



## The STORK a community treasure

One of the very few remaining public houses in our area is The Stork on the corner of Finch and Heathfield Roads. Named after the maternity hospital close by it has faithfully served its customers for over a century. Its present landlord, Chris Fleming,



pictured left, together with his wife, Kim and daughter Julie, above in the lounge bar, hope that this community asset will survive. There

is no doubt that landlord Chris is passionate about serving his customers but feels that cheap deals at Supermarkets has knocked the trade for six. He calculates that a can of beer is as cheap as a litre of water.

However, he is looking at ways to restore the pub's image and is keen to offer the Lounge as a Functions room where the wider community can meet even over a cup of coffee. It can be made self contained with a separate entrance on Finch Road.

Chris describes his customers as "very multi-cultural, Scottish, Irish, Caribbean, Asian, Vietnamese, full of characters, all with many stories to tell of their experiences of living in the Birchfield area. He says they are very concerned about each. The OAPs are

given a £9 treat each at Christmas from regular bar small change collections. A recent collection raised money to buy a headstone for John Hussey, a well loved regular.



### COMMUNITY RESPECTS

On the day that we talked to Chris a reception was being held in the lounge for the deceased wife of one of the regulars George. Earlier in the day Glennis Foley's funeral had passed by as regulars left their drinks to watch the procession go by towards Holy



Trinity Church on Birchfield Road. Glennis was a community activist for many years. As community leaders and citizens came to pay their respects at the service, so to the Islamic worshippers, coming from their Mosque opposite on the day that ended their festival of Ramadan, stood and remembered this fine devoted citizen. She had served our area so well for over 40 years, and her legacy was the founding of the Practical Care Project to help elderly folk.

Glennis Edith  
Maureen Foley  
19th November 1938 – 27th August 2010



Pictured above is Glennis Foley, late of St Peter's Road, whose memory was being celebrated in the lounge bar of the Stork.

pictured below is the funeral procession as it passes by the STORK on Heathfield Road on the way to Holy Trinity Church



Below a lone Irish piper leads the coffin into a packed church, past assembled mourners.



The Mosque worshippers opposite the church witness the passing of a great and respected community activist



# Birchfield Bugle

ISSUE 7

Summer 2010 newsletter of the Birchfield Residents Action group

## POPE PASSES BY BIRCHFIELD



photo TNT

Pope Benedict, was at Cofton Park for a special service on September 19th. *Danny Ryan, one of our Council ward Support Officers, says, "I had the immense privilege of being seated very near the altar and found the whole Mass experience very spiritual. I was delighted to be asked by Sharon Lea, Strategic Director for Environment and Culture to be part of the Community Engagement aspect of the Papal visit".* His role has involved liaison with Cofton's residents since early summer.

Many other local people went to the event to hear the Pope declare Cardinal John Henry Newman "Blessed", the first stage of becoming a Saint.

'Mary Stanley, Head Teacher of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, said, "On Friday 17 September, children and staff from St Augustine's and the Oratory School participated in the 'Big Assembly' at St Mary's University College, Twickenham. The assembly was a huge success and the atmosphere was electric when Pope Benedict arrived in the Popemobile. The arena at Twickenham was awash with flags and everyone cheered excitedly for Pope Benedict. Being so close to the Holy Father was magical

and we will cherish our experience for a lifetime"

Some of the children who went said.

'I had a great day. It was very exciting to see Pope Benedict.' Olivia, Year 5

'I enjoyed visiting the Pope in London. He is a messenger of God and we love him.' Emily, Year 5

'I cheered when the Pope came.' Remigio, Year 5

'When the Pope came everyone started screaming and waving their flags!' Jessica, Year 6



This happy group of children from the two schools are clearly delighted after meeting the leader of the Roman Catholic Church



photo thanks to TNT

Oratory Primary children being interviewed for BBC Midlands Today, after the Pope had come to greet them at the Oratory

In this issue find out  
who has put Perry  
Barr on the map,  
local historian Tom Flanagan  
reveals all on page 2

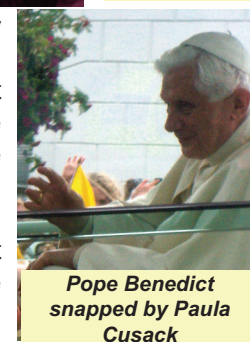


Tom Flanagan, local historian, stands in front of St Paul's Church Lozells, which, he believes, marks the spot of the Roman Watch tower that overlooks an important battle site.

**other features**  
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Dangerous DOGS on page 6  
a police officer's story  
Faiths in Action on page 7  
The Shree Geeta Bhawan Temple  
A day at the STORK page 8



Local Catholics in the Newman Shrine at the Oratory Church.



Pope Benedict snapped by Paula Cusack

John Henry Newman would possibly have travelled through our district, on horse or by carriage, during his stay at Maryvale, Kingstanding in 1846, after he had become a Catholic. The motto he chose when he became a Cardinal in 1879, was "Heart speaks to Heart", fitting words for us to remember in this internet age, as he reminds us that however we communicate, what we say should come from the heart.



Birchfield Residents Action Group (BRAG) was set up to highlight problems within the Birchfield area. Our aim is to cooperate with all the organisations working in and responsible for the well being of our residents.

Our hope is to regenerate pride and find agreed solutions to the problems.

This quarterly newsletter illustrates some of the current activities that are happening in our area, and has been kindly funded by Be Birmingham's Successful Neighbourhoods fund.

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[www.brag.btik.com](http://www.brag.btik.com).

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## The SITE OF QUEEN BOUDICCA'S LAST BATTLE - PERRY BARR,BIRMINGHAM

In the year 61 AD Queen Boudicca, widowed Queen of the Iceni Celtic Tribe, faced in battle Roman General Gaius Suetonius Paulinus and his Legions. This was the most decisive event in the Roman's conquest of Britain, Alas, no one is sure where it took place!

First the background to this moment:- General Paulinus, from his capital city, Colchester, marched, in 60 AD into North Wales to destroy the Druid priestly class, a thorn in the side of the Romans, on their Holy Island, Anglesey. Behind him, in Colchester, now part of East Anglia, he left only retired veterans from the Roman Army to defend the city and Province. The local Celtic tribes were peaceable.

Unfortunately, on the death of Boudicca's husband Prasutagus, who left in his will half his kingdom to Emperor Nero and half to his two daughters, Nero's tax collectors wanted it all and also Rome decided to call in all debts and loans that had been granted to the Celts in return for their submission to them.

### REVOLT

There was a revolt, not led by Boudicca but put down harshly. As punishment the Romans brutally whipped Boudicca and raped, repeatedly, her two young daughters. Boudicca and her tribe, as well as other Celts, rose in rebellion, Colchester was first to be attacked and was razed to the ground. Undefended, its inhabitants were put to the sword. According to Roman historians many atrocities were committed. A Roman Army Legion, based at Lincoln in the North, was ambushed and massacred as it marched South. Next was London's turn. At that time a small and undefended trading port, it too was looted and put to flame and sword. Just before Boudicca's army arrived at London, General Paulinus had arrived there with a group of his cavalry, after riding 250 miles from Anglesey. He saw the situation was hopeless and turned about, retracing his route north-west up Watling Street (the A5). Boudicca set off in pursuit of him. On the way the town of Verulamium, (now Saint Albans), was also destroyed.

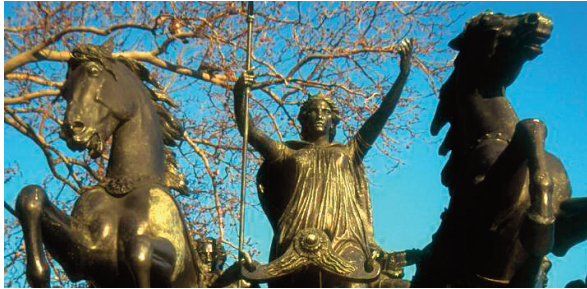
### SUPPOSITION

We now enter the realms of supposition:- Paulinus had sent for the Roman Legion based at Exeter in the south-west to join him. He also needed to reconnect with his footsoldiers

marching down Watling Street from North Wales. He knew Boudicca was on his tail and he must have been thinking of a suitable place to reunite with his own forces and have a favourable ground for his smaller forces to face and defeat the much larger Celtic army. The Roman Road, Watling Street from London to Holyhead, was built by the Romans on top of a Celtic road which, for them, was the "Gold Road", bringing precious metals etc. from Ireland and Wales into south-west England. At Daventry, near the start of the present M6, it takes an even greater loop than the M6 to avoid the Coventry and Midland areas. No doubt this diversion was to take the least provocative route between two tribal boundaries.

### FINAL BATTLE

The orthodox thinking is that both



Paulinus and Boudicca took this way and eventually the final battle took place at Mancetter, near to a Roman camp. There are many question marks about this including the supposed site being too small for the size of the armies and the lack of a Roman monument celebrating the Roman Victory. Roman historian Tacitus, whose father-in-law was almost certainly present, describes the Roman Army as with its back to trees preventing outflanking and the Celtic Army coming onto the battlefield through a 'defile', meaning through a narrow pass between trees on uphill ground?

The shortest route to North Wales from Daventry is presently to take the M45 to South Coventry, (where a Roman 'cavalry training' fort was discovered in 1960) then A45-A452, past North Birmingham, to rejoin 'Watling Street' near Cannock. I feel certain that this was the route Paulinus would have taken rather than sticking to the A5 loop. On his way down from Wales he could have changed to fresh horses at the Lunt (South Coventry) fort and, on the way back, with Boudicca behind him, took as many horsemen as possible, as he strove to rejoin his

legionaries on their weary march down from their battle on Anglesey. He may well have told them to wait for him at the Roman Camp at Wall, on the Watling Street, where it is crossed by the Icknield Street, a Roman Military road coming from the South and along which the sent for Legion from Exeter could be expected to come. Another Roman Fort, discovered in the 1930s, lies in South Birmingham on Icknield Street. Built just after the Claudian Conquest, it had been recently extended around 60 AD to take more troops and cavalry. This fort would be the obvious place for Paulinus to wait for the expected reinforcements from Exeter. Meanwhile his legionaries would be resting and regrouping at Wall, about 15 miles away.

Perhaps, not so curiously, something happened at Metchley Roman Fort about this time. The substantial accommodation, stables and workshop buildings disappeared and, later, a smaller camp was built on top of the first and second ones. Paulinus was waiting for the Exeter legion to arrive but got word they were not coming. Their officer-in-charge, Poenius

Postumus, who was standing in for the absent Commanding Officer, decided it would be suicidal for his legion to march up in support - remember Boudicca had already destroyed a legion from Lincoln. On hearing of Paulinus' victory he killed himself. General Paulinus, realizing that he, his cavalry and his foot-soldiers were on their own and that Boudicca was about to over-run him at the Metchley Fort, decided to spring his trap! He and his cavalry, as well as the Fort Garrison, went up Icknield Street to meet his legionaries, marching down 10 miles from Wall, to Perry Barr! Perry Barr, about 7 miles from the Metchley Fort, is within a loop of the River Tame and was also within the Forest of Arden. Either side of Icknield Street would be thickly wooded. As Boudicca followed the Romans, the road traversed the valley of the Birmingham river Ray, crossing several fast flowing streams. The last one before Perry Barr is Aston Brook and, at its crossing the ancient Aston Iron Foundry was built, perhaps, initially, by the Romans. Icknield Street rises to cross a high ridge, Lozells, before descending into the Perry Barr promontory.

*continued on page 3*

## FAITH IN ACTION

Each issue will highlight some of our local Faiths outreach to the local community. Here we invite the SHREE GEETA BHAWAN Hindu Temple on Heathfield Road to tell us about their activities, their General Secretary, AV Chandan, reports

More than 45 years ago a magnificent church was on sale and we, the Hindus were delighted when our offer to purchase was accepted. We, the Hindus established the FIRST HINDU TEMPLE IN THE MIDLANDS.

There is an evident tranquillity as you walk into the Prayer Hall, you feel the presence of the God and Goddess deities catering to all the devotees and representing all the regions of India. To name a few, Bala Ji Vanketeshwara of South region, Goddess Durga of North and Lord Ram and Lord Krishna of central region can be found in our temple, a fascinating exhibition of diversity.

Many devotees desired a replication of the beautiful construction of the temples in India and their desires and prayers are now being fulfilled. Shikharas (marble domes, one of which can be seen behind the ladies below) have been ordered and are in the process of being installed.



Secretary A.V.Chandan, on the right, in front of the main Shrine with some visitors from Great Barr



Hinduism as a religion is a captivating educational focus and many educational visits are made to the temple by schools (both primary and secondary), higher and further education institutions and the local community with people of all faiths and backgrounds, who are warmly welcomed to join us for a free meal and a tour of the temple.

Celebrations of all the Hindu festivals occur throughout the year and are notable for their exhibition of colour and dance.

The four Vedas are Holy Scriptures over 4000 years old and you may be surprised to discover that the word 'Hindu' does not appear in any of these Vedas. This is because the Vedas were not specific to any religious community when they were written.

Lord Krishna expresses advice to Arjuna. His message is universal for all regardless of their faith.

Why are you unnecessarily worrying? Whom do you fear? Who can kill you? Soul is not born, nor does it die. Young and the elderly Hindus are well established in the local community and have very good relationships with people of all other faiths.

I extend on behalf of the Board of Trustees to all the Handsworth and Lozells community an invitation to visit our temple.



Secretary A.V.Chandan, on the right, in front of the main Shrine with some visitors from Great Barr



Pictured above is S.P.Babba, who was the first secretary 45 years ago, and now runs the Friday Community Activity event, after which the attendees sit down to a splendid vegetarian meal. They will have taken part in Exercise, Yoga, and sometimes Banks or Social Services will come to give an Advice Surgery. Some of his pictures are shown opposite of other community events.

### PRAYER

*WHERE the mind is without fear and the head is held high;*

*Where knowledge is free;*

*Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;*

*Where the words come out from the depth of truth;*

*Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards refection;*

*Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;*

*Where the mind is lead forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action;*

*Into that Heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country (Britain) awake.*





## The problem of DANGEROUS DOGS- a Policeman's story

by John Marsh (Lozells & East  
Handsworth Policing team)

I was a police officer with little over a years service when I first came across dangerous dogs from a policing perspective. An argument had broken out between two men in a flat, and a fight had ensued. During the fight, a pit bull terrier type dog belonging to one of the men had bitten his opponent on the leg, bringing the man to the floor. The dog, in an excited state, had then bitten the man numerous times on the neck, face and head. The man suffered an arterial bleed to the head, and lay unconscious on the floor, bleeding profusely from a massive head injury.

Members of my team were first on the scene. Whilst trying to apprehend the owner of the dog, my colleague was bitten badly on the arm, causing him to permanently lose feeling in the part of the arm affected. The offender and his dog still ran away, where they were eventually picked up by a traffic unit. Most police traffic cars carry an on board camera, which captured what happened next. One of the traffic officers was attacked by the dog, which took hold of his leg, and ragged him around the floor like a toy. The officer attempted to defend himself with his baton. The footage shows the dog completely ignoring blows to the head, pulling the officer around by his injured leg. The owner tried to control his dog by taking hold of it. The dog finally released the officer, only to turn and bite into its owner's arm, before disappearing on its own. Only after several hours were skilled dog handlers able to control and seize the dog. Due to their skill, no further members of the public were harmed, and the staff of City Hospital were able to save the life of the man who had been bitten in the head and neck, although he received permanent facial scars.

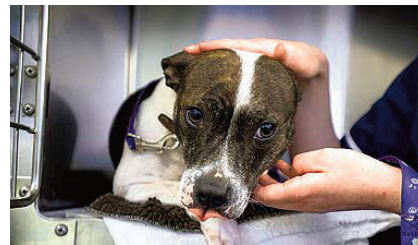
I was tasked with the investigation of the events of the evening, and following the conviction of the owner, the court ordered the destruction of the dog. Since this incident, I have dealt with dozens of dangerous dogs, predominantly pit bull terrier type dogs. These have ranged from dog fights in local parks, to excited dogs attacking children, and everything in between.

The Lozells, Birchfield and East Handsworth area has a large population of dogs, of which I am pleased to say the majority are kept by law abiding, responsible individuals. However, like any area, pit bull terriers are present.

Pit bull terrier type dogs are prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, covering any dog which displays a substantial number of characteristics of a pit bull terrier. Originally bred for dog fighting, these dogs are athletic and powerful, and have a terrier's temperament. Often, people will say to me how surprised they are by

how friendly these dogs appear, especially where the dog is alleged to have attacked a person. This again harks back to the task they were bred for. The original fighting dogs would have been gentle around their owners, yet aggressive when confronted with another dog. Due to their unique physiology, pit bull terriers are capable of maintaining a level of excitement for incredible periods. Some reported dog fights have lasted up to six hours. When such a dog attacks a child, the results can, and have been fatal

### What Can The Police Do



An unwanted 'staffie' at a RSPCA Hospital.  
Copyright Photo: Geoff Pugh Daily Telegraph

### About Dangerous Dogs?

**Dog Fighting-** Unfortunately, dog fighting does still exist, and in almost all cases involves pit bull terriers. This can range from two people with their dogs in a park, to large, organized fights where large bets are placed. Residents should contact police and RSPCA if they have any suspicions around the breeding, training, home vetnary care or fighting of dogs. This information could prevent the unnecessary suffering of these animals. I work closely with the RSPCA and any information received will be looked into

**Status Dogs-** The appeal of owning a large and powerful dog may lead some people involved in anti-social behaviour to possess dogs they have little control over. Again, pit bull terriers are predominant, but other large or powerful breeds are used for the purposes of intimidation, or in extreme cases as a weapon. The Lozells and East Handsworth neighbourhood policing team takes anti-social behaviour very seriously, and often the use of dogs in this way can be controlled by civil remedies, such as a Dog Control Order.

**Dangerous Dogs-** Unfortunately, dog attacks on children do sometimes occur. If you are concerned about specific dogs within your community, informing the police means that we can identify any risk before an attack happens. Sometimes, this can be as simple as officers visiting an address and making sure there are no problems with the dog, other times this may result in the seizing of a dangerous dog. By working together, we can minimise these risks within the community.

Since the formation of the Lozells and East Handsworth neighbourhood policing team in April 2010, we have executed warrants at several addresses suspected of containing



## Ask Your Neighbourhood Manager ?

Hi I'm Yvonne Wager( left above)  
with my colleague Debbie  
Parsons(Environmental Warden)  
and I'm your local Neighbourhood  
Manager that covers the Birchfield  
area. My job as a Neighbourhood  
Manager is to work in partnership with  
residents and service providers from  
the community, voluntary and  
statutory sectors like residents groups  
such as Birchfield Residents Action  
Group, Neighbourhood Forum, Age  
Concern, Faith organisations, Fleet  
and Waste Management, Regulatory  
Services, Heart of Birmingham  
Primary Care Trust, the Police, Fire  
Service and others to help deliver  
improved services for local people.

Some recent activities and  
initiatives include 'Stop the Dumping'  
campaign, the Birchfield Be Healthy  
Fun day, Princes Trust Volunteers  
tidying up the community garden  
between Hutton Road and  
Grosvenor Road, Community Action  
days in Haughton Road and Lyndon  
Close. To find out more about what's  
happening in Birchfield please visit  
my blog: [www.birchfield.org.uk](http://www.birchfield.org.uk)  
If you have a local issue you want to  
raise with me please contact me on  
(0121) 675 7061 or mobile 07917 172530 or  
pop in to see me at my office at the CMAT  
Centre, 16 Grosvenor Road, Handsworth,  
B20 3NP

prohibited dogs. A number of pit bull terriers  
have been seized, and their owners  
prosecuted. We have acted on information  
quickly and effectively, and through our  
actions we have removed a number of  
dangerous dogs from the community.  
The West Midlands Police supports the  
returning of sociable Pit Bull Type dogs to  
responsible owners, and there is legislation  
in place allowing us to assist you in this.  
Equally though, if you are thinking about  
obtaining a dangerous dog, I would advise  
you to think again.

continued from page 2

### ROMAN WATCH TOWER

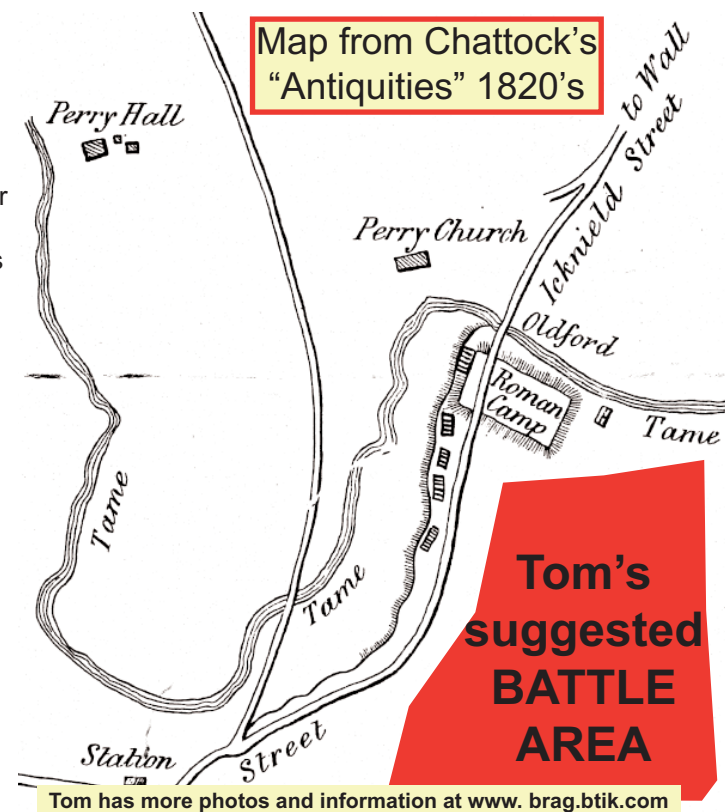
Where Icknield Street crosses the  
ridge,at its highest point,there stood  
what was thought to be a Roman  
watch tower,now covered by the tower  
of St Paul's church,its  
architect,J.A.Chatwin certainly seems  
to have made this previous tower the



Tom(left) with Pastor Stewart,and  
Church Secretary, Angela  
Williamson, inside St Paul's  
which is undergoing  
refurbishment funded by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund.

inspiration for his design.

Pastor Stewart,the present incumbent,  
feels this fact answers questions he  
had.But was this tower the Roman  
Memorial to the victory of General  
Paulinus? Was there a stone with  
Suetonius Paulinus in Latin on it? Aston  
parish church is dedicated to Sts Peter  
and Paul and there is a St Paul's about  
2 miles away.  
The Romans,used Perry Barr as a  
workshop and staging area for troops  
who were on the move to Northern



Tom has more photos and information at [www.brag.btik.com](http://www.brag.btik.com)

England and North Wales so they knew  
it well.Also there would be an open area  
cleared of trees used for fuel and  
building purposes.The three sides of  
the river would have trees lining the  
banks with the river ford(an escape  
route to Wall?) centrally behind the  
ranks,both it and the river hidden by the  
trees.Perhaps,even as Boudicca's army  
came down from Lozells ridge into the  
clearing where they sighted the ranks  
of the Roman army lined up against  
them on the rising ground,they also  
saw,in the distance,the heights of Barr

Beacon,a Druid  
stronghold,behind  
their enemy.Boudicca  
may have been a  
Druid priestess as  
well as a queen and  
perhaps part of her  
motivation in coming  
so far with her men  
and camp-followers  
was to give support  
to the Druids under  
attack by her  
enemies.Had she by  
now heard of the  
Roman victory at  
Anglesey?

The Romans,less in  
numbers,were better  
armed,armoured and  
disciplined.

The confined space  
favoured the Roman  
Cavalry over the  
Celtic chariots.After  
fierce fighting the

Celtic line broke but there was no  
escape route to fight another day.Their  
baggage train,the trees behind,the  
marshy ground at streams,all blocked  
their retreat.The Romans were on  
ground they knew and regarded as their  
own.

There was great slaughter and so there  
is probably a mass burial site  
somewhere in Perry Barr.People may  
have some artifact on their mantle piece  
to show that Boudicca, Paulinus and a  
great battle happened here.

## TOWER BLOCKS ESTATE RESIDENTS BATTLE ON

One of the remaining residents families on the Birchfield estate  
who featured in our last issue has now had to move because of  
burglary and vandalism.But this family are still in the area, which  
was the wish of many families who have been moved out  
elsewhere. The two remaining ladies battle on for their right to  
be given accomodation of equivalent size as they have now for  
their families.

**02 MOBILE MAST PROBLEM** Birchfield Residents Action  
group have been told that the demolition of the remaining tower  
is being held up because the resiting of the mast to the opposite  
side of Birchfield Road on the old Bingo Hall has run into  
difficulties.The tower needs to come down before the end of the  
next financial year otherwise funding would be lost, and it will  
remain an unsightly reminder of the Council's promise to  
regenerate the area. The old library site has remained  
undeveloped for 3 years now as money has dried up and the  
new library will not now happen. We fear that the same will  
happen to the Tower block, with the rusting O2 mast serving to  
remind us daily of the "state of the Nation". It would seem that  
the Regeneration is not for Birchfield,as eventually Birch tree  
scrub takes over the cleared areas, as in ancient times.

## YOUTH IN ACTION



Pictured above are the Council Apprentices who  
together with volunteers from the Prince's trust  
team,below, tackled vandalism that happened in  
St Mary's Church yard  
by Handsworth park  
during the summer.





## "The Spice is right!"

That is the mantra for the West Midlands First Jerk Cookout", say event organisers Tony Fairweather and Claudiette Richards,(pictured below)



The sun shone over Handsworth Park on Sunday 22nd August for the first ever family Jerk Cook Out event in the West Midlands which was a great success!! This free outdoor event brought out the community to sample a range of "Jerk" and cultural foods. There were craft stands, live entertainment and activities for all the family from bouncy castle to face painting. The event was well attended providing a great opportunity

for families' foodies, and the inquisitive to try out the distinctive taste of traditional Caribbean "Jerked" Chicken, Fish, Lobster or Pork. (For those of you yet to try this great dish, Jerk is a Jamaican spice and usually cooked on a BBQ.) Stall holders offered their distinct cuisine to the public, and the sight and aroma of this sizzling spectacle was enough to get your taste buds going.

These cooks were not only impressing the public with their tantalising food but they were also entered into a competition to see who would be crowned the West Midlands first Jerk



Third place went to the Boathouse Café situated on site at Handsworth Park and run by Mark Bent, pictured above. An award literally won on his doorstep!

## OUT AND ABOUT WITH BUGLE'S CAMERA THIS SUMMER

Cook Out winner. Jesse Gerald Senior community Partnership Officer for Birmingham City Council said. "This was a fantastic day to showcase and celebrate Caribbean cuisine and a great way for people of all cultures to learn about Jamaican Jerk food. We are encouraged to see how the community came together through food to provide a great event like this "

The Jerk Cookout raised funds for Oscar a sickle cell charity, the African Caribbean leukaemia trust (ACLT), and Nelson Mandela Childrens Fund.



Father Mack stands between two couples that he married at the church early in his ministry. To his left are John and Katheline Connolly with Clare and John Banks on his right.

Father Simon Hall and parishioners of St. Therese of the Child Jesus invited Canon Sean Mc Ternan, from Solihull to another celebration for his Diamond Jubilee. Father Mack as he is affectionately known in Perry Barr spent 41 years of his priestly ministry there. He was greatly loved by his former parishioners and esteemed for his wonderful pastoral care, spiritual

A colourful Asian wedding ceremony was snapped as this groom and his bride enter their new home. The mother-in-law kisses the bride, followed by the scissors to cut the ribbon at the door.



## JOYFUL CELEBRATION IN PERRY BARR



Father Simon Hall on the left, looks on as Father Mack cuts his celebratory cake to share with parishioners.

© photos- Stephen McPhillips Photograph 0121 356 6939

guidance, wisdom and wit. He ministered to them for over three generations: at baptisms, First Sacraments, weddings and funerals, sharing fully in the joys and in the sorrows. They missed him greatly when he moved to Solihull and welcomed this opportunity to have him back for the day. It was a glorious sunny day! Lunch in the presbytery garden was a feast of food, fun, music and wine! Food was prepared by parishioners who presented exciting dishes from the five continents.

report by parishioner Nora Warnaby

## 30th anniversary of the Vietnamese Catholic Community



There was a colourful gathering of the Vietnamese Catholic Community at their Pastoral Centre on Wye Cliff Road. Seeing the great devotion of the Vietnamese refugees in the UK, and their customs of clustering together for sharing and reminding themselves of their ancient national traditions, Mgr. Tom Fallon invited Mgr. Peter Diem - the first pastor of the Vietnamese refugees - to live and work with him in the Parish of St. Francis, Birmingham, in July, 1980. With his great help, the Vietnamese Catholic Community gradually came into being. As the Vietnamese proverb: 'Drinking water, remember its source; eating fruit, remember its grower', the Vietnamese Catholic Community considers Mgr Tom their great benefactor.



Now the Pastoral Centre consists of a Chapel dedicated to the Vietnamese Martyrs, and many classrooms for catechism and Vietnamese language to preserve Vietnamese culture and religious traditions.

During the days celebration children and adults performed traditional dances and songs to the delight of the gathered community, whilst meals of traditional food were prepared to be eaten for the delight of the those present. Many guests had been invited from around the UK by the Community Pastoral Council to share in the festivities. Father Peter Dac is shown left with Father Peter Connolly who has come to help Mgr Fallon at St Francis parish.



## SECRET GARDEN re-opened by PRINCE'S TRUST volunteers



The Hutton Road playground was revamped as part of the students 12 week 'Team Programme' course which sees them spending two weeks developing community projects locally. Local resident Sarah Bagun, 27 said: "The project has made such an



improvement and the kids have really enjoyed their new play area. It's nice to see our local police officers visiting the site regularly also and makes our community feel safe. "I've lived here for 15-years and meeting my local officers and projects like this really make me feel safer." Sophie Forsey, 18 and a student on the course added: "Being part of this programme has given me a stronger sense of belief in myself as well as a chance to give back to the community. The team, including the officers all get on so well and now we see the police as people we can talk to."