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Stephen Wheeler
Press Complaints Commission
Halton House
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June 29, 2009

Dear Mr Wheeler,

Thank you for your letter of May 8, 2009, regarding the complaint brought by Alexander Baron (ref 092080) over an obituary of Colin Jordan that was published in the Guardian on April 13, 2009.

Mr Baron's complaint concerns reference to a fatal fire at "a Stamford Hill theological college", which we said was part of a series of 34 arson attacks conducted by NSM supporters in the mid-1960s. Mr Baron says this fire was an accident unconnected to the later NSM arsons. He also claims that the Guardian implied Colin Jordan was responsible for the fire. In fact the relevant paragraph does not implicate Jordan and indeed ends with the sentence: "Jordan was not charged over the arson."

The wave of arsons eventually led to three trials at the Old Bailey, which resulted in a number of convictions. The author of Colin Jordan's obituary, Gerry Gable, who was among those who helped bring the perpetrators to trial, says the court was left in no doubt that the method of attack on the college was consistent with that seen in the series of proven arsons that followed. The coroner's report – which Mr Baron submits with his complaint – came only a few weeks after the fatal fire when there was no cause to suspect foul play.

However, the Guardian accepts that no one was charged in connection with the Stamford Hill fire, and proposes the following correction to be published in the paper and above the article online:

In an obituary of the former British fascist leader Colin Jordan (p31, April 13, 2009), we wrote that a fatal fire at a theological college in Stamford Hill, London, was part of a wave of 34 arson attacks by NSM supporters in the mid-1960s. While some have long contended that the college fire had the hallmarks of the later arsons, no charges were brought in connection with that incident and the coroner at the time recorded the victim's death as "accidental".

We hope this provides an acceptable resolution to the complaint.

Yours sincerely



Elisabeth Ribbans
Managing Editor

Guardian Newspapers Limited

A member of Guardian Media Group PLC
Registered Office
164 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3GG
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Registered in England Number 908396