

THE BULLETIN

NABIS NEWSLETTER FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS
June 2010

WELCOME TO THE SECOND EDITION OF BULLETIN

The tragic consequences of gun crime have been highlighted by the events in Cumbria earlier in June. The indiscriminate use of a firearm by Derrick Bird to kill members of his family and the public demonstrates that gun crime can happen anywhere in the country, at any time. It is on occasions such as this that NABIS has a responsibility to support the police force affected in dealing with an incident where no amount of pre-planning can properly prepare you for the impact it has.

NABIS has been able to offer support to the force by providing forensic guidance and also in determining which firearms were involved in each incident. We have also been able to facilitate quick time access to experts in firearms investigations and national media support in tackling the criminal use of firearms.

NABIS has been able to act as a conduit for Cumbria Constabulary because of its position in relation to national issues surrounding gun crime. This has relieved the force of some of the pressures that emerged as the extent of the shootings became clear. The degree of support across a number of areas that NABIS was able to offer Cumbria Constabulary shows the true value of the integrated capabilities of the Service.

A partnership approach to tackling gun crime is essential. Recent visits by members of NABIS overseas have presented real opportunities to mutually share and develop good practice. In the United States of America the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF) have also expressed keen interest in the work NABIS has carried out on inferred firearms and they are looking to carry out further work with us in this regard. The ATF have a vast amount of experience in tackling the illegal supply of firearms, and have invested heavily in firearms tracing, which is an area where we can learn from their processes.

A recent seminar in Macedonia has also shown how important it is that other countries understand the work of NABIS. International

co-operation will enable the importation of illegal firearms to be prevented and it will also contribute to providing a better intelligence picture about the movements of weapons between countries.

This work is also being taken forward by the European Firearms Experts who meet regularly to discuss best practice and lessons learnt in investigations and intelligence gathering. NABIS represents the UK at the EFE and is another way of ensuring international cooperation on tackling the criminal use of firearms.

NABIS will continue to maximise all partnership opportunities to tackle the criminal use of firearms. The holistic approach NABIS uses is proving to be successful, and this can undoubtedly be adapted to be similarly effective in other countries.

Det. Chief Supt. Paul James
Head of NABIS

WELCOME TO THE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

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POLKA AND NABIS

A Criminal Use of Firearms community is currently being developed on the NPJA Police OnLine Knowledge Area (POLKA). This will be a central repository for information and best practice in addition to offering an electronic gateway on all issues related to the criminal use of firearms. The community will be run by NABIS Knowledge and Communications and will include information about Programme 5 which is one of 20 UK law enforcement programmes of activity aimed at tackling serious organised crime. The senior responsible officer for Programme 5 is ACC Sue Fish who also leads the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Criminal Use of Firearms (CUF) working group.

The Criminal Use of Firearms community on POLKA will detail information on the services offered by NABIS Forensic Services, Intelligence Cell and Knowledge and Communications, ACPO CUF and Serious Organised Crime Agency's Programme 5 work stream.

Relevant documents will be uploaded onto the site in a PDF format to ensure that the information is accessible to community members. The community will also be interactive by way of a blog function that will allow users to know when a document has been uploaded and also encourage community members and stakeholders to share good practice. Forthcoming events will also be detailed on the community pages as well as relevant press notices.

The Criminal Use of Firearms community will go live on the POLKA site by the end of August this year. When it does you can become a member by joining POLKA at: <https://polka.pnn.police.uk/> and searching under communities for 'Criminal Use of Firearms'.

FORMING A PARTNERSHIP

NABIS is forging a good practice relationship with one of its overseas partners, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Following a visit by the members of the Bureau to the United Kingdom earlier this year, members of NABIS visited the ATF in the United States of America where they are based, to continue the development of sharing and developing working practices in relations to tackling firearms crime.

The ATF has nearly 2,500 Special Agents supported by nearly 800 civilian investigators and 1,800 other professional, technical and administrative staff. It was established in 1972 and over 90% of the ATF's business is related to the illegal use and trafficking of firearms. This includes tracing firearms, understanding and tackling the criminal supply of firearms, in addition to providing training to firearms technicians as well as firearms and explosives dogs throughout the US. Another aspect of their work is the investigation of illegal firearms purchases through legitimate firearms dealers. In 2009 they inspected over 11,000 firearms dealers. Another of the bureau's major activities in this area is the detecting and deterring of 'straw purchases', this is the illegal purchase of a firearm by one person for another. This issue is prevalent throughout the United States. One way of tackling it is to educate would-be straw purchasers of the penalties of knowingly participating in the purchase of an illegal firearm. This work is critical to the ATF's mission in preventing violent crime. This all forms part of day to day business for the ATF.

The delegates from NABIS were able to visit the various units that make up the Bureau. The ATF Firearms Tracing Centre is based in West Virginia and is an imposing facility that is home to over half a billion firearms sales records. The constitution of the USA prohibits the Bureau being able to keep records of individuals who own firearms. Records of firearms sales are therefore collected from firearms dealers and scanned at the Tracing Centre, on to microfiche tapes. Each roll stores approximately 10,000 records and on average there are 10 tapes for each firearms dealer. In 2009 the Tracing Centre traced 343,746



Left to right: Supervisory Special Agent Adam R. Price (ATF), Det Chief Supt. Paul James, Assistant Director Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information James E. Mc Dermond (ATF), Head of Knowledge and Communications NABIS Matt Lewis, Chief Counterterrorism Division Special Agent Mark Martin (ATF)

firearms. When the Tracing Centre receives an enquiry about a firearm, they search through the tapes of microfiche to find the details of the sale. Needless to say the Tracing Centre is very busy and in the future it may well be a 24/7 operation.

The ATF has a Firearms Technology Branch (FTB) which provides expert technical support to the ATF and other federal and law enforcement agencies through the USA. The FTB is responsible for determining the technical specification of various types of firearms approved for importing into the US to ensure they comply with the required standards. This is in addition to carrying out extensive research and maintaining an extensive reference collection of firearms, reference files and databases on the weapons.

Firearms technicians who work for the ATF are trained at the Firearms Scientific Training facility. Here they are taught the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS), weapons classification, microscopy and how to appear in court amongst other things. The standard of training delivered here is very high and can enable someone with little or no knowledge to become a competent firearms technician after completion of the training.

The ATF also feeds information and intelligence into State Fusion Centre's, as well as local police forces and other national and international law enforcement agencies. The concept of the Centre's is 'turning information and intelligence into actionable knowledge'. The Fusion Centre's facilitate the sharing of security

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and crime related information and intelligence and the management of the flow of this information across all levels of the Government. They are not simply an intelligence centre, but a way of supporting activity throughout the country with various programmes of prevention and response and the identification of emerging threats. Put simply, they take information and intelligence and develop it so it can be used at a practical level to support work that identifies, prevents and monitors criminal activity. This is a concept that is being explored for use in the UK on a project being led by Commander Martin Hewitt from the Metropolitan Police Service.

The approach of the ATF is similar to that taken by NABIS, in that partnership is essential to tackling the illegal use of firearms. The partnership that has formed will enable both services to develop their practices in tackling the illegal use of firearms, alongside the development of intelligence capability in the UK.



THE OLYMPIC .380 BBM AMNESTY



The amnesty for the Olympic .380 BBM ended on 4 June. The targeted amnesty of the Olympic .380 BBM began on 16 April following tests which identified this particular revolver as being readily convertible under the provisions of the Firearms Act 1982. That means it is now a prohibited weapon under Section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968.

The amnesty involved all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Police forces were supplied with information about the Olympic .380 BBM and how to manage the amnesty in terms of safety to the public and those who bring these guns into police stations to hand them in.

Those revolvers handed into police forces will be recorded by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS). NABIS will carry out a considered evaluation of all the Olympic .380 BBMs that have been surrendered. This will include identifying the number of converted revolvers and unconverted revolvers handed in. It will take time to carry out the necessary forensic tests and as such it is envisaged that the information will be available in September 2010.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

 NABIS

INVESTIGATION ANONYMITY ORDERS

Investigation Anonymity Orders (IAOs) ensure that a witness to a serious crime does not have their identity revealed at any stage of the investigation, enabling them to provide their evidence to the police with a greatly reduced fear of reprisals. The orders were introduced by the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (Part 3, Chapter 1, specifically sections 74-85) and are granted subject to various conditions being met.

The Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Use of Firearms (ACPO CUF) working group proposed that IAOs be introduced after a gap was found in the service provided to witnesses in gang-related gun and knife murders, where a fear of reprisals impacts significantly on their willingness to give evidence. IAOs provide the witness with the reassurance and confidence that their identity will be protected from the early stages of the investigation right through to after the process has been concluded.

An application for an IAO can be made by UK law enforcement during the course of the investigation providing that the conditions are satisfied:

- The offence must be either murder or manslaughter where death has been caused by being shot with a firearm or being injured with a knife. The offender must be aged between 11 and 30 years old and must be a member of a group engaged in criminal activities where the majority of members are aged between 11 and 30 years old. The witness should have reasonable grounds for fearing intimidation or harm if they are identified as assisting with the investigation. Furthermore, they must also be able to provide information that would assist the investigation and be more likely to do so if the order is granted. If these conditions are satisfied, the application process can begin and a magistrate can determine the application without a hearing. Where an application is refused, an appeal can be made to the crown court

The use of these orders will be reviewed by the Home Secretary in April 2012. To enable this review to be



informed, police forces and law enforcement agencies should monitor their use of IAOs.

Assistant Chief Constable Sue Fish OBE, ACPO lead on the criminal use of firearms said:

“These orders provide the essential function of offering further support to witnesses in murder cases where the fear of reprisals can lead to witnesses not co-operating with police.

“In order to ensure that IAOs have longevity it is essential that law enforcement know about their existence and how to use them. If it cannot be shown that they are used regularly and are of practical assistance to investigators, then there is a risk they could be withdrawn at the review stage.

“Witnesses have an absolutely crucial part to play in successfully prosecuting crimes of murder and manslaughter. This is often made difficult where guns or knives are involved. These orders provide witnesses with reassurance that their evidence will not be at the expense of their identity being revealed.”

ACPO CUF has produced a briefing paper on Investigation Anonymity Orders which will be circulated shortly. The briefing paper includes a template to be used for applying for an IAO and a national data collection form which forces should use to record the information required to inform the review. The data collection form should be completed for all cases where an IAO is considered and/or granted and submitted to ACPO CUF Secretariat at acpoiao@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk.

EUROPEAN SEMINAR

In May this year, Martin Parker, Lead Forensic Scientist at NABIS, attended the First Southeast European Ballistic Collaboration Seminar in Macedonia. The one-day event was attended by representatives from Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia, Herzegovina, as well as the host nation Macedonia and the United Kingdom.

The event was organised by Forensic Technology Incorporated (FTI), who are responsible for creating the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). The aim of the seminar was to further the relationship building between European countries on the issue of firearms crime, as well as the control of firearms between source and destination countries. The European countries that were invited to attend the seminar could all potentially be possible source countries for illegal firearms imported into the UK. As such, the presence of NABIS at the event was essential to ensure these countries were cited on the work being done in the UK to tackle international firearms criminality.

A number of presentations were given to delegates, including one from the Head of Interpol's Ballistic Information Network (IBIN) Programme about the system, how it works, and the benefits it brings to the countries that currently use it. There was also a presentation by the United Nations about the importance of developing effective gun control systems to tackle gun crime within, and between countries.

Martin was invited to speak about the work of NABIS and the holistic approach the Service takes to tackling gun crime by developing intelligence from the



Delegates from the Macedonia Seminar

forensic examination of ballistic material. The unique approach that NABIS takes to effectively link gun crimes throughout the country represents a method that could be used as a model of best practice for other countries.

Speaking about the event, Martin Parker said:

“Not only was this an opportunity to promote NABIS, and the work we have developed, it was also an opportunity to see if other European countries had similar issues around particular weapons, for example the criminal use of Baikal hand guns that have been prevalent in the UK.

“After talking to the delegates attending the seminar, it has become clear that the use of these weapons is not experienced by these other European countries to the extent it is in the UK.”

The seminar's aim of spreading an understanding of the issue of gun crime at an international level highlights the importance of ensuring that there is shared learning between countries, and an awareness of the approach taken to tackling gun crime and the supply of firearms.

EUROPEAN FIREARMS EXPERTS MEETING

Ian Head, NABIS Intelligence Manager, attended the European Firearms Experts (EFE) meeting in Madrid in early June. The EFE is a collaborative body of Firearms Expert Units and related legitimate European Union Member states (EU MS) government agencies focused on the enhancement of EU co-operation in the fields of firearms and ammunition. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Europol and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

A number of restricted issues were discussed. The UK was thanked following a report prepared by NABIS that was produced to provide assistance to Belgium about a recent weapons fair in Ostende. The report was recognised as good practice for future operations whereby a partnership approach was taken by working with other countries. A good practice guide is going to be produced as a result of this experience by Belgium, to benefit other member countries.

Trident representative DCI Gordon Alison gave a presentation about Operation Trident, to inform members of the EFE about how Trident works. This was very well received by the delegates.

A United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was circulated for comment at the meeting. Feedback was also given following a High Impact Operation co-ordinated by France towards the end of 2008.

The next meeting will be held in October and hosted by Brussels.

MEET THE TEAM

Lorna Hallsworth is one of two NABIS regional analysts providing analytical support for police forces in the North of England and North Wales. Lorna is based in Greater Manchester Police and her primary role is providing forces in her region with information in relation to linked firearm offences and emerging trends identified by NABIS.

“One aspect of the support I provide is in the form of dissemination packages. When NABIS identifies a linked firearms offence, I create a dissemination package. This is then emailed to all Senior Investigating Officers (SIO’s) and Force Intelligence Bureaus in police forces which have been linked via the firearms offences. The package will include individual letters to each of the SIO’s, a chart showing the sequence of events around the linked offences and an analytical link chart, which provides pictorial links between the firearm and the places where the offences were committed. Upon dissemination of the package the SIO’s are asked to provide information about the suspects, the victims, if the firearm(s) have been recovered and if they know where the firearm has come from. This information is used to update the analytical chart. The process is aimed at identifying emerging trends or common factors around the linked offences, in addition to

identifying suspects who may be moving between force areas.

I am also responsible for maintaining and updating the Northern Hub Tracker database. This holds details of all the ballistic material that has been submitted to NABIS from forces in the North of England and North Wales. Using the information on this database, I produce a bi-annual analytical report. The report is focused on the Northern region and shows the types of weapons being submitted to NABIS, in particular the make and model and whether it has been converted or modified. This again helps to identify emerging trends in how firearms are used. The Northern Hub Tracker database is also compared with the databases in the Central and Southern Hubs which enables further trends to be found nationally.

I am also able to provide operational support for national police operations. In a recent operation targeting a suspect who was converting and manufacturing weapons and ammunition, I was able to use the intelligence gathered around some linked offences in the North West region and build up a ‘bigger picture.’ This subsequently helped to establish how the weapons may have moved between force areas.

My job is hugely varied and interesting. It is good to know that I am able to make a difference to policing operations by providing them with information that assists with their investigations.”