

Widow killed by dog pack: Daughter's five pets pounce on 71-year-old as she calls in to feed them

- **Gloria Knowles, 71, went next door to feed the animals but was mauled to death**
- **Neighbours say they heard screaming coming from the garden in Morden, south London**
- **Five dogs seized: two French Mastiffs, two American bulldogs and a small mongrel**

By Martin



Tragic: Gloria Knowles, who was savaged to death by her daughter's dogs, pictured at Harrington's pie and mash shop, Tooting, where she worked

A great-grandmother was mauled to death by a pack of dogs she was feeding as a favour for her daughter. The five animals pounced on Gloria Knowles, 71, after she went into the garden to give them their evening meal.

The widow was badly injured when the dogs – two 'giant' Bordeaux French mastiffs, two American bulldogs and a small mongrel – suddenly turned on her. Neighbours described hearing 'hysterical screaming and barking' from the garden.

Mrs Knowles lived next door to her daughter, Beverley Mason, with her granddaughter, who has a baby of her own.

Mrs Mason lives with her husband, Dylan, and her other three children. The couple own the dogs together. The family has run Harrington's pie and mash shop in Tooting, South London, for several generations. Police and ambulance services were called to the house in Morden, also in South London, on Tuesday night. Five dogs were later seized from the semi-detached property, and it was revealed that Mrs Knowles had had a heart attack as the animals set on her. Nazir Hussein, a friend and neighbour of Mrs Knowles, was alerted to the attack when he heard Mrs Mason screaming 'Mum, Mum, Mum' outside the house.

Mr Hussein, 65, said he had long been afraid of the family's dogs, describing them as 'vicious'.



Brutal: Gloria Knowles was mauled to death by her daughter's dogs - two French Mastiffs, two American bulldogs and a small mongrel (all pictured)



Dog attack: Mrs Knowles (centre) with daughters Jasmine-Jade Knowles (left), and Beverley Knowles (right)

'I would see the dogs being walked in the park but I didn't want to walk near them,' he said. 'They were vicious dogs – you knew by how they pulled on the lead and you could hear them barking from my house.'



Neighbour: Kevin Hamilton said he heard screaming but assumed it was one of Beverley's children

'There were so many dogs something like this was bound to happen.'

Another neighbour, Kevin Hamilton, described hearing screams from Mrs Mason's house at 5:15pm but mistook the noise, thinking it had come from one of Mrs Knowles's grandchildren.

Mr Hamilton, 65, who lives in the other house next door to Mrs Mason, described hearing 'hysterical screaming and barking' as he watched television.

He only became aware of the attack when a police officer told him about it, explaining that Mrs Knowles was alone in the house when she went to feed the dogs. He said officers had told him it was Mr Mason who discovered Mrs Knowles's body.

Mr Hamilton described the two mastiffs as 'real muscle dogs' with 'enormous chests', and said the animals had a 'pack mentality'. He added: 'If one jumped on you it would certainly knock you over.'

He described Mrs Knowles, a widow, as a 'fit old bird' who talked to all the neighbours and enjoyed gardening.

She had lived on the street with her husband Victor for 40 years, until he died five years ago. Neighbours said her daughter and her family moved into the house next door the year after Mr Knowles's death.

They explained that there was a gate between the gardens of the two houses which Mrs Knowles would

regularly use, often to feed the animals.



Scene: Police have cordoned off the Morden home where Mrs Knowles died last night



Scene: The back garden of Gloria Knowles' daughter Beverley where it is believed the five dogs attacked her



Tragedy: Dog baskets and food bowls can be seen in the garden at the scene where Gloria Knowles may have been mauled to death by the animals



Animals removed: Police have seized the two French Mastiffs, the American bulldogs and the mongrel pending the post-mortem

Another neighbour, who did not wish to be named, said: 'The dogs were always barking, everyone around here will tell you that.

'They had always had dogs but never any that big. They were not the sort of dogs I would have around children, let me put it that way.'

ATTACK MIRRORS PREVIOUS VIOLENT DEATHS IN LONDON

Two years ago Barbara Williams, 52, was mauled to death by an eight stone Neapolitan mastiff in Wallington, south London.

The dog had been kept in a cage seven inches shorter than its body. Earlier this year its owner Alex Blackburn-Smith, 35, admitted failing to ensure the dog's welfare and was ordered to do 150 hours' unpaid work and pay costs of £3,300 at Croydon Magistrates' Court.

In January Leslie Trotman, 83, died after he was mauled by a 'pitbull-type' dog that had broken out of his neighbour's garden in Brentford, West London.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: 'Police were called at around 6.25pm on Tuesday to reports of a 71-year-old woman found deceased at a residential address in Morden.'

He added that an investigation was under way to establish the cause of death, and said the woman had sustained a 'number of injuries'.

A London Ambulance Service spokesman said: 'We were called at 6.12pm to [a house] in Morden to a patient in cardiac arrest. Sadly, the patient was dead at the scene.'

The family was too upset to talk last night. Mrs Knowles's death follows a spate of attacks by dangerous breeds.

Earlier this year, Leslie Trotman, 83, died after being mauled by a 'pit bull-type' dog that had escaped from his neighbour's garden in Brentford, London. And two years ago Barbara Williams, 52, was killed by an eight-stone Neapolitan mastiff.

Its owner, Alex Blackburn-Smith, 35, admitted failing to ensure the dog's welfare after it was discovered to have been living in a cage seven inches shorter than its body.