

Woman dies after attack by gang of youths



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LONDON (Reuters) - A "kind" young woman who was attacked by a gang of youths in a Lancashire park almost two weeks ago has died of her injuries, police said on Friday.

Sophie Lancaster, 20, and her boyfriend Robert Maltby, 21, were set upon in Stubby Lee park in Bacup near Burnley in the early hours of Saturday, August 11. Both were beaten unconscious.

The Lancashire Telegraph newspaper said they were so badly injured that police had difficulty establishing their sex. The paper added that detectives thought they might have been attacked because they were wearing "Goth" clothing.

Police said despite attempts to treat Lancaster's injuries, she had now died in hospital. They have renewed appeals for information about the assault.

"We were proud to know our daughter," Lancaster's parents Sylvia and John said in a statement.

"She was funny, kind, loving and brave. Not being able to see her blossom into her full potential, or even to see her smile again, is a tragedy beyond words."

Five youths, aged between 15 and 17, have been charged with the assault on Lancaster and Maltby.

Lancashire Police's Acting Assistant Chief Constable Jerry Graham described the death as a "senseless loss".

"There are, of course, young people in Lancashire -- and as we have seen in recent times, all over the country -- who are intent on disrupting the lives of law-abiding citizens," he said.

"In the very worst cases, such as this one, their actions have devastating consequences."

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