

MIKE HARDING

It's all Greek to me

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ALL WRIGHT ON THE NIGHT

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THE SKIN GAME

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BLOODBATH IN SUPERMARKET

11 British soldiers among freed UN hostages

By Roy King

ELEVEN British soldiers were among 125 UN hostages released by their Bosnian Serb captors early today.

The freed troops were bussed across the border into Serbia and were expected to be airlifted to the Croatian capital Zagreb this afternoon.

The 11 Royal Welch Fusiliers were relaxing and enjoying a meal and a wash after their ordeal at Novi Sad in Serbia.

Bosnian Serbs said their release was "a gesture of goodwill" and were understood to want concessions in return from the UN.

They were still holding 23 British troops, with 220 other UN personnel.

Six of the freed Britons were said by British charge d'affaires Ivor Roberts to be slightly injured.

"There are all in good spirits," he said. "But three are suffering from cuts, two have broken wrists and one has a broken ankle."

The injuries were caused when their military personnel carrier was in an accident.

Serbian sources hinted that the remaining hostages would be freed in the next few days.

The hostage release came in response to a plea by Bosnian President Slobodan Milosevic, desperate to get sanctions against his country lifted.

The freeing of British, French, Swedish, Canadian and Danish troops, just after 1am came ahead of today's crisis meeting of Nato chiefs in Paris.

Top of their agenda was a blueprint for the creation of a multi-national rapid reaction force of up to 10,000 troops to protect the Bosnia peacekeepers.

Britain's Force Alpha, three companies of the Devon and Dorset Regiment, is expected to be ready for deployment next week.

Bornita Focus: P6

Father and son in café suicide bid

A FATHER slashed his own throat and then stabbed his son in a bizarre double-suicide bid in a crowded supermarket café.

Horrified shoppers at the Sainsbury's store in Regent Road, Salford, watched as the 68-year-old father cut his throat with a carving knife he had bought only minutes earlier.

He then hacked at his 45-year-old son who stood willingly in front of him — and onlookers scattered in panic as the two men collapsed in pools of blood.

The father was "serious, but stable" in nearby Hope Hospital today and his son was "very serious" in the intensive care unit at Wilthinton Hospital.

"Why they should end up in Sainsbury's café on a Friday afternoon in such a bizarre and ritualistic incident is difficult to understand," said Det Chf Insp Kenny Caldwell.

Police today appealed for witnesses and also offered counselling to anyone traumatised by the horrific incident.

The two men, who police have not named until relatives are traced, sat in apparent calm conversation together for an hour before the bloodbath.

"They had bought the knife in the supermarket, then sat there and opened the package," said DCI Caldwell.

"The father then cut his own throat, at which point the son offered himself to me. He then cut his own throat and she fell on to the railings."

"They were nice blokes."



Horror as Sophie, 8, is speared on railings

By Jill Burdett

A GIRL of eight was impaled on school railings after plunging from a tree.

Sophie Crawshaw was speared through the ribs by a seven-inch metal spike.

She was rushed to hospital with a section of the railings still sticking from her body after medics decided it was too dangerous to pull her free at the scene.

Sophie underwent emergency surgery at Tameside Hospital, where the spike was removed. She was today in a stable condition.

Fire station officer George Vickers said: "We realised we could not get Sophie off the spike at the scene so carefully cut through the railings as gently as possible so the vibrations did not cause any more damage."

"It was a very delicate operation but the little girl was incredibly brave. She chatted away the whole time."

Sophie's father Colin, said: "By some miracle, the spike missed all her vital organs."

"She has been incredibly lucky — and incredibly brave."

Sophie and her sister Melanie, aged 10, were playing just a couple of hundred yards from their home on Broadoak Crescent, Ashton under Lyne, when the accident happened.

Melanie said: "We were a bit bored and Sophie started climbing the trees. She was at the top of one when a branch fell and she fell on to the railings."

By Paul Taylor

well. He had every opportunity to step back.

"There was no struggle. The son got closer and was slashed across the throat and in the stomach."

Store manager Gordon Davy said: "An off-duty doctor and nurse from Hope Hospital raced over and were absolutely marvellous."

"They immediately started stitching the two men up. There was an awful lot of blood."

"The men left their boarded-up home in Cheetham more than a week ago and appeared scruffy as if they had been living rough."

Days before they left, someone took away their white dog — which they were very attached to, according to neighbours.

One neighbour said: "They were nice blokes."

BRAVE: Sophie, eight, and sister Melanie. "She chatted all the time," say rescuers

OFF-DUTY DOCTOR IS LIFE-SAVER

A FORMER Hope Hospital doctor performed life-saving first aid on the floor of Sainsbury's Regent Road cafe, after a father and son cut their throats in a double suicide bid.

And police say that but for the actions of thoracic registrar Dr Mike Bickells, the men would 'certainly' have bled to death.

Dr Bickells was shopping at the Regent Road supermarket at 4pm on Friday when he saw police and ambulances race up.

He immediately joined paramedics, Sainsbury's first aid staff and two off duty nurses in the blood-splattered cafeteria.

There, according to police, Thomas Hunt, aged 68, and his son Albert, aged 45, carried out a bizarre 'ritualistic' stabbing with a carving knife they had bought in the store.

Thomas slit his own throat, and moments later his son offered himself to his father,

Shoppers shocked by cafe bloodbath

who slashed the younger man's throat before Albert stabbed himself in the stomach.

Shocked shoppers were evacuated as the impromptu medical team sealed the wounds.

Store manager Gordon Davy was full of admiration for Dr Bickells, the nurses and his own store staff.

"The doctor and nurses were absolutely marvellous," he said. "They rushed in and immediately began stitching up these awful wounds, afterwards they just calmly gathered their things and went. I am so thankful as I'm sure at least one of the men would have died."

Det Chief Insp Kenny Caldwell also paid tribute to Dr Bickells and the nurses.

"This doctor provided magnificent first aid, stitching up and

putting in drips which certainly saved the younger man, who had horrendous injuries," he said.

But Dr Bickells claimed he had not performed any heroics.

"I simply administered first aid and then accompanied the most badly wounded man to Hope. I was just helping out," he added.

Thomas and Albert Hunt, formerly of Dearhurst Drive, Cheetham Hill, left their home on Monday which has since been boarded up, and police believe they had been living rough.

As The Advertiser went to press, Albert was in a stable condition at Withington Hospital. Thomas's condition was described as 'satisfactory' by a Hope Hospital spokesman.

Store brings in counsellors to comfort traumatised on-lookers

SAINSBURY'S is offering free professional counselling to anyone who witnessed the shocking double stabbing at their shoppers' cafeteria on Friday.

The store, which immediately brought in an expert counsellor from London to help traumatised customers, was already employing another counsellor following a recent armed robbery in the store.

On that occasion a security guard was marched through the busy store by gun toting robbers who threatened terrified wages staff.

Anyone who witnessed the apparent suicide bid by Thomas and Albert Hunt and would like to speak to a counsellor should contact Sainsbury's manager Gordon Davy at the Regent Road store.

Joe's bowling along!



100 up: Centenarian Joseph Lomax prepares for action

Sports fan has a ball as he gets a ton up!

A CLIFTON bowling fan celebrated his centenary down at his favourite green.

Joseph Lomax, of Ragland Avenue, was 100 years old last Friday, and to mark the occasion enjoyed a game of bowls at the club where he's played for 90 years!

Mr Lomax spent his special day at Newtown Bowling Club in Moss Field Road, Pendlebury.

Nephew Brian, of Burford Road, Swinton, says the sports-mad centenarian is wonderful for his age.

He said: "He still goes watching football matches and the dogs. He's really into his sports."

And his uncle has no intention of retiring from his bowls, either!

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PLUS OPLUS

Northbank chemical alert: p5

PLUS OPLUS

Kersal kids on TV: p6

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Coffee competition winner: p8

PLUS OPLUS

Spot the keys

WINNER of our Spot the keys tinner this week is Mrs B Howard of Buckingham Road Clifton.

If you would like to land a £10 cash prize, just look out for the keys symbol hidden among the adverts in our paper this week.

When you have found them, cut out the advert in question and send it to us together with your name and address to Spot the keys, Salford City Reporter and Advertiser, 30 Church Street, Eccles, M30 0DF.

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