

NEWSFILE

Courses offer a fresh start

THERE is a chance to make a fresh start with Swarthmore Adult Education Centre this autumn.

The centre in Little Woodhouse, Leeds, can help you build your confidence, improve your basic skills, teach you home maintenance or encourage you to support others.

The new learning programme also offers the chance to have a go at complementary healing, aromatherapy, T'ai Chi, life drawing, pottery and calligraphy.

Call in at the centre or phone 0113 2432210.

College holds summer club

HARROGATE College is holding a children's summer club until September 1 based at the Hornbeam Park Campus

The club, for children aged four to 11, will be open from 8.30am until 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

Prices are £14 per day, £8 for a half-day and £1.80 per hour. Call Emma Parker on 01423 879466.

Ramblers' new boardwalk

MEMBERS of the Ramblers Association from across Rydale and York area have joined forces with council chiefs to build a boardwalk on a public footpath close to the River Derwent.

The path runs between Kirkham Bridge and Howsham Bridge and passes through the River Derwent Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Find a lawyer

A PUBLIC awareness campaign designed to help people find a personal injury lawyer has generated overwhelming interest from libraries and citizens' advice bureaux.

More than 30 people have contacted the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers in a few weeks after it issued libraries and CABs with leaflets and posters.

Breast aware

A NEW breast awareness leaflet has been produced by a national charity, Breast Cancer Care. It has been updated to ensure that men and women are informed about what is normal and what changes to look for.

Bodyguard passes on his skills to disabled

BY BRUCE SMITH

A MARTIAL arts bodyguard who once taught prostitutes self-defence in Hamburg's Reeperbahn has been helping to give disabled Yorkshiremen new independence.

Bremen-born Robert Kaiser has been teaching basic "self protection" techniques to a dozen or more severely disabled people at a Leeds Council training centre.

An exponent of a range of defence systems including Aikido, Ju-Jitsu and Wingchun, the 31-year-old German started learning as a 17-year-old.

For years he worked as a doorman on clubs in Hamburg's famous red light district where violence against prostitutes and other women was common. Mr Kaiser was highly regarded for his skills at dealing efficiently with aggressors and began giving lessons in self-defence to the girls in his off-duty hours.

Later he worked as a bodyguard for

businessmen in Germany, France and Spain.

But it was romance with his Bradford-born girlfriend whom he met while holidaying in Edinburgh in 1995 that finally brought him to England and a job as gymnasium manager at the Harefield Hall Hotel, Pateley Bridge, two years ago.

Today, he holds a Sports Science and Health degree from his hometown university of Bremen and expects to graduate from the Institute of Bodyguards in Cheltenham later this year.

Earlier this year Mr Kaiser was approached to launch the course for a group of disabled men. Shocked to hear how disabled people could be victims of assault, he was eager to help.

Effective

"My research took me quite a while, because I knew that my students would have different kinds of disability and I knew that every single strike or kick I would teach would have to be absolutely effective," he said. "A disabled person cannot give an attacker a second chance."

"It is very similar to the self-protection style I teach women. If a woman or a disabled person uses a defence technique which does not work, the attacker will become more aggressive, more violent and cruel and there is the extreme risk that the attacker gets completely out of control."

"I could not believe what these people told me. I could not believe that there are idiots around who really attack physically disabled people in such a disgusting way."

One student described how he had been pushed onto a railtrack in his wheelchair as a joke.

Mr Kaiser's students have included a number confined to wheelchairs, a blind person and one unable to speak who was helped by a fellow student using sign language.

Over the 12-week one-day course both students and instructors learned from each other.

"They were very friendly and



● DEFENCE TIPS: Left, some of the disabled people to whom Robert Kaiser, above, teaches self protection. PICTURES: CLAIRE LIM

made me feel very welcome. I will miss working with them very much," said Mr Kaiser.

He advised them on self-defence within the law, the need for them to have confidence in their abilities and the need to be aware and spot "pre-attack indicators".

He also included hints on pressure, strike and vulnerability points and how to halt an attack with one strike as taught in the Japanese Wingchun system.

Deterrent

He realised that for these students his "street" sense gained as a doorman was a vital ingredient.

One student is 37-year-old Simon Fisher, from Yeadon, who has

severe co-ordination problems resulting from a complication of meningitis suffered as a 12-year-old and a subsequent accident.

"It is a very bad thing for a disabled person to be attacked and learning something like this can act as a deterrent," he said. "I have learned quite a lot."

A council spokesman said: "The self defence - self-confidence course held at Shire View Centre has been a resounding success, thoroughly enjoyed by the people who attended."

"The course was tailor made to suit individual needs and physical ability. We hope that this will be the first of many courses that encourage independence and boost self-esteem."



Minister studies city's traffic plans

AUSTRALIAN Government minister Diana Laidlaw has been in Leeds to see some of the city's innovative transport schemes.

Ms Laidlaw, whose brief includes transport and urban planning, saw the guided bus system in Scott Hall Road before going on to the car-share lane in Stanningley Road.

Her tour ended in Briggate to see how pedestrianisation had helped transform the street which is now dubbed the "Knightsbridge of the North".

Briggate is to undergo more improvements when a £2.5m refurbishment programme

starts next year.

Coun Elizabeth Minkin, Leeds City Council executive councillor with responsibility for transport, said: "Leeds and the South Australian capital Adelaide both have an international reputation for pioneering innovative and successful transport schemes."

"This visit will allow us to share some of the expertise we have built up over the last decade."

Ms Laidlaw said: "I am keen to learn how other cities are addressing public transport as a viable and attractive alternative to the car."

PC charged with stealing £10 note

A WEST YORKSHIRE police officer has gone on trial accused of stealing a £10 note from a purse which was handed in as lost property.

PC Steven Sheard, 28, is alleged to have stolen the money after two 12-year-old boys discovered the purse in a Castleford street 16 months ago.

A jury at Bradford Crown Court heard how the youngsters

found the purse and handed it in at Castleford police station.

Prosecutor Michael O'Neill said the boys alleged that there had been two £10 notes together with some coins in the purse, but when they went back to claim the money some weeks later they found that the purse only had one tenner still inside.

Sheard, who was the officer on duty at Castleford police sta-

tion when the purse was handed in, later claimed that he had not properly completed the lost property documentation at the time because he was too busy.

Under-cross examination by the officer's barrister one of the youngsters denied that he had taken the £10 himself before handing the purse in at the police station.

Proceeding