

Local briefs

Electrical fault sparks blaze

A CAR was destroyed by a blaze at the weekend. The blue Vauxhall Corsa was gutted after the fire broke out at Birkdale Road in Dewsbury at 7.45pm on Saturday. The blaze is believed to have been caused by an electrical fault. A crew from Dewsbury Fire Station spent around 30 minutes at the scene.

Plea to farmers

THE RSPB is asking Yorkshire farmers to sign up for free bird surveys on their land. The Volunteer and Farmer Alliance are working in connection with the RSPB to create a bird hotspot map. The initiative aims to boost income, as the wildlife data can be used to bolster applications for wildlife-friendly farming grant schemes. To find out more information contact Geraldine Straker on 0191 233 4332 or via email on geraldine.straker@rspb.org.uk

Bicycle club

A GROUP of 11 'born again' cyclists embarked on a 16-mile journey. Led by ride manager John Radford and supported by Pete Ralph and Kevan Shuttleworth, the Kirklees Monthly Easy Riders explored Meltham, Helme and Honley. The group, which is aimed at new riders and 'people trying to get a little fitter', enjoyed coffee in Morrisons following the cycle.

Mailbag

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Charity meets

A MENTAL health charity is holding its annual meeting today. System to recovery, or S2R, will be holding the meeting at its town centre office, Revenue Chambers on St Peter's Street at 6pm. The Mental Health organisation has seen nearly 1,200 referrals in the past year and continues to work with Kirklees Council and NHS Kirklees. For more information visit www.s2r.org.uk

Outlane ramble

THIRTEEN members of the Huddersfield Healthy Life Ramblers Club faced the inclement weekend weather and walked from Swan Inn at Outlane via Carr Hall Lane, Stainland Dean, Moor Hey Lane and Helen Hill before returning to the Swan. The walk was led by David Crompton.

Bungee fun day

A FUNDRAISER for the New Children's Hospital in Leeds renal and liver appeal is taking place in Bradley next weekend. The High Park pub on Bradley Road will host a fun-day with a reverse bungee challenge. The fun takes place from 11am until 6pm on Sunday, October 16.

Baby joy turned to tragedy

Severe postnatal depression blamed after new mum stepped in front of a train



■ JUST LIKE HER MUM: Emily Bingley with her dad Chris. Right: Joe on her graduation day and, below, with Chris and Emily (S)

LITTLE Emily Bingley has the sparkling blue eyes, blonde hair and winning smile of her mother.

By KATIE GRANT
News Reporter
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But Chris Bingley, from Fartown, is determined his 18-month-old daughter will not suffer the same tragic fate as her mum, Joe. In April last year Joe – who was suffering from severe postnatal depression (PND) following Emily's birth – was killed instantly after she stepped in front of a train near Deighton railway station. With the inquest into Joe's death scheduled to start today, Chris has spoken exclusively to the Examiner about rebuilding his life and making plans for Emily's future. The widower is certain that his wife Joe took her own life because of severe PND and is worried because Emily is twice as likely to suffer from the condition if she decides to be a mother in the future. Chris, 43, said: "Every time I look at Emily I see Joe and it's so hard. "Emily looks so much like her mum – she's got the same sparkling blue eyes, blonde hair and smile. "As she grows older my key concern

is that Emily is at risk of PND because of the family history and I don't want to run the risk of the same thing. "What happened still hasn't sunk in properly because Joe and I had everything going for us. "There's this hard physical pain that feels like a broken heart. There are still many times when I cry myself to sleep. "I was a management consultant and Joe was a nurse. It was a job that fitted perfectly with her personality – loving and caring, capable and gregarious. "She was one of those people who seemed to move everyone she met. This was something that became apparent at her funeral where there was standing room only. The inquest to determine the circumstances of Joe's death and the quality of care she was given leading up to it, will be held at Bradford Coroners' Court starting today. Chris and the rest of Joe's family – including her parents Christine and Sam Smith from Mirfield – will have to

hear the details about when she was hit by a First Transpennine service from Hull to Manchester. Joe came from a loving family and had nursed her father through a life-threatening illness. Following her death, Chris's pain and grief developed into anger as he started to question the quality of care she was given in Kirklees for her severe PND. Chris believes Joe – who was a nurse for 20 years and trained at Huddersfield University – would still be here today if she had had more support from the local health trust. In a bid to increase awareness of the condition and improve support services in the UK, he gave up his job in finance to focus on the Joanne (Joe) Bingley Memorial Foundation he set up in his wife's memory. Chris, who was with Joe for 10 years after meeting her on a night out in Huddersfield, said: "I felt the mental health team had failed her so when the hospital trust did an internal review and concluded that they did nothing wrong I requested the strategic health authority carry out an independent investigation.

"This concluded with 21 recommendations for change that are being implemented across Yorkshire. It's so frustrating because if Joe had got the right treatment or I had been given the right information to help her more myself I think she'd be alive today." As Emily grows older Chris will have to decide on the right time to explain to his daughter what happened to her mother and the tragic way she died. He said: "She's started to talk now and is stringing sentences together. "She points to pictures of Joe and says 'mummy', but she's too young to understand." Chris wants to make sure that Emily understands Joe's condition and doesn't blame herself for the death. He and Joe, 39, were delighted when Emily was born in February, 2010. After a miscarriage and four years of trying to conceive they saw Emily as a "miracle baby". Chris said: "Joe was determined to do the right thing from the start and began breast-feeding immediately to ensure that Emily had the best start in life she could give her. "However, like a lot of women before her, Joe found that her plans to



breast-feed were not going well. It wasn't always easy and eventually the baby's weight began to drop. "She was persuaded to move to bottle feeding and although the baby started to put weight on and settle, Joe had now started to become depressed. Very quickly this developed into a very severe form of postnatal depression that can pose a threat to the life of both mother and baby as sufferers often feel suicidal." Chris has formed partnerships with other organisations and charities to form the Maternal Mental Health Alliance. The group aims to campaign for improvements to Perinatal Mental Health Care, and Huddersfield MP Barry Sheerman has offered support to Joe's charity and the 'Call to Action' campaign. Chris hopes Mr Sheerman will host a parliamentary meeting of MPs, members of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance and other key groups and individuals. For more information about the Joanne (Joe) Memorial Trust visit www.jobingleymemorialfoundation.org.uk



How to cope
ADVICE on Postnatal Depression from the Joanne (Joe) Bingley Memorial Trust. Half of mothers suffer from the baby blues after giving birth – feeling weepy and irritable and very tired. The baby blues should go after a few days. However, for some women they don't and it gets worse and they find it hard to cope and some have trouble bonding with their baby. When the blues develop into something more long lasting it is time to get help. PND affects around 10% of mothers in the UK. It is important to seek help as soon as you start to recognise that you have postnatal depression. Symptoms include low mood, feeling unable to cope and difficulty sleeping, but many women are not aware that they have the condition. In a small number of cases postnatal depression can develop into a life threatening illness called puerperal psychosis or postpartum psychosis which could threaten the life of both mother and baby. Although this illness is extremely rare it results in some extreme and dangerous behaviour and if you suspect that someone close to you is behaving in a manner that threatens the life of herself and her baby you should seek emergency assistance immediately.

Youngster injured in fire drama

A TEENAGER suffered severe burns after setting himself alight. By **BARRY GIBSON** News Reporter
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Paramedics, firefighters and police officers raced to the scene at Partridge Crescent in Thornhill, Dewsbury, at 9.50am on Saturday where they found the stricken 17-year-old. Peter May, watch manager at Dewsbury Fire Station, said: "I don't know if it was a suicide attempt or a cry for help. "I think some neighbours had seen him on fire and had managed to douse the flames with a hose. "When we got there he was being treated by paramedics on a seat in a garden. "They had got his clothes off and he had some wet towels round him," he added. "He seemed quite distressed and he was hurting from the burns he had suffered. "We helped the paramedics to cool his burns using burn pads. They're sterile pads with a gel which takes the heat away." The teenager was taken to Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield for treatment. Watch manager May said: "I understand that his injuries are severe, but not life-threatening." A specialist fire investigator is looking into the incident.

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