

# Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## Cheshire News & Appeals



### Latest Cheshire News

#### Man charged with drug dealing offence following a stop and search in Alderley Edge

A 26-year-old man has been charged with a class A drug dealing offence after an officer stopped and searched a car in Alderley Edge. Reece Gayle, of Roxley Road, Hither Green, Lewisham, London, was arrested on the night of Tuesday 13 April. He has subsequently been charged with possession with intent to supply class A drug cocaine. Gayle has also been charged with possession of criminal property and possession of class B drug cannabis. The charges relate to a car being stopped and searched in Heys Lane, Alderley Edge, at around 10pm on Tuesday 13 April. Gayle appeared at Chester Magistrates' Court on Thursday 15 April. He was remanded in custody and is set to appear at Chester Crown Court on Thursday 13 May.

#### Gang responsible for supplying crack cocaine and heroin in Ellesmere Port jailed

A gang responsible for supplying crack cocaine and heroin of an estimated street value of £182,000 in Ellesmere Port have been jailed. Led by Michael Birch, 53, of Forge Road in Little Sutton, the gang of four were known as the 'Birchy Team'. Over several months Birch directed street dealers Ryan Huckle, Macauley Smith, Gary Beck to deal heroin and crack cocaine to users across the town. When officers raided Birch's home on 11 February, 'graft' phones used to sell drugs were discovered along with scales, £740 in cash, a cutting agent for heroin and lists of numbers for addicts in the area. He was subsequently arrested along with Smith who was seen coming away from the address on Forge Road. Smith was found to be in possession of £1,580 of crack cocaine and £960 of heroin. He also had a list of customers which matched the list found at Birch's address. Following analysis it was found that the phone discovered was linked to three other graft numbers which had been active since November 2020. Further evidence found that these phones belonged to Huckle, Beck and Smith. The gang were arrested and subsequently charged before all pleading guilty at earlier hearings. Birch and Smith were sentenced at Chester Crown Court on Thursday 1 April with Birch being handed a five year jail term while Smith received 28 months imprisonment. Huckle was sentenced on 16 February to 27 months for possession with intent to supply crack cocaine while Gary Beck was jailed for 42 months for possession with intent to supply crack cocaine and heroin on 7 January. DC Roy Wellings of the Ellesmere Port Beat Initiative Team said: *"This gang was one of the busiest and largest heroin and crack cocaine supply team in Ellesmere Port at the time of operation. I welcome the sentencing handed down by the courts and hope that it acts as a deterrent to those who believe that they can get away with illegal drug activity in our town. We will continue to work tirelessly and do everything in our power to remove gangs like this from our streets to hope bring an end to the misery drugs bring to local communities. I would urge anyone with any concerns about illegal drug activity in their community to get in touch with Cheshire Police on 101."*



Michael Birch

Gary Beck

Ryan Huckle

Macauley Smith

## Teenager sentenced to 14 years for attempted murder after blinding a man in Nantwich hammer attack

Today (Tuesday 13 April) 17-year-old Jack Halliwell was sentenced to 14 years in prison after he was found guilty by a jury of attempted murder on 18 March 2021. The teenager left a man blind after attacking him with a hammer in Nantwich. The 40-year-old victim was repeatedly hit with the weapon up to 12 times in an attack which took place in the space of just two minutes inside a flat in Arnold Street. Following the assault the severely injured victim was left alone in a bedroom. He was only found four hours later after an anonymous call to the police. DI Claire Jesson, of Crewe CID, said: *“This was a truly horrific and distressing attack, which will stay with the victim, his family and the officers who attended the crime scene, for the rest of their lives. He was beaten so brutally that he was left unrecognisable and could only be identified by his tattoo – and then he was left alone in a room in severe pain with horrific injuries. I am pleased the jury found the Halliwell guilty and justice has been served. However the victim’s life has changed forever and he will continue to be on a long road to recovery and will never regain his sight. I commend my detectives who have worked tirelessly to secure this outcome on what was a complex investigation.”* The court heard that the incident took place on Sunday 26 July 2020. At 4.30pm the victim arrived at a flat in Arnold Street where he was subjected to the brutal attack that left his face covered in blood and severely swollen. Halliwell had been using the flat as a place to deal drugs and it is believed that a dispute had taken place between him and the victim over a debt. Immediately after the attack the teenager took a photo of the victim as he lay on the floor and then fled the property. He ran to a nearby address, called for a taxi and waited to be collected. Ten minutes after leaving the taxi he sent the photo he had taken of the victim to a contact on social media. Shortly before 5pm two women attended the flat and saw the badly beaten victim in the bedroom lying on the bed. He had a hammer underneath his feet and they tried to help him. At 8.20pm police received an anonymous call to say a man had been attacked and was in a bedroom. When they arrived they found the victim in the bedroom with severe injuries to his head and face – he could only be identified by a tattoo on his body. What followed was a meticulous investigation to review CCTV footage, forensic analysis and conduct house-to-house enquiries. This led to the Halliwell being identified and a sustained manhunt led to his arrest in Gorton, Manchester, on 31 July. He had tried to burn the clothes he was wearing on the day of the incident but a jacket seized from his address had traces of the victim’s blood on it. The teenager was subsequently charged with attempted murder. A second man, aged 42, was found not guilty of attempted murder.



## Romanian crime gang jailed following series of high value thefts

A Romanian crime gang who stole more than £160,000 worth of items from supermarkets across the UK have been jailed. Nicolea Ilea, 36, Alin Mahai, 27, Florin Costea, 51, Stefan Florin, 31, Marius Meiosu, 25, and Gabriel Mocanu, 36, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to steal and were sentenced at Chester Crown Court on Tuesday 13 April. They were each sentenced to 42 months in prison. The court heard that the gang travelled across the country stealing high value items from supermarkets, primarily targeting Asda stores. Their crime spree began on Wednesday 29 April 2020 when Mahai and Ilie targeted the Asda Great Bridge Supercentre in Tipton, West Midlands. Over the next four months Mocanu, Meiosu, Flori, and Costea joined the gang. Between April and September in 2019 the group went on to commit at least 81 separate offences at stores as far afield as Newcastle upon Tyne, Cardiff, Bridgend, Fleetwood and Alloa in Scotland. On each occasion the gang worked together as a team to distract the store’s security staff by intentionally activating the

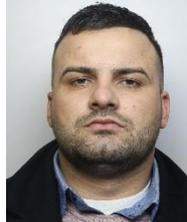
security alarms. This enabled other members of the gang to escape the store with the stolen items without being spotted. They specifically targeted high value items such as printer cartridges, razor blades, nappies and cosmetics, which they would then sell on. Their downfall began after they targeted the Asda Barons Quay store in Northwich in June 2019 and stole approximately £1,000 worth of items. Following the theft, Asda's Asset Protection team contacted Cheshire Constabulary to report the incident, which they believed was part of a wider nationwide series. Over the next two months detectives from the Northwich Beat Initiative Team worked closely with Asda's Asset Protection team and the National Business Crime Centre. Using CCTV footage, ANPR camera's and credit card data they were able to identify the gang members and link them to at least 80 other incidents across the country. After the detectives had gathered extensive evidence, Meiosu, Costea and Mocanu were all arrested on Thursday 10 September following a raid conducted by officers from Northwich Local Policing Unit at an address in Darwin Street, Oldham. During the warrant officers recovered a number of stolen items including perfume, alcohol, more than 50 razors and thousands of children's nappies. They also seized three cars which the gang had been using to commit their crimes. Ilea, Florin and Mahai were also arrested over the following months and all six men were subsequently charged with conspiracy to steal.



Gabriel Mocanu



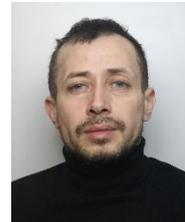
Florin Costea



Alin Mihai



Sefan Florin



Nicolae Ilie



Marius Meiosu

Following their sentencing, DC Paul Matchett, of the Northwich Beat Initiative Team, said: *"It is clear that this gang travelled to the UK with the sole intention of committing crime. They set up their base in Oldham and from there they travelled to stores across the UK and stole hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of items. They believed that they could evade justice by spreading their crimes across the country in a bid to keep a low profile. While their plan worked initially, they underestimated the partnership work between the police and the business community and they are now behind bars facing the consequences of their actions."* Senior Crown Prosecutor Daryl Pollard of the CPS says: *"These serial criminals targeted various ASDA stores throughout the UK hoping to operate under the radar, stealing £160,000 of goods from supermarkets to sell on. We were able to unravel their crimes by carefully evaluating CCTV footage and analysing credit card transactions. We worked very closely with the police and stores to bring these criminals to justice."* DC Matchett added: *"I would like to recognise the work that Asda's Asset Protection team has undertaken and I have no doubt that without their support this gang would still be targeting stores across the country. It's important to remember that shoplifting is not a victimless crime, and it's the general public who end up footing the bill through increased prices. I hope that the sentences handed to this gang provide reassurance to the public and business community and act as a warning for other offenders who think that retail outlets are easy targets."*

## **Road safety operation to educate drivers and riders in Chester**

Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service are taking part in a road safety operation in a bid to educate drivers and riders and help keep people safe on the roads. The operation will take place on Wednesday 14 April between 10.30am – 3pm on the roads in and around the Saughall area, Chester. Officers are running the operation alongside their partners, including colleagues at the Fire Service who will demonstrate to drivers and riders how to stay safe on the roads with close pass mats and other road safety

aids. Covert officers will ride along the identified hot spot areas while wearing body worn cameras. Uniformed officers will then be stopping any drivers identified as having driven too close to the covert officers. The drivers will then be educated on how to pass riders safely and why this is so important – with officers enforcing the law where necessary. Riders will also be invited to stop as part of the initiative and talk to officers and the Fire Service about how to keep themselves safe on their journeys, the importance of being visible to other road users and the significance of courteous riding. CI for Cheshire Police's Roads and Crime Unit, Rob Dickinson, said: *"There has been a large increase of cyclists on the roads recently and there has been an increase in the number of reports of 'close passes' where the safety of cyclists has been put at risk. "This operation is about educating drivers to the vulnerability of cyclists and others riding on two wheels such as motorcyclists, and explaining the reasons why it is so important to leave enough space when overtaking. Everyone has the right to use the roads safely and we want all road users to be more considerate of each other, regardless of their chosen mode of transport. Station Manager Andy Gray, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's Road Safety Manager, said: "I am really pleased to be working in partnership with Cheshire Police with this initiative as making Cheshire's roads as safe as possible for all is vitally important to the people who use our roads. We will be offering education and advice to both drivers and cyclists, and will be demonstrating why it is crucial for both to be more aware of each other on the roads. Cyclists can feel extremely vulnerable when being overtaken by another vehicle, and we want everyone to feel as safe as possible on their journeys and to share the space."*

### **Man charged following drugs raid in Ellesmere Port**

A 19-year-old man has been charged with a number of offences following a drugs raid in Ellesmere Port. On Friday 9 April officers executed a warrant at an address in Richmond Court, where they seized a quantity of cocaine and a quantity of cannabis. A weapon was also seized, from a car which was parked outside the property. Two local men, aged 19 and 32, were arrested at the address. Nineteen-year-old Kyle Arathoon, of Richmond Court, has since been charged with possession of a weapon, possession of criminal property, possession with intent to supply class A drug cocaine and possession with intent to supply class B drug cannabis. Arathoon appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Saturday 10 April. He was remanded in custody and is set to appear at Chester Crown Court on Monday 10 May. The 32-year-old man who was arrested has been released on conditional bail pending further enquiries.

### **Three men arrested by officers investigating criminal damage incidents in Northwich**

Officers investigating a spate of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour incidents in Northwich town centre have arrested three 18-year-old men from the town in connection with them. The trio were arrested at their homes at around 8am on Friday 9 April on suspicion of criminal damage and public nuisance offences. This relates to incidents that occurred in the town centre between Friday 19 March and Friday 9 April. After being questioned in custody, the three men have all been released on conditional bail pending further enquiries. Sergeant Andrew Cooper, of Northwich Local Policing Unit, said: *"The arrests come on the back of a number of reports of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour in the town centre in recent weeks. These include reports of roof tiles being damaged and thrown at vehicles below, other items being thrown at cars, CCTV cameras being hit and damaged, wheelie bins being put in the middle of a busy road and anti-graffiti paint being used to write offensive words on the library building. We take all incidents of this nature extremely seriously. Enquiries in relation to the incidents are ongoing and I hope that the arrests of the three 18-year-olds provides some reassurance to residents and local businesses."*

## Latest Cheshire Appeals

### Appeal for information following arson attack at Winsford pub

Detectives are appealing for information following an arson attack at a pub in Winsford. A report of a fire was received at around 5.10am on Friday 16 April at the Old Star pub on Swanlow Lane. One man was assessed by paramedics on scene but did not require hospital treatment. Police are now appealing for anyone who may have any information in relation to the incident to get in touch. DS Rob Astbury said: *"I would like to reassure the public that incidents such as this are rare in this area and we are doing everything possible to find those responsible. Following initial enquiries we are treating this incident as arson and are eager to hear from anyone who may have information on who is responsible. A number of enquiries are ongoing and I am keen to speak to anyone who may have CCTV footage or dashcam footage from the area around the time of the incident. The same goes to anyone who may have witnessed something which did not look quite right."* Anyone with any information is asked to call Cheshire Police on 101 quoting IML 964904 or via the Cheshire Police website. Alternatively, information can be passed on to Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111 or report it via [the Crimestoppers website](#).

### Appeal for information following fatal collision in Church Lawton

Officers are appealing for information following a fatal collision in Church Lawton. At around 10pm on Thursday 15 April officers were called to the junction of Congleton Road South and Liverpool Road West following reports of a one vehicle collision involving a red Yamaha motorbike. The motorcyclist, a man in his 20s, passed away at the scene. His next of kin have been informed and are being supported by specialist officers. Police are appealing to anyone who may have witnessed the collision or may have any dashcam footage of the vehicles before the incident to come forward. Anyone with information is urged to call 101 quoting IML 964763 or report it via [the Cheshire Police website](#). Alternatively anyone with information can report to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via [the Crimestoppers website](#).

### Appeal following serious collision near Chester

Officers are appealing for witnesses to come forward following a serious collision involving a car and a motorbike near Chester. The incident occurred on the A41 Whitchurch Road in Waverton, at the junction with Eggbridge Lane, at around 6.15pm on Thursday 15 April. A man in his 70s sustained serious injuries as a result of the collision. He had been riding a yellow Yamaha motorbike that collided with a black Vauxhall Corsa car. The casualty was taken to Aintree University Hospital in an ambulance. He remains in hospital receiving treatment. The driver of the car is not believed to have been injured. Officers spoke to him at the scene. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and no arrests have been made. Officers want to speak to anyone who was in the area and witnessed the collision or anything else that may help their investigation. They also want to hear from any motorists who believe they may have captured relevant footage on their dashcams. Anyone with information or dashcam footage that may aid the investigation is asked to call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 964568, or give the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report>.

## **Appeal after driver is assaulted in Ellesmere Port road rage incident**

Detectives investigating a road rage incident in Ellesmere Port are appealing for witnesses to come forward. The driver of a white transit van, a man in his 40s from the Wirral area, was assaulted whilst sat behind the wheel on Station Road, at the junction with Westminster Road. The man who assaulted him had got out of his blue car to confront the victim in the culmination of an incident that occurred between 8.30am and 9am on Tuesday 13 April. The victim sustained facial injuries as a result of the incident. He was taken to hospital in an ambulance and has since been discharged after receiving treatment. A 50-year-old man from Merseyside has been arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm, driving without due care and attention and driving otherwise in accordance with a licence in connection with the incident. After being questioned in custody by officers, he has been released under investigation pending further enquiries. DC Chris Tyrer, of Ellesmere Port CID, said: *“This road rage incident left the victim with facial injuries, including a serious one, that required hospital treatment. It also left him extremely shaken up. We are determined to establish exactly what took place and who was responsible. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing. As part of our enquiries we want to speak to anyone who was in the area and witnessed anything that may help our investigation. The assault took place at a busy junction with a high volume of traffic. If you were in the area and have any information or dashcam footage that may aid the investigation, please get in touch.”* Anyone with information or footage that may be relevant to the investigation should call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 962804, give the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## **Appeal for witnesses following racially aggravated incident in Widnes**

Officers are appealing for information following a racially aggravated incident at a fast food takeaway in Widnes. At sometime between 3.50pm and 4.10pm on Sunday 28 February two cars were in the queue at the McDonald’s drive thru on Moor Lane when a verbal argument took place between the drivers of the cars. It is believed one of the driver’s made a racially aggravated comment towards the other. Anyone who may have witnessed the incident or may have dashcam footage is urged to contact Cheshire Police. PC Andy Collict said: *“We take all reports of hate crime extremely seriously and will act on any incidents of this nature. A number of enquiries are underway in relation to this incident and as part of these enquiries we are looking to speak with anyone who may have caught dashcam footage in the Moor Lane area at the time of the incident. The same goes for anyone who may have witnessed the altercation and could help us with our investigation.”* Anyone with information is asked to call Cheshire Police on 101 quoting 21000142852 or report it via [the Cheshire Police website](#). Alternatively, information can be passed on to Crimestoppers anonymously by calling 0800 555 111 or via [the Crimestoppers website](#).

## **Appeal for information after three bikes stolen in Macclesfield**

Police are appealing for information for the public after three pedal cycles were stolen in Macclesfield. At around 3pm on Friday 9 April three bikes, which were unattended, were stolen from Sutton Woods, off Byron’s Lane. The bikes belonged to a group of teenagers who were in the area. One of the bikes has since been recovered, but two remain outstanding and enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing.

The missing bikes are describes as:

- A Charcoal grey Calibre Sentry mountain bike
- A blue and red framed 540st Roadrider mountain bike with grey pedals

PC Mark Stringer from Macclesfield Local Policing Unit, said: *“Enquiries in relation to this theft are ongoing and we are keen to hear from anyone with any information which may aid our investigation. We also want to hear from anyone who believes they may have seen any of the bikes since they were stolen, or know where the bikes are. I’d ask anyone with any information in relation to the theft, or the whereabouts of the bikes, to contact the team here at Macclesfield on 101, quoting IML 959950.”* Information can also be reported online at <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.



## **Appeal following attempted knifepoint robbery in Runcorn**

Detectives are appealing for information from members of the public following an attempted knifepoint robbery in Runcorn. The incident occurred on a pathway between the Lidl and Asda supermarkets off West Lane at around 3pm on Friday 9 April. As he walked towards Asda the victim was accosted by a man who had jogged towards him from that supermarket’s car park. The offender brandished a knife and demanded money from the victim, a man from Runcorn in his 40s. When the victim refused to comply, the offender slashed his hand, causing a minor injury. The victim then ran off to the Asda store. The offender ran away along West Lane in the direction of the McDonald’s fast food restaurant and the Trident retail and leisure park. He is described as black and looked to be around 60 years old and approximately 6’ 2” tall. He had a stocky build, short black hair with a bald patch in the middle and a distinctive blue tattoo on his left bicep. The offender was wearing a T-shirt, jogging bottoms, trainers and a baseball cap, all of which were black. He was also carrying a black rucksack. Enquiries in relation to the incident are ongoing and detectives are urging anyone with any information or footage that may aid their investigation to get in touch. DC Beth Colbourne, of Runcorn Local Policing Unit, said: *“As well as a cut hand, this frightening incident has understandably left the victim extremely shaken up. I would like to reassure Runcorn residents that it is believed to be an isolated incident and we are doing all we can to establish the identity of the offender and bring him to justice. Enquiries are ongoing and I urge anyone who was in the area and saw anything that may be relevant to our investigation to contact us at Runcorn Police Station. The same goes for anyone who thinks they may know who the offender is, or have CCTV or dashcam footage of him.”* Anyone with information or footage that may help the investigation should call Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 959598, give the details via <https://www.cheshire.police.uk/ro/report> or contact Crimestoppers anonymously 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/>