

Don't axe six-day postal service

THERE has been recent correspondence about cutbacks in Royal Mail services in order to make the sums add up to the satisfaction of shareholders. Why?

The demands of shareholders are endless and in law take precedence over all other considerations like customer service.

People have been missing NHS appointments because letters have arrived after the due date, thus wasting expensive time of NHS professionals. How to get over that one? A special category perhaps!

There should be no erosion of the six-day post service and all mail should proceed rapidly to its destinations. This is important for all customers, including other businesses.

The Post Office was never a suitable candidate for generating cost-plus returns for shareholders.

It should become a not-for-profit business like Welsh Water, guaranteed by the state to maintain and deliver six days a week for the customers.

Nitpicking changes are not wanted and not needed. Leaning on the Ofcom regulator is not the answer. Don't bash up the service! We wouldn't have a private army that only goes out when it can generate at least five per cent minimum profit.

AD Gill
Ashford, Barnstaple

Railway line would ruin the Tarka Trail

I THOUGHT I was the only person who thought that running a train alongside the Tarka Trail was disruptive, expensive and unnecessary.

I wrote to Selaine Saxby, who eventually replied and stated that "the train line would not affect the Tarka Trail".

The railway line, with its high safety fences and regular noisy trains, would ruin what is North Devon's best and most favoured destination. The construction required to achieve this line would cost a fortune, destroy natural ecology and alarm users of the trail.

It is the only flat, safe and long walk in North Devon and, as such, is vital to families with small children or dogs, disabled users and cyclists. The link road is a fast and convenient route to Barnstaple from Bideford and, as Oliver Harding-Fleet pointed out, buses every 15 minutes serve the station.

I don't think the advocates for this scheme have any idea, in their excitement, what they are proposing.

Lani Shepherd

Moving story about better mental health

MOVING regularly and being active is important to nurture and protect good mental health but many of us are not moving enough.

Mayfair greeting for queen of hearts



Photographer John Insull faithfully captures the spectacle and pomp of Torrington Mayfair

That's why 'Movement: moving more for our mental health' is the theme of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week which is taking place from now to May 19.

We know that it can be difficult to be physically active when you're busy with work, childcare or caring responsibilities. We know it can be tougher still if you're living with a long-term health condition or struggling financially.

That's why we're sharing information and advice throughout the week to help people move more for their mental health. People are invited to find their #MomentsForMovement and talk about how it makes them feel.

Whether it's dancing around your living room to your favourite music, doing chair exercises while watching television, or going for a walk in your local park, it all counts, and the

Mental Health Foundation want to hear about it!

We invite your readers to share what they're doing and tag the Mental Health Foundation to be part of the #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek conversation.

Alexa Knight
Director of England
Mental Health Foundation

Why Bratton Fleming needs to have a pub

MY grandparents used to run the White Hart pub at Bratton Fleming.

It was a Starkey, Knight and Ford pub then. My mum, Mary Orchard, was brought up in the pub. Mr Milton needs to think about people in the village. It's not all about money.

The White Hart has always been a busy pub. My dad used to meet up

with friends on a Saturday night playing cards. Bratton needs a pub. People like to meet up. It's village life. Bratton is growing all the time.

K Mogford
Aliswear, South Molton

Our bus services need to improve

YES, I agree with the plea to re-instate the 155 bus from Barnstaple to Exeter.

Under the new arrangement, it takes three buses instead of one, changing at South Molton and Tiverton.

Once upon a time, I used to go to Exeter twice a week, volunteering, and very often on a Saturday, changing onto another bus for a day trip to Torbay, Exmouth or Sidmouth.

Now I may get as far as Tiverton but haven't dared to attempt a return

journey from Exeter because if I miss the connection at Tiverton there is a two-hour wait for the controversial 346!

North Devon seems to be the poor relation when it comes to buses.

I rely on them to get me out and about. In the past I could get a bus to Plymouth on a Saturday and enjoy the matinee at the Theatre Royal.

Similarly, there were buses to Taunton with a guaranteed change at Bampton. Don't forget it works both ways - we could get visitors and tourists by bus coming to our lovely countryside with its churches and markets, helping to stop the rot of too many local shops closing down.

Come on, Stagecoach, you can do better.

Peter Jewell
Newport, Barnstaple

We remember the miracle of Dunkirk

AS our nation commemorates this special anniversary on June 6, let's remember that there wouldn't have been a D-Day without the successful evacuation of Allied Forces from Dunkirk four years earlier.

At that time over 350,000 Allied troops were trapped across the Channel by the German army and if they couldn't be rescued, the UK would have been invaded. Britain was on the verge of defeat.

There could be no help from other European countries and America hadn't even entered the war.

What happened next may seem strange to today's generation but to the people of wartime Britain it was perfectly natural. King George VI broadcast an urgent message to the nation, declaring May 26 to be a special day of national prayer and urged everyone to pray for divine intervention.

In response to his call, millions of people attended special church services, pleading for deliverance. At one point the response was so great that the queue of people trying to get into Westminster Abbey stretched for a quarter of a mile.

Two events occurred straight after this national day of prayer. Firstly, a violent storm arose over the Dunkirk region, grounding the Luftwaffe which had been killing thousands on the beaches. And then secondly, a great calm descended on the Channel, the like of which hadn't been seen for a generation. It was in fact this Channel calm, coming at that precise time, which permitted hundreds of tiny boats to sail across and help rescue 335,000 soldiers.

These two events happening when they did were so dramatic, that people named it "the miracle of Dunkirk" and Sunday, June 9 was officially appointed as a day of national thanksgiving.

D-Day wouldn't have happened without "the miracle of Dunkirk".

Rev J Willans