

Police seize fighting dogs in biggest raid

American Bull Terrier trained to hunt wild boar caught after street chase

by Tom Lawrence

ELEVEN dogs bred and trained for illegal fights have been seized from a cramped basement flat in Wembley.

Officers say the swoop at the three-room property in Elms Lane is one of the biggest and most successful the borough has ever seen.

More than 20 members of Northwick Park Safer Neighbourhoods Team and a police dog unit searched the flat at 10am on Friday last week after receiving reports that aggressive canines were being trained there.

Two Pit Bull Terriers, two Bulldogs, two American Bull Terriers, one Bull Mastiff and six pups were found.

One adult dog and the six pups were squeezed in a small cage and the other animals were roaming around in squalid conditions.

Police also found a large amount of dog strengthening

equipment and evidence the animals had been running up and down the back garden tied to tyres to build muscle.

A 21-year-old man was arrested for possessing and breeding fighting dogs and has been bailed to return to Wembley Police Station in November.

During the raid one of the American Bull Terriers, which are trained to hunt wild boar in the USA, escaped out of a window and led police on a 10 minute chase through the streets of Wembley before being caught in Carlton Avenue East.

One resident who did not wish to be named said: "The man moved in three months ago and the dogs have been barking day and night."

"He lets them out on the grass without a lead and neighbours are really scared."

Yvonne Lewis, 60, of Harrow Road, was attacked by six of the dogs a week before the raid.

She said: "I was walking along Elms Lane and saw the animals. I crossed the road because I'm scared of dogs but they circled me."

"The owner said they wouldn't bite but I was terrified and started kicking at them and crying out."

"He said he had too many dogs to put on a lead but they were out of control."

PC Simon Underwood, of Preston Safer Neighbourhoods Team, said: "This is one of the worst cases we have had in Brent. The flat was in a terrible state."

"We have been aware of the address for a while and have slowly but surely been making connections with other properties involved in dog fighting."

Brent Police have carried out 14 raids this year and have come into the possession of 30 dogs for offences under the dangerous dogs and animal welfare act.

On 7th September 2007, 11 dogs were seized under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 & Animal Welfare Act 2006 after a member of the public phoned the council to complain about dogs barking in his area. After careful investigation work and collaboration with local residents, Brent Animal Welfare Service were able to gather information indicating that dogs were being bred and trained to fight at the address. This information was shared with the RSPCA & Metropolitan Police who then organised a raid on the address in Northwick Park.