

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 14th March 2021

Cheshire News & Appeals



Latest Cheshire News

Three men found guilty of shooting conspiracy in Warrington

Three men have been convicted of their involvement in a conspiracy which led to an innocent man being shot on his own doorstep in Warrington. Aaron Bretherton posed as a pizza delivery driver outside the house on Poplars Avenue in Orford on Friday 24 April 2020. He fired three rounds at the 56-year-old victim with one bullet causing life-changing injuries to his leg. As the 24-year-old gunman fled the scene he paused to turn around and fired a further shot towards the house before escaping in a van with getaway driver Anthony Morris and Lewis Fitzpatrick who was also inside. The trio are alleged to have been acting on behalf of a 34-year-old man who is suspected of plotting with others to shoot individuals he had grievances with. Bretherton previously admitted to being the gunman but, along with 25-year-old Fitzpatrick and 23-year-old Morris, denied being part of a conspiracy to shoot the victim's stepson who was not at the address at the time of the attack. Today (Friday 12 March) a jury found Bretherton, Fitzpatrick and Morris guilty of conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm to the 26-year-old stepson following a three-week trial at Liverpool Crown Court. In the hours leading up to the attack Bretherton was seen travelling with Fitzpatrick to Warrington in order to carry out a reconnaissance mission. Then shortly after 7pm Morris travelled from his workplace in Connah's Quay, North Wales, to pick up Bretherton and Fitzpatrick in Liverpool and transport them to the crime scene. Bretherton deliberately left his own mobile at home and used a phone belonging to Morris to communicate with Fitzpatrick as the trio made the journey in the van. When they reached their destination, Fitzpatrick is believed to have handed Bretherton the gun and he was captured on CCTV making his way to the house and carrying out the attack. The victim attempted to shut the door before Bretherton opened fire, however one bullet hit the floor and another travelled through the door and he was hit below the knee. A 999 call was made and armed officers attended to the scene. What then followed was a challenging, fast-paced and painstaking investigation by detectives from Cheshire Police's Serious and Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) to apprehend those involved in the shooting. The white van was identified as being from the garage where Morris, previously of Fifth Avenue in Liverpool was employed and he was stopped and arrested by police in Southport two days later. Officers searching the van discovered a hide and a mobile phone was seized. While Morris was in custody being questioned, detectives continued to examine CCTV and carried out forensic and telecommunications enquiries, which led to the arrests of Bretherton and Fitzpatrick in Liverpool on Wednesday 6 May. Clothing with significant amounts of gunshot residue were recovered from Bretherton's apartment, in City View, Liverpool, along with a Glock handgun in the extractor fan of the oven, several bullets in a magazine on a heater in the bathroom, a smoke grenade and £5,000 in cash. The handgun is not the same weapon used in the shooting. An encrypted mobile telephone and £4,000 in cash were seized from Fitzpatrick's home on Eldersfield Road in Liverpool. Both men were taken into custody for questioning and subsequently charged.

DCI Mike Evans, from the Serious and Organised Crime Unit, said: "*This was a co-ordinated attack that involved weeks of sophisticated planning and preparation with each individual fulfilling a specific role to ensure the hit was carried out. However this didn't match their actions on the night of the shooting as they were far from sophisticated in the way that they carried out the attack. Bretherton shot an innocent man on*

his own doorstep causing life changing injuries. The victim has undergone several operations using metal pins and plates which means he will never be able to walk the same again. The driver Morris used one of his employer's vehicles and concealed a mobile phone in a hide, which was crucial to the investigation as it enabled us to identify Bretherton and Fitzpatrick and place them at the scene through telecoms analysis. They thought they were untouchable but instead they made mistakes which led to detectives unravelling their plot and taking a viable firearm out of circulation. While justice has been served, I hope this is a reminder to those who enter into a world of organised crime that it can also lead to a life of fear and violence." Superintendent Simon Meegan, of Warrington Local Policing Unit, said: "The shooting brought fear to the local community and understandably caused a significant amount of concern. While the investigation was ongoing we carried out high-visibility patrols in the area and spoke to residents to provide reassurance as much as we could. Thankfully, following a fantastic investigation these men were caught and the danger they posed taken away from our streets."

David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, said: "This must have been a terrifying attack and my thoughts are with the man who has been left with life-changing injuries. I want to take this opportunity to commend the detectives involved in bringing these individuals to justice and protecting the community from serious and organised crime. I also want to acknowledge the work of local officers who sought to provide reassurance to the victim, his family and to residents who were fearful of what happened."



Aaron Bretherton

Anthony Morris

Lewis Fitzpatrick

Salford man extradited to the UK from the Netherlands

A 34-year-old man from Salford in Greater Manchester who was arrested in the Netherlands has been extradited to the UK. Jamie Rothwell was brought back to Cheshire by the National Extradition Unit on Thursday 11 March. He appeared at Warrington Magistrates Court the following day after being charged with firearm and drug offences. Rothwell was arrested on 14 December 2020 as he travelled in a taxi in Amsterdam after Cheshire Constabulary's Serious and Organised Crime Unit obtained a European Arrest Warrant. Detectives worked with the National Crime Agency, North West Regional and Organised Crime Unit and Dutch partners along with assistance from the Crown Prosecution Service to secure the arrest and his subsequent extradition. Rothwell has been remanded in custody and is due to appear at Liverpool Crown Court on Friday 9 April 2021.

Macclesfield man jailed for 50 months following sexual offence

A Macclesfield man has been jailed after committing a sexual offence at an address in the town. Luc Roth, formerly of Ravenhoe Lane Rainow, was sentenced to 50 months imprisonment at Chester Crown Court on Thursday 25 February after pleading guilty to trespass with intent to commit a relevant sexual offence. He also pleaded guilty to driving without due care at an earlier hearing. The court heard how the 62-year-old gained access to an address of an elderly woman at around 1.20pm on 10 June 2019 and began a conversation with her. He then exposed himself and performed a sexual act. Roth was disturbed after a neighbour heard voices inside the property and decided to check on the woman. After being confronted by the neighbour, Roth fled the address in a van. In doing so, he drove towards the neighbour, causing him to jump out the way to avoid serious injury. Officers were called to the address and checks were made on the van which was traced back to Roth. Police arrested Roth on 11 June 2019 after he was identified as the offender. He was also ordered to sign the sex offenders register indefinitely and was made subject to a sexual harm prevention order.

DC Andrew Cole said: "*Roth targeted a vulnerable elderly lady causing extreme distress to her and her family in the very place she has every right to feel safe, her home. His actions also almost caused serious injury to her vigilant neighbour who had stepped in to help. I am pleased with the sentence that has been handed down from the courts and hope that Roth has time to reflect on what he has done.*"

Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane said: "*This is a particularly shocking case and my thoughts are with the victims of this offender. I hope that this sentence will help the victims gain some closure for the incident. I would encourage anyone who has been a victim of a sexual offence to report this to police. You will be listened to and supported every step of the way.*"

Body found in search for missing man in Crewe

Officers searching for a missing man in Crewe have found a body. The body was discovered by a member of the public in a wooded area near Crewe Hall shortly before 9am on Thursday 11 March. Formal identification has not yet taken place, but it is believed to be that of missing man Josef Skrdlant. His next of kin has been informed and are being supported by specialist officers. His death is not believed to be suspicious. A case file will be prepared for the coroner.

Detectives issue warning following spate of scam calls from fraudsters claiming to be police

Detectives have issued an urgent warning after a recent spate in reports of fraudulent calls from scammers claiming to be police and targeting the vulnerable and elderly. Recently the force has seen a number of reports of fraud where organised crime groups (OCGs) are calling victims purporting to be from the police. Typically on answering the call, an automated message is played, telling victims that a warrant is out for their arrest or that a loved one has been apprehended. The scammer then asks the victim to press a number where they speak to a member of the OCG who will then confirm the victim's details and demand the transfer of money from their bank to clear their name or free their loved one. Officers are now urging others to stay vigilant and alert vulnerable family members or neighbours of this scam. DS Chris Jacques from Cheshire Constabulary's Economic Crime Unit said: "*Fraudsters are extremely convincing and can be very threatening especially towards the vulnerable. Police officers will never ask you to transfer money or provide personal details over the phone to 'clear your name' or to free a loved one. It is concerning that we are seeing*

a few reports of this and banks have thankfully stepped in to protect customers from falling foul to these scammers. Anyone who is receiving calls asking for money to be transferred by scammers should call 101 or report it to Action Fraud immediately.”

Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane said: “*These scams can be incredibly believable and are frightening for victims. I would ask anyone who has a vulnerable or elderly relative or neighbour to please inform them of these scams so we can prevent people falling foul to these individuals.*” Anyone who believes they have been contacted fraudulently or have been a victim of fraud should call Cheshire Police on 101 and Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

Two men charged following Nantwich drugs warrant

Officers have charged following a drugs warrant at an address in Nantwich. Simon Piggott and Gavin Mitchell were both arrested on Tuesday 9 March following a raid at an address on Weaver Road. Piggott, 46, of Weaver Road, was subsequently charged with two counts of possession with intent to supply class A drugs (cocaine and heroin) and acquire/use/possess criminal property. Mitchell, 50, of Baronia Place, was charged with being concerned in the supply of class A drugs (cocaine), possession of a class A drug (cocaine) and acquire/use/possess criminal property. The pair were both remanded in custody and were due to appear at North Cheshire Magistrates on Wednesday 10 March. A 42-year-old woman who was arrested during the warrant has been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

Cheshire Constabulary urge residents to stay local and follow guidance after relaxation of restrictions

Residents are being urged to stay local and follow the guidance following the latest relaxations in the coronavirus legislation. On Monday 8 March, England took its first step of the gradual relaxation with the reopening of schools. As part of the changes, the public can now visit local public outdoor place to take part in recreation with their own household or one other person from outside their household. Following the changes officers will continue to engage and explain the rules with the public but will move to enforce when met with blatant and repeat breaches. ACC Jenny Sims said: “*As we move into spring and summer we know that more people will be visiting beauty spots across Cheshire. The rules in place remain clear and officers will be supporting the relaxation of the rules and will be enforcing when met with blatant and repeat breaches. If you are visiting beauty spots for recreation or exercise, only do so with members of your household/bubble or one person from outside your household. Please also think, is it necessary to travel to a beauty spot to do this, or can you do it more locally to your home? It is really important that although you can now meet up recreationally you must still stay at home as much as possible to continue to keep the infection rate down.*”

Since the lockdown regulations began in January, Cheshire Constabulary have issued more than 1,273 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). FPNs have been issued for a range of blatant breaches such as birthday parties, businesses remaining open when they should be closed and multiple people travelling without reasonable excuse. Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane said: “*Cheshire residents have made great sacrifices over the last year but it is really important that we do not damage the hard work we have done in reducing coronavirus cases. There are still strict rules in place which we all need to follow in order to see further*

relaxation of the national lockdown restrictions." For further advice and guidance please visit [the Government website](#). To report a coronavirus breach visit [the Cheshire Police website](#).

Family pays tribute to Congleton woman after man is charged with murdering her

The family of a woman who died in Congleton have paid tribute to her. Samantha Heap's body was discovered by officers at an address in Nursery Lane on the night of Tuesday 2 March. David Mottram, of Nursery Lane, was arrested that night on suspicion of murdering the 45-year-old and has subsequently been charged with the offence. In a statement, Samantha's family said: *"Samantha had a real zest for life. She loved music and helping people, and she always saw the best in everyone. We are devastated by the tragic loss of her life."* Mottram, 47, appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Thursday 4 March and at Chester Crown Court the following day, both via a video link. He has been remanded in custody and is set to return to the crown court on Friday 28 May. Samantha's family are being supported by specialist officers.



Samantha Heap

Family pay tribute to 44-year-old man who died in Plumley collision

The family of a 44-year-old man who died in a collision in Plumley have paid tribute to him. Wayne Jackson, from Northwich, was the driver of a black Vauxhall Corsa which was involved in a collision with a silver Mercedes. The incident occurred on the A556 just before 3.30pm on Thursday 4 March. Sadly, Wayne passed away at the scene. His family are being supported by specialist officers. Wayne's wife Jo has paid the following tribute to him: *"Wayne was one of the most gentle giants you could meet. He loved his family and friends and he was a loving husband and daddy. He enjoyed spending time with his family at the beach, on walks and holidays. He was well known for his love for music, ranging from the heaviest metal to classical music. He had a love for films and had a wealth of knowledge of nature, space and science. He was an avid writer and loved to write stories, one of which we hope to publish as a memory to him. "Wayne had a massive presence wherever he went and the main discussion would be the size of his feet, they were massive. He was lovingly known as 'gentle giant', 'Big guy', 'Chewy' and to his wife and kids 'our GORILLA'. "We, as a family, are devastated that we have lost our whole world. We are heartbroken at being robbed of the most amazing man so soon. We love you more than words can say. He leaves behind his wife Jo; three beautiful children Ellie 13 years, Nicole 10 years and Lucas three years; his mum, dad and step mum; his sisters; mother and father in law; and many other family and friends."*

Officers want to hear from anyone who may have witnessed the collision or may have captured relevant dashcam footage. Information and footage can be provided by calling 101 quoting IML 930987 or via [the Cheshire Police website](#).



Latest Cheshire Appeals

Appeal for witnesses following attempted robbery in Runcorn

Detectives are appealing for information following an attempted robbery in Runcorn. At 8.50pm on Wednesday 10 March a man was walking in woodland near Halton Lodge Avenue when two men on bikes approached him. The men demanded the victim handed over his mobile phone and money. After the victim refused, the offenders assaulted him before riding away. One of the men is described as white, aged in his 20s, around 6'2" tall and of a heavy build with long blonde hair. At the time of the incident, he was wearing a hooded camouflage jacket and a snood. The second man was aged in his 20s, around 5'10" to 6' tall and of a medium build with short dark hair. He was wearing a black 'Timberland' jacket. Both mountain bikes looked like they had been sprayed, one was dark grey and the other was black. Officers are now appealing for anyone who may have witnessed the incident or information to contact Cheshire Police. DC Nathaniel Walkowiak said: *"The victim in this attack not only managed to keep his possessions but also managed to defend himself while sustaining minor injuries but the outcome could have been a lot worse. A number of enquiries have been ongoing in the local area and as part of these we are keen to hear from anyone who may have witnessed the incident or may remember spotting the offenders in the area around the time of the offence. The same goes to anyone who may have captured dashcam or CCTV footage of the two men on mountain bikes around the time of the incident."*

Anyone with any information that could help police with their enquiries is asked to call 101 quoting IML 935616 or report it via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report>

Alternatively, information can be passed on to Crimestoppers anonymously by calling 0800 555 111 or via <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>

Latest Cheshire Wanted

Man in Chester wanted in connection with harassment offence

Police are asking the public to help them trace a man from Chester who is wanted in connection with harassment. Sylwester Debowski, aged 44, has links to Chester and Connah's Quay. Debowski is white and 5'7" tall with a slim build. He has dark brown hair and blue eyes. Anyone who sees him, or has information regarding his whereabouts, is asked to call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting 20000733029.

Alternatively, information can be given anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

To find out further information about the Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association, to log into your account or for Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Literature please visit our website: <http://cheshire.ourwatch.org.uk/>