Trade waste operation

FROM the end of March the council will cease to operate trade waste collection services in Middleton, affecting shops, offices and other commercial concerns.

Terry Trayler, Rochdale's waste collection manager said: "The decision to cease this service has been a very difficult one, but it is believed that we are in a position to best serve the needs of the borough by concentrating on providing an efficient and effective domestic collection service. This in turn allows specialist suppliers to concentrate on delivering the trade waste collection service taking full advantage of the synergy benefits available from providing a fully comprehensive service within geographical areas."

Companies affected have been told the council will negotiate with trade waste collection companies to ensure a seamless service is available.

DEREK and Jean prepare to dive on one of the club outings (above).

GETTING some practice (right). Jean and Scott do some training in the pool at one of the club meetings

Take a leaf out of Derek's book

by Mike Glendinning

IF YOU are thinking of spending your forthcoming retirement on the golf course , at the fishing lodge, or just pottering around the garden, why not take a leaf out of Derek Stansfield's book?

Derek is chairman of Middleton Sub Aqua Club and, at the age of 60, has just passed his open water scuba diving exam to become a fully-fledged instructor, despite only taking up the sport a couple of years ago.

The snorkelling sexagenarian said: "I had always liked being in the water – swimming and snorkelling, and as we had a holiday booked to visit our daughter in Australia, I thought how great it would be to dive down and see the Great Barrier Reef close up. I had also just gained a BA in Business Studies, so I suppose I was looking for another challenge."

Refusing to be dissuaded by his family and friends, Derek threw himself into his training and soon gained his Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) certificate, which allowed him to dive in Australia.

Once down under and underwater, Derek swam alongside giant barracuda, rays, giant turtles, dolphins and White Tip reef sharks. His wife Jean was also bitten by the scuba bug, and has just attained her Sport Diver grading, which means she can join Derek underwater on their return to Oz.

Jean said: "I had always snorkelled in the sea while Derek dived, but I was always a bit scared about swimming below the surface. I must have been wary of water coming down the snorkel tube. Then I had a few tries in a pool using Derek's scuba gear and I realised that, in many ways, it was actually easier than snorkelling."

ENJOYING his new role as an instructor, Derek Stansfield (centre) with wife Jean and the club's youngest diver Scott Ball/

Since Jean wanted to learn to dive at her own pace, the couple decided to join Middleton Sub Aqua Club. The club meets every Friday for training sessions at the town's leisure centre and anyone can be trained to dive in around 12 weeks.

Derek said: "The training methods help novices to learn at a pace that suits them, and the club is a very sociable one. Around half of us will be heading out to Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt in March to go diving in the Red Sea."

While Derek and Jean are two of the more senior members, the club's youngest diver is 15-year-old Scott Ball.

A rugby injury has confined Scott to pool diving only, but he intends to get back into open water to complete his Sport Diver training. Scott is a pupil at Cardinal Langley RC High School, and feels that his diving will stand him in good stead in his ambition to become a marine biologist.

Scott said: "The actual training is free, as the instructors give up their own time. It's done very professionally and safely and all the other members help out too."

Derek said: "We have around 25 members of all ages at Middleton Sub Aqua Club, and two of our members are close to achieving instructor status, which will increase our training capacity."

If you would like more information on Middleton Sub Aqua Club, or would like to book your first dive at the leisure centre, log onto www.geocities.com/middletonsac/ or contact John Hardman, on 0161 653 4779.

No plea entered on charge of damaging pub windows

A 23-YEAR-OLD man appeared at Rochdale Magistrates Court accused of damaging windows at the Who'd a'Thowt It pub and being involved in a public order incident.

Christopher Anthony Lyle, of Wood Street, entered no plea in respect of a charge of damaging two windows to the value of £300 at the pub in Wood Street, Middleton.

He denied the further charge of using threatening words and behaviour likely to cause fear of provocation of violence. The case was adjourned to a pre-trial review on 11 February.

Lyle was granted unconditional bail.

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