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RUSSELL KILLER BIDS FOR FREEDOM

Josie's anxious wait as Michael Stone back in court



COURT HEARING: Schoolgirl Josie Russell (main picture) was attacked by Michael Stone (above)

KENT'S most notorious killer, Michael Stone, could be free this time next weekend.

Stone was jailed for life for the savage hammer murders of Lin Russell, 42, and her daughter Megan, who was six, as they walked home from school in Chillenden in 1996.

This week survivor Josie, now aged 17, and her father Dr Shaun Russell will be forced to re-live that October day as the nation awaits the verdict of a new judge.

On Wednesday Stone will be taken by prison van to London's

By GARY WRIGHT

Court of Appeal where he hopes his conviction will be quashed, proving he is the victim of a miscarriage of justice.

Confessed drug addict and violent robber, Stone, 42, from Gillingham, always denied the murders which left Josie – then aged nine – with horrific head injuries.

She was unable to speak and underwent a series of operations to rebuild her fractured skull.

And when she was well enough

her father took her back to north Wales where they try and live quietly and away from the media spotlight.

The appeal will be uncomfortable for those Kent Police officers involved in the original hunt for the Chillenden murderer.

It was a year before they arrested Stone and they know there was never any forensic or witness evidence linking Stone to the murder.

Top QC Edward Fitzgerald will present Stone's attempt to overturn the three life sentences at the appeal hearing.

He will explain how Stone's con-

viction stands or falls on the alleged confession he made to a fellow prisoner, Damien Daley, while on remand.

Daley, a small time crook and drug dealer, claimed Stone told him exactly what happened as they shared adjoining cells.

It was a vital breakthrough for detectives who feared there was insufficient evidence to convict the man they believed carried out the attacks which left a country stunned and people in East Kent frightened to walk near

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Wind farm foundations laid down off Kent coast

By NEIL CLEMENTS

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FOUNDATIONS for Kent's first offshore wind farm are going down in the seabed off Whitstable and Herne Bay this weekend.

Danish power company Elsam started work on six supports for wind turbines on the Kentish Flats sandbank on Friday.

Morten Milthers, Elsam's work vessel co-ordinator for the site, just over five miles off Herne Bay, told Kent on Sunday: "Work is proceeding at a faster rate than we had hoped for. The installation vessel Resolution has returned from Hoboken, in Denmark, with six new monopiles and we expect the work to take six-10 days."

The company had warned residents they might hear some construction work underway in fine weather.

Last Sunday Mr Milthers received one complaint about pile-driver noise.

He said: "Last Sunday morning there was a dead calm and some noise could be heard on shore, but not very much. If there is a little bit of wind there won't be any problem at all."

"If it is very calm this Sunday we will try to work around it so that it won't disturb anybody."

He said local shipping had been observing safety restrictions around the site.

Cable-laying will start in the



FUTURE SHOCK: How the wind farm off Herne Bay will look

next month but the 30 wind turbines will not be put up until the spring of next year, once the shore installation and sub-station have been completed.

Only serious bad weather with high winds from the North-East would delay the project.

The Government has given the green light to 15 offshore wind farm sites around the UK and one of the major concentrations will be in the Thames Estuary.

Meanwhile the public inquiry into the planned on-shore wind farm at Little Cheyne Court on Romney Marsh is due to start at Lydd Airport on Tuesday, October 12.

Press reports have claimed the Government has been deterred from pursuing its wind farm policy as part of a bid to drive up renewable energy input, because

of strong opposition to such on-shore schemes from high-profile figures including Prince Charles, naturalist David Bellamy and the Conservative leader, Michael Howard.

But on Friday a spokeswoman at the Department for Trade and Industry was adamant wind and wave energy would remain an important component in the Government's strategy to reduce the effects of energy consumption on climate change.

She said: "There has not been a shift in policy. There is a lot of chit-chat about this, a lot of people claiming the Government has seen the light and the rest of it, but the reality is this - we have got to make some inroads in renewable energy."

"There is a correlation between climate change and the

power supplies we are using. That is why we are planning to use 10 per cent renewable energy by 2010.

"Wind is not out of vogue. Yes, we have set aside £50 million for wave and tidal power generation because we need that to get up to a reasonable development standard. This is a valuable source of renewable energy for Britain as well, but it is some years away.

"People will see gas prices going further up within the next year or two because Britain is ceasing to become self-sufficient in gas, so they must seriously consider how they are to power their homes in the future."

A variety of power sources would give Britain some security of supply, the spokeswoman said.

On Friday the East Kent Green Party called on Labour and the Conservatives to reject nuclear power from future energy plans.

Its campaigns officer, Dr Hazel Dawes said: "It is clear renewable energy can meet all existing and conceivable needs. Work by the Kent Energy Centre demonstrates improved energy conservation and renewable energy can cut pollution, combat global warming and create useful employment throughout the county."

The spokeswoman for the DTI said: "We can't rule it out because we need security of supply and affordable energy. We want people to seriously look at the options available. Are the people shouting 'no' to nuclear power also saying 'no' to wind farms?"

'The right man was jailed'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

their homes. But Daley, who was jailed earlier this year for drug offences, has been labelled an unreliable witness. Defence counsel will tell the Appeal Court judge that the case against Stone stands or falls on Daley's confession and even if he is telling the truth, there is no proof the voice was Stone's.

The detective chief inspector who led the hunt, Dave Stevens, is not expected to attend the court but he is understood to be convinced the right man was jailed.

A police source told Kent on Sunday: "This was a difficult and highly emotive case with little hard evidence and nothing that positively proved Stone was the killer."

"But I can assure you that officers involved in the case are convinced the right man was jailed and are convinced he should remain behind bars for life."

But if Stone wins his freedom this week, Kent police will be forced to re-open a Kent's biggest murder case from eight years ago.

• *Josie making the grade, p7.*



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