

Singing for her hero father

SOLDIER Edwin Thurgood signed up to fight for his country on the day the Second World War was declared.

And 70 years later, his daughter is set to sing in honour of him and his comrades.

Gateshead singer Julie Pendleton will perform at a concert raising funds for serving soldiers and veterans.

Salute Our Heroes, at the Sage Gateshead on September 19, marks the 70th anniversary of the conflict and will be specially dedicated to the heroes of the war.

Julie, a soloist with the popular Ravenswood Singers and Opera Live, attributes her operatic voice to her late father.

She said: "On September 3, 1939, at the age of 19, my father took off his apron at his job in the Co-op and declared, 'I have to go, I'm off to war'."

Edwin, who lived in Low Fell, Gateshead, saw action in North Africa and Italy as a soldier with the 8th Army.

As well as being a proud serving soldier, he excelled as a singer who was always entertaining the troops.

Julie said: "He had a marvellous tenor voice, likened by many to Mario Lanza. He even sang in front of the Army top brass."

"When he became ill he regularly received cards and good wishes from his old comrades."

"They never forgot him."

Road to close

PART of a major road will be closed overnight to allow construction of a new bridge to begin.

The A19 will be shut between Holystone and Killingworth, from 6pm on Saturday, September 5, until noon the next day.

The closure is taking place for work on the bridge at Castle Park, near Backworth, North Tyneside. Traffic will be diverted along the A10587, A186 and A189M and drivers are advised to allow extra time for their journeys.

Road users are advised to follow diversion routes, allow extra time for journeys and check traffic conditions before they travel.

John Sheerin, the Highways Agency's project manager said: "Setting up the bridge beams is a key part of the project, which we plan to finish before Christmas."

PICTURE: LLOYD WRIGHT www.chroniclelive.co.uk/buyaphoto ref: 00097261



SKY'S THE LIMIT: Graham Carter is using his football skills to coach other offenders in an effort to get them going straight

By **LAURA CAROE**

laura.caroe@ncjmedia.co.uk

HE WAS up to his neck in the ugly world of crime, but now he is helping others through the beautiful game.

Graham Carter was a hardened criminal, one of the most prolific in South Tyneside.

He spent 13 out of the last 15 years banged up for a variety of offences including violence, burglary and car theft.

The 32-year-old said: "The longest I stopped out was four weeks, and the shortest was three hours. I had never had any discipline all my life. It was just a game at the time."

But now it is a different game which rules his life - football.

And it has not only got him back on the straight and narrow, but, through a groundbreaking community coaching scheme, he is helping other criminals mend their ways.

When he was in the probation office he discovered the work carried out by Sports Universities North East England (SUNEE) Street League, who use sport to change the lives of disadvantaged people, and decided to give it a try.

Now he has been into Castington young offenders' institute and HMP Acklington, both in Northumberland, with the project to speak to inmates who are about to be released.

Graham, of Leighton Street, South Shields, said: "It's been the best thing I have ever done. After a couple of weeks I stepped out of line and I got severely told off and I realised it was for real."

"Any problems I have had, SUNEE Street League have supported me through it. I used to answer with my fists to any confrontation, but now I do it verbally."

"I had never had any encouragement before. Through their help and my own determination I have turned it around and I love life now. I was only existing before."

"People who knew me, from the estate I lived on, and when I went into the prisons to speak to inmates, could all see a massive change in me."

"At first I thought it was a stitch up as I had spent eight years in Acklington and I thought they



WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME: Graham Carter

Reformed crim has a whole new goal in life

would keep me in there!"

Cons also got the chance to play football to show them what the scheme would be like on outside.

Neil Hurren, of SUNEE, said: "Graham is a huge success story and the prisoners can relate to him. He is such an inspiration to others as he can show how he changed his life. We went into jails to work with staff and prisoners to make them aware of SUNEE Street League in the hope that when they are released we can help them break the cycle of crime."

SUNEE Street League are currently running sessions in Newcastle, Ashington, Durham, Darlington, Middlesbrough and Sunderland and are hoping to run the sessions in prisons across the region.

A Prison Service spokesperson said: "The Prison Service supports all sporting activity where possible. Taking part in sport promotes teamwork, self-confidence and discipline, all of which are vital in the rehabilitation of offenders."

"Schemes such as this help to ensure offenders, including those with drug and alcohol problems, get support after their release and do not re-offend."

Accident?

YOU NEED AN EXPERT SOLICITOR

- ✓ No cost to you whatsoever
- ✓ Keep 100% of your compensation



ACCREDITED Personal Injury



Rapid
SOLICITORS



Andrew Good, Partner

Work Accidents • Road Accidents • Slipping/Tripping • Cyclists/Motorcyclists

Newcastle: 0191 203 7060

LINES OPEN 24 HRS, 7 DAYS A WEEK • FREE HOME VISITS
CONSULTING OFFICES THROUGHOUT THE REGION