WITNESS SEMINAR

Policing Piracy 2: The International Picture, Politics and Strategies Post 1989

University of Plymouth in association with the Institute for Contemporary British History, King’s College, London. Event organised as part of the Annual ESRC Research Festival: Pirates, Entrepreneurs and Visionaries – Social Sciences in the Twenty-First Century

Panel:

Jim Gale, Superintendent, Devon and Cornwall Police
Nick West, Detective Inspector, Devon and Cornwall Police
Paul Richards, Devon and Cornwall Police (retired)
Mike Williams, Visiting Research Fellow, School of Law, Criminology and Government

Chair: Professor Judith Rowbotham

Date: 9 November 2016 1pm-3pm

Location: Rolle Building, University of Plymouth

Organized and Edited by: Professor Kim Stevenson, 15 February 2018

Expert Consultant: Michael Kandiah, Director of the Witness Seminar Programme, Kings College London

Transcribed by: Karen Giles, 28 November 2016
Kim Stevenson – Welcome back everybody who was here this morning and welcome to those who weren’t and are joining us for the first time and as I said this morning, thank you everyone for giving up your time to come to this event. We’ve had a fantastic session this morning. It went really, really well and we’re all looking forward to more of the same. So rather than taking up any more time.

Judith Rowbotham – This is the second of two witness seminars. For those of you who were not here in the morning, we had a very interesting and informative panel which looked at the issues of piracy and the policing of piracy on the high seas. Whereas one of our panel members commented, if you want to understand the realities of piracy, you need to look also at what is going on on-land and that is what is the focus for this afternoon’s seminar. It is quite literally looking at the way in which law enforcement agencies in the South West, notably the police, have policed in modern times the challenge of the coastline of Devon and it’s hint of misdeeds that have their origins on the high seas and on international waters, so issues to do with smuggling, trafficking and all of the accompaniments that go with that. Just to remind you that the point of a witness seminar is always to add to the official record. When you look, as a 19th Century historian I’m very conscious, that when you look at the official record, you’ve got all these scrawled notes. This morning I remembered that looking at one, dispatched to the Colonial Office, it then got past onto Gladstone. Gladstone had scrawled ‘balderdash’, which was quite a strong epithet for him, in the margins and various other opprobrious comments underneath. Now those kinds of comment are now made via email, via text message, via telephone conversations and so they’re lacking for anybody who is interested in the history, the culture of institutions like the police, so on and so forth, incident topics and this is what witness seminars of this nature can help to fill in. Because when it comes down to it, history starts yesterday and also history is always about people and how they interact and how they relate to each other and what their perspectives are, what they think they are doing and what is going on, and that is what this panel will be exploring this afternoon. So just to remind you, Chatham House rules do not apply. However, because we have no interest in unnecessary sensationalism, anybody who contributes to this, whether they ask questions or make comments from the floor or on the panel itself, will be shown in transcript before it goes public and will have the chance to redact any information that they do not wish to see in the public sphere. So please feel free to comment and react because you will have that chance to see what is there and to react to it. The other thing is that if you do answer questions from the floor, please be certain to give your names so that we can ascribe the right comment to the right person. There will be a roving microphone going around. Simply say who you are and then proceed to make your statement, give you experience or observation, “my experience was like this”, “my experience was different”, whatever it maybe. Finally, although I gather sadly that for some reason transatlantic events are dominating Twitter. There is a Twitter feed going out from here that hasn’t been particularly widely picked up, but I think the trumpets are sounding in Plymouth. So I shall start by asking our panel to give a brief five minute, up to seven minutes, after which the hat-pin comes into play. The explanation of where and how they relate to this particular theme for this afternoon and we’ll then have a series of questions, which I will invite the panel to discuss and finally the session will be thrown open to the floor. So if I could start with Nick.

Nick West – Ok, so who am I then to be here? Well my name’s Nick West, I’m a Detective Inspector from the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary. For my sins I’ve just completed 28-and-a-half years’ service. I have quite an extensive background over probably the last 20 years in what you would know as Serious Organised Crime Departments, covert policing and targeting stuff that obviously impacts both Devon and Cornwall and further afield. So I think from my knowledge I can give you the background in relation to probably events around human-trafficking, which is probably current and topical within Plymouth. I can give you lots of background in relation to drug-trafficking. As a unit, the Serious Organised Crime Branch which works out of Mead House at Newton Abbot, has worked extensively
with other agencies. So if you look at what sits above us and the interlinked regions, it’s the Regional Organised Crime Unit otherwise known as a ROCU, so they’ll deal with the intermediary stuff. The latest group that some people will have heard on the news is the National Crime Agency. Obviously they’ll deal with the top quality stuff and the stuff that probably impacts from international into the United Kingdom and then obviously filters out what comes down through to within our forces. So what are we facing at the moment then in relation to serious organised crime and organised crime groups? For ourselves obviously drug-trafficking seems to originate from major cities such as Liverpool and into London. We can all surmise around the Liverpool situation, massive docks, looking to expand. We seem to see a significant amount of heroin predominantly and other controlled substances somehow coming in through that port into the UK, then being distributed down through, whatever network, into Devon and Cornwall and other force areas. Nationally now we’ve set up a system called Dangerous Drug Networks, DDNs for short. This basically looks to collate intelligence from all sources and indicates how these people operate. If you imagine that drugs are brought in, they come in through any port, any forum, they go to a centralised location and are distributed. The poor little victim gets sent down into the force area, say Devon and Cornwall, gets domiciled into a house in Exeter and then all of a sudden the phone starts ringing by the local drug users. So the local drug users who know this project will phone a phone number which may well be domiciled in Liverpool, that usual map phone will turn round and tell that user to go to a park in Exeter and when that person goes there, they might find they’re in a queue of 30-odd people. So there’s 30 people that’s phoned that number in Liverpool, been directed to the park in Exeter and are then served up a controlled drug. That’s what we operate on at the moment called Dangerous Drug Networks, that’s what we’re trying to stop. So from your trafficking point of view and your piracy point of view, you know, we as an organisation are trying to work with Liverpool, Merseyside and obviously into London to try and stop the flow of drugs coming in, but that’s obviously a massive operational commitment. We’ve talked about the current expansion into human-trafficking. Those of you who follow the local press will be pleased to see that we’ve just concluded a recent trial in Plymouth over 10 weeks, in relation to Czech nationals. Again that’s talking about human-trafficking and people smuggling into the UK on behalf of organised crime groups. When you get into the nuts and detail of that operation, what you’ll see is that that group weren’t only operating in Plymouth, but were operating in significant cities up and down the country and assisted with identifying people who you would regard as vulnerable, then the Czech Republic and facilitating their transport into the UK, where they would come in and they would undertake some slave labour. Having travelled to the Czech Republic myself as part of the Enquiry Team just to get a feel for how these people live over there, you do get a sense of feel that actually what they’re coming to here is not bad. From where they live and their circumstances at home, sometimes they are better off in the UK. The issue that we’re finding is obviously the exploitation by the people that are running these groups, is the fact that they actually don’t pay them what they earn. They bring them over here for labour and then exploit them in relation to, they earn £600 a week and they might only give them £50 and they’ll make them sleep in, maybe, squalid conditions. So you can build a picture and read from the press really. Devon and Cornwall has a healthy relationship with the National Crime Agency. We’ve done quite a few operations with the NCA and looked at operations whereby they’re acting on intelligence from stuff that’s coming in from overseas. There are numerous jobs that we probably could talk about where they’ve used ships for transportation, as was previously described this morning, for piracy. Intelligence has identified where the boat is going, where the course is and then we’ve obviously made a joint response in relation to targeting that. I wouldn’t say we’re 100% successful in what we do and I think probably research will show that we only really just touch the tip of the iceberg really. Drug-trafficking is massive and we do what we can to make the city safe and obviously we work in partnership with all the local partners in
relation to joint agency operations to try and make sure the end product, the user, is protected and safeguarded from what are horrible people sometimes from Liverpool, sometimes from London.


Paul Richards – Thank you very much Nick. I’m Paul Richards and I lecture in Police Studies here in Plymouth. I retired from Devon & Cornwall Police in 2009 after 30 years. I served with Nick, here, I was his sergeant on the Isles of Scilly, he was one of the PCs coming over to do summer attachment, so I’ve a lot of experience in neighbourhood policing and obviously the real issues of smuggling, certainly on the Isles of Scilly, that was a big issue in terms of where we were. My interest today and certainly exploring some of the themes is looking at differences between people smuggling and human-trafficking, because there’s a big difference between the two and they can be blurred in discussion and that makes for potentially the case in Plymouth that Nick alluded to, where I think five family members from the Czech Republic are starting 20-and-a-half year sentences for modern slavery convictions, but it blurs the lines between human-trafficking and smuggling. The other thing I want to explore is the impact of post-Brexit, because I think there’s a lot of implications from post-Brexit on the way we police and on the pressures on people smuggling and trafficking, because the profits that these people make are going to increase potentially as legal migration routes are shut down. Also, for the police it’s going to be more of a challenge because at the moment there is a potential loss of police with access, nationally and locally to Europol itself, which is a European security agency, when you come outside of Europe. Nick and I have already discussed this, there’s probably going to be a pragmatic way of achieving this. But essentially outside the EU, the UK will have no access to the European Security Agency and information related to that intelligence, they wouldn’t have access to that. Lastly, the other issue to explore is potentially the impact of police cuts on the amount of community intelligence that the police are gathering in, what they require to conduct a lot of these people smuggling operations because there’s been a 20% reduction in front line police officers since 2010, that’s a loss of over 18-and-a-half thousand police officers nationally and some of the Police Community Support Officers that have taken their places used to be the ‘eyes and ears’ of Devon & Cornwall Police, but they are doing a lot more crime enquiry jobs that would potentially have been done by police officers. To explore differences that I see between smuggling, human smuggling and trafficking, traditionally smuggling people was when people consented to being smuggled by illegal means getting into the country in some way, always across international borders, essentially smuggling ends when the people successfully arrive in their target country and then it’s kind of finished. With trafficking it’s often illegal or legal means, but what’s involved is the threats and the coercion or sometimes deception or use of force on the people being trafficked. Often their passports are removed when people are trafficked. Trafficking takes place across international borders, but also within national borders, so people are trafficked from one place to another often. The main thing is there’s an ongoing exploitation on people being trafficked after they have been trafficked through. It’s interesting because the crime of people smuggling is a crime against the state. The crime of trafficking is often against the individual. So essentially what we’re looking at today is how the Plymouth experience blurred those lines because people who are trafficked weren’t kept here by coercion or force, they just didn’t know enough about Britain to free themselves from the slavery they were actually in, so there wasn’t any form of deception so to speak, they just didn’t have that experience. There’s a blurring between, I think, trafficking and smuggling.

Judith Rowbotham – Mike.

Mike Williams – Good afternoon. My name’s Mike Williams. I’m a visiting Research Fellow here at the Law School. My background is in Seabed Law and the major component of that is Underwater Cultural Heritage Law, mainly historic wrecks and there has been for a number of decades a persistent
problem, not on an organised basis, but on mainly an educational basis of heritage crime against historic wrecks, not only formally designated wrecks, but ones which are equally important, but not necessarily worthy of designation for financial reasons. This morning reference was made to the South West of the former piracy hot-spot in centuries past. What I find interesting is the divers involved in this activity in the South West very proudly carry the label of pirates, self-labelled. They regard themselves as the modern day successors to the Drake’s and the other South West former pirates and they even had a t-shirt at one stage put up as ‘pirates’, which was sold at a heritage conference at the university. So I hesitate to say Plymouth University’s involved in heritage crime, but, to be fair it was not a university conference I should add, before my fellowship is withdrawn. There is an issue, not on an organised crime basis and I wouldn’t for a moment suggest it’s of the level of seriousness of the drugs problems and the people-trafficking, but it’s a problem which is increasingly grabbing the attention of Historic England as heritage values and antiquities rise and the Law School is currently putting finishing touches to a research proposal jointly with Historic England to look at how more effective enforcement can be achieved in the marine section. If you think enforcing against piracy on the surface is difficult, try underwater. Wearing a slightly different hat, I’m Deputy Chair of Devon & Severn Inshore Fishery Conservation Authority and one of the things that we’ve been very exercised about is illegal netting, which again seems to be a bit of a hot-spot activity in Plymouth with the estuaries. We work quite closely with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and one of the things that’s emerged there is that illegal netting, which can be very lucrative and is on an organised basis as well as amateur, as well as being lucrative the returns can be increased by dropping the net in the water, letting it drift for a couple of hours and in the meantime going off and doing a few boats. I think 30 outboards were stolen in the Yealm estuary one summer and the main suspect is illegal netting and interestingly there is evidence of activities by gangs from eastern Europe getting more involved in the illegal netting. So whether you regard the netting as piracy per se or whether the side-line of maritime crime from boats is I suppose definitely falling into the piracy category. The self-labelled pirates of the South West, I suppose have put themselves into that definition.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you Mike and then Jim.

Jim Gale – Good afternoon. My name is Jim Gale. I’m a serving Police Officer with Devon & Cornwall Police, just over 20 years’ service now in a number of roles, but never a detective. I thought for a second I was going to have to caution you about heritage crime. In that time, and there are a number of senior colleagues here in the room with me, past and present, and in that time I’ve come to realise that Devon & Cornwall Police is very closely linked with the sort of maritime environment and as I was reflecting this morning, listening this morning, I realised that none of our local policing areas, none of our divisions in old money, are landlocked, they all have a coast, with beaches and towns and things on the coast. So I think Devon & Cornwall Police are quite unique like that in terms of how it polices that environment, that interface almost, between coastal communities and the sea. I think from my own personal perspective I’m keen to talk today is just to reflect a little bit on that and my own personal experience. Probably initially from when I was a Response Constable in Teignmouth, which has a dock and regularly used to be visited by coasters, Russian coasters, other eastern European coasters, which in itself is quite an experience because every now and again you’d be called on-board to check out potential illegal immigrants or for other forms of crime and it is genuinely like stepping off or onto a little ecosystem all of its own. It feels different, it looks different, all the signs are in a foreign language. For someone like me who’s Wiltshire born and bred, moved to Devon, to have that exposure suddenly is quite a culture shock. More recently, although it’s not as recent as I’d like it to be, it’s 10 years ago now, is the experience I had with the beaching of the MSC Napoli back in 2006 and if you’ll excuse me I shall go into a small narrative around that, simply because I’ve developed a thing called a Napoli twitch and the reason I refer to it as a Napoli twitch is because it was one of those
defining moments. I think for me personally, but I think also for the force, and I think in my 20 years there are probably a number of what I would call seminal events which the force can look back on as defining moments in its history and before my time there were others too. Even now people can talk about certain defining events in the force history which shape the way it thinks, the way it operates and defines some policies. Now I think the Napoli was probably one of those events. So the story’s this. I took over rural East Devon which is a sector east of Exeter in early January 2006. I remember it because my birthday’s the 19th January and I think I took over on the 18th, so it was like a birthday present. In the news at the time was this sort of story, not a terribly unusual story, but a story of a ship that was struggling in the south western gales out in the English Channel and there was a peripheral discussion in the news about the rescue of the crew and various other things and I was only half listening to this story, but it came into really sharp focus on the 20th, the day after my birthday, when there was a decision reached by, I think it was a chap called Mr Middleton of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, that this ship, which at one time had been the largest cargo ship afloat, was going to be beached on Branscombe Beach. For those of you who don’t know Branscombe and literally the day before, I had visited for the first time, it is a fantastically beautiful rural/coastal village reached by a lengthy and narrow country lane, which really is a jewel, you know, it’s an undiscovered jewel really and I remember standing there on the 19th looking at the moon and the waves and the shingle thinking “what a fantastic part of the world, aren’t I lucky”, only to discover in the news the next day this ship was going to be very deliberately beached there on the shore. Bold decision to be fair, it’s part of the Jurassic coast, part of the National Heritage site and to consciously, deliberately beach this cargo ship in an area of such vulnerability really. It was a very brave decision and was taken with the best of interest with a lot of balancing bricks going on, the ship was going to break up, clearly with its cargo going to break up in the middle of the Channel. I think the feeling was that it would never make it to Portland Harbour, which was the preferred port of refuge, so pitched up on, what I by then was considering my beach, and it was a tremendous shock to the system, because this thing which was massive started to shed its load, there were shipping containers full of all sorts of things which began to appear on Branscombe Beach, because they’d been washed off. So the 24 hours or 48 hours or so that passed between my looking at this beautiful jewel in the crown, what a fantastic beach, to what then began to look like a landfill site with broken open containers and BMW motorbikes and various other bits strewn all over the beach, was really a shock. More of a shock was that I was in command of this thing for the first night. I was the Silver Commander, had very few resources and to be honest the Merchant Shipping Act hadn’t featured as part of the training at the Police College, nor in any of my subsequent promotion exams. We didn’t have things like the internet. There was nothing. We even had to have a command van down in order to talk on the radio, so there was no way we could access the law around this in a sort of dynamic sense. So, I don’t know how I’m doing for time, but I’m on a roll. I’m re-living this moment. [laughter]

Judith Rowbotham – That’s why I haven’t stopped you.

Jim Gale – So in a very short space of time it was a subject of national, international news and they had news vans and satellite vans and various others down there. Vans, transit vans and old trucks and things started to turn up on Branscombe Beach from all over the country, essentially to try and help themselves to the stuff that was appearing on the beach, which is why the law becomes relevant. Police officers very often don’t know the ‘ins and outs’ in every detail of the criminal law, but they kind of recognise when something doesn’t look right and it didn’t look right that various kinds of scruffy kind of individuals from Manchester were pitching up on the beach, wheeling away motorbikes, packed into vans, it just didn’t look right. The powers we had around that felt very, very limited and we were honestly scrabbling around trying to work out what we were going to do in this situation. To cut a long story short, we used some policing skills, took names and addresses from people and ran
things up in the following days, but the impact on the local community was staggering to be honest. The mess that was left, the damage to things like hedgerows and lanes and peoples’ drives was something to behold and from the local policing point of view, the sort of working community, the working local authority after that to minimise the damage and actually make some capital from it really, some of the guest houses did quite well, was again a new experience for us. The learning around command, around engaging with communities, around the Merchant Shipping Act, continues to this day.

Judith Rowbotham — Yes, Mike.

Mike Williams — I hesitate to add to Jim’s pain, but to underline the point at the time of the Napoli incident, a friend of mine was actually the UK Receiver of Wreck and she pitched up at the scene and was about to descend onto the beach down the footpath when she was stopped by a police constable who said “you can’t go down there and I’m going to arrest you for obstruction if you do”, at which point she told him she was the Receiver of Wreck and if he stopped her, she was going to arrest him for obstruction of the scene, which is an offence under the Merchant Shipping Act. [laughter] Twenty minutes on the cliff top swapping mutual threats of arrest. [laughter] We subsequently, Jason Lowther who’s a colleague and sitting in the back there grinning, and I and another colleague, subsequently did an analysis for the Maritime Coastguard Agency and we did supply Devon & Cornwall with a copy and I think two things came out of it, and again I’m going to add to Jim’s pain here, one we did a time-line with wrecks and the Napoli was large for her day, but at the time of writing, was actually rather small and now if you look at things like Emma Maersk and I think there’s even a further generation of container ships. The second thing is the time-line showed that we are overdue for another one. [laughter] So I don’t know how Devon & Cornwall Constabulary get involved with merchant shipping, but I suggest that Jim dusts it off this evening because he’s overdue for another visitation. [laughter]

Judith Rowbotham — Now much of my childhood, my grandfather was Rector of Instow, amongst other places. I was used to going down onto Instow Quay and buying fish, fresh fish, freshly landed from the local fishermen. I went down, staying with my aunt, and I said “are we going down for fish?”, you always knew you’d see his little chalkboard saying “I’ll be landing here”, he’d go onto Appledore and Bideford and things like that, and Pam said “didn’t I tell you, [inaudible] been had-up, smuggling”. It was something which had a huge impact on those local communities because all of a sudden we were having to go to fish shops and supermarkets to get our fish because the twice weekly catch being landed on the shore was just disappearing and looking back through the newspapers, you can see a number of such very small incidents where this really quite small scale incidents of this nature going on, this, if my memory serves me rightly, was between ‘95 and ‘98 that [inaudible] incident, so relatively recently. What I’d like to ask you all to comment on then is picking up on some of the comments that Jim has made, how important is the fact that so much of Devon’s policing involves a coastline and anything that may come ashore, legal and illegal, over that coastline, how much impact has it had on your experience of day-to-day policing? The Napoli was clearly something pretty big, but, you yourself said Jim about the local day-to-day impact. So if I could perhaps start with Nick?

Nick West — Yes, thank you. Obviously we’ve talked about the fact that Devon and Cornwall is surrounded by water and none of the beats used within are land-based, they’ve all got some sort of coastline. We can talk about a certain instance where stuff has come ashore and I know there are instances where Burgh Island and Bigbury, we can talk about huge bales of cocaine that’s been washed-up and obviously the impact there is that Joe-public who finds it in the first instance obviously didn’t know what it was, because if they did they probably wouldn’t bring it to us, and then following from that, obviously the impact is, you know, what else is there around that area? I would say impact on local policing is limited to those isolated incidents, rather than actually what we’re all asking our
troops to do community based and within our beach users, is to be aware of your coastline, to keep a lookout for what’s going on, report back any irregularities. As an organisation we probably operate more on intelligence about what might be going on, rather than actually proactively patrolling our coastline to see what’s going on. I think with the diminishing resources I think now we’re very community led. We are reliant on community intelligence telling us what’s going on rather than having officers in the right place at the right time, who in some circumstances, if you watch some of the television programmes, are in the right place at the right time, but that’s probably for other reasons.

Judith Rowbotham – Paul.

Paul Richards – Yes, for me it’s interesting because I think we’ve not really seen, what I’d say, a huge pressure on our coasts from people smuggling, but looking at the way in which, as I said earlier on, the current situation, we have 30,000 EU workers coming to the UK every year as seasonal workers. The current rules are if you’re regarded as non-EU citizens, you make up only 12% of that 30,000 actually arrive in this country. There’s going to be a massive shortfall in terms of seasonal workers for farmers, ‘Farmers Weekly’ reporting on their concerns, the NFU have recently seen Theresa May debate about this issue. There’s going to be a real pressure I think and as early as October ‘The Economist’, the magazine, was talking about as legal migration reduces, there’s a bigger demand on illegal migration. Let’s not lose sight of the fact that the profits to be made on smuggling people into the country are huge. This is why people do it, you know, not for any other reason other than it’s very, very lucrative. So I think we’ve not really seen it yet, but I think the pressure will grow on Devon and Cornwall, in the terms that our maritime borders are pretty porous, you know, it is quite easy to land things all around the Isles of Scilly. It’s very, very easy to just land people there. There’s no boat checks. There’s no checks on people getting onto The Scillonian, this little boat, which is the main passenger ferry to the mainland. You can easily get on there and just travel back. You pay cash and you can get back in. We always thought this. So our coasts are quite porous and I think we haven’t yet seen the influx that I think we might see because of the way post-Brexit is changing.

Judith Rowbotham – You mention the Isles of Scilly. When you were there were you conscious of the porousness of the coasts in any way?

Paul Richards – Well pretty much we had then, as Nick said, we had a Customs Cutter then, we had Customs staff. There are no Customs staff now, based on the Isles of Scilly, there are no permanent staff there because of spending cuts. So I think it was evident to us then and I don’t think it’s changed. It is very difficult to police the influx of people through our coasts. It’s very difficult, you know, whether you’re bringing a person by dinghy onto a beach or whether you bring someone by a yacht, whether it’s drugs or people, it’s very easy to bring them ashore and very easy for them to go because we don’t have a national identity card in this country, where we wander around with some form of ID that regularly gets checked, like in other countries. So once you’re here, it’s very, very easy to just basically start working in the local economy. I notice that the Op Triage, the Czech nationals, some of the workers that were over here and trafficked, were working in local packaging companies. One of the people convicted was a task master, provided cheap employees to a local firm who were not aware and that’s simply what they were doing, they were basically here working very cheaply and all the money was taken by the task masters and the workers were given a pittance of an allowance.

Judith Rowbotham – Mike from the perspective of somebody working with the police, have you any comment on that particular aspect?

Mike Williams – Well obviously in smuggling persons or drugs, it doesn’t really relate to heritage, so in that particular aspect, not. But, one of the things I think has become certainly apparent to Historic
England because of the particular enforcement issues, is that really we’re just beginning to scratch the surface on marine enforcement and colleagues here have alluded to the impact of diminishing resources. One of the things that we’ve become aware of is that there are a diverse number of platforms out there. The MMO has Royal Navy services, the Royal Naval fisheries patrols vessels. It has its chartered aircraft, the coastguard, helicopters, Border Force as cutters, Devon and Cornwall, as I understand it, has a marine unit. I think it either had a unit or it has a unit which, I think, is substantially diminished.

Jim Gale – Yes it has a Force Support Group which is a team of officers who do lots of things, but one of their particular areas of remit is diving and water-based operations.

Mike Williams – So there are a number of marine assets out there and the issue then becomes, what’s been referred to as a silo complex, which is each one does its own particular area of enforcement. The one with the least assets is the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, so when it came to giving enforcement responsibility for the Protection of Wrecks Act, which is underwater, the one body you wouldn’t give it to is the police, because they lack the resource, but that’s what they did. Fortunately, they subsequently acquired a helicopter, which has been used on a few occasions, but the economics of using a helicopter for low level heritage crime doesn’t really add up. So one of the things that needs to be looked at really is, the Dutch have what’s called the Common Enforcement Manual and I think it’s a bit of a misnomer, because it would require a lot legal reform to have enforcement for different functions, but what it can have, which the Dutch have got, is this awareness of each agency’s responsibilities and then feeding into a central intelligence. So if you have a fisheries vessel which can only enforce fisheries, but it sees suspicious activity in relation to smuggling or heritage crime, then there is a protocol, there is a well-rehearsed mechanism whereby that information can speedily be conveyed to those who have the legal responsibility. The other thing that Devon & Severn is looking at with the Marine Institute here at the university, is drone technology. I think I should make it clear at this point, we’re not talking hellfire missiles. I’m afraid the armed response units are going to have to work with what they’ve got. You can put a drone up in the air, it doesn’t get hungry, it doesn’t get fed-up and it doesn’t lose concentration and you can lease air-time, so a number of agencies can lease so many hours from a drone, which is going to sit there, it can’t be hurt, it can’t be seen, it’s got night capability surveillance, you can use that recording for evidentiary purposes. So it’s not altogether a gloomy picture. It’s about organising, it’s about coordinating and it’s about just being clever at using less resource more efficiently.


Jim Gale – Yes, I completely agree with Paul. The coastline is so porous that it’s essentially impossible to police it, to prevent the comings and goings, which I’ve done myself in terms of having a look. Go and stand on a cliff somewhere and have a look up and down and you’ll see how easy it is. A bit of local knowledge and some boat skills and you’re away, really. Sometimes we run operations and things to raise awareness and I do remember in the 90’s we were quite proactive about potential gun-running, so this is linked to IRA activity, where I think the South West coastline seemed quite vulnerable and a good point to bring weapons in. So we kind of did our thing and looked around, but the reality is that it’s very difficult to spot. I think we do rely on, as Paul has said, on man intelligence and people talking to us, but the way in which we engage with communities is very important. Some communities are easier to engage with than others. I remember as a brand spanking new PC in Brixham, being told then that fishing was a big thing in Brixham, but the fishing community wouldn’t talk to the police, they completely policed themselves. So we can talk about it, we can say “yes we need to engage with local communities”, but bringing that to life is actually quite hard.
Judith Rowbotham – Thank you. That actually leads onto my next question. Back when smuggling was a real problem during the Napoleonic war period, it was said that it was particularly problematic dealing for instance, with the Kent Sussex coast, but they didn’t even bother to send those precursors of the police and customs and revenue riding officers in any numbers down to Devon and Cornwall because of the difficulty, the hostility of local communities. We heard from Nick, from Paul and again from you, about the extent to which drugs, guns, are being smuggled in from outside Devon and Cornwall, Liverpool’s been mentioned, Manchester’s been mentioned, London, but how involved in your judgement are local communities or is it something where, simply because Devon and Cornwall are relatively sparsely populated, that the local communities don’t see what’s going on? Could we start with Jim perhaps this time?

Jim Gale – Yes, what a fascinating question. I think, and people will know the old law rather better than I do, but I think that the purpose behind some of the law around recovery of wreck recognise that isolated communities, this is an important source of income for isolated communities, they needed to be protected. They’re taking some significant personal risk to bring this stuff ashore or rescue it from rocks. So I guess in distant times it was probably a very important source of income for some of these really isolated communities. Is that the case now? Not really, certainly not in the same way. I mean it would be wrong to assume that we’re not subject to some of the organised crime groups that extend tentacles right into the South West as they do in other parts of the country. Things that we’ve talked about, the importation of drugs and things like that or contraband of tobacco would be part of that, but in terms of whether or not local communities are in the same way linked to it like they once were, I think it’s unlikely. I think the nature of our local communities have changed. You look at places like Salcombe, there’s a lot of second home ownership, that type of thing and probably a greater degree of people that have come into the area with money, than before. So I don’t think it’s quite, it’s not in the same realm as it was and any reach into communities I think is probably a bit more sophisticated and deliberately criminal, really, rather than relying on wreck as a source of income.

Judith Rowbotham – But could you say a little more about those criminal organisations then, that are clearly locally based and how they relate?

Jim Gale – I’m probably not the expert. I think in terms of organised crime groups they are very organised.

Judith Rowbotham – Are they incomers to the region?

Jim Gale – Well I was going to come onto that. Largely not. We do have organised crime groups or crime families that are locally based, but the kind of really serious stuff is external and moving out of the cities, moving out of London for instance and Liverpool into other markets. Places like Guildford have been particularly vulnerable. You get into very interesting, we’re moving off the subject perhaps, but you get into a very interesting philosophical debate about whether the purpose of the police is to eliminate crime or manage it. There is a cogent argument to say that if you manage your local market, for instance the local drugs market in Plymouth, the harm caused by that local drugs market is rather less than an organised crime group who give no second thought to very serious and violence-related crime to kind of enforce their will. I’m a Firearms Commander and I know Brendan you have been too. I think probably, we’ve both dealt with firearms operations which are trying to tackle the very violent and threatening behaviour of organised crime groups from places like London, who really don’t have any compassion at all, there’s no respect for human life at all. If we are too efficient and deal with the drugs market in Plymouth, it creates a void, which can then be exploited by these other organised crime groups. A kind of a difficult, philosophical, policing discussion to be had I think.
Judith Rowbotham – Very interesting. Mike how do you feel that the smuggling out of the region of heritage and the kind of marine heritage that you’ve been talking about is locally based and inspired?

Mike Williams – I don’t think there’s very much smuggling of heritage out of the region and I think that goes to the origins of it being, Historic England and the Receiver of Wreck have identified two UK hot-spots for marine heritage crime. One is Yorkshire and the other is Devon and Cornwall. There’s absolutely no doubt there is a section of the diving community in Devon and Cornwall that takes positive pride in this, and I say, link it back to, in fact one person takes great delight in saying that he has established to his family tree that one of his ancestors was hanged as a pirate in Plymouth. So there’s definitely this social, cultural identification with what they do not see as a crime. When Jim mentioned the Napoli, I remembered the predecessor to that, it might have preceded you, the Kodima, which went into Whitsand Bay carrying a cargo of very cheap pine wood and people were employing tractors and carrying these planks up fairly steep cliffs. You couldn’t even buy wood that was of such a low quality in B&Q, so why would you risk falling off a cliff for a plank? [laughter] But it wasn’t about the economic value, it was about the cultural value. I was fulfilling a tradition which my ancestors had done and I remember at the site of the Napoli there was a young reporter, put a microphone in front of one of the people who was struggling off the beach with a gearbox for a BMW, which he probably never used and probably didn’t own a BMW, and he said “well it’s tradition isn’t it? you know, that’s what we do down here”. [laughter] Evidently that’s correct. I wonder in a way, I would say, certainly with maritime heritage crime, it’s not about the economic value, it’s not about smuggling out of the region, it’s very much kept in the region and proudly displayed in frames and on mantelpieces and there are some individuals that actually have a garage which doesn’t house their car, but is virtually a museum of their activities. So it’s not economically based. In some ways that makes it worse because if it was economically based, all you’ve got to do is make it uneconomic and as the panel said this morning, lowest hanging fruit, people will go elsewhere and do something different. Here you’re talking about what did start off as an economic activity. Just to put a figure on Jim’s comment, it was a valuable source of income. One local man who engaged in wreck gathering, in 1656 collected £30,000 in one year in the value of recovered wreck. So it was a huge and I doubt his tenants handed in everything they found to him. So it was a bit of a rural lifeline economically, it’s not any longer. It’s about, I suspect, a certain amount of defiance of authority and it’s about a fairly deep-rooted social tradition, part of the regional identity, you know, something dashing about it, which in many ways will make it even harder.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you Mike. Can I move onto Paul for his comments?

Paul Richards – Just listening to Mike and it was knowing the culture. I think certainly looking at the Plymouth experience with the modern slavery, I think it’s interesting that the, about the police’s challenge of spreading the word about in terms of what is right and wrong or when you employ someone really cheaply and where that person’s come from. Because I think a lot of the people trafficked were working in local businesses of packing. In the account I read, local colleagues of one of these workers was so worried about the fact that he was so starving, was buying him sandwiches from a vending-machine, trying to support him. Now that’s crying out for people to ring the police and say “we’ve got a real problem, why is this guy starving in this way?”. Rather than companies knowingly employing people who have been trafficked, it about raising the profile of what impact that might have and do they then turn themselves in and say “I’ve employed somebody who’s been trafficked or I think I have”. That’s a challenge, I think, for the police to get that message out there, of what is right and what is wrong. Some businesses will say “great, if we can employ somebody for a fiver an hour, that’s great for our profits”, but is that pressure to send the message that actually there are huge consequences to doing that to the people involved and the communities. That to me is a very
challenging because it’s not the sort of thing where the police have a lot of resources to go and spread that message.


Nick West – If I can just obviously provide some reassurance about that Op Triage as the Senior Investigating Officer for that job, that was very much community related, which is how it came to our attention, where people were phoning us in and raising their concerns about people living in their street and obviously the investigation unfolded by then and grew into what it did. Just taking you back to the victimisation and the drug-trafficking. I’m probably racking my brains to think of any job that I’ve worked on in the time that I’ve been in Serious Organised Crime that show an importation that was actually orchestrated by anybody within Devon or Cornwall. What I mean is, our king-pins down here that you’ll probably read about in the papers who have been involved in the drug scene, don’t appear to have orchestrated the drugs coming into the Westcountry. Historically, I think if we did some detailed research what we would show is that stuff will always predominantly be coming into Liverpool, Manchester, London and will be trafficked down into the Westcountry to be delivered.

Judith Rowbotham – Can I just ask how it might be trafficked down?

Nick West – Well we look at numerous stuff. Obviously in the old days, the good old days when people didn’t understand police tactics, they would just put it in the boot of their car and they wouldn’t expect to be stopped and they’d just drive it down and probably one in ten we would stop and the other nine would get through. When they suddenly realise that our tactics were a little bit better, they start hiding them, they conceal them in compartments within cars and then you obviously get onto your modern trafficking where people would actually swallow and insert inside themselves packages of decent values, of heroin and cocaine and act as mules, if you like, to bring the stuff down into Devon and Cornwall. Quite horrific circumstances if you’re the unfortunate mule and you get challenged and the package you are bringing down, inadvertently breaks open. Some stuff that we’ve worked on previously, was about the drug trafficking being a business. Certainly the Liverpudlian jobs I’ve worked on, when you look at your hierarchy group up in Liverpool, they don’t actually feature on the Merseyside radar as king-pins of drug-trafficking, they’re all lower level and they’re just somebody who’s taking an opportunity from somebody above them who we didn’t know about to traffic drugs. What they would do is they would organise for the lower level criminals, who didn’t really have any employment in Liverpool, to come down and they’d pick on somebody who was a user in Devon and Cornwall, befriend them, go and live with them, then all of a sudden they would take over their lives. So we call it ‘cocooning’ down here and, you know, it’s a really horrible experience for somebody in a house to suddenly find they’ve got three or four Scousers living with them, taking over everything in the house, making them drive around, making them deliver drugs. What’s key I think really is that they’re actually quite, what I would call, professional at this and they don’t actually use the drugs themselves and if any of their couriers that come down through, inadvertently get mixed up with taking the drug down in our Devon and Cornwall area, you will find that the hierarchy in Liverpool will come down and drag them home themselves. So you know that quite a large of the fact that what the impact of taking this drug does, they’re quite disciplined in the way that they deliver, deploy their tactics.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you. Building again on that, it’s interesting that there seems, from what you’re saying, to be absolutely no attempt to use the coastline to transport things like the drugs, it’s more road transport, which suggests that you have yet another reason for not worrying so much about the coastline?
Nick West – I think I’ll just reiterate really. We always act on community intelligence. So if the community intelligence tells us that stuff’s come in by the coastline, then that’s where we’ll try and put the resources. The only jobs I can recall really with coastline, come from the National Crime Agency and the bigger picture of international smuggling, rather than our own people really.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you. I think that being conscious of how many people in the audience have experience, that instead of asking my final question, I’d quite like to open the session to the floor now and if necessary I’ll insert my question later on. So if I throw it open to the audience and ask for questions, comments, reflections and we have our first one. Please remember to say who you are as you start your session.

Brendan Brookshaw – Brendan Brookshaw, Devon & Cornwall Police. I’ve got probably a couple of recollections, just to touch on your conversation about your involvement locally. I can remember when I was living in Plymouth when all of that wood washed up onto the shore and it was not very good quality wood, but ‘The Herald’ ran a press article about a month later, where they went around Plymouth and took photographs of all the things that had been built with the wood that had been taken off the beach and there was a competition in the paper about it, so something here about the culture of “it’s ok to steal off the beach because it’s not really stealing”. The second one of mine is at Branscombe. I was the Staff Officer to the Chief Constable at the time, so I was nice and warm in the office, whilst Jim was on the beach [laughter] and unless you came into the Chief Constable’s office, we had a police authority then, rather than an elected police and crime commissioner, and one of the police authority members that had been very vocal on the news about how terrible it was that the police weren’t acting, I think that was the six o’clock news, and then on the nine o’clock news, somebody was being interviewed and the police authority member was seen wheeling off the beach a barrel of whatever. [laughter] My role in the police service is as Professional Standards Department, so when somebody dies in contact with the police service, or any state agency in the UK, that needs to be investigated because it’s an Article 2 issue and it’s done by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. I was going to tell you a quick story about an incident that happened in 2013 on the Isles of Scilly, which is Christiana Woestenburg, he was bringing in about £20-million worth of cocaine and stopped on the island, or the ship was boarded when it came on the island, by the UK Border Force and he made the rash decision of trying to escape from the UK Border Force by running up the mast of his boat and tragically he fell off and died. That was initiated into an investigation as to why he died in contact of a state agency, which was of course, a tragic accident. So I don’t know what historical basis of it is, but certainly I just wanted to point out now that we’ve talked in the past about the level of violence that was used sometimes when people come in and carry out this illegal activity, it nevertheless remains that when the police or any agency which is policing the smuggling in the UK, does anything which causes someone harm or death or a serious injury, there is an independent and quite extensive investigation to ensure that the tactics that have been used are absolutely spot-on in terms of protection of those peoples right. I don’t know what happened back in the days when they used to have a cutlass on the cliff top, but things are very different now, I guess.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you Brendan. Are there any comments on that from the panel? Mike.

Mike Williams – I’m not sure in a way that they’re so different. In 1992 every port had its own Receiver of Wreck which is a Customs official and the government decided to centralise the role in the Maritime Coastguard Agency, so you then had one Receiver of Wreck for the UK, who was a lady in her mid-50’s who was with the MCA. Shortly after taking on this new role she received a phone call from the Department of Transport asking her to come up to London where they then gave her, her cutlass, which she was supposed to carry back to MCA headquarters. Unfortunately, she wasn’t the fittest of ladies and discovered she couldn’t even lift it, let alone weald it. I think the Merchant Shipping Act
1995 actually took away the defence of lethal force by the Receiver, so it has changed. However, I’m assured that my friend who was the second UK Receiver, the thought of lethal force definitely crossed her mind on the beach on the Napoli. [laughter]

Judith Rowbotham – Any other comments for that from the panel? In that case, I think we have another question.

Raymond Brenton – Yes. My name’s Raymond Brenton from Border Force. I was a frontline officer from mid-70’s to the late 90’s. Picking up what Nick said, and I agree with him, with regard to the coastline, all forces involved with smuggling have to risk assess with the staff available. For instance, the smuggling of drugs these days, with roll-on, roll-off ferries, particularly from Plymouth, Portsmouth and Dover, you have a constant stream of lorries and cars crossing the continent; these are the high risk areas particularly for drug smuggling. Yes, even in this locality any drugs that were discovered [which I’ve been involved with over the years], often off the Spanish ferry in particular, it was not uncommon to take 30 to 80 kilos out of a vehicle once a fortnight, at one time. Those drugs weren’t destined for this locality, even though they probably would be eventually; but they would go north, and as Nick quite rightly said, either to London, to Liverpool and probably redistributed from there. Even though those were large quantities that we were detecting at that time; recently there was 110 kilos of coke taken out of a trailer, not that many months ago. Again, all these drugs are not destined for here per se, they are destined for the big cities to be distributed. The coastline is so open and yes, I’ve been involved with, and I think you mentioned the drugs at Bideford, I was there. That was a big joint (pardon the pun) organisation there and it was so blasé. The fishing boat in question came alongside Bideford Quay and was going to, admittedly off-load at night, [even though it tied had up at 12 o’clock in the afternoon and they left it there]. Four-and-a-half tonnes of cannabis in fish boxes were concealed and they were off-loading on the quay in front of everybody. I was involved in unloading four-and-a-half tonnes of cannabis and driving up to Bristol. That was how blasé they were. The cannabis was in the fish boxes, a bit of ice on the top with a few fish sticking out the top and I remember the local police constable saying, “I’ll take the dabs off that one”, which I’m sure he was thought was funny at the time.

Judith Rowbotham – I’m so glad that somebody who remembers that particular operation has turned up, because as I say, I remember the shock all of a sudden to be reduced, in Bideford and Instow and Appledore, to buying your fish in a supermarket was quite a major issue for us all. Nobody could have thought it. He was a rather wizened, old man who’d been doing this clearly for years and years and years, which is no doubt why he was so blasé.

Raymond Brenton – I know, it was an incredible operation which of course, all the joint agencies had been called together, particularly the police with the customs investigation who had been watching the quay for many months for this to happen, and of course, it went off on that night. We were all stuck in RAF Chivenor, all tucked away, so nobody knew, so yes, that was interesting. Jim, I also remember the ships that came into Teignmouth in my younger days, when we used to go on-board, and the Germans and the Russians and all the different nationalities, things have changed a lot since then. I think it is with the movement, particularly free EU movement, that we’ve had since ’93; then with the roll-on, roll-off ferries, the vast number of vehicles and the opportunity for smugglers is immense.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you very much. Are there any comments from the panel? Nick.

Nick West – Just to pick up on a couple of things from there. Obviously, historically Exeter and Plymouth have suffered from the Border Agencies and Customs withdrawing from the area and acting
only on intelligence led operations. I think we’re quite right to point out that there possibly is quite a good amount of smuggling going on through the port. What I would say in connection to that now, is obviously the South West counter-terrorism unit operating in the South West region have quite a good network of operatives that work in and around the ports at key times. So, again, not just acting on intelligence, you’ll find that there are trained police search teams undertaking what we would now call ‘routine searches in ports’ and are coming off with the same sort of result you talked about just now. So I think there is a little bit of reassurance really. Devon and Cornwall, specifically the ports, Exeter and Plymouth, are now seen as a soft touch for people to bring the stuff in and then travel back up country.

Judith Rowbotham – Would you agree with that Ray?

Raymond Brenton – Yes, I totally agree. We have that liaison, we’ve have the intelligence, because that’s how we have to work. As mentioned before, long are the days gone where a Customs man would drive around the coast in his Mini and never see anything, because that’s not the way, it has to be risk assessed and it has to be intelligence led.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you very much. Are there any other comments from the panel? Jim.

Jim Gale – Yes, just a couple of thoughts have occurred to me, really. I mentioned the 90’s and the sort of perceived gun-running threat, the adjunct to that was that the perception at the time was that the South West was less likely to be a target for the IRA, simply because they didn’t want to bring attention to the area they were bringing weapons in, I don’t know if that’s true or not. The second point that occurred to me is, we’ve discussed this morning, I think, that the motivation behind smuggling, in context with Somali pirates, was money. I do wonder if there might be, especially where weapons are concerned, a motivation around cause or political cause. I remember a story from the late 80’s, early 90’s, that a sympathetic farmer in the south west of Ireland, who was quite happy for his barns and his land to be used for the hiding of weapons. So, he may have been paid, I don’t know, but it seemed to me, primarily in relation to his case, was about furthering the cause, and not principally making money.

Judith Rowbotham – I think that’s often an issue with certain areas. Whether it’s part of what Mike was identifying as a tradition, or whether it’s a question of we know what used to happen, local squires and parsons storing baccy for the parson and brandy for the squire and letting other things go on too. Are there any other comments? Yes, Mike.

Mike Williams – I wonder about the social tradition and the acceptability and I wonder whether it’s material sensitive, in the sense that, I think that the Kodima incident, at the time, one of the legal officers with the Receiver had a bungalow in Looe, a holiday home, and his neighbour was repairing the fence with timber from the Kodima. He said nothing and did nothing, but that would have been entirely different had it been drugs or weapons. So I think, it’s the old issue isn’t it? Perhaps I could put a question to the audience? How many people here think their neighbour would report a person who was smuggling cigarettes in?

Judith Rowbotham – One show of hands. One hand.

Keith Johnson – Keith Johnson from the Devonport Naval Heritage Centre. I’ve had incidents when, I’ve got property in Plymouth, where workmen working on one of my properties reported to me a strong smell of cannabis and it emanated from one of my properties. As a landlord I was then very aware that I had to report it because, by law, as a landlord I’ve got that responsibility. It turned out that the guy was smoking cannabis for his own use, but it turned out that there was quite a bit of
cannabis in that area, that’s down by Stoke. So as a citizen, in certain responsible areas, you’ve got to be aware of what’s going on. We’ve now got to report people when they come up to the end of their VISA. So there’s all sorts of laws coming out which will impact on the average citizen, although some of them don’t realise that that’s the case.

Judith Rowbotham – From that point of view, I have a cousin, Robin Scott, it’s probably too long ago for most of the people on the panel. Robin, down in Cornwall, grew a substantial amount of cannabis, which he took great pride in and he was caught for growing it, he insisted it was for medicinal purposes. Having told the judge at the Exeter Assizes to sentence him and be damned, he had the book thrown at him, perhaps unsurprisingly and got the maximum and he was later caught, somebody’s nodding their head, I think they may even remember this, he was later caught from prison because he was always phoning little old ladies in the local community and they were continuing to grow the cannabis for medicinal reasons, it was always claimed, in their little greenhouses out the back. So I think that does actually show that your question Mike was a remarkably impressive one. I mean there were these respectable, middle-classed, upper-class citizens of Devon and Cornwall cheerfully growing cannabis in their greenhouses for medicinal purposes and because Robin, I mean ex-Rugby, ex-Balliol, remarkably well spoken, things like that had convinced them that this was a good thing. They were not going to betray Robin in anyway. The Scientologists threw him out for bringing Scientology into disrepute.

Keith Johnson – Can I just ask another question whilst I’ve got the mike?

Judith Rowbotham – Yes.

Keith Johnson – I live on the edge of Dartmoor and I’m very aware we’ve got Special Forces flying over at night with low aircraft, but also you’ve got satellite airfields scattered all over the place. One of the areas that I often wonder how well regulated this is, there’s light aircraft coming in and landing on satellite small airfields and of course we’ve got the drone situation coming up soon, where obviously drones can be used. You could fly a drone off the back of a ship and get it ashore quite easily. There’s a company just about to start work down in Devonport, making midget submarines. My question is, aircraft, how well controlled are light aircraft?

Judith Rowbotham – Mike.

Mike Williams – I think that the point is, I mean I have limited aviation experience, but Special Forces aircraft, night vision goggles, extremely well equipped. If I was flying a Cessna, they say that aviation has three things that are completely useless - fuel you never took on-board, the runway behind you and height above you, and I certainly wouldn’t want to be anywhere less than about 1000 feet between me and terra firma, and maybe a couple of thousand at night. So it’s not perhaps as easy I think as sometimes it’s portrayed. If you are familiar with Dartmoor and it actually has quite a bit of aircraft heritage, bits of aircraft speckle the Moor, scattered around it where they’ve flown into it and even in the 60’s with low flying RAF fast jets. So I don’t think you can rule anything out, but it’s not as easy, like all things the professionals make it look easy, but that’s because they’re professionals. In terms of midget submarines, that’s been a route through the Caribbean. As Paddy on the panel this morning mentioned, I think, I don’t have extra knowledge of it, but I think it’s considered as relatively unsuccessful, but then of course you only get to know about the ones you catch or [inaudible]. The ones that got through are not going to attract the publicity, so I don’t know. The drones, that’s an interesting one because I was the person who said, we can use the drone technology to be better with less in terms of enforcement, but of course, like all technology, we turned against you. Yes, that’s an interesting thought, but I admit, I haven’t really given much thought to it, but if you hadn’t bought
Standoff, I assume you could, I don’t know enough about drone technology, but I assume you could use it. Yes, that’s an interesting thought. If they reduce my state pension any longer, I’ll give it some thought. [laughter]

Judith Rowbotham – Any other comments from any of the panel. Nick West.

Nick West – Just to pick up on the point of the landlord responsibilities. I was fortunate enough to be in charge coordinating the intelligence around Vietnamese drug-trafficking houses and what was quite apparent from there is that Plymouth unfortunately, at that time, had lots of unscrupulous landlords who were quite happy for the tenant to give them £10,000 and disappear, they were under no pretence that the landlord had to come back in 12 months. Virtually every case that we had, which was quite significant, bearing in mind that these organised crime groups bring these people over and they’re probably on a par with SWEB in relation to their installations, earning up to about £20,000 per house, so it really is serious organised business. The fault for me at that time, and thankfully you point out now, it’s obviously tightened up a bit, is the fact that landlords were unscrupulous, looking for that quick buck, take the cash, run away, don’t come back for 12 months and all of a sudden we were ringing them up and saying “do you realise you’ve got a problem with your address?” So it’s good to see landlords taking responsibility.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you. We have a question from Steve Pearce.

Steve Pearce – Thank you. Steve Pearce former Devon & Cornwall Officer who retired before the Napoli incident [laughter] and therefore was at home and with all the other old soldiers out there was saying “what the hell are the police doing?” Now I know! They were out there arresting partner agencies [laughter] Not stopping people taking engines to Birmingham or somewhere. Anyway, good to hear that story Jim and as I say, there were a few of us out there who were worried. I mean, difficult job, because none of us could have foreseen that and I suspect that if it happens again next week, there will be the same issue, nobody will know anything about the Maritime Act or whatever and hopefully though, because you work in partnerships, it would be a bit more heads-up. But my question isn’t to try and embarrass Jim, it’s a wider issue really and it’s been touched on by most members of the panel, it’s about community intelligence, or lack of community intelligence, or the need to develop more community intelligence at a time when, we’ve already heard, the borders, the sea ports are porous. For reasons we obviously know in terms of the public spending, agencies are having to withdraw. I hope police colleagues won’t think this is a political question, but I think about three or four months ago the Police & Crime Commission for Dorset, there’s a problem in Dorset, in terms of this is people smuggling and human-trafficking and was seeking further resource, whether that resource be awareness, training, or some awareness scheme within Dorset, I don’t know, but I also noticed that at the same time the Devon & Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner failed to support that wholeheartedly. I mean she made some interesting sounds, but I don’t think I picked up that anymore resources would be directed towards raising community awareness to get community intelligence. I wonder if any of the police colleagues would like to make a comment about the amount of resource they feel have been put into, plug in the gaps if you like, certainly along the south coast.

Judith Rowbotham – Would any of the panel like to comment? Nick.

Nick West – I suppose the only thing I would pick up on, the actual request if I’m right was about a resource to actually target the problem, so I think they recognised through community intelligence that they have a problem with trafficking, they didn’t have the resources to endorse it until the job, so their correct tasking routes to take that to reason of tasking for a reasonable resource to deliver and I understand that was done through the [inaudible]. In relation to Devon and Cornwall, I think
recently we have upped our game in relation to human-trafficking, training of staff. I think there’s more people now we engage in what the process is, in with an organisation called ‘Gain’. In short, that’s people from within the region having knowledge about what the processes are, who the best people are to help people in these circumstances to come together and provide you that support. If I give you an example where that worked, in Exeter we have big issues with car-wash, with Romanians and Czechoslovakians going there and being exploited, the ‘Gain’ model was deployed in that area and joint agency approach went into locations, delivered the operation and came away, probably confident that there were some issues, but not the bigger issues that the community was, sort of, implementing. In relation to the PCC stance, I don’t know whether I can answer that one any further, obviously that’s a little bit above me.

**Judith Rowbotham** – Jim.

**Jim Gale** – Not really. I’m not aware of any specific issue. To re-emphasise Nick’s point, the issue around modern slavery and human-trafficking, it’s real, it’s serious, it’s happening on the street corner and we’ve got to tackle that. I’m under a Chief Constable who is the National Policing Lead for that, he’s quite rightly bringing some focus on it. Just going back, I think we recovered pretty much everything, I don’t there’s any BMW motorbikes left in Birmingham, I think we even got the barrel back from the police authority, just to set the record straight.

**Brendan Brookshaw** – I don’t think it was as political a question as you might have thought, to be honest, because we are currently in a strategic alliance with Dorset, so there’s a sharing of resources often anyway and not necessarily, therefore, has to be formally done, it’s done on a regular basis. But also, just to be clear, the Police & Crime Commissioner is responsible for setting the strategy and providing the resources and what you were talking about, I think, is more an operational decision about resources go. That’s not her decision. It’s a decision for the Chief Constable and the executive side of the business, so, it wouldn’t have been her decision anyway, it would’ve have been an internal resourcing decision, not a political decision.

**Judith Rowbotham** – Thank you. Now another question from Alan Stevenson.

**Alan Stevenson** – Alan Stevenson, retired Detective Sergeant from Nottinghamshire Police. Very interesting to listen to the current views from the panel. Our policing has not really changed in the 10 years since I’ve been retired. Part of my police service was four years’ tenure on what was then a dedicated Drugs Squad in Nottinghamshire. Most of our drugs, as Nick has confirmed, were from the Liverpool area. You’ll be pleased to know that we never got intelligence, as far as I was aware, but then if it was coming through the South West, so perhaps not as porous as it might have been. What happened in Nottinghamshire, just after I’d left the Drugs Squad, the then current Chief Constable, who shall remain nameless, decided that he could do without a Drugs Squad because of cost-cutting purposes and he said he didn’t need a Drugs Squad because there was 2500 Drug Squad Officers employed by himself. As you all know Nottinghamshire then became quite lawless and became the gun capital of England, or the UK, which cumulated in a 13-year-old girl on her way back from Nottingham Goose Fair being shot dead and that was as a result of two rival gangs meeting outside the fair and deciding who was going to be dealing with the main drugs in that area. From that, several other shootings and killings occurred and eventually Nottinghamshire Police were looked at by the Home Office as to whether they were fit-for-purpose at the time. Quite a serious charge. All down to drugs coming into the city and because they’d lost the dedicated Drugs Squad, that led to a lot of problems that later occurred and that was down to cost-cutting. The aftermath of that was that it probably cost ten times as much to look into these killings as it did from the Drugs Squad. Very, very
serious concerns. I just wondered what your thoughts are about disbanding the Drug Squad. Is there a dedicated Drugs Squad in the South West at the moment?

Judith Rowbotham – Nick West.

Nick West – Thank you Alan, it’s nice to see you’re still drawing your pension. [laughter] Well, in relation to Drug Squads, there is still a, well it’s not a reasonable crime squad, as it was probably was in your day, it’s moved up into the ROCU, which is the Regional Organised Crime Unit, so they’re the people that would service the South West as it is for the five Forces around this region. I just take you back to a Plymouth scenario, and again policing is always under review and we’re always cost-cutting, always looking at resources. We did go through a spell where we decided that we didn’t need a proactive unit and we didn’t need the five officers and the sergeant controlling the unit to be out running around, meeting and greeting people, and just getting a flavour of what was going on. That unit, for whatever reason, was disbanded, similar to what Alan was saying, and within a very short period of six months and it was recognised by probably practitioners on the street that the level of drug related activity resulting in taxings, kidnappings, a little bit of extortion, had significantly increased. When we went back into the intelligence to try and find out who was responsible, what groups were operating and what the current picture looked like, nobody could really tell us. It wasn’t until someone made a strategic decision to put this group back together, with maybe some fresh new faces and a little bit more flavour on it, that we actually managed to, I know some people will call it ‘regain the streets’, but we actually managed to understand what was going on within our communities. Again, it takes it back to a word that I think has been used throughout the seminar, is about tolerance. So, it’s a bit like some of the bosses will say “what I don’t know can’t hurt me, if you tell me something I’m obliged to manage the risk and do something about it”. That was a little bit, probably where the culture came from, “if I don’t know about it, I haven’t got to worry about it, but if you’re now telling me I’ve got six serious beatings, three extortions and four kidnaps, then actually I’ve got to something about it”. Thankfully for us, now, I think most of the divisions within Devon and Cornwall, being Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, Plymouth and in Devon, have all got some form of capacity which we can draw upon to give us a flavour and tell us what the intelligence looks like for what we now class as ‘Dangerous Drug Networks’. So I think we’re moving in the right direction.

Judith Rowbotham – Paul, do you have any comment?

Paul Richards – Yes, sort of linking back to community intelligence. I have to go out every quarter with my local police officers, operationally, and just observe what’s going on, to maintain our licence and one of the things I’m struck with when I go out on the streets with my former colleagues, is just the way it’s changing, in terms of on the street, in terms of the ability for the force to have their PCSOs available, because what often happens is that neighbourhood teams have taken the biggest proportion of cuts in Devon and Cornwall, as in other places, so the police officers that were dedicated as community officers have been withdrawn, or retired, or moved away and that role has been taken by PCSOs. Increasingly, as the cuts have bitten further, then some of the PCSOs are doing the role of police officers in terms of doing crime enquiries, so what you’re seeing is some PCSOs doing crime enquiries, so they were traditionally the ‘eyes and ears’ of the police, but they’re just not getting out as much as they should do. I think it’s absolutely right to stop this revolving door of what’s flavour of the month, what’s not flavour of the month. Police have got massive issues to deal with, in terms of things like terrorism, drug smuggling, people-trafficking, as we sort of emerge into this new brave world we’re inheriting. It seems to me that that’s a real issue then for them to manage how they get this community intelligence in the right kind of way and it’s a real struggle, because I think they are, at the moment, trying to manage all of this and fire-fighting as well. It’s a real struggle and I’m very pleased to hear that the Plymouth operation welcomed the use of community intelligence, because in my experience community intelligence was absolutely key. When I was in the Drugs Squad in Torbay,
primarily the main reason we were effective was because of what people were telling us. I think that that connection with local communities is absolutely vital.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you very much. Anything from Mike or Jim? Mike.

Mike Williams – I feel slightly embarrassed just talking about maritime heritage crime because it is a serious issue, but I think most people would agree with me, it falls into insignificance measured against the effect of illegal drugs in society, or people smuggling, or terrorism. In terms of heritage crime there’s been some successes lately and every one of them has come from intelligence. Intelligence from within the diving community that has initiated investigations. Indeed, one of the biggest successes, the person who had stolen several very valuable antique cannons, which were sold for almost £100,000, had actually reported them, but had reported them to the Receiver who’s coming from outside territorial waters, filled out the appropriate forms, got title to them and then they were then sold to a perfectly innocent buyer in America. It was subsequent intelligence from within the diving community that said “you really ought to check out where these came from, because they didn’t come from where they were declared to have come from”. So, I’ve no experience whatsoever in policing the issues that have been talked about here, in terms of drugs, or smuggling, or arms, but I can certainly say that in terms of maritime heritage crime, one of the best routes is the intelligence from law-abiding members of the diving community. I think I should add, in fairness, that’s about 99% of the community. We’re talking about a small minority, but a small minority who’s very effective at what they do. Depending on what they recover, and in this case was the guns, one of them was very unusual and had it not been brought to the attention of the authorities, a lot of heritage information would have been lost. So you can actually lose a lot of information from around these small islands. So yes, community intelligence really has been the cornerstone of any successes to date.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you. Jim have you any comment?

Jim Gale – If I could be sort of big picture, controversial for a second, it’s absolutely true that communities and on their behalf, the police, are facing some really significant kind of existential threat and we’ve talked about some of them and it’s probably impossible to deal with them all. So it probably is time, and I’m not sitting here as an advocate, but it’s probably the time to have the debate around legalising drugs and being a bit more sophisticated in how we tackle that particular threat. The reason for that is because, if we, our mission, our policing mission, talks about keeping people safe and protecting people from harm, and harm isn’t just about crime, it can be a variety of other things. So maybe a slightly more sophisticated approach is called for so we can actually invest our limited resources and skills in those other existential threats, which are real and significant and growing and didn’t exist previously. In the 90’s we were dealing with drugs and burglary and robbery and things like that. Now we’re dealing with things like child sex exploitation, human-trafficking, online fraud, in a way that we simply weren’t before, yet the resources available to us haven’t grown. So just to be a bit controversial for a second, maybe it’s time for a rethink.

Judith Rowbotham – Are there any comments on that? Martin Morgan at the back.

Martin Morgan – Thank you. It’s probably a question for Nick. Romanians, Czechs and Vietnamese have been mentioned. How do the various, perhaps they’re ethnic groups, but they’re certainly probably different gangs, if there were four Scousers cocooning a local, who then spotted, perhaps, full of Vietnamese in their street, what would their reaction be? How historically have the relationships between various different crime groups and ethnicities been? Was it all out war or division?

Nick West – That’s a lovely question to finish with, thank you. Drug related activity, Scousers, Mancs, Londoners, will come down and have a turf-war for a patch and they will, to a degree, tolerate each
other. They will get along and they will respect each other’s market. We’ve already talked about what happens when you create a void by doing some activity and you take away one side of the market, quite rightly they’ll say the other side will move in and take over and increase their turf, that’s a given really. I don’t think we’ve seen too much violence between what would be our Kurdish, Vietnamese, if I talk about the cannabis grows, the Vietnamese, very quiet people, very unassuming, they probably have been trafficked into the country for the purpose of being, what we would call and what you’d probably hear from ‘The Herald’, as a gardener. They’re brought here solely to go and live and sleep in that house and wake up in the morning and water the plants, do what they do during the day, and come back in the evening and do the same again, and the cycle goes on. Ethnicity, I suppose, we are seeing an increase in other foreign nationals coming in. I don’t think at the moment we’ve seen any impact of that in relation to any turf-wars. So thankfully at the moment, you know, diversity teams and community teams have kept a lid on it. So, touch wood, I think we’re where we should be really.

Judith Rowbotham – Any comment from Paul or Jim? Paul Richards.

Paul Richards – I was in the Drugs Squad in 1998, I think, in Torbay, and it was interesting. My first experience of moving to Torbay from the Isles of Scilly, actually, was when I arrived as a sergeant at 2 o’clock in the morning, going around this patch, was a guy, in quite a nice part of Torquay, with his ear almost detached from his head, holding his ear, and we were sort of saying “do you want a medic? who did this to you?” and he said “no, I don’t anything, I’ll sort this out myself, I’ll walk myself to the hospital, I don’t want anything”, he just didn’t want to know and I was completely shocked and I spoke to my colleague “why is he like this?” – “it’s probably drugs taxing Serge, he’s been taxed”, so it was basically local violence between either a crossed drug dealer or a drug dealer/user. Certainly, my experience, the violence was, and I dealt with actually a Vietnamese gardener in my time, so it probably hasn’t changed that much, where the Vietnamese person I dealt with, had no injuries at all, was living in the house where the plants were being tended to and I agree with Nick entirely, there was no really antagonism between them and local drug dealers. But the local drug dealers, themselves, would have very violent interludes where they would conduct quite violent operations. The most dangerous thing for us going in, and executing warrants, was that the people we were executing the warrant on thought we were from a local other drug dealer, and that was our biggest danger. Throughout, we weren’t in plain clothes, so had to add big fluorescent baseball caps with ‘police’ on the top, saying “we are the police! don’t attack us”, because, again, it took a while sometimes, inside volatile situations, to calm them down, to make them realise we really were the police and not some local taxing agency. So I think, even back then, violence was eked out, it was not reported, sometimes it was extremely violent, but not reported. [inaudible] well there’s no problem because it’s not reported, but it isn’t traditionally reported, they don’t tend to talk to each other when there are these fights, apart from they actually get killed.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you very much. We have a question here.

Jak Chaos – I’m Jak Chaos, student of Maritime Law here at Plymouth University. We’ve been discussing an issue regarding community intelligence and there has been a lot of answers from the panel regarding that issue. I’m a foreigner, obviously my name, I’m from Spain and obviously we’ve had quite a few North Africa traffic up to the peninsular, and not only through Spain, but northern Europe, through Spain and I would refer to a question to everyone really, it’s not only from the policing side but also from culture that Mike Williams was mentioning now, how accurate can community intelligence be when there’s a change in generation now, where a man is growing, not from the older generation that has a clear definite view on such bad use of drugs, but from the younger generation that actually don’t see the negative side of such use and often treat as medicinal use and such usage, how can that information in terms of policing, in terms of heritage and other sort of crime detection,
be used from the police side when it may not be fully accurate regarding a whole interest to defend such industry from crime agencies and stopping crime?

**Judith Rowbotham** – Thank you. That’s actually a question which brings us to back to the comment that Jim made earlier on. So any comments from the panel on this? Mike Williams.

**Mike Williams** – I think actually for once there’s an optimistic note which is commuting intelligence heritage crime has been very successful and it’s despite the generational change. It certainly was the case that with the growth in recreational diving, there’s always been a tradition amongst the old hard-hat divers of souvenir collecting from wrecks and this was merely taken up by the recreational community in the 50’s and 60’s and in the 90’s the first UK Receiver of Wreck set herself the task of changing that culture, together with the marine archaeological community. There was a public education campaign specifically directed at the diving community and the importance of heritage and the damage you can do by souvenir collecting, and it’s been extremely successful to the point where, as I’ve said, many of the incidents and misdemeanours have been detected through intelligence from the community, so it’s an example of a public education campaign that’s worked very well. But it took quite a bit of resourcing and it took a lot of cooperation between the different agencies, the recreational diving organisations, marine archaeological organisations, the Maritime Coastguard Agency, Ministry of Defence, Department of Transport, there was a big coming together and actually working groups set up to be delivering, but it has been very successful. The thing that’s been learnt from it, however, was, and I think this is in the nature of government, it tends to be a box ticked, and as a result it had been delivered, attitudes have changed and we can all go away. What’s become apparent in the last few years is that you can’t do that, because there is a generational churn, as it’s put, and you have to keep topping up that public education message. But certainly in terms of maritime heritage crime, it’s nice to be able to report a big success story.

**Judith Rowbotham** – Thank you very much. Any other comments from the panel? Nick West.

**Nick West** – We’ve talked about community intelligence, but it’s about the word ‘intelligence’, not just community, because within the strands of policing there are numerous sources of intelligence. If you look back at how your local base command units are structured now, you’ve got PCSOs. Since their introduction, they’ve managed to get out and about within their communities, eyes and ears, and the wealth of information they bring back and the knowledge of their patch is absolutely tremendous. I know in Mr Pearce’s day he resurrected something called ‘Crime Stoppers’. Again, it’s a system which is quite well advertised through media and allows people to anonymously report intelligence that they might not really have any faith in how it’s handled and managed, so it’s just anonymous, it’s put into the system and that intelligence is used to corroborate what else might already be known to the police. So if you take your community intelligence, your local policing teams, Crime Stoppers and your intelligence derived from your operations, all that gives you quite a rich picture and understanding of what’s going on and obviously it’s from that, that divisional commanders make their sort of operational decisions about what areas they’re going to target. So, I think the actual model works quite well.

**Judith Rowbotham** – Thank you. Do you have anything you wanted to say Jim?

**Jim Gale** – Yes. It’s a really, really interesting question for me because I think it begins to point towards potentially laws or customs that are becoming out of date. So if we exist in this world and we are applying a law and society moves on and that law is kind of no longer relevant to certain perceptions of the community, then community intelligence’s going to dry up because of the way in which it works will be that the community will say “well I don’t see anything wrong with it, so why am I reporting
anything?”, so the police effort to continue trying to tackle that issue is not only kind of pointless, it begins to undermine some legitimacy because the police will then be alienated from that section of community. We’ve probably seen some of this in relation to the law around sexual activity between men, which was eventually the law was changed, thus not making sexual activity between consenting men an offence. The law was slow to respond to changing attitudes of society but it took a long time.

In the meantime, the police action to enforce the outdated law alienated a very significant section of society. I think the things we’ve seen around perhaps Brexit and the election of Donald Trump begin to point towards some of this, which is actually, do you know what, some parts of society and some parts of community aren’t very comfortable with the status quo. Policing is in a difficult position where that’s concerned, because on one hand we’re kind of crown or public servants, we need to uphold the law, that’s what we do, albeit with some discretion. So we need to be quite sophisticated and grown-up and we need to have the debate in the right sections of society and the hierarchy to say “do you know what, this may not be right” and it’s quite a difficult thing to do, especially if we’re being measured by results. Having that discussion and that sort of sophisticated discussion to say “we think it’s wrong here, the way we’ve been operating here is out of date”, is quite a difficult discussion to have. I think it’s a really, really interesting question.

Judith Rowbotham – Actually it does relate because we’ve already seen it. If you think about it, the question about importing cigarettes, tobacco smuggling and we’ve already seen the lowering of expectation, whereas maybe it was not so at various stages in the past.

Student – I’m a student here at Plymouth University studying Navigation and Maritime Science, once a deck-cadet or officer-cadet in the Merchant Navy. What I get from this meeting is that ports and ships are the main gateway to drugs and to human-trafficking. For me it’s interesting because being on a ship, you want to know what is in the cargo and you want to be in control of what you are shipping, which is not always easy, it’s very difficult. So I don’t know if this question is ideal, but let’s say how is the police tackling the problem when a ship is coming in? How are they controlling the cargo? How are they preventing ships to import drugs or humans?

Judith Rowbotham – Is that a question that either the panel or anybody else, like David Thomas or Ray would care to comment on? Ray.

Ray Brenton – I can assist a little. As far as I’m aware, as I say, it’s not the area I work in now. However, on arrival of ship first of all, the ship will announce its arrival to the agent. Its cargo must be declared. It’s manifested, and of course that can be checked against the manifest. As far as the crew are concerned, the crew list will be sent to the agent, which will be forwarded to Border Force. Border Force will check those names, make sure they’re perfectly reasonable names and they’re not obviously criminals of any kind. So the crew list will be checked and also the ship can be checked at any time by either police, Special Branch for terrorist enquires or Border Force. So the checks are there on the cargo and the crews.

Judith Rowbotham – So it would be the Border Agency who would invoke the police rather than the police being at the front line?

Ray Brenton – Yes. It would be depending on where the ship has come from and the crew. There may be interest for the police. The gentleman here could answer this. If it is, then they would under the terrorism laws, board that vessel to check out what they believe could be a problem, if it’s a Border Force interest, then Border Force will monitor and board. There are patrols in check.

Judith Rowbotham – David, did you have any comment?
David Thomas – Not really. Not working in the UK.

Judith Rowbotham – Right. Anybody on the panel? No. We have a question.

Audience member – It’s just a comment really, historical comment. Years ago I was on one of the first Drug Squads, which was in Bolton, and we were starting to find the drop drug population starting to appear. Later on I was sent on a course to Hutton Hall, the Lancashire Police Training College, where the first Drug Squads were being trained. We were treated like pariahs. We could identify that this problem was going to hit Britain very badly, but the chief constables and senior officers at that time just didn’t recognise the problem. One of the problems was there were no inter-agency discussions. You had thiefdoms, where that’s not my partnership, don’t bother me with it and from then, with this lack of interest at a senior level, suddenly the drug population increased quite rapidly. So what I’m saying is as these problems occur, and I quite agree with what you’ve been saying, we’ve got problems starting to develop now which are going to be quite substantial, it’s up to all the agencies really, Inter Police, Special Forces, the Secret Services, to come together to share their information and I still wonder if that’s not the case.

Judith Rowbotham – Any comments from the panel? Nick West.

Nick West – From an obviously serious organised crime branch there is that collision and again we’re talking about a joined-up approach in relation to intelligence from all sources. It goes through a mechanism which washes it to make sure there’s no, what we call, ‘blue-on-blue’. So there’s no point in me acting on some intelligence that comes from Devon and Cornwall which might frustrate the outcome of another job which has been in the being for the past two years. I’m sure the boss of that job would get very unhappy with me if I suddenly went and cracked in the door and he was on the end of his job. There is that collusion that goes on and I think it works very well. I don’t know how much more assurance we can give that. I think everything that is done, is there. I think what we’re now getting better at is what we call ‘a street level-up approach to drug related operations’. So we recognise as the needs in relation to drug enforcement that it’s not about us just taking the drugs off the criminals coming down, it’s about educating those at a lower level who are actually using the drugs, which is why the stuff keeps coming down. So if you see an operation in Plymouth, some years ago, you would have seen quite an engagement by Plymouth City Council Health Authority in relation to “right we’ve identified these 30 victims that are receiving these drugs, what I need you to do is to work with them to treat their habit and reduce their need for the drug” and then obviously hopefully by doing that, we can stem the need for these people to bring the drugs down. Now always effective, but then again, drugs are there. I don’t think they’re ever going to go away unless we go along Jim’s line and legalise it. I don’t think we can legalise everything, as some of its really nasty and horrible and you wouldn’t really want to get involved with it. There is certainly some scope for movement somewhere.

Judith Rowbotham – Jim any comment?

Jim Gale – I think the partnership arena, I’m starting to learn a bit about this, following a recent appointment into that world, is growing and there is a genuine appetite, I think, to working in partnerships with other agencies, almost to a fault. I think we’re a bit confused about who we should be working in partnerships with. So we’ve got a strategic alliance with Dorset, for instance, and we’re working with Devon County Council, Plymouth, we’re talking to the Fire Service. The world of partnership is very crowded. The appetite’s there, the organisation perhaps isn’t quite yet.

Judith Rowbotham – Thank you very much. I think on that note, I will bring the panel to a close and thank our panellists very much indeed and also those members of the audience who have contributed
and made this, once again, a very informative panel. I think when the two sessions are put together it will be something that will be, I’m sure you’ll agree Michael, a major resource for those interested in aspects of policing. So again can I ask everybody to thank the panel for giving up their time. [applause] Thank you very much indeed.