

The Heathwick Echo

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MYSTERY VICTIM OF HEATHWICK TRAGEDY

POLICE APPEAL FOR HELP NAMING BEGGAR

Is he a former comedy star?



By Stuart Penton, Special Correspondant

Nearly a month after the events that rocked Heathwick on 16/12, the police are still unable to identify the 65th

victim of the disaster. Many local people walked past the man almost every day, but nobody seems to know who he was, though some people knew him as 'Matey'. Probably in his fifties, he used to sit outside the bank in Heathwick High Street, begging for money. It is now known that he was sleeping at a hostel in Newhallen, but the name under which he was registered

there has been found to be false. The only lead the police have comes from Bernie Blackstock manager of the Rose and Crown, himself a 16/12 survivor. The mystery man occasionally drank in Mr Blackstock's pub and had dropped hints about being a stand-up comedian on the northern club circuit in the early 1980s. There are no photographs of the beggar, who seems deliberately to have sat out of range of the CCTV cameras at the bank. He is described as of average height, with receding brown hair and dishevelled clothes.

Mr Blackstock says, "It seems extraordinary that we saw this man so often, and never really knew who he was. Perhaps he has relatives somewhere who don't even know he is dead. He deserves a decent send off from his family, if he had one. He seemed to be a decent man, down on his luck." Mr Blackstock was with the man just before the explosion on 16/12. "I can believe he was a comic," he says, "He was always joshing. He was telling a joke when he died. It was something to do with two men on a night out. I'm afraid I missed the punchline."

A police artist has studied the charred remains of the man's body, and produced a photofit of what he may have looked like when alive. Mr Blackstock says it is a reasonable likeness. Using computer technology, that image has now been recast to show how he might have looked thirty years ago. Now they are appealing to the public to name the face.



HOW 'MATEY' MIGHT HAVE LOOKED IN THE 1980S
DO YOU RECOGNISE HIM?



A POLICE PHOTOFIT OF THE BEGGAR KNOWN AS 'MATEY'

Professor Paul Sparvo, Head of the Department of Ephemeral Performance at Heathbrook University, is a specialist in the history of stand-up comedy. Yesterday, I showed him the artist's impression. He suggests that the man in question may be Dan Moloney, who had a brief, comedy career in the last century, but disappeared from the scene amidst rumours of alcoholism.

The police now want to hear from anyone who might know of Mr Moloney's current whereabouts, have a photograph of him, or better still, to hear from Mr Moloney himself, so that this line of inquiry can be closed. Failing that, they would like any relatives of Mr Moloney to contact them, so that their DNA can be checked against that of the dead man.