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Tragic accident at local beauty spot

TRAGEDY struck in Gravesend last Tuesday as a local man died at a local beauty spot. David Jelish, 40, of Vertrauen Avenue in Gravesend died of heart failure after he was pulled from Ehrlich's Pond in Gober Park. Mr. Jelish had been walking a dog with two of his children, one of which had fallen into the pond. Mr. Jelish waded into the pond to pull his son from the water when he fell into danger. Several attempts were made to pull Mr. Jelish from the pond. Eyewitness William Coit said: "We tried many times but he was just too wet and heavy."

Despite the paramedics attempts to revive him at the scene, Mr Jelish died in the ambulance whilst on the way to hospital. Mr. Jelish had been receiving treatment for a coronary complaint but was released from hospital the previous Friday. Paramedic Phil Scrivens warned: "At this time of year when the weather is getting colder I advise people to be careful when near water as tragic accidents like this can happen." Mr. Jelish leaves a widow and four children.

Newsdesk: 0474 333381

Shape up for charity day

DO YOU want to test your fitness and endurance? If so why not team up with your mates and join the Snowdonia Charity Challenge. The one-day cycling, climbing and canoeing triathlon is in the Welsh national park on Saturday, March 2. The money raised will go to Regain, the charity for men and women paralysed in sports accidents. Call 0590 222176 for details.

Carer awards

DO YOU know someone who has had a stroke or cares for someone who has suffered one? If yes, then why not nominate them for the Stroke Association's annual Life After Stroke Awards? All nominees will receive a certificate and award-winners will attend a gala ceremony on December 16. Call 0604 262919 for an information pack. The deadline for nominations is Friday, November 30.

Pedal power

KENT air ambulance's popular sponsored Weald Bike Ride takes place on Sunday 3 November. The ride leaves Mascal's School, Paddock Wood, at 10.30am. The entrance fee is £1 and riders will be able to enjoy one of the pre-arranged routes through the beautiful Kent countryside. Call 0622 388388 for more information.

Donor dates

BLOOD donor sessions are taking place on Friday, October 12, 10am-1.15pm and 3.30pm-4.45pm at the mobile donor unit in Parrock Street, Gravesend and Swanscombe Leisure Centre, Craylands Lane, Swanscombe.

Garage fire

FIREFIGHTERS were called to a mattress fire in a garage near Gravesend Court, Clarence Road, Gravesend. The blaze is being treated as suspicious.

Marathon plea

CHARITY Diabetes UK would like to hear from anyone who has already secured a place in next year's London Marathon but has not chosen a charity to run for. Call 071 454 4545 for more information

Priests abused children

A CATHOLIC priest has been convicted of sexually abusing a boy and a girl at a Gravesend children's home where he was in charge.

Gerald Emerald, 51, will be sentenced with another priest, 56-year-old Jakob Gradus, who previously admitted molesting children at the home.

Maidstone Crown Court heard the offences were committed in the early 1970s when Emerald and Gradus were trainee priests. Emerald went to St Mary's children's home, run by the Catholic Children's Society in July 1971 and became the senior house father in charge shortly afterwards.

Then, aged 20, he took over from a strict disciplinarian nun and created a more relaxed atmosphere. Emerald and Gradus met at college and became friends. Gradus was a student resident at the large detached seven-bedroom house in Zemblan Road, Gravesend. It accommodated 10-12

children, either from problem families or without parents.

Emerald, of Walworth, south east London, denied eight charges of indecent assault, two of gross indecency with a male and one of a serious sexual nature.

He was convicted of three indecent assault charges involving one girl and one of gross indecency with a boy.

Emerald was cleared of one indecent assault on a girl by judge's direction and acquitted by the jury of the other six charges.

Gradus, of Edinburgh, admitted nine indecent assault charges.

Mary McCarthy, prosecuting said assaults happened "over and over again" at the home.

The three indecent assault charges Emerald was convicted of related to a 15-year-old girl, who consented to sex with him.

She was always a willing partner but could not legally consent because she was under 16.

The relationship progressed to Emerald having sex with her two or three times a week until he left.



BIRTHDAY GIRL: Hazel Shade celebrates her birthday with her son John.

Happy birthday to Hazel, she's 102

BIRTHDAY girl Hazel Shade was 102 last week and celebrated with a party. Mrs Shade, who lives at Goldsworth nursing home in Southfleet, was surrounded by family and friends. Unfortunately an

entertainer booked for the party failed to arrive after his car broke down but that did not dampen Mrs. Shade's spirits. She enjoyed a buffet lunch and birthday cake and caught up with her son and granddaughter and other residents

Call for fireworks ban

A NORTHFLEET woman is supporting an RSPCA bid for a total ban on fireworks after her cat went missing for eight weeks and nearly starved.

The animal charity has quoted the plight of Sybil Irondell's pet cat in its fight for a total ban.

Mrs Irondell's cat went missing for eight weeks and nearly starved to death after being frightened by a firework.

Mrs Irondell said: "I missed Botkin so much - she's so adorable. She disappeared on November 2 last year and eight weeks later I had given up all hope of getting her back. I couldn't imagine that she could survive that long on her own

and anything could have happened to her.

"When I received that call on Christmas Eve saying she had been found and the RSPCA had collected her, I couldn't believe my luck."

In a new report published on Monday by the RSPCA, it claims the distress caused to animals by loud fireworks can be harmful.

The Quiet Please report also reveals that, contrary to guidance from experts in the firework industry, it is possible to control noise levels through a firework's construction.

The RSPCA is calling for the Government to enforce a maximum noise level of 95 decibels.

Studies have indicated quieter fireworks are likely to minimise distress to animals but still allow people to enjoy firework displays at home.

Charles Xavier, the RSPCA's chief veterinary officer, said: "As fireworks are used more and more the RSPCA believes urgent measures must be taken to stop distress and injury to animals."

"We would like to see shops selling fireworks to the public required to have a licence."

What do you think? Write to the Gravesend Messenger, 7 High Street, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0BQ.

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