

## FAKENHAM

## Camel racing switches from Middle East to East Anglia

They are more commonly seen in the arid deserts of the Middle East, but yesterday a group of camels took centre stage in rural Norfolk.

For while it is usually horses that race to the finish line at Fakenham Racecourse, yesterday the venue hosted what is believed to be East Anglia's inaugural camel racing event as part of the West Norfolk Amateur Racing Club's Point-to-Point.

Four camels – two single-humped dromedaries and two bactrians, which have two humps – took part in the charity races in aid of the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

Each of them was ridden by a representative from one of eight north Norfolk pubs, with each rider wearing a colourful fancy dress costume inspired by the name of their watering hole.

Pip Case, of The Crown at East Rudham, won the first race, and Kerry Sumner, of The Crown at Gayton, won the second. Then the two Crowns went head to head, with the East Rudham pub being named the ultimate champion.

Mrs Case, who had never been on a camel before, said: "I found the camel racing quite terrifying. I was expecting a smoother gallop, and steering was bit of a problem but fortunately the camel went in the right direction."

"It is certainly not as easy as it looks. I am really excited for The Crown to have won the competition."

Norfolk-born actress Miranda Raison, star of spy drama *Spooks*



Pictures: MATTHEW USHER

**SOMETHING DIFFERENT:** A camel ready to race, action on the track, and support from actress Miranda Raison.

and ITV comedy *Married Single Other*, presented the prizes. She said: "I absolutely loved the camel racing. It was such a fun thing to do and for such a worthy cause. It was my first time seeing a camel race although I did have a ride on a camel in Tunisia once."

The four camels, from Warwickshire-based Joseph's Amazing Camels, have been specially trained to run in a straight line over a one-furlong course towards a bucket of food at the finish line.

■ See Sport, page 32, for a full report on the point-to-point event and another picture of the camel race.



## GREAT BEESTON

## Share your memories at reunion dance

Post-war residents of a village near Dereham have been invited to share their memories at a reunion dance next month.

More than 100 people from all over the country are expected to arrive for the Grand Beeston Reunion, which will be held at Longham Village Hall on Saturday, May 15.

Norfolk raconteur Keith Skipper will be "mardling" with the guests from 5pm to 7.30pm, and later in the evening there will be a charity dance with country music by Green Velvet.

The event is being organised by Mr Skipper's sister Sheila Brunton, who said the proceeds from a charity raffle would be given to Quidenham Children's Hospice.

Mrs Brunton, 71, said: "I do this every year to get people together from Beeston who used to live on the aerodrome in the late 1940s, or who went to school here. The money we raise is going to Quidenham in memory of Joy Hammond, one of our Beeston ladies who died earlier this year."

■ Tickets cost £5 each and can be purchased from Sheila Brunton on 01362 698650.

## NORWICH

## Construction workers' tribute

Construction workers in Norwich will take part in an event to remember those who have died while at work.

Construction is the most dangerous industry in Britain. Last year there were 53 construction fatalities, including four in the eastern region.

The event will begin at 10am on Wednesday at the war memorial opposite City Hall. The memorial is currently being renovated by construction workers. Workers who are unable to attend are asked to take part in a two-minute silence at midday.

The event will include a speech from Brian Rye, regional secretary of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians.

## NORTH WALSHAM

## Help for Heroes given cash boost

There was a touch of the Dad's Army about North Walsham's Barclays bank, when it staged a wartime-themed charity day for Help for Heroes.

The Market Place branch was decked out with second world war trappings.

Donations given in the North Walsham branch came to £617 which the bank will match, making a total of £1,234.

## NORWICH

## Civic visit to charity

A civic dignitary is to find out more about a bereavement charity's work in a visit today.

The lord mayor of Norwich, Evelyn Collishaw, will visit the Norwich Cruse Monday Group. She will then visit the charity's base at Boardman House.

■ More information about the charity is available by visiting its website at [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

## GREAT YARMOUTH

# Teenage girls' clinic trip is a pioneering initiative

A school trip normally means a day out at a museum or nature reserve, but pupils from Great Yarmouth have recently gone on a tour of an NHS sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinic.

In a pioneering initiative for the region, teenage girls from one local high school were shown round the Bure Clinic at James Paget University Hospital, Gorleston, and given a chance to inspect facilities and ask questions.

The trip, organised outside of the clinic's working hours, was the idea of the charity GFS Platform which works to improve life opportunities for young women, in many cases teenage mothers.

Sally Rozier, GFS Platform's strategy and development manager in Yarmouth, said it was an extension of their long-standing sexual health peer educators programme, which saw young women supported by the charity going into high schools to raise

By STEPHEN PULLINGER

awareness about the realities of teenage pregnancy and parenthood.

These volunteers had been going on fact-finding visits to the Bure clinic for years, but the recent trip was the first involving a party of high school pupils escorted by GFS Platform staff.

Hailing it as a success, she said: "It allows them to experience how it feels to walk through the doors of a sexual health clinic to learn about the confidential services it provides."

Ms Rozier said they had good links with all the local high schools as well as the clinic and would be happy to organise future trips.

The trial scheme has won the enthusiastic support of a county council expert and local headteacher, although a national parents' campaign group has expressed scepticism.

Mark Osborn, Norfolk's teenage pregnancy co-ordinator, said: "Good sex and relationships education and health advice help to reduce rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and we are supportive of any initiative that aims to give young people the information they need to make good choices."

Naomi Palmer, acting head at Gorleston's Oriel High School, said: "It is imperative that students nationwide are able to access as much accurate information regarding sexually transmitted infections as possible, without feeling embarrassed or intimidated. Any service which focuses on demystifying them as to the consequences of unprotected sex is invaluable."

"Young people benefit from gleaning information about their sexual health from a variety of sources. Sometimes the message can be more powerful and more poignant when it comes from someone other

than a teacher or a parent."

Paul Nicholls, a health adviser at the Bure Clinic, said: "We make our service as accessible as possible and hold fact-finding visits to our clinic to raise awareness and understanding about the potential consequences of unprotected casual sex. This allows people to look around our facilities, meet our staff and have their questions answered."

"This is an excellent opportunity to dispel some of the myths around sexually transmitted infections and encourage responsible sexual behaviour."

However, Margaret Morrissey, founder of pressure group Parents Outloud, insisted information given to teenagers about sex "needs to be in the context of a loving relationship". "Taking a group of teenagers to an STD clinic not only suggests that casual sex is normal, but will make many teenagers feel under pressure to rush into sexual relationships," she said.