

**APPEAL: DRIVE TO HELP POLICE OFFICER RAISES A TOTAL OF £48,000**

# Cancer victim overwhelmed by well-wishers' generosity

A campaign to raise £100,000 to send a young police officer to America for experimental cancer treatment is about to hit the halfway mark.

David Robinson, a 29-year-old officer in Leicester city centre, has four tumours – three on his brain and one on his spine.

His friends, family and police colleagues took on the daunting task of raising £100,000 just three months ago.

The total now stands at £48,500, with more donations

by **CIARAN FAGAN**  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

rolling in every day. David's colleagues at Mansfield House police station, in the city centre, are planning a major sports memorabilia auction next month which they hope will add significantly to the fund.

The officer and his wife, Almira, have been offered free accommodation by police officers in North Carolina, near the hospital where he hopes to undergo treatment.

The couple – who married and had their first child last month – said they were overwhelmed by the generosity of David's po-

lice colleagues and complete strangers alike.

They believe the trial of the new treatment in the US is their only hope of extending their time together as a family.

Almira, 29, said: "It's amazing to have raised so much in a relatively short time."

"It's even more amazing to know that so many generous people we don't even know have contributed to that."

Appeal co-ordinator Sergeant Nick White, one of David's senior officers at Mansfield House, said: "David's story has clearly touched an awful lot of people, from readers of the Leicester Mercury to police officers all

over the country. I've never been involved in anything like this before and, if I'm honest, I thought we'd be able to raise a couple of thousand pounds when we first started."

"As David and Almira said, it's totally amazing that so much money has been raised in such a short time."

David was first diagnosed with cancer 12 years ago, when he was 17. It returned last year, despite several apparently successful attempts to beat it. He is undergoing chemotherapy and is feeling "a little nauseous and tired, but doing okay".

The couple are expecting the results of David's latest scan

this week. Depending on the results, they will contact the team behind the trials to check on the availability of places.

David hopes to be part of a clinical trial at Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumour Centre, at Duke Hospital, in Durham, North Carolina. It is aimed at adults with a recurrent medulloblastoma tumour.

The sports memorabilia auction is at Sumo, in Braunstone Gate, West End, Leicester, on Thursday, July 22, from 7.30pm.

For condition updates and details of fund-raising events, see the "help us help a friend" site on Facebook and at:

[www.davidleerobinson.co.uk](http://www.davidleerobinson.co.uk)



**MISSED:** Alexander Betts

## Newspaper veteran has died at 94

**ALEXANDER** Betts, a former Leicester Mercury man who worked for 50 years for city newspapers, has died aged 94.

The grandfather, from Oadby, is survived by his wife, Freda, two children and four grandchildren.

Freda, 83, said: "He was a kind and gentle man and I loved him very much."

"He was wonderful with children and he loved his four grandchildren. We shall all miss him."

"He was a gifted pianist and used to play for me when I sang – that's how we met."

In 1930, Alexander joined the Leicester Mail, which was taken over by the Mercury in the 1960s and continued to work at the Mercury until his retirement in 1980.

His father, also called Alexander, had worked for the newspaper, having joined the Mail in 1914, moved to the Mercury in 1934 and retired in 1951.

Freda and Alexander celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary last year.

The couple were married in 1959 at the Unitarian Chapel, in Bond Street, where Alexander occasionally played piano for services.

His funeral will take place at noon at the chapel on Thursday.

## Horse racing in the garden

**HORSE** racing is the theme of an open gardens event in Lubenham, near Market Harborough, on Sunday.

Organisers hope to raise £2,000 which will go towards the restoration of the 12th century All Saints' Parish Church.

A dozen gardens will be open from 11am and lunches and other refreshments will be available.

Admission is by programme which costs £3.



**FLIGHT OF FANCY:** Adam Priestley, seven, made a bird



**FUN:** Children at Woodland Grange school, in Oadby, enjoy a performance of Bob, The Man On The Moon as part of the festival



## Youngsters are over the moon as arts festival finishes on high note

A FAMILY sculpture day and a man on the moon helped an arts festival to end on a high.

The eighth Spark Children's Arts Festival ran for a fortnight at venues across the county ranging from schools, theatres and libraries to parks and gardens.

During the two weeks, a touring production of Bob, the Man

on the Moon, visited schools, village halls and churches in the county.

One of the last performances of the one man show was at Woodland Grange School, in Oadby.

Festival spokeswoman Francesca Wright said: "It was an absolutely fantastic and magical performance. It's a one

man show, but there are aliens popping up in unusual places throughout. All the children were screaming they could see the aliens. It was really interactive."

On the final day of the festival, the gardens of Belgrave Hall, in Church Road, Belgrave, Leicester, were transformed into a menagerie of colourful

creatures at a family sculpture day.

A team of professional artists helped youngsters create birds, bugs and beasts out of a range of materials.

Francesca added: "This was a wonderful fun event for families. They came with their picnics and stayed at Belgrave Hall all day."

"There was a team of artists that helped youngsters make sculptures out of different materials – wire, clay, plastic, cardboard, wood and metal."

The festival ran from May 31 until June 13.

Other events included puppet-making workshops, dance shows, interactive performances and creative sessions.

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