



## People for Proper Policing in North Wales

**Deadly Mates** Posted Friday, April 03, 2009 3:56 PM by **ACC Ian Shannon** 751

We can all remember (yes, even me) the feeling of invincibility that we had in our youth. That belief that we could do anything; that fortune was on our side and the promise of the future was almost tangible.

This is a precious part of growing up but all too often these things are dashed on our roads in a horror of twisted metal. Most police officers and most of our colleagues in the other emergency services will have seen this at first hand and dealt with the aftermath.

You will have seen tragic examples in the press recently. This week a twenty year old young man from Trawsfynydd was jailed for four years for causing the death of his nineteen year old friend. The most frustrating part of all is that these deaths are so preventable. And this is how we are trying to keep young people alive by supporting the **“Deadly Mates” road safety campaign** which aims to stop young people is being killed by their friends’ driving.

This involves both enforcement and education and has been running in Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham and is now being rolled out forcewide. The aim is to bring peer pressure to bear on those young drivers who drive dangerously and put their mates at risk.

Whilst this is aimed at young people, parents would be well advised to take note of our aims. Spare a thought as to how your children are driving your car when they borrow it. In particular, how fast they are going; are they sober, are they wearing seatbelts; get them to turn off their mobile phones (yes, they do have off buttons!)

From January to March we reported 82 young drivers in Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham for various traffic offences, 47 drivers had points on their licences and 7 vehicles were seized. Some of the prosecutions were for truly awful driving, including speeding at 82mph in a 40mph area

Education and peer pressure play a large part in this campaign but experience has shown that only penalty points and the threat of losing their licence gets the message across with some young drivers. Some people are still unaware that within the first two years of passing your driving test you can only accrue 6 penalty points before losing your licence – beware.

In **Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham** between January 1st and March 31st 2008 we recorded 82 fatal, serious or slight injury road traffic collisions where a young driver was to blame. Over the same period this year we have recorded 38.

**That is a 54% decrease.** It is far too early to claim success but the approach is very promising collisions are down, awareness is up, fewer offences are being committed, historic complaint areas have been targeted and officers are reporting a noticeable improvement in driving standards among young people. Please drive carefully.

**The PPP comments .... ACC Shannon has been the ACPO Officer responsible for road safety policy and road policing in North Wales since his appointment in January 2005. Cont.-**

In that period Arrive Alive have prosecuted over 200,000 motorists for 'speeding'. These mostly safe drivers were on safe sections of road deliberately targeted by the Camera vans. In the same period over 100 young drivers have died on our roads and many more have been crippled. Finally NWPF are attempting to deal with the issues and target the at risk and really dangerous drivers. This policy should have always been the priority and is still only half hearted. Everywhere we are told that this type of driving is happening. Like the targeted drug dealing policy which does work when applied, the CBMs must do the ground work to identify the times, places and even the identities of these drivers. The PPP wants to see prevention by persuasion rather than prosecution. A young driver without a licence and/or a vehicle is likely to be unemployable and wide open to criminal influences such as drug dealing and to driving uninsured. Cherry picking statistics is not the answer and is just one disingenuous legacy of Brunstrom's regime. Patrol car hours and drivers stopped and warned in each area is more relevant. The NWPF website management information **highlights** their own poor performance in dealing with illegal and **dangerous drivers, only EIGHT summonsed in the last year to March ...** See pages 2, 68 and 77