

FIRST FOR NEWS

Dunelm Mill comes to MK

SPRUCE up your home this summer as new homewares store Dunelm Mill comes to Milton Keynes.

Mayor Councillor Debbie Brock will open the store, at Winterhill, on Thursday, August 12 at 9am.

The store has created a minimum of 155 jobs for people and will stock an extensive range of over 20,000 homeware items, including favourite household names and Dunelm Mill's own exclusive collection.

Builders top national survey

CITY based house builder CALA Homes has been recognised as the best in the UK.

The developer of 107 new family homes at Broughton Gate, came top in six of eight categories in a national survey of people who bought new homes in 2009 by the Home Builders Federation.

CALA Homes topped the ranking with scores of 95.6 per cent of overall customer satisfaction and 97.2 per cent of customers prepared to recommend its homes.

WI revisit the swinging 60s

THE July Stony Stratford meeting attracted a good attendance to hear Cohn Oakes talking about London when Harold MacMillan was Prime Minister.

This was followed by a talk about the fashions, music and eateries of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, August 3 at 2.15pm at Ancell Trust Ground Croquet Club.

Museum's new website launch

WOBURN Heritage Centre Museum has entered the digital age with the launch of a new website - www.woburnheritagemuseum.co.uk.

Visitors can preview the museum, learn about Woburn and pledge donations to the clock tower renovation.

Make a wish for kid's charity

THE Eastlake Harvester in Milton Keynes is aiming to raise more than £1,000 for Make-A-Wish.

August is the fifth annual fundraising month at the restaurant for the charity, which grants wishes for children with life-threatening illnesses.

Staff will organise events and invite guests to donate.



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Climbing is child's play for schoolgirl

by Georgina Butler

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A SIX-YEAR-OLD girl is on track to break two climbing world records with a sponsored climb for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Most girls of Willow Pochin's age are eagerly awaiting presents, a cake and candles as they approach their birthday, but the Wolverton youngster is facing a mountainous challenge for her next birthday.

Willow, of Windsor Street, turns seven on September 8 and aims to set the world record as the youngest person to climb the equivalent of Mount Snowdon on an indoor climbing wall.

The height she will be matching is 1,085 metres.

She also hopes to break the world record for the fastest climb on an indoor climbing wall at this height.

To achieve the feat she will have

Six-year-old brings new meaning to the phrase 'climbing the walls'

to climb to the top of the Ellis Brigham climbing wall at Xscape 85 times.

To beat the record Willow is aiming to do the climb in five hours or under. Her interest in climbing escalated after seeing the climbing wall at Xscape.

Not daunted by the imposing height the daring youngster was desperate to have a go.

After successfully persuading her mother Jelena to allow her to attempt it she scaled the wall and discovered a love for climbing.

Her mother said: "She really wanted to have a go and just really took to it."

Willow did a short course to learn the basic skills and now climbs twice a week.

Despite her young age Willow is

no stranger to sponsored climbs.

Her previous fundraising attempt raised £600 for the Haiti Earthquake appeal.

On that occasion she had to reach the top of the wall 25 times so her next mission will be a big leap.

Willow is keen to help others and hopes the money raised will improve the quality of life for children treated at Great Ormond Street,

She said: "I know how lucky I am to be fit and healthy enough to do something like this so I really want to help children who aren't as lucky."

> If you want to sponsor Willow you can visit her Just Giving Site at www.justgiving.com/Willowsrecordclimb



ON THE UP: Willow Pochin is set to scale new heights

Five robbed and one man injured in crime spree

A MAN had nine stitches to his lip and his teeth 'reset' after he was assaulted outside a city shop.

The 19-year-old victim had earlier refused to buy cigarettes for a younger male before the attack happened.

The incident happened outside Tesco in Walnut Tree, and was among a series in the estate and neighbouring Wavendon Gate.

There were five robberies believed to be linked. All the victims were aged between 14 and 19 and were threatened

before items such as iPods and mobile phones were stolen.

A Thames Valley Police spokesman said the assault itself related to an incident on June 15.

She added: "A 19-year-old victim was in Tesco Express, opposite Walton High School, and a man approached him and asked him to buy him cigarettes.

"The victim refused, left the store, and as he reached Blackberry Court, Walnut Tree, the offender asked him where he was going.

"He then punched the victim, causing his lip to spilt and loosening two teeth.

"He attended Milton Keynes General Hospital where he received nine stitches to his lip and had his teeth reset." The other incidents also took place in June.

> On Friday, a Thames Valley Police spokesman confirmed a 17-year-old boy has been charged with five counts of robbery and one count of assault.

He will appear at Milton Keynes Magistrates Court on August 10.

Not guilty plea to double sexual assault charges

POLICE have charged a man with two counts of sexual assault.

Kassam Khalid, 28, from Veryan Place in Fishermead, appeared at Milton

Keynes Magistrates' Court on July 12, where he pleaded not guilty to both offences.

Currently on bail, he will appear on trial

on September 13 and 24.

The charges relate to two incidents on July 8 involving a woman and a girl being touched inappropriately.

Collision on a 'well known' road led to tragic death

THE death of a 'careful' driver in a head-on collision has baffled an experienced coroner.

Coroner Rodney Corner recorded the death as accidental, but it remains a 'puzzle' he concluded at an inquest last Wednesday.

Norma Wroe died at the scene on March 24 after veering into another vehicle travelling in the opposite direction on the A422.

Mrs Wroe, 69, from Great Holm, was driving westwards towards Chicheley after visiting her sister in Bedford.

It was a road she knew well, yet she missed the bend in the road and swerved into the path of a minibus from Kimbolton Avenue Care Home in Bedford, the inquest heard.

Witness Mrs Deborah Poynton said it was "like a slow motion film" and she had not seen Mrs Wroe try to avoid the oncoming traffic.

PC Aidan White who joined colleagues on the scene said: "I can only assume there was some form of inattention or distraction either internally or externally to the vehicle."

The coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death as a result of multiple injuries caused by a road traffic accident.

Mrs Wroe's daughter Helen Wroe said, "my mother had no underlying health issues but we believe she was incapacitated in some way."

City's surfing system to go super-fast?

BLOOD tests over the internet, super-fast streamed television, online video doctors' appointments and a communications network the envy of the country - both commercially and socially.

These hi-tech possibilities could become reality if, as being currently debated by Milton Keynes Council, the city's communications infrastructure is upgraded.

It was the hot topic at the partnerships and growth select committee last Wednesday, where a number of independent experts explained the benefits - and practicalities - of implementing super-fast, or 'next-generation' broadband.

Along with the huge costs implicated, the meeting also set out to hear from the companies involved.

BT was invited to attend but sent a statement instead, while Virgin Media - which currently provides cable TV in the city - did not respond to its invite at all.

>For more on this meeting and the ongoing developments of digital Milton Keynes, see this Thursday's Citizen.

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Car servicing helps hospice

WILLEN Hospice received a £1,500 donation from Cirrus Communications Systems as a result of service from Skoda UK's customer service team.

As the car manufacturer's charity of choice, the hospice was awarded the funding in recognition of the 'exemplary' service Skoda provided.

Paul Allis, regional sales manager for Cirrus' Southern region said: "To show our gratitude to the team we wanted to give something back to the community and they suggested we make a donation."

Pulling the right strings

MILTON Keynes Music Service's String Orchestra has won a national award for its performance at the Music for Youth competition held at the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

The orchestra is looking forward to its next performance at the Music for Youth finals at the Albert Hall in November.

David Rose, Head of Milton Keynes Music Service, said: "Conductor Euan Forrester and cello teacher Heather Dunne have worked tirelessly to ensure the orchestra achieves a high standard – and the students have risen to the challenge."

Join in family fun all summer

A WEEK of activities at Oakgrove Leisure Centre between August 23 and 27 is sure to entertain the whole family.

People can get creative with crafts, active with sports including badminton, football and squash or relax with yoga, art and beauty sessions. The activities, organised by Milton Keynes Council's extended services and Hertsmere Leisure, cost £2 to £4 for adults and £1 to £2.50 for children.

Award for super study support

INNOVATIVE study support in the city has been recognised with the Quality in Study Support mark.

Gail Tolley, director of Children and Young People's Services at Milton Keynes Council presented the award to the team behind the extended service programmes 'Playing for Success' and 'Lights Up On Learning' at an awards evening at stadium:mk.

Mind the gap: SEEDA cuts

PEOPLE and industry will suffer a loss of contact with Whitehall under new coalition government plans, says Peter Skinner MEP.

Mr Skinner has added his voice to criticism of the government's cutting of the South East of England Development Agency: "Without SEEDA there will be a huge void between local and Whitehall government, which will mean most local decisions will be made in Westminster," he said.



Six years' prison for 'unprovoked attack'

A FURZTON man who threatened two people with a knife during a 'vicious attack' has been jailed.

Nathan Stear, 22, from Swimbridge Lane, pictured left, has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment for grievous bodily harm with intent.

The attack took place on January 15 in The Linx, Bletchley, and one of his

victims suffered cuts to his face and body. Stear was sentenced at Huntingdon Crown Court last Wednesday after he pleaded guilty.

He will serve a further two years on extended licence.

Det Con Adam Billingham said: "Stear committed a vicious, unprovoked attack on his victim."

Man who had heart attack at 36 can climb mountains

Pete has the heart for charity climb

A COUNCIL worker who went into cardiac arrest at the age of 36 has climbed the three highest peaks in Yorkshire to help others with heart conditions.

Pete Roberts, who is now 44, has raised £2,000 in sponsorship for the British Heart Foundation after his 25-mile challenge.

He was playing football in 2002 when he suffered chest pains and had to be taken to Milton Keynes Hospital where he went into cardiac arrest.

"It was very scary," he said "I was very fit at the time and I just didn't know what was going to happen."

Pete recovered well and his condition is now controlled by medication.

Afterwards he enrolled in the BHF's cardiac rehabilitation programme to make sure he kept as fit as possible for the future.

"The programme was really good," he said. He decided to take on the Three Peaks challenge to "give something back" to BHF.

Accompanied by a group of ten Milton Keynes Council colleagues, he was among 500 BHF walkers to climb Pen-y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough.

Carl Jones, from the BHF events, team said: "It was great to see Pete and his colleagues take part."

"It was a fantastic day and we had so much positive feedback, which is wonderful as the work we carry out in the area is vital."

BHF is dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information.

The charity runs a range of events, including family bike rides, hikes and extreme off-road challenges, to help people get fit, have fun and raise money for its work.

Anyone is welcome to join in by registering on www.bhf.org/events

Meanwhile Pete is encouraging more people to sign up for the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge next year.

More more information contact 0800 085 2280 or email northevents@bhf.org.uk



RECOVERED: Heart attack victim Pete tackle the peaks

Frosts' three years of sowing seeds of success



NOT COMMON OR GARDEN: Exceptional staff at Frosts

GREEN fingers were joined by a thumbs-up at a city garden store that has scooped top prizes for the third year in a row.

Frosts Garden Centre swept the board at a prestigious awards ceremony celebrating the greatest of the great outdoors industry.

For the third year running, the Woburn Sands-based firm took the coveted title of Best Destination Garden Centre at the North Thames Area Garden Centre Awards.

It also scooped three other gardening gongs: Highly Commended Garden Centre for 2010/11; the Best Plant Department and Best Food Hall.

The centre itself hosted

the annual event for the first time, meaning staff of garden centres across the region visited Woburn Sands to see for themselves why it made the 'best destination' grade.

Another prize reflected staff's efforts – a certificate of merit for achieving a score of more than 85 per cent in 16 categories including everything from the car park to pet care.

Frosts' managing director Paul Wright said: "We have consistently worked hard to deliver a much improved service."

"We're extremely pleased this has been recognised. I cannot thank the team enough."

Environment award for motorway noise ridge

A UNIQUE ridge, which was designed to block out the noise of the busy M1 motorway, has won a prestigious environmental award.

Brooklands Ridge, a three-and-a-half kilometre earthwork, won the award from the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation.

The ridge was constructed from a million cubic metres of soil sourced from other local building projects.

Residents of the new development at Brooklands, developed by Places for People, are now benefiting from the construction.

Places for People project director Simon Elcock said: "This is a fantastic award which rightly recognises the achievements in constructing the ridge."

"In years to come many thousands of people who come to live in Brooklands will benefit hugely from the ridge."

"Many people have already commented that they would not know the M1 was so very close by, so successful is the ridge at absorbing the traffic noise."

It was designed by engineering consultants Peter Brett Associates and provides enhanced habitats for a myriad of creatures and plants.

Jobcentre to open new site in city centre

ELDERLY and disabled people who had to travel out of Milton Keynes for benefit assessments will no longer have to.

In a move applauded by MP Mark Lancaster, Jobcentre Plus will be opening a new one-stop-shop in Central Milton Keynes.

Mr Lancaster had previously campaigned alongside charity Carers MK against incapacity benefit, employment and support allowance claimants having to travel to Aylesbury and Luton for their assessments.

Atos Healthcare, which undertakes the examinations, is opening a new office in Milton Keynes at the end of August.

Meanwhile, Jobcentre Plus will open a new premises in Southgate House, Midsummer Boulevard, due for the end of November.

It will no longer be based at St George's House in Silbury Boulevard or Libra House in Linford Wood.