

A PROFILE OF THE JUVENILE JOYRIDER AND A CONSIDERATION OF THE EFFICACY OF MOTOR VEHICLE PROJECTS AS A DIVERSIONARY STRATEGY.

ABSTRACT

Motor vehicle related crime is now the most prolific crime in Britain having surpassed that of burglary for the first time in 1988. In the Northumbria Police area alone motor vehicles are reported as stolen at the average rate of one every fourteen minutes. On a National level this figure is increased to one every two minutes.

The 1984 British Crime Survey estimated that the net loss after insurance recoveries, sustained by private motorists each year amounts to £270m. Subsequent annual figures have shown a progressively escalating increase in both the number of reported incidents and value of property stolen. In 1987, in excess of 34% of those found guilty of, or cautioned for, motor vehicle related crime, was in the 10 - 16 age group.

This research sets out to attempt to identify and define the factors which cause and/or facilitate such a high level of adolescent involvement in joyriding by, wherever possible, adopting the perspective of the offenders involved, the purpose being to assess the validity and efficacy of motor vehicle projects as strategies by which to divert juveniles away from the many dangers associated with joyriding as well as the risk of custodial sentence.

The research site is Clavering House, an Observation, Assessment and Remand Centre managed by Newcastle-upon-Tyne Social Services Department. The sample study group comprises thirty adolescents between the ages of 11 - 17 years all of whom have been convicted of taking a vehicle without consent. The data gathered from the study sample was compared with additional data provided by a control group of two hundred youngsters, all self confessed joyriders, from 'Walker Wheels', a locally based motor vehicle project.

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**A PROFILE OF THE JUVENILE JOYRIDER AND A CONSIDERATION OF
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STRATEGY.**

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For the sake of convenience and style, the convention has been followed whereby HE and HIM are used to cover SHE and HER wherever the context is appropriate.

All the rhinos and hippos and elephants in the world, if gathered in one city, could not begin to create the menace and the explosive intensity of the hourly and daily experience of the internal-combustion engine. Are people really expected to internalise - live with - all this power and explosive violence, without processing and siphoning it off into some form of fantasy for compensation and balance?

In the silent pictures of the 1920s a great many of the sequences involved the motor car and policemen. Since the film then was accepted as an optical illusion, the cop was the principal reminder of the existence of ground rules in the game of fantasy. as such he took an endless beating'.

Marshall McLuhan (1973).

INTRODUCTION

The principal aims of the research are, first of all, to look at the problem of joyriding from the perspective of the young offenders involved as a way to determine how they make sense of their actions and, secondly, to evaluate the use of motor vehicle projects as specific diversionary initiatives with special reference to the attitudes and perceptions of those involved.

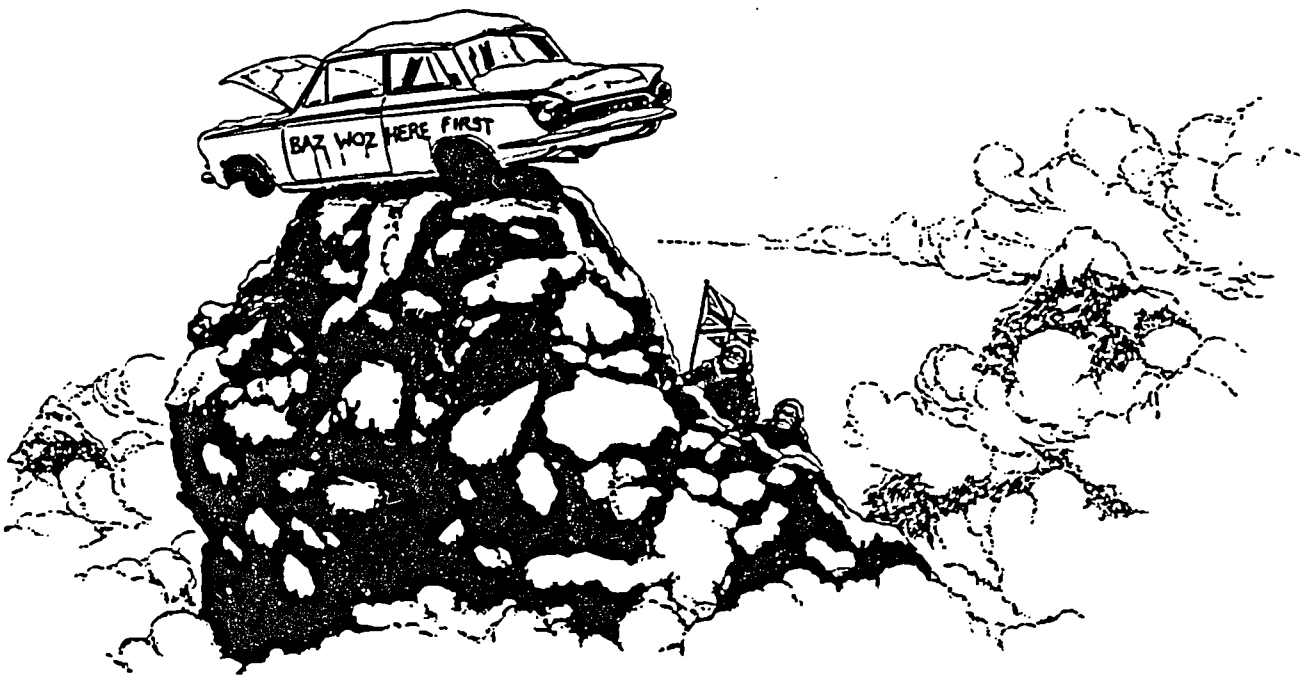
At this juncture, it might be interesting to note that the term 'joyriding', as used in the present context, is not currently one which is officially recognised by the police or the legal profession; indeed, it is rarely used by the offenders themselves. However, to date, no suitable alternatives have been proposed to describe this particular aspect of motor vehicle related crime. The origins of the term are uncertain but it may well have been the media who used it initially, possibly perpetuated and reinforced by society's need for a specific descriptive term. It would appear that there are attempts being made to eradicate it altogether but I feel, for the purposes of this study, that the term adequately conveys the nature of the offence and will continue to use it in this specific context until an officially recognised alternative is adopted.

Arguably, joyriding has two class related components, firstly, that of taking a motor vehicle without lawful authority and, secondly, illegally driving a vehicle.

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However, whilst 'TWOCKING' (taking without owner's consent) and joyriding are both illegal activities in their own right, they are not necessarily synonymous. Joyriding is not a predominantly working class phenomenon whereas, as I shall argue, twocking is such a phenomenon. Middle and upper class adolescents may joyride in their parents', their friends' or even their own cars; however, very few working class adolescents have ready access to such opportunities. For the purposes of this research, however, I am restricting the term 'joyriding' to mean that the vehicles used have been taken without the owner's consent.

Some commentators have stated that to use the expression 'joyriding' is a misrepresentation which merely serves to sensationalise the act. For many, particularly the victims, 'there is no joy in joyriding'. Whether this statement holds true for the young people concerned remains an issue for contentious debate.



Patrick Wright (1988), 'Off the Road'.

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DEFINITION OF MOTOR VEHICLE RELATED CRIME

For the purposes of this research the term 'motor vehicle related crime' refers, in the main, to three separate offence categories: theft of a motor vehicle, taking a motor vehicle without the owner's consent (T.W.O.C.) and theft from a motor vehicle. Additionally, as in the case of most juveniles, motor vehicle theft and taking without consent automatically involves the subsidiary offences of driving without a licence and insurance as well as disqualification by virtue of age.

There is an important distinction to be made between taking a motor vehicle without the owner's consent and the actual theft of a motor vehicle. T.W.O.C. caters for those who 'borrow' or 'joyride' a motor vehicle, and differs from theft in that one of the main criteria for theft - 'intention to permanently deprive' - is missing. Where it can be proven that there was an intention to permanently deprive (For example, by selling the vehicle, fitting false registration plates, repainting or otherwise changing the appearance of the vehicle, or causing wilful extensive or irreparable damage) a charge of theft would be deemed to be appropriate. The offence of T.W.O.C. is defined as:

"A person shall be guilty of an offence if without having consent of the owner or other lawful authority, he takes away any conveyance for his own or another's use or knowing that any conveyance has been taken without such authority drives it or allows himself to be carried in or on it".

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Taking without the owner's consent and interference or tampering with motor vehicles contravenes the THEFT ACT 1968 (section 12) and the CRIMINAL ATTEMPTS ACT, 1981 (section 9) respectively.

Thefts of and from motor vehicles, unlike T.W.O.C. which was introduced primarily because of the difficulty of proving 'intent to permanently deprive' have been awarded no special categories. Such offences are regarded in law as simple thefts.

"A person is guilty of theft if he dishonestly appropriates property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it".

Offences of this nature are in contravention of the Theft Act, 1968 (sections 1 - 7).

Unfortunately, the official statistics relating to vehicles taken illegally do not differentiate between T.W.O.C. and theft, being jointly classified as 'theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle'. The subsidiary offences of driving without a licence, driving whilst disqualified by virtue of age and having no insurance are in contravention of the Road Traffic Act, 1972 (sections 84, 99 and 143) respectively.

Nature and extent of motor vehicle related crime

Since the beginning of the decade up until the end of 1987 the number of vehicles taken without lawful authority within the Northumbria Police area totalled 142,737 representing a monetary value of no less than £197,174,734. A recorded 66,959 crimes were successfully detected resulting in the recovery of £154,011,578 worth of property. This equates to an average annual detection rate of 47.38%. £43,163,156 worth of property remains unaccounted for.

The theft and unauthorised taking of motor vehicles is unique because, unlike other property offences, the property is most likely to be returned to the owners. However, the relatively high recovery rate for stolen cars should not conceal the fact that vehicles are seldom returned in their original condition. They range from having emptier petrol tanks to being burnt-out hulks. Generally, owners can at least expect their glove compartment and boot to be rifled and looted and, in a majority of instances, the radio/stereo equipment to be stolen.

Official statistics indicate that incidents of theft from motor vehicles during the same period were considerably higher with 170,269 recorded offences, the value of property stolen being estimated at £22,563,454. Crimes of this nature met with a lower annual detection rate of

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44.5% at 75,491 and a much lower ratio between property stolen and property recovered, the value recovered being approximately 8% of the total value at £1,798,737, (see table 2). Many of the offences interrelate insofar as a very high percentage of vehicles taken without the owners consent have their contents stolen in the process.

The apparent discrepancy between crimes detected and the number of persons brought before the courts is accounted for by offences having been 'taken into consideration' or by offenders receiving official police cautions. 'T.I.Cs.' and cautions, for statistical purposes, are classified as detected crimes.

It must be borne in mind that official statistics relate only to those crimes reported. P.E. Beattie of the Ford Motor Company, Chairman of the Car Security Working Group and member of the relevant Home Office and B.S.I. committees, stated in his paper presented to the International Police Exhibition and Conference (London, 1987), that an estimated 98% of thefts of vehicles are reported as opposed to only 30% of thefts from vehicles.

The report published by a Home Office working party on car crime (final report published 6th. Dec. 1988) shows that since 1983 the number of recorded offences of theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles increased by 19% and that the number of offences of theft from motor vehicles increased by 55%.

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Criminal Statistics for England and Wales (H.M.S.O.) provide details of the national situation: from the beginning of 1980 until the end of 1987 no fewer than 2,846,800 motor vehicles were reported as having been taken without lawful authority. Statistics provided since 1980 indicate an average annual percentage change of +3.37%, with 324,000 recorded offences in 1980 against 389,576 in 1987. In monetary terms, over the eight year period, these figures represent in excess of £3,831,792,800, that is an average of £478,974,100 per annum. This total is considerably increased when figures relating to theft from motor vehicles are included.

The 1984 British Crime Survey estimated that the net loss after insurance recoveries sustained by private motorists each year amounts to £270m. for thefts of and from vehicles. According to the Association of British Insurers, theft in 1987 accounted for 8.5% of all motor insurance claims. To this must be added the cost of almost 1m. hours of police time expended each year in dealing with motor vehicle related crime, the costs incurred by the criminal justice and prison systems, the cost of care and treatment of accident victims and the costs of increased Social Security payments to those incapacitated by injuries.

During the period between 1978 and 1984, 73% of those found guilty of theft or unauthorised taking of a motor

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vehicle were under 21 years of age. Between 1985 and 1987, 71% of offenders were below the age of 21 years and approximately 98% of the offences were committed by males. In excess of 34% of those found guilty of, or cautioned for, motor vehicle related crime were in the 10 - 16 age group. The Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development indicated that 75% of offences of theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles and 77% of theft from vehicles were committed by young persons under the age of 21, the median age being between 16½ and 17 years.

This chapter has highlighted the fact that motor vehicle related crime is now the most prolific crime in Britain and that, nationally, the theft and unauthorised taking of motor vehicles is increasing annually at the average rate of +3.37%, although certain regions record a much higher incidence rate. Criminal statistics for the first nine months of 1990 showed a 31% increase in the number of vehicles taken without consent in the Northumbria Police Force area alone.

It has also been established that a high percentage of offences are committed by children aged between 10 and 16 years. It is a small but representative sample of these young offenders which forms the basis of this research in which I set out to identify the trends and possible causal factors.

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TWOCKING AND JOYRIDING

An historical perspective.

In 1958 T.C.N. Gibbens wrote: "The theft of cars, and especially 'taking and driving away without the owner's consent' for the sake of joyriding, is a crime of the times and perhaps destined to be one of the most important forms of nuisance". This prophecy has turned out to be even more fulfilled than Gibbens himself would have predicted.

Given the extent of motor vehicle related crime in contemporary Britain where cars are taken without the owner's consent at the rate of one every two minutes, sociological literature is surprisingly limited, particularly when one considers the impact of the automobile on both the economy and culture.

Most existing reference material is based on early research carried out in the United States and tends to support the theory that motor vehicle related crime is a 'favoured group' activity.

For instance, Cavan and Ferdinand (1975) concluded that:

'Teenage car thieves fall into a rather distinctive pattern. They are generally better adjusted in school, in their families, and with their peers than other types of delinquents. They are likely to be white, and they come from a higher economic stratum than other delinquents.'

This theory was supported By Sanders (1976):

'Automobile theft is generally committed by white middle class youths in groups of two or more, largely for kicks'.

and again by Gibbons (1977):

'Juvenile joyriders are usually from middle class, comfortable economic backgrounds. They live in single-family dwellings in middle income areas. Their parents are usually white collar or other types of middle class workers'.

The principal origin of the middle class hypothesis would appear to be based on data generated in 1948 by Wattenberg and Balistrieri (1952), when they selected 230 white youths convicted in Detroit for offences of automobile theft and compared them on every available recorded item of information in terms of age, socio-economic status and peer group relationships, against 2,544 charged with other types of offences.

From their findings Wattenberg and Balistrieri concluded that generally, those convicted for offences of motor vehicle related crime enjoyed good peer group relationships, came from relatively more favourable neighbourhoods but were otherwise similar to juvenile offenders in general. They suggested that the common factor accounting for one general class of anti-social behaviour regardless of socio-economic factors was a 'personality structure which readily accepted the values of immediate associates but responded weakly to the enactments of larger social entities'.

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This 'favoured group' hypothesis was by no means confined to the U.S.A. Gibbens (1958) subscribed to the general theory that car theft was a 'favoured group' form of delinquency which held equally true for British delinquents, but with some interesting differences.

For Gibbens, Wattenberg and Baliesteri's thesis was borne out, not because offenders lived in favoured areas, but because they came from intact and affectionate homes. His theory was that it was surprisingly uncommon for severely deprived youths to commit this offence and that, clinically, car thieves stood out from the usual sort of offender in that the offence was more often of the 'neurotic' type in the sense that it had a symbolic significance and was unconsciously motivated from several sources, especially sexual ones. This, for Gibbens, was not surprising since the motive was necessarily to obtain a 'thrill' or 'excitement'.

His hypothesis was based on a study of every other youth from the London Metropolitan area committed to Borstal training between 1953 and 1955 and was prompted by the observation that, among those committed to Borstal, the proportion with convictions for taking cars without the owner's consent had shown a dramatic and rapid increase. During this period two samples of 100 youths were interviewed and tested and it was found that in 1953 only 14% had convictions at any time for stealing or taking

away motor vehicles; however, the proportion rose to 25% in 1955 and included, for the first time, a few youths whose offences were largely confined to this sort of activity; those with convictions for motor vehicle related crime showed interesting differences both in personality and social background.

Gibbens contrasted 39 youths charged with motor vehicle related offences against a control group in respect of 94 factors in the social and criminal history, of a sort which are 'familiar in criminological analysis'. From his analysis he concluded that these youths tended to be more likely to come from intact homes, to be probably the later members of large families, and to have reached Borstal after several convictions for which they were not sent away, probably because they seemed to have 'good' homes and to be hopeful cases for probation.

A subsequent American study conducted by Charles W Thomas between January 1st. 1966 and July 31st. 1973 shows a radical shift away from the 'favoured group' hypothesis. Of 14,815 young offenders brought before the juvenile courts in an area of Virginia, Thomas was able to make a comparison of automobile offenders' demographic characteristics with those of juveniles arrested for other categories of offences. The results indicated that those juveniles, whose fathers were either professional-managerial or other types of white collar workers,

accounted for 35.6% of all auto-thieves but juveniles from similar situations also accounted for 34.9% of non-auto theft offenders, thus throwing considerable doubt on the claim that juvenile auto-theft was a 'favoured group' delinquency.

Rather than refuting out of hand the 'favoured group' hypothesis, McCaghy, Giadorno and Henson (1977) identified a changing trend in the socio-economic status of auto-offenders in their work, AUTO THEFT: Offender and Offense Characteristics, based on a study in Toledo, Ohio.

They found that 66.7% of all auto offenders and 67.8% of juvenile auto-offenders resided in geographical areas where the median income was below \$10,000 per capita at a time when the median income of Toledo was in excess of \$10,500. As a consequence, the Wattenberg and Balistrieri claim no longer, if ever, held true for Toledo.

In my research and that of Dr. Rosemary Kilpatrick (1988) based on her practical experience whilst working with offenders in West Belfast, there is little evidence to substantiate either the American middle class 'favoured group' hypothesis or the British 'intact and affectionate home favoured group' hypothesis.

This, in part, may be attributable to the increasing access by members of the middle class to motor cars thus

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reducing the inclination to steal them; on the other hand, it may be due to the fact that at the time when Wattenberg and Balistrieri and others conducted their respective studies, ownership of motor cars was almost exclusively confined to the more fortunate members of the middle class. Thus, the availability of motor cars in public places, thereby providing the opportunity for car thieves and joyriders, was considerably less than it is today. I would conjecture that Gibbens findings of the rising incidence of car theft between 1953 and 1955 is purely a reflection of the escalating ownership of motor cars during that period. Indeed it could be argued that progressively increasing legitimate access to the motor car by members of the middle class has led to a corresponding illegitimate opportunity structure for [mainly] working class youth.

Joyriding - A contemporary view

For Kilpatrick, the typical car thief originates from a socially deprived inner city area where the population is overwhelmingly working class and both poverty and unemployment are high. Generally speaking he is in the 10 - 20 age group with an average age of 15 -16 years.

She further states that these teenagers have commonly severed their ties with any form of formal education by the age of 14 or 15. Very rarely have they any formal

qualifications and few will have any experience of employment outside of youth training schemes. Such schemes are usually viewed by them with cynicism as a low paid interlude in a life of unemployment. The prospects for these youths are already unfavourable. They have no real identity or status conferred on them by work or education. They are almost always male, the few females that are involved have usually been carried as passengers.

Kilpatrick's findings are based on demographic and social history information gathered and provided by professional agencies such as Social Services departments and the Probation Service in relation to her involvement with the West Belfast Motor Project.

In her paper 'The Archetype Car Thief' presented to The National Car Crime Conference in Newcastle upon Tyne in November 1988, Kilpatrick identified a definite 'career structure' in the life of a car thief:

According to Kilpatrick, the older, more experienced car thief will bring a stolen car into the area and race it around where the younger children (usually under 12 years) watch and sometimes ask for, or are offered a ride as a passenger. Most progress quickly from passenger to driver, though learning any level of driving skill is purely a matter of chance.

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"First time I'd been driving I was coming up the street in first gear - I didn't know the rules of the road or anything. This lad who could drive got in beside me. He showed me how the clutch and gears worked. I started getting interested in driving. By the end of the day I could drive".

At this early stage in his career the car thief is most probably still in a car stolen by someone else and possibly abandoned in the area. However, he soon progresses to stealing cars himself, the techniques for getting into and starting them, being quickly and easily learned.

The next stage in the progression is the stealing of items and parts from the vehicle for resale. Kilpatrick suggests that, at the height of his career, a typical car thief would take a car to travel from A to B where he would abandon it minus its radio equipment and any other easily resellable item. From point B he would then take another car to point C and abandon it, again minus its radio/stereo or other item.

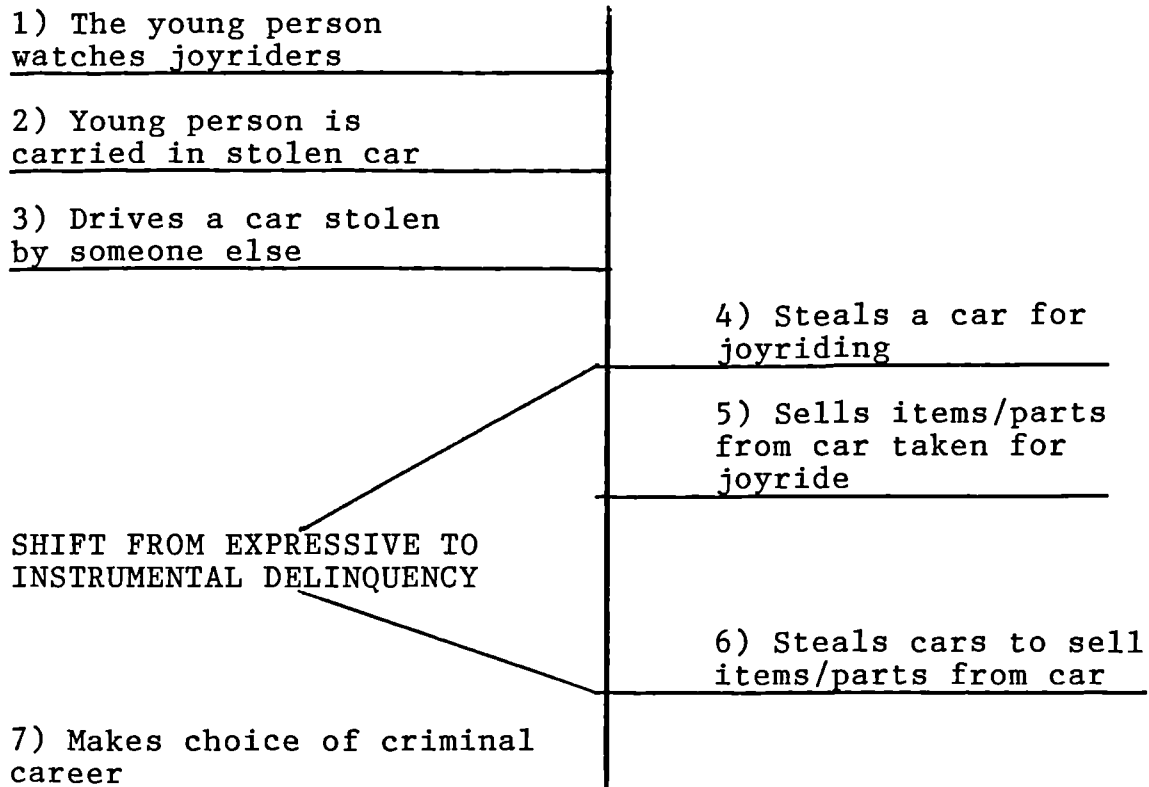
Kilpatrick further suggests that car thieves appear to have an extremely strong group identity. They see themselves as joyriders and are proud of it. Although often involved in other types of criminal activities they strongly resent being classified as 'villains' or as being involved in any criminal offences outside those centred around cars. They typically regard those who break into

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cars to steal goods as the 'villains' whereas they take the car and the stealing of goods is incidental.

In Kilpatrick's view, this type of behaviour will almost invariably develop into "instrumental delinquency". As the accomplished car thief becomes progressively more involved in the stealing and selling of goods, he may gravitate toward other forms of criminal activity such as burglary and perhaps more serious crime. Most serious car thieves will reach a turning point in their careers in their early twenties. A proportion will carry on and develop toward a criminal career. The majority will gradually settle down and be absorbed back into their own community. The motivation for this is often marriage or at least a steady relationship; others may find permanent employment or simply develop the need to become socially accepted.

In her study of joyriders, Kilpatrick identified a 'clear move' from what appeared to be 'expressive joyriding' toward 'instrumental delinquency'. At some stage in the perceived progression the motivator seemed to change from emotional to economic factors.



Although Dr. Kilpatrick raises many valid and interesting points, it could be argued that her theory is both ambiguous and contradictory and, in many respects, over generalises insofar as she appears to regard motor vehicle related crime as a clear cut, 'black and white' issue and implies that theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles is an all embracing progressive process which will ultimately lead the offender into more serious crimes.

In its basic simplicity, the Kilpatrick model initially overlooks or fails to consider the fact that many young people convicted for motor vehicle related crime have

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established histories of other indictable/non-indictable offences before and, often contemporaneously with, their involvement with automobiles, although she proceeds to acknowledge the fact that some young car thieves are often involved in other types of crime. As I shall argue, Kilpatrick also fails to take into account the fact that the motives of joyriders are completely different to those who steal motor vehicles purely for financial gain.

The research carried out by McCahgy, Giodarno and Henson (1977), to which my findings add support, suggest that motor vehicle related crime can be sub-divided into six distinct categories each with its own, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, precipitating motives thus negating Kilpatrick's notion of a typical or 'archetype' car thief. The following categories are based on the findings of McCahgy, Giardano and Henson but redefined and reworked in the light of my experience.

The categories of motor vehicle related crime.

Twocking for the purpose of joyriding

There is a wide ranging variety of motivations assigned to joyriding by writers, psychologists and sociologists. They include 'to have a good time', 'striving for status and recognition' and 'to prove masculinity'.

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The motor car's symbolism as a major contributory factor to motor vehicle related crime among juveniles cannot be overlooked. For many youngsters wishing emphatically to convey to peers and public what kind of persons they are, there is no more effective means than the cars they drive.

Whatever the motivations of the individuals' concerned, be it recognition, power, entertainment or sex, joyriding denotes essentially recreational, non-utilitarian, short term use of motor cars. However, this is not to imply that the motor car may not be of real practical value to the individuals concerned in terms of promoting and bolstering self-esteem or status. It can be considered non-utilitarian to the extent that the offender's goal is not strictly limited to obtaining a means of transport or financial gain, although as research has demonstrated, cars taken for the purposes of joyriding are very often looted in the process.

For joyriders the symbolism of the motor car is paramount; the car is taken not for what it does, but for what it means.

Utilitarian twocking

Like joyriding this category of taking a motor vehicle without consent involves only short term use, but unlike joyriding it is utilitarian based. The vehicle is used primarily as a means of transportation from one location to another. Police sources suggest that instances of short term T.W.O.C. are considerably less than those of joyriding and that more vehicles are recovered undamaged and with their contents intact.

It may be argued that this category of offence is committed for practical reasons usually by more mature persons and not necessarily 'accomplished' car thieves. In instances of short term use the vehicle is taken not for what it means, but for what it does.

Long term twocking

In this category offenders take vehicles without lawful authority with the intention of retaining them for long term personal use. Long term retention of motor vehicles is an activity more prevalent among the maturer age group, usually adults, the main reason being attributable to the fact that most parents would deter juveniles from keeping an unexplained or suspicious motor vehicle. This is another example of a utilitarian based T.W.O.C.

Twocking for profit

By definition, this type of T.W.O.C. is 'theft' in its purest sense. Offences of this nature are committed by individuals of differing sophistication who steal motor vehicles for the sole purpose of re-selling them or the parts from them.

Many components taken from stripped down stolen motor vehicles are used for the purposes of 'ringing'. Ringing is the practice of rebuilding damaged motor vehicles, usually insurance total loss 'write offs', from components taken from stolen similar makes and models. Not only is this practice proven to be extremely dangerous, it is difficult, often impossible, to detect. All identification is removed from the stolen components and, to all intents and purposes, the hybrid vehicle assumes the identity of the original, supported by the official and relevant documentation.

Some 'ringers' are simply complete stolen motor cars with the registration, chassis and engine identification numbers relating to written off or scrapped vehicles transferred to them. There is also a thriving and lucrative business in the theft and redistribution of stolen high prestige models such as Porsche, Jaguar and Mercedes, many of which are exported abroad which again makes detection extremely difficult. Information provided by a representative of the Northumbria Police Stolen Car

Squad would suggest that incidents of vehicles stolen for this purpose are widespread and often part of highly sophisticated organised operations.

The theft of motor vehicles in the profit motivated category is based on the automobile as a valuable commodity, not as a symbol or a means of transportation and one would anticipate offenders of this type to be similar in characteristics to property offenders generally.

For use in other crimes

Although representing only a small proportion of all twocking it is another example of an offence for which the motivation is utilitarian based. Anonymity and mobility are often crucial to the execution of a successful crime, the twocked motor vehicle provides both.

Theft from motor vehicles

These offences are not necessarily the acts of accomplished car thieves, like most profit motivated offences they are just as likely to be committed by any opportunist thief.

According to Tim Hope in his paper "Residential Aspects of Auto-crime" prepared for the Home Office Research and Planning Unit (Research Bulletin no.23, 1987), theft and

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attempted theft from motor vehicles accounts for just over one third of all auto-crime. It is predominantly a night time offence - 78% of incidents occurring between the hours of 6p.m. and 6a.m.; significantly, this is the opposite pattern to that of residential burglary and illustrates the different distributions of opportunity.

A recent and serious aspect of theft from motor vehicles is the escalating problem of crimes referred to as 'Pop and Seize'. This involves a thief breaking the windscreen or side window of a vehicle stationary in a traffic queue, at a road junction or traffic lights, grabbing a handbag or other valuable commodity from the passenger seat or dashboard and then running from the scene, thereby leaving the startled and bewildered driver (usually an unaccompanied female) at a loss as to how to deal best with the immediate situation.

Should Dr. Kilpatrick's theory be applied solely to the category of 'joyriding' or, more accurately, 'twocking for the purpose of joyriding' it would assume an entirely new dimension and her concept of an identifiable career structure would provide a valuable insight into the life of the joyrider.

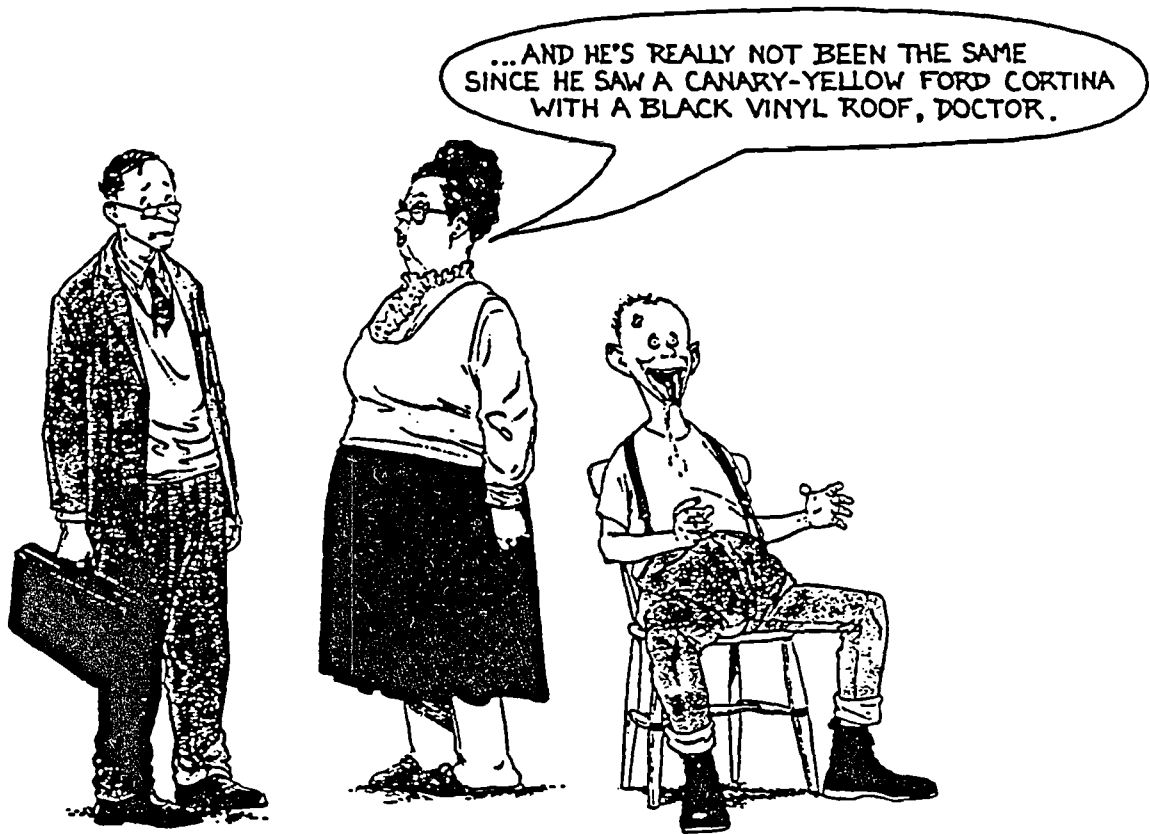
Dr. Kilpatrick is by no means the only writer to have identified a career structure. In his work, 'The Joys Of Joyriding', Howard Parker (1974) too, recognises a

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distinctly progressive joyriding career, although he refers to it as an 'apprenticeship' which begins with inner city children as young as the age of nine - the 'joyriders of tomorrow' - playing games of fantasy in vehicles previously abandoned by joyriders and which have been subsequently stripped of all useable or resellable components by local adults. Parker's 'apprenticeship' develops in much the same way as Kilpatrick's 'career'.

It is evident that motor vehicle related crime is a much more complex issue than would first appear and perhaps the category of joyriding is the least understood. According to McCullough and Schmidt (1990) in their research document 'Joyriding in West Belfast', few other crimes involve such a complicated set of group behaviours as joyriding and many descriptions of the phenomena recognise this fact. It has been described as a "cult" or a "craze", terms that aptly imply that there is much more to joyriding than the simple criminal act of taking a car without the owners consent. Joyriding is predominantly a male orientated, adolescent activity to which is assigned a range of motivations. By looking at joyriding from the boys' point of view I set out to determine how they make sense of their world and what exactly prompted McCahgy, Giadano and Henson to make the observation that:

'The car frequently embodies and projects for its occupant degrees of status, power, aggressiveness and sex as no other bit of property can'.



Patrick Wright (1988), 'Off the Road'.

CHAPTER THREE

SCAFFY OR JIGGLE?: A VIEW FROM THE LADS

The research site.

Clavering House, although officially designated as an Observation, Assessment and Remand Centre, is in practice a multi-functional crisis centre catering for the material, psychological and emotional needs of approximately forty adolescents, male and female, between the ages of eleven and eighteen years, the majority of whom have histories of criminal offences.

Formerly the Ragged School of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Clavering House has occupied its present site since 1925. The building is owned by The Axwell Park Trust and is managed and financed by Newcastle-upon-Tyne Social Services Department.

The establishment provides day care and educational facilities, a long term residential unit and a remand function.

The usual catchment area spans the entire North East of England from the Tweed to the Tees but on occasion and under certain circumstances, Clavering House will accept clients from anywhere in the country.

The study sample.

The thirty subjects were selected because of their proven and documented involvement in motor vehicle crime and could, in certain respects, be compared with those chosen by Gibbens (1958) insofar as many, prior to the abolition of the Borstal regime, would undoubtedly have been considered as likely candidates for Borstal training.

Unfortunately, the transient nature of the client group has precluded any long term chronological study of particular offenders. It has therefore been necessary to build up a composite profile of the type of young person most likely to participate in motor vehicle related crime and his motives for doing so, by means of observation, informal discussion, questionnaires and taped interviews with the selected relevant clients over a period of approximately fifteen months.

The research and research methodology.

Permission was granted by the senior management of Clavering House to allow me to interview and observe the clients as well as permitting unrestricted access to confidential files and documents containing information compiled by a variety of professionals such as residential and field social workers, educational psychologists, probation officers, psychiatrists and schoolteachers on the understanding that anonymity would be preserved at all

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times. For this reason, wherever possible, pseudonyms have been used. All other details are, to the best of my knowledge and belief, as accurate as possible.

Much of the information contained within the research is by its very nature based on material gathered under a wide range of circumstances. Details of the attitudes and perceptions of motor vehicle related crime demonstrated by the study sample may be categorised under a number of headings, the main ones being covert observation of informal discussions among members of sub-groups, overt observation of the same groups, active participation in group discussions without attempting to influence the outcome and semi-structured intervention where the group discussion was guided by the observer.

A detailed search of the records pertaining to the thirty clients of Clavering House, who collectively make up the study sample, revealed that all but two originated from identifiable socially deprived inner-city areas of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, notably, Scotswood, Benwell, Elswick, Rye Hill and Walker.

Disrupted family backgrounds were a common feature; nine of the boys came from reconstituted families all of which were with their natural mother. Three lived with divorced mothers, two had unmarried mothers, one lived with his father and his father's co-habitee, one had been in care

since infancy, and the remaining fourteen were from more stable family situations.

Unemployment was a prevalent factor in the familial homes; only seven were from homes where one or both parents were in full time employment. Material standards within the family homes were at best described by social workers as 'acceptable' and, at worst, as 'very poor'.

These facts alone must bring Gibbens' somewhat dated statement - 'it is surprisingly uncommon for severely deprived youths to commit this offence' - into question. On the contrary, I would argue that it is surprisingly uncommon for socially advantaged youths to commit this type of offence. I would also argue that no other category of criminal offence has shown such a radical reversal of social trends in such a short span of time.

The documented facts support Kilpatrick's (1988) findings that 'car thieves' tend to originate from socially deprived inner city areas where the population is overwhelmingly working class and both poverty and unemployment are high, and that these teenagers have commonly severed their ties with any sort of formal education by the age of fourteen or fifteen.

Twenty three of the boys were described as being below average in terms of academic ability although the educational records suggest that most showed potential and their situations may well have been improved with the

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aid of remedial teaching. However, the majority of those below school leaving age had long since relinquished any real degree of formal education. The level of truancy was extremely high and the lack of interest in school very apparent.

From the onset of the investigation it became evident that the content of any discussion was influenced by the physical location of the groups and often by the time of day and the composition of the groups (which never exceeded more than five members at any given time).

It was frequently noted that the presence of girls and occasionally female staff, perceptibly altered the tone and content of the discussions. This is difficult to analyse qualitatively but it became obvious that the normally technical aspects of the conversations, often confined to performance and vehicle specifications, changed to anecdotal boasting about driving exploits with the obvious intention of impressing. This subtle change often permeated the entire group and for a time members would collude and support each other's stories. This apparently happened regardless of whether the females showed any interest or not.

For the observed study groups, twocking and joyriding illegally obtained motor vehicles, together with the associated activities such as unnecessary risk taking, high speed chases and the use of vehicles in other forms

of crime comprise a complex issue which carries with it its own set of rules, norms and values.

There is evidence to suggest that various activities associated with joyriding have a hierarchical order of importance and that the higher up their tariff an activity is placed, the greater the kudos assumed by and, given to, the perpetrator. The more 'skilled' a youth is the higher his status becomes. So much so that some of the boasting which has been recorded relates to more difficult or spectacular activities. This is reinforced if the person can elicit confirmation from another in the group or can provide some other form of tangible evidence such as police bail or charge sheets and press articles. These documents, far from being something to be ashamed of, are often valued, coveted and frequently carried about and produced to lend weight to the stories. In short, these represent a mark of their achievement in a form readily recognised and accepted by fellow joyriders.

Within the city of Newcastle upon Tyne, as in all major British cities, there are regional core groups of joyriders with varying degrees of ability, some of these have been apprehended and some have not. In addition, there are peripheral group members currently serving their 'apprenticeship' and who aspire to their respective main group but have yet, in the eyes of their peers, to prove themselves and become recognised and accepted 'twoockers'.

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The occasional presence of one of the better known, and in their terms 'more expert', members of a main group in Clavering House often re-kindles an active interest in motor vehicle related crime.

Incidents of twoc and joyriding among certain other clients then appears to increase and may continue until the ring leader is dealt with or is subsequently removed from the client group; although this does not always happen, fluctuations do occur and frequently coincide with the presence of 'high status' joyriders.

On one occasion Brian, a sixteen year old youth with a long history of twoc offences, was remanded to the care of the local authority as the result of a spectacular high speed chase in a stolen Ford Granada which culminated in an accident in which the car overturned and four other occupants were injured, one seriously.

Brian immediately assumed status within the group because the incident had been mentioned on regional television news and featured on the front page of a local daily newspaper. In view of the fact that he had shown little remorse and even indicated that he was prepared to repeat the performance, the staff of the establishment attempted to warn others of the risks and dangers of accompanying Brian should he abscond.

Despite all of the warnings, within twenty four hours three youths, previously low on the tariff in terms of

motor vehicle related crime, absconded with Brian and were observed some hours later speeding through Newcastle city centre in a two-wheeled Ford Escort. Fortunately, no one was hurt and all were apprehended some time later following yet another police chase.

When interviewed the three accompanying absconders could give no rational explanation other than "Brian was good" and had been able to predict how the incidents of the evening would proceed. Not one of these three expressed any fear or concern at the possibility of being involved in an accident similar to Brian's recent one. This had been rationalised by them as 'bad luck' and partly the fault of the police rather than being directly attributable to Brian's lack of ability.

The overriding factor expressed by all four youths was that it had been exciting and stimulating. One of the boys, Tony, admitted later that he had been sick in the back of the car, although at the time of the interview he had stated that it had all been 'fucking great'. An informal follow up interview with Tony, conducted away from the other participants indicated several things:

Firstly, he had gone along under peer group pressure; secondly, he had been frightened and had not really enjoyed the experience; and thirdly, after gentle probing, he admitted that it had made him feel important.

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The involvement in accidents, sometimes of a very serious nature, serve to confer status and prestige on some juveniles. Paul, a sixteen-year-old, regarded by his peers as a vociferous braggart and a bully who constantly boasted about his exploits in 'chordy' cars (see glossary), twocked a Ford Escort in Newcastle late one evening, whilst in the company of three other youths - another boy aged sixteen and two girls aged fourteen and fifteen. He then drove south of the River Tyne into Gateshead where they were soon observed and subsequently pursued by the police. Continuing for several miles and eventually leading onto the main A69 Western By-pass, the ensuing chase often reached speeds in excess of ninety miles an hour.

In a manoeuvre intended to 'lose' the police car, Paul drove the Escort at speed up a slip road whereupon he suddenly veered right in an effort to rejoin the main carriageway. Losing control of the vehicle it crossed the central reservation and collided with a car travelling in the opposite direction, at which point 'their' car overturned and slid, on its roof, for several yards along the road. Fortunately, the driver of the second vehicle was unhurt but the four youths were taken to hospital. Paul and the two girls were not detained. The fourth youth, Shaun, sustained extensive injuries including a suspected fractured skull and severe lacerations to the

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neck and head. He eventually recovered after spending several weeks in hospital, part of the time in intensive care.

Following this incident Paul appeared in court and for this offence, together with a number of outstanding charges of T.W.O.C, he was sentenced to four months youth custody.

During his period of remand at Clavering House, prior to being 'sent down' and in an interview with the writer, Paul stated quite clearly that the accident was not his fault but that of the police driver whom, he claimed, "clipped his back end". (According to the statements of witnesses, the police car was in fact several yards behind when the accident occurred).

Despite the injuries sustained by his companion as well as extensive damage to two cars, Paul showed no signs of remorse whatsoever and treated the whole incident lightly and as something of a joke. Appended to this work is a copy of an extract from a letter sent by Paul, whilst serving his subsequent sentence in a youth custody establishment, to another client in Clavering House. (Permission to reproduce the document was granted by the recipient and the senior management team). The letter clearly demonstrates the power that the motor car holds over some youths as well as the apparent ineffectiveness of current sentencing policy. Despite the imposed

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custodial sentence, Paul, makes numerous references in his letter to twocking. The letter also serves to highlight the extent of rivalry between joyriders when jockeying for status and recognition.

The rival in this instance is Mark (see interview 2), another client of Clavering House.

'I am in here for what I do best Twocing. I dont Twoc what doddsy Twoc's He Twocs shit cars like 1.1 hundreds BL 16.L I go for the good cars like GT Turbo's and 16.I Ghier's RS Turbos and XR2's Stuff like that Doddsy couldn't do that if he tried because he's an asshole He couldn't Twoc a baby's pram never mind a Turbo'. (sic).

4 are hurt in joyride pile-up

By LINDA RICHARDS

FOUR young joyriders were injured, one seriously, when a car crashed following a high speed police chase on Tyneside.

Police pursued the youngsters at speeds of over 90mph before the Ford Escort somersaulted out of control on the Gateshead Western Bypass late last night.

The chase began when the car, which had early been reported stolen from Newcastle, overtook a police patrol car on the bypass near the turn-off for Askew Road.

The Escort sped off up the slip road, but the 16-year-old driver suddenly veered violently to the right and turned back onto the dual carriageway.

He lost control of the car which careered onto the westbound lane and smashed into a car travelling in the opposite direction.

All four occupants, two boys and two girls, were injured when the Escort flipped over onto its roof.

They were taken to Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital following the crash at 11pm.

Three of the youngsters, the driver and the girls aged 14 and 15, were not detained.

They have been arrested and are now helping police with inquiries into the incident.

Poorly

The fourth youngster in the car, a 16-year-old boy, is detained with a suspected fractured skull and severe lacerations to the back of his neck and head. His condition is described as "poorly".

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Paul goes on to make other such comments as 'Doddsy you can't Twoc to save your life so fuck right off ha! ha!!' and, 'Doddsy go and Twoc an 11. popular fiesta you cunt'.

There are also several highlighted references to the actual act of twocking, for instance 'SCAFF 4 A LAUGH' and 'JIGGLE 4 A GIGGLE' (see glossary). He goes so far as to illustrate his text with drawings of a selection of the necessary tools for going equipped.

Twocking motor cars is taken very seriously by the boys and, whilst the cars are in their possession, they are regarded as 'their' motors, often to the point of near social convention. This was demonstrated by one of the most humorous incidents which occurred during the study. It involved Trevor who, together with three friends, decided to visit London. Whilst there they twocked a Volvo 760 series Turbo from outside a car rental agency. During the return journey they, conventionally, joined the Automobile Association. Their ensuing three day adventure took them to a number of different towns and cities including Bradford, where it came to a sudden, unexpected and ironic end.

Deciding to go for a meal they parked the vehicle in a nearby street only to return to find it missing. Again, in keeping with convention, they did what any other motorist in the same situation would do: they reported the matter to the police. Unfortunately for them, they did

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not realise that it had been the police who had removed the vehicle in the first place following a tip-off by a vigilant member of the public who informed them of four suspicious youths in a prestigious motor car. Of course, by this time, the car had been reported and circulated as a stolen vehicle. Needless to say, they were all arrested, charged and subsequently released on police bail.

The need to 'feel important' has recurred several times throughout the term, not only of this research project but others too, as the following quotations from an evaluative document, relating to the West Belfast Motor Project, amply illustrates:

"I got into cars because I'd nothing else to do. Everybody was doing it and you wanted to show you were the best. God, you should see some of the cars I've been in. It makes you feel as if you're a great driver".

"When I was in a car I didn't care what speed it went or anything, it it made you feel like somebody. You know the way everybody thinks you're nothing. When you're in a car and you're going past people you know, you're saying to yourself 'I'm somebody, I'm better than you .

These and similar verbal reports from joyriders, that they feel important when having taken a car, would appear to accord well with the theory that delinquency is merely a symptom of a social malaise which results from feeling oneself to be at the bottom of a status orientated society and may also serve to explain why joyriders continue an

activity which frequently generates violent societal reaction. Sometimes, as we have seen, even spectacular road accidents confer status on the joyrider. However, joyriding is infinitely more complex than would first appear. It is by its very nature an emotive subject. Among those participating there has developed a range of attitudes, values and a peculiar jargon or 'verbal shorthand' to describe the activities.

Whenever a group of would be or actual joyriders gathers together and discusses motor vehicle related crime, it would appear that their perceptions of their own ability are not necessarily based in fact and that both status and perceived ability may hinge on little more than an individual's use of current jargon or his willingness to boast. On occasion this has led to serious consequences when a claimant has been provoked or incited to 'put his money where his mouth is'.

Logic would suggest that a fifteen year old youth with a probable maximum total of between five and twenty hours driving experience, conducted in less than ideal driving conditions with no formal tuition, cannot conceivably be a good driver and yet, throughout the investigation, youths with this amount of experience quite definitely claimed to be 'above average' or 'excellent' drivers, some even believing themselves to be better than qualified Class One police drivers. This may well account for the recent

escalating incidents of youths deliberately baiting the police in the hope that a chase will ensue.

The apparent disparity between perceived and actual driving ability proved to be one of the main problems when safety was discussed. The majority of the youths who completed questionnaires or were interviewed considered themselves to be either average or above in terms of driving ability yet, when pressed on this point, few could begin to indicate what was meant by 'good driving'. Scant attention was paid to such niceties as road sense or consideration for other road users.

Whilst it must be acknowledged that technically, many youngsters knew how to drive, they lacked any real understanding of driving theory. During group discussions almost all references were related to the ability to drive fast, to be able to corner at high speed or other activities related to the actual physical handling of a car. If all of the claims were to be believed (many of which certainly stretched the bounds of credulity) then most of the young drivers had actually managed to execute manoeuvres normally associated with either professional or stunt driving of the type frequently seen in films featuring car chases. The youths often made reference to 'wheel spins', 'handbrake turns' and 'decking' after a successful 'flight' (see glossary), all of which are

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dangerous and outside the normal design specifications of most standard production motor cars.

Few of those interviewed showed more than a little remorse when cars were damaged or when owners were deprived of their vehicles. The attitude of one particular youth, Neil, was fairly typical of most offenders when asked about their feelings toward their victims - 'I never really think about it, I couldn't give a fuck really'. (interview 3, ques.51). Some of the joyriders even boasted about the damage they had caused to 'their' and others' vehicles. An often used justification for this complacency was that 'the owner will be insured'.

We can therefore identify the essential ingredients of a discussion when a number of joyriders are gathered together in an informal setting and the topic turns to joyriding: anecdotes will be exchanged; there will be jockeying for status; the language will often become aggressive. Conversation is invariably anti-authority and there will be vilification of the police and their abilities to chase and apprehend joyriders. The youngsters' own driving abilities will be luridly exaggerated and unrealistic claims made. The conversation will be heavily punctuated with the necessary jargon which serves both as an identification and a reinforcing mechanism which appears to enhance a mutual bonding between fellow joyriders. (See glossary).

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Those youths, claiming to be better than average drivers and who carry the status among their peers sufficient to attract others to accompany them, frequently feel the need to show off, drive aggressively or otherwise ill-treat the vehicles as a way of demonstrating superiority.

Many of the vehicles recovered after having been used by joyriders show tyre wear and structural damage consistent with excessive mis-handling and abuse. The proprietor of a specialist vehicle recovery service stated that most of the cars recovered from joyriders exhibit damage which would indicate a very low standard of driving, lack of care and concern for the vehicles and in many cases, deliberate vandalism.

Often, vehicles are irreparably damaged or totally destroyed either as a result of the joyride or as a means of eliminating evidence (in the event of deliberate destruction of a vehicle the offence may be one of theft rather than taking without the owner's consent because of the proven intent to 'permanently deprive').

These facts support the view of psychologist Dr. John Groeger who explains joyriding as an attempt to assert one's influence on a group. He believes that young drivers are often scared behind the wheel, but the need to look good in front of friends can lead them to drive beyond their abilities. (Observer 6th. Nov. 1988)

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In addition to the more obvious factors which combine to make joyriding a particularly dangerous offence, there are often hidden factors not usually taken into account but which deserve serious consideration.

Young offenders, for instance, frequently admit to drinking alcohol or 'glue sniffing' [solvent inhalation] prior to joyriding, some even admitting to the use of hard and soft drugs such as 'Speed' [amphetamines] and 'Tack' [marijuana]. For example, Mark, a rather immature fifteen-year-old, confessed to having driven towoked cars whilst under the influence of alcohol and tack on separate occasions and claimed that it actually made him feel safer. (Interview 2, questions 44-46. see also Interview 3, question 56). Therefore the disinhibiting effect of alcohol and other substances would appear to play a part in joyriding.

In the case of alcohol, in addition to the behavioural effects, with the increasing level of alcohol consumed there is an increasing impairment of driving skills and ability beginning with fine visual perceptual judgements, through cognitive decision making to gross ineffective motor coordination at about 0.15% blood/alcohol level. Such factors interact to impair driver performance (Levine, Kramer and Levine 1975). Alcohol would also seem to impair an individual's appraisal of his own abilities to such an extent that the cognitive effects of alcohol

sometimes go unrecognised (Sharrock 1989). These factors together with a youngster's already unrealistically exaggerated and misguided appraisal of his own driving ability, his unfamiliarity with the vehicle he is driving, the negative effects of peer group encouragement, an increased anxiety level and the American research findings that the driver of a stolen vehicle is two hundred times more likely to be involved in an accident (Home Office Report 1988), combine to make joyriding a considerably more dangerous offence than the relatively minor status afforded to it by legal statute would suggest.

In view of the above it seems curious that Section 37 of the Criminal Justice Act (1988), which came into force in October 1988 made the offence of taking a motor vehicle without consent a non - indictable one.

Another hidden factor is that of 'inadvertent reinforcement'.

Inadvertent Reinforcement

The youths' often misguided perceptions of their own abilities as drivers are, on occasion, unintentionally reinforced by the actions of the police.

It is an unwritten policy, certainly within most police force areas, for a police officer in pursuit of a stolen vehicle to abort the chase if, in his opinion or that of

his control room supervisor, the pursued vehicle is being driven in a reckless or dangerous manner. Such a decision is usually determined on the grounds of the police officer's immediate professional assessment of the situation, the time of day, prevailing weather, road and traffic conditions and the speed of the chase.

Following the police decision to abort a chase, the youths seeing the pursuing police vehicle slow down or stop and, being unaware of the police officer's motives for doing so, apply their own interpretation to the situation and almost invariably conclude that they had 'wopped the arse off him' or 'the copper lost his bottle'.

Such decisions understandably cause a dilemma for the police. On the one hand, they come under public criticism for their involvement in dangerous car chases which, as recent events demonstrate all too often culminate in serious or fatal road accidents, and yet, on the other hand, they are criticised and ridiculed for allowing joyriders to 'get away with it', thereby creating a situation which not only reinforces the joyriders' self esteem but encourages further offending.

Another occasionally reported form of vicarious reinforcement is when a youth, having been pursued and apprehended by the police, says he has been complimented on the quality of his driving by the officer involved. Of course such claims may be little more than myths,

perpetuated and exaggerated through generations of Joyriders; alternatively, it may perhaps be an embellishment on the truth originating from the youth's interpretation of the police officer's attitude and general approach, whether verbal or non-verbal, following a chase which was for the police officer equally stimulating.

Some indirectly supporting evidence [for the 'lads'] perhaps may be found in the accounts of David J. Smith and Jeremy Gray in their report 'Police and People in London' (1983) commissioned through the Policy Studies Institute by Sir David McNee, the then commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

Smith and Gray state that, because police work is often dull and routine, the elixir is action.

'For a police officer, patrolling tends to be boring, not only because it is often uneventful, but also because it is rather aimless. A considerable amount of police behaviour can best be understood as a search for some interest, excitement and sensation'.

According to Smith and Gray, car chases offer a kind of excitement that police officers particularly hanker after. Because of the boredom, police car crews compete with each other to answer calls that sound interesting.

In order to conduct their joint research, both Smith and Gray were seconded to working closely with the police in all aspects of their daily policing duties. Gray relates

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one particular experience when he was assigned to work with the crew of an area patrol car.

Having spent a completely uneventful six hours of a night shift driving around apparently aimlessly and without answering a call, a 'great commotion' broke out on the police radio in reference to a car chase. Gray's area car immediately responded to the call and within seconds a Ford Fiesta appeared round the corner going very fast towards them with another police area patrol car in close pursuit. Gray's car joined the chase.

The crew of the area patrol car in front of them transmitted a running commentary as the Fiesta was pursued for fourteen miles. Other area cars eventually joined in the chase, which, according to Gray, became more and more hair-raising as it reached speeds of over ninety miles an hour through narrow suburban streets. It finally ended when the offending driver turned into a cul-de-sac where he was subsequently apprehended and arrested. By this time the whole area (a recreation ground) was surrounded by police vehicles. Gray counted seven area cars, four Panda cars and two vans, a total of thirteen vehicles. By the end of the chase, most of the police vehicles from about six divisions were concentrated in an area a long way from their home districts.

This incident, according to Gray, illustrated the magnetic attraction of a chase. Everyone who had taken part found

it intensely satisfying and later, back at the police station, stood round in the charge room in small groups swapping exaggerated and self-congratulatory accounts of what had happened for some time afterwards.

Here we have a situation not at all dissimilar to a group of joyriders recalling their particular experiences. In view of this, it could be argued that a police officer, who either verbally or non-verbally compliments a joyrider on the quality of his driving, is in fact less concerned to reinforce the offenders own evaluation of his ability to drive than he is to bolster his own macho image. His compliment implies 'You're good son, but I caught you so I must be better!'.

I shall go on to argue that the emphasis on aggressive and spectacular driving exploits as a means of projecting a macho image are trends found in various activities involving thrill and an element of high personal risk which can be commonly found throughout wider society. Therefore the pleasureable surge of adrenalin sought legally by the police is not so different to that induced by youngsters through twocking and joyriding.

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Joyriders tend to take vehicles which otherwise reflect the status and prestige of wider society and yet few Rolls Royces or Mercedes Benz (for instance) are taken by youngsters. Perhaps the usual targets, that is Fords, Vauxhalls and Leylands, confer anonymity whilst providing the required speed and acceleration whereas, at the other end of the scale, perfectly serviceable low prestige makes such as Skoda and Lada are rarely considered acceptable. (See Interview 3, question 8). This was amply demonstrated in an interview conducted with Wayne, an experienced and very status conscious sixteen year old.

When he was asked to describe which models he took and why, Wayne dismissed the aforementioned Skodas as 'crap'; he knew nothing about them and obviously did not want to. He said that to take or even drive them would only result in "piss taking" from his mates. On the other hand, he considered the likes of Rolls Royce and BMW to be out of his league; he regarded them as 'old men's motors' and felt that to be caught in such cars would invite stiffer penalties. To quote him, "They'd throw the fucking Keys away if you bent a Roller." He therefore restricted his attentions to a fairly narrow band of what he considered to be acceptable cars relative to his social aspirations. He did, however, prefer Turbo or GTi versions of his chosen models paying particular attention to the year and the overall general appearance of the

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vehicle, another consideration being the quality and accessibility of the stereo equipment which he invariably stole if time and circumstances permitted him to do so.

CHAPTER FOUR

TWOCKING AND JOYRIDING: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE.

In order to emphasise the diversity and often contradictory nature of current thinking on juvenile delinquency, it is my intention to view the social phenomena of twocking and joyriding, as one aspect of juvenile delinquency, in the context of a number of contemporary theoretical models.

Within the scope of what is essentially a practical project, the remit is not to determine if any particular model does or does not provide an explanation or, indeed attempt to provide an alternative theory, but to demonstrate how useful these and various other perspectives are as a means of making sense of the activities of joyriders and as a way of addressing the very real problems associated with delinquent behaviour in relation to motor vehicle related crime.

From a structuralist standpoint, lower working class youth recognise and adhere to the aspirations of mainstream culture but due largely to educational failure and the resulting unemployment, or at best 'dead end' jobs and Youth Training Schemes which according to Kilpatrick (1988), are "viewed with cynicism as a low paid interlude in a life of unemployment", they have little opportunity to attain them. Such fatalistic views are shared by those of pre-school leaving age too. Many youngsters are

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already resigned to their future at the bottom of the social structure with every avenue to success seemingly blocked. Being both frustrated and dissatisfied with their low status in society they resolve their situation by achieving the success goals of mainstream culture by means of a more available set of norms and values.

Merton (1933) adopts the standard functionalist position of value consensus and states that all members of society share similar values but are placed in different positions in the social structure and therefore do not possess the same culturally institutionalised means of realising the shared values, thereby creating a situation which can lead to deviance.

Merton believes that anomie results when there is a disjunction between the valued cultural goals of society and the legitimate means of attaining those goals, such as work or education. Members of society share the major values of mainstream culture, particularly that of success which is mainly measured in terms of wealth and material possessions. Merton further argues that, because of low educational achievement or employment which provides little opportunity for advancement, many 'innovate' by selecting a deviant route to success - a route which promises greater rewards than more legitimate means.

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In this way, twotocking and joyriding may be explained as a form of innovation by the youngsters concerned by providing access, albeit temporarily, to a prized and valued possession, as well as a major and socially accepted symbol of success - the motor car. For Merton, those who innovate have been 'imperfectly socialised so that they abandon institutional means while retaining success aspirations'.

The car is a powerful symbol and its media image may have fostered in certain adolescents the expectation that they will have a car at their disposal as soon as legally possible. When the unreality of this expectation becomes apparent, those who maintain the goal then seek alternative means of realising it, in the form of taking without the owner's consent.

In 'Delinquent Boys' (1956), Cohen adds the subcultural dimension. In his work he analysed the characteristics of the delinquent subculture from which he considers so many juvenile and young adult offenders against property emerge, a subculture which, for him, consists in many respects of a denial of the attitude to status which characterises the middle class, or the 'respectable' working class which is seeking to achieve middle class status.

Cohen considers delinquency to be a consequence of a delinquent subculture which is a reaction to failure to

attain status. He believes that working class boys hold the success goals of the mainstream culture, but because of educational failure and its consequent low paid and menial employment they hold little chance or opportunity of attaining them. This failure can be explained by their position in the social structure.

Cohen supports the view that 'cultural deprivation', explains the lack of educational success of the lower working class. Consequently, many lower working class boys suffer 'status frustration' which they resolve, not by merely rejecting mainstream ways of achieving status but by reversing them. To quote Cohen,

'The delinquent subculture takes its norms from the the larger culture but turns them upside down'.

Thus considerable value is placed on activities which are condemned by wider society; one such activity is taking a vehicle without the owner's consent.

According to Cohen's theory, it is the 'inverting' that is the motive and not the intrinsic pleasure of twocking. It is his belief that throughout the delinquent subculture there is a kind of 'malice apparent', an enjoyment of the discomfort for others, a delight in the defiance of taboos, yet the delinquent subculture is much more than a mere act of defiance or a reaction to a society which has apparently denied success and opportunity. It also provides positive rewards.

Those who perform successfully in terms of the values of the subculture gain peer group recognition and prestige, thus twocking and Joyriding becomes a valued activity which attaches glory, prowess and profound satisfaction. In this way Cohen also provides an explanation for acts of delinquent behaviour which seemingly defies any real level of financial motivation.

In their work 'Delinquency and Opportunity', Cloward and Ohlin (1960) expand, develop and combine many of Cohen and Mertons respective theories and thereby provide an explanation for various forms of delinquency.

By adding the notion of the illegitimate opportunity structure to Merton's 'value concensus' and by placing Cohen's view in a broader context, Cloward and Ohlin present what is considered to be one of the most sophisticated analyses of lower class delinquency from a structural and subcultural standpoint.

Whilst generally accepting Merton's view of working class criminal deviance, Cloward and Ohlin contend that he has failed to provide an explanation for the differing forms it takes. For example, why do some delinquent gangs appear to to be preoccupied with violence and vandalism whilst others seemingly concentrate on theft? Indeed, adopting their point of view may well lead one to enquire as to why some youngsters joyride motor vehicles in preference to innumerable other types of delinquent acts.

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For Cloward and Ohlin, Merton, in his 'legitimate opportunity structure', has merely addressed half of the situation; he has failed to account for the 'illegitimate opportunity structure'. Thus, as opportunity to be successful by legitimate means varies, so opportunities for success by illegitimate means does. Having less opportunity to succeed by legitimate means there is greater pressure brought to bear on members of the working class to deviate.

There is a disparity between what lower class youth are led to want and what is actually available to them. Consequently they react by adopting illegitimate ways of attaining the same goal of economic affluence.

It is by examining access and opportunity for entry into illegitimate opportunity structures that Cloward and Ohlin provide an explanation for different forms of deviance. They identify and distinguish between three different responses to this situation which they refer to as the 'criminal subculture', the 'conflict subculture' and the 'retreatist subculture'. The development by young people of any one of these responses depends entirely on their access to, and performance in terms of, the illegitimate opportunity structure.

Criminal subcultures have a tendency to emerge in those areas where there is a ready established pattern of organised adult crime thereby creating a 'learning

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environment' for the young - an environment where they are exposed to criminal skills, deviant values and presented with criminal role-models. For Cloward and Ohlin, those who perform successfully in terms of these deviant values have access to the illegitimate opportunity structure and therefore have the opportunity to rise in the professional criminal hierarchy.

In the main, criminal subcultures are concerned with 'utilitarian crime', that is those which generate financial rewards, whereas conflict subcultures tend to evolve in those areas which fail to provide a learning environment and where adolescents are offered little chance of access to illegitimate opportunity structures. In such areas there is little organised adult crime with which to provide an 'apprenticeship' for potential young offenders thereby denying them the chance to climb the illegitimate ladder to success. According to Cloward and Ohlin such areas usually show a high turnover of population and a lack of social cohesiveness and unity thus preventing the development of a stable criminal subculture and subsequent access to both legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures. The response to this situation often manifests in gang violence which serves both as a release for anger and frustration and as a means of obtaining status and prestige in terms of the subcultural values.

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Finally, Cloward and Ohlin analyse Merton's retreatist response in terms of legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures. They argue that certain lower class adolescents are 'double failures' because they have failed to achieve success by both legitimate and illegitimate means and, as such, form retreatist subcultures mainly organised around the illegal use of drugs.

When applying the Cloward and Ohlin theoretical model, based on their belief that lower working class boys form delinquent subcultures in response to external problems of social injustice, it becomes difficult to categorise joyriders.

Research has demonstrated that very rarely do they take cars primarily for financial gain thus negating the 'criminal subculture' response nor do they necessarily live or indeed 'practise their skills' in areas given to high population transiency or lack of social cohesiveness. However, it is perhaps the 'conflict subculture' response which comes closest to providing an explanation for joyriding; rather than anger and frustration finding expression in violence, gang warfare and defence of 'turf', it is given vent in the illegal taking of motor vehicles and all its attendant risks and excitement; yet this is open to considerable conjecture and begs the question - Is joyriding really an expression of anger and

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frustration or merely a form of conventional fun seeking? In which case Cloward and Ohlin would fail to provide a satisfactory explanation for the activities of joyriders.

In his work, *A Glasgow Gang Observed*, Patrick (1973), states that, unfortunately for Cloward and Ohlin's elaborate typology, extensive empirical research carried out in Chicago by Short and Strodtbeck in 1973 has found great difficulty in locating full blown criminal gangs or drug-using groups of the Cloward and Ohlin type, a finding which casts doubt on the generality of these phenomena, if not on their existence. According to Patrick, other researchers in London (Downes, 1966), in Paris (Vaz, 1962 and Monod, 1967), and in Cordoba, Argentina (de Fleur, 1967), have likewise experienced similar difficulties in verifying the existence of the three distinct forms of subculture.

Unlike Cohen, Merton, and Cloward and Ohlin, Walter B. Miller (1962) sees delinquency simply resulting from lower class subculture and argues that 'following cultural practices, which comprise essential elements of the total life pattern of lower class culture, automatically violates certain legal norms'. He sees a lower class 'distinctive cultural system' which includes a number of 'focal concerns' or major areas of interest and involvement. Among these focal concerns are 'toughness', 'smartness' and 'excitement'.

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Toughness involves a concern for masculinity and finds expression in the rejection of weakness and timidity at the risk of physical threat. Although Miller uses the term 'physical threat' in the context of actual physical force and violence, it may be argued that it could equally be applied to joyriders as it manifests, not in fighting prowess, but in the need to prove masculinity through twocking and driving skill, whether real or perceived, often in the face of extreme physical danger.

Smartness refers to the ability to outwit or outsmart another. This is often demonstrated by joyriders, and is indeed occasionally contrived by them, as they intentionally set out to instigate a chase by the police. Joyriders who outsmart or outwit the police are afforded considerable credence and status by their peers. Equally, it is as important for joyriders to be seen to outsmart each other in terms of the ability and degrees of sophistication used to twoc and drive motor cars. The more proficient, adept and skilful a joyrider becomes, the higher will be the prestige and credibility afforded him by his peers.

Excitement alludes to the quest for thrills, for emotional stimulus. For the adolescent, twocking and joyriding holds a considerably high element of excitement and thrills. The entire process is regarded by them as an unpredictable adventure.

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For adolescents, two factors emphasize and exaggerate the focal concerns of lower class subculture: firstly, their tendency to associate with a peer group which demands close conformity to group norms and, secondly, the concern of young people with prestige and status which is, in the main, achieved in terms of those norms.

Miller believes delinquency simply to be the exaggerated acting out of the focal concerns of lower class subculture resulting from socialisation into a long established subculture with its own distinctive traditions and an inherent integrity originating from and, partly sustained by, society's need for a pool of low-skilled labour. Low skilled workers require the ability to endure boring, repetitive and routine activity and to be able to tolerate recurrent and frequent unemployment.

Lower class subculture facilitates the ability to endure this situation; its focal concerns provide satisfaction and stimulation external to the workplace and so helps to come to terms with the dissatisfaction associated with menial and low grade work or unemployment. The emphasis on excitement compensates for the resulting boredom.

Delinquency causation has been seen by other sociologists as pre-eminently a process whereby the individual becomes associated with a gang which devotes some or all of its time to planning, committing or celebrating delinquencies and which has elaborated a set of lifeways - a subculture

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- which encourages and justifies behaviour defined as delinquent by the larger society.

For instance, at the level of the individual, Thrasher (1927) assumes a set of basic needs common to all children - security, response, recognition and new experiences.

Gang boys and boys in gang areas are, in this sense, no different from other boys. They merely come to choose different ways of satisfying these needs. Thrasher's theory, although formulated to apply to gang delinquency in general, can readily be applied to joyriding groups in particular. What determines which boys form joyriding groups is the differential success of the agencies of socialisation and social control in channelling their needs into conventional paths. Thus, due to family problems or breakdown or school difficulties, coupled with the ever present temptations of the exciting, adventurous street as compared to the drab, dull, and unsatisfying family and school, some boys are more available for this aspect of street life than others.

At the level of the local adult community, it could be said that social structure is permissive, attractive, facilitative and morally supportive of the joyriding group development process. It is permissive because control over children is weak, and attractive because many enjoyable activities are available, some, such as twoc,

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are illegal, but all can be enjoyed if the child manages to evade whatever conventional controls do exist.

The local environment is facilitative in a number of ways. There are potentially hundreds of vehicles at the mercy of joyriders and, unlike most items of personal property which are preserved behind fences and walls, they are constantly moved from one exposed location to another. In addition to the thrills associated with the actual taking and driving of the vehicles, their contents and components are readily available for stealing, for people to buy them, and for hiding in places without adult supervision.

To a degree, The environment is 'morally' supportive due to the high level of adult crime. There is a willingness of certain adults to buy stolen goods; even the parents of some boys have been known to receive property taken from towed cars.

Joyriders do not necessarily belong to established street 'gangs' in the accepted sense of the word; they are usually a loosely structured group of boys who share a common interest in motor cars and who team up with one common purpose in mind - to joyride. Their joyriding companions may not be members of their usual peer group although this is the exception rather than the rule. Such loosely knit, amorphous groups are described by Farrant (1965) as 'quasi groups'. Parallels can be drawn too, with Yablonsky's (1959) 'near group' concept.

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As a new group develops and consolidates and constituent members become aware of each others particular skills and abilities it becomes acknowledged, recognised and accepted within the network of similar groups.

An indeterminate number of such groups evolve in the crowded, exciting inner city streets and, inevitably, in a situation of high population density where resources are limited and social controls are weak they come into conflict with each other as they vie for territory and reputation.

Individual joyriders tend to build a reputation over time commensurate with their level of skill and daring. It does not take long for news of their exploits to permeate the street network. This may lead to one group attempting to 'recruit' high status members of another and thereby increase the level of inter-group conflict or at least lead to more daring, dangerous and spectacular exploits as they set out to convince a potential recruit of their particular group's superiority.

It has been argued that the proponents of the structural, ecological and the subcultural perspectives fail to take into account the essential individual strengths and weaknesses of the persons subject to these pressures, and the fact that there are degrees of deviancy in the most deviant of social groups.

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Matza and Sykes (1957), for instance, suggest that such theories present the deviant as being more destructive than he is in actuality and that they provide an overly deterministic perspective of the origins of deviance by implying that man has no latitude to choose or freedom to direct his actions. Thus, trapped by prevailing circumstances, the individual must automatically assume a deviant route.

In their work 'Techniques Of Neutralisation: A Theory Of Delinquency' (1957), David Matza and Gresham M. Sykes highlight the similarity between juvenile delinquency and acceptable adolescent behaviour. They reject Cohen's theory that juvenile delinquency is controlled by a delinquent subculture which is, in essence, in direct opposition to the norms and values of wider society. They do not consider delinquents as being totally committed to deviant values and argue that, because delinquents express a measure of remorse, guilt and shame relating to their criminal activities, they must be at least partially committed to the dominant social order.

According to Matza and Sykes, deviant behaviour is made possible, not because of an outright rejection of mainstream norms and values but by the application of a set of justifications, rationalisations and excuses. These 'techniques of neutralisation' make deviance acceptable to the offender by neutralising much of the

blame and disapproval associated with deviant acts. 'Techniques of neutralisation' include denial of responsibility for a deviant act. For instance, the delinquent may shift the emphasis of responsibility from himself by projecting the blame for his behaviour onto his parents, his peers or as a consequence of his social circumstances.

Joyriders often rationalise their actions by arguing that joyriding is 'harmless', is 'just a bit of fun' and that they merely 'borrowed the car'. Such denial of responsibility and harm are examples of techniques of neutralisation. The fact that the car 'borrowed' for the purpose of seeking 'just a bit of fun' may well be a prestige model valued in excess of £10,000, is irrelevant. Very often, blame is projected onto the victims themselves. Several of the youths interviewed have on occasion implied that "it was the owner's fault" because 'they'd left the window open' or the 'keys in the ignition' or 'parked their car in a dark, quiet street'. The majority of victim-facilitated incidents are justified in such a way.

It is Matza and Sykes' contention that the applied use of 'techniques of neutralisation' throws considerable doubt on established notions of deviant subcultures.

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If deviant subcultures do exist there would be no need to resort to techniques of neutralisation since there would be no guilt to neutralise.

The concept of a deviant subculture, rather than the less deterministic notion of a 'subculture of delinquency', implies that working class adolescents are wholly committed to and so organise their activities around the central values of delinquency, so that illegal juvenile delinquent behaviour is ubiquitous, persistent, collective and salient. However, most working class youths do not involve themselves regularly in criminal activity; of those who, do many give way to conformity and social convention in early adulthood. As observed by Kilpatrick (1988), joyriders are no exception.

Adolescents occasionally 'act out' delinquent roles as opposed to engaging themselves in a permanent violation of the norms and values of conventional society. They are predominantly occupied with mundane, non-deviant activities, merely drifting in and out of delinquency periodically and temporarily without embracing it as a 'way of life'.

According to Matza and Sykes, law breaking results from the fact that the male working class adolescent's leisure time is peer orientated and very much focussed on asserting masculine identity as a way of gaining group acceptance. Expectations are that they conform to the

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norms of the group as failure to do so would threaten their standing within it. Consequently, when a law breaking activity such as joyriding is suggested, each individual adds his support believing others to be in favour. For Matza, in his later work, 'Delinquency and Drift' (1964), this is little more than 'a comedy of errors' with each member misapprehending the motives of all the others. These 'shared misunderstandings' pass unchallenged because each adolescent wants to appear as 'one of the boys'. This was perhaps demonstrated in the incident referred to earlier involving the four youths joyriding in a 'twooked' Ford Escort when one of them later admitted to feeling frightened, not having enjoyed the experience and only having taken part because of peer group expectations.

Furthermore, various observers have noted that the juvenile delinquent frequently accords admiration and respect to law abiding persons and does not necessarily regard those who abide by the legal rules as, in their terms, 'immoral'. Conversely, the juvenile delinquent may exhibit resentment if illegal behaviour is imputed to 'significant others' in his immediate social environment. If, then, the delinquent does adhere to a set of values and norms which stand opposed to those of wider society why does he, in many instances, appear to recognise the moral validity of the dominant normative order?

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In twocking and joyriding there is to be found considerable similarity to the components of the code of Thorstein Veblens' (1934) 'Gentleman of leisure': the emphasis on daring and adventure, the rejection of the prosaic discipline of school or work, the taste for luxury and conspicuous consumption and the respect paid to masculinity through force or, in the case of the joyrider, driving prowess and risk taking. Each of these characteristics find a prototype in Veblens' depiction of a leisured elite. 'What is not familiar is the mode of expression of these values, namely, delinquency. The quality of the values is obscured by their context. When 'daring' turns out to be acts of daring by adolescents directed against adult figures of accepted authority, for example, we are apt to see only the flaunting of authority and not the courage that may be involved'.

Much of the foregoing discussion demonstrates how sociological theories of crime and delinquency in the positivist subcultural tradition have been the subject of considerable debate. In conclusion to this theoretical look at joyriding, I consider it necessary to turn the focus of attention to an approach which represents a significant and radical departure from traditional positivist explanations - the interactionist perspective.

One of the most influential statements on deviance from an interactionist perspective was made by Howard S. Becker (1963).

'Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders'.

From Becker's point of view, deviance is not a simple quality present in some kinds of behaviour and absent in others. It is not a quality that lies in the behaviour itself, but in the interaction between those who commit acts and those who respond to them. The deviant is simply one to whom the label 'deviant' has been successfully applied. In Becker's view, an act only becomes deviant when others perceive and define it as such. He illustrates his hypothesis with an example of fighting between young people. In a working class, low income area such behaviour may be regarded, particularly by the police or magistrates, as evidence of delinquency whereas, in a wealthy middle or upper class neighbourhood as merely evidence of youthful high spirits. Joyriding too, may be defined differently when committed by members of differing social classes. The behaviours are the same but the interpretation of them by the audience differ considerably. Similarly, those who commit the act may regard it in one way and those who witness it may define it in another. In this way certain adolescents regard joyriding as a 'harmless bit of fun', a 'frisk' or a

'laugh', whilst wider society sees it as a serious example of juvenile delinquency and wanton destruction.

If the agents of social control classify the youths as delinquents and they are subsequently convicted for breaking the law, they then become deviant because they have been labelled as such by those empowered to make the label stick. As Becker states,

'Deviance is not a quality that lies in behaviour itself, but in the interaction between the person who commits the act and those who respond to it'.

From this perspective deviance is generated by a process of interaction between the potential deviant and the agents of social control

Becker goes on to consider the possible effects and consequences of public labelling upon an individual. A label defines a person as a particular kind of individual; it is not neutral, it is an evaluation of that person, his 'master status' which, according to Becker, takes precedence over any other status held. In this sense the labels 'criminal', 'car thief' or 'joyrider' override his status of 'neighbour', 'friend', 'athlete' or perhaps even 'Boy Scout'. Others perceive and respond to him in accordance with the label and tend to assume he has the negative characteristics usually associated with such labels. This labelling process may ultimately lead to a

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self fulfilling prophecy whereby the deviant identification becomes the controlling factor.

Being publicly labelled as a deviant may result in an individuals' rejection from certain social groups. Regarded as a 'car thief', a 'joyrider', a 'delinquent' or a 'tearaway' he may be rejected by his family, ostracised by his neighbours and possibly lose his job which in turn may create a situation conducive to further deviance. According to Becker, the treatment of deviants denies them the ordinary means of carrying on the routines of everyday life open to most people and, as a result of this denial, the deviant must of necessity develop illegitimate routines. For Becker, the 'deviant career' is complete when the individual joins an 'organised deviant group' in which he experiences the company of others who share similar circumstances and who can provide the necessary support and understanding. Within the group a deviant subculture develops which often incorporates values and beliefs which serve to rationalise, support and justify deviant identities and activities. For example, organised joyriding groups provide the individual with a rationale for his deviant behaviour as well as facilitating the learning process by older and more experienced members in terms of ways of avoiding trouble with conventional society. Thus the young joyrider, socialised into the subculture, can learn various ways of avoiding arrest,

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driving techniques, twocking methods and advice relating to technical specifications of particular makes and models of motor vehicles.

Becker argues that, having joined an organised deviant group, the individual is more likely than ever to perceive himself as deviant and to act in accordance with this self concept. In this context the deviant identification tends to become the 'controlling one'. Becker further contends that the process is by no means inevitable, after all, joyriders do get jobs, 'go straight' and re-enter conventional society but, once labelled, 'societal reaction' to the deviant places pressure upon him to follow the route which leads to the organised deviant group.

In his explanation of deviance, Edwin M. Lemert (1966), in accord with Becker, highlights the importance of societal reaction but further elaborates on his theory to distinguish between what he refers to as 'primary' and 'secondary deviation'. Primary deviations are deviant acts before they become publicly labelled. In this way a joyrider is not a joyrider until such time as he has been caught, dealt with and, subsequently labelled as such. For Lemert, primary deviance comprises the widespread acts of deviant behaviour in which every member of society engages, but which in most cases do not lead to apprehension and public labelling.

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Lemert is not particularly interested in why individuals become involved in such activity mainly because he regards the study of origins and causes of such behaviour as of comparatively little value for two reasons.

Firstly, samples of deviants are unrepresentative insofar as they are based upon those who have already been labelled. From Lemert's perspective, it would make little sense to look into the background of convicted joyriders for the underlying causes of their deviance without making a comparative study of joyriders who have not been caught. Furthermore, a search for causes assumes a common thread running through deviant acts whereas, Lemert argues, primary deviance arises from a variety of motivations and circumstances. For instance, joyriding may be a search for 'kicks', the need for peer group acceptance, a desire for financial gain or simply for the enjoyment and thrill associated with risk taking or, indeed, any combination of these factors. Such variation of motivations from one individual to another defies any meaningful generalisation or any single all-embracing theory.

Secondly, primary deviance entails little implication for the individual's self-image.

'It is behaviour engaged in without being incorporated into one's identity, but rather is accommodated easily into a favourable conception of oneself. Such acts are merely troublesome adjuncts of normally conceived roles...with only marginal implications for the psychic structure of the individual' (Lemert, 1966).

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It is when social reaction in the form of public labelling arises that the situation becomes problematic because, according to Lemert, such processes may create numerous difficulties for the deviant thus forcing him into a career of 'secondary deviance', which is crucially distinct in evolving a deviant self-image. An ensuing spiralling sequence of interaction between the deviant and the community in the form of progressive deviance and penalties result, to the point that the deviant becomes confirmed in his deviant role and the process of 'deviance amplification' is set in motion.

Unlike many other approaches, Becker's and Lemert's respective analysis of deviance locate their origins within the interaction process between the potential deviant and the agents of social control and see the development and reinforcement of deviance resulting from the reaction of members of society to the individual who has been labelled as deviant. This could be seen to be particularly relevant to twotocking and joyriding because the consequences of formal processing such as disqualification or difficulty in obtaining insurance, are particularly effective in isolating the labelled offender from conventional forms of activity such as legitimate car ownership and driving.

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In the foregoing discussion I have briefly considered only a few of many contemporary theoretical models and perspectives relating to deviance and delinquency which may be applied as a way to explain the escalating social phenomenon of twocking and to make sense of the activities of joyriders. I do not claim that any single approach provides a comprehensive explanation, I do contend, however, that certain elements of each perspective, when conjoined, do provide a valuable aid toward an understanding of the situation.

There is little doubt that twocking and joyriding for certain youths is a source of 'fun' in the conventional sense of the word. According to Matza and Sykes, delinquent values are 'closely akin to those embodied in the leisure activities of the dominant society'. Thus, the emphasis on aggressive and often spectacular driving exploits, as a means of demonstrating toughness and masculinity as well as a search for adventure and excitement, are trends not at all dissimilar to those found in various leisure pursuits throughout wider society. The incident mentioned in chapter three involving the police chase, when the officers involved found the experience intensely satisfying to the point of exchanging exaggerated and self congratulatory accounts, may well serve to demonstrate the point.

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It could also be said that such behaviour is an example of youth setting out to meet and address the fundamental needs of security, response, recognition and new experiences which are considered by Thrasher (1927) as being common to all children.

From a subcultural perspective joyriding may be explained as little more than an example of certain juveniles over conforming to the adult lower class culture particularly with regard to the focal concerns which are identified by Miller as 'toughness', 'smartness' and 'excitement', and perhaps suffering 'status frustration' as well as being denied legitimate access to motor cars; many youths, who recognise and adhere to the aspirations of mainstream culture but have little opportunity to attain them, find toughness, smartness and excitement in the rejection of mainstream success goals, thus replacing them with their own set of norms and values by which they can achieve success and prestige. In this way joyriding becomes a valued activity which attaches glory, prowess and profound satisfaction.

The interactionist 'labelling' theory may well provide an explanation as to why Joyriding is predominantly an 'organised deviant group' activity with its own peculiar identification mechanism in the form of a common jargon and recognised methods.

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A good example of the excluding consequences of being officially labelled and processed is when certain youths become legitimately eligible to own and drive a motor car only to find it almost impossible and, certainly cost-prohibitive, to obtain insurance cover despite the fact that they may constitute no less an insurance risk than those not previously convicted for joyriding. Such situations can only exacerbate the problem by leaving youngsters only deviant access to driving.

No matter which sociological banner one may raise or how polarised theories may appear, when applied to joyriding there are certain factors common to all. Whatever the reasons, influences or pressures underlying the joyriders' motives for taking vehicles without lawful authority, it is the resulting thrills, excitement, status, prestige and need for peer group acceptance and recognition which take priority and which are sought by the young people concerned.

In this there may be parallels to be drawn with Paul Tappan's (1949) belief that because an activity involves breaking the law it is precisely why it is infused with an air of excitement. The delinquent way of life is frequently a way of life permeated with adventurous exploits which are valued for the stimulation they provide. Thus the excitement gained from joyriding is not

merely an incidental by-product but more a major motivating force.

This search for excitement is not easily satisfied in legitimate outlets such as recognised activities. Logically then, any initiative intended to divert the delinquent away from the many dangers associated with joyriding must provide an equal, if not higher, level of stimulation, status, recognition and prestige.

The task, therefore, is to develop a programme which alleviates the problems and in turn facilitates a working relationship with the young offenders and which may or may not at some future date allow the worker to carry out background research into the social or other underlying causal factors.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MOTOR PROJECT: AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY.

"I was in prison four times and to me prison, although it's hard, it doesn't work. The first time I was released from prison I stole a car within two hours. I went in as just an ordinary joyrider and come out knowing a whole lot more than what I went in with."
(Joyrider. 10x10, BBC2 documentary.
6th.Oct.1989)

This supports the views of Peter West, the leader of the Ilderton Motor Project, a scheme devised to re-educate young joyriders. He stated in an earlier national press interview:

"A detention centre stops them but only while they are inside. Eight out of ten re-offend within a year of coming out. They go in as naive kids and come out as hardened thieves. They make contacts, learn how to steal more efficiently, and worst of all, how to make money from stealing cars". (Observer 6th. Nov. 1988).

To date, significant numbers of young offenders have been imprisoned each year for auto-crime: of the 23283 receptions of young offenders into custody in 1987, 1208 related to car theft (H.M.S.O. 1987 p.67). Car theft accounts for nearly 20% of the total of notifiable theft and represents 10% of all notifiable crime (H.M.S.O. 1987 p.28).

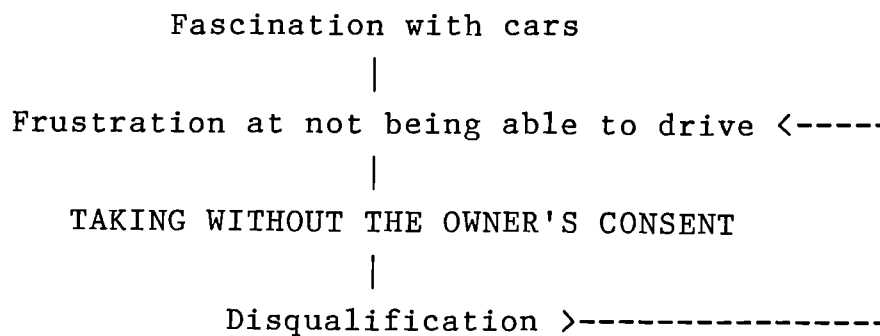
Various studies, to which official statistics add support, have shown that sentences imposed by the courts are generally ineffective, whether judged by their deterrent or rehabilitative standards.

During an interview with a young joyrider, I asked if a custodial sentence would act as a deterrent and was told in reply that such sentencing 'doesn't bother anybody' and that in fact it 'just makes it worse' (interview 1, question 45).

Sentencing begins with fines, penalty points and disqualifications with persisting offending inevitably leading to custodial sentences. Penalty points and disqualifications have little or no meaning to an offender who is not even old enough to qualify for a driving licence. Ironically, in relation to such offenders, periods of disqualification or the imposition of penalty points, rather than deter, more often than not, merely serve to exacerbate the problem. The periods of disqualification are far too long and otherwise meaningless to offenders whose generally hedonistic values are more attuned to living for the here and now. Most will soon re-offend thus leading to ever increasing periods of disqualification to such an extent that the prospect of being able to drive legitimately is pushed progressively further out of reach.

According to Wilkins (1960), once established this pattern of deviance is peculiarly resistant to change. It produces an 'amplification cycle'. This comprises a treadmill of frustration, offending, disqualification from driving by the courts, increased frustration and

consequent motivation to further offend by driving whilst disqualified. Each offence closes legitimate avenues of goal achievement, leading to the endless loop of behaviour and the events shown below.



At the age when most of these youths begin offending they are too young to fully understand the implications of tax, insurance and M.O.T. legislation. By the time they do become eligible to drive they will generally find that, because of the nature of their past involvement in motor vehicle related crime, insurance premiums are cost-prohibitive. One young interviewee, when presented with the facts, cynically replied, 'I probably won't be able to get it [insurance]. That'll just make me worse. If you can't get it, you can't get your own car'. (Interview 3, question 61). This in turn is likely to further exacerbate the situation and lead to increased offending.

Furthermore, such sentencing fails to consider the primary focus of the offender's interest, that is the motor car, and provides him with no means or provision of actually

facing up to the responsibilities associated with driving safely.

Therefore, programmes that attempt to deal with these youngsters on a personal basis, to divert their energies and rebuild their self-confidence, are crucial.

Very often it is the delinquent that is most alienated from the structures which exist to deal with young people. Joyriders rarely frequent youth clubs. According to Morse (1985), the traditional youth clubs' staple diet of ping-pong, Coca-Cola and five-a-side football will not cure the [joyriding] gang boy's 'thirst for thrills'. Bolder, innovative and more effective methods are needed to draw these young people back into their own communities.

Joyriding will not be eradicated overnight; it has become part of youth culture. More can be achieved by working with these young people than the punitive imposition of custodial sentences.

The Home Office Working Party (1988) recognised that much opportunist car theft is committed by young people, almost exclusively male, and that a common factor among car thieves is their self interest and apparent lack of concern for their victims. They identified a need for a multi-agency approach to the task of diverting young people away from car crime and recommended increased community involvement by local authorities, the police, schools, driving schools and the business sector in the

development of motor projects which allow young offenders and potential young offenders access to building, maintaining and repairing motor vehicles in a structured, supervised and safe environment. It was further suggested that such projects should also provide professional guidance and education in safe driving, social awareness and responsibility, with special emphasis on the issues of morality and concern for the victims of the offences.

A primary recommendation of the report was that, when considering sentencing disposals, the court system should make greater use of Probation and Supervision Orders which require attendance at such motor projects. The use of cautions too, should be in conjunction with a recommendation to attend a motor project.

As a response to motor vehicle related offences, such projects should offer an alternative to the spiral of traditional punishment, where progressively severer fines and bans are imposed which only makes the chance of driving legally an increasingly distant and more difficult objective for the recipient to achieve.

Recently, various motor projects have been established to combat, in a constructive way, the problems created by recalcitrant young offenders. Such schemes have been increasing in number as their benefits have become more widely recognised.

The term 'Motor Vehicle Project' covers a wide variety of activities. For example, the pioneering Ilderton Motor Project specialises in the building and racing of 'banger' cars and caters exclusively for young offenders referred for 'Intermediate Treatment' by the magistrates courts. By contrast, Walker Wheels, situated in the east end of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, concentrates mainly on the construction, maintenance and riding of motor cycles on a purpose designed track and is available to all young people of the area.

The Ilderton and Walker Wheels Motor Projects share the common characteristic of involving young people, legally and constructively, with motor vehicles in order to attempt to keep them out of trouble with the law.

Such projects enable young people to pursue their interests and, it is believed, provide them with a source of fulfillment which will encourage self-reliance and a sense of responsibility to society.

An 'Intermediate Treatment' approach.

According to Jean Craig (1983) of the Social Research Division, Stormont Policy and Planning Unit, the term 'Intermediate Treatment' describes various interventionist activities aimed at keeping young offenders out of custody by providing for their needs within their own community.

Protagonists of Intermediate Treatment are opposed to locking up delinquent children and young persons, partly for humanitarian reasons but largely because it would appear to have no deterrent effect and therefore does little to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

As can be seen from the statistical evidence, the failure of punitive measures to act as a deterrent is demonstrated by both the rate of recidivism and re-committal figures to young offender institutions, and may be explained by learning theory which states that punishment must be contingent to the undesirable behaviour if it is to succeed in stopping that behaviour. In addition to contingency, punishment must also be consistent. Any system that involves apprehending offenders and taking them to court before administering 'punishment/justice' cannot be both consistent and contingent, and frequently is neither. For example, the driver of a 'two-wheeled' motor car is nine times likelier not to be caught than to be caught and, if apprehended, will usually wait several weeks before appearing in court for sentence.

The rationale behind the Intermediate Treatment approach is that by diverting youngsters from criminal behaviour they will eventually realise the value to themselves in behaving in more socially acceptable ways. However, unless the delinquent can develop a moral basis for his own

behaviour, one that accepts the rights of others, intervention is unlikely to have long term effects.

The efficacy of motor vehicle projects

It is difficult at such an early stage in their development to accurately and objectively assess the true worth of motor projects. However, preliminary evidence would suggest that they have much to offer in terms of rehabilitating young joyriders where the more traditional punitive approaches have failed and it would seem that they also serve to make a positive contribution to the personal and social development of many of those who participate.

Four years after its inception, Pearce and Thornton (1980) wrote of the Ilderton Motor Project:

"What we do know is that having followed through for about two and a half years, out of forty three known and persistent car thieves who attended the project on a regular basis only three or four re-offended with motor vehicles."

Of course, one cannot use Pearce and Thornton's observations as a tool by which to make a genuine controlled comparison against the re-offending rate of young joyriders who have been subject to the more traditional punitive sentencing disposals. After all, one must take into consideration the recidivism rate of those young offenders who did not attend the project on a regular basis and must also acknowledge the fact that, of

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those who did attend regularly, many may have been 'good risks' and perhaps not have re-offended in any event.

Nevertheless, when Pearce and Thornton's findings are considered alongside many of the verbal statements and questionnaire responses of some young offenders encountered during this research then the implied, albeit questionable 9% or so re-offending rate of those who regularly attend motor projects, is infinitely more encouraging than the aforementioned 80% re-offending rate, within a year, of those released from custody.

Motor projects, however, are not without their critics and opponents. Understandably, by their very nature projects specifically set up to deal with joyriders raise considerable question and doubt.

For instance, two often-asked and valid questions are, 'Do motor projects really provide an equivalent substitute for twocking?' and, 'Don't they have the effect of bringing twockers together to mutually reinforce their commitment?'

I would conjecture that the answers to these questions lie in the quality and degree of commitment of the individual motor project's management teams. It is reasonable to assume that under normal circumstances joyriders are bound to influence each other more than they are influenced by adults simply because they care more about their standing with their peers, after all, this research

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has certainly shown peer group pressure to be one of the principal causal factors where joyriding is concerned and, as such, must be given a priority consideration.

The evidence from Pearce and Thorntons' study, however, tends to deny this argument. It was the regular attenders (and therefore those who interacted with each other most intensively) who had the particularly low recidivism rate. Consequently, the evidence suggests that even if motor projects do provide opportunities for mutual reinforcement of pro-twocking values, this clearly is not reflected in increased twocking activities.

There are certainly grounds to debate that, since those most intensively involved with the Ilderton Motor project had a high 'success' rate, it counters the 'mutually reinforcing into further deviance' argument.

As a result of my research, it is my contention that there are a number of causal factors to be considered which, when combined, contribute in no small way to the high incidence of twocking and joyriding.

First there is the boys' search for thrills and excitement, secondly, their need to feel important as well as their need for peer group recognition and acceptance and, thirdly, the impetus generated by their feelings of conventional social rejection and failure.

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All of these issues need to be addressed if motor vehicle projects are to be of value.

To begin with, a motor project must be capable of providing the young status conscious joyrider with an equivalent or higher degree of kudos, prestige and status than can be found 'on the streets'.

It is this principle which underlies many established and recognised initiatives and works on the premise that this objective can be achieved by means of intra and inter-group competition combined with an interesting and stimulating learning experience.

A youngster can generate a great deal of peer group credibility and status by demonstrating his driving ability and technical knowledge in a controlled environment, perhaps even more so than on the streets due to the fact that they are demonstrated in front of a wider and more interested audience.

This can be reinforced by means of an internalised, democratically formulated and agreed system of judicious penalties and sanctions imposed by the group on those members who re-offend whilst attending the project. For example, minor offences may be dealt with by the group imposing workshop cleaning duties, whereas more serious offences, particularly twocking whilst attending the project, could result in the offender being denied a place

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at a future competitive event or being banned from the project altogether.

In a recent study document 'Motor Projects: A plea for more research', commissioned by the Ilderton Motor Project and carried out by Robert Sharrock of The Institute of Psychiatry (1990), the writer states.

'I enquire about what kind of deliberations lie behind motor offending and what factors may be a deterrent. Prison is mentioned rarely, but one thought comes up with reassuring regularity: the loss of their place at the project. And it is not simply racing and doing up cars that is attractive to the lads: it is also the conviviality and mutual friendship.'

Although no one single approach has as yet been formulated and unanimously adopted, most existing motor projects share a common philosophy in terms of the aims, objectives and the methods used to divert youngsters away from the many dangers associated with joyriding. This philosophy will now be outlined.

The primary aim of a motor project is usually understood to be that of assisting a referred group of young people from the local community to reduce or cease their involvement in joyriding. This would go hand in hand with the promotion of the examination and development of positive behavioural and attitudinal change in the client group.

There should be a commitment on the part of project managers to promote the development of technical and

social skills among the clients, and to develop their use of interests or activities external to the project by encouraging and supporting the clients self-organising of social events and functions.

Care should be taken to ensure, wherever possible, that adequate support systems are available to help individual clients with any problems whether social, emotional or educational which may be identified during their involvement with the project. The use of individual counselling where appropriate should be readily embraced and the creation or use of existing, formal or informal support systems, undertaken.

The methods by which these aims could be achieved should come about through the provision of structured, supportive sessions in which the clients work on motor vehicles and have ready access to one or more competitive or stimulating driving, riding or karting activities.

A pleasant, disciplined but socially invigorating environment is considered to be most conducive to both the social and educational learning process. Motor project managers should provide and encourage the use of regular and formalised technology based education sessions.

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The overall plan must enhance the development of community understanding and support for the individuals and for the approach and methods of work undertaken by the project.

When these youths work on cars, go-karts and motor cycles they are not simply spending their time up to their elbows in oil and grease, but by sharing a common interest they begin to build positive relationships with each other, and perhaps for the first time begin to view adults in a constructive, helpful, caring role.

Working on motor vehicles also teaches patience and provides a basis for the willingness to learn. When youngsters stop regarding themselves as society's failures their criminal activities often abate.

A large majority of young auto-crime offenders are not involved in the "business end" of motor stealing and these are the ones for whom motor projects are designed. Nevertheless, in much the same way as prisons are cynically regarded by some as 'schools for crime', motor projects may be viewed as little more than 'schools for twockers'. This will no doubt remain the case until such time as motor projects have been in existence long enough to facilitate an in depth and detailed statistical analysis and an actual proof of their worth has been either recognised or refuted.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Few other crimes involve such a complicated set of group behaviours as joyriding and many descriptions of the phenomena recognise this fact. It has been described as a "cult" or a "craze", terms that aptly imply that there is much more to joyriding than the simple criminal act of taking a car without the owner's consent.

For the young people involved there is a whole pattern of behaviour that gives meaning to their activity. This includes their experience of driving twocked cars, confrontations with authority and perhaps, secondarily, their shared enjoyment of any financial rewards which may result.

Joyriders have a strong sense of identity. They regard themselves as 'tweekers' and are almost invariably proud of that fact. Despite being involved in other aspects of criminal activity many resent being regarded as 'villains'. Joyriders and 'villains' normally form distinct sub-groups although there may be some degree of overlap. The joyriders' sense of identity is reinforced by their treatment. The isolation within their own community tends to drive them toward the formation of exclusive groupings of their own kind. Their dealings with the judicial system too - the warnings, police cautions, court appearances and youth custody sentences - all serve to further reinforce their sense of common

identity. The more experienced joyriders will tend to know each other, if not personally then almost certainly by reputation.

This and other studies such as that carried out by McCullough et al. have shown that experience of twocking usually begins at an early age.

Cars having been dumped and possibly stripped or burnt out by joyriders become temporary playgrounds for children. Indeed twocked cars, which have merely been abandoned, may be commandeered by youngsters and driven around on grass or wasteground. This is conceivably how many youngsters, perhaps as young as the age of nine or ten, first become involved.

This type of activity provides considerably more excitement for some youngsters than merely 'hanging around the streets'. As a youngster's interest progressively develops it will be inflated by the dramatic and exotic accounts which permeate the joyriding community. At the same time the 'trade secrets' of the favoured techniques, methods and places, is passed on from twocker to twocker.

The peak ages for joyriding are the mid to late teens, by which stage the youngsters' misguided perception and self appraisal of their abilities as drivers are already grossly over estimated, a period when a twocked car will offer a refuge and a means of escape from the pressures,

limitations and boundaries of the parental home and, at a time when the thrill of driving may be supplemented by a desire for financial reward.

One of the most important factors influencing these youngsters is their socio-economic lifestyles. Those who are prosecuted and adjudged to be young offenders come most often from identifiable socially deprived urban areas and disproportionately from the more disadvantaged parts of such areas, with poor housing, where the welfare services and schools are under pressure. Disturbed family backgrounds and weak parental controls are also common features.

Many juvenile joyriders have long since commonly severed their ties with the formal educational system. Academic qualifications are scarce and long term future employment prospects are perceived as bleak. For the majority of these youngsters the only work experience they will be likely to gain after leaving school will be Youth Training Schemes which are cynically regarded as low paid interludes in an otherwise life of unemployment.

In the face of such an existence the thrills and possibilities of twocking can present an exciting option. Motor cars are an omnipresent, inescapable feature of contemporary life. As consumer products, they are attractive, available and furthermore, present little

problem for the experienced joyrider to obtain and for whom the chances of detection are extremely low.

The motor car probably represents the most highly glamourised of all consumer products. Overt commercialism in the form of expensive television advertising campaigns, as well as in newspapers, magazines and billboards are a constant reminder to society that the automobile is synonymous with social and financial success. For the young unemployed or otherwise unoccupied adolescent, the attraction of controlling such an seemingly unattainable status symbol is obvious.

No matter which sociological banner one may raise or how polarised theories may appear, when applied to joyriding there are certain factors common to all.

Peer group acceptance and status, prestige, the need to impress, to demonstrate masculinity, the search for excitement or, simply, conventional fun seeking, are the principal motivating factors for joyriding. The pleasurable surge of adrenalin usually sought legally through activities involving thrill and high personal risk is induced by these youngsters through twocking and joyriding. There is evidence to suggest that the degree of danger, drama and law-breaking, necessary to generate the desired level of excitement, increases with time and experience. When simply driving a twocked car no longer produces the desired effect, the demand for bigger and

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faster cars increases as does the dangerousness and technical complexity of stunts such as high-speed handbrake turns, skids and wheelspins. There is evidence to suggest that various activities associated with joyriding have a hierarchical order of importance and that the higher up their tariff an activity is placed, the greater the kudos assumed by and, given to, the perpetrator. The more 'skilled' a youth is, the higher his peer group status becomes. In order to increase peer group status some joyriders intentionally provoke chases with the police; although perhaps not as widespread as popular myth would suggest, this does happen and has been the cause of several fatal road accidents.

Although verbal accounts may well be embellished and exaggerated they nevertheless provide an insight into the psychology and behaviour of the juvenile joyrider for whom thrills are achieved with an almost total callousness and disregard for their victims or for the safety of themselves and others or for the damage that invariably does ensue as a result of their actions; in this respect their moral judgement is often weakly developed.

'Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle' accounts for nearly 20% of the total of notifiable theft and represents 10% of all notifiable crime. In excess of one third of the offences are committed by children in the 10 - 16 year age group. The driver of a 'twocked' motor car

is nine times likelier not to be caught than to be caught and, if apprehended, will usually wait several weeks before appearing in court for sentence.

However, research has shown that sentences imposed by the courts are generally ineffective, whether judged by their deterrent or rehabilitative standards.

Sentencing begins with fines, penalty points and disqualifications with persisting offending almost inevitably leading to custodial sentences. Research has demonstrated that penalty points and disqualifications have little or no effect on an offender who is not even old enough to qualify for a driving licence. In relation to such offenders, periods of disqualification or the imposition of penalty points, rather than deter, merely serve to exacerbate the problem. Periods of disqualification are too long and meaningless to juvenile joyriders. Many will re-offend thus leading to ever increasing periods of disqualification to such an extent that the prospect of being able to drive legitimately is pushed further out of reach.

It may also be argued that current sentencing policy fails to consider the primary focus of the offender's interest, that is the motor car, and provides him with no means or provision of actually facing up to the responsibilities associated with driving safely.

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In 1989 a Home Office Working Party identified the need for a multi-agency approach to the task of diverting young people away from car crime by the development of motor projects which allow young offenders and potential young offenders access to building, maintaining and repairing motor vehicles in a structured, supervised and safe environment. Primary recommendation of the report were that, when considering sentencing disposals, the court system should make greater use of Probation and Supervision Orders which require attendance at motor projects. The use of cautions too, should be in conjunction with a recommendation to attend such a motor project.

To date the Working Party recommendations have not been followed to any significant extent. However, evaluations of various existing independent projects have been undertaken and have shown them to be of particular value and models of successful practice which are capable of development and replication. Motor projects are not easy to manage, their aims are open to question and misunderstanding, not least by the local community, but available evidence would suggest they do offer a positive approach to working with young people engaged in motor vehicle related crime, which is certainly less destructive and more cost effective than time negatively spent in punitive young offender institutions.

As Lockhart (1990) points out, whilst incarceration may act as a temporary stay there is substantial anecdotal evidence that those who experience such punishment may return with increased intensity. Times spent in custodial establishments may also serve to increase sophistication and range of criminal behaviour.

Implications for policy making

Most of the official reports of the last two decades on young offenders have advocated the need to avoid custody wherever possible. This agreement, for example, runs through the 1968 White Paper, The Younger Report, the 1976 White Paper, the 1978 Green Paper and the Black Report. The reasons for this are well known. For instance, the Younger report states:

"Neither practical experience nor the results of research in recent years have established the superiority of custodial over non-custodial methods in their effect upon renewed offending. This is still open to question. Some aspects of custodial treatment may even contribute to recidivism These considerations point in the direction of trying to achieve change not by withdrawing a person from the community but by supervising and influencing him while he remains within it."

This point was also made by the former Minister of State at the Home Office, Mr. Leon Brittan M.P. speaking in Derby in November 1979:

"Our aim must be to teach the young offender to live freely in the community without indulging in unacceptable behaviour. And it is obvious from common sense, from experience and from research, that teaching anyone to come to terms with the community in which he lives must for the most part be better done in that community than in an artificial institutional setting providing supports which will be removed as soon as the youngster returns to his own home". (Leon Brittan M.P. Nov 1979).

It is generally appreciated that whatever system of criminal justice may be in operation it is unlikely to provide a solution to the problem of delinquency. As this and other studies have shown, offending by young people is closely connected with the physical environment and the nature of the community in which they grow up. This fact was recognised in the Government White Paper (Command 8045 October 1980), which went on to point out that it would be misleading if the impression were given that legislative changes proposed in the document purported to be a complete answer or even the most important instrument in dealing with the problems of delinquency. The response to such problems must lie initially with the family, helped as necessary by community support networks, both formal and informal, voluntary organisations, and the education system."

In 1981 The National Association For The Care and Resettlement Of Offenders (NACRO), in response to issues raised by the Government White Paper, made the point that the success of dealing with juvenile crime, [of which

motor vehicle related offences constitutes a large part], depends not only on a legislative framework but also on decisions taken at a local level.

Local authorities, the police and the probation service, all locally accountable in different ways, are required to work together to assess priorities, develop policies, and establish facilities designed to contain juvenile offenders. This approach, that is, designing and implementing an overall policy for dealing with juvenile offenders whilst only being able through legislation to control only one small part of that policy, has led to muddle, inconsistencies, an uneven spread of provision, varying practices on the part of police and local authorities and a number of unintended consequences.

NACRO believe that the courts, lacking confidence in the facilities available locally for the supervision of young offenders, have increasingly relied on nationally provided facilities and young offender institutions. The funding system, whereby local authorities meet the costs of alternatives to custody whereas central government meets the cost of custodial sentencing, may well be a disincentive to good practice.

If the government is serious in wishing to devise an effective policy for dealing with juvenile offenders which emphasises non-custodial disposals, it will not do simply

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to produce legislative proposals about the powers of the courts. At the same time it must establish a framework within which the services the courts will need can be provided effectively and reasonably consistently throughout the country.

Fortunately for the community the minor nature of most juvenile crime is marked by its transience; joyriding is no exception. Many children and young people contravene the law in some way as they grow up. Most never come into contact with the police or other agencies nor do they persist in crime. Likewise, only a minority amongst juveniles who are prosecuted persist beyond a first or second offence. The indications are that many juvenile offenders, detected and undetected, mature out of their delinquency. (Black Report).

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERVIEWS

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW No1 : TOMMY aged 16yrs 11mths.

1. How old were you when you first chorred a motor car?

TOMMY: I was about fourteen years of age.

2. Can you tell me how it was that you first became involved in twocking?

TOMMY: With friends Watching friends how to drive cars going round in cars and things.

3. These were chordy cars presumably, were they?

TOMMY: Yes.

4. Since you've been involved have you encouraged anybody else to do it? Have you had any younger kids in with you?

TOMMY: Well, all round about the same age as me.

5. Had they done it before?

TOMMY: not all of them, no.

6. So in a way you can say you've encouraged somebody else to twoc cars.

TOMMY: Yes.

7. Since you were fourteen, since the first car you ever chorred.....How many, approximately have you taken?

Interviews

TOMMY: About sixty, seventy, somewhere around there.

8. Have you ever chorred a car alone

TOMMY: No, wait a minute, yes, just once.

9. Is there any particular sort of car you prefer?

TOMMY: New ones mainly.

10. New ones.....What is it you go for?

TOMMY: Fast, speed, speed.

11. How do you rate yourself as a driver?

TOMMY: Fairly good.

12. Fairly good.....and what's the fastest you've ever attained. What's the maximum speed you've ever driven?

TOMMY: Ton forty five, ton fifty.

13. You're talking about one hundred and forty five to one hundred and fifty miles an hour, what was that in?

TOMMY: That was in a Sierra four by four.

14. Do you consider yourself to be as good as a police driver?

TOMMY: I'm as good as some of 'em.

15. When you go out to chore a car where do you go to look for them?

TOMMY: Car parks or Jesmond.

16. Why particularly car parks? Do you think they are easier to get into in car parks?

TOMMY: No easier than anywhere else.

17. When you come across a likely motor car is there anything you would look for that would deter you from chorrying it?

TOMMY: Just a chain and a lock on the steering.

18. What about a security alarm?

TOMMY: It doesn't bother 's, I'd turn them off.

19. But you don't always know where the switch is to turn them off.

TOMMY: It doesn't matter I don't need a switch.

20. So how do you do it?

TOMMY: Either, if they've got key holes turn them off at the key holes with a screwdriver or you can turn them off by the back indicators.

21. How do you do that?

TOMMY: Take a bulb out and short circuit the fuses.

22. Describe to me a typical twocking. How do you approach a car. What do you do to twoc it?

TOMMY: First of all, check to see if there's anybody about. If there's nobody about, you would walk up, check for alarms, chains or anything. If there's no chains sit at the back, unscrew the back lights - do the burglar alarm first. Do the doors with a pair of scissors or something so you've got the lock on the door, then either use keys or rip the plastic off and snap the ignition switch.

23. What sort of keys do you use?

TOMMY: Black cappers.

24. Black cappers - Right, so you're in the car, what happens next?

TOMMY: I'd snap the ignition - Turn it on.

25. Snap the ignition?. What do you mean by snap the ignition?

TOMMY: With scaffolding tube or sometimes you put a big spanner on it.

26. When you go out do you go equipped to do this? Do you go with the intention of chorryng a car?

TOMMY: Sometimes, sometimes not. Sometimes I take tools with me, sometimes I don't.

27. Have there been instances when you've just walked past a car and thought I'm going to have that, and that's it?

TOMMY: Yes.

28. Why do you chore cars, is it to

Interviews

TOMMY: (interrupts) Sometimes for a frisk, just to drive 'em. Sometimes we chore the gabby to make some cash.

29. How do you explain where the gabby came from?

TOMMY: It doesn't make any difference to the blokes I sell 'em to but I'm saying fuck all more about that.

30. Do you chore cars to feel good, feel important?

TOMMY: I suppose so.

31. And to impress others, to impress your mates?

TOMMY: Yeah.

32. Does any of the friends you knock about - your immediate group of friends twoc cars.

TOMMY: Not all of them, no.

33. When you twoc a car, do you ever intentionally damage it?

TOMMY: If you mean crashing it ,no, never. Sometimes they get bumped a bit but not much.

34. Have you read the Highway Code?

TOMMY: No.

35. Does it surprise you to know that in a stolen car you have a two hundred times greater risk of an accident?

TOMMY: Aye.

Interviews

36. You're a fairly inexperienced driver in a strange motor car. Do you ever consider the possible consequences if you were to be involved in an accident?

TOMMY: Sometimes; it's happened to me before.

37. Right, so you've had an accident before, can you describe the cause of that?

TOMMY: I was in Jesmond one night, I was fiddling about with a car and a bus came over and I got panicky and I put my foot on the floor and ran him over.

38. Did you actually hit him?

TOMMY: Yes, but luckily for my sake he wasn't seriously hurt.

39. Have you twocked a car since then?

TOMMY: No.

40. Is this going to deter you from taking cars in the future?

TOMMY: Yes, I think it will.

41. Presumably you got caught.

TOMMY: Yes, yes.

42. Have you ever been caught for twocking in the past?

TOMMY: Yes, quite a few times

43. What happened at court?

Interviews

TOMMY: Well I got banned from driving, got penalty points on my licence and then conditional discharges.

44. Did conditional discharges and penalty points put you off? Did they act as any sort of deterrent?

TOMMY: No.

45. Can you think of any judicial penalty? Anything the courts can do that would deter you? For instance, if you were sent to Youth Custody, would that have an effect?

TOMMY: No, sentences doesn't bother anybody. It just makes it worse.

46. How does it make it worse?

TOMMY: 'Cos you're getting in with people who have been doing it a lot longer than you and them telling you like different ways of chorrying cars and different experiences they've had.

47. So in many ways it can be considered as something of an education rather than a punishment?

TOMMY: Yes.

48. What if there were projects set up in the area where you could go to a track to be involved in fixing motor cars and driving them round in a safe, controlled, structured sort of way - do you think that would be of any benefit?

TOMMY: Yes.

49. Do you think it would deter you from twocking cars for joyriding - for excitement?

TOMMY: Yes it would help a lot of young people like myself... You know that you don't have to go and nick a car. You can just go there.

50. We have certain provision in the North East. For instance 'Walker Wheels', but that's mainly motor bikes. Have you been down there?

TOMMY: Yes.

51. How did you find that?

TOMMY: I don't like motor bikes anyway so it means fuck all to me.

52. But you feel that a motor project would be valuable?

TOMMY: Well yes, 'cos there's one in Gateshead. That's run by Probation but I haven't actually spoken to anybody about that one, but when I was at I.T. they told us there's another one at Durham. So we'll see what happens at court this time and I'm willing to start and have a look at them.

53. You've been twocking cars now for two years. Do you still get the same buzz, the same level of excitement out of it as you did when you first started two years ago?

TOMMY: Yeah, it's better now 'cos I can drive properly and I know that if I get a chase I will be able to get away.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW No2 : MARK aged 15yrs 8mths.

1. Right Mark, I just want you to tell me, without exaggeration if you can, facts relating to twocking. You are now 15years and eight months old. How long have you been chorrying motor cars?

MARK: About three years.

2. About three years - so that makes you about eleven or twelve when you took your first car. Can you tell me why you began to chore cars?

MARK: Just curious, that was all, just to see what it was like and that. Other kids that I knew were doing it, so I tried it, that's all.

3. And you got hooked..... How many cars do you think you've taken since you took your first car?

MARK: About, more than a hundred I think.

4. Have you ever done it by yourself or has there always been someone with you?

MARK: I've only done it with other kids.

5. Usually how many kids are with you when you do it?

MARK: Normally about two.

6. Are they about the same age as you are?

MARK: No they're older than me, about seventeen and sixteen.

Interviews

7. When you go out, do you go out with the intention of chorryng a motor car or is it something that just happens.

MARK: **Sometimes I do but normally it just happens.**

8. What methods do you use to take a motor car? First of all, what sort of motor cars do you look for?

MARK: **Newish ones, fast ones.**

9. So speed's important?

MARK: **Yes, fastness.**

10. What is the fastest speed you have driven in a chordy car?

MARK: **About 110 miles an hour.**

11. What sort of car was that?

MARK: **A Montego.**

12. That couldn't be a standard Montego.

MARK: **No, it was a Turbo.**

13. Do you consider yourself to be a good driver?

MARK: **Not really, well alright I suppose.**

14. We'll come back to the subject of driving ability a little later on...but right now...when you see a car that you've decided to chore, how do you go about it?

MARK: Well, first I check out what the areas like and that, to see if there's people walking around, then we check to see if the cars got an alarm on, make sure nobody's there when you're going to do it.

First you'd break the side window then you walk away from the car. Then you come back in a couple of minutes time and see if anybody has noticed it and if they haven't you put your hand through and open the door.

15. What do you use to break the window?

MARK: It's easy, with a popper or a screwdriver.

16. Can you describe exactly what a 'popper' is?

MARK: Well, it's knocked out the back of a bicycle wheel, something like a cog. You take the spindle thing out of the wheel and like these little nut things fall out and you tie them with a piece of string.

17. Do your friends do this....Have the same sort of poppers?

MARK: Yes, just the same.

18. Then what happens?

MARK: Then you rip the casing off 'til you get to the ignition and you might get a slidie or a scaffie bar and start the ignition. Then put a screwdriver in and turn it, then take the handbrake off and freewheel down a hill or push it, then bump start it when you get to the bottom of the hill or something.

Interviews

19. Why do you push it then bump start it if you've already got the ignition switch? Can you not just then start it with a screwdriver?

MARK: Yes but it makes a noise in front of the door. Like if you get a car at 11 o'clock at night and you push it away from the door the owner's not going to report the car stolen 'til the next morning. He doesn't notice the cars gone and you haven't got a chance of the police pulling you.

20. What about other methods of twocking cars? Do you always take them from outside private houses or do you prefer other places?

MARK: Car parks and that, 'cos it's easier.

21. Right, there are some cars you can't scaffie. What do you do in that case?

MARK: You pull them with an ignition puller.

22. An ignition puller is a slide hammer presumably. What other methods do you use?

MARK: Sometimes I can jiggle them with car keys and that - some oldish cars, get them started with keys.

23. Which is your favourite method?

MARK: Scaffie them. It's quicker and easier.

24. You've mentioned Montegos. Is there any other particular model that you look for?

MARK: Orions and that. Golfs.

Interviews

25. And you take them for convenience and speed?

MARK: Yes.

26. Do you look for things like colour or style?

MARK: No, not really.

27. Do you ever go for the up-market stuff like Mercedes, BMWs, Jags, that sort of thing?

MARK: Not Jags, we've had a couple of BMWs and that. I've never actually taken one. It was some other kids that took them. I was just there like popping the window for them...Them done the rest.

28. Did you get in the cars?

MARK: Aye, and I drove them

29. Now then, when you've twocked a motor car and you've been joyriding with your friends and there's something of value in the car, what do you do about that?

MARK: Take it. Golf clubs or a leather jacket. Take them and sell them.

30. Is that ever your main reason for breaking into a car in the first place?

MARK: No.

31. Anything you steal then is purely bonus. If you twoc a motor car and there's anything of value you just nick whatever you find?

MARK: Yes.

32. Once you've chorrred a car, having already caused some damage by scaffying the ignition lock and breaking the window, do you, in the course of driving the vehicle, ever damage it in any other way; for example, by racing around lampposts and other obstacles?

MARK: No, nowt like that.

33. So then presumably, you try to get it back to the owner with the least amount of damage as possible?

MARK: Yes.

34. You've mentioned that you don't consider yourself to be a particularly good driver, and yet you've stated that you've reached speeds as high as 110 miles per hour. Have you ever stopped to think about the consequences?

MARK: Sometimes.

35. What worries you most?

MARK: Hitting somebody else, Hitting another car and causing an accident or something. Somebody innocent, walking along or something.

36. Does that bother you very much?

MARK: Yes.

37. Yet you continue to chore cars?

MARK: I can't help it. It's something I like doing.

Interviews

38. Do you ever worry about the consequences when somebody else is driving and you're sitting in as a passenger?

MARK: Aye.

39. Does it worry you more than when you're driving?

MARK: Aye, you feel unsafe when somebody else is driving. You get frightened when somebody else is driving fast and that. Even if you know they're a good driver, you feel safer if it's you behind the wheel.

40. Have any of your friends been involved in an accident?

MARK: Yes, five of my mates in an XR3 crashed into a bus shelter and had to get cut out. A couple of them got put on a life support machine.

41. How long ago was this?

MARK: About two years ago.

42. What do they do now? Are they still twocking?

MARK: Yes, well not all of them, I know that four of them are.

43. If you had been involved in that accident would you have stopped twocking?

MARK: I don't know really 'cos I've never had a bad crash like that before, so I wouldn't know until it happens.

44. Do you ever chore cars when you've been drinking.

MARK: Aye.

Interviews

45. That then increases the risk. Does that not bother you?

MARK: No, when I'm drinking I feel safer. I feel I can control it and that. I feel just double safe when I'm in the car. I make sure that I go at a certain speed - not daft or nowt.

46. Have you ever taken any sort of substance, other than alcohol, before driving a churdy car?

MARK: Aye, Tack

47. And when you're under the influence of Tack or alcohol you feel safer, even though it's a proven fact that you couldn't possibly be safer?

MARK: It's just the way it is, I've just got to feel - I feel safer.

48. When you've got a motor car do you go out to impress whoever's with you with handbrake turns and that sort of thing?

MARK: Yes, just to show them that you can drive and that - what you can do in a car, just to show off a bit.

49. Where does this normally happen?

MARK: In the countryside and that, like wasteland up the countryside.

50. How many times have you been picked up by the police for twocking cars?

MARK: Can't remember. I've never actually been caught red - handed, just like police have recognised us in cars and that and like they've come to my house and arrested me for it. Like somebody's grassed us or something and I get picked up for it.

51. How many times have you actually been to court for twoc?

MARK: Five or six times or something.

52. And yet you've chorred about a hundred cars?

MARK: Yes.

53. Do you think that police drivers are any good?

MARK: Aye.

54. Do you ever purposely go out to get a chase?

MARK: No, some of my mates do but I keep well away from them.

55. How do you feel when you see a police car?

MARK: Shit scared. It makes me nervous. I get frightened of it and I panic.

56. Does that affect your driving ability?

MARK: Sometimes it does. If he comes up behind me I panic and that. There's a higher risk of crashing the car 'cos I put my foot down and I take the corners too fast.

Interviews

57. If you thought the police were chasing you, would you abandon the car or would you try to lose them?

MARK: Try and lose them at first or go somewhere I know and jump out and run like fuck.

58. When you've been out in a car have you ever stripped it down, taken parts of it and rendered it useless?

MARK: Yes, if somebody asks us to steal a certain car, we go out and steal it then we take it to a garage and take the parts off it and he like comes and picks them up and we get the money for them.

59. That implies that you know there are people somewhere who would pay for chordy cars.

MARK: Yes, for wheels and that and interiors like XR3s.

60. Is it normally modern motor cars they want?

MARK: They want Sierras and Orions, XR3s, XR4s, things like that.

61. How many cars have you disposed of knowing that the owners are likely never to see them again?

MARK: It doesn't happen that often but we've done it a canny few times.

62. Who's idea is it ?

MARK: It's my friends really 'cos they say, well if we steal a car I know I can sell the wheels off it. First we take it for a spin then sell the wheels. That way, we have a frisk and get some money for it.

Interviews

63. Does it bother you knowing that the particular owner isn't going to see his car again?

MARK: Not a lot.

64. Does the fact that you consider the vehicle to be insured make any difference?

MARK: Never really thought about it, but sometimes I've done insurance jobs.

65. What do you mean. What's an insurance job?

MARK: Well it means the owner wants his car took and burned out so he can get the money for another car.

66. How many times has that happened?

MARK: Two times. It's not that often, just for people I know.

67. Are many of the lads that you knock about with actually into twocking cars?

MARK: There's a canny few of them.

68. What's more important to you when you chore a car, making money or the thrill of driving it?

MARK: Definitely the thrill of driving the car. I love driving cars. Owt to do with cars and that.

69. Have you ever twocked a motor car to use it for any other purpose than joyriding?

Interviews

MARK: Yes, just a couple of times, to do a shop....Like drive a car through a shop window and grab whatever's in the shop. But I've only done it just twice, 'cos I'm not really into doing things like that. I just like chorryng cars.

70. Have you ever specifically chorred a car to go somewhere in it? For instance, you wanted to get somewhere and the only way to do it was by taking a car?

MARK: Yes, a couple of months ago we went to a party and we got drunk and there was no buses so we just chorred a car and drove back to where I live, not to joyride, just for transport.

71. I assume that as a result of having been to court for twoc you've been banned from driving?

MARK: Yes.

72. That means from the day you become seventeen you are banned for however long the magistrates imposed the sentence?

MARK: Yes, six months.

73. Does that bother you or are you going to keep on having penalties imposed whereby it's going to be a long time after your seventeen before you can drive legally?

MARK: It doesn't bother me now but when I'm older it will because I want my own car one day.

74. You're probably well aware of the fact that if you get caught too many times you're going to be facing a

custodial sentence - a stretch in Y.C. - does the prospect of that not deter you?

MARK: Not at the time it doesn't, but when I actually get caught I start worrying.

75. Do your friends worry about it?

MARK: No, at the time we think it's good. When we finally get caught for it then we don't think it's such a laugh after all. That's just the way it is.

76. Do you promise yourself that you will never do it again?

MARK: Yes, but everybody says that and still do it.

77. Is twocking cars important to you?

MARK: Yes, it's something I like doing, driving and that. It's like showing off and that.

78. O.K. then, in the area we have Walker Wheels, where you can go and spend a lot of time working on motor cars or riding around on motor cycle tracks, wouldn't you find that a much healthier pastime than chorrying motor cars?

MARK: Yes, but it's when my mates - like everybody I knock around with that chore cars, call me 'bottle' or 'chicken' or something like that and they convince me it will be a laugh, and I just give into them - that's the kind of person I am. I've been to Walker Wheels before, it's fucking double cush.

Interviews

79. What you seem to be implying is that your friends are a major influence. Are you saying that you wouldn't two cars if your friends didn't lead you into doing it?

MARK: I probably wouldn't, no.

80. So can I take it that a lot of your offences are as a result of your mates persuading you to become involved?

MARK: Yes.

81. Have you ever suggested the idea of chorryng a car?

MARK: Just a couple of times.

OK then Mark, thanks very much for your time and help.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW No.3 : Neil aged 16yrs. 4mths.

1. You're not yet seventeen. How many cars do you think you've taken unlawfully since your first one?

NEIL: About, I don't know, I've lost count, stacks.

2. How old were you the first time?

NEIL: Thirteen, but it wasn't a car it was a council wagon.

3. Presumably you prefer cars?

NEIL: Yes.

4. Is there any particular make of car you look for?

NEIL: Austin Montegos, 'cos I like them.

5. Why do you particularly like Austin Montegos?

NEIL: I don't know. It's one of the easiest ones to get.

6. So they are especially easy to chore. What about Fords for instance?

NEIL: They're hard to start.

7. Would you consider stealing an older motor car?

NEIL: No, I like new ones better.

8. Is there any make of car you wouldn't chore?

NEIL: Skoda, Yugo, Lada or one of them fucking three wheeled things.

9. Describe how you would set about twocking a motor car.

NEIL: Get a screwdriver, bend it so it's like an 'L' shape, stick it in the door lock then force the lock open. Open the door, rip the plastic off around the ignition lock, put a bit of scaffolding over it and snap it off.

10. Can you describe a typical twocking? What it is you look for and how you do set about doing it?

NEIL: There's normally about three of us go out. One to stand near the car and one to watch the windows on the other side of the road.

11. What about alarms and that sort of thing.

NEIL: Just fuse them or stick your hand up underneath the engine and rip out the alarm thing.

12. How do you know which bit to rip out?

NEIL: I don't know; my mate does that. Or you just get a screwdriver, break the back indicator, take the bulb out and put the screwdriver in, it fuses the alarm - that's the ones with the red sensors. Sometimes we keep on setting the alarm off on purpose then hide and keep on until the bloke thinks its faulty and switches it off.

13. Are you saying that there is nothing that would stop you?

NEIL: Apart from the thing they put on between the gearstick and handbrake. Them other things, 'crooklocks'

or something are a piece of piss. You just bend the steering wheel down and pull them off.

14. Right, your friends keep a look out, then what happens?

NEIL: Open the door with a screwdriver, get in, rip the plastic off around the ignition then scaffie it or sometimes we use a slide hammer.

15. What do you use the slide hammer for?

NEIL: Ripping the ignition out, it makes less mess than a scaffie, you don't have to rip the plastic off. It's meant for panel beating. Just screw it into the ignition, it's got a weight on it. Just pull it hard and it knocks the ignition out.

16. Does that work every time?

NEIL: On some cars it does.

17. What about using keys, black cappers?

NEIL: No, they hardly ever work on new cars

18. Do you do any jiggling at all?

NEIL: No.

19. You always force off the ignition barrel?

NEIL: Yes

20. Where do you normally go to look for cars?

NEIL: Jesmond or Whitley Bay.

21. What sort of surroundings, is it car parks or.....?

NEIL: (Interrupts) Well, there are a lot of hotels around Jesmond and there are quiet car parks around the back. It's quite easy 'cos there's hardly anybody about late at night.

22. Have you ever taken a car from outside a house?

NEIL: A couple.

23. What do you do? Do you start it up there and then?

NEIL: No, I push it out the driveway and then push it along the street a bit and then start it - probably bump it.

24. Why do you chore cars? What do you get out of it?

NEIL: Seems like a laugh at the time. You get to drive - rally them around, it's fuckin' exy.

25. Describe some of the things you do in chordy cars - what you get up to.

NEIL: Joyride, go to Otterburn and places like that somewhere in the country. Race other cars, do handrake turns, flying off jumps and that sort of thing.

26. Have you ever been alone when you've chorred a car?

NEIL: Never, there's usually two or three of us.

Interviews

27. Do you ever take them for any reason other than for a laugh?

NEIL: Sometimes, if somebody wants bits off a one.

28. Out of all the vehicles you've taken how many have actually been stripped down for parts?

NEIL: About two.

29. Were they as a result of someone asking you to get those particular models?

NEIL: Yes.

30. Is there a big market for parts?

NEIL: There is but I don't really know anybody doing it.

31. Do you consider yourself to be a good driver?

NEIL: I'm getting better, I'm good but not excellent if you know what I mean.

32. Do you consider police drivers to be any good?

NEIL: Some are OK, some are wankers.

33. Do you ever go out with the intention of instigating a chase with the police?

NEIL: No.

34. Do you think that keeping a look out for the police affects your driving?

Interviews

NEIL: No, never think about it except when I see them. I just act normally, look forward, don't look at them all the time, don't stare at them.

35. What is the fastest you have driven?

NEIL: One hundred and fifteen in an Escort 1600 Ghia.

36. Here you are, a lad not yet seventeen with relatively little experience behind the wheel of a strange, very fast motor car doing a hundred and fifteen. How did you feel sitting behind the wheel at that speed?

NEIL: Fuckin' cush, I wasn't scared or nowt.

37. Have you ever considered the consequences of an accident?

NEIL: I've had one. Me and my mate pinched this Ford Cortina over Chopwell. It was the first car I ever pinched and I thought driving was just putting your foot flat on the floor and I went flying up this bank and into a wall. I burst all my mouth open.

38. That obviously didn't deter you very much.

NEIL: For about a year it did.

39. Then how did you become involved a second time? What prompted you to go out and chore a motor car?

NEIL: Just a few people were doing it.

40. Your friends?

NEIL: Yes, my mates.

Interviews

41. If your friends weren't there do you think you would still twoc cars?

NEIL: **Might do, I just like doing it.**

42. When you're out in a car with your friends do you try to impress them with your driving?

NEIL: **Sometimes.**

43. Do you take turns to drive, does everyone have a go?

NEIL: **It depends if I can trust them or not. If they haven't been in a car before I won't get in.**

44. Have you read the Highway code?

NEIL: **Parts of it.**

45. Do you think you know all the road signs and procedures?

NEIL: **Yes.**

46. If there are any valuables in a car, say a camera for instance, do you leave them?

NEIL: **No, I take them.**

47. What about things like fitted radio cassette players?

NEIL: **If it's a good one I'll have it; if it's crap I don't bother.**

48. Is there a market for them, for good ones that is?

NEIL: **Aye.**

49. How much would you sell a stolen radio for?

NEIL: **If it's a good didgie, about twenty or thirty quid.**

50. And it doesn't matter that they cost anything from two to five hundred pounds or more to buy new?

NEIL: **Loads of people are going around selling them for tenners 'cos they're desperate for the money. I'd rather wait.**

51. Do you ever consider the feelings of the people the cars belong to? Does it ever occur to you that they've possibly saved up four, five, six thousand pounds or more, then you come along and take the car?

NEIL: **Never really think about it, I couldn't give a fuck really.**

52. Have you ever totally destroyed a car?

NEIL: **Once, we burned it 'cos we had done a shop in it and it had finger prints all over it.**

53. Was that car stolen with the intention of committing another crime?

NEIL: **Yes.**

54. So the cars are sometimes returned reasonably intact. Where do you leave them when you're finished with them?

NEIL: **Wherever I find another one, normally Jesmond.**

Interviews

55. You leave one car and chore another. How many cars do you do in a night?

NEIL: Normally just one. It's only this last six months it's getting worse.

56. Do you go out with the intention of chorryng cars or is it mainly a sudden impulsive decision?

NEIL: Normally we go out looking for them, except once when I'd been on the piss, but I crashed that.

57. Do you drive very often when you've been drinking?

NEIL: Not any more

58. How many times have you been to court for twoc?

NEIL: About four.

59. Does the prospect of court or a possible custodial sentence not put you off a bit?

NEIL: I don't think about it at the time. I keep thinking I'm going to get away with it.

60. Have you been given any penalty points at court?

NEIL: Quite a few.

61. Has it occurred to you that, come the time when you're eligible to hold a driving licence, you are not going to find it too easy to obtain insurance? Does that not put you off twocking cars?

CHAPTER EIGHT

QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaire administered to the study groups was purposely designed in such a way as to appear interesting and amusing as well as unauthoritarian and non-threatening to the respondents. Given the low educational attainment level of the majority of the group, it was, by necessity, simplistic in constructional format and presentation. The use of open ended questions was largely avoided; most were of the fixed choice or 'closed' type.

The questionnaire was intended both to generate new objective data and to measure the validity of the findings resulting from my own earlier observations and participation in group discussions. Hopefully, my presence and methods did not have a significant influence.

In association with The Northumbria Probation Service, a questionnaire similar in content but somewhat less elaborate in design was administered to approximately six hundred members of the Walker Wheels Motor Project. From this a smaller sample of two hundred was selected on the basis that each one was completed by a respondent below the age of seventeen with an admitted history of twoc.

The reasons for the second questionnaire were both to provide a control group comparison and a guide by which to measure the worth of an established motor project.

Questionnaires

Other than expressing some results as percentages, no attempt has been made to present the findings in a statistically significant way. The intention is to identify trends and give some insight into the reasons why crimes relating to the theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles are committed, to highlight some of the methods used to provide a means of assessing some of the attitudes of the young offenders involved.

From the findings it was proposed to determine if there were any perceived effects on behaviour and attitude directly attributable to the membership of, or association with, a motor vehicle project as typified by Walker Wheels.

Questionnaires

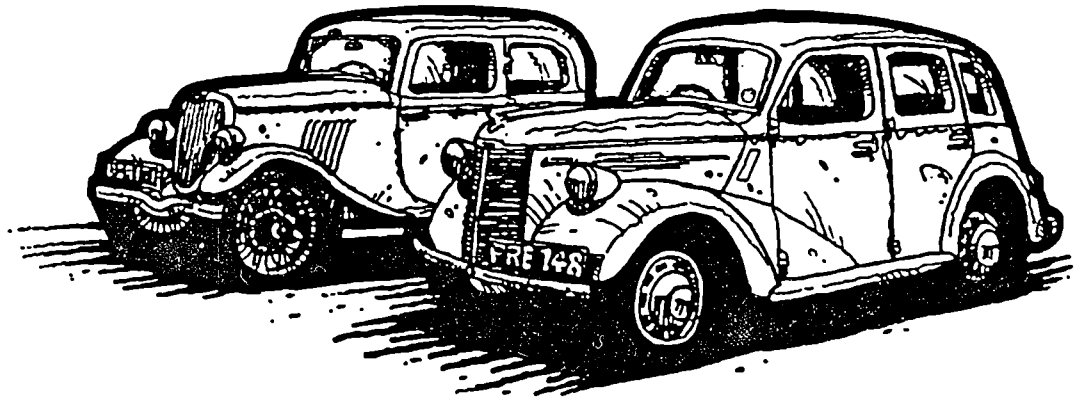
Please complete this questionnaire truthfully and as accurately as possible. **DO NOT** put your name anywhere in this book, the information will remain private and confidential and will be used **ONLY** for research.

Complete one page at a time: Start here.

Boy

Girl

Age: Years _____ Months _____



All respondents were male, this was an unintended consequence as it was initially planned to include girls in the research. However, the records revealed only one current female client with a motor vehicle related offence against her. She declined the offer to participate.

The ages of the respondents ranged between 13years 2months and 16 years 11 months, the average age of the group members being 15.9years.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 1. I know it is wrong to take someone else's car.

True

False

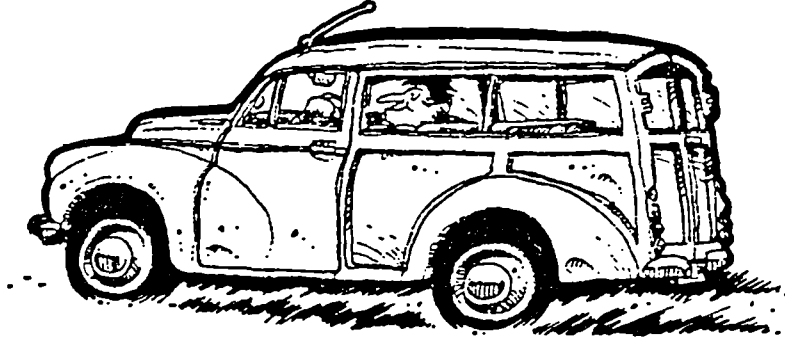


All of the thirty respondents acknowledged the fact that they knew it was wrong to take a vehicle without consent.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 2. How old were you when you first took and drove a motor car?

..... years old



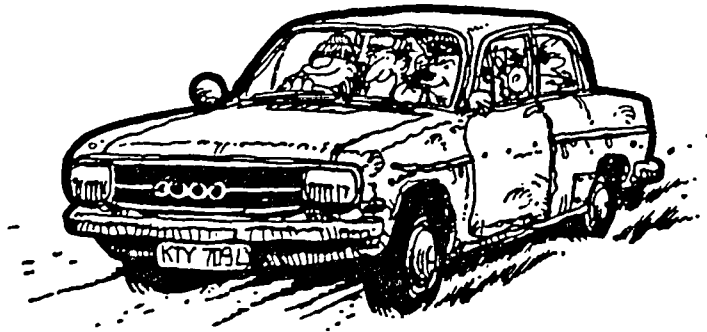
Answers ranged from 9 to 16 years with an average of 13.1 years.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 3. When you go out do you plan to twoc a car or does it just happen on the spur of the moment?

Planned

It just happens



Twenty one of the respondents claimed to pre-plan twoc as opposed to nine who took cars on impulse as and when the opportunity arose.

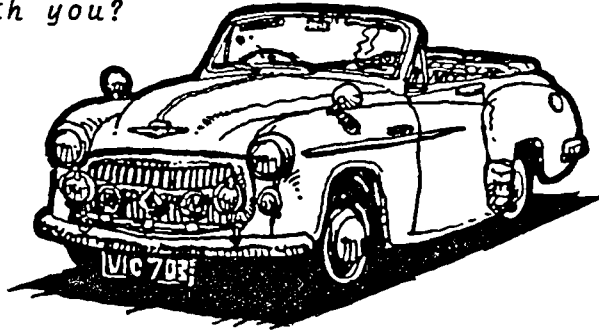
Questionnaires

QUESTION 4. If it is pre-planned do you 'go equipped' to twooc cars?

Yes

No

If yes, what do you take with you?

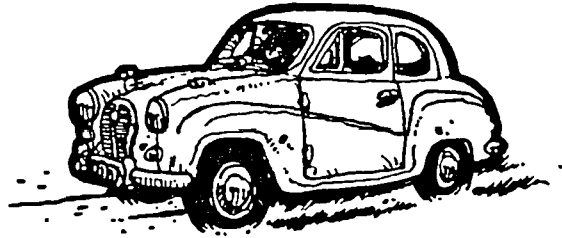


Nineteen of the twenty one respondents who pre-plan twooc go equipped for the purpose, scaffy bars, keys, poppers and screwdrivers being the favoured implements.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 5. Do you look for any particular make or model of motor cars to twoc?

If so, what are they and why?

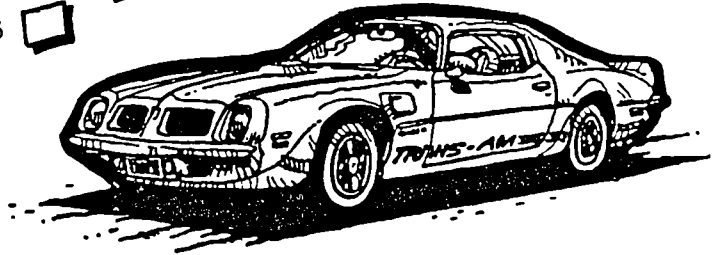


Twenty three of the thirty respondents cited Fords as their favoured motor car, particularly the Escort Mk.3 XR series. Leyland Maestros and Montegos also scored highly.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 6. From what kind of place do you find it easiest to take cars?

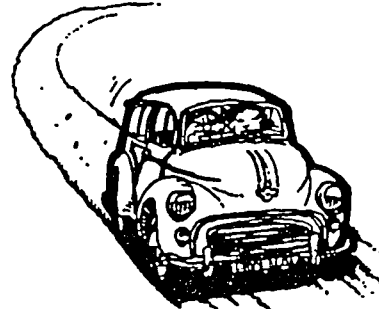
- From the kerbside
- From open car parks
- from multi-storey/underground car parks
- From private houses/driveways
- From motor trade premises



Open car parks, the kerbside and private driveways are the favoured locations from which to take motor vehicles. Sixteen of the respondents preferred open car parks although not necessarily public car parks. Hotel and public house car parks are also target areas for joyriders. Ten preferred the roadside and four private houses.

QUESTION 7. . What do you look for when twocking a car?

- Make
- Model
- Speed
- Looks
- Easy to open
- Anti-theft devices (e.g. burglar alarm etc.)
- Colour
- Age
- Size of engine



Tick as many as necessary, if there are any other reasons then write them down here.....

The make and model are the primary considerations. Speed too is a major factor together with ease of entry and absence of security devices.

Questionnaires

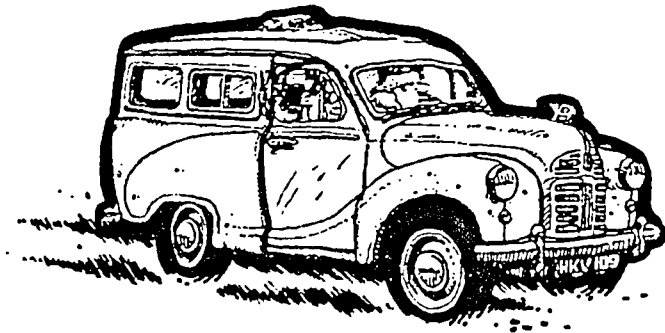
QUESTION 8. When you go to twoc a car are you more interested in:-

The contents

The stereo equipment

Other items (e.g. Tyres/wheels/seats etc.)

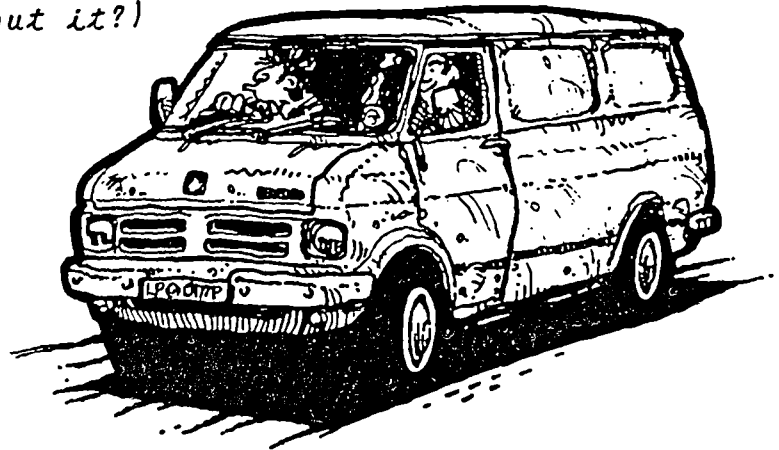
The whole car



Every member of the study group cited the vehicle as the primary reason for twoc. Twelve also based their choice on the quality of the stereo/radio equipment or other contents, although these were of secondary importance. Only two of the thirty respondents expressed any interest in the wheels or other components.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 9. What method do you prefer to tow a car?
(i.e. how do you go about it?)



Twenty four of the thirty respondents resorted to the combined use of popper and scaffy bar. Perhaps not the most sophisticated of methods, it is, however, regarded as the quickest and most effective. Four preferred to jiggle the locks with keys and two preferred the more professional and skilful approach of using tape/slim jim and hot wiring.

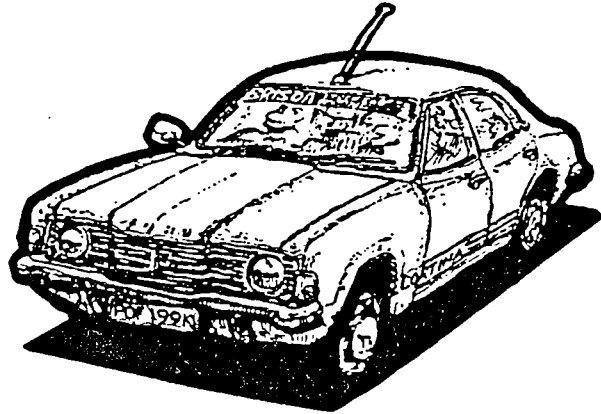
Questionnaires

QUESTION 10. If you knew a car was fitted with an alarm would you still try to take it?

Yes

No

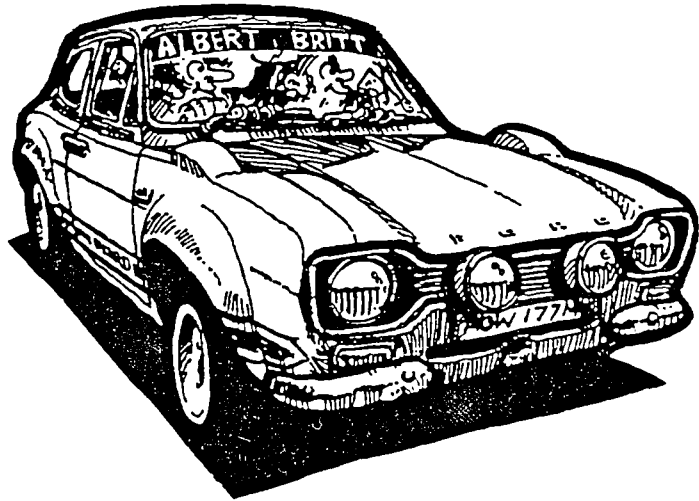
If yes, how would you do it?



Five out of thirty would attempt to take a car knowing it to be fitted with a security alarm. Apparently one frequently used approach to overcoming an alarm system is to purposely and repeatedly trigger it until the vehicle owner assumes it has developed a fault and eventually turns it off.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 11. *What sort of car would you not tow and why?*



Most bottom of the range, low status, Eastern Bloc manufactured vehicles such as Skoda, Lada, Yugo, Polononez, F.S.O. etc. Reliant Robins too, are avoided by joyriders.

Questionnaires

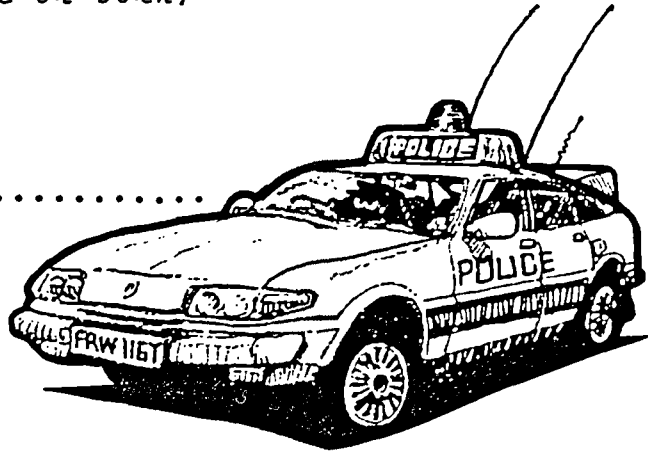
QUESTION 12. Does anyone in your family or any of your friends have a history of twocking cars?

Family

Friends

(tick one or both)

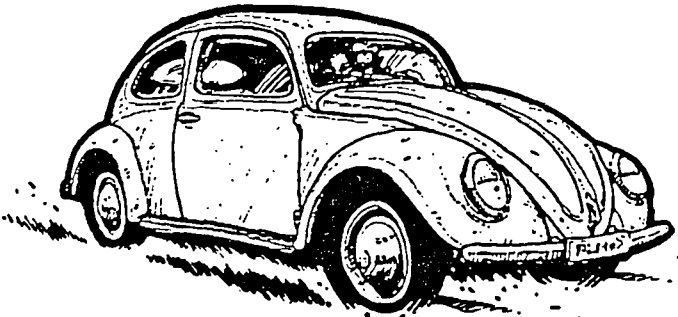
If family, what relation?.....



All of the respondents claimed to have friends with histories of twoc. Two had brothers, three cousins and one a father with previous convictions for this type of offence. It may be claimed, therefore, that all of the respondents are, or have been, subject to external social influences whether familial or peer group based.

QUESTION 13. Why do you twoc cars?

- To feel important
- To impress my friends
- To impress girls
- To steal from them
- For excitement
- To get somewhere
- To damage them
- Because I'm bored
- To use in other crimes
- For fun
- To make money



Tick as many as necessary, If there are other reasons then write them down here.

(1) To impress my friends	21	(2) To feel important	19
(3) For excitement	19	(4) To impress girls	14
(5) For fun	12	(6) Because I'm bored	9
(7) To get somewhere	4	(8) To steal from them	3
(9) To make money	3		

The most consistent factors are the need to impress others, to feel important, for fun and excitement and to relieve boredom. Both utilitarian and financially motivated reasons scored low.

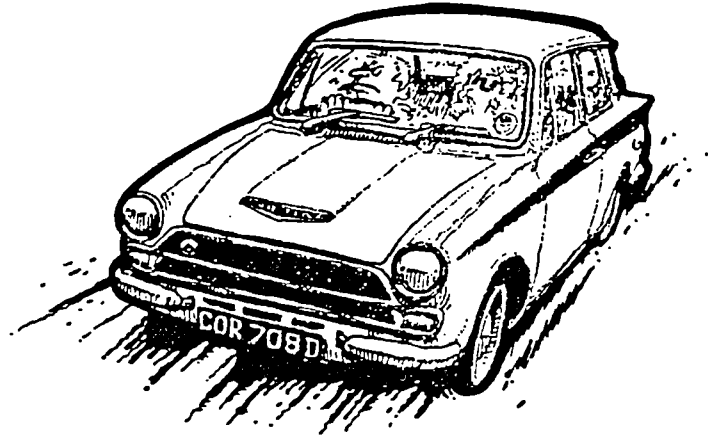
Questionnaires

QUESTION 14. What are your feelings toward the owners of the cars you have taken?

Not at all sorry

a little sorry

Very sorry



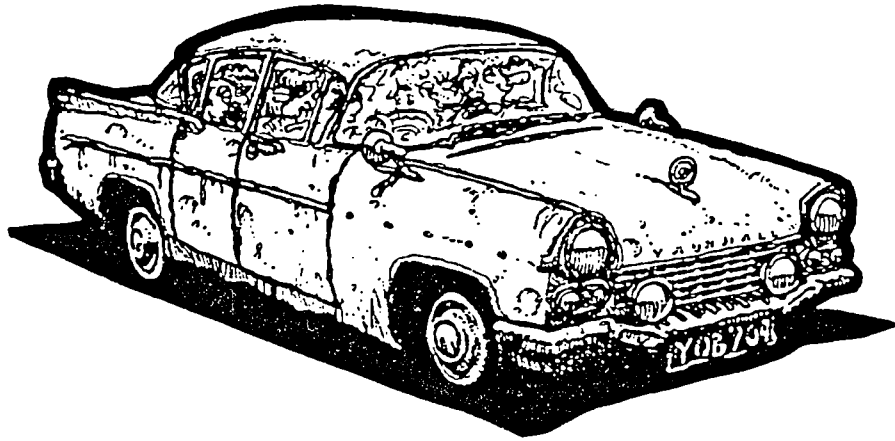
Seventeen of the respondents claimed to be not at all sorry for their victims, eleven were a little sorry and two felt very sorry.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 15. Have you read the Highway Code?

Yes

No



Of the thirty respondents, two claimed they had read the Highway Code in preparation for their cycling proficiency test at school.

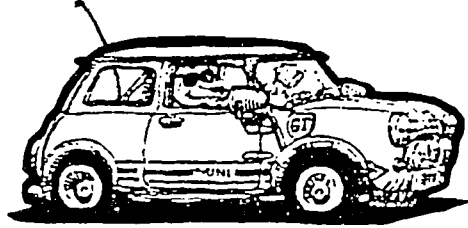
Questionnaires

QUESTION 16. Are you or any of your friends better drivers than Police drivers?

Me

My friend(s)

If your friend(s), how old is he/she



Seventeen believed themselves to be better than qualified police drivers, twenty four claimed to have friends or associates who could drive better than the police, the youngest being fourteen and the eldest nineteen.

QUESTION 17. Which of these words best describe you as a driver?

Beginner

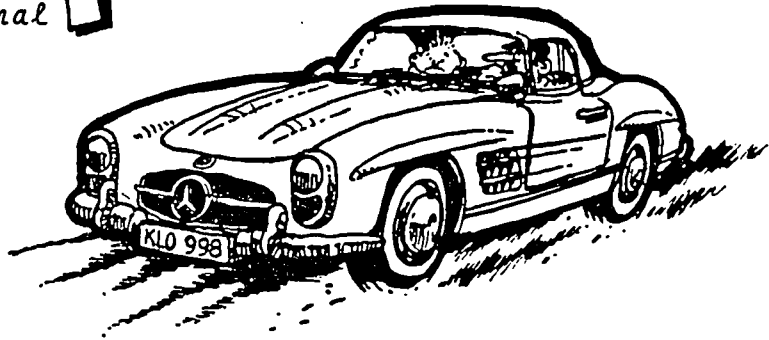
Not very good

Average

Good

Very good

Exceptional

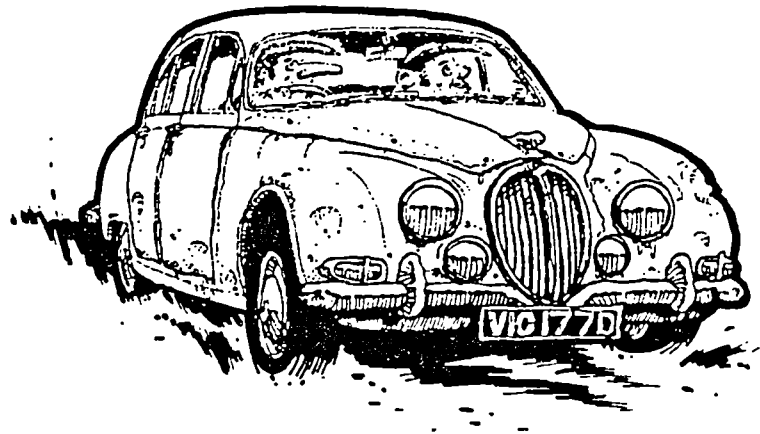


All of the respondents considered themselves to be either average or above in terms of driving ability. Seven considered themselves as average, ten as being good, twelve as very good and one exceptional.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 18. *What is the fastest speed you have ever driven in a two-wheeled motor car?*

..... m.p.h.



Answers varied from sixty to one hundred and forty miles per hour, the average being in excess of one hundred miles per hour.

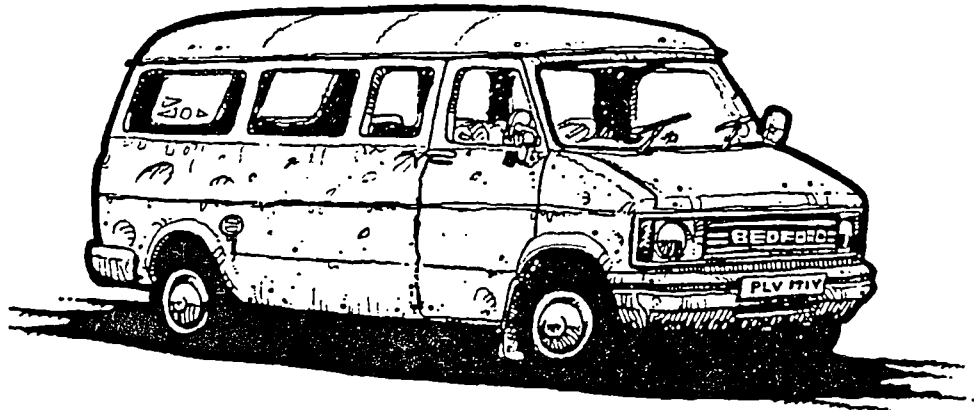
Questionnaires

QUESTION 19. Do you ever consider the possible consequences of an accident when twocking a motor car?

Never

Sometimes

Often



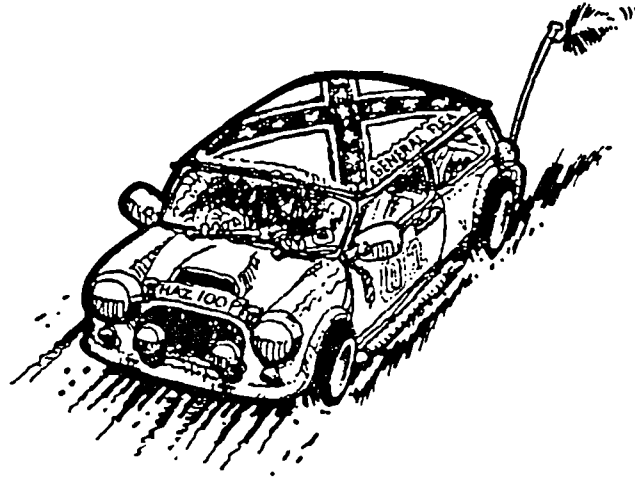
Twenty one of the thirty respondents claimed never to have considered the consequences of a possible accident whilst driving a twocked motor car, seven 'sometimes' did and two often considered the possibility.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 20. Do you ever purposely get a 'chase' by the police?

Yes

No



Fifteen of the respondents admitted to having purposely instigated a car chase by the police.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 21. Have you ever intentionally damaged or, taken items from a towcked car?

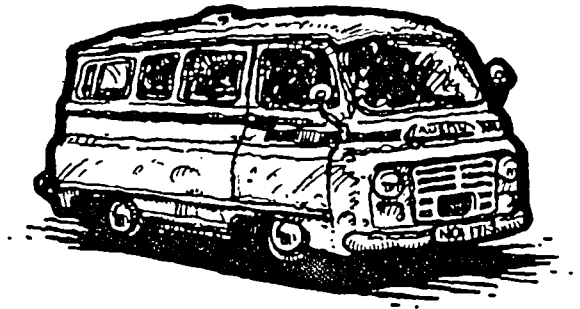
Yes

No

If yes. Damaged

Stolen from

(tick one or both)



Twenty eight admitted to stealing items from towcked cars and seventeen to intentionally causing damage to the vehicles.

Questionnaires

QUESTION 22. Have you ever vandalised or, stolen from a parked car?

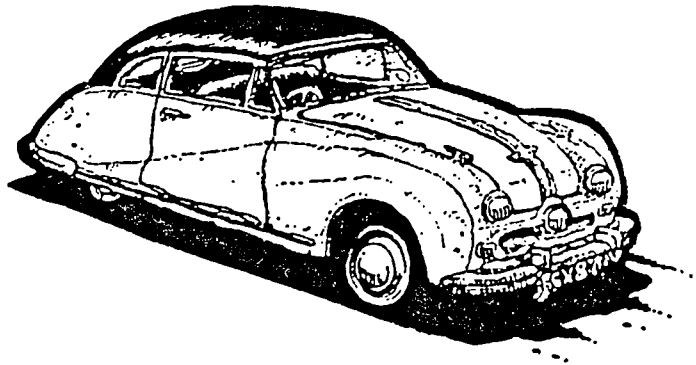
Yes

No

If yes. Vandalised

Stolen from

(tick one or both)



Three confessed to having stolen items from parked vehicles and one to having caused criminal damage.

Questionnaires

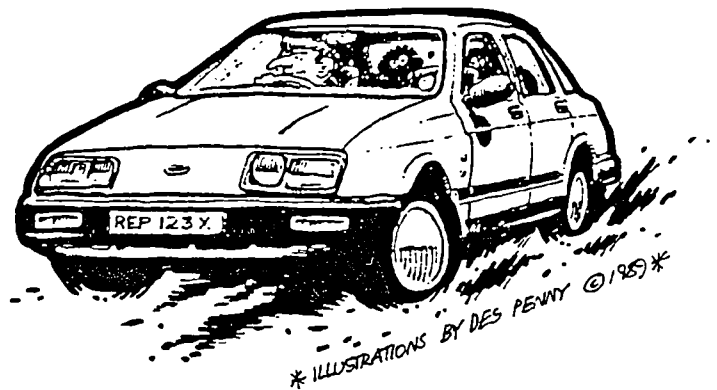
QUESTION 23. If you could take part in an activity where you are allowed to build/mend and drive motor cars do you think it would stop you from twocking them?

Yes

No

Maybe

Don't Know



Of the thirty respondents twenty seven stated the belief that their involvement in a motor project, where they could legitimately drive and repair motor vehicles, would stop them from illegally taking cars. Two believed it would perhaps help and one considered the idea to be of no real value.

WALKER WHEELS QUESTIONNAIRE

1). HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIMINAL OFFENCE OR RECEIVED A POLICE CAUTION? If yes, please give details.

Offences against property 56 responses.

Offences against the person 15 responses.

Motor vehicle related offences..... 200 responses.

(T.W.O.C., road traffic etc.)

By definition 100% of respondents had been involved in some aspect of motor vehicle related crime. In addition to this 28% had committed offences of crimes against property and 7½% against the person. 64½% were therefore solely concerned with offences relating to the automobile.

2). HAVE YOU STOPPED OFFENDING?

Yes: 57 responses.

No: 143 responses.

If YES please go to question 5

3). HAVE YOU COMMITTED ANY OFFENCE DURING THE PERIOD YOU HAVE BEEN A MEMBER AT WALKER WHEELS?

Yes.....

No.....

4). IF YOU ARE CONTINUING TO OFFEND CAN YOU SAY WHY.

.....

Questionnaires

5). IF YOU HAVE STOPPED OFFENDING, WHAT CAUSED YOU TO STOP?.....
.....

Did becoming a member of Walker Wheels have any influence on your decision to stop offending?

Yes..... 43 No..... 14 If yes, how?.....

Questions 2 - 5. 28.5% of respondents claim to have stopped offending. The reasons given include, employment on YTS for the sixteen + year olds, familial influences, social pressures and the risk or actual imposition of judicial penalties.

Of this 28.5%, three quarters expressed in some form that they had been influenced and encouraged to cease offending by their association with the Walker Wheels Project.

Of the remaining 71.5% who had indicated that they had not ceased offending, a high proportion i.e. 104 of the 147, stated that their level of offending had reduced due to project participation.

Those continuing to offend gave a variety of reasons for doing so: mainly financial, peer group pressure, for excitement or as the result of boredom.

6). DO YOU KNOW IT IS WRONG TO TAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S VEHICLE?

Yes.....180 responses No.....

From the 200 questionnaires administered, 180 respondents acknowledged that they knew that to take someone else's vehicle was wrong. The remaining 20 failed to respond to the question.

Questionnaires

10). DO YOU LOOK FOR ANY PARTICULAR MAKE OR MODEL TO TAKE?

YES..... 106 (53%)

NO..... 94 (47%)

11). FROM WHAT KIND OF PLACE DO YOU FIND IT EASIEST TO TAKE A VEHICLE?

The kerbside.....	167
Open car parks.....	151
Multi-storey/underground car parks.....	43
Private houses.....	75
Motor trade premises.....	5

12). WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN TAKING A VEHICLE?

Make.....	172
Model.....	169
Speed.....	191
Looks.....	102
Easy to open.....	190
Colour.....	2
Age.....	35
Anti-theft devices.....	184
Engine size.....	105
Other.....	6

Questionnaires

13). DO YOU ALWAYS TAKE THE WHOLE VEHICLE OR ARE YOU MORE INTERESTED IN :

The contents.....	51
The stereo.....	126
Whole car.....	197
Other (e.g. tyres/wheels/seats etc.).....	37

14). WHAT METHOD DO YOU PREFER TO TAKE A VEHICLE?

(how do you go about it)?

Popper.....	160
Scaffy Bar.....	117
Jiggling.....	108
Slide hammer.....	7
Tape/Slim Jim.....	20

15). IF YOU KNEW A VEHICLE WAS FITTED WITH AN ALARM WOULD YOU STILL TRY TO TAKE IT?

Yes..... 33

No..... 167

16). WHAT SORT OF VEHICLE WOULD YOU NOT TAKE AND WHY?

Questionnaires

20). HAVE YOU READ THE 'HIGHWAY CODE'?

Yes..... 26

No..... 174

21). ARE YOU OR ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS BETTER DRIVERS THAN THE POLICE?

Me..... 112

My friends..... 80

If friends, how old are they..... 13 to 22yrs

22). WHICH OF THESE WORDS BEST DESCRIBE YOU AS A DRIVER?

Beginner.....	8
Not very good.....	0
Average.....	3
Good.....	58
Very good.....	101
Exceptional.....	30

23). WHAT IS THE FASTEST SPEED YOU HAVE EVER DRIVEN A VEHICLE YOU HAVE TAKEN?

answers ranged from 60 to 145 M.P.H

Questionnaires

24). DO YOU EVER CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ACCIDENT WHEN TAKING A MOTOR VEHICLE?

Never	114
Sometimes.....	65
Often.....	21

25). DO YOU EVER PURPOSELY 'GET A CHASE' BY THE POLICE?

Yes..... 93	No..... 107
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26). HAVE YOU EVER INTENTIONALLY DAMAGED OR TAKEN ITEMS FROM A 'TWOCKED' VEHICLE?

Yes..... 198	No..... 2
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27). HAVE YOU EVER VANDALISED OR STOLEN FROM A PARKED VEHICLE?

No.....	187
Vandalised.....	4
Stolen from.....	9

Questionnaires

The 'Walker Wheels' questionnaire : a brief discussion.

By definition 100% of respondents had been involved in some aspect of motor vehicle related crime. In addition to this 14% had committed offences of crimes against property and 7½% against the person. 79% were therefore solely concerned with offences relating to the automobile.

It is a commonly held belief that most offences involving the theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicles are committed by opportunist thieves and yet the evidence here would suggest otherwise.

79% of respondents claim to pre-plan TWOC as opposed to only 21% who take vehicles when the opportunity presents itself. Of those who pre-plan TWOC, 121 admitted to having gone equipped with a variety of tools and implements (as listed above), with poppers, scaffy bars and keys taking preference. The cruder and more destructive methods of entering and starting a vehicle, usually the combined use of popper and scaffy bar are those most likely to be used. This, in the main, is attributable to the improved quality of modern locking systems. Interestingly, there appears to be a slight correlation between the age of the joyrider and the degree of sophistication of the methods used. It is the older

Questionnaires

youth who is more likely to use keys or, to use the common expression, 'jiggle'.

Most young joyriders will be discouraged, if not deterred, by obvious anti-theft devices. A very high percentage of the youths would not attempt to take a vehicle knowing it to be fitted with an audible security alarm. It must be concluded, therefore, that such devices are a valuable deterrent against joyriders, particularly if fitted in conjunction with a visible warning light.

There is evidence to suggest, however, that some youths will attempt to overcome alarm systems as part of the overall challenge. It would appear that the ability to successfully do so serves to raise their credibility and status among their peers.

Ease of access is a very high consideration particularly in relation to fast, popular cars of attractive modern appearance and design. The age or colour of the vehicles, whilst significant, do not appear to be major deciding factors.

Most models of the Ford range, i.e. Sierras, Granadas, Escorts, Fiestas and, to a lesser extent, the now discontinued Cortina, consistently rated as the most sought after targets for joyriders, particularly the Escort XR3i. Leyland Maestros and Montegos together with the Astra, Nova and Cavalier models of the Vauxhall range, although considerably less popular than Ford, were

Questionnaires

cited with regularity. The higher prestige makes, for instance, Mercedes Benz, Jaguar, Porsche and BMW, although perhaps favoured by professional car thieves, did not figure to any significant extent with juvenile joyriders.

Most Eastern Bloc manufactured vehicles such as Lada, Yugo, Skoda and Polonez are shunned. Indeed, most bottom to mid-range foreign makes such as Fiat and Peugeot are, apparently, for the most part, avoided by young joyriders. The reasons given range from 'too slow' to 'absolute shit'. Two notable exceptions however are Audi and Volkswagen (the V.W. Golf GTi being a particularly sought after model).

The survey demonstrated that joyriders are quite selective in their choice of vehicle whereas the opportunist thieves, in search of radios, cassette players and other valuable commodities, do not discriminate so readily.

When asked from what kind of places they found it easiest to take cars, a high percentage of joyriders favoured locations which provided both anonymity and a relatively unrestricted exit such as the kerbside and open car parks.

Only 3% of the respondents demonstrated any degree of real concern for their victims. The findings of the questionnaire fully support a number of observations made by various researchers that joyriders generally exhibit an attitude of almost total callousness, as if their victims

Questionnaires

deserved to have their vehicles taken and, more likely than not, damaged and looted in the process.

A consistently recurring trend throughout this research has been the joyriders' exaggerated perception of their own abilities as drivers. Only 4% of the respondents considered themselves to be anything less than average in terms of driving ability. Of the 8 who did, none actually admitted to being 'not very good', preferring to regard themselves as beginners. In excess of 75% considered themselves to be either very good or, as in the case of 15%, exceptional.

Bearing in mind that all of the respondents are under the age of 17 years, 192 of the 200 participants regarded themselves as being average or above (112 believing themselves to be better than qualified police drivers) despite which only 26 claimed to have read the Highway Code - a prerequisite of any responsible motorist.

The overall response to the question, 'Do you ever consider the possible consequences of an accident when taking a motor vehicle?', demonstrated a significantly high degree of irresponsibility. 57% of respondents never considered the possibility of being involved in an accident and only 32½% 'sometimes' gave it consideration. It could be argued that such a false sense of security may only serve to heighten the many dangers associated with joyriding.

Questionnaires

More than half of the joyriders concerned claimed to have intentionally instigated a chase by the police. Whilst it must be acknowledged that many such claims are exaggerated or simply not true, there are those which are.

From these findings it was proposed to determine if there were any perceived effects on behaviour and attitude directly attributable to the membership of, or association with, a motor vehicle project as typified by Walker Wheels.

The responses to questions 2 - 5 would indicate that 28.5% of young offenders have ceased offending. The reasons given include employment on YTS for the sixteen-year-olds, familial influences, social pressures and the risk or actual imposition of judicial penalties.

Of this 28.5%, three quarters expressed in some form that they had been influenced and encouraged to cease offending by their association with the Walker Wheels Project.

Of the remaining 71.5%, who had indicated that they had not ceased offending, a high proportion, that is 104 of the 147, stated that their level of offending had reduced due to project participation.

Those continuing to offend gave a variety of reasons for doing so: mainly financial, peer group pressure, for excitement and as the result of boredom.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The common jargon contains the following terms:

BLACK BOX. - On certain vehicles, the part of an ignition switch resembling a black plastic box housing the electrical contacts. Access to the 'black box' is gained by either unscrewing it from the ignition switch or, more usually, with the use of a 'scaffy bar' thus allowing the ignition to simply be switched on with a screwdriver. This method of starting a vehicle is referred to as 'black boxing'.

BLACK CAPPERS. - Standard ignition keys with black rubber tops, frequently collected from scrap yards by Joyriders.

CHORE or CHORDY. - A local colloquialism meaning to steal or be stolen, thus, to 'chore' the stereo or a 'chordy' car.

CLUTCH or CLUTCHING, FRISK or FRISKING, RALLY or RALLYING
These are all well used terms to describe the act of driving a twoocked motor car.

DECKING. - Scraping the engine sump or crossmember off the ground when landing after a 'flight'.

DIDGIE. - Used in reference to a digital display radio/stereo unit.

DIDGIE-PINS. - Extraction tools designed for professional use to facilitate the quick removal of 'Din-fit' radio/stereo equipment. These can be very easily copied and fabricated from metal wire coat hangers.

DRAG or DRAGGING. - The act of racing against another vehicle in a twoocked car.

FLY, FLYING, FLIGHT. - The act of making all four wheels leave the ground simultaneously.

Glossary

GABBY - A general term used to describe any type of car radio or stereo unit.

HAMMER BUTTON. - The now outdated mechanically operated push button radios.

HANDBRAKE TURNS. - Spinning a moving vehicle through 180° with the applied use of the handbrake and accelerator.

HOIST or HOISTY. - Terms frequently used as alternatives to 'chore' or 'chordy'.

HOT WIRE. - A term of American origin either used as a verb or a noun to describe the act of by-passing the cars low tension ignition circuit with a bridge wire thus allowing the engine to be started without the need for an ignition key. Contrary to popular belief, this is a fairly complex operation and requires a relatively high level of technical knowledge and ability.

JIGGLING. - The act of manipulating door or ignition locks with specially adapted or worn 'black cappers'.

POPPER. - Any instrument used to break toughened or laminated window glass. It may simply be a weight attached to a short cord, a spring loaded centre punch or even a small hammer.

SCAFFY BAR. - A short length of scaffolding tube used as a lever to break off steering/ignition locks

SLIDEY. - A slide hammer, so constructed or adapted that once the threaded end of a purpose designed bar is screwed into a lock a blow can be struck in a counter direction thus forcibly removing the entire lock barrel.

SLIM JIM. - A device made from plastic or light gauge metal designed to slide behind the window glass and lift the door locking mechanism.

Glossary

TAPE. - The tough plastic retaining strap from industrial packaging which is used to lift door locking buttons in much the same way as a Slim Jim.

TWOC. - Taking without the owners consent

WHEELSPIN. - Causing the tyres to 'squeal' against the road surface by excessive use of the accelerator combined with quick clutch release when pulling away.

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