



Police appeal: One of the leaflets handed out at East Finchley station

## Sadness of a family who just want justice

By Claire Biek

**“The sadness never goes away”, Anthony Littler’s cousin Tricia McClure told *The Archer*. “He was a gentle giant; he wouldn’t have hurt a fly. He didn’t deserve what happened to him.”**

Although Anthony Littler’s photograph has been all over the news as part of the recent appeal and the reports on arrests made in connection with his murder, there hasn’t been much written about his character. Tricia generously shared all the stories she could remember about her beloved cousin who was so brutally murdered 40 years ago.

Anthony was born and grew up in St Helens, at that time in Lancashire, now in Merseyside. An only child like her, his mother and Tricia’s mother were sisters. Due to the large age difference, Tricia saw Anthony as her big brother: “He was always very kind and gentle to me when I was a little girl. He always gave me presents at family dos.”

### ‘Gentle giant’

They were quite close. Even though Anthony worked away, he always came home for Christmas and made sure to send cards for birthdays. Without a driver’s licence, he would bring small gifts with him on the train, declaring that one day he would learn to drive in order to bring them bigger presents. He was a thoughtful and sweet “family guy” who they thought of as a ‘gentle giant’ due to his tall 6ft 3ins stature.

He and Tricia used to take “daft photos” at family parties. Tricia fondly recalled one she found recently in which she held a three-tiered cake over Anthony’s head unbeknownst to him. “I thought he’d have made a wonderful father,” Tricia said. “It’s a shame he never got married.”

When asked about Anthony’s interests, Tricia shared his love for CAMRA, the campaign for real ale. He and his friends would travel on weekends to try ales on tap. She believes that he

was planning another weekend away with his friends the night that he was murdered.

### In limbo

Tricia cried when she found out. “It was horrible, it felt like we were in limbo. It’s hard to describe the feeling.” She remembers that his mother “went very quiet”. When asked how they all coped with Anthony’s death, she shared that looking back now, her aunt must have been a “tough cookie”. They had to wait a year to hold the funeral due to the inquest. Anthony’s work colleagues attended and spoke very highly of him.

Although time is a great healer, the sadness doesn’t go away. She was keen to help, saying that it would give her great satisfaction if whoever committed this horrible crime could be brought to justice.

Anthony Littler is buried in St Helens, his hometown.

## Detective determined to find answers for victim’s family

By John Lawrence

**There are still many unanswered questions surrounding the murder of Anthony Littler 40 years ago but the detective leading the reopened investigation is confident that someone, and possibly someone still living in East Finchley, will have information that leads to the killer or killers.**

Speaking to *The Archer*, DCI Neil John said the science and methods that police rely on today, such as CCTV and mobile phone records, were entirely absent in 1984. “But I would be surprised if there is not still someone in the East Finchley area who remembers the case and perhaps even the details of the scene that night,” he said. Mr Littler’s murder has been investigated twice since, in 1993 and 2013, and has been brought to the fore again now after a Met Police panel of high-ranking officers decided there was still a chance of uncovering crucial evidence.

### Key witnesses

One key line of inquiry is the attack on another man close to East Finchley station two days before Mr Littler was killed. He walked into the Galleon Wines off-licence on the High Road with severe facial injuries saying he had been attacked by two men with baseball bats.

“Who was that person and is there anyone around who knows who he was? The injuries he sustained and the violence of that attack mean it was a significant event in his life which suggests people who knew him would have known about it,” said DCI John.

“We can’t say at this stage whether that first incident is linked to the murder of Anthony Littler but we have to keep it open as a possibility. The circumstances of another violent attack taking place in the same location within 24 hours I would suggest is significant.”

Another potential key wit-



Search for evidence: DCI Neil John

ness who has never been traced is the person who made the 999 call to report the attack on Mr Littler. DCI John revealed his team have already spoken to many people who helped with the original investigation but the passage of time means some have since passed away.

### Puzzle over motive

The detective is unable to speculate on the motive behind Mr Littler’s killing but inevitably he has some working theories.

One is mistaken identity. Perhaps returning home shortly after midnight and walking up the dark path from the station Mr Littler was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time and fell into the hands of attackers who were lying in wait for someone else.

Was it a fight? “What little

we know of Mr Littler’s character suggests this is unlikely,” said DCI John. “Possibly it was a robbery gone wrong. But then we know that none of Mr Littler’s belongings were actually taken from him after the attack.”

### Search for evidence

As the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unsolved murder approaches in May, this fourth investigation remains in a very active phase and DCI John is determined to find the truth before memories fade forever.

He told us: “I am new to the case and my aim is to try to uncover evidence that leads to charges against a person or persons so that we can finally bring an end to the investigation and settle the case for the sake of Mr Littler’s surviving relatives.”

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