



Space to sit: Head gardener Ashley Edwards with Tracey McCarthy in Horatio's Garden in Stanmore.  
Photo Lucy Shergold

## Trail-blazing garden is good for mental and physical health

During lockdown we have all come to realise the importance of outdoor spaces, most notably in hospital settings, and the ways in which they help to support good mental health and recovery.

With this in mind, national charity Horatio's Garden last month opened their fifth garden at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore. It was planted by a team of volunteers led by head gardener Ashley Edwards, assisted by East Finchley resident Tracey McCarthy.

Working at the garden signals a complete career change for Tracey. Most recently she managed a set of barristers' chambers in central London, and now she manages, with Ashley, the volunteers and events at the garden. She said: "It is such a privilege to work for this wonderful and worthwhile

charity. I am very proud of it."

### Space plus intimacy

When the acclaimed, eight-time Chelsea gold medal winner Tom Stuart-Smith offered to design the charity's fifth garden, he realised the project had "the capacity to transform the lives of patients with spinal injuries when they are most in need."

Thanks to his design and planting, Horatio's Garden London & South East will be fully accessible to people in both beds and wheelchairs. It features a garden room and uniquely designed 'garden pods', ensuring that patients and their loved ones can spend time together beyond the hos-

pital wards all year round. And, as well as intimate places that allow for moments of reflection, the garden also features vast open spaces.

Patient Ruth commented: "A spinal cord injury is a really difficult thing to go through, not just because of the physical side of things, the mental stuff is actually harder. Having a Horatio's Garden here at Stanmore will make everything a little bit easier."

*If you would like to volunteer for Horatio's Garden, London & South East, find out more at [www.horatiogarden.org.uk/get-involved](http://www.horatiogarden.org.uk/get-involved) or call 01722 326834. Follow @HoratiosGarden on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.*

# Guilty verdict in fifth trial over double murder

By David Melsome

A man has been jailed for the murder of mother-of-nine Annie Ekofo and her nephew Bervil Ekofo, pictured below, in their home in East Finchley in 2016. Obina Ezeoke, 28, faced five trials over four years before he was convicted last month of the double shooting.

The Old Bailey was told that Ezeoke, of Cambridge Heath, E2, "crept noiselessly" into Mrs Ekofo's flat in Elmshurst Crescent, N2, just after dawn on 15 September 2016. He shot her 21-year-old nephew, who was staying overnight, while he slept and then shot Mrs Ekofo, 53, in the hall when she came out of her bedroom to investigate the noise.

### "Vendetta of violence"

The BBC reported that prosecutor Mark Heywood QC told the court the 28-year-old drug dealer had gone to kill one of the teenage boys in the family as "part of a vendetta of violence". He said: "His hate was such that he did not falter when confronted by a second person, he simply took her life as well."

Ezeoke denied the two charges of murder brought against him. He said he had an alibi for the time of the shootings and argued that gunshot residue found in his car was from a previous shooting. The Old Bailey jury convicted him by a majority of 11 to one after deliberating for 41 hours over eight days. He was due to be sentenced on 1 October.



### Five trials in four years

The guilty verdict brings to an end an unprecedented run of trials. Ezeoke's first trial in 2017 was abandoned after the judge became ill. The juries at two subsequent trials in 2018 and 2019 were unable to reach verdicts. A fourth trial began in February but was abandoned after jury numbers fell below nine due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last month, Old Bailey judge Mr Justice Davis granted a prosecution request for a fifth trial despite the defendant's lawyer James Scobie QC claiming it "would be oppressive" and "enough is enough".

Sally-Anne Russell, from the Crown Prosecution Service, said Ezeoke's actions had "devastated a family", adding: "When he couldn't find the person he was looking for, he murdered a young man and a mother-of-nine instead."

## Meet the new neighbours

By Nick Allan

Despite the pressure on local businesses due to the pandemic, East Finchley is welcoming a number of new shops and restaurants. Going Greek will open on the High Road site of the closed Japanese restaurant Yama Yama. Opposite will soon be café and bar Cup of Joy (The Archer, September 2020), just a few doors up from the recently opened HMR Glass.

Further down are new barbers The Cut, pizza restaurant Nudo Pizza and 'Ooh La La' nail bar, with Ella Food Centre at the other end of the High Road on the corner of Creighton Avenue.

The good news continues on East End Road where Jo Sutherland Hair is expanding and newly opened Niny Beauty Studio is getting established. They will all be grateful for your support, like the rest of our local shops and traders.

## N2United is back... online

September saw the return of N2United, the local community and networking group working to bring shops, traders and the community together. The popular monthly meetings, suspended since March, will be held again via video for now and last month's centred on 'Community Matters'.

The next Business Matters meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8 October with the next Community Matters meeting on the Thursday 12 November but members are welcome at every meeting. For more details visit [n2united.co.uk](http://n2united.co.uk) or search @n2united on Facebook or Instagram. New members are always welcome.

## Station fruit and veg stall back in business

Commuters and fans of fresh food will be pleased to hear that Tony Mackie is reopening his fruit and vegetable stall outside East Finchley Tube station.

Tony had no choice but to close down when Tube use declined dramatically during lockdown. The Archer reported on Tony's successful business in our May 2019 edition and we wish him a warm welcome back.

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