

www.  
Evening  
News 24

News  
Newsdesk ☎ 01603 772443

Today's poll

Should the walk-in centre at Dussindale be kept open?

Vote online at [www.eveningnews24.co.uk](http://www.eveningnews24.co.uk)

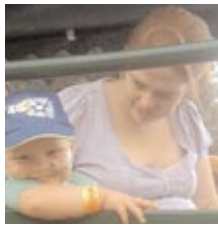
Yesterday's result

Would you like to see the transfer window scrapped?

Yes 72% No 28%

Top stories on the web

Relief as family finds home for dying boy



What A11 dualling would mean for Norwich



Cost of bus price rises revealed

Look no further!

Whether it's jobs, cars or homes, we've got the best local web sites.

jobs24

homes24

drive24

Sign up for the news

The Week

Sign up for The Week – the best of the Evening News straight to your inbox

Go to [www.eveningnews24.co.uk](http://www.eveningnews24.co.uk)

Don't miss out – add us to your favourites list today

INSIDE → → →

National and world news	6
Comment	8
Letters	10
Life matters	12/13
Share prices	14
Weather	14
Stacia Briggs	16
Personal announcements	18
TV & radio	19/20/29/30
Derek James	32
The Puzzler	34/35
The Small Ads	37-39
Sport	40-48



Puppet man takes his final bow for fans

He has entertained crowds for decades with his unique form of karaoke. But now Norwich's famous puppet man has taken his final bow, along with the toys who star alongside him. Street entertainer David Perry, whose act has made him a cult figure in the city and further afield, thanks to the internet, made his last appearance on the city's Haymarket on Saturday. Mr Perry claims he is taking a job in

London "working in the entertainment industry with young ladies". But he disappointed his fans when he said a Norwich comeback would be unlikely – although conceded he might put in an appearance in his new home town of Yarmouth on his 66th birthday on April 9. And despite Mr Perry's credit-crunch woes previously reported, he said Saturday had been his best day ever, taking £140 by 2pm and receiving dozens of cards from well-wishers. "It has been quite emotional, I've had lots of lovely kisses but it's time to

move on," he said. Mr Perry's act consists of dancing with a range of puppets while singing along to pop songs played on a portable karaoke machine. He first started performing in the mid-1980s, but in 1997 was forced to quit after officials stopped his incapacity benefit because he was earning money through busking. Since returning to his city centre pitch about three years ago, internet sites such as YouTube and Facebook have spread his fame further afield. PHOTO: ADRIAN JUDD

Passer-by saves pier from an arson attack

An eagle-eyed passer-by saved a 155-year-old Victorian pier from potential disaster this weekend when he spotted a small plume of smoke coming from the roof.

He saw the smoke coming from Yarmouth's Wellington Pier early on Saturday, and his call gave fire crews enough warning to stop the flames from spreading along the 700ft wooden structure.

The pier's lucky escape from a suspected arson attack comes just a month after Weston-super-Mare's Grand Pier was engulfed by fire.

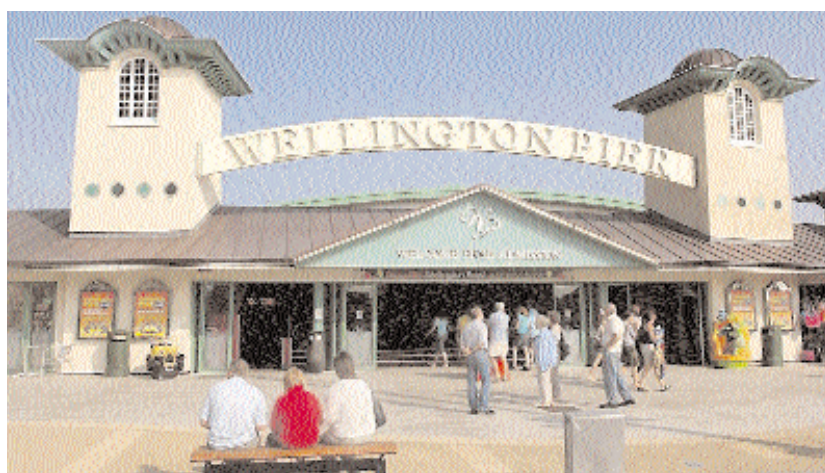
The pavilion on the grade I-listed pier on the Somerset coast, built in 1904, was destroyed within two hours by a fire which is believed to have started in a chip frier.

Yarmouth fire station manager John Kiernan said that without the early call from a concerned member of the public, the blaze on Saturday could have been much worse.

Four fire crews were called to the pier on Marine Parade just after 6.15am and had put out the fire within an hour. Mr Kiernan said: "A member of the public who was cutting some grass nearby called to report that there was smoke coming from the pier.

"Due to the nature of the building we sent four appliances straight out to attend. When they arrived, the crews found a small fire on a flat roof area and were able to put it out.

"We are full of praise for the member of the public for being so vigilant and for making the call. It



certainly saved us vital minutes and what ended up being a small fire could have been much, much worse."

He said that evidence was found to suggest the fire was started deliberately. "We suspect that a member of the public or persons unknown to us gained access to the roof area, gathered waste material near an air-conditioning duct and set fire to it in the hope the rest of the building would catch fire."

Wellington Pier was only the seventh to be built in the country and opened in 1853, costing £6,776 to build. It was bought by the Great Yarmouth Corporation in 1899 and the pavilion opened in July 1903.

The structure underwent a major £1.75m facelift after the 2003 summer season, which included a redeveloped frontage with shops, a booking office and a 20,000sq ft

family entertainment centre. The pier, which is the town's oldest, was taken over by comedian and television host Jim Davidson on a 99-year lease in April 1996 but was sold on after just five years following disputes with the council over subsidies.

It has been owned by Felixstowe-based company Family Amusements, which also runs the Britannia Pier and Winter Gardens in Yarmouth and Pettitts animal adventure park in Reedham, since 2001.

No one from Family Amusements was available to comment on the fire at the weekend. The cause of the fire is being investigated by police.

Staff reporter  
[eveningnews@archant.co.uk](mailto:eveningnews@archant.co.uk)

Health bosses considering if homes cause asthma attacks

→ From page 1

correlation between those figures and the number of people with health problems such as asthma.

Experts have linked the growth of mould in damp buildings with a higher risk of respiratory diseases, such as asthma, along with allergies and depression, plus more general symptoms such as fatigue, headaches and dizziness.

NHS Norfolk confirmed the hospital admissions for asthma in Norwich were above the regional average and Lucy Macleod, consultant in public health said: "It has been accepted for some time that the living environment is one of many factors that can affect the incidence of asthma and mould in damp houses can be an allergen which triggers or exacerbates the condition in some people.

"However, a number of other factors can cause the condition, not all of which have yet been identified. In some people, for example, perfume or cigarette smoke can trigger an attack."

Ian Gibson, Norwich North MP, welcomed the efforts to establish if bad housing was contributing to asthma cases in and around Norwich and Yarmouth.

He said: "There has long been a high number of people with asthma in Norwich and we have always wondered why, whether it was to do with pesticides, pollution, bedbugs or what, so it could be because of the homes they live in."

One person who knows only too well the difficulties asthma can present is Doreen Cochrane, from St Stephen's Square in Norwich, who was diagnosed with the condition in 2004.

She said: "My step-daughter lives in Lincolnshire in quite a damp house and I find that I'm worse there, I have to keep going outside for some fresh air. When I'm at her house I wheeze a lot more and can't get my breath. I do think the damp and lots of dust and dirt can make it worse."

Brenda Arthur, Norwich City Council's executive member for housing and adult service said she was aware of a link between bronchial conditions and poor quality housing.

She said: "It may be that GPs here are more vigilant but I'd certainly be interested to see the report and how it can be used to improve the houses that we have.

An interim report on the studies which the working group has carried out so far will be presented to the health overview and scrutiny committee on Thursday. Jacqueline Howe, chairman of the working party investigating the issue, said she would rather not comment until the report was completed.

Dan Grimmer  
[dan.grimmer@archant.co.uk](mailto:dan.grimmer@archant.co.uk)