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Lothian and Borders Police

Chief Constable's Electronic Newsletter

July | 07

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CID

Pssst! Pass it on

If you find this newsletter interesting, please feel free to pass it on to anyone you know who may be interested in policing in Lothian and Borders or share it with members of any organisation with which you are associated.



David Strang

THE PEOPLE ARE THE REAL STORY

“ I recently presented my annual report to the new police board. As you would expect it is a wide-ranging look at the activities of the force over the previous year.

It also contains tables and statistics showing how we have performed as an organisation and measures what we have achieved against targets and previous performance.

It is available in hard copy in public places, including police stations, and it is on our website, so I will not recite the figures here. Suffice it to say we have had our successes and our disappointments and learned much that we can build on for the future.

Nevertheless I take pride in the large number and wide variety of activities, projects and initiatives which are taking place across the length and breadth of the force area, from Newcastleton in the south to Linlithgow in the north and from the boundary with Strathclyde to the North Sea coast.

But for me, more than anything else, the report is a reminder that behind the statistics and the initiatives and the operational activities are the men and women who daily do police work. By that I mean working in communities, face-to-face with ordinary people or at the sharp end of criminal investigations. These officers and support staff are engaging in everyday lives, seeking to improve the quality of life in our region. Many of them are also confronting the hard-edged issues of crime and

... officers and support staff are engaging in everyday lives, seeking to improve the quality of life in our region

disorder which cause distress; yet more are engaged in discreet work, gathering, analysing, sharing vital intelligence.

And there are others. Take, for instance, the work on road policing and road safety which has seen dramatic reductions over the years in the numbers of fatalities involving children. Others are instrumental in getting Anti-Social Behaviour Orders which are reducing nuisance in the streets. Simultaneously proactive positive work is being done with schoolchildren to help them be ready for the transition into adulthood.

I also think of the all too frequent occasions when police officers are helping people through the worst moments of their lives. Two such occasions have recently demonstrated this.

Who could fail to be moved by the shocking death of four year old Olivia Donachie ,tragically killed by a car in Colinton?

And who would not feel compassion for the family of the schoolgirl Vicki Hamilton, whose disappearance we are re-investigating. In both cases police officers are involved with people at the most distressing times.

The intimacy and rawness of some of these policing duties cannot

be conveyed in a written report, but they are at the heart of police work. Essentially they should remind all of us that the police service is about human beings, their trials and traumas, the social issues which impact on families and the community concerns about our towns and villages, their safety and the peacefulness of the environment.

It is there in communities and with the public that the traditional police work is conducted, albeit utilising every modern advantage we can. But that is the corner-stone on which so much resilience is built. Even large-scale international threats such as terrorism and computer generated crimes do not thrive and spread so rapidly in communities where individuals and agencies work together to build a strong base.

Partnerships, formed to address local problems, are what I can talk about in my annual report. They represent values and attitudes shared by all the elected representatives nominated to serve on the new police board. Police officers and support staff will look forward to working with them to help them perform their duties to the best of their ability and strengthen that bridge between the police and the public. ”



Iain Whyte

WORKING TOWARDS FIRM PARTNERSHIPS

“ I have been Convener of the Lothian and Borders Police Board for just over a week and clearly I am still learning much about the work involved.

However I am keen to make an impact in this very important and challenging role and am grateful to my colleagues for the confidence they have shown in electing me. I intend to learn very quickly and am determined that my colleagues and I will make a contribution to helping to ensure an effective and efficient police service is delivered in our area.

Every politician knows that law and order and the police service are among the small number of issues which dominate public debate and policy making. Inevitably, those with different political convictions will have divergent views on some issues. But I am confident that all the councillors, no matter our political party, share a commitment to working with police officers to preserve and enhance the high quality of life generally enjoyed across our area.

Like my colleagues I know that not everyone is so fortunate and we will want to help all our communities in every Council area to have a fulfilling and safe environment in which to live and work.

We all want our area to be a prosperous and safe place for residents, workers and visitors. Achieving these standards is a job for more than just the police service and the other public services. It is something in which every person in the population

has to make a commitment. We have to work in partnership but the most important partnership is with the public. Through our constituencies and our sponsoring local authorities, we will be doing all we can to encourage people to share this responsibility.

I am pleased to have had some early discussions with the Chief Constable and I am looking forward to working with him and his senior officers. The Board members have a monitoring and advisory role, budgetary responsibilities and certain important statutory duties. We have no role in operational policing but at times we might have to be a critical friend. We will not shirk our duties when it is necessary to speak out but my aim is for us to work together for the common good in a relationship which is supportive and mutually advantageous. ”

We all want our area to be a prosperous and safe place for residents, workers and visitors.

Police Board

CRIME COMES DOWN DETECTION UP

Reported crime was down 2.5% in the year end March 31, Chief Constable David Strang told board members. That amounts to 2,100 fewer crimes.

Presenting the annual performance report for 2006-2007, he also said the detection rate had reached the highest level ever at 45.3%.

“There are variations across crime types and different areas,” Mr Strang said. Drug offences were up, he said, but pointed out that can be construed in different ways. It can reflect increased police pro-activity but it might also indicate that there were more drugs about in the community.

He welcomed the figures which showed that firearms incidents were down by more than 100 on the previous year.

The former Convener, Councillor Eric Milligan, who is quoted in the report, congratulated his successor, Councillor Iain Whyte, and wished him well.

“Looking back over the last four years I think we did start off with one or two big challenges. One was the way we brought in changes to policing in the city of Edinburgh and, as is the way with any major changes, it had its wrinkles and its problems and we had to come through it, but we did.

“The FCC was another issue with which did have problems and maybe we under estimated the public demand.

“But placed alongside that were



The Make Poverty History march attracted 225,000 participants of all ages and nationalities and brought a carnival atmosphere to the city of Edinburgh

the concerns over G8 and the fabulously successful Make Poverty History march through the city of Edinburgh and many other things we have done and achieved over the last four years.

“We have had major changes to the senior officers but we have a good team at the top and we have made good progress over the years.

“One thing we have not got right is the recovery from a turbulent period when there is an increase in public dissatisfaction. It takes a while to get back to the level of public confidence you were at.”

Councillor Milligan also said

that as important as the facts of crime was the fear of crime which required hard work on reassurance of the public.

The Chief Constable agreed that despite the fact that reported crime is falling, people still believed it was rising. “I think the police service gives a sense of safety and well being,” he said. “We need the public to feel we are on their side and involved with them and not here as an army of occupation. They need to be confident that when they want us we will be there and where we can establish relationships where people feel secure and safe to go out and about.”

Police Board

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS THE WAY FORWARD

Lothian and Borders Police will seek to be involved with communities in solving problems rather than having continually to be reactive, Chief Constable David Strang told the first full business meeting of the new police board.

Mr Strang told members at their meeting in Edinburgh at the end of June that his intention would be to work closely with them. "My vision for policing in Lothian and Borders is very much a local one right across the whole area that we serve," he said.

"The vast majority of what we do is a service at a local level which will be delivered by community policing and dealing with the symptoms of the problems. Whether it is drugs or anti-social behaviour, we want to work with the local authorities to resolve them.

"Rather than being re-active, we want to be involved with people in communities. We know that budgets are going to be tight, so the challenge for us will be to deliver the same services, aim to



do it better whilst driving through greater efficiencies."

Mr Strang went on to tell members: "I am very keen to involve you with the force to whatever extent you wish to be involved. You may wish to take a particular interest in some aspect of the force's work and I hope that over the next four years we can have a constructive relationship - I am very much looking forward to working with you."

Later in the meeting Mr Strang emphasised that the spending for the next three years would be very tight and would require new ways of thinking about what the

police do and how it is done.

He said extending co-location arrangements were one means of working effectively with partners and cited the West Lothian Civic Centre Project and the Operation Amethyst unit set up to provide a joint agency for the protection of vulnerable people in Edinburgh.

"We are going to have to be creative in driving through efficiencies," he said

Budget deficit explained

Press speculation about a budget deficit in the Midlothian and East Lothian division was wildly overstated, the meeting heard.

Councillor Jack Aitchison (Midlothian) asked: "There was press speculation reporting that E division was £1million overspent. Is that right and what are the circumstances?"

The deputy treasurer, Mr John Connerty, said the deficit at the

end of the financial year for the division was £300,000.

The Chief Constable told him: "Speculation is the right word. It was wildly overstated. One of the facts of life with devolved budgets is that a division might have more events and operational activity than is normal and therefore has to overspend, but this is taken account of in the force's overall budget and financial planning."

Budget reserves

Unaudited accounts presented to the Board showed accumulated general reserve at the end of March 2007 of £8.217million, deputy treasurer John Connerty told the meeting.

The majority of that amounted to earmarked balances with £1.247million unallocated. This was £57,000 more than the position reported when the three-year budget for 2007-2010 was approved in January 2007.

Audited accounts will be presented to the Board at a later date.

Police Board

SPEED AND DRINK STILL CRASH FACTORS

There had been an increase in fatal accidents according to the annual report, Convener, Councillor Whyte, pointed out. "We are talking about small numbers but it is a cause for concern," he said.

The figures showed 40 deaths compared with 37 the previous year but fewer crashes with serious or slight injuries.

Mr Strang agreed that there was always cause for concern over road deaths and said it was particularly sad that there had been high profile child deaths in the last couple of years.

However he said that over the past 20 years there had been significant reductions in child and adult fatalities. He said there had been an average of 10 child deaths a year 20 years ago and now that was down to an average of one a year and there had been a similarly large decrease in the number of adult road deaths.

He stressed though that this was due to many factors and the efforts of a number of agencies from educational, engineering and medical advances.

However, he said, the two major factors were speeding and drink driving. "It is an urban myth that drink driving has reduced," he said. "It has not and is still a problem as is speeding which is a factor in many road crashes."

Councillor James Hume (Scottish Borders) suggested the report should have included specific statistics for knife crime and asked that figures relating to knives be provided.

Mr Strang said knives and the association with violence and drink were significant issues and the Violence Reduction Unit was carrying out valuable work. He said a report could be provided for members.

Councillor Robert Logan (Scottish Borders) noted that there were 11.8 complaints made for every 100 officers in the force and asked whether that was not unacceptably high.

It is an urban myth that
drink driving has reduced

The Chief Constable told him: "Part of the reality of police work is that you are dealing with some unsavoury people and dealing with them against their will. There is a certain inevitability about some complaints but I would like to bring them to a minimum.

"We do look carefully at the pattern of complaints and, for instance, if there was a trend relating to a particular officer, a particular station or unit or a particular process then we would investigate and take action if it were necessary. We do use complaints as part of a learning process."

Police Board

MEMBERS JOIN THE PROGRAMME BOARD

Two members of the police board have been nominated to join the programme board steering the improvements to the force communications centre at Bilston.

Councillor Margot Russell (Midlothian) and Councillor Rob Munn (Edinburgh) agreed to accept an invitation to join the board which is chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Ian Dickinson.

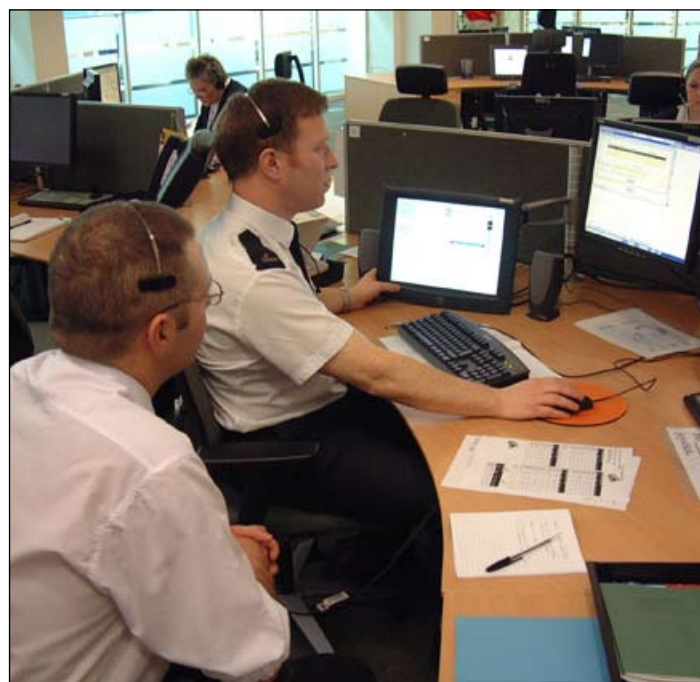
The Board is charged with finding sustainable long term improvements at the centre and the Chief Constable presented a progress report to police board members.

Mr Strang acknowledged there had been problems but said that the latest figures showed that call volume is still rising which does not support the view that people are losing confidence in the service.

He said performance had been improving but the assistance desk was still short of its targets although it had been showing an upward trend. A new switchboard would be introduced in July which would have greater facilities. A new crime and accident unit would take work away from the assistance desk.

A new command and control system, called STORM, was being introduced across Scotland and the force would be expecting to be using it in November, one of the first in Scotland.

Mr Strang said there would be a training requirement for the



The Force Communications Centre's communication hall

command and control system and there may be a dip in performance at the centre over the next few months but the system will improve things.

Councillor Marilyne MacLaren (Edinburgh) said it was unfortunate that the force would be one of the first to get STORM because of the impact it would have on the centre's performance.

She also asked if it would be possible to find out which areas calls were coming from. "Generally speaking most people make calls from where they live and it might be worth analysing the figures to see if there is a reason."

Mr Strang said he would arrange for this to be investigated.



George Simpson

POLICE TRAINING ON POLISH LIFESTYLE

Police and support staff across the Capital are to get specialist training on Polish culture in response to the increase in the number of Polish nationals living in Edinburgh. Training will include presentations on differences between Polish and Scottish law, attitudes towards crime and police, beliefs, culture and language. The training will be aimed at frontline staff including police officers, station assistants, custody staff and traffic wardens.

Leaflets have been produced in Polish explaining the role of the police and covering key areas of legislation, including information for foreign nationals driving in the UK.

Inspector Moore McCartney from the force's Diversity Unit said: "The training has been designed in acknowledgement of the considerable influx of Polish people to our force area. We aim to give staff an insight into Polish culture and some of the differences between their laws and ours which will be invaluable for helping staff understand the needs of a growing community."

Representatives from the Drylaw and Leith Safer Communities Unit routinely attend weekly meetings of the Polish Community at the



Constable Tony Lawrence with some of the Drylaw Polish Community.

Fort and Royston/Wardieburn Community Centres.

Following discussions with organisers, officers have presented talks on domestic violence, hate crime and roads policing. The presentations have been well received and prompted many questions, including 'what to do if you witness a crime being committed, how do you contact the police, what insurance is required to drive vehicles and which agencies assist women

who are the subject of domestic violence?'

Sergeant Mark Rennie from the Safer Communities Unit said: "The meetings have enhanced the confidence the Polish community have in the police, particularly in dealing with matters of most concern to them. There is a wealth of expertise and knowledge within the Polish community with many showing a keen interest in joining the police service in various capacities."

Force: A contemporary portrait of Scotland's police

Police and support staff from the City of Edinburgh are featured in a new photographic exhibition entitled Force: a Contemporary Portrait of Scotland's Police.

The exhibition comprises a series of images commissioned from Edinburgh-based artist Jane Brett.

The inspiration for the exhibition came in 2005, when staff at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery witnessed at close quarters a stand off between the police and a group of G8 protesters. The exhibition runs from 4th May to 17th July at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1 Queen Street, Edinburgh and admission is free.

George Simpson

DRINKING BYLAW ENFORCED AT SHOPPING CENTRES

Antisocial behaviour associated with the consumption of alcohol in public places is being tackled at the Muirhouse and Newkirkgate shopping centres in the north of the Capital.

Following complaints about antisocial behaviour, the police and The City of Edinburgh Council have used the provisions of the The City Of Edinburgh Council Prohibition of Consumption of Alcohol in Designated Public Places Byelaws 2006 to introduce designated enforcement areas at the two shopping centres.

Designated enforcement areas are intended to tackle individuals who use the areas to drink alcohol and engage in acts of antisocial behaviour. From April 24, anyone found consuming alcohol within the areas surrounding the shopping centres will be asked to stop by the police. Failure to do so constitutes an offence.

Inspector Dennis Hunter, Station Inspector at Leith Police Station, said: "Everyone should have the freedom to enjoy both shopping centres and their surroundings without the fear of the types of

antisocial behaviour that has previously been linked to alcohol consumption in these areas. The enforcement of the drinking bylaw will only affect the people who congregate in these areas to drink and we believe it will bring relief to the people who live and work there and provide a safe and welcoming environment for anyone visiting the areas."

"Those responsible for behaviour that adversely affects others or has a negative impact on an area of our city must accept that they need to change their behaviour."

Disco nights for young people



Police are to stage disco nights to help get youngsters off of the streets of north Edinburgh.

The 'Blue Light' club nights will be staffed by police, youth action workers and local volunteers and will provide a safe environment where local youths can enjoy themselves. As well as a disco, the Blue Light events will have information areas, providing advice on issues such as exam stress, depression and sexually transmitted diseases.

One of the requirements of entry is that youngsters will be asked to

take a standard breathalyser test and, if they fail the test, police officers will take them home to face their parents. Similar initiatives have proved successful in other parts of Scotland and it is hoped they will be rolled out across Edinburgh.

Sergeant Euan Smith from the Drylaw Safer Communities Unit said: "We will mainly be targeting 12 to 16-year-olds to get them involved and interested in something, offering them a relaxed environment that doesn't involve alcohol."

Police and council move in together

Seventeen officers from the Safer Communities Department are now sharing office space with their Council colleagues at Chesser House in Edinburgh.

Officers are working alongside their Council colleagues on issues affecting the Capital, including problem solving partnerships, crime prevention, personal safety and the reduction of antisocial behaviour. Also co-located at Chesser House are police officers involved in drug awareness training and Public Transport Liaison and a school teacher on secondment to develop a personal safety education programme for secondary schools.

Co-location is regarded as a unique and groundbreaking opportunity to achieve an improved and more efficient integrated service for people living and working in the Capital.

George Simpson

FIFTEEN ARRESTED AFTER FOOTBALL VIOLENCE

Police have continued their zero tolerance towards football related violence with 15 men arrested in dawn raids during April. The raids took place at locations across Edinburgh as well as in Ayrshire and Stirlingshire following disturbances after the Hibernian FC v Rangers FC match at Easter Road in March. The 15 men aged between 17 and 42 were charged with Breach of the Peace.

The arrests are part of an ongoing initiative to target football related violence with some 60 people charged in connection with disorder in the City since October 2006.

Chief Inspector Willie Wills, of the West End Police Station said: "Let this be a reminder to anyone who is thinking about causing or getting involved in public disorder before, during or after a football match. These arrests are proof that we will not shy away from tracking down individuals, even long after the incident has actually taken place."



Chief Constable David Strang, Superintendent Ram Mohayuddin and PC Nicola MacRae in the police control room at Easter Road.

New cycle patrols in Howdenhall

Patrolling police officers on mountain bikes will soon be a common sight in the south of Edinburgh.

Four officers from the Safer Communities Unit based at Captain's Road near Howdenhall Police Station have been pedalling on the bikes since 30 April. The new initiative follows on from the successful launch of similar patrols in the city centre last summer.

Inspector Stephen Paul, Howdenhall Police Station said: "Officers in the city centre

received extremely favourable comments from the public about them using the bikes so it was decided to extend the scheme to other parts of Edinburgh. We hope the public in the south of the city will now literally see the benefit of this initiative. They are used to officers in patrol cars going by but having these officers on the bikes will bring them closer to the community."

It is anticipated the mountain bike scheme will be extended to the Portobello and Craigmillar areas of the city later in the year.



Terry Powell NEW COMMANDER BACKS PARTNERSHIPS

The new commander of the East Lothian and Midlothian division has pledged to further develop close working relationships with communities and agencies across the area.

Chief Superintendent Terry Powell who took up his post on 18 June says he believes the most effective way of resolving local problems is by finding local solutions involving the people who live in the areas concerned.

Mr Powell, 54, is an experienced police officer who has spent his career with Lothian and Borders Police. He was in charge of the policing of the historic Make Poverty History March in Edinburgh and involved in much of the policing of the G8 events in the following week.

He served as Commander, Specialist Operations, Deputy Commander of the City of Edinburgh Division and head of city events and was commander North and Leith and East command areas. Earlier he was attached to the HMIC as well as a period at the Scottish Executive on the Common Police Services Review.

Mr Powell succeeds Chief Superintendent David McCracken who has been seconded to a national project working with another police force.

He said of his appointment: "East Lothian and Midlothian are areas of great natural beauty and distinctive character with vibrant and active communities.

"People here enjoy a good quality

of life in general though there are inevitably pockets which have some social difficulties. What is clear to me as I take over responsibility for policing in the area is that there has been a lot of work over many years in building effective partnerships to address local concerns.

"Much of what has gone on has been pioneering and innovative and resulted in real progress in tackling issues which concern local people.

... there has been a lot of work
over many years in building
effective partnerships to address
local concerns

"I know that the service has been grateful for the support and commitment of the two local authorities, their elected members and their officials. It is quite evident that after much groundwork, real benefits are beginning to flow from those efforts.

"I believe that local problems need local solutions and I will be keen to develop further the work that has been going on for the benefit of the communities we and the councils jointly serve.

"I am delighted to be returning to 'E' Division as its commander and look forward to getting to know the people in the agencies and within the communities and learning from them how we can provide the best service possible for the area."



Murdo MacIver

JOINT FUNDING OF POLICE INITIATIVES

Two new police initiatives in East Lothian are to be launched as a result of funding by the council.

The first of these initiatives will see traffic officers use noise monitoring equipment, paid for by the council. This equipment will be used to test vehicles that have had modified exhausts fitted. A number of complaints have been received in relation to vehicles with noisy exhausts constantly driving around town centres, usually in the late evening.

East Lothian traffic officers have already begun testing vehicles with factory fitted exhausts to build a database of acceptable noise levels emitted by each type of vehicle.

Owners of vehicles found to have modified exhausts that emit higher than normal levels of noise will be charged. The nuisance caused by such vehicles affects the quality of life, especially for residents in town centres. The equipment will be in reducing the menace caused by driving vehicles with exhausts modified to make excessive noise.

In the second initiative East Lothian Council has agreed to fund forensic equipment for every police vehicle in East Lothian. This equipment will ensure that where crimes have been committed equipment is available to examine the crime scene for signs of forensic evidence at the earliest opportunity.

Home Office meets ASBO team

The Home Office sent a team to visit East Lothian Council Anti Social Behaviour Team in June.

The visit enabled them to see first hand how East Lothian has developed its strategy, policy and procedures in respect of anti social behaviour. The work completed by East Lothian Council in partnership with Lothian and Borders Police has been held up as a model of best practice.

The Home Office team with members of the Scottish Executive met those responsible for the development of the policy.

We are all in this together

An event to raise awareness of race equality in community planning was held in May hosted by East Lothian Community Planning Partnership, together with Edinburgh and Lothian's Race Equality Council.

'We are all in this together' was held in the Brunton Hall, Musselburgh and welcomed a wide range of participants. Acting Chief Executive Alex McCrorie welcomed participants and said the Council was committed to engaging with the community.

Superintendent Martin Gordon outlined the police approach to working with the community and the benefits as a result of this work. A community perspective on engagement and involvement was provided by Cathy McArthur



Speakers at Brunton Hall, Musselburgh in East Lothian

for East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel. Cathy outlined her involvement with the Council and enthused about the changes that the work had brought about across the community.

The event also provided an opportunity to introduce East Lothian's draft community engagement strategy, which will be finalised over the next few months. Workshop sessions opened up discussion about the

barriers faced by people from ethnic minority communities in getting involved in community planning. This event was an important step in continuing the dialogue with this community. The challenge remains to all community planning partners to act upon the information and to be innovative in the approach to continue meaningful engagement.



Finlay Borthwick

CRIME INITIATIVES PAYING OFF

Recorded crime continues to fall in Midlothian building on last years decrease of 13%.

So far this year Midlothian has shown a decrease of 6% of all crime recorded and at the same time is maintaining a high detection rate of 44%.

The efforts of our housebreaking team continue to pay dividends with only nine reports of break-ins to dwelling-houses in Midlothian this year. Midlothian remains a very safe place to make

your home.

Operation Excalibur continues to front the divisions' efforts to curb vandalism and fire-raising, and there has been a continued decrease in the recording of these crimes namely 7% & 8% respectively.

We continue to work in partnership with Midlothian Council particularly in joint community safety initiatives and look forward to maintaining these improved results.

Action team counts on success



Councillor Peter Boyce – The new police board member for Midlothian and some members of the Team in Bogwood Court.

The Midlothian community action team has carried out high-visibility foot and mobile patrols throughout the Midlothian area, conducted enquiries into reported crimes, and targeted areas where disorder is known to occur. To date the CAT Team has recorded the following:

Arrests – 25
Reports – 37
New crime reports submitted – 42
Previously submitted
crime reports solved – 15
Arrest warrants executed – 14
Vehicles seized under RTA legislation - 4

More than 60 youths had their names noted for further action to be taken over their behavior and 1.5 litres of vodka, 29 litres of cider, 2 bottles of wine, 4 litres of vodka and lemonade, 6 litres of red wine and cherryade and over 200 cans and bottles of lager were seized and destroyed.

Most notable incidents during the month were the arrest of a man in Bonnyrigg who was breaching his ASBO; the arrest of a man, following extensive

Tune in



PC Steven Tait

E Division is building on their community relations with the new partnership with Black Diamond Community Radio. Black Diamond broadcasts to the Midlothian area live from 7am to 7pm. Although still in its infancy the partnership aims to develop closer links with the community providing information bulletins and appeals to the public.

enquiries, who was reported for three break-ins to motor vehicles and two vandalisms to motor vehicles in the Gorebridge area; three men who were reported for ten fireraisings and one vandalism in the Bonnyrigg area and the policing of a "trouble free" Penicuik Hunter and Lass Day.

Superintendent Borthwick said: "The Community Action Team has carried out a lot of good work this month and they have settled quickly into their new role and are working together very well. Their presence at this year's Gala events has been greatly appreciated by the various communities. Their impact in particular trouble spots have also brought positive comments from residents."



Bill Skelly WEST LoTHIAN GETS NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chief Superintendent Bill Skelly has been confirmed as the Commander of West Lothian Police Division. He replaces Chief Superintendent Jim Coupland, who is attached on temporary promotion to Deputy Chief Constable to the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

Superintendent Chris Griffiths is the new Deputy Commander of West Lothian Police Division. He has exchanged posts with Superintendent Graeme

Dobbie, who is now the Head of Operational Support, 'O' Division, Police Headquarters, Edinburgh.

Chief Inspector Jim Baird has been transferred on promotion to Livingston DHQ, and is the officer in charge of Police operations on the eastern side of West Lothian Division. He has replaced Chief Inspector Lesley Clark, who has been promoted to Superintendent 'A' Division - Craigmillar, Edinburgh.

New off-road motorcycle unit



The new West Lothian Division Off Road Motorcycle Unit after successfully completing their training course

A new off-road motorcycle unit has been set up in West Lothian to tackle the problem of noise and nuisance caused by a range of motorcycles.

Last year West Lothian Police Officers seized 29 mini-motos, 17 off-road motorcycles, and two quad bikes. The riders were charged with road traffic offences, including not having driving licences and insurance for their vehicles.

West Lothian Council provided money from its Community Safety fund to buy suitable off-road motorcycles and equipment for police officers.

Inspector Douglas Muir, who is in charge of the Unit said that anyone illegally riding such vehicles will be charged, and their vehicles will be seized.

He added: "The illegal use of these machines on paths and

West is best

Police have welcomed the news that West Lothian has been named in a national survey as one of the top ten places in the UK to raise a family.

Its rural location, good schools, low crime rate and employment figures placed it seventh in the list.

Alex Linkston, Chief Executive Officer, West Lothian Council, said: "We are one of the few areas in Scotland which has a growing younger population, and this is predicted to grow."

Fiona Hyslop MSP, said: "It is a fantastic place to live, and I am very proud to be a resident. It has a real community spirit, and it is ideal for people to travel between Glasgow and Edinburgh because of its good transport links. It really does have a lot going for it, and I am delighted that it is getting this recognition".

trails where people are walking, cycling, or horse riding is both dangerous and a nuisance. Even just the noise impacts upon the quality of life of local residents. The police in West Lothian are determined to tackle the problem head-on, and to charge offenders, and remove the machines from circulation."

Bill Skelly

BRAVE OFFICERS TACKLED ARMED ROBBER

Two police officers who tackled an armed robber as he tried to escape from a post office have been honoured for their bravery.

Sergeant Steven Elliot and Constable Elaine MacLennan from West Lothian Division were among 64 officers and civilians recently awarded Lothian and Borders Police Meritorious Conduct Awards.

An armed robber aimed a gun at the head of the Mid Calder postmaster, and demanded money from the safe. A customer escaped from the post office and ran towards the nearby police station.

Sergeant Elliot was walking to the police station when he was told what was happening. He told Constable MacLennan to drive to the scene in case the robber drove off, whilst he ran to the post office.



As Sergeant Elliot approached he saw a man with a scarf over his face jump in to a 4 x 4 vehicle, which had its engine running. Sergeant Elliot attempted to smash his way in to the car with his baton which startled the robber, who was trying to put the vehicle in gear.

Sergeant Elliot opened the driver's door, pulled the robber to the ground from the vehicle



and a struggle then ensued. The postmaster and Constable MacLennan arrived a few seconds later, and the robber was subdued.

The cash stolen from the Post Office was found on the robber and his gun was later found to be a replica. The robber, Steven Robert, was later jailed for seven years for the crime.

Benefits of football by moonlight

The Bank of Scotland Midnight League is a national five-a-side community football development initiative aimed at keeping young people off the streets, and reducing crime and anti-social levels of behaviour. The league is open to both boys and girls.

Livingston's League started at the beginning of this year, and will last through the summer months.

Each week, West Lothian police officers have had a presence at the matches, providing an

opportunity for local youngsters to meet them on an informal and regular basis.

As a result of the funding for this initiative provided by the Bank of Scotland, there are now five separate Midnight Football projects in operation in West Lothian. The multi-agency partnerships that make this possible comprise West Lothian Leisure, West Lothian Youth Action Group, and Lothian and Borders Police West Lothian Division.

District court's final bow

The unification of criminal courts in Scotland will mean the end for West Lothian District Court on the 9th December 2007.

It will be replaced by a Justice of the Peace Court, under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Court Service, as part of the reforms undertaken of the Summary Criminal Justice system.

The final 'Annual Statutory Meeting' of West Lothian District Court was held in the Livingston District Court House on Wednesday, 6th June 2007.

Bill Skelly

DRIVE TO CUT ROAD DEATHS

In 2006, 95 people were killed or seriously injured on West Lothian roads, and in Scotland as a whole, there was a 10 per cent increase in fatalities in 2006 compared with 2005.

The West Lothian branch of the Lothian and Borders Police Roads Policing Unit, based at Livingston Police Station, has joined forces with West Lothian Council, West Lothian Camera Safety Unit, and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, to improve driving standards, and reduce the number of injuries from motoring incidents.

The initiative will target young male drivers, aged between 17

and 24 years, who are more likely to be involved in serious crashes.

Inspector Grant Allan said: "The campaign will be mainly an educational exercise, and will run from June until September 2007. We will be looking to educate young drivers, because between January and May 2007, 60 per cent of the drivers involved in serious injury crashes were between the ages of 17 and 25.

"In addition to the educational element of the exercise, there will also be enforcement, where we will use all of the resources available to us, including speed cameras and Officers in unmarked police cars."

Court project's hailed a success

Unprecedented co-operation between the courts, prosecutors, defence agents, local authority departments and the police in West Lothian, has resulted in a pilot project aimed at speeding up the criminal justice system being hailed as an outstanding success.

People who commit crimes in West Lothian now face swifter justice. The project brought the average time between a suspect being charged to the conclusion of their case at court being reduced from 150 to 59 days.

The dramatic results have prompted a pledge by the Lothian and Borders Criminal Justice Board to extend the initiative with a pilot scheme in Edinburgh.

Board chairman, Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen, QC, said: "The achievements of this project are remarkable. Not only are the quantitative results remarkable, but also staff throughout the system are positive and confident about the changes, and do not want to return to the previous arrangements."

The Project Board was chaired by Colin Peebles, Director of Corporate Services, Lothian and Borders Police Force, who said: "The number of scheduled appearances is also reduced, and that reduces the demand on prosecutor, defence lawyers, police, and court staff. The methodology we used ensured that every element of the criminal justice system was involved in reviewing the whole process, rather than just their own part."

Taser tackles machete man

Armed Lothian and Borders Police Officers used a Taser for the first time to stop a man, armed with two machetes, going berserk in a public house in Broxburn, West Lothian,

After barricading himself in the pub, the man threw himself through a window that he had earlier shattered by throwing tables and chairs at it. Still waving the machetes, he ignored demands by armed officers to drop it and he was then hit by a shot from the Taser delivering 50,000 volts.

The impact stunned him long enough for officers to take control and recover the machetes. The man was then taken to St John's Hospital for treatment, but was later released into police custody. A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal at Linlithgow.

Assistant Chief Constable Ian Dickinson said: "The use of the Taser, which is one of a number of less lethal weapons available to the police, is intended as a specific alternative to the use of firearms. It can only be used in the most violent and dangerous situations.

"Tasers are intended to save life, and to avoid people being seriously hurt. In this case the man was uninjured despite his violent conduct, and we are grateful to the police officers involved for achieving this."



Charlie Common

DRUGS AWARENESS TALKS PROVE POPULAR

PC Kenny Houston has been Divisional Drugs Awareness Officer for eighteen months and his main remit lies within Education.

He travels all over the Borders region visiting 63 primary schools and nine secondary schools, where he speak to primaries 6 and 7 as well as S1 through to S6 on drugs. He also delivers parents awareness sessions mainly through the school network and in conjunction with the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) at NHS Borders. Along with the DAAT, he also delivers awareness sessions to Foster Carers networks. He will basically speak to anyone who requires an input regarding drug awareness and is flexible in his working arrangements to accommodate such requests.

One of the main problems he encountered was getting parents along to awareness sessions so he has recently broadened this aspect and has now spoken to two Rotary Clubs regarding drugs and the local scene. The inputs have been very well received and feedback has been positive.



Chief Superintendent Charlie Common, Mr Barry Robertson of the Belmont Motor Group and PC Kenny Houston in the sponsored car

Recently the Belmont Motor Group at Selkirk offered use of one of their vehicles specifically for use by the Drug Awareness Officer. The sponsorship by Belmont is yet another example of the police and a local company working together. The car which has been marked up with the Force Crest, the Force Web address, the words Drug Awareness Officer and the Belmont group will undoubtedly enhance the image of PC Houston's role as it will be a very visible presence on Borders roads and beyond.

Charlie Common COMMON TOUCH

Hawick Inspector John Scott became the master of the double-act during the town's Common Riding festivities this year.

John has returned to his roots in his new role as the Sector Inspector for his home town of Hawick. But there was a danger that his duties would disrupt his participation as a flute player in the band which participates in the events.

One of John's main duties as Inspector is the planning and organising the policing of the events surrounding the annual Common Riding.

Hawick Common Riding is the first Border festival of the year and celebrates the capture of an English Flag in 1514 by the youth of Hawick at a place called Hornshole and the ancient custom of riding the marches or boundaries of the common land.

Inspector Scott has become a familiar figure during the local festivities having been a keen supporter of the Common Riding, as a mounted follower on horseback and as a member of the Cornet's Band known as the Drums and Fifes. The band marches immediately in front of the Cornet at many ceremonial marches throughout the Common Riding.

When appointed as Hawick Inspector John was faced with the dilemma of how to balance the demands upon his time as head of the policing operation against those associated with appearing as a flute player with the band.



But his police planning experience paid off. With skilful scheduling and clever footwork he struck the perfect balance.

On Common Riding Friday, John was involved in a number of quick changes. He began the day performing with the band, but quickly assumed his Inspector's role. On came the police in uniform as he took responsibility for the safe passage of 300 horses and riders as they paraded through the town. At one point he managed to briefly combine both roles.

John said: "I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to become the Police Inspector for my home town and to remain involved with the Drums and Fifes was for me a great way to end what was for me the best Common Riding I have ever been involved with."

Charlie Common

VETERANS MAKE FINAL

On Saturday 19th May, 2007 Lothian and Borders Police Vets Rugby Team competed in the Selkirk Rugby Football Club's Centenary Tournament at Philiphaugh.

The Force found themselves in the tough side of the draw, surprise, surprise, and came up against Archiball Bordeaux in their first tie of the afternoon. Bordeaux lined up at the kick-off and performed their own version of the Hakka or was it the Hokey - Cokey? A highly entertaining game ensued with the Police coming out on top 22 - 0. Tries were scored through Ross Parker, Sky Laurie, Conal McEwan and Colin Campbell.

The next tie was a tougher affair against Dunbar and although the Police came close on a number of occasions and had the better of the exchanges, the game ended 0 - 0.

The crunch meeting in the group was against Heathfield and Waldon from England. As was to be expected, the English were man for man heavier than the Police, however they found the "strong arms of the law" tough to break down. It was Lothian and Borders who finally broke the deadlock with an interception try by the ever youthful, Colin Campbell who sprinted from the half way line to score underneath the posts. He converted his own try and when the final whistle sounded the Heathfield and Waldon supporters were heard to sing the immortal words of that Clash favourite, "we fought the law, and the law won."



The Police were worthy finalists and again, they met Selkirk Vets who strolled through the easier half of the draw. Selkirk fielded a strong 15 at the start of the game, many of whom would not look out of place in Selkirk's current First XV, and scored three quick tries to put the tie beyond reach before half time.

The Police, however, stuck in and battled hard and in the second half scored the try of the tournament with almost every player in the teams hands touching the ball before Sky Laurie dotted the ball between the posts. The conversion made the final score, Selkirk Vets 24 - L & B Police Vets 7.

A big thank you to Selkirk RFC for hosting the Tournament and organising the after match celebrations and congratulations to all those who represented the Police, gave up their all for the cause and for all the aches and pains that followed in the few days after.



Colin Campbell

CHILDREN LEARN THE CHOICES FOR LIFE



Chief Superintendent George Simpson and Detective Sergeant Gillian Wood (National Drugs Co-ordinator, SCDEA) backed by 8,000 fans!

Thousands of school children had a fantastic time at the latest annual Choices for Life concert in Edinburgh.

The third, national “Choices For Life” involved two shows at the Royal Highland Showground in May.

The show then tours Scotland and the Isles. It is aimed at Primary 7 schoolchildren to give them information on drugs, alcohol, smoking and peer pressure and to help them get skills to

make informed, healthy lifestyle choices and resist pressure as they make the leap from primary to secondary education.

It also complements drug and alcohol education at school, building upon what they have already learned. The Edinburgh event, attended by 13,095 children and teachers, had representation from the Lothians, the Scottish Borders, Fife, Central and Tayside areas. The show included music, video storylines, a theatre production by PACE

National LGBT liaison officers awareness training day

The first National LGBT Liaison Officers Awareness training day was held at the Scottish Police College on 6th June. The one-day course was designed to give Police LGBT Liaison Officers an update on recent legislation changes and an opportunity

to discuss LGBT issues. The day consisted of four workshops facilitated by partner agencies. The training day was organised by Inspector David Lyle and PS Pauline Nairn, Chair and Secretariat of the ACPOS LGBT Reference Group.

Youth Theatre and was hosted by Forth 1 DJ's.

Even though the kids are encouraged to enjoy themselves, the message running through each part of the show is about making positive choices and the children are always drawn back to this.

Last year's event was positively and independently evaluated by MORI and this is available on the Scottish Executive website.

Advice day for Muslim women

Muslim women learned about the services provided by the police at a seminar last month.

PS's Pauline Nairn and Andy Doig of the Safer communities Department and AMINA Muslim Women's Resource Centre arranged the half-day seminar on 31st May at St George's West Church in Edinburgh.

It was the first day of this kind, which aims to promote engagement and involvement with Muslim women. The seminar consisted of three workshops and incorporated Hate Crime and Remote Reporting/Personal Safety within the Home (Domestic and Sexual Abuse) and an input by the Procurator Fiscal Service. The seminar was an opportunity for Muslim women to raise issues with Lothian and Borders Police and was a chance to learn more about the services, which the police can provide. A plenary session followed by lunch concluded the day.



Iain Livingstone

GIFTED DOG HELPS POLICE



Court for callous bogus caller

A bogus caller who stole from a wheelchair-bound 92-year-old woman has been convicted of fraud and theft.

Catherine Strachan appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, which heard her victims were all elderly and vulnerable and selected in the knowledge that she was unlikely to be challenged when committing her crimes.

In one incident she entered a sheltered housing complex, gained entry to the 92-year-olds flat, and stole cash.

She was identified from CCTV for this incident and subsequently charged for several other similar crimes.

Partner agencies were involved in the enquiries to a great extent and assisted in not only providing reassurance and advice to the victims and their relatives but in providing evidence as to their vulnerability which assisted in securing Strachan's conviction.

Lothian and Borders Police is the first Scottish police force to have recruited the services of a uniquely gifted dog.

South Yorkshire Police's Crime Scene Investigation dog Keela, a Springer Spaniel, is trained to detect traces of human blood and was used recently during the search of a house in West Lothian.

The dog is capable of finding minute traces of human blood which can be decades old and can pick out clothing with blood on it even after it has been washed many times in biological

washing powder. It distinguishes human blood from any other by the differences in the amounts of plasma and haemoglobin.

Keela is trained to freeze with her nose as near to the subject matter without touching, enabling scientists to recover a sample quickly and efficiently.

The dog has gained a world-wide reputation and has assisted the FBI with murder enquiries in America. Unlike other animals, whilst flying to America, Keela has her own seat reserved and stays in hotel accommodation.

Iain Livingstone

WILDLIFE OFFENCES LEAD TO COURT

Six men have been arrested and charged with wildlife and Badger Act offences in the Scottish Borders.

The arrests came as a result of a successful multi-agency operation. The men will now be the first in Scotland to face trial, on petition, for badger baiting and associated offences.

During the the investigation, 17 dogs were seized and examined by vets. Many of the dogs required immediate medical attention and one dog died as a result of injuries.

The investigation, known as Operation Granite, has severely disrupted a large network of Badger baiters and could also

implicate criminals from the north of England.

The case is complex and has involved a huge amount of effort and endeavour by PC Mark Rafferty, the G division Wildlife and Environmental Crime officer.

A Borders gamekeeper was sentenced to 240 hours community service as an alternative to imprisonment, after being found guilty of eight offences including deliberately poisoning wildlife.

The accused arrived at court for sentencing wearing full combat clothing and a full-face ski mask.

The Forces' success in investigating and prosecuting wildlife cases has also been

recognised by the BBC which will televise a four-part documentary "Wildlife Detectives" featuring Lothian and Borders police along with four other Forces. The first part is to be screened on July 9th when a detailed insight into the above case will be shown.

Cold calling brokers alert

Investors have been warned to be on the alert against cold-calling brokers who have carried out frauds involving thousands of pounds.

Well-organised and credible 'brokers' dupe share investors into buying worthless or over-priced stock in companies with little or no value. There is often a long period before the victims realise they have been subject to fraud, when they try to sell the shares or find they cannot trace the 'broker' concerned.

Potential investors are usually cold-called in the first instance before being supplied with high quality literature and supporting documentation. They are usually impressed by the apparent knowledge demonstrated by the 'broker' about the investments on offer.

There has been an upsurge in this type of scam within the Lothian and Borders Police area in recent months with losses amounting to tens of thousands of pounds being suffered.

Conservative estimates of this type of fraud cost UK investors approximately £50 million per year.



PC Rafferty examines a poisoned buzzard found during a recent police wildlife search in G Division . This search was one of a number of cases that were filmed by the BBC for a four part documentary, 'Wildlife Detectives'.

Turkish property fraud warning

Residents in the Lothian and Borders Police area are among up to 500 known UK and Irish residents defrauded of over £50 million, in a real estate scam which duped them into believing they had purchased properties in Turkey.

Victims visited the site concerned and were shown round the complex prior to participating in the investment but were shown false documentation including fake deeds and now find

themselves at considerable loss.

Authorities in Turkey are extremely concerned of the impact this scandal will have on the confidence for individual foreign investors and have quickly traced a local couple involved.

People from Northern Ireland are also involved and the Police Service of Northern Ireland is coordinating the investigation in the United Kingdom.