



**It takes a big man to face up to Derbyshire's policing problems.**

**The county's 6ft 4in Chief Constable John Newing is such a man.**

**He talks to BARRIE ECCLESTON**

**A**s you would expect from a man who used to battle it out in the back row of one of the country's leading rugby clubs, John Newing does not draw back when action is necessary.

He fights like hell, meets trouble head-on like he used to do for Northampton Saints, and he doesn't relish losing.

Finally, after months of cutbacks and financial frustrations, battles with the police authority and the county council, he has removed the handcuffs of constraint and is now actively recruiting for the sullied Derbyshire police force he commands.

The Chief Constable had a little celebratory drink the other day to toast a man who has taken over the mantle as "the latest recruit" - a tag Mr. Newing himself held for 20 months after taking over the force in June 1990.

Since then, with the force already suffering from a £2 million cut in budget and a freeze on recruitment, there have been more difficult times. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Geoffrey Dear, openly criticised the force and the Derbyshire police authority in his annual report for 1990. Despite this official reprimand, the county council cut the police budget by a further £2.4 million in March last year, the ban on recruitment continued and in September an interim report by the HMI failed to recommend a certificate of efficiency.

"Challenging times," says the man who had to tough it out in the Limehouse area of London when he joined the Metropolitan force "by accident really" back in 1963. He answered the challenge with some reconnoitring, some scouting before laying his campaign plans to get pride and efficiency back into the Derbyshire force.

He began consultations with local people to determine what they thought the priorities should be. He asked his own officers for their opinions and found about half of them thought morale was a problem within the force. Only five per cent thought there was a problem in the workplace.

"The fact people thought morale was a problem is historical and there's no doubt it has had an effect," says Mr Newing.

The events of the Eighties - the battle between the then Chief Constable Alf Parrish and the county council - also had a profound effect on the attitudes

# Big Chief meets trouble head-on

within the force" says Mr Newing, adding: "These are things we have to put behind us. Now everybody looks forwards."

He admits he is "a little apprehensive" about the final 1991 report soon to be issued, but morale among his officers is boosted by the fact the Chief is battling for them.

Mr Newing took up the fight for them after HMI gave Derbyshire the first really critical public report ever given to any police force in the country. "You have to reply publicly to public criticism; no two ways about that. That is why I went public with my disagreements about the adverse report. I didn't think HMI gave sufficient credit to the men and women in the force and I said so."

He explains: "Basically that first report was about constitutional issues, about the control exercised by the county council over the Chief Constable and that the police authority was not fulfilling its constitutional function. The Chief Constable relates to and is overseen by the police authority, not the county council. The council's job is to set the level of funding which the police authority asks for."

Too much political interference in Derbyshire?

"Derbyshire has been said to be unique in this way. It isn't unique and it isn't the only force which has been hit by these kind of controls."

He maintains that those controls have changed and have gone. There is now full and proper co-operation between the police authority and the county council after legal opinion was sought to thrash out the legality of controls.

"Something had to be done about those controls if we wanted the internal management of the force to improve. It is now a strong and positive policing authority. It does its job. It makes its mind up over issues," says the Chief Constable. But there is still a lot more it could do.

"To be blunt I don't see any evidence of any police authority in the country doing the job it ought to be doing under the Police Act. It ought to be taking a much stronger position asking questions about the efficiency of its force. Most police authorities tend to believe what its told by their Chief

**'...policing is far too important to be left to the police alone.'**

Constable!"

The reason was people assumed those asking critical questions or questioning policing in the public arena were anti-police or against law and order. "We need to change that kind of environment. I am very happy to answer questions. It's one of the ways local representatives can have some influence over what ought to be done on their behalf. I agree that policing is far too important to be left to the police alone."

At the beginning of the year, Mr Newing began to implement the strategy he had formulated from his early scouting days around the force and among the people in Derbyshire.

Both the county council and the police authority knew by now that their tall (he's 6ft 4in), commanding, new Chief Constable was not a man to be trifled with. HMI too could see Mr Newing's work beginning to bite as the lines of communication were improved, middle management was reduced and the force began to take on a different shape. That's why HMI deferred his latest decision on the force.

Mr Newing's arguments and a letter from HMI helped to release the purse

strings sufficiently for a £6 million increase up to a budget of £74.5 million for this financial year, although the county council could not totally forsake old habits and required an efficiency saving of half a million pounds. That shouldn't present too much of a problem to a man who passed a course on police financing and says: "The learning curve when I first came to Derbyshire was very steep indeed."

He had already started pruning the force along the line that there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The money saved by freezing senior posts and reducing middle management would give more money to the sharp end – the bobbies on the beat. "We are reducing management overheads because they are costly and they don't actually make the contribution they ought to make. I think the police service is like a lot of other British institutions and organisations, it is heavily overmanned in the middle management ranks. You have to ask about every position 'What value does it add to the service we deliver?' If it doesn't add value then you question the need for it."

"Since I joined the force 30 years ago there has been an increase in the hierarchical structure of policing where every flea has to have another flea on its back to check, if you will. That's not necessary. We have a better quality of officer now in terms of education and the amount of training given to them. They are better prepared and have more skills than when I joined and they need to be given more

## FACT FILE

**John Newing** Born: March 1 1940  
**MARRIED:** September 28 1963 to Margaret  
**CHILDREN:** Stephen (born 1966), Matthew (born 1970), Jacqueline (born 1975)  
**EDUCATED:** Kettering Grammar School 1951-58, Leeds University 1969-72 (Bramshill Scholarship)  
**QUALIFICATIONS:** GCE O-levels – nine subjects; GCE A-levels – English Literature, History, Geography; BA Honours (Social and Public Administration)  
**WORK EXPERIENCE BEFORE POLICE FORCE:** Barclays Bank 1958-62  
**INTERESTS:** Walking, watching Derby County and other sporting activities

◀ responsibility and more authority to carry out those responsibilities.”

He has told the Home Office he only needs Chief Superintendents in two of his six divisions with the other four commanded by Superintendents. He has asked for 11 senior ranks to be frozen and phased out.

“I made no secret of the fact there was going to be pain to the force. I actually went round and told the people who were the ones who were going to

feel the most pain ‘You have got to adjust the horizons of your ambitions’. Derbyshire is extremely fortunate in the quality of people who work for the police force.

“I do my best to give them the tools for the job. I don’t mind whatever the challenges or the knocks. Some things have to be done. I feel it underneath. I feel the pain myself, you have got to be a sadist to enjoy it.”

Mr Newing discovered constables and sergeants were very critical of management and the way management managed. “What they would rather see is a team in an area, a number of officers local communities can identify with, a team which operates almost autonomously within the area.

Police and public working in harness together to build a more efficient policing – that’s the way ahead.”

Units are being set up to operate in identifiable communities and all divisional commanders have been told to sort out those community areas.

In each community there would be quick response teams to answer calls from the public but there would be other policing to include visits to schools, youth clubs and organisations. “Both quick response and spreading the word were deemed highly important by the public,” says Mr Newing.

He is very excited about the response to Derbyshire’s belated drive for recruits. More than 3,000 have shown an interest – “that shows the real depths of the depression in Derbyshire” – and the applications have been across a whole range of age and experience. Mr Newing has been attempting to attract people from other forces as well.

“One of the reasons is I need to get some experienced officers into the force and onto the streets who don’t need training to the same extent as

recruits need training. It takes some

12 months before you get real value out of a recruit. Experienced on-the-beat bobbies – that’s what we want”

One of his lures to join Derbyshire is the housing allowance is at least £1,000 a year more than anywhere else in the country, except Essex or London, because Derbyshire was one of the last two counties to get increased allowances before the Home Office put a freeze on. “It’s an anomaly we can benefit from,” says Mr Newing.

Until recruitment was stopped in Derbyshire, the force had always been able to keep up to its establishment. “It has had plenty of people to choose from so the level of vocational commitment within the force is very high indeed. People who join do so because they want to be police officers. That isn’t always the case with some forces where people join

because it’s a way of earning a living.”

Many places suffered as the force went below strength and that’s why the Chief Constable has promised that Derby, Alfreton, Chesterfield and Buxton will get the first and major share of the newly

recruited officers. The cost of moving people around to fill gaps and the effect on morale meant understaffing was prolonged in some areas.

It would probably be 12 months before more bobbies would be seen on the beat, but there was likely to be more police visibility sooner than that.

Mr Newing is looking to have a force about 2,000 strong, an elite force not overburdened with middle management and top brass and with more people out in the communities working across the board after better training and able to handle more responsibility.

A streamlined, very functional, hard working, well paid unit led by a man who regards himself as a father figure, a state of mind brought home to him at a recent commendation ceremony.

“One of the mothers of one of the lads receiving an award turned to me and said ‘They are a bit like your family, aren’t they? You are a bit like the father of a family’. That’s true. That’s really how I feel about them,” says the hard ex-rugger player – with just a touch of a soft centre.



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**Derby NOW!**

■ In action: Pc Andy Szegota (left) and Sgt Stuart Exton

**Derbyshire Police Force, deprived of funding through political arguments between the county council and the government, still have over 100 vacancies to fill and suffered the embarrassment of having a certificate of efficiency withheld.**

**It is the only constabulary in the country to have this stigma attached to it.**

**Derby Now! spends an evening on patrol with one of the county's rural police divisions – at Matlock – in a bid to find out how serious the situation is. NEIL ROBINSON reports**

**T**he Derbyshire police force is under-funded, under-manned, and stretched to breaking-point.

It went into the year facing the prospect of becoming the first-ever to be denied a Certificate of Efficiency by the government.

In a damning report last year, Geoffrey Dear, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, recommended signing of the certificate be deferred after branding the state of the force "alarming".

He pointed out that Derbyshire's Chief Constable John Newing had described community policing in the county as a myth, alleged that foot patrols were a rarity, and said "substantial areas" of the county were no longer patrolled at all.

The police presence on a Friday night in Matlock, base for the Labour-ruled county council, is a thin blue line and in the words of one senior officer, "virtually transparent".

For three hours it consists almost entirely of Andy Szegota, a 39-year-old Pc with 18 years as a police officer, and his Vauxhall Cavalier patrol-car.

As the night's designated First Response Unit, he alone is responsible for patrolling roughly 1,200 square miles in the Buxton south sub-division.

He says: "We work one car

# It's a typical night – we've no men!



■ Pc Tony Umney: smiling through the police problems in Matlock

from Matlock, the response car. We have a back-up car which is often out on patrol, but he will deal with routine inquiries.

"Unless I've any enquiries on, my main job now is driving around. If anything comes in that needs immediate response, this is the car which will be sent."

He adds: "It's not my ordinary duty. The lad who normally does it, he's off today. He's

been off walking in the Peak District, and it's been left to me."

As Sergeant Stuart Exton, responsible for the early night-shift, tells his team as they assemble for 7pm briefing in the parade room: "It's a typical night: we've no men."

Backing up tonight are Sgt Exton, Pc Tony Umney, and a woman special constable. They begin their shift attending parish council meetings to discuss

policing problems.

Matlock, a busy enough spa town with a reasonable passing trade from Peak District holidaymakers and visitors from surrounding cities such as Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield, has a population of almost 9,500. It boasts 17 pubs – some flanking the main A6 road which runs through the town. Sometimes it's quiet, sometimes it's not.

Pc Umney explains the

difficulties bluntly: "If you have a busy night you're in the mire. Someone is going to have to wait."

"If we get 30 yobbos who decide they want to fight outside the Pavilion – one of the area's major nightspots, in adjoining Matlock Bath – then we've got trouble."

"For a start we haven't got enough cars. Then we haven't got enough men, especially if we make an arrest: that takes two people, one as a custody officer and one to drive."

Pc Szegota's one-man patrol begins quietly. He tours through Matlock checking industrial estates and dimly-lit car-parks – vehicle thefts are at a high in the region.

At 7.30pm the radio begins to suffer interference which makes messages from the Ripley-based ops room indecipherable. Local calls are fortunately made with two-way walkie-talkies.

The usual calls are for burglar alarms, pub trouble, and domestic incidents ("They get paid, spend it all on booze, find they haven't got enough for the weekend, and fall out with each other").

Pc Szegota says: "The one thing about our job is that you can never predict what is going to happen. You can't plan for it. But you always keep your fingers crossed nothing will happen."

"You only need a handful of jobs to come in, with offenders involved and interviews to be done and files to be put in, and it can make you very busy."

"It's unlike a lot of city work, where the bobbies are busy but they're more or less going out, doing as much as they can and then somebody else takes over and continues."

"In your rural areas, the bobby who goes to the crime invariably deals with it from start to finish. You get more ➤

◀ involved: You know what the job is, and you tend to see it through better."

Pc Szegota enjoyed stints in the Road Traffic Division and as a community policeman before assuming his usual role – tonight excepted – as the driver of Matlock's back-up car.

"I wouldn't mind working in the city. It would be a change. But I wouldn't like to for any length of time. I admire the lads that do it, but I think it's more of a young man's game.

Half an hour into his shift, he tails a Ford Escort XR3i seen executing a U-turn in the middle of town. It's the suspected occupants, not the manoeuvre, which cause concern.

"They look like a couple of young lads. The XR2, 3 and 4 are the most popular cars for being stolen," he says. But a stop-check reveals a mother and her young son.

At 7.45 he visits Pc Barry Hall, the resident policeman in Wirksworth. Pc Hall lives locally, and with one other constable is responsible for policing the small 5,500-strong community.

He admits: "We're overstretched, really. There's 5,000 or so people out there who could call on the police, whether it be a cat up a tree or a murder.

"Unless it's something that requires urgent attention, I would be the one dispatched to the scene, so that

**"The only thing that keeps most of us going is the love of the job."**

eliminates me for whatever length of time.

"And if it's a cat up a tree . . . well, it could take two hours to get a cat out of a tree. It could be something that simple, and so I'm crossed off the computer as unavailable.

"And then it falls to the next person, which would be the car (and, tonight, Pc Szegota); but his demands are much greater, in as much as he's got a bigger area to cover – he's got the whole damned lot. And that's why we don't need much to really have nobody left."

Pc Szegota adds: "Nobody stays in the office unless there's paperwork to catch up on. There are two or three enquiries I could be doing, but you tend to try and hang fire with them. If you're in the middle of sorting something out and they suddenly shout you to go somewhere else, you've had it."

More routine car-park checks at 8.10pm uncover a youth who is apparently cruising around vehicles for no reason. A registration check shows the car is registered to a local woman.

The youth is stopped and questioned briefly. At 8.15pm tea-break is curtailed by a call from the landlord of the Boat House Inn, Matlock, where a drunken 19-year-old youth is refusing to leave the premises.

Both cars attend, the second containing Sgt. Exton and the woman special constable. The long-haired teenager, cheered on by leather-clad supporters, is put inside Sgt. Exton's car.

He is given five minutes to "cool off" in the Cavalier, but becomes threatening and abusive and is placed under arrest for being drunk and disorderly.

His arrest poses new problems. Matlock is not a holding station, and can keep a prisoner for only six hours. After that he must be taken to either Alfreton or Chesterfield, a drive of at least 25 minutes.

It's likely, though, that he'll be allowed to sober up and sent home with a caution once the pubs are closed. Pc Szegota says: "Someone like that just wants an argument."

The rest of Pc Szegota's shift is uneventful: Routine checks on local service-station cashiers and more car-park surveillance. He finishes at 10pm.

Thereafter the First Response Unit is doubled, with 29-year-old Pc Colin Ingley and 26-year-old Pc Adrian Fry looking after the divisions 1,300 square miles.

Staff is now so short that two members of the local Road Traffic Division are brought in to help.

Inspector Steven Johnson is responsible for controlling two

divisions until 8am due to the shortage of manpower and briefs his Matlock team of three Pc's, two specials and the RTDs.

He reads a message from Chief Constable John Newing which assures them that Geoffrey Dear's latest inspection, just completed, could find no fault with the Derbyshire officers themselves.

Then Pcs Ingley and Fry begin their shift. Matlock remains quiet: They follow a car seen seen being driven suspiciously at around 10.45pm, but lose track of it in a maze of lanes.

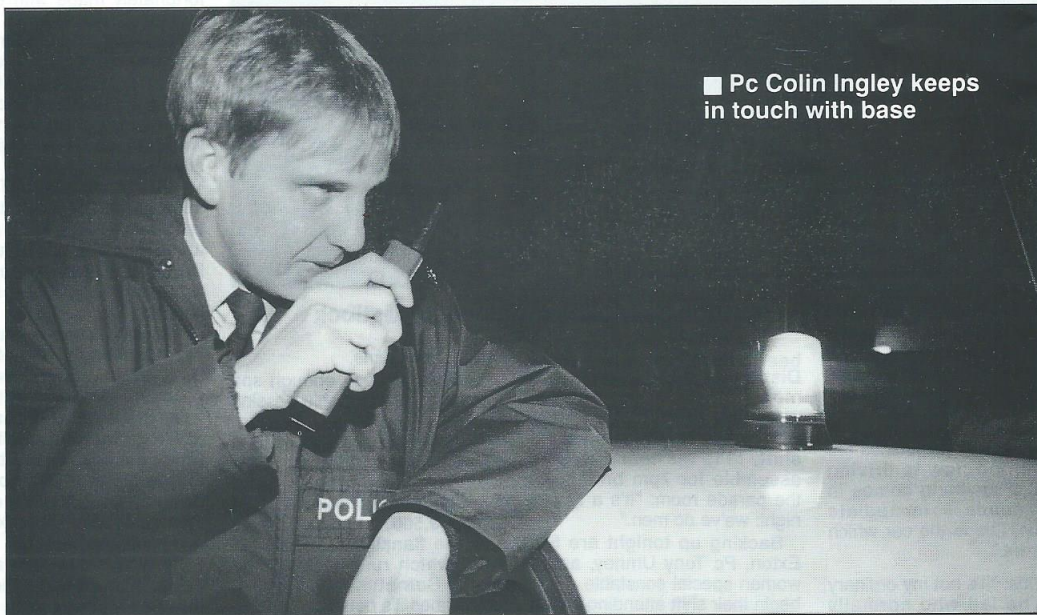
The only incident of note comes at 11.30, when the radio – still battling against interference – blares an announcement that, as usual, one of the two police channels will be shutting down.

The ops room, it transpires, does not have the staff to maintain both channels for the night, meaning calls for all divisions will be fighting for space on the same one.

As Inspector Johnson comments when his two-man First Response Unit returns for a midnight tea-break: "Sometimes the situation here is ridiculous.

"The only thing that keeps most of us going is the love of the job."

The thin blue line disappears into the night. . .



■ Pc Colin Ingley keeps in touch with base

# Out on the city beat

**I**t's late Saturday night in Derby and David and Dick are looking for trouble. They'll be the first to admit it.

For them, the night is certain to end with arrests. But they're the ones holding the handcuffs.

David Sismey, an Inspector, and Dick Ickton, a Pc, with Derbyshire police force, never know what to expect when they start work covering the city's central division.

**CHERYL ALBERY** joined them on the 10pm to 7am shift to discover what our police have to deal with all in the line of duty.

See pages 36 & 37

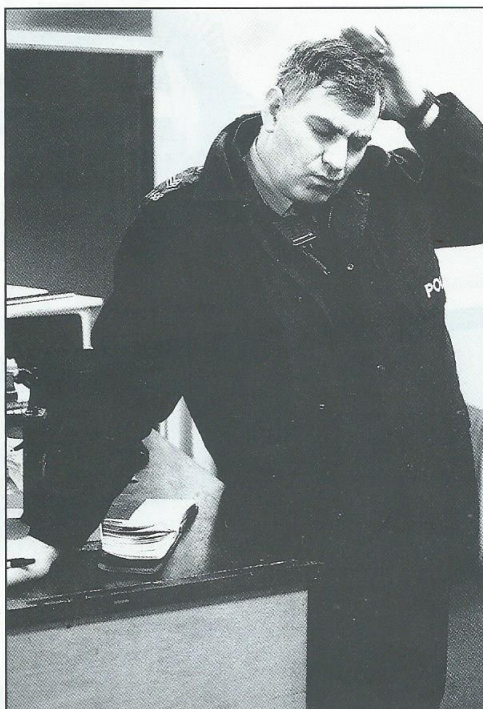


PICTURES: DOUG MARKE/RAYMONDS PRESS AGENCY



■ Above: Insp Sismey and Pc Ickton tackle a man outside the Duke of York pub

■ Below: Midnight and Sgt Steve Ellis knows it's going to be a long hard night



**10pm** Sgt Steve Ellis gives an operational briefing adding: "We've had a right rip-roaring afternoon. They've been running around like idiots." He's referring to an incident involving two rival gangs who attacked each other with broken bottles.

And the night is young.

**10.15** It's into the car and we're off patrolling the streets. Derby's residents are on their way to pubs and clubs. Many make menacing gestures at the car.

"You get used to it. There's not the respect there used to be," says Insp Sismey, who has been in the force 17 years.

Doug the photographer and myself feel like criminals as youths peer in at us and give a conspiratorial thumbs up. They think we're on our way to the cells.

**10.20** A radio call says a fire alarm has gone off at the Playhouse Theatre and people have been evacuated. Insp Sismey puts his foot down and at Traffic Street we see the fire-engine arrive.

But we don't stop. Another message reveals that a pet food shop has been raided in Derby East and the robbers are in a white getaway transit van.

"If they see all the blue lights, they won't be coming down here," says Insp Sismey.

We circle the city and the radio tells us a Vauxhall Astra and a Honda motorcycle have been stolen from the Meteor Centre in the last two hours.

**10.35** Another call says an Astra had been stolen from the Cathedral car park. That's three vehicles since the shift began.

"It's not like The Bill is it?" says Doug who, Nikon at the ready, is waiting to take some shots. We have been ferried around for half an hour and have not yet left the car.

**10.45** We are told a man has been hit over the head with a bottle in Sadlergate. The car takes off, blue light flashing. We arrive to find no-one there. "There's been a mix up with the location. That happens sometimes," says Insp Sismey.

**10.50** We get a call that a man was attacking the landlord of the Duke of York public house, Burton Road. We're there in three minutes.

Doors fling open. Out jump Insp Sismey and Pc Ickton and within seconds they are grappling on the ground with a man who is shouting: "Leave me alone." He is arrested on suspicion of burglary.

We later find out police believe the man had broken into the living-quarters of the pub and was trying to steal the takings when he was disturbed by the landlord. He says he was hit around the head by the intruder with a snooker ball fixed on a piece of rope. Sixty seconds later the police transit van arrives and the man is bundled into the back.

We call back at the police station to see the man empty his pockets. In his wallet a Stanley knife blade has been concealed in a piece of paper.

"He is too drunk to talk to us at the moment so we will speak to him in the morning," says Insp Sismey.

**11.15** Pc Ickton fills in a property receipt form for the hand-made snooker cosh and Stanley blade which will at a later date be used as evidence.

"A lot of our time is tied up with paperwork which means we cannot get on and do other things."

As we wait we learn a police car in Shakespeare Street has had a tin of paint thrown over it. The previous night, its blue light was stolen.

**11.25** All 14 male cells are full. Anyone arrested now will be taken to Chaddesden, Ilkeston or Swadlincote.

"That means a strain on manpower because for each prisoner in the public order vehicle there has to be an officer. Arrest a lot of people at the same time and you're left without the men you need on the streets," says Insp Sismey.

**11.30** Back in the car and off to Canal Street where a Montego driver has reported his car has been broken into. Surprisingly, the radio is still intact. "Either someone came by and frightened them or they were unable to start the car and weren't as clever as they thought they were," says Insp Sismey.

**MIDNIGHT** Back to the Duke of York pub to drop off Pc Ickton to take a statement from the landlord.

We learn there is always a "lull before the storm" with throwing out time bringing a series of crimes.

This is when the police are at their busiest as hordes of people, many drunk, spill onto Derby's streets.

This night, there are just two patrol cars and a handful of officers on foot covering the central division.

Most policemen, like Insp Sismey and Pc Ickton double up, but often, due to manpower problems, officers have to go it alone.

Any officer alone in a potentially dangerous situation has to radio for assistance before arriving at the scene. "If he goes there like a bat out of hell, he's going to get his head kicked in and that's no good," says Insp Sismey.

**0.40** We are sent to Victoria Street where an assault has been reported. A teenager is bleeding heavily from his mouth and he is told to jump in the car which will patrol the area so he can look for his attacker.

We stop outside all chip shops in the area as the lad peers out the window. But the search is to no avail. The disgruntled complainant is dropped off.

**1.05** "There are a lot of unhappy people at St George's Yard car park off Sadlergate who've had their cars smashed," is the message over the radio. We arrive to find glass everywhere. Around eight vehicles have had all windows smashed. Spiders-web cracks are on the few windows not completely caved in.

Sgt Ellis, who has arrived at the scene says: "This is a mindless act of



vandalism. Nothing has been stolen, which is quite unusual. There are some very angry people here."

**1.08** As we drive past the Blue Note club, a man rushes out shouting: "Stop those lads. They've just attacked my boss."

We turn our heads to see three youths walking round the corner and Insp Sismey drives after them and jumps out of the car. The three, all drunk, dehy attacking anyone and raise their voices. Within seconds the transit van arrives to pick them up.

"The idea is to keep them talking before the van arrives. They didn't like being questioned and they could easily have made a run for it. Sometimes you have to go in softly," says Insp Sismey.

We return to the club to see the manager. He's sporting a black and blue bruise above his left eye which has closed with swelling. Three witnesses will give statements later.

**2.16** We are sent to the Booker Cash and Carry warehouse where the burglar alarm has gone off. There's a small hole in the roof where intruders have lowered themselves in to steal cigarettes, wines and spirits.

Pc Richard Watson and Wpc Rebecca Marples arrive to search the premises and discover a pallet of Twix boxes strewn over the floor.

"They weren't like this when we arrived. The thieves have obviously hidden here," says Wpc Marples.

**2.20** Police dog Khan, an alsatian, is brought in to see if he can sniff out the intruders, but they have escaped.

**2.40** We are told a woman has been attacked near the Pentagon island. We arrive to see a woman talking to other officers. She has decided not to make a complaint.

**2.50** Back to the Duke of York pub to pick up Pc Ickton. We learn the landlord had received bite marks in the attack and injuries to his head, though not serious enough to need hospital treatment. But it's enough to charge the arrested man with assault.

**3.39** We receive a report that a man has indecently assaulted a woman in St Peter's Street. The man is found and arrested, and Insp Sismey says he is sure he has taken drugs. Back at the police station the man admits he has taken LSD.

**3.50** We're called out to a suspected house burglary but discover all's in order. Insp Sismey points out a van to us. "There are two plain clothes officers in there working undercover. They have to spend the whole night in the van observing the area. They must get through a lot of coffee."

**4.15** We receive a message that four men in a Mini have attempted to rob a garage by spraying the cashier with a fire extinguisher and are racing up the A52. Doug's hand twitches on the shutter. Me? I can feel

a lump in my throat. I check my seat belt is fastened. The car takes off and we're listening intently to the radio message as we swerve around bends and build up speed in areas where only an officer would get away with it – and be experienced enough to.

"The Mini is now doing 90mph.....now 95....." came the calm female voice over the radio.

"What a nerd!" says Insp Sismey as my eyes stay glued to his speedometer. We are soon doing a steady 90 to 95 mph. on the A52. We suddenly pull into the slow lane. Vroom. Another police car has overtaken us before we can blink. Doug's jaw falls open.

"Like The Bill now is it?" asks Pc Ickton, knowing damn well we have picked a night full of surprises.

Very soon we have caught up with the Mini on the A6005, and there are five other police cars at the scene. The car is covered in dried foam. The four men are arrested and again, on cue, the transit van arrives to take them away. The cells at Ilkeston are full so they are taken to Swadlincote.

"How did they think they could get away in a Mini?" asks Insp Sismey who throughout the whole evening has remained cool calm and collected.

**4.50** We drop off Pc Ickton back at the station and then head off for the Murco service station in Stores Road – target for the Mini gang – where a distraught member of staff refuses to talk to us.

Insp Sismey tells him someone will be around to take a statement and we leave him staring at the mess on the forecourt and inside the shop.

Back at Full Street, Sgt Ray Foulkes in the control room has been dealing with all the 999 calls. The central subdivision averages 80 calls per eight-hour shift. The total number of calls for all divisions is around 250.

**5.00** Last stop is the cells where custody sergeant Mark Vallis reveals there are 20 male prisoners at Full Street, one female, and four males at Swadlincote and three at Ilkeston.

As we leave, we learn that a youth has arrived at the police station and has asked for a bed for the night.

"He believes some men are after him. He is on remand and failed to turn up to a court appearance. We cannot arrest him because the cells are full. It's a ridiculous situation," says Wpc Rachel Walker.

It is 5.30am. As he sleeps on a bench in the waiting area, the work continues long after the shift is supposed to end for the officers at Full Street.

- As a direct result of one night's police work, one man has been charged with insulting behaviour, a public order offence and indecent assault.

- Two men have been charged with assaulting the manager and cashier at the Blue Note club.

- Four men have been charged with criminal damage at the Murco service station (no robbery was committed).

- One man has been charged with aggravated burglary and assaulting a pub landlord.



■ Above: Custody sergeant Mark Vallis checks on the crowded cells

■ Below: An officer examines one of the vandalised cars at St George's Yard car park



Derby County's Baseball Ground is becoming a safe haven for the true fans of soccer – under the watchful eye of an expert police and stewarding presence

IAN PARKES reports



# Winning the battle against the football yobs

**T**he massive police presence at football grounds, which is now commonplace, should in time become a thing of the past.

Police will always maintain a high profile outside the ground on match days; that is par for the course, but it is inside the ground where the revolution is beginning to gather momentum.

At the start of the season Derby County employed a ground safety officer, whose responsibility encompassed the complete welfare of all spectators, via the watchful eye of fully-trained stewards.

These stewards have undergone the most radical transformation, in accordance with guidelines under Lord

Justice Taylor's report following the Hillsborough disaster.

David Hollands, a former divisional commander for Derbyshire police, is Derby County's ground safety officer. He has 145 stewards under his wing and says: "Stewards now have to be qualified and hold a Football League certificate and be trained to the standards that are required by the Taylor Report.

"It takes a full season to be fully trained, going through classroom sessions, on-the-job training during matches and then taking an examination at the end."

Hollands has also set his own code of practice. "There is a strict policy on the standards of dress. They must all adhere to the rules by wearing a collar and tie;

jeans and trainers are not allowed. All this makes sure that they are up to standard, so when we start the new season they will all be fully qualified."

Sgt Colin Nellist is the football liaison officer responsible for the planning of each fixture's policing requirement. As he puts it: "I'm the one who does all the running around and organising and then sits back and watches it all come together."

The implementation of fully trained stewards can only be good news for his officers in the long run. He says: "The club's employment of these stewards will hopefully mean a reduction in police levels inside the ground. But the actual withdrawal of the police, I have to say, is some way off and whether this is



■ Two hours to kick-off and the football force gets a match briefing

“achieved at all, only time will tell.”

Supt Keith Collett, who is match controller in charge of the whole police operation for Derby County's home matches, echoes his colleague's sentiments. “The upgrading in the standards of stewards could lead to them being able to deal with situations normally reserved for the officers and take over functions which would also normally be carried out by my men.”

The police have already taken the first steps towards deploying just a handful of officers inside the ground. At a couple of matches at the Baseball Ground this season the police experimented with a reduction in the number of personnel, albeit at games which were low key.

In general the procedure is executed with precision. First, a match is given a category rating depending on the level of support from the visiting team and, more significantly, on how Derby's fortunes are fluctuating.

The East Midlands derby against local rivals Leicester City received the highest rating of an A+, while the low key game against Watford was given the lowest rating of a C.

The total level of manpower, both inside and outside the ground, varies accordingly with around 200 officers

## ‘As far as the Baseball Ground is concerned the behaviour here is very good...’

needed for a game such as Leicester, and half that for Watford.

Several briefings take place before kick-off. As Sgt Nellist explains: “The times of the briefings also vary with the category of the game. The higher the rating then the earlier the briefings. The first briefing is for the mobile units who have to get out on the streets to cater for early arrivals.

“The second, an hour later, is for the foot patrols who work closer to the ground and who don't need to be out in position as soon as the mobile units. This is because people do not start arriving at the ground that early and even if they do they are usually in such few numbers they are not a problem.”

In both briefings, given by match commander Supt Collett and his second-in-command, Ch Insp David Coleman, a group of ‘supervisors’ receive information on what to expect from visiting supporters as well as usual

safety and emergency procedures.

The ‘supervisors’, usually sergeants, then pass on the information from the briefing to a group of officers in his or her immediate control for the match. For mobile units the group includes the sergeant plus six officers with road traffic and dog patrols in singles or pairs.

Foot patrols have a sergeant and ten officers with an inspector in charge of two units which also includes six to eight specials.

Inside the ground the level of manpower ranges from 40 to 80 with the whole group given a separate briefing two hours before kick-off.

Insp Tony Hurrell, in charge of the briefing, stresses to the group that they are to be firm but fair with offenders and are not there to spoil the supporters' entertainment but to make it safe for all concerned. He reserves his most important point until last, emphasising

they are there to work with the club and for the club and to remember most of all they should work with the crowd and not against them.

Inside the ground the most important part of the operation is controlled by just a handful of people. The closed circuit TV booth has cameras which monitor the whole of the inside of the stadium as well as the streets outside.

Supt Collett says: "The outside cameras, which look along Vulcan Street, Shaftesbury Crescent, Columbo Street and the rear of the Co-op stand, are fitted with light sensitive equipment and are in black and white because picture definition is better than in colour.

"We are able to monitor supporter movement from the coaches and through the turnstiles and with the zoom feature have close-ups on anything which looks suspicious. This feature is so powerful we are able to read a car number plate at the top of Cambridge Street.

"The cameras inside the ground are in colour. This makes identification much easier when it comes to items

such as clothing. However they are not just there to watch the supporters, because we also monitor our officers to make sure they are doing their job properly."

With the aspect of safety in mind there is one vital piece of equipment which takes centre stage in the booth.

Supt Collett adds: "The computer which monitors turnstile flows is the most important piece of machinery we have. It tells us the capacity in each section of the ground and gives us a clear indication of which turnstiles are open and the opportunity to rectify any problems we can see.

"When supporters start to come in through the gates there is a green indicator which moves across the screen and tells us how each section is filling up as well as the number of supporters in that section in relation to its capacity.

"When a section is 85 per cent full the indicator turns red and we then start filtering fans towards other sections."

From the booth the police are also able to override all tannoy and

electronic scoreboard facilities which are initially under the control of the club, for use in emergencies to relay information to everybody in the ground.

Any offenders are taken to one of two detention cells under the Vulcan Street stand. The officer will bring in the offender and give details of the charge to the custody officer, Pc Palmer.

After the game the offender is then transferred to the mobile cell block, used in case of emergencies, and taken down to the station.

Fortunately, Derby County are recognised as a well behaved club and Pc Palmer cannot remember a time when both, if either of the detention cells have ever been full.

David Hollands says: "As far as the Baseball Ground is concerned the behaviour here is very good. On a national basis the atmosphere has been much improved but obviously there is still an element intent on causing trouble."



PICTURES: WILL PICKERING/RAYMONDS PRESS AGENCY

■ Monitoring crowds inside and outside the Baseball Ground from the stadium's sophisticated closed circuit TV booth

*BAR MASKERY  
I THINK?*