

British bobbies are 'Gr8', let's keep them that way Tony

The security of eight world leaders, including Tony Blair, descending on Gleneagles in Scotland for several days has dominated not only hundreds of news channels, but will require hundreds of officers to police the event.

Thousands of demonstrators are expected to descend on Edinburgh this month to highlight global poverty, the operational policing needed will be tremendous.

Although mutual aid from English and Welsh forces provides essential support to our Scottish colleagues the real issue here is, will a wealth of knowledge and operational policing exist in tomorrow's officers for this country to be able to host events of this magnitude in future years.

Whilst the Government is adamant that the record number of sworn police officers will be maintained, they are less enthusiastic to confirm what their role will be. We have already endured

two bouts of police reform this century and the predication is that we will face a third wave of modernisation within the next 12 months. If the trend of civilianising operational police roles continues then it begs the question, will we have sufficient experienced sworn officers to afford world leaders protection in the future?

New recruits joining the police today are treated as a business commodity – what they can do, when they can do it and how much will it cost, rather than focussing on the quality of service they provide. They get less training, whether that's in the classroom or on the job, and do not have the luxury of learning the ropes from those who have walked the beat before them. Regrettably, this results in a wealth of grass roots knowledge not being passed on and real experiences being lost.

This is supported by the feature this month in *Police* entitled Basic Instincts which highlights a



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We would like to hear your views on the issues discussed in this month's magazine.
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course set up in Hertfordshire Police to get back to basics with probationer training specifically in relation to dealing with major incidents.

It clearly demonstrates that a gap does exist in the awareness of some new recruits. An awareness that comes from officers being able to cut their teeth in those initial years, and an awareness that is necessary to know something isn't quite right.

It's reassuring to see that some forces, such as Hertfordshire, recognise that a good police officer is an aware police officer.

And as Sir Bob Geldof himself concedes, the British police are the most experienced on the planet when it comes to dealing with public disorder, let's hope they stay that way or events like G8 could become a distant memory.

In Focus



Tony Judge examines the political backdrop to the rioting in cities across Britain 20 years ago. He highlights how police officers dealt with the social unrest and how the Federation fought for proper training and equipment. First in a series. **Page 15, 16 and 17.**



Tina Orr-Munro reports on a course for probationers which teaches them how to deal with potential major incidents, such as a terrorist attack or rail crash. As experienced officers leave the police service, Hertfordshire Police put those young in service through their paces and teach them what to expect. **Pages 19, 20 and 21.**



The Surrey Police Dog Training School runs courses for search and explosives dogs and has attracted attention from around the world. Helen Gilbert reports as officers from Singapore take part in the extensive eight-week course under the supervision of Surrey police officers. **Pages 22 and 23.**