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COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Tea and cakes as dozens of long-serving stalwarts are celebrated in Volunteers' Week

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'Liked by all and loved by so many'

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- ◆ Hundreds attend funeral for 12-year-old Sunnah after Bournemouth beach tragedy
- ◆ Bereaved mum speaks out on risks of swimming at sea
- ◆ School remembers 'happy and energetic youngster'

CRIME

Manhunt for teen wanted in murder probe



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NEWS

Cry for support as businesses face struggle



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SPORT

Smiles all round in Marlow

LAST weekend Marlow FC Minors team hosted their annual youth football tournament at Marlow Football Club.

On the day they had over 4,000 people visit the club comprising of children, parents, supporters and helpers coming from over 200 teams all over Bucks and Berks.

The tournament ran over two full days with boys games on the Saturday and girls games on the Sunday. Thankfully the weather was glorious on both days which kept the bar, food stalls and ice cream van busy.

There was a great level of football on display with the following teams winning their competitions:

U9 Cup - Marlow Youth
U9 Trophy - Marlow FC Minors
U10 Cup - Harefield United
U10 Trophy - Marlow FC Minors
U9 Girls - Bedwell Girks
U10 Girls - Fleet Town
U11 Girls - Caversham Trends
U12 Girls - Hearts of Tedlothian

And as well as a great chance for the children to play and compete they also managed to raise over £4k for the youth team which will go towards supporting the youth team next year.

Be a part of a Marlow FC team - we always welcome new players to join our friendly and talented teams by going to www.marlowfc.co.uk/contact/1095.

Aldershot friendly booked

MATT Bloomfield's Wycombe Wanderers will travel to National League Aldershot Town for a pre-season friendly next month.

Legend Bloomfield's first pre-season as manager of Wanderers, a trip to Hampshire is the first confirmed fixture.

Scheduled for 3pm on Saturday, July 22, ticket details for the trip to the EBB Stadium will be announced in due course.

Wealdstone will also provide opposition in a behind-closed-doors practice match on Tuesday, July 25.

Not meeting the Shots in a competitive fixture since a fourth tier win in 2013, the sides played out a 1-1 friendly draw in 2015.

In seven meetings between the Chairboys and all guises of Aldershot, the sides are at three wins apiece.

Fixtures for the new League One season are released in under two weeks (Thursday, June 22.)

Football clubs in same town merge



The merger between the two clubs was confirmed on June 3, with Buckingham playing their games at Stratford Field (pictured)



It was a good day for Thame at the end of the season

TWO football clubs within the county have merged into a solitary side as preparations for the 2023/24 Non League season continue.

Buckingham Athletic and Buckingham United confirmed on the morning of June 3 that will be known as 'Buckingham Football Club', with immediate effect.

One of the decisions for the merger was to produce a 'sustainable Non League football club by sharing resources, passionate volunteers, and great sporting facilities.'

Despite the merger, the team will still participate in the Spartan South Midlands Football League for the new season.

In a series of tweets, the club explained: "As a result of many meetings between the clubs, both Buckingham United FC & Buckingham Athletic FC formally agreed to pass the motion to combine both clubs, creating Buckingham Football Club with immediate effect.

"Initial exploratory meetings between both clubs showed a real synergy, shared aspirations, and a great working relationship. There has been no historic rivalry between the two clubs, and instead one of the unique connections, which has allowed this door of opportunity to be opened.

"This is not an end to Buckingham Athletic or Bucking-

By James Richings

ham United, this is very much a continuation in the story of these clubs and football within the town.

"The history of which won't be forgotten.

"The ultimate aim of combining the clubs is to provide the town with a sustainable non-league football club by sharing resources, passionate volunteers, and great sporting facilities.

"A club with the aim of pushing up the pyramid while also providing structured football for the community, maintaining the fun and enjoyment of the game that everyone loves.

"This is a really exciting time for football in the town, and the club as a whole, providing a great opportunity to carry this positive momentum forward and build something.

"Further details and opportunities will be announced over the next few days."

Buckingham Athletic was originally created in 1933 whilst Buckingham United formed in 1995.

They follow the move between Bedgrove Dynamos and Aylesbury FC, which saw both clubs form into one ahead of the 2019/20 season.

To read more about the latest sports news in Buckinghamshire, go to the www.bucksfreepress.co.uk website and click our sports section.

Terrific Thame lift the cup as season finishes

THAME United boys under 12s, sponsored by B P Collins located in Thame and Gerrards Cross, overcame strong opposition from Prestwood Colts to win the South Bucks Mini Soccer Conference (SBMSC), Division 1 Championship Play-Off Final at Thame's Meadow View Park stadium on Sunday, May 14.

In a hard-fought game, with the lead swapping hands throughout, the teams couldn't be separated at full-time - 3-3 score line at the end of the game. Thame United came through to win in a tense

penalty shoot-out and lift the trophy.

Jo Davis, employment partner at B P Collins said:

"We are very proud to have sponsored the Thame United Boys U12 team. After a strong season, their win in the final was richly deserved. We look forward to following their progress in the summer tournaments across the region and the season to come next year."

To send in your articles to the Bucks Free Press, submit them to the 'Send Us Your News' section on the BFP website.

New face at Adams Park

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed former Ipswich Town defender Scott Mitchell as their new head of player recruitment for the upcoming 2023/24 season.

The 37-year-old, who played with current Chairboys boss Matt Bloomfield during the mid 1990s and early 2000s, arrives at Adams Park after departing the Portman Road side in May of this year.

Following his arrival in Buckinghamshire, Bloomfield told the Wanderers website: "Recruitment is a hugely important part of the game and Scott will play a big part in helping us plan ahead to give ourselves the best possible chance of attracting the right

players to Wycombe Wanderers.

"It's not just about which players are available now but Scott will be looking ahead to the next transfer window, and to next summer, to help us create a real direction for how this squad can evolve.

"Scott is someone I've known for a long time and I trust his judgement implicitly when it comes to identifying players.

"He is extremely well-connected across the game and I'm really pleased that he's agreed to join us."

It is expected to be a very busy summer at Adams Park following the departures of 12 players, which include the links of Lewis Wing, Nick Freeman and Dominic Gape.

Gold is the colour for rower Rory Gibbs



Rory Gibbs won gold

MARLOW rower Rory Gibbs played his part in a classic European final as Britain won gold in the men's eight by a hair's breadth.

Gibbs combined with Morgan Bolding, Jacob Dawson, Tom Digby, Charlie Elwes, Sholto Carnegie, James Rudkin, Tom Ford, and coxswain Henry Fieldman for a stunning victory.

The British boat came in as re-sounding favourites having won world and European titles last year and dominated the final from the front at Lake Bled, Slovenia.

But their redoubtable Romanian rivals came charging back to lead in the dying moments and it was decided on the last stroke, Gibbs' crew claiming gold by a margin of 0.05 seconds.

"We're very relieved and enjoyed being in a race that was so close," said Fieldman.

"It often comes down to those margins and that makes it all the sweeter.

"It's the age-old saying from the Redgrave days, you want to be able to win on your worst day.

"Maybe this was our worst day.

"There's confidence to take from that but a lot of space to push forward and that's really exciting.

"It might be a real motivator for this crew moving forward - that's not a comfortable position to be in.

"You always want to win but if you can put a bit more margin in there, it will be a lot better for everyone."

The British men's eight remains unbeaten since claiming bronze at the Tokyo Olympics.

It was all the more impressive given coxswain Harry Brightmore, having guided his crew to victory in Thursday's preliminary race, pulled out of the final for medical reasons to be replaced by Fieldman.

The thrilling triumph was an emotional one for Olympic bronze medallist Dawson, who suffered a life-threatening pulmonary embolism in April 2022.

"I didn't know whether I'd return to rowing at all, let alone race on the world stage again," said Dawson.

"Everybody in this team is very special to me, they all become your closest friends. I've shared Olympic finals with lots of them and it was cherry on top to be able to get the win with them, despite it being much closer than we wanted it to be."



This summer is expected to be a busy period for Wycombe in terms of transfer activity (PA)

The 100-mile trek for a good cause



The RideLondon-Essex 100 took place on May 28 (PA)

A BEACONSFIELD father-of-two has cycled 100 miles in memory of his friend who died of a brain tumour.

Alex Speculand completed the Ford RideLondon-Essex 100 on May 28 in aid of the charity Brain Tumour Research.

The challenge saw him set off from Victoria Embankment in Central London and cycle through the boroughs of Westminster, City of London, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Redbridge, before heading into Essex via Epping Forest, finishing at Tower Bridge in Southwark.

He pedalled through some of the most picturesque towns, villages and countryside in Essex, including Epping, Ongar, Great Dunmow, Felsted and Writtle, with a section of the route a replica of the 2014 Tour de France stage that went through Essex.

Alex's support of the charity comes from his friend Mickey Radice, who he met at National Childbirth Trust (NCT) classes he attended when expecting his older son, who is now aged 10.

Mickey, who also lived in Beaconsfield, fought a brain tumour for 14 years, undergoing radiotherapy and chemotherapy, before passing away in February 2019.

He was 45 years old and left behind a wife and two children.

Alex, 40, said: "He was a really nice guy. When it came to his funeral, we couldn't fit everyone in the church, and it was massive, which I think says a lot about him.

"Many people call him a legend, and he was.

"He had time for everyone and was

By James Richings

just the nicest guy you could meet. I hit it off with him immediately."

"The thing I've found shocking is the number of people who've sponsored me that know someone affected by a brain tumour, including one of my parents' friends who is going through treatment at the moment.

"I want to raise awareness of the disease and the need for more investment in research. I also know how much Brain Tumour Research helped Mickey and am trying to give something back."

Key statistics on brain tumours:

- Brain tumours are indiscriminate; they can affect anyone at any age
- Brain tumours kill more children and adults under the age of 40 than any other cancer

- Just 1 per cent of the national spend on cancer research has been allocated to brain tumours since records began in 2002

- One in three people know someone affected by a brain tumour

- In the UK, 16,000 people each year are diagnosed with a brain tumour

- Brain tumours kill more children than leukaemia

- Brain tumours kill more women under 35 than breast cancer

- Brain tumours kill more men under 70 than prostate cancer

- Just 12 per cent of those diagnosed with a brain tumour survive beyond five years compared with an average of 54 per cent across all cancers

To support Alex's fundraising, visit www.justgiving.com/page/alex-speculand-1682330582200.

SPORT



Wanderers' new kit supplier were announced on June 1

Wycombe team up with Danish kit supplier for the next five years

HUMMEL has been announced as Wycombe Wanderers' new kit manufacturer, with the Danish company signing a five-year deal with the Chairboys.

The Adams Park side had previously been with O'Neill's, but confirmed in May of this year that their contract with the Irish company would not be renewed.

Instead, Wanderers have

opted to work with the Scandinavian brand which currently produces kits for Everton, Southampton, Coventry City, Fleetwood Town, Cambridge United, Northampton Town, and St Albans respectively, along with several others.

Wycombe's Head of Business Operations Neil Peters said: "We are delighted to be entering into a new chapter in the

club's history with Hummel as our official kit supplier.

"We know they were the brand that many of our supporters were eager for us to partner with and it's fantastic that we've been able to make it happen.

"We are gearing up for an exciting new season in every area across the club and our retail operation will go from strength

to strength with Hummel by our side.

"They are an instantly recognisable brand which have produced countless iconic kits in their 100-year history, and their global reach will also help with our efforts to reach more and more supporters across the world."

The new kits are due to be released this month.

Couhig is 'a big Matt supporter'

WYCOMBE Wanderers owner Rob Couhig backed up his belief that Chairboys boss Matt Bloomfield has done a 'masterful job' in a recent phone-in.

Couhig spoke live on Wycombe Sounds, covering topics ranging from behaviour in the terrace to the performances on the pitch.

Fully-backing Bloomfield, despite a run of two wins in nine and dropping to a ninth-place League One finish after the departure of Gareth Ainsworth.

Caller, named only as Luke, rang in to question Couhig's Bloomfield claims, but the American threw his backing 100 per cent behind 'Mr Wycombe.'

"Until a week before the end of the season, we were still in the hunt," he explained. "The top six recorded some of the highest points in history. Matt did a masterful job in the way he worked with the players, made some difficult decisions and made the club better for next year. I am a big Matt supporter. I am very happy with him."

Another caller, Nigel Rowland, hinted that the lack of 'characters' in the dressing room - such as Adebayo Akinfenwa.

"I never bought into the claim that losing Akinfenwa is the reason we fell away," Couhig refuted. "The table never lies. We had one of the best finishes in our history. We didn't pull things together well enough at the end because of injuries. We lost Sam Vokes to injury on a dreadful pitch. But it wasn't because of a lack of experience in the changing room."

Losing at Wembley last season after getting all the way to the play-off final, Couhig explained

By James Earnshaw

that he underestimated the impact of finishing the season so late.

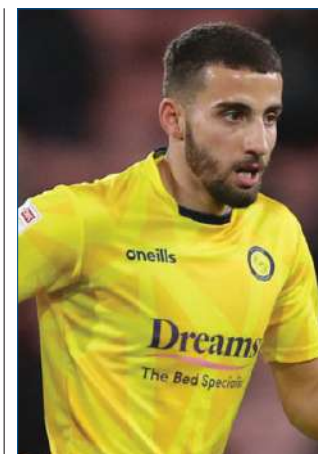
"I would have set my expectations as high as I did [if he had the chance to set expectations again.] "The gaffer and I sat down and we believed we had put together a squad that was capable of getting there (to the Championship). I don't think we realised the effect of finishing last season so late (because of the play-offs) would have on the team in terms of injuries that we picked up. I wish we had had a deeper bench of talent but I don't know where we'd have put them when everyone was well."

One exciting development at Adams Park is the new Head of Recruitment, Scott Mitchell, which was something Couhig alluded to on the phone-in.

When asked about summer incoming, the 73-year-old said: "He has taken a very disciplined approach to this job. He has come to me with a list of things he wants. He knows we have created spots in the squad and we want to use a director of recruitment to be aggressive at going out to find players who can come in to help. We will continue to have Sam Grace finding development squad players. I think people will be generally pleased with what we bring in. Matt wants to bring in two or three loans from Premier League sides to supplement us. We have a great reputation with those clubs. I could not be more pleased with Matt's approach and his staff."



Bloomfield has won four of his 15 matches in charge. Credit: PA



He left in May this year (PA)

Freeman joins new team

FORMER Wycombe Wanderers midfielder Nick Freeman has joined newly promoted Stevenage on a free transfer.

The 27-year-old, who was released following the expiration of his most recent Chairboys contract in May, has become the Hertfordshire side's first signing summer.

Freeman, who is from the town, said: "This is my local club.

"I was born and raised in the area, so it's an exciting time for me.

"The club is going in the right direction and improving every year.

"This next step is big, and I can't wait to get started."

His exit after seven years at Adams Park was 'primarily down to not being a first-team regular', and the decision to decline the opportunity to remain with Wanderers came 'with a heavy heart', according to manager, Matt Bloomfield.

In all, he played 178 times* and scored nine goals during his time in Buckinghamshire.

*This does not include appearances in the Berks & Bucks Cup