

Big City Plan

High note for city industrialists

Industrial pioneers Matthew Boulton and James Watt appear on the new £50 banknote which went into circulation last November.

Birmingham City Council's Boulton and Watt Collection, held at Central Library, reveals that for entrepreneur Matthew Boulton and scientist James Watt, their appearance on the new £50 banknote is not their first encounter with currency.

While Boulton and Watt are most famous for the invention of the steam engine, from 1788 they also ran the Soho Mint in Birmingham, manufacturing currency for the UK and around the world.



New look New Street

Construction progress is now highly visible in several areas in and around New Street Station.

Work on the new station entrance on the corner of Stephenson St and Navigation St – opening at the end of this year – will start soon.

At the south side of the station, Stephenson Tower is coming down rapidly with demolition set to complete early in the New Year and construction of the new John Lewis department store starts in the spring.

Within the station itself, platform 12 reopened in December, and Platform 10 is now closed for refurbishment. Platform 12 will be returned to at a later stage to install lifts and escalators up to the new concourse.

At the front of the station, a crane has been installed which will be used over the coming months to construct the new public square which will link the station with the Bullring. The front of the station will remain open for pick up and drop off, however, passengers should allow more time for their journey as access has been reduced to one lane of traffic.

For more information, visit www.newstreetnewstart.co.uk

Prime ministers impressed by the Library of Birmingham



■ Prime ministers David Cameron and Mark Rutte at the new Library of Birmingham construction site with council leader Mike Whitby (right) and architect Francine Houben (second left)

The new Library of Birmingham was a highlight of a visit to the city by Prime Minister David Cameron and his Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte in November.

They were shown around the huge construction site by council leader Mike Whitby and architect Francine Houben of Mecanoo, who designed the striking library, due to open in 2013. The group also visited Birmingham Science Park Aston. Council leader Mike Whitby said: "Both leaders were clearly impressed to see how we, as a city, are aligning arts, sports and culture as catalysts for regeneration."

And in December, six new Faces of the Library of Birmingham were announced – as part of a quest to find 26 people to be ambassadors for the new library.

The announcement came as a survey, conducted by Vector Research, revealed that Birmingham people overwhelmingly support the scheme, with 89 per cent believing that the library will be good for the city and its residents.

The faces all have different stories to tell: as well as passionate library users Steven Woodhouse and Trevor Boddington (pictured), there's also Saadiyah Harun Kilburn

who came to Birmingham from Malaysia and used the resources at Central Library while studying a masters degree. While researching her dissertation she met a man researching his own dissertation who went on to become her husband! The other new faces are Mrs McGhie-Belgrave, Gary Baker, Ian Myatt and Thomas O'Flaherty.

The library is still looking for people with a specific interest in the environment, history, health, science, art or photography and film, and particularly welcome applications from teenagers.

If you're interested in becoming a new face of the library – or would like to nominate a friend, family member or colleague – visit www.rewritingthebook.com for more information.



■ Steven Woodhouse and Trevor Boddington are passionate users of Central Library and often use its reference and IT resources to research their art projects.

New academy opens up opportunities

Jobs are being created for local people as the redevelopment of New Street Station steps up a gear.

Network Rail and its construction partner, Mace, joined Birmingham City Council last November to launch the Birmingham Gateway Construction Academy – pledging to



■ New job: Jake Cooper

open up job and training opportunities for local people involved in the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street Station.

The academy will provide first-class training and resources to help local people make the most of their skills and find employment.

And the support doesn't stop there. Local companies – such as Coleman and Co from Perry Barr – have

been encouraged to bid for contracts on the project. The company is one of several firms across the region who have successfully bid for multi-million pound contracts, in turn, creating and securing even more job opportunities for local people.

New Coleman and Co recruit Jake Cooper, 18, from Chelmsley Wood, an apprentice demolition supervisor, said: "Before I joined the academy, I was unemployed, despite making lots of applications for apprentice opportunities, and contacting agencies. I was beginning to feel demotivated, but, after applying for this opportunity, I was invited to go through the recruitment process and to meet the team here. That gave me a really good impression and made me want to work on the project. Now I'm working and training at the same time, earning money and gaining new skills."

Anyone interested in working on the Birmingham Gateway Project should contact the Employment Access Team, (Monday to Friday 10am-4pm) on 0121 464 2112 or email eatgateway@birmingham.gov.uk