



Jail terms for brothers found guilty of murder

By David Melsome

The two brothers found guilty of the murder of civil servant Anthony Littler as he walked home from East Finchley tube station in 1984 (The Archer, July 2026) have been jailed.



Justice at last: Detectives reopened the murder investigation and appealed for information outside East Finchley tube station in November 2024

Anthony Stewart, 60, and Michael Stewart, 57, were just 18 and 15 at the time of the attack. The Old Bailey heard that they had boasted about attacking men who they believed to be gay.

Mr Littler, 45, was walking back to his home in Leslie Road, N2, shortly after midnight in May 1984 when he was bludgeoned twice over the head with a blunt weapon. He was found fatally wounded half an hour later following an anonymous phone call to the ambulance service. He still had his briefcase with £80 cash and credit cards. Anthony Stewart, of Old Farm Road, N2, and Michael Stewart, of Station Road, EN5, were finally brought to justice after their younger brother reported them 29 years later, saying his siblings had confessed to the killing and boasted about 'queer bashing'. Detectives then spent several more years amassing evidence to bring them to trial. In a televised sentencing hearing on Friday 10 July, Anthony Stewart and Michael Stewart were sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 15 years and ten years respectively. Senior judge Mrs Justice Cutts said: "This was

not an impulsive attack, I am quite sure your group was lying in wait for a victim, someone to attack and rob." While there was no evidence Mr Littler was gay, the judge said the pair had targeted gay men to rob, saying: "1984 was a different time and in many respects a different place."

Mr Littler's cousin Patricia McClure, who lives on The Wirral in Merseyside, said she was angry the murderers had had 42 years of freedom but glad they were finally found accountable. "Anthony was a bit like a big brother," she told the BBC. "He was always a kind soul and to die in such a horrendous way, it's just so unfair."



Fellow travellers: Michael Palin introducing the David Attenborough film on stage at the Phoenix. Photo Mike Coles

Two national treasures together at the Phoenix

By Ruth Anders

Two national treasures came together recently at the Phoenix Cinema, one on film and one in person. On Saturday 27 June, Phoenix patron and world traveller Sir Michael Palin was at the East Finchley picturehouse to introduce Sir David Attenborough's film *A Life on Our Planet*.

Made six years ago, Sir David calls this "My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future", and as such it proved: over an hour of stunning footage, memories of key points in his career and messaging so strong that it was sometimes hard to watch.

There was not a spare seat to be had as Sir Michael took to the stage to talk about the famous naturalist's career and to give us a lively introduction to their friendship. The audience

then settled down to be inspired, dismayed and inspired again.

The film starts and ends in Pripyat, a neighbourhood deserted after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, where plants and animals have taken over the buildings and outside areas. "After humans have disappeared, nature will take over", it tells us.

At the end of the film, we enjoyed a delightfully informal filmed conversation between Sir Michael and Sir David which touched on various topics alongside the importance of the film.

Asked what each of us could do individually to help save the planet, Sir David thought for a moment before replying, "Don't waste. Don't waste food and water, don't waste electricity, don't waste packaging, and don't waste time." Food for thought for us all.

The Phoenix has made a name for itself as an innovative venue where a variety of events like this have been held, and more are planned in the future. The cinema's new fundraising campaign is well underway, and the target to keep the cinema open and thriving is £100,000 during the current financial year.

Can you help with a donation, large or small? Visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk/phoenixrising to find out more.

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:
August 2016

After more than 100 years the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute faced final closure when a move to Kingsbury failed to improve its situation. Several years of financial difficulties followed the Institute's move from its long-time base in the Henrietta Barnett School building. It was a sad end to an organisation that brought education and pleasure to many thousands of students, young and old, in north London.

15 years ago:
August 2011

Police reported trying to find the owner of thousands of pounds found hidden in Coldfall Wood. The substantial sum was uncovered in woodland off Creighton Avenue, but anyone wishing to claim it had to provide a large amount of detailed information to the police to prove ownership. Obviously, speculation arose that the cash could be the proceeds of criminal activity, but the police declined to comment on this.

25 years ago:
August 2001

A fight involving criminal damage and assault shook the local community, as two successive incidents in the county roads followed a road-rage episode between three or four cars elsewhere in East Finchley. Local residents were further outraged when 14 calls made to the police and emergency services were ignored. This resulted in a hastily convened meeting between residents and police, where miscommunication between shifts was blamed for the inaction.

Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Our readers are our eyes and ears, and we are always pleased to hear what is going on in East Finchley. Tips, ideas and stories, large or small, are very welcome. Please email news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you

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