

yourcanterbury

NEWS IN BRIEF

## Police join with DVLA to remove untaxed cars

THE police have been clearing the district's streets of cars with no road tax.

Almost 50 cars and vans have been removed from the city and the surrounding area in the last two weeks.

The police worked with the city council and DVLA to trace and pick up the vehicles.

Police have also been doing roadside checks in the Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable areas to promote road safety and stop fly-tipping.

## Parking penalty waived after newspaper steps in

A PARKING enforcement firm has waived a fine following a story by Yourcanterbury.

Mrs Phyllida Edwards approached Yourcanterbury after Parking Eye, who police the Aldi car park in Canterbury, fined her £70 for a parking offence she insists she did not commit.

Mrs Edwards said: "Without the newspaper interceding for me I don't know what would have come of it. I may have ended up being fined hundreds of pounds."

## £500,000 award makes cycle paths go further

KENT'S new extended cycle route network is making excellent progress, according to the council.

New cycle paths have been built through Reculver Country Park and around Bishopstone Glen in Beltinge, as part of the Oyster Bay Trail.

This route will link Reculver and Whitstable, and connect with the Viking Coastal Trail around Thanet and the Crab and Winkle Way to Canterbury.

The paths have been built following a £500,000 award from Sustrans.

## Recycle your old books and pick up a new read

AN environmental charity is hosting two books swaps in Whitstable.

The first swap is at the Duke of Cumberland at 8pm on Monday, July 13. The second is for children's books and runs from 10-11am at the Whistlestop Restaurant on Tuesday, July 21.

Transition Town Whitstable organised the free events.

# Martin's battle an inspiration to pupils

BY JENNY ARMSTRONG

AT 17, Martin Hopley was told by doctors he only had 10 months to live following a series of unsuccessful operations to treat a large brain tumour.

But following a miraculous, scientifically-unexplained remission Martin, now aged 30, has devoted his life to inspiring others to make the most of the time they've got.

Last week he visited Barton Court Grammar School to tell his story and extol the virtues of thinking positively.

The talk had a profound effect on students.

Christine, 17, a Barton Court student, said: "I thought the talk was inspirational. I want to get out there now and do something with my life."

Martin's story started when he was 14, and he began to get severe headaches and nausea.

One day he passed out and woke up in the John Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford. He was told he had a tumour which was preventing fluid from leaving his brain.

The schoolboy had a valve inserted in his head which cleared the fluid, but this was repeatedly rejected, so he had to have multiple operations to replace it.

He sat one of his GCSE exams just 48 hours after one such procedure, with stitches still in his head.

Then at 16 he was told he had to have surgery to remove the tumour, facing a one-in-three chance of becoming severely disabled, or not waking up at all.

The surgery and subsequent radiotherapy left him with severe double vision, impaired hearing in his left ear and short-term memory loss. He also had to re-learn to walk.

Then he was told the operation had not worked, and he only had 10 months to live.

Martin said: "At 17 my family, my friends, everything I wanted to be, was stolen from me. I became the loneliest person in the world and quite frankly it broke me."

But when everything seemed as bad as it could be, he did not give up.

He said: "If conventional medicine couldn't help me I would try unconventional medicine."

"I thought, what's the worst that could happen? I would die? Oh well, I was going to die anyway." He called a herbalist who told him to stop eating rubbish, become a vegan, and start



THINK POSITIVE: Pupils at Barton Court school listen as Martin Hopley encourages them to live life to the full

being happy. Despite the odds, the tumour shrank. One day it could grow again and kill him, but for now he is doing well.

The talk was part of a day organised by the school to help students make choices about their lives after school. Mr Hopley spoke to two sixth-form groups, but had also presented the same talk to a group of 14 to 15-year olds earlier in the year.

Remarkably, Mr Hopley does the talks to give something back.

He said: "I'm living on benefits. I feel it is better doing something useful for society than sitting on my backside living off the state. And I think the kids get something from it too."

"Nothing has changed. I'm still going to die. But by getting over the fact that I'm not immortal, I have been able to get on with my life and do something amazing with it."

"Barton Court are rather unique and think in very different ways to many schools. It's not easy and some people think it's a risk to invite someone to talk to their pupils about death. Barton Court's vision is a credit to their high standards."

Mr Hopley now enjoys travelling around Japan, and has learned Japanese. He is also a published author, currently writing a novel.



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