

MOVE OVER, MADONNA! CLASSES ARE POPULAR WITH CHILDREN

HANDS UP IF YOU LOVE YOGA



PICTURE: MATT SHORT / 187316-3

FUN: Keeley Baigent and Honey Heskeymee-Preston

Madonna has been doing the lotus for years and Geri Halliwell is a well-known fan of saluting the sun - and now children are getting into the yoga craze.

Youngsters who go to Blossom Yoga classes, in Knighton, Leicester, say they cannot wait to hit the mats for an hour of bending and stretching every weekend.

Sessions have been running at Knighton Parish Centre since January, and organisers said yoga was as beneficial for children as it is for adults, improving posture, flexibility, co-ordination, concentration and general fitness.

Children at Saturday's session - the last before the summer holidays - said the best thing about the classes was having fun.

Honey Heskeymee-Preston, six, from Knighton, said: "It's fun and sometimes you have to be really quiet."

"We all like coming because it's good exercise."

by **GEMMA PELOW**

Maria Iliffe, seven, also from Knighton, said: "I like it when we do animal poses and games."

"Sometimes, we have to walk around in a circle and when she says 'do a pose' we have to do something like stick our leg out."

"You have to take your socks and your cardigan off so you don't get boiling hot."

Sant Flora, four, of Leicester's West End, said: "I like to do the games here."

"I like Incy Wincy Spider because you have to climb up the wall with your legs."

"We do aeroplanes and that's good as well, because you have to put your arms up."

"I like it because I have made friends."

Lily Pidgeon, three, from Birstall, said: "I like lying down and I like doing the lion pose."

There are two classes, one for three to seven-year-olds and one for children aged eight to 12.

Lily's mum, Lisa, who also takes

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Honey Heskeymee-Preston

son Jack, eight, to the sessions, said: "They both really enjoy it. They like doing the 'oms' at the end."

"It helps them to relax and concentrate. It's very calming and they sleep well afterwards."

Honey's mum, Sera, said the classes had helped with her daughter's asthma.

She said: "I wanted her to do something that would concentrate on her breathing, and also something that wasn't competitive."

"She used to go to ballet and I had to drag her there, but with yoga she loves putting on her comfy clothes and she's happy to be there."

"It's done in such a fun way that they don't realise it's proper exercise."

Jacinda Butterworth and Keeley Baigent, who set up Blossom Yoga last year, also teach it in schools and nurseries.

Following sessions at Glen Hills Primary School, in Glen Parva, head teacher Tim Sutcliffe commented on the Blossom Yoga website: "Feedback from children has been very positive and some of them have now taken up yoga as a regular hobby."

"The classes help to develop energy, strength and confidence and leave the children feeling re-energised, calm and ready to focus on learning with a clear mind."

Jacinda said: "We blend some aspects of adult yoga with games and stories."

"For some bits, with the older kids, we'll have funky music on, and the younger children have nursery rhymes and singing to make it really good fun."

A summer school takes place on July 31 and August 1.

For more details, call 07739 507960 or e-mail:

blossom@blossom-yoga.co.uk

Man who stabbed another over loan is jailed

A MAN who stabbed another in a row over a £145 loan has been jailed for seven-and-a-half years.

Deldar Majid (32) was found guilty at a recent trial of wounding with intent, in the early hours of July 15 last year.

The 23-year-old victim - who had angered Majid by asking for the repayment of a loan - suffered a wound to the right side of his abdomen and needed emergency treatment.

Passing sentence at Leicester Crown Court, Recorder Jonathan Gosling said: "This is a very grave offence."

"I'm quite sure you set out to use the knife on the victim. It was pure luck that the wound wasn't fatal."

"Only a lengthy prison sentence can be justified."

Majid, of Tarragon Road, off Western Boulevard, Leicester, had denied the charge, claiming he did not know the victim and had not borrowed money from him.

The victim told the court he had formerly been friends with the defendant, whom he knew from the Iraqi Kurdish community in Leicester.

He said he loaned Majid £145 the

year before the incident, and had not seen him for many months until they encountered each other at the Clock Tower, in the city centre, on the afternoon of July 14 last year.

He asked the defendant for the return of the cash and the defendant arranged to meet him later, but failed to show up.

The two men then met by chance at 3.30am the next day, in Narborough Road.

He said Majid, who was with a friend, appeared the worse for drink.

He was aggressive towards the vic-

tim and told him he was not getting his money back.

The defendant pushed the victim, who pushed him back.

Majid punched him and produced a blade, stabbing him in the right side.

During the trial, the victim told the court: "I started to become dizzy and I wanted to run away, but I fell over."

He went by taxi to hospital, where a build-up of fluid was drained from his abdominal cavity.

The wound was 3cm wide and penetrated the abdomen, but no major organs were affected and he recovered.

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