

Specialist teams carrying out searches to find wanted Richard Scatchard



Specialist search teams will be carrying out extensive searches in West Somerset over the coming weeks as the investigation into the disappearance of Richard Scatchard continues.

Scatchard, 70, is wanted on a prison recall and we need to talk to him in connection with the death of Kelly Faiers that happened in October in Minehead. Her death continues to be treated as a murder inquiry.

More than 300 enquiries, including speaking to witnesses and obtaining CCTV, have been carried out since he disappeared on Monday 16 October but there remain no confirmed sightings since.

Superintendent Lisa Simpson said: "It has been three months since we last had a confirmed sighting of Richard Scatchard.

"Our priority remains to find Scatchard alive and arrest him and any public information to help us achieve that aim will be gladly received. We wish to question Scatchard about what happened to Kelly in the hours leading up to her death, information we desperately want to be able to give her family.

"We have spoken with both Kelly's family and Scatchard's and been honest with them that there have been three months without proof of him being alive and that is an extremely long time.

"While these searches are partly being carried out with that in mind, we remain open minded that Scatchard may well still be alive and do not give up hope someone can provide crucial information that leads to his arrest."



Events of 14-16 October

Scatchard and Kelly went out together on the evening of Saturday 14 October in Minehead.

Due to Kelly being critically ill, Scatchard called the ambulance service to his home address in Blenheim Road at approximately 4.15am on Sunday 15 October, where sadly paramedics pronounced her deceased.

Officers attended and spoke with Scatchard before leaving the scene. On returning the next day to speak further with Scatchard, he had disappeared.

Scatchard is considered a danger to women, specifically those he seeks a relationship with, and has been a regular user of dating apps. He has previous convictions for sexual offences in which he administered drugs to victims, as we have previously stated.

Kelly's death

A post-mortem examination in October proved inconclusive in terms of establishing the cause of Kelly's death.

Further tests have been carried out and our Major Crime Investigation Team continues to treat Kelly's death as suspicious.

Supt Simpson said: "Family liaison officers continue to support Kelly's family and provide them with key updates in relation to our investigation.

"They need to know what happened to Kelly and we are desperate to provide them with those answers as soon as we can."

Search for Scatchard

After we spoke with Scatchard in Minehead on Sunday 15 October, he travelled to Watchet. The last confirmed sighting of him on CCTV is in the Swain Street area at about 9am on Monday 16 October (pictured below).



He was then seen back near his home address in Minehead approximately an hour later by a member of the public.

A short clip of CCTV footage has recently been found showing a man riding a bike in North Road, Minehead, and turning left onto The Avenue (see above). We believe the footage was taken from approximately 10.15am on Monday 16 October.

This footage was discovered during a further review of CCTV shortly before Christmas. Efforts have been made to find further images which can help us confirm who the cyclist is, but unfortunately despite efforts from the investigation team the identity of the man riding the bike remains unconfirmed.

Supt Simpson said: "The clothing worn by the cyclist, especially the black trainers with a blue heel, bears a strong resemblance to what Scatchard was seen wearing on CCTV in the proceeding hours. We therefore believe there is a strong chance the man in the photo is Scatchard and shows a bike, with silver handlebars, that he may have used.

"We'd be particularly keen to hear from anyone who has seen a similar bike to that pictured, or alternatively believes they are the cyclist shown so we can eliminate that potential evidence from our enquiries if not relevant."

A **Crimestoppers reward for information that leads to Scatchard's arrest was issued last month** and remains live.

To date we have had approximately 100 unconfirmed reported sightings of Scatchard, predominantly in the West Somerset area.

In those cases, enquiries have been carried out, such as reviewing CCTV and speaking to those informants, and have either shown it was a different individual or there is insufficient evidence and significant doubts whether the report was accurate, despite the best intentions.

Further searches

Additional resources are being committed to the search investigation. Specialist officers, including the rope access team and police dogs, are being deployed at locations across the Minehead and West Somerset area and we expect these latest enquiries to last a number of weeks.



Supt Simpson said: "Searches on land and from the air were conducted once we learned of Scatchard's disappearance.

"These have been supplemented by a large number of enquiries – including reviewing CCTV, distributing wanted posters, media appeals and following up on potential sightings reported by the public. Sadly, these have failed to provide any certainty as to Scatchard's whereabouts but we still want people to call us immediately should they see him.

"Therefore, we have worked with expert teams to plan a series of key searches over the coming weeks. These will be concentrating on a mix of previously covered areas, plus some more remote parts where access would be difficult or impossible without specialist training and equipment.

"We are conscious that after three months, no confirmed sightings or proof of life that crucial clues as to what has happened to Scatchard may be found in a more inaccessible location, especially if he has come to harm, which a member of the public or previous searches would not ordinarily come across.

"Ultimately, we hope to find Scatchard alive so we can question him, and continue to urge the public to contact us if they see him."



Police complaint

We can confirm a complaint about the police response was made by Kelly's family on Wednesday 20 December.

Voluntary referrals to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) can be made under certain circumstances, including the receipt of a public complaint, should the criteria for a mandatory referral not be met. Having received a complaint from Kelly's family last month, we voluntarily referred it to the IOPC on Thursday 4 January and told her family within 48 hours.

Our Professional Standards Department were notified of the incident and our response during the early stages of the inquiry, and we will do all that we can to assist the IOPC.

How can you help?

We continue to ask anyone with information about Scatchard to contact us.

Scatchard is white, about 5ft 11ins tall, of average build with short grey hair. He speaks with a Scottish accent and has previously claimed to be called Richard Dunlop.

If you see Scatchard please call 999 immediately quoting reference number **5223259285** and do not approach him. If you have information about where he may be or the bike pictured, please call 101.

Alternatively, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or via its website.