

News in brief

Christmas dinner on Kilimanjaro

NORTH YORKSHIRE: Intrepid Tom Bottomley is planning on eating a full Christmas dinner on Africa's highest mountain.

Subject to weather conditions, 37-year-old Tom, who hails from Runswick Bay, in the North York Moors, will eat at a camp just below the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro on Christmas Day, followed by a meal on Boxing Day at the very top – an altitude of over 19,300ft.

Tom will carry a custom-made table and chairs, together with candelabra, cutlery and white silk tablecloth.

He will dress formally for both dinners and enjoy meals which will include smoked turkey, sprouts, Christmas cake, cheese and port.

He hopes to raise £5,000 for Marie Curie Cancer Care. Charity spokesman Brian Curran said: "It never ceases to amaze me the lengths Tom will go to support the charity."

"And, while he is enjoying dinner on Kilimanjaro, he will be helping our nurses care for people living with cancer, over Christmas".

To support Tom visit www.just-giving.com/ChristmasOnKili.

Operatic link-up

YORK: The City Screen Cinema in York will join forces with the Metropolitan Opera in New York for a live satellite screening. A performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* will be broadcast in the cinema on December 30 at 6.30pm, using a live high-definition signal from America. The Metropolitan Opera's general manager Peter Gelb said: "The movie broadcasts provide a front row seat to the unique spectacle of live opera." City Screen head of digital development Marc John said he thought the broadcast would be "perfect for the Picturehouse audience". Tickets are available from www.picturehouses.co.uk or by phoning 08708 505703.

Mencap chairman plea

RYEDALE: Local Mencap chairman Mary McAfee, of Malton, is stepping down – and the search is on for her replacement. The Ryedale branch of the charity has 30 volunteers who help with fundraising and accompany people with learning difficulties on trips away from their family home. The post is unpaid – but "extremely rewarding". Anyone interested should phone Mary on 01653 698371.

Festive services

RYEDALE: The dates of Christmas services in the Street parishes near Malton have been announced. There will be crib services on Christmas Eve at 4pm at St Helen's in Amotherby, All Saints' in Hovingham and St Michael's in Barton. There will also be services at 4.15pm in All Saints', Slingsby and at 6pm in Coneythorpe Chapel. There will be Christmas Eve midnight masses starting at 11.30pm at All Saints' in Appleton-le-Street and All Saints' in Slingsby. And on Christmas Day, Scackleton Church will host Holy Communion at 9am, with a family worship in All Saints', Hovingham at 10.30am.

Toddler's killer illness 'miracle'



FAMILY DELIGHT: Katie Hornsby with toddler William Chidsey, Lewis Hornsby and Emlyn Chidsey, right
Picture: Nigel Holland

by Lucy Stephens

Health Reporter

CHRISTMAS is meant to be a happy time – but for one York family, it will be the "best ever" after they welcomed home their little toddler who has been battling life-threatening meningitis.

William Chidsey, who will celebrate his second birthday on Wednesday, had been fighting the illness in hospital for five weeks, two of them in intensive care.

Mum Katie Hornsby, 27, of Haxby, said: "Unfortunately, William got one of the worst cases of it."

"He's our little miracle. Staff in York did an amazing job, they saved his life."

"Normally, children who get what William got can lose their fingers and toes – or in the worst cases die."

"The NHS gets so much gyp on the news – but all the people doing hard work, they do such a good job."

Guardian angels
A campaign by **THE PRESS**
in association with **York Hospitals NHS**

William's fight for life started in November when he came down with a temperature one night and developed a rash the next day.

His mum performed the well-known "tumbler test" on her son – pressing down a glass to see if the marks faded – and when they did not he was taken to hospital by ambulance where he was given a shot of penicillin.

William was suffering from meningococcal septicaemia, which can kill if it is not diagnosed and treated fast.

He was taken to Leeds General

Infirmery's intensive care unit where he was put on a ventilator, dialysis machine and brain monitor, along with antibiotics and morphine.

The illness gave him sores on his body, some measuring up to two centimetres deep.

But slowly, William's condition improved and he was sent back to York Hospital and finally arrived home this week.

The illness has left him so weak he still cannot walk, but his family are hopeful he will make a full recovery.

Now they are urging other people to back The Press Guardian Angels appeal for high-dependency facilities in York for other children – with the aim that other families might not have to go through the hell of travelling away from the city when their child is ill.

His grandad, Tim Hornsby, who runs Fibbers live music venue, is putting on a special benefit night on January 20 to raise money for our

William has an Olympic future

WILLIAM has shown true fighting spirit in beating off his life-threatening illness – and he is not yet two.

He will reach his second birthday shortly before Christmas, on December 20.

And because he was born on that date in the year Britain learned that London was to host the 2012 Olympic Games, he will be one of the children chosen to take part in the opening ceremony.

campaign. It will feature members of the band Mostly Autumn, and all ticket sales will go to the appeal.

Tickets for the Fibbers event are available at the venue, on the website www.fibbers.co.uk, or by phoning 0870 9070 999.

'Government funding will not save post offices'

by Haydn Lewis

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DOZENS of post offices across York and North Yorkshire still face the axe despite fresh Government money.

Selby MP John Grogan is standing by claims made in The Press on Monday that up to 60 post offices could close across York and North Yorkshire despite an announced funding package of £1.7billion nation-

wide. Both York MP Hugh Bayley and Selby MP John Grogan have reacted to potential plans to close around 2,500 of the country's 14,000 post offices to help stem mounting losses.

Mr Grogan predicts the cuts could mean as many as 20 per cent of the post offices going from across York and North Yorkshire in the years ahead – or almost 60.

But Mr Bayley has said although some closures were "sadly inevitable" the

Government's plans would secure the long-term future of the Post Office.

Mr Grogan said: "It looks like it will be exactly as I predicted and that is hugely disappointing."

"This could mean as many as 60 post offices going in York and North Yorkshire."

"One thing I'm investigating is getting a parliamentary vote on the issue on which I would vote against."

In York, the number of

post offices had dropped from 25 in 1999 to 18 in 2005, and in the Vale of York from 68 to 49 while in Selby the number had gone up by one from 44 to 45 – the only one of seven districts to do so.

The Government yesterday announced an investment package worth up to £1.7 billion for the Post Office, designed to preserve the national network, and set it on a firm footing, after some "rationalisation".

A Royal Mail spokesman

said: "We will now take some time to consider the details of the Government's announcement to understand fully the potential impact on the future of the Post Office – and how the Government's proposals will be impacted on by the discussions on funding for the Royal Mail Group as a whole."

A consultation seeking views on the Government's proposals has now opened, with the last date for responses being March 8.