

BUSINESSNEWS

Firm's project at historic site

Bosses at a flooring company in Telford have played their part in the restoration of one of Europe's most famous historic sites.

J&A Stevenson Ltd is to donate £25,000 worth of materials for the path around the Lochnagar Crater, where 60,000 people died at the battle of the Somme in 1916.

The site was bought by Richard Dunning to help preserve it as a historic monument, and as the Friends of Lochnagar group does not receive government funding to help maintain it, company bosses offered to carry out the work for free.

Specialist

They will now design and make the specialist anti-slip floor covering to cover the duckboard path around the crater site which has been posing a hazard to visitors when it gets wet due to being on the chalk site.

Adrian Stevenson said: "This site is a major part of British history and attracts thousands of visitors a year. Safety is paramount but without any funding safety features on this scale would be difficult.

"We are pleased to be able to help with this project and will be donating



The Lochnagar Crater near the French village of La Boisselle

the materials which would normally cost £25,000 free of charge.

"Once the work is completed we will know those visitors will be safe."

The massive crater near to the French village of La Boisselle was blasted open at 7.28am on July 1, 1916 when the British Army attacked the Germans.

Captain James Young of the 179th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers, pressed the switches and blew the mine crater of La Boisselle. It was to be the biggest of the Great War measuring 137 metres wide.

It had obliterated between 300 and 400 feet of the German dug-outs - all said to have been full of German troops.

Mr Dunning, who bought the site

34 years ago and holds an annual ceremony there attracting 1,500, said:

"The Crater path, being on chalk gets extremely treacherous when wet which is why the new wooden duckboard path around it has been done.

"However, even this poses problems with the build-up of algae and muddy chalk on the wooden slats over the exceedingly wet winter months.

"The extraordinary act of generosity demonstrated by J & A Stevenson addresses the important safety issues we faced."

Mr Dunning said they were expecting a record-breaking number of visitors for the centenary commemorations between 2014 and 2018.



New arrivals Nicola Pugh and Gemma Jones with Rachael Hughes

Two join practice

A solicitors firm has appointed two new members of staff to offices around Shropshire.

PCB Solicitors has welcomed Nicola Pugh as a legal executive and Gemma Jones as a solicitor, both of whom will work across the firm's south Shropshire offices.

A chartered legal executive specialising in residential conveyancing, Nicola will be based at PCB's Church Stretton office, having lived and worked in the area for the past 25 years.

She is a member of Solicitors for the Elderly, as well as founder and inaugural chairman of the Shropshire and Mid Wales branch of the professional association for Chartered Legal Executive lawyers (CLEX).

Jemma will be based at the firm's Ludlow office and will be responsible for providing clients with legal advice on all areas of contentious law including matters relating to

family, civil litigation, employment, debt and recovery, and personal injury.

PCB managing partner Rachael Hughes said: "We are delighted to welcome both Nicola and Gemma to our team here.

Asset

"Their wealth of experience and local knowledge will prove to be a huge asset to our clients across south Shropshire, and by complementing our existing team will help to ensure that local people continue to be provided with a truly friendly high street service."

The firm has also launched a series of drop-in clinics at its Craven Arms office, providing a free 30-minute consultation on all areas of the law.

The clinics are held on the first Saturday of every month between 9.30am and 11.30am.



John Merry

Hosting seminar

Bookings are being taken for Lanyon Bowdler's next employment law seminar in Shrewsbury on September 20.

Partner and head of the employment team John Merry will deliver a round up of the latest developments in legislation and case law at the event, at the firm's offices in Abbey Lawn. In addition, Tony Conlon, a director at Henshalls Insurance Brokers will be providing an overview on the common pitfalls of insurance.

The event runs from 9am until midday and costs £17.50 plus VAT, including refreshments and brunch.

● To book a place contact Rachel Donaghey on email rachel.donaghey@lblaw.co.uk or telephone 01952 224047.

Service for reviewing contracts

Businesses have the chance to review their employment contracts and handbooks with a new service offered by a Shropshire solicitors.

Linder Myers has launched the service offering local businesses a review of their employment contracts and handbooks, after noticing an increase in disputes arising from simple omissions from contracts.

Employment specialist Joanne White said: "Contracts are the basis on which a business can set terms and conditions for employees agreeing the parameters, expectations and rewards for individuals while under its employment.

Protect

"In the current economic climate, ensuring these are up to date can help protect businesses for example, the inclusion of covenants restricting employees from contacting clients and suppliers for a set period after the termination of their contract can eliminate risk.

"It is advisable to review contracts on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to meet business needs."

Omissions can include areas such as restrictive covenants which, if drafted correctly, can help protect businesses from their competition.

The initiative follows a period of significant growth for the firm in the region with the merger of Turnbull Garrard earlier in the year, doubling its turnover.

Regional managing partner Bill Jarvis said: "We are enjoying a period of healthy growth across all departments and are pleased to be offering this service to local businesses to ensure their future success."

Taking on role at county firm

An off-road enthusiast has taken up a new role as marketing and administrative assistant at a Shropshire law firm.

Emily Price, from Church Stretton, travels across the region putting her beloved Land Rover through its paces.

Now she's getting revved up for her new job at the employment and media law specialists Bennetts Legal.

The law graduate studied for her LLB at Bangor University before doing a three-month internship at a law firm in Perth, western Australia.

She said: "Australia was great fun but I'm a Shropshire girl at heart so it's nice to get back home.

"I did quite a bit of marketing work for a charity in Church Stretton so I'm really pleased that I've got the chance to develop this into a career with Bennetts Legal."

Founder Paul Bennett added: "There is a real pool of talent from within this county and we are delighted to take on someone of Emily's calibre.

"The combination of her law degree and her passion for marketing will be a real asset to the business."



Emily Price

Awards success

Shropshire motor company Greenhous is celebrating after being named one of the top performing dealerships in the country by Vauxhall.

The Old Potts Way, Shrewsbury-based company was named as the runner-up in the Vauxhall Professionals Award League, which runs two competitions a year to reward the best performing sales teams in the country.

Group sales director Richard Potts said: "The Vauxhall Professionals recognises achievements in sales service and parts, and is judged over a period of several months on how teams perform when it comes to product knowledge, retail sales penetration and trade parts sales.

"This is the second accolade we've achieved this year, after being awarded with an outstanding customer service award six months ago, and while that one was based on the customer experience, this achievement was assessed as a result of industry knowledge and goal attainment.

HMRC launches amnesty

A HMRC amnesty presents the perfect opportunity for anyone with undeclared tax to tidy up their affairs, a Shropshire accountant says.

The revenue service has launched three new campaigns to encourage people to come forward about any undeclared earnings, according to Martyn Bramwell, tax manager at Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants in Shrewsbury.

It means that anyone volunteering tax information will receive a lower penalty than if HMRC comes knocking.

"It's vital that anyone who falls into this category should declare themselves now before the deadlines run out," Mr Bramwell said.

"All the new schemes are intended to encourage people to come forward about any unpaid tax and so bring their tax affairs up to date within strictly limited timeframe.

"If you believe you fall into any of the categories covered by the new campaigns, come forward now and you'll save yourself the stress of facing really tough penalties in the future."

The first scheme is the Tax Return Initiative - aimed at 40 and 50 per cent taxpayers who need to complete a tax return for 2009/10 or earlier but who haven't yet done so.

The Direct Selling Campaign is aimed at businesses selling products to customers away from a retail shop, often in the customers' own homes.

The final initiative is the Trades Campaigns - Home Improvement Sweep Up focusing on the home maintenance sector.

Your business...

Alan Hopkins of Alan Ward Furniture with Dyke's Andrew Young | Dyke's Marie Bramwell with Butcher Bert Butler | Refrigeration experts Steve Ryder & Peter Gee with Dyke's Mark Bramall | Farmer Tim Downes with Dyke's Mark Griffiths

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