



PRESS RELEASE
**£50,000 Gift Helps Museum
Drive Accessibility Forward**

A £50,000 gift from 'The Patrick Trust' family charity will ensure history is accessible to all, the Black Country Living Museum has announced today. Thanks to the generosity of Birmingham-based businessman, Alex Patrick, who is a trustee of the Trust, the gift enables the award-winning museum to address access issues on its historic site and to purchase a multi-accessible period bus.

The 1930's vehicle will provide authentic, yet accessible, transport for less mobile visitors. 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 canalside village.

Alex Patrick, speaking on behalf of The Patrick Trust said: "I and my trustees are 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. Discovered in a state of

dereliction in Clacton-on-Sea, the bus, christened Doris because it was found with the name painted on its side, arrived on the back of a breakdown van, having ground to a halt 16 miles outside the museum's gates.

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."

The cash boost is one of a range of access developments on the 26-acre site. These include making safety improvements to the museum's canalside pathway and a programme of installing ramps and drop kerbs has also been

undertaken in the Museum's historic village. The museum has also launched a 'virtual guide book' for the hearing impaired and 'virtual tours' of inaccessible buildings for visitors with restricted mobility, as part of their ongoing 'Access for All' programme.

Photo Opportunities

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

For further information regarding photo opportunities please contact:

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