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DINERS ESCAPE AS CAR RAMS RESTAURANT

TERRIFIED diners had to dive for cover when a car rammed into a restaurant doorway as they were leaving.

The car had roared the wrong way down Seven Sisters Road, Holloway, before mounting the pavement and veering towards a group of about 20 people outside

by CHARLOTTE TAMVAKIS
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Fassika Ethiopian restaurant at 4am on Sunday.

The driver then reversed and hit the outside of the restaurant for a second time, before speeding at the diners again and stalling the car.

Fassika's owner Solomon Neggatu said: "Everybody was outside at the time or getting ready to go out. I've never seen such a thing. It was very scary. People were screaming and running."

Mr Neggatu believes the horrifying ordeal will drive customers and staff away.

He said: "Of course my customers are not coming back, and the staff as well, they don't want to work."

"This is a small community. When they see such a thing they will not come back. We've never had this kind of experience before. We have been here for 10 years. We have never had to call the police."

Police Constable Andy Williams said: "Luckily it was quiet at that time of night because driving the wrong way down the street is extremely dangerous."

"He drove at very high speed and it's obviously



■ WORRIED boss Solomon Neggatu outside his damaged restaurant this week

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GARDEN 'VANDALS' ARE BLOOMING BRILLIANT!



■ THE concrete strip before it was tackled by the guerrilla gardeners

by GEMMA BRIGGS
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GUERRILLA gardeners operating under the cover of darkness have illegally turned an abandoned strip of land into a blooming oasis.

A dozen volunteer green-fingered "vandals", aged between nine and 40, took to the streets armed with trowels and spades.

Their mission was to transform a grey and unloved stretch pavement in Regan Way, Hoxton, with yucca plants and lavender.

A nature-loving resident, who yearned for more plants to care for than he could fit in his own tiny garden, called in the gardeners.

But they had to be quick – strictly speaking the operation on February 21 at 8pm was illegal.

Richard Reynolds, who runs the Guerrilla Gardening website, said: "I think it went well. It was quick and colourful. The residents said they couldn't remember when there were last flowers there. One lady cooked us all soup."

He added: "What we're doing is



■ RICHARD Reynolds and guerrilla gardener volunteers tackle Regan Way in the dark
Picture: Dieter Perry

vandalism. We're not asking for permission but no-one's ever complained. Some councils have even secretly given us money after we've done it."

Mr Reynolds, by day a freelance advertising planner who lives at the Elephant and Castle, set up his website www.guerrillagardening.org two years ago. The project relies on donations but Mr Reynolds added: "It's about people doing it themselves. People should think 'here's a patch of grubby mud outside my house, why don't I do something about it?'"

"I was doing it myself round my tower block. I wanted to share with more people what I was doing."

Guerrilla gardeners also planted 100 red tulip bulbs in Manor House, Finsbury Park, in November last year.

Estate youths rip out intercom

A GANG of destructive teenage yobs have found a new way to torment residents – ripping out their intercoms so people have no way of ringing on their doors.

In the last two weeks four intercoms have been torn from the wall in Theseus House, Theseus Walk, Islington.

Residents say one has not yet been repaired despite worried calls about the wellbeing of an elderly man living there.

Pat Briggs, who lives in the flats, said: "They take the screws out and pull the whole intercom right out of the wall."

"They've tried to fix our intercom twice now but it still doesn't work."

Doug Goldring, Homes for Islington's director of operations, said: "Our out-of-hours team has been present on the estate and a letter is going out to residents encouraging them to help tackle anti-social behaviour by reporting it to us if they are aware of it."

"Workmen have been out to assess the intercom and we expect to have it fixed soon."

Youth music festival

MORE than 500 young performers from across London will take part in a festival in Finsbury. LSO St Luke's in Old Street is the venue for the Music for Youth Regional Festival on March 12.

Twenty-two groups, including choirs from Islington's Copenhagen Primary School, St Joan of Arc Primary School and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School will perform at the festival. It is one of 59 Music for Youth events across the country involving 40,000 young musicians, singers and dancers – making it the world's largest youth music festival.