

## Bid to take drugs to prison

A CAREER criminal who arranged to smuggle mobile phones into Wellingborough Prison along with a £2,000 package of cannabis has been jailed for 42 months.

Jason Lawlor, aged 34, from Bermondsey, south London, was jailed at Northampton Crown Court on Friday after he admitted being part of a conspiracy to supply drugs into the category C prison. Recorder Sam Mainds said the sentence should start immediately and would run alongside an indeterminate sentence of eight years imposed at Croydon Crown Court for firearms offences last December.

He was recorded making phone calls from Wellingborough Prison in November 2004 to his 60-year-old girlfriend Gloria Tiano, also from Bermondsey, to arrange for a package to be delivered.

Tiano was convicted by a majority verdict for her part in the conspiracy. She was remanded in custody and will be sentenced later.

She travelled to the prison with a 188-gramme bar of cannabis in the boot of her car which was allegedly to be thrown over the 20ft prison walls by Kelly Scott, aged 30, of Brooke Street, Wellingborough.

He was unanimously acquitted by the jury after they accepted his claim to have agreed to go along with the drugs conspiracy but had no intention of going through with it.

Mr Scott failed to turn up and throw in the drugs which meant Tiano went ahead with the prison visit and was arrested as she was leaving. The drugs were later found in her car.

Gavin Gordon, aged 27, of Tulse Hill, south London, was convicted of conspiracy in his absence after jumping bail. He had been on the run for six months but turned up for the first day of his trial, only to be given bail and then disappearing again.

## Pensions protest

YOUNG public sector workers from Northamptonshire are expected to travel to the House of Commons today to lobby MPs over changes to the pensions scheme.

Members of Unison have planned to lobby MPs as part of its fight against proposed Government pension changes including increases to the retirement age.

# Very interesting, but why are you here?

GEORGE Galloway may be one of the best speakers in Parliament, but if his opponents want to flummox him they only need to ask about his one-man tour.

Because, although he had facts and figures for every subject from firefighters' pay to the number of dead on a given day in Iraq during his "show" at The Deco in Northampton, the one question he was not prepared for – or indeed prepared to answer at first – was the reason for his tour.

It took a young woman among the tiny 60-strong audience to ask the first question with a real edge to it: "Bearing in mind you said you will be standing down as an MP, is this tour for political reasons or self-inter-

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est?"

Mr Galloway, not sensing any intent from the audience thus far and so in full grin was left to bluster that he had "better things to do on a Saturday night" before moving swiftly on. To be fair, the answer stood out because it was the only time when the controversial Respect MP did not explore fully any issue he touched upon.

There can be few politicians outside the Cabinet who can talk with much authority on subjects as far reaching as Hamas and weapons of mass destruction without sounding as if

they have ideas above their station.

But Mr Galloway, it seemed, has been involved in all these issues and his first hand experience gave real weight to what was essentially a round-up of the political climate today.

There is nothing wrong with that of course, but it still begged the question: What was the show for?

Although it was engaging, the two-hour shuffling monologue, despite being on a small stage in the conference room of the theatre was not what one normally calls entertainment.

It was informative with an anti-New Labour bent, but there were no anecdotes about the time he met Saddam's son or the occasion

he faced down the American senate.

Perhaps we were wrong to expect as much.

After all, the former *Big Brother* contestant has maintained he went into the house for political reasons and not to become a showbiz star.

He certainly stuck to that on this evidence.

It seemed like the largely receptive audience had got what they came for so perhaps there is some mileage in a "politics-lite" tour such as this.

The reality of Gorgeous George's tour came later, however, when he had had time to think about it.

"There will be copies of my book to be signed afterwards. My kids have to eat."

Ah, life at the sharp end.



■ George Galloway



■ Plans are unveiled for the new trampolining facilities, from left are performance manager from British gymnastics John Beer, chief executive of Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs John Whitaker, trampolinists Penny Mitchel and Oluwa Adesina, MP Sally Keeble, and chairman of NAYC David Darby

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## Half a million pounds boost for trampolinists

THE Northamptonshire Trampoline Gymnastics Academy is set to receive first class facilities after being awarded a grant of nearly half a million pounds.

The academy, based at the Benham Sports Arena at Moulton Park, Northampton, will receive £445,110 from English Gymnastics and Sport England. The money will be used to improve and extend the centre and apply to become a training facility for the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

The plans will allow the academy and its partner, the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs, to build an extension, which will enable them to have 12 trampolines, a foam landing pit, a viewing gallery and disabled facilities.

The club can already boast Olympian Jaime Moore among its stars, with other British champions and a European Champion among the members and the aim

is to add to this achievement.

Head coach, Tracy Whitaker-Smith, who was a coach for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, said: "The new trampoline facility is key to the development of trampolining gymnastics in Northamptonshire and we are committed to making sure that the academy continues to provide access for the community."

One athlete hoping to make it to the 2012 games is 19-year-old Steve Walsh.

Mr Walsh, who has been trampolining since he was seven, trains with the academy.

He said: "It's just going to be a brilliant thing for the whole of Northamptonshire. They have about 900 members coming through the door every week.

"In terms of myself and the people I train with it's going to be fantastic. Hopefully I will be going to 2012. Beijing is just a little bit too soon for me."

Competitor's father calls on firms to sponsor son for the Vancouver games

# 'Back our bobsleighters for the next Olympics'

THE family of Northampton's Olympic bobsleighters Martin Wright are already looking forward to the next winter games only days after he competed in the Turin tournament.

The British four-man bobsleigh team, including the 31-year-old brakeman, whose parents live in Little Billing, finished the competition in 17th place, but scored one of the fastest times of the day with their final slide.

And the Royal Marine's family believe their son will be fighting for a medal at the next games in Vancouver and are appealing for businesses in the town to lend their support with sponsorship.

Father Leslie Wright said: "Not many people can say they have been to the Olympics. We are very proud of

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him. What they need now is sponsorship to help them prepare for the next games. There are lots of companies out there in Northampton who could get on board and support him. It is a very expensive sport, a bobsleigh costs around £25,000.

"With the right support, they will be up there in four years time."

He watched Friday and Saturday's competition on television with his wife Torina at their Little Billing Home.

The team eventually finished 17th, with German defending champion Andre Lange leading his team to victory, collecting his second medal of the games.

Mrs Wright added: "It was a fantastic achievement for Martin. It was very emotional watching him. I think in four years time they will be up there and competing for a medal."

And the couple's daughter-in-law, Martin's wife Kathleen, a Canadian bobsleighters, is already planning a family trip to 2010 games in Vancouver, Canada, her native country.

She watched the tournament trackside and said: "It was amazing. They pushed and drove brilliantly in the final race. The key to the bobsleigh is consistency but with the final run they showed everyone what they are capable of."

"Hopefully next time we will be able to go their together. I would love to compete in the Olympics in my own country."

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■ The British bobsleigh team including Martin Wright