

# Police News

## ASSAULT AND ATTEMPTED ROBBERY

Lothian and Borders Police are appealing for witnesses following an assault and attempted robbery on a 20-year-old man in Edinburgh. The incident happened around 1.20am in the High Street area of the city. The man was returning to his home address and was walking through Stevenlaw's Close when three men approached him from an unknown direction. One of the males asked the man for money before assaulting him. A second male then joined in the attack before the victim was able to flee towards the Cowgate, where a member of the public assisted him. The man suffered soreness to his left cheek and temple of his head but did not require medical attention. Police are now appealing for anyone who was in the area and witnessed anything suspicious to come forward. The first suspect is described as white, 15-18-years-old, wearing a red hooded top and a red beanie hat with eye-holes cut out of it. The second suspect is described as being of mixed race, 15-18-years-old with short dark curly hair and wearing a dark-coloured top. There is no description of the third male. A police spokesman said: 'Fortunately the victim did not suffer serious injury, nor was he robbed of any of his possessions. Nevertheless, we are keen to trace those responsible for the random and unprovoked assault.'

## DRUGS CONVICTION

A 23-year-old man who was arrested by police while in the process of preparing 7kg of highly addictive crack cocaine, pled guilty to a number of drugs offences at the High Court in Edinburgh on Friday 9 July. His arrest followed a lengthy but successful investigation by Lothian and Borders Police into serious organised crime. Mark Richardson had been identified as a principal figure in a serious organised crime group, which was based in Edinburgh but operated on a national basis.

Today he admitted being involved in various drugs offences committed between April and December last year. The long running inquiry, which spanned two years, also resulted in the arrest of 66 people and the recovery of 40.8kg of Class A drugs including cocaine, heroin and crack cocaine, with the potential street value of £2,040,000. To date, 14 people have been convicted and sentenced to a total of 44 years, while proceedings are still ongoing in relation to others. When Richardson was arrested on December 9, 2009, he was actively involved in preparing a large quantity of crack cocaine, which had a street value of £700,000. It was the largest seizure of crack cocaine within the Lothian and Borders Police Force area, and one of the biggest recoveries of the Class A drug in Scotland. Richardson was also behind two other multi-kilo quantities of cocaine, which were trafficked into Edinburgh, and linked to thousands of pounds of cash which was believed to be drugs money. Detective Chief Supt Malcolm Graham, Head of Lothian and Borders CID, said: 'This investigation was designed to target a high level organised crime group which was involved in drugs, threats and violence, and which was blighting local communities with its actions. 'As a result of this investigation, the group was decimated, and their ability to conduct their criminal activity has been thwarted, making Edinburgh a safer place for everybody to live. 'We all want Lothian and Borders to be a place which residents can be proud of and feel safe in, and there is no place for criminal activity in that vision. 'By working together, Lothian and Borders Police and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service will ensure that all those responsible for serious and organised criminal activity will be brought to justice. 'We rely on the cooperation of the public to tackle these groups who impact on their community, and this has been a prime example of how the police and public can work in tandem to defeat these criminal groups.' He concluded: 'I believe this investigation has sent a clear message to anyone engaged in serious and organised criminality that they will be pursued vigorously by the police and arrested.' As part of this

investigation, £52,000 in cash and around £5,000,000 of property, vehicles and jewellery has been identified as under the control of the crime group. In 2005 Richardson and his father, also Mark Richardson, were convicted of being concerned in the supply of cocaine and were sentenced to 32 months and four years respectively. On his release, Richardson Jnr resumed his involvement in the supply of drugs at a major level.

## MISSING WOMAN

Lothian and Borders Police are making a renewed appeal for information on the whereabouts of a missing Edinburgh woman, six weeks since she was last seen. Elizabeth Brown was seen on CCTV getting off a number 3 LRT bus in Nicolson Street at 11.55am on Friday, May 28. The 55-year-old, who is known to her friends and family as Betty, was wearing a black jacket, open neck blouse, blue jeans and black shoes, and was carrying two large 'Aldi' carrier bags. This is the last known sighting of Betty, who hasn't been in touch with any of her family since Saturday, May 22. She has missed a number of family engagements since she was last seen, and her bank account has remained unused. She is described as 5ft 7ins tall, with fair hair, and glasses. Chief Inspector Allison Strachan, who is carrying out the inquiry into her disappearance, said: 'Officers will today be in the vicinity of Nicolson Square today, handing out leaflets and trying to jog the memories of those who may have been in the area at the time that Betty was last seen. 'After leaving the bus at 11.55am, we know that she crossed the street and visited the cash machine at the Royal Bank of Scotland on Nicolson Street. 'The trail ends there, and we are appealing for anyone who can help us establish her movements after this point to get in touch.' Chief Inspector Strachan added: 'In addition to our officers handing our leaflets today, our advertising trailer will also be circulating in the area, featuring an appeal for information on Betty's whereabouts 'We are also planning a leaflet drop to

around 6000 homes in the area, in the hope that someone living locally may have information that can help us.'

#### WILDLIFE CRIME OFFICER

Lothian and Borders Police has appointed a new part time wildlife crime officer in West Lothian. PC Mike Urquhart will be based in Livingston, and will be specially trained in the diverse aspects of wildlife crime. The role will involve close liaison with the SSPCA (Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) and the Scottish Government Environment and Rural Affairs Department. PC Urquhart said he is looking forward to the challenges of his new role: 'Wildlife crime is an issue throughout the country, and not specific to West Lothian, but I hope by increasing awareness locally, we will send the message that it will not be tolerated. 'I would ask anyone who has any information relating to any wildlife crime, in any form, to contact police as a matter of urgency.'