

## In BRIEF

## Clinic rewarded

A SKINCARE clinic has won an award for the service provided to customers. Rejuven Skincare and Wellbeing clinic, based on the High Street in Stokesley, has been awarded the Best Client Experience Award by Phorest Salon Software. The award is based on how people who spend money in the salons feel about the service provided to them throughout the year. The awards are based on customer reviews between May 2015 and 2016.

## Open-air show

CHAPTERHOUSE Theatre Company will stage an open-air performance of *Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Baskervilles* at English Heritage property Mount Grace Priory, near Northallerton, on Saturday, July 17, from 7.30pm. Visitors are invited to take rugs or seating. For advance tickets, at £13 for adults and £11 for concessions and children, call 01609-883494 or visit chapterhouse.org

## Classic play

NORTH Country Theatre will stage an open-air performance of *Twelfth Night* at Kiplin Hall, near Catterick, on July 1 and 2, at 7.30pm. Visitors are invited to take chairs, rugs and picnics. For advance tickets, at £12 for adults and £8 for children, call 01748-825288 or visit northcountrytheatre.com

## 'Bold' design

A LIBRARY and community sports facility has won a national award for its design from the Royal Institute of British Architects (Riba). It said the Hebburn Central building, in Hebburn, South Tyneside, was "exemplary in its boldness" and would enrich the lives of the local community.

## Golf sponsors

MITSUBISHI dealership Batchelors of Ripon has sponsored Ripon City Golf Club's club's first team squad, providing team shirts, and will be offering a new car as a prize for a hole-in-one competition later in the season.

## 10k starters

NORTH-EAST band Lindisfarne will be the honorary starters of this year's Great North 10k run on July 3. A record 5,000 runners will join the event along the River Tyne banks.

# Jail term for serial child sex offender

A MAN who sought sexual gratification by preying on two young girls was yesterday jailed for a total of 23 years.

Robert Hodgson, a married man of 40 years and described as "hard working" throughout his life, was also said to, "have a dark side".

He was recently convicted on 16 sexual offences, all following unanimous jury verdicts after a six-day trial at Durham Crown Court.

They included one of rape, and all but that and one other count were classed as "specimen" offences, as they were said to represent a course of repeat conduct.

All were denied by the 66-year-old defendant, of Windermere Terrace, Stanley, who was previously unconvicted.

The court heard he committed the offences on the girls, aged as young as five or six, up to the age of 13.

Both victims were said to have been badly psychologically affected by the crimes, while one has since self-harmed and attempted to take her own life.

She has also since found it difficult to forming close relationships with boyfriends.



**JAILED:** Robert Hodgson has been locked up for 23 years

By Bruce Unwin  
Staff Reporter

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Both gave emotional victim impact statements to the court at a hearing earlier in the week.

Joe Hedworth, for Hodgson, told the hearing there was little he could say about the offences as the defendant still denies committing them.

He presented four character testimonials to the court on behalf of the defendant, and added: "Before the convictions for these matters he had an entirely unblemished record."

"The verdicts of the jury have had a crushing and profound impact on the Hodgson family."

"The defendant, himself, is not of good health and suffers a number of medical problems."

Passing sentence, he told Hodgson: "I watched these two young women give evidence and heard them read out their victim impact statements to the court, both showing great courage and dignity in doing so."

"But, at some cost, it has caused them great distress."

"You could have pleaded guilty and spared these girls."

He added that both appear to have suffered "extreme psychological harm" as a result of Hodgson's offending.

Jailing him, with an added two-year licence period, he said Hodgson can only be released following the midpoint of the 23 year sentence, if the Parole Board considers it safe to do so.

Hodgson was also made subject of registration as a sex offender and a sexual harm prevention order, both indefinitely.



**CYGNET PATROL:** A concerned passer-by watches on as the swans take a rest

Pictures: DEBBIE WISE

## Is this a swan-way street?

IT was swan-way traffic for a North-East street yesterday. A mother and her babies, believed to have come from Darlington's Drinkfield Marsh, held up traffic in Whesoe Road and got residents and business owners in a bit of a flap. Phil Harburn, director of MT Print, helped guide the birds back in the direction of the nearby Marsh after they turned up outside his premises just after 10am.

"We were looking for a delivery and I looked outside and saw a lady at the gate trying to block it," he said. "The swans were just resting in our car park, sat down. "At first I just saw the two, but we opened the door and saw a little family of them all in a line. "The male was trying to walk off with them and our initial thought was to try to keep them from the busy road, but after speaking to

the RSPB they said we were better off letting them go, but try and guide them and if we had any problems, especially with traffic, ring the police. "The male, especially with having the little ones, was being quite protective," he said. "The little ones were getting tired and kept on sitting down and getting back up again." It is understood the birds also caused a hold up on Thursday.



**ON THE MOVE:** The swans take a stroll... with a bit of guidance from concerned residents

## Hairdressers offer free haircuts for the homeless

HAIRDRESSERS are to offer free haircuts to the homeless under a new scheme.

Community group Haircuts4Homeless, set up by veteran hairdresser Stewart Roberts, already operates elsewhere in the country and is now setting up its first sessions in the North-East.

Working with Durham Salvation Army and

hairdressing students from East Durham College, the group is setting up monthly events in Durham City.

Haircuts4Homeless founder Stewart Roberts added: "Homeless people have many challenges to face, one of them often being a low self-esteem."

"A haircut can have a great effect on someone, giving them a real boost."

"It's often way down on the list of a homeless person's priorities so the service proves to be very popular."

"One of people's basic rights is for them to feel good about themselves and this service can give that to people."

For more information on Haircuts4Homeless please visit the website at haircuts4homeless.com.



**TRIM:** East Durham College barbering students with Haircuts4Homeless team members, from left, Stewart Roberts and Lee Dixon, at the first Durham event