

Bricklaying Sam shows off skills

A bricklaying teenager has won a skills competition pitting him against some of the best competition in the industry.

Sam Yeomans, aged 18, from Gnosall, is currently studying a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Bricklaying at Stafford College and participated in the SkillBuild 2017 Regional Heats last week at South and City College in Birmingham. The regional heat was one of the largest in the competition with over 100 people competing.

As part of the competition, Sam had to build a decorative wall, with distinctive features on all sides, within a six hour time limit.

He will now go on to SkillBuild's National Final, which will take place at The Skills Show, NEC Birmingham, between November 16 and 18.

Sam, said: "I'm really happy having won the Senior Bricklaying title, I wouldn't have been able to do it without the support of my tutors. I'm going to keep working on improving my skills with my tutors so I have the best chance of winning in November."

Julian Harrison, curriculum leader at Stafford College, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for Sam."

"It was a full day of intense competition, but Sam demonstrated his skills, speed and attention to detail and produced a fantastic piece of work."



Sam Yeomans

Westfield launches self-drive sports car in industry first for British design



An open-top Westfield GTM

The first British-made self-driving sports car is being launched today.

The Westfield GTM is being made by Kingswinford's Westfield Sports Cars.

Westfield, which has been making open-top kit and factory-built cars since 1982 at its base on Gibbons Industrial Estate, has already launched a driverless Westfield POD which is currently in use at Heathrow Airport.

The new vehicle is being unveiled at iCentrum, Birmingham, during the launch of Midlands Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Cluster.

Over the past two years Westfield Technology Group, under the direction of chief executive Julian Turner, has been quietly, but radically, changing the way we travel.

Report by John Corser
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Chief executive Julian Turner said: "Building on our experience with the Westfield POD we've been able to produce a British first by developing a sports car that can be driven in both manual mode, or in fully autonomous mode."

Technology

The autonomous system is due to be on the road within the next two years in trials, taking passengers along the A6 from Stockport train station to Manchester Airport.

"It's a world first as the GTM will be platooning in groups of up to three vehicles at speeds of up to 70mph at just one metre

apart, whilst saving up to 90 per cent vehicle energy on a typical journey," added Mr Turner.

Westfield claims that collision avoidance technology will ultimately enable GTMs to travel anywhere at any time, night or day without the need for any predetermined routes.

Mr Turner said the new open-top car, available in petrol, hybrid and electric versions from next year, would be sold to 'pay as you go' operators. People would be able to lease one for a single journey and it would then go on to its next customer.

The Westfield GTM is to be tested on private roads in Kingswinford and in controlled circumstances on public highways, subject to agreement from the authorities.

New engine will take cars from 0-62mph in under six seconds

City factory delivers power-up for Jaguars

Report by Simon Penfold
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JAGUAR Land Rover has unveiled a new, more powerful, 2.0-litre engine being produced at its state-of-the-art factory in Wolverhampton, capable of taking its cars from 0-62mph in under six seconds

The new 300PS Ingenium petrol engine will be available for Jaguar's XE and XF saloons and the top-selling F-Pace performance SUV models.

The 2.0-litre four-cylinder Ingenium petrol engine produces 400Nm of torque for exceptional acceleration. That's enough to power the World Car of the Year-award winning F-Pace from 0-60mph in 5.7 seconds with fuel economy of 37mpg.

The new engine is manufactured at the £500m Engine Manufacturing Centre on the i54 site on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. It already employs 1,400 people and is currently being expanded to a £1bn, 2 million sq ft, facility.

Economy

In the Jaguar XF business saloon, the new engine delivers 0-60mph in 5.5 seconds. With CO2 emissions of 163g/km and fuel economy of 40mpg, the new Ingenium powerplant delivers Jaguar performance allied to impressive efficiency.

For the XE sports saloon, the new engine delivers even more impressive figures. The 0-60mph sprint takes only 5.2 seconds, while fuel economy of 41.5mpg and CO2 emissions of 157g/km ensure its strong eco credentials remain intact.

Nick Rogers, executive director for product engineering at Jaguar Land Rover, said: "We continue to broaden the range of our Ingenium engine family, giving customers more choice than ever before. Our new 300PS petrol engine provides the performance synonymous with Jaguar, while delivering enhanced fuel economy thanks to its state-of-the-art exhaust technology and pioneering valve train design."

"This clean and more efficient engine perfectly complements the advanced lightweight aluminium body structure of our XE, XF and F-Pace models." The new Range Rover Velar will use the engines, as will the recently announced E-Pace baby SUV.

With the Jaguar Land Rover engine production deal with Ford's Bridgend plant - making V-6 and V-8 engines for its bigger cars - due to come to an end in 2020, the Wolverhampton factory is set to become the sole source for Jaguar power plants.

Group gives £3k to help extend hospice

A group which provides mentoring and coaching to high-performing professionals has supported a Black Country hospice to help them care for more families.

The Stourbridge-based Mary Stevens Hospice was given a cheque for £3,000 by the V28 Vistage group, to support their upcoming £3 million redevelopment project. It will ensure free, specialist care is available to more families in the local area who are battling the impact of terminal or life-limiting illnesses.

In order to further contribute to the project, the V28 group will also run a charity sailing challenge in September 2017, which will see two novice teams race across the Solent, from Cowes to Hamble - with all of the proceeds being donated to the Hagley Road hospice.

Stevan Jackson, chief executive officer, Mary Stevens Hospice Group, said: "Since being encouraged to join Vistage, I have not been disappointed. The knowledge and skills I have gained have helped me to be a more effective leader."

Ian Harris, V28 group leader, said: "For a CEO, running a hos-

pice has many of the same needs as running a business - so I'm delighted that my Vistage business leader group and myself can support Stevan's leadership."

Vistage is a coaching group, which supports executives and business owners by providing mentoring and leadership support. If you would like to donate to their effort, visit givepenny.co.uk/V28.

Dentist raises 10 times target

A dentist from Bilston has helped raise £15,000 for a children's charity - 10 times more than his target.

Jaz Jandu, principle dentist at the Church Street Practice, raised the cash with friends by taking part in a charity bike ride from Paris to London.

Staff at the dental practice originally asked patients to help them meet a £1,500 target for the Make a Wish charity which supports children with life-threatening illnesses.

Mr Jandu, along with team member Guloo Virdee and others, cycled a total of 287 miles over the course of three days last weekend.

He said: "The bike ride was gruelling both mentally and physically and we still can't believe that we've accomplished it. The support and messages from patients, team members, friends and family was heartfelt and warming. We would like to thank everyone who donated and helped to achieve such a large amount of money."

Anyone who still wishes to donate to the charity can do so via the Just Giving website.

Showroom comes to shopping centre

Drivers will be able to buy a car in a shopping centre from next month.

Volkswagen UK will open its first store in Birmingham's Bullring on July 7 offering shoppers the chance to browse and buy from the Volkswagen range of cars in a different environment to the usual car showroom.

Alison Jones, Director of Volkswagen Passenger Cars, said: "Setting up Johnsons Volkswagen Bullring Birmingham has been an exciting project. The store allows us to try out new ways of bringing our cutting edge products and technologies to the public in their usual retail environment."

Michaela Moore, General Manager of Bullring Birmingham, said: "Volkswagen joining the centre is a real coup for us. We were excited by the new store concept and we think it will be a real hit with our shoppers."

Join the fun as free carnival hits park

The Halesowen Carnival is getting set to head into town this weekend.

It will be at Highfields Park from noon on Saturday. Celebrities Des Coleman and Tony Daley will be on hand to cheer on this year's extravaganza, which is set to be bigger than the previous years - running over two fields.

It will be free to enter with a fair, market stalls and an added food and drink festival featuring small breweries. A fun dog show will take place at 3pm, which has nine categories plus best in show which has been sponsored by the Big Pet Store.

Karen Dunham, vice chair of the committee, said that the event had also secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

She said: "It's a huge help and we are so pleased to have secured the funding for the Halesowen event as we believe in making it free for all to access a family day out."

Join Nordic walking session

Walkers can join a guided stroll with a difference at a National Trust property. A Nordic walking session will take place on July 13 in the garden and Dingle at Dudmaston Hall, near Bridgnorth. The session will run from 1pm on July 13 and costs £6. Places can be booked by calling 07980 266964.

Girls in the fast lane for careers



School girls from across the region had the chance to get to grips with the nuts and bolts behind Formula 1 racing

Schoolgirls got their chance to see what it was like to drive a Formula 1 car or fly a plane.

Sixty girls from schools across the Midlands turned out for the International Women in Engineering day at Wolverhampton University's Innovation Centre, part of the special open day aimed at encouraging more women to seek careers in hi-tech industries.

Youngsters aged 12 to 17 learned about opportunities available through the university's motor racing team and about the work students can carry out in the field of

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robotics - and the careers available industries such as Formula 1 racing and aerospace. The girls also heard from women who had forged such successful careers, including Mercedes Formula 1 design engineer Elsa Reeve.

The day had been organised by the university's social media co-ordinator Tara Andrews, who said it had been a huge success.

She said: "Everybody has been really in-

terested, which is good because the people who have come along are not necessarily those who were interested in engineering, but we have been able to show those girls the interesting jobs that might be available."

Youngsters from the Willenhall E-Act Academy, Walsall Academy, Phoenix Collegiate in West Bromwich, and Cheltenham College all attended the event. They were invited to try their hand at flying a plane or driving a racing car using specialist simulators, which are normally used during research.

Successful open day for college

A summer fair and open day was held at Sandwell College.

The West Bromwich campus welcomed dozens of prospective students on June 25.

Sandwell College Principal, Graham Pennington, said: "It's great to see so many people interested in the college and applying for our courses, as well as having fun joining in all our activities."