

Motorist is found guilty over death of motorcyclist

A MOTORIST has been given a community order after being convicted of causing the death of a motorcyclist.

Jonathan Bridger was this week found guilty by jurors at Oxford Crown Court of causing the death of 59-year-old Christopher Mason, of Mulberry Close, Bicester, by careless driving.

The 20-year-old defendant lost control of his Toyota Yaris in wet conditions on the B4100 north of Bicester on May 30 and collided with the motorcyclist.

Bridger was sentenced immediately after the verdict.

Judge Gordon Risius handed Bridger a 12-month community order with 200 hours' unpaid work.

He said: "Your carelessness on that day was plainly entirely out of character — your remorse was evident from the very outset and has continued ever since."

"I remind myself that this has never been a case of dangerous driving but rather of careless driving. The prosecution case was you were driving a bit too fast for the conditions and that must have been the jury's view."

Bridger, of Shortlands Close, Helmdon, Northants, was also banned from driving for a year and must retake his test before regaining his licence.



■ **TRAFFIC SURVEYED:** John Henry Newman pupil Lauren Pearce, nine, was among those carrying out a traffic monitoring operation outside the school this week
Picture: OX51906 by Jon Lewis

Pupils monitor streets outside school

NINE-year-old children with cameras and clipboards took to the streets to tackle the problem of parking around their Littlemore school.

The nine John Henry Newman School pupils were joined by teachers, police community officers and parish councillors in Grange Road on Tuesday.

They recorded examples of motorists who were leaving their cars on dropped kerbs, double yellow lines and in no parking zones.

Man struck after driving a car without tyre

A MOTORIST drove a car without one of its tyres before then punching a policeman full in the face.

Karl McCarthy was stopped by police officers on January 6 this year after they spotted his Vauxhall Astra grinding along the road in Banbury on one of its rims.

The car had no tyre on its front passenger side as it drove along Bloxham Road and South Bar Street in the centre of the town.

As he was about to be arrested, the 34-year-old driver punched PC Matthew Oaten in the face and ran off.

He was eventually arrested by police officers after a further struggle.

McCarthy, of Nethercote Road, Tackley, was convicted of a string of offences by jurors at Oxford Crown Court this week.

He had represented himself during the trial after sacking his barrister.

The jury found him guilty of dangerous driving, assault with intent to resist arrest and a charge of causing actual bodily harm.

A fencing sword was found in McCarthy's car but he was cleared of having an article with a blade or point.

He was remanded in custody to be sentenced on June 11.

Fraudster fled to woods for 18 months after he conned Salvation Army woman out of £25,000

By Our Reporter

A FRAUDSTER who hid in woodland after conning a pensioner out of £25,000 was caught when he came home for a shower.

Mark McGuire was jailed for 20 months at Oxford Crown Court for swindling 77-year-old Barbara Wellman of Banbury.

McGuire had befriended the Salvation Army worker while she helped him and other visitors at one of the organisation's drop-in centres.

After giving her a false name he told Miss Wellman he needed to visit his sick mother in the North of England, so she gave him money for a train ticket. The retired headteacher went on to give him monthly cheques for £1,000, thinking it would be a loan he would use to pay his Oxford rent.

It turned out the defendant was actually living rent free with a friend, the court heard.

After McGuire's scam was detected he was arrested and charged before being released on bail. He then vanished and fled to woods where he camped for a year-and-a-half until he went to his sister's for a shower and the police caught him.

Roger Coventry, prosecuting, told the court Miss Wellman had met 46-year-old McGuire at the Salvation Army centre close to her home. She thought lending him the money was "the Christian thing to do".

But the 77-year-old was starting to lose her memory and struggling to look after her affairs, the court was told.

McGuire's scam was uncovered when he asked a friend to cash the £4,000 cheque for him, but he refused and police were informed.

The defendant, of Binswood Avenue, Leamington Spa, was arrested in August 2009 and appeared before Banbury Magistrates' Court. He failed to answer his bail and then went on the run.

Andrea Ferguson, defending, said McGuire had been a chronic alcoholic at the time he carried out the fraud, to which he pleaded guilty.

He had missed his 2009 hearing because of a panic attack, and then fled to the woods she added.

She said: "During that period of time he had pangs of conscience on a number of occasions."

The defendant faced one charge of fraud in Oxford last week.

He was jailed for eight weeks at Banbury Magistrates' Court last month for absconding from bail.



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