



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Interview: ACPO Lead On Public Order 14-May-09

In light of the recent intense media coverage of public order policing, **Police Oracle interviewed DCC Sue Sim, ACPO lead for Public Order and Public Safety....**

ROLE OF THE MEDIA

How do you think recent press coverage of major public order events affects the morale of frontline officers?

There is no doubt that recent press coverage has affected the morale of officers, particularly those trained as public order officers. It is important to remember that during the policing of the G20, the large majority of officers, some of whom were brought in from forces around the country to provide assistance, acted appropriately and with considerable restraint.

*But it remains true that **British public order policing is among the very best in the world** and we should not criticise all officers for the actions of a few. Our officers should be very proud of the contribution they make on a daily basis.*

Do you think recent reactions and reporting from journalists has been one-sided?

Recent reporting has understandably been focussed on what have been perceived to be the negative parts of the G20 operation. We do need to remember that G20 was one of the largest security operations ever mounted in this country and had to be planned in just a three month period. It included a number of events including the State Visit of the President of Mexico, the arrival and movement of 48 protected principals, including the first overseas visit of the new President of the United States of America, large-scale demonstrations and the London Summit for Stability, Growth and Jobs. Sadly the tragic death of Ian Tomlinson and footage we have seen of other incidents has overshadowed much of the good work that went into all the complexities of policing those events.

What's important now is that we learn from the experience. The various investigations that are now taking place should ensure that happens.

The PPP comments ... This sounds much like the last head of ACPO, Ken Jones. Lessons may or may not be learned. The MET is slewing with very highly paid senior officers (as is SOCA (many already early retirees!) and ACPO... BUT we still have to pay again for the poor man's ombudsman, the IPCC, to investigate their misdemeanours. From what we have heard and seen **second hand (at our age we can't risk being TASERED or battoned!) many officers had their faces and their IDs covered or removed, this must have been either openly or TACITLY condoned. The body language (and armour) of the frontline was extremely aggressive, the 2nd line of dog handlers and their dogs seemed likewise. The Police officers and senior officers' attitude to certain Political groups and causes was clearly unbalanced (DCom. Bob Quick was typical and his attitude must have influenced those reporting to him).**

The serious incidents including the fatality were highlighted primarily by amateur photographers not the media, the initial MET response to the fatality was disingenuous (as per the Brazilian's shooting), the initial response of the IPCC was inadequate, they left it to City Force!. The tactic of penning the protesters and holding them in an area is generally unacceptable unless they are rioting rather than protesting. One will very easily lead to the other which may even be an objective of the policy! . Comparisons to other countries with hard line paramilitary police forces and MAJOR extremist groups such as Russia's communists and Germany's Neonazis are disingenuous. BUT it is interesting to consider which came first?!

In conclusion we have significant concerns and the people and the press need to remain vigilant as THEY still haven't got the message.