

Tottenham woman jailed for smuggling £24,000 of cannabis in suitcase

Tottenham & Wood Green Journal, March 1, 2012

A South Tottenham woman who tried to smuggle £24,000-worth of cannabis into the country in her suitcase has been jailed for 16 months.

Senima Allen, of Newton Road, was arrested by UK Border Agency (UKBA) officers after stepping off a plane from Montego Bay, Jamaica, at Heathrow airport on December 1, 2010.

The 23-year-old claimed she had no idea how the four packages, weighing a total of 8kg, got into her luggage, and maintained her innocence throughout the trial at Isleworth Crown Court.

But a jury took just 15 minutes to convict her of importing class B drugs, and a second offence of failing to disclose the PIN codes on her mobile phones to investigators.

They found incriminating text messages on Allen's mobile phones revealing she was in on the smuggling plan.

Last Friday, February 24, she was sentenced to 16 months in jail. The UKBA's Peter Avery, assistant director of its criminal and financial investigation directorate, said: "Allen lied from the word go about her role in this criminal act, but fortunately the jury saw right through her.

"Our officers are on constant alert to keep illegal drugs and other banned substances out of the UK and take them out of the supply chain before they reach the streets."

Anyone with information on drug smuggling can call the UKBA hotline anonymously on 0800 59 5000.

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Tottenham still has highest unemployment levels in London

Tottenham & Wood Green Journal, March 14, 2012

The outlook remains poor for Tottenham's job seekers as high unemployment reigns supreme for another month.

Tottenham again had the highest unemployment rates in the capital and the fourth highest in the UK for February, according to figures released by the government earlier today.

There were 6,685 people unemployed in Tottenham last month, up from 6,607 in January, with the number of men out of work nearly double the number of women.

Despite the introduction of the government's work programme last June, the number of Tottenham residents claiming unemployment for 12 months or more has increased 30 per cent.

David Lammy MP said: "Another month goes by and more evidence that the government is failing to tackle unemployment in Tottenham.

"Tottenham needs a game-changer and it needs it fast. That has to be in the form of a government agency being moved up to N17 to bring back jobs and growth."

Haringey Council is taking matters into its own hands with a new £3.5million job fund that will provide direct subsidies to businesses that hire unemployed Haringey residents.

Cllr Joe Goldberg said: "With business confidence so low that few are taking on new employees, we can't afford to stand by and let the government create another lost generation on Haringey."

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Improvements promised for ‘worst in London’ Haringey bus service

Hornsey, Crouch End & Muswell Hill Journal, March 9, 2012

Transport bosses have promised improvements will be made to the worst bus service in London, which winds between Finsbury Park and Tottenham.

Transport for London (TfL) has made assurances that the service on the W3 bus route will improve, after it topped the list as the most complained-about route in the capital last autumn.

The W3, which runs from Northumberland Park in Tottenham through Wood Green and Alexandra Palace to Finsbury Park, received 52 complaints between September 18 and October 15 last year - the worst of 700 routes.

Complaints were mostly about an unreliable, overcrowded service. In a letter to Lynne Featherstone, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, TfL cited engineering problems with buses “which are reaching the end of their life” as part of the problem.

It added: “We introduced a new operating schedule at the end of January and newer buses are being introduced over the next few weeks.”

Ms Featherstone said: “With many people locally being completely reliant on the W3 bus to get to work, school or out and about, an unreliable service and overcrowded buses can mean a very bad start or end to a day, and in a worst-case scenario, leave people stranded.”

Ms Featherstone will launch a survey “in a few weeks’ time” to see if the W3 service has improved.

Harringay man jailed for stealing passengers' luggage at King's Cross station

Hornsey & Tottenham Journals, March 2, 2012

A man who stole luggage, including a laptop, from 11 passengers at King's Cross rail station has been jailed for two years.

Meetak Zargo, 26, of Falklands Road, Harringay, carried out a string of thefts at the station between August and October last year.

He would loiter around before boarding trains, snatching luggage from racks and jumping off before the trains departed. His victims were often unaware of the theft until they arrived at their destinations.

British Transport Police (BTP) began tracking Zargo and learning his methods from CCTV footage on trains and platforms. Plain-clothes officers finally arrested him on November 2, after spotting him acting suspiciously at the station.

Det Con Ian Waudby, the BTP theft team investigating officer, said: "Zargo's actions were accomplished and well-planned. He knew exactly what he was doing, to the point where, even on busy services, passengers had their belonging stolen from above their heads without them even noticing.

"In one incident in October 2011, Zargo even had the audacity to commit two thefts within half an hour of one another. At 7pm, he boarded a train and stole a bag while still carrying a laptop he'd stolen from another service."

On searching his home, officers found a number of suitcases and bags. Their contents ranged in value from £600 to £2,200.

Last Friday (February 24) at Blackfriars Crown Court, Zargo pleaded guilty to 11 counts of luggage theft and one count of stealing a bicycle.

He was sentenced to two years in jail for each offence, to run concurrently. He was also recommended for deportation to his native Algeria on release.

Det Con Waudby added: "I'm in no doubt that Zargo was fully aware of his actions and intended to get away with stealing as much as possible. I welcome the sentence handed down to him."

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Rare plant species now growing in Queen's Wood

Rare plants are springing up in a Muswell Hill woods thanks to a traditional management technique.

Hornsey, Crouch End & Muswell Hill Journal, March 2012

Rare plants are springing up in a Muswell Hill woods thanks to a traditional management technique.

More than 50 new species of plants have emerged in Queen's Wood with the help of coppicing, which involves trees being felled to their stumps near ground level so that new offshoots can grow from them.

The technique provides additional light and space on the forest floor, allowing plants to flourish.

It clearly works. Before coppicing began in Queen's Wood in February 2009, there were only 39 species recorded in a half-hectare section of the local nature reserve.

Now 150 species have been recorded, including the new ones and plants previously seen in other areas of the reserve.

Dormant seed

The rare plants include wood small-reed, water avens and the shining cranesbill, a tiny, pink flower which was listed as very rare and almost extinct in 1975.

Bounds Green naturalist and project leader David Bevan said: "It is well over 100 years since Queen's Wood was last coppiced on a regular basis, yet a range of characteristic coppice plants have survived as dormant buried seed.

"This project has given them a chance to germinate again.

"Some of the surviving plants are rare in London and had not been seen in the wood for many years.

"The coppicing project has given them a new lease of life. I am delighted by these results."

SITA Trust Landfill Communities Fund financed the project and the Friends of Queen's Wood will continue to monitor the area now that it is complete.

World Famous Circus Comes to Alexandra Palace

Hornsey, Crouch End & Muswell Hill Journal, April 11, 2012

A world-famous circus is coming to town, and it has more than a few new “secrets” up its sleeves.

Moscow State Circus is bringing its newest show, *Babushkin Sekret*, to Alexandra Palace from now until Sunday, April 15.

The high-flying show combines a “typical Russian story” with contemporary and classical circus styles and brilliant performers to bring audiences to the edge of their seats.

A circus spokesman said: “It’s a very unique show, with acts that you haven’t seen in England for many, many years.”

The performance is based on the story of the “12 Chairs”.

A formal member of nobility, who is working as a desk clerk, finds out that family jewels had been hidden from the Bolsheviks in one of the 12 chairs of the family’s dining room set, and ventures out to look for them with his sidekick.

This production marks the second time the Circus has used a story as a theme for a show, with the first being *Legenda* in 2009 with a plot based on Rasputin.

In the new production Russian circus queen Yana Alievia will take to a revolving aerial chandelier, accompanied by an ensemble of high-wire performers, acrobats, jugglers, clowns and even a vertical pole balancer.

The spokesman said: “We have five people walking the high-wire simultaneously.

“There hasn’t been a high-wire like that in Britain for 20 years, not since the last time Moscow came here.

“We have two wire walkers on the wire while a girl is between them standing on their heads – one foot on each – and as they walk apart she ends up doing the splits, 30ft in the air.”

To reserve tickets, call Ticketmaster on 0844 856 555 or visit the on-site box office, which is open from 9am to 9pm on days of visit.

Drought-hit parks may become eyesores Council officials fear public areas may be included in hosepipe ban

Brown patches could become an eyesore in public parks this summer due to Thames Water's latest hosepipe ban.

Hornsey & Tottenham Journals, April 2012

Brown patches could become an eyesore in public parks this summer due to Thames Water's latest hosepipe ban.

The Temporary Use Ban which goes into effect today will impact on 8.8 million water customers across London and the Thames Valley. For the first time the ban – which is currently indefinite – will include many public places, including Haringey parks such as Alexandra Park and Stationers Park.

Thames Water said the decision was caused by the drought plaguing South East England and parts of the East Midlands.

Under the ban, customers cannot water their plants or gardens; clean private motor vehicles or boats; fill or maintain personal swimming pools, ponds or fountains; or clean their houses or patios with a hosepipe.

According to Thames Water, “garden” also includes parks, lawns, public gardens, or any area of grass used for sport or recreation. Thus, local parks and even Olympic sites – including Alexandra Park, which will be used as a cultural centre for the Olympics – fall under the ban.

Simon Evans, media relations manager for Thames Water, said: “All of the Olympic Sites fall under the hosepipe ban except for the national or international sporting fields. Human beings come further up the list of priorities than flowerbeds.

“Obviously we don't enjoy imposing restrictions ever, but its something we do because we have to”.

He cautioned that flowers can still be watered with a watering can or non-drinking water. Friends of Stationers Park chair Kle Savidge said: “The deterioration the grounds will see due to a hosepipe ban will bring the space down.

“This could have long-term impacts if the lack of water on plants and especially grassy areas that people enjoy, fall into such a state that would be impossible to bring back.”

Haringey and Alexandra Park officials said they are waiting for further instruction from Thames Water before releasing an upkeep plan. Cllr Nilgun Canver, cabinet member for environment, said that the council was meeting with Thames Water today to discuss the flexibility of the ban.