

Featuring:

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Railway menace with pet rat is jailed and given ASBO

Crime writer guilty of robberies in east London and Essex

CCTV captures man threatening boy with imitation firearm

London North tackles drugs on railway in joint operation

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For officers, staff and industry

OPERATION LINCOLN SNARES PROLIFIC PROPERTY THIEVES

Two prolific thieves who stole almost £38,000 worth of property from passengers at Euston and Paddington stations in two separate investigations have been jailed this month.

Adam Newton, from Nottingham, and Stephen Edgar, of Liverpool, were sentenced to a total of 18 months and 15 months respectively thanks to the investigative work of London North's dedicated property theft team, Op Lincoln.

Newton, 21, stole almost £20,000 worth of luggage and Christmas presents from 18 rail passengers during December of last year and February this year.

Newton was also handed a three-year Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO), which precludes him from travelling on First Great Western trains and loitering near luggage storage areas on trains and stations in England and Wales.

He was caught in the act and arrested by plain-clothes BTP officers who were on the look-out for him at Paddington station after he was linked to a string of offences.

Detective Constable Dave Graney, investigating officer for both cases, said that Newton visited the station on various dates in December and February, which saw him stealing from trains before they departed from Paddington.

"Newton stole a vast array of property including laptops, digital cameras, iPods, mobile phones, designer clothes and jewellery," said Det Con Graney.

Edgar, 41, was responsible for stealing almost £18,000 worth of cash and goods from two passengers at Euston station and was snared after detectives identified him via station and on-street CCTV footage.

"Edgar stole a rucksack from an unsuspecting Chinese student on 11 January 2010. It was his first day in the country," added Det Con Graney.

"The rucksack contained £10,000 in Sterling notes, the victim's passport, two laptops, a video camera and a digital camera, among other items valued at £7,000."



Caught on camera: Newton pictured on CCTV at Paddington with stolen bags



Edgar at Kings Cross ATM

Edgar also struck previously on November 1, 2009, again at Euston, where he stole a woman's bag, which contained credit cards and pin numbers. He later used one of the woman's credit cards to withdraw £400 in cash from ATM machines at Kings Cross.

Senior investigating officer, Detective Inspector Terry Pearce, said: "Both cases clearly illustrate the fact that opportunist thieves will take every chance they can to steal from unsuspecting members of the public.

"They also illustrate the fact that stations are well covered by a vast network of CCTV cameras. This network is proving increasingly vital in bringing successful prosecutions for the Op Lincoln team, who have had an excellent run of results in recent months."



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AREA COMMANDER UPDATE

My name is Chief Superintendent Mark Smith and as the new Area Commander for London North, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and set out what I want to achieve for the Area.



I joined BTP in 1981, on London North, and I have more than 28 years of policing experience, working in both uniform and CID roles.

My immediate priority is to maintain the Area's exemplary performance over the past two years. Nonetheless, it is important that we do not rest on our laurels and I am committed to take London North even further.

Working with the industry is vital to this success and through a joined-up approach I want to focus on protecting people by preventing and detecting crime on the railways and ensure that fatalities and critical incidents cause minimal disruption to the network. I also want to forge greater ties and a better understanding between the BTP and our industry partners.

Developing my staff is another key priority, which in turn will mean that London North's officers and police staff can provide a better service for all those who use or work on the railway.

I look forward to meeting you all and hope the next policing year is a great success.

OFFICERS ENGAGE WITH RAIL USER GROUPS

March saw London North officers engage with rail user groups and people interested in crime and security on the railways in the Maidenhead and Bedford areas.

Sergeant Pete Goodchild attended the 30th anniversary of the Bedford to Bletchley (Marston Vale Line) Rail User Group as a guest speaker, alongside Wallace Wetherhill, London Midland's Director of Operations and Safety.

Sgt Goodchild explained what BTP does and reassured the audience that we work closely with London Midland and Network Rail to improve passenger safety and security. He also explained that passengers have an important part to play by acting as our 'eyes and ears' and reporting antisocial behaviour on the network.

PC Dominique Ioannou represented the Area at the Marlow Maidenhead Passengers' Association AGM. The meeting was attended by the Area's industry partners from Chiltern Railways, First Great Western, Network Rail, as well as local parish and council representatives. In addition, special guest speaker was Anthony Smith, Chief Executive Officer of Passenger Focus.

Area Commander, Chief Superintendent Mark Smith, said: "Making sure passengers feel safe on the railway is a key priority for London North and only by getting out there and talking to the people and the industry, we are able to make a difference."

Chiltern Railways

First Great Western

londonmidland

RAILWAY MENACE WITH PET RAT IS JAILED AND GIVEN ASBO



Allan Page

A resident of Arlesey, known locally as 'rat man', has been jailed for two years and handed a five-year antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) after committing a number of offences on the railway.

Allan Page, 39, who was often seen travelling in and around the Arlesey, Peterborough and Biggleswade areas travelling with his white rat, 'Rizla', was sentenced this month at Luton Crown Court. Page pleaded guilty to a racially aggravated public order offence, which saw him racially abusing a member of rail staff at Peterborough station, and two counts of witness intimidation.

In addition, the court imposed a five-year ASBO, which precludes him from carrying any live animals on any train or station. He is also barred from causing harassment, alarm or distress and begging on the railway network.

On 23 July 2009, Page became abusive towards rail staff after failing to produce a valid ticket at Peterborough station. Page became aggressive, threatened violence and racially abused a Scottish member of staff.

He was arrested and bailed to return for questioning in connection with the incident, however he twice went on to intimidate rail staff into not giving evidence in court.

Page, who was well known to police, appeared in court in

December for sentencing in relation to a number of other offences on the railway, including fare evasion, begging and cannabis possession.

PC Chris Thompson-Chambers, investigating officer, said: "With a white rat on his shoulder, Allan Page has become something of a well-known local personality. The more important fact is that he has been responsible for committing a large number of offences on the railway that have caused misery to others."

He added: "Law-abiding people should be able to travel and work on trains without fear of abuse from people like Page. These were serious offences, which I am pleased to say have been duly recognised by the court."



Page at Biggleswade

First Capital Connect's Customer Service Director, Michelle Smart, said: "We will not tolerate any type of abuse to our staff and are pleased that the court in sentencing the individual has recognised the severity of the verbal assault. Our colleague was simply doing his job and no one should face this kind of treatment while carrying out their job."

Page was sentenced to 12 months for the racially aggravated public order offence, with two further six month sentences imposed for witness intimidation to run consecutively.



PROACTIVE CASH DOG LEADS AREA'S FIGHT AGAINST FINANCIAL CRIME

London North welcomes back police dog Ozzy after he attended the Force's training centre in Tadworth to become the Area's first proactive cash dog.

As well as being able to search for drugs and firearms, Ozzy now has the ability to identify paper-money in Sterling, Dollar and Euro denominations.

Ozzy a cross-breed Spaniel, lives with his handler PC Andy Fidgett and has already worked on a number of proactive operations.

"As soon as Ozzy came back to London North, we had him out working with the Economic Crime Unit searching, where he was able to indicate a place in a

house where the people had hidden money," said PC Fidgett. "More recently, he has identified a hand gun as well as a cannabis factory."



Ozzy is raring to go

Sergeant Jane Evans, officer in charge of London North's dog unit, said that while Britain slowly creeps out of recession, economic and financial-based crime is still an important issue.

"Now that Ozzy has been trained to find money, London North is able to tackle those that traffic cash on the railways, as well as people who have stashed money in their homes, which may have been accumulated through illegal activities," said Sgt Evans.

LONDON NORTH TACKLES DRUGS ON RAILWAY IN JOINT OPERATION

London North recently conducted a series of robust and high-visibility operations at stations across Watford to restrict people from carrying drugs on the railways.

Operation Hercules took place on the evening of Friday, 26 March, and was a joint operation between London North and Hertfordshire Police.

On the night, BTP officers and police dogs were present at Watford Junction, Watford High Street and Bushey stations, while Herts officers attended Watford Underground station.

Revenue Protection Inspectors from London Midland and London Overground were on-hand, targeting those who were travelling fraudulently on the railways. And members from the Independent Advisory Network (IAN) were also present observing the operation and providing guidance on community confidence.

Sergeant Matt Ashby, one of the organisers behind Op Hercules, said: "We had received intelligence that people were coming from Euston down to Watford on Friday

nights carrying drugs.

"Consequently, we put in place a high-visibility operation at stations in the Watford area to put the message out that BTP will not tolerate those that carry drugs on the railway."

On the night, three people were cautioned for possession of cannabis and one person was arrested and received a fixed penalty notice for a public order offence. In addition, 27 people were dealt with by Revenue Protection Inspectors from London Midland and London Overground.

"We received lots of positive feedback from staff and members of public, who said they felt safer because of our presence," added Sgt Ashby.

"London Overground's Travel Safe Officers were also around to provide additional reassurance on the night."



CCTV CAPTURES MAN THREATENING BOY WITH IMITATION FIREARM



McMahon

A man who threatened a 15-year-old boy with an imitation firearm before apologising and offering to take him for a drink has been jailed for 12 months.

Benjamin McMahon, 22, of no fixed abode but known to the south Essex area, travelled to Benfleet station on

Friday, 14 August 2009 and as he got off the train, McMahon started to follow a 15-year-old boy, on the platform.

Detective Constable Dave Rabbitt, investigating officer, said: "When McMahon got close to the boy, he pulled out an imitation gun from his trousers and pointed it at the victim, demanding money that he claimed was owed to him.

"McMahon, however, quickly realised that he had in fact got the wrong person and instead offered to buy the victim a drink to apologise. The boy declined this offer and so McMahon left the station."

The incident was captured by CCTV cameras installed at the station, which proved vital in identifying McMahon carrying the weapon. Cameras at Benfleet helped to estab-

lish that McMahon pulled an object that looked like a firearm from his trousers, cocking the weapon and approaching the boy.

Later, on 10 September, McMahon was spotted at Southend Central Station by c2c CCTV operators, who recognised him from stills that were circulated by police as part of the investigation. Officers were called to the station and McMahon was arrested. At the time of his arrest, McMahon was wearing the sunglasses that he had worn at Benfleet station in August.

Det Con Rabbitt added: "This was a frightening encounter for a young boy and although no one was harmed as a result of this incident, the court's decision to impose a custodial sentence of 12 months for possession of an imitation gun is to be welcomed.

"Carrying weapons on the rail network, whether imitation or otherwise, will not be tolerated by BTP and we will push for the strongest penalties in the courts."

McMahon appeared at Southend Crown Court on Tuesday, 9 March, after he pleaded guilty to possessing an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence.



CRIME WRITER GUILTY OF ROBBERIES IN EAST LONDON AND ESSEX



Jailed: Smith

An armed robber who wrote a book entitled 'The Art of Armed Robbery' and later took part in a string of robberies in east London and Essex will serve a minimum of 12 years following an investigation by British Transport Police.

Published crime writer Terry Smith, 51, of Canvey Island, was found guilty of conspiracy to rob and conspiracy to possess firearms with intent to commit robberies between September 2006 and April 2008.

His brother, bricklayer Lenny Smith, 52, of Dagenham, who was also at Chelmsford Crown Court, was cleared of both offences and discharged. The decisions came after a jury spent six days in deliberation.

Terry Smith's co-accused, Brian Wall, 62, was found guilty in May 2009 after a three-month trial, also at Chelmsford Crown Court, in which a jury heard how IT technician Adam Mapleson was shot after he came to the aid of a female security guard during a robbery at Rayleigh railway station on 25 May 2007.

Terry Smith and Brian Wall were in court for their involvement in robberies at Beckton, Witham, Rayleigh, Pitsea, Basildon, Chadwell St Mary and Vange, between 2006 and 2008, in which almost £250,000 is thought to have been stolen.

Senior investigating officer, Detective Superintendent Michael Field, said: "This enquiry, which began after a brazen robbery and shooting at Rayleigh station, uncovered a string of other robberies in east London and Essex, in which Terry Smith was deeply involved.



Burnt out car with scorched bank notes

"Firearms were often used to threaten and instil fear in the security van staff who were targeted. During the raid at Rayleigh station this resulted in a young man almost losing his life."

A minor celebrity, self-confessed 'robbologist' and

'Britain's most wanted man', Terry Smith has appeared on television and spoken as an expert on armed robbery methods, such as Channel Four's reality crime show, 'The Heist' and he even acted as a technical advisor on the Spike Lee film 'Inside Man'.

"The conviction of Mr Smith is particularly welcome," Det Supt Field added. "This is a man who has previously touted himself to the media and to the public as a reformed career criminal who had seen the light.

"What we now know is that he is anything but reformed.



Smith's book

He is a violent, cynical individual with no regard for the law who was prepared to go to frightening ends to ensure his demands were met."

The Rayleigh heist happened just after 7am when the security guard, who was delivering £20,000 cash to a cash-point, had a gun thrust into her stomach. Adam Mapleson, who suffered huge blood loss as a result of his intervention, has been praised by detectives for his heroism.

Forensic evidence, along with CCTV footage from the various robberies, proved vital in bringing Smith and Wall to justice. Brian Wall's DNA was recovered from a discarded baseball cap found yards away from the burnt out car, a tactic used to destroy forensic evidence, which was used in the Rayleigh robbery.

BTP fingerprint experts also uncovered prints linking Brian Wall to the purchase of the Rayleigh getaway vehicle - obtained from a car dealer's purchase and receipt book.

Det Supt Field said that joint working between different forces during the course of the two-year enquiry into the gang's exploits - codenamed Operation Cobalt - was vital in securing the convictions. In particular he highlighted the cooperation between BTP, the Metropolitan Police, Essex Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

"By sharing vital intelligence and carrying out joint operations with the Metropolitan and Essex Police, we managed to compile a compelling case-file against Terry Smith, from which the Crown Prosecution Service has been able to successfully prosecute him," he added.



JAIL FOR MAN CAUGHT GOING EQUIPPED TO STEAL FROM RAILWAY



Simon Scott

A 42-year-old man has been jailed for five months after pleading guilty to going equipped to steal from the railway.

Simon Scott, of no fixed abode, but from the Leeds area, appeared at Chelmsford Magistrates Court this month following an investigation by London North's dedicated cable team, Op Drum.

Detective Constable Andy Pester, investigating officer, said that Scott was arrested at the Boreham interchange, near Chelmsford, on 21 December 2009 after he was spotted acting suspiciously in bushes at the side of the line by a member of the public.

"To the witness it appeared that he was making a cutting motion, as if he was sawing something on the line," said Det Con Pester.

"Officers attended the location and Scott was stopped shortly after driving off in his car. No cabling or metal was found in his possession, however a search of the vehicle uncovered a hacksaw."

In interview Scott claimed that the reason he had been so near the railway line was because he had been living in his car near to the interchange.

He stated that he had found the hacksaw under the General's Lane Bridge, next to the A318, and that anyone who had seen him on the line must have been mistaken.

Det Con Pester said: "When successful, metal thefts from the railway can result in massive disruption to the network and huge inconvenience for passengers.

"In addition, there have been several instances where thieves have been seriously injured or killed when trying to steal metal from the railway. It is an incredibly dangerous thing to do."

He added: "This case serves as a strong reminder that if you intend to commit such crimes, you are risking not only your life, but a custodial prison sentence too.

"We will continue to work with the industry to target and prosecute those that commit metal thefts from the railway."



COLCHESTER MAN JAILED FOR ATTEMPTING TO ROB RAIL STAFF



Robert Bell

A violent man who threatened and attempted to rob two members of rail staff at Colchester station has been jailed for 27 months following a London North investigation.

On Friday 31 July 2009, Robert Bell, 49, of Colchester, arrived at the station and as he passed through the gates with his bike, Bell was asked to produce a valid ticket for his journey.

Detective Constable Alan Reed, investigating officer, said that at this point Bell became aggressive and brandished a rubber mallet from his shopping bag.

"The member of staff was concerned for his safety and called his colleague over for assistance," said Det Con Reed.

"Bell then threatened the two of them with demands of, "Give me your money" and "You owe me money"."

The member of staff, who had come to assist his colleague, thought that Bell's threats were serious considering he had a weapon and confronted his attacker. Bell responded by cycling away from the station.

Police were called and conducted a search of the local area. Bell was eventually located in a nearby street and was arrested after he was found to be in possession of the mallet.

Det Con Reed added: "This was a shocking incident and although neither of the victims were hurt, both were left badly shaken as a result.

"Rail staff and members of the public should be allowed to use and work on the railway without fearing for their safety."

Bell was sentenced at Chelmsford Crown Court after he had pleaded guilty to the charges of attempted robbery and possessing an offensive weapon.



BTP LEADS COUNTER-TERRORISM EXERCISE ON LONDON OVERGROUND



A dog searches the tracks

This month saw BTP officers conduct a week-long counter-terrorism exercise on the London Overground route between Camden Road and Kentish Town West rail stations.

The exercise, Operation Safe Return, lasted for five days and took place from 15 to 18 March. Specialist search officers undertook a counter-terrorism search along the track leading into Kentish Town West station.

The London Overground route between the two stations is currently closed for refurbishment and proved the ideal setting for officers to put into practice what they had learned in the classroom.

Superintendent Phil Trendall, of BTP's Counter Terrorism Support Unit, said: "The planned refurbishment of this line gave us the perfect opportunity to undertake training with our partners in a realistic railway setting.

"We are constantly learning from terrorist events from around the world and Operation Safe Return helped enable the Force to practice our counter terrorism procedures, making the most of up to date techniques in a real railway environment.

He added: "As with this week's exercise, we carry out regular training and information sessions with our partners to test our current contingency plans, increase general awareness of the threats which occur on the railway and put our tried and tested procedures into action."

London Overground (LOROL) staff also conducted a series of related exercises at the station. Throughout the week, staff learnt about suspect packages, methods used by those wishing to cause harm and what to do if they spot something suspicious.



Officers look for a suspect device



LN AND NETWORK RAIL DRIVE HOME CROSSING SAFETY MESSAGE

Drivers and pedestrians using Peterborough's busiest level crossings were reminded of the dangers of misusing crossings this month as part of a national awareness campaign.

The education and awareness day, a joint operation between by Peterborough officers, Network Rail's (NWR) community safety team and East Midlands Trains staff, was aimed at drivers and pedestrians using Helpston, Lolham, Tallington and Holme crossings.

The operation came a day after NWR called on the Government to change the driving theory test to include questions on level crossings to enforce learner drivers' understanding and stamp out reckless driving behaviour.

Sergeant Mark Brown said: "While the vast majority of drivers are law-abiding, there are still too many instances of people taking unnecessary risks that endanger not only their lives, but also the lives of others.

"We welcome Network Rail's pledge to increase awareness about level crossing safety and echo the message

that level crossings are perfectly safe if used correctly."

In May last year, taxi driver Joama Permos was jailed for six months after a London North investigation. Permos admitted running the red lights with five schoolchildren in his car at Helpston level crossing. He was also banned from driving for six months.

Richard Pedley, Network Rail's community safety manager for the Peterborough area, said: "All too often we see motorists playing Russian roulette with a 200 tonne train – and tragically some lose their lives gambling at level crossings by running red lights or dodging around barriers.

"I'm confident that lives will be saved if motorists learn how to safely use level crossings from the day they pass their test. Our campaign is raising awareness of the very real dangers of running the risk but we think more can be done to change motorists' behaviour."



Cars waiting patiently at level crossing



LONDON NORTH SAYS FAREWELL TO CHIEF SUPT MARK NEWTON



March has been a busy month for London North, where we welcomed the new Area Commander, Chief Superintendent Mark Smith, and at the same time said farewell to Chief Superintendent Mark Newton, who has left London North to take up a new role within the Force.

LN Inside News caught up with Chief Supt Newton to have a farewell chat before he left the Area.

What have been your key achievements on London North?

When I came to London North, the Area was not performing to the highest standards. This was a considerable challenge to turn things around and I am pleased to say that by the time I left my post, London North is now one of the best performing Areas in BTP.

Over the past two and a half years London North has reduced crime so there are over 3,000 fewer victims of crime per year, staff assaults have been reduced, almost trebled the number of football-related offenders brought to justice every year and increased victim of crime satisfaction.

Have you got anything to add to the list?

London North recently secured planning permission for its very own custody suite, we have made a concerted effort to build better relationships with our industry and stakeholder partners and I am particularly proud that the Area's officers and staff have been recognised externally for their efforts. For example, we won the London Team of the Year at the National Rail Awards in 2009.

What is your new role going to be at BTP?

I was recently appointed as the Area Commander for London Underground (LU) Area.

LU is very different in terms of industry relations, geography and size of the network compared to London North and I am fully prepared for the test that awaits me.

Any farewell words?

I would like to say a big thank you to all the officers and staff that I have worked with over the past few years. Without their efforts and dedication to the job, London North would not be in the healthy position that it is in today.

I am sure that everyone will make Chief Supt Mark Smith very welcome and that you will help him to maintain the current performance levels, relationships with the industry and continue to keep the railways safe and secure for passengers and rail staff.

WHITE VAN MAN BANNED FOR A YEAR AFTER NEAR MISS AT CROSSING

A motorist has been handed a one-year driving ban after he dodged under the barriers at a level-crossing near Lowestoft, following a London North investigation.

PC Mel Dobbs, investigating officer, said that on 9 October 2009, 25-year-old Paul Sayer, from Worlingham, Suffolk, was driving in his white van when he approached the Oulton Broad North level crossing.

"When Sayer got close, the amber flashing lights and sirens had been activated as the crossing was preparing for a train to pass through," said PC Dobbs.

"However, he decided to take his chances and drove over the crossing against the red lights as the barrier was descending."

The incident was reported by the signalman to officers at Norwich and Sayer was also caught out by a Suffolk

Special Constable on his way to work.

PC Dobbs added: "Sayer's actions were completely reckless and could have led to far more serious consequences."

"Level crossing lights are very different to regular ones and unlike motor vehicles, trains, which can potentially travel up to speeds well above 100mph, would have a hard job to avoid hitting something on the tracks."

Sayer admitted to dangerous driving at Lowestoft Magistrates Court on 22 March 2010 and has been disqualified from driving for 12 months. He was also given a 12-month community sentence, ordered to complete 100 hours unpaid work and pay £30 in costs.

