

## Stop thieves in their tracks

POLICE are offering cyclists the chance to stop thieves in their tracks with a free bike-marking event.

Officers from the Byker and Walker Neighbourhood Policing Team, in Newcastle's East End, will be security stamping cycles as well as providing advice on bike maintenance.

They will be also be on hand to give residents general crime prevention advice and answer any questions.

The bike marking will be held at the Byker Family Fun Day which takes place this Thursday between 11am and 3pm at St Lawrence Park.

The community event, which has been organised by the Byker Play and Youth Forum, will feature a range of activities including arts and crafts, sports, music workshops and face painting.

The event ties in with the force-wide campaign, Respect: it's a two-way street, which focuses on anti-social behaviour and highlights activities available to young people during the summer months.

PC Kelly Hetherington said: "Security marking your bike is a really good way to deter thieves.

"It also makes it easier for the bike to be reunited with its owner if it is stolen and then recovered.

"As well as the bike marking, we'll also be offering other security advice.

"By taking steps to ensure your bike is safe and secure you can reduce your risk of falling victim to a thief."

## Keep an eye on your purse

SHOPPERS are being warned to keep on eye on their belongings following a spate of purse thefts.

Police working in Newcastle city centre received a number of reports of purses being stolen from handbags over the last week.

Officers are now warning shoppers to be vigilant and ensure they keep their personal belongings safe and secure at all times.

Neighbourhood Sgt Helena Barron said: "We want to remind people to take a common-sense approach to looking after their purses.

"Don't leave valuables lying on top of an open bag where an opportunist thief can easily steal it.

"Purses should be kept zipped safely in their bag at all times, and they should keep a very close eye on it.

"I'd like to reassure people that the city centre is a safe place to shop and by working together we can keep it that way.

"That also includes others being vigilant and reporting any suspicious or unusual behaviour to police."

Shoppers and people living in Newcastle can contact Northumbria Police's Newcastle Central Neighbourhood Team, on 03456 043 043, ext. 69191, for advice or to report any suspicious activity they see.

## SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGE MAY BECOME ANNUAL FIXTURE

# Event for charity is set to run and run

By ROBERT WEATHERALL  
robert.weatherall@ncjmedia.co.uk

ORGANISERS of a gruelling charity run have vowed to make the event an annual challenge.

People dug deep into their pockets to support TV presenter Ben Shephard and a group of fitness fanatics who ran from Whitehaven to Tynemouth over five days, covering a marathon each day.

Although money is still being counted, organisers of the event estimate that a whopping £50,000 has been raised from the charity challenge.

And those who took part in the coast to coast run enjoyed it so much they are hoping to do it again.

The run was organised to support two charities – the Children's Heart Unit at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

One of those who helped organise the event and ran every mile of the route is Ivan Hollingsworth, whose son Seb underwent life saving heart treatment at the Freeman.

Ivan, 35, said: "We had a great time doing the run, so much so that we want to do it again.

"I have a little bit of a sore knee but I'm sure that will go soon."

Ivan managed to convince former GMTV presenter Ben to lend his support as they are life-long friends.

He said: "Ben was very willing to take part and use his fame to help attract publicity.

"I've not mentioned it to him yet but I'm going to ask him if he can do it again next year.

"Once he has settled into his new job with Sky I'll give him a call and see if he fancies it."

Ivan, Ben and County Durham man Andrew Roberts were joined on their cross country run at various stages by other members of the public.

Ivan, of North Tyneside, said: "I think we want to keep the same format.

"A core group of runners who will complete the whole distance and they are joined along part of the route.

"Doing it that way means we will attract



SUPPORT: TV star Ben Shephard

more people who can then decide if they just want to run a mile or spend a whole day with us."

While Ivan did the hard work pounding the roads and footpaths between the Irish and North seas, his wife Nadine was busy providing back up.

The 33-year-old helped to collect donations from the public and organised a glitzy charity ball at the Gateshead Hilton to celebrate the run.

The event was attended by more than 400 well-wishers who paid to attend the charity auction and evening of entertainment.

Nadine said: "The ball was a fantastic evening and really helped to increase the total raised.

"Ben hosted the evening overall but we also had fantastic support from Denise Welch who hosted the auction.

"The audience was told about the very serious work the two charities do and learned more about some of the youngsters who have been helped.

"There was a very serious sombre mood at that point but Denise came on stage and lightened proceedings with a joke.

"It was just what was needed to cheer people up and get them bidding."

Ivan added: "During the last mile when we were running into Tynemouth it was very emotional.

"Ben turned to me and said he couldn't remember the last time he cried but he had a couple of tears in his eyes."

To make a donation to the two charities, visit [www.Seb4chuf.org.uk](http://www.Seb4chuf.org.uk).



WORK: Ben Shephard running. Right, auctioned items, including a football signed by Sir Bobby Robson



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