

WEEKEND POST



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Saturday, August 14, 2004

Controversial: Wilson Moore-Murray, standing beside the upside-down tree, says the artwork at the Knowle West Health Park is a waste of money. Right, how the complete artwork looks



£30,000 oak (it's dead and upside down) is city health park art



by **Ayesha Gilani**
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AN ART project at a city health park which features a dead tree planted upside down in the ground has been branded a waste of money by residents and staff.

The artwork at the Knowle West Health Park, *Living Tree/Dead Tree*, is understood to have cost around £30,000 – enough to pay the annual salary of a Grade H “modern matron” or two Grade C nurses.

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MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES

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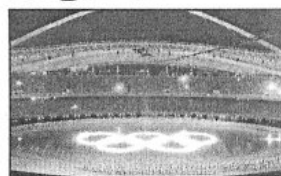


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Let the games begin ...



The Olympics return home: Page 4 and Sport

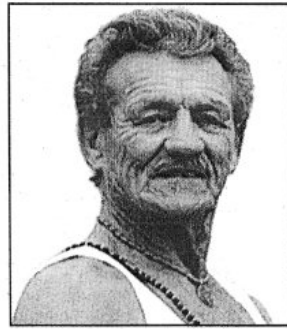
Pup, pup and away

Churchill the dog and other balloon fiesta fun: Page 15

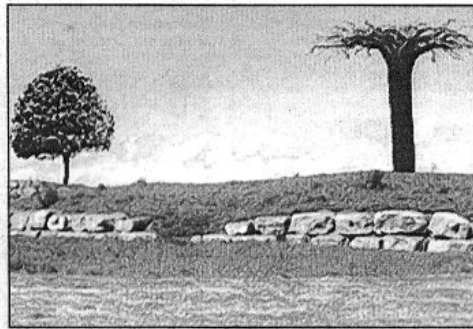


£30,000 oak (it's dead and upside down) is city health park art

Money doesn't grow on trees



Controversial: Wilson Moore-Murray says the artwork at the Knowle West Health Park is a waste of money. Below, how the complete artwork will look



In brief

TV girl Sammy is allowed out

BRISTOL: Former HTV "golden girl" Sam Mason, pictured, has successfully appealed against a court-imposed curfew order that stopped her leaving her home for 12 hours per day.



Mason, aged 36, was given a six-month order in June to stay at home between 7pm and 7am by Weston-super-Mare magistrates, after she admitted driving while disqualified, without insurance and speeding.

It was part of a two-year community rehabilitation order imposed along with a year's driving ban. But a judge at Bristol Crown Court yesterday upheld an appeal against the sentence and quashed the curfew order on the grounds it was too severe and would prevent Mason attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings or enjoying a reasonable social life.

After the hearing, Mason, of Clifton, who is battling alcoholism, said: "Winning the appeal is fantastic."

"It will enable me to attend meetings and get help and support."

"I am getting there."

Judge Carol Hagen reduced a costs order made against Mason from £250 to £50. She said that the two-year rehabilitation order would remain in force.

Police appeal for lad

HARTCLIFFE: Police have appealed for help in tracing a teenager who has been missing since Tuesday.

Patrick Gould, aged 17, left his home in Bishopton Green at about 2pm to go to nearby shops. He has not been since.

Last night, officers said there was growing concern for his welfare as he does not leave his house very often.

He is described as white, 5ft 10in tall,

and a light blue polo shirt, which had white horizontal stripes.

Anyone with any information should contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Illegal immigrant

FOUNDALVESTON: Police arrested a suspected illegal immigrant from the back of a lorry at Alveston.

Officers found the man hiding in the back of a curtain-sided articulated lorry from Salzweg in Germany, which had crossed the English Channel from Dunkirk to Dover.

A police spokeswoman said the driver called the police saw a man's arm waving between the pallets of paper his vehicle was carrying. The driver was given the all-clear to continue his journey.

AN ART project at a city health park which features a dead tree planted upside down in the ground has been branded a waste of money by residents and staff.

The artwork at the Knowle West Health Park, *Living Tree/Dead Tree*, is understood to have cost around £30,000 - enough to pay the annual salary of a Grade H "modern matron" or two Grade C nurses.

It takes the form of two oak trees, a living tree planted the right way up and a second, dead tree planted opposite but upside down.

The Art of Wellbeing Project, set up to provide artwork for the health park, commissioned the piece by contemporary visual artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva.

The two trees are said to be representing the life cycle.

But retired carpenter Wilson Moore-Murray, aged 66, said the artwork was a waste of money.

He said: "I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it, and when I was told it was actually art I thought it was absolutely ludicrous."

"I find it a strange misuse of funds. The money could go towards many other important and much-needed facilities."

"There are people in Knowle West

by Ayesha Gilani
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who are taking it upon themselves to fight for a decent place to live and this money could have gone to them.

"There are also plans for the development of the health park and these should have taken precedence over this tree art project."

"The type of thing being bandied about as art these days just eludes me."

A member of staff at the health park, who asked not to be named, said: "No one seems to know who authorised this. It's such a waste of money and it does nothing for the place."

"I find it quite sad-looking and can't see how anyone would feel uplifted by it. There are so many people who feel the same about this and it's a shame the money could not have been put to better use."

Ann Cooper, a Lib Dem Councillor for the area, said: "I was really shocked when I saw it."

"I don't have anything against art - I can appreciate art - but I don't see how this will benefit the area and its people."

"Money needs to come into Knowle West for the right reasons."

"There is a football club in the area which desperately needs £2,500 to keep it running and if a lot of money has

been spent on this then it is really "shocking."

It was unclear last night who had paid for the project. The artist believed the project was funded by Arts Council England.

The *Evening Post* contacted the Art of Wellbeing Project for clarification and a comment on the criticism levelled at the artwork but we were told that its manager, Annie Beardsley, was on holiday and that no one else was available to comment on the issue.

A statement describing the organisation's aims on its website says: "The arts have been part of the vision and process of developing Knowle West Health Park from its earliest days."

"The arts will help to bring the park alive as a vibrant resource for the community, developing a unique environment where people will feel positive about coming to gain support, education, information, entertainment as well as medical treatment."

We also approached the South Bristol Primary Care Trust, which is in charge of financing healthcare provision in the area, but were told that the issue was the responsibility of a different organisation.

The Macedonian artist behind the work, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, said: "I was approached to make the area look better. I didn't want to upset people."

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