

Letters to the editor

Write to the editor at 4 The Quadrant, Warwick Road, Coventry, CV1 2EL or e-mail editor@coventryobserver.co.uk

Renewal day was lovely

AS ONE of the couples lucky enough to win the chance of renewing our wedding vows in Coventry Cathedral, we would like to convey our thanks to all concerned.

The whole day was lovely. The hairdresser and make-up artist did a wonderful job, and the crew at BBC Coventry and Warwickshire made us feel very special.

The service was friendly and informal, and champagne flowed at the reception afterwards. There was even a heart-shaped cake.

We had a meal at Nailcote Hall in the evening, where the food and entertainment were superb.

We would also like to thank the young couple from Lime Tree Avenue, with whom we shared a taxi home. They insisted on paying the fare, congratulating us on our marriage of 60 years.

Everybody concerned put a lot of effort into making the day a success, and we would like them to know that it is very much appreciated.

Brenda and Dave Jessop
Tile Hill
Coventry

Justice for Mattu long overdue

THANK you for your excellent editorial and article on February

2 expressing concern with senior managers at the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust for still not ending the suspension of Dr Mattu, now entering its fifth year. The costs continue to mount, and Dr Mattu is left to suffer.

Geoffrey Robinson MP and Jim Cunningham MP have tried tirelessly to end this disgraceful scandal and appalling waste of public money. The £7.8 million deficit already declared by trust managers includes over £1 million on the inquiry and a further £2 million on four years of legal fees and two locum doctors covering Dr Mattu's duties whilst suspending Dr Mattu on full pay to stay at home.

At a time when trust managers are closing wards and cutting jobs, is this acceptable?

Just months after Dr Mattu whistle-blew about dangers and deaths relating to the management policy of overcrowding wards at Walsgrave Hospital, trust managers suspended him on February 21 2002. They alleged they had done this for bullying his junior colleague.

After senior managers had constantly denied placing seriously ill patients in overcrowded bays, or that they came to any harm as the extra patient, BBC Midlands Today revealed, four years later, in September 2005 that "at least 11 patients" are known to have died.

The management now seems to blame previous managers, even though trust chairman Bryan Stoten was part of the management that suspended Dr Mattu and led to chair of the hospital senior consultants, Dr Peter Mulrooney, resigning in disgust at the appalling attack upon Dr Mattu.

The BBC report has vindicated

Dr Mattu for speaking out for patient safety.

There can be no justifiable basis for continuing this discriminatory suspension, and it is about time that there was justice for Dr Mattu and an independent public inquiry into this whole disgraceful matter.

Niall McChesney
Secretary

The Dr Raj Mattu Reinstatement Committee

Smokers are being vilified

RE: YOUR article on 'Working towards a smoke free city' - Observer, February 9.

I work very hard - full time - to help support my household. I pay my bills and taxes. I have never been in any trouble with the police. I am of good character.

I have run a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and been a parent governor. I could go on - but, in short, I am regular good person.

I support non-smokers' choice not to smoke and their right to work and socialise in smoke free environments. So why am I, and thousands like me, being systematically vilified by the likes of Jo Luxmore?

I don't smoke in the presence of non-smoking family and friends, I go outside - even at home - if my smoking offends anyone in anyway.

Do I no longer have the same rights or freedom of choice that I support for others?

I choose to smoke, so why - on my entitled breaks - does Jo Luxmore feel the need to impose her views and attitude on me?

If I choose to spend my hard

earned money on cigarettes and to go outside, away from non-smokers, to enjoy my right to smoke how am I infringing on her or anyone else's rights as non-smokers?

And if the Government and local councils want smoking banned why are they profiting from the sale of cigarettes? Hypocritical if you ask me.

I would never have believed that one section of our community could be so deliberately and purposely discriminated against today in this country.

I still vigorously uphold and support the rights and freedom of choice for Jo Luxmore and people like her, but it's an infuriating shame that she and others are too bigoted to return the favour.

T Poppy
Stonehouse Estate
Coventry

Fatal flaws in case for ID cards

GORDON Brown's much-trailed speech about terrorism, designed in part to win over wavering Labour backbenchers on the day of the ID cards vote in the Commons, failed completely to address the arguments put by the Green Party against their introduction.

You can't use ID cards to identify criminals who haven't been caught - such as a huge proportion of burglars - or track 'lost' illegal immigrants who weren't issued with them in the first place. And faking ID cards is no problem at all to

sophisticated terrorists and money-launderers - the perpetrators of the 9/11 atrocities were all either in possession of legitimate ID or held compelling forgeries.

Home Secretary Charles Clarke and former MI5 boss Stella Rimington have both admitted ID cards would not have prevented the July 7 bombings.

The French government discovered fraudulent production of its new "unforgeable" smartcard quickly became one of the most profitable criminal activities in the country in the mid-1990s.

Indeed, there seems little doubt that technology such as finger prints and retinal scanning will be far behind the capabilities of criminals to manipulate these systems for purposes of fraud or terrorism, the very crimes which the ID cards are supposedly there to prevent.

In fact, ID cards will only be of use if they contain much more data than is currently proposed and if the public is forced to carry them. Why does the Government want to set up the National Identity Register, with so much personal information about us?

The register and the ID cards represent a threat to civil liberties by effectively increasing state surveillance of individuals and intruding on our privacy.

When the Communist authorities and secret police did this in the days of the former Soviet Union we used to call it totalitarianism, a 'police state.'

Mr Brown has not made a convincing case, or any case at all, why the United Kingdom in the 21st century should go down that road.

Chris Lennard
West Midlands Green Party