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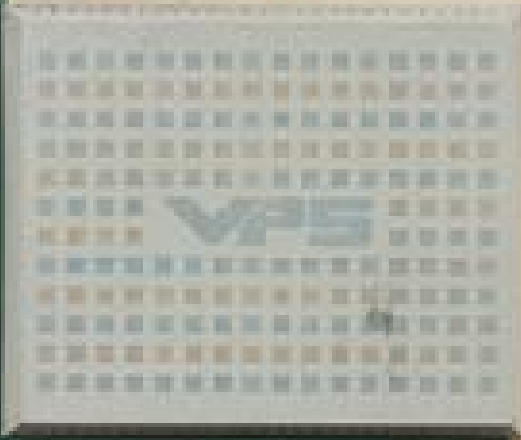
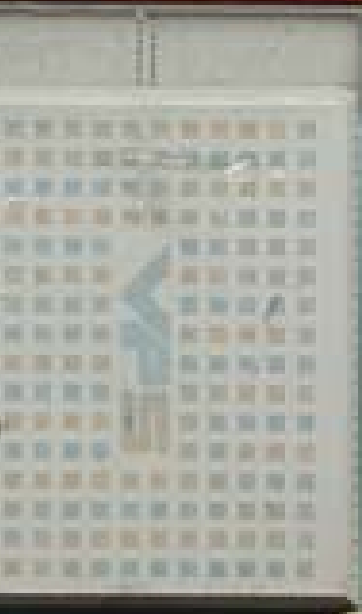
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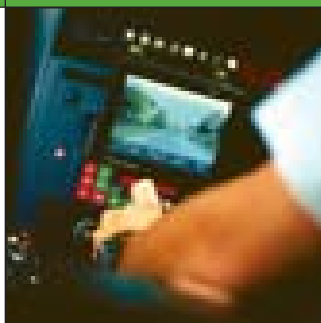
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# The Chief Constable's Foreword

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

In February this year I was proud to take on the role as the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police. I hope this annual report will illustrate why I feel privileged to head a Force with such dedicated and innovative staff.

For the first time this year, the report has been combined with that of the Police Authority's. I feel we work well together to provide the best possible service for our communities and I appreciate the Police Authority giving me this opportunity to make the bond even stronger.

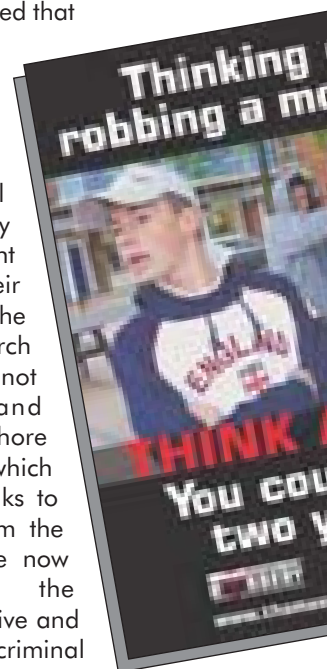
Even though I have only been in post for a few short months there was not much time to become acclimatised before the Force was pushed into the limelight. When I took over Thames Valley Police we were facing a 35 per cent increase in robbery compared to the previous year. It was an issue of such concern to the Prime Minister that he took a personal interest in the progress of our Force and nine others which had a combined total of 82 per cent of the nation's robberies occurring in their areas.

We immediately implemented Operation Robbery, which aimed to halt the increase and improve detections. Thanks to a lot of hard work and innovation on the part of our staff we have not only managed to halt the increase, but even achieved a two per cent reduction by September 2002. The detections, currently standing at 32 per cent, are also a testament to all that has been achieved between April and September this year. The operation has also brought about benefits for the long term, including improved working relationships between the various

criminal justice agencies, including the courts, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Probation Service.

Under Operation Robbery we were able to develop and promote a criminal justice system working together for a common goal, to prevent, detect or punish criminal activity. These kinds of improvements are at the heart of the Search For Truth campaign, launched by my predecessor Sir Charles Pollard in January. We argued that the criminal trial had become a game which not only victims and the larger community are losing, but also offenders who get caught in a spiral of criminality because they are rarely forced to confront the consequences of their action. We argued that the trial has to become a search for truth, based on facts, not archaic rituals and procedures, in order to shore up vital public support on which the system depends. Thanks to overwhelming support from the public and media we are now working closely with the Government to make positive and lasting changes to the criminal justice system. I hope one of the legacies of the Search For Truth and Operation Robbery is that the organisations within the criminal justice system, including police, courts and lawyers, seize the challenge to work together and bring about a system geared towards establishing facts and meeting the needs of the community they serve.

The Police Reform Bill is one of the strands of this process and the challenge for the year ahead is to embrace this necessary change. The main thrust is to develop national standards for policing and to free up police officers by not only reducing the





Chief Constable Peter Neyroud (right) at Reading Festival



burden of paperwork but also increasing the use of police support staff so that fit and trained officers are not tied up doing work which can be done by others. If implementation is successful it should lead to more officers being available where their community wants them. This process is already being implemented in the Thames Valley, with a redeployment programme in place, where jobs, including crime analysts, crime reduction advisors and area training officers are being filled by skilled civilian workers. The ultimate aim is to put around 300 officers back on the streets using their policing skills and experience to their maximum potential.

Redeploying officers, however, will only work if we can keep our staff. It is no secret that Thames Valley is losing staff

to other forces which can offer more generous enhancements or a cheaper cost of living. Even though we are recruiting higher numbers than ever this effort is being diluted by the number of officers leaving. I have been working hard to overcome this issue, even suggesting a "transfer" fee to cover the costs of training officers, but of course this is not necessarily going to encourage officers to stay when they cannot afford a decent family home. I am now working closely with colleagues from the nine forces in the South East to find solutions to the cost of living issue and to lobby for support against this common threat.

I am well aware that people in the Thames Valley want to see more officers on the beat. I also understand the frustrations encountered by members of the public who have found it difficult to contact us. We are in the process of implementing new and improved call

handling systems, an up-to-date radio network for our officers and robust IT systems to ensure we provide communications more in keeping with the demands of the 21st century. It will take some time for the changes to "bed in" and, therefore, before the improvements are noticeable, but I cannot overstate that we are very aware of the problems people may be experiencing and can only ask for your patience while we implement the necessary changes.

While I am in no doubt about the public's views on our communications and officer visibility, I need to know what else the public expects from Thames Valley Police. This year the Police Authority and I have been trying to find out more about the needs of communities within the Thames Valley by holding a series of policing forums explaining what we intend to do for the next three years. I hope that by seeking public feedback we will come up with a strategy which will meet the requirements of communities we serve. I do not believe that presenting sheets of figures is enough of a demonstration to the public that we are performing. They need to understand and have confidence in the service we provide. Performance indicators alone will not achieve that. Of course, the annual report traditionally focuses on the performance of the Force with regard to set objectives, as detailed in the annual plan. However, to help our communities understand how we work and who we are, this report contains not only performance statistics, but also illustrates the stories behind the figures and some of the individuals responsible for the delivery of your service.

Next year will present new and possibly unexpected challenges, as well as those I have detailed here. I am confident, however, that with the support of the Government, the Police Authority, local communities and our dedicated staff, Thames Valley Police will continue to meet those challenges and deliver a quality service.

**Peter Neyroud, Chief Constable  
Thames Valley Police**



# About Thames Valley Police

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

Our Force 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. These areas are policed by around 3,800 officers, 450 Special Constables, 180 volunteers and 2,200 civilian support staff.

residence and the private homes of a number of past and present MPs and Ministers. Last year, as well as large events like the Queen Mother's and Princess Margaret's funerals our Protection Group officers carried out 299 VIP and royalty commitments, 350 military commitments and 18 category A prisoner escorts.

**Working with our communities to reduce crime, disorder and fear as a leading, caring and professional police service.**



To meet the needs of this vast area, between April 2001 and March 2002 our 811 fleet vehicles, including patrol cars, traffic cars, armed support vehicles and dog vans, covered 18.2 million miles.

The Thames Valley area plays host to a wide variety of special events including the Henley Royal Regatta, Newbury and Ascot races, Reading Festival 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, Prince Harry's school Eton, the Duke of York's

These major commitments are only a very small part of the picture. We work closely with the people we serve, and our many partners in local authorities. By working together we can use a problem-solving approach to increase safety, tackle the causes of crime and not just the symptoms, and meet the needs of our diverse communities.

At Thames Valley Police we want our staff to be approachable and for people to trust us to listen to - and act on - their concerns. Over the past year we have continued 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.





# Working with our communities

**Our staff work hard to establish what communities expect and need to feel secure in their homes and neighbourhood. Where possible we work closely with other organisations to ensure the most effective solutions. We also try to increase our visibility and accessibility by providing officers in the heart of the communities they serve, right where people want them.**

## Getting back on the street

Officers working in non-operational roles in Southern Oxfordshire Police Area went back on the streets to support frontline colleagues this year.

The move means there were more officers on patrol in the market towns of Abingdon, Didcot, Wallingford, Henley, Thame and Faringdon on Friday nights, traditionally one of the busiest times for police.

Initially introduced on a four-month trial basis, the new arrangements reflected the public desire to see more police officers on patrol.

High Wycombe's town centre policing unit was given a boost in December with extra officers to further the success of the team. The two extra roles were developed to increase police visibility in the town and work with partners including the district council and Wycombe Watch, a business scheme closely based on the Neighbourhood Watch system.

## Gaining understanding

Officers in Slough visited New Delhi for an insight into community policing.

Two community and race relations officers were part of a delegation of officers from across the country who attended a three-day conference in March. It was followed by a four-day stay with the Punjab Force where they went on patrol with Indian officers.

The group was led by officers from South Yorkshire Police, with the support of the Indian government and the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth office.

## Jail birds

Traps set to cage wild British birds were found by the Wildlife Liaison Officer following a tip-off from the public.

The traps were found in a field near Maidenhead in September. Investigations identified a suspect and our WLO and the RSPCA's Special Operations Unit monitored the traps. As soon as birds were found in the traps the suspect's home was raided and 200 wild birds were found of 23 different species including goldfinches, bramblings and blackcaps. A number of traps and nets were also found. It is believed the birds were destined to be sold abroad.



## Clearing the streets

Oxford police area joined forces with Oxford City Council in December to clear the streets of potentially dangerous and illegal vehicles. The two organisations agreed no action would be taken for a two-week period against people who owned abandoned vehicles or had no road tax, in return for them giving the police or council the vehicle's location and completing paperwork for the vehicle's removal.



The action came about as some 2,875 vehicles were dumped on Oxford's streets in a 12-month period. Each vehicle was not only an eyesore, but also hazardous as they were a potential target for arson and vandalism.

## **Forging links for the future today**

Young people in Aylesbury who wanted greater links with the police have been working hard with officers this year to develop a youth group.

The Aylesbury Youth Forum was formed in June last year following requests from young people for monthly



**Young people in Aylesbury who wanted greater links with the police have been working hard with officers this year to develop a youth group.**

meetings with the police. An anonymous donation of £1,000 helped kick start the group which aims to bring together 14 to 23 year olds from different cultures and backgrounds. The group also involves police officers and Aylesbury Vale District Council leisure staff.

Community and Race Relations Officer Pc John Rene, who takes part in the group, said: "The young people are an important part of our community life - they represent our future and so deserve an opportunity to speak out and make a difference."

Amanda Higgs, 18, a member of the group, said: "This is exactly what we needed in the town. It has given us the opportunity to talk directly to the local council and other organisations about issues affecting young people in Aylesbury."

## SMART success

Partnership work led to shops in Maidenhead becoming the first in the Thames Valley to receive the National Shopping Award.

The Shops in Maidenhead Against Retail Theft (SMART) received the award in December. The initiative is only the 25th partnership to receive the Home Office award in the country. The award recognises successful partnership work between the police, local authority and retailers.

Work carried out by the partnership includes using CCTV, radio links and information exchanges to alert each other about known offenders. Where possible exclusion orders are used to ban offenders from all shops if they are caught committing offences.

Det Sgt Ian Holt, from TVP's Crime Reduction team, is keen that all shopping centres and retail areas in Thames Valley benefit from the initiatives that the award promotes.

He said "The cost of retail crime currently stands at over £2.5 billion each year. This is passed on to all of us



through the price we pay for our goods. It is well recognised that combining the efforts of police, retailers, local councils and the public is an effective way to reduce retail crime and increase safety in our towns and city centres."





**Support from partner agencies and residents resulted in a gang of pimps and drug dealers being kicked out of the country at the culmination of a seven-month operation.**

### Case study

## Working together to root out trouble

Support from partner agencies and residents resulted in a gang of pimps and drug dealers being kicked out of the country at the culmination of a seven-month operation. Operation Ensconce was mounted in October, because of the activities surrounding three properties in Foxglove Gardens in Reading.

Throughout the course of the operation evictions were served, drug warrants executed and 20 people were deported back to the Caribbean.

Single women with a drugs habit had their homes taken over, were forced into prostitution and their houses used to

deal and take drugs including crack cocaine and heroin.

As well as the distress the activities were causing families in Foxglove Gardens, the houses became crime generators causing burglaries, car crime and robbery in the area to increase.

At first officers only had the street names of the dealers and their response was limited as the offenders were known to carry guns.

Work continued behind the scenes, with observations on the houses and target suspects. Officers and social services also worked together to remove vulnerable children from one of the houses.

In January, police and housing association officers evicted the tenants of the three houses. The women left, but the

drug dealers simply took over two other houses in the street, which were also occupied by lone women.

Investigations revealed that one suspected drug dealer was found to be an overstay. He was deported back to Jamaica, where he was killed, believed to be by a drugs rival, within hours of his arrival. Since then, 19 other people have been sent back to Jamaica from Reading with Wokingham Police Area.

However, the problems continued at the two new addresses and in February drugs warrants were executed at both houses. Six more warrants were executed in the following weeks.

Both tenants were then evicted at the end of last month ending the misery for other residents in the area who no longer have drugs and prostitution on their doorstep.

## Making a fresh start

This year officers in Oxford worked with their community to turn a no-go area nicknamed "Heroin Park" into a playground for children.

Manzil Gardens in Cowley was a gathering place for drunks and drug dealers, leaving the rest of the community afraid to use the only green space in east Oxford.

Four years of hard work by officers in the area, working in partnership with residents, businesses and local authorities led to the development of a £50,000 play area including special facilities for disabled children.

Work on the park included "designing out crime" by removing hiding places and increasing surveillance. Wider paths and extra lighting increased reassurance for residents walking through in the evening.

Local beat officer PC Chris Griffin said: "The aim of the Manzil Garden Project was to return the only green space within East Oxford back to the whole community rather than a handful of people intent on acting in an anti-social manner. It is now up to the community to use the facility which is rightfully theirs."

## Targeting hare coursers

Fines totalling £6,765 were imposed on illegal hare coursers in Southern Oxfordshire in December and January.

The latest in a series of hare coursers arrested as part of Operation Migrate - an initiative launched by Southern Oxfordshire police and members of the rural community to crackdown on illegal hare coursing - appeared at Didcot Magistrates Court on January 18.

Pc Pete Hale, Community Safety Officer for Southern Oxfordshire Police Area, said: "The success of Operation Migrate is a tribute to the commitment of the rural community in to stamping out this menace. Every year, hare coursers cause thousands of pounds worth of damage to the countryside, as well as intimidating

and, on occasion, assaulting local people who object to their activities. Now the police, in partnership with landowners, farmers and other rural residents, are fighting back."

## Getting rid of rubbish

Unightly and dangerous fly tipping was targeted in a joint venture between officers and South Bucks District Council in March.

Officers from the Roads Policing unit and enforcement officers from the council, Environment Agency and Vehicle Inspectorate carried out spot



checks on vehicles carrying a large amount of waste. As well as checking the loads and vehicles, drivers were questioned as to where they intended to dispose of the rubbish.

## Teenagers tackle racial harassment

Schoolchildren in Chesham took part in a poster competition to help combat racial harassment.

Chesham Park Community College students were tasked with designing a suitable poster for the Chiltern Anti Racial Harassment Group, to encourage those suffering racial harassment to come forward and report it to police or another reporting centre.

## Acting on needs

Oxford Police Area set up six reporting centres to offer reassurance to people wishing to report racist incidents in the wake of the September 11 attack.



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Following a meeting with Oxford's Muslim community, officers set up the "third party reporting centres", where victims of racial abuse of any nature can report incidents without fear of reprisals.

The centres aim to give people a chance to report incidents, who otherwise may not have passed the information on directly to the police.

Reporting forms used at the centres can be anonymous, and need not be the start of an investigation. It is up to the victim whether they wish the matter to be pursued. If they do, they will be contacted by Oxford Police Area's Community and Race Relations Officer.

Through the forms officers can build up important information to help them monitor any increase in concerns and then respond appropriately.

## Staff profile

**Name: Helene Sentkovsky**

**Age: 42**

**Role: Restorative Justice Advisor – Bracknell**

**Time in Force: 4.5 years**

**Previous Roles: Helene has been recently promoted from her former post as RJ administrator.**

Helene Sentkovsky was so impressed with restorative justice she made a career out of it.

Helene first came into contact with the innovative concept when she became the victim of crime. Teenagers had been making her life a misery, culminating in her car being stolen three times. She was asked to attend a restorative conference, where she was given the opportunity to meet and tackle one of the offenders responsible. Six months

later she applied for and got the job as administrator to the RJ unit in Bracknell.

Her current post became vacant through the redeployment programme, where officers in station-based jobs which do not need particular police skills and training, are replaced by civilians, enabling the officer to go back on the beat.

In November last year Helene was invited to attend a private meeting at Number Ten with the Prime Minister Tony Blair to discuss RJ. She accompanied former Chief Constable Sir Charles Pollard to describe the positive effects of the RJ process.

She said: "The Prime Minister was very switched on and alert. He really did seem to be interested and I was pleasantly surprised. The meeting was actually in the Cabinet Office and every time it's on TV I can say I have been there."

Helene explained her personal experience of RJ. Of the three offenders who had stolen her car, two, who did not attend the RJ conference and went to court, have reoffended. The one who did go through the RJ process has not reoffended. There were also benefits for Helene personally, she said: "I had been very fearful of him - before the meeting I had nothing but my imagination. Once I had met him and talked to him the fear was removed.

"Fortunately for me, Thames Valley Police was using RJ. My questions were answered and I was able to understand the reality. It gave me a lot more confidence and restored my faith in the police. Having been a repeat victim my faith had taken a real beating."

In January she was instrumental in introducing a missing person scheme to Bracknell, working with young people who may have been reported missing more than once, to try and prevent them going missing again. The family are invited to discuss what could be causing them to run away, and where appropriate, outside agencies are called in to help resolve the problem. Helene said: "Where restorative justice makes a difference it should be used. If it doesn't work what have you lost?"

## Taking positive action

Officers in Slough have taken action to encourage reporting of homophobic crime.

The Positive Action scheme was launched because officers believed many victims of attacks were not actually reporting incidents to the police due to their sexuality.

A leaflet with information and helplines has been produced, including a form which can be filled out with details of incidents of homophobic crime and sent to police.

PC Eddie Hurley, Community and Race Relations Officer for Slough and District Police Area said: "The self-reporting form will make it easier for people to come forward as they will not have to come to the police station or make a phone call. It is confidential and no one else need know.

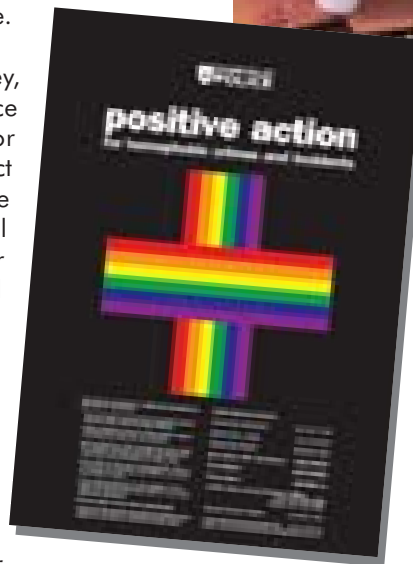
"Homophobic crime is not acceptable in our society and should not be swept under the carpet. But to tackle it we need to be contacted in the first instance. We are taking steps to look deeper into homophobic attacks and find the motive behind them in order to tackle and prevent them."

## Neighbourhood nuisance

'Low level' crimes or nuisance behaviour can severely disrupt communities and blight everyone's lives. We work with communities to stop anti-social behaviour which can greatly increase fear of crime.

## Tackling vandals

Officers in Windsor spent last summer working with young people to reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour.



The area of Dedworth was the main focus of the initiative to reduce crime and reassure residents in the area.

As well as increasing the visibility of officers, crime reduction officers and Housing Association representatives visited homes to provide advice. One of the Forces Crime

Prevention Design Advisers also looked at ways of reducing crime opportunities which had been created by poor design.

As a result of extra patrols, officers were able to communicate more effectively with young people and find out the reasons behind any nuisance behaviour. In some cases they visited the child's home and spoke to the parents about their offspring's behaviour - highlighting the effect it was having on the larger community.

## Solving problems

Calls to police about nuisance and youth disorder were virtually eradicated following a police and community project on the Britwell Estate in Slough.

Before the project began in October, at least ten calls a day were made by residents on the estate asking for

officers to deal with the youngsters. By February those calls reduced to an average of one or none.

This was achieved by the Slough police problem solving team working with the community to identify trouble makers and deal with disorder and nuisance issues. The project was also supported by the local authority community safety, housing and neighbourhood warden teams.

Due to the success of the project a similar scheme is being developed in Manor Park, which kicked off with a meeting at a local school in January where residents were invited to raise any issues they felt needing addressing by officers.



## Beating bad behaviour

Area beat officers in Northern Oxfordshire have been dealing with nuisance teenagers by using acceptable behaviour contracts.

Any teenagers caught causing trouble, though not necessarily committing a criminal offence, sign up to the contract which can range from promises not to play football outside pensioners' houses to agreeing to curfews. In Middle Barton the beat officer has used the contracts to deal with half a dozen anti-social teenagers to good effect.



## Staff profile

**Name: PC Chris Skae**

**Age: 40**

**Role: Schools and Youth Officer - Witney**

**Time in Force: 20 years**

**Previous Roles: Chris was previously an area beat officer in Abingdon Road, Oxford, he has also worked in Oxford City Centre, Reading, Woodley and Wokingham**

Chris has been a Schools and Youth Officer for five years and he deals with

three secondary schools and around 30 primary schools around the Witney area.

The idea of putting officers inside schools is based on the fact that by the time the pupils, their families and the teachers are taken into account, they actually make up a large community in themselves. Chris is available for pupils, their parents and teachers when they need him. He also encourages area beat officers to take time to visit their local schools.

It is a very varied job where he gets involved in numerous activities. The incidents he attends do not necessarily take place within the school. For example, an assault took place after school hours outside the school, but pupils from the school were involved. He was responsible for making the enquiries and following the investigation through to the end.

Chris helps organise Junior Citizen where children spend a day learning about their own safety from the police, fire service, RSPCA, Home Safety and Oxford County Council. He also goes into the classroom taking lessons on citizenship, petty crime, drugs and keeping safe, but always driven by local needs.

The local MP, David Cameron, has praised PC Skae's initiatives with schools, in particular, his drug-awareness presentations which outline the dangers and pitfalls of illegal drugs.

Chris finds the job very challenging, but very rewarding. He remembers the first lesson he ever took. He said: "It was very nerve-racking. I was quite fortunate that I didn't have a difficult class. One thing I always remember is that there are always members of staff in the class alongside you. We are not there to replace teachers, and it is not our role to discipline the kids in the classroom."

Chris said: "My main function in this role is to reduce crime. The best part of the job is the feeling of making a difference. I emphasise to young people that we do a difficult job in stressful situations and if I can help young people look beyond the misconceptions and the negative portrayal of the police, then I've succeeded in my role."

## Restorative Justice and Youth Justice

Research conducted this year has praised the restorative approach pioneered and developed by Thames Valley Police and its partners.

Restorative justice is based on the principle of getting offenders to face the consequences of their actions.

Oxford University's Centre for Criminological Research completed a Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded study of restorative cautioning in Thames Valley. The report concluded that "restorative cautioning can be seen as having achieved a remarkable degree of success". The report added: "Thames Valley Police has shown that a major public organisation can be innovative, can take risks and, perhaps more surprisingly, can accept constructive criticism and alter practice in line with recommendations made by academic critics."

Major national research continues to examine the effectiveness of restorative justice in re-offending amongst adults. Random selection is used to assign cases to be dealt with either by restorative justice or the existing court system so that results can be compared.

Restorative conferencing, where offenders meet their victims face-to-face and are confronted with the consequences of their behaviour, has proved effective in dealing with anti social behaviour and forms a key aspect of the front-line response to crime and disorder.

### For example:

- In Bracknell a conference was arranged after a 16-year old boy was thrown out of home by his mother. The boy had lost his temper and gone berserk in the house with a baseball bat, causing extensive damage (for which he received a police reprimand), and his mother had reached the end of her tether. Effectively homeless, a relative agreed to put him up for a week whilst arrangements were made for the conference. During the three-hour meeting it emerged that the



boy's problems were closely associated with his mother's difficulties in coming to terms with his growing independence. She was continually testing his patience, even to the extent at one point of hitting him. The meeting ended with the boy being referred to a local counselling organisation and an anger management course, and his mother agreeing to have him back home and to attend a parenting course. There have been no calls since.

- In Milton Keynes a conference was held at a secondary school after three schoolboys were involved in a series of incidents, coming to a head when they were caught throwing large pieces of concrete at other children in the playground. As a result they were all facing exclusion from the school. The meeting was attended by the boys and their parents, and gave staff the chance to explain the effects of the boys' behaviour. As a result they have apologised and committed themselves to behaving as responsible members of the school community.
- In Oxford a conference was set up to try and resolve a long-standing neighbourhood dispute. The two families involved have lived next door to each other for over ten years and had at the outset been on very good terms. But after falling out over a minor misunderstanding five years ago, things had



deteriorated badly and the police were frequently being called out to deal with incidents. Both parties had been warned about their behaviour, but plans to prosecute them for harassment had to be shelved for lack of firm evidence. The meeting, held at the local police station, allowed a frank and honest discussion between all involved. Apologies were offered and accepted over the incident that had started things off, and afterwards everybody shook hands and set off for home discussing the possibility of meeting during the coming Christmas festivities. The police have not been called since.

The restorative justice team has developed nationally accredited training packages to assist other organisations with the techniques.

Oxfordshire Youth Offending Team has continued to pilot Referral Orders, whereby young offenders meet local community members and agree a contract of behaviour. This system is now being introduced in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.



# Reducing crime

## Targeting offenders

Persistent offenders have been put under pressure in Slough by a proactive team dedicated to taking them off the streets.

The team, which includes one sergeant and seven constables, targets car crime, street robberies and burglary.

Since the team began highlights have included 25 arrests on Slough Trading Estate following a spate of thefts of laptops. The arrests were made with the assistance of businesses on the estate, including the use of a CCTV system which helped identify offenders.

In November, following a year of planning, 24 people in and around Slough were arrested for drug offences. Simultaneous raids were conducted, a substantial amount of drugs were recovered and £16,000 cash confiscated.

Burnham railway station area was also targeted leading to offences falling from 48 recorded in November to 26 in March.

The proactive team has made 65 arrests since January this year. Sergeant Tony Padfield, who heads the team, said: "Persistent offenders should be aware that we are getting real results and they will not get away with breaking the law for long."



## Community intelligence

Community involvement led to police in Buckingham and Winslow achieving a 10 per cent reduction in crime in the last year.

Officers believe the work led to 161 less victims of crime in the two areas by using information from local people, targeting crime hotspots and working with the local media.

## Lynch initiative works

A series of raids carried out by officers across the Thames Forest police area resulted in 16 arrests.

Childnet International, the Football Association and the Home Office.

Chat Safe was launched in October to help children and parents avoid chatroom stalkers. The initiative, supported by Carol Vorderman, aims to encourage chatroom users to take a few simple steps to avoid contact with paedophiles who use the net to lure young people into meeting them.

The campaign includes a video presented by Carol and follow-up lesson plans for schools, distributed by Thames Valley Police schools liaison

**A joint Thames Valley Police and Royal Air Force internet safety scheme for young chatroom users was nominated for a national award in February.**

Operation Lynch, carried out over a two-day period in March, involved raids on 25 addresses throughout the Thames Forest area (Windsor, Maidenhead, Bracknell and Ascot), as well as Reading, Slough, Aylesbury, Swindon, Basingstoke and London. There were 16 arrests for offences including burglary and car theft, and stolen property was recovered alongside class A drugs and a firearm.

## Joining forces to fight chatroom hazard

A joint Thames Valley Police and Royal Air Force internet safety scheme for young chatroom users was nominated for a national award in February.

Chat Safe was nominated by the Internet Watch Foundation for the Internet Industry Awards. The IWF sponsored award is dedicated to developments in the field of online safety. Chat Safe was nominated by the IWF along with the BBC (the winners),



officers. Information and advice, for both parents and children, is also available on the web at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/chatsafe](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/chatsafe), including excerpts from the video. The RAF is distributing the packs through their RAF Police staff.

Since the launch enquiries via the website have come from all over the country, as well as the USA and Cyprus.

## Safer houses

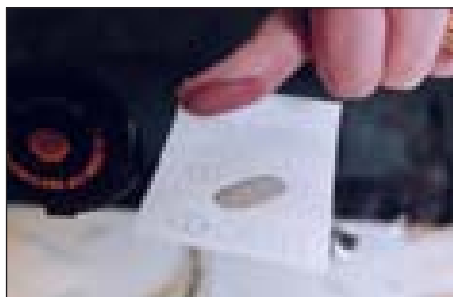
In March a dedicated team was setup to combat burglary in Maidenhead.

The unit includes five detectives led by a detective sergeant. In their first few weeks of operation they made an arrest which led to the detection of 10 house burglaries in the area.

Police officers intend to extend the approach to other areas in Thames Forest, including Bracknell, Windsor, Ascot and Crowthorne.



**Officers visited schools to help children security mark their phone and battery and identify their phone's IMEI number. The 15 digit number is unique to the phone and can help police trace the rightful owner if it has been stolen and recovered.**



## **Protect your phone - protect yourself**

Young mobile phone users were this year urged to take action to prevent their mobile phone from being stolen.

Mobile phone theft and robbery is increasing and young people are particularly vulnerable. In order to help teenagers prevent their phone being taken, officers visited schools to help children security mark their phone and battery and identify their phone's IMEI number. The 15 digit number is unique to the phone and can help police trace the rightful owner if it has been stolen and recovered. It can be accessed by pressing \*#06# into a mobile phone keypad.

Officers also passed on security advice to reduce the risk of phones being taken, including being aware of your surroundings, trying not to use the phone in public places and not having it on display.

## **Driving off crime**

Forecourt theft was eradicated during an experiment to trick thieves out of committing crime at Milton Keynes petrol stations.

Officers used an optical illusion to get rid of bilking, a crime where drivers fill up their car with petrol and drive off without paying. A marked police car, usually only used for demonstration purposes, was placed on 12 different forecourts over a 21-day period in July and August last year.

As a result only one of the 12 garages had a bilking and another an inability to pay. On both occasions the drivers later returned to pay their dues.

Bilking was also the subject of a national conference set up by Thames Valley officers in January.

Between April and December last year it is estimated the crime cost the Force around half a million pounds to investigate.

## **Thumbs up for security**

A new security scheme has been rolled out across the Force area to help reduce cheque and credit card fraud.

Under the thumbprint security scheme shoppers are asked to endorse cheques and credit card slips with a thumbprint, using a special inkless gel pad to cut out mess.

Shops will store the prints and only pass them on to police if the transaction proves to be fraudulent.

So far the scheme has been set up in High Wycombe, Cowley, Banbury, Bicester and is due to start in Milton Keynes.

In Aylesbury an offender used a cheque and provided a thumbprint. The cheque was later proved to be stolen and the thumbprint was used to identify the offender.

## Staff profile

**Name:** Roger Hampshire

**Age:** 55

**Roles:** Roger is a retired police officer, working as a Crime Prevention Design Advisor

**Time In Force:** 30

Believe it or not, it is possible to make the lives of criminals difficult just by pointing a window in a certain direction or laying out alleyways and gardens in a certain way. Roger Hampshire devotes large parts of his working day to thinking about exactly that. His job is to advise planners about ways to design out crime and increase community safety.

One of the main considerations has to be keeping houses, car parks and footpaths where residents can see them. This can deter criminal activity - as they have nowhere to hide - and provide extra security. Roger and other crime prevention design advisors call it "natural surveillance" or "discrete policing".

Roger is now a civilian employee. He spent a large part of his 30 years as a police officer as a detective. His experience of visiting crime scenes and detecting how criminals think and work has paid dividends. He said: "Most of the time you rely on the experience you gained in the police on how crime occurs and how criminals operate. I think it is very important to have police awareness and police training, but with proper training and architect or planner could take on the role in future."

Sometimes Roger does have a battle on his hands to convince councillors to take action. He said: "If there is an existing footpath on a housing estate causing a lot of anti-social problems I will ask one of the councillors to meet me there at 11 o'clock on a Saturday night - quite often they decline but they do then support me! It is just another way of bring home the reality of the situation."

Increasing a sense of community safety is not just about pure crime prevention, other methods can be used. For instance, Roger, who covers the Oxfordshire area, and his Buckinghamshire colleague Mark Wilkinson, produced a good practice guide on youth shelters and sports systems. The guide can be found on our website [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/crime-reduction/shelters.htm](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/crime-reduction/shelters.htm). This was because they both knew that gangs of young people hanging around



the streets can increase fear of crime - even if the teenagers are doing nothing wrong. Roger said: "There is nothing for teenagers to do and nowhere for them to go. Just by providing them with seating areas it does have an impact on increasing community safety and reducing crime. It gives them somewhere to focus and socialise."

"Youth shelters illustrate perfectly that what we do is about long term solutions, not quick fixes."

Making people's lives better by improving their surroundings is the most satisfying aspect of the job for Roger. He said: "The best part is being able to give advice on some plans knowing that the advice given assists residents in future to have a good environment in which to live."

"The ridiculous thing about the planning rules and regulations is that they stipulate the sort of bricks, tiles and windows to use but nowhere does it say you have got to put a lock on the door!"

Roger and his two other colleagues which cover the Force received Chief Constable's commendations in May this year for their contribution to reducing crime, solving problems and being leaders in their field.

## Burglary classes

Schools in High Wycombe were given lessons in crime reduction as part of a burglary reduction project last summer.

Year six pupils were given an insight into the consequences of burglary and tips on ways of making their homes safer.

The 350 pupils who took part were all given crime prevention packs to take home, which included ultra-violet marking pens for postcoding property.

## Cutting car crime

Thames Forest used a dedicated team of staff to bring down vehicle crime by 10 per cent in 12 months.

Between April 2001 and March 2002 theft from cars across Maidenhead, Windsor, Ascot, Crowthorne and Bracknell was down by 20.8 per cent. Theft of cars reduced by 16.6 per cent, leading to a reduction of car crime 10.1 per cent overall. Detection rates for this period were increased from 8.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent.



Work to bring about these results included setting up a dedicated auto crime team, including auto crime investigators at Maidenhead, Windsor and Bracknell. They worked closely with local authorities and businesses to identify crime hotspots and take action in those areas to prevent and detect crime. For instance, if a particular car park was identified officers would patrol the area at peak times. A Business Watch scheme also worked with pubs, restaurants and hotels with a particular problem.

In March a restaurant car park in Windsor was targeted due to a number of car break-ins. An operation at the site led to the arrest of two people, one of whom admitted 58 other offences.



## Hounding out drugs

Aylesbury Vale Police Area has been sniffing out drugs and dealers in a pioneering partnership which provides specially trained dogs for licensed premises.

In November Grosvenor International Services (GIS) began a 12-month programme to provide six drug dog handler teams to regularly patrol the pubs and clubs in Aylesbury and Buckingham town centres, to send out a clear message that drugs will not be tolerated.

The move was part of the Aylesbury Pub Watch scheme. GIS dog teams work together with door staff and the police to prevent customers from bringing drugs into licensed premises.

The Pub Watch Scheme also received a Silver Award at the Annual Licensing Awards in March.

## Beating burglary

Officers in Henley set up an operation to target drugs-related burglaries which resulted in the imprisonment of five men responsible for more than 120 offences.

In January the five men were sentenced to 15 years between them. One of the offenders received three years nine months for six high value burglaries. He also asked for a further 71 offences to be taken into consideration. One man was given three-and-a-half years and three others were given two-and-a-half years.





# Reducing disorder and increasing safety

## Presidential presence

American President George Bush and the First Lady swept into the Thames Valley last summer to stay with the Prime Minister at his country residence, Chequers in Buckinghamshire.

Initially there were fears major environmental protests would disrupt the visit, which began at RAF Brize Norton. However, the only incident of note involved a Greenpeace protester attempting to fly around Chequers in a paraglider, while President Bush was still at Brize Norton. The Force helicopter unit escorted the glider away.

A total of 350 officers were involved in policing the operation in July including mounted officers, Protection Group, Roads Policing and the Chiltern Air Support unit. Thames Valley was also supported by officers from surrounding forces.

Members of the Police Authority visited the Chequers operation to gain an insight into the work of our officers.

## Here comes the cavalry

A large fight broke out on The Heath during Royal Ascot but was soon brought under control by mounted officers.

About 100 people were involved in fights between two groups. Four nearby officers tried to calm the situation but were outnumbered as no other officers on foot or by car could get to the area due to the large amount of people. Fortunately, all eight of the Force horses were able to get through and corralled the groups involved in the fight. At that point some of the crowd began to throw things at the officers and horses so the mounted team moved the groups and arrested four people for serious public order offences.

## Animal rights protest

Around 400 animal rights protesters took to the streets in Oxford in August as part of the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign.

One person was arrested and two officers received minor injuries during the march in the city centre. The protesters then held a demonstration at Yamanouchi Research Institute in Littlemore, Oxford.



## Judge's commendation following wedding brawl case

An officer received a commendation from a Crown Court judge for his investigation into a brawl at a travellers' wedding.

The conviction of Danny Stevens and John Collins for wounding with intent, marked the end of a complex investigation which began at the Holiday Inn in Caversham, Reading last June.



**An officer received  
a commendation  
from a Crown  
Court judge for  
his investigation  
into a brawl at a  
travellers' wedding.**

Police were called following reports of a fight during the reception and arrived to find people suffering horrendous stab and cut wounds. Pc Calum Maclean arrived at the scene first and rushed to the aid of a critically-ill man, standing over him to protect him from flying debris. He later received an Area Commander's commendation for his actions.

The investigation involved scores of officers who worked around the clock to try and trace the 100 plus guests who were at the reception. When the case went to court, the work didn't stop as officers looked after the travellers, ensured they attended court and prevented problems at the court.

Stevens and Collins each denied six counts of wounding with intent, but were found guilty of their respective charges.

## Dealing with drunken disorder

Police in Henley launched a new crackdown on drink-related disorder in the town.

As part of Operation Merger, officers carried out focused patrols in the town centre and nearby residential areas on Friday and Saturday nights.

The action came after a number of reports of damage to vehicles and rowdy behaviour in residential areas late at night.

## On their bikes

Two Reading area beat officers turned to pedal power in June last year to tackle crime on their patch.

The pair trialed two state-of-the-art mountain bikes for six months which included flashing blue lights and high visibility markings. The bikes enabled the officers to move around more easily and be more visible on their beats, as well as increasing their accessibility and reducing fear of crime.

The bikes were presented to the officers by Reading Crime Prevention Panel.

## Eye in the sky

The Force helicopter unit, Chiltern Air Support, has the versatility to contribute to reducing crime and disorder, as well as catching criminals. Their search capabilities also ensure the safety of members of the public, officers and offenders involved in pursuits, as the unit can contain and track a vehicle from a safe distance.

## Heat is on

A robber who thought he had escaped arrest did not account for the heat-seeking skills of Chiltern Air Support in September last year.

The helicopter crew were called to assist officers on the ground searching for offenders following a robbery in Lower Earley. The offenders had run off across some gardens and were hiding in undergrowth. One offender was



arrested by the officers at CASU's arrival. The crew then found a heat source, talked the ground officers in and the second person was arrested.

## School burglary spotted

An offender who tried to burgle a school in Cowley, Oxford, was tracked down by Chiltern Air Support in July last year.

The caretaker spotted the offender, tried to chase after him but lost him. The air crew spotted someone fitting the offender's description in nearby Risinghurst and guided in ground officers to make the arrest.

## Lighting up time

Chiltern Air Support lit up the night to bring about the arrest of a bike thief and arsonist in Berinsfield in December.

The crew were on the way back to their base in Benson when they spotted a small fire between Berinsfield and the



Golden Ball roundabout. They realised it was a motorbike on fire and then spotted someone walking away from it.

The crew put on the "nite sun" a powerful light which illuminates vast areas, and the suspect started to run. The crew followed him and talked in officers on the ground to arrest him. It was later discovered the bike had been deliberately set alight.

## Off his tree

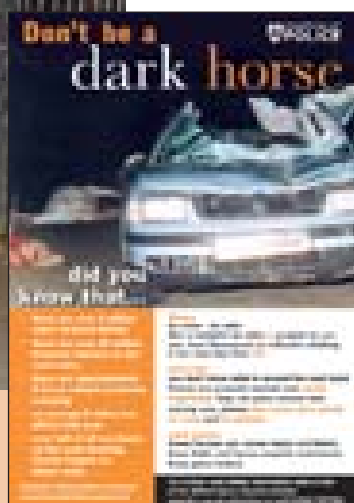
An offender trying to escape arrest by hiding up a tree following a ram raid was tracked down by Chiltern Air Support.

A Roads Policing crew had begun a pursuit following the ram raid in Beaconsfield in December, but the police vehicle was rammed then blocked. One of the offenders ran from the car but was then tracked to his tree hideout by the air crew.

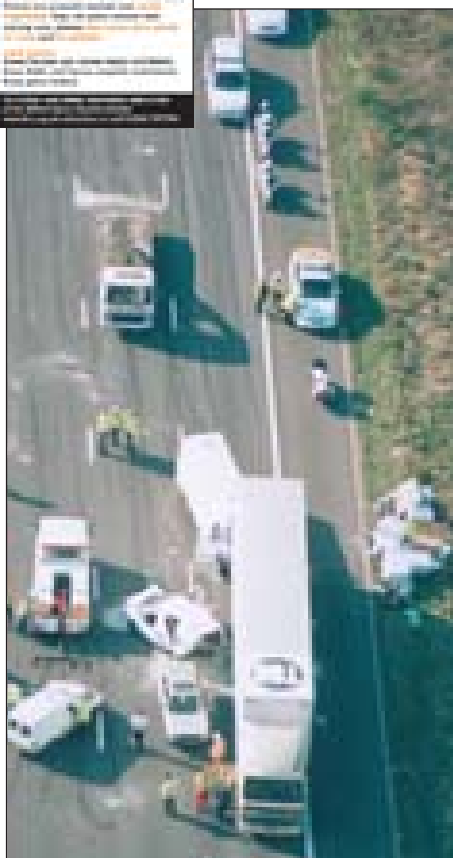


## Don't be a Dark Horse

London's Burning star Glen Murphy and British Olympic three-day eventer Ginny Elliott helped the Mounted Section and Roads Policing officers to promote rider safety.



The Don't be a Dark Horse campaign was launched in August last year at the Oxford Equestrian Centre to encourage riders to wear high visibility clothing.



## Driving crime off the roads

Aylesbury Roads Policing officers have taken three of the town's target criminals off the streets this year after catching them for disqualified driving.

The three offenders, who were wanted in connection with other crimes, were remanded in custody after being caught driving without a valid licence.

## The Roads Policing proactive team

The team targeted with 709 offenders in the year and of those made 467 arrests. The system aims to focus on known offenders on the roads who may be responsible for other crimes including drugs, burglary and car crime.

Using the automatic number plate recognition system (ANPR) the team made 188 arrests, detected 349 offences and recovered stolen vehicles worth £106,500. ANPR is a roadside checking device which can read number plates as cars are driven past then checks them against national databases for criminal activity.

## M40 crash

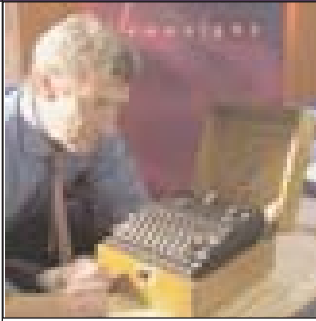
Two people were killed and 12 people injured in a crash on the M40 in March involving 100 cars.

Roads Policing officers had to close the entire southbound carriageway between junctions eight and five and a lane northbound was closed to allow emergency vehicle access.

The crash which caused the pile-up occurred in thick fog at around 7am, just before rush hour and leading to six mile tailbacks.



**The 'Don't be a Dark Horse' campaign was launched in August at the Oxford Equestrian Centre to encourage riders to wear high visibility clothing.**



# Watching the detectives

## Case study Enigma

On April 1, 2000, an extremely rare Second World War Enigma coding machine was stolen from Bletchley Park during an open day.

The machine, an Abwehr Enigma G312, is one of only two in existence and is valued at £100,000. It is also considered to be of substantial historical value due to its use by German military intelligence during the war.

Our officers' first task was to trace and interview the large number of visitors who attended the open day.

More than 20 detectives worked on the case, taking a total of 168 statements. They were led by Detective Superintendent David Buckenham and Detective Chief Inspector Simon Chesterman. The investigation also included the National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Appeals for witnesses and a reward of £5,000 was offered, but this did not lead to any positive lines of enquiry. In September, however, the first of several letters - later followed by telephone calls - were sent by a person who claimed to possess the machine.

He stated that he was acting on behalf of an "innocent purchaser" of the Enigma, who was now demanding £25,000 for its safe return.

The machine, minus three of its four vital rotor wheels, was then sent by post to Newsnight presenter Jeremy Paxman.

It had been posted on October 12, but not opened by Mr Paxman until five days later when he returned from holiday.

On December 17, as a result of a police operation, Dennis Yates, of Sandiacre, Nottinghamshire, was arrested. He

admitted posting the letters, making the telephone calls which detailed the demands, and sending the machine to the BBC.

While in custody, he arranged for the return of the missing rotors.

Mr Yates was charged with handling stolen property and blackmail. He pleaded guilty to the handling charge at Aylesbury Crown Court in September last year.

He was sentenced to ten months in prison. The blackmail charge was ordered to lie on file.

Following the trial Det Supt Buckenham said: "The theft of a machine which played such a crucial role in helping the Allies to victory during the Second World War really captured the public imagination and interest in the investigation has been intense. Working on this investigation has been a truly unique experience."





## Watching and waiting

An intensive surveillance operation resulted in Nicolas Kay's conviction for killing his wife Rhonda who disappeared in 1992.

The 30-year-old mother of two left the family home in Newbury following a row and was never seen again.

An incident room was set up and ran for 53 days following the initial disappearance but no real leads were found.

In keeping with Thames Valley Police policy to review historical unsolved major crime inquiries, Detective Superintendent Trevor Davies led a team of detectives in re-investigating the crime in 1999.

Officers involved in the original inquiry were consulted and key witnesses re-interviewed. Det Supt Davies also travelled to America to speak to members of Mrs Kay's family.

A total of 164 people gave statements and 450 separate lines of enquiry were pursued, as well as the surveillance operation.

As a result Kay was sentenced to six years imprisonment in October after being found guilty of manslaughter. His wife's remains have never been found.

The judge formally commended five officers for their part in the enquiry.

Det Supt Davies and five of his team also received a commendation from the Chief Constable this year for their "dedication and outstanding detective ability".

## No escape

Offenders who had escaped from magistrates court using armed accomplices, while on remand for robbery were put back behind bars in December.

Woolwich Crown Court sentenced Richard Hurley to ten years for robbery and two years for escaping from custody, and Ricky Loveridge received eight years for robbery and one year for escaping from custody. A third man, Terry Downes, who had refused to leave the court during the breakout at Slough in August 2000, was given nine years for robbery. All sentences are to run consecutively.

## Operation Voyager

Officers received a commendation in March from His Honour Judge Broderick following a long running investigation into a series of robberies and violent burglaries.

The criminals targeted high value computer chips and mobile phones. They used high powered vehicles to ram premises or other vehicles and then threatened security staff or drivers with guns.

Wayne Terry, 30, of Cippenham, Slough and Robert Coleman, 27 of Burnham, Slough, received ten year terms and Jay Shambrooke, 27, of Burnham, was jailed for six years by Winchester Crown Court in March.

## Case re-opened ten years on

Detectives in Reading found themselves re-investigating a case almost a decade old when medical developments led to the re-trial of a convicted murderer.

Original witnesses to the case had to be traced across the country for the retrial of 45-year-old Andrew McMillan, which took place at Reading Crown Court in April.

McMillan was sentenced nine years ago after being found guilty of battering 18-year-old Teresa Williams to death with a table leg in Coley Park. After two years

in prison, he began to suffer epileptic fits and this led to his retrial on medical grounds.

However, after nine hours of deliberation by a jury, he was found guilty of the murder for a second time.

Detective Inspector Kevin Rowe, who led the investigation, said: "It was quite an emotional first trial, so it was difficult for the witnesses and officers to relive the case."

## Operation Even

A team of burglars responsible for up to 50 offences which targeted elderly and vulnerable people were arrested in December.

The team of four, which operated in Reading and London, were arrested following a surveillance operation.

## Car thieves jailed

A gang of organised criminals who stole high performance cars received a total of 48 months in prison.

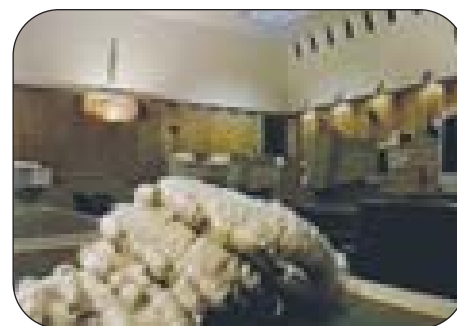
The three men from the Oxford area were sentenced for handling stolen vehicles at Northampton Crown Court in January. They were arrested and charged following a lengthy investigation into thefts of cars across the Thames Valley.

## Man found guilty of meat cleaver attack on wife

An horrific incident which led to a Reading police officer receiving a commendation for his actions was finally concluded in April when a man was found guilty of attempting to kill his wife.

Hassan Farmahini-Farahani tried to chop off his wife's head with a meat cleaver because he thought she was having an affair.

The incident happened in Granby Gardens, Reading, last year. PC Simon Osamoh, who was called to the scene, rushed to the aid of the victim, tending to her potentially fatal injuries, before enlisting the help of neighbours so he could pursue the escaping offender and arrest him.



He was rewarded for his efforts last year, when he received a commendation from Chief Superintendent David Murray, Area Commander of Reading with Wokingham Police Area.

## Legal history following town centre stabbing

A Reading murder made legal history for Thames Valley Police when it became the first Force to secure a conviction by using CCTV evidence.

Kevin Alvarado, 19, of Caversham, was sentenced to life imprisonment after he was caught on CCTV cameras owned by the Oracle shopping centre. He had been filmed stabbing 25-year-old Scott Davis during a fight in Bridge Street last July.

Security staff from the shopping centre were having a break when they saw the fight between Scott and Alvarado break out, and they rushed back inside to train their cameras on the incident.



They then used cameras to track Alvarado and his friends Craig Stevenson, 18, and John Hamilton, 18, as they fled the scene. Security guards from the Oracle also followed the three men and helped police to arrest them.

Passing taxi driver Murray Lewis stopped his cab and attempted to break up the fight, before rushing Scott to hospital. Sadly, Scott died just hours later.

All three were arrested and charged with murder. Alvarado admitted the charge and was sentenced. Hamilton and Stevenson were cleared of murder but found guilty of violent disorder following a trial at Kingston Crown Court in March.

At a recent area commander's commendation ceremony in Reading, the Oracle staff and Mr Lewis were commended for their bravery and efforts on that evening.

## Staff profile

**Name: Steve Morrison**

**Age: 45**

**Role: Detective Superintendent - Senior Investigating Officer with Major Crime**

**Time in Force: 26 years**

**Previous Roles: Area Beat Officer in Slough, CID, Serious Crime Squad, Sergeant at Milton Keynes, Regional Crime Squad, Administration Support Unit Inspector, Chief Constable's Staff Officer, Crime Advisor, Det Chief Insp for Major Crime.**

Det Supt Steve Morrison believes his primary role is to help people find the truth behind the tragedy.

He leads major crime investigations, which this year have including the rape

inquiry resulting in the conviction of Richard Leadbeater (see story on page 30) and the murder of Rachel Manning (see page 28). In both cases part of Steve's job was to take the highly scientific and detailed evidence provided by expert witnesses, and turn it into something that the man on the street could understand. He also felt responsible for helping the victims and their families by finding out the facts.

Helping the families involved keeping his perspective. He said: "While you do see the worst in people, those who commit the crimes, you also see the best. Some of the people who have lost relatives, daughters, wives, husbands, are so stoical. They are so fair-minded, they just want to know the truth. I have never seen people looking for retribution, they are just looking for the whys and to find out what happened.

"I let them know there is going to be a professional investigation and that we will do everything we can within legal limits to get a trial, so they can hear all the evidence and hopefully hear an account from the person accused. I never guarantee the result as that is not our job, that is for the judge and jury."

Steve was also heavily involved in the Chief Constable's campaign The Search For Truth (see page 48), which aims to reform the criminal justice system. He said: "This campaign, for me, is about rebalancing the system more in favour of the victim and the community, giving them the right to expect justice."

He takes pride in doing the job well to help in that process. He said: "The best part is when you know you and your team have done a really professional job on the behalf of the community. You've followed all the rules, done everything ethically and managed to catch the person who did it."

## Case study

### Jonathan Wilkes - Magistrate and bomb maker

A cache of bombs discovered in woodland led to the conviction of magistrate Jonathan Wilkes who had made the devices in a jealous rage.

The bombs were found in Freeland, Oxfordshire, and Syreford, Gloucestershire, in August 2000.

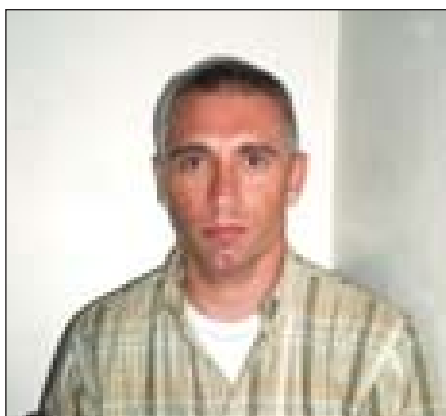
A joint police investigation between Gloucestershire and Thames Valley was set up under the command of Detective Superintendent Euan Read.

The devices were so expertly manufactured that the enquiry initially focused on people with bomb disposal skills. The bombs were consistently described as the most sophisticated devices ever recovered in Britain. It was clear that their intended purpose was to kill or maim on a wide scale.

Painstaking enquiries discovered components used to make the bombs had been bought in the name of Cooper, by a man on a pay-as-you-go mobile registered in Birmingham. Through this Wilkes was identified.

His bank accounts revealed further purchases that included surveillance equipment, gunpowder, batteries and other relevant material. It also revealed a long term affair with a woman by the name of Cooper.

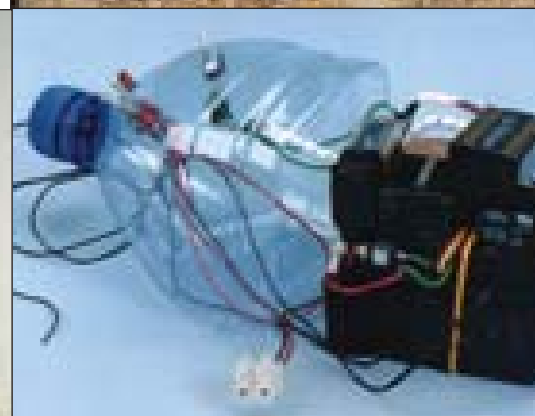
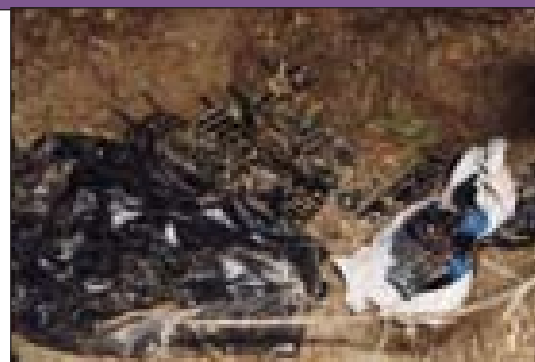
In 2001 Wilkes, a 40-year-old local magistrate and high earning computer



programmer, had relocated to France. Miss Cooper told officers that, as a deeply jealous man, he had not taken it well when she called off their relationship. Officers also discovered Wilkes had sought a "hit man".

Wilkes was contacted in France and agreed to return to the UK for an interview. Forensic evidence was obtained from him which linked him to both scenes of the crime. He claimed he had been blackmailed into buying the parts and denied all knowledge of the bombs. He was charged.

While awaiting trial further evidence linked him to the crime and Wilkes changed his defence. He admitted to making the bombs but said he intended to use them in an elaborate suicide bid. The jury rejected his claims and found him guilty of possessing the devices with intent to endanger life. He was originally sentenced to five years but the decision was appealed and he was given nine years by the Deputy Lord Chief Justice.



### Rachel Manning

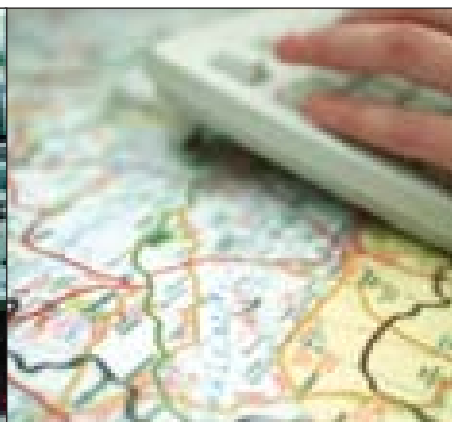
Barri White is now serving a life sentence following his conviction for the murder of his girlfriend Rachel Manning.

Rachel, who was 18, had been out with White on the night she died. White, 22, of Epsom Grove, Bletchley, claimed they separated and he made his own way home. What actually happened was he strangled Rachel and his friend, Keith Hyatt, of Fishermead, Milton Keynes, helped him get rid of her body. Hyatt is now serving a five year sentence.

Rachel disappeared in the early hours of Sunday, December 10, 2000.

She was seen on CCTV outside the Chicago Rock Cafe in Central Milton Keynes dressed in seventies style clothing after attending a themed party earlier that evening.

Her body was discovered a couple of days later by a member of the public on the edge of Woburn Golf



Club. A post mortem was carried out and revealed that she died as a result of asphyxiation.

Thames Valley Police launched a murder investigation, led by Det Supt Steve Morrison, and an incident room at Bletchley police station was set up.

In February 2001, detectives arrested White and Hyatt, 49.

Both men were charged with Rachel's murder and Hyatt was also charged with perverting the course of justice.

The four-week court case at Aylesbury Crown Court ended in April this year, with Hyatt being found not guilty of murder, but guilty of perverting the course of justice and jailed for five years.

### **Life for rapist**

A High Wycombe man was jailed for life in February after attempting to rape a woman at knifepoint.

Gerald Dyson, 47, of Downley, already had three convictions for rape and two for indecent assault. He was sentenced by Aylesbury Crown Court following an attack on a woman in Gerrards Cross in September. Detective Inspector Philip Chandler, who led the investigation, said: "I pay tribute to the victim in this case who defended herself against a powerful man armed with a knife who tried to rape and imprison her. To go before court and re-live what happened required tremendous courage."

### **Life sentence for robber**

An armed robber was given life imprisonment by Aylesbury Crown Court in May.

Kenneth Lumsden, 45, of Hillingdon, was found guilty of committing a robbery at the Halifax Building Society in Chalfont St Peter in January 2000. As well as being given a life sentence he was also given 11 years for possession of an imitation firearm, to run concurrently.





# The appliance of science

## Forensic detail

A series of detections proved the effectiveness of our Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCOs):

- A SOCO attended a burglary in a street in Oxford identified as a burglary "hotspot" due to the high number of offences committed there. A number of marks were recovered and tracked through our Fingerprint Bureau, leading to the arrest of a suspect the next day.
- Earlier this year there was a series of burglaries and thefts from cars in Calcot and Tilehurst in Reading. The SOCO recovered a number of footwear marks at the scene of some of the offences. Later, two men were arrested near a burglary and their footwear matched that of the marks recovered by the SOCO. As a result 12 burglaries and numerous car crime offences were detected.
- Following a burglary in Aylesbury in July last year a SOCO recovered fingerprints and blood. As a result a suspect was identified who matched both pieces of evidence. During interview he admitted ten burglaries, four thefts and one count of being carried in a stolen vehicle.
- In December a SOCO attended the scene of an arson at a hotel in Waddesdon. A number of items were recovered, including a blow torch and marks from which vital DNA evidence was recovered.

Due to the increasing importance and effectiveness of forensic science Police Authority members visited the Forensic Alliance in September, an external company used by our Forensic Investigation Unit, to get a better

understanding of the work and the contribution towards crime investigation.

## Rapist trapped by DNA

DNA led to the trapping and conviction of a rapist ten years after the offences had been committed.

Richard Leadbeater, 32, of Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, was given a life sentence at Aylesbury Crown Court in December 2001, for a series of attacks committed between October 1991 and May 1992.

He was caught after an officer arrested him following a domestic incident in January last year. The officer took a DNA sample from him as a matter of routine. When the sample was compared to the national DNA database it matched two samples taken after rapes some ten years earlier.

The attacks had taken place on two overbridges that led from the Central Milton Keynes area to the Fishermead estate. An incident room, called Operation Zeus, was set up to investigate the attacks. The most serious of the offences the Operation Zeus team investigated were two rapes which were linked by DNA samples. The remainder of the offences were linked by the description and the trademark of the offender.

Leadbeater initially denied committing the offences but pleaded guilty to the two rapes, one charge of buggery, three charges of indecency, one of robbery and three attempted robberies.

Detective Constable Maria Stride, from the family protection unit based in Bletchley, was commended by the Chief Constable in May this year for her sensitive and professional approach when dealing with Leadbeater's victims.



## Staff profile

**Name: Doron Jensen**

**Age: 31**

**Time in Force: 3 years**

**Role: Scenes of Crime Officer (SOCO)**

SOCO Doron Jensen came top of the class this year and won the prestigious National SOCO Development Student of the Year.

His job takes him to all sort of crime scenes to gather photographic, fingerprint and forensic evidence. As well as working at crime scenes, his job also involves taking pictures of victims' injuries at police station.

He said: "One of the things I like about the job is the amount of variety – you don't know what you'll be dealing with from day to day.

"For instance, last year on my birthday, after a quiet day at work, an unpleasant smell was reported coming from the boot of an abandoned car. It turned out to be a decomposing body that had been there for three months before it was discovered. There was someone else on call but the job needed more than one person. As I was around I volunteered, and ended up working most of the night!"

Some might consider it to be grim and gruesome work. But Doron sees beyond the blood and gore, as do his colleagues. He said: "You are going in there with a task in mind, rather than just looking. You are searching for some sort of evidence, and in some ways I think that protects you."

"The photographs you see afterwards often seem far worse than you remembered at the time."

He thinks the key to being a good SOCO is being methodical, having an eye for detail and a lot of patience - all



of which stood him in good stead to win the award while on the Crime Scene Examination, Development Course which all SOCOs attend two years after having completed their initial course.

Interest in scenes of crime work has increased over the past few years due to television dramas. Doron said: "There is an awful lot about forensic work and scenes of crime on TV. Because of the dramas, people think that results will appear a lot more quickly than they actually do.

"It is not as glamorous as on the TV. There's a lot more paperwork for a start - but I heartily recommend the job - three years in I still thoroughly enjoy it."





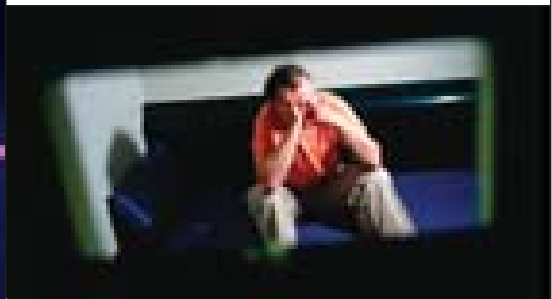
## Reading Festival rapist

DNA enabled detectives hunting a man who raped a 16-year-old schoolgirl at the Reading Festival last year to pick out their suspect from tens of thousands of revellers.

Up to 100,000 people attended the festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend, so the DNA evidence was a vital clue.

However, thanks to the excellent work of officers who arrived at the scene first and preserved the evidence, a DNA match was found.

Close liaison with other forces led to the arrest of 24-year-old Chad Kaminski in Hertfordshire a month later and he was found guilty of the rape by a jury at Reading Crown Court in April. He was sentenced to six years in prison and received a further four months for absconding during the trial.



## DNA strikes again

A man is serving 12 years in jail after DNA evidence connected him to a series of indecent assaults and indecent exposures.

Operation Diffusion was set up after the assaults in Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire. While officers visited one of the scenes they spotted a man loitering who matched descriptions given by victims. The man was arrested and DNA samples were taken, which were later matched to offences in both force areas.

On April 20 at Luton Crown Court Mark Lerveno, 35, pleaded guilty to offences including six indecent assaults and three indecent exposures.

**Between April 2001 and March 2002 5,985 DNA samples were taken from prisoners in the Thames Valley. There have also been 1,379 DNA hits, where samples have been matched fully or partially against the national DNA database.**





# Drugs

Over the year there have been 5,099 drug seizures by our officers. This comprises of 555,709 grammes of drugs including ecstasy, cannabis, cocaine, crack, heroin, LSD and amphetamine.

## Break down recovery

One hundred kilos of cannabis resin was seized after Chieveley traffic base officers attended a broken down vehicle on the M4 in July last year. The driver and passenger were arrested.

## Persistence pays off

Underwater Search Unit officers got their reward after going back to a house they had previously searched and finding £100,000 worth of heroin.

The house search in Bracknell in August also uncovered £17,000 cash seized as evidence.

## Cocaine seizure

Following information from the National Crime Squad, Bicester and Amersham traffic officers stopped a car on the M40 in September and found around two kilos of cocaine worth more than £225,000.

## Crime doesn't pay

A drug dealer was imprisoned and his property was confiscated in September last year after the seizure of £800,000 worth of heroin.

The man from Marlow was sentenced to nine years in prison following the discovery of four kilograms of heroin by the Crime and Drugs Investigation Unit. Work by the Financial Intelligence Unit also led to £268,000 worth of property being seized.

## Major hoard

Drugs worth up to £8.5m were found at an amphetamine laboratory in Milton Keynes last October.

Four people were remanded in custody following the discovery, which included 80kg of amphetamines and 200kg of cannabis.

## Leg work

Protection Group officers spent six days in December carrying out a detailed search of a small holding in Sindlesham near Reading operating as an amphetamine "factory".

As a result of their search drugs with a street value of £3.8m were recovered, including cannabis resin, imported into the country by concealing it in pine table legs.

Following on from the search, which also uncovered £1m of counterfeit currency, a second search was conducted in Essex by Thames Valley officers, and printing equipment, plates and transparencies were seized.

## Putting dealers in the dock

Officers in West Oxfordshire secured the conviction and imprisonment of five heroin dealers.

Following Operation Vespa, which led to the five dealers going to jail and a dearth of heroin in the patch, associated crime



**A drugs gang dealing in and around Milton Keynes was put behind bars following an operation by the Crime and Drugs Investigation Unit.**



dropped. This included car crime, bag and mobile phone snatches committed by addicts to get cash to feed their habit. This contributed to a 14 per cent drop in crime in West Oxfordshire.

### **Operation Venus**

A drugs gang dealing in and around Milton Keynes was put behind bars following an operation by the Crime and Drugs Investigation Unit.

As a result of the investigation six offenders appeared before Aylesbury Crown Court for sentencing in October last year. Alan Morris, the prime offender, was sentenced to eight years imprisonment for conspiracy to supply cocaine and five years for conspiracy to supply cannabis, both sentences are to run concurrently. Gavin McNicoll and



Andrew Partlow received six and five years respectively and three other offenders were sentenced to shorter terms of imprisonment and suspended sentences for related offences.

In March, thanks to the work of the Financial Investigation Unit, at Luton Crown Court Morris' assets of £93,000 were confiscated and a further order to seize £250,000 was made. Failure to pay the order will result in an additional two years to Morris's sentence.



# A leading, caring and professional police service

## Helping to rebuild lives

Every year Taplow Traffic Charity Trust helps children bereaved through road collisions by raising money to give them two days of make believe at Disneyland Paris.

The trip gives them a chance to share their experience with others in similar situations and in many cases helps them to move forward. Each child is accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Money is raised through donations from local businesses, Thames Valley Police charity funds and a raffle. This year £10,000 was raised to cover all costs for the group of 28 including flight, accommodation and spending money for the children.

The registered charity is administered by two officers, Inspector Steve Thwaites and Pc Martin Harper, and has as patrons Chief Constable Peter Neyroud and Baroness Flather of Windsor and Maidenhead, JP, DL.

The grandparents of a two-and-a-half-year-old girl who went on the trip after she lost her father wrote: "Please take this as a very personal huge thank you for arranging the trip to EuroDisney. We had a great time and, of course, Disney is the best place to be to leave all the sadness behind and enjoy the magic of the park. Believe me you do a really worthwhile job."

For more information please visit their website on [www.ttcharitytrust.org.uk](http://www.ttcharitytrust.org.uk)

## Building bridges overseas

Slough police area has been swapping experience with officers from the Royal Anguillan Police Force.

Slough, which has the largest community of Anguillians outside the Caribbean, played host to Supt Ilidge Richardson for two weeks in September last year. During his stay he went on patrol with officers in

the town and learned more about the Force's pioneering approach to problem solving through restorative justice.

In return Crime Prevention Design Advisor Pc Dave Stubbs visited the Anguillan force to give advice on creating a more secure environment in and around Government buildings, following a burglary at the country's Treasury building.

## Video a hit with parades

Thames Valley became one of the first Forces in the country to sign up to a revolutionary new system for identity parades.

The VIPER (Video Identification Parade Electronic Recording) system speeds up the process by using a library of people captured on video for "virtual" identity parades, cutting down the time it usually takes to find local people suitable to take part.

The system was installed in St Aldates police station Oxford, by the creators, West Yorkshire Police. The system is only used with the suspect's permission and they can also pick suitable candidates from the library of the 6,000 images.

A video image is then taken of the suspect and shown to witnesses, along with the other images taken from the library. In effect it is exactly the same as a traditional ID parade but the use of electronic images is potentially less intimidating for vulnerable witnesses and can result in a faster process.

## Training professionals

The Force is committed to giving its staff the training they need to do their jobs effectively.

The Training, Education and Development department is responsible for meeting the training needs of new staff as well as ensuring existing staffs' needs are met. As the number of new recruits has gone up, this has led to a 25 per cent increase in the amount of staff trained compared to last year, from 4,401 to 5,656.





This has included a full programme of stress and sickness awareness training which has contributed to a significant reduction in sickness.

The Force has supported 91 staff to study in their own time to work towards qualifications in career related subjects. In the last year around 30 per cent of the total workforce also received some form of IT training.

## Healthy option

At the start of the financial year the Police Authority introduced a scheme to ensure sick or injured staff were fighting fit for work as soon as possible.

The Optima Health Scheme is an option for police officers and civilian staff who are off sick or on restricted duties and face a long wait for treatment on the NHS.

Funding of £300,000 per year has been put aside by the Police Authority for the scheme. The first year has shown there were 225 referrals made, saving a total of 25,750 days of NHS waiting time. The potential saving in lost time is estimated to be £2.6 million.

## Improving performance

Performance management inspections are continuously carried out on departments and areas to ensure consistency and quality across the Force.

The reviews focus on staff management, how information and intelligence are used and recorded, the structure of the area or department team, financial management and how processes can be improved.

## September 11

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on America on September 11 our Family Liaison Officers gave support to the relatives of Britons caught up in the disaster.

Two specially trained officers flew out to New York, shortly after the attacks, along with 18 others from the Metropolitan Police and Home Counties forces.

Their role was to assist British families who arrived at the New York briefing centre. The Force has 26 accredited officers who provide care, support and information to families affected by major crime.

DCs Kath Gorman and Colin Hall spent two weeks in the city. Kath said: "We arranged hotels and transport, took the families to Ground Zero and liaised with the American authorities to provide any information and support that was available."

Colin said: "At first people were coming over hoping to find their relatives alive, or at least take home bodies. Though when people saw the full extent of Ground Zero, the hope disappeared and the enormity of the situation began to sink in."

Kath and Colin worked out there for two weeks, then Dcs Dave Bowler and Chris Silman were sent out. A team of officers in the Thames Valley was also on hand to help relatives over here, who had family missing as a result of the attack.

Following the attacks Slough Area Commander Anton Setchell met with local community leaders to urge calm and Milton Keynes Area Commander Michael Page wrote to the 50 American companies in the area to offer



reassurance and support. Forcewide, patrols were stepped up to protect vulnerable sites.

## On the case

Civilian case workers were introduced in Oxford to ease the paperwork burden on officers and allow them to spend more time on the streets.

The four case workers began in February and are responsible for obtaining statements and completing files necessary to progress court cases. They were the first of their kind in the Thames Valley and work is now ongoing to extend the role across the Force.

## Service Improvement Programme

The way we communicate with the public and between ourselves and other partners will be changing significantly thanks to the hard work and preparation carried out this year.

The Service Improvement Programme aims to use new technology to change call handling and crime recording and investigation for the better, by making the police service more accessible to our local communities and increasing officer visibility.

This will be achieved by implementing two new police enquiry centres (PECs), two new control rooms, centralising crime recording, introducing a new digital radio system for our officers and making increasing use of the internet.

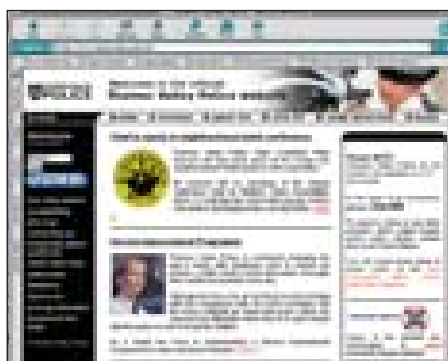
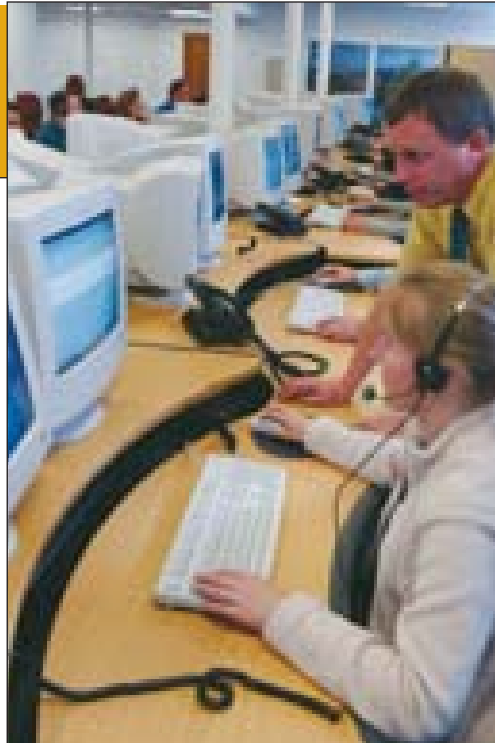
In the last year the new PECs have been made ready for service, two of the seven original control rooms have been closed and their duties transferred in preparation for the eventual reduction to two. The 999 service has also been centralised to make best use of resources. We have also been working closely with mmO<sub>2</sub>, which is implementing a new national radio network for the police and other emergency services.

## Tooled up for the job

An increase in recruitment has led to greater demands on behind the scenes support to ensure everyone has the equipment they need.

The Procurement Department is responsible for ensuring value for money goods and services for the Force:

- The introduction of new Airwave radio technology and the wider Service Improvement Programme, has been a significant task for the department, including finding appropriate contractors for hardware and software for the new police enquiry centres.
- All officers are being issued with personal issue body armour to ensure they have the right equipment for their personal safety.



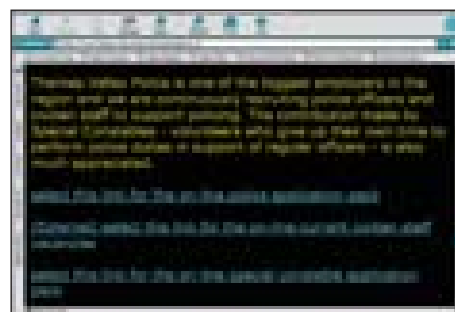
Thanks to the work of the Procurement Department savings of £100,000 have been made to the original estimated cost.

- Working with other forces to buy standard items in bulk, rather than negotiating on an individual basis, has saved the Force £2m over the last four years on personal computers alone.
- Work is also ongoing for a joint furniture contract, led once again by Thames Valley. Participation in the national arrangements for office-based software has resulted in savings in excess of £120,000 this year on behalf of Thames Valley Police.

## Everybody's surfing

A commitment by Thames Valley Police to become even more accessible was expanded into cyberspace.

A new-look website was launched in June last year which not only made navigation simpler but was also one of



the first police websites in the country to be specially adapted to allow greater accessibility for people with impaired sight or other disabilities.

New features include a search engine for people to get directly to the information they require, keyboard access for people who have difficulty using computer mice or other pointing devices, and a text version using BETSIE (BBC Education Text to Speech Internet Enhancer). BETSIE allows people with text-to-speech systems to "listen" to internet pages.



The site was also expanded to include information about firearms and shotgun certificates with downloadable application forms, updated special constable pages with downloadable application packs and forms, a summary of the Police Authority's annual plan and information about the recovery and removal of abandoned vehicles.

A rolling news feature on the home page also ensures surfers can keep up to date with what is happening in the Thames Valley on a daily basis.

Assistant Chief Constable Julie Spence, who heads Corporate Development, said: "We know that the web is becoming more and more a part of people's everyday lives and that no organisation can afford to be without a vibrant and informative site.

"People seeking non-emergency advice or information should make our website their first port of call. We hope they can find the answer to the question which would usually have to be directed at one of our members of staff. By using the web they should get those answers in a much more efficient way."

The Thames Valley Police website, which can be found at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk), has received around 1.2 million visitors this year. The site has 2182 pages and 27,942 links, including 2593 external links.

## Staff profile

**Name: Kevin Ellis**

**Age: 43**

**Role: Area Beat Officer and shift officer in Milton Keynes, Public Order, Support Group. Current role is Firearms Instructor.**

**Time in Force: 18 years**

PC Kevin Ellis is a good man to have around in a crisis. If you're not sure what to do he usually has at least three or four options to offer.

Unfortunately, when Kevin was a shift officer among 200 patrolling officers in his Milton Keynes patch, it was unlikely he was going to be at their side when they needed him most. Because of that he developed the Streetcraft programme.

Kevin, who is recognised both nationally and internationally as an officer safety training expert, had returned to patrolling duties at Milton Keynes after spending seven years as a public order instructor.

He said: "When I went back to shift I found tonnes of motivation and tonnes of enthusiasm and a lot of ability. What was missing was the ongoing development of the officers' skills and their role. The old style craft that was passed down the line from senior officer to junior officer had gone".

He felt his fellow patrol officers were not given proper training as individuals and within their teams to develop them for

the challenges they faced on a daily basis. All training was abstracted and often officers and supervisors never trained with people they worked with.

The management team on Milton Keynes Police Area was prepared to give Kevin the support he needed to develop Streetcraft. He said: "If a senior officer trusts you and gives you the opportunity, you work for them because you want to do a good job. No individual can change anything without people above them listening."

As a result Streetcraft was developed to provide officers with once-a-month training within their working teams taking them through practical scenarios. These scenarios are based on issues raised by the officers themselves. To assist in operational matters every officer in Milton Keynes is given a pocket-size book with tips on how to handle incidents ranging from dealing with a major incident to conducting a search.

Strategically Milton Keynes needed to re-structure to improve areas that were identified as a result of the initial Streetcraft survey conducted with over 400 officers from Milton Keynes. This included appointing full time briefing officers and making patrol sergeants beat managers, giving them autonomy to manage their shift on the streets. As a result of Streetcraft officers have become more confident and overall performance has improved, leading to a rise in the detection rate from 18 per cent to 30 per cent last year. There has also been a decline in injuries and a sickness level drop of two days per officer.

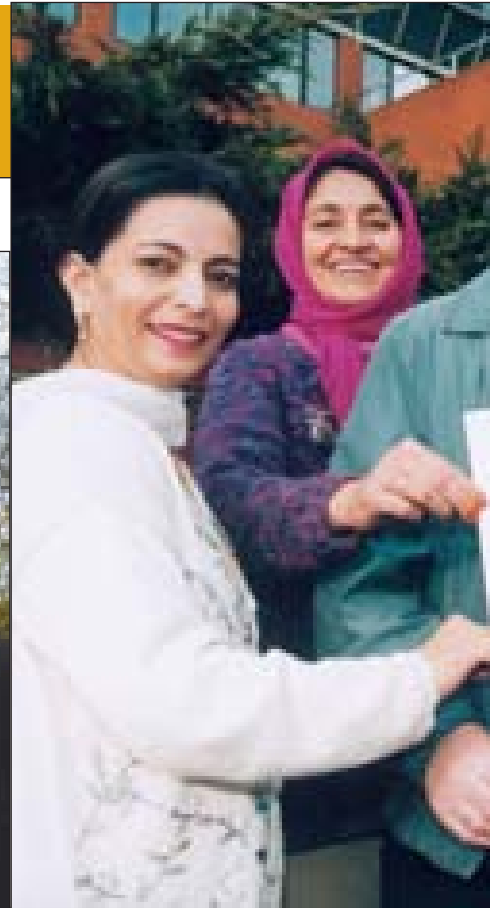
The remarkable results of the project led to Kevin receiving the Shrievalty Merit Award, created by the High Sheriffs of Berks, Bucks and Oxon to reward officers deemed by the Chief Constable to have brought credit to the service.

Kevin, believes the ability to challenge and change things is one of the most important qualities for a good officer. He said: "You don't need to be Superman or super fit. You need to have a combination of different things. You need to be observant, inquisitive and need to challenge when necessary - the same as you would in any responsible job. "Ultimately we as individuals are responsible for our working environment, and we can make a difference."

## Scaring the horses

Chatshow host Graham Norton made an effort to dress down so he wouldn't scare police horse Douglas at an official turf cutting.

This year Douglas, based at the Milton Keynes Police Station stables, was made patron of the new hospice for young people in Oxford, which will be known



## Our Protection Group assisted officers in Essex in July in the search for 15-year-old Danielle Jones who went missing from Tilbury.

as Douglas House. Douglas graciously shared the limelight with Graham, while taking a break from his usual chores of escorting the Queen, patrolling football matches and Milton Keynes Bowl events, eating buttonholes and stealing hats at Royal Ascot.

## Working in partnership

The Chiltern Air Support helicopter crew from Benson in Oxfordshire stepped in to help Bedfordshire deal with the major public order outbreak and fire at Yarlwood Detention Centre in February.

Chiltern Air Support works as a consortium with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces. Due to the Luton-based crew being unavailable the Benson crew stepped in. They also assisted the fire service by taking a station officer up with them for a bird's eye view of the scene in order to develop appropriate fire fighting techniques. Footage from the crew was later used on national news.

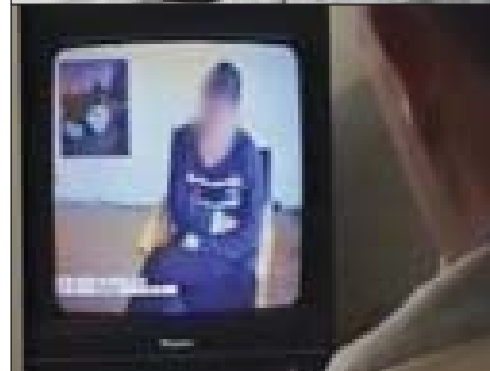
## Supporting victims of violence

Reading with Wokingham's domestic violence unit has been praised for its work in securing a 15-month prison sentence for a man who beat his girlfriend and then refused to take her to hospital.

Small, 39, punched his girlfriend in the face so hard that he split the inside of her mouth, causing her to have nine stitches. He admitted assault occasioning actual bodily harm and was sentenced at Reading Crown Court in May.

The success of the case was largely down to the work of the officers, but also the courage of Small's girlfriend, who bravely supported the case throughout.

It is hoped that the substantial sentence received by Small and the professional service his victim received from the





police will encourage other victims of domestic violence to come forward.

A conference held in Buckinghamshire in March included representatives from Thames Valley Police, the Probation Service, county and district councils, Citizens Advice Bureau, Victim Support, Rape Crisis, the Samaritans and Women's Aid.

The conference aim was to share best practice with other counties, raising awareness of the issues surrounding domestic violence and ensuring a standardised service to all victims across the county.

## Breaking the language barrier

A new team of volunteers at Reading are helping officers deal with other languages by offering a unique interpreting service.

The five members of the team spend 20 hours a week at the station's front desk to help with residents who speak Urdu, Swahili or Punjabi. The scheme was set up by the area's volunteer manager.



## Under the influence of cyberspace

Members of the public were this year invited to use the world wide web to influence the future of policing in the Thames Valley.

Every year communities have the chance to put their views forward while the Police Authority's annual policing plan is being developed. The plan sets out priorities and targets for the financial year, including targets for the detection and reduction of crime.

Public meetings and forums are held, but the Police Authority members were conscious that many members of the public were unable to attend and participate.

In an effort to consult as widely as possible, and include people who may otherwise not have the opportunity to put their views forward, a feedback form was launched in August last year on the Force website.

The form remains on the website at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk). Mrs Penny Elvin, chairman of the Police Authority, said: "By providing this facility on the Force website people will be able to give us their views quickly and at their convenience. We look forward to hearing from you."

## Queen Mother's funeral

More than 15,000 people lined the streets of Windsor in early April to pay their last respects to the Queen Mother.

The funeral attracted one of the largest crowds ever seen for a royal event in the town and involved more than 300 Thames Valley officers and 85 Special Constables. The support of the Specials meant that fewer full time officers had to be taken from their frontline policing duties.



Our Protection Group officers also provided mutual aid to the Metropolitan Police for the Westminster Abbey service, by providing close protection officers for the Royal Family and other VIPs.

This was only one of several high profile operations for our Protection Group, who also worked on Princess Margaret's funeral in February, and state visits at Windsor including the South African President Mbeki in June and King Hussein of Jordan's visit in November.

## Special attention

Speeding drivers and car thieves were put in the spotlight by Special Constables in Bracknell.

Residents had made a number of complaints about the problems so the Specials worked with area beat officers to identify where the trouble spots were and the times the problem was at its worst.

As a result of a sustained commitment to the problem it has now diminished. As the aim was for the Specials to be a visible deterrent, most of the 280 drivers stopped were given a warning, rather than a ticket.



## Taking action

Acting on behaviour Special Constables took action against anti-social behaviour in Aylesbury this year.

The area had been getting a high number of calls about youths causing a nuisance, so in response Specials were sent to the "hotspots" which were mainly in rural areas.

Since taking this positive action the behaviour has improved and the patrols have also had a reduction effect on burglary and car crime.

## Homes fit for workers

A Thames Valley officer was one of the first in the country to take advantage of the Government's Starter Homes Initiative.



## Team profile

**Name: Counter Terrorist Wing**

**Role: To respond to potential terrorist and explosive incidents using specialist skills and search equipment, including the use of dogs trained to detect explosives.**

The threat of terrorist attack became uppermost in a lot of people's minds following the September 11 tragedy.

Within the Force there is a dedicated team of specialists who deal with the terrorist threat on a daily basis.

The team of five constables, one civilian and civilian supervisor John Howells, will deal in an average year with more than 600 searches, more than 160 bomb threats or suspect packages and around 130 chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incidents, including last year a number of white powder incidents - where letters had to be checked for anthrax or other contaminants.

While there are obvious dangers to the job, John feels the right approach minimises the risk. He said: "It is a dangerous game, but policing is a dangerous game. The danger is minimised by good training and good procedures. You don't just steam into the building, if a device is in there you have procedures to go through."

The team are alerted in the first instance, and will advise senior commanders on the

best options for managing incidents, liaising with other specialist agencies where appropriate.

John and his team were instrumental in introducing Operation Felix, a response to suspect packages. This came about due to the number of hoax threats which could have led to mass evacuations and closures while searches were conducted. The controlled response now means that the threat is assessed and treated appropriately.

The team received the Shrievalty Merit Award this year from the High Sheriffs of Berks, Bucks and Oxon, in recognition of their work. John, who was a police officer for 30 years, was also invited to take part in the Services Parade in London to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee this year.

The ability to keep your head is probably the most important part of the role. John said: "You need a natural ability to convey calmness. When we are dealing with incidents there is a lot of pressure and a lot of stress. If a bomb threat comes in people are looking to us for advice. They don't want to see us panicking."

You also need to love dogs. The team use Spaniels, Labradors and Collies. They are hard working breeds who can squeeze into small spaces to search. Each member of the team has their own dog, who becomes part of the family. John, whose canine partner is Springer Buddy, said: "You have got to love these animals - you are likely to see more of your dog than your families, as you are with them all day."

Under the national scheme key worker employers like Thames Valley Police work with local authorities and housing associations to provide decent, affordable housing.

We have been allocated Housing Corporation funding for 171 homes over a three year period for our staff.

The 32-year-old constable, who works in Slough, said: "This was an excellent opportunity for me to buy some affordable accommodation. It is difficult for police officers to find places they can afford in the South East. There are many reasons people want to join Thames Valley, but often we are held back by the high cost of living."



# Police 2001

Last year the Force decided to throw open its doors once again to the documentary film maker Roger Graef - 20 years after his first controversial series about Thames Valley Police.

The "fly-on-the-wall" documentary Roger produced in 1981 was one of the first of its kind produced on policing. One particular episode, A Complaint Of Rape, led to far reaching changes in the way rape victims were treated and questioned.

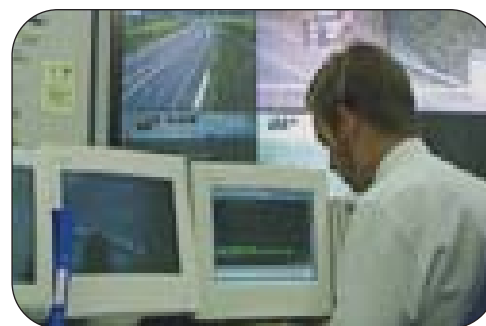
Twenty years on the award-winning film maker was commissioned by the BBC to return to the Thames Valley to show the public once again the hard reality of policing.

Roger and his crew spent four months last summer following officers in Reading and in special departments like the Family Protection Unit. He also followed a successful raid in West Berkshire (detailed on page 46). As well as major operations like a protest in Oxford, the film also showed worked carried out with persistent young offenders, a typical night shift in Reading and the work of the Oxford autocrime team.

The two-hour documentary, broadcast in November, illustrated the fact that police activity is too complex to be measured in crude results like number of arrests or crime figures.

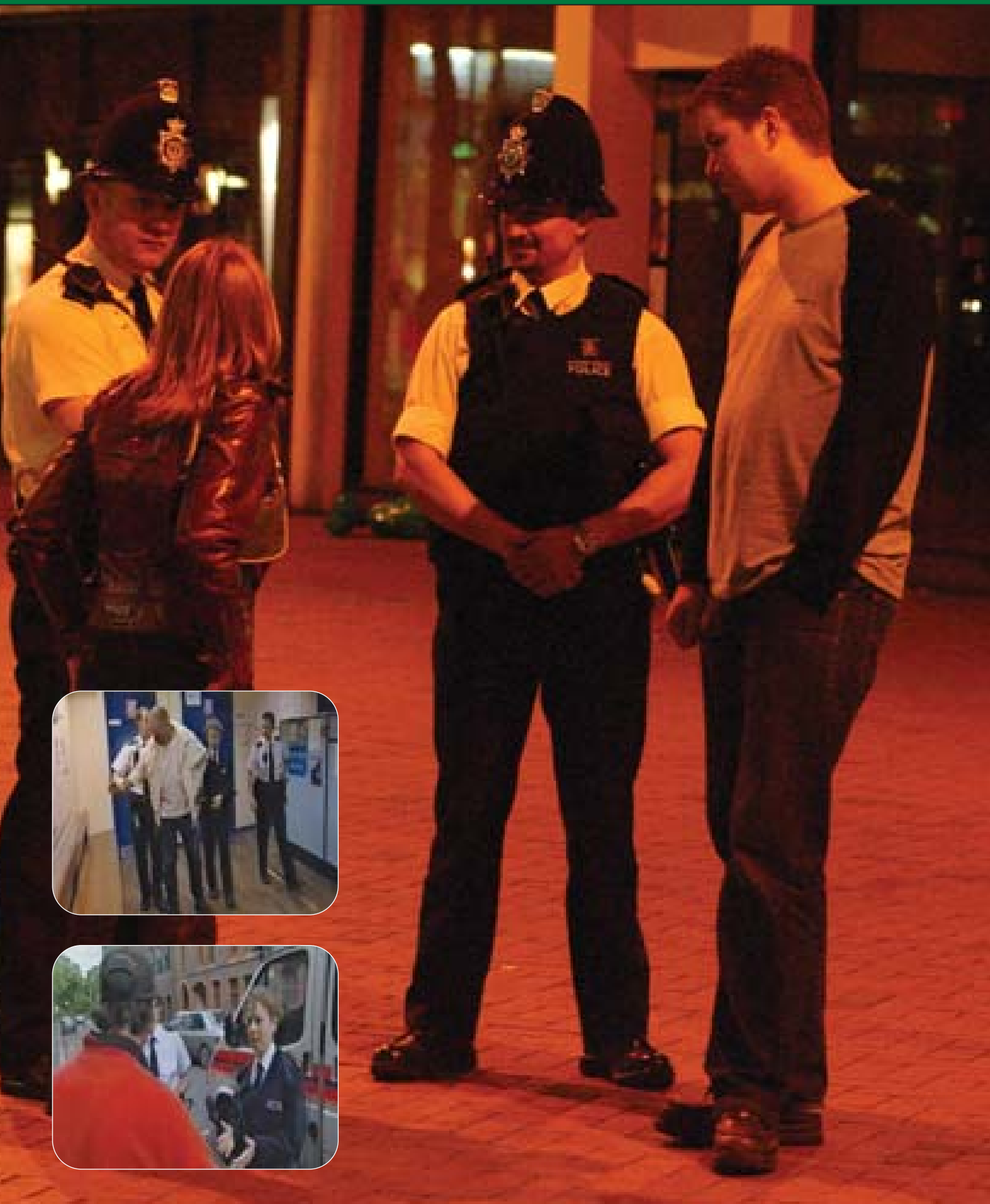
Chief Constable Sir Charles Pollard said: "One of the main reasons why I decided to allow Roger Graef to come back to Thames Valley was because I want the public to see what policing is really about.

"I hoped the programme would improve understanding of police work and would reassure the public that we have some outstanding officers out there whose professionalism, attitude and patience is second to none."



After filming Roger said: "Time and time again the officers in Thames Valley spent hours dealing with situations where there was no arrest at the end - but they kept the peace and kept people safe. I think it is important that people realise this is what modern policing is all about and that whether crime rates go up or down is nothing much to do with what's really going on out there."

After the broadcast people were invited to make comments on the Thames Valley website. One member of the public, who was considering becoming a police officer, wrote: "At the end of the programme my wife asked me if I had second thoughts. I would be lying if I said no, the hours are terrible and it would mean a drop in pay. However, the situation won't improve by a lack of action. I will still apply."



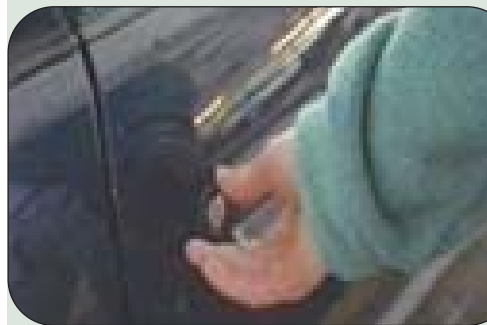
## Operation Fleur

West Berkshire's largest ever crackdown on heroin resulted in 24 arrests, 47 years of prison for the offenders and an immediate reduction in crime.

Operation Fleur, which culminated in a series of drugs warrants being executed on July 4 last year in Newbury, came about due to a massive increase in the supply of heroin which had resulted in



**West Berkshire's largest ever crackdown on heroin resulted in 24 arrests, 47 years of prison for the offenders and an immediate reduction in crime.**



three drug related deaths and an 18 per cent increase in recorded drug offences.

Enforcement was having little effect on drug dependency and criminal activity as street level dealers were being replaced as fast as officers could arrest them.

Alternative action was needed so a three-phase plan was formed starting with a dedicated team working undercover gathering intelligence. The next stage was planning 17 simultaneous search warrants involving 200 officers. Final phase was ensuring eviction notices were served on dealers by the local housing authority and that treatment and support was available for users wishing to kick the habit.

Within weeks crime levels in West Berkshire plummeted. By the end of July house burglaries had fallen by 38 per cent, theft from cars had dropped by more than half and shoplifting offences had fallen by 66 per cent, compared with the same period the previous year.



Area Commander Frank Sullivan said: "I believe we achieved some real long term preventative measures with this operation, including people receiving treatment for their addiction. Working with West Berks Council, the Drug Action Team, Sovereign Housing and SMART has helped to achieve this.

"But without the hard work of the officers involved it would not have been as successful. They were flexible, enthusiastic and determined."

## Team profile

**Name: The Oxford Autocrime team**  
**Role: to combat the growing problem of car crime in the city.**

The Oxford Autocrime team was formed by DCI Paul Emmings in December 2000.

Since then, the team, which is led by Sgt John Clayton, has had a massive impact in tackling car crime in Oxford and are continuing to do so.

Sgt Clayton works with one detective constable and four police constables on a rotation of six-month secondments. Last year, the team was awarded the Force Shrievalty Merit award, jointly with EOD, which is given to the unit or units which have brought the most credit to the Force.

Part of their success has been down to a new way of dealing with offenders, which



mostly commit car crime to fund their drug habits. Instead of the normal arrest, charge, imprisonment routine, John and the team have pioneered Drug Treatment and Testing Orders for offenders, and maintain these are significantly harder on the offender than any custodial sentence.

Should they fail to complete the DTTO, which is indefinite according to their addiction as oppose to a finite



sentence, they return to court to be sentenced in full for their crimes.

They also work closely with local youth offending teams and have stopped the majority of offences committed by young people, as defined under the Children and Young Person Act, with a 15 per cent drop on last year (2001) and a 75 per cent detection rate.

Sgt Clayton said: "I think we have been successful because we target specific offenders, and take things such as DTTOs and use it as problem solving policing, not just putting people inside. Unless you stop the vicious circle of crime and drugs, they are never going to get off them, and that is the root of the problem. We are tackling that root."

The team which worked on autocrime last year prior to receiving the merit award were Sgt Clayton, DC Roger Lamboll, Sgt Mark Ponting, PC Sarah Hancock, DC Steve Jones, PC Sian Jones and PC Beth Walton.

# The Search for Truth

## - Chiefs' Challenge Criminal Justice "Game"

Thames Valley is leading a major national campaign urging radical reform of the criminal justice system.

Chief Constable Sir Charles Pollard set the ball rolling in January to transform the trial from a game, which criminals are winning all too easily, to a search for truth.

Peter Neyroud then took the lead following Sir Charles' retirement in February.

Following a major media campaign which was heightened in March, the Home Secretary David Blunkett vowed to change the system.

The Chiefs' took action due to officers becoming increasingly frustrated that criminals are taking advantage of a host of legal technicalities to get off the hook while often witnesses are intimidated and victims are ignored.

They acted in response to two major Government papers, The Way Ahead which looked at broad criminal justice issues, and Lord Justice Auld's Criminal Courts Review.

The campaign is supported by Sir John Stevens, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir David Phillips, President of the Association of Chief Police Officers, and National Crime Squad Director General Mr William Hughes.

Sir Charles said: "There have been several reviews of the courts over the years and all of them reach the same conclusion - that the trial process has become a game instead of a search for truth. However, none of them have resulted in the radical change which is so desperately needed."

The campaign proposes a number of reforms, including putting victims at the centre of the system, instead of the periphery, as well as mandatory defence disclosure, effective pre-trial mechanisms and an overhaul of archaic rules of evidence which mean crucial facts are not put before the jury.

Sir Charles said: "In the past every attempt at real reform has been hijacked by the need to give the advantage to the

defendant. While we have no intention of altering that right, our justice system must also respect victims' rights. Unless this happens public confidence will continue to plummet."

The campaign gained momentum in March when the Commissioner, Sir John, gave a speech at Leicester University describing how victims and witnesses were treated with "utter contempt".

Mr Neyroud spoke publicly of his support for the Commissioner's views and said: "The reaction of the press and public to this campaign was inevitable because it goes against the British sense of fair play that criminals are getting away with it thanks to intimidation, red tape and technicalities.

"Some lawyers have warned that our suggested reforms might lead to a police state but that is nonsense, as the public has nothing to fear and everything to gain from effective justice."

The Home Secretary then echoed Mr Neyroud and Sir John's views in the News of the World and said: "Too often those who have suffered crime are treated with indifference or disrespect, and valuable witnesses as irritants. Sometimes it can seem that the whole system is geared towards the person in the dock, not the person who has been left traumatised by crime."

Mr Neyroud is confident that the Government is taking the police's concerns seriously and said: "The recent changes in the Home Office signal to me that the criminal justice reform is right at the centre of the Government's agenda and not before time. However, such reform must not be carried out in a partisan way and it must be cross-agency. It is no good to tinker with one bit of the system and hope that better things will follow from the rest. This means all of us - police, courts, lawyers and probation, need to play a part in making the reforms work."

[www.thamesvalley.police.uk/acpo/index.htm](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/acpo/index.htm)





# Awards and Commendations

## **Citation for Shrievalty Merit Award - Team Winner (joint) Oxford Auto-Crime Unit**

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The Oxford Auto-Crime Unit has pioneered a scheme to help offenders break free from a vicious circle of drugs and crime. See pages 46-47.

## **Citation for Shrievalty Merit Award - Team Winner (joint) The Explosive Ordnance Department**

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The Explosive Ordnance Department is a small and highly efficient team which provides invaluable support, assistance and guidance in relation to searching and security issues, including the location of explosives. See page 43.

## **Citation for Shrievalty Merit Award - Individual Winner PC Kevin Ellis**

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Constable Kevin Ellis is one of the most respected operational police officers within Thames Valley Police.

His contribution towards officer safety training and personal protection issues is widely acknowledged, both in the British police service and abroad. See page 39.

## **Chief Constable's Higher Commendation**

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**Constable Mark Poulton and Constable David Elder** are awarded a Chief Constable's Higher Commendation for their courage during an incident where a man had fallen through ice into a marina.

They mounted a very brave rescue attempt which put their own lives in danger. Despite the danger to themselves due to the actions of a very disorientated casualty, they managed to keep him afloat until support from other emergency services arrived.

There is little doubt that they saved the life of the man and that their actions were in the very highest traditions of the police service.

## **Chief Constable's Commendations**

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**Constable Jeremy May** is commended for his prompt action and outstanding commitment while off duty, in pursuing and effecting the arrest of a suspect, recovering the proceeds of a robbery and restraining the offender until uniform police officers arrived at the scene.

**Detective Sergeant Geoffrey Webb** is commended for his tenacious effort and diligence in the detailed preparation of forensic evidence and overall case management which led to the successful conviction of four defendants for offences of robbery and grievous bodily harm.

**Detective Constable Graham Pheby and Detective Constable Nigel Haynes** are commended for their dedication and professionalism whilst acting as Family Liaison Officers during the investigation of a particularly brutal murder. Their patience, sympathy and support over an extended period of time helped relatives of the deceased through what was a very harrowing experience.

**Inspector Steve Hockin, Police Sergeant Paul Creffield, Detective Constable Chris Nutt, Detective Constable Kim Bishop, Detective Constable Lee Hughes, Detective Constable Ian Seymour, Detective Superintendent Ray Lejeune** are commended for their dedication to duty, tenacity and professionalism throughout Operation Chronic. This operation was complex and protracted and involved surveillance, test purchase and undercover work over a nine month period to secure the arrest, conviction and imprisonment of ten major drug dealers.

**Sergeant Iona Rowberry, Constable Clare Woodland and Constable Darren Bates** are commended for their courage and professionalism when they jumped into the fast flowing and very cold Kennet and Avon Canal in an attempt to save an elderly lady who had fallen in. Despite their efforts, and that of a member of the public, they were unable to save her.

**Constable Michael Shaw** is commended for his courage, tenacity and dedication to duty whilst trying to rescue a collapsed diabetic male from his smoke-filled home. Despite being forced back due to the intensity of the smoke fumes on his first attempt, PC Shaw re-entered the property and recovered the casualty.

**Acting Sergeant Martin Jubb, Sergeant Stephen Warren, Constable Simon Tiffin and Special Constable Karen Harrison** are commended for their professionalism and dedication at the scene of a fatal shooting incident at Pangbourne. They administered first aid to two men until the arrival of paramedics.

**Detective Sergeant Michael Cronin and Detective Constable Andrew Mottau** are commended for their professional and thorough investigation into an offence of armed robbery for which a man was sentenced to life imprisonment at Aylesbury Crown Court.

**Constable Barry Payne** is commended for his professionalism and bravery whilst acting alone and arresting two violent offenders. Despite being attacked and subjected to a severe assault by a large number of people, he managed to detain the two main offenders.

**Inspector Carl Borges** is commended for his dedication, initiative and hard work in leading and contributing to a team that has undertaken outstanding work, in extreme hardship, providing policing services to the people of Kosovo. This mission is of enormous importance to the future peace of the region.

The Chief Constable would like to recognise the outstanding work by all Thames Valley police officers who are serving, or who have served in Kosovo and Bosnia, however, this officer's contribution has been particularly exceptional and he has been commended by the Deputy Director of the Kosovo Police Service School.

**Detective Inspector Robert Stirling, Detective Sergeant Amanda Dansey, Detective Constable John Webb, Detective Constable Jacqueline Brierley, Constable Fiona Pearce, Constable Tessa Snelgar, Detective Constable Nicola Porter** are commended for their investigative skills, professionalism and determination, when dealing with a man who had inflicted a regime of torture and sexual and physical degradation on his eight children and wife, over a period of 30 years. The offender was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment.

**Sergeant Gary Hughes and Detective Constable Keith Mutch** are commended for their outstanding investigative ability, tenacity and professionalism, relating to a serious and complex fraud lasting over five years, affecting hundreds of victims. Their actions were in the highest traditions of the police service.

**Sergeant Lindsay James and Constable Majid Mohseni** are commended for their decisiveness, courage and professionalism when they disarmed a man in possession of a firearm who had committed an offence of attempted robbery. The officers' actions were in the highest traditions of the police service.

**Detective Constable Roy Thornton** is commended for his determination and perseverance in ensuring the prosecution of a prolific drug dealer who ruled his clientele through fear and intimidation. As a result of DC Thornton's detective ability the offender was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

**Detective Constable Paul Howells and Detective Constable James Deans** are commended for their investigative skills resulting in the uncovering of serious sexual abuse of three very young children. One prolific and serious paedophile was sentenced to two concurrent periods of seven years imprisonment and a number of other paedophiles were arrested in connection with similar matters.

**Inspector Andrew Boyd, Detective Constable George Taylor and Detective Constable Barry Campbell** are commended for their exceptional level of commitment, dedication and professionalism over a prolonged period of time which proved to be crucial in securing the conviction of a highly sophisticated team of commercial drug suppliers.

**Jackie Blackmore, Area Commander's Secretary, Aylesbury**, is commended for her outstanding professionalism, loyalty and support over many years, enhancing policing in Buckinghamshire.

**Chief Area Officer David May, Special Constabulary, Thames Forest** is commended for his outstanding contribution to policing in the Thames Forest Area. David joined the Special Constabulary in July 1971 and since then has completed 30 years service and has shown a tremendous and selfless commitment to Thames Valley Police and the local community. His hard work and dedication is much admired and appreciated by his colleagues.



# Notifiable offences recorded by the police, by offence

## Number of offences recorded

Offence Group	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Violence Against The Person	10784	13870	14798	16646
Sexual Offences	879	1002	1010	1099
Burglary Dwelling	14434	15498	13222	13397
Burglary Non-Dwelling	16301	15687	14534	14401
Robbery	1327	1659	2147	2894
Theft and Handling	89616	96123	91582	94964
Fraud and Forgery	11778	14191	16085	15677
Criminal Damage	26006	28630	29719	32152
Other offences	5352	5215	4892	5750
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>176477</b>	<b>191875</b>	<b>187987</b>	<b>196980</b>

## Number of offences cleared up

Offence Group	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Violence Against The Person	8177	9432	10492	11638
Sexual Offences	532	527	430	447
Burglary Dwelling	4310	2398	2188	2696
Burglary Non-Dwelling	2313	1332	1248	2009
Robbery	401	388	534	749
Theft and Handling	15813	13099	14912	16634
Fraud and Forgery	2966	3025	3596	4123
Criminal Damage	4223	3936	4238	4658
Other offences	4730	4598	4322	5242
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43465</b>	<b>38735</b>	<b>41960</b>	<b>48196</b>

## Clear-up rate

Offence Group	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Violence Against The Person	75.8	68.0	70.9	69.9
Sexual Offences	60.5	52.6	42.6	40.7
Burglary Dwelling	29.9	15.5	16.5	20.1
Burglary Non-Dwelling	14.2	8.5	8.6	14.0
Robbery	30.2	23.4	24.9	25.9
Theft and Handling	17.6	13.6	16.3	17.5
Fraud and Forgery	25.2	21.3	22.4	26.3
Criminal Damage	16.2	13.7	14.3	14.5
Other offences	88.4	88.2	88.3	91.2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>24.5</b>



# Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984

Under part VI of the Act, 18 suspects were detained for more than 24 hours - but less than 36 hours and released without charge.

One warrant for further detention was applied for. Magistrates permitted an additional 48 hours of detention. The detained person was held for 46 hours under this warrant and then charged.

There was one intimate search conducted under Section 55, by suitable qualified people. The search was for drugs and heroin was found.

There were 15690 searches of people or vehicles made under Section 1, leading to 1893 arrests.

## Reasons for search

Searches made	Stolen property	Drugs	Firearms	Offensive weapons	Going equipped	Other	TOTAL
April (2001)	330	544	4	105	160	22	1165
May	377	539	8	94	143	36	1197
June	391	594	19	100	161	29	1294
July	365	490	19	123	192	44	1233
August	391	515	3	122	205	29	1265
Sept	391	529	9	88	162	27	1206
Oct	472	634	7	134	156	32	1435
Nov	340	481	45	64	165	53	1148
Dec	391	655	8	104	131	27	1316
Jan (2002)	431	567	1	102	171	29	1301
Feb	452	705	1	132	194	39	1523
March	421	752	1	191	199	43	1607
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4752</b>	<b>7005</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1359</b>	<b>2039</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>15690</b>

## Reasons for arrest

Searches made	Stolen property	Drugs	Firearms	Offensive weapons	Going equipped	Other	TOTAL
April (2001)	48	58	0	15	4	35	160
May	39	59	0	13	6	27	144
June	46	72	1	12	13	27	171
July	24	38	0	9	4	26	101
August	26	59	1	11	19	38	154
Sept	32	41	4	7	10	29	123
Oct	52	83	1	15	9	30	190
Nov	31	54	0	14	15	18	132
Dec	38	68	0	15	7	22	150
Jan (2002)	48	74	0	17	11	50	200
Feb	49	78	0	16	9	37	189
March	46	69	2	12	20	33	182
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>1893</b>



THAMES VALLEY POLICE AUTHORITY

# Annual Report 2001-2002





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# Introduction



The Police Authority and the Chief Constable each have a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Report, and historically these have been separate documents.

The report of the Chief Constable concentrates on the policing of Thames Valley, whilst that of the Authority comments upon the performance of the Force, and the decisions taken by the Authority to support its police officers in providing an 'efficient and effective' police service.

This very much involves a close working relationship between the Authority and the Chief Constable, and in recognition of this partnership working, it has been decided to publish a joint document, whilst still emphasising the independence of the Authority and its governance role, and the management of the Force by the Chief Constable.

We welcome your comments on the report itself and this new format, either by letter to:

The Clerk & Treasurer  
Thames Valley Police Authority  
Police Headquarters  
Kidlington  
Oxfordshire  
OX5 2NX

or by e-mail to: [tvpa@dial.pipex.com](mailto:tvpa@dial.pipex.com).

# Foreword

Our aim at the Police Authority is to secure an efficient and effective police service for you, the people of Thames Valley. This report outlines the type of work we have been engaged in over the last 12 months and the results achieved.

At a national level, we have been active in the discussions around police reform; these were formalised in the Police Reform Act which received Royal Assent in July 2002. At a local level as part of our role, we review current performance and activities and look at how resources are prioritised. Given the constraints in terms of police officer numbers which the Force has faced over the last 12 months, the Force has performed well. In particular, good results have been achieved in improving burglary detections - now hitting 20% - and in reducing working days lost through sickness - a reduction of over two days per person. A number of other areas have shown improvements in performance over last year. However, there is scope for yet further improvement and, in conjunction with the Force, we have looked at how this may be achieved on a sustainable basis in the future. For example, the Best Value review of Crime Investigation examined how investigation techniques may be improved; our review of Call Handling looked at how the Force can enhance the service it provides to you in dealing with general enquiries and also emergency calls.

We have explored how to make best use of the officer resource. In approving the budget for 2002/03, the Authority released £5.8 million to enable the Chief Constable to "free-up" a further 400 officers for front-line duties by civilianising some posts which do not require specific police skills. This redeployment process will take time and will be one which will be unfolding over the next 12 - 18 months; we will be monitoring progress closely. Support staff are an important resource, and we have also reviewed how they can be used more to enhance Force performance.

Police officer resource continues to present difficulties. Whilst recruitment of officers is going well, the number of experienced officers who are transferring to other forces is also on the increase. Much of this stems from the high cost of living within Thames Valley compared with other parts of the UK; there is also a £4,000 differential between the Metropolitan

Police pay and that of surrounding forces. We are working very actively with the Force to try and address this issue, for example, through various housing initiatives, and more flexible working patterns. You may be assured that we will continue to focus on this key area over the coming months.

In terms of financial resource, the Authority recorded an out-turn of less than 1% of underspend against its budget (full details are provided on page 11). I am delighted to say that, once again, we achieved the annual 2% efficiency saving, which is a requirement of Central Government, and received a favourable report from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in this respect.

The year has been a busy one and I am most grateful to my fellow Members for their hard work, their energy and their commitment. In particular, may I thank my predecessor Glenn Maybury for his significant contribution in his two years as Chairman. The Clerk and Treasurer and his staff have provided us with every support, my appreciation and thanks to them.

I cannot conclude my foreword without paying tribute to Sir Charles Pollard, who retired in January 2002, after 11 years as Chief Constable. He provided strong vision and leadership for the Force and did much to develop our partnership working over that period. He played a significant role in the development of Restorative Justice not only within Thames Valley but also at a national level. The Authority enjoyed a very good working relationship with him and I thank him for that. We wish him a long and contented retirement.

The Authority was delighted to appoint Peter Neyroud as his successor. He joined us in February 2002, and brings a wealth of experience with him which has already started to benefit the Force and the Authority. We look forward to working closely with him in the years to come.

Finally, I would ask that you let us know what you think about the policing within Thames Valley. Historically, the service "polices with the consent of the public". We want to hear your views, and welcome constructive comment.

  
**Penny Elvin, Chairman**

# What is the role of the Police Authority?

The 19 members make sure that Thames Valley Police are accountable to YOU, for what they do, and that you have a say in how you are policed.

The Authority has a legal responsibility to provide 'an efficient and effective' police service for the Thames Valley communities. Its other main powers contained in the Police Act 1996 are:

- To secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police service.
- To produce an Annual Policing Plan to include both national and local policing objectives, and to report at the end of the financial year in question on the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. The Plan will provide information about the policing priorities for the year, and the targets set for the Force.
- To produce a Best Value Performance Plan, identifying a five year programme of project reviews, to make sure local people can see a continuous improvement in the service from their local police.
- To approve the annual budget, and allocate resources.
- To appoint the Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constables.
- To consult widely with local people about the policing of their area.
- To set local policing priorities and targets for achievement by the Force.
- To keep itself informed about complaints against the police, which are investigated by the Force, and to determine any complaints against senior police officers.
- To monitor how well the police perform against the targets set by the Authority.
- To participate in Appeals Tribunals in relation to the conduct and efficiency of members of the Force.
- To publish an Annual Report.



The Authority has no direct responsibility for operational policing, this falling firmly within the remit of the Chief Constable, who has a duty to submit an annual report to the Authority on the policing of the Thames Valley.

The Authority receives regular formal and informal reports from the officers on operational matters, and can question the Chief Constable and his staff. The Chief Constable can also be required to submit a report on a particular operation that causes concern to the public.



Penny Elvin, Chairman  
Independent Member  
Milton Keynes



Lord Bradshaw,  
Vice Chairman  
Elected Member  
Wallingford



Barrie Patman,  
Vice Chairman  
Elected Member  
Wokingham



Ben Simpson,  
Vice Chairman  
Magistrate Member  
Oxford



Howard Springthorpe  
Clerk and Treasurer



Wendy Coates  
Independent Member  
Slough



Stephen Coventry  
Elected Member  
Milton Keynes



Margaret Dewar  
Elected Member  
Beaconsfield



Sally Hannon  
Elected Member  
Newbury



Garth Hobley  
Magistrate Member  
Milton Keynes



Patrick Magee  
Independent Member  
Westcote Barton



Glenn Maybury  
Independent Member  
Maidenhead



Peter North  
Elected Member  
Bracknell



Tony Page  
Elected Member  
Reading



Dr Peter Rickaby  
Independent Member  
Milton Keynes



Mike Scott  
Elected Member  
Maidenhead



Lydia Simmons  
Elected Member  
Slough



Carol Viney  
Elected Member  
Stoke Row



Christine Weston  
Magistrate Member  
Wokingham



Shirley Williams  
Independent Member  
Marsh Gibbon

# Annual Policing Plan 2001-2002

## Performance at a glance

The Force is set targets by the Authority, governed by both Ministerial Priorities introduced by the Home Secretary, and objectives approved by the Authority. All this detailed information is contained within the Annual Policing Plan, a copy of which can be obtained from the Clerk and Treasurer. A summary of the performance against its targets for 2001/02 follows:

### Corporate Health Performance Indicators

Target achieved



Target not yet achieved, but progress being made



Target Not Achieve



BVPI	Indicator	TVP 2000/01	TVP 2001/02	TVP Target 2001/02	Success of Target	
19	Has her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assessed the force as having achieved its efficiency target last year	Yes	Yes	Savings of £5,042,627	Target Achieved	
21	Number of complaints per 1000 officers	202.1	174.9	5% Reduction	Achieved 13.5% Reduction	
23	Percentage public satisfaction with police action in response to 999 calls	74%	71%	90%	Target Not Achieved	
23	Percentage public satisfaction with police initial response to a report of violent crime	75%	79%	85%	Target Not Achieved	
23	Percentage victims satisfied with police initial response to a report of burglary of a dwelling	91%	91%	95%	Target Not Achieved	
23	Percentage of victims satisfied with the police service at the scene of the collision	88%	89%	90%	Target Not Achieved	
25	Percentage of minority ethnic police officers in the force (*Some increase is due to reclassification of ethnicity)	2.66%*	2.74%	Increase the number of Ethnic Officers by at least 12 (2.6%)	Target Not Achieved	
26	Number of working days lost through sickness per police officer	14.3	11.4	Reduce by 1 day per year	Achieved Reduced by 2.9 days	
26	Number of working days lost through sickness per civilian employee	11.5	9.3	Reduce by 1 day per year	Achieved Reduced by 2.2 days	

### Local Performance Indicators

BVPI	Indicator	TVP 2000/01	TVP 2001/02	TVP Target 2001/02	Success of Target	
Local	Reduction in domestic burglaries compared with the previous year	13222	13397	10% Reduction	Target Not Achieved	
Local	Violent crimes percentage detected	63.8%	62.2%	75%	Target Not Achieved	
Local	Reduction in vehicle crimes compared with the previous year	42856	41780	10% Reduction	Not Achieved 4.5% Reduction	
Local	Answering non 999 calls at the switchboard within 20 seconds	87.8%	71.7%	85%	Target Not Achieved	
Local	Percentage of staff (excluding long term sick and probationary staff) who have had a Performance Development Review (PDR) created within the last 14 months	-	87%	100%	Target Not Achieved	
Local	Percentage of staff (excluding long term sick and probationary staff) who have had a PDR completed within the last 14 months	-	61%	65%	Target Not Achieved	
Local	Number of Volunteers in post as at 31 March 2002	169	229	300	Target Not Achieved	

### Community Safety Performance Indicators - Service Delivery Outcome

BVPI	Indicator	TVP 2000/01	TVP 2001/02	TVP Target 2001/02	Success of Target	
125	Total recorded crimes per 1,000 population	88.8	92.6	2% Reduction	Not Achieved 4.3% Increase	
125	Percentage total recorded crimes detected	22.3%	24.5%	26%	Target Not Achieved	
126	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	15.5	15.7	10% Reduction	Not Achieved 1.3% Increase	
126	Percentage domestic burglaries detected	16.5%	20.1%	20%	Target Achieved	
127	Robberies per 1,000 population	1.0	1.4	10% Reduction	Not Achieved 34.7% Increase	
127	Percentage robberies detected	24.9%	25.9%	35%	Target Not Achieved	
128	Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	20.3	19.6	10% Reduction	Not Achieved 3.4% Reduction	
128	Percentage vehicle crimes detected	9.2%	11.4%	13%	Target Not Achieved	
131	Percentage of all full files provided to the Crown Prosecution Service both within pre-trial issue time guidelines and which are fully satisfactory or sufficient to proceed	41.5%	47.4%	55%	Target Not Achieved	
131	Percentage of all full youth files provided to the Crown Prosecution Service both within pre-trial issue time guidelines and which are fully satisfactory or sufficient to proceed	39.2%	54.2%	55%	Target Not Achieved	
132	Number of road traffic collisions involving death or serious injury per 1,000 population	0.65	0.60	4% Reduction	Achieved 7.1% Reduction	
133	Percentage of responses to incidents requiring immediate response within 15 minutes	79.8%	74.8%	85%	Target Not Achieved	
134	Percentage of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds	88.2%	91.2%	90%	Target Achieved	
137	Percentage of adults arrested referred to drug treatment programmes as a result of arrest referral schemes	1.4%	2.0%	Increase on 2000/2001	Achieved 0.6% Increase	
138	Percentage of PACE stop/searches of white persons leading to arrest	13.8%	12.6%	Aim For Indicators To Be Equal	Target Not Achieved	
139	Percentage of PACE stop/searches of minority ethnic persons leading to arrest	14.5%	12.1%	Aim For Indicators To Be Equal	Target Not Achieved	
141	Percentage of reported racist incidents where further investigative action is taken	96.4%	92.4%	98%	Target Not Achieved	
141	Reported racially aggravated crimes detection rate (Similar non-racially aggravated detection rate)	32.8% (30.9%)	30.2% (30.5%)	Detection Rate Equal To That For Non Racial Crimes	Target Not Achieved	

# Review of 2001/2002 and key issues

**The year has been a busy one for the Authority. The key areas which have occupied its time include:**

- **Police Reform Bill** - the Authority has submitted detailed comments on the content of the Government's Bill to revise the police service.
- **Best Value** - the Authority continues to undertake reviews of police functions as part of a five year programme. Further details are contained on page eight in this report.
- **Basic Command Unit Inspections** - The Authority is closely involved in monitoring the performance of its ten police areas and has received several favourable and constructive reports from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary on the work undertaken by officers at area level. These reports are shared with local partners.
- **Consultation** - as part of the process for consulting on the Annual Policing Plan and Best Value Performance Plan, the Authority has arranged a number of planning fora at which the views of a diverse range of the public have been invited.

Sector Forum meetings continue to be held in local communities and further details can be obtained from the Authority's Secretariat on 01865 846780 or by e-mail: [tvpa@dial.pipex.com](mailto:tvpa@dial.pipex.com).

- **Redeployment Programme** - The Authority recognises the public's desire to have more police officers within their local communities. It has also looked at how it may most effectively utilise its officers. Consequently it has supported the Chief Constable by agreeing a budget figure of £5.8m for 2002/03 to enable the civilianisation (replace officers with civilian support staff) of posts currently occupied by police officers, thereby allowing them to return to front-line policing duties. In addition, the Authority has agreed to invite tenders from private security firms for the

provision of the gaoler facility within custody suites. The end result will be the return of up to 400 officers to front line policing duties by April 2003.

- **Standards Committee/Code of Conduct** - propriety within the public sector is much to the fore at present. To meet its statutory requirements, the Authority has established a Standards Committee. This includes two Members of the Authority and an Independent member of the public. The Authority has also adopted a Code of Conduct which applies to all Members and officers and a Code of Corporate Governance.
- **Special Constabulary** - the loss of many experienced volunteers has caused the Authority to press the Government to recognise the invaluable support given to the regular officers by the Specials, by introducing a form of annual retainer. A response is still awaited.
- **Appointment of a new Chief Constable** - the Authority undertook a rigorous interviewing procedure in the autumn of 2001. It was pleased to appoint Mr Peter Neyroud to this post.
- **Resourcing** - Whilst the recruitment continues to go well, retention is more of a problem area, with the number of officers transferring to other forces increasing. The Authority has worked with the Force to explore ways in which this can be countered.
- **Airwave/Call Centres** - the Authority has supported the Force in introducing the new national Police radio network which will provide officers with improved safety standards.

The Authority has also supported the Force in implementing its new call handling strategy. This entails centralisation of Control Rooms and two new Police Enquiry Centres, coupled with significant investment in IT and training. This will result in more efficiency in dealing with your calls.

# Best Value

The Government requires police authorities to ensure that they are delivering services in an efficient and effective way. To do this we began a five year review of our main services in April 2001. Each review looks at what is currently being done and examines how it could be enhanced. The process is robust and involves:

**Challenging** why a service is provided in the first place; questioning the quality and cost of the service and exploring how the service could be provided to ensure it is **competitive**; actively **comparing** the service with the best providers of similar services; **consulting** with service users and providers, and **collaborating** with others to help deliver our services.

Each year we update our programme of reviews to reflect changing public and government priorities. Our full programme of reviews is published in our combined policing and best value plan. Copies of the plan can be found in main libraries and are produced on the Authority's website: [www.tyva.police.uk](http://www.tyva.police.uk). Last year we undertook best value reviews of:

**Call Handling** - This review looked at how we could improve all aspects of receiving and handling all calls from the public. We are now developing new call centres to deal more efficiently with both emergency calls and general enquiries. These will be coming on-line during 2002/03.

**Crime Investigation** - This review examined good practices we can employ to improve how we investigate violent crime, burglary, car crime and cheque and credit card fraud. Changes have been made to improve our overall effectiveness and detection rates are now improving.

**Human Resources** - This review has developed a five year improvement plan which covers recruitment, retention and staff development.

**The Information, Communications and Technology Department** - The support systems and structures which are set up enable users to maximise the benefits of IT. This is important to the effective running of the business and the review examined how to further develop the existing support systems.

**Custody** - This review has examined proposals to rationalise existing custody suites and to use civilian support staff in the custody gaoles function in line with government guidance.

**Visibility and Availability** - This review focused on how the impact of available 'officer' resource could be maximised.

**Transport** - This review has developed an improvement plan to ensure our transport department is cost effective.

In addition to being involved in the reviews themselves, the Authority is also very actively engaged in following through implementation of the recommendations and monitoring both performance and benefits accruing.

Our reviews for the coming year will concentrate on Criminal Justice, Professional Standards, Training, Local Policing, Roads Policing and the Police Authority itself.

# Consultation

The Authority constantly strives to improve facilities for communities to comment on local policing. The existing arrangements for Community/Police Consultative Groups and Sector Fora have been maintained.

During the summer of 2001, the Authority recruited members of the public in the ten police areas to join together to formulate ideas for the Annual Policing Plan 2002/03. These meetings were constructive, challenging and incorporated the views of diverse sections of local communities. In late 2001, three county-based meetings were arranged to consider the draft Policing Plan and Best Value Performance Plan which had been compiled as a result of Ministerial Priorities (ie Home Office imposed key targets) and the views expressed at the earlier Area meetings.

The Authority will continue to review its consultation arrangements, including the use of the Internet, so that it can gauge public opinion of the level of service delivered by Thames Valley Police.



# Financial commentary



The key duty of the Police Authority is to provide an efficient and effective police service. The Authority sets its own budget and its own council tax precept to finance expenditure not met by central government funding. It is responsible for managing overall expenditure within the budget. However, responsibility for day to day financial management is delegated to the Chief Constable in accordance with the financial framework agreed by the Authority.

## Financial performance for 2001/02

### Setting the budget

The net budget for 2001/02 was approved at a total of £252.131 million. The majority of funding for the budget is provided from central government funds with the balance being found by the Authority raising a charge upon local council taxpayers (see Financing of Expenditure chart on page 12). The budget settlement resulted in a Council Tax charge for a standard Band D property of £64.49, an increase of 6.9 per cent on the previous year.

### Special Grant Income

The Government continues to fund an increasing proportion of police expenditure through the payment of special grants. The Authority budgeted to receive the following sums during 2001/02:

- £4.301 million from the Crime Fighting Fund to help recruit additional police officers
- Rural Policing Grant of £1.263 million
- A one-off capital allocation of £6.138 million for Airwave (the new police national digital radio system)

- A one-off revenue grant of £2.514 million for Airwave.

The Authority has also received significant grants during the financial year to assist with specific policing initiatives such as DNA expansion, reducing burglary, the drug arrest referral scheme and setting up the local criminal records bureau.

### Final Accounts

The table on page 12 provides a brief summary of the final outturn position for 2001/02 compared to the approved budget.

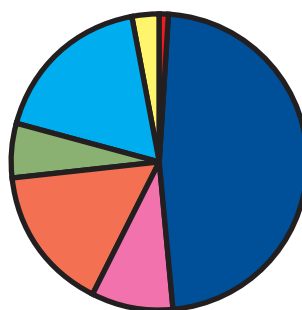
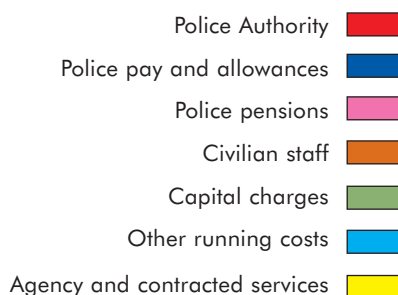
The outturn for revenue expenditure was £2 million or 0.8 per cent below the approved estimate. The main reasons for this underspend are:

- The Authority continued to have problems recruiting and retaining police officers. This led to an underspend on the specific budget for police pay of £1.8 million
- There was an underspend on police pensions of £0.3 million
- The Authority also suffered from not being able to attract and retain specialist support staff, most notably information technology experts. This gave rise to a budget underspend of £0.5 million
- Primarily as a result of these budgetary savings, the Authority was able to generate additional investment income of £0.7 million
- Due to the delay in implementing Airwave, the Government stated that it would only pay £2.006 million in Airwave revenue grant, some £0.5 million or 20 per cent less than originally notified.

## Comparison of 2001/02 Net Revenue Expenditure and Budget

	Budget £m	Actual £m	Variation £m
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>261.2</b>	<b>260.0</b>	<b>- 1.2</b>
Appropriations to reserves and balances	- 0.8	- 3.0	- 2.2
Revenue financing of capital expenditure	8.9	10.9	2.0
Interest receivable	- 2.4	- 3.0	- 0.6
Council tax benefit subsidy limitation	0.3	0.3	0.0
Asset management revenue account	- 9.2	- 9.2	0.0
Provision for the repayment of external loans	- 5.6	- 5.6	0.0
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>252.4</b>	<b>250.4</b>	<b>- 2.0</b>
Police grant	- 122.8	- 122.8	0.0
Revenue support grant	- 29.1	- 29.1	0.0
Non domestic rate income	- 48.6	- 48.6	0.0
Council tax	- 51.9	- 51.9	0.0
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>- 2.0</b>	<b>- 2.0</b>

### Expenditure



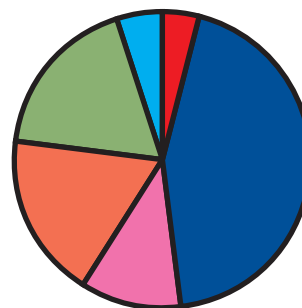
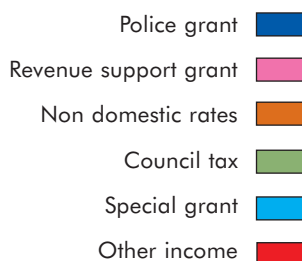
The Authority was successful in achieving the required two per cent efficiency gains in the budget during the year, a process closely monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. This was achieved through a mixture of cash savings and redeployment of resources. All such gains were redirected into front line services. Overall, careful management of the budget has once again been a key feature during 2001/02 and credit is due to the Chief Constable and his staff.

### Best Value accounting



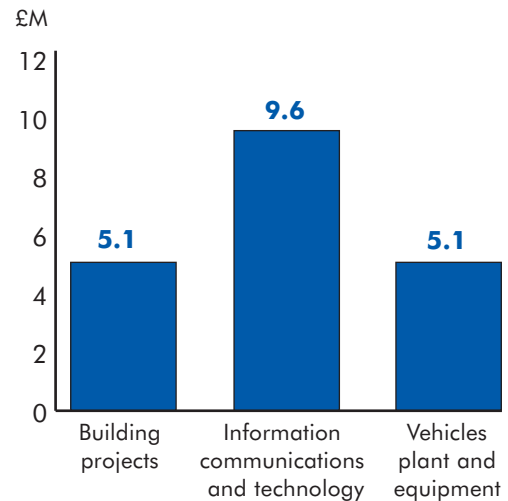
The charts on the left indicate how the budget was spent and how this spending was paid for. Two charts are shown for gross expenditure. The first shows the breakdown of expenditure (i.e. pay, pensions etc). From this chart it can be seen that around 64 per cent of gross expenditure relates to employee costs with a further nine per cent spent on pensions. The second chart, which analyses expenditure by functional headings, shows that approximately one third of police time and therefore expenditure is spent on patrol duties.

### Financing of expenditure



## Capital Expenditure

In addition to spending on day to day activities, the Authority incurs expenditure on buildings, information technology and other major items of plant and equipment which have a longer-term life. The outturn of capital expenditure in 2001/02 was £19.8 million which was financed by Government grant, borrowing approval, revenue contributions and capital receipts.



## Future Prospects

In February 2002 the Authority approved a net revenue budget of £259.23 million, an increase of £12.4 million or 5% over comparable 2001/02 resources. This gave rise to a Band D council tax of £73.49, an increase of £9.00 or 14 per cent over 2001/02.

The Authority's budget is designed to increase significantly the number of police officers available for operational duty through the civilianisation of police posts. This should go some way to meeting the wish of the general public, as evidenced through the consultation exercise, to see a higher level of visible policing throughout the Force area, and will also provide a real boost to the Chief Constable and his Area Commanders in their quest to improve operational effectiveness in Thames Valley. The main components of the budget package are:

- an extra 100 police officers, funded from the Government's Crime Fighting Fund;
- the release of between 240 and 290 trained, fit and experienced police officers to frontline duty by converting office-based police posts to civilian staff;
- 97 additional civilian staff to support frontline officers; and
- the implementation of Airwave, the new national digital radio system for the police service.

However, since the budget was set in February, the Authority has learnt that its go-live date for Airwave has been put back until June 2003. Despite this setback, the Force has recently implemented its new call handling strategy by reducing the number of control rooms from ten to two (based at Abingdon and Milton Keynes), and has also opened two new Police Enquiry Centres (PEC) at Kidlington and Windsor.

In April, Thames Valley was one of ten forces targeted by the Government under its Street Crime Initiative. The Force has been tasked with halting the increase in overall robberies by September 2002. Performance must also improve. The Force must detect at least 28 per cent of robberies by September 2002, rising to 30 per cent by April 2003.

Although there are a number of challenges on the horizon, both financial and operational, the Authority is currently in a sound financial position. Provisions have been established which go some way to meeting our known future liabilities, and earmarked reserves are maintained to help finance a number of specific operational and financial issues. The current policy is to retain general balances in the region of three per cent to five per cent of the annual revenue budget. The Authority has always maintained sound financial control, firm budget management by the Chief Constable and a forward looking financial strategy adopted by Members of the Police Authority.

# Complaints and letters of appreciation

The Authority has continued its long established practice of a Complaints Committee to undertake the statutory role of ensuring that complaints against police and civilian staff are investigated properly. Members of that Committee scrutinise case files of every completed complaint.

This year the Committee slightly extended its terms of reference and was re-named the Complaints and Professional Standards Committee. It meets six times each year, and during 2001/2002, scrutinised 713 completed complaints, of which 11 were substantiated. This should be seen in the context of 57,781 arrests throughout the Force area in the same period.

In every case, Members were satisfied as to the manner of investigation.

As part of the process, the Committee considers trends across all categories of complaint, with a view to the Chief Constable considering any training issues for the Force.

The Authority itself deals directly with complaints against the Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constables. During the year, two such complaints were made, but in both cases were not substantiated by the Authority after full investigation.

During the year, 757 letters of appreciation were received from the public.

**Restorative justice is being trialled by the Police Complaints Authority in the Thames Valley area as a further means of dealing with complaints against officers by members of the public.**

Restorative Conferencing is being piloted within Thames Valley as a further means of dealing with complaints against officers by members of the public. It involves structured, facilitated discussions between a complainant and

the officer(s) involved, together with any other affected parties.

## **Civil claims: Public and Employers Liability**

During the year, 274 new claims were received containing allegations which were covered by the Public Liability and Employer Liability insurance policies. This compares favourably with 377 claims during 2000/2001.

### **Public Liability**

207 new claims were received. Of these, 51 related to claims for false imprisonment assault or malicious prosecution; 106 related to minor property loss or damage; 50 covered negligence, dog bites and horse kicks, breach of statutory duty and miscellaneous matters including one claim under the Riot Damages Act 1886 and one claim under the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Employer Liability**

67 new claims were received. Of these, 35 resulted from loss or damage to personal property, and 32 to personal injury whilst on duty.

### **Trials**

There have been six civil trials during the year ending 31 March 2002, relating to claims received in earlier years which were heard in the Royal Courts of Justice, and County Courts in Reading, Oxford and Slough.

Four were entirely successful and two partially successful. Of the two partially successful, damages were awarded in one Employer Liability case of £7,500 against Thames Valley Police and £7,500 against the Metropolitan Police. In the other Public Liability case, £600 damages were awarded by the Court.

One case arising from Operation Stile (policing the cattery at Hill Grove Farm, Witney) was struck out by the Judge with costs awarded to the police. The Claimant undertook to abandon any further claims.

# Independent custody visiting scheme

The Authority undertook a major recruiting scheme in the latter part of 2001, to boost the number of custody visitors throughout the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Custody visitors are members of the public, appointed by the Police Authority, but totally independent of the police service.

Their main role on behalf of the public is:

- To observe, comment and report upon conditions under which persons are detained at police stations.
- To view the operation and practice of statutory and other rules governing a detained person's welfare, with a view to securing greater public understanding and confidence in these matters.

Custody visitors make unannounced visits in pairs to the major police stations within the Thames Valley area, and speak to any detained person willing to see them. They do not become involved in the reasons for detention, but ensure that the conditions in the cell area are clean, and that the detained person has been made aware of their rights and entitlements (eg to speak to a solicitor, to be provided with food and drink). The condition of the building itself is also commented upon by the custody visitors, leading to improvements or maintenance work being undertaken.

The Authority asks that each custody visitor carries out at least six visits in a year - not a very onerous task, but in the hope that more will be undertaken. The majority of visitors do carry out more than six visits, and during 2001/2002, some 300 visits were undertaken across the area.

This is a purely voluntary role, with the Authority meeting travelling expenses.

Full training is given, and newly appointed custody visitors will be accompanied by experienced colleagues for their first few visits. To quote a custody visitor: "You will find the role to be challenging and rewarding as well as an enjoyable one."

So, if you can give a few hours a month to the community, and feel this role may be of interest you, then please contact the Authority's Secretariat on 01865 846780 for further information and an application form.

# Conduct of business

The Authority will meet on the following dates during 2002/03 with meetings commencing at 10.00 am, at Police Headquarters, Kidlington, Oxfordshire:

24 May                      13 September  
13 December      26 February 2003

To assist the decision making process, there are a number of executive committees:-

- **Personnel Committee**  
19 June (2.00 pm)  
16 October (10.00 am)  
15 January 2003 (10.00 am)  
12 March 2003 (10.00 am)
- **Complaints and Professional Standards Committee**  
24 April (10.00 am)  
26 June (10.00 am)  
28 August (10.00 am)  
30 October (10.00 am)  
18 December (2.00 pm)  
28 February 2003 (10.00 am)  
23 April 2003 (10.00 am)
- **Audit and Performance Review Committee**  
31 July (10.00 am)  
11 September (10.00 am)  
18 December (10.00 am)  
26 March 2003 (10.00 am)

- **Urgency Committee Meetings as required**
- **Property Committee**  
3 July (10.00 am)  
2 October (10.00 am)  
4 December (10.00 am)  
19 March 2003 (10.00 am)
- **Information and Communications Technology**  
3 July (2.00 pm)  
9 October (10.00 am)  
4 December (2.00 pm)  
19 March 2003 (2.00 pm)
- **Strategy, Finance and Planning Committee**  
17 April (10.00 am)  
19 June (10.00 am)  
1 November (10.00 am)  
20 December (10.00 am)  
29 January 2003 (10.00 am)  
14 February 2003 (10.00 am)  
30 April 2003 (10.00 am)
- **Community Consultative Committee**  
26 June (2.00 pm)  
9 October (2.00 pm)  
27 November (10.00 am)  
12 March 2003 (2.00 pm)

**ALL THESE MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**