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PRESS RELEASE

Doris Drives History Forward with a £50,000 Gift for Dudley Museum

A vintage vehicle called Doris is ensuring history is accessible to all at the Black Country Living Museum thanks to the generosity of Birmingham-based businessman, Alex Patrick. The businessman, who is a trustee of The Patrick Trust, dug deep into the coffers and donated a £50,000 gift enabling the museum to address access issues including the purchase of a multi-accessible period bus through his family charity 'The Patrick Trust'.

The 1930's vehicle, christened Doris because it was found with the name painted on its side, will provide authentic, yet accessible, transport for less mobile visitors. Discovered in a state of dereliction in Clacton-on-Sea, the bus arrived on the back of a breakdown van, having ground to a halt just 16 miles outside the museum's gates.

Alex Patrick, speaking on behalf of The Patrick Trust said: "I was delighted to make this gift to the Black Country Living Museum, as The Patrick Trust is always keen to support local charitable organisations. Helping less mobile visitors move more easily around the museum site is a priority for me personally and so I was especially keen to fund this particular project."

The museum's latest acquisition has been lovingly restored and adapted by Wednesbury firm Leewood Coachbuilders Limited. A cleverly disguised tail

lift gives visitors all the advantages of easy access whilst enhancing their experience of the museum as they travel back in time to the museum's canalside village.

Tony Tunicliffe, Sales Manager from Leewood Bus and Coach Builders said: "We were very pleased to be chosen over a number of other local body builders to renovate and rebuild the retro bus for the Black Country Living Museum. We build various types of commercial vehicle bodies but it was a delight to build this vehicle as it was built in the way bodies were built a number of years ago. We were very pleased with the final product and we hope the vehicle gives the Black Country Living Museum years of service."

The vehicle's maiden voyage took place on Saturday 10th October and proved just the ticket. Trustees of The Patrick Trust joined 11 year-old Murray Field - who was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in 2005, his parents Mark and Jane Field and the Black Country Living Museum's Director, Andrew Lovett to enjoy an accessible trip back in time.

Commenting on 'Doris', Murray said "this is a great vehicle for the disabled - my wheelchair can be safely anchored to ensure a comfortable ride down to the village at the museum".

Andrew Lovett, Director and Chief Executive of the Black Country Living Museum said: "Our thanks go to the Patrick family. It is fabulous news that the museum now has this bus. It means even more visitors will be able to enjoy what we have to offer."

Photo Opportunities

Journalist and photographers are invited to attend the launch of the accessibility bus on Saturday 10th October at 11.30 am at the Black Country Living Museum.

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