

BUSINESS: New bus just the ticket for visitors to become acquainted with city

All aboard for top Brum attractions

By Jonny Greatrex

BIRMINGHAM is to get its first open top bus for more than a decade with the launch of a new tourist service.

A live guide will be on hand to point out the sights as the bright red double-decker travels round the city.

The Big Brum Buz has been set-up by Edgbaston mother-of-three Sue Behan. She said: "The idea came from my time as a Blue Badge Guide.

"Every other city has open top buses but we have not had one for 12 years.

"It was always something I would like to see happen.

"I am proud to be a Brummie and wanted our city to be in line with other major cities in the UK and abroad.

"It will start on Colmore Row, go through the Jewellery Quarter then go to Edgbaston and finally back into the city centre."

Sue, who runs a company called Birmingham Tours, is offering the excursions in association with bus operators Central Connect.

She added: "It really is a fantastic opportunity for Brummies and visitors to learn more about Birmingham's great heritage and just what our city has to offer.

"Having expanded our walking programme this year to include ghost walks, real ale trails, canal and Jewellery Quarter walks, it was a natural progression to promote special interest bus tours like this one."



A deck above is mother-of-three Sue Behan, of Birmingham Tours, on The Big Brum Buz.

Pictures: Tim Easthope

Sue's enterprise has been welcomed by Birmingham tourism chiefs.

Tim Manson, director of operations and policy at marketing Birmingham, said: "This is a great initiative and one which will reveal so much more of what Birmingham has to offer.

"I am sure it will generate enormous interest amongst both local people and the growing number

of visitors to our fantastic city."

The service, which costs £10 for adults, was due to make its maiden journey today.

It will run every Saturday until September 26, leaving at 10.30am, noon, 1.30pm and 3pm from Church Street, near Colmore Row, next to St Philip's Cathedral.

■ For tickets call Tourist Information on 0121 202 5000.



Photo ref.: TE240409BUS-01

Community work plan for teens

By Jonathan Walker

MORE than 20,000 young people will get the chance to do full-time community work in a £146 million government scheme inspired by projects in Birmingham.

Liam Byrne, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and MP for Hodge Hill, has developed the policy, which was launched by Gordon Brown.

The Government eventually hopes to ensure that every young person takes part in community work by the time they are 19, contributing at least 50 hours of service.

The first stage is a £146 million package for 16 to 19-year-olds starting this September, which will see 20,000 school leavers a year undertake full time community service.

A number of pilots will also be launched to test ways of significantly increasing the proportions of young people within a given area participating in community service, involving over 14,000 14-16 year-olds in the next two years. Mr Byrne said the proposals were inspired by his experience of seeing community organisations in Hodge Hill. He said: "We want to make it easier for every young person to give a little back to make their community a better place to live."

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Technobabble

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Views sought on supermarket bid

COLESHILL residents are being asked for their views on plans for a new supermarket in the town.

Lime Developments Ltd want to build a 1,000 square-metre store on a car park and former bowling green off Park Road. The plans, including access, layout and design are available in Coleshill library and on the North Warwickshire Borough Council website. Views should be sent by May 20 to the development control manager at North Warwickshire Borough Council, South Street, Atherstone CV9 1DE or email PlanningControl@NorthWarks.gov.uk

Students boost

By Tony Collins
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE University of Birmingham is one of 11 across the country taking part in a mutual recognition scheme aimed at widening access to students.

Under the scheme, the widening access activities that a student undertakes with one university will now be taken into

account should they choose to apply to one of the other ten.

It is intended that the initiative will widen the opportunities available to students who might otherwise be more likely to study in their home locality, or less likely to apply to research intensive institutions such as those in the scheme.

Gail Rothnie, head of Outreach at the University of Birmingham, said

all 11 universities were keen to identify able students with potential, but who require additional motivation and support either to apply to higher education or make a successful switch.

"Through this scheme a young person can choose to have details of the activities they have undertaken with one institution shared with the other partner institutions."

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