



## ABSTRACT

### "The Trouble with Auto-Crime"

North Surrey police division suffers from a relatively high number of offences involving thefts from motor vehicles. Although significantly fewer than our immediate neighbours, in places like Windsor, Slough or Feltham, the challenge for local policing is to reduce crime to the lowest possible level. This means understanding and tackling the `trouble' which militates against us.

The troubles I refer to are the unique factors which apply in every problem. In this case one factor is that most offenders caught committing this crime in North Surrey actually live in poorer housing estates outside Surrey and appear **to be** attracted to the area. Another factor is that our `hot spots' are nearly all private car parks belonging to landlords like the Crown Estate, major conference hotels, leisure parks and the biggest area of open countryside near South West London.

Access to these `hot spots' is via the A.30 corridor which connects the M3/M25 interchange with Southern England. The gateway to stockbroker Surrey is the Magna Carta's Runnymede, exactly 18 miles from Hyde Park Corner and a place of plenty since the Doomsday Survey of 1085.

These documents describe how we instigated Operation Wheelbarrow to demonstrate how prosecutions are possible for volume crime; we studied two years of information to help focus our strategies; we held a major seminar to establish better co-operation and understanding with the largest landlords; we used lobbying and other methods to draw the attention of senior managers in the police and Borough Authority to the need for better surveillance techniques and technology.

There is much else which can improve our ability to reduce autocrime. We have learnt from this work that some tactics are worth pursuing. Visible patrols, both police and security, deter opportunists. The trick is to do it in the right way at the optimum time and to show landlords and proprietors that there is a return for their investment.

Technology also works for us in a number of ways. We have introduced aerial photographs on the police Intranet so we can plot crime. Victims are sent computer-generated photographs and questionnaires to assist in information gathering.

The Intelligence Officer receives e-mail reports from hoteliers, restaurateurs and park operators on a special address used for this purpose.

The Surrey Police Website records `hot spot' information which can inform the public, the media and site owners who wish to reduce crime.

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The aim of the Operation Wheelbarrow team is to reduce autocrime at privately owned sites by using all the methods and technology available. It is also necessary to use our considerable influence to encourage proprietors and the public to take more care.

Although Surrey has the lowest levels of crime in England, we will know when we have reached our goal when co-operation is so well established that no one says "Not my problem mate".

# INTRODUCTION

## "The Trouble with Auto-Crime"

Common partisan views : -

"The amount of crime is one of the public's greatest concerns"  
(Audit Commission)

"Auto-crime represents 1:4 of all Surrey crime" (Surrey Police)

"We deal with shoplifters more effectively than auto-crimers"  
(Beat PC)

"How the police deal with this problem is a matter for them.  
It is not for the CPS to be concerned with the difficulties in bringing  
prosecutions."  
(CPS Lawyer)

"I want you to concentrate on achieving a higher detection rate and not to  
devote resources on strategies which don't deliver." (Senior Police Officer)

"I just want you to give me a crime number for my Insurance Company. I  
know there's nothing you can do!" (Victim of Auto-crime)

"People park their cars at their own risk. My shareholders are only interested  
in the bottom line."  
(Hotelier)

"Policing public places is my priority. I want car park proprietors to take up  
their responsibilities."  
(Area Police Inspector)

The trouble is that most people agree the problem of auto-crime is significant  
but there is no common appreciation of the nature of the crime.

In North Surrey Police Division an examination of all the information  
available indicated that our weaknesses are : -

- partisan views and opinions – police, CPS, Local Authority, public
- no common agreement
- exploitation of weaknesses by criminals
- failure to act together

The aim of the project is to : -

- agree our relevant responsibilities
- work together
- generate proactive tactics
- make North Surrey unsafe for auto-crimers

The project team began by focussing on : -

- individual crimes
- criminals
- crime pattern analysis
- modus operandi
- victim's characteristics
- `hot spots'
- target hardening
- patrol officers' tactics

The existence of a problem was apparent to everyone at North Surrey Division. However, there was no agreement with regard to a Problem Solving Approach.

The first step was to establish the actual factors.

It was generally agreed that

- The number of auto-crime offences were significant
- The offences occupied a great deal of police time
- The proportion of total crime is approximately 1:4 of all offences
- The cost to this crime is not known
- + Criminals are frequently seen driving vehicles believed to have been used in crime
- The detection rate is between 4% - 9%
- Very little property is recovered
- Losers appear not to take reasonable care of their property
- The age of technology is providing an endless number of products to be stolen and easily disposed of.
- Whilst car security has improved offenders simply smash windows
- Witnesses are few and often reluctant
- Crime Management Units were inclined to file reports
- SOCO's were inclined to avoid attending
- Police Officers failed to take loser's statements or were not making house to house or local enquiries
- Losers often only wanted to make an insurance claim
- CPS lawyers tend to prosecute substantive offences where identification is not disputed
- A significant amount of crime occurred in car parks
- Car park proprietors tend to avoid responsibility
- Little analysis of repeat crimes is undertaken

We decided to attack these factors with a raft of activities, which broadly fell into four categories.

Operation Wheelbarrow : -

- (i) to target criminals and bring prosecutions
- (ii) to involve the CPS in a complex prosecution from the beginning
- (iii) to encourage car park proprietors to become prosecution conscious.
- (iv) To enthuse police officers with self belief

Lobbying Policy Makers to recognise : -

- (i) the need for mobile surveillance techniques and technology
- (ii) the prosecution regime needs review
- (iii) police practice and procedure is failing
- (iv) the ability of the Local Authority to influence others

• Publicity. Both internal and external : -

- (i) to raise public awareness
- (ii) to deter criminals
- (iii) to focus car park proprietors to act

• Seminar to learn some lessons : -

- (i) Police Officers, hotel proprietors and car park owners, Local Authority managers

The outcomes have yet to be fully evaluated. The initial results are : -

- 5 men charged with conspiracy to commit 400 crimes
- Improved tactics for responding to multiple crimes
- Primary detections improved from 9% to 29% in the Borough
- Victims' responses taken into consideration
- Improved information emerging on 'hot spots'
- Officers more willing to apply P.O.P.
- + Management reviewing policy on surveillance and improving decision making with CPS.
- Car Park owners exercising more responsibility and a duty of care.
- A more co-ordinated response from all involved

## **OPERATION WHEELBARROW**

It is unclear when this problem was recognised as very significant and frankly rather difficult to tackle.

However, North Surrey Division devoted more time and resources to achieving higher detection figures at a time when Government was setting targets and managers struggled to be strategic and focussed.

Specialist teams of officers, crime analysts, crime prevention officers, patrol officers and divisional managers all felt they knew what should be done and a great deal of effort was exerted. Perhaps 'exhausted'.

In mid 1999 it was decided to re-examine the whole picture and to look at our assumptions by applying some research to test our thinking. This was to lead to a range of ideas and tactics that would give new confidence to patrol officers and rebut the view that 'there was little we could do'. We called this 'Operation Wheelbarrow'.

We set out to empower staff to influence and co-ordinate community resources and to show police managers and others to use the SARA problem solving approach to deal with specific locations, to improve information sharing, to achieve better co-operation between practitioners on the ground and to use technology for prevention and detection purposes.

The impetus for this new approach came from a small team of criminals who appeared to be targeting certain locations and certain types of people. A decision was made to

- Conduct research into the previous 2 years of crime information to identify patterns and trends for prevention purposes.
- To set up a short term operation to gather intelligence
- To develop a co-ordinated approach to the whole problem

### **The Research**

Four sites were selected for study purposes. All are privately owned with management structures which operate rather like absentee landlords. Two sites are major hotels operating lucrative business seminars in the London/Heathrow circuit and two sites are major tourist attractions operated by a unique management hierarchy within the Crown Estate.

I include the study at Virginia Water Lake car park below to illustrate our approach and methodology. The remaining studies are included at Appendix A

# **AUTOCRIME STUDY**

## **VULNERABLE CAR PARKS ON EGHAM AREA**

### **STUDY PERIOD**

**01/10/97 to 31/10/99.**

Egham Area has over a number of years suffered from what is perceived as 'high volumes' of Autocrime (Theft from Vehicles) at car parks on the area. A number of car parks are Considered Vulnerable to Crime and for the purposes of this study 4 locations were selected -

**The Crown Car Parks at Virginia Water Lake & Savill Gardens,  
Savill Court Hotel & Runnymede Hotel.**

Other locations on the area are also considered vulnerable ie Thorpe Park, The Wheatsheaf, Chiquitos Bishopsgate & various other Restaurant Car Parks. To carry out a detailed study on all of these locations would have been impractical **and** it was felt that general problems identified in the selected car parks could be applied to other locations with similar problems.

Detailed records of each offence recorded at the selected locations are held on the Surrey Police Crime Information System. The records hold details relating to time, date, location, method, property stolen and details of the investigation. The records however do not contain the exact location of where the victims vehicle was parked in a car park, it was impossible to identify vulnerable areas within the specified car parks without making contact with the losers. It was therefore decided to write to each victim of crime over the study period at the 4 locations asking for the exact location of each offence to be identified and at the same time the victims were given the opportunity to make observations that could be passed onto the owners of the car parks.

The numbers of crimes at each location equal the number of letters sent out and the number of responses are recorded in the table below:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Crimes/Letters</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Resp' Rate</b>
<b>Virginia Water Lake Car Park</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>55.36%</b>
<b>Savill Court Hotel Car Park</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>57.14%</b>
<b>Savill Gardens Car Park</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>64.29%</b>
<b>Runnymede Hotel Car Park</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39.29%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>54.32%</b>

The information relating to where the vehicles were located in the car parks have been extracted and plotted on an aerial photograph. This information along with a summary of the victims comments is included later in the report under the headings of the locations studied.



## **VIRGINIA WATER LAKE CAR PARK.**

During the study period a total of 56 Offences of Theft from Motor Vehicle were recorded at Virginia Water Lake Car Park. This total does not include a number of offences recorded in the Lay-by on the A30 opposite the Car Park.

### **METHOD.**

Analysis of crime data clearly identifies that the car park is being targeted for Handbags left in vehicles whilst the victims enjoy a walk in the park. The method of entry to the vehicles break down as:

<b>Method of Entry</b>	<b>Number Recorded</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Smashed Window</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>75.00%</b>
<b>Forced lock</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7.14%</b>
<b>Insecurity</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.79%</b>
<b>Remove/Cut Window Seal</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10.71%</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5.36%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	

**The theft of bags from the vehicles accounts for 95% of Property Stolen.**

The main method of entry employed by the offenders is simply to smash a window on the Victims Car (usually a I/4 light) and remove a Handbag concealed inside the vehicle. The method regarding the removal of window seals is a fairly recent development and is clearly a quieter method than the former. It is clear from analysis of the offences that the offenders must be watching the car park prior to selecting a victim as in a number cases victims have been careful to place valuables in the boots of vehicles, out of view. The offenders have then gone straight to these items when given the opportunity.

### **VULNERABLE AREA.**

Location details provided by the response to the Victims survey have been plotted on an aerial photo of the car park and the 'Risk Area' is clearly identified as adjacent to the fence on the lake side of the car park near the path running down to the lake. This area of 'Risk' holds no surprises as it equates to the busiest area of the car park. This area also affords the offender the most cover without having to expose him/her self to the open central area of the car park.

The effects of the new lay out of the car park are unknown at the moment and there may be some subtle changes in the risk area due to changes in the traffic flow through the car park. I do however feel that the same area of the car park will attract a majority of the visitors due to easy access to the park and as a result this area will continue to attract the offenders.

See Aerial Photo Below:







# Lake Car Park Virginia Water.

## Introduction

This car park services Windsor Great park and is used almost exclusively during daylight hours. It is situated alongside the A30 London Rd with the access being directly from the A30, with the exit being through the Wheatsheaf Hotel onto the A30 at a traffic light controlled junction. This is a relatively new layout having been completed during the summer of 99.

The entire carpark is almost completely screened by mature trees and in the gap where the recent works were completed further planting has been carried out. The area adjoining the footpath into the park is the only break in the tree screen; therefore there is little scope for natural surveillance of the site from the perimeter.

The parking area is basically rectangular with parking rows being separated by heavy timber. There is a circulatory route through the parking area but there are gaps in the rows allowing motorists to cut through. There are several trees especially at the Wheatsheaf end, which further reduce observation of the parking area.

On entering the carpark slip road motorists will see a permanent sign warning that thieves operate in the area. This is located on the nearside and is visible as drivers turn in. There were no further warning signs visible on the site, an existing sign having been removed from the gate entrance to the actual park. There is a pay barrier before entering the car park and on gaining admission vehicles can be driven straight across the middle of the parking area to the main pedestrian entrance to the park.

This area has been identified by research as being the main area targeted by thieves, which is undoubtedly due to its proximity to the pedestrian entrance to the park and is the favoured parking area for visitors. There are no existing security measures other than infrequent random patrols by park rangers.

## Crime

This site has been subjected to vehicle crime for many years and the attached analyst's report gives the reported crimes for 97,98, and the current year. It also includes the views of the victims on the lack of carpark security and warning notices.

## Recommendations

Redesign vehicle routes around perimeter to give more natural observation and block cut through.

CCTV to give total coverage of parking area, capable of giving recognisable facial images and identifying vehicle number plates.

Permanent thief warning signs displayed throughout including on pay machine.

Improved lighting throughout car park

Increased security patrols by Crown employees.

Judicious pruning of trees to improve observation.

Whilst it is appreciated that this is a 'Beauty spot area' of significance and that there will be a reluctance on aesthetic grounds for installing the CCTV and additional security measures it is possible to soften their impact on the environment and blend them to their surroundings.

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This survey is based on the current crime trends in the area concerned I can only give a view on what measures might reduce the risk of crime and there can be no guarantee that the measures will prevent crime.

Gary Blackmore  
Crime Prevention Officer.

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We wanted to impress on the management the need to consider crime prevention and that the police do hold significant information which is available for study purposes. The most senior managers within the Crown Estate hegemony were unaware of our concerns and car park design and administration was more concerned with maintaining appearance and unobtrusiveness verging on negligible crime prevention.

The studies enabled us to plot crime, advise on prevention tactics and inform landlords of the scale and effect of crime on their property. This was followed up by a major seminar aimed at bringing considerable persuasion and publicity to overcome reluctance.

Two other separate pieces of work looked at police patrol tactics, which gives another insight into the effects of police work.

In 1997, Thorpe Park, with 25,000 visitors per day at peak periods, suffered 140 offences of theft from motor vehicles. In 1998 the area sergeant was directed to use patrol tactics to reduce crime. In that year only 12 offences occurred. However, crime increased elsewhere indicating that displacement was the probable outcome whilst a lot of police time was used to deter offences at a large business/leisure complex.

Another tactic we experimented with which was less costly in police manpower was called 'strategic parking'. North Surrey Division acquired an old retired patrol car, in full livery, due to be scrapped. Throughout 1998 the vehicle was parked at strategic times at one or other of the top 10 'hot spots'. A study of the particular times the patrol car was parked revealed that not once did a crime occur when it might otherwise be expected that some crime would be reported. However, again it was felt overall crime was not much effected.

Finally the research indicated the need for pro-active police prosecution of our most prominent nominals. The perceived risk of detection being the best deterrent.

### **The Prosecution**

Crime pattern analysis indicated a vast number of offences were being committed by a group of criminals who were operating across North Surrey, Berkshire and South West London. At least three police forces were affected.

A great deal of intelligence showed that around 15 people were responsible for most of the crime. Sightings and police stop checks identified the core suspects who resided mostly in Datchet near Windsor. At this time the police in that Force area were not investigating these suspects.

Examination of available evidence showed there was no likelihood of achieving a prosecution.

A plan was prepared and in Phase I it was decided to set up an intelligence cell at Addlestone Police Station staffed by two police officers on light duties. Their task was to examine every offence over a determined period and extract every item of evidence.

A standard operating procedure required every new offence to be fully investigated to include a scene visit, SOCO to attend, statements to be taken.

This led to the identification of a number of vehicles which were being used by a combination of up to 15 people. None of the vehicles were directly linked to suspects but were found parked at various locations. A surveillance operation, conducted over 3 months, identified the people who were using them.

Phase II involved building a case against 5 prolific offenders. A detective officer was appointed to the growing team. Over 400 statements were taken but direct evidence linking them to offences was still missing.

A meeting with the Crown Prosecution Services led to the formulation of a plan to proceed with 'Conspiracy' charges.

Mobile surveillance for 3 days followed the suspects around Southern England where several offences were committed. A policy decision was made not to interfere with the offenders during the commission of their crimes.

Phase III involved a joint operation with Thames Valley Police in whose area the suspects lived. All five suspects were simultaneously arrested and their homes searched. A considerable amount of identifiable stolen property was recovered. All five have been charged with Conspiracy to Steal on 400 occasions. The matter is awaiting trial at the Crown Court.

The evidence gathering and file preparation looking at hundreds of offences and linking them to the suspects' huge fleet of vehicles, often used by dozens of other people, took 3 months work alone. Despite extracting every ounce of direct evidence it still remains that only during surveillance was a specific offender implicated in a specific offence. All the remaining information merely puts the offenders at the scene of a crime in company with other people. It follows that only a joint charge with others will finally bring them to Court.

Despite the considerable difficulties of identification, of working cross-border with police and prosecution services, Operation Wheelbarrow has shown that it is possible to prosecute multiple offences. However, the resources needed require considerable organisation and senior level support.

In particular it showed that crime pattern analysis and intelligence can be linked to identify suspects and their modus operandi. Police officers must then mount pro-active operations to give effect to this knowledge.



### A More Co-ordinated Approach

A need to share information and good practice and, indeed, to influence others to take up their responsibilities, was clear to us all. We were working with :

Runnymede Borough Council  
 Four major hotels  
 The Chamber of Commerce  
 The Crown Estate  
 Thorpe Park  
 Royal Holloway College  
 Victims  
 Other Police Forces

A range of useful but not yet co-ordinated tactics were daily in operation, but it was felt that localised successes were not likely to change the picture across the division and eventually the whole region.

A unique seminar involving all the interested parties was convened at The Runnymede Hotel in January 2000. (See Appendix B) The purpose was to achieve a more co-ordinated approach to generate new ideas and to provide a platform to influence senior managers and policymakers. This is an on-going process.

Every delegate received a pack of information including a profile of crime at their own site. Many people acknowledged they did not have the information or the in-house skills and knowledge to produce a crime prevention strategy.

High visibility patrol was discussed : -

- High visibility patrolling did displace crime at certain locations
- Businesses could well afford their own security patrols but were not convinced of the return. They needed help and advice to target patrols properly.
- Co-ordinated effort would, lead to better results.
- The police were more effective targeting criminals and using their information and influence to, in effect, 'direct the orchestra'.

The thinking and suggestions from the seminar has led to : -

- A police deployment strategy which uses high visibility patrols at certain times and locations driven by the crime information system.
- A lot of pressure on businesses like Thorpe Park and The Crown Estate to use uniform patrols of their own. (See letter Crown Estate, Appendix B).
- Runnymede Borough Council negotiating with the biggest car park proprietors to install linked CCTV systems. Thorpe Park, The Crown Estate and Royal Holloway College are all showing signs of interest.

Some other tactics which involved sharing information and joined up thinking include : -

- Questionnaires sent to victims to get more information and opinion
- + Aerial photographs of car parks held on Force intranet for crime plotting and may be printed and sent to victims (See Appendix A)
- Victims' self assessment of any crime prevention factors
- Police Officers' assessment of any crime prevention factors sent by e-mail to the Crime Prevention Officer
- Crime Prevention officer's analysis and report of factors at these locations
- The Intelligence Officers e-mail address for hotel proprietors and selected car park owners. This may be re-circulated as appropriate
- Surrey Police World Wide Web page for autocrime hot spots to assist the public and car park proprietors in assessing their spending priorities. (See Appendix C)
- Local Authority signs on lamp posts, placed according to crime information.
- Local Authority tasking of Town CCTV according to crime information. This involves surveillance of road junctions at certain times rather than public buildings or inner-town locations.

### **How Successful was the Approach?**

There are several areas of success and other areas of improvement. However, overall I have the impression of an oil tanker slowly changing direction.

North Surrey crime detection figures reveal a marked improvement in our autocrime primary detection rate.

The area with most improvement is the Borough of Runnymede where this work has been taking place.

The most pleasing response has been from the places which have shown least interest, i.e. the car park landlords. There is a mood for change and all the senior managers have sensed it and are co-operating well. The task is to maintain this impetus.

It is clear, however, that managers evaluate the need to act on a risk assessment. Co-operation depends on a belief that to fail to do so would be disadvantageous. There is a need to maintain the information flow and to direct more towards action groups such as the Crime and Disorder driven Local Authorities Group.

Police resources are also driven by perceived need. It is ironic that as soon as success is being achieved attention is drawn away to another more pressing issue.

However, the results of this work are : -

- Car park owners seeking improvements to security
- + Local Authority offering CCTV solutions
- Police sharing valuable crime pattern data
- CPS discussing prosecution issues and not just the easiest answer
- + Senior police management looking at surveillance and technology issues
- + Detection rates up

Areas of work which require much more attention Nationally include : -

- + Individual car owners taking responsibility
- A review of legislation to enable prosecutions to follow where people act together. Conspiracy charges in the Crown Court do not appear to work adequately for these types of offences.
- Insurance companies to question claimants more closely on THEIR actions
- Attention to the whole question of honesty when purchasing 'dodgy' goods

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## APPENDIX A

### Autocrime Study Vulnerable Car Parks on Egham Area

Study Period  
1/10/97 to 31/10/99

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# SAVILL COURT HOTEL CAR PARK.

During the study period a total of 49 Offences of Theft from Motor Vehicle were recorded at Savill Court Hotel, Wick Lane, Egham.

## METHOD.

Analysis of crime data clearly identifies that the car park is being targeted for Computer Equipment (Lap tops), Audio Equipment & Bags/Briefcases left/fitted in vehicles whilst the victims use the hotels facilities. The method of entry to the vehicles break down as:

Method of Entry	Number Recorded	%of Total
Smashed Window	36	73.47%
Forced Lock	9	18.37%
Unknown	3	6.12%
Forced Door	1	2.04%
Total	49	

Property Stolen	Number Recorded	%of Total
Computer Equip(Lap tops)	13	26.53%
Audio Equipment	12	24.49%
Briefcase/Bags	11	22.45%
Nil Stolen	7	14.29%
Clothing	2	4.08%
Other	4	8.16%
	49	

The **main** method of entry employed by the offenders is simply to smash a window on the Victims Car and having gained entry remove the property from within. Over recent months the method of forcing door locks using a sharp instrument to puncture the door skin or the use of a slide hammer or similar to remove the locks have become more popular. These methods appear to have been specifically linked to certain vehicles favoured by the business client and it follows that Lap Top Computers are the main target when this method **has been adopted**.

## VULNERABLE AREA.

Location details provided by the response to the Victims survey have been plotted on an aerial photo of the car park and the 'Risk Areas' although not immediately obvious, study of the locations does show that the areas favoured by the offenders are the edges and the corners of the various car parks, especially the areas offering cover/sanctuary of nearby trees. A notable fact is that there is no activity recorded in the central more exposed parts of the larger 2 car parks.

See Aerial Photo Below:



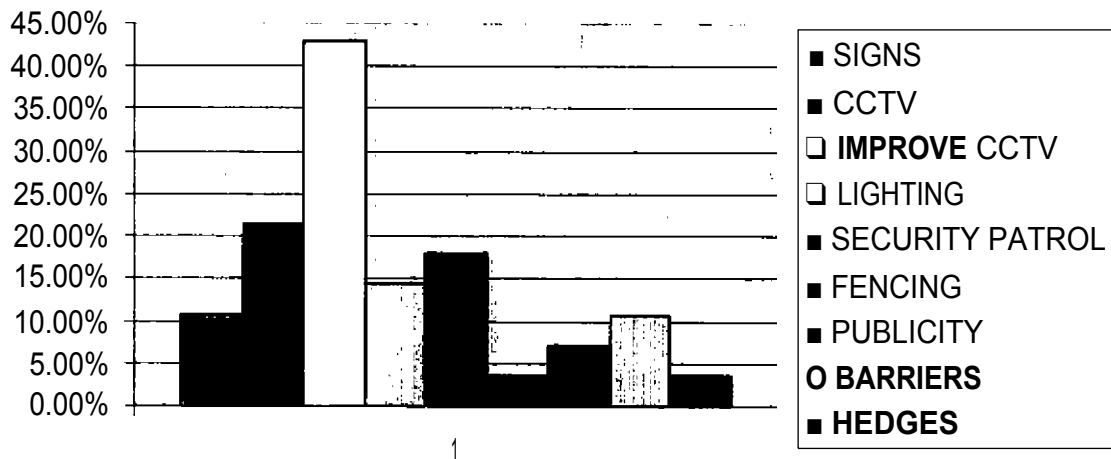


## VICTIMS SURVEY - Suggestions to Car Park Owners.

As previously mentioned a survey of victims was conducted and the results were analysed and any suggestions made by the victims were categorised under broad headings such as request for CCTV and Provision of a Security Patrol etc. These results were placed into a table with a column for each response received. The comments made were then scored with a 1 for each comment raised in the survey & a 0 for no comment on a particular category. This enabled the suggestions to be calculated as a percentage against the total numbers of replies received.

The results of this analysis are shown below:

### Savill Court Hotel Victim Survey - Suggestions For Improvement



This graph clearly indicates that a request for CCTV/Improved CCTV Cover forms the main request for improvements that the victims/Customers wish to address to the car park owners. Also Significant are the requests for provision of a Security Patrol, Improved Lighting, Signs & Barrier Control.

On the issue of signs 23 of the 28 victims who responded stated they **had** not seen any signs relating to Autocrime at the location, 2 failed to answer the question and only 3 stated that signs were visible.

### GENERAL COMMENT.

This location clearly has a problem in relation to Autocrime. As mentioned earlier it is known fact that a number of incidents will go unreported to the Police so the actual levels of crime are again likely to be significantly higher than those recorded. Again when talking about numbers of crimes and breaking the figures down to month by month activity the scale of the problem is lost. The car parks at Savill Court have in recent months shown significant levels of crime with 9 offences recorded in Nov 99 and 3 so far in Jan 00 (10/01/00). Again if the levels of crime were mirrored in all the other major car parks on the Division our Autocrime figures would show a significant increase. I understand that Pc 568 Blackmore, the North Surrey Crime Prevention Officer, has spent considerable time liaising with the Hotel Management and with the plans that the Hotel has in relation to re-development on the site this will result in a reduction in the levels of crime.



# **Saville Court Hotel**

(member of Hotel Watch)

## **Introduction**

The hotel is located in a rural area with the entrance from Wick lane and is set in its own parkland. It is a popular venue as a conferencing facility and regularly hosts large corporations. The attached ariel photograph gives a very good indication of the establishment and shows the main car parks, some of which are obscured by the trees. There are spaces for approximately 350 vehicles at the moment but there is a planning application being considered at this time and further development of the site may alter the car parks and their current design.

At present there is a CCTV system installed but does not give evidential quality pictures and does not cover all of the parking area. The trees and shrubs around the parking area restrict observation by both formal and informal methods. Lighting is also very poor over much of the parking area and this coupled with the trees and shrubs must cause a certain amount trepidation for some people using the car parks. Lately, following an incident where nine vehicles were attacked belonging to the same company a security guard has been employed to patrol the parking areas providing additional security when large corporations are using the venue.

## **Crime**

The attached analysts report gives the reported vehicle crime for the years 97/98 and 99. It also plots the known locations of the crimes in the car parks and gives the views and comments of the victims.

## **Recommendations**

Operate a one way system through out the site with vehicles entering and exiting the car parks directly in front of the hotel.

Close rear entrance by out buildings

Use lockable bollards to close access to fi'st large carpark.

Ramps at approach to entrance to main car parks.

CCTV

Redesign CCTV system to give full coverage of the parking area with evidential quality pictures. The camera covering the carpark entry /exit to be capable of capturing all vehicle numberplates regardless of light.

Ensure adequate staff training on use of system.

An alternative to CCTV would,be the installation of a system such as ANPS, which captures all numberplates and projects them on a display and keeps a computer log.

This type of system is in use at Pennyhill Pk where it is deemed to have reduced vehicle crime.

Judicious pruning of the site to improve site lines and lessen the fear of crime.

Consider planting of prickly shrubs along public boundary to discourage foot access to car parks.

Retain security patrols especially at peek times.

Signs warning of vehicle crime should be displayed and business visitors could be given reminders not to leave laptops and other equipment in their vehicles. The hotel should provide additional provision for storage.

Any vehicle crime reported to hotel staff should be plotted on a carpark grid in order to identify any problem areas.

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### **Conclusion**

Whilst it may not be possible to completely eradicate crime from these car parks, with the implementation of these measures it should be considerably reduced. An ideal aim during the current proposed redevelopment would be to obtain a secured car parks award, which could only further enhance the hotels, reputation.

This survey is based on the current crime trends in the area concerned. I can only give a view on what measures might reduce the risk of crime and there can be no guarantee that the measures will prevent crime.

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Gary Blackmore  
Crime Prevention Officer

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# SAVILL GARDENS CAR PARK

During the study period a total of 28 Offences of Theft from Motor Vehicle were recorded in Savill Gardens Car Park. This total does not include a number of offences recorded in the Lay-bys on Wick Lane near the location.

## METHOD.

Activity at this location is almost identical in method to that recorded at Virginia Water Lake. Analysis of the crime data clearly identifies that the car park is being targeted for Handbags left in vehicles whilst the victims enjoy the facilities on offer at the location. The method of entry to the vehicles break down as:

Method of Entry	Number Recorded	%of Total
Smashed Window	24	85.71%
Forced Lock	1	3.57%
Unknown	1	3.57%
Remove/Cut Window Seal	2	7.14%
Total	28	

**The theft of bags from the vehicles accounts for 96% of Property Stolen.**

The main method of entry employed by the offenders is simply to smash a window on the Victims Car (usually a 114 light) and remove a Handbag concealed inside the vehicle. On a large number of offences the offender gained access to the boot area of the vehicles by pulling down the rear seats. As with Virginia Water Lake it is clear from analysis that the offenders must be watching the car park prior to selecting a victim as in a number of cases victims have been careful to place valuables in the boot, under seats or covered them travel rugs or similar. The offenders have then gone straight to these items when given the opportunity.

## VULNERABLE AREA.

Location details provided by the response to the Victims survey have been plotted on an aerial photo of the car park and the 'Risk Area's' are clearly identified as: near to the Shop/Garden Centre and the wooded area near the fence & the park. These areas of 'Risk' again hold no surprises as they equate to the busiest areas of the car park, these areas offering the offenders what they are after ie the vehicles to target As with Virginia Water Lake there is a requirement by the offenders to watch what is going on so they either need to be concealed or, be in a busy area where their movements are likely to go unnoticed. In relation to the area adjacent to the wooded area at the back edge of the car park, cover is given by the trees and the offender does not have to expose him/her self to the central areas of the car park

See Aerial Photo Below:

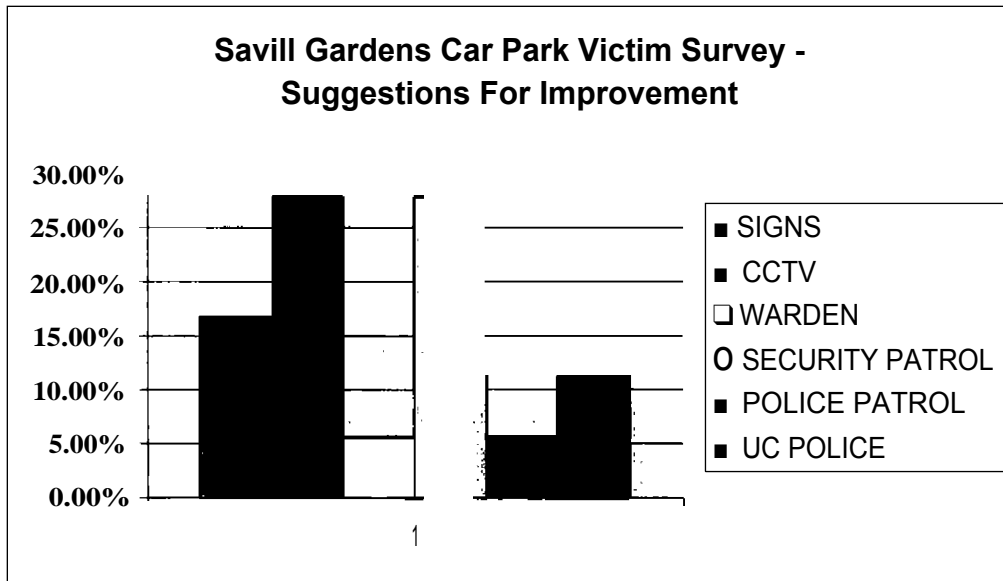




## VICTIMS SURVEY - Suggestions to Car Park Owners.

As previously mentioned a survey of victims was conducted and the results were analysed and any suggestions made by the victims were categorised under broad headings such as request for CCTV and Employment of Wardens etc. These results were placed into a table with a column for each response received. The comments made were then scored with a 1 for each comment raised in the survey & a 0 for no comment on a particular category. This enabled the suggestions to be calculated as a percentage against the total numbers of replies received.

The results of this analysis are shown below



This graph indicates that a request for CCTV and Security Patrols as being the main suggestions for improvements at the location. Signs are also high on the list along with a **suggestion** that the Police should mount under cover operations at the location.

*Note: These suggestions are based on a fairly small sample the data having been extracted from 18 responses.*

On the issue of signs 9 of the 18 victims who responded stated they had not seen any signs relating to Autocrime at the location, 2 failed to answer the question and 7 stated that signs were visible.

### GENERAL COMMENT.

As with the previous car parks studied there is clearly a problem at this location, which would appear to be on the increase. It is again likely that the true level of criminal activity is liable to be higher than that recorded with incidents going unreported. The criminal activity in this location is without doubt directly linked to that at Virginia Water, offering the Offenders the same opportunities at each site. The location has seen incidents of Autocrime recorded over a number of years. If any action is decided upon to address this problem I believe it needs to be carried out in conjunction with Virginia Water Car Park in order that the problem is not merely displaced, reducing the problem in one car park and increasing it in another. As At Virginia Water Lake Car Park I again believe that we will continue to record similar levels of crime year on year until some preventative improvements are made to the location whether it be by provision of CCTV Cover, A Warden , High Visibility Signs etc.

## Saville Gardens Car Park auto crime

### Introduction.

This car park services Windsor Great Park and used almost exclusively during day light hours, the entrance / exit is via Wick Lane and is located in a very rural area. Official and unofficial The attached Ariel photograph clearly shows the lay out of the site including the shop restaurant and coach parking area, which has its own entrance exit.

Vehicles parked in Wick Lane have also been subjected to auto crime and to combat this measures are being implemented by Runnymede Borough Council and supported by the Crown estates to reduce the unofficial on street parking. The aim being to encourage drivers to park in the Saville Gardens car park.

There is an access-controlled 'entrance for private vehicles with the exit along side and on the approach to the entrance there is one warning sign 'Thieves operate in this - area.' Apart from the area by the buildings the site is enclosed by mature trees and there are further trees in the parking areas reducing natural observation of the site.

### Crime

This site has been subjected to vehicle crime for many years albeit at a lower rate than the Lake car Park. However in the recent past there has been a noticeable increase in theft from vehicles, which is shown in the attached crime analyst's report. This again covers crime over the period 97 to the present day and and comments on security by the victims.

### Recommendations.

CCTV To give total coverage of parking area capable of giving recognisable facial images and identifying vehicle number plates.

Consideration to be given to reducing size of car park out of season.

Permanent auto crime warning sign at pay machine and further signs through out car park especially on entrance gates to Great Park.

Speed bumps.

Improved lighting

Increased security patrols especially during identified peak times

Judicious pruning of trees to improve site lines.

Whilst it is again recognised that CCTV and lighting towers may be at conflict with the environment they can be installed sympathetically to reduce their impact on the surroundings. Note has to be taken of victim's comments and the fact that these crimes have been taking place for years with very little chance of the culprits being apprehended. It is not acceptable for this situation to continue.

This survey is based on the current crime trends in the area concerned. I can only give a view on what measures might reduce the risk of crime and there can be no guarantee that the measures will prevent crime.

Gary Blackmore.  
Crime Prevention Officer.

## **RUNNYMEDE HOTEL CAR PARK.**

During the study period a total of 28 *Offences of Theft from Motor Vehicle* were recorded at Runnymede Hotel, Windsor Road, Egham.

### **METHOD.**

Analysis of this data clearly identifies that the car park is being targeted for Car Audio Equipment and Computer Equipment (Lap tops) left/fitted in vehicles whilst the victims use the hotels facilities. The method of entry to the vehicles break down as:

<b>Method of Entry</b>	<b>Number Recorded</b>	<b>%of Total</b>
<b>Smashed Window</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>78.57%</b>
<b>Forced Lock</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17.86%</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.57%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	

<b>Property Stolen</b>	<b>Number Recorded</b>	<b>%of Total</b>
<b>Computer Equip(Lap tops)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17.86%</b>
<b>Audio Equipment</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>60.71 %</b>
<b>Briefcase/Bags</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10.71 %</b>
<b>Nil Stolen</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.57%</b>
<b>Mobile Phone</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.57%</b>
<b>Camera</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.57%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	

The main method of entry employed by the offenders is simply to smash a window on the Victims Car and having gained entry remove the property from within. As the main target for the offenders at this location is car stereos further analysis of the type of vehicles attacked revealed that BMW's, VW Golfs & Mercedes accounted for 61% of the total. This factor has been identified previously in Autocrime analysis as these vehicles are specifically picked out by **the offenders knowing that they** are all fitted with **high quality Audio Equipment as standard. Recent** activity at this location, as with Savill Court Hotel, has seen a number of offences where the offenders have forced the door locks of vehicles to gain entry with Lap Top Computers being the main target.

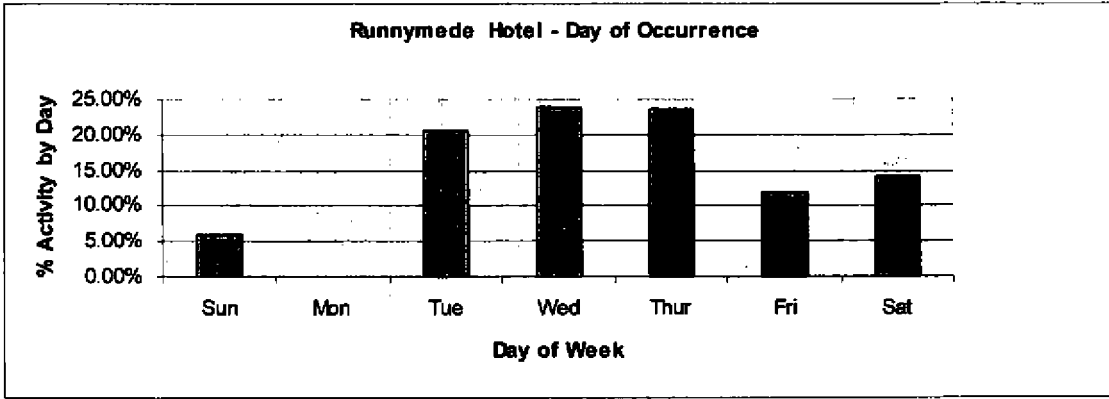
### **VULNERABLE AREA.**

Location details provided by the response to the Victims survey have been plotted on an aerial photo of the car park and the 'Risk Area' identified. Unfortunately the response from the victim survey was poor compared to the others locations (39%) and it is more difficult to establish a clear area of 'Risk' based on what is a relatively small sample. The results however do indicate that the areas targeted are centred on the main drive way into the hotel (allowing easy access & exit) and those along the front edge of the car park - being the furthest away from hotel building. It also appears that the areas offering cover from trees and hedges have been identified by the offenders, see squares D & E4.

See Aerial Photo Below:





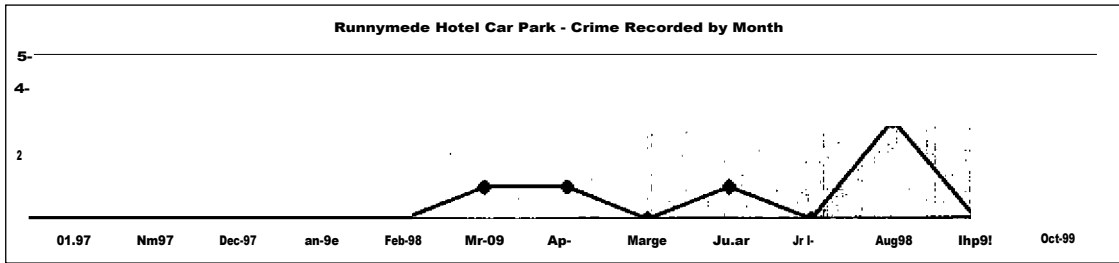


The above graph indicates activity at the location peaks in the middle of the week particularly Tuesday Wednesday & Thursday which has similarities with that recorded at Savill Court Hotel.

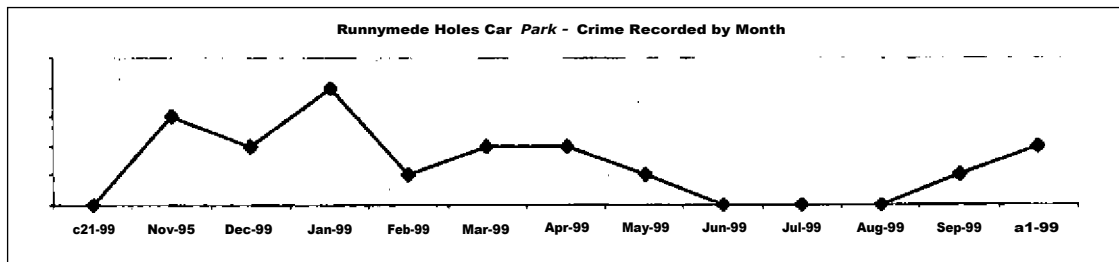
**SEASONAL VARIATION**

In order to establish if there was a broader picture in relation to times and days of occurrence activity was plotted month on month covering the 2 year study period to establish if there was any seasonal variations that could be established.

Oct 97 to Oct 98



Oct 98 to Oct 99

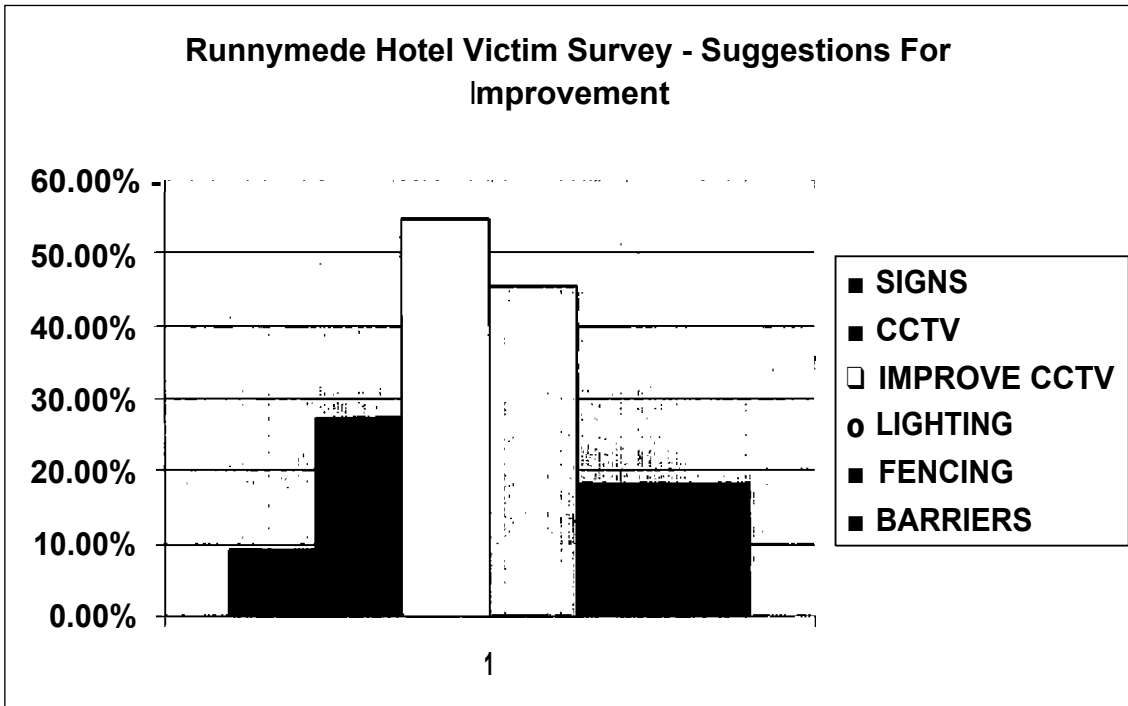


Results of this analysis fail to show any trend/pattern relating to any seasonal factors with a fairly random spread of activity over the study period.

**VICTIMS SURVEY - Suggestions to Car Park Owners.**

As previously mentioned a survey of victims was conducted and the results were analysed and any suggestions made by the victims were categorised under broad headings such as request for CCTV and Provision of a Security Patrol etc. These results were placed into a table with a column for each response received. The comments made were then scored with a 1 for each comment raised in the survey & a 0 for no comment on a particular category. This enabled the suggestions to be calculated as a percentage against the total numbers of replies received.

The results of this analysis are shown below:



This graph clearly indicates that a request for CCTV/Improved CCTV Cover forms the main request for improvements that the victims/Customers wish to address to the car park owners. The request for lighting at the location also appears to be significant although caution should be taken in interpreting these results as they are based on such a small sample.

On the issue of signs all 11 victims who responded stated they had not seen any signs relating to Autocrime at the location.

**GENERAL COMMENT.**

This location again is an Autocrime 'Hot Spot' with the true figures likely to be higher than those actually recorded for reasons as mentioned earlier. There is little more that I can add in relation to this specific location. I believe there is a direct link between activity at this location and other like premises ie Savill Court Hotel, and if a method of deterrent for criminal activity is learned at one site then similar lessons learned can be applied at other locations. I am again aware that Pc 568 Blackmore, the North Surrey Crime Prevention Officer, has spent considerable time liaising with the Hotel Management and various improvements to security at the Hotel are currently under consideration.

**Pc 1122 Andy Young  
Crime Analyst  
North Surrey Division.  
Surrey Police**

# Runnymede Hotel

## Introduction

The Runnymede Hotel is a member of the Hotel Watch scheme and is located a few minutes from junction 13 and is located off the Windsor Rd and backs on to the River Thames. The ariel photograph clearly shows the layout of the complex with the one entrance / exit point from the Windsor Rd. The hotel is a popular venue as a conference centre and has extensive facilities attracting major corporations as well as catering for the private market.

The site has been targeted criminals and has suffered vehicle crime from the car parks for a number of years. To counter this a new CCTV system was installed in May/June 1999.

## Crime

The attached analysts report gives the reported vehicle crime for the years 97/98 and 99, It also plots the known locations of the crimes in the carparks and gives the views and comments of the victims.

The introduction of the CCTV system seemed to have an immediate effect on reported vehicle crime however in recent months the site has again been subjected to crime. Police officers investigating these crimes have complained at the lack of evidence obtained from the camera system especially the camera covering the entrance / exit and its inability to record vehicle number plates. It is felt that most of the criminals are entering the hotel in their own vehicles and the index numbers are obscured by the glare from the vehicles own lights both front and rear. Further comments by officers that have dealt with the crimes show concerns over the quality of the recordings and a few on the staff ability to operate the system.

## Recommendations.

A review of the existing CCTV system and a study of the car park areas that have been effected by crime.

The driveway camera to be capable of obtaining vehicle numberplates day and night and to be clearly visible on the recordings.

Consideration to be given to a barrier access control system. This could be operated - by tokens obtained from the reception area.

Cameras that at present cover the tennis courts could be sighted to improve coverage of the carpark and lighting improvements may assist with the quality of the recorded pictures.

Any vehicle crime reported to hotel staff should be plotted on a carpark grid to easily identify any future problem areas.

Signs warning of vehicle crime to be placed in the carparks and further warnings to corporate bodies using the facilities to avoid having I.T. equipment left in vehicles.

The hotel should promote its own safe storage for such property.

## Conclusion

Whilst it may never be possible to completely eradicate crime from these carparks with improvements to the existing CCTV and by fitting an access control system it may be possible to further reduce the number of offences. An ideal aim would be to obtain a secured carparks award.

## Selected Quotes from Victim Survey:

"As a quality hotel I would expect a high degree of Security. We have not used the facilities since the event and will not do so unless security is improved. It would cost us too much money."

*"CCTV would have trapped the culprits as it was broad day light, I was right in the centre of the car park, quite deliberately feeling anyone could see **if my car was broken into.**"*

"I have subsequently heard from friends who live near the hotel that this is a regular occurrence. I therefore feel that it is the hotel's duty to do something about more cameras, single point of entry, less cover from hedges."

*"There was a big sign saying that this area was under surveillance cameras, therefore I felt safer unaware that this was untrue. This obviously doesn't put off criminals it just encourages victims their way.*

"I was disappointed that even under a lamp the video coverage was not good enough to help detect the culprit"

*"I would like to see many notices to bring drivers attention to the fact that car thieves are operating in that car park and to be placed in a prominent positions for drivers to see."*

"After paying £2.50 to park I think the owners of the car park could at least install CCTV as a deterrent"

*"Employ Security Staff to walk the areas regularly. I was made aware after the event that there had been numerous break ins recently. I would have preferred to have **known** about this for me to be extra vigilant **and** I would have moved the car nearer the hotel. I did park in view of a security camera but apparently the tape was unclear when re run ?!"*

"Warn of vehicle crime, Display notice "Are you being watched", install freephone to local Police should historic evidence and trends warrant its funding"

*"This car park looked like it was designed for car theft, when I arrived I was nervous about parking there. No possibility to see the car park from the hotel. Surrounded by high trees. Good escape routes. The staff were slow to inform me that the car had been broken into. CCTV quality was so poor, unable to identify the thieves even though they could watch them at work."*

"We were obviously being watched as the thieves knew exactly where to go, this was not an opportunist crime and if the owners know that the car park is being intentionally targeted surely they have a responsibility to address the issue. I would like to point out to the owners that we have not returned since ! though we used to be regular visitors."

*"Make sure they install the latest surveillance techniques, CCTV etc and consider the installation of entry/exit barriers to prevent unauthorised access to the car park "*

"I cannot believe that the introduction of CCTV by the hotel did not allow the early warning to its security personnel. The question I would like an answer to is - Is there anyone monitoring the screen or is it left totally to VCR?"

*"I do not expect to have to pay to exit/park in a car park that is not adequately protected, particularly when vehicle theft and break in was commonly reported "*

"What is the point of having cameras if the lighting is so poor you cannot see!"