



Impressive: skateboarder shows off stunts at Ewen Hall

Mobile skate park launched to help reduce youth crime

By LEE BELL leebell@nctjnews.co.uk

EXTREME sports rolled into Ewen Hall on Saturday when Barnet Community Projects (BCP) launched the borough's first mobile skate park.

Theresa Villiers MP joined 100 local youngsters, councillors and church leaders at the launch of the skate park which aims to reduce anti-social behaviour in Underhill and surrounding areas of Barnet.

BMX bikers and skateboarders showed off their skills on the mobile skate park, which is hoped will help to reduce youth crime in the area.

Project manager, Steve Neale, said: "The launch was fantastic; a real success. There was a good broad cross-section of residents there, including the

target group that the project is aimed at."

The skate park idea was adapted by Sergeant Simon Kelly, of the Underhill Safer Neighbourhood Team, after talking to young locals in Bells Hill who said they wanted somewhere to skate.

After forming a partnership with BCP to help the young people into the community, he said: "Most problems are caused by boredom and so we needed something to divert young people from hanging about on the streets and causing trouble."

There will be four afternoon skate sessions running during February half term at St Stephen's Church, in Bells Hill, and every Saturday onwards.

OAP to be media star

Royal family fanatic to report on royal wedding for US TV

By LEE BELL leebell@nctjnews.co.uk

A ROYAL family fanatic from South Kenton is thrilled to be reporting for American television on the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

Margaret Tyler, 67, lives in a house that is more like a museum. Every surface of the living room is crammed with memorabilia depicting the royal family.

Comprising of more than 10,000 carefully arranged royal relics - from standard plates, cups and framed pictures to bizarre Charles and Diana slippers - the hoard is now insured at £40,000.

Ms Tyler started collecting more than 30 years ago, with a glass dish of the Queen from a jumble sale, and admits her collection "just grew and grew", extending into a second room dedicated solely to Princess Diana.

She said: "I've always been interested in the royal family, even as a little girl.

"I started in Covent Garden market on a Monday - they sold antiques - and I worked at Tottenham Court Road so used to rush there after work. That's where I started buying things.

"Once I started buying I couldn't

stop. People started giving me things, my children bought me things for Christmas and birthdays. My son lives in America and buys me things you can't get here, so I'm at this stage now."

Ms Tyler is no stranger to publicity. Her collection is world renowned and receives regular visits from fanatics all over the globe: "I had Japanese television here recently and I get coach loads of Germans mostly. I have to bring them round in fours and fives, then they sit out in the garden and I bring the next lot in."

Excitement

Margaret expects to be reporting either outside Westminster Abbey or in television studios on the South Bank on the day of the royal wedding.

However, such work is not new to the committed royalist. Reporting in the past on the Queen mother's 100th Birthday for German TV, she can barely contain her excitement to do the same for William and Kate's big day: "This is a biggy for me, I'm really looking forward to it. I don't know how they heard of me.



Cherished possessions: Margaret clings on to parts of her extensive collection

"They contacted me by phone originally, then a lady came over from New York to meet me, then sent me a contract by Fedex. It was all very professional; I was shocked. It's a thrill isn't it?"

Margaret hopes local residents will throw street parties to celebrate the royal wedding and is considering holding one herself

before the ceremony.

She added: "I think everyone is excited about the royal wedding. I think it gives everyone a lift and there's nothing so British as a street party, with everyone getting to know each other. I think it's a marvellous maker of friends and I hope people will do that. You've got to enter into the spirit of it."

Though running out of space to display the expected wedding paraphernalia, Margaret was disappointed when her plans for a "Will and Kate conservatory" were denied by Brent Council.

But that has not stopped the royal family devotee, who is determined to find space for her ever-growing collection.

Job fair to offer pupils paid work placements

PUPILS are being encouraged to attend job fairs as part of the National Apprenticeships Week this February.

The College of Haringey is holding two drop-in sessions for college students and school pupils to find out about a range of apprenticeships on offer.

The fairs will be held at the

college's Enfield Centre on Tuesday 8 February and its Tottenham Centre on Wednesday 9 February, running between 3pm and 7pm.

Careers Advisers will also be on hand to offer advice.

Those enrolled will find it can pay to learn, with apprentices earning up to £95 a week.

Blind man bowling at 99

A 99 YEAR-OLD from Barnet is still bowling despite being blind.

Jim Booth, of Meadway Close, does not let his age or sight stop him playing the game he has played for 60 years.

As a member of Barnet Blind and Partially Sighted Bowls Club, Jim turns out twice a week at Glebelands Indoor Bowls Rink,

Finchley, participating in competitive games against sighted teams around the region.

He said: "It's a wonderful game; it's been my life right from 1952. It's a lovely club and I have made lots of friends here."

The club welcomes new members and urges people of any age and level of sight to join.

Young MPs run for Youth Parliament

YOUNG politicians are running to become Barnet's first representatives in UK Youth Parliament (UKYP).

Two Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) and two deputies will be elected to represent Barnet at national level on February 21.

The UKYP gives youngsters the chance to share opinions on everything from employment to foreign policy. They help to organise events, run campaigns and influence decisions made by government that matter to young people.

The 21 candidates created manifestos last month at Hendon Town Hall with the help of Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, Councillor Andrew Harper, giving candidates advice on the election process and how to successfully campaign.

He said: "It is important we encourage our younger residents to take an active interest in the decision making process in this country.

"These young people could be our next Councillors and Members of Parliament."

Voting is now open to all of Barnet's 11 to 18 year-olds who can view the candidates' manifestos online at www.barnetukyp.co.uk. Voting closes February 18.

The election count will be held at North London Business Park in Oakleigh Road on February 21.

Students help to mend hearts

STUDENTS in Hendon are helping to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation's new major research project.

Mending Broken Hearts is a five-year national appeal which aims to fund research into finding a cure for coronary heart disease, one of the biggest causes of premature death in Barnet.

Students at Middlesex University's Hendon campus have planned a number of events to help reach the charity's target. The first on February 25 - Red Hearts Day - will see students wearing bright-red fancy dress to raise awareness of the illness.

Genna Soller, campaign organiser and student representative, said: "It's a great initiative and is something I would definitely like to see the university get more involved with in the future."

Mending Broken Hearts campaign aims to raise £50m in the next ten years to complete stem cell research, which is hoped will lead to possible techniques allowing damaged heart muscle to be repaired.