

Newham Recorder

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VOTING STARTS NEXT WEEK

See next week's paper for all the photographs and help us find a winner.



Irons are up and running

The Hammers got their season up and running with a good win, and captain Kevin Nolan warned of the battles ahead

» See Page 10



Drug dealer is jailed

A Beckton man has been jailed for five years for drug dealing after British Transport police mounted a major operation

» See Page 11



Man in two worlds...

This week the spotlight turns on a man who is clearly in two very different worlds

» See Pages 28 & 29

Births total now 'highest in UK'

Chiefs react to increase with special maternity helpline



■ PC Jez Briggs...injured but went back to the front line

Face of a hero

Heroic stories of inspirational individuals emerged this week as the fightback began against the disorder that hit Newham and the rest of the UK.

Police chiefs, MPs and Mayor Sir Robin Wales spoke of their pride our borough and of its heroes. The council and the Recorder also published pictures in paper and on our website of those responsible for the riots on the streets. See if you can help identify them.

» The fightback: See Pages 5,6,7,8,21, 23 and 32

by Kay Atwal
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» A record number of babies were born to mothers in Newham last year, continuing the trend for the district which now has the highest birth rate in the country.

Statistics from NHS East London and the City show there were 6,059 babies born at Newham University Hospital NHS Trust in the financial year 2010-2011.

The borough has a total fertility rate of 3.18. The average for England is 2.

Newham also tops the London boroughs for having the highest number of live births. In the same period in Ealing there were 5,861 and in Wandsworth there were 5,546.

Support for women

Rachel Flowers, Joint Director of Public Health in Newham for NHS East London and the City and the London Borough of Newham said: "Newham has the highest birth rate in London. The number of births at Newham University Hospital Trust were 6,059 for the 2010/11 financial year."

"In that same year it is estimated that the total number of births to women who live in Newham was 7,389 (this takes into account women who live in the borough but have their baby elsewhere).

"To support local women the NHS in Newham, last year, launched the Newham Maternity Helpline.

"This gives local people direct

access to a midwife from 10am to 8pm seven days a week by calling the Helpline number on (020) 8090 9999."

The Newham Maternity Helpline is part of a raft of initiatives to encourage local women to get their first health check with the Maternity Booking Centre at Newham University (NHS) Hospital Trust before they are 12 weeks pregnant.

Ms Flowers added: "The modernisation of Newham's maternity services has so far seen women being able to access maternity services freely and directly (regardless of GP registration).

"There has also been an increase in antenatal appointments and better recruitment and retention of midwives."

Last year, Newham University Hospital opened part of a new maternity complex at its Glen Road, Plaistow site which is due to be completed next year.

The new £17.5 million unit is designed to cope with 6,500 births a year...a thousand more than it could previously.

Delivered

As the unit delivered its first baby, Scott Johnston, head of midwifery at the hospital, said: "Newham has one of the country's youngest populations and this is a partial response as to why we have a higher birth rate than many places.

"Equally, Newham has one of the most diverse communities in the country and we know that for many cultures, multiple child birth and often at a younger age, are common."

Firefighters given a shock at blaze

Firefighters received a shock when they found a homeless man living in a waste disposal room that was on fire in Plaistow.

An appliance engine from Plaistow fire station went to the council facility in Prince Regent Lane at around 2am on Monday morning to deal with a small rubbish fire.

But once the smoke had cleared, they discovered a middle-aged man in the building.

And after speaking to him in detail they discovered that he was sleeping rough there.

The man did not need medical attention but the brigade informed the council so they could see if he needed any help.

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■ Jeremiah Sogunle and Kevin Rhys-Wright in Anchor House's music room

The man with a foothold in two worlds...

Kevin Rhys-Wright
Homeless charity volunteer

by Alistair Kleebauer
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Kevin Rhys-Wright shares the same preoccupations of many 26-year-olds. He's saving for his first home and applying for a master's degree.

His smartly-turned out appearance, eloquence and focused nature match his profession as well, working for Morgan Stanley's corporate services department in Canary Wharf.

But the fact we are meeting at Anchor House, a hostel and education centre for homeless people in Canning Town, is the first clue that Kevin doesn't fit any easy stereotypes about the corporate world.

Rebellious

Even though he is now a volunteer at the centre in Barking Road, 10 years ago he was on a path which he believes would soon have brought him through its doors for very different reasons.

He says: "When I was 16, I started to experiment with drink and drugs. It was almost like having two lives, one being academic and studious and then having a rebellious streak, going clubbing and sneaking out."

"The pressure to succeed and do better than my parents sent me off the rails."

"I ran away from home. The youngest of three

If everyone is giving to Cancer Research UK, there could be a hospice down the road which is getting shut down

Kevin Rhys-Wright

growing up in the family home in Stamford Hill, even his stable background wasn't enough to shelter Kevin from homelessness.

His defiant gesture turned into sofa-surfing, staying with friends and turning to hostels. It's an all too common experience in Newham, which has the highest homeless population in the UK.

Anchor House, for example, has 180 single homeless adults staying there every year.

Kevin says: "People think that just because you're

homeless you'll sleep in a urine-soaked corridor. I knew at 16 that I didn't want to sleep on the streets."

He classes his own period of homelessness as three weeks and used the help of Victim Support in Walthamstow to reconcile with his parents.

Struggle

But he is all too clear about how close he came, and how close anyone can come, to swapping a life of opportunity for one of daily struggle, saying: "I was quick to turn it around but it could have become three years. Anyone could end up that way."

"If Victim Support hadn't reached out, I would have more than likely ended up in Anchor House."

Following the reconciliation with his parents, Kevin began the process of getting his life back on track.

He was allowed to return to St Thomas More Catholic school in Wood Green to complete his qualifications.

This despite having another obstacle to overcome - having brachial palsy in his right arm, which means it has very limited movement.

He refuses to use that as an explanation for his brief period off the rails though. "I was just a demon child," he says with a laugh.

Explaining his disability, he adds: "I was a big baby and when I was born they had to dislocate my shoulder



■ Kevin Rhys-Wright outside Anchor House in Canning Town

Redevelopment Plans



■ An artist's impression of a redeveloped meeting room and courtyard in Anchor House

Anchor House's redevelopment plans include building a catering training facility, leisure and recreational areas and 25 self-contained "move-on" apartments which will be separate to the main building. They will help residents in

their transition from a hostel place to living independently. Appeals director Guy Insell said: "It is a high-risk time when someone is ready to leave. "This way, they will still have access to full support."

to get me out. I've always been disabled so I've always had an impatience of wanting to hurry up and better myself."

Teaching yourself to type 50 words a minute with just your left hand, for example, helps, as does a politics degree from Kingston University and a business management diploma from Brunel.

It led him to Morgan Stanley, following a spell at Clifford Chance, as well as to Anchor House, where he meets with six residents on a regular basis.

When we meet he is chatting with two residents, Nigel Miles, 44, and Jeremiah Sogunle, 32, and soon joins them in the centre's music room.

There is much for them to do, from playing pool to helping in the garden, but trustees admit the building is in need of refurbishment as soon as possible.

Established in 1962, the charity helped seafarers from the nearby docks who had fallen on hard times, hence the name.

It is now pursuing an ambitious fundraising programme to find £9.3million



to bring the current building up to scratch and to create new accommodation.

Kevin describes how he fits in: "It ranges vastly depending on what the residents' needs are."

"I meet with a 47-year-old who has special educational needs, he needs help with reading and writing and he is willing to persevere to get back into work."

"And there's a guy who's my age, we have an almost identical upbringing. He is of Sudanese origin, he went to university and did a fine art degree."

"It turns up different emotions. I can identify problems that support workers might not

have picked up on.

"The residents may have to go on a drug rehabilitation programme, need help filling out forms or CVs or finding out where to learn to drive."

It's a role he mirrors in his nine-to-five life, looking after Morgan Stanley's corporate clients, internal staff and visitors to their Cabot Place office.

Having experience of both worlds, what are his views on corporate social responsibility?

"I'm not getting political about Morgan Stanley but in all corporate businesses, there are set criteria of what charities they will give to and everyone gets to vote

[for a charity] but it's flawed," he says.

"If everyone is giving to Cancer Research UK, there could be a hospice down the road which is getting shut down. Anchor House is so close to Canary Wharf but they have it hard."

Kevin could be just the person to open the vital connections with east London's business district. An email he sends following the interview reveals he's got into the access course which will lead to his master's degree in social work at Goldsmiths.

So he looks destined to help others in much the same way he was helped a decade ago.

Celebrity Backers



EastEnders Barbara Windsor (second from left) with staff and residents at Anchor House in Canning Town

Anchor House's fundraising campaign has attracted a number of high-profile supporters including Shoreditch-born Barbara Windsor, former World Boxing champion Barry McGuigan and *Newsnight* presenter Jeremy Paxman, who visited this

month. Paxman describes Anchor House as, "the antidote to compassion fatigue." Kevin said: "If someone like Jeremy Paxman invests their time in Anchor House, it shows that it must be worthwhile."

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