

annual report

2003-04



AYLESBURY VALE

CHILTERN VALE

MILTON KEYNES

NORTHERN OXFORDSHIRE

OXFORD

READING WITH WOKINGHAM

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT

SOUTHERN OXFORDSHIRE

THAMES FOREST

WEST BERKSHIRE



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contents

Chief Constables's foreword	2
About Thames Valley Police	6
Challenge and Change	8
Reducing crime	12
Investigating crime	18
Promoting safety & security	26
Helping the public	36
Thames Valley Police Areas	
Aylesbury Vale	42
Chiltern Vale	48
Milton Keynes	54
Northern Oxfordshire	60
Oxford	66
Reading with Wokingham	70
Slough & District	76
Southern Oxfordshire	82
Thames Forest	88
West Berkshire	92
Awards and Commendations	96
Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984	102
Notifiable offences recorded by the Police, by offence	104



chief constable's foreword

To: The Secretary of State for the Home Department, The Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, the Chairman and members of the Thames Valley Police Authority.

Welcome to the annual report for Thames Valley Police.

This year I have been able to make serious progress towards my long term aim of providing consistent and effective neighbourhood policing.

Since joining the Force more than two years ago I have been working towards increasing our presence on the streets. These efforts were boosted this year with a record number of police officers working for the Force, from 3,770 in 2002 to 4,047 at the end of March this year. Further redeployment meant more officers out of stations and on the beat, and we introduced the first group of police community support officers to provide additional visible patrol.

I am now about to embark on an ambitious programme which will put neighbourhood policing at the heart of the Force and provide a more effective response to issues in our communities. The Challenge and Change programme is explained in more detail in a later section of the annual report, but I would like to use this opportunity to explain what I am trying to achieve.

Challenge and Change is not a wholesale return to the "golden age" of policing, if such a thing ever existed. The term conjures up cosy images of bobbies on bikes, seen on television in *Heartbeat* and *Dixon of Dock Green*. But this golden age was tarnished.

The Great Train Robbery, which happened 40 years ago, illustrates the problem. The robbers' hideout was discovered by two beat bobbies from Buckinghamshire Constabulary, but as was usual in those days, Scotland Yard headed the investigation because only the Yard had the manpower and specialist resources to deal with a crime of such magnitude.

These days forces lead on and resource their own investigations and I believe this is vital for

any Force and its communities. It ensures a familiar and consistent approach is used on both major and minor crimes, and that officers and staff working on those cases have local knowledge, appreciate local sensibilities and have a stake in the neighbourhood. It is true there are some modern-day parallels for the shared approach of the sixties. For instance, during the Soham investigation Cambridgeshire Constabulary had to rely on help and support from other forces, but this is the exception and not the rule. There has also been talk of national teams of specialised officers dealing with major investigations, but if this ever happened this would be a support and guidance role, as I understand it.

Major investigative work, similar to that required following the disappearance and death of Dr David Kelly, is not the only extra demand on our time compared to the sixties. The demands on policing have changed radically since those days. The population has grown and we all live longer; we consume more and have more valuable and portable goods in the home and on our person, like DVD players, mobile phones and lap tops. There are also more cars which not only attract criminals but also lead to more death and injury on the roads. Then there are other pulls on our time, such as the terrorist threat, major events like Reading Festival, demonstrations like the current animal rights campaign in Oxford and maintaining new technology and computerised databases.

What I am proposing to do is not a return to some mythical golden age, but a practical way of addressing neighbourhoods' concerns, working with the people who live there, based on an intelligence-led approach with our statutory partners.

At the same time I must balance this with ensuring the Force has the resilience and resources to provide an appropriate level of response to our other commitments.

chief constable's foreword

4

The introduction this year of the National Reassurance Policing Programme in West Berkshire has given a good indication of how this might work. The residents in Burghfield and Greenham do not rely on their neighbourhood policing team alone to identify and resolve the problems. They work together with the police, other partners like the parish and district councils, housing association, youth workers and even the local pub landlord to identify issues and come up with workable solutions, which they then play a part in implementing. In some cases police officers play only a minor role in the solution, as it is better dealt with by other, more relevant agencies or the communities themselves.

Running alongside this neighbourhood focus, there will be local police area, basic command unit and Force levels of activity, providing clear and consistent senior leadership, specialist support to the frontline and specialist services to the community, as well as working on major crimes and crime trends which affect more than one neighbourhood.

This creation of different levels of policing, from neighbourhood teams at the heart of the community to the corporate Force level, will ensure that appropriate resources are used to deal with the different needs we have to meet within the Thames Valley.

The last 12 months give a good illustration of this. It has been another busy and challenging year for Thames Valley Police and once again the people who work for the Force have responded with vigour and determination.

At the start of the year we faced an unacceptable rise in the burglary of people's homes. We know that burglary is a terrible crime which has a devastating effect on victims and therefore we have worked hard to regain our previous record of success. Through our Safer Homes campaign, by the end of the year we had turned the corner and slashed the increase by half. This reduction has continued into the present year but there is still much work to do, particularly in relation to detections.

In the summer the Force was under the international spotlight following the disappearance and death of weapons expert Dr David Kelly in the Oxfordshire village of Southmoor. The subsequent Hutton Inquiry included scrutiny of the Force's investigation and concluded it was thorough and efficient.

By the autumn we were planning our response to the Government's National Crack Plan, which had identified Reading, Oxford and Slough as high crack areas. The two weeks of Operation Crackdown led to 51 arrests and reinforced the fact that crack and associated crime would not be tolerated in the Thames Valley.

The terrorist threat continues to play a part in our operational life and I was particularly proud of the response from staff in the major emergency planning exercise Red Signal in February. Though it was an exercise it was an important opportunity to test our response to real-life emergencies. It also gave us a great opportunity to work closely with partners including the military and local authorities. The findings from the exercise will form an important part in the way we deal with major emergencies in the future.

The year ended with a ringing endorsement from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, with a Force baseline assessment which put us in the top 10 of forces, with excellent or good ratings in 11 out of 16 categories and no poor ratings at all.

The assessment also acknowledged that the "excellent" ratings for roads policing, critical incidents, forensic management, leadership and direction, and strategic management were achieved despite having the second lowest police officer strength in the country and the continued haemorrhage of experienced police officers to other parts of the country where the cost of living is lower or the benefits are higher.

While recruitment and retention remain an issue I am pleased to say that efforts made over the last 12 months have staunchened the flow of officers from the Force and the recruitment drive has led to more than 4,000 officers now working for the Force - an all-time high. Added to this we now have more police community support officers thanks to the support from our local authority partners and the Home Office.

It is a tribute to the men and women police officers, police staff, Special Constables and volunteers of Thames Valley Police that we do a good job with limited resources. The support of the Police Authority means that we can constantly strive to improve our service to the public and that I am able to have the tools in place to provide consistent and effective policing.



I would like to pay tribute to Penny Elvin, who stepped down as Chairman of the Police Authority this year. Penny continues to be a member of the Authority and I look forward to continuing to work with her, and her successor as Chairman Sally Hannon.

Thames Valley Police faces many challenges in the next 12 months and I know my staff will rise to meet them and help me to improve our service delivery through the Challenge and Change programme. I hope that our partners and the communities of the Thames Valley will help us to meet these challenges by providing the support which is vital to our success.



Peter Neyroud, QPM
Chief Constable



about Thames Valley Police

Working with our communities to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime.

Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in the country. Covering the 2,200 square miles of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, we patrol 196 miles of motorway - the largest stretch of motorway in Britain - and serve a population of 2.1 million, plus the six million visitors who come every year in search of history, royalty and a day at the races.

Our turf covers a diverse area, from the new town of Milton Keynes in the north, to the historic town of Windsor in the south, from the dreaming spires of Oxford to the silicon valley of Bracknell and the largest industrial estate in Western Europe at Slough. These areas are policed by around 4,140 police officers, 350 Special Constables, 370 volunteers and 2,860 police staff, who work to keep the Thames Valley safe and peaceful.

To meet the needs of this vast area, between April 2003 and March 2004 over 900 Force fleet vehicles, including panda cars, roads policing cars, armed support vehicles and dog vans, covered 15.2 million miles.

Close work with the communities we serve and our many partners in local authorities and the criminal justice system remains at the core of our role and our aims. By working together we can use a problem-solving approach to increase safety, convict and deter offenders and be tough on crime and criminals.

However, the Thames Valley area also plays host to a wide variety of events, including Reading Festival; Wycombe, Oxford, Reading and MK Dons football matches; the Henley Royal Regatta; Newbury and Ascot races, and state visits at Windsor Castle. Our Protection Group officers deal with the largest protection commitment outside the Metropolitan Police area, including the Prime Minister's country residence at Chequers, the Duke of York's residence and the private homes of a number of past and present MPs and ministers. Last year, in addition to special events, our Protection Group officers carried out 232 VIP and royalty commitments, 270 military

commitments and 25 category A prisoner escorts - deemed necessary if the prisoner is vulnerable or an escape risk.

At Thames Valley Police we want our staff to be approachable and visible to the diverse communities we serve. We will continue to develop new ways to give our communities greater accessibility to our officers and services.

We hope to build on this even further in the next 12 months, putting neighbourhood policing at the heart of Thames Valley Police.

Activities in the past year include:

- 55,345 files were registered for prosecution by our Administration of Criminal Justice Department.
- As well as policing motorways, the Roads Policing department dealt with 132 fatal and 5,398 injury collisions. Roads Policing officers also attended 29 per cent of the Force's immediate incidents and were responsible for 14 per cent of the Force's arrests - 48 per cent of these for crime offences.
- The Roads Policing Proactive Team of 14 officers made 2,400 arrests during the robbery initiative at Reading. This year these officers featured in the Sky One programme Road Wars.
- Our 34 dog handlers attended 17 per cent, or 13,904, of the Force's immediate incidents, as well as 509 drug searches, 80 firearms commitments, 41 football matches and having one dog handler present whenever Tony Blair is at Chequers.
- Our firearms officers dealt with 206 incidents requiring an armed response.
- The Mounted Section carried out 1,062 commitments across the Thames Valley.
- Chiltern Air Support Unit carried out 2,363 tasks and 401 suspects were arrested solely due to the presence of air support.
- Our Specialist Search and Recovery Team carried out 315 operations which required specialist diving equipment.
- Our Counter Terrorist Wing carried out 932 commitments.





Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in the country.

Challenge and Change

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Peter Neyroud this year announced plans to restructure the Force to put the “local” back into policing.

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud plans to create 16 local police areas, overseen by five basic command units (BCUs). Up to now the Force's command structure has been based around 10 police areas and a headquarters which delivers the specialist police functions like roads policing and major crime investigation.

The five new BCUs will deliver the main crime and support functions for local policing, including forensics, administration support and managing local major operational requirements.

The 16 local police areas will mirror the local authority boundaries which should enhance local partnership work to deliver community safety and crime reduction. Each local police area will have a clearly identified local commander.

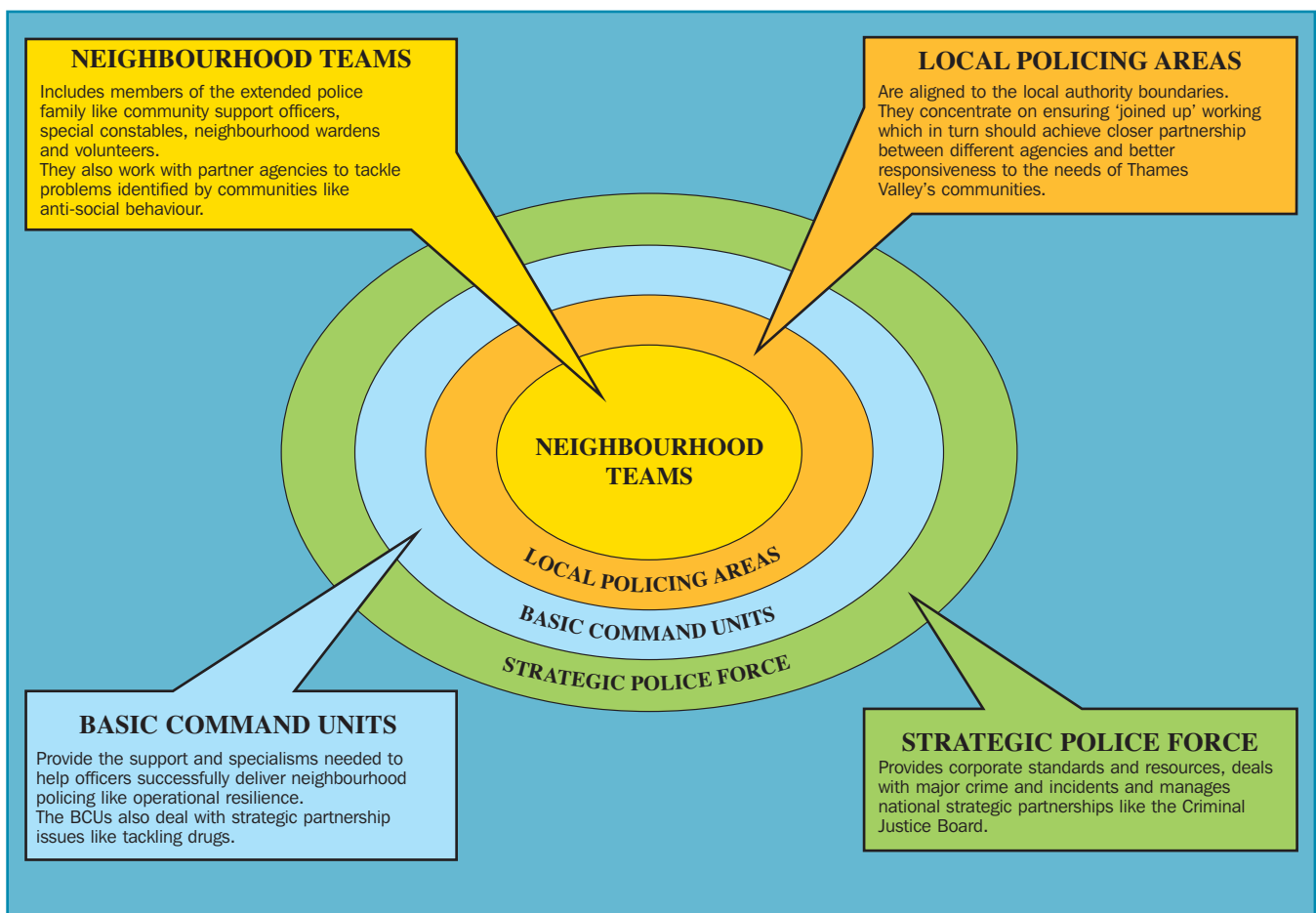
This change will also support co-operation with local partners and communities to deal with anti-social behaviour and disorder and deliver more locally-owned visible policing.

Neighbourhood teams will be introduced to the local police areas, and they will be responsible for delivering and responding to the community.

Mr Neyroud said: “As with every reorganisation there may be concerns about the closure of police stations, reductions in the number of local officers and a loss of local service delivery. This is absolutely not what these changes are about - quite the opposite. The Force is trying to expand its network of small police stations, police points and mobile police stations.

“The budget agreed by the Police Authority has allowed for a further 60 police officers on top of the 200 already recruited. These numbers have been further supplemented by the 400 officers redeployed to front-line duties in the last two years.

“I am determined to bring police operations closer to the community.”



CHALLENGE & CHANGE

CLOSER TO THE CITIZEN

Milton Keynes BCU
Chief Superintendent
John Liversidge



Oxfordshire BCU
Chief Superintendent
David McWhirter



Buckinghamshire BCU
Chief Superintendent
Simon Chesterman



Berkshire West BCU
Chief Superintendent
David Murray



Berkshire East BCU
Chief Superintendent
Brian Langston

Challenge and Change

Andy Talbot – Sector Inspector for Pangbourne.

Staff Profile

Names: Andy Talbot

Age: 46

Role: Sector Inspector for Pangbourne

Time in Force: 24 years

Previous roles: Shift officer in Witney, Oxford and Cowley; Support Group; Traffic; Protection Group; Sgt at Abingdon; Sector Insp at Hungerford.

Tackling crime and providing reassurance should go hand in hand but Insp Andy Talbot knows that both need completely different approaches.

As sector inspector for Pangbourne, he leads a team of 40 officers covering a population of 86,000 across 30 parishes.

He is also responsible for the implementation of a pilot scheme being run in Burghfield to provide reassurance.

Andy said: “The National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) trial is about providing reassurance and reducing the gap between people’s perception of crime and the reality.

“For example, people may believe there is a problem with speeding, anti-social behaviour, vandalism or fly-tipping in their neighbourhood. These are not major crimes, but they do send out a signal to the community and can make people feel less safe. These incidents may also create the perception that crime is rising, whereas in reality it is actually falling.”

Andy set up and chairs a Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) in Burghfield which identifies priorities and then works collectively on the solutions.

At the same time, Andy and his team have to remain focused on reducing and detecting other crime in the patch, like burglary.

“It is really vital that we don’t take our eye off the ball regarding our performance on tackling crime, as we have to succeed at all levels,” he said.

“We are actively trying to solve problems rather than being constantly reactive and responding to repeated calls about the same issue. This in turn frees up officers to focus on crime hotspots, target offenders and tackle other neighbourhood priorities.”

“The approach seems to be working, as from April to August 2004 crime in Burghfield has fallen by 25 per cent compared with the same period in 2003. At the same time crime in the sector has fallen by 17 per cent.”

While a key part of the trial includes visible patrolling Andy hopes people realise that a lot of officers’ work goes on out of sight. He said: “I think that when the public don’t see us out and about, they may wonder exactly what we are doing, however, a lot of police work is ‘behind the scenes’. We have to make sure we get the balance right.”

Burghfield Neighbourhood Action Group

The NAG was set up as part of the NRPP and includes representatives from Burghfield Parish Council, West Berkshire Council, Sovereign Housing Association, residents, the Youth Service, Willink School, a licensee and Neighbourhood Watch as well as Insp Andy Talbot and other members of the community policing team.

The group is responsible for working with local people to identify neighbourhood priorities and possible solutions. These could be as simple as clearing litter, refocusing police patrols to target anti-social behaviour hotspots, or removing abandoned vehicles.

Current priorities in Burghfield include speeding, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping.

The principle behind the NAG is to include as many representatives as possible from Burghfield, so that residents are part of the process and have confidence in it. The solutions must include visible action, so people are aware that something is being done to address their concerns.

Though there is a dedicated police team, officers are only part of the neighbourhood solutions and not solely responsible for them. For instance, though Burghfield was not statistically a road casualty hot spot, speeding was identified as a local concern. The solution has been to buy a Speed Indicator Device and train people to use it, providing both community reassurance and education to drivers. Andy said: “Any action taken needs to be joint action. It is not just about the police and our partner agencies - we need to make sure local people feel involved and are part of the solution.

“That is the real change, getting people to be part of the solution.”





“What appears on television and in the newspapers can also affect people's expectations - there is a gap between what some members of the public think we could and should do, and what we actually can do. We need to bridge that gap and neighbourhood policing is an opportunity to achieve that.”



Many areas set up dedicated burglary teams to ensure there was a consistent and effective response to reports of burglary.

reducing crime

Safer Homes

Beating a surge in burglary became the main focus of the Force this year after an unacceptable increase in the crime.

The Chief Constable's Management Team dedicated £400,000 in extra funds to help areas tackle the burglary of people's homes through focused patrols, scene attendance, exploiting forensic opportunities, targeting known offenders and promoting crime prevention advice. Many areas set up dedicated burglary teams to ensure there was a consistent and effective response to reports of burglary. Between April and June 2003 there was a 10 per cent increase in domestic burglary and a 12 per cent detection rate.

By the end of March 2004 this increase had been slashed by half and detection rates had risen to 14.3 per cent.

Operation Leon

A three day crackdown across Thames Forest police area just before Christmas last year led to 12 people being arrested and suspected stolen property being recovered.

Officers raided over 20 homes as part of Operation Leon. The operation aimed to disrupt and detect criminal activity including burglary, handling stolen goods and class A drugs misuse.

Six addresses in Maidenhead were raided, seven in Windsor, four in Bracknell and four in Slough. As well as the arrests, suspected stolen property and class A drugs were recovered.

Locking Out Burglars

Officers and police staff provided crime reduction advice in Northern Oxfordshire burglary hotspots to stop criminals taking easy pickings.

In February joint Safer Homes roadshows were held in Chipping Norton and Banbury. In Chipping Norton more than 300 homes were visited by police, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Oxfordshire Housing, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. Home security surveys were conducted and free door chains and smoke alarms were provided where appropriate. Around 50 homes were given extra security and safety measures.

In Banbury 500 homes in the town were surveyed by officers and crime reduction advisers, who tried to spot the kind of things opportunist burglars would look for. Each home was given a copy of the survey and appropriate advice. The work was supported by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Neighbourhood Watch.

Prolific Offender Jailed

Ross Nancarrow, 18, of Crown Leys, Aylesbury, will be in prison until at least next year after admitting to more than 100 burglaries.

Nancarrow was sentenced to two years imprisonment in May for committing three commercial burglaries. He also had 25 other commercial burglaries taken into consideration. Following this forensic evidence linked Nancarrow to a further eight burglaries and after a prison visit he admitted to a further 100 commercial burglaries for which he was given a six month concurrent sentence.

He was released around Christmas but was arrested again after only two weeks and was back before the courts pleading guilty to two counts of house burglary in January. He was sentenced to 12 months and ordered to serve the remainder of his previous sentence.

Following another prison visit he admitted to a further house burglary and seven commercial burglaries for which he received a six month concurrent sentence.

Offenders On Duty

In Reading thousands of leaflets were sent out across the area providing advice and crime reduction advisers toured properties offering suggestions for security measures. Officers even had young offenders helping to deliver the leaflets - under supervision - as part of their reparations.

Helping Chilton Chain Up

Police officers and crime prevention advisers spent a weekend in September visiting every house in Chilton offering crime prevention advice.

The weekend came after a series of burglaries in the area. From January to July, there were 19 burglaries in Chilton, part of the Southern Oxfordshire police area. For the same period in 2002, there were nine. After the crime prevention weekend there were no distraction burglaries or burglaries to houses reported in the area.

Officers carried out high visibility patrols and were available to residents with problems or questions about policing issues. Residents were given an ultra violet pen, along with a security demonstration, and offered a free on-the-spot crime prevention survey. Anchor Security Company was also available to fit locks and chains for free to residents who may be vulnerable to distraction burglars.



Pole-Axed

Burglars in West Berkshire began using bent bars wrapped in plastic to get into people's homes.

The bar was stuck through the letterbox to release the inside door handle of UPVC doors. Unless the door was double locked burglars could easily get in.

West Berkshire detective constables Vince Newton and Alan Gibson found a similar bar at the scene of a burglary in Calcot in October. On a hunch they searched Oxford Road in Reading for a car described by witnesses and found the car at the same time as an offender was identified using stolen credit cars from the Calcot burglary. When the suspect returned to a house nearby he was arrested.

Barry Thomas, aged 25, of Norfolk Road, Reading, was remanded in custody by Reading Magistrates after being charged with three burglaries, four counts of handling stolen goods and attempting to obtain property by deception. He later received a two year drug treatment and testing order.

Don't Give Criminals An Easy Ride

Southern Oxfordshire police area staff in Henley worked to cut down on burglaries where high-value cars were being targeted by launching a "keep your keys" safe campaign in March. Offenders were breaking into houses where high-value cars were parked on the driveway and stealing the keys. With the use of Special Constables and volunteers crime prevention leaflets were posted through doors with high-value cars parked outside.

Burglary Blitz

Officers in Oxford blitzed burglars in the city with two high profile operations.

Operation Bohemian and Operation Blitz followed a rise in burglaries in April.

There were 120 arrests in the three-week Operation Bohemian in September and October 2003. All had serious drug problems.

A further 65 offenders were arrested in February's Operation Blitz for a range of crimes including drug possession, burglary, immigration issues and failure to appear warrants.

Knock Knock - Who's There?

The public was urged to help officers drive distraction burglars out of the Thames Valley as part of Safer Homes.

Thames Valley Police teamed up with Crimestoppers to try and stop bogus callers, who use tricks to get into people's homes and steal.

These criminals, who prey on the most vulnerable members of the community, will try and trick their way into several homes before they strike and will not stop until they find a potential victim. They also look out for signs of neglect to identify if a resident is vulnerable.

The public was urged to contact police immediately on 0845 8 505 505 if they were visited by a suspicious caller, even if they did not let them in, as any information they could pass on could be vital in stopping that criminal from calling on their next victim.

Relatives, neighbours and professional and voluntary carers were also asked to security check the homes of vulnerable people to ensure there were no signs of neglect to attract these opportunist criminals. To find out more, including agencies that can help secure and repair vulnerable people's homes, visit the website at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Good Neighbour Defeats Distraction Burglars

Two burglars who preyed on the elderly and the vulnerable across Thames Valley have been jailed for a total of 11 years.

Darren Willmot, 28, of Knights Inn, Wokingham, and Craig Walden, 32, of Longs Way, Wokingham, were jailed after admitting a total of five distraction burglaries between them.

The offences happened in Gerrards Cross, Caversham, Finchampstead, Mortimer and Ruscombe last year and involved elderly and infirm women.

They were foiled thanks to the actions of Ch Insp Geoff Smith, who spotted them acting suspiciously in Finchampstead and went straight to the home of his elderly neighbour and told her to lock her door and not let anyone in. She did so and, minutes later, received a call at her home from two men. She did not answer. Ch Insp Smith then noted the registration plate, which led to the arrest of the men.

Det Con Simon Osamoh pieced together the investigation, working with the confused and vulnerable victims in order to put his case against the offenders together. Thanks to his work, they were jailed for a total of 11 years at Reading Crown Court in April.

Police are urging others to follow the lead of Ch Insp Smith and look after their elderly, infirm or vulnerable friends, relatives or neighbours.

Garden Task Force

A green-fingered volunteer group set up by police in Chiltern Vale to help reduce the number of burglary victims received sponsorship from a DIY store.

High Wycombe police officer PC Jon Taylor took the lead on the gardening initiative after recognising that an untidy garden is often an indicator to burglars that the resident is vulnerable. He teamed up with volunteers from Wycombe Youth Action, Buckinghamshire and Chilterns University and B&Q to offer simple garden maintenance.

B&Q provided a strimmer, rakes, protective clothing and spades among other pieces of basic garden equipment. The garden task-force helps out repeat burglary victims, distraction burglary victims and other people whose gardens are likely to lead to them being identified by burglars as vulnerable.

reducing crime

Knock Knock - Who's There?

The public was urged to help officers drive distraction burglars out of the Thames Valley as part of Safer Homes.



Bus Pass To Jail

A distraction burglar who conned his way into the homes of vulnerable people in Berkshire is now serving a five year sentence in jail.

Henry Mark Doe, 42, of Fieldview, Egham, Surrey, was sentenced at Reading Crown Court, in March this year. Doe visited the home of a 91-year-old woman in Maidenhead in October claiming that he needed to get into her back garden to carry out some work next door. Once inside the garden, Doe distracted his victim while an unknown accomplice entered her house and stole around £250 from a handbag.

Almost a month later Doe stuck again, this time calling at the home of a 75-year-old woman in Old Windsor. He claimed to be a tradesman servicing gas boilers. Once inside the house, Doe charged the woman £30 to fix the boiler. He then went on to distract his elderly victim, stealing two purses containing a small sum of cash and personal items including a bus pass.

A day after committing this offence, Doe was stopped in Egham by Surrey Police after his car attracted their attention. While searching the car, officers came across the bus pass belonging to the victim from Old Windsor. He was subsequently arrested and charged with this offence. Further questioning by detectives led to Doe admitting to and being charged for the Maidenhead burglary. He also requested officers to take further distraction offences in Surrey, Windsor and Slough areas into consideration.

A total of sixteen offences were put before the court to take into consideration when Doe appeared at Bracknell Magistrates' Court in November.

Det Sgt Mick Maughan, who heads the Thames Forest police area's burglary unit, said: "The sentencing of Doe followed a detailed and thorough investigation carried out by my officers in conjunction with Surrey police. I would like to thank the victims of this despicable crime for supporting us with our inquiry."

Caring For the Elderly

Police and other key representatives in Bracknell greeted hundreds of elderly residents at an annual social event in December.

The Community Action for the Retired and Elderly (CARE) event took place at the Coppid Beech Hotel.

The aim of the day was to provide entertainment, but also to pass on information about how to stop becoming a victim of distraction burglars and bogus callers.

Councillor Shelagh Pile, Mayor of Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Ch Insp Ian Boswell of Thames Forest police area, opened the prestigious event which was organised by the police in conjunction with Age Concern, John Nike and Bracknell Forest Borough Council.

The invited guests aged 70 and above, were entertained by a game of bingo, a live performance by a school children's choir and a presentation on bogus callers. They were also given a Christmas lunch and free raffle.

reducing crime

Operation Crackdown

A far reaching operation to crackdown on crack cocaine and the spiral into crime associated with it was launched just before Christmas.

Operation Crackdown

Operation Crackdown was the Force response to the Government's National Crack Plan, which named three Thames Valley areas - Oxford, Slough and Reading with Wokingham - as high crack areas. Further research highlighted High Wycombe as a "high drug area".

To support the plan we worked with partners to tackle crack, the crime it can generate and the addicts who offend to fund their habit.

The operation included enforcement, high profile patrols in areas of concern and partnership efforts to support crack-affected communities, such as evicting dealers and fast-track clearing of graffiti and needles. The aim was to disrupt and dismantle crack supply networks, prosecute dealers and crack-addicted offenders, reassure communities and engage residents to make them officers' strongest allies in the fight against crack. It is only with the intelligence and information officers' are given by residents that the police are able to take the legal action necessary to tackle dealers and other criminals.

In two weeks of intensive activity there were 51 arrests, 24 for drug offences; 31 search warrants were executed and 10 subsequent searches were conducted as a result of these warrants. Crack, heroin, cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy were recovered along with CS spray and a BB gun.

Det Ch Insp Melvyn Young, who headed the campaign, said: "There is national concern about the increasing use of crack and its impact on communities.

"More work will be needed in some parts of TVP than others, but this is a Force-wide commitment to tackle crack and the crime it generates and also to ensure the areas which do not have a large problem at the moment remain that way, by sending out a clear message to dealers that they are not wanted."

About Crack

The use of crack cocaine is steadily increasing in the UK. It is derived from imports of cocaine and recent intelligence shows around 40 to 50 tonnes of cocaine are shipped to this country each year. Crack cocaine itself is rarely imported.

Once the crack has been made and passed to street dealers, it can be sold to users in a number of different ways, including on the

street and from crack houses, where users can also smoke the drug.

Many dealers will use violence to protect their patch and compete with other dealers. Of all the drug dealers, crack dealers are the ones most likely to use extreme violence or even firearms to protect their turf, take over other dealers and intimidate witnesses. They may also be involved in other crimes, such as pimping prostitutes, handling stolen goods and gun crime.

Prostitution

Prostitution and crack use are closely linked crimes - with many crack dealers getting vulnerable women addicted to the drug then forcing them into prostitution to pay for their habit.

As part of Reading's Operation Eightfold, an ongoing response to crack and related crime, there has been as much emphasis on disrupting kerb-crawling activity as crack dealing. During the two weeks of Operation Crackdown, many of the arrests made were for street prostitution and soliciting. One of the men arrested for soliciting prostitutes was identified as a travelling criminal and a registered sex offender, with convictions for serious violent and sexual assaults against females.

In The Right Place

Two teenage girls arrested as they arrived at a Reading crackhouse to deliver drugs were jailed for a total of almost four years in March. The girls, aged 17 and 19, arrived at a west Reading flat in October unaware that it was being raided by officers as part of Operation Eightfold.

They were carrying a holdall with 21 crack cocaine rocks and 16 wraps of heroin - worth around £1,000. Both were charged with possession of heroin; possession of crack cocaine; possession of heroin with intent to supply and possession of crack cocaine with intent to supply. They pleaded guilty in January at Reading Crown Court.

Shana Baxter, 19, of Lilford Road, Camberwell, London, was sentenced to two years. The 17-year-old London girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was sentenced to an 18 month detention order, to be served at a young offenders' institute.





“Operation Eightfold has seen more than 100 arrests. We have executed scores of drug warrants, seized thousands of pounds of crack cocaine, heroin and cash. And the operation will continue.

Photograph above courtesy of Reading Evening Post.

Photograph (left) courtesy of Forensic Alliance Limited.



John Todd

Richard Todd



“This was obviously a large-scale operation involving a protracted sequence of events. Close collaboration between Thames Valley Police and neighbouring forces meant that these dangerous men were apprehended before someone was seriously hurt.”

investigating crime



“Cold-Blooded Terror” Brothers Behind Bars

Two brothers who went on a nine-and-a-half hour crime spree across Thames Valley and the Metropolitan police area are now safely behind bars.

Richard Albert Todd, aged 38, and John Todd, 33, both of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to a series of offences at Reading Crown Court in February.

Due to two previous convictions for Sec 18 GBH with intent, John Todd was sentenced to an automatic life sentence, with a recommendation he serve at least nine years before being considered for parole. He will remain on license for the rest of his life. Richard Todd was sentenced to a total of 16 years.

The crime spree began when Thames Valley Police officers visited an address in West Drayton on 23 May to speak to the brothers in relation to an aggravated burglary in the High Wycombe area on 20 May. This was an incident in which the Todds forced their way into an elderly couple's home and tied up a woman in her seventies, marched her husband round the house and made off with cash, jewellery and documents.

Earlier that day the Todds had also stopped an 82-year-old man driving in Maidenhead, and forced him into the passenger seat. The man tried to stop the car by pulling on the steering wheel so the brothers fled the scene.

Officers tracked the brothers to the house in West Drayton. When they arrived to question them the brothers threatened them with a gun and fled.

What followed involved one of the biggest manhunt operations in recent years and the close collaboration of four police forces - Thames Valley, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and the Metropolitan Police.

As police pursued the Todds the brothers went on a crime spree threatening and robbing police officers and members of the public at gunpoint all over Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, before being arrested in Hayes.

Det Supt Mark Warwick, of Thames Valley Police, who led the investigation, said: “This was obviously a large-scale operation involving a protracted sequence of events. Close collaboration between Thames Valley Police and neighbouring forces meant that these

dangerous men were apprehended before someone was seriously hurt.”

Judge Stanley Spence said the men, who have both admitted having drug problems since they were aged around 11, caused “cold-blooded terror” among their victims and said they were both still a “serious danger” to the public.

They had both been charged with one count of kidnap, three counts of robbery, two counts of aggravated burglary, two counts of burglary, two counts of unlawful violence with a firearm - Section 16A of the Firearms Act, four counts of robbery with a firearm, four counts of possession of a firearm with intent to commit an indictable offence - Section 18 of the Firearms Act, three counts of aggravated taking of a motor vehicle without the owner's consent and three counts of taking of a motor vehicle without the owner's consent.

In addition, John Todd was charged with possession of a loaded shotgun in a public place and being a prohibited person in possession of a firearm.

Dr David Kelly and the Hutton Inquiry

International media descended on southern Oxfordshire in July following the death of weapons expert Dr David Kelly.

Dr Kelly's family reported him missing on July 17 after he left his home in Southmoor saying he was going for a walk, but failed to return. The next morning his body was discovered on land nearby.

In August there was a further significant police operation for Dr Kelly's funeral held at the village church in Longworth.

His death led to a Government announcement that an independent judicial inquiry would be held, which started in August headed by senior judge Lord Hutton.

The Hutton Inquiry report praised Thames Valley Police for the thorough investigation it conducted into the death of Dr Kelly.

Chapter 13 of the report states that the inquiry was “greatly assisted” by a very thorough police investigation into the circumstances surrounding Dr Kelly's death and that “it was very fortunate to have had the benefit of the assistance of Assistant Chief Constable Michael Page and Detective Chief Inspector Alan Young”.

The report also comments that the search for Dr Kelly was carried out with “great efficiency.”



We Have The Technology

The work of a crime-fighting team has led to more than 700 arrests in its first year of operation thanks to the appliance of science.

The Technology-led Operation Group (TOG) is a small unit of police staff which began work in April providing a mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capability for the Force and partnership organisations. They work with officers from Roads Policing and police areas, which deal with the suspects.

ANPR is a system where a camera, linked to a computer, checks number plates as vehicles go past against databases like the Police National Computer, Customs and Excise and the DVLA. When a match is made officers are alerted and able to take action. The technology allows thousands of vehicle registrations to be scanned, stopping criminals in their tracks, as well as providing good intelligence about criminal movement on the roads.

Of the 739 arrests made, 28 were for burglary offences, the Force's top priority; 120 arrests were made for vehicle crimes, including theft of and from cars; 101 people were arrested for drugs offences; 81 for theft and five for robbery.

Disqualified drivers who ignore their ban are also being picked up on the system, with 142 arrests being made so far. This is a proven method of tackling mainstream crime as a high proportion of people who drive while disqualified have or are committing other crimes.

Stolen cars to the value of £571,600 have also been recovered.

Project Manager, Insp Gary Grant, said: "Policing in the Thames Valley is becoming smarter and intelligence-led. ANPR is already a major tool in the fight against crime, and we have only just begun to see the benefits."

Caught In The Net

More than 200 warrants were executed in the Force's largest-ever crackdown on offenders accessing child pornography on the internet.

By October 115 people had subsequent action taken against them under Operation Viola.

There were 758 computers seized and more than 14,000 floppy disks, CD and other media analysed.

Viola was part of the nationwide Operation Ore, in which Forces acted on information originally supplied by the US Postal Inspection Service.

Officers from the High Tech Crime Unit, Child Protection and Sexual Crimes Unit, CID, Proactive teams and uniform worked to research details of individuals, study computer material and execute warrants.

The Force investigated the largest number of individuals outside the Metropolitan Police and was among the first to start executing warrants.

Det Insp Bob Stirling, who led Operation Viola, said: "This operation meant us not only discovering offences at this stage, but also being able to collect information and monitor the individuals, should they attempt to gain positions of trust in the future.

"The images we have found have been sickening and many would shock even the most resilient person.

"Every image involves the abuse of children, and those accessing the images are playing a part in facilitating that."

Force Gets NIMble

Intelligence-led policing is a term that is often used but rarely explained.

In 2002 Home Secretary David Blunkett placed the National Intelligence Model (NIM) at the heart of the police reform agenda.

The NIM is a way of gathering and analysing information received by police forces on a daily basis, ranging from reports of crime, information about criminal activity at a national or local level and community intelligence - information from our communities about suspicious or anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhoods.

This information, once analysed, becomes intelligence which can then be used to direct police activity - for instance focusing on crime hotspots, which are areas where certain types of criminal activity are concentrated like robberies or burglaries, and ultimately, to reduce crime through a more proactive approach.

As criminals do not respect force boundaries and can move from one area to the next, it was important to ensure that forces could share information, by gathering and analysing it in a similar way. So, the NIM was introduced, along with national minimum standards.

The Force's approach was given a health check at the end of the year and measured by a team from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which found the Force had reached the standard.

Det Ch Insp Steve Thwaites, NIM Implementation Manager, said: "A lot of people worked very hard to ensure the Force reached the required standards. There are some forces that are still struggling to comply, so our achievement cannot be underestimated. While we still have a lot of work to do, we have got off to an excellent start."

Crime Doesn't Pay

Officers have seized more than £300,000 in cash from criminals in the first year of new legislation aimed at hitting criminals where it hurts.

The first cash seizure under the new Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 took place in Reading in April where CID officers seized £20,000 in cash following an investigation into theft offences. So far £337,672 has been seized by Thames Valley officers.

investigating crime

Caught in The Net

More than 200 warrants were executed in the Force's largest-ever crackdown on offenders accessing child pornography on the internet.



Under the new legislation cash and assets can be seized. Officers then have to make an application to magistrates within 48 hours of the seizure, to obtain an order to detain the cash for three months. Officers then have those three months to prove the money is the result of illegal activity. If proved the money goes into a national pot and all forces can bid for a share of the money to fund crime reduction initiatives.

The Government recently announced forces can seize even more cash from criminals, with the minimum amount reduced from £10,000 to £5,000.

Det Insp Dave Edmondson, who heads the Economic Crime Unit, said: "We have been very successful in the last year in seizing criminally acquired assets and cash. This sends a clear message that crime doesn't pay.

"Now that the Force will receive some of that money back, we can put it to good use to fight crime in the Thames Valley."

Fingered By Forensics

Thames Valley's fingerprint development team is leading the world in the use of pioneering techniques to help trace drug offenders.

The team has developed new treatment to recover prints on wrappings from cannabis resin bars which led to a 90 per cent fingerprint recovery rate, compared to less than 10 per cent when using the conventional method.

The team was asked to speak at the International Fingerprint Research Group conference in May, and Thames Valley Police was the only British force invited to attend the prestigious event.

Record-Breaking Crimestoppers' Year

Record results were announced by Thames Valley Crimestoppers this year with 231 people arrested and charged as a result of calls to the anonymous 0800 555 111 number - an increase of 10 per cent.

The Crimestoppers charity was launched in the Thames Valley in April 1999 and since then 833 people have been arrested and charged as a result of more than 6,600 calls about crimes in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. More than 14 per cent of items of information from anonymous callers in the Thames Valley led to an arrest, considerably higher than the Crimestoppers national average of 8.3 per cent.

As well as helping to bring offenders to justice callers to Thames Valley Crimestoppers have helped recover stolen property worth £4.06 million and their calls have also led to the seizure of drugs with a street value of £158,000. Roy Trustram Eve, chairman of Thames Valley Crimestoppers said: "Crimestoppers is a perfect example of how each and every person in the Thames Valley can help the police to solve crime. Those who call 0800 555 111 can rely on the guarantee of anonymity that ensures they need never fear for their own safety if they give information."

Persistent Offenders



WARNING
local persistent offenders can seriously harm your performance

Always do your PNC check. If the national system says 'persistent offender' the LPO protocol applies. Check it and is suitable to do the arrest!



22

“Members of the forensic investigation team often have to work in isolated locations or need to be at the same site for a number of days. By having a vehicle which we can take to these crime scenes we can provide a high quality, professional service.”



investigating crime

Joined Up Justice For All

The Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board was launched in April as part of a national drive to provide a “joined up” criminal justice service.



Forensics Go Mobile

The Force's forensic staff have a new mobile unit which they can use at crime scenes around the Thames Valley.

The major incident vehicle for the Forensic Investigation Unit has been tailor-made for the team. It contains a briefing area and an area to label and package exhibits without the risk of contamination. A stock of routine and specialist scenes of crime equipment is also carried in the vehicle.

Joined Up Justice For All

A new way of working with our Criminal Justice System partners to bring more offenders to justice and provide a better service for victims and witnesses was introduced this year.

The Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board was launched in April as part of a national drive to provide a “joined up” criminal justice service which can better meet the needs of the public.

Chaired by Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Peter Neyroud, the board includes the chief officers of all the criminal justice agencies, including the courts, the Crown Prosecution Service, probation, the prison service and youth offending teams.

The board works to provide a holistic approach to the local justice system, ensuring the separate agency systems complement each other to produce efficient and effective justice, from the moment a crime is reported to the time after an offender is released from sentence.

The board had a successful first year, meeting its targets and laying the foundations for future developments.

It was tasked with increasing the number of offences brought to justice by five per cent. Although the end of year figures have yet to be published by the Home Office, it is anticipated that the Board will have achieved a 10 per cent increase.

The target was aimed at narrowing the gap between the number of crimes reported and the number of offenders brought to justice. It was achieved mainly through the persistent offender scheme, detailed on this page.

The Board also reduced the number of ineffective trials in the magistrates' and crown courts which cause significant inconvenience to victims and witnesses. This is largely down to criminal justice agencies working much more

closely to prepare for trials so they go ahead when they are planned and less time is wasted.

Part of this process is the new charging scheme introduced this year, detailed on the next page.

Another Board target was to reduce the average time from arrest to sentence of persistent young offenders from 141 to 71 days. Overall, the target has been met although there have been some occasional glitches due to the effect of tackling a backlog of long running cases.

Mr Neyroud said: “There have been a few teething problems as one would expect during the first year, but there have been significant benefits in all the criminal justice agencies getting round the table, identifying the issues that we need to address and working together to try and put them right.

“One of the Board's main aims is to restore confidence and satisfaction levels in the criminal justice system. Hopefully, by the end of our second year, those members of the public who do come into contact with any of the Thames Valley criminal justice agencies will benefit from some very real service improvements.”

During 2004/5 the Board plans to set up a multi agency group to look at domestic violence, increase the number of staff qualified to hear court cases involving juveniles and reduce the backlog of cases at East Berkshire magistrates' courts.

Persistent Offenders In The Spotlight

Offenders who continue to commit crime in the Thames Valley were targeted by partnership work in an effort to narrow the justice gap.

Criminal justice agencies in the Thames Valley launched the Persistent Offender Scheme in April to tackle offenders who had been convicted of six or more offences, with at least one for burglary, robbery or car crime, in the previous 12 months.

The scheme was part of a national drive by the Government aimed at “narrowing the justice gap”. This refers to the disparity between the number of crimes reported and the number of crimes which result in a conviction at court.

Members of the Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board signed up to a protocol for processing persistent offenders. It meant any persistent offender was to be given extra attention throughout the criminal justice system - from the moment of arrest to post-sentence.

investigating crime

Change On Charging

The Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board rolled out a scheme aimed at bringing more offenders to justice this year.

Support was also being put in place to give offenders an alternative to a life of crime, for instance by offering treatment for drug addiction.

Members also intend to devise a new protocol for sharing information between police, probation and prisons to help the scheme. The scheme has now been developed and renamed the Local Priority Offender Scheme, which will focus on around 200 people across the Thames Valley whom Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships identify as having the most adverse effect on their communities.

Change On Charging

The Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board rolled out a scheme aimed at bringing more offenders to justice this year.

The charging scheme means the Crown Prosecution Service and police officers work together more closely on many cases.

Under the scheme a CPS lawyer is based in the police station to provide immediate legal advice before a defendant is charged and the files are compiled. They will also advise on whether a prosecution can be brought, what the appropriate charge is and the evidence required to bring the case to court.

Previously officers worked with custody sergeants to prepare charges. The new system is a major change for both the police and CPS, which now advises on cases involving death, assault, sexual offences, drug supply offences and all others which are likely to be dealt with at Crown Court or where a not guilty plea is expected.

Under the scheme there should be less court and officer time wasted through better preparation for court, fewer cases discontinued and a much better service for victims, witnesses and defendants because appropriate charges are agreed at the start.

Milton Keynes police area was the first in the Force to work under the scheme and it was so successful it is now seen as one of the best in the country.

Milton Keynes staff have been praised following a review by a joint team from the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Crown Prosecution Service. ACPO and the CPS are overseeing the programme nationally.

David Evans, who led the review team, said he was particularly impressed by the support of senior managers and by Sgt Clive Mott, CPS liaison officer, who he described as key to the success of the scheme.

Staff Profile

Name: Sgt Clive Mott

Age: 55

Role: CPS Liaison Officer for Milton Keynes Police Area

Roles Covered: Patrol officer in Newport Pagnell, Wolverton, Buckingham and Milton Keynes (when the station was a number of mobile cabins). He was promoted to sergeant and served in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes before taking on his current role.

Time in Force: 31 years

Milton Keynes was the first police area in Thames Valley to launch the Charging Scheme in November.

Sgt Clive Mott worked on the project team which implemented the changes and now works as the CPS Liaison Officer.

He said: "Officers come to see me and we look at what evidence they have and the lines of inquiry they have already carried out.

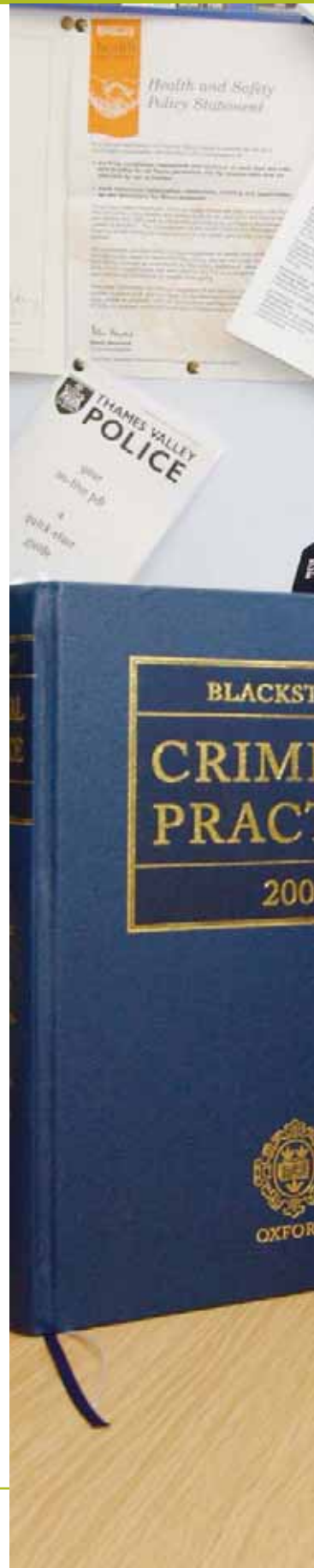
"If they have completed the initial lines of inquiry I arrange for them to see the CPS lawyer who is based in the station.

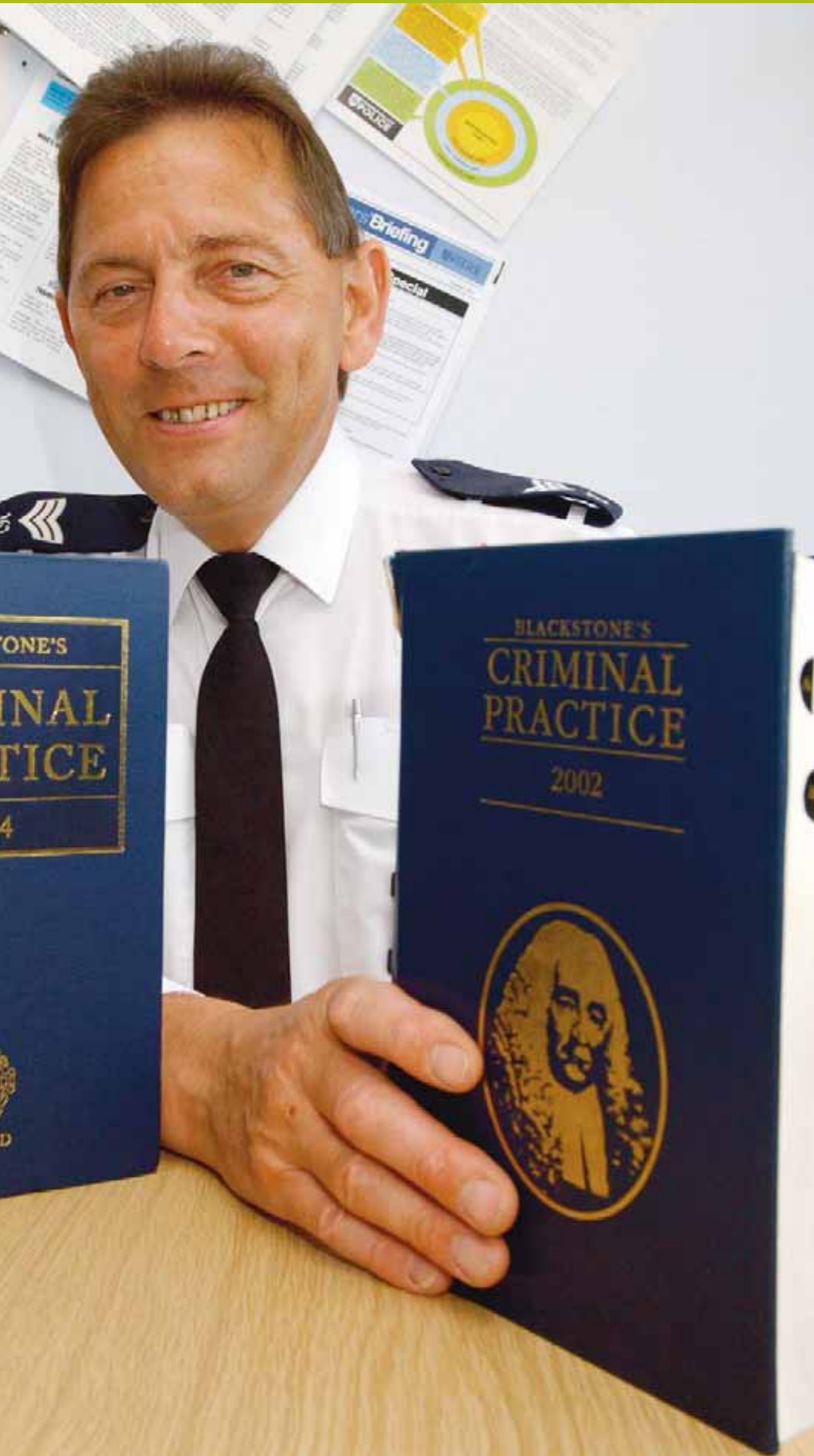
"Under the scheme officers have to gather all the evidence and conduct all the lines of inquiry before a defendant is charged. Before the scheme was introduced a defendant would be charged and then the officer would pull the file together.

"This gives the victim a more realistic idea of what the outcome of the court case will be."

Almost 10 months after taking on the role, Clive still loves his job.

He added: "It's been a case of having to change some officers' way of working and explaining all the positive benefits there are."





“Coming to work is a great social experience, meeting officers and assisting them and the CPS lawyer and, ultimately, the victims. We now take offenders to court knowing there is a better prospect of getting a conviction.”



“In the RAF you have to virtually ask for permission to undertake the most menial of tasks. I quite like that Thames Valley willingness to delegate individual responsibility. You seem to get treated like adults if you are doing a reasonable job. It's quite encouraging. “In the military the people who made all the decisions were senior officers; in the police the people making the immediate operational decisions are the beat officers and other front line staff. “I believe it is essential that support staff realise this and do all in their power to ensure officers receive the best of the technology that is available to make them most effective in their role.”

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Roger, Roger - Loud and Clear

Officers this year were given a state-of-the art radio system which should support more effective patrol and provide much greater security.

Staff Profile

Name: Mike Sanders

Age: 59

Role: ICT Senior Project Manager with responsibility for the new Airwave radio system

Time in Force: Four years

Previous roles: Worked for the RAF 1962-96. Joined as an airman and worked through the ranks to become a Squadron Leader. From 1996 until 2000 he worked as a civil servant for the RAF.

Project manager Mike Sanders has a flying pig hanging from his office ceiling and it is symbolic of his professional ability to make miracles happen - in budget and on time.

Mike has spent the last four years delivering Airwave, a dramatically improved digital system which replaced the analogue radios used by officers since the 1960s.

Over those four years Mike has had to liaise with service providers mm02, which are responsible for the delivery of the radio infrastructure including mast installations and maintenance of the system, as well as planners, radio terminal manufacturers and police personnel.

Even once the network was installed, the radios had been purchased and the Thames Valley fleet had the new radios installed, there was still the logistical challenge of co-ordinating the training of some 4,600 staff, within the limits of permissible extraction of duties; personalising each radio and keeping the old system going while the new system was being rolled out.

Mike's role was to co-ordinate all this activity, making sure the right things happened at the right time and in the right order. Throughout this frenetic activity, and especially during the early days, Mike was also busy acclimatising himself to the radically different culture of policing.

He said: "I was surprised by the relative autonomy enjoyed by the police areas, as the RAF is very centrally managed.

"You can understand in policing terms that each area needs to set its own priorities, but in terms of implementing a major radio system it can cause real difficulties."

The other big culture shock was the amount of freedom he was given to do the job. He said: "I've been given a really free hand and do not have to account for every second of my day."

Roger, Roger - Loud and Clear

Airwave, which is being rolled out nationwide, is a new digital radio system which brings policing into the 21st century.

Thames Valley Police moved to the new system ahead of Government plans to replace the VHF and UHF radio systems used by the emergency services by 2005.

Airwave replaces an ageing system which suffered from poor coverage and poor reception, particularly in rural areas, and was easy to scan due to the analogue signals it used.

The new system provides 100 per cent coverage for vehicle radios, which is similar coverage to the old system. However, Airwave provides around 95 per cent coverage for hand-held radios, compared with 60 per cent under the old system. As well as increased coverage the system is far more flexible.

For instance, under the old system officers within a particular town could talk to each other, but were not able to speak if they were in different sectors. Under Airwave officers can speak to each other across the Force and will soon be able to speak to officers across the country.

The other benefits of Airwave are that it is a digital system with encryption, which will prevent police transmissions from being scanned; it is much clearer with a better quality of speech; it has talk groups, allowing several officers to communicate with each other at once, as well as having a mobile telephone function. The handset can also send status messages allowing call logs to be updated, reducing pressure on the police network. One of the most important benefits relates to officer safety, as it allows them to press a "panic" button, which will alert control room operators that an officer needs urgent assistance.

Two control rooms, one at Abingdon and one at Milton Keynes, support Airwave where highly-trained operators take 999 calls from the public and direct the Force's response to incidents.

The first main stage in making Airwave possible was working with the service provider, mm02, to plan and develop 125 mast sites; another stage was buying in radio terminals. Officers themselves played a part in the selection to ensure they provided the functions officers needed and were easy to use. Once the radios had been bought 4,600 staff had to be trained, their personalised radios engineered and delivered to them, as well as 750 vehicle terminals fitted. On top of this the control rooms had to be fitted out to be compatible with the new system.

An indication of the new system's popularity was given by West Berkshire officers. They were due to change to Airwave, but just before this the old UHF system broke down, so they were given Airwave early. When the UHF system had been repaired the officers refused to go back to the old system and insisted on keeping their Airwave terminals.



Red Signal resulted in several “firsts” for the Force. This included the first time Airwave has been used in a major incident exercise. It was also the biggest event of its kind which had taken place in the Thames Valley.



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Exercise Red Signal

Thames Valley Police's ability to deal with a major incident was put to the test in Exercise Red Signal.



Exercise Red Signal

In February more than 2,000 people from Thames Valley Police, local and national organisations, spent three days testing how they would deal with a complex major incident. Each year three of these major exercises take place nationally, partly funded by the Home Office.

The potential threat of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism has been widely reported, so there is a need for all agencies to have plans in place to effectively respond to these and other threats.

The training scenario started with reports of a car exploding at a site in Piddington, Oxfordshire. When the emergency services arrived at the scene they discovered the area was contaminated as a result of the explosion and required a full-scale national response. Police, ambulance and fire services from across the south east joined local authority teams, government agencies, scientific and military experts to come up with a plan to deal with the situation.

As the scenario unfolded a second site came into play when an additional device was discovered at Upper Heyford.

A strategic co-ordinating centre was opened at Sulhamstead, and over the three days of the exercise Thames Valley's Gold Commanders ACC Mick Page and ACC Julie Spence worked with senior representatives from 24 different agencies to decide the strategy for dealing with the incidents and their aftermath.

Red Signal resulted in several "firsts" for the Force. This included the first time Airwave had been used in a major incident exercise. It was also the biggest event of its kind which had taken place in the Thames Valley.

More than 90 official observers from the UK and abroad looked on, identifying best practice that they could take away with them.

Tanker Crash Brings M4 To A Halt

An overturned tanker on the M4 during rush hour brought the traffic to a halt in March while emergency services battled to deal with the chemical spill caused by the crash.

Due to the potentially hazardous nature of the material from the tanker spill a careful and considered response was needed, and the priority was the safety of the public.

For this reason the M4 was closed for more than eight hours in both directions at junctions 8-9 westbound and junction 10 eastbound to clear the area and make it safe.

Unfortunately, this meant many motorists were stuck in traffic for several hours.

Forty-two police officers, as well as large numbers of fire and ambulance crews, worked through most of the night to completely clear the carriageways.

The 56-year-old driver of the tanker suffered minor injuries and was treated at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Fast Track To Jail

A motorcyclist was caught on camera travelling at nearly 160mph between Bicester and Buckingham - the highest speed ever recorded by police.

Andrew Osborne, 31, of Marston Avenue, Lighthome Heath, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, and his friend Neil Bolger, 30, of St Marks Close, Gaydon, Warwickshire, were filmed on the A421 Tingewick Bypass in March. In July at Aylesbury Magistrates' Court the pair admitted to dangerous driving and were both sentenced to 28 days imprisonment, disqualified from driving for two years and have been ordered to take a re-test when this time is up.

Frank Yabsley, the camera technician who filmed them, said: "I heard what sounded like a light aircraft. I quickly realised that it was in fact motorbikes and a few seconds later they came into view."

He filmed Osborne travelling at 157mph and Bolger at 148 mph. The highest speed recorded previously was in Aberdeen at 156 mph.

Frank said: "This isn't a record that anyone should try breaking. Motorcyclists make up less than three per cent of vehicles on the road but are involved in more than 30 per cent of serious and fatal accidents."

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Community Officer Of The Year

Communities in the Thames Valley submitted a record number of entries in the search for the Force's top community officer.

Community Officer Of The Year

More than 80 nominations were received, leading to the selection of overall winner, Oxford PC Paul Phillips, who went on to become third in a national award. He was chosen by a panel of judges including ACC Julie Spence, Martin Elliot of the Thames Valley Police Federation, Crimestoppers board chairman Roy Trustram Eve and John Bond-Smith of West Oxfordshire Motor Auctions, which sponsored the award.

Deputy Chief Constable Paul West, who supported the award, said: "The work of community-based officers may not hit the headlines every day but without their vital contribution we would not be anything like as effective as a Force."

30

The other winners were:

Northern Oxon:	PC Tony Lowe
Aylesbury Vale:	PC Colin Foster
West Berks:	PC Andy Buckingham
Reading with Wokingham:	Sgt David Griffiths
Slough & District:	Sgt Anthony Welch
Milton Keynes:	PC Jim Lake
Chiltern Vale:	PC Jim Clarke PC James Ellis
Thames Forest:	PC Nick Preston

Staff Profile

Name: PC Paul Phillips, Community Beat officer of the Year.

Age: 40

Roles covered: Community constable and CID officer based in Oxford. Currently city centre community beat officer in Oxford with special responsibility for residential and homeless liaison.

Time in Force: 22 years, plus two years in the Police Cadets before joining.

Oxford has always felt lucky to have an officer as dedicated as Paul Phillips and it was no surprise to colleagues when Paul was not only voted Thames Valley's top community copper, but also the third best in Britain.

He was up against 45 other entrants from across the UK, and was elated at being placed in the top three of Britain's officers.

He received more than 20 nominations, both from staff at Oxford, residents of Oxford City Centre and representatives of partner agencies in the city. They all highlighted his success in reducing the number of people sleeping rough and tackling anti-social behaviour in Oxford. Paul has a high profile and demanding role which requires tact, diplomacy, common sense and great people skills in equal measure.

Ch Supt David McWhirter, area commander of Oxford and a great fan of Paul's, said: "Paul has a unique blend of personal and professional skills, underpinned by the sort of personality which everyone instinctively warms to. It is this complex mixture which has enabled him to make such a difference to the quality of life of so many people in Oxford city centre. Over time he has won the hearts and minds of other agencies as they have watched him deal with the homeless and deprived people with great respect and an extremely positive, sensitive and tactful approach."

Paul said: "I was thrilled to win the Thames Valley Police award, but to have come third nationally is absolutely brilliant. It is a real honour and is very moving. I love the work I do, and so this is a great bonus."





Paul, who is married to Linda and has two children, James, aged 13, and Hannah, nine, added: "I was very emotional on the night, as I was when I learnt I had won the Thames Valley award. I was speechless, which as anyone will tell you is unusual for me.

"I joined this force because I wanted to make a difference and be a useful person in society. I hope I have gone some way to achieving that, and I will continue to do so."



Back On The Beat

Moves to increase the number of officers patrolling the streets continued this year with the redeployment programme.

In the two years since the innovative programme began in April 2002 around 400 officers were moved from station-based roles to frontline patrols - half the total constable strength of Warwickshire Constabulary.

Phase two of redeployment, which was rolled out this year, led to a total of 282 officers back on the streets by the end of June, with 176 already in place by May. The redeployment programme was the first of its kind on this scale in the UK and generated interest from the Prime Minister's Senior Policy Adviser, the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

Changes In Custody Release Officers From Stations

Thames Valley Police led the way nationally by using the Police Reform Act to provide Force custody assistants and documentation officers with more powers.

Designated staff have been given the specific power to carry out duties like a police officer and use reasonable force to carry out those duties, including searches, fingerprinting without consent and taking samples.

Reliance Secure Task Management custody assistants and documentation officers started work this year. All staff have intensive four-week custody course, including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (which details how long and under what circumstances people can be kept in custody) and health and safety. For their first four weeks on the job they worked alongside experience officers in the custody suites.

The move meant officers who worked in custody suites were freed up for frontline duties and that arresting officers could get back on patrol, as documentation officers carry out the fingerprinting, photographing, DNA sampling and paperwork, which previously had to be done by officers. The total officer time saved through the initiative is equivalent to 133 full-time police officers.

Taser Trial

Officers in the Thames Valley began a national trial of Taser guns in April.

Thames Valley Police was one of five forces across the country to take part in the trial of a "less lethal" option for officers

in dangerous circumstances which would usually involve armed officers.

A Taser looks like a pistol but fires an electrical current which temporarily incapacitates the target.

Thames Valley officers were chosen because the Force is part of the National Committee on Police Use of Firearms.

The Taser has been authorised for use on several occasions but has not been discharged in the Thames Valley. It was aimed on one occasion but the situation was brought to a safe conclusion without the need to discharge the weapon.

After the first year the Home Office recommended the trial will continue until further notice.

Supt George Wilson, head of Tactical Support, said: "During the extension of the trial, further research will be made into the weapon. The five forces have found that it is having a deterrent effect and helps us to bring dangerous situations to a safe conclusion."

Breeding Programme For New Recruits

Thames Valley's Dog Section welcomed seven new recruits after police dog Kelly gave birth to the Force's first home-bred litter of puppies.

The dog section needs on average 10 German Shepherds a year to train as general purpose dogs. There is a nationwide shortage of police dogs, due to high demands not only from police but armed forces, Customs and Excise and private companies.

As a result the Force set up its own breeding programme. The puppies are cared for at the training school at Sulhamstead initially, then homed with puppy walkers to prepare them for training.

Author Colin Dexter, who wrote the best-selling Inspector Morse books about a fictional Oxford detective, met up with two new police recruits named after his most famous characters.

Morse and Lewis were German Shepherd puppies. Colin said: "Of course I'm highly delighted and honoured that two Thames Valley police dogs have been named after my characters. My only concern is which one of the dogs will get promoted first!"



Changes At The Top

Sara Thornton was this year appointed the new Deputy Chief Constable, following the departure of DCC Paul West, now Chief Constable of West Mercia. In the role Sara is responsible for performance, professional standards, legal services and corporate information.

DCC Thornton started at the Metropolitan Police in 1986. In November 2000 she took the post of ACC Specialist Operations at Thames Valley Police.

She said: "At my level, to be promoted and to stay in the Force you love working for is a huge bonus."

- Francis Habgood joined Thames Valley Police in January to replace newly-promoted DCC Sara Thornton.

The new Assistant Chief Constable said: "I only applied for one place and that was Thames Valley. In many cases Thames Valley is ahead of the game, pushing the boundaries and helping to shape the future rather than reacting to it."

Driver Improvement Scheme

Nine out of 10 motorists caught speeding by Thames Valley Police are taking up the option, where it is given, of attending a speed awareness course instead of paying a fixed penalty fine.

Since the launch of the Speed Awareness Scheme at the end of July, 2,000 drivers a month have agreed to take a course designed to improve their driving skills, attitude and behaviour - a take-up of 92 per cent.

Motorists caught speeding by Thames Valley officers can be considered for one of two courses depending on the severity of their offence.

Course one is a workshop for speeders recorded marginally over the speed limit in the 30mph zone. This may be extended to other speed limits depending on demand. Instead of a £60 fixed penalty fine and three points on their licence, a three-hour interactive course at a cost of £65 is offered.

Course two is for those speeding excessively over the limit which would place them outside the fixed penalty bracket and liable for a court summons, a fine of up to £1,000 and the possibility of a driving ban or six penalty points. Instead a four-hour interactive course is offered, including a two-hour on-the-road practical session with a trainer, at the cost of £85. A £60 fine and three penalty points would also be incurred.

In extreme cases of excessive speed motorists will be given no alternative but to go to court.

Both courses are run by driver training company DriveTech (UK).

promoting safety & security

Special service of thanksgiving at Henley

A service of thanksgiving in recognition of the work of the emergency services in Thames Valley was held in Henley-on-Thames in September.

The ceremony, led by Thames Valley Police chaplain Rev David Bouskill, and the Bishop of Oxford, Rt Rev Richard Harries, celebrated the bravery and integrity of all emergency services staff.

The service was inclusive of all faiths representing and reflecting the many diverse communities within Thames Valley.

During the service at St Mary the Virgin, PC Phil Hanham was honoured for his work as family liaison officer to families who have lost loved ones in road collisions.

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud said: "This event was held to commemorate the contribution of the emergency services to the community, to remember those who have given their lives in endeavour and to bless the co-operation between the agencies in what has become an ever-more difficult role."

Recruiting Diversity

Thames Valley was selected by the Home Office as one of four police forces nationwide to take part in a campaign to increase black and minority ethnic recruitment to the police.

In a drive to challenge negative perceptions of the police and encourage applications from potential black and minority ethnic officers throughout the Force area, the campaign ran from January to March.

Securing Your Community

Thames Valley's first police community support officers (CSOs) started work in the Force this year.

The CSOs are jointly funded by the Home Office, Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police.

They are employed by the Police Authority.

After completing an intensive four-week training course, the CSOs began work in Northern and Southern Oxfordshire police areas where they have a high visibility patrol role, providing reassurance to communities.

They complement the work of police officers by focusing on lower level crime, disorder, nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

This should free up officers' time allowing them to tackle more serious crimes and incidents.

The CSOs wear police-type uniforms and have stab-proof vests and high visibility jackets. They do not have any powers of detention.

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud said: "Community support officers will provide us with much-needed visibility and will be able to tackle the quality of life issues which affect us all. In short, they provide reassurance."

CSOs have extensive powers which include being able to:

- Demand the name and address of people being disorderly
- Seize alcohol in designated no drinking areas
- Enter a property to save life or limb, or to prevent serious damage
- Remove abandoned vehicles
- Issue fixed-penalty notices for cycling on the pavement
- Seize alcohol and tobacco from young people.

New legislation is set to be introduced which should mean that the community support officers will also be able to issue police fixed penalty notices for disorderly behaviour within the next year.

Thames Valley Police and local authorities have secured funding for further CSOs in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.





“Community support officers will provide us with much-needed visibility and will be able to tackle the quality of life issues which affect us all. In short, they provide reassurance.”



“He covered my body with his own as the car exploded. As a result, he inhaled a lot of black acrid smoke. It could have made the difference between life and death. They are heroes.”

Photograph courtesy of The Sun.

helping the public

PC Neil Stephenson and PC Andy Hiscocks from Milton Keynes Roads Policing were voted the bravest officers in the south east at the national police bravery awards this year.



Staff Profile(s)

Names: PC Neil Stephenson
and PC Andy Hiscocks
- Milton Keynes Roads Policing

PC Neil Stephenson and PC Andy Hiscocks from Milton Keynes Roads Policing were voted the bravest officers in the south east at the national police bravery awards this year.

The prestigious award is organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales. The officers received their awards in the presence of the Home Secretary, David Blunkett and attended a reception at 10 Downing Street where they met the Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Andy 37, and his crewmate Neil, 32, saved a woman from a burning car, just moments before the fuel tank exploded. Barbara Pearce was trapped in the wreckage of her vehicle after it was involved in a head-on collision with a Ford Escort which was travelling the wrong way up the A5 in Milton Keynes.

Just before the crash PCs Hiscocks and Stephenson had tried to flag down the Escort, but before they could speak to the driver and his passenger, the driver did a rapid U-turn and drove the wrong way up the carriageway. They careered into Barbara's car and were killed instantly.

At the scene the officers found Barbara badly injured and trapped in her burning car. With flames already enveloping the dashboard the officers struggled to free the driver's door with crowbars and their bare hands.

With help from two members of the public, the officers managed to bend the top of the doorframe and pull her out through the top of the door. The bones in her legs, feet and pelvis were shattered by the impact of the crash but she was dragged to safety moments before the car exploded and PC Hiscocks shielded her from the blast.

Barbara, a special needs teacher from Northamptonshire, recalled: "He covered my body with his own as the car exploded. As a result, he inhaled a lot of black acrid smoke. It could have made the difference between life and death. They are heroes."

Barbara was taken to hospital where doctors initially feared she would lose her legs. Following 40 hours of intensive surgery, when her legs were rebuilt, Barbara is today grateful to be alive and determined to walk again.

Jan Berry, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: "PCs Hiscocks and Stephenson deserve the highest praise. They demonstrated immense courage and determination in saving this woman's life, despite the considerable risk to their own safety. They are a credit to the police service. We hope this award goes some way towards recognising their bravery."

Both officers were delighted to receive the award and see it as the highlight of their careers.

PC Stephenson said that the most rewarding part of his job is helping people in the aftermath of serious car crashes. He said: "It is important for the families of those killed on the roads to know what happened and to seek justice if someone is at fault. This really helps people to start putting their lives back together."

PC Hiscocks hopes the incident will show the vital work that traffic officers do. He said: "People believe that Roads Policing officers just prosecute people for speeding and nothing else, and that they get a bonus every time they make an arrest! It couldn't be further from the truth. We are here because we want to help people and make the roads safer for everyone."

helping the public

New Year - New Number

A new single non-emergency number was launched in January to make it easier for the public to contact Thames Valley Police.

New Year - New Number

A new single non-emergency number was launched in January to make it easier for the public to contact Thames Valley Police.

If anyone needs to contact us but doesn't need to dial 999 there is now just one 24-hour number to use, putting people straight through to one of two Police Enquiry Centres (PECs) and an experienced operator who will be able to deal with the call or refer it to the right person.

The highly trained PEC operators, based in Kidlington and Windsor, have access to a huge database of information to help deal with the caller's particular query in the right way.

If it is an emergency people must still phone 999. It is an emergency if a crime is being committed, is about to be committed or if there is a risk of serious injury. For everything else phone 0845 8 505 505.

The introduction of the number to deal with our 30,000 non emergency calls a week was one of several measures introduced to improve call handling and accessibility to Thames Valley Police. As well as the two new PECs, two new state-of-the-art control rooms, operating from Milton Keynes and Abingdon, deal with the 6,000 emergency calls received a week. There are also 10 Crime and Incident Management Units on each police area, which are responsible for some crime investigation and allocation of frontline staff.

Assistant Chief Constable Mick Page, who is responsible for community services, said: "We know the public has not been satisfied with the way calls have been dealt with in the past.

"They may have had to spend some time on the phone, trying to track down the right person to speak to. Some people have also disliked the fact that they are dialling a local number but not getting through to their local police station.

"We have to deal with a staggering amount of calls - around 36,000 a week - and this new central number is the best way of ensuring as many people as possible can get through and have their query dealt with promptly and efficiently.

"Callers should not be put off by the fact that they are being dealt with by someone other than their local station - a central number does not mean an end to local service delivery, but it should lead to a better service overall."

Facelift For Force Museum

The Force Museum was given a complete renovation to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the Great Train Robbery. Exhibition space was increased so that more artefacts and pictures from the Force's history could go on display, including an expanded display devoted to the Great Train Robbery.

On August 8 1963 Bruce Reynolds and his gang committed the notorious robbery, stealing £2.5 million. In the process they seriously injured train driver Jack Mills.

The gang's hideout was Leatherslade Farm, Buckinghamshire, near the Oxfordshire border, where they played Monopoly with real cash. Five days after the robbery, and after the gang had left the farm in a hurry, two Buckinghamshire Constabulary officers visited the farm following a tip off. The officers discovered the gang had been staying there and had been extremely careless, leaving a hoard of evidence behind them, including the infamous Monopoly set.

Most of this evidence is now on display at the Thames Valley Police Museum in the new and expanded exhibition.

Museum Curator Ken Wells said: "Our Great Train Robbery display has always been one of the most popular within the museum. The Great Train Robbery itself has been the subject of enduring fascination for the British public and internationally.

"This is why we chose to mark the events with an improved display, showing more photographs, more evidence exhibits and, of course, the Monopoly board."

The museum, which is based at the Force Training Centre in Sulhamstead, Berkshire, is open to the public by appointment. Any groups or individuals interested in visiting the museum should contact Mr Wells on 0118 932 5748. Details can also be found on the website at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Water Relief

Thames Valley officers handed out free water to motorists stranded for hours in traffic queues on the hottest day of the year in August.

Two lorries were in collision on the A34 at Chieveley blocking the north and southbound carriageways, causing six-mile tailbacks in both directions.

Sgt Dick Thorpe, of the Roads Policing department, said: "As it was so hot I was concerned for the welfare of the people who



0845 8 505 505

the new single number for Thames Valley Police

in an emergency call 999



were inevitably going to be stuck in traffic jams. I contacted the control room and asked them to try and get as much water to the scene as possible. Officers went to local shops and bought all the bottled water at the nearby service station.”

West Berkshire Council also organised a lorry from Thames Water to supply more later on.

TRL partnership to investigate fatal polaccs

A unique partnership was formed this year with the Transport Research Laboratory.

Now all fatal collisions involving Thames Valley Police vehicles are overseen and investigated by the Crowthorne-based TRL, one of the world's leading centres of excellence in transport research.

The agreement is a result of recommendations in the new national Road Death Investigation Manual, which suggest using an investigation team from another area or Force to provide a degree of independence. The partnership takes this one step further, rather than relying on other Forces. Malcolm Collis, head of Roads Policing Specialist Units, said: “TRL may well be asking us difficult questions but it is only right and proper than we are held to account for our actions.

“We have drawn up a very sound set of procedures and protocols with TRL and our sincere wish is that we don't have to implement them very often, but when we do, the public can be confident we are taking the matter seriously.”

Officers pass the 4,000 mark

For the first time in the Force's history Thames Valley Police now has more than 4,000 officers.

There are currently 4142 police officers serving across the Force.

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud said: “This is a great success in our constant battle to both retain and recruit staff - the most valuable asset within any Force.

“Recruiting in the south east is a considerable challenge, when you consider the competition from the private sector, and our colleagues in the Met who can offer £6,000 extra pay and free travel.

“This achievement is a reflection of our recruitment team who have worked tirelessly to promote Thames Valley Police as a leading and innovative Force.”



helping the public

Alan Buckingham – Chief Officer of the Special Constabulary (Retired).

Staff Profile

Name: Alan Buckingham

Age: 62

Role: Chief Officer of the Special Constabulary since 1993

Time in Force: 40 years as a member of the Special Constabulary including patrol work in Newbury and Kidlington, and Senior Officer in Banbury and Oxford. Retired in February.

Previous roles: Alan worked for Thames Valley Police for 31 years, retiring in 1998.

He was the head of Performance Information but at night, weekends and every other scrap of spare time he enforced the law and looked after the team of Special Constables.

He was no ordinary Special Constable either, as during his service he received three Chief Constable's Commendations, two for bravery, and received an MBE in 1996 in recognition of his dedication to the police work.

The plaudits continued this year as he received the Shrievalty of Merit award, one of the most prestigious awards given within Thames Valley Police.

But the rewards of the work would be enough for Alan. He said: "There is a sense of belonging here and whatever the trials and tribulations are, the police service is for the common good and if you are part of that there's got to be some satisfaction in thinking you are doing your best for society."

Alan almost stumbled into his life of work for Thames Valley Police. He said: "I wasn't particularly interested in policing as a young man. But I saw some Special Constabulary posters and made what I thought was a casual inquiry and the next moment I was signing on the dotted line."

What he discovered was a role which gave him immense satisfaction. He said: "I enjoyed being on the beat, talking to people, understanding people and getting to know

people. When I started in Newbury I was treated as a responsible individual. While this was quite daunting at times when you were going out on the beat, there was a feeling that you were both master and servant of all you surveyed, which was quite exhilarating."

Since the early sixties there have been changes to the role of the Special Constabulary, in part thanks to Alan's work developing the Special Constabulary nationally. But the changes in policing generally have been enormous.

He said: "Over the years we have got better at specialising in certain things, in forensic science for instance, and the way we deal with all sorts of problems, but at the same time this may well have been at the expense of 'traditional' policing."

Society attitudes have changed as well. He said: "To many, a police officer no longer represents authority in upholding the law of the land. But if society wants a system whereby men and women represent the general public as its agents of law and order, then that self-same public should consider any threat or act against police officers upholding the law as something simply not acceptable. Society itself should consider an assault on a police officer in the execution of his or her duty to be heinous and support the severest of penalties.

"Many incidents could be dealt with adequately by one police officer but nowadays we have to send half a dozen because of the risks. Fortunately, when I started, if you were walking down the street and asked a bunch of lads to be quiet, they did as you asked - well, most of the time!"

Alan continues to be involved in the work of Thames Valley Police as a member of the Volunteer Support Team, where his vast knowledge and experience is being put to good use.





“We may have wonderful work going on behind the scenes dealing with the most notorious villains but the vast majority of the population want to go out on a Saturday night and feel safe, and they feel safer when they see a police officer or know for certain that there is one around the corner.”



“This is a good example of Thames Valley Police showing its intention to invest in and develop its commitment to rural policing and surrounding villages. The new facilities are excellent and show how important rural police stations are to us and that we value the communities reliant on these stations.”

aylesbury vale

The mainly rural Aylesbury Vale police area covers more than 300 square miles and serves a population of more than 156,000. It stretches from the Northamptonshire border to Wendover in the south. The area commander is Supt Mick Doyle.



Operation Angel

Three crack and heroin dealers were sentenced to a total of 19 years in prison following a successful operation in 2003/04 by Aylesbury's Pro-Active drugs team.

Operation Angel followed on from the success of Operation Alpaca back in January 2003, when seven men were sent to jail for 28 years for dealing crack cocaine and heroin.

Officers in CID, uniform, tactical support and in surveillance joined forces to kick-start Angel.

Undercover officers used numerous tactics, enabling police to gather crucial evidence.

This was backed by extensive intelligence gained by officers, who spent painstaking hours building up profiles of the dealers and gathering information about previous and planned offences.

Dean Anthony Callum, aged 39, of Moorlands Road, Wing, and Elizabeth Carroll, 21, of Moorlands Road, Wing, and Paul Crowhurst, 25, of Old Stoke Road, Aylesbury, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to supply heroin and crack cocaine at earlier appearances.

They were all sentenced at Aylesbury Crown Court in October. Callum received seven-and-a-half years, Carroll six-and-a-half years and Crowhurst five years. The judge said that because the three had not heeded the warnings from Operation Alpaca their sentences were higher than they may have been.

Det Con Pete Foy, of Aylesbury Vale police area, said: "There's a continual proactive push against dealers and users of crack cocaine and heroin, as we clearly understand the links between offences like burglary and shoplifting being committed on the area and the dependence of some individuals on class A drugs.

"Dealers make money by wrecking people's lives - addicts and the victims of addicts.

I hope their conviction has sent out a clear message that those who are caught dealing in hard drugs in Aylesbury will go to prison for a long time."

Supt Mick Doyle said: "This was a detailed, thorough investigation carried out by dedicated officers and these convictions are a credit to the police officers involved."

The team's work continues. Following on from Angel is Operation Antique in which a number of arrests and charges have taken place and so far more than £20,000 worth of drugs have been seized.

Wendover Police Station Refurbished

One of Thames Valley Police's oldest police stations was reopened following a £5,000 refurbishment.

The refurbishment included the front office, a new operational interview room, improved accessibility and security, and making sure the station complied with health and safety regulations.

A new role was also created for the new-look station. Gillian Franklin is performing the dual role of station duty officer and rural crime desk which means she not only takes queries and crime reports from members of the public but she also has an active role in investigations from start to finish.

Previously, all crimes that went through Wendover front desk were passed onto Aylesbury. Now Gill has access to a range of software that will enable her to alert officers more efficiently and she may even be involved in secondary investigation of crimes in the area.

Supt Mick Doyle said: "This is a good example of Thames Valley Police showing its intention to invest in and develop its commitment to rural policing and surrounding villages. The new facilities are excellent and show how important rural police stations are to us and that we value the communities reliant on these stations."



Photograph courtesy of the Bucks Herald.

Aylesbury Pubwatch Wins National Award

Aylesbury Pubwatch won a prestigious national licensing award for creating a safer environment and bringing about a decline in alcohol and drug related disorder throughout the town's pubs and clubs.

The Pubwatch Award for Social Responsibility, sponsored by Laurel Pub Company, was awarded in March this year and is a reward for the fantastic results that the Aylesbury scheme has achieved during the past year.

The award recognises the scheme that has made the most effort during the past year to tackle violent crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

Some of the judges' comments included: "Utterly professional and well organised", "driving crime and drugs out of the town centre" and "innovative areas of work and longevity". Steve Baker, police liaison officer to Aylesbury Pubwatch, said: "This award recognises the tremendous amount of work carried out by licensees to create a safe environment for their staff and customers.

"It is a fantastic award to win and really nice to be judged as the best in the country when up against such strong competition."

Flat Rate For Car Tax Dodgers

A campaign was launched in November 2003 to combat car tax dodgers and make them pay.

Operation Cubit targeted people who continue to flout the law by not paying their car tax.

In a two week period officers from Aylesbury Vale police area and the Roads Policing department supported the DVLA in removing 84 vehicles not displaying valid tax discs.

Cubit was the second part of a partnership scheme to combat abandoned and untaxed vehicles in Aylesbury Vale.

In the first part of the campaign Aylesbury Vale District Council led a vehicle amnesty designed to allow people with abandoned cars to surrender them for scrap free of charge, which led to more than 200 vehicles being taken off the streets.





One small jump for skateboarders ... one giant leap for community spirit

The first village skate park of its kind was opened in Wingrave by PC Mike Buckle in December 2003.

Villagers raised £19,000 to build it, including a £2,500 grant from Aylesbury police. It meant the end of a 17 month campaign to gain the required funding through grants and fundraising events. PC Mike Buckle worked hard to coordinate the fundraising efforts.

He said: "The skate park is a great success and I am very pleased we have given the kids something constructive to do with their time.

"Petty vandalism has stopped and now the kids have somewhere safe to ride their boards away from the roads."

Moves afoot on the Stoke Mandeville Beat

Stoke Mandeville Hospital now has its own area beat officer. PC Neil Budd started work there in March 2004 and hopes his new role will build stronger links with the hospital and the surrounding residential area.

He has an office at the site and works alongside the hospital's security adviser Ron Hale.

Insp Andy Gray said: "The hospital is a large community in itself with a workforce of over 2,500 staff and capacity for 500 patients, not including out-patients, family and friends.

"We hope the presence of a police officer will reassure patients and the staff, who are doing a very difficult job.

Jason Gifford Inquest

In January 2004 an inquest into the death of Jason Gifford took place.

He died on 24 June 2002 after being shot by police firearms officers. He had held his wife, Carol, prisoner in her own home before charging at police pointing what was later discovered to be replica gun and bearing down on them with a sword held aloft.

This is the first time since the Force was created in 1968 that Thames Valley Police has had to fire a fatal shot.

As in all cases involving fatal police shootings a jury inquest was held and after three days of hearing evidence from people involved in the incident they returned a verdict of suicide.

The Force welcomed the closure that the verdict provided and the clear outcome of the inquest, as well as the inquiry into

Jason Gifford's death by the Metropolitan Police. Both showed that the officers displayed immense restraint and were left with no alternative but to use their weapons in a dangerous and life-threatening situation.

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud said: "First and foremost Thames Valley Police would like to repeat its condolences to Carol Gifford and Jason's family. Taking a life is not something we do lightly and it is with deep regret that this decision had to be taken.

"There are lessons from this, as there are from every such case and I have taken a very personal interest having been responsible for police use of firearms nationally before coming to Thames Valley.

"We could have got armed response vehicles to the scene faster and I am currently doubling the number of these vehicles to meet the increased threat.

"We should also have kept Mrs Gifford better informed about her husband's condition while he was in hospital.

"Throughout this case we have worked hard to support the officers involved and I want to pay tribute to them. Indeed, Mrs Gifford asked me personally to do so on her behalf as well. I am very, very proud of their courage and professionalism and it is regretful that the consequence had to be the loss of a life."

Attackers of Autistic Teenager Sentenced

A 17-year-old girl who was given an 18-month detention training order following an attack on an autistic teenager also admitted a further 29 offences.

The attack on Simon Taaffe, aged 18, but who is autistic and has a mental age of a child aged six to seven, took place in September 2003.

The girl along with another 17-year-old girl and 18-year-old Timothy Davey, of Harvey Road, Aylesbury, were found guilty of actual bodily harm, on Wednesday 12 May this year, following a three week trial at Reading Crown Court.

The other girl also received a 12-month detention training order and Davey was handed a three year sentence.

The first girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, has subsequently admitted to the 29 other offences.

This includes seven non-domestic burglaries, 12 theft from motor vehicle, four criminal damage and three stolen motor vehicle offences. All the offences took place across Aylesbury.

aylesbury vale

David Price – Crime Reduction Adviser.

Staff Profile

Name: David Price

Age: 57

Role: Crime Reduction Adviser, Aylesbury Police Area

Roles Covered: Probationer at High Wycombe and later beat officer for Booker and Cressex, Aylesbury, patrol and beat officer for Southcourt, scenes of crime officer as a constable and later as a civilian, crime reduction adviser.

Time In Force: 34 years.

David started working for Thames Valley Police as a raw recruit in 1970 - not long after the Force was amalgamated.

He said: "I was rubbing shoulders with a mixed bag of Borough and County police officers who were still coming to terms with being part of the Thames Valley Police. There was no resentment from the 'old sweats' who did much to make my transition into the police world easier to cope with."

Soon after David married his wife Margaret they moved back to Aylesbury, his home town, where he has spent the remainder of his time with the Force.

He said: "It is true to say that there has rarely been a dull moment. I was lucky to be placed on a shift with a couple of sergeants who could not be more loyal to their men and looked after us all as if we were close relatives; they were often champions against adversity. I was guided by one of these towards a new role in Scenes of Crime where I stayed as a constable and more recently in a civilian capacity. I have been privileged in being allowed to be involved in the investigation of some high profile inquiries."

For the last two years David has been employed in his present role as Aylesbury Vale crime reduction adviser.

He said: "I find the role diverse and absorbing. It is the kind of job where one can make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable folk in our community and it seems that I have an empathy with the plight of the elderly who become the victims of crime and fall prey to those unscrupulous denizens of the criminal world.

"I hope that I make life a little easier for the elderly and harder for the crooks.

"I find I am increasingly more interested in crime prevention through environmental design which in the longer term may be a key to reducing the incidents of crime. The knowledge I have gained in this area is invaluable."

David considers himself lucky to have a career in the "job". He added: "It is never boring - clock watching has never been an entity - it's often rewarding with its share of frustrations. There have been the inevitable periods when things go awry and I have been grateful for the support given by my colleagues."





“I find the role diverse and absorbing. It is the kind of job where one can make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable folk in our community and it seems that I have an empathy with the plight of the elderly who become the victims of crime and fall prey to those unscrupulous denizens of the criminal world.”



“The aim was to remove as many weapons as possible from the streets of High Wycombe.”

chiltern vale

Chiltern Vale police area covers approximately 223 square miles. It spans three district council areas Wycombe, South Bucks and Chiltern, and serves approximately 276,500 people. The area commander is Ch Supt Simon Chesterman.



Burglars Behind Bars

A gang of six men received more than 25 years in prison following a cross-border operation by police in Chiltern Vale and London into a case of conspiracy to burgle.

Operation Kez led to the conviction and sentencing in July of six men for burglary offences involving 60 homes.

The burglaries were committed in Gerrards Cross in Chiltern Vale police area, Burnham in Slough police area, Wraysbury and Datchet in Thames Forest police area, Henley in South Oxfordshire and Ruscombe in Reading with Wokingham police area. A number of burglaries were also committed in London and Surrey. High value cars were taken in the majority of the burglaries.

James Wooden, aged 18, was sentenced to five years at a young offenders' institute after admitting to committing nine burglaries. Derek Augustine, 24, was sentenced to five years for committing six burglaries and two attempted burglaries. David Augustine, 24, was sentenced to five years in prison after admitting to five burglaries and one attempted burglary. James Rafferty, 21, was also sentenced to five years in prison after admitting to eight burglaries and one attempted burglary. Justin Palmer, 21, was jailed for three years, after pleading guilty to one burglary and two attempted burglaries. Daniel O'Leary, 18, was sentenced to two years at a young offenders' institute after admitting to two counts of handling, allowing himself to be carried in a stolen car and one attempted burglary. In addition, Shaun Nedd, 22, was given a community punishment order of 200 hours after pleading guilty to one count of handling. They were all from Hayes, Middlesex. The group were sentenced together at Blackfriars Crown Court.

In his summing up of the trial Judge Deva Pillay commended the work of Thames Valley Police and the London Crime Squad, and said: "It was a particularly difficult and complex case that involved an investigation into a substantial number of crimes."

He singled out Det Sgt Mike Wallen of Chiltern Vale CID for particular praise. Judge Pillay said: "They (the offenders) showed a total disregard to the offences they committed, the possessions of others and the sanctity and privacy of people's homes. These were the actions of a ruthless and committed gang."

Det Sgt Wallen said: "These offences caused a considerable amount of distress to the victims, some of whom have been unable to overcome the trauma of the ordeal. This was taken very seriously by the Judge and I can only echo the comments made by him in passing sentence."

Weapons of Destruction Off The Street

Knives and a crossbow are now off the streets of High Wycombe thanks to a weapons amnesty held in community centres by police in Chiltern Vale.

The amnesty offered people the opportunity to drop weapons they shouldn't have into a safe bin anonymously and without fear of being prosecuted.

This amnesty aimed to recover sharp implements or weapons designed to cause injury including knuckledusters, flick knives, lock knives, daggers and bayonets. Weapons containing a sharp blade but disguised to look like another item such as a cigarette lighter were also taken in.

The initiative was run by police but staffed by community representatives and ran in February and March 2004 at community centres in High Wycombe.

The weapons handed in include two Stanley knives, one can of CS spray, four metal bars, one lock knife, one hunting knife, one machete and one hand-held crossbow.

PC Nigel Headley, who co-ordinated the initiative, said: "The aim was to remove as many weapons as possible from the streets of High Wycombe. It is the first time we have run this style of initiative and it was successful. Every weapon handed in is one less that could be used in crime."



Sniffing Out Drugs

A campaign to sniff out drugs and dealers was launched.

Code-named Operation Ginseng, the initiative is a partnership campaign and is funded by police, Wycombe District Council and Chiltern District Council.

The operation aims to disrupt and reduce drug-related offending. The dogs and handlers are accompanied on their searches by detectives who carried out investigations into any indications given by the dogs.

Pubs, clubs and bars in High Wycombe, Marlow, Beaconsfield, Amersham and Chesham have been visited by the drugs dogs. 36 people have been searched as part of the operation so far leading to 12 arrests and five people cautioned for drug possession or use.

Operation Ginseng includes the use of specialist drugs dogs from Grosvenor International Services at licensed premises throughout the south Buckinghamshire area. Licensees within the High Wycombe and Amersham and Chesham Pubwatch schemes have given the initiative their full support.

Operation Ginseng has been successful in raising awareness of the campaign between police and partners to stamp out drug-related offending. Advice has been given to each landlord within the two participating Pubwatch schemes about how to reduce drug-use in their premises.

The operation is set to continue and there are more drugs dog visits to licensed premises planned for South Buckinghamshire during the coming year.

Neighbourhood Policing goes mobile

Community officers went mobile this year thanks to funding from Chiltern Vale police area and their partners throughout Buckinghamshire.

The aim of both police and their partners was to increase their contact with the communities they serve, particularly in rural areas where there is no police station. Members of the public can pop in when the van is in their village, and have a face-to-face chat with officers who are on hand to take statements, offer advice and deal with issues raised by members of the community.

Wycombe District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Buckinghamshire District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council have joined forces to help fund the mobile office.

Though the van is used primarily by police officers, council representatives have also operated from it in conjunction with police.

Chief Insp David Colchester, Head of Community Safety, said: "By having a mobile office officers have become more visible and accessible. It gives residents more opportunities to access their police officers within their own communities and helps us to understand the neighbourhoods we serve."

Gillian Stimpson, Community Safety Manager for Wycombe District Council, said: "This van opens up possibilities to increase our communication with rural areas and put council staff in smaller areas, making it easier to contact us."

Learning The Lessons Of Crime

Thames Valley students swotted up on tips to fight crime at an exhibition in March.

Student representatives across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire were invited to the exhibition organised by officers and held at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College.

Exhibitors included Thames Valley Police, the Home Office, universities and private companies with products to help students protect themselves and secure their accommodation.





Force Award of Merit goes to Chiltern Vale Special Response Team

A team of Special Constables was recognised by Assistant Chief Constable Julie Spence for skills and dedication at a ceremony in February 2004.

Chiltern Vale's Special Constabulary Response Team was given the Force Award of Merit in recognition of an outstanding contribution. The winners are selected by an independent panel of judges.

The award-winning team is made up of 10 Special Constables who were nominated because of their work policing hunts in Chiltern Vale.

The team includes Team Leader, Section Officer Dominic Saati, Area Officer David O'Connell, Section Officer Ben Clarke, Section officer Matthew Jennings, Special Constables Robert Brown, Barney Giles, Julian Barrington, Joel Desborough, Adrian Wilkins, and A/Section Officer Abdul Rauf.

Section Officer Dominic Saati, said: "We were all delighted when we heard the news. It was a complete surprise. We have a very varied role, we attend hunts and football matches and assist on Operation Gaunt (a burglary initiative). It is a great opportunity to do the jobs police officers do and even better to be recognised to be doing it well.

"This award is our biggest achievement. We do a job and our aim is to make a difference to policing and get results. The team is very dedicated and experienced. They are all fully behind each other."



chiltern vale

PC Jon Taylor – Area Beat Manager.

Staff Profile

Name: PC Jon Taylor

Age: 39

Role: Area Beat Manager, High Wycombe Town Centre

Time in Force: 12 years

Previous Roles covered: PC Taylor has worked as a shift officer and has served two years as a detective.

PC Jon Taylor is a familiar face around High Wycombe. Not only is he a town centre beat bobby, he is also a police liaison officer for both Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC), and Wycombe General Hospital, and in his spare time he is High Wycombe's town crier.

Jon has forged strong links with students at BCUC in his role as liaison officer and has been nominated for three years running for the Force-wide Community Officer of the Year Award by supportive students and staff. In 2002 Jon was one of 10 finalists in the Force competition and he counts this achievement as one of the highlights of his policing career.

He said: "Being selected as a finalist was a great honour. I am proud of the relationships I have helped to build up at BCUC. It is satisfying to feel I have made an impact on making the University safer and a nicer environment to study in."

Jon's work as a town crier helps to keep him up to date with news and issues affecting residents and retailers. He tries to use a problem-solving approach to policing and has set up a mural project after a wall in High Wycombe was found covered in graffiti. The project uses volunteers from BCUC, local artists and young people from High Wycombe. The "Graffiti Alley" project in West End Road near Desborough Avenue, is well underway after a number of successful consultations to come up with ideas for the mural. The painting is due to get underway during the summer of 2004.

Another initiative Jon has set up is Chiltern Vale police area's Garden Gang, where students do garden maintenance work for elderly people.

Jon said: "I thoroughly enjoy tackling the diverse challenges I face on a daily basis. If anyone asked me whether they should become a police officer, I would say 'go for it!' During my 12 years with Thames Valley Police, I could honestly count the number of times I have been bored on one hand. There is always something to do."





“I thoroughly enjoy tackling the diverse challenges I face on a daily basis. If anyone asked me whether they should become a police officer, I would say 'go for it!' During my 12 years with Thames Valley Police, I could honestly count the number of times I have been bored on one hand. There is always something to do.”



Drugs cause serious problems, not just for those who use them, but for the community as a whole. We will not tolerate people supplying drugs here and will do everything within our power to prevent them doing so.”

milton keynes

Milton Keynes is a thriving modern town at the north east point of the Thames Valley Police region. The area covers one of the fastest growing populations in the Force and, indeed, the country. The area commander is Ch Supt John Liversidge.



Operation Ripple

Police and other agencies in Milton Keynes caused ripples throughout the drug dealing community when they carried out a major operation.

Undercover police officers carried out the covert operation alongside social services, drug referral agencies, a drug action team and environmental health aimed at tackling the drug dealing community last summer.

For two months Operation Ripple focused on gathering intelligence on individuals supplying heroin and crack cocaine.

Dawn raids were carried out involving 180 police officers from across Thames Valley, including specialist units such as the Support Group, Protection Group, Public Order and dogs units.

Twenty-two homes in Conniburrow, Fullers Slade, Middleton, Netherfield, Bradwell, Coffee Hall, Springfield, Neath Hill, Heelands, Fishermead and Bletchley were raided.

Police arrested 23 people on the day, including one man at his work address. Since the raids 16 people - 12 men and four women - have appeared and been convicted for serious drug offences at Aylesbury Crown Court.

Eight of those received more than 29 years in prison in total. Two people received Community Rehabilitation Orders (CRO) and six received Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTO). Two people have since broken their DTTOs - one has been jailed for three years while the other is awaiting sentence. Another man broke his CRO and was sent to prison for two years.

Supt Brendan O'Dowda said: "Drugs cause serious problems, not just for those who use them, but for the community as a whole. We will not tolerate people supplying drugs here and will do everything within our power to prevent them doing so.

"Operation Ripple won the trust and support of the community and put the fear of drug - related crime back into the hands of the dealers."

Dons Hit The Road

More than 100,000 football fans watched Wimbledon FC, now re-named MK Dons, play at its new temporary home during its first season in Milton Keynes.

There were 24 home fixtures played during the 2003/04 season - four at the club's old ground at Selhurst Park and the other 20 at the National Hockey Stadium in central Milton Keynes.

Police made 28 arrests for offences such as pitch invasion, theft, being drunk in a sports ground and common assault at the stadium. 18 others were ejected from the ground by stewards.

Ch Insp Graham Wharton said: "We have worked hard with everyone involved in the move including the club and Milton Keynes Council to ensure that matches are a safe environment where all the family can come and enjoy themselves.

"The fans have been well behaved with the exception of a very small number who were dealt with quickly and efficiently.

"I am confident that we will maintain the safe family-orientated environment throughout the next season."

Three people were banned for three years each when they appeared at Milton Keynes Magistrates' Court - two for pitch invasion and another who was arrested under the Public Order Act.

This summer work starts on a complex at Denbigh in Milton Keynes which will see the creation of a football stadium, built to UEFA standards, which will be capable of holding 30,000 spectators.

Completion of the new stadium is due by July 2006. Thames Valley Police has been working closely with architects and the developers to ensure that the new stadium is built to the highest standards.

milton keynes

Baby Tragedy

Police officers can very often be deeply affected by what they have to deal with.

Often there are times when an incident will occur where officers have no intention of making a prosecution, but instead they want to help the people affected.

One such case hit the headlines in Milton Keynes one Sunday evening in August 2003 when an off-duty police officer discovered the body of a newborn baby boy which had been wrapped in film and left by a stream near Teardrops Lake in the Loughton area of the town.

From the early stages of the inquiry police wanted to trace the mother of the child, not to prosecute her but to give her the help she obviously needed.

Officers turned to the public and the medical community to try and trace the woman. A post-mortem was carried out on the little boy's body which was unable to establish how he died. Doctors believed he may have been dead for up to a month before the officer discovered his tiny body.

Despite the large number of stories about the discovery of the boy in the newspapers, on television and radio appealing for the mother to contact officers, she has never come forward. In December the local community and the police staff involved in the inquiry decided it was time to put the baby to rest. They joined together at All Saint's Church to pay their respects to the little boy before he was buried in the nearby churchyard.

Several weeks later a headstone was erected on his grave with a space left for his name, in case his mother decides one day to come forward and name her son.

The police inquiry has ended, but the boy's mother can still contact Brendan O'Dowda, in confidence, at Milton Keynes police station.

Paying The Price

A Milton Keynes officer made a vandal clear off all his handiwork after catching him spraying graffiti.

The 15-year-old boy from Milton Keynes spent part of his school holiday away from his PlayStation scrubbing his graffiti off subways and bus stops, after he was caught by area beat officer PC Paul Newman. The officer could also link him to a surge of graffiti across the city.

The boy shocked his parents when he admitted to creating graffiti at about 300 different locations in Milton Keynes, and across the border in Bedfordshire at Leighton Buzzard. His father agreed that he should put away his PlayStation and scrub off his tags, under PC Newman's watchful eyes.

PC Newman said: "The boy had to use a lot of elbow grease and was really shocked by how hard the tags were to take off, even using specialist solutions to remove them."

Praise From On High

Milton Keynes police area was highlighted as an "effective and vibrant police service" by a Government inspector in 2004.

The report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary was welcomed by Det Ch Supt John Reeve, who was the Milton Keynes area commander when the inspection took place.

He said: "The report reflects the excellent work that is taking place on the police area and it is a testament to all the hard work and efforts of all the staff.

"I was particularly pleased to see recognition of the results achieved at Milton Keynes which shows us in a very good light compared with other police areas in the country."

Life-long learning was highlighted as good practice, as was the way police deal with drug intelligence and multi-agency tasking.





The boy had to use a lot of elbow grease and was really shocked by how hard the tags were to take off, even using specialist solutions to remove them.”



I really enjoy training. I like to see things done properly. All the officers who work in the training unit have to be as good, if not better, than most otherwise we wouldn't be taken seriously.”
(PC Dave Hawkins)

milton keynes

Milton Keynes Training Team.



Staff Profile(s)

Milton Keynes Training Team

A Milton Keynes team which helps prepare officers and police staff for every eventuality received a prestigious award this year.

The Milton Keynes training team received the Shrievalty Merit team award, given for outstanding contributions.

The team's achievements include developing a training programme which ensured people's personal development was linked with the requirements of the Force.

They also implement Streetcraft training packages. Streetcraft plays an important part in training probationary constables, Special Constables and police staff, to ensure the communities in Milton Keynes receive the best possible police service.

The unit has also been instrumental in developing partnerships with the community such as Milton Keynes College to promote life-long learning.

The team comprised of Sgt Lisa Stanhope, PC Alan Nisbet, PC Dave Hawkins and Joanne O'Driscoll when they won the award. Joanne, the unit's administrative assistant, has since left the Force and moved to Wales.

Name: Sgt Lisa Stanhope

Age: 36

Roles Covered: Probationer at Bletchley, shift officer at central Milton Keynes and Wolverton.

Time in Force: 13 years (Before joining worked as a loss adjuster for an insurance firm)

Lisa is the sergeant in charge of the training unit which is part of the Personnel Department run by Carolyn Tinson.

Lisa is passionate about delivering the right information and skills to people so they are the best at what they do.

She says: "I absolutely thrive on seeing people develop their skills and improve. I want them to be the best that they can be - we are only half of that by facilitating their development, they are the other half."

Name: PC Alan Nisbet

Age: 35

Roles Covered: Probationer in Bletchley, shift officer in central Milton Keynes and then on the car crime project Operation Doorlock before joining the training team.

Time in Force: Six years (Worked as a physical training instructor in the RAF and then for the Sheriff's Office in Edinburgh before joining TVP).

Alan works as a full-time personal safety instructor in the training unit. He says: "I enjoy passing on the skills and knowledge that I have to other officers, showing them how to work safely. If it stops them getting assaulted then I've done my job."

Name: PC Dave Hawkins

Age: 41

Roles Covered: Bletchley area beat officer for 12 years and then became a shift officer in central Milton Keynes for a year before moving back to Bletchley as a rural beat officer. He joined the training unit in 2000.

Time in Force: 20 years

Dave has helped compile training for a whole range of issues for the police area. These include, in the past year, training for the new charging scheme.

Dave says: "I really enjoy training. I like to see things done properly. All the officers who work in the training unit have to be as good, if not better, than most otherwise we wouldn't be taken seriously."

Despite their huge training commitments the three officers continue to involve themselves in operational patrol work and can be seen out policing the city centre on a Friday and Saturday night.

Area commander for Milton Keynes, Chief Supt John Liversidge, said: "The team has worked very hard to ensure that training is enjoyable. There's little doubt that as a result of their efforts Milton Keynes police staff are ready for the challenges which the service will be facing over the coming months."

northern oxfordshire

Northern Oxfordshire police area covers 240,000 residents and more than 600 square miles from the Warwickshire border in the north to the River Thames in the south. The area commander is Supt Duncan Graham.

Hitmen jailed following Witney CID investigation

During the early hours of 16 October 2002, a young woman living in Witney was woken by noises and found herself confronted by a man wearing a balaclava and brandishing a handgun.

She was forced to the floor and the handgun was placed against her head. She was convinced she was about to be robbed and executed. Fortunately, her dog started to bark at which point the gunman escaped.

On 13 November 2002, the same gunman, together with two accomplices, went to a house in Bourton Close, Witney. They forced their way in and attacked a group of young men having a party, forcing one to the floor and placing a handgun into his mouth.

Less than a week later, two of the offenders went to a house in Basingstoke. When the occupant came to the door, one of the gunmen placed a handgun to his head and pulled the trigger. The victim fell backwards into the house with blood on his face. Convinced that he was dead, the two gunmen walked calmly away.

Unbeknown to them, the firearm had not discharged properly and the victim was still alive having been hit in the face by shrapnel.

The team investigating the offences, based at Witney, began their investigations which led to a series of armed raids. Cell site analysis of the offenders' mobile phones proved that they had been in Basingstoke on the night of the attempted murder, linking the three offences.

Using sophisticated listening devices the team captured vital evidence from the offenders who were openly discussing their part in the offences, also boasting of a gunpoint car-jacking that they committed in London. The defence challenged the legality of using such tactics but a High Court Judge at the Old Bailey found the tactics legal and innovative.

Three men were convicted of robbery, armed robbery and attempted murder. Mubshir

Hussein, aged 26, of Cleves Road, Eastham, London, got 18 years; Derek Danso, 22, of Apollo Place, London, got 13 years and William Phillips, 21, also of Cleves Road, got nine years.

Life imprisonment for gunpoint robber

On the morning of August 6 2002, staff were arriving for work at Lloyds TSB in Banbury.

Unbeknown to them, Roy Swinscoe had already entered the building through the roof and was lying in wait for them.

As staff came into the bank Swinscoe took them hostage at gunpoint and ushered them into a strong room. One member of staff resisted his instructions and was struck on the head with the loaded sawn-off shotgun which was then fired onto the floor.

Because this took place out of sight of the main group, some of the hostages thought their colleague had been killed.

After forcing staff to open the safe and cash machine, Swinscoe escaped with over £120,000 in cash.

His black Alfa Romeo getaway car was later spotted at a service station in Southam where CCTV footage of him was taken.

This was traced and shown to police in Nottingham who identified the suspect as 36-year-old Swinscoe of Addison Street, Nottingham.

Swinscoe's arrest came three months later in October 2002 after he was stop-checked whilst acting suspiciously at East Midlands Airport. After his arrest, photographs were taken of Swinscoe which were matched to the CCTV footage from inside the bank and the getaway car footage, using ground-breaking techniques. The images showed a person of identical body shape down to shoulder-width, neck and face shape and nose length. Swinscoe was convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to life imprisonment at Reading Crown Court.





Using sophisticated listening devices the team captured vital evidence from the offenders who were openly discussing their part in the offences”



Partners In Crime

Banbury Crime Partnership is a multi-agency partnership between police, retailers, Cherwell District Council, Banbury Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce.

The aim is to combat town centre crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour within Banbury.

There are 62 shops in the town signed up to the scheme, with each being visited at least once a month by officers to share information.

As a result of such intelligence, 13 prolific offenders are currently excluded from all of the BCP retailers.

Every three months, an album is compiled of all the prolific offenders known to the partnership, and distributed - the latest album featured 21 offenders.

As well as day-to-day liaison with stores, the BCP has also been responsible for a number of individual initiatives.

The Retail Crime Diversion Programme was launched earlier this year. The scheme offers juvenile offenders a chance to step off the path which could lead to further criminal activity.

Once on the scheme offenders attend sessions where they are involved in talks with a restorative justice-trained police officer and a store manager, to help them understand the impact of their crime.

Stun gun rapist sentenced to 10 years

A rapist who threatened his victim with a stun gun was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment earlier this year after being found guilty by a jury at Oxford Crown Court.

Timothy Williams, 26, of Lerwick Croft, Glory Farm, Bicester, was identified as a suspect for the rape after a DNA profile was obtained with the help of Forensic Alliance. Due to the firearms element armed officers took part in an early morning operation. Williams was arrested and the firearm was recovered from his vehicle.

Williams denied rape throughout the investigation stating the sex was consensual, but many subsequent inquiries regarding that night proved to the jury that it was indeed rape.





Volunteer numbers double in 12 months

The number of volunteers working out of northern Oxfordshire has more than doubled in the last year.

The area now benefits from 41 volunteers compared to 18 this time last year.

Volunteers in Northern Oxfordshire work over 2,500 hours each year assisting in a variety of roles and departments such as station duty officer, VIPER identification, file quality management, personnel, Child Protection and Sexual Crimes Unit, Crime Incident Management Unit, property and the mobile police station.

The police office front counters in Deddington, Burford, Eynsham and soon, Charlbury, are entirely manned by volunteers, keeping offices staffed that otherwise would not be.

Volunteers co-ordinator Rosie White said: "Our volunteers provide vital additional resources to Thames Valley Police, and bring with them a variety of skills and experience, which serves to enhance the diversity within the Force."

Paedophile sentenced to 11 years

A paedophile who groomed a number of young boys in the Banbury area was sentenced to eight years in prison and three on licence earlier this year.

Alan Johnston, 43, of Poolside Close, Banbury, sexually abused seven boys between the ages of 10 and 11, bribing them with cigarettes and computer games.

Following a lengthy police investigation, Johnston pleaded guilty at Oxford Crown Court to 20 charges of indecent assault on a male under 16, one of indecency with a child and two serious sexual offences. He also asked for 38 other offences to be taken into consideration.

After the hearing, Det Sgt Paul Gibbard said: "We have taken a very dangerous person off the streets for a considerable period of time and shown an extremely vulnerable group of people that we do listen and take such allegations seriously."

BEACON finals for West Oxon CDRP

Earlier this year, the West Oxon Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) was short listed from 218 applicants as one of 80 finalists in the Government's BEACON programme for its crime and disorder reduction work.

The BEACON scheme, which was established in 1999, applauds successful authorities acting as centres of excellence in their field and sharing their learning with others.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced that the West Oxon CDRP had shown evidence of excellence and innovation, as well as a commitment to spreading best practice in a range of important service areas.

This includes anti-social behaviour officers working within council officers alongside drugs, community safety and licensing staff to establish an integrated approach to the problem.

Despite narrowly missing out on the award following visits from and presentations to the Home Office, the partnership still felt that the short-listing was a massive accomplishment in itself.

Attempted murderer sentenced to six years

A man who attempted to murder a woman he met in an internet chatroom was given a six-year custodial sentence after he slashed her throat in front of her young children.

Gary Hopes, 34, of Lincoln Street, Barton Hill, Bristol, was visiting the home address of his victim in Banbury when he became jealous of text messages she was receiving, and slashed her throat with a Stanley knife.

His victim required 14 stitches to the wound, and was left scarred for life by the attack. He was arrested and charged with attempted murder in February and pleaded guilty at Oxford Crown Court.

northern oxfordshire

PC Mike Ellis – Anti-social behaviour manager.

Staff Profile

Name: PC Mike Ellis

Age: 44

Role: Anti-social behaviour manager

Time in Force: 17 Years

Previous roles: Drugs proactive unit, control room, rave intelligence unit, secondment to Prince's Trust, youth liaison officer, community beat officer, crime prevention officer and restorative justice practitioner.

In his ground-breaking role as Anti-Social Behaviour Manager, PC Mike Ellis has been tackling the problems of anti-social behaviour that affect Northern Oxfordshire. Seconded to Cherwell District Council, and working with Det Con Ady Cole, the officer seconded to West Oxon District Council in the same role, Mike works closely with other agencies on the cases of some of the most hardened anti-social behaviour offenders in the area.

Making a real difference to both the offender and the community by using tools such as anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), restraining orders and eviction orders is the most satisfying aspect of Mike's job.

He said: "Our role is to firstly identify the offenders that we need to target, then work with our partner agencies to secure appropriate methods to deal with them, such as an ASBO.

"Often, once an ASBO is in place, the real work begins. By continually working closely with both intelligence and operational officers, we are able to monitor offenders and the impact that they are having on communities and if orders are being breached, make the relevant arrests as we have done on six occasions over the past six months.

"It is when an order is successful, and both the path of an offender's life and the sense of security within a community is changed for the better, that the true benefits of proactively challenging anti-social behaviour can be seen."

Mike feels Thames Valley Police's modern approach to policy can only mean more positive moves in tackling future problems of anti-social behaviour. He said: "Thames Valley Police is probably one of the most forward-thinking, advanced forces in the country.

"They have developed many of the most innovative and new approaches to crime nationwide, and I am confident that we will continue to explore new ways of challenging anti-social behaviour within the Force."





The impact that anti-social behaviour can have on the community is massive. What to some people may seem like a petty crime may to others have a devastating effect on their sense of security and wellbeing.”

They were intent on causing disorder at the fixture and needed to be identified. The offences they are involved in are serious. In one incident a bottle was thrown at an officer, striking him on the head. Fortunately he was not injured, but it could have been more serious.”



oxford

Oxford Police Area is the smallest geographical area in the Thames Valley Force, but arguably one of the busiest, with a daytime population which can reach 200,000 during the height of the tourist season, as well as a huge student population. The area commander is Supt Paul Sullivan.

Diary of a Criminal

A teenage thug inspired by American "gangsta rap" was jailed for five years after a diary he kept of his crimes was discovered by Oxford police.

Can Akcal beat up victims for fun and then boasted about it in the diary, which was discovered by Oxford's Det Con Roy Thornton during a search of his address in Wootton, near Abingdon.

The diary went into graphic detail about his violent activity over a six-month period from January 1 to June 4. It provided police with vital information about a sickening spate of assaults and robberies.

Akcal was arrested in July during Operation Brigand, one of Oxford's biggest raids.

In March 2004 at Oxford Crown Court Akcal admitted robbery, attempted robbery and one count of wounding with intent to cause GBH.

The judge told Akcal his diary revealed a racist streak to his violence and sentenced him to five years for wounding and four years for each of the robbery counts, to run consecutively.

Detectives cross-referenced incidents described by Akcal in his diary with crime recorded on their database and found a close match. Akcal had even recounted when he was stop-checked by police - checks also recorded by officers.

Sgt John Turner, the officer in the case, said Akcal and a number of other young Asian men were involved in the attacks, and Akcal drove his accomplices around in an old black BMW.

He said: "There was a series of eight to 10 different robberies involving a group of Asian males, in which people were violently assaulted and robbed of mobile phones, credit cards and cash. The group just seemed to be out of control, and reading the diary would support that theory. These were just senseless, indiscriminate attacks for their own amusement."

Thief Targets Gay Man

A man was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in July after pleading guilty to theft from a gay man.

Elvis Springer, aged 39, of no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to taking £30 from a man in Angel Meadow after performing a sex act on him and demanding money.

The incident happened after Springer approached the man in Angel Meadow on 19 September 2002 and offered to perform the act. Afterwards, he demanded money and the man's bike, before grabbing his arm. The man then handed over his wallet and rode off while Springer was looking through it.

Springer was sentenced at Oxford Crown Court to two years imprisonment. PC Mark Hill, who led the investigation said:

"Springer targeted the man because he thought he was gay and perhaps thought he wouldn't report it.

"We want to send a message to the gay and lesbian community that all reports of any crime against them will be taken seriously and action will be taken."

Springer's sentence will run concurrently with a five-year sentence he received in June for supplying class A drugs. Springer was sentenced after being arrested by officers from the East Oxford team in December 2002 in Oxford Road, Cowley.

Springer had pleaded not guilty to one charge of possession with intent to supply two grams of crack, and 6.035 grams of heroin. The crack was found split into 10 heat-sealed cling film packages, and the heroin split into 28 heat-sealed cling film and paper packages.

Football Hooligans In The Dock

Members of the public helped bring football hooligans to justice after police issued their photos.

A group of hooligans threw missiles at police prior to an Oxford United Vs Reading match on 24 September.

During the match, particularly at half time, other serious public order offences were committed where police officers within the stadium had bottles thrown at them and were spat at.

CCTV footage reviewed after the match also revealed other offenders who were violent and disruptive during the match.

Officers from Oxford's operations department had exhausted all possible lines of inquiry - including attending all Oxford's home and away fixtures, involving plain-clothed spotters and circulating the offenders' photos to intelligence sources in Oxford and Reading -but had only identified two of the alleged offenders.

In a last-ditch attempt to identify the thugs, they issued CCTV footage to the media. Within hours, positive identifications were made. Three people were eventually charged with causing violent disorder as a result. One man handed himself over to police five days after the press appeal was made. They are now awaiting trial.

A total of six arrests were made at the match - one Reading fan and five Oxford United supporters. Two were found guilty at Oxford Magistrates' Court of threatening behaviour and have received three-year domestic and international football bans.

PC Simon Feist, Oxford's football liaison officer and head of the investigation, said: "These individuals were ruining the good reputation of the game here in Oxford, destroying the game for those supporters who enjoy coming to the match as a family, while also posing a threat to genuine fans and police alike."

Staff Profile

Name: East Oxford Team

A team of bobbies on bikes was awarded the Shrievalty Merit Team Award this year – one of the most prestigious awards to be presented in the Thames Valley.

The East Oxford Team was chosen in recognition of its significant impact on reducing crime and increasing public confidence in east Oxford.

The award goes to Sgt Jim O’Ryan, PCs David Stares, Lewis Prescott-Mayling, Christopher Griffin, Kevin Crick, Richard Jones, Jonathon Lewis, Lucy Creed, Neil Streeter and Steven Clarke, who are present and former members of the 2002/3 team. The team operates from Cowley police station and was introduced in January 2002 to tackle the area’s rising crime problem and falling levels of public satisfaction. Using bikes was thought to be an effective way of being not only visible, but fast and effective in the fight against crime.

Some of its recent successes include:

- assisting HM Immigration with removing 20 Jamaican drug dealers from the area
- securing Oxford’s first conviction for money laundering, in connection with drug dealing
- conducting the most successful daytime Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) operation in the Force, resulting in 18 arrests
- cutting domestic burglary by six per cent
- cutting vehicle theft by 29 per cent
- reducing the number of people coming to East Oxford to buy class A drugs
- improving public confidence in the police
- reducing fear of crime
- arresting 12 people and recovering a substantial amount of crack in November 2003
- numerous successful drug and burglary raids in 2003
- the conviction of Class A drug dealers
- convictions, including Elvis Springer who received two years imprisonment after deliberately targeting a gay man thinking he would not report it
- arresting a drink driver following a pursuit on bicycles in April
- conducting more than 1,000 stop and searches, with just one complaint received.





The team has gone from strength to strength, cutting crime and increasing public confidence which has been acknowledged within the community. This is an excellent reward for the team, who thoroughly deserve it.”



Officers in Reading with Wokingham became the first in the Force to use new laws to close crack houses and put a halt to the misery they cause to communities.

Photograph above courtesy of the Reading Evening Post.

reading with wokingham

Reading with Wokingham police area is one of the busiest and most diverse police areas in Thames Valley Police. The area commander is Chief Supt David Murray.



Reading With Wokingham Police Area

Reading is one of the fastest-growing towns in the south east. It has a 24-hour economy, and tens of thousands of people visit each day to take advantage of the town's office space, shopping centre and entertainment venues.

Wokingham is one of the safest and most affluent areas in the country.

Shutting Out Crack Dealers

Officers in Reading with Wokingham became the first in the Force to use new laws to close crack houses and put a halt to the misery they cause to communities.

Operation Eightfold, which is cracking down on drugs and drug-related crime, has so far led to more than 100 arrests and around 40 drugs raids. Crack, heroin and even firearms have been seized.

The operation has also included a clampdown on the illegal sex trade and officers this year secured their first conviction against a kerb crawler who had previous convictions for violent attacks on young women.

In March, north west sector area beat officers teamed up with their partners at Reading Single Homeless Project and Warden Housing to close crack houses in Ivydene Road and George Street, using new powers under the Anti Social Behaviour Act.

Officers and their partners spent months gathering evidence from the community of the misery and crime the two crack houses generated. Details included residents having their doorbells rung at all hours of the day and night by people desperate to buy their crack and other class A drugs, fights, shouting, screaming and even a stabbing.

Armed with the evidence officers and the registered social landlords went to court and secured closure orders for three months on the premises.

The good work was continued in May when police and Reading Single Homeless Project joined forces again to use existing tenancy agreements to close down two crack houses in Howard Street.

For more information on Operation Eightfold, call 01189 536354 or email eightfold@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Night Safe

A police operation to combat alcohol-related crime and disorder in the wake of Reading town centre's ever-increasing nightlife has proved a success.

A review of Operation Effusion, which was launched at the end of April, revealed violent crime and disorder has fallen by almost half thanks to the operation.

Crime recorded in the town centre on Friday and Saturday nights between January and April 2003, prior to Effusion, included 58 serious assaults, namely ABH and GBH.

In January to April this year, when Effusion was in place, there were 33 serious assaults, a 43 per cent drop. In addition, robbery dropped 80 per cent, from five offences to one.

Public order offences have increased from eight to 16, but this is due to officers arresting more people for minor public order offences - such as drunk and disorderly - and bringing them in to custody before their behaviour has a chance to deteriorate to violence.

Effusion was launched to address problems caused by the increasing number of bars, clubs and pubs in the town centre. 20,000 people from south east England visit Reading at weekends. Unfortunately, they bring with them associated problems - rowdiness, fighting, vandalism and urinating in streets.

Extra officers are brought on duty especially to deal with the town centre and the thousands of people within it. This leaves other officers free to continue their work in other parts of Reading with Wokingham.

reading with wokingham

PC Karen Brown – Prostitute Liaison Officer.

Staff Profile

Name: Karen Brown

Age: 27

Roles: Joined Reading with Wokingham police five and a half years ago and has worked on shift, until last year, when she became the Area's first Prostitute Liaison Officer.

PC Karen Brown has excelled in carrying out a role which cannot be found anywhere else in the Force.

She was appointed Prostitute Liaison Officer last year in response to problems associated with the growing illegal sex trade in Reading.

She has developed the role herself, building up relationships with the women and partner agencies responsible for supporting them.

Prostitution is an appalling legacy of the crack cocaine and "yardie" infiltration of west Reading, which began in Foxglove Gardens three years ago.

Many of the prostitutes are single, vulnerable women whose homes are taken over by men of violence who use them as places to sell and consume drugs.

Slowly, the women are introduced to drugs until they develop addictions and are then sent out on to the streets by their men to earn the money for drugs.

The Foxglove Gardens crack houses and the men of violence have gone. Police have executed scores of warrants and deported 100 people to the Caribbean. But the women remain on the streets at all hours and in all weather conditions.

Karen now has an intimate knowledge of the world in which they operate, which includes drugs, drug dealers and unsavoury, often violent, characters.

Her work has led her to being involved in the formation of the multi-agency Sex Workers Forum, which meets to discuss what can be done to tackle the sex trade problem.

Karen said: "It's really frustrating when I see the kerb crawlers, who are mostly business men and family men with lives a world away from the ones the prostitutes know.

"Until they are arrested they don't seem to think about what they are doing to their families, or the health risks they pose to their wives and children.

"Some of these men are so naïve and ignorant to the health risks they are taking and have no idea about the risks they take with sexually transmitted infections."





I really enjoy getting to know the women. It's sad when you see these young girls and listen to their life stories. They are all individual, but each of them has a part of their life which, if tackled differently, would have prevented them from being there. Early intervention could have meant they may not have taken to the streets."



Photograph courtesy of the Reading Evening Post.

CAT Springs Into Action

A Community Action Team was created to “float” across Reading with Wokingham police area and provide extra help and support where it is needed the most.

The team was formed as part of an area-wide commitment to residents to provide them with the reassuring and visible policing they have requested.

The team of experienced officers - led by Sgt Phaedra Hurst - recently purchased bikes so they can patrol the area with more ease.

They provide support for area beat officers who have particular problems within their communities that need extra attention and resilience. They also patrol anti-social behaviour hot spots, talking to youths, confiscating alcohol where necessary and stop-checking suspicious people, and spend time in areas which have suffered more than most from burglary and robbery.

The team has patrolled in Woodley, Wokingham, Barkham, Finchampstead, Twyford, Earley, Lower Earley, Caversham, Tilehurst and East Reading.

It is only thanks to continued support and co-operation from residents, who phone police with information on crime, criminals and disorder, that police can have the full picture of where the issues across the area are - and then deploy the CAT team accordingly.

To speak to your local officer or to raise issues about crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, phone police on 0845 8 505 505. Calls are charged at local rates. Alternatively, people can ring Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Groups of youths who affect the quality of life for other residents with their anti-social and even criminal behaviour continue to have their collars felt by the long arm of the law.

Wokingham district remains one of the safest places to live in the country, according to national surveys. However, it is recognised that many residents there have a higher fear of becoming a victim of crime than those in other parts of the Thames Valley.





This fear is intensified by the perception people have of groups of youths hanging around in public or open spaces, sometimes fighting, drinking or being rowdy and abusive. Responding to concerns from residents and local businesses, former Wokingham sector Inspector Lindsey Finch identified the top “anti-social behaviour hot spots” in the area. These areas are now subject to anti-social behaviour patrols.

A team of a sergeant and up to six police officers is tasked with touring Wokingham sector on Friday and Saturday nights, when the problem is deemed to be at its worst. They approach groups of youths, speak to them and confiscate alcohol if necessary.

Insp Finch said: “The patrols are a direct response to concerns raised by people about increasing levels of unacceptable and bad behaviour from youths.

“We are not out to give all youths a hard time, but we want to get the message across that police will not tolerate anti-social and criminal behaviour, especially when it has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of others.”

Robber jailed for six years

A police offensive against robbery continued for the third year, resulting in the imprisonment of one offender for six years.

Abdul Shelim was so desperate for cash to buy drugs that he snatched the handbags from two elderly and frail women, dragging them to the floor and injuring them as he attempted to take their bags.

The 24-year-old, of Earnest Street, Reading, appeared before Reading Crown Court this May and was jailed for six years after admitting two offences - one on 27 November in which a 79-year-old woman was followed from a Caversham supermarket and thrown to the floor by Shelim as he snatched her bag, and a second on 9 January in Caversham in which a 79-year-old woman standing in a supermarket car park was knocked to the floor by Shelim as he stole her bag, causing cuts to her face, chips to her teeth and breaking her glasses.

His imprisonment was thanks to the hard work of robbery officer PC Matt Fear.

Cracking Crime

An outstanding investigation by one of Reading with Wokingham's most experienced detectives has highlighted the link between drug addiction and offending - and the massive challenge police and their partners face to tackle the issue.

Around 70 per cent of all crime in Reading with Wokingham is committed by a core group of people who are addicted to class A drugs - crack cocaine and heroin - and offend any which way they can in order to get cash for drugs.

And few groups were more prolific than a gang of 15 linked to one crack house in Granville Road, Reading. The team would work in pairs to get the cash for crack. As soon as the crack ran out, they were back on the streets committing more crime.

Det Sgt Dave Bowler of the Reading with Wokingham Prisoner Intervention Unit - formed to deal with prolific offenders - spent months researching all the offences linked to the Southcote crack house and dealing with the 15 offenders, all of whom have since been convicted and most of whom are behind bars.

His concluding summary of the offending was staggering - 463 crimes were committed by the team in a year, with property worth almost half a million pounds stolen from residents and £55,000 damage caused as they smashed their way into homes, cars and businesses, desperate for drugs money.

Det Sgt Bowler's work is just an example of one crack house and one team operating from it. His report illustrates the extraordinary levels of offending a small minority of people are committing and the huge impact on the lives of the 500,000 other people who live in the police area.

His report has also once again highlighted why the Criminal Justice Intervention Programme (CJIP) - which brings police, local authorities, prison, probation, health and other agencies together to offer a streamlined approach to tackling drug addicted offenders and getting them off drugs - is so important.

The CJIP tracks identified offenders, so that whether they are in prison or at home they receive the same level of care and support to get them off drugs and away from crime.

slough & district

Slough and District police area includes Eton College, Cliveden House, Pinewood Studios and the largest privately owned trading estate in the UK. The area commander is Ch Supt Brian Langston.

Slough and District Police Area

The area covers around 45 square miles, and is populated by over 146,000 people, 120,000 living within the borough of Slough.

The area is culturally rich. Around 20 per cent of the community has minority ethnic origins.

Pub Watch stops trouble brewing

Licencees in Slough town centre took a lead role in the relaunch of the Pub Watch scheme.

Representing licencees, retailers, the police and Slough Borough Council, the Pub Watch committee meets once a month and has implemented a number of successful joint initiatives.

Under Operation Crater, a team of officers provides high-visibility policing in the High Street every Friday and Saturday night. A system of staggered closing times ensures that police can be on hand at each licensed premises in turn to prevent disorder.

Slough Borough Council operates a Door Safe scheme, under which all door staff must be properly trained and registered. Club-goers are searched at the door for weapons and/or drugs, and anyone suspected of being under 18 is required to show a valid passport or driving licence. A person banned from one venue for causing trouble will be refused entry to every other pub and club in the town centre.

Sgt Adam Wise said: "We prevent disorder by intervening early in minor incidents before they escalate. There has only been one large brawl in the past few months, and that was quickly over."

A/Sgt Kev Denman said: "I've been patrolling the town centre for several years now, and the level of alcohol-related disorder has gone down dramatically."

Toolbox Talks

With a high number of probationer officers and a recent influx of police staff as part of the redeployment programme, Slough and District police area has an acknowledged "experience gap".

To bridge that gap, Slough's area training officer, Les Payne, organised a series of short, informative talks on the work of specialist departments. Informal in style and lasting about 15 minutes each, these Toolbox Talks were given by personnel experienced in the subject matter.

Topics covered included community intelligence, anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs), crime reduction and the new Violence and Hate Crime Task Force. The talks were timed so that officers could attend at the end of one shift or the beginning of the next.

Said Les: "Our staff are bombarded with a huge amount of new information on paper and online. Face-to-face talks, with the chance to ask questions, are a popular and painless way of learning."

Clampdown on kerb-crawlers

Slough beat officers launched Operation Counter to tackle the problem of prostitution, after identifying 47 women and girls working as street prostitutes in one area of the town, some of them as young as 12.

In the first eight months of the operation, officers issued 50 official cautions and charged 25 women with prostitution-related offences. They also stopped more than 30 kerb-crawlers.

In each case, they took the men's details and sent warning letters to their home addresses via registered mail - a tactic that proved a very effective deterrent.

Beat officers also closed down 19 brothels in the Slough area and dealt with 12 illegal immigrants who had been brought to the UK to work in them.

"Most of the prostitutes are victims of drug abuse or violence, and our aim is to help them as much as to prosecute," said PC Chris Howlett. "We refer them to drug treatment agencies and try to get them into rehabilitation."

Operation Counter brought the number of women working the streets down from 47 to five. Although the nuisance they cause has been greatly reduced, the problem has not gone away and the operation is continuing.





CCTV has been instrumental in reducing crime. Police officers and licensees are all in constant communication with the CCTV operators, who quickly alert us to any trouble brewing. Our message to the public is that if you misbehave in Slough High Street, you are guaranteed to be caught on camera.”



I've been a cycle officer since the team was set up in July 2002. We work in pairs and can move very fast to catch street robbers in alleyways or underpasses where police cars can't go."

slough & district

Steve Parker-James – Cycle officer, Street Crime Unit.



Staff Profile

Name: Steve Parker-James

Age: 38

Role: Cycle officer, Street Crime Unit, Slough Police Area

Time in Force: 15 years

Roles covered: Shift officer in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Slough, area beat officer in Chesham

It's a long way from the Cornish fishing village where he grew up to the busy streets of Slough, but Steve Parker-James wouldn't be anywhere else.

"I love the job I'm doing and I love being in Slough. People often ask me why I don't go back to the West Country, but I believe the opportunities are better here - in terms of jobs, schooling and leisure.

"Slough police area is busy all the time, and I know I would never find as much job satisfaction or have the same range of experiences elsewhere."

Those experiences include patrolling crime hotspots, making arrests, escorting marches and processions, preventing public disorder and searching for missing people.

As a member of the Street Crime Team, Steve rides a high-performance mountain bike, one of four sponsored by the mobile phone company O2 . "I've been a cycle officer since the team was set up in July 2002. We work in pairs and can move very fast to catch street robbers in alleyways or underpasses where police cars can't go."

Steve has used his bike to block the path of fleeing criminals, contain unruly crowds - and has pursued, tackled and arrested offenders while still in the saddle.

"Our mountain bikes are ideal for patrolling the parks and open ground in Slough, where we've made some good arrests. Once I came across a man hiding behind bushes with an open till, counting the stolen cash. Of course, he ran off, but I caught him and he was eventually sentenced for a whole string of similar offences."

But Steve's time is not always spent chasing criminals. "I really enjoy the big events in Slough, like the Mela and the Vaisakhi processions. The people are so friendly and the specialised bike is a great ice-breaker. Lots of people come up to me and chat, which is one of the best aspects of the job."



Justice for all

This year Slough and District police area set up the Violence and Hate Crime Task Force as a pilot for Thames Valley Police.

The task force brings together police officers, detectives and police staff, selected for their experience and specialist skills in dealing with domestic violence, racist, homophobic and other hate crimes.

Det Sgt Ian Smith, who heads the task force, said: "Thames Valley Police has had domestic violence units and community and race relations officers for a number of years, but they were primarily concerned with the victims. Our approach is to focus more strongly on catching the offenders, while working with other agencies to provide support to victims."

The task force liaises closely with faith and community organisations, women's aid agencies, housing, health, social services and gay and lesbian support groups.

"Slough is made up of many different communities. For the first time, we are actively seeking to make contact with under-represented groups, to find out how best we can help them," Ian said. "We are concerned that these people may not feel comfortable talking to the police, resulting in the under-reporting of crime."

"Our message is that the police are here to serve all members of the public, whatever their religion, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation."

The Violence and Hate Crime Task Force also acts as a resource for the rest of Slough police area, providing community impact assessments so that operational officers can take into account any sensitivities or issues.

"Above all, we hope the task force will make it easier for people affected by violence and hate crime to approach the police," said Ian. "It's about giving every member of the community equal access to justice."

Managing critical incidents

In terms of policing, Slough is acknowledged to be a challenging area.

Although the town as a whole is a vibrant and prosperous, there are pockets of deprivation with associated high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Slough adjoins the Metropolitan Police area and shares many of its problems, particularly drug-related offences.

While continuing their fight against burglary, robbery and vehicle crime, Slough officers dealt with more critical incidents in the past year than any other area in the Force.

Between February 2003 and March 2004 there were eight murders and six attempted murders, as well as a high number of armed robberies, kidnappings, rapes and other violent crimes.

Several of these were deemed critical incidents because of their potential impact on the community.

Investigating such incidents requires extra sensitivity and understanding. Officers sought advice from faith and community leaders, and worked to build relationships with minority groups affected by these events. The result has been a strengthening of the links between Slough police and their many partners in the community.

Chief Superintendent Brian Langston said: "The Violence and Hate Crime Task Force has been invaluable in helping to retain and develop the trust and confidence of the community during a year of unprecedented numbers of critical incidents, which have had an enormous local impact."





United against terrorism

With almost a third of its population from ethnic minorities, including large Muslim and Sikh communities, Slough is quick to feel the impact of international crises.

In the aftermath of September 11, global tensions were played out within the community. Asian residents in particular reported an increase in racial and religious harassment.

Slough police pioneered a problem-solving approach aimed at defusing community tension. Operation Comfort used existing community networks to provide early warnings of racial tension, anti-police feeling or infiltration by extremist groups.

Unfounded rumours and public alarm were minimised through regular dialogue with community leaders and faith representatives.

Officers from the Thames Valley Black Police Association were also an important component of the operation. Their heightened cultural awareness and language skills were used to build bridges within the community and break down negative stereotypes.

This model of community involvement has since been used successfully to defuse tension caused by events in Afghanistan and Iraq, worldwide terrorist attacks and continuous news coverage of the “war on terror”.

In March 2004 the approach was again put to the test when several addresses in Slough were targeted in high-profile anti-terrorist raids.

Community representatives were briefed and consulted beforehand, while during and after the raids an increased police presence provided public reassurance. As a result, racial tension was low and good relations between Slough police and the community were maintained.



A joint crime reduction initiative was launched by South Oxfordshire District Council and Henley police following a rise in thefts from cars in Kings Road and Greys Road car parks, which were repeatedly being targeted by opportunist thieves.

southern oxfordshire

Southern Oxfordshire is among the largest of the 10 devolved police areas which make up the Force. The area commander is Supt Jill Simpson.



Southern Oxfordshire Police Area

The area covers over 400 square miles of countryside and has a population of just over 233,000 people.

Banned from boozing

A 19 year-old man who continuously intimidated residents in Abingdon was imprisoned after breaching an Anti-Social Behaviour Order this year.

The order banned Daniel Rumley, of Parsons Mead, Abingdon, from entering certain areas of Abingdon, drinking alcohol in a public place and congregating in a group of more than three people.

If he breached any of these terms it meant he would be instantly arrested.

Louise Russell, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator for Southern Oxfordshire monitors offenders like Rumley to assess how they are damaging the community and affecting people's every day lives.

Rumley agreed to sign an Acceptable Behaviour Contract - a voluntary contract to try and keep offenders on the right side of the law and away from crime.

Contracts usually have an 85 per cent success rate in southern Oxfordshire but unfortunately this did not work for Rumley and he continued to breach the contract 16 times, forcing Louise to apply for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

The order helped the crime reduction partnership to monitor and deal with Rumley in an appropriate way. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders send a strong message to other people who carry out this type of behaviour that it will not be tolerated and that police and partners will come down hard on individuals who choose to behave in an intimidating and careless manner.

Louise said: "Granting the order was a huge joint effort between police officers, Vale of White Horse District Council and residents of Abingdon. It made a significant improvement to the quality of life of the people in Abingdon."

Rumley breached the terms of the order after just nine days. He has been jailed for three years and 270 days for the breach and three further offences.

Under contract to behave in Berinsfield

A sports centre in Berinsfield which suffered extensive damage from vandals became a crime-free zone from November after Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were issued to youths in the town.

Abbey sports centre was constantly vandalised by teenagers who threw paint at the building and smashed windows.

Staff were scared to go to work because of verbal abuse they suffered daily from teenagers outside.

Following reports of vandalism and staff being verbally abused, multi-agency discussions were held with Thames Valley Police, South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Housing Association and the manager of Abbey Sports Centre.

It was agreed that every member of staff at the centre would have access to an incident diary. The purpose of this was to record every incident of anti-social behaviour and to gather intelligence on who was responsible. Regular incident diary sheets were sent in pre-paid envelopes to Louise Russell, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, based at Abingdon police station. She liaised with the agencies and police to create a solution for the on-going problem.

She said: "When we had enough evidence of who was causing the problem, a letter was sent to their parents asking if they could bring their child to a voluntary meeting to discuss what had been happening. At the meeting the teenagers were spoken to individually about the problems they had caused and how people were being affected by their behaviour. They were then asked to sign the Acceptable Behaviour Contract."

All teenagers who attended the meetings signed up to the contract. If the contracts are breached parents could face possible eviction from housing association property, the teenagers could be taken to court to be issued with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or they could be banned from the area completely.

The contracts, which were issued to four boys from the area, stated that they were not allowed to congregate outside the sports centre or verbally abuse other people. When the contracts were signed by the boys the complaints from the sports centre stopped and the teenagers have ceased to intimidate staff.

southern oxfordshire

Angie Simmons – Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

Staff Profile

Name: Angie Simmons

Age: 30

Roles covered: Police Enquiry Centre Operator, Police Community Support Officer

Time in Force: Just over a year

Angie is one of three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Southern Oxfordshire.

Her role provides a visible presence in the area, dealing with issues like anti-social behaviour and traffic offences, and acting as the eyes and ears of police officers.

Angie decided to take on this role after working in the Police Enquiry Centre (PEC) in Kidlington as a telephone operator. She said: "Working in the PEC I was dealing with the initial calls into the police but not seeing the end result. When I saw the post of the PCSO, it was the perfect opportunity to become more involved in solving crime and to be able to see the end result of the original reports coming in.

"Since starting the role in October I have learnt so much about people's behaviour and the area by working alongside and supporting officers, working with partner agencies and dealing with offenders. I support officers in different operations and events like Party in the Park and Cowley Road Carnival. I also attend crime reduction days, Neighbourhood Watch, residents meetings and fire safety days to promote our role.

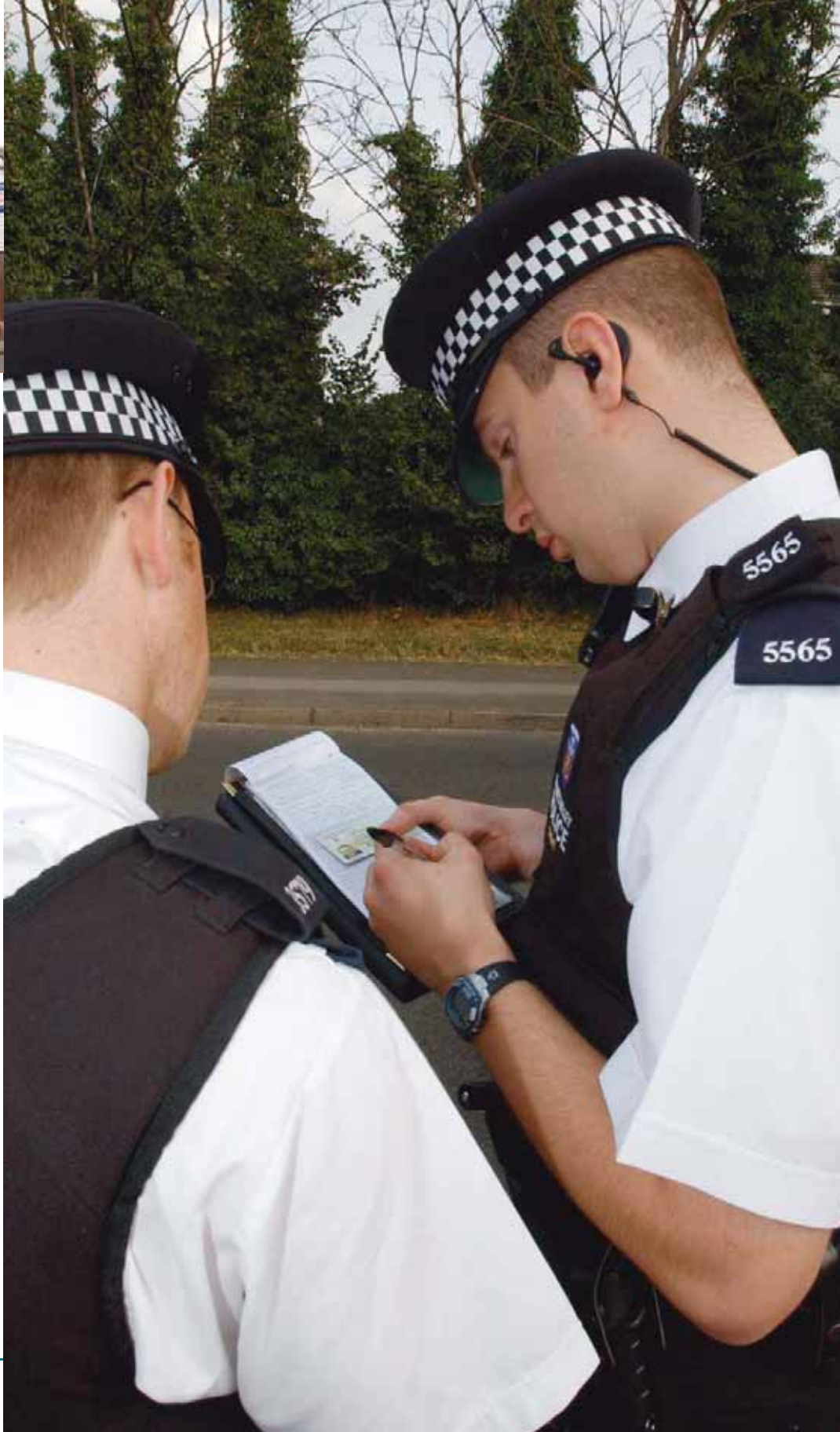
"Ninety per cent of my time is spent out on the streets interacting with the community. While working for the whole of southern Oxfordshire, I do have a specific responsibility in Thame where I support a community beat officer and also do independent work with the community. Most of the residents and children know who I am and I work with them to overcome anti-social behaviour and other issues that affect their everyday lives. Sometimes I buddy up with other PCSOs and other times I am on my own. I feel I been given sufficient training to handle myself in a difficult situation and know when to call for back up from police officers.

"The great thing about the job is you never know what's coming next, you get to meet new people every day and you're not tied down to a desk from nine till five. My long term aim is to become a police officer and I feel the experience and knowledge the role has provided gives me the confidence to do this."





The great thing about the job is you never know what's coming next, you get to meet new people every day and you're not tied down to a desk from nine till five. My long term aim is to become a police officer and I feel the experience and knowledge the role has provided gives me the confidence to do this."



Staff in Henley moved offices in December to a renovated building in Greys Road after 36 years in the original station.

Changes to Henley police station

Staff in Henley moved offices in December to a renovated building in Greys Road after 36 years in the original station.

Noble House is now the operational base for Henley police, but the front counter has stayed behind in the original station in Kings Road while the new front counter is being built. The new site is just a stone's throw away from the original police station in the town centre, and is easily accessible for people.

Three members of the same family killed in crash

Three members of the same family lost their lives in September 2003 following a crash on the A4130, near Nettlebed.

Husband and wife, Rachel and Richard Turk from Carterton, and Rachel's children, Emily and Jack, were travelling to the children's father when their Toyota Corolla was involved in a collision with a Subaru Impreza.

Rachel and Richard died at the scene with six-year-old Jack and eight-year-old Emily being rushed to hospital. Jack sadly died the following day at the JR2 Hospital in Oxford. After undergoing numerous major operations Emily managed to pull through and left hospital months later.

Despite numerous appeals to the public, a cash reward being put forward and an appeal from the grandparents on Crimewatch, no information about a red Mini involved in the incident has come forward.

Men jailed for attempted robbery

Two men were sentenced to 10 years in jail after attempting to rob the Great Western Pub in Station Road, Didcot.

Nicholas Mitchell, aged 22, of Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys, pleaded guilty to attempted robbery. David Bartlett, aged 26, of St Martins Road, Rose Hill, Oxford, also pleaded guilty to attempted armed robbery.

The licensee and his wife were threatened by two masked men armed with a handgun and a knife. The licensee was repeatedly hit on the head with a gun and his wife was thrown to the floor and threatened with a knife, receiving bruises and a cut on her arm. After a struggle both men left the premises empty handed.

Det Con Paul Kingsley, of Didcot CID, led the investigation. He said: "Both the licensee and his wife were left deeply traumatised by this robbery. I hope the sentence acts as a warning to anyone thinking of committing such a crime. They will get caught and they will be made to face the consequences."

Partnership reduces car crime in Henley

Car crime in Henley reduced due to Thames Valley Police and South Oxfordshire District council (SODC) joining forces to catch opportunist thieves.

A joint crime reduction initiative was launched following a rise in thefts from cars in Kings Road and Greys Road car parks, which were repeatedly being targeted by opportunist thieves.

Crime prevention advice was issued in the town and signs funded by the Community Safety Partnership were installed in the car parks advising motorists not to leave valuables on display.

Lighting in both of the car parks was improved and new lamp columns were installed. Three months into the initiative thefts from cars in Kings Road and Greys Road car park reduced by 60 per cent and no vehicles were reported stolen.

New-look office for Sonning Common

Sonning Common police office was re-opened after the building was refurbished.

The work made the building more accessible to the public, with a front counter and disabled toilets. Improved and up-to-date office equipment was also installed.

The office is manned by Thames Valley Police volunteers who dedicate their spare time to helping the public and supporting the officers who work from the station.

Sgt Pete Dillon, who is based at the station, invited residents and partner agencies to the official re-opening of the office after they supported the volunteers by allowing them to use the village hall as a base so they could continue their work with the public.

thames forest

Thames Forest is a unique and diverse police area which covers the towns of Windsor, Maidenhead, Bracknell, Ascot and Crowthorne. The area commander is Ch Supt Adrian Becks.

Thames Forest Police Area

With an estimated population of 250,000 residents, Thames Forest is the third largest area within Thames Valley Police.

As well as being densely populated, the area is also commercially prosperous, attracts numerous international organisations and includes the Queen's home, Windsor Castle.

Staff Profile

Name: Drugs Enforcement Team

Set up date: September 2003

Members of staff: Det Insp Nick Evans, Det Sgt Sarah Lawson, Det Con Steve Price, Det Con Jon Pike, and PC Kevin Murphy.

The seizure of several kilos of cannabis, quantities of crack, cocaine, heroin and pills, together with numerous arrests have proved the value of a new drugs team.

Since its introduction to the police area, the Drugs Enforcement Team has worked to tackle drug dealers and those who commit crime to fund drug habits across the area.

Warrants executed by the team of detectives have turned in around 100 kilos of cannabis worth around half a million pounds, and thousands of pounds worth of what is believed to be ecstasy tablets, crack, cocaine and heroin.

The team has also seized a live firearm, an imitation firearm, stun gun, CS spray, and discovered a hydroponics set-up at one address for the production of cannabis.

When appropriate and in partnership with other agencies, like the Drugs Action Team and Probation Service, the Drugs Enforcement Team can help to refer drug users into treatment. The detectives also provide valuable assistance, support and advice to regular shift officers across the police area about drug trends, legislation and the investigative and forensic techniques of drug investigations.

Det Insp Nick Evans, who heads the team, said: "It is easy to compare Thames Forest with other areas suffering from serious heroin and crack problems and feel some comfort, but we must do everything we can to prevent and deal with drugs in the community.

"That means that everyone - all agencies and public alike - must play their part in combating drugs. Some excellent partnership work is on-going with many agencies and voluntary groups to ensure we tackle the problem from every angle, including education and treatment."

He added: "Police enforcement alone will not be enough. Information about drug dealing and use is vital to support the work of the police and other agencies."

If you have any information which would help the Drugs Enforcement Team please call the 24 hour Police Enquiry Centre on 0845 8 505 505 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Drugs pose the biggest threat to increased crime and the safety of our community. We know that drug use fuels the bulk of crime being committed and significantly impacts on the quality of life within our community.”

Ascot Murder

A detailed and thorough investigation following the discovery of a man's body found buried in a shallow grave in Ascot led to two men being sentenced to life.

Peter Taylor, aged 44, of Keeler Close in Dedworth, and Nigel William Ogier, 27, of Harvest Road, Englefield Green in Egham, Surrey, were sentenced at Reading Crown Court in February for murdering 37-year-old Patrick Welch. The judge recommended they serve a minimum of 20 years each, stressing that their conduct was brutal and heartless. He added that it was a premeditated revenge attack in which both men played an equal part.

Mr Welch's body was discovered by a member of the public in an area of woodland, close to Ascot railway station.

A murder investigation was launched and a major incident room was set up at Maidenhead police station where around 60 officers worked on the inquiry, led by Ch Insp Steve Tolmie.

A post mortem revealed that Mr Welch, from the Dedworth area in Windsor, died from multiple stab wounds and severe head injuries, which were consistent with a blunt instrument.

A swift police operation led to Taylor and Ogier being arrested shortly after Mr Welch's body was discovered. The pair were charged with his murder and remanded in custody.

Both Taylor and Ogier pleaded their innocence, but were found guilty of murdering Mr Welch following a five week trial.

Det Ch Insp Tolmie, of Thames Valley Police's Major Crime Unit at Maidenhead, said: "I am pleased that our thorough investigation resulted in two murder convictions for what was a truly brutal and frenzied attack. The level of violence used was clearly extreme."

Operation Orb

Thames Valley officers were part of the biggest linked police inquiry since the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper over 20 years ago, which led to serial rapist Antoni Imiela being jailed for life.

Imiela's conviction followed a detailed investigation involving six forces including Thames Valley Police. He was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court in March where the judge described him as a "ruthless sexual predator".

The jury found Imiela guilty of raping four women and three girls aged from 10 to 52. They also found him guilty of abducting, sexually assaulting and attempting to rape another girl aged 10 in a five-hour ordeal.



Although Imiela was charged in connection with the rape of a 12-year-old girl in Bracknell in July 2002, the decision not to proceed with this case was taken as the victim was too traumatised to give evidence. The charge therefore remains on file.

Det Supt Mark Warwick from Thames Valley Police was the deputy officer in overall charge of the investigation.

Following the verdict, he said: "It is important that we do not forget the victims. Imiela has received a life sentence for his crimes, but his victims are also serving a life sentence as a result of what he has done to them.

"I would like to pay tribute to the courage and strength they have all shown and the invaluable part they have played in helping to convict Imiela, making sure that he will never be a danger to other women ever again."

The successful operation to catch Imiela involved more than 350 officers from different police forces working more closely together than at any other time in UK policing history. The whole process involved a real team effort, one which was highly commended by the judge who also gave particular praise to family liaison officers.

Mobile Crime Fighting Vehicle

A new mobile police van equipped with the latest hi-tech technology is one of Bracknell Forest's latest tools to home-in on car thieves.

Thieves have been warned that all eyes are on them with this up-to-date vehicle launched this year.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council, which works closely in partnership with the police to help reduce crime, fear and disorder, part-funded the vehicle which is clearly marked with the partnership logo and normal police markings.

The vehicle has an interior similar to that of an office and is equipped with all the latest technology to help disrupt and catch car thieves in action. It is used by officers from the auto-crime unit to patrol the streets of Bracknell.

The vehicle is also linked to a camera, working in a similar way to CCTV, which is planted in various places where car crime is considered to be active. Officers are able to watch criminals at work and respond directly or seek assistance from regular shift officers. Thieves do not necessarily know that they are being watched as the van can be situated miles away from where the solo detachable camera is fitted.

The mobile crime fighting vehicle also carries a speed device which means that officers can, when necessary, carry out speed enforcement in areas identified as particular hotspots.

Neighbours from hell evicted

A family which blighted the lives of neighbours for years were evicted from their home in Maidenhead in March.

Maidenhead and District Housing Association obtained a court order in January for the repossession of the family's home in Desborough Crescent, following a string of complaints from other residents concerning incidents of anti-social behaviour. Police in Maidenhead worked closely with the housing association and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead using a multi-agency approach to provide support for the successful eviction.

Ch Supt Adrian Becks, area commander, said: "Evictions of this nature are only carried out in very extreme cases.

"The family had been warned regarding their behaviour on several occasions and were given many opportunities to amend their ways and to respect the needs of others.

"However they clearly chose to ignore this; hence the strong multi-agency approach taken to evict the family."

Robber Jailed

A man is serving eight years behind bars having pleaded guilty to robbery and being in possession of an imitation firearm in relation to an incident at a hotel in Bracknell.

Cleon Omar Cunningham, 26, of Tabard Street, London, was sentenced for his involvement in an armed robbery at the Coppid Beech Hotel.

The incident happened during the early hours when three members of staff were threatened with a handgun and bound with tape, while Cunningham and two others, who have not been captured, searched an office area for cash. The trio made off with over £15,000.

Commitment and can-do attitude praised

Staff in Thames Forest were praised for their commitment and "can-do" attitude in a report published in August.

The report followed a detailed, week-long inspection of the police area in April by members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

The inspection team said that overall, Thames Forest staff demonstrated ample evidence of a "can-do" culture in operation, with all the staff showing a desire to contribute to improving performance.

The analysis of the police area found that the area commander, Ch Supt Adrian Becks, and his senior team provided a focused and visible leadership across the area.

west berkshire

The West Berkshire Police Area is situated in the south west corner of the Thames Valley Police area and is bordered to the north by Oxfordshire, to the east by the town of Reading, to the south by Hampshire and to the west by Wiltshire. The area commander is Supt Jim Trotman.

Operation Fashion

West Berkshire police area's pro-active team targeted people who handle stolen goods in early-morning raids in Thatcham at the beginning of March.

Warrants were executed at four addresses in Loundyes Close and two people were arrested. Officers seized a large amount of property, believed to have been shoplifted, mainly clothes, shoes and sportswear.

The aim of the operation was to target those people who are willing to pay for property they know has been stolen, the idea being that if the market for this property is removed, crime such as shoplifting and burglary will reduce.

The warrants produced a good result and sent out a strong message that buying stolen property is a crime we take seriously in the West Berkshire police area.

Operation Farmer

Police in West Berkshire and Southern Oxfordshire combined their resources and joined forces with volunteers from the rural community to tackle illegal hare coursing in an operation which began in September.

By working together a far wider area could be covered and enlisting the help of volunteers from the area provided up-to-the-minute information on where the illegal coursers were, what vehicles were being used and the number of people involved.

Illegal hare coursing traditionally happens on Sunday mornings and involves a number of people with Lurcher-type dogs sweeping fields and chasing and killing hares. Large bets are often placed on the results of the course or chase. Coursers will and do damage property and crops, getting on to land and escaping afterwards.

The operation demonstrated to the illegal hare coursers that the west Berkshire and southern Oxfordshire areas will not tolerate their presence.

West Berkshire police teams act on neighbourhood priorities

Officers in West Berkshire are testing a new way of working as part of a national trial in the wards of Burghfield and Greenham.

They are two of just 16 sites around the country involved in the National Reassurance Policing Programme.

The trial aims to encourage better communication between police and the communities they work with so officers and other public agencies are responding to the issues which directly affect residents, increasing reassurance and reducing disproportionate fear of crime.

Insp Andy Talbot, sector inspector covering Burghfield and Insp Pete Oliphant, sector inspector covering Greenham, have

organised public meetings, surveyed local residents and formed neighbourhood action groups in the wards to find out which issues matter most to residents and what are the local priorities.

They have carried out this work in partnership with the parish and town councils, West Berkshire Council, Sovereign Housing Association, the youth service and residents.

In Greenham and Burghfield police and partners, along with representatives from the community use problem profiling, a process where, rather than dealing with the end result of a problem, agencies work together to try and solve the cause.

This process has had a lot of success in tackling issues such as underage drinking, anti-social behaviour, litter and anti-social driving - problems identified and prioritised by residents who responded to surveys and attended public meetings.

CCTV has been installed next to the community centre in Greenham and shops and West Berkshire Council, working with the police, is working to begin using new legislation to issue a designation order preventing public drinking in the area.

Alongside this, Sovereign Housing Association has worked with the district council to fix broken lights and add new lighting. Greenham's neighbourhood wardens have used specialist equipment to clear graffiti and police are working with parents and schools to try and identify offenders via the "tags" used. In Burghfield, more than 150 people took part in the first public meeting and since then work has been done in many areas to reduce anti-social behaviour and vandalism, combat speeding and improve communication between police and the communities.

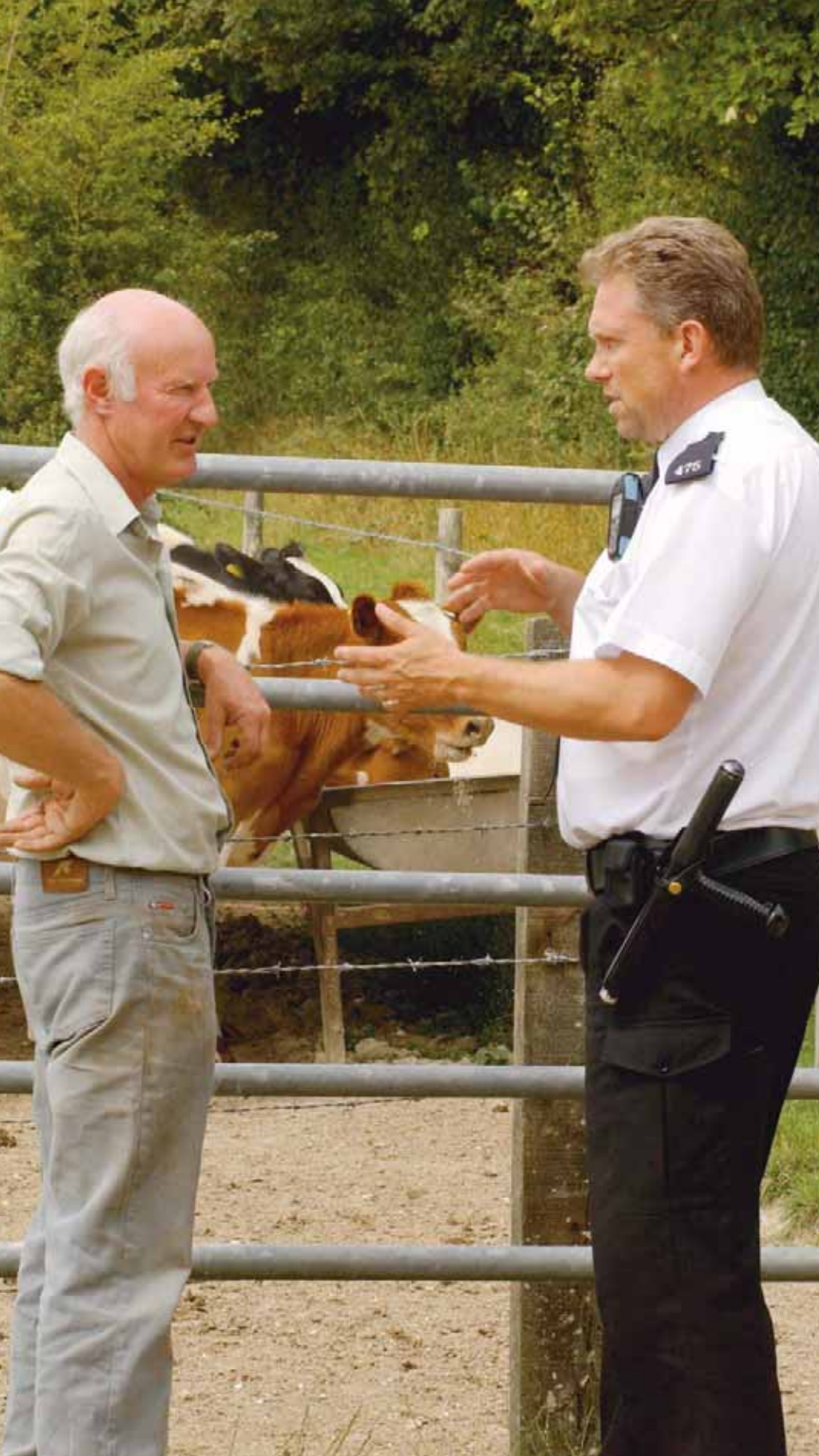
Links between police and bodies such as the parish council have improved and groups which increase co-operation between sections of the community and police, such as Neighbourhood Watch and Pubwatch, are being revitalised. A premises for a new youth drop-in centre has been found and work with other partner agencies to crack down on issues such as fly-tipping is ongoing.

Supt Jim Trotman said: "This style of policing fully involves the communities we serve and ensures a joined-up approach from all the agencies involved in providing safe neighbourhoods for the residents of West Berkshire.

"To see the way residents of both trial sites have really got behind the project and become so much more involved in the way things are run is really very encouraging and I know that everyone involved in the project feels that a lot of very positive work has been accomplished. I believe many worthwhile ideas and practices have been developed which will be of use across the board in the future."

For further information about National Reassurance Policing Programme, see the website www.reassurancepolicing.co.uk





Rural communities feel threatened and intimidated by illegal hare coursers and their activities. Often these people are quite aggressive and seem to have little or no regard for the distress or damage they cause. Very often fences are cut or simply flattened, crops are torn up and hedges destroyed.”

I wanted to find something worthwhile to occupy my free time and decided that my experience and expertise would surely be of benefit to some worthy cause."



west berkshire

Richard Whitworth – Volunteer.



Staff Profile

Name: Richard Whitworth

Age: 68

Time with Force: 11 months

A lengthy career within the RAF and time spent working with former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, is perhaps not the CV you would expect from a volunteer at Hungerford police station.

For Richard Whitworth though, the thought of spending his retirement finding ways to pass the time was not an attractive prospect. "After my time within in the RAF and at 10 Downing Street as liaison officer for the Ministry of Defence the thought of retirement sent shivers down my spine", confessed Richard.

After reading in the local newspaper that Hungerford police officers were looking for volunteers Richard got in touch with the local sergeant to find out more about what is involved.

"After speaking with the sergeant I was really excited about the prospect of becoming a part of the service providing policing to my local community. The officers do a wonderful job despite the ever-increasing pressures these days and I could see that by volunteering to take on some of the routine administration-type work, I would be helping to free-up more of their time meaning a better service to the public," he said.

Richard runs the front counter at Hungerford three afternoons a week and covers any time the full-time member of staff is on holiday or sick.

He deals with members of the public who come into the police station with a huge variety of queries - from asking for directions to how to produce their vehicle documents - answers phone calls from both staff and public, processes paperwork and faxes and takes crime reports.

Richard said: "I find my work here very fulfilling and enjoyable. It is great to be able to help members of the public deal with such a variety of issues and know that at the same time I may well have taken the pressure off a police officer. People come into the station practically frothing at the mouth sometimes and I am in a position to listen to the problem, find a solution and help everyone get on with things. I am getting busier and busier and I am really pleased about that. I take it as a great compliment that people are getting to know I am here and value my knowledge and experience."

awards and commendations

QPMs for PC Graham Waddington and Chief Constable

- **PC Graham Waddington**, who works in the Youth Justice and Schools department at Headquarters, was awarded a Queen's Police Medal for his pioneering work tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. He broke new ground by basing himself at Drayton School in Banbury and working closely alongside staff, pupils and governors. His innovative approach has become a model for other schools and come to the attention of the Home Office and Youth Justice Board. The citation for the QPM said: "Graham puts his heart and soul into his work and achieves considerable success in diverting young people away from crime."
- **Chief Constable Peter Neyroud** was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in the New Year's Honours List. The Chief stressed the award reflected the work of the entire Force, as well as his own achievements. He said: "There is little doubt this award mirrors the reputation we have as an innovative Force, continually at the forefront of new policing methods." The QPM is given for distinguished service to the police.

MBEs for John Howells and Special Constable Jim Scott

- **John Howells**, the Force's senior explosives ordinance detection adviser (EOD) received an MBE for services to the police. He joined Berkshire Constabulary in 1966 and retired as an officer after 30 years service, but has stayed working for the Force as a member of police staff. He has spent most of his service developing a safe and professional response to all aspects of explosives searches.
- **Special Constable Jim Scott** was awarded the MBE for services to the community and the Royal Mail. He joined the Specials in 1992 and has spent most of that time working on the Bracknell town centre beat.

PC Paul Phillips wins Community Officer of the Year Award

- See details on page 30

Dermot Norridge Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

- Oxford detective Dermot Norridge won the Force's Lifetime Achievement Award after devoting more than 30 years in a relentless fight against crime. The Lifetime Achievement Award recognises an outstanding operational police career over 30-year period of an officer in his or her final year of service. During those 30 years Dermot received two Chief Constable's commendations for complex investigations.

PC Dawn Seston wins Probationer of the Year Award

- Slough **PC Dawn Seston** won the Probationer of the Year Award for her outstanding communication skills and her great rapport with her fellow officers and members of the public.

Chief wins award from American leaders

- Chief Constable Peter Neyroud has been given an international award in recognition of his leadership and dedication to policing.

The prestigious award was presented by the Police Executive Research Forum based in Washington. This is the first time it has been given to a leader outside the United States.

The Chief said: "I am thrilled and honoured. With all the messages about US lessons for UK policing, it is a double privilege to be recognised by American colleagues, for whom I have the highest professional regard."

PC Derek Ingram received Royal Humane Society award

- PC Derek Ingram was off-duty when he came across an elderly woman in Bracknell town centre. She had stopped breathing and had no pulse; he immediately started trying to resuscitate her. He was joined by a nurse and as a result of their joint efforts, the woman started to breathe again. She was taken to hospital where she made a full recovery. PC Ingram was presented with a special certificate by the Royal Humane Society for his part in saving the elderly lady.

Officers nominated for national leadership and diversity awards

Three Thames Valley officers were nominated for national leadership and diversity awards.

The GG2 awards, run by the Asian Marketing Group, are open to staff working in both the public and private sector. They aim to recognise outstanding achievement and celebrate multi-cultural Britain.

- Det Con Wendy Richardson, based at Major Crime in Maidenhead, was short listed for her work as a family liaison officer, providing support for victims and their families during investigations.
- Det Con Pinder Parkes was also nominated. She is responsible for managing the Force's witness protection scheme which supports victims, witnesses and their families who face a substantial threat for giving evidence in serious cases.



- Supt Brian Langston had his name put forward for his work in Slough and District police area for the last four years, where a diverse, multi-cultural population of 150,000 can mean officers are faced with significant policing challenges.

Employee Health Scheme Award for Optima

Thames Valley Police has been named as one of the top three organisations in a national award scheme which aims to find the most effective healthcare strategy across the private and public sector. Thames Valley's Optima scheme was a runner-up in the healthcare category of the Employee Benefits Awards 2004. Optima was introduced so that staff can be fast-tracked into private medical consultations, investigations and treatment.

The panel of judges said: "Thames Valley Police is doing something difficult with a limited budget, and this project should encourage other forces to undertake similar initiatives."

Shrievalty Merit Award

Created in 1981 by the three High Sheriffs of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, the Shrievalty Merit Award is one of the most prestigious awards to be presented in Thames Valley Police.

These awards are made annually, one to an individual and one to a team, who in the opinion of the Chief Constable have brought great credit upon the service. The awards are open to police officers and police staff. As well as the presentation of an illuminated certificate, details of the winners are handwritten in a leather bound Shrievalty award book by a calligrapher. Nominations for 2003 were of an extremely high standard, and after careful consideration, the Chief Constable decided to make two team awards in addition to the individual award as follows:

- Shrievalty Merit Individual Award: **Alan Buckingham MBE** (see page 40)
- Shrievalty Merit Team Award - Jointly awarded to:

Milton Keynes Area Training Department (see page 58)

Acting Sgt Lisa Stanhope

PC Alan Nisbet

PC David Hawkins

Joanne O'Driscoll

The East Oxford Cycle Team (see page 68)

Sgt James O'Ryan

Det Con Lewis Prescott-Mayling

PC David Stares

PC Christopher Griffin

PC Kevin Crick

PC Richard Jones

PC Jonathon Lewis

PC Lucy Creed

PC Neil Streeter

PC Steven Clarke

Chief Constable's Commendations

PC John Morgan is commended for his initiative, commitment and professionalism in resuscitating a man who had stopped breathing, thereby saving his life.

PC David Goldsworthy is commended for his bravery off-duty for confronting a group of five drunken youths who were kicking and assaulting a member of the public on the floor. By approaching his incident, he chose to place himself in a position of considerable danger and received injuries as a result. Without his intervention, there is no doubt that the victim would have sustained very serious injuries.

PCs Rebecca Luke and **Steven O'Neill** are commended for their courage and bravery for preventing a woman from harming herself. At a clear risk to themselves, their actions prevented serious injury to the woman or others.

PC Colin Stonehouse is commended for bravery and actions above and beyond the call of duty when, with little regard for his own safety, he attempted to rescue and save the life of a member of the public who had hanged himself from the window of a block of flats.

Acting Det Sgt Robin Hubbard and **Det Sgt Raymond Summers** are commended for their dedication and professionalism in the investigation of offences of conspiracy to supply class "A" drugs as part of Operation Alpaca. The professionalism of the tactical operation and the high quality of the case preparation, which drew praise from the CPS and prosecuting barrister, were entirely responsible for the six main defendants pleading guilty to the conspiracy charge and receiving a total of 28 years in custody.



The following officers are commended for their bravery and professionalism when dealing with a man who was intent on self harm. Despite considerable risk to themselves, they worked tirelessly in extremely difficult circumstances to render assistance:

Sgt Graham Hurst

PC Jeremy Long

PC Stephen Daly

PC Matthew Hunt

PC Justin Miers

PC Peter Sutherland

PC Clare Tidy.

Sgt Neville Clayton is commended for his courage and bravery for holding onto a woman who had been threatening to jump from the top floor of a multi-storey car park. While risking his personal safety, he held onto the woman for several minutes until others could join him in assisting to pull her to safety. Sgt Clayton's actions undoubtedly saved the life of the woman, who would have fallen to her death.

Barbara Hill is commended for the development of a professional and customer focused approach to the provision of procurement services to the Force and her lead role in the promotion of best practice in the field of procurement nationally within the police service.

Det Insp Robert Mason is commended for his exceptional commitment and case management skills in the prosecution of several dangerous criminals. His efforts were crucial to the successful outcome that was achieved.

Det Con Sally Kestin is commended in recognition of her great skill and sensitivity in dealing with a series of horrendous sexual attacks. Her management of the inquiry was excellent and was a very significant factor in the offender being found guilty and sentenced to a very lengthy period of imprisonment.

Terence Williams is commended for the exceptional technical skills that he directed towards securing evidence that was being systematically destroyed by a serious paedophile offender. His ability and perseverance were instrumental in achieving a lengthy prison sentence for this individual.

Det Con Terence Wise is commended in recognition of his dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm over four years in

carrying out work on behalf of the Force that has been vital to the success of a large number of criminal investigations.

The Forensic Team below are commended for their outstanding work at the scene of a particularly unpleasant murder of a young man found with multiple injuries in a deep ditch in a remote rural location. Despite very challenging conditions, they were able to secure evidence of the highest quality which resulted in the two defendants being convicted of murder.

Acting Det Insp Colin Ratcliff

Claire Houston

Jennifer Williams

Sara Robins

Zoe Collier

Rodney Evans

Sharon Long.

Insp Paul Winks and **Sgt Nigel Welham** are commended for their professionalism and proactive policing ability when they arrested three men in possession of firearms and other equipment. Their prompt actions undoubtedly prevented the commission of a serious criminal offence by all three men.

PCs Gary Begnor, Gavin Collier, Andrew Shaw and **Adrian Bradbury** are commended for successfully resolving an incident where a drunken, disqualified, female driver drove the wrong way down the M40 motorway at speeds of 100mph. Their prompt actions and quick thinking undoubtedly prevented an incident which could have had drastic consequences.

The following officers and members of the Milton Keynes Children's Services are commended for their determination, professional and sensitive investigations into significant sexual abuse in a foster care setting resulting in the conviction of a 77-year-old man, for offences of buggery and indecent assault, and in his subsequent sentencing to five years imprisonment:

Det Sgt Paramjit Grewal

Det Con Kelly Gliester

Det Con Sally Kestin

Balijinder Haer

Janet Khan

Helen Lee.

awards and commendations

PCs Roger Moore and **David Warner** are commended for their bravery and professionalism when confronted by a man armed with a knife who had earlier been seen violently assaulting a woman. By their calm and measured response the man was disarmed and arrested, despite continuing to struggle violently.

PC Derek Ingram and **Carol Harvey**, who is a Sister at Princess Margaret Hospital in Windsor, are commended for their quick thinking and prompt actions while off-duty when they found an elderly lady collapsed in Bracknell Town Centre. They administered CPR and saved her life as she had stopped breathing.

PC George Atkinson is commended for his bravery and professionalism for disarming a man in possession of a kitchen knife. The man had already stabbed a person several times and was holding the knife at their throat when he confronted PC Atkinson. Putting himself in danger, PC Atkinson forced the knife from the offender, controlled him and prevented potential fatal injuries to the aggrieved.

The Collision Investigation Unit is commended for professionalism, motivation and investigative ability. Members of the unit continue to provide expert evidence, frequently in horrific circumstances, in relation to crime, road deaths and serious injury investigations:

Sgt Michael Sanders

PC Geoffrey Chambers

PC Mark Howard

PC Terry Anderson

PC Gary Baldwin

PC Stephen Moffat

PC Andrew Evans

PC Stuart Parratt

PC Andrew Bryant

PC Antony Reading

PC Stuart Mitchell.

PC Marc Steadman is commended for his professionalism, dedication and courage at the scene of a fatal road crash. Despite being injured he ensured the safety of other road users before attending to and comforting a young woman who subsequently died from her injuries.

Det Supt Stephen Morrison is commended for the professionalism he displayed as the Senior Investigating Officer in the Rogers' murder investigation. His performance directly contributed to the early resolution of the investigation and reflected highly on Thames Valley Police.

Det Cons Karen Cameron and **Matthew Bick** are commended for their professionalism as Family Liaison Officers in the Rogers' murder investigation. Their professional conduct and compassionate approach provided the family with the highest standard of support, reflecting highly on Thames Valley Police.

Sgt Colin Paine and **PC Paul Davies** are commended for their professionalism and bravery at the scene of a murder. The victim had been stabbed repeatedly and despite efforts to save her life, she died two days later.

Sgt Nigel Welham and **PCs Martyn Buckby** and **Robert Wooldridge** are commended for their professionalism and bravery for rescuing a person from a house fire at a block of flats. Remembering instructions received from Operation Fresco, by crawling on their hands and knees through the smoked-filled building, the officers were able to get the person to safety.

The following officers are commended for their professionalism at the scene of a fatal coach crash on the M25 motorway at which six people lost their lives:

Insp Malcolm Collis

PC Philip Hanham

Sgt Huw Walker

PC Neil Phillips

PC Phillip Martin

PC Darren Carnell.

PC Andrew Hiscocks and **PC Neil Stephenson**, together with two members of the public, **David Jones** and **Timothy Flach**, are highly commended for their bravery. Despite putting their own lives in danger, they pulled a badly injured female driver from a burning vehicle before it exploded. Had it not been for their actions, the driver would have died.

Det Con Michael Wallen and Temporary **Det Con Elizabeth Scurlock** are commended for their dedication to duty and painstaking investigation in a cross border operation involving a case of conspiracy to burgle. Together with officers from the Metropolitan Police, they successfully concluded the investigation resulting in 60 burglary dwellings being detected and considerable sentences for the offenders involved.

awards and commendations

PC Daniel Hall is commended for his prompt actions, while off duty, for saving the life of a man who had suffered a heart attack. He provided CPR and mouth to mouth for 10 minutes, until the arrival of the ambulance service, and the man has since made a full recovery.

PC Anthony Grove is commended for his bravery when he became a victim of car jacking. PC Grove was with a civilian ride along when, en-route to an incident, they were threatened at gun point, handcuffed and made to lay on the ground while his police car was stolen and abandoned a short distance away. His response to very serious threats of violence was commendable and displayed great courage.

PC Jamie Smith is commended for his prompt actions and bravery for confronting a large, aggressive and emotional man intent on ending his life. The man was balancing on a branch with a ligature around his neck and without hesitation PC Smith climbed the tree and physically held on to him to prevent him jumping. The man forced himself away and was hanging from the ligature but PC Smith managed to force a gap in the ligature and made it loose enough to release him. His actions without doubt saved the life of the man.

Det Con Philip Ashford is commended for his professionalism and tenacity in a difficult and complex investigation which resulted in a child pornographer, who had represented a significant risk to children, being sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment.

Det Con David Lattimore is commended for nationally representing Thames Valley Police throughout the creation and operations of the UK National Technical Assistance Centre (NTAC). Det Con Lattimore provided a high level of knowledge, skills, determination and resourcefulness. This dedication ensured that NTAC has become an internationally regarded centre of excellence in a highly specialised forensic field.

Sgt Alan Penny is commended for his outstanding professionalism during the investigation of a major incident on the M40. The incident involved 564 vehicles, spanned a distance of 1.8km and required the management of 19 separate scenes. Two people were killed and 31 injured and, as a result of the investigation, 26 drivers pleaded guilty to careless driving.

Det Con David Bryan is commended for his drive and tenacity in his role as the Maidenhead Sector Intelligence Officer and the extraordinary contribution he has made towards proactive initiatives and the detection of crime.

Det Con Colin Steele and **Sheila Perry** Senior Probation Officer are commended for the exemplary manner in which they have managed high risk offenders being reintegrated into the community, and in particular a very difficult national high risk case which had the potential for serious concern and offending within the community had it not been handled so carefully.

PC Andrew Pickwick is commended for his bravery in administering immediate first aid to the victim of a road crash who was trapped in an overturned car from which smoke was pouring. When PC Pickwick arrived the victim was not breathing and had no pulse, but he established an airway and restored a pulse. He remained with the victim until paramedics attended. His actions clearly saved the life of the victim.

Det Supt Simon Chesterman is commended for his performance over the last 18 months in the Professional Standards Department. During this time he has been involved in a number of complex, and in some cases, high profile investigations. Throughout, he has maintained a level of sensitivity, balance and understanding which has brought great credit upon himself and Thames Valley Police.

PC Mark Brashaw and **PC Mark Hamblin** are commended for their tenacity, commitment and professionalism, when after resuming patrol following a community policing surgery, they arrested two men for possession of crack cocaine with intent to supply. Both men were subsequently convicted and imprisoned for five years.

Acting Det Sgt Bruce Riddell is commended for his determination and tenacity in relentlessly pursuing the offender involved in an armed robbery at a bank in Banbury. A thorough and rigorous investigation resulted in the offender being sentenced to life imprisonment.

Captain Ian Ridley is commended for his enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication to flying with Chiltern Air Support for over 12 years in support of police operations. The aviation skills, experience and acumen he displays, provide the police service with the ability to maximise the advantage of using an aircraft in the fight against crime.



Darryl Timmins is commended for his outstanding support to the operational effort of Thames Valley Police as a Senior Network Analyst and, in particular, for driving forward the Remote Working Project. He has displayed devotion above and beyond the call of duty, being available to resolve technical difficulties at times of operational crisis. He has also played a key part in delivering remote access working by overcoming a range of complex technical difficulties and devising solutions which have persuaded regulatory authorities to permit the development of this concept.

Det Cons Deborah Ashford, John Williamson, Claire Belk, Philip Ashford and Paul Howells are commended for their determined, professional and sensitive investigations into significant sexual abuse. This resulted in the conviction of a 54-year-old man for offences of rape, buggery and indecent assault against six boys, aged between nine and 15.

PCs Stephen Blackburn and Graham Hadley are commended for exhibiting considerable bravery and disregard for their own safety, in attempting first aid on a casualty at an ongoing firearms incident, in the full knowledge that neither the weapon nor the offender had yet been located, and in very close proximity to the incident scene.

The following police officers are commended for their professionalism, enthusiasm and commitment to evidence gathering and case preparation while employed on Operation Cooper, a drugs test purchase operation in Slough that resulted in 17 drug dealers being sentenced at Reading Crown Court for supplying class A drugs. The sentences ranged from 12 months to six years imprisonment.

Det Ch Insp Christopher Fletcher

Det Ch Insp David Lewis

Det Con Geoffrey Horwood

Det Con Lee Hughes

Det Con Colin Hall

Det Con Robert Tomblin

Det Con Royston Maxwell.

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

- Under part VI of the act 24 suspects were detained for more than 24 hours - but less than 36 hours and released without charge.

- No warrants for further detention were applied for.
- There were no intimate searches conducted under section 55.
- There were 17,532 searches of people or vehicles made under section 1, leading to 2,027 arrests.

Reasons For Search							
Searches Made	Stolen Property	Drugs	Firearms	Offensive Weapons	Going Equipped	Other	Total
April (2003)	360	424	16	81	111	17	949
May	394	746	13	169	147	16	1485
June	477	579	25	192	163	17	1453
July	458	738	13	80	141	16	1446
August	336	578	20	75	155	19	1183
September	429	803	4	101	136	24	1497
October	496	781	14	92	164	30	1577
November	425	587	16	106	133	11	1278
December	348	656	6	102	125	22	1259
January (2004)	528	837	7	112	212	62	1758
February	605	872	26	116	181	46	1846
March	454	984	5	148	171	39	1801
Totals	5250	8585	165	1374	1839	319	17532

police and criminal evidence act 1984

Reasons For Arrest							
Searches Made	Stolen Property	Drugs	Firearms	Offensive Weapons	Going Equipped	Other	Total
April (2003)	46	60	1	12	11	17	147
May	39	70	2	24	9	33	177
June	43	58	2	19	5	31	158
July	39	91	0	12	4	29	175
August	39	78	1	9	8	33	168
September	39	80	3	13	2	40	177
October	42	78	0	12	7	41	180
November	39	67	1	7	7	23	144
December	34	75	0	6	4	18	137
January (2004)	57	69	0	11	10	41	188
February	52	74	1	12	4	55	198
March	40	100	1	10	1	26	178
Totals	509	900	12	147	72	387	2027

Notifiable Offences Recorded By The Police, By Offence

Number of Offences Recorded						
Offence Group	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Violence Against The Person	10784	13870	14798	16646	25326	28588
Sexual Offences	879	1002	1010	1099	1469	1618
Burglary Dwelling	14434	15498	13222	13397	13809	14505
Burglary Non-Dwelling	16301	15687	14534	14401	15623	15571
Robbery	1327	1659	2147	2894	2406	2286
Theft and Handling	89616	96123	91582	94964	93639	90255
Fraud and Forgery	11778	14191	16085	15677	15655	12641
Criminal Damage	26006	28630	29719	32152	33693	37320
Other Offences	5352	5215	4892	5750	6903	7472
Totals	176477	191875	187987	196980	208523	210256

notifiable offences recorded by the police, by offence

Number of Offences Cleared Up						
Offence Group	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Violence Against The Person	8177	9432	10492	11638	15469	14602
Sexual Offences	532	527	430	447	480	503
Burglary Dwelling	4310	2398	2188	2696	2522	2081
Burglary Non-Dwelling	2313	1332	1248	2009	2007	1718
Robbery	401	388	534	749	699	577
Theft and Handling	15813	13099	14912	16634	16416	13995
Fraud and Forgery	2966	3025	3596	4123	4232	3420
Criminal Damage	4223	3936	4238	4658	5318	5199
Other Offences	4730	4598	4322	5242	5983	6306
Totals	43465	38735	41960	48196	53126	48401

Clear-Up Rate						
Offence Group	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Violence Against The Person	75.8	68.0	70.9	69.9	61.1	51.1
Sexual Offences	60.5	52.6	42.6	40.7	32.7	31.1
Burglary Dwelling	29.9	15.5	16.5	20.1	18.3	14.3
Burglary Non-Dwelling	14.2	8.5	8.6	14.0	12.8	11.0
Robbery	30.2	23.4	24.9	25.9	29.1	25.2
Theft and Handling	17.6	13.6	16.3	17.5	17.5	15.5
Fraud and Forgery	25.2	21.3	22.4	26.3	27.0	27.1
Criminal Damage	16.2	13.7	14.3	14.5	15.8	13.9
Other Offences	88.4	88.2	88.3	91.2	86.7	84.4
Totals	24.6	20.2	22.3	24.5	25.5	23.0