



Man jailed for 'small debt' killing

By Janet Maitland

A man has been sentenced to ten years in prison for stabbing a man to death over a small debt. Bright Osei, 22, of Ballards Lane, N3, killed Ali Nasrollahi, 22, in broad daylight in North Finchley on 29 March.

Detectives established that Ali had been involved in an argument with Osei outside West Finchley tube station the previous day about a small debt owed to one of his friends. Osei and three other men met up with Ali the following day on Woodside Grange Road where witnesses reported that Ali was beaten up, then pushed against a tree and stabbed.

All four men then ran off down Grange Way towards Woodside Avenue. Police searched the route and found a knife with traces of Ali's DNA on it.

The trial of the four men began at the Old Bailey on 12 September. The judge acquitted three defendants on the grounds that joint enterprise had not been proven. Osei was sentenced on 5 October.

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Chalmers said afterwards: "It is hard to believe that someone can place so little value on another person's life. The actions of the defendant on that day resulted in the unnecessary death of another young man and he has now deservedly been sent to prison."

Life imprisonment for teenage rapist

By Janet Maitland

A teenager has been sentenced to life imprisonment for brutally attacking, robbing and raping two women. Dylan McDonald, 19, will serve a minimum of ten years for what investigating police officer Daryl Gibbs described as "one of the most horrific investigations I have ever undertaken".

Both women were attacked in broad daylight. McDonald targeted his first victim as she walked along Southey Road, N15, at 2.30pm on 11 March. Holding a knife against her he forced her into a nearby stairwell where he raped her twice at knifepoint, punched her repeatedly in the face, and then ran off with her mobile phone, camera and watch.

Three days later, McDonald attacked a woman walking in Alexandra Palace Park. He cycled towards her, produced a long knife and demanded her rucksack, stabbing her in the leg when she didn't hand it over quickly. After stealing her phone, money and house keys, he dragged her into the undergrowth and raped her twice at knife point.

Further ordeal for victims
McDonald was arrested

on the evening of the second attack. Despite overwhelming evidence found in his bedroom, including the first victim's property and a knife stained with blood matching that of the second victim, he pleaded not guilty and subjected both victims to a week-long trial before he was found guilty on 26 July. He was sentenced on 7 October.

Charity shop plea

East Finchley's RSPCA charity shop is looking for more volunteers to help in their shop in the High Road. Their friendly animal-loving team would welcome new members. There is a variety of shop work to be done and training will be given.



On the doorstep: Leo Smith trims a fuschia. Photo Iain Geddes

Gardens grow into a place to meet

By Cathy Young

"It's a great way of pulling people together; I've even met some of the neighbours," jokes Leo Smith but, in fact, his words were proved true by the community gardens of Brownswell Road.

The gardens were recently awarded the runner-up prize in the Barnet Homes Gardening Club competition for communal gardens, although winning prizes is not the real aim of this enterprise.

The four members who do a lot of the work have a varied mix of ability, skill and physical health and they all help each other out and keep an eye on each other.

Starting small

It all started when Leo started to plant up pots outside his flat off the top end of the High Road. This grew, like the plants, into digging up a flower bed and the neighbours began to join in. The open grass around the block of flats was then

bordered off by a hedgerow of a variety of shrubs.


A Community Involvement officer from Barnet Council, interested in reviving the old Barnet Homes Gardening Club, came to visit. That was 10 years ago. This autumn a party was held to celebrate a decade of the club's success throughout the borough and, of course, to give the Brownswell Road members their award.

Hawks, tigers and more

At the back of the flats there is an area of grass, wild flowers

and trees which attracts a wide range of wildlife; not just the regularly seen foxes but also jersey tiger and lime hawk moths, birds such as sparrow hawks and, once, a flock of more than 160 waxwings which only come to this country every four years or so from Scandinavia.

The Brownswell Road Gardening Club is in a small but significant way providing a sense of community and a connection with the natural world: something we all need in our lives.



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