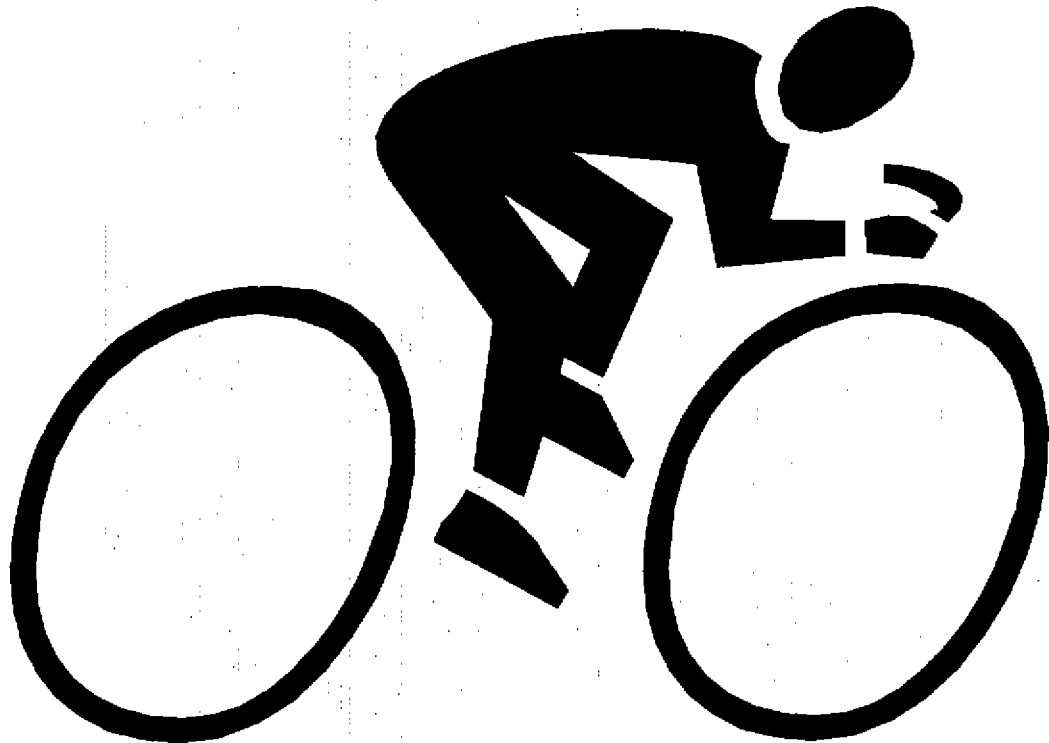
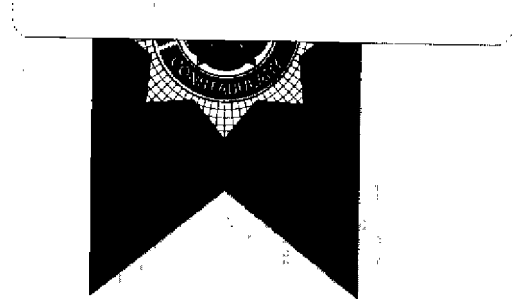


Lancashire Constabulary

*Operation
atlanta*



*~ W'esteryt Ih'vision
Geographic Initiative*



~
1

1

OPERATION ATLANTA - SUMMARY

Scanning

Blackpool is one of the busiest tourist resorts in Europe with 17 million, visitors every year. During the summer months there is a massive influx of people to the resort, and accompanying this is the associated crime increase. The increase in population is centered primarily along the 'Golden Mile' (2 1/2 miles of Blackpool Promenade) There is also a dramatic increase in crime within this area. Impacting further is the fact that traffic congestion is at a premium and accessibility is extremely difficult. Four main areas alerted us to the problem.

- Public Satisfaction Questionnaire
- Crime statistics
- *• General public comments
- Response times affected by the traffic congestion

Analysis

- + Massive influx of people / vehicles
- + Traffic congestion
- ❖ Tourists not as vigilant over security of personal property
- 3 Previously reactive policing proved ineffective in reducing crime

Response

The golden mile has never previously been specifically policed. It was decided to dedicate a highly visible and mobile team to the area. In response to this a squad was formed consisting of a Team Leader and 10 PC's. These officers would police the area on pedal cycles and in a highly visible uniform. They were to act as a proactive team responsible as a unit to tackle specific crime problems — stealing from vehicles, burglaries, thefts, accidents etc.

To focus resources on anticipated and current hotspots within the target area to reduce incidents of crime, anti-social behaviour and road/tram accidents.

- To reduce demand on police resources by taking a planned and concerted effort on problems that have historically caused problems throughout the holiday season.
- To increase public satisfaction in relation to police patrols as identified in the community expectation survey.
- Visit the majority of premises within the target area and deliver a leaflet with a brief explanation of the intention.
- Dedicated scratch pad in the communications room for people to leave specific messages for the squad.
- Work in close liaison with a number of agencies to combat expected problems – Hotel and Guesthouse Association, Trading Standards, Town Centre Forum, Town Centre Link Radio etc.
- To work in close association with the POP Sergeant, Operation Atlas, Target Unit and the Analysts.
- Cycles were obtained through a partnership with 'Coral Island' and Ridgeback cycles and a uniform was designed and produced in liaison with a local manufacturer and the clothing committee.
- ∴ Operate only during the problem period i.e. from 1st May until 13th September

Assessment

- Positive media exposure
- Reductions in Crime Figures
- Improved response times
- Improved public satisfaction
- Arrest / PACE 1 / INTEL figures

Operation Atlanta

Lancashire Constabulary
Western Division



Operation Atlanta

Lancashire Constabulary

Western Division

Background

Blackpool is one of the busiest tourist resorts in Europe with 17 million visitors every year. During the summer months there is a massive influx of people to the resort, and accompanying this is the associated crime increase. The increase in population is centered primarily along the 'Golden Mile' (2 ½ miles of Blackpool Promenade). There is also a dramatic increase in crime within this specific area during the summer months. Impacting further is the fact that traffic congestion is at a premium and accessibility is extremely difficult. The following areas alerted us to the problem;

- ❖ Analysis of Intelligence information provided by the Analysts showed that in previous years, 16 weeks during the summer the crime rate increases
- ❖ The business community was unhappy with levels of disorder and antisocial behavior brought about by the increase in single sex groups to the resort as this discouraged families from visiting the area.
- ❖ Traffic Congestion made vehicle response times in this area slow.
- ❖ There is a general lack of police high visibility in this area due to the expanse of promenade to cover. Blackpool has one of the largest promenade areas in Europe.
- ❖ A public satisfaction survey highlighted public dissatisfaction with the lack of police response.

Crime Levels across Western Division

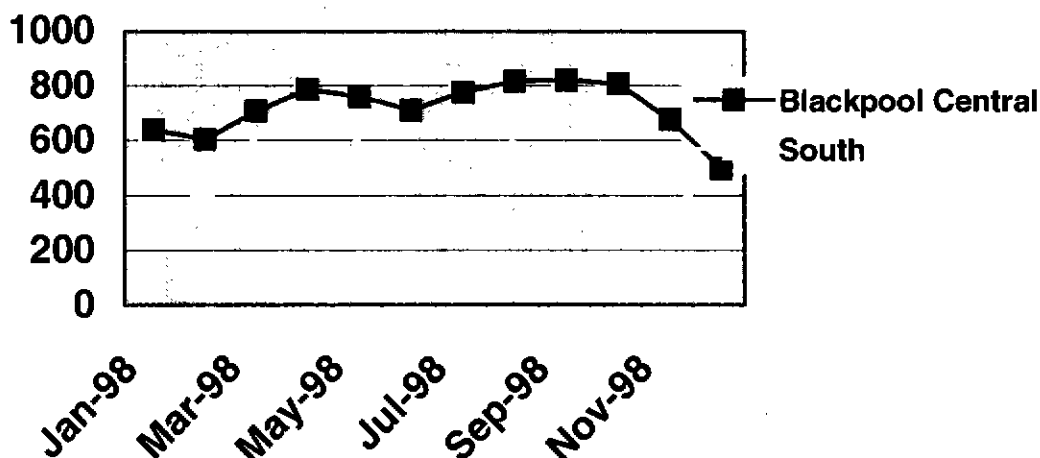
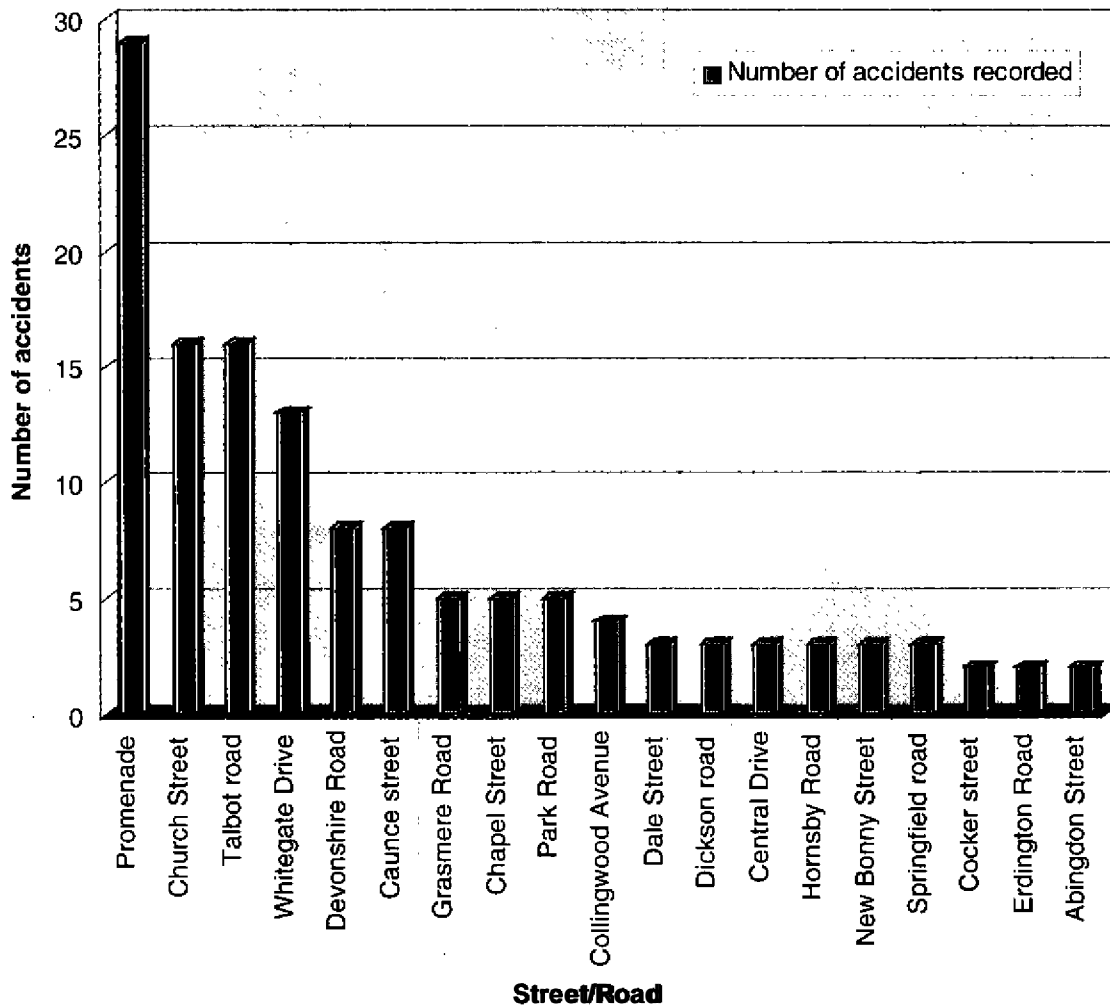


Chart highlighting the periods of increase in crime, which coincides, with holiday periods throughout the year.

Analysis of the problem

A team of highly motivated individuals led by Sergeant Daryl Turner in conjunction with the Intelligence analysts, highlighted the fact that the majority of crime, disorder and road casualties during these summer months was centered around the 2 % miles of promenade called 'the Golden Mile' and extended inland around 300meters. Road casualties alone were almost double on the promenade compared to any other town centre busy road.

Accidents within the Blackpool Central Geographic Area 1998



The area was too great a distance to cover on foot effectively and too busy with pedestrians to drive on promenade / pedestrianised areas as a large number of streets are now pedestrianised around Blackpool town centre. The problem becomes exaggerated during certain period's i.e. Illuminations, conference, and school holidays.

The nature of the offences committed in this area included the following;

- + Public Order Offences
- *." Drugs
- ❖ On Street Booze Ban
- ❖ Violent Crime
- ❖ Traffic & vehicle crime
- ❖ General Nuisance
- ❖ Burglary (Hotel & Guest Houses)
- ❖ Dipping
- ❖ Juvenile nuisance
- + Under age drinking
- ❖ Street Traders
- ❖ Indecent exposures
- ❖ Missing persons

From information contained in the Community Expectations Survey the following was ascertained;

- ❖ Only 10.6% of people surveyed were satisfied with present levels of foot & cycle patrols
- ❖ 72.7% of people surveyed preferred to see officers patrolling on either foot or bicycle
- ❖ 82% of people surveyed said they were happy for police to take longer to attend non emergency incidents if it allowed more officers to be placed on foot / cycle patrol
- ❖ 90% of people wanted community focused policing.

Response

The 'Golden Mile' had never before been specifically policed, however analysis indicated that a solution must be found which increased public levels of satisfaction both within the resident population and also for the families visiting the resort. The required solution needed to reduce levels of crime, disorder and road casualties within this area, all of which are core-policing functions.

The solution appeared to be to return to the old fashioned method of policing i.e. on bicycles. It was decided to dedicate a highly visible, flexible mobile patrol to the area, whose response time would be faster than either foot or vehicle patrols.

A high visibility uniform for officers would serve two purposes, firstly to act as a deterrent and secondly to encourage a feeling of confidence in the public.

Analysis of the intelligence information highlighted specific areas to target within the 2¼-mile area. For example missing children are to be found in the many arcades along the promenade. Pickpockets work in specific locations and intelligence information pinpointed which streets and areas to target.

Objectives

Increase levels of public satisfaction

Reduce demand on Police resources

Promote partnerships to combat problems

To assess feasibility of dedicated cycle patrols for the County

To reduce crime in the target area

To reduce incidents of antisocial behaviour

To reduce road casualties

Specific responses

The response aimed to direct the cycle squad at specific problems within specific areas and focus on anticipated and current hotspots within the target area. The squad would also work in close co-operation with other on-going divisional operations and the POP Sergeants in those areas.

The response specifically target weeks between 20th May until 13th September

A leaflet drop to businesses in the area was carried out to inform owners and managers of the operation and also canvas support, not only from the public satisfaction viewpoint but businesses can also be an important source of intelligence concerning criminal activity.

A Dedicated scratch pad was held in the communications room to collate intelligence information.

The general public was encouraged through use of the media to convey any information regarding criminal activity to the squad

Officers on the squad keep in constant touch with incidents within the town centre and on the promenade via the Communications Room and also the Town Centre Link Radio Initiative.

CCTV cameras along the promenade and in the town centre provided the officers with instant information regarding incidents via the Communications Room.

Partnerships

Working with the Divisional Community safety department partnerships were established with various agencies. These were necessary for various reasons.

Due to bylaws concerning the promenade, permission from the council had to be obtained in order to cycle along the promenade. With no finance available within the organisation sponsorship was obtained for the bikes from a cycle shop, which provided the cycles at cost, and Coral Island supplied the funding to purchase the 'Ridgeback' cycles. A specialised high visibility uniform was developed in co-operation with a local clothing manufacturer and the Constabulary's clothing store.

Other partnerships were developed to enhance the operation including the following.

Internal

Analysts

Target Unit

Section Patrols

Communications

Intelligence Unit

Road Safety

CCTV

External

Coral Island

Arcade Association

Hotel and Guest House Association

Trading Standards

Council Town Centre Forum

Town Centre Link Radio

Media Liaison

Liaison with the press was built in as a fundamental part of response. It was targeted at local and national level and radio interviews with Police personnel were planned.

The Cycle Squad was officially launched with the "PruTour" and photographs were taken with celebrities. Other initiatives to promote awareness of the squad to the public were;

- * Sponsored bike ride - Manchester to Blackpool to promote awareness
- *• Working with the Council for Child
- Safety Weekend

Training

Training was organised for officers, including;

Cycle proficiency test – this was organised with the co-operation of the council

Sea rescue training – it was possible that the officers on bicycles may well be the first people on the scene in any sea rescue. While it was not anticipated that officers should go into the sea their training might mean the difference between life and death for someone. Also the Beach patrols only work between the hours of 9.00am till 5.00pm and the officers duties cover the hours of 9.00am till 9.00pm (daylight hours).

Self defence training (MX21 Baton) – the regular police baton was proven uncomfortable whilst cycling and also contravened health and safety regulations therefore training was provided in the use of the MX21 Baton.

Resources

A highly motivated and pro-active team of officers with good local knowledge of problems encountered along the "Golden Mile" was formed from a selection of officers already working in the problem area.

The team consisted of 1 Sergeant, 10 Constables (5 from Central Wards, 2 from South Shore, 3 from Support Unit).

All officers were provided with a specially designed high visibility uniform, wrap around sunglasses for health and safety reasons (on a windy day sand easily blows into eyes), specially designed helmets and radios.

The team were provided with comprehensive intelligence information regarding the area they were patrolling

Assessment of the initiative

The level of success of the operation has been unprecedented, achieving all objectives. The divisional target for crime reduction is 10% - Operation Atlanta achieved an 18% reduction during the first month in the target area.

Levels of public satisfaction can be gauged via the feedback from the community as a whole, our partnerships and letters written by the public to the press, all of whom expressed whole hearted support for the initiative. The general perception is that the police are 'getting it right'.

Demand on Police resources has been considerably reduced with section patrols no longer getting stuck in traffic on the way to the scene of an accident. More often than not the cycle squad reach RTA's long before any police response vehicle.

The public, find the officers on their bikes approachable and as a consequence more intelligence information is being gathered.

The officers are achieving considerable success in detecting crime. Their higher vantage point enables them to look down into vehicles and also follow offenders down alleyways and paths where officers in vehicles cannot go.

Enquiries are being made by other geographic areas and divisions who would like to form their own cycle squad.

A secondary benefit but nonetheless a valuable one, is the effect on the moral of the division. There is now a waiting list for inclusion on the cycle squad. Also interaction with the public for other officers is now improved due to the publicity the initiative has attracted.

The final assessment will take place in September however it is anticipated the initiative will continue through to the Millennium.

In total over 80 arrests have been made by the cycle squad since the start of the operation

The operation is an excellent example of problem solving at a geographic level.