



# KENT ON SUNDAY

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IT'S WHAT SUNDAYS ARE ALL ABOUT

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INSIDE SPORT THIS WEEK

## UNREST AT ST LAWRENCE

Kent trio **JAMES TREDWELL, DARREN STEVENS** and **MARTIN VAN JAARSVELD** on the impact felt after the departure of Amjad Khan

# BOOZE PUTS MORE OF US IN HOSPITAL

## Figures show drink-related admissions have rocketed

THE number of people being admitted to Kent's hospitals as a result of alcohol has risen year on year since 2005, new figures have revealed.

By **MARLIKE COX**

authority was nine per cent in 2008-9. Professor Mark Bellis, director of the North West Public Health Observatory, which prepared the figures, said the English death toll from alcohol now exceeds 15,500 every year.

He said: "It is time to recognise we are not a population of responsible drinkers with just a handful of irresponsible individuals ruining it for others."

### Violent crime

"Over one-in-four drinkers exceed weekly limits according to national surveys and alcohol sales figures suggest the number is much higher."

The study contained 24 alcohol-related indicators for each NHS trust, including binge-drinking, hospital admissions, deaths and treatment for alcohol misuse.

Despite the continuing rise in hospital admissions, the research showed that at Kent's three NHS trusts almost all of the 24 measures looked at by the North West Public Health Observatory were "significantly bet-

ter" than the national average. Broken down into districts, the indicators also revealed better than average results.

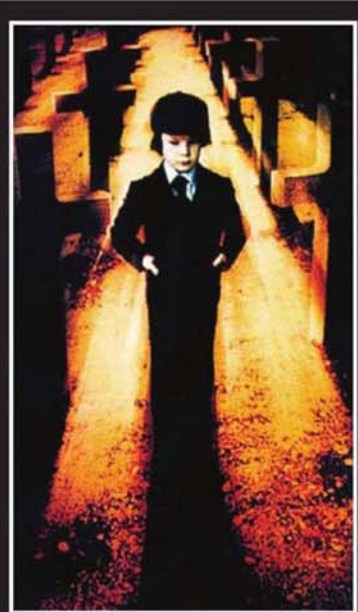
The exception was Thanet - which has some of the most deprived wards in the county and a life-expectancy 17 years less than those in some other parts of Kent - where most indicators, including alcohol-related violent crime and alcohol-linked deaths, were significantly worse than the national average.

Stephen Cocharne, NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent's public health specialist, said although the overall figures for alcohol-related health problems showed improvement in east Kent compared to the rest of the UK, there were still some local 'hot spots' where alcohol misuse continued to pose problems.

He said: "We are working in partnership with Kent County Council, GPs, East Kent Hospitals University Foundation NHS Trust and other agencies, including Kent Police and Kent Drug and Alcohol Action Team to address these concerns."

The Trust has launched a project

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## 666's a good Omen for Damien actor

SEE INSIDE FOR FULL STORY



## Stones talks nearing end

THE TAKEOVER saga at Maidstone United appears to be nearing a conclusion after chairman Paul Bowden-Brown and shareholder Oliver Ash announced they had agreed terms. The Ryman Premier League club has been in limbo for several weeks while its long-term future has been decided.

Bowden-Brown has been Stones chairman since 1992, but is now ready to pass control to Ash, subject to the final contract and completion of financial and legal documents.

### Offer

The pair spent several weeks negotiating earlier this summer, but talks ended in July without an agreement.

It allowed an alternative offer by Lashings World XI Cricket Club to be made, only for the move to be ruled out with the club claiming it could not go through because it would break FA and Ryman League rules.

The collapse of the Lashings deal prompted the Stones shareholders to meet again earlier this month and they now appear to have found another way forward.

In a statement Bowden-Brown said: "It has taken hours of work to get us to this point. Heads of terms, subject to contract, were signed [on Wednesday]."

"Oliver and I are very close to a conclusion and we will inform everyone once we have finalised everything and agreed a takeover date."

Ash originally came on board in February 2008, when his company, Richmond Participations, invested £100,000 to buy a 25 per cent stake in the club.

If the takeover is finally completed then top of the agenda for the long-suffering Stones fans will be news on developments at the planned new ground at James Whatman Way. The club is renting Ashford's Homelands this season and have not played in the county town for more than two decades.

# 'Shape up or be loaned out'

## Hess threat to Gills players as poor early season form fails to improve

By **DAVID PRITCHARD**  
LEARN from your mistakes fast or face being loaned out - that's the threat hanging over some of Gillingham's players following a sluggish start to the campaign.

The Gills went into this weekend's clash with Shrewsbury Town winless from their first five games in League Two, their worst start to a league season for 11 years. The lowest point so far came with last Saturday's 5-4 defeat at Bury, when Gills boss Andy Hessenthaler told the players they should have been ashamed with their first-half performance.

### Crumbled

His main concern was over the inconsistency of the side's defence, which crumbled after conceding the first goal. After the game Hessenthaler threatened the squad's under-performing players with being loaned out if they did not improve.

He said: "The good teams and the best players are the ones that do it week to week. "We've not done that. It's harsh but if you're not going to learn quickly then you won't be in the team, simple as that, we've got to get players that are going to take it on board on the training ground."

"We've got players out injured, but unfortunately in defensive areas they are a bit longer term. What it might mean is again be a bit ruthless and put players on the loan list."

"We can't get players in until perhaps we've moved a couple of players on. That's how it's got to be, we've got to be honest with them."



Photo: ADY KERRY

The Gills boss made his squad watch a re-run of the Bury game before training on Thursday to emphasise his point.

One player who could watch without pressure was Dennis Oli, who only made his playing return in the reserves on Wednesday. The winger, who has been out since tearing a hamstring in July, scored twice in the 3-0 win against Brentford's second string.

The 26-year-old has been a frustrated spectator so far, but is not to be concerned by the team's early season form.

He said: "I'm not good at watching, it's frustrating because there's nothing I can do to affect the game. You feel for them when they're not getting results because we're like one big family."

"I'm sure we'll turn things round, I've been in the game long enough to know that the first five games doesn't mean anything."



RUTHLESS MOVE: Struggling Gills players like Josh Gowling face being loaned out, while injured striker Dennis Oli (above left) says the team will come good



RACE SETTERS: Louise Cook and Boumani the cheetah

## Rally driver left stunned as feline opponent purrs past

AS A rally driver, Louise Cook is used to speed, but even she was blown away by the raw pace of the animal kingdom in an unusual race last weekend.

The 22-year-old from Maidstone took on some of the world's fastest animals at Eagle Heights Wildlife Park in Eynford. Her Ford Fiesta was just quicker than a peregrine falcon over 150 metres, but was edged out by Boumani, a cheetah.

Cook said: "I am surprised we got as close as we did. The cheetah claws are really effective and on the slippery grass the rally car wheel spins, whilst the cheetah is just gone."

## Surgery threat to Camier's season

THE motorsport season may have come to a premature end for Leon Camier after the factory Aprilia rider underwent surgery on his broken wrist this week.

Camier flew to the UK for the operation on Wednesday before returning to his Andorra home, and he may not ride in the final two rounds of the World Superbike Championship. In a statement on his website, Camier said: "Surgery went really well and the team looking after me did a great job, I can't thank them enough. I'm looking forward to being back home and will be working on getting back to full fitness as soon as I can. Thanks again to everyone for their support and well wishes."

Camier sustained the injury at Germany's Nurburgring circuit last weekend, during qualifying ahead of the 11th round of the championship.

The Ashford-born rider went in full of confidence after securing a podium finish at Silverstone in the previous round, but his weekend was cut short when he crashed on the 21st practice lap of his 60-minute session.

Since winning the British Superbike Championship last year, the 24-year-old has gone from strength to strength on the world stage, securing three podiums prior to his Nurburgring accident.

He sits ninth in the championship standings with two rounds remaining, although he is now unable to finish any higher than fifth in his debut season. The crash, which came out of the blue with no other rider in the immediate vicinity, left Camier with a gashed knee, but it is the wrist damage which threatens the rest of his campaign. Although injuries to the scaphoid bone are relatively common for motorcycle riders, the limited blood flow slows recovery time significantly.

The penultimate round of the season takes place at Imola, Italy, on September 26 - giving Camier a fortnight to prepare, should he opt to make a quick return.

He has yet to sign a deal for next season although the indications are that he will remain at Aprilia alongside Max Biaggi, who leads the championship by 62 points.



WRIST SURGERY: Racer Leon Camier