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Wednesday, March 28, 2007

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Plants help organisations succeed
- and could save you money!
8 secrets of success from having plants around...

1. Improve air quality
2. Control humidity
3. Reduce stress
4. Enhance creativity
5. Encourage shoppers
6. Reduce background noise
7. Increase hotel occupancy rates
8. Promote a positive corporate image

All amazing but true!

Do not miss out

on the benefits plants can bring.

Telephone: 01527 576249 or

visit www.worcestershire-office-plants.co.uk

Plants help achieve goals

PLANTS help organisations succeed - solving Sick Building Syndrome...

Most people would agree that organisations have to work harder today than ever before to succeed - and some might be surprised to learn that plants can help these organisations achieve their goals.

Worcestershire Office Plants, the new division of The Fresh Flower Co, supplies plants and flowers to a range of corporate clients, who can benefit from the positive atmosphere created in the workplace.

"Because plants create a healthier environment, workers are more productive, have less absence and are more imaginative - so far from being an extravagance, having plants around the office is very cost-effective," says proprietor John Rudge.

Buildings with sealed windows are particularly prone to Sick Building Syndrome because the stale air can lead to an increase in employee sickness. Plants in the office can help clean the air by absorbing harmful chemicals, and can regulate the atmosphere by either absorbing or releasing humidity. Stress levels may also be reduced by plants, especially as they absorb background noise.

"Plants provide an improved atmosphere in every sense, from gaining client confidence to motivating the staff," John adds.

"They are becoming an integral part of any successful organisation."

Worcestershire Office Plants will visit organisations to discuss the clients' needs, before a plant scheme is proposed, agreed and delivered. Maintenance is all part of the service, and the team will return to check plants and water system on a regular basis.

For more information on the benefits of plants, visit www.worcestershire-office-plants.co.uk or request a free site survey on 01527 576249.



PLANT POWER: John Rudge, of Worcestershire Office Plants, shows how plants can make a difference.

By the bottle or
by the case...

...the
choice
is all
yours

Just choose from our superb
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bottles for all your celebrations

And if you need help, our FREE
friendly & expert advice is always
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- Port and Sherry
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 **Noble Rot**
wine warehouses Ltd

18 Market Street,
Bromsgrove, B61 8DA

(Next to Wilsons Pet Centre)- Free parking outside

Open Tuesday - Saturday 10-6.30

Tel 01527 575606

email info@noble-rot.co.uk



**Friendly advice
and such a
great selection**



WHETHER you're a wine expert or simply enjoy the odd glass now and again, you'll find an excellent and vast selection at Noble Rot, plus friendly and professional advice if required.

Owner John Nurthen, who took over the business in August 2006, aims to introduce many more Bromsgrove people to the delights of wine.

"I want people to be aware that a wine shop doesn't have to be intimidating - our staff are friendly as well as knowledgeable, so they can help you choose a wine to suit you," he points out. "Connoisseurs will also find the area's largest selection of fine wines and champagnes, and we have introduced a choice of rare spirits and speciality beers."

Noble Rot also hosts wine tastings on the first and third Thursday of every month from 6.30 to 7.30pm, offering an opportunity for customers to find out what they like before making a purchase - places must be booked in advance so ring to reserve your preferred date. Those interested in sampling a variety of different wines can also opt to buy a pre-selected six-pack (reds, whites or mixed), either as a one-off or by subscribing to the 'Magnificent Six' Club - perfect for a dinner party where guests have

differing tastes.

John is anxious to maintain the good reputation established by the previous owners - father-and-daughter team Peter Weston and Julie Wyers, who founded Noble Rot in 1990 - but he also has plenty of ideas for moving the business forward and making everything as customer-friendly as possible. Patrons can now take advantage of free parking and a carryout service, as well as free delivery within a 10-mile radius.

The newly-refurbished premises have a much more spacious feel, with customers clearly able to see the range of over 400 quality wines on offer. These are arranged by country, and each bottle has a special label with an at-a-glance description of the taste - everything is designed to make the wine-buying experience simple and enjoyable.

"It's a much happier experience than shopping for wine in a supermarket - there are no huge queues here, and customers really appreciate the personal touch," John concludes. It's this customer-orientated approach that gives Noble Rot its appeal - if you've never visited before, now is the time to discover a hidden gem in the heart of Bromsgrove.

Location is the big key



KEY PLEASE: Tony Hyde of Thomas Vale (right), hands over the Basepoint Business Centre key to Clare Tyler, centre manager, and Phil Stansfield, project director of Basepoint.

AS a variety of businesses move into the new Basepoint Business Centre at Bromsgrove's Technology Park, location has emerged as the reason why they want to move to the area.

It is the first Basepoint centre to open in the Midlands and, being just a few minutes drive from the motorway - as well as within easy reach of airports, it is already attracting a number of high-profile companies with international contacts as well as new and developing businesses.

Basepoint has developed a strong reputation for delivering high-quality office and workshop accommodation on flexible terms over the last 14 years. As well as offering added value with a full-time management team, advice and business support, it is also working with key partners at the technology park to boost development in the area.

The facilities, which include workshops with mezzanine floors and specialist furnished incubator units where a small business can literally start up right away, are regarded as second to none. "When I show potential clients round they are delighted with the spacious outlook and variety of space on offer," explained centre manager Clare Tyler.

Those who have already moved in are full of praise. "Basepoint is the ideal location for us as it is close to the motorways and airports," said Jason Brown, international sales manager of SHOKK, the youth fitness specialists who have opened a second office at Basepoint.

"We were also attracted by the extra facilities, such as being able to hire meeting rooms for training meetings and seminars," he added.

John Broderick, managing director of Adapt Control Solutions, a revolutionary control system that operates everything from lights and blinds to audio systems and even garden irrigation, was attracted by the location and resources.

"The flexible terms and ability to book extra facilities were really important to us," he said.

To find out more or to arrange a viewing contact Clare Tyler on 01527 834600 or e-mail: bromsgrove@basepoint.co.uk or visit the website: www.basepoint.co.uk

Basepoint Bromsgrove

Your own office from only £70 a week

High quality offices and workshops and more.

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... and we are not tied down to a long term contract."**

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Basepoint

www.basepoint.co.uk





READY TO GET YOU FIT: Staff at the Dolphin Centre in Bromsgrove - from left to right - Ryan Broadhurst, Julie Smith, Wendy Morgan, Matt Jupp, Adam Weaver and Deborah Gwenllian.

Keeping active is made easy

THE Dolphin Centre in Bromsgrove offers a vast range of leisure and sports activities for adults and children, all under one roof and in a convenient town centre location.

A number of Adult Fitness and Well Being classes are held at the centre, for example Land Aerobics, Body Conditioning, Pilates, Circuits and Water Aerobics, all run by qualified instructors. Classes are open to both members and non-members over the age of 16.

Sports hall activities include community badminton, over-50s badminton and ladies' netball. Badminton courts and table tennis tables are also available for hire and if you feel like a game of five-a-side football, the whole sports hall can be hired.

The Fitness Suite features 36 pieces of cardio-vascular and resistance equipment plus a satellite music system and air conditioning to enhance your experience. Two qualified fitness instructors are available to support and guide you and ensure that you get the best out of your workout. The gym is available to anyone over the age of 16, and dedicated sessions for the over-50s are taken by one of the instructors (membership required).

For the under-16s there are a number of activities available including trampolining, Artclub and Fitkids (subject to age restrictions), while under-fives have their own special session every Wednesday with bouncy castles, climbing frames and soft play equipment. In addition, the centre provides a range of after-school activities and children's holiday clubs.

The two swimming pools at the Dolphin Centre offer dedicated sessions, for example ladies' only sessions, tiny tots, over-40s and over-50s. There are also fun sessions for the children and family-only sessions, whilst public swimming sessions operate at various times throughout the day.

The Dolphin Centre also caters for children's parties both in the sports hall and the swimming pools - there are a number of options available to make your child's special day extra special. The pools and the sports hall can also be hired for galas and special events.

A variety of children's swimming classes are on offer - parent and toddler, pre-school, beginners, high beginners, intermediate and advanced - designed to suit a range of age groups and abilities. The courses consist of weekly 30-minute lessons over a period of 10 weeks (term-time only). Adult swimming courses are also available.

After all that fun and exercise, Dolphin Centre users will be happy to relax in the newly-opened NRG Café located on the premises - the venue offers a wide selection of freshly made food, including plenty of healthy options in keeping with the health and fitness ethos of the centre. The café is also happy to cater for parties and groups.


As well as being one of the town's most popular assets, the centre has received recognition for the quality of its services under the Quest Scheme, an award developed by Sport England to raise the standard of sporting facilities nationwide.

go4fun

Easter


2nd - 13th April


2007



Places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment

Get Ready For Fun And Book Today





Bromsgrove Leisure Services
Four Link to Leisure



activzone

Multi Activity Camp

Includes Arts, Sports, Fun Games and lots more!

The Dolphin Centre, Bromsgrove

5-12 year olds - (under 8's can't go swimming)

Easter Holiday 2nd April to 13th April

Activity Options:

- 9.00am - 3.00pm (Drop off from 8.45am) Multi activity sessions (sport, games & arts) £13.50 a day or £61.50 for a Full week
- 9.00am - 5.15pm Additional cost of £4.50 for extended session Per day

Reductions for second and third family members

Sports Specific

The Dolphin Centre will be running sports specific through the Easter holidays:

Week 1 Fitness week (Circuits and gym work for Children)

Week 2 Football Coaching (Indoor)

(Sessions run 3.30pm-5pm Monday-Friday)



Learn 2 Swim

An 8 day intensive Junior Swimming Development Programme

Our popular Learn2swim campaign will be held throughout the Easter holidays. Sessions commence half hourly from 9.00am to 10.00am with Beginners and High Beginners classes available throughout the morning

Course Dates are as follows

Monday 2nd April to Friday 13th April Excluding Good Friday and Easter Monday

For more information or to Book Please contact Reception on:

(01527) 881720






Specialist foods

RECEIVING a Booster Grant from Bromsgrove District Council enabled Pippa Wright to expand her successful small business, Dietary Needs Direct.

The company, which provides products suitable for people with food intolerances or on special diets, was founded in 2001 and is now located in one of the converted farm buildings at Fairfield Court.

Pippa knows from personal experience how difficult it can be for those following a restricted diet to find suitable and affordable foods, and she created Dietary Needs Direct as a one-stop on-line shop. The business initially catered for children with autism and related disorders, many of whom follow a special diet, and Pippa worked closely with an autism charity to learn about the dietary requirements.

Although Dietary Needs Direct continues to assist those on the Autistic Spectrum, it now caters for a variety of special diets with items free from ingredients such as gluten, wheat, lactose, soya, sugar or additives. The easy-to-use website (www.dietaryneedsdirect.co.uk) allows customers to search by diet or by food group, with all items clearly labelled and the ingredients listed.

An amazing choice of food and drink is available, from staple items like bread, milk and cereal to baking ingredients and snacks, as well as all-natural healthcare and cleaning products. "We also offer a lot of items for

children on restricted diets, so that they don't feel left out when their friends are eating sweets and snacks," Pippa points out.

The premises now features a dedicated dairy-free kitchen area complete with chocolate machine, where Pippa and her assistant Kay create handmade treats including a range of Easter-themed goodies free from problem ingredients.

"Sugar-free and a lot of dairy-free chocolate tends to be dark, but we make a lighter, sweeter product which often appeals more to children's tastes," Pippa adds.

This year's range includes Easter Eggs, Mini Eggs, Chocolate Rabbits and other Easter shapes.

Dietary Needs Direct delivers to customers across the UK, offering next-day delivery in most cases, and has sent parcels as far afield as Cyprus and the Baltic states – customers clearly appreciate the vast choice, reasonable prices and clear information.

■ Telephone: 01527 570444, Fax: 01527 558 885

Website: www.dietaryneedsdirect.co.uk

Email: info@dietaryneedsdirect.co.uk



HOLIDAY HOUSE: Paula Fallows and Sarah Egerton with Margaret Owen, owner of Barrington House in Bishop's Frome, one of the Midlands properties listed on the website.



So easy to holiday with friends

IF you have ever trawled the internet or brochures searching for large self-catering holiday accommodation, you will know what a time-consuming and frustrating task it can be.

With this in mind, Paula Fallows and Sarah Egerton decided to found www.bigholidayhouse.com, an on-line 'one-stop shop' providing a diverse listing of larger properties in the UK, Ireland and France.

The company, which was set up with financial assistance from Bromsgrove District Council, invites holiday home owners to list their properties on the website, enabling those seeking accommodation to browse through a wide selection and book direct with the owner. The catalogue encompasses all sorts of holiday rentals, from cottages, farmhouses and villas to castles and chateaux – perfect for large families or groups of friends.

"Group holidays are becoming ever more popular, whether it's a family reunion, a wedding party or a student break," says Paula. "With many family members living further apart these days, it's a chance to get together and enjoy a holiday at the same time – and it's affordable because the cost is shared."

All properties listed are self-catering and sleep a minimum of eight people, in one house or in select small developments that can be rented as a whole.

Paula and Sarah say that Christmas is now a very popular time for group holidays, as it eliminates the need for hordes of relatives and friends to descend on one household – instead, the whole group can gather in a spacious rented house and share the cost and the cooking. Many of the properties also have plenty of land, ideal for any children in the party.

www.bigholidayhouse.com caters for all budgets, and with no need for a 'middle man', the whole process is more cost-effective as well as faster and more efficient.

The website merely serves as a medium for property owners and searchers to make contact – Paula and Sarah do not take any commission or insist on advertising exclusivity.

"Dealing directly with the owner also allows clients to ask questions about the property, and the owner can provide detailed information about the local area, such as the best restaurants and activities," says Sarah.

Got a good Business idea?

Live in the Bromsgrove District??

You may be entitled to a Small Business Start-up Grant from Bromsgrove District Council and Free Business Training from the Chamber of Commerce. You'll have to prove your idea can work, but we'll help you do that. Our experienced Business Advisors work with you to-

- ▶ Prepare a business plan
- ▶ Seek out sources of finance
- ▶ Help and advise you for the first year

**Your first step ??
Call Peter Michael,
Economic Development Officer
Bromsgrove District Council
01527-881327**



Reputation enhanced by service they offer

AS home and business owners will appreciate, it's important to make sure heating and plumbing systems are purchased, installed and looked after by a reputable firm. M & M Heating Services Ltd offers these services and many more, and the Studley-based firm has earned plenty of custom for its professional and friendly approach.

Established just over six years ago, the family-run company carries out a varied body of work, encompassing not only heating and plumbing but also a range of associated services such as carpentry, plastering, tiling and even bathroom design.

All M & M engineers are fully employed rather than contracted, and the smart uniforms and liveried vehicles further enhance customer confidence.

With energy-saving very much on the agenda these days, customers will be happy to know that M & M specialises in the installation of high-efficiency heating and water systems, and the company is also branching out into the latest solar powered heating.

"We carry out annual servicing and repairs, and also offer system upgrades to ensure that the heating is working as efficiently as possible - this saves the client money as well as being environmentally friendly," points out Malcolm Cox.

Heating systems are designed to meet each client's needs and budget, and M & M offers supply and installation (using components from well-known manufacturers such as Worcester, Vaillant and Glow Worm) or installation-only packages. Gas fires and fireplaces, cookers and hobs can also be supplied and fitted, while bathroom projects can include anything from fitting new taps to designing and installing a complete bathroom suite.

Interest-free financial packages are also available, and the company offers free estimates as well as a detailed information pack for prospective customers. All work is fully guaranteed, and M & M's personal touch means that clients deal with the same person throughout the project.

M & M works closely with landlords and estate agents to carry out system inspections and provide the necessary certification. "From April, it will be compulsory for anyone selling a property to provide a Home Information Pack, and we can assist by carrying out checks and filling out a safety certificate and record sheet," says Malcolm.

M & M would also like to welcome a new works manager, Matthew Layton, on board the team - the company believes he will be an asset to both customer relations and works bookings. He is the first port of call for any enquiries on 01527 854455.



M&M
HEATING SERVICES

Domestic Gas & Plumbing Service & Installation Engineers
Tel: 01527 854455 Mobile: 07776 438446



BUILT ON REPUTATION:
M&M Heating's Malcolm Cox Jr and Malcolm Cox Sr with one of their company vehicles. And inset, works manager Matthew Layton.



M&M

Unit 3 Doric Works
Church Street, Studley
Works, B80 7LG

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CALL 01527 854455 for more details



Experience and expertise are at the heart of Fascia Fascia in Bromsgrove, a customer-friendly company where the personal approach is all-important. As well as uPVC fascias, soffits and guttering, customers can also choose windows and conservatories from partner company Vision Windows, creating the 'complete package'. Fascia Fascia's owner Rob Edwards takes a hands-on approach to his business and is involved at every stage of the project, from offering the original quote and carrying out the survey, to completing or overseeing the installation. As well as providing excellent standards of workmanship, Fascia Fascia carries out installations using top-quality products from leading manufacturers. Rob prides himself on offering the highest standards of customer care, and as a Bromsgrove resident himself, he is more than qualified to understand the individual needs of local people and businesses.



Quality Installers of U.P.V.C Fascias, Soffits Guttering
Speak to Rob for your FREE Competitive Quote on 01527 877879 or 07834 286796
 A QUALITY LOCAL FAMILY BUSINESS BUILT ON REPUTATION

Ladybird Lodge

2 Fininstall Road,
 Aston Fields,
 Bromsgrove. B60 2DZ
 Tel: 01527 889900
 Fax: 01527 889949

email: info@ladybirdlodge.co.uk
 web: www.ladybirdlodge.co.uk

- 3-star hotel rating with AA and Visit Britain
- 43 en-suite bedrooms with a range of modern features including high-speed internet connection
- Negotiated rates offered for local businesses and regular users
- Breakfast meeting venue
- Conveniently located near Bromsgrove town centre and railway station, with easy access to the motorway network
- Three separate suites available for conferences, meetings and functions
- Enjoy fine dining in the award-winning Italian restaurant, Rosado's, or relax at the traditional Ladybird Inn



SPA DECORATORS
 DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL

ALAN GANDY
 Tel: 01905 771720 • 07787 944494

GARY ROGERS
 Tel: 01905 773628 • 07751 780006

ESTABLISHED SINCE 1993

Founded in 1993 by Gary Rogers and Alan Gandy, Spa Decorators of Droitwich is a thriving business with many satisfied customers in this region and the company is frequently contracted to carry out work across the whole of the UK as well. The full range of interior and exterior decorating services is offered, and Spa Decorators can also take on building work, giving customers the benefits of having their project handled by just one company. Public-sector contracts for clients such as Droitwich Housing Association and various schools create plenty of business, and the firm carries out exhibition work for national venues like Earl's Court in London. However, Spa Decorators also brings the same level of quality and customer service to private and domestic projects. The company's membership of the Painters and Decorators Association, plus the fact that many of the 25 local staff have prestigious City & Guilds qualifications, shows that customers can trust Spa Decorators to do an excellent job in all aspects of decoration.



Your curtain call!

WHEN the summer term begins there will be over 560 Stagecoach schools throughout the UK; an impressive growth record considering that 18 years ago there were just three in Surrey. The fact that Britain's largest part-time theatre school is now established in almost every town or its vicinity is an obvious pointer not only to its popularity but also to its system of teaching, which appeals to students and parents alike. One of the main attractions is that the centres are part-time, offering a bridge between school and full-time

training – a chance for a child to follow their dreams but at the same time keep their feet firmly on the ground. Young people aged six to 16 are taught by staff with professional backgrounds on a rotational basis – each student gets an hour of drama, dance and singing at every session. Alongside this runs 'Early Stages', shorter 90-minute sessions for four- to seven-year-olds, and all this provided under one roof, saving on cost and travelling time. Classes are held at weekends out of school hours and are deliberately kept small so children receive the attention they need.

There are no high-pressure auditions at Stagecoach – enthusiasm and commitment are all that's needed, and sessions are designed to build confidence and develop communication and creativity through the medium of theatre and performance skills. Although Stagecoach is open to all young people with an interest in the performing arts it does provide opportunities for some to perform professionally and students have found success in film, television and on the West End stage. Parents are kept in touch with their child's progress and

twice a year get to see their classwork. Occasionally schools come together for community events and the annual showcase production draws its cast from students throughout the network. There has been an increase in large national events bringing Stagecoach students, parents and school principals together. Many high-profile events and exciting developments are in store for this year. For more details contact their website on www.stagecoach.co.uk or you can give their Bromsgrove contact – James Suckling - a call on 01926 651159.



Three hours a week can last your child a lifetime

ONCE your child starts to act, sing and dance at a Stagecoach school, doors open, soon they gain in confidence, poise and self esteem. Their interests widen, creativity kindles, the arts come alive.



To stimulate any child aged 4-to-16, enroll them at the original three-discipline theatre arts school. Three-hour groups are held outside school hours.

For a prospectus call Stagecoach Bromsgrove on 01926 651159

Vital focus on the health of your eyes

AS well as testing your vision, a thorough eye examination will assess the overall health of your eyes – and at Chapmans Opticians in Bromsgrove, an advanced new method is now being used to diagnose potential problems at the earliest stage.

A state-of-the-art Topcon Digital Retinal Camera has recently been installed at the branch, meaning that opticians can photograph the retina – the back surface of the eye – and detect subtle changes which might indicate an eye disorder or general health problem.

The special screening is available in addition to normal eye tests and opticians recommend it so that conditions including glaucoma, diabetes, cataracts and age-related macular degeneration can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible. The examination is comfortable for patients and the image is captured in seconds using flash photography – the equipment does not actually touch the eyes.

In the past, patients needing detailed retinal examinations required special eye drops to dilate the pupils, meaning they were unable to see properly for many hours following the procedure. With retinal photography there is no need for eye drops, and the eyes return to normal within a minute or so.

The revolutionary technology allows retinal images for each patient to be stored permanently on a computer, so that the condition of the eye can be compared with images taken on previous occasions and any changes identified more easily.

Images can also be magnified to look at perceived abnormalities, and sent to

another specialist for a second opinion if necessary, making the technique a major step forward in the field of eye care.

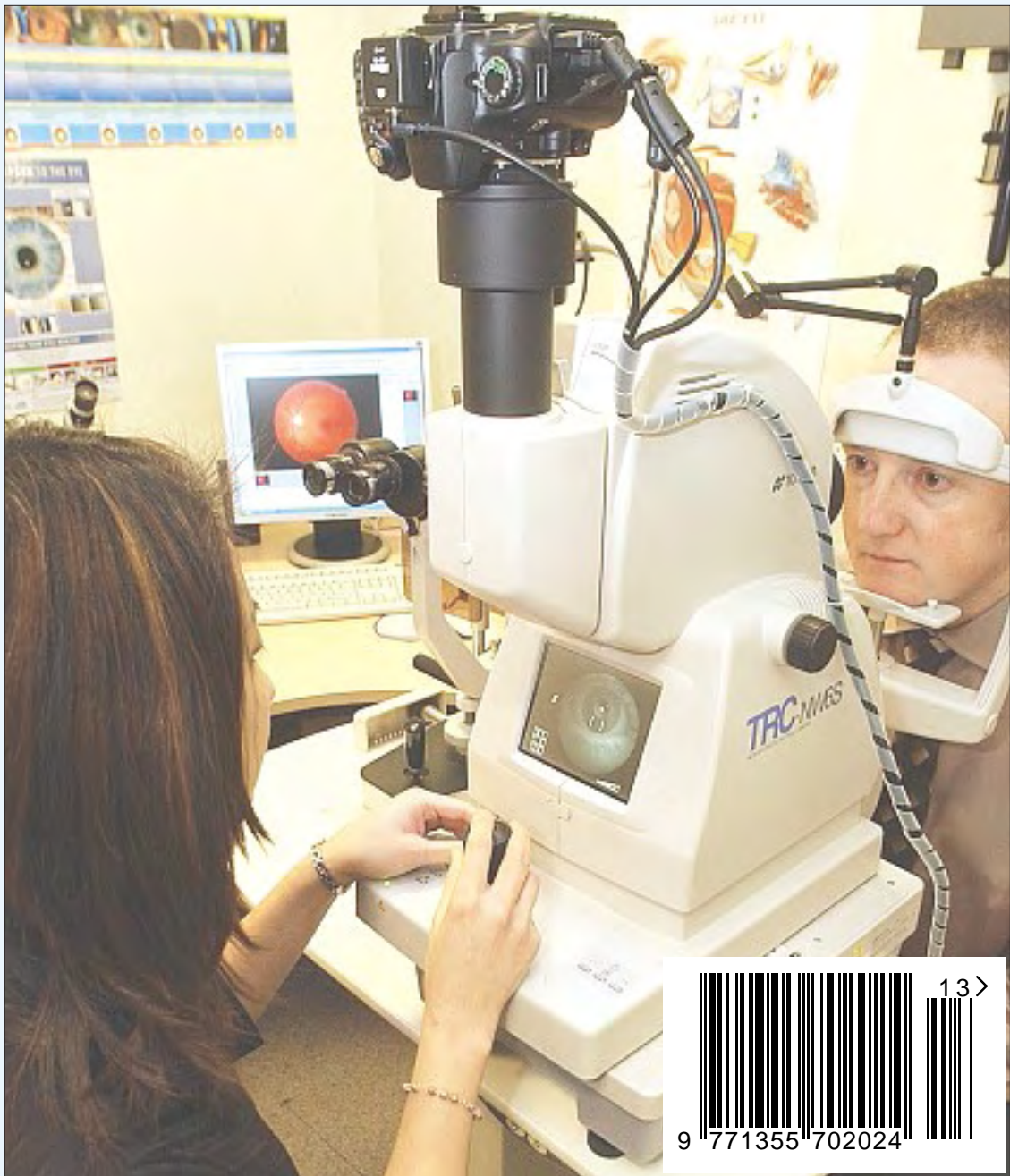
This advanced test is available at Chapmans for just £10 on top of the regular sight test fee, and is an excellent way to protect your sight and general well-being.

Chapmans is also offering a new innovation that particularly benefits the over-40s, who tend to lose flexibility in the lens of the eye and struggle with reading small print. The Varilux Physio, a new type of varifocal lens, is now available and provides the wearer with clearer, sharper vision.

The uniquely-designed lens is manufactured with immense precision, taking into account the whole beam of light entering the eye and eliminating any deformations (a capability known as Wavefront Management). The difference between Varilux Physio and an older type of varifocal has been compared to the difference between watching a DVD and a video, offering better contrast for high-resolution vision.

The Varilux Physio also improves intermediate and near vision, meaning fewer eye movements are needed to read small type, while distance vision is enhanced with more defined images. In effect this means people aged 40 and over can enjoy a return to the good vision of their youth.

And whatever your age, excellent eye care and fashionable frames are always available at Chapmans. Anyone interested in learning more about the new technology is invited to drop into the shop, or make an appointment on 01527 836290.



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Digital Photography



The advanced new method of checking the health of your eyes

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