

# THE BULLETIN

NABIS NEWSLETTER FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS  
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## INTRODUCTION FROM DET. CHIEF SUPT. PAUL JAMES HEAD OF NABIS

Partnership working creates better co-operation, which leads to more effective coordination of activity between police forces and law enforcement agencies. This principle is central to all law enforcement work and ensures a joined up approach is taken to tackling any given issue or problem.

That is why NABIS is working to develop strong relationships with a broad range of partners to ensure that, as a service, we are best positioned to oversee and co-ordinate activity to tackle the criminal use and supply of firearms.

In this edition of The Bulletin you can read how NABIS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) in the United States. This will enable shared access to the ATF's eTrace system. In the past couple of weeks the use of this mechanism, coupled with the close working relationship that we have established with the ATF, has led to the rapid tracing of firearms being illegally imported into the UK from America. It has enabled NABIS to use ATF agents in the United States to knock on the door of those concerned with importing these weapons within days of the items being brought into the UK. This is a good example of an effective partnership, without which those responsible would not have been apprehended as quickly.

NABIS works hand in hand with the gun trade to ensure that a fair balance is established between developing effective strategies and enforcing legislation to tackle the illegal use of firearms, whilst at the same time safeguarding the rights of those who legitimately possess and use firearms. This edition of the newsletter features the first of four articles focusing on the work we are undertaking with the gun trade.

By developing a number of working partnerships with agencies such as Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), UK Borders Agency

(UKBA) and the police forces of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, NABIS is well positioned to provide a comprehensive support service to our stakeholders in dealing with the criminal use of firearms. However, any intelligence service is only as effective as the quantity and quality of information it is able to gather from its primary sources. For NABIS those primary sources are you as our stakeholders, not just in respect of the forensic material you submit to NABIS Hubs, but also in relation to the information that you place on the NABIS Database.

A recent audit has established that the level of intelligence being placed on the NABIS Database is not of the quantity that could be provided and that this will start to have an effect on the support we are able to provide at a local, regional and national level in tackling gun crime. This issue will be addressed with forces individually but to get the most out of a service that your force subscribes to, the processes in place for inputting and updating intelligence on the NABIS Database should be part of daily police business. The service NABIS provides is unique in that we are able to pull together local information to inform the national picture in relation to gun crime. NABIS needs your local information and that information can only come from you.

**Det. Chief Supt. Paul James**  
Head of NABIS

## WELCOME TO THE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

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 NABIS

## NABIS SIGNS MOU WITH ATF

NABIS has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to establish a partnership to enable access to eTrace services.

The ATF is a federal law enforcement agency in the United States which NABIS has formed an excellent and developing working relationship with following recent visits between the two organisations. The ATF works collaboratively and in partnership with overseas governments and law enforcement agencies, to assist in tackling international serious and organised crime, which includes the criminal use of firearms. eTrace is a paperless firearm tracing submission system and trace analysis computer programme that can be accessed via a secure connection at NABIS. This protected facility provides a way of submitting, retrieving and storing firearms trace related information from different countries. The organisations that have signed up to access eTrace can benefit from the universal tracing of firearms recovered from crime scenes. The analysis of firearms trace information can help with identifying patterns in firearms trafficking and geographic profiling for areas of criminal activity and sources of illegal firearms. The eTrace system operates in real time and allows law enforcement agencies to submit electronic firearms trace requests as well as monitoring the progress of traces and retrieving completed trace requests. In addition registered users can initiate a search on virtually any data field or combination of data including firearms serial numbers, an individual's name, and type of crime or date of recovery of the firearm.

By having access to eTrace NABIS will be able to strengthen its development of investigative leads, reduce the time required to process a trace request, improve the quality of trace information because the system works in real time, monitor the status of traces and generate statistical data.



eTrace is available 24 hours a day and enables a comprehensive trace of recovered firearms which allows law enforcement agencies to develop strategies to reduce the criminal use of firearms.

To date more than 29 countries actively use eTrace and during 2009 ATF processed more than 34,000 trace requests. The countries using eTrace include Germany, Canada, Japan, Mexico and Antigua amongst others.

Ian Head, NABIS Head of Intelligence said:

*"This partnership with the ATF will enable NABIS to have an international reach when it comes to tracing firearms. This will enhance the current service provided to police forces and law enforcement agencies in the UK and help with the strategic approach to tackling gun crime."*



## OLYMPIC .380 BBM REVOLVER AMNESTY - UPDATE

The targeted amnesty held between 16 April and 4 June for the blank firing Olympic .380 BBM revolver has resulted a substantial in number of these firearms being surrendered to police forces in England and Wales. The amnesty was part of a programme of activity which was instigated after evidence identified the Olympic .380 BBM as being 'readily convertible' under the provisions of the Firearms Act 1982. This means that it is now open to classification as a prohibited weapon under the provisions of section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968. This makes it illegal for anyone to be in possession of one of these items without an appropriate licence.

The programme of activity is being co-ordinated by NABIS Knowledge and Communications under the ambit of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Criminal Use of Firearms portfolio (ACPO CUF). The amnesty was targeted solely at Olympic .380 BBM revolvers and involved all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Anyone who did not hand in their Olympic .380 BBM during the amnesty period could now be liable to prosecution for an offence, for which on conviction there is a mandatory prison sentence of five years.

The British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC) the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Gun Trade Association (GTA) were supportive of the action to remove the revolver from circulation in the UK. ACPO CUF worked with Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and UK Trade and Industry in order to cease the importation of Olympic .380 BBM revolvers into the UK, which was completed on 24 March 2010.

Paul James, Head of NABIS said:

*"The activity has successfully removed a large number of these revolvers from circulation along with the stopping of importation of these firearms into the UK. The threat posed by the conversion of these weapons has been reduced however, we will not become complacent. NABIS and its partners will continue to work together to ensure that people using firearms for*

*criminal activity are stopped and prosecuted."*  
ACC Sue Fish, ACPO Lead for the Criminal Use of Firearms said:

*"The comprehensive approach that NABIS was able to provide to ACPO CUF has been highlighted by the majority of responding police forces. The NABIS central team were professional throughout what was a very busy period, and your hard work has undoubtedly made the amnesty a success- thank you. It is important to learn lessons from operational activity. Any recommendations that result from the debrief will be implemented in the future."*





## NABIS - WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

Since it became operational in 2008, NABIS has been working with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), the British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC) and the Gun Trade Association (GTA). One of the priorities of the service is to ensure a good flow of communication between associations representing the firearms trade and lawful firearms owners. NABIS has been able to develop the relationship between these associations and the Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Use of Firearms secretariat (ACPO CUF representing the police service) to help ensure that law abiding gun owners understand law enforcement activity against the minority who use firearms for criminal purposes.

### The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)

BASC was started in 1908 as the Wildfowler's Association of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1981 its name was changed to BASC because shooting sports required a single representative body and the Wild Fowling Association was best placed to provide this. BASC aims to promote and protect sport shooting and the well being of the countryside throughout the UK and overseas. This is achieved by a unified voice for shooting across all parliamentary parties created by BASC.

### The British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC)

The BSSC is an umbrella organization that represents major shooting associations in the UK. It acts as a conduit between, the Home Office, other government departments and ACPO, to ensure information is exchanged across the spectrum of those with a vested interest in sporting shooting. The BSSC actively promotes the safeguarding of the lawful use of firearms and air weapons for sporting and recreational purposes in the UK. The BSSC is also active on legislative matters at the EU regional level and, via the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities (WFSA), at the United Nations level.

### The Gun Trade Association (GTA)

The GTA represents its members through the BSSC where it is a council member, through the World Forum on the future of sport shooting activities, which is held every year. The GTA is also a member of the European Association of the Institut European des Armes de Chase et de Sport (IEACS) where it takes an active role in European firearms issues.

### The Olympic .380 BBM Amnesty - An Effective Partnership

An example of how the effective partnership between NABIS and these firearms associations has been successful was during the recent amnesty for the Olympic .380 BBM revolver. The British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC), the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Gun Trade Association (GTA) worked closely with ACPO CUF and NABIS to collectively support the work to remove the Olympic .380 BBM from circulation in the UK. The BSSC, BASC and GTA along with NABIS and ACPO CUF all gave their commitment to continue to work to ensure that law abiding firearms owners are not disadvantaged by the criminal minority who covert firearms, and use them illegally.



## NABIS KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATIONS

As the development of NABIS continues, the NABIS Knowledge and Communications team enters a challenging delivery phase in order to build upon the existing Forensic Services and Intelligence capabilities of the service.

NABIS Knowledge and Communications, which includes the ACPO Criminal Use of Firearms secretariat function of activity, is tasked with developing and delivering a range of activities in support of both NABIS and UK Law Enforcement as a whole.

NABIS Knowledge is currently looking at a range of activities that support the Forensic and Intelligence areas of NABIS by ensuring that the entire NABIS Service is used effectively by police forces and law enforcement agencies. The strategy surrounding these activities focuses on the use of management tools, communications products, the development of existing infrastructure and the development of standards and definitions that will allow everyone to share in a common understanding of gun crime issues and counter measures to tackle this criminality.

NABIS Knowledge and Communications is actively involved in developing six key pieces of activity that will support this broader vision;

- A national Memorandum of Understanding between forces and NABIS
- Quarterly performance management reporting
- National definitions for criminal use of firearms offenders
- National communications strategy and products
- Police OnLine Knowledge Area (POLKA) for criminal use of firearms
- NABIS Liaison Officer providing support and guidance to forces.

Products such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will ensure that standards are collectively maintained throughout the police service whilst defining expectations in relation to the input of intelligence and forensic submissions. It will also further define what forces can expect from the service NABIS provides.

This work is supported by detailed quarterly reporting and assistance from the NABIS Liaison Officer in conjunction with communication tools, such as directed marketing and the new POLKA site. NABIS Knowledge and Communications is striving to ensure that the entire process surrounding the criminal use of firearms forms part of a wider centre of excellence.



## NABIS TRANSPORT

### KEEPING NABIS INTELLIGENCE UP-TO-DATE

As part of the service provided by NABIS, all ballistic items that are being sent to one of the NABIS hubs are collected from police forces and partner agencies via a dedicated transportation system. NABIS operates a number of dedicated vehicles that collect a range of material across the country. This service is key in ensuring that vital intelligence information is submitted to the NABIS Hubs in a timely manner.

Martin Parker, NABIS Lead Scientist said.

*"The transportation service is born from the lessons learnt by colleagues in the United States. Ballistics material in a property store is not able to give you those vital pieces of information that NABIS is able to provide."*

*"Getting the items to the hubs and benefiting from intelligence is vital if we are to understand the movement of firearms around the UK"*

The NABIS transport system operates in a covert manner ensuring maximum security for material. Although it is not possible to go in to detail around the transportation system for security reasons it is possible to say that vehicles are equipped with a range of security measures such as access to the national police airwave system, satellite tracking and internal safes.



To ensure that the ballistic material is secure, police forces and agencies complete detailed information in relation to the submissions and these are sealed into numbered boxes. Details of the material and the incident it was recovered from are entered onto the NABIS Database prior to it being sent to the hub. The boxes are then opened at the relevant hub and are checked against the paperwork before being examined. This information is then updated onto the NABIS Database.

The transport service is an essential part of the NABIS process ensuring that ballistic material is collected regularly, which subsequently ensures that intelligence is kept up to date, which strengthens the capability of the service to follow the story of the gun and identify the links between incidents.



## MEET THE TEAM

### Helen Ryan NABIS Database Business System Administrator

Helen's role as NABIS Database Business System Administrator is pivotal to the relationship between NABIS and its stakeholders. Helen provides support to all the police forces in England and Wales in addition to partner agencies and Scottish Police Services Agency (SPSA) in relation to their use of the database.

Helen joined NABIS in July 2008. One of the immediate challenges she faced was the co-ordination of all the stakeholders who were involved in National Ballistics Intelligence Programme (NABIP), in particular managing different working practices and differing priorities which all needed to be taken into consideration as the Programme moved into a Service.

On a daily basis Helen's role involves managing the accounts of the database users, which includes creating accounts, re-setting passwords and training people in how to use the database. Another aspect of her work is maintaining the relationships with stakeholders around the capabilities of the database. This could be anything from producing a database user guide, producing information for the NABIS management team or the capture and collation of user requirements to help the development of the system.

Helen enjoys the diverse aspect of her role, saying:

*"I have found it extremely interesting to have an insight into the way in which different forces and agencies in law enforcement carry out their business. I enjoy having the opportunity to meet officers and staff from across the country. These are the individuals that continue to help shape NABIS and the way in which we work."*

The database is constantly evolving through a number of projects that aim to improve the reporting capability of the system. These include the implementation of a Business Objects tool to allow the NABIS team to produce management and statistical information for forces and the development of an i2 tool. The latter will enable more complex enquiries around NABIS data in addition to generating graphics that illustrate the links between incidents and ballistic items.

Over the next few months the immediate aim is that both LGC Forensic and Forensic Science Service (FSS) will achieve connectivity to the database following implementation of a new encryption product.

Helen's role is one of providing a consistent service to the NABIS database users.

Helen added:

*"Whilst there have been some great achievements in terms of the steps forward that have been created by the database, it is fair to say that there is still a lot more work to do because this area of NABIS is one that will be constantly evolving in order to meet the needs of our stakeholders."*

### Got something to say about NABIS?

We want to hear from you about the service provided by NABIS.

If you have feedback on any aspect of NABIS work please send your comments to:  
[ah\\_nabis@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ah_nabis@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)