

DEREHAM

Inquest hears former soldier died at home

A retired soldier found dead at his Dereham home just before Christmas had last spoken to his family in October, an inquest has heard.

Roy Coe, 61, was found at his home in Lesley Walk, on the Middlemarch Road estate in Toftwood, on December 22.

Yesterday's inquest heard that Mr Coe had had a long and impressive military career, serving all over the world including in Singapore, what was then East Pakistan, The Falkland Islands, Belgium and Berlin, and that he had been honoured for his military achievements. After leaving the army he went on to work at the library at the University of East Anglia.

Mr Coe's sister, Megan Hutchinson, told the inquest she had last spoken to Mr Coe on the telephone on October 2. She said she contacted the police on December 22 because she had been to Mr Coe's home and could see a pile of mail building up. The inquest heard a police officer then went to the home and found him.

Norfolk Coroner William Armstrong said the post-mortem examination had established the cause of death was unascertained. He said as there was no evidence of Mr Coe being alive since October, that there was no reason to believe there were any suspicious circumstances, and that it was very likely that Mr Coe had died from natural causes.

Mr Coe's other sister Rosie Parsons also attended yesterday's inquest.

OH YES WE ARE:
Pantomime dame **Richard Gauntlett** with **Carl Lamb**, of **Almary Green**. The firm will be sponsoring the **Theatre Royal** pantomime this **Christmas**.



NORWICH

Firm will be sponsoring city panto again

A local firm is sponsoring Norwich's 2012-2013 production of Aladdin at the Theatre Royal, as the long-standing dame Richard Gauntlett has been confirmed to star in the next production.

Norwich-based financial advisory firm Almary Green, will continue its links with the theatre, Aladdin being their second sponsored production following the success of Sleeping Beauty, showing until January 15.

Carl Lamb, founder and managing director of Almary Green, said: "For a company, it's not all about making money, but also about giving something back to the community, and helping people who are less fortunate than others."

Tickets are already being sold.

WEST NORFOLK

Men who caused animal fights are spared custody

Two Norfolk men who admitted causing animal fights walked free from court yesterday.

Luke James Byrne, 19, of Mill Houses, King's Lynn, admitted causing three animal fights by setting terriers on foxes and a rat caught in traps, when he appeared before King's Lynn magistrates in December.

Byrne also admitted possessing three dead wild birds - a heron, a cormorant and a buzzard.

Gamekeeper Christopher Carter, 49, of The Burrows, Gayton Thorpe, admitted one offence of causing an animal fight at the same hearing.

Jonathan Eales, prosecuting for the RSPCA, showed magistrates video footage taken on a mobile phone by Byrne of the fights, which saw dogs attacking animals trapped in snares.

The first clip showed a fight between Byrne's dog and rat and Byrne can be heard encouraging the dog, with shouts of: "Kill it, kill it."

Other videos showed Byrne's dog attacking a fox and a fight between one of Carter's dogs and a fox.

Mr Eales said the offences came to light after a woman bought the phone

By **CHRIS BISHOP**

from Byrne's parents on eBay and found one of the video clips.

Both men were raided by the RSPCA and police, who found pictures of three dead birds on a laptop at Byrne's address, along with video clips of the fights.

Mr Eales asked magistrates to consider depriving Carter of ownership of his dogs, which would then be re-homed by the RSPCA.

Mr Eales said the dog Byrne used appeared to be owned by a family member, but asked magistrates to consider whether or not to disqualify both men from owning animals.

James MacWhirter, representing Byrne, said he regretted his actions "with every fibre of his body".

In a letter handed to the bench, Byrne said: "The guilt I feel and the shame I have brought to myself and my family is massive."

Malcolm Savory, representing Carter, said his client had 15 character references and was a man with no previous convictions, who was of exemplary character.

"He is held in wide regard as a gamekeeper, as a family man, as a conservationist and a countryman," he said. "An essential part of a gamekeeper's job is the control of vermin and that includes foxes. It's an entirely legal procedure if done properly."

Mr Savory said the offence which Carter admitted had occurred because he had allowed an inexperienced dog off the leash alongside a more experienced animal, which was marking a snared fox.

He said Carter was "full of shame and self-disgust".

Byrne was given a four-month prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, and 150 hours' unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay £500 costs.

Carter was sentenced to eight weeks custody, suspended for 12 months, and ordered to do 150 hours' unpaid work.

Neither man was banned from keeping dogs because magistrates believed that the events were out of character and were unlikely to happen again.

NORTH NORFOLK

First woman chief executive for council



NEW ROLE:
Sheila Oxtoby will be the first woman chief executive of North Norfolk District Council.

Sheila Oxtoby, 42, has been appointed as the first woman chief executive of North Norfolk District Council where the senior management team is being slimmed down as part of cost-saving and efficiency measures.

Mrs Oxtoby, deputy chief executive since 2008, will replace Philip Burton, 57, who is taking early retirement after more than eight years in the post.

She will take up her new duties from the end of the month. The

restructure has seen chiefs posts reduced from five to three, aimed at saving the authority a minimum of £150,000. Mrs Oxtoby will be joined on the Corporate Leadership Team by strategic directors Steve Blatch, 42, and Nick Baker, 47.

The overhaul will now focus on 14 senior officers, with possible further job cuts ahead. The whole process will be completed by the end of March and implemented between April and July.

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