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### Thought for the week

A man cannot free himself from the past more easily than he can from his own body. - *André Maurois*



### This week in history

December 14, 1542 - Princess Mary Stuart becomes Mary, Queen of Scots.

## Useful Contacts

### Editorial

Editor: Chris Willmott  
Reporter: Sarah Judkins  
NEWSDESK: 01926 451771  
editor@solihullobservers.co.uk

Sports Editor: Jamie Arrowsmith  
SPORTSDESK: 01527 453730  
sport@solihullobservers.co.uk

Advertising  
01926 451900

Team Leader:  
Chris Oakley

adverts@solihullobservers.co.uk

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# Letters to the Editor

The Solihull, Shirley and Arden Observers, 45 The Parade, Leamington Spa CV32 4BL  
Tel: 01926 451771 Fax: 01926 429012 email: editor@solihullobservers.co.uk

## Time to get behind the Parkgate

It was great to see Karren Brady touring the new Parkgate development in Shirley along with local campaigner Julian Knight.

We have waited far too long in Shirley for the jobs and new homes this new development will bring.

The way in which this development has been delayed and used as a political football has been appalling, even now there are some councilors who seem desperate for the project to fail.

It is sad in life when people can't come together to get behind a project which help regenerate our town and instead just look for the negatives.

Sometimes it takes someone from the outside like Karren, with her business brain, to come in and tell it as it is.

She said Parkgate will be fantastic for Shirley, bring new jobs and homes and lift the whole area and I completely agree with her.

Time that everyone got behind Parkgate.

Megan Williams  
Via e-mail

## Thanks for nurses' help

I would like to thank the two off-duty nurses who on the 71E bus on Sunday,

November 24 came to my help.

I was travelling into Solihull with my nephew, who was on a visit from Manchester, when he started to have an epileptic fit.

The first nurse who was on the bus helped to make him comfortable, the second nurse who came onto the bus then talked over the phone to the ambulance crew who the bus driver had kindly called.

My nephew was taken to Solihull Hospital where the paramedics and staff were excellent.

I don't know how I would have coped without all the people involved, once again thank you all round for everybody who helped.

Tom Lamb  
Lighthorne Road  
Solihull

## No need for the 'overspill' to land here

Can I assure worried residents that there is no requirement for Solihull to provide land for Birmingham overspill and the question of housing provision and land availability is being looked at as part of the Spatial Strategy exercise across the whole of the Local Enterprise area stretching from Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch to Lichfield, Tamworth and East Staffordshire.

Solihull is participating in this exercise but as having an adopted Local Development Plan puts us in a much stronger position. Contrast this with other councils



## Lorely's Life

Lorely Burt MP writes  
for The Observer

I've been working for months at the Treasury on measures to help hard-pressed families and businesses in these difficult economic times.

This all came to fruition last week in the government's Autumn Statement, which gives a partial preview of the Budget which comes out in the spring.

I would like to share some of the good news with you now.

Ever since I've been an MP I've fought especially hard for small businesses and small shops.

So I am delighted that we have been able to help by capping business rates rises at 2 per cent. That's a real-terms cut in business rates as long as inflation is above 2 per cent - a pretty safe bet.

Small shops will receive a £1,000 discount on their rates for two years, and to protect our high streets we'll give businesses setting up shop in previously empty premises 50 per cent off their rates for 18 months.

Another area I've been working on locally is employment for young

people.

With my colleague Vince Cable as Business Secretary this government has already doubled the number of apprenticeships. The Autumn Statement outlines plans to increase the number on offer by 20,000.

However, my favourite announcement is the plan to scrap National Insurance Employer Contributions for all workers under the age of 21.

This will make it cheaper for businesses to take on young staff, benefiting over 4,000 young people in Solihull alone.

Now the Autumn Statement is done, I've been looking forward to relaxing a bit over Christmas. But when we get back the Budget will only be 12 weeks away.

And there's no prizes for guessing what I'll be pushing for in the New Year - a further increase in the amount of money you can earn before paying any tax. The government has already committed to delivering the Lib Dem manifesto target of a £700 tax cut for most workers next April.

I'll be working to see if we can cut income tax further in the Budget, putting another £100 back in the pockets of ordinary workers.

whose LDPs have been ruled unsound or not yet even submitted for examination.

Whilst housing sites are always contentious, the Plan gives the borough protection from unbridled development and it was pleasing that the Inspector stressed the importance of our Green Belt and maintaining our character.

In adopting the Plan members of

all parties recognised the significant achievement in reaching this stage and expressed thanks to our staff for producing a Plan that meets government requirements but maintains our Urbs in Rure standing.

Ken Meeson  
Leader of Solihull Council