



North West Air Operations Group Newsletter Spring 2012

Welcome to the review of January, February and March 2012 with regards to "ON99" the Lancashire contingent of the North West Air Operations Group, (NWAOG).

Well we have had a busy start to the year, with the incidents we are attending still increasing despite quite a major service at the beginning of March. I think it's safe to say that we have all settled into the Regional flying set up now and deployment of helicopters in the North West is probably as seamless as it can be. This is definitely a positive as the focus for Air Support now looks towards the



National Project.

Throughout the country, all Air Support has come under a regional set up and as in the North West despite early differences and difficulties, all regions are working well. Now the challenge is

to bring all the regions together and for us to work under the banner National Police Air Service (NPAS). The first phase starts in October when the South East become the first to move under the national banner. The North West will join in January 2013 and every thing (if it goes to plan) will be in place by 2014. This will all be overseen by West Yorkshire Police who will effectively look after the purse strings. Interesting times ahead!!



One of our main focuses over the next few months will

be to support Operation Bikewatch, an initiative being run by our Road Policing Unit to try and reduce motorcyclist fatalities in this county. Some of you may have seen the launch in the local press last week that highlighted nine deaths in the last 12 months and considerably more serious injuries. This works much the same as our other operations that you are all now familiar with, but we will also make regular patrols on popular biker routes, at peak times, such as Sundays and Bank holidays. Sometimes a rider just has to see how dangerous their riding has been to

make them think.

Throughout January we attended 212 incidents. From this 21 arrests were made and from 31 missing person searches we located two people. Our hotspots numbered 20 and we completed 67 photographic tasks.



Throughout February we attended 186 incidents and from this we made 24 arrests. We had 37 missing person searches and located 7 people. Our hotspots numbered 25 and photographic tasks 39.

Throughout March we attended 223 incidents. From this we had 19 arrests and from 30 missing person searches we located nine persons. Our hotspots numbered 34 and we completed 68 photographic tasks.

A quick summary of our more notable jobs are illustrated on page two of this newsletter.

Regards

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The last **PACT** meeting was a great success on the 9th February with over 40 people attending. My thanks, to Andy Barlow from our Motorway department (and part time air observer) who provided a wonderful insight into the work of the North West Motorway Group and the help the Air Support can provide in pursuits, stops and incidents. With his two caps, I'm sure you all would have preferred more Andy and less me!

Thank you also to Insp Jones, (my boss) from the North West Air Operation Group for attending and bringing you up to speed with the progress of the region.

I in turn must thank you all for the wonderful turnout and your continuing support with this initiative. I think it's an important media as you all do and one that can't be replaced solely by computers.

In St Helens a burglary had occurred where two offenders were seen to make off. Patrols were quickly on scene and able to contain a fairly large estate that always makes our job easier, allowing us to search using the thermal imager. Both burglars were located in different gardens and patrols were talked into their locations where they were arrested.



JANUARY

and his car was a write off. It really isn't worth it drinking and driving.

The helicopter was used to maintain observations on a car that our Force Incident Manager did not want pursued due to the age of the driver. An attempt with Stinger to bring the car to a stop failed and the two boys abandoned the car in Ashton Park, Preston and ran off. We were able to pass a commentary to patrols on their progress and position to allow patrols to intercept them. They had no idea they were being watched by the helicopter.



A New Years Day hangover caused one male to crash his car through a hedge at Longridge and then run away. We attended the scene and found him hiding in bushes a short distance from the car. Not a good start to the year as the male was over the drink/drive limit

We were asked to help find a man up a pylon in Bury. Amazingly between us and the ground patrols we found him not exactly up the pylon but hugging it!

FEBRUARY

after finding him some distance away on the railway line and located two for burglary lying in gutters on a roof in Warrington.



In Maghull, Merseyside three lads had made off from a burglary and officers believed they had them contained. However as we were arriving on scene with the camera looking forward, movement was seen on the canal towpath and as they got

closer, could clearly see three running down the canal out of the contained area. Overhead, the three lads were now a mile and a half away and disappeared under the M58 motorway bridge. They did not come out the other side. It had to be them. The crew had to be quite insistent that patrols checked right up under the bridge and thankfully all three were located in the ramparts of the bridge and admitted the burglary.

We caught a male from an armed robbery at Simonswood



My favourite job for this newsletter though is two males on a roof at an old Mill in Rishton who had been stealing lead. They clearly weren't for coming down even when I'd asked politely over the skyshout!

And they were quite skilled in keeping their faces covered so we couldn't identify them. Two things happened though that made this a successful day. Enquires at the local shop showed they'd stocked up with sweets and chocolate for their exertions and had been caught unmasked on CCTV. Rather deflating when the negotiator now knows your name. And secondly we caused a bit of a crowd to gather and two local lads came to watch the fun. Only they seemed to have forgotten they were wanted for several offences and were also arrested by a very happy officer.



In Penwortham we were asked to locate motorbikes

MARCH

on the banks of the River Ribble that had been causing a considerable amount of

problems for local residents. We located the bikes quite easily and were able talk patrols in to positions to intercept. Operation Off Road that we champion here can lead to the motorbikes being seized.

In Southport, following a domestic, a male in a very angry state was shouting and screaming in the street but also

waving a large machete around. The helicopter was used to keep observations on him until a firearms team was in position to deal with him. He surrendered immediately on being challenged.

And finally in Rainford, following a serious offence we located a male hiding in woodland, who had earlier located the offender, taken actions in to his own hands, before realising his error and running off to hide. Whatever your thoughts leave it to the police as we have to act on all crime reported. .

The next **Pact** meeting will be at **10am, Thursday 9th June 2012, at The Black Horse Hotel, Gregson Lane, Hoghton, Nr. Preston. PR5 0ED.**

It is not far from the major motorway networks so hopefully is easy to get to for anyone in the County. All are welcome to come and join us for a brew and a bacon butty. Hopefully I will also have another speaker from our

Firearms Unit to tell you about their work and how the helicopter can help.

As always thank you for your continuing support and please don't hesitate to contact me if you feel we can help with any issue or query you may have. If you are interested in attending the Pact meeting just drop a line.