

New investigation into unsolved East Lothian murder



Lothian and Borders Police have launched a major reinvestigation into the murder of an East Lothian man that took place over a decade ago.

Steven Brown, 35, was found lying dead in a field near Elphinstone, Tranent, on the morning of Sunday 21st February 1999. He had been badly beaten and stabbed several times. Witnesses at the time reported hearing a disturbance in nearby Kerr Road in Tranent around midnight the previous evening, involving a large group of men and women. Officers believe Mr Brown may have been involved, and may have sustained his injuries during this disturbance.

Officers are now re-examining a number of lines of enquiry in relation to the murder including:

- * Revisiting key locations and areas that may be of significance
- * Re-interviewing key witnesses
- * Conducting widespread door-to-door enquiries
- * Speaking to local residents

Officers will also be reinvestigating the reported disturbance from the night before Steven's body was found.

Lothian and Borders Police is working along with the charity Crimestoppers as part of the reinvestigation, and Crimestoppers have offered a £5000 reward for information leading to the conviction of those responsible. The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Cold Case Review Unit has reviewed the unresolved homicide, and will continue to provide advice and direction where necessary.

Detective Inspector Gary Boyd from Lothian and Borders Police is leading the reinvestigation. He said: "It is now almost 14 years since Steven Brown was murdered and we are determined to bring those responsible to justice. We firmly believe that the key to solving his murder lies in the local community, and we are appealing directly to anyone with information to come forward and help Steven's family put his memory to rest. We understand that people may have previously been reluctant to approach police with any information they had at the time of his murder, however as time has passed people's personal circumstances and loyalties may have changed, and they may now be willing to share any information they have with us.

"An incident room has been established, and detective and uniformed officers will be in the local Tranent area, speaking to witnesses and carrying out door-to-door enquiries."

DI Boyd added: "Many residents who were living in Tranent in 1999 will still be living and working in the area, and we plan to speak with all those who previously helped with our enquiries in an effort to bring a new focus to this latest investigation.

"We believe that the key to the truth of this violent murder rests in the local community, and with the community's help we can finally bring those responsible for Steven's death to justice."

In a statement released on behalf of the Brown family, Steven's brothers Colin Brown (57) William Brown (48) and Kenneth Brown (56), said:

"It will be 14 years on the 21st of February that our brother Steven Brown was found murdered in a field in Tranent. No one has ever been brought to justice for this crime, and it is great to see that police have not given up on finding those responsible. Steven's murder affected the lives of a lot of innocent people, not least his family. Steven had three

daughters, three brothers, a sister, and a mother and a father, and we all deserve to see justice done. It has been a difficult time for the family, knowing that there are those in the local community who know what happened to Steven that night.

“It would be a great comfort to us to see the culprits finally convicted, and give our family the closure we so desperately need. We have felt that over the years Steven has been forgotten, while those responsible for his death have been allowed to lead their lives as normal. We are appealing to people in Tranent who have information regarding Steven’s murder to contact the police and help us achieve justice.”

In a separate statement, Steven’s ex-partner Wilma Brown (48), who is mother to his teenage daughter, said:-

“I am grateful that the police have reopened this enquiry as I have been trying for years to get justice for Steven and for people to tell the truth about his murder. Steven never had the opportunity to get to know his daughter, and he never will. He also raised my own son as his own. We would ask people to come forward and tell the truth now, and help us put his memory to rest.”