



# Man jailed for violent burglary

By Janet Maitland

A 21-year-old man from Harrow has been sentenced to eight years in prison for a violent burglary in East Finchley.

At Patrick O'Leary's trial at Wood Green Crown Court in October, the court heard that on 20 February a 67-year-old woman was at her home in Huntingdon Road when she heard someone banging on the front door. As she went to the door it crashed open, three men barged in and two of them ran upstairs.

Fearing for her safety, the woman tried to escape through the front door, but the third man, O'Leary, grabbed her arm and slammed the door on it. He demanded to know where her valuables were kept and marched her upstairs where she was forced to hand over £600 in cash. O'Leary then stabbed her in the face with a screwdriver, very close to her eye, to get her to tell him where she kept her jewellery.

### To the rescue

The doorbell then rang. This prompted the burglars to make a run for it through the front door. But waiting on the doorstep were two concerned workmen,

who'd seen the men force their way into the house.

The workmen managed to grab hold of O'Leary and to keep holding on even though he stabbed one of them in the leg, shoulder and buttock with his screwdriver. The workmen only let go of him when the other two burglars came back also armed with screwdrivers.

### Praise for courage

O'Leary was subsequently arrested and charged with aggravated burglary, grievous bodily harm with intent, actual bodily harm and possession of an offensive weapon. He pleaded not guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent, but the jury unanimously found him guilty of all four charges.

"I'm pleased that O'Leary has received a lengthy custodial sentence," said DC Yogini Patel. "This was a particularly violent burglary that could have been worse had it not been for the courageous efforts of the two workmen."

# Become a winter friend

There are more than 3,000 people aged 60 and above living in East Finchley, a large proportion of whom will spend winter alone with only the television as their main form of company.

East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) is working with local organisations which will open their doors to the community on the coldest days of winter to make sure everyone is safe and warm.

Hot drinks, soup, blankets and of course a friendly chat will be on offer. EFAB is looking for volunteers to help them telephone people to let them know a venue is going to open, help at venues by making hot drinks and enjoying a friendly chat, and provide transport or just the offer of an arm to help them walk there.

To become involved contact Lisa on 07909 998453 or email us@efab.org.uk. More information can be found at www.efab.org.uk



More than three bags full; The Green Party litter picking volunteers on the North Circular bridge.

# Bin it or bag it

In a little over an hour on Sunday 16 November, five Green Party volunteers filled nine sacks with litter picked from the vegetation on the south side of the North Circular flyover by Strawberry Vale.

They found mostly cans, and snack wrappers. "Ashame about the cans, they are all recyclable," commented Adele Ward. "It's mostly snacks people eat around the bus stop. I found the whole area saturated with cans, bottles and food wrappings." "No wonder we saw rats right near the bus stop, where there is a bin. Are people so apathetic that they can't use it?" said Phil Fletcher, who organised the litter pick.

# Weighty sum raised

By Diana Cormack



Brian Hooper presents the cheque to Carole Heffeman.

Photo Marc Furr

This year the Hallowe'en 2014 Guess the Weight of the Pumpkin competition held at The Old White Lion pub was in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Organiser Brian Hooper spent many hours cajoling customers into taking part, with guesses ranging from 7.3 kg / 16 lbs to 175 kg / 385 lbs. More than 40 people were within 0.5 kg / 1-2 lbs of the correct weight. However, one person guessed the exact weight of 38.4 kg / 84lbs 8oz to win a £50 voucher to spend in the pub.

After all his hard work Brian was able to hand over a cheque to Carole Heffeman, NW London fundraising manager, for the magnificently appropriate sum of £2,014.

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