

News

Newsdesk ☎ 01603 772443

Warning after thefts from cars

Motorists are being warned to be vigilant after a spate of thefts from cars.

Police have now increased patrols in and around Happisburgh, Lessingham and Sutton near Stalham, and warned motorists to remove valuables from vehicles and ensure they are secure. In one theft, in The Street, Lessingham, on

Friday, April 30, the victim had left his car unlocked on the driveway.

In another incident, which also took place on Friday, thieves smashed the front window of an MG ZR in North Walsham Road, Happisburgh, and stole a wallet. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Stalham police team on 0845 456 4567.

Hopton villagers help raise the roof

Villagers in Hopton, near Great Yarmouth, have celebrated an important landmark in the building of their village hall with the completion of the roof.

The £700,000 project has been funded by grants from various organisations, including the Big Lottery, Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd and Yarmouth Borough Council, with

contributions from local businesses, residents and the parish council.

It will provide facilities for residents and the wider community with a range of activities including educational courses, sporting activities, children's groups and dances.

Completion of the building is due towards the end of August. For bookings, contact Julie McNair on 01502 730110.

Broads trip nearly claimed my life

A relaxing holiday on the Norfolk Broads turned out to be a gruesome near-death experience for one man who had to have half his face reconstructed after a freak accident.

Father-of-four Craig Decent had his left eye totally smashed and bones in his face broken as he operated a winch on the sunroof of a motor cruiser.

The 49-year-old was airlifted to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and within hours he was undergoing some of the most radical medical work attempted in the UK.

Mr Decent's injuries were so severe – with the bones around his eyes completely shattered – surgeons had to make an incision on the top of his head and then peel back the flesh from his face in order to work on his eye socket and cheekbone.

Mr Decent, who lives in Calvert in Buckinghamshire, was with his family on the boat when the accident happened in 2000. He said: "It was a glorious day and I was attempting to open the sunroof using a winch to make the most of the sunshine.

"As I attempted to wind back the roof it suddenly came hurtling back towards me. Before I could move out of the way it trapped my head and smashed it against the winch."

A team of surgeons led by Bijan Beigi, attempted to save his eye, but it was so damaged that it had to be replaced with an artificial one.

Mr Beigi said: "We thought we could save the part of Craig's face that had

Have you got a health story?

Contact Sarah Hall on 01603 772426 or email sarah.hall2@archant.co.uk



Traumatic: Craig Decent, who had to have his face reconstructed at the N&N a few years ago following a freak boating accident.

been crushed, even though it was in a terrible state.

"The accident had annihilated significant parts of it and reconstruction was essential."

It was decided to peel back the skin of Craig's face, which is dangerous "every step of the way".

Mr Beigi said: "It might sound relatively straightforward, but there are muscles and nerves beneath the skin which need taking into account.

"Unless the operation was done perfectly, there was a risk of paralysis on at least a part of his face and also the danger of infection and lasting scarring."

Mr Beigi said: "It was like peeling a banana, which is a reasonable analogy, but it was obviously a much more difficult process and frankly, a bit weird too."

The team used pins, plates, screws and wire mesh to reconstruct the shattered eye socket and

cheekbone before the facial skin was lowered back into place and stapled back on to Craig's skull to allow the healing process to begin.

One false move or a millimetre of inaccuracy could have resulted in a wide range of problems for Mr Decent, including loss of hair to paralysis.

Fortunately, the operation was a total success and Mr Decent barely shows any physical signs of his injuries or the pioneering operation he endured. He said: "Mr Beigi and his team performed a miracle, for which I will always be grateful.

"Without their skill and application I would probably have suffered permanent disfigurement." → **Mr Decent's story will be told on Monday, May 17, in a new series of Bizarre ER on BBC3 at 10.30pm.**

Sarah Hall
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RAF officers' cycle ride for church

A pair of long serving RAF officers will be powering their way to Great Yarmouth on Saturday to raise more than £750 in aid of the town's St Nicholas Church.

Squadron Leader Steve Willis and Flying Officer John Harrison will be cycling 125 miles from their base at RAF Wyton, in Cambridgeshire, to the doors of St Nicholas Church in 10 hours.

The officers, who have both been in the RAF for 19 years, are setting out on the longest bike rides of their lives because Sdn Ldr Willis's father-in-law, Colin Smith, is involved in the St Nicholas Church Preservation Trust fundraising group.

Mr Smith said his son-in-law got involved

after he saw a picture of the 12th century church's organ and described it as 'awesome' and then decided to do something to help restore it and other parts of the towering building.

Although Sdn Ldr Willis has taken part in triathlons he has never cycled 125 miles in one day.

The officers' route is through Ely, Downham Market, Norwich and Acle and they hope to arrive at St Nicholas Church at 4pm.

They will be welcomed by the mayor of Yarmouth Tony Smith and a guard of honour from the town's 221 air cadet squadron.

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