

## Stretching the point

HOYLAKE action man Jack Jones dropped in to Hoylake Cottage to tell residents about his 750-foot bungee jump.

Jack dressed as James Bond to re-enact a scene from *Golden Eye* when he leapt off the Verzasca Dam in Switzerland, the world's highest bungee launch.

He has raised more than £3,000 through sponsorship, and called in to Hoylake Cottage to chat to staff and residents about the challenge.

Jack, of Melrose Avenue, Hoylake, said: "It was the experience of a lifetime. I was quite calm about it – I was more concerned about looking the part and winning a bet that I would keep a straight face and wouldn't scream!"

All funds will go to the Hoylake Cottage Appeal, funding the development of new day care facilities for older people.

## Award hopes

WIRRAL Farmers' Market is a finalist in the BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards 2007.

This year – marking the 10th anniversary of the introduction of farmers' markets in the UK – a new award for Best Farmers Market has been added to the awards.

The awards ceremony will take place on Wednesday, November 28 in Birmingham.

Chairman of the independent judging panel is cookery writer and chef, Sophie

# Forensics tracking a Viking ancestry

## Volunteers take a DNA voyage into the past

By CLIFFORD BIRCHALL

**FORENSIC tools have taken the place of trowels as researchers unearth the North West's Viking past.**

History has come alive for them thanks to a special project in Wirral based on volunteers' DNA.

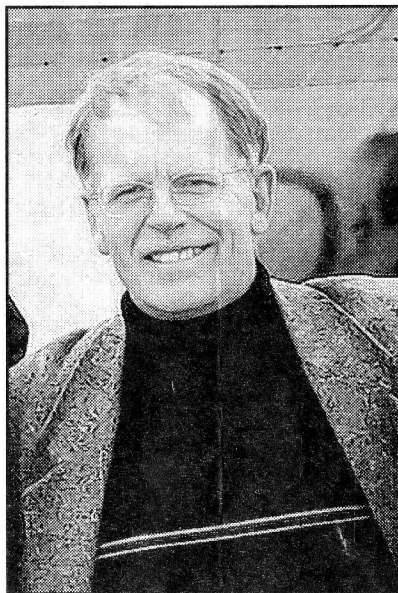
Guided by myth and a maze of Viking place names, they sought out men whose families had lived in West Lancashire or Wirral for generations – men with surnames dating back to the area before the 17th century.

A unique DNA marker – a Y-chromosomal haplotype to be precise – plots male family history as it hardly ever alters, even over hundreds of years.

Professor Stephen Harding, from the University of Nottingham, and Professor Mark Jobling of the University of Leicester, will reveal the results of their team's years of research at a special evening on Tuesday, November 27, in Knowsley.

These results are about to appear in the major scientific journal *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, published by Oxford University Press.

Professor Harding said: "In the North West of England, Scandinavian major



● Professor Stephen Harding Code NA

place names are most concentrated around the Wirral peninsula and West Lancashire.

"These two regions possess the only definite examples of the place name Thingwall (from Old Norse þing-völlr meaning Assembly Field) in England, indicating settlements of sufficient density and autonomy to warrant their own parliaments.

"Moreover, the intensity and distribution of minor place name elements at-

tests to the persistence of a Scandinavian-influenced dialect through the centuries that may reflect the intensity of the original settlement.

"This onomastic evidence is supported by archaeological discoveries such as jewellery, weaponry or treasure hoards at Meols, Crosby, and Cuerdale or Hiberno-Norse ring-headed crosses and hogback tombstones which reflect Scandinavian presence."

But Viking blood is still running strong in the veins too. DNA samples in both areas reveal this.

The researchers' chosen marker is a relatively frequent lineage in Norway, Shetland, Orkney and the Isle of Man, but rare in most mainland English and Welsh samples.

"The samples from men with old surnames from both West Lancashire and Wirral show a strong increase in the proportion of it with respect to their 'modern' counterparts and suggests a strong Scandinavian input into the population."

How strong will be revealed by Professors Harding and Jobling together with Judith Jesch, Professor of Viking Studies at the University of Nottingham, at the event hosted by the West Lancashire Heritage Association at 7pm at the David Lloyd Leisure Centre in Arbour Lane, Knowsley.

Tickets cost £6 and can be obtained from the West Lancashire Heritage Association by calling 01695 573350 or emailing patrickwaite@hotmail.co.uk

## On beat for the samba

WIRRAL School of Samba is holding a beginners' drumming course at Oldershaw School, Wallasey, on Monday, November 5 between 7- 9pm.

The course lasts for six weeks, all instruments will be provided and different samba styles and percussion skills will be taught.

Samba is particularly associated with carnival music from Rio De Janeiro and Bahia, the percussion is fun and relaxing and a great way to let off steam.

Contact Brian for details on 638 7628 or email [brian@wirral-samba.co.uk](mailto:brian@wirral-samba.co.uk)

## Club collects charitable sum

The Rotary Club of Bebington carried out a Hallowe'en charity collection at the ASDA store in Bromborough on Saturday, October 27.

In total, £330.92 was collected for which the club are very grateful as this will be used to support a range of local charities in the near future.

## Research plea

LOCAL researcher Heather Chapman is looking into the history of West Kirby Primary School, and is interested in hearing from past pupils.

Anyone with memories or photographs to share can contact her on 625 7013.