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MAN'S SKULL FRACTURED IN PUB BRAWL

Fighting spilled on to street

By **PAUL JAMES**
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A MAN suffered a suspected fractured skull after a pub brawl in Torquay spilled out onto the street.

The victim, in his 20s and from Torre, was rushed to Plymouth's Derriford Hospital after violence flared at the Tor Abbey Inn late

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FIGHT SCENE A police officer on duty outside the Tor Abbey pub yesterday

'Marks' to tell how much it will pay
By **TINA CROWSON**
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The contribution which retail giant Marks & Spencer is prepared to make towards helping Torquay's ailing town centre was being revealed today.

The company has been asked to clarify the amount it is willing to pay and a package of proposed improvements, including to roads and public transport at The Willows, as part of the application for an extension for its flagship store.

In a letter to the council, the company's planning and design consultants says M & S is prepared to contribute £150,000 towards improvement in Torquay town centre, payable before the extension opens.

But a report to councillors said the company had originally been asked to contribute £818,000 over five years.

Mezzanine

The extension to create a mezzanine floor would make it the biggest M & S store south of Bristol.

Planners had deferred the application in April after warning the expansion could drain more than £1million in trade from the town centre.

Those figures are also to be clarified at today's meeting by strategic planners.

Development control committee chairman Cllr David Thomas said: "There was some discrepancy over the figures and I asked that the officers go back to Marks & Spencer to get a definitive figure to put before the committee."

"Marks & Spencer have never made a specific payment for town centres before. But it is something Torbay Council is keen to achieve. I have also asked how the figure of

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Bygone's



Police appeal for witnesses to pub fight

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on Sunday night.

He was undergoing surgery at the hospital yesterday after being placed in the intensive care unit.

Police said his condition yesterday afternoon was 'serious but stable'.

A group of men were involved in the skirmish inside the pub

which continued outside where the casualty received his injury at about 11pm.

Detectives immediately launched a manhunt for the offender who is said to be in his 20s and was wearing a striped top.

A group of witnesses have already been quizzed about the punch-up but police are anxious to hear from more.

Det Sgt Garry Mudge said: "It would appear that an altercation did start in the Tor Abbey Inn which spilled out on to the pavement where the man received a serious injury to his head.

"We are still making inquiries to establish how he received this injury.

"If anyone has any informa-

tion we would be pleased to hear from them.

It has not yet been established what provoked the fight.

D5 Mudge confirmed two groups of men were involved in the violent exchange.

He said the head injury suffered by the victim was serious, but not life-threatening.

"We are still in the process of trying to find out exactly what

happened. We have identified some witnesses who we have spoken to in an effort to identify the suspect," he said.

Anyone with information of use to Torquay CID should contact D5 Mudge on 08452 777444, quoting log 422 of May 25.

Witnesses can also use the confidential Crimestoppers number of 0800 555111.

Inquiry into bypass set for summer

By LAURA DALE

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A DATE has been set for a public inquiry into the controversial £130million Kingskerswell bypass scheme.

The inquiry into compulsory purchase orders and road closures along the route will start on Tuesday, July 7 at the Passage House Hotel, Kingsteignton, and could last up to four weeks.

During the inquiry an inspector will listen to arguments for and against the bypass.

He will then submit a report and recommendation to the Government.

Ken Pegden, chairman of the Kingkerswell Alliance, which campaigns against the bypass, said he hopes to persuade the Government to look at cheaper and less destructive methods of improving traffic congestion along the main Torquay to Newton Abbot road.

He said: "We are very pleased the public inquiry has been set. We have continued to push for a range of alternatives which have been produced by a leading transport consultant.

"We believe that if the alternatives can be explored through the public inquiry it will show there is no need for the compulsory purchase orders," he said.

The Alliance says the bypass would 'totally devastate Kingskerswell' and that the mayor's vision of a prosperous Bay could be met without the scheme.

Mr Pegden believes tunnelling under

Penn Inn roundabout rather than building a flyover, having an integrated public transport system, better lanes and redesigning the traffic light systems could cut the cost of the bypass by £80million.

Devon County Council, Torbay Council and Teignbridge Council have pushed the agenda for a new highway for years to improve traffic congestion and vehicle access to the Bay.

Supporters say frequent traffic jams are blighting the Bay's economy and causing misery for Kingskerswell residents.

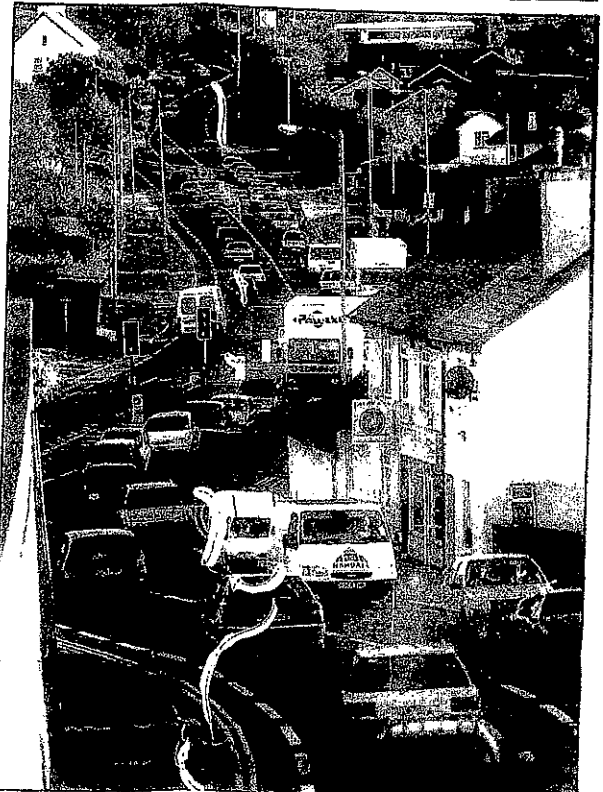
Report

Bypass supporter and Kingskerswell councillor Mike Haines said: "Planning permission has already been given and hopefully it will still be on target for work to start in 2010."

A pre-inquiry meeting to discuss the format of the meeting will be held at Newton Abbot Racecourse on Wednesday, June 3.

The inspector's report, which will follow the public inquiry, is not expected to be completed for several months.

It will then be up to the relevant secretary of state to accept or throw out the findings.



BYPASS INQUIRY: Traffic moving slowly through Kingskerswell

'Missing' householder in hospital during fire at home

FIREFIGHTERS who tackled a bungalow blaze in Torquay feared the elderly Normandy veteran occupant inside may have perished in the smoke-filled property.

Instead the 84-year-old man was in good hands at Torbay Hospital having fallen and injured his leg at his Shipway Avenue home just before the brigade answered the 999 emergency call on Sunday evening.

Crews sent in a snatch team wearing breathing gear to hunt for the occupant after neighbours told them he was definitely at home. They found no one.

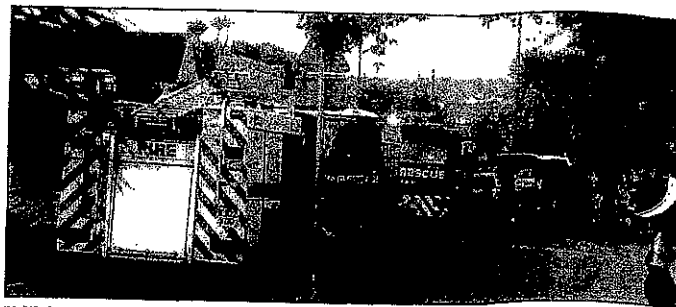
But they later heard paramedics had taken him to nearby Torbay Hospital after he had slipped on his garden terrace.

Watch commander Alan Gilson said: "Neighbours were convinced the gentleman was inside, but we could not find him.

"It was a very unpleasant job because we really thought we were dealing with a fatality.

"We all believed he was somewhere inside because that's what we were told and his car was on the drive.

"It was only later that we



FLASHBACK: Fire crews at the blaze in Shipway Lane, Torquay

learned he had fallen in the garden and been taken to hospital. It was huge relief to know he was OK."

A neighbour revealed the casualty was recovering in hospital. He was due to be discharged late yesterday.

A Torbay Hospital spokesman confirmed yesterday morning: "He is doing fine and will soon be allowed back home."

But his home is not thought to be immediately habitable after suffering extensive smoke damage, but very little fire damage.

Mr Gilson explained: "At this stage it is thought the cause of the fire may have been an electrical fault in the boiler cupboard.

"Fortunately the door was shut and it did a brilliant job in holding back the fire."

One neighbour said: "It was such a fluke that he was out of his home and in hospital at the time. He's so very lucky.

"We think he cut his leg in the fall. He was a bit shaken."

Four pumps attended the incident after the alarm was raised just before 7.50pm by a passer-by who heard the high-

pitched sound of an activated smoke detector.

Mr Gilson said: "We knew we had a job on our hands before we arrived because we could see the smoke coming half-way down Shipway Avenue."

Altogether eight sets of breathing gear were worn by the crews who used two hosereel jets and a positive pressure ventilation fan to snuff out the flames and clear the thick smoke.

Two hurt in domestic incident

POLICE armed with Taser guns were called to a Newton Abbot street after reports of a violent domestic incident involving three people.

Two police units and tactical aid group officers attended the scene at Church Road at about 1.30am on Sunday.

According to one resident, who did not want to be named, police blocked off the road while they dealt with the disturbance.

Police treated a local 28-year-old man at about 2.05am on suspicion of actual bodily harm against a 21-year-old woman and of grievous bodily harm against a 41-year-old man.

The use of Taser guns was authorised but officers did not deploy them.

A police spokesman said: "We were called to a violent domestic incident. Two local units and a tactical aid group who were in the area attended the scene.

"There were two assaults against one woman and one man.

"It appears a man received a serious injury, which is not life-changing.

"The investigation is still on-going."

The 21-year-old man was being questioned by police.

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Man due in court after death of Ivy, 92

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out in the hope of establishing exactly how Mrs Hawken died.

It emerged yesterday Mrs Hawken had spent the evening with her family playing cards at the £725-a-week home which specialises in dementia care.

Det Supt Steve Carey, heading the murder investigation, said Mrs Hawken was known to have been very happy at the home where she had lived for five years.

She had lived locally before moving

into the home which has been run for the last seven years by Stephen and Yvonne Mould.

Mrs Hawken's family are reported to be 'devastated' by the tragedy.

Det Supt Steve Carey said: "Staff at the home have been spoken to by police officers and are co-operating fully."

Woodruff was initially bailed by police after the incident but was taken back into custody yesterday where he was charged late last night.

An inquest into the death is

expected to open early next week in Torquay where formal evidence of identity is likely to be given by a police officer.

It is anticipated that South Devon coroner Ian Arrow will be asked if the body can be retained for a further period by the police while their inquiries into the death continue.

Histology test results on tissue samples are expected within the next few weeks.

Mrs Hawken was taken by ambulance to Torbay Hospital after the 999

call was made at 10.24pm on Wednesday. She died soon after admission.

Retirement home owner Mr Mould has said: "We are devastated. There is a police investigation going on and we are cooperating with that."

"This is a family-run care home and nothing like this has ever happened before. We are just trying to take stock of the situation."

"It is very upsetting and we are all trying to come to terms with what has happened."

Five jobs to go as discount store to close



ONE of Paignton's discount stores is to close with the loss of five jobs.

Pound World (left) in Victoria Street is packing up for good after Christmas, and even a further discount promotion selling everything at just 75p had failed to secure its future.

The shop's lease is due to run out on December 31 and already the owners of the building have been in contact with national firms to take over the premises in the New Year.

Manager Carly Brooks said it was not even the 75p offer on every item had helped saved the store from closure.

She said: "When the whole stock is gone that's it. The store is almost empty."

"At present we're just trying to get through Christmas." She said all members of staff had applied for jobs in the newly opened 99p Store in the former Woolworths store, but without any luck.

She added: "There are no jobs around in Paignton. It's difficult. When a job comes up, you have so many people apply for it."

"It's hard. We're all in the same boat. To know you're going to be on the dole by Christmas is not great."

"I think what Paignton needs is a good music shop. HMV has extended its lease in Torquay. It's done well there. We need something like that."

Ms Brook said the new 99p Store on the High Street had not been too damaging because Pound World is currently selling everything from Christmas decorations to

cutlery and gifts at 75p per item.

Although a Lease for Sale sign has been outside the shop for a month, the store, which opened in April, has been on the market for the past three.

Damian Cook, director at Stratton Creber commercial estate agent in Exeter, which is handling the lease, said several big national names were in the frame to take over the store, hopefully in the spring.

He said the annual £20,500 rent was negotiable with deals on the cards for good brands wanting take a long-term lease on the property.

He said: "No decision has been taken. The property is on the market. It is a prime location with a regular shaped shop."

"We're also ready to be flexible on tenancy and rent. We're looking at a lease which can be tailored to the requirements of the client whether it is a three or five-year lease."

He added: "No major alteration is needed to the store, which takes the ground floor and half of the first floor."

Mr Cook said there was little chance the shop would be taken over before March because of the difficult first months after Christmas.

He added: "Hopefully, people will see the potential for this store, especially when the tourist season kicks in."

Man's skull fractured in hammer attack outside pub

By STAFF REPORTER

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PSYCHIATRISTS will assess the level of danger posed by a pubgoer who fractured another man's skull with a hammer, Exeter Crown Court heard.

Sentencing of Ben Darling, 25, of Queen Street, Torquay, was adjourned for a psychiatric report yesterday until a date to be set.

Darling had attacked Danny Harper, son of the landlord of the Tor Abbey pub, in Belgrave Road, Torquay, during a brawl on the pavement outside.

Recorder John Williams was going to sentence him but became involved in a debate with the defence team about whether the defendant was a dangerous offender, which could affect the length of his prison term.

The judge told Darling: "I suspect you may be sentenced on the basis you are a dangerous offender and that may not be fair to you."

Darling had pleaded guilty to inflicting grievous bodily harm with

intent in an incident in the street, during karaoke night at the pub on May 24 this year.

Prosecutor Richard Crabb said a fight started between Danny Harper and the defendant's two friends inside the back bar.

Darling was not involved but one of his friends was injured, bleeding, and needed to be cleaned up by the pub landlord.

Mr Harper and his friends went outside the pub to avoid any further trouble.

"He was outside on the pavement when there was a further fight which ended with him being hit on the head with a weapon," said Mr Crabb, referring to the hammer. "There was a lot of blood and complete chaos."

A neighbour, looking out of their window, saw a man opening his arms, while shouting 'come on then'.

The man fled to a taxi rank after swinging the hammer at the back of Mr Harper's head. Mr Harper then collapsed.

Mr Crabb said police identified this man as the defendant, after viewing CCTV footage of a suspect coming out of the pub armed with something concealed behind his back.

The victim needed treatment for a skull fracture, including the insertion of a metal ring on his head.

He was now recovering but still suffered weakness in his arm caused by the skull injury.

The court heard Darling already has several previous convictions for violence.

Defence counsel Barry White said the defendant had written a letter to the judge which showed his remorse.

He added Darling had not initially been involved in any violence but joined in out of loyalty to his friends.

"He hadn't gone to the public house with the intent of causing trouble or gone there armed," said Mr White.

The court was not told where Darling found the hammer.

He added that his client had a troubled childhood.

"He has no role models, no opportunities," said Mr White.

The judge said he was considering adjourning the case until later in the day, as he might impose a sentence of imprisonment for public protection.

This would mean the defendant could be jailed indefinitely if he remained a risk.

Mr White then said the case must be adjourned for a psychiatrist to assess Darling, as he disagreed about his client's potential for violence.

Recorder Williams agreed to this suggestion and remanded Darling in custody to be sentenced on a date to be set.

The defendant, in a striped blue sweater, remained silent throughout proceedings except to say "thank you" after the judge thanked him for his letter and said the case needed further consideration.



WINNER: Howard Scott

equality and diversity and a code of conduct for people working with children.

Jo-Anne Downing, the LTA county development officer, presented Cary Park chairman Dave Harding and club coach

provide even better training for young people, adult members and the community to enjoy playing tennis in a friendly and safe environment," said Harding.

MARK OF DISTINCTION: Left to right are Rachael Jacobs (with Clubmark certificate), Dave Harding and Louise Pope

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