

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

The reality of mounted police officers

This snippet from the horse and hound

Only 12 of the UK's 42 police forces currently have mounted units and some of those are under threat. Nottingham's unit faces closure unless £450,000 in sponsorship can be raised. Staffordshire was the last force to close its mounted unit, in 2000.

Essex chief constable Roger Baker, also a rider, said he hopes to have the first of the new team on duty within six months. He said: "This has the potential to be one of the best things Essex police ever does. It's not a gimmick — **it's about operational cops out on horses doing real police work.**

"Horses take the fear out of policing — put a cop on a horse and the public will come and talk to him or her." The new mounted unit will be based at Writtle Agricultural College near Chelmsford, with £1m being spent on funding the officers and a stable manager for three years. The remainder will be spent on horses — at about £6,000 each — their keep and the construction of a new stableyard at Writtle. Essex budget is said to £2m over 3 years

Mr Baker visited Merseyside Police, which has the largest mounted section in the country, when putting together his plans for Essex.

Inspector Graham Howard, who runs Merseyside's mounted unit, is the chair (should that read 'saddle') of the mounted division of the Association of Chief Police Officers. He told H&H horses make for more effective policing.

"One horse and rider equates to six constables," he said. **"One day in Wrexham we put two horses on the corner of a street. In minutes, they were surrounded by people wanting to pat them. At no point was there less than 20 people around them."**

This same event was described by NWPF's Chief Superintendent Thomson who said he had conducted an "experiment" in Wrexham that demonstrated "horses break down barriers". **He positioned two standing officers in a certain spot for two hours and then replaced them with two mounted officers for the same length of time. "Two members of the public approached the standing officers; the mounted officers were mobbed,"** he said.

Mr Baker added: "It's what policing is about. People will talk about a horse and remember it, and we benefit from the feel-good factor."

The PPP comments The reality as expressed by Thomson, Baker and Howard is that the Police nationally have so lost the support and friendly contact with the public they have resorted to gimmicks. We much prefer to Pat horses than chat to our CBM (the local police officer in your area, don't you know him?). Note Baker says it is not a gimmick which confirms that it is and it's also his pet Hobby which is nice!