

Going back to track to thank my lifesavers

By SOPHIE EDWARDS
sophie.edwards@nqe.com

A RACING driver will return to the track where he nearly died to personally thank the ambulance team who saved his life.

Vince O'Connor, 59, from Basildon, stopped racing when he felt chest pain and went to see the track-side St John Ambulance crew, who quickly realised he was in trouble.

The team-of-five volunteers knew he was having a heart attack and wanted to transfer him to their on-site medical centre immediately.

Yet there was no time because Vince's condition suddenly deteriorated and he

fell unconscious and stopped breathing. The quick-thinking St John crew gave him CPR and administered two electric shocks, which restarted his heart, saving his life. Shortly afterwards, paramedics arrived to take him to Basildon Hospital, where he underwent heart surgery. Now, almost two months on, Vince will return to the scene of his near-death experience – the Rolling Thunder Show at Arena Essex Raceway in Purfleet – to

thank the crew in person.

He said: "I don't remember much about that evening. "But I do remember being with the St John team having chest pains.

"I would like to thank them all for everything they did. If I hadn't gone over to see them the outcome for me would have been very different."

Darren Bartholomew, 42, was one of five first-aid volunteers who treated Mr O'Connor.

He said: "It just goes to show first aid really can make the difference between a life saved and life lost.

"The St John volunteers all know Vince so it was great to be able to save him."



So grateful – Vince O'Connor

College promotes new term classes

SOUTH Essex College of Further and Higher Education has launched its summer campaign, outlining all the courses available in September for 16 to 19-year-olds.

The college has campuses in Basildon and Thurrock, while its third campus, in Southend, is currently undergoing a £2million renovation, with priority given to improving IT facilities, furniture and equipment.

Other areas being improved include libraries, classrooms, the refectory and student common areas.

Marketing and communications manager Jo Taylor said: "The quality of learning options for students is better than ever, which will help make their career plans a reality."

Staff will be on hand to talk to school leavers about their options at the Eastgate Shopping Centre, Basildon, from Monday, August 9, to Friday, August 13.

For more information on courses, visit www.southessex.ac.uk/bursting or call 0845 5212345.

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