



Paper delivery woman viciously attacked by 14-stone dog

A NEWSPAPER deliverer has spoken of her horror after a 14-stone bull mastiff dog burst through locked patio doors before viciously attacking her.

Anita Southworth was left needing hospital treatment after the dog, named Tyson, sank its teeth into her leg and hand as she completed her round in Martindale Close, Blackburn.

A destruction order has now been put on the animal - which had previously attacked a postman - but police have been unable to act upon it because its owner gave it away after the attack.

Kaine Slater, 19, of Martindale Crescent, has now been threatened with a £5,000 fine by Blackburn magistrates unless he co-operates with police attempts to find the animal.

The court was told that the dog had an aversion to fluorescent colours and the victim had been carrying a bright yellow bag at the time.

Mrs Southworth, 39, was attacked as she was delivering copies of the Lancashire Telegraph's sister paper, The Citizen, in the Shadsworth area on September 20.

She said: "I've been doing the round for about three years and the dog usually barks, but it would be behind a garden gate.

"I had my iPod in but I could hear barking. Then the dog came out from the next door garden - apparently it had not been secured and it charged through the French windows.

"Suddenly it lunged at me. I was very frightened because it was such a huge dog. I put my bag in front of me to protect myself but it managed to bite me."

She added: "I was shouting for someone to come and help me. It jumped at me again and eventually the owner came rushing out and grabbed it.

"She asked me if I wanted to come in and have a cuppa but there was no way I was going in the house with the dog."

Mrs Southworth, of Talbot Street, Rishton, was bleeding from wounds on her upper leg and hand. She went to see a doctor who sent her to the

hospital.

"Fortunately I didn't have to have stitches but I was left shaking like a leaf," she said.

"It was a horrible thing to happen. It could have been a child that it attacked and then it would have been much worse."

The woman responsible for the dog at the time, Alison Slater, appeared before Blackburn Magistrates Court and pleaded guilty to having a dog out of control resulting in injuries.

The 39-year-old was fined £400 with £100 costs and ordered to pay £500 compensation to Mrs Southworth. She was also disqualified from keeping a dog for five years.

Her 19-year-old son, Kaine Slater, who owned the dog, told the court he had since given the animal away and didn't know where it was. Magistrates issued the destruction order and told him he had to co-operate with police in tracing the animal - or risk a fine of up to £5,000.

The court was told that when interviewed by police Slater said the dog had an aversion to fluorescent colours and had previously gone for a postman.

She said that she had locked the dog in the conservatory but it had burst through the doors to get at the lady delivering newspapers.

Jonathan Taylor, defending, said his client had taken the dog to the vet to be put down but didn't go through with it after the vet said it would cost £200 because of its size.

Mr Taylor. "As far as she is concerned it would have been better for everyone concerned if the dog had been put down."

7:25pm Tuesday 11th December 2007

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