

# Brief Lines

A bridge between business and the local community

## About CSP

Welcome to the latest edition of the Brief Lines newsletter, published by Community Safety Partnerships Ltd (CSP) which offers quality solutions to help address safety and other risks. Specialising in personal, community and system safety issues, CSP provides a holistic intelligence-led approach to partnership between business and community, business and regulator and other interfaces where risk arises.

CSP is headed by Aidan and Sue Nelson who between them have wide experience in corporate reputation handling, developing and delivering community safety strategies and campaigns, crisis management, and the advancement of health, safety and environmental policy both internationally and nationally at industry, multi-party programme and individual company levels.

## Metal theft checks produce results

As part of the national metal theft day of action British Transport Police led a highly successful multi-agency operation near Tilbury Docks, one of the UK's main ports. Police and partner agencies undertook a high profile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) operation, which resulted in 82 vehicles stopped, nine vehicles seized, 22 fixed penalty notices issued and two men arrested. A number of prohibition and production notices were also issued. Nationwide, a total of nine people were arrested, including two youths, aged 14.

## Rail police lead metal theft national day of action

British Transport Police led police forces, government agencies and rail organisations across Britain in a national day of action to target metal theft.

Several people were arrested, ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) checks made, vehicles seized and visits made to scrap metal dealers across the country in a bid to raise the profile of the problem which Chief Constable Ian Johnston has described as 'the second biggest challenge' facing British Transport Police (BTP) after terrorism.

Around 20 police forces took part in the day of action alongside the Environment Agency, HM Revenue and Customs, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, Border and Immigration Agency, Department for Work and Pensions, railway businesses and local councils to raise the profile of the issue. The day was co-ordinated by BTP on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), whose metal theft working group BTP leads.

Soaring world metal prices has prompted criminals to cash in on the high cost of scrap metal through the theft of rail signalling and electrical cable. In the last 18 months there has been a large increase in metal theft with BTP recording 1,928 thefts and 396 arrests in 2007 compared to 1,142 crimes and 317 arrests in 2006. The force now has a dedicated national squad to combat rail metal theft and has been working closely with the British Metal Recycling Association to crack down on rogue dealers, as well as working with the prosecuting authorities and the courts to bring offenders to justice.

The problem is not just rail specific, hence the day of action involving other agencies. Copper thieves are also targeting electricity facilities, the telecoms industry and even church roofs.

BTP Assistant Chief Constable (Crime), Mark Smith said: "The day of action demonstrated that we are prepared to devote considerable resources to target this type of crime. Metal theft is a major crime that has potentially serious economic consequences for the country and negatively impacts on communities in many ways. It is certainly not a victimless crime."

## High-tech solution for cable crackdown

British Transport Police revealed its latest high tech weapon in the cable theft crackdown - the Microdrone. The latest technology in police surveillance, the Microdrone is an unmanned, almost silent helicopter that can film from more than 350ft. It was used in Cleveland area for the first time as part of the metal theft national day of action.

Invisible to the naked eye and able to offer at 350ft above railway lines and surrounding areas, the remote controlled helicopter - the size of a dustbin lid - beams back live video footage and infra-red imagery to police operators on the ground. The hovering Microdrone can even squirt offenders with Smartwater security marking solution that can then be identified by police.



Police conducting ANPR checks as part of the metal theft day of action



The Microdrone - BTP's new cable theft weapon



## **Tough new terrorism measures**

The government has now published the Counter Terrorism Bill 2008, which is designed to address the constantly changing threat posed to the UK by violent extremists.

The bill includes proposals to:

- Increase the time terrorism suspects can be held (in exceptional circumstances) before they are charged
- Enable post-charge questioning of terrorist suspects
- Enhance sentences for offences tied in to terrorist plots
- Strengthen monitoring of convicted terrorists
- Expand the use of DNA in terrorism investigations.

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said the government's top priority in introducing the bill is to protect law-abiding citizens with the bill containing a broad range of measures to ensure that police and security agencies have the tools they need to prevent acts of terrorism from ever taking place.

The government says it has backed up its counter-terrorism effort by allocating record levels of funding for local police forces. In 2007 the police received £472 million for counter-terrorism work. In October an additional £695 million was allocated, with funding expected to increase further over this year and next. In addition £45 million has been budgeted for local authorities to spend over the next three years on programmes to counter violent extremism. The government has sought the views of the public and human rights organisations throughout the process of drafting the Counter-terrorism Bill, which was introduced on January 24.

## **Crime victim risk at all time low**

Latest British Crime Survey figures show that the risk of becoming a victim of crime has dropped to 23% - a return to the lowest level since the survey began in 1981. Survey interviews in the year to September 2007 highlighted that the risk of falling victim to crime had fallen from 24%, the figure recorded for the year to September 2006. In addition the number of crimes recorded by the police fell by 9% for the period July-September 2007 compared with the same period the previous year. Personal acquisitive crime fell by 11% while violence against the person fell by 8%, as did recorded domestic burglary. There was a 12% drop in offences against vehicles and criminal damage fell by 11%. But in the 12 months to September 2007 the survey showed there was a 4% increase in firearms offences. However, confidence in the local police significantly increased in the 12-month period compared to the previous year. To view the latest BCS figures in full go to:

[www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk)

## **Police praised for secure station scheme**

The head of Britain's rail industry personal security group has praised British Transport Police for its work in promoting a national secure station scheme.

James Burt, formerly of South West Trains and now with train operator First Great Western, was speaking at a Secure Station scheme awards ceremony at which he was among a number to receive awards from the Princess Royal for their work in tackling crime at stations across Britain.

Mr Burt has been instrumental in keeping the safety and security of staff and passengers high on the rail industry's agenda, with British Transport Police also playing a key role.

He said: "We now have a far more professional partnership with British Transport Police at operational level. That partnership is based on mutual respect and a greater understanding of each other's needs... the benefit of a wider police family supported by a number of complementary policing schemes is now generally accepted." Mr Burt pointed out that community support officers and train operator funded schemes such as Travelsafe and rail enforcement officers are all new initiatives since the last Secure Station Scheme awards in 2001.

He added: "We have also worked hard with BTP to make anti-social behaviour orders work for the industry. London Underground has led the way in this and has had many successes in excluding highly undesirable people from their network. We are all learning from their success.

"...Learning from each other and working together is important. The security of the railway community, both passengers and staff, is invariably enhanced when we work with partners in the wider community. Many of the same people who act in an anti-social way don't just do so on railway stations and trains but also in the high street and on local buses."

