



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

# Editorial - November 2007

## Speed-ing ahead?

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This month the police service will rightly focus on roads policing at a joint conference between the Police Federation and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). For years the federation has highlighted concerns about declining numbers of roads policing officers to a government which seems to think that speeding is the only criminal offence that takes place on the highway.

Talking of speeding, it would be remiss of me to ignore the latest outburst from the king of speed cameras himself – the chief constable of North Wales, Richard Brunstrom.

Now I know Mr Brunstrom was recently zapped by Taser to show that it has no long-term ill effects, but I do wonder.

Only last month several newspapers reported that he is now campaigning for drugs to be legalised. A view immediately distanced by ACPO who said that Mr Brunstrom is entitled to his personal views, but they are just that.

I appreciate that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but I do question whether that view should be publicly voiced when holding such a responsible position in law enforcement.

I can imagine the comments made to North Wales officers out on the beat the days after the news broke. Less desirable members of the local community were probably wondering if their neighbourhood policing team could pick up their daily 'crack' for them so as to save them having to leave home. Well, we are a police service, aren't we?

I don't make these comments lightly. I appreciate there are complex arguments about the best ways to tackle drug abuse, supply and addiction. But as the Police Federation national chairman, Jan Berry, told a London conference last month, sufficient numbers of sworn police officers are needed to tackle the problem at all levels – international, national and local.

If there is a shortfall in any one area then we don't stand a chance of making any real difference to the drugs trade.

But comments like those made by the North Wales chief do nothing to assist. The BBC reports that Mr Brunstrom's favourite saying is 'carpe diem'; that's Latin for 'seize the day'. And there I was thinking it must be 'lost the plot'.