

`Crime-a lot' to Camelot

Police in partnership with theme park management reduce crime and create a safer environment for the community

SUMMARY

Lancashire Constabulary in partnership with Park Hall management rejuvenated a national theme park. Camelot was associated with violence and crime, and had become locally known as 'crime-a lot', it is now a thriving theme park in the heart of the Lancashire community.

Camelot theme park is the second largest theme park in Britain which attracts people from all over the country. In 1997 the park was suffering from high levels of crime and disorder disrupting the enjoyment of many visitors and compromising their safety. With a strong commitment from the new management of Camelot theme park, Lancashire police officers began a partnership to return Camelot theme park to a place of safety and relaxation for the people of Lancashire as well as the many national visitors that frequent the park.

The problems of crime and disorder at Camelot theme park became evident through many channels. Members of the public had reported problems experienced while at the theme park, which included returning to their vehicles after a days entertainment only to find their cars had been stolen or property from their cars had been removed, and those who stayed on for evening entertainment were faced with disorderly and sometimes violent encounters. These reports were supported by the police officers who work in the area as well as the crime statistics.

Utilising the policing objectives set out by the Chief Constable this partnership began reforming Park Hall. The main objectives were to increase public confidence, allowing the visitors to Camelot to feel safe and reassured, through decreasing crime and incidents of disorder.

These objectives have been achieved and are sustainable. The objectives were achieved through acting on the causes of problems at the theme park rather than focusing on the symptoms. The changes made have been sustainable because the management have taken ownership of the issues of crime and disorder on their premises, and for every problem solutions were found through the Camelot/Police partnership.

Through a problem-orientated approach to policing Camelot theme park is now a safe environment for its national visitors. It is no longer a burden to the police force, who happily assist the management in their ongoing commitment to provide a crime free park to the community.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Lancashire Constabulary are to:

- reduce crime
- reduce disorder incidents
- reduce road casualties
- * increase public confidence
- provide a quality service to the community
- let the public feel safe, involved and reassured.

Focusing on these objectives, in the light of the problems encountered at Park Hall, a partnership was initiated between the police and the theme parks management. This document outlines the problem-oriented initiatives set out by the partnership.

Plan one directs attention to the problem of autocrime experience at Camelot (page 2). The processes of scanning, analysis, response and assessment are considered and the input of partnership is discussed.

Plan two concentrates on the problems that arose from the night time entertainment offered by the theme park (page 6). Similar to plan one, all aspects of the partnership are documented in terms of scanning the problem, analysing the participants in the problem, the partnerships response and the long term assessment of the plan.

PLAN ONE: AUTOCRIME

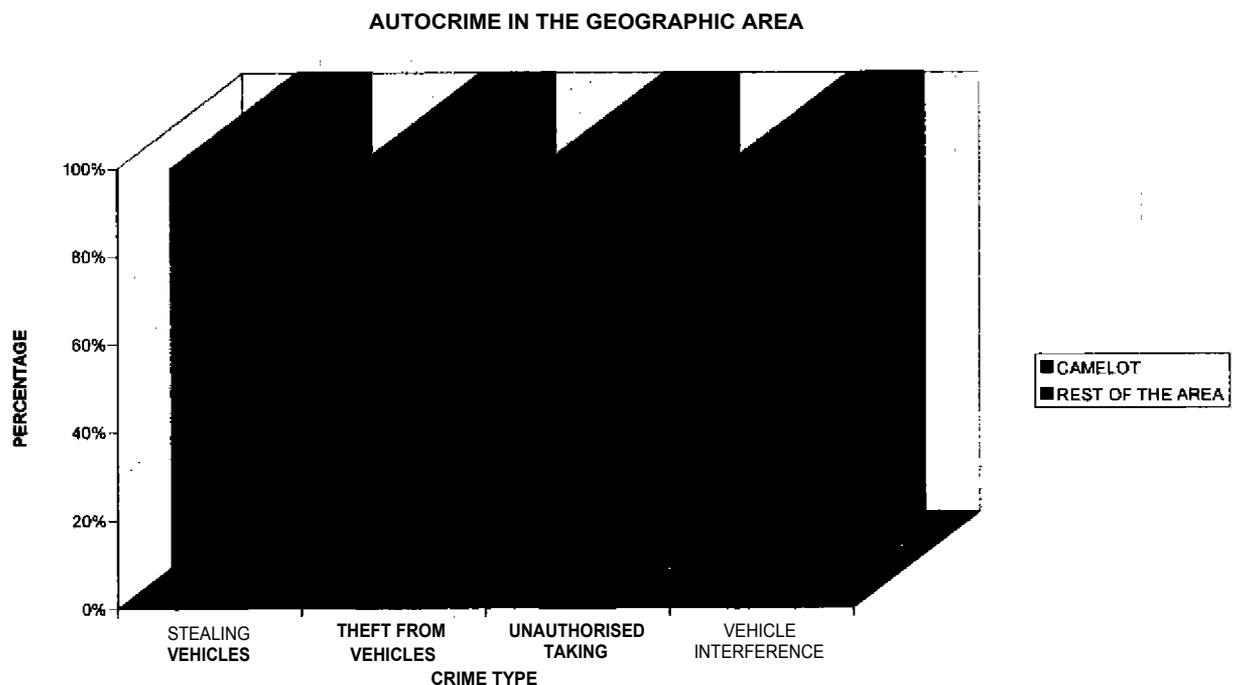
• SCANNING

The local community as well as visitors to the theme park expressed their concerns to police officers about their fear of crime and the high level of crime experienced at Camelot. These concerns were echoed by the police officers themselves who felt that they were spending a disproportionate amount of time answering calls to Park Hall. This is further supported by the crime statistics.

Within the entire geographic policing area 10% of all recorded crime in 1997 was reported from the Park Hall site. This a large percentage of crime for one business address in a large policing area. The figures in the table below demonstrate this in relation to the areas vehicle crime.

**Autocrime at Camelot versus the wider geographic area for
1 January 1997 - 31 December 1997**

OFFENCE	Camelot	Total area	% in Camelot
Stealing Motor Vehicles	25	77	33%
Theft from Vehicle	14	214	7%
Unauthorised Taking of a Conveyance	4	44	9%
Vehicle Interference	7	36	19%
Total	50	371	14%



The chart above shows the proportion of crime that was committed at Park Hall in comparison to the wider geographic area. This clearly demonstrates the extent of the problem for the geographical policing team.

The high volume of vehicle crime had a huge impact on the visitors to the theme park. The inconvenience encountered when a persons car is stolen, broken into or damaged is difficult to measure. From the table above it is clear that many people did experience this inconvenience during 1997. The impact of these crimes can further be evaluated in financial terms. The cost of damage to vehicles and property stolen from vehicles alone amounts to £185, 000 in just one year.

- **ANALYSIS**

The main aims of analysing this problem would be to reduce crime related to vehicles and improving public satisfaction. The location of these vehicle related offences is within the car parks on the privately owned Park Hall site. There are nine large car parks on the site, all recording crimes against vehicles.

The victims of these crimes are visitors to the theme park, who leave their cars for long periods of time whilst enjoying the facilities provided. The management of Park Hall also suffer, in that their reputation as a centre of safety, relaxation and enjoyment is marred when numerous visitors report that their vehicles have been stolen, broken into or damaged.

The offenders of these crimes are viewed by the police as criminals intent on stealing vehicles or stealing from vehicles and who travel to Park hall with this in mind rather than opportunists or petty thieves. During 1997, of the stolen vehicles recovered, 73% were found outside of the Lancashire border, which usually indicates travelling offenders.

- **RESPONSE**

To achieve the objectives of reduced vehicle crime and a safer environment, a partnership was formed between the police and Park Hall management. The police would be committed to reducing crime through operations that focused on high visibility policing as well as using covert tactics. The management would be committed to improving the physical surroundings to enforce safety and security. This partnership aimed to provide a service to the community that could be developed into best practice for other theme parks to follow.

Operations Jester **and** Chester were carried out by the constabulary (see appendix 1). The staff of Park Hall, members of the Special constabulary and local police officers co-ordinated their efforts during these operations. The strategy for the operations was that officers would follow the targets until they committed an offence, at which point uniformed officers would arrest the individual(s). Alternatively the targets would be followed and if they did not commit an offence information would be gathered about them.

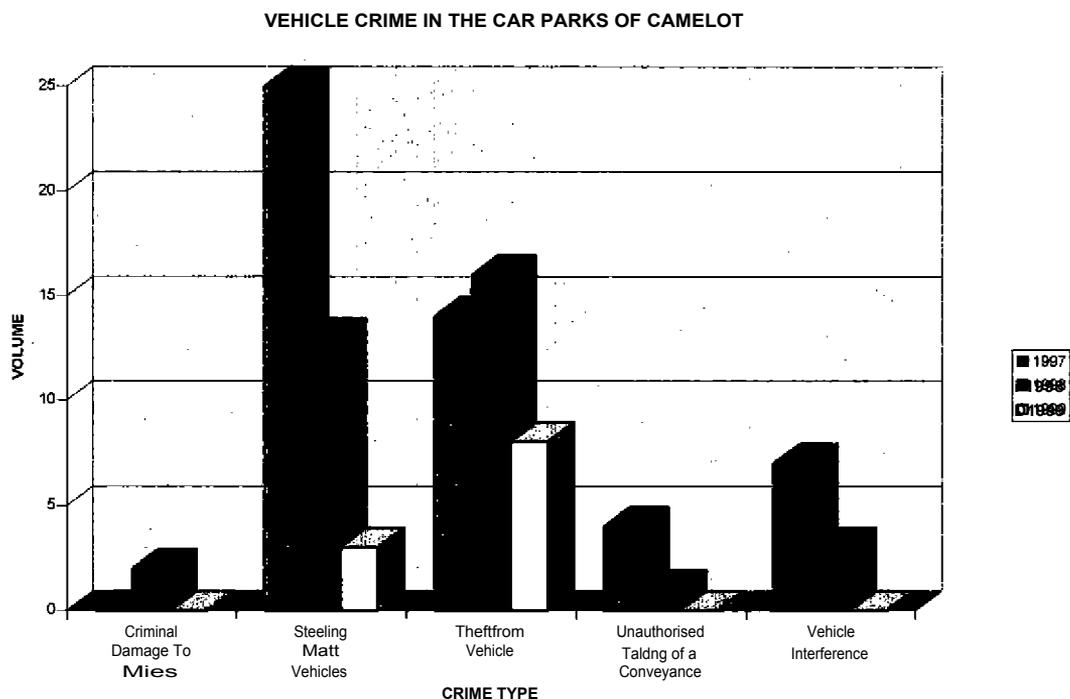
The operations were intended to change the psychology of the offender through changing their perceptions, altering their attitudes and impacting on their behaviour. Offenders who came to Park Hall to offend had the perception that committing vehicle crime in this area was easy and you could get away with it. This is in line with the public perception of Crime-a lot. In running an operation focused on gathering intelligence, disrupting offenders and arrests, offenders attitudes towards offending in the area would be altered. This would then impact on the behaviour of the offender, Camelot would no longer be seen as an 'easy target'.

Responsibility for the structural changes to security were accepted and implemented by the theme park management. These changes included cutting down hedges and trees that obstructed the view of security staff and which also created hiding places for offenders. High security fencing was erected to stop offenders, who parked in the nearby services, from entering the car parks through gaps in the fencing. The lighting on the car parks was improved and in some cases installed. Police officers also trained the security staff at Camelot to ensure that they had the skills to observe, prevent and detect criminal activity.

A further partnership was forged with the service station who place prohibitive barriers on some exits and entrances during peak times to prevent criminals from parking at the service station with the intention of committing crime at Park Hall.

- **ASSESSMENT**

Operations Jester and Chester were a success in that they demonstrated to the criminals intent on operating in the car parks of Camelot that they could not offend in this area without detection. The operations had the desired impact on perceptions, attitudes and behaviour.



The above chart shows that with the implementation of improvements to the car parks and the police directed operations the over all volume of crime against vehicles decreased, from 50 offences (1997) to 36 offence (1998). Some crime categories did increase, these were criminal damage and theft from vehicles but these increases were small.

PLAN TWO: NIGHT CLUB

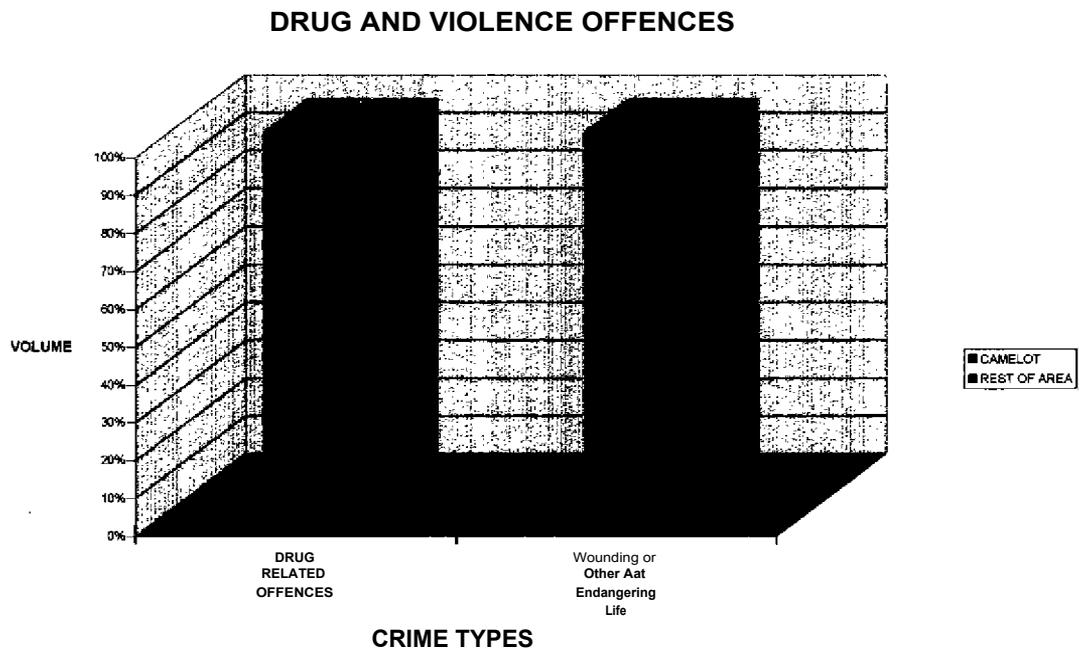
- **SCANNING**

The level of violence reported to police officers by individuals who had used the night club facility at Park Hall was a cause for concern. This was not only a worry for the patrons of the night club and the police, but the also for the new management of the Camelot night club. This level of violence would also impact on other community services like hospitals and general health care professionals.

Drug related offences and acts of violence at Camelot theme park versus the wider geographic area for 1 January 1997 - 31 December 1997

	Camelot	Rest of area	% in Camelot
Drug related offences	22	119	19%
Wounding or Other Act Endangering Life	15	41	37%

The table shows that nearly 20% of drug related offences were recorded from the Park Hall site and 37% of acts that endangered life were reported from the same location. The extent of this problem is clearly demonstrated in the chart below.



+ ANALYSIS

The main aims of analysing this problem would be to reduce incidents involving drugs and violence, consequently reducing associated crime and improving public safety. In analysing the problem consideration was made of the location, the offender and the victims.

Park Hall and the night club are privately owned property, this is the location of the offences. The owners of Park Hall night club lose customers and subsequently revenue when their patrons are aggrieved in any way. The other victims are the visitors to the night club. In some cases the worst that happens is they are faced with the criminal element in other cases they potentially could lose their lives or be badly injured.

The offenders in this case were individuals involved in the use and sale of drugs, in some cases staff members at the club (door staff). Some of the offenders were visitors to the theme park who, under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances, became violent.

The underlying problems associated with the night club were manifold. These included a lack of control by management both of their property and their staff, an inability to control access to the club and once access is gained an inability to manage the patrons.

• :RESPONSE

The police response to this problem was firmly grounded in the relationship that was being established between the management and the police officers. This partnership allowed the police officers to negotiate with Park Hall management as to the best value solutions to their then mutual problem. This entailed a letter being sent to the management outlining changes that would improve the safety of their patrons and ensure they were aware of all their legal obligations. The suggestions included, a member of the management staff to play an active role in the club, proof of age on entry, removal of burger van at closing time, provide secure, sterile area at club entrance, stop bottles and glasses being removed from the club, staff registration and training. The implementation of these suggestions involved lengthy discussions and consultation meetings between Park Hall management and the police.

• ASSESMENT

The club management were conscientious in their approach to the suggestions proposed. Some of the suggestions were almost immediately implemented, others took longer to put in place (see appendix 2). As the changes began to take place the level of drug related incidents and violence increased, which was viewed as problematic by both the police and the club manager.

Once the majority of the agreed changes were made and the club was running within legal parameters, it lost its appeal to many of the individuals who previously used the facility for criminal purposes and decreased the number of `visitors' to the club. This decrease in numbers resulted in the club being viewed as less popular and fell out of favour with the youngsters who had frequented the club.

The decrease in patrons resulted in the Park Hall management reassessing their business strategy. The outcome of this reassessment was that they viewed the night time activities as less of a priority especially in a climate of increased problems of violence and drugs imposed on their patrons by unwelcome others. This culminated in the club having its last night of opening on the 31 December 1998. The management have now successfully moved their investment into the daytime activities of the theme park.

Since the closure of the club Park Hall no longer suffers from a problem of violence or drug related incidents, the community is safer and police time can now be spent on other matters arising within the local community. The statistical impact of this initiative is demonstrated in the table below.

Drug related and offences of violence from 11/11/99 to 30/6/99

OFFENCE	THE ENTIRE GEOGRAPHIC AREA	PARK HALL ONLY
Drug related	31	0
Violence	11	0

The above table clearly shows that Camelot theme park is once again a place where families can go for rest and relaxation without the fear violence and encountering drug related incidents of disorder. Police officers can now spend their time effectively policing public areas of the geographical area rather than focusing 10% of their attention on one privately owned concern. The management of Park Hall are satisfied that they are providing the community with the safe environment they seek, while operating a profitable business.

SUSTAINABILITY

The development of a partnership between Lancashire Constabulary and the management of Park Hall has been a resounding success. For the constabulary this has meant that divisional objectives have been met, crime has decreased, incidents of disorder have decreased, the public have become more confident in the police force while receiving a quality service. Members of the public, especially those who enjoy the facilities offered by Camelot, feel safe and reassured.

For the management team of Park Hall they can now offer their customers a safe environment in which they can use their leisure time to relax with their families. The staff no longer have to face the problems associated with a high crime area and they feel that they are offering a service to the community of which they are proud.

The operations that were run and the changes that have been implemented will all have a long term effect on reducing crime and creating a safe environment for the public. All of the changes are sustainable at no additional cost to either the police force or the Park Hall management. In addition to these benefits the police force is now part of a partnership that will be sustainable and have benefits into the next millennium.

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