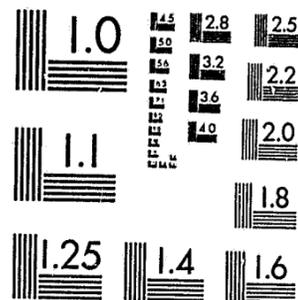


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United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C. 20531

1/13/84

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CITY OF COVENTRY

CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

SEMINAR

ON

VANDALISM

COVENTRY
COUNCIL HOUSE

Thursday 13 November 1980

WORKING PARTY REPORT

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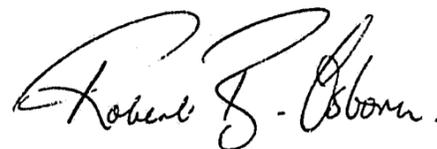
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FOREWORD

1. As in other Cities, vandalism has been a cause of considerable expense and concern for the citizens of Coventry. The unfortunate reality of the situation is that the major offenders are generally under 18.
2. The problem has become so large that its deterrence must involve more than a single organisation.
3. Investigation into the causes of vandalism is one in which the broad experience and background of crime prevention panels can most usefully direct their efforts. The Coventry Panel received with enthusiasm the Chief Constable's suggestion that a seminar should be arranged in the City.
4. The seminar was held in the Council Chambers at Coventry on 13 November 1980 and comprised representatives of the West Midlands and Coventry District Councils, Magistrates, Police, Crime Prevention Panel Members but most significant some forty students from local schools, together with representatives of the Education Department. The contribution of the students was so useful that it was agreed to hold a further seminar for them alone.
5. The second seminar took place at Police Headquarters, Little Park Street, Coventry, on 10 February 1981, where the pupils formulated the final six recommendations included in this report. The students' response indicate that vandalism is a crime which is of concern to young and old alike and their suggestions were both useful and constructive.
6. As Chairman of the City of Coventry Crime Prevention Panel, I consider that the seminars have been extremely useful and an ideal way to discover the views of society in a manner which is understandable to lay people.
7. I would like to express my appreciation to all the participants in the seminars as their contribution was not only enlightening and valuable, but heartening since they revealed a spirit of community feeling often absent in other exercises.



Chairman
Coventry Crime Prevention Panel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. The Coventry Crime Prevention Panel wish to record their gratitude to the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor P W G Robinson for his help and encouragement, and for allowing the use of the Council Chambers as the venue for the Seminar.
2. The Panel would also like to thank Chief Inspector Alan Cross, 'F' Division, for allowing the use of abstracts from his report on Vandalism, and to the Director of Education, Mr R A Aitken for his support and the assistance of his Department in arranging the attendance of pupils at the Seminar.
3. Finally, the Panel wish to record their appreciation to the guest speakers who made such a valuable and instructive contribution to the Seminar.

**WEST MIDLANDS POLICE
PROGRAMME OF SEMINAR ON VANDALISM**

MORNING SESSION

- 9.30 am Registration of delegates.
- 10.00 am Opening of Seminar
by Chairman of the day, Councillor R A Wootton
Chairman of the West Midlands Police Committee
- 10.10 am Welcome to delegates
by Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry
Councillor P W G Robinson
- 10.15 am Introduction to the Background Document and Film
by Councillor R A Wootton
- 10.50 am Who are the Vandals?
by Dr Joanna Shapland
- 11.05 am Prevention through planning
Mr Robert Nursey
- 11.20 am Sport as a deterrent
by Mr Hamilton Bland D.L.C. (Hons)
- 11.35 am Why England
by Mr Alan Clifford
- 11.50 am Summary of Morning Session
by Chief Constable, Sir Philip Knights CBE QPM

12.15 pm Buffet Lunch at St. Mary's Hall

AFTERNOON SESSION

- 1.00 pm Reassemble into Seminar Groups
- 1.45 pm Tea
- 2.00 pm Reports on discussion and debate
- Group 1
Group 2
Group 3
Group 4
- 3.15 pm Summary of Proceedings
by Deputy Chief Constable, Mr Broome
- 3.25 pm Close
by Councillor R A Wootton

**OPENING OF THE SEMINAR BY COUNCILLOR R A WOOTTON,
CHAIRMAN OF WEST MIDLANDS POLICE COMMITTEE**

1. The Seminar was chaired by Councillor R A Wootton. He explained to the delegates the construction and purpose of Crime Prevention Panels and then introduced the Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Coventry, Councillor P W G Robinson.
2. Councillor P W G Robinson informed the Seminar that the Council had been active in the field of Anti-Vandalism for many years. In 1972 a Sub-Committee had been established, working in close co-operation with the Police, to study Vandalism in its many forms, including the problems of football hooliganism. This Panel, was still active.
3. The Chairman introduced a background document to the delegates, outlining the cost of Vandalism to Public Property within the City of Coventry and possible motives for Vandalism. He emphasised that Vandalism was not confined to youngsters but also included adults.
4. The Seminar was proceeded by the Chairman introducing a film produced by the West Yorkshire Constabulary entitled 'Vandalism'.

FILM - 'VANDALISM'

1. The film is intended to make the public aware of danger signs of vandalism and the need to notify the Police at an early stage.
2. It shows vandalism on public transport and the public's reaction to it, also a gang of youths committing vandalism on a housing estate.
3. It also points out that vandalism is costly not only to the Local Authority but also to the private sector.
4. The film emphasises the need that acts of vandalism should be reported to the Police at an early stage.

DR. JOANNA SHAPLAND

Well, what is interesting about the film we have just seen? We actually saw some of the vandals — this is rather unusual — what one normally sees is the results of vandalism. You can see the results as you walk round almost any street in any town, but the vandals themselves are very invisible and indeed, as the film shows, it is quite rare for such offences to be reported to any authority, let alone the Police. For example, one study of vandalism in a city suburb showed that if you ask householders or people who live there how many instances of vandalism they've suffered during a period of time — they said they'd suffered 820 instances — whereas only 402 had been reported to the Local Authority, which was the Council's direct work department, responsible for going and getting the damage mended. The Police had only heard of 64 of those 820 instances, so it's very rare for vandalism to be reported.

That means we have very little idea of who the vandals are, yet vandalism is very visible. These conditions tend to produce a picture in one's mind, a stereotype of who the vandals are, an idea of the typical vandal. When you look at say, broken windows in an empty house, who do you immediately think has done it? Probably a young person, an adolescent, you probably think it is senseless and malicious damage. Now I want to go behind that typical picture and try and look, rather sketchily I'm afraid in the time, at who does do vandalism and we will find that the reasons why people do vandalise things are very dependent on what age they are.

It's a fact that the overwhelming majority of vandalism is committed by young people, much of it by very young children, children even under the age of ten. We saw a possible example of that on the film, that child banging the car with a stick. At that age, ten and under, vandalism stems from something quite innocuous itself, play. It's part of all children's play to take things apart, to climb trees, throw stones or to scribble on walls, and put in a proper context, these things are O.K. Things naturally get damaged in such activities, typically this may be by a small group of boys and these boys will not necessarily go on to do any other kind of criminal act, yet the result of such play can be horrific. I was told last night, in fact, of one case in London where some kids aged ten or eleven got into an abandoned work-shop in part of a disused factory to play and they started playing with matchsticks, as young kids do, and some paper on the floor caught fire and the whole lot went up and it cost £200,000. On the other hand, damage can be very trivial and still be very annoying for people living near — perhaps you have all seen flower beds used as sand beds by very young kids, flowers broken off, picked, bulbs dug up, planted somewhere else by kids making their own little garden.

Going up the age range a bit, talking now about young teenagers, play becomes more a game of skill, who can break that window in an abandoned house? For example, it may be throwing a milk bottle around a group and of course, the idea is to catch the milk bottle. But eventually somebody is going to drop it and the bottle of milk is going to smash on the pavement — all people will see when they come by is just a pile of glass. Here the target for such vandalism tends to be something that is abandoned, something that is disused, something that doesn't seem to belong to anyone. That's why you're always getting damage to already damaged property, damage to building sites, damage to public rather than private buildings, damage to derelict and abandoned property or property that has been boarded up.

There needs to be some kind of releaser in the environment to set it off. This is not a deliberate planned activity in the sense that the kids set off from home, walking around the streets, saying we are going out to do an act of vandalism tonight. It is that they are going round the street in a group and they see something that doesn't seem to belong to anyone and no one seems to care about it and so someone picks up a stone or whatever and throws it at the thing. Then, partly because the others have got to show that they can dare to do it as well and partly, because it's a game, for fun and excitement, since it gets boring just walking around, others start in as well. Quite a lot of destruction can be caused by this. Here also we see the effect of the group and this gets stronger as you get into middle adolescence. Who are you? What status have you? How you think of yourself depends on who you are going round with, who your friends are, what they think of you. So, if you belong to a group where it's the done thing to do something slightly daring and perhaps something you're not quite supposed to do, then vandalism can come very often into play. Vandalism is one of the safest crimes you can commit because very few vandals are caught, because you don't have to carry anything with you in order to throw stones at buildings. Perhaps, most importantly, because there is no obvious loser present, not like picking a fight where you're quite likely to be beaten up yourself instead of you beating him up. Here there's no one to stop you and there's no one obviously around to come out and beat you up. So it's the safe kind of crime, it's a thing you can dare to do. On this can I say that self-reported studies of delinquency (which is when you ask kids what they have done) show that the majority of adolescents by the age of 15 or 16 years have committed at least one act of vandalism. However, may I say immediately that serious or frequent acts of vandalism are committed by only a few of these. These very few teenagers tend also to break into houses, steal from shops, get into fights and so forth, to do all the other kinds of street delinquency. They are the ones also who will tend to go into adult crime. So what I'm saying is that in adolescence most people have probably done one thing at one stage in their life, but only a very few kids do serious or frequent acts of vandalism or hang around the street as we saw those people do on the film, rocking the car.

By the late teens, the crime rate begins to fall off and vandalism is no exception. By now most boys, and I have been talking mostly about boys, are becoming more interested in girls than hanging around in groups in the street. Most people have got a job, so they will be moving away from their old friends at school and in the area to friends at work. Again it's a lot more fun to go and sit in pubs and drink than hang around street corners, especially with the weather as it is at the moment, and so they grow out of general street crime and in doing that they grow out of vandalism particularly. They have more responsibility in their lives and they have more things to do and more places in which to do it. However, there are a few late adolescents (and I'm now talking about those who have left school, people of 17, 18 and 19), who can't cope with these new adult pressures -- they can't cope with new friends at work, with new responsibilities, they can't find girl friends and so forth. So they try and stay with the original group they were going round with, but by now the group is younger, and so these older kids are still trying to stay in with this group, still trying to find their status within that group. They have to prove themselves to the group and they do tend to do very serious and very malicious acts of damage which can cause a large amount of cost and harm.

Moving on up the age range, in the late teens and in adults, you get another kind of what's called vandalism, because it is damage, but really it's not damage as an end in itself, but where damage is committed in the course of doing some other kind of crime, such as breaking into a house to steal fittings or trying to break into a coin box. Here again you can see the damage, but it may have been done not as an end to itself, not as vandalism, but as what we call 'instrumental vandalism' in the course of some other crime. Because so little vandalism is reported to the Police or known about by local authorities, it's not possible to say exactly how much vandalism is caused by which of these kinds of people I've described, but I suspect that the age progression counts for the majority.

There's also a few small types which I'll go through briefly. First, there's revenge against individuals or institutions. Here again the fact that vandalism is a safe crime becomes important. If you have a grudge against your landlord -- do you go and steal his property? Or do you go and beat him up or try and beat him up? Or do you go and destroy his property? The safest thing is to destroy his property when he is out and so you get quite a lot of revenge damage which again can be very serious.

Secondly, some vandalism is the result of general frustration and boredom, particularly at work. The spanners dropped quietly into the right place on the assembly line so that it stops for a tea break can be due to this. Another example is some of the disturbances in prison.

Thirdly, there is activity directed towards a specific end or cause. Finally, a rather strange kind of vandal, what one may call the 'old lag', that is someone that's been in and out of prison all their lives often for quite minor things. These people are happier in custody than free in the community. They may perform a small amount of criminal damage in order to attract attention to themselves so that they can get arrested by the Police, so that they can get back into the only place they feel secure, which is prison or a Police cell. Such a person may do a little bit of damage but it's rather a strange kind of damage because it's trying to attract attention, whereas most of the vandals we have been talking about have been trying not to attract attention.

So let's consider a broken window in an empty house caused by vandalism. All we see is a broken window. It could have been done by kids playing; it could have been done by older children as a game of skill; it could have been done by adolescents or adults in order to remove or to steal the remaining furniture and fittings in the house; it could have been done by what I called an 'old lag' to gain attention or to doss for the night; it could have been done by someone having a grudge against the present or previous landlord. In each case glass is broken and that's what we see, but the meanings for the vandal and who did it are very different and have very little in common. When you come to think about prevention and the control of vandalism, perhaps you might like to think about whether it is possible to do any one thing that will stop vandalism being committed by all these varied and different people, or whether we need to suit the prevention to the particular type of vandal.

MR ROBERT NURSEY

1. This morning, I'm talking about Prevention of Vandalism, by planning, largely in respect to the work done by the Northampton Development Corporation. I feel that before I do start talking, I must tell you something about the Northampton Development Corporation and what are its functions.
2. To start, we have to go back some way in time to the early sixties, when a survey was made by the Government of the South East part of England and as a result of this survey, it was discovered that a great number of people were living in poor and over-crowded houses. It was decided that many of these people should be moved to areas where there was more space.
3. In 1965, the New Towns Act was passed by Parliament and as a result of this Act, it was decided to expand three towns and to build a new City in North Buckinghamshire. The towns chosen for expansion were Ipswich, Peterborough and Northampton and the proposed new City was to be Milton Keynes.
4. Of the three towns chosen, Peterborough and Northampton agreed to the expansion but Ipswich declined to take part, so you had in the South Midlands, three areas which were to be expanded very considerably.
5. Northampton at this time, had a population of 130,000 and was then and still is, the largest town to be designated as a new town under the Act. The job for Northampton was to build for 100,000 head of population, to be increased to 280,000. This was an immense job and it was decided that this was to be done by the borough and Northampton Development Corporation, in partnership, with the borough working on the somewhat lorry-bound town centre and Northampton Development Corporation working on the areas surrounding the town.
6. Work was commenced by the Development Corporation in 1968 and work on the ground started in 1970. We soon realised that it was impossible to maintain the planned rate of growth, as similar work was going on in Peterborough and Milton Keynes. There was far too great a demand for resources in the area. Consequently, the programme has to be modified and Northampton's task is now to increase the population by 50,000 to bring it up to a town of 230,000.
7. Since commencement of building, almost 25,000 people have been persuaded to move to Northampton and these have been housed in 15,000 new houses. These have been built by private builders, the borough council and the Development Corporation, who have been responsible for 50% of the buildings constructed to date. The houses built by the Development Corporation are located on 14 separate estates. To serve these, 31 miles of major roads have been built and 155 miles of estate roads together with 25 new schools, colleges, community centres, shopping centres and parks.

8. The philosophy of the expansion was, also, to encourage industrialists to move to Northampton to find jobs for the increased population. One of the requirements of having a Northampton Development Corporation house, was that the applicant should have a job to move to in the area. Three hundred and twenty firms have had their premises re-located in Northampton, 52 of these coming from overseas, and the factories are built on four new Industrial Estates.
9. From the start of the expansion, Northampton has been very fortunate in having very little vandalism and it is the belief that because of the high standard which was set, this has had a considerable anti-vandalism effect. The Development Corporation was extremely fortunate in having the services of a first class architect who was concerned with the quality of the houses and of the environmental surroundings and what I talked about, attractive buildings and attractive environment.
10. Slides showing the new estates were then shown.
11. Once we had built these estates and carried out attractive landscaping wherever possible, we had the job of looking after it when it had been built. One of my jobs, is to oversee the estates and see that things are maintained in a good order. To assist, we have an Environmental Care Unit which is split into three units. There's the General Unit to carry out cleaning work, prepare footpaths, remove graffiti from walls and generally act as a fire brigade, a Landscape Unit, who will carry out repairs to landscaping in any given area that is damaged, also carry out landscaping work in their own right and a Tree Nursery Unit. One of the most noticeable factors of the Northampton Development area is that an immense number of trees have been planted and these were supplied by the Tree Nursery Unit.
12. Slides showing children at play and the Tree Nursery Unit.
13. Unless you have some alternative things for children to do they tend to turn to vandalism, but we try to keep them occupied and we build play areas with plenty of room for children to play.
14. The Tree Nursery Unit have grown a large number of trees since we started the scheme. We do of course, have to be careful how we plant the trees. In addition, the men from the combined units do provide a security patrol, so if there is vandalism we can pay special attention to an area with a view to controlling it. This is part of the job, these estates are only as good as the people who live in them. We do take every effort to involve people living in these particular estates, because with their co-operation, they will take an active part in preventing vandalism themselves and also notify the Police when vandalism takes place.
15. We have committees on the estates who liaise with us, both in the management and running of the estates. We involve youth clubs, and during the school holidays we organise events for children, again to keep them occupied and avoid vandalism. We also invite assistance of schools in the community in helping us with our work. We do get some damage and we try to prevent this as much as possible. We don't like this and we try and get any damage put right as soon as possible by the Tree Nursery Unit, re-planting trees that have been vandalised.

16. To encourage people to co-operate with us, we organise schemes. Two years ago, we planted a wood for the year 2000. This was done by the people living on the estates who came along and helped. This was done on a wet day, but still people were happy to come along and by having worked on it themselves, they have an interest in it and they help to protect it.
17. We do have problems with ammunition for vandals. In one instance, we had a footpath running close to a school which is a modern building with big windows. Between the footpath and the school we had trench drains. In case you don't know, this is a trench filled with gravel to take the water away from the footpath. The gravel was greatly accepted by the vandals who promptly threw it through the school windows, so the trench drain had to go.
18. On some of the estates, we put down gravel paths, and again this was thrown about by children. They threw it on grassed areas which wrecked the lawn mower and we now realise this is not a material we can use. Also, we used to put plastic gutters and down pipes in shopping centres and heavily used areas and again it had to be replaced with cast iron drain pipes.
19. These are some of the ways through good design and good housekeeping the Development Corporation endeavours to control vandalism, but all we can do is to try and control it. We can build an environment, we can plan, we can take care looking after it, but again it does come down to the fact that we have to make sure the people are proud to live in the area which we have built, because unless they are, there is no chance that we will maintain it.
20. I have read many articles on the subject of vandalism and some of these I find quite frankly, amusing. I'm quite sure the person who wrote them has never met a vandal. Some of them are written in a type of language I find quite unable to understand. Not being an expert on vandalism I don't know who is a vandal, so perhaps the previous speaker has given us some assistance. I do know what a vandal is and I'm quite sure that he is either bad or stupid or a combination of both and I'm afraid that a lot of the explanations for vandalism which we hear today leave me quite cold.

MR HAMILTON BLAND

1. I am a Professional Swimming Coach to the City of Coventry. I am involved with the sort of age range we're considering for about six hours a day and as far as they're concerned it is on a voluntary basis. I was with about 120 young people from five o'clock until eight o'clock this morning for swimming training and I shall see about another 150 of them this evening between about four o'clock and nine o'clock. So I am involved in sport and at the end of the day, people come to me and to my club and are coached by my assistant, because they want to be — because we make it attractive and I'll explain that in a few minutes.
2. Firstly, a little bit about myself, I am a Boltonian and proud of it, although they're not doing very well in the Second Division just now, but I'm standing here addressing you as the result of one particular soccer player. I was born in Bolton in 1943 and in the early fifties I was a young teenager and there was a man in town called Nat Lofthouse, and if you were a young lad in Lancashire in the fifties, you knew who that man was because he was nicknamed 'The Lion of Vienna'. He was a tremendous sportsman and if I could have chosen when I was twelve or thirteen, to be anyone, there was no hesitation who my choice would have been.
3. Nat Lofthouse is now a great friend of mine and is now a Manager of a supermarket. It does seem to me that a man who gave such a lead, not only to Boltonians and Lancastrians but to the nation as a whole, in the early fifties, made us all feel proud, not only in the town but also at his school and I actually chose to go to his Secondary Modern School.
4. The reason I made that point is that I believe that many of our soccer players and rigger players, still don't comprehend or understand how important they are in society and how the kids look up to them. I'm proud to say that I can still identify with these boys and girls in the front row here because I am actually involved with them for about six hours a day.
5. I'd love to have the opportunity of getting any group of vandals, if you like we could call them 'these difficult people' because I believe adamantly, that I can interest them in my particular programme that takes place at Coventry Baths. I am of the opinion that all of them could be good swimmers and that a lot of them could be rigger players, artists, musicians or whatever. I believe in young people and quite obviously we need a lot of people like me and there are a lot of people like myself, in a position to actually help young people.
6. In a few minutes, I'm going to be critical of schoolteachers, the youth service and I'm going to be critical of leisure and recreation in this City of Coventry because, I'm not happy about it and it's a super opportunity to tell you what I think about sport as a deterrent.
7. I left Lancashire and went to a college called Loughborough, which seemed to be the place to go if you wanted to be a physical educationalist. I didn't quite make it as a soccer player although I tried and played for Bolton schoolboys but I was obviously not going to do as well as Nat so I turned my hand to swimming. I swam quite well and at the end of the day I ended up swimming for Great Britain and playing Water Polo for the National team.

8. My own particular competitor, who I would have had to beat to be top, was a young lad called Bobby McGregor, who as the Americans say 'wasn't too shabby'. He was a bit quick and I very quickly realised there was no way I was going to beat him. He was literally better physically and certainly better in the skills. Still, I wanted to be involved in the Olympic Movement and I decided I would like to become a National Swimming Coach. I was fortunate enough in 1968 and 1972 to be the British Olympic Swimming Coach in Mexico and Munich. On coming back from there, I wanted to get down to grass roots level and actually coach kids again, because I don't particularly want the Ron Greenwood, Alf Ramsey type of job where I'm taking other people's good swimmers to high level events and doing a sort of finishing job.
9. I've found out, having gone to the Olympics and having been coach for many years now, that I'd much prefer to produce our own kids and I'm coaching 7, 8 and 9 year old children just now, not this morning I hasten to add but about three times a week, early in the evenings. We do coach them that young, so we are well into the potential vandals age bracket.
10. I became a schoolmaster at Rugby School and spent three years teaching at this establishment. There were very few cases of vandalism as the pupils were quite well disciplined and I suppose the pressures on them, amongst other things, prevented them turning into vandals.
11. I eventually came to Coventry in November 1972 and I persuaded the City of Coventry Corporation to take me on, as a result of the support of the Chairman of Recreation, who I think, was Arthur Ward Jnr., at the time and the Director of Recreation who is still the same gentleman, Peter McGregor. I said I would like to come to Coventry for six months and try to persuade the Corporation to employ me on a full-time basis.
12. I started off on 1 November with 60 kids who used to come in the morning and at night and used to pay £1 a week for that service. The charge was for entrance to the pool and my services as a Professional Coach, so 60 kids, was obviously bringing in about £3,000 a year. Within six months and as a result of offering good facilities and good coaching the kids were getting better. We had 140 kids in the scheme so we were bringing in about £7,000 a year. In their wisdom or otherwise, the City of Coventry took me on after this pilot scheme. I started as a senior officer on 1 April, not the best of dates to start your new job, with about 170 kids paying about £1 a week. I stayed with the Corporation for some two years and built it up to about 200.
13. My Swimming Club, The City of Coventry Swimming Club, then took the whole scheme over from the City of Coventry and said that instead of the kids paying through the ticket office and the Corporation paying me a salary and running a break-even scheme, the Swimming Club itself would like to take the whole lot over and employ me and give the profits to the Corporation so that is what happened. We've got about 300 kids paying a little bit over £1 a week and our income last year was just short of £27,000.

14. I'm a very highly paid Swimming Coach only because I think we are the best job in the country. We've got a waiting list and I've got a full time assistant and we've also got eight part-time professionals. We have the largest club without question in Great Britain, we have 2,300 members in the Swimming Club, that's the City of Coventry Swimming Club. We have about 150/200 of them get up every morning at five o'clock and come down and train and the same number train for two hours in the evening. We had five people in the last Olympic team and it's the British Final on 6 December 1980 in our own pool at Coventry and if we don't win it, there will be a spot of bother. Basically, I'm employed by the Swimming Club on a two year contract, a little bit like Gordon Milne, although my contract is a little bit shorter than his seems to be, although before the two year contract expires I can be fired and they can employ someone else who might do a better job. We're not talking about people who swim for Great Britain, we have in fact got more than that, we are talking about a Swimming Club with 2,000 plus members, so I'm not talking of elitism but I am talking about 2,000 of which we have put 20 people in the National team which includes a lot of Coventrians.
15. Our latest one, Gareth Sykes, son of Graham Sykes, a very famous swimming father, Commonwealth Gold Medallist and a Coventrian who goes to King Henry VIII Grammar School. Now I'm delighted to say we had a lady from Woman's Own recently who came to interview Gareth and said, "What a moron this boy must be, five hours a day in the water just looking into this chlorine and so on, he must be a moron." I said, "The boy had traveled the world, he's been to South America, Soviet Union, Europe about 17 times — he's just taken two 'A' levels, he's just got a full scholarship to the University of Florida at Gainslow, that doesn't fit my definition of your average moron."
16. Most of our people do well academically and I just happen to think that kids in our programme are very, very lucky, because we have no problems, and I should say we do see them often for four or five hours each day. We have a very strict discipline in my club and I have sent people home at 5.32 in the morning and when I say we start at 5.30, I mean just that. I don't mean nine or ten year olds, these are my top people, the people swimming for Great Britain. I keep a register and I can tell you my attendances for the last seven years (if the tick is in a circle with a 5 to the left of it you are 5 minutes late, if a tick is in a circle with a 10 to the right of it you are 10 minutes early). At the end of the day, I can show any parent or any kid that feels they are not getting any better, why they're not getting better because they're coming late or whatever. As I say to my people, I may be the worst swimming coach the world has ever known but I'll start on time because I believe that is where it all does start.
17. I would like to have the opportunity, and I really would, of having a look at how good 'these difficult people' might be in a swimming pool. They might be awful but then again, I might just get one of them that's good but each and everyone of them would get my full attention. I'd personalise the thing and I'd make them feel important. I don't know but there might be one of them that could be a good swimmer. If they're not, they would still take part in our programme.

18. Tomorrow night we've got five teams going all over the West Midlands and in the East Midlands, about 260 swimmers, in five motor coaches with chaperons and all the rest of it and I think we are doing a fair job. So we are not elitists and in my club we certainly have a disciplinary procedure. If you step out of line and obviously we have small misdemeanours of sorts, we have our own discipline and I believe that's what it's all about.
19. I was interested to read in the Telegraph this morning, a report of Brian Clough's comments yesterday in the House of Commons. For those who read the 'Open Committee Report on Football' or the 'All Party Committee Report on Soccer', which are the problems that Hector Monroe and his Ministers and fellow M.P.'s are trying to solve with the F.A., Brian Clough said, in his opinion, "that soccer clubs ought to become the centres of the community". Now, I couldn't go along with that, what I could go along with is saying that quite obviously sports centres must play a far more important role in the community life and I think it has to be said that in Coventry, with its fantastic Sports Centre — a 50 metre pool and Sports Centre itself probably now worth between 10 to 15 million pounds to reproduce, it cost £1.6 million in 1966 when it opened. We have excellent facilities. We certainly won't see another of those things for many years to come.
20. I think it's still failing — we only had less than a million patrons last year. That's not good enough for a town of 333 thousand plus. The Sports Centre and Principal Organisers and I'm not saying this in any privileged company, because I criticise Officers and the Sports Centre Management about this lack of attendance. I think things are becoming a little expensive. It's very difficult to get a game of squash unless you can go down there at nine o'clock and book your court and you have to be careful that having built a centre to facilitate for the people, you don't then cost them out of it. I think this is one of the problems with the central sports facility like our own, which is, in my eyes, probably the best in the country, and I don't say that because I work there, I travel a lot and it is one of the best in the country.
21. One of its downfalls is because it cost so much. I believe, it probably loses the rate-payers about £1 million a year, but then the parks cost us a few pounds and so do the libraries, in heating, in loan charges and staffing and all the rest of it. It is a very essential service.
22. One of the problems, however, is that we haven't built Regional Sports Centres as well, around the City. Everyone has to come to their sport and it doesn't seem to be happening. I also work at Comprehensive Schools in Coventry in the evening, President Kennedy in particular. I see some super facilities being used, but it always appears to me not quite optimally and obviously with the cost of these sports facilities now, they have to be used optimally.
23. As far as the youth service is concerned, my wife's been a youth leader for many years and I've been openly critical to many youth leaders. I don't think they are quite doing the job. I know they haven't got the finance, but I really do see a lot of kids in youth clubs several nights each week who are often just drinking coffee or hanging about outside. We had a few problems last week at President Kennedy caused by a few youth members wrecking cars belonging to people who were in fact playing sports in the sports hall.

24. It is, and I'm sure a lot of the youth people would agree with me, just falling short. They need more finance and they need more facilities and all the rest of it and I think as a nation, we're not even paying lip service to needs now, of leisure and recreation in this country. Quite obviously there is going to be more and more of it and there seems to be less and less money from Central Government. I'm sure the City of Coventry's Recreational Committee could do a fine job if it had the finance to build the facilities and to provide the personnel.
25. Success in Coventry is because we've got a 50 metre pool or because, in the early seventies, it was quite an affluent City and because we've got a Sports Centre as well. I think the real reason is, that facilities only work if you've got someone in them to really make them work and just now it's my job to make sure financially and economically if you like, that we have at least 2,000 people in the club and 300 people in regular training. There's only one way these people are going to keep on coming, and that's because they like the thing that I offer and I believe in. It seems to me that swimming in Coventry can have 2,000 members.
26. I'd love to be in Jimmy Hill's seat or Gordon Milne's office because I think the coaching of soccer, the way it is presented in this City, is nothing short of appalling. I've said it before, almost in this very room. In fact, the Committee room adjacent to this room in 1973. I had Alan Wade the Director of the F.A., Arthur Wall Jnr., Joe Mercer, who was then Manager or a Director at Coventry, Peter McGregor and a few of the recreational people and I said, "If I can get 300 kids to pay a pound a week or £15,000 a year or thereabouts, to come and swim with us, I'd love the opportunity of organising soccer properly because it seems to me that unless you go to a good soccer school, or one of the local clubs who train once a week, you've got no chance." It seems to me, that with so many people wishing to play soccer in this City, the game could be much better organised to use the excellent outdoor, or all weather playing areas that are often floodlit. The use of the Ryton ground, the use of Highfield, the use of possibly the Vice President's Car Park at Highfield Road which is an all weather area where soccer could be organised.
27. Rigger is much the same, I was interested to read David Duckham's book published on Monday. The book's called 'Die for England' and he speaks of great concern about an aspect very well covered by, I think, Steve Evans in the Coventry Evening Telegraph, about the lack of concern the senior clubs seem to have had for the small clubs around the City.
28. The fact of the matter is, in this City, sport is not being organised 25% well enough. There is only one way sport can be organised, as it is in the Soviet Union and I was fortunate enough to be in Moscow at the Olympics. I've been abroad several times before, to East Germany at their sports centres in Dresden, Leipzig, East Berlin etc. There's only one way they organise it, they put professional people in charge of it then they give them a chance by giving them a facility and making it financially possible. I believe that if we attacked the problem of vandalism and I'd much rather see it as a problem of recreational leisure time of the people of Coventry in that way, I'm sure that a large proportion of the problems would in fact be eradicated.

29. Sport isn't obviously the only way and if I was an artist or a musician I would be saying exactly the same thing, but I would say as a nation, we only pay a very poor lip service to recreation and leisure.
30. I believe the very best sports club in the world, including the American Universities, including the Russian Sports Clubs and the East German Centres of Excellence, is in fact in Central London and it's called the Royal Ballet School.
31. The Royal Ballet School is at 164 Telgarth Road, and they have about 10,000 auditions each year throughout the country. They accept the best 50 young dancers aged ten to eleven, what they then do, irrespective of social background or economic circumstances and indeed intellect, is to take them away from home at ten or eleven and put them in a little place called White Lodge in Richmond Park. They then give them the very best teachers and if you go to the Royal Ballet School in Telgarth Road you will see the Fonteyns, the Wayne Sleeps and the Nureyev's actually coaching our young dancers. It's a three year course and at present we've got a hundred and fifty young dancers being prepared and being paid for by local authorities because, if my daughter, when she's ten gets a place in the Royal Ballet School, my local authority tend to accept that as educationally viable and give her a similar grant as if my child was going to a Polytechnic or a University. So what's happening in Central London is, that we are taking kids away from home and we're putting them in a good facility. We're giving them good teachers and the consequence is, we have and probably always will produce, the finest dancers in the world.
32. We criticise the Russians and the East Germans for doing exactly the same thing in sport when they take young children away from their homes and put them in a school. They give them an education - the education at the Royal Ballet School isn't great - three subjects English, French and History and sometimes a notation course for writing down dances. What the Russians and East Germans do very well is, they put them in schools and educate them but they also allow them to take part in something they're good at.
33. I hope that if my daughter is a good musician, or a swimmer or whatever, she will be given the opportunity to achieve her full potential. I believe, here among these kids, one of them is probably a great sportsman. He's got very little chance in Coventry because we are not geared up to identifying that talent and we're certainly not geared up to dealing with it once we've identified it.
34. That's what we're doing at Coventry and that's what they do at the Royal Ballet School and we're the envy of the Ballet World while East Germany, the USA and Russia are the envy of the sporting world and I think there's a little bit of hypocrisy about that.
35. In conclusion, I think the kids of Coventry, the kids of the West Midlands are as good as any other kids in the nation. They just need a chance. We've given them the chance in swimming and we've the best club in Great Britain. I hope that solves some of the problems.

MR ALAN CLIFFORD

1. You have sat through a lot of talk and I'm not going to subject you to much more. I'd like to comment from one or two other different angles to look at the problem that is central to our consideration today. One of the earlier speakers talked about planting daffodils and sometime having problems that they'd been plucked. The only story I can tell you about daffodils is that a few years ago I took a party of 'Over 60's' away to Farndale for a day on a coach trip and they absolutely denuded the valley and brought the coach back full of literally thousands of daffodils, so we do have senior delinquents as well as juvenile delinquents.
2. Now, to read you a quotation, particularly as we are talking about young people today - 'The world is passing through troubled times and the young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no reverence for parents or old age and what passes for wisdom with us, is foolishness with them - and as for the girls they're foolish and immodest and unwomanly in speech and behaviour and in dress'. That didn't come out of The Sun yesterday, of course. It didn't go out in the Daily Telegraph either, it was written by Peter the Hermit in 1274. He had all sorts of problems with kids of your age when he endeavoured to take them away on what was subsequently known as the 'Children's Crusade'.
3. Vandalism today, as I've said, isn't entirely confined to young people but it's mainly concentrated among the younger set anyway, young adults. It seems to me that the mindless violence, as well as the random wrecking of property both public and private, is concentrated in those parts of the world affected by Britain at one time or another. Now why this should be so - why it should be the old Commonwealth and the USA, which was originally part of the Commonwealth, gives me to think Hamilton Bland's right.
4. There isn't any vandalism in the Soviet Union. I spent some time there both as a prisoner of war and as a visitor. Subsequently, the reasons are complex but the methods I wouldn't want introducing here. You do see graffiti in other parts of Europe; outside the UK in France and in Germany or Spain but it's all political with a large or small 'P' - it's all politically influenced or politically biased. Some of you will remember the riots in the Sourbonne a few years ago; some of you may even remember Red Rudie, but those revolts all had political undertones. You don't see the sort of graffiti like 'Up the skins' - 'Soap rule O.K.' or whatever: none of that sort of thing will you see in the rest of Europe. You do see paint spray signs in France at present, for instance saying - 'Stop importing Italian Wine' - because it's beggaring the French economy. You will see in Germany signs up saying 'Send the guest workers home' - because it's causing unemployment among German national youngsters by the importation of so many Turks.
5. So what is different about Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA? Is it as some of the continentals and the French in particular say - 'The British are ungovernable'. We live in families like the rest of the world and we have schools on the surface not too different from the rest of the world, so what is the variable? Is it our school system? - most of you are still at school. Is it more repressive or is it more liberal compared with the rest of Europe, Germany, France or whatever?

6. In Coventry, I think we have schools that are more liberal, and I think we have schools that are more casual than the average and in that we don't depart from the rest of the UK. So what is different? Is possibly our education machine, the education service, the schools and colleges less relevant? Is what goes on in them less relevant to what goes on in the world outside, than it is elsewhere? I was listening to Sir Joseph Pope last week who is the former Vice Chairman of the University of Aston — and he said, 'Last year, if you looked at all the History papers of all the examination boards of 'O' levels in history, only about 1.5 of the questions offered, are about the history of commerce and technology and yet we're the country that one hundred odd years ago sparked the Industrial Revolution.' We're the country that at present is going fastest downhill because our failure to exploit the initiatives of our Scientists.
7. When people come to write the history of this country over the past 50 years, I think what they will be talking about is the failure of our technologists and scientists to relate to our economists, accountants and the failure of both of them to relate to the sales people, and the blame for some of that must go to our schools. I'm not just talking about Coventry now, I'm talking about the UK as a whole. If our schools don't prepare people like yourselves for the world that follows, the world of industry, and before long the post industrial world, well, then I think we are going to have more problems than we have got at present. But if we're going to change attitudes and that is what we must be about, it seems to me, we are going to start interfering in people's lives and I think we made a start about ten years ago in Coventry by doing just that through the agency of our schools with the institution of Community Schools from which some of you come.
8. If we talk about violence and vandalism, particularly vandalism of schools property, look at Sydney Stringer, the oldest established Community College in Coventry and not a hundred miles from here, with about 1600 to 1800 youngsters in every day and about the same number of adults in every evening. After eight years intensive use it is one of the least vandalised buildings in Britain and I would say, let alone in Coventry.
9. The forms the changes need to take should be discussed more widely, you'll need to talk, and as recipients and participants in the educational system, you'll know and will have something to say about what they might be. There's a line in this report that talks about the problems being aggravated by unemployment. If our future is tied up with life chances and with hope, well I'm worried because the unemployment prospects in Coventry are dire at present and some of you who are in the transitional period of leaving school and hoping to enter the world of work are caught in that mill race at present.
10. We will, within the next two or three weeks, be launching an imaginative scheme for helping youngsters in that difficult transitional period, not so much from 16 to 18 but from about 14 to 18. If we get it right then things may flow from it but if we don't you'll have Bristol all over again here.
11. I started with a quotation so I'd like to finish with one. It is from a sociologist, not an Englishman, who had this to say, "I'd to learn once again that love is not enough: that the good life can be achieved by the individual and society, only if it is based on the constructive, healing, personality-building and not just ego-building propensities of work."

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ADDRESS

1. The Chief Constable expressed his appreciation that so many people were prepared to give their time, in an effort to assist the Police in their attempt to find remedies for one of our major social ills.
2. Having first thanked the Chairman, he saw his role as needing to highlight some of the points made, to crystalize their thoughts in readiness for the discussions programmed for the afternoon session.
3. He emphasised that vandalism is a modern problem and primarily an urban one and there are no precise figures but from careful consideration of the figures made available by the Home Office Standing Committee on Crime Prevention from the Working Party set up in 1974, there is no doubt that the annual cost of vandalism to the community in England and Wales runs into tens of millions of pounds and is increasing fast.
4. Sir Philip then referred to the background document prepared in 1976, when it was estimated that in the West Midlands vandalism was costing the community approximately £5 million per annum. Therefore, in the light of inflation the 1980 figure must be somewhere in the region of £10 million. He pointed out that if these figures were accurate, they would represent, as far as the West Midlands Police were concerned, an equivalent amount for providing the salaries of another 800 Police Officers for a full year. He emphasised that this waste of money had been displayed in some of its facets in the film shown during the morning.
5. He then summarised various points made by previous speakers in order to provide a basis for the later discussions in which he hoped the younger people would play a major role.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon session commenced with four Seminar Groups each comprising a cross section of the young people attending, together with adults acting as advisers. Each group was chaired by a member of the Crime Prevention Panel and one of the teenagers acted as spokesman for the group. The group took an individual topic raised by the set questions and discussed the implication of this topic and produced a verbal report for the main Seminar.

The topics were:-

- (1) Schools are now now of the favourite haunts of the vandals and there are some schools in the West Midlands which have almost been destroyed through vandalism.

Why is this so and what steps can be taken to prevent this type of crime taking place.
- (2) Why does vandalism tend to occur more in some parts of a city than others and do you think there are sufficient amenities to occupy young people and dissuade them from committing this type of crime. If not, how would you improve the situation.
- (3) Why do they do it? You have heard the expression, possibly from adults, when houses have been vandalised, graffiti sprayed on walls, bus seats torn or telephone boxes damaged. Discuss.
- (4) Most persons dealt with for vandalism are under Section 1 (1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Do you think the sentences handed out by the Magistrates' are appropriate or do you think other forms of punishment would have a greater deterrent effect.

When the Seminar re-assembled later, the spokesman for the first group presented the group's report which was then followed by a general discussion among all members on the topic, each group then following sequentially.

(With hindsight it was felt that a period longer than three quarters of an hour should be given to the Seminar group discussion and that the ratio of adults to young people should be no more than 1:2).

SUMMARY OF SEMINAR BY MR BROOME

DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE, WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

1. Mr Broome pointed out that there are many different types of vandalism and that it is not all committed by young people, but people of all age groups — from toddlers to teenagers and adults. He thought one fundamental point that transpired is that vandalism can thrive and take place where there is a lack of care; by parents in what the children are doing or where they are; by society who see acts of vandalism and do nothing about it; and a lack of care by those who commit vandalism.
2. He thought that too little is known about the true levels of vandalism and although we have records where vandalism is classified as a crime (because it exceeded £20 to put right) it is really a gross under-estimate of the damage that has been caused.
3. Mr Broome discussed Community Policing and the benefits of getting the community working together in caring about their particular environment and the need for thought by planners and designers.
4. He referred to the need to harness the energy of young people, through sport to develop their personalities and by involving young people a lot more in developing ideas that could combat vandalism.
5. He thought that the Seminar had served to increase our understanding of what vandalism is and what young people in particular think about it.

**CLOSURE OF SEMINAR BY
COUNCILLOR R A WOOTTON
CHAIRMAN OF WEST MIDLANDS POLICE COMMITTEE**

1. Councillor R A Wootton thanked the Deputy Chief Constable, Mr R F Broome for his summary of the days events.
2. He stated that he was sure that all delegates had found the Seminar instructive and informative and perhaps everyone had gained new knowledge concerning the serious problem of vandalism in our present day society.
3. He extended his thanks to the guest speakers, senior Police Officers and the delegates for the contributions in making the days events, interesting and worthwhile and he concluded by thanking members of the City of Coventry Crime Prevention Panel for their organisation and planning of the programme of the days events.
4. He then formally closed the Seminar and thanked all persons present for their attendance.

ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE SEMINAR

1. At a later meeting of the Vandalism Sub-Committee of the City of Coventry Crime Prevention Panel, the reports made by the representatives of the Seminar group were considered and condensed into six main recommendations.
2. These recommendations were incorporated into a document which formed the basis of discussions at a further meeting held between the Sub-Committee members and the pupil representatives (See Appendix 'C').
3. This meeting was held at the Assembly Hall, Divisional Headquarters, Little Park Street, Coventry on Tuesday 10 February 1981 (See Appendix 'D').

APPENDIX 'A'

REGISTRATION OF DELEGATES

Members of the Seminar Vandalism Sub-Committee

Inspector B Dawson	West Midlands Police Crime Prevention Department
PC J Wilkins	West Midlands Police Crime Prevention Dept at Coventry
Mr D Lewin	Deputy Headmaster Foxford Comprehensive School
Mrs B Pritchard	Styvechale Ratepayers Association
Mrs M I F Mitchell	Federation of Ratepayers
Mr R Ormrod	British Telecom
Mr B Shilling	West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive

Visiting Speakers

Dr Joanna Shapland	Centre of Criminological Research
Mr Robert Nursey	Estates Inspector, Northampton Development Corporation
Mr Hamilton Bland DLC(Hons)	National Swimming Coach
Mr Alan Clifford	Education Advisor

Participating Officials

Chief Superintendent Snow	Home Office Crime Prevention Centre
Superintendent Rickells	West Midlands Police
Chief Inspector Cross	West Midlands Police
Inspector Stewart	West Midlands Police
PS Godridge	West Midlands Police
PC Bowen	West Midlands Police
Councillor Adams	Coventry City Council
Councillor Cooper	Coventry City Council
Councillor White	Coventry City Council
Councillor Waugh	Coventry City Council
Councillor D White	Coventry City Council
Mr Hicks	Deputy Town Clerk
Councillor Mrs Stoneman	Police Committee
C F Redgrave JP	Police Committee
Mr Horn	Chamber of Commerce - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel
Mr Lear	Scouts Association - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel
Mrs Beebee	Care of Victims - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel
Mrs Hart	Citizens Advice Bureau - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel
Mr Green	Careers Officer - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel
Mr Baxter	Education Dept - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel
Mr Bailey	British Insurance Assoc - Coventry Crime Prevention Panel

Guests

Chief Constable Sir Philip Knights CBE QPM	West Midlands Police
Deputy Chief Constable R F Broome	West Midlands Police
Superintendent H West	West Midlands Police
Councillor P W G Robinson	Deputy Lord Mayor, City of Coventry
Councillor R A Wootton	Police Committee (Chairman)
Chief Inspector Wallace	West Midlands Police Crime Prevention Officer
Mrs Middleton JP	Coventry City Crime Prevention Panel
Mr Decker	Junior Chamber of Commerce - Coventry City Crime Prevention Panel

Participating Pupils

Miss S Kipling	Mr E Bradley	Miss J Court
Mr K Singh	Mr M Stone	Mr K Green
Mr I Hole	Miss M Goodwille	Mr B S Dhillon
Miss R Butt	Mr M Taylor	Mr C M Singh
Miss S Boote	Mr T Annan	Mr H Davies
Miss T Borthwick	Mr S Crass	Mr A Patel
Mr M Hinkson	Mr E Wilson	Mr A Singh
Mr I Grant	Mr M Smith	Mr S Francis
Mr T Coate	Miss J Trickett	Miss V Patel
Mr D Ullah	Miss K Patel	Miss S Radford
Mr I Curley	Miss E Devoy	Mr S Smith
Mr M Shipton	Mr J Murphy	Miss D Rawlings
Mr O'Brien	Mr J Tranter	Mr Ancil

Staff Members

Mr J Noone
Mrs Oxley
Mr P Rossborough
Mr Davies

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTVANDALISM SEMINAR1. Introduction

1.1. What is "Vandalism"

In Great Britain the term "vandalism" does not appear in the criminal law. It originally referred to the ruthless destruction of, or damage to, venerable, artistic or beautiful works resulting from the sacking of Rome, Western Europe and Northern Africa by the Vandals, an Eastern Germanic tribe, in the fifth century. It has been defined — "the wanton and apparently motiveless destruction of, or damage to, property without any clear advantage accruing to anyone, least of all the perpetrators" and as "the illegal destruction or defacement of property by any method including arson".

1.2. The term is used to refer to activities which lie outside this definition, for example violence to bus crews is sometimes included, with damage to buses, under the umbrella of vandalism, but violence to people, as opposed to property, is not really within the scope of the phenomenon of "Vandalism". There are other activities which are also taken to be vandalism, for example where there is damage to property which can directly or indirectly result from acts of theft and, whether or not the damage is the main motivation of the activity, it is considered to be vandalism.

1.3. Under the criminal law of England and Wales "Vandals" will usually be dealt with under Section 1(1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971, which provides that "a person who, without lawful excuse, destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged, shall be guilty of an offence". They could, under certain circumstances, be dealt with under other provisions of the act, for example if they also intended to endanger life or were reckless as to whether the life of another would be endangered, or under the Malicious Damage Act 1861, certain sections of which still remain, for example for displacing any rail with intent to obstruct an engine.

2. Costs

2.1. Vandalism is expensive to the community although the full extent is not known and no precise assessment can be made. What is clear, however, is that the cumulative effect of literally millions of acts of destruction, most of them minor themselves, is far more serious, expensive and deleterious to the environment than the public can possibly appreciate.

2.2. In seeking to obtain a precise assessment, there are a number of factors which present difficulty, for example the ability to be able to distinguish between acts of actual vandalism and cases of damage from heavy wear and tear or overuse, from misuse and from accidents. Broken windows in a school always suggest vandalism, but it may be happening because there is nowhere to play football a safe distance from a building and a decent game of football is no fun without a goal but is it vandalism to paint goal posts on to the playground wall? Damage can be caused by using things for purposes for which they are not intended. Whilst adults may be tolerant of a five year old using chairs and tables as a space rocket, the

woodwork teacher may call it vandalism when the fourth year ruin his best chisel by using it as a screwdriver or damage a polished surface by cutting straight onto it with a sharp tool. Certain areas in a school take a battering from heavy wear and tear; circulation areas (corridors and entrances) are an example. As it is unusual for them to be decorated more often than the rest of the school, they may well look as if they have been vandalised and when classroom doors fall off their hinges they have not always been kicked in; often they cannot stand up to normal school use. Street furniture such as bollards often sustain damage as a result of road traffic accidents and not at the hands of vandals.

2.3 However, it is important that there are proper recording procedures and that every instance of vandalism is recorded in spite of the difficulty in separating deliberate and accidental damage. Too often vandalism is rectified in the course of general maintenance. In the Criminal Statistics of England and Wales any act of damage was recorded as a crime only if it was damage to the value of £20 or more, and only since 1 January 1977 have figures of offences involving damage of £20 or less also been collated. Thus acts of damage were only recorded as a crime if they involved property of fairly substantial value. A broken window, a smashed electric light bulb, a slogan paint sprayed on a wall would in all probability not be 'crimed'. It is estimated that only 3% of cases of vandalism are likely to find their way into official criminal statistics. Even so, during 1979, there were 8940 offences committed in the West Midlands where the damage was £20 or over and the total cost was £1,166,790. In addition, 9591 cases were recorded of damage under £20. The more sinister offence of arson which means the unlawful setting fire to property, showed a very slight reduction over the previous year 627 compared to 636, but the value of this property was £2,525,211. On a more local basis, similar categories of crime in Coventry during 1979 are as follows:—

Arson	162 cases	Value £253,871
Criminal damage	1117 cases	Value £139,390
		<u>Total £393,260</u>

There were also 1484 offences where the damage was less than £20. This amounts to approximately 15% of the force total.

2.4 The Working Party of the Home Office Standing Committee on Crime Prevention could not put a figure on vandalism but said it could be as high as £100 million a year. Each year, vandalism and arson in schools are said to cost Britain over £15 million and the cost of repairing vandalised telephone kiosks is almost £1 million. The British Railway Board estimate that their probable annual vandalism bill is well over £3 million. Damage to signalling and telecommunications equipment alone is estimated to run well over £300,000 per annum and a study of vandalism on the railways of North East England revealed fencing repair costs of over £150,000 in 1975. The manpower costs for British Transport Police investigating crimes of vandalism are put at £2 million a year. The Building Industry reports that the cost of vandalism is enormous, running into millions of pounds annually. The cost of damage or replacement of materials is about 3% of the contract figure and beside this, replacements being not always immediately available, financial loss is accrued owing to the over-running of contracts.

2.5 It is some-times forgotten that the costs incurred in the Public Sector or even in Industry or Commerce are passed onto the individual either as increased rates, fuel costs or often price increases. In 1976 a report was prepared by the Crime Prevention Unit of the West Midlands Police which showed that the cost to the rate-payers in this area was in the order of £5,000,000 per annum, which is £14,000 per day or £9 per minute. The following figures, which will almost certainly have increased in monetary value over the last three years indicate the spread of costs over the county:—

Birmingham District Council	£3,500,000
Coventry District Council	£ 500,000
Sandwell District Council	£ 100,000
Solihull District Council	£ 100,000
Wolverhampton District Council	£ 100,000
West Midlands County Council	£ 300,000
West Midlands Passenger Transport	

2.6 The senseless vandalism caused to West Midlands Passenger Transport in Coventry during the last 12 months not only caused many buses to be taken out of service but cost the rate payers almost £2,000. This included 3 bus shelters, 43 torn seats, 42 windows, 5 windcreens and countless others where graffiti was used. It should be borne in mind that these numbers only include those offences which were reported and there were many more unreported instances which nevertheless greatly increased the cost of repair.

2.7 These costs include only for the Local Authority spending and therefore exclude a significant major part of the cost borne by the nationalised industries and the commercial world at large. Also the consequential costs of such wanton action is ignored. In 1976 a motor cyclist was killed in Sandwell after vandals had put out the traffic lights. Also a small boy was killed after wandering through a protective fence ripped down by vandals. Vandalised railway gates and fences caused the recent death of an eleven year old boy in Birmingham and the City Council are continually replacing similar property in Coventry. Who is to say that some child or elderly or disabled person will not die as a result of not being seen by a motorist because there is a 'pool of darkness' resulting from a playfully thrown snowball, or more likely a viciously thrown stone.

2.8 We are rapidly approaching the time when vandalism is becoming accepted as a way of life and it strikes at the fabric of community life and our environment. Nobody gains from it — but everyone loses. The reasons for it are not clear — at the root of the matter there may be social or economic causes, or more likely an amalgam of a number of factors. There is a need to identify and to explore ways of taking some positive steps to improve the situation. For this reason this seminar has been organised and all delegates asked to provide as much statistical information as they can. It is believed that local knowledge can really help to (a) quantify the size of the problem and (b) point towards remedies ('remedies' because it is an illness or disease of modern society).

3 The Nature of Vandalism

3.1 Vandalism like other forms of social deviancy is largely associated with youth and adolescence. Any attempt to understand it is dogged from the start by the words like "meaningless", "senseless" and "motiveless" and the extent to which these descriptions apply is a matter for study. However it has been suggested that acts of vandalism makes sense to the vandals and it should be noted that much of the property destroyed or damaged is public rather than private, and either derelict, unused or in a state of partial completion. Accepting that the behaviour has a meaning for the individual, types of vandalism may be identified:-

- (a) 'Acquisitive' -- describing damage done in order to acquire money or property, such as damage to telephone boxes.
- (b) 'Tactical' -- a conscious tactic employed to advance some other end, for example jamming a machine in a factory to ensure a rest period or setting off fire bells in a school to avoid lessons.
- (c) 'Ideological' -- where the person intends to further an explicit ideological cause e.g. breaking embassy windows during a demonstration, chalking slogans on walls.
- (d) 'Vindictive' -- where damage is carried out in order to gain revenge, such as damage to a school against which a person has a grievance.

- (e) 'Play' -- describing damage done in the context of a game and which can be rationalised as play, especially among youngsters such as how many windows can be broken. This usually involves children up to the age of 12 years who are not generally known for their delinquency and most of whom do not go on to commit any other sort of crime. This is not to be confused with 'accidents' which result from innocent although perhaps thoughtless play.

- (f) 'Group' -- as the child moves into the 13 - 16 age group the character of the vandalism changes from play to the individuals standing in the group. This involves a small group whose activities are aimed at becoming the more daring member of the group and thereby gaining more prestige.

4. Causes

4.1. It has been suggested that the growth of the affluent society may be at the heart of the problem, which has certainly made itself known with the greater provision of public property and a lack of a sense of respect and appreciation of other people's property. As the result of the affluent society there are weakened family ties with the working mothers and with both parents indulging in the various activities available at night, for instance games of bingo at pubs and clubs, separate or together. There has certainly been a decline in supervision for the young, responsibility for which rests firmly and squarely with parents. More parents than before seem content not to know where their teenage children roam at night and children now have more money to go further afield, parents giving their children generous pocket money in the hope that they will find their own entertainment.

4.2. This phenomenon has led to an increase in unstable young delinquents conforming to a common psychological type, namely the youngster who starts with defiance against his parents and carried on this defiance against other figures of authority namely teachers, police and society as a whole. The increase in the number of truants tends to support the suggestion that there are more insecure children. Whilst discipline and understanding should start in the home, it must be continued through the school and learning to live in society is as essential as learning to read and write. Often failures at school or those alienated from home tend to become the group leaders and whilst the average school vandal is proceeding to take his place in society the hard core will continue to become involved in the larger scale events which catch the headlines, e.g., football hooligans.

4.3. These young delinquents tend to form into groups and society has failed in some measure to provide sufficiently for the leisure activities of youth so as to satisfy the need for challenge and for outlets for natural aggression. There are sports grounds, playgrounds and youth clubs, but there is an increasing need for other kinds of youth involvement which will attract the 'unclubable' whose activities are certainly one of the main sources of damage.

4.4. Furthermore, the process of large scale rehousing has had an unsettling effect on young people, especially when moved to a new, unfinished estate where no provision has been made for any organisation for them. The situation is aggravated by unemployment

amongst school leavers since boredom and frustration lead to vandalism. Many sociologists believe that gaunt high-rise estates are the breeding grounds of vandalism and that ill-planned buildings in a way attract their own destruction. The front door of a semi-detached house recognisably belongs to an individual — someone who will protect, give chase or call the police if the door is vandalised, but the lifts in a high rise block belong to no-one in particular and so vandals have fewer inhibitions about damaging them just as unoccupied property is a prime target.

4.5. Drink has been blamed for vandalism and more and more young people state at Court that excessive drinking led them to commit crime. People do things in drink which they would not otherwise do and young people leave public houses at closing time, considering it too early to go home. They gather in the streets in high spirits, sometimes committing damage and sometimes visiting youth clubs or church discotheques to cause disorder, damage and injury.

4.6. Many people blame magistrates for being too lenient in dealing with vandals and some have called for measures such as corporal punishment and labour farms. There must be a deterrent, especially ~~where~~ the influence of the mass media has made it difficult for young people to distinguish what society really considers right or wrong. The exposure of corruption in high places develops cynicism that 'everyone is on the fiddle' and leads to a lack of respect for authority and property. In a similar way violence on the field of play or arena cannot do anything but encourage like attitudes amongst the supporters.

5 Control of Vandalism

5.1. Most of the causes relate to vandalism committed by juveniles but of course vandalism is also caused by adult offenders. However, the best way to tackle that problem is by taking a long term view and concentrating efforts on youth. The attempts by local authorities and other organisations to come to terms with the problem appear to have been largely ineffective. Some authorities have an essentially defeatist approach in regarding the damage done as not worth bothering with, either because each incident is trivial (although the cumulative cost may be high) or because enforcement and preventive measures are impossible to apply or cost more than the actual damage.

5.2. A positive approach is an educational one, based on the philosophy that if only people were more aware of the seriousness of the problem—its financial cost to the community, the potential physical danger to the community, its threats to cherished values — they would do something about it. In this connection posters and leaflets can be distributed, articles written for publication by the media, talks given and exhibitions arranged. It is important that the active support of parents and teachers should be enlisted. The responsibilities of parents could be effectively established with wider publicity being given to cases where parents are made liable for fines and compensation awarded against young offenders; there is scope for the latter practice to be more widely adopted by magistrates. The most common public reaction to vandalism is that all that is required is better detection by the police and the imposition of stiffer penalties by the Courts.

5.3. However, a psychological or sociological approach must also be taken. It is necessary to examine life styles and to focus on the educational and employment deficiencies of certain groups with the object of trying to understand and then eradicate the social causes which prompt the desire in members of the group to express themselves by acts of vandalism,

for example reducing boredom by diverting the energy of young people into recreational and leisure activities to occupy some of their spare time. To this end local authorities can provide sports grounds and facilities, playgrounds and youth clubs and give added support to the voluntary youth organisations to enable them to expand their activities.

5.4. Accepting the assumptions that vandalism is partly attributable to a lack of identification with the property destroyed, the use of the children as tree wardens and tree planters, arranging for them to look after trees or beds of plants or naming personal trees after children, has been found to be a useful approach.

5.5. There should be a much wider use of vandal-restraint materials and at the same time more attention should be paid by architects and planners to the design and siting of public buildings and other facilities so as to improve opportunities for their natural surveillance by members of the public and others and to produce an atmosphere where there is a regard for the maintenance of public property. Damaged buildings should be repaired promptly, and vacated dwellings, not scheduled for early re-occupation, should be secured by close boarding on doors and windows; vacated dwellings, due for early re-occupation, should be fitted with curtains to preserve the impression of occupancy. In vandal-prone areas schools should have resident caretakers and possibly anti-vandal alarm systems.

6 Summary

6.1. The problem is very wide and complex and probably hits at the very roots of any society which has progressed beyond the mere need to survive (food and shelter) and therefore as such needs to be tackled by the whole of society..

7 Acknowledgements

1 To the Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor P W G Robinson, for his help and encouragement and for agreeing to speak at the Seminar.

2 To all the speakers (see programme) for their willingness to partake.

3 To the Coventry Crime Prevention Panel for assisting with the organisation.

4 To Chief Inspector Alan Cross 'F' Division for permission to use abstracts from his report on Vandalism written in January 1978 as a result of a Winston Churchill Fellowship Award.

APPENDIX 'C'

STUDENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

Points extracted by Sub-Committee from transcript and formed into working document for follow-up meeting.

1. Facilities provided for teenagers were too expensive or too far away from home and also had too many restrictions.
2. Recreation should be made cheap. More Policemen on the beat. Uniformed Police prove barrier — organised games with Police.
3. Evening classes provided just for teenagers — music, guitar playing, drama.
4. School children not informed of what is going on.
5. Acts of vandalism reduced if evening classes held in schools.
6. More involvement by public in local affairs and greater publicity of activities of voluntary organisations — use of local radio and press.
7. Proposed — skating rink and swimming pool for toddlers.
8. Only four comprehensive schools represented — should be more.
9. Good sensitive leadership.
10. Vandalism caused mainly by boredom, excitement of being chased.
11. Way of dress; being in a crowd; "The thing to do".
12. Parents should have more responsibility and more control over their children. Full recovery of costs from parents.
13. Coventry Magistrates should impose heavier penalties.
14. Repairs to vandalised property should be put in hand more quickly.

WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE FOLLOW-UP MEETING

COVENTRY CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

Summary of major recommendations arising from the Seminar on Vandalism held on 13 November 1980

1. In order to ensure that maximum use is made of the leisure, recreation and education facilities provided by the City Council, the Seminar recommends that arrangements be made for young people to be consulted when these facilities are being planned.
2. Members of the Seminar recognise that the City Council already provide a wide range of facilities for young people, but recommend that Council give urgent consideration to means of improving communications and publicity so that the fullest possible use of these facilities is made.
3. The members of the Seminar consider that it is very important that the penalties imposed by the Magistrates should reflect the nature and extent of the vandalism, so they recommend therefore that serious consideration be given to making the maximum use allowed by law of Community Service Orders and orders for compensation to be claimed from parents where appropriate.
4. Seminar members felt that further vandalism often results when damage is left un-repaired. They therefore urge the Council to ensure that all repairs to their damaged property are carried out as quickly as possible.
5. The Seminar members were pleased to note the increased use of Police Officers on the beat, and would urge the Police Authority to take every opportunity to develop informal contact between the Police and young people.
6. Seminar members felt that vandalism often results from boredom and urged that the City Council consider the provision of recreational evening classes specifically for young people.

APPENDIX 'D'

COVENTRY CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

NOTES OF MEETING HELD 10 FEBRUARY 1981

PRESENT: Representative Young People from Coventry Schools
and The Top Shop.

Members of Coventry CPP

Police Personnel

CHAIRMAN: Mr D LEWIN

OBJECT OF MEETING: Follow-up of Vandalism Seminar held on 13 November 1980.

The Chairman opened giving a brief outline of why the second meeting had been called.

The tapes of the first meeting had been transcribed and everyone attending this meeting had had the opportunity to look at the six main points.

POINT 1

General: All agreed they wished to be consulted before anything is provided for Young People. An example was quoted. Questions then arose how and where.

Recommendations:

- a) That the City Council be recommended to investigate the setting up of a Committee of young people to take part in any discussion where a provision of facilities is considered. Representatives from as many areas as possible.
- b) That in addition to the main Committee above, Area based Councils are formed.

POINT 2

General: Much more publicity is required. All details including cost, times, activities etc. Tell everybody what is happening in the different parts of the city, including classes and youth group committee facilities.

A need for more sporting facilities was stressed.

Mercia Sound should be used.

Recommendations:

- a) Much more publicity needed about the way that facilities can be used and the cost.
 - b) There should be improved communication with and from the City Council.
-

POINT 3

General: There was a long discussion on Community Service, and the difference explained between compensation and a fine. The police also explained the limitations imposed on punishment within various age groups, including the fact that Community Service Orders cannot be imposed on anyone under 18.

It was agreed that the Community Service Order age was not realistic and should be lowered. Voting was taken on a suggestion of 10 years and over but this was defeated in favour of 14 years and upwards.

Recommendations:

- a) Community Service Order age should be lowered to 14 and upwards.
- b) Compensation Orders should be made against the person guilty of the offence.
- c) Where the child is under 14 the parents should receive the Compensation Order for the damage caused.

POINT 4

General: Seminar members felt that further vandalism often results when damage is left unrepaired. They therefore urge the Council to ensure that all repairs to their damaged property are carried out as quickly as possible.

Recommendations:

Action as above.

POINT 5

General: Informal contact with the Police through sports etc..

Recommendations:

- a) Ask the Police Authority to give as much encouragement as possible to their police officers to make informal contact with youngsters.
- b) Police to set examples to youngsters by teaching sport, guitar playing or any activity particularly appealing to youth.

POINT 6

General: Although many activities are available for youngsters, the money is not always available. Further, although Evening Classes are free to anyone under 18, there are many activities that are not.

Further, older students should not have to pay the full fees where they are not earning, and where they are earning they cannot spend their money on Night School and Further Education and have money over for recreation.

Classes are often full of older people which destroys the atmosphere — youngsters would like special classes of their own with specialities for young people.

Recommendations:

- a) Special recreational activities and sports should be available for young people and the word 'class' which could be misleading, should be discontinued. There should be a skating rink in Coventry.
- b) The Council look into the question of providing de-centralised facilities to cut down the cost and time of travelling.
- c) Special Students Cards should be issued to cut the costs of older students recreational facilities.

COVENTRY CRIME PREVENTION PANEL

Major recommendations made by young people at the Vandalism Seminar and submitted by the Coventry Crime Prevention Panel to the Coventry City Council and City Justices.

1. In order to ensure that maximum use is made of the leisure, recreation and education facilities provided by the City Council, the Seminar recommends that arrangements be made for young people to be consulted when these facilities are being planned and that the City Council investigate the setting up of a Youth Committee with area based representatives from active Youth organisations.
2. Members of the Seminar recognise that the City Council already provide a wide range of facilities for young people, but recommend that Council give urgent consideration to means of improving communication and publicity about these facilities. Use Mercia Sound and 'Telegraph' to give City wide details of Youth Clubs and other activities, including times.
3. The members of the Seminar consider that it is very important that the penalties imposed by the Magistrates should reflect the nature and extent of the vandalism, so they recommend therefore that serious consideration be given to making the maximum use allowed by law of Community Service Orders. Consideration should be given to a change in the law reducing the minimum age for a Community Service Order from 18 years to 14 years.

Orders for compensation should automatically be made against the person found guilty of vandalism or the parents if under 14 years of age.
4. Seminar members felt that further vandalism often results when damage is left unrepaired. They therefore urge the Council to ensure that all repairs to their damaged property are carried out as quickly as possible.
5. The Seminar members were pleased to note the increased use of Police Officers on the beat, and would urge the Police Authority to take every opportunity to develop further informal contacts between the Police and young people, perhaps by instructing young people in a skill at a club, i.e. sport, judo, etc..
6. Seminar members felt that vandalism often results from boredom and urged that the City Council consider the provision of recreational evening activities specifically for young people. Special Student Leisure Cards should be issued to part-time students at Further Education to enable them to make use of existing City facilities at reduced rate. The provision of a Skating Rink in Coventry was requested.

END