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National Parks Ben's 'inspiration'



CELEBRITY GUEST: Television presenter Ben Fogle, third from left, with David Butterworth, left, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's chief executive, Government minister Huw Irranca-Davies, and Nurjahan Ali Arobi, of the Mosaic project
Picture: DEBBIE ALLEN

ADVENTURER and TV presenter Ben Fogle has taken time out to visit the Yorkshire Dales. Mr Fogle - who has raced across the Sahara, rowed the Atlantic Ocean in 49 days and walked to the South Pole - was accompanied by Huw Irranca-Davies, the

Government minister responsible for National Parks. The visit was to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. The pair also visited the Dales Countryside Museum, in Hawes, for

the launch of the third phase of the Mosaic project, which aims to engage ethnic minorities with the National Parks. Mr Fogle, who is president of the Campaign for National Parks, said: "Going to the countryside inspired me when I was a child,

and led me to pursue the adventures I enjoy now as an adult. "Mosaic is a fantastic project that works to make sure that everyone has that opportunity to experience and be amazed by the most spectacular landscapes in our country."

Chip robbery boy gets a 'last chance'

A TEENAGER who robbed another youth of a bag of chips at gunpoint was given a "last chance" yesterday.

The 15-year-old, from a village near Chester-le-Street, was ordered to wear an electronic tag and must remain indoors from 8pm until 6am for the next three months.

The incident happened outside a Chinese takeaway when a gang of youths approached the victim who was sitting with friends. The teenager, then aged 14, pointed an airgun at him, a court heard.

Michala Glass, prosecuting at Consett Youth Court, said: "The defendant stood and faced him, reached inside his jacket, pulled out a gun, pointed it at him and said, 'Give me your food'.

"He immediately handed over his chips. The boy left him and went back to his group and he (the victim) heard the gun being fired. "He felt a piece of metal skimming past his hand."

The court heard that the 17-year-old victim and two girls who were there were now wary about going out in the village in the evening.

The defendant admitted robbery at an earlier hearing.

Ben Nixon, mitigating, said his client had overcome the drug and alcohol problems he was experi-

encing at the time and not been in trouble since the incident on September 13, last year.

He said: "He did not intend to hurt the victim. He did it as a joke for the benefit of the people he was with. It was a foolish incident."

The court heard that the 15-year-old had previously been given a warning for carrying a knife and convicted of a carrying an offensive weapon after being caught with a knuckle-duster.

The teenager was warned by magistrates yesterday that he had come very close to being sent to a young offenders institution.

As well as wearing the tag, he was sentenced to a 12-month supervision order and a six month intensive surveillance supervision programme.

His grandmother, who appeared with him in court, was asked to pay £250 towards court costs.

Chairman of the bench Keith Parker said: "We are going to give you one last chance but I want to make this very clear to you.

"If you fail to take this chance there is only one place you are going to go."

Moves to improve health of children

HEALTHIER lives for young people is the main focus of a new report by County Durham and Darlington's Director of Public Health.

The annual report highlights the range of factors which affect the health and well-being of children and young people, and some of the work that is taking place, including:

- Identifying problems in families early and providing care and support to help reduce the risk to children and young people;
- Improving educational attainment by supporting a better early start in life, the highest possible educational achievement and promoting physical and emotional health;
- Ensuring safe and effective services are available for children and young people who are ill or disabled.

Dr Tricia Cresswell, executive director of public health for NHS County Durham and NHS Darlington, said: "Delivering healthier and better lives for children and young people requires effective partnership across all agencies and at all levels.

"Strategic and targeted action plans are further being developed and implemented to identify problems in early years to reduce risks and to help young people to be healthy and achieve at school and later in life."



DIABETIC: Steven Joseph Cook

Appeal over missing man

POLICE have renewed their appeal for help to find a diabetic man who vanished after a night out in Middlesbrough.

Steven Joseph Cook and his girlfriend returned home to Crossfell Road in the Berwick Hills area on Sunday morning, but he left shortly after 5.30am.

Police are growing increasingly concerned as the disappearance is out of character for the 29-year-old, a street warden for Middlesbrough Council.

His mother, Lyn Andrews, said yesterday: "He is a happy-go-lucky man and it is out of character for him to just disappear. We are all very worried about him, especially as he is an insulin dependent diabetic."

His colleagues have been searching the streets for him.

Mr Cook is 5ft 8in, medium build with short brown hair. Mr Cook, or anyone who has seen him or has any information, is asked to contact police on 01642-326326.



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