

officer had been published in which it was claimed that home helps were scared to go on the estate, Dolly Kiffin contacted the paper expressing anger at the report. The result was a full page report about the Youth Association and in particular its work for old people. A leading article said:-

"Broadwater now offers a community life to old and young alike, especially to the unemployed with time on their hands. Not only that: those who are housebound get hot dinners delivered by young volunteers."

2.58 While the success has been remarkable, it is important to recognise that the Youth Association has many obstacles still to overcome. As we show from the analysis of the survey in Chapter 7, the estate is not a fully integrated community. Many people praised the work of the Youth Association and other new organisations, but few are actually involved in them. There are sections of the estate that do not feel that the Youth Association caters for their needs. There have been considerable improvements in the housing field, but in other areas, such as education and economic development, the participation of the community has scarcely begun. We return in Chapter 9 to consider various ways forward for the future. We now turn to consider how the various ranks of the Metropolitan Police responded to the community of Broadwater Farm.

Chapter 3

THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY

THE BACKGROUND OF INJUSTICE

3.1 Black people who settled in Britain in the 1950s and early 1960s were strongly supportive of the police. But over the 1970s, as a generation of Black people born in Britain grew up, the attitudes of their parents to the police changed dramatically. The change came about because they saw what was happening to their sons and daughters. They saw them picked on in stop-and-search operations and arrests under "Sus". When they complained to the police, whom they believed to be the protectors of the law, they were rebuffed and sometimes mistreated. And when they complained they were not taken seriously.

Mrs Scott, the mother of five children, told us how her experience changed:-

"In the sixties I was quite friendly with the police. We had a club on the Bruce Grove Road. I can't remember the name - there is a hairdresser's there now. And we used to gamble there and the police officers from Tottenham used to be there. We used to know and call each other by our first names. And sometimes when I'd get broke I would turn to one and say: 'I'm skint, have you got any money?' And they would turn to me the same way. It suddenly changed in the early seventies. It seemed as if all the decent police officers had left the area and there were all different people coming in. And you couldn't go to the police and make a complaint without being harassed. Although you are making a complaint, you are being harassed by the police."

Mr Jarrett described to us an incident in 1977 when he asked for the help of the police to deal with a boy breaking his windows, and ended up being arrested himself. He concluded:-

"These are all things which you have to look into. How much can you trust the police when you need help? There are several West Indian families who have gone to the police for help and been turned down flat."

3.2 The pages of Haringey press show that throughout the 1970s there was mounting concern about the behaviour of police officers to Black people in Tottenham. In August 1973 a meeting was held at the Civic Centre, chaired by the Mayor, to "ease strained relations between the police and the Black community". Bitter criticism of various aspects of police behaviour was voiced. The meeting launched a voluntary liaison scheme, organised by the Haringey Council for Community Relations, under which volunteers could be called into police stations in cases of difficulty.

3.3 In July 1975 there was an outraged reaction to the conviction of a Black sixth-form student for assaulting a police officer. Many witnesses had testified in court that police officers assaulted him. A reporter on the *Hornsey Journal* analysed the background of the case and concluded:—

"There must be a thorough investigation of the general complaints being made against the police, and action taken to see that the Black community have confidence in them. Anything less would be a whitewash, with untold consequences in a multi-racial society".

Concern about the crisis in police/community relations crossed party lines. At a meeting in the same month, a Conservative councillor, Robert Atkins, said:—

"There are frightening indications of a sudden and serious deterioration in relations between the immigrant community and the police."

3.4 In January 1978, a Labour Party inquiry was set up into racism and discrimination against Black people in the borough. The inquiry had been called for by the Tony Anderson Campaign — a campaign to expose police harassment of one Black youth, whose case was said by the inquiry chairman to be "the tip of the iceberg". Dolly Kiffin is Tony Anderson's mother, and she told us of her own response when her son came home and said the police had punched him:—

"I just grab him and take him down to the police station and demand: 'This police punched my son and I want justice'. Because although you read about it, you don't know this, don't believe that these things happen, because you believe they are supposed to keep the law. I personally did not realise that they break the law."

3.5 Witness after witness to our Inquiry spoke of the indignities which they have suffered at the hands of police officers for no other

reason than that they were Black. The bitterness of their experience was shared by old and young, men and women, professional people and unemployed:—

"I have never been unemployed. I have a reasonable standard of living. However as a Black person individually, it's been my common experience to be stopped, searched, questioned by the police, and treated with suspicion and hostility." (Michael Hutchinson-Reis, social worker).

"I have had my toes stepped on, I have been backed into corners, policemen have spoken to me with a filthy mouth full of spit. I have stepped out of that and I have handled the situation, but I can see that young people can't keep their patience, and quite a lot of the times they have exploited that, and then they get a hammering and a hiding." (Norton McLean, Principal Youth Officer).

"They stopped me by St. Paul's cathedral once, twice in one night. Two different lots of police. They said: 'Well what are you doing in St. Paul's? We don't usually see Black people in St. Paul's.' So I asked him: 'Is that the only reason why they stop me, just because I'm Black and in St. Paul's?', and they said: 'Yes'. At which point I got a bit angry, because I thought that was a fucking insult" (young Black man).

It is because of experiences like this that people so often get charged for what are called "knock-on offences"; they get stopped, searched or arrested for a reason which turns out to have no foundation, but are then charged with some other offence — obstructing or assaulting the police, or threatening behaviour — which has arisen only because of the contact between the "suspect" and the police.

3.6 There should be no surprise at this evidence. Throughout the 1970s there were reports written and inquiries made into the maltreatment of Black people by the police. Finally in 1981, the evidence was brought before the official inquiry made by Lord Scarman into the Brixton disorders. Lord Scarman said of the evidence of which he had heard:—

"Whether justified or not, many in Brixton believe that the police routinely abuse their powers and mistreat alleged offenders. The belief here is as important as the fact. One of the most serious developments in recent years, has been the way in which the older generation of Black people in Brixton has come to share the belief

of the younger generation, that the police routinely harass and ill-treat black youngsters".

3.7 We differ in one central respect from the conclusion of Lord Scarman. It deliberately avoided the central question – was the "belief" of Black people based on fact or fiction? The belief is not "as important as the fact"; it is the fact which is supremely important. If the belief of Black people was based on fact, it meant that great numbers of Metropolitan Police officers were racist in their thoughts and actions. If the belief was based on fiction, it meant that Black people were being over-credulous and were naively accepting unfounded rumour. From the mass of reported evidence, which was available to Lord Scarman, we have no doubt that the conclusions of Black people were deeply grounded on true experience of racially prejudiced police behaviour.

1981 – THE CHANCE FOR A NEW START

3.8 In 1981, the year of the Brixton and Toxteth disturbances, the Borough of Haringey had also experienced confrontations between police and people. On Easter Monday there had been a brief but violent clash at the Finsbury Park funfair. Commander Dickinson, the head of Y district which covered the boroughs of Haringey and Enfield, suffered a broken nose and a fractured cheek bone. The *Hornsey Journal* carried an emotive report: –

"They did it again. About 500 Black youths stampeded the Finsbury Park funfair last Monday – as they did last year – and terrified the mixed race groups, who until then, were happily mingling on the swings and roundabouts. And today people in Haringey are asking: **"WHO IS GOING TO STOP THESE RIOTS?"**

On 7th July shop windows were broken and missiles thrown at the police in the Wood Green High Road. It was reported that 59 shops had been damaged or looted, and 8 police officers injured.

3.9 The publication of the Scarman report in November 1981 offered to all the chance of a fresh start. Lord Scarman had made a series of recommendations to deal with the crisis in police/community relations: action against racist behaviour by police officers, improvements in police training, compulsory in-service courses, close supervision of stop-and-search operations, and a setting up of immediate consultative arrangements, in advance of a statutory

scheme. In Brixton immediate steps were taken to bring in a new leadership to the police force which was prepared to carry through the Scarman proposals. Such leadership was desperately needed in Tottenham.

THE POLICE AND THE YOUTH ASSOCIATION

3.10 On Broadwater Farm, the newly formed Youth Association was ready and willing to enter into dialogue with the police, and at some levels, at least, the police were ready and willing to enter into dialogue with the Youth Association. **It is central to our Inquiry to discover why the dialogue failed to develop trust and confidence between the police and people on the estate.**

3.11 At a certain level, the contact was close. Three officers in particular came frequently to the Youth Association office in the period between 1982 and 1985:

- Chief Superintendent Couch, the officer in charge of the Tottenham division from 1984, and a man generally recognised to have been committed to community policing. We will have to examine how he interpreted the concept of "community policing", and whether he operated it effectively. But we have no doubt that he genuinely wanted to work in collaboration with local community leaders.

- Chief Inspector (later Superintendent) Dick Stacey, the Community Liaison Officer, and a man who also made great efforts to be available for meetings with local people. Councillor Martha Osamor, who has been prominent in campaigns against police abuses in Tottenham for many years, said of him: –

"We don't see them all as bad people, wicked people. There's some good ones. Inspector Stacey was one of those that we could rely on, call him day and night and he will visit the families."

- Inspector Paul Gee, who worked as Superintendent Stacey's assistant in community liaison work.

3.12 On the side of the Youth Association, there was also a desire for co-operation. A football match was played between the Broadwater Farm team and a team from Tottenham Police station. Police had an open door invitation to come into the Youth Association Office. High ranking officers from abroad, such as Superintendent Henry De Geneste of the New Jersey police, were entertained for lunch. The accusation made by D.A.C Richards that "normal policing methods are resisted by a vociferous minority" – an

accusation which is plainly levelled against Youth Association leaders – is preposterous. Indeed it is completely belied by Chief Superintendent Couch's words in a television interview after the disturbances: –

“Up till about June of this year, the Broadwater Farm Estate was a pleasant place to work on for our police officers. In fact, they said you really don't need so many of us any more. And things were working very well. And we worked in good co-operation with the housing department, and with Miss Kiffin, who was on the Broadwater Youth Association.”

(*The London Programme*, 11th October, 1985)

3.13 The problem was that the constructive ideas discussed at meetings with Messrs Couch, Stacey, and Gee were not translated into reality. There were two areas of difficulty. First, the local command appeared to have no control over the activities of special units such as the Special Patrol Group and the instant response units. Attempts at building good relations were regularly set back by the insensitive and unnecessary actions of these units which enraged local youths. Haringey's Chief Executive, Roy Limb, who helped to arrange many of the meetings, described what used to happen: –

“It did seem to us that when we had had a good meeting and things were going quite well, all of a sudden there would be another incident on Broadwater Farm and that would damage the relationships. Now I still don't believe in the conspiracy theory, but I do actually accept that these incidents occurred. On one occasion, it had all been agreed that 15 youngsters were going to go over to Hendon (the police training college) and have a look at what goes on there, and be really straight with policemen about police-youth relationships. That had all been arranged for a Saturday morning, and the police were to provide the van. Sure enough, as God made little apples, on the Friday an instant response unit came screeching down onto the estate. Out leapt policemen and a number of youths were detained, questioned and so on, and sure enough that was the end of the visit to Hendon.”

3.14 The second difficulty was that the Youth Association wanted, above all, to build a co-operative relationship with the regular patrolling officers on the estate, who had been increased into a team of eight. But this never happened, except briefly when a young Black woman officer joined the team.

As one witness said: “There was a lot of ribbing and she accepted that and at the end of the day there was some kind of vibes between her and the youth.” But to everyone's annoyance she was transferred after a few weeks. The police said that she needed to continue her training elsewhere, but many took it as evidence that good community relations at rank and file level were not to be encouraged.

3.15 Stafford Scott, a youth worker with the Youth Association, gave a vivid picture of how the Association pressed for contact with patrolling officers, only to be confronted with two men who plainly had no intention of being community policemen: –

“Although we had what at times seemed to be very good meetings with senior police officers, what we found was, in the day to day relationships with the beat officers, there was no change. At one stage we actually had to demand that they come and visit the Youth Association. We told them: ‘You do not need to phone; come in and see what we are up to; come in and play pool with us, come in and talk to the members’.”

Question from Panel: –

“Has that ever been done?”

“The first time it ever happened, we had Billy the Kid and the Sun Dance Kid – anyway they were cowboys. They actually kicked open the Youth Association's door and stood with hands on hips holding truncheons, and they just looked in, in a very aggressive and antagonistic manner.”

Neale Coleman, who as Neighbourhood Officer had regular dealings with the patrolling officers, confirms: –

“It was certainly my impression that the complaints that the Youth Association made about a comparative lack of response from the patrolling officers to invitations to come into the centre, to become involved, were, by and large, justified. Obviously there were other pressures on those officers, other tasks that they had to carry out, but I think it is fair to say that not very much progress was made in establishing links between the patrolling officers and the community as a whole.”

3.16 If proof were needed of the failure of the patrolling officers to relate to local organisations, it came from a remarkable piece of evidence provided by Tricia Zipfel. She had attended a meeting with police officers on 1st October 1985. Present were Chief Superintendent Couch, his deputy, Inspector Sinclair, and Sergeant

Gillian Meynell, who was in charge of the Broadwater Farm home beat team. Tricia Zipfel's record of the meeting states:—

"A further significant point emerging in our discussions was the fact that, although very committed to community policing, the sergeant who had been in charge of the home beat team since May 1985, had rarely been on the estate and had never met with Dolly Kiffin or any other key people. In fact, she stated that she and the home beat officers were not allowed to meet with community groups."

3.17 We find it quite deplorable that the police officer in charge of the patrolling team should make no effort to meet key people on the estate — especially during a period in which, as we will see, there were causes for increased tension and therefore a real need for police/community understanding. As for the statement that "she and the home officers were not allowed to meet with community groups", we find it even more appalling. Tricia Zipfel felt that it was not so much an order, but an implicit assumption that the job of negotiating with the community was left to senior officers, and the people on the ground were not part of that process. We find that to be profoundly disturbing. The Broadwater Farm home beat team had cut themselves off from any hope of co-operation with the community they were meant to serve. They had — and their later published reports prove it, as we shall see — begun to regard local people as the enemy.

A FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP

3.18 When senior and junior officers are found to have such conflicting views of their role, it becomes important to look at the person in overall charge, who from 1981 to May 1985, was Commander Dickinson. He has been mentioned by many as a man who had no desire to consult seriously with local people. Ernie Large was a councillor in the Bruce Grove ward until May 1986, and was involved many times in trying to improve relations between his constituents and the police. He was himself a former military policeman and magistrate, and not a man who would make judgements lightly. He gave us this view of Commander Dickinson:—

"He was the grey haired, old fashioned type police officer. We both came from the East End. He actually had knowledge of the criminals in the East End, and a kind of mutual respect. What the Commander could not handle was the openness of community relations with the council, with its felt need to protect the community from all injustice. In all my political life I have not

really had a serious argument with anybody on the council. The only battles I have had have been with that particular Commander. I found an iron curtain came down, and every time we wanted something, the retort was invariably, we don't have to tell you anything, we are only responsible up the road at the Home Office, and therefore we are totally separate. The insularity of the police vis-a-vis the community was created by the attitude of that one Commander. If there could have been a different type of character there in terms of human relationships, he would have found that moderate and left-wing Labour councillors might have been no different to anyone else, in human terms, in getting things right for the community. But there was this total blockage."

3.19 Commander Dickinson was responsible for starting a petty minded procedure whereby, when written to by the chair of the council's police committee, he invariably replied to someone else. In one such letter, written on the 10th April 1985, to Mr Limb in reply to a letter from Councillor Makanji, the contempt for the council was scarcely veiled:—

"The proposals in a letter dated 2nd April signed by a Councillor Makanji are not acceptable."

Not surprisingly, Councillor Makanji told us that this form of reply was regarded as a snub to the elected leaders of the council. According to Nick Wright, head of the Council's Police Research Unit, Commander Dickinson had issued an instruction to his subordinates not to talk to any of the staff of the unit:—

"We would talk to an officer and when they found out who we were, they put the phone down. That was a consistent pattern until April or May of last year."

3.20 As regards the Broadwater Farm Estate, Commander Dickinson made no secret of his attitude in an interview on the "*Black on Black*" programme, broadcast in early 1983:—

Commander Dickinson:

"Certainly the crime rate as far as street crime is concerned, that's robberies and mugging in the modern parlance, had gone down as opposed to last year, and it needs to go down because it was extremely high last year, but this hasn't gone down because we are walking away from the problem. It's gone down because of effective policing that we are displaying around the area."

Interviewer:

"How do you reply to the youths that say that the decrease in the crime rate was because of their specific action, in other words they had taken youths off the streets, provided them with some sort of special centre and so on?"

Commander Dickinson:

"Well if that is the case, if they claim that, very good, and I give them great acclaim for that, but it only proves that they were responsible for it in the first place, if that's what they say".

For a senior officer to make such a remark, on a programme designed for a Black audience, reveals a frightening lack of understanding and sensitivity.

3.21 We are bound to conclude that with Commander Dickinson in charge, the opportunity of taking a new, post-Scarman look at police/community relations was not on. Chief Superintendent Couch must have felt himself caught between junior officers who had no sympathy with his approach and a Commander who was unwilling to give him support.

3.22 In May 1985, the reorganisation of the Metropolitan Police command structure began to take effect. The districts disappeared, and instead London became divided for police purposes into five areas, each under the command of a Deputy Assistant Commissioner. D.A.C. Richards took on the overall command of Area 1, a huge wedge of North London from the centre to the outer suburbs. He had little time before October to know much about Broadwater Farm, but he appears to have adopted the negative view of his predecessor. In an interview on the "*Diverse Reports*" programme, broadcast on 27th November 1985, he had this to say about the estate and its people:—

"No, they've long since been alienated, I'm afraid. It's long been a haven for the wrongdoer. It's long been the place to which people go from outside to gain comfort and support from people of a like ilk."

There are some nasty connotations to this description, which we do not believe were shared by the Chief Superintendent of Tottenham, who had direct knowledge of the estate and its people. It seems to indicate that the new top leadership was no more open-minded than the old.

POLICE ON THE ESTATE

3.23 We turn now to the particular clashes which took place on the estate. Prior to 1982, a single home beat officer, PC Brian "Ginger" Stratton patrolled the estate. He was liked by many residents. Russell Simper, now the Estate Supervisor, described him as a decent police officer, dedicated to the people on the estate. But there was discontent about the problems of getting police assistance after the all too frequent burglaries and vandalism. As one resident said:—

"You would have a job getting a policeman if you phoned the police. But when they did come, they would come in droves."

3.24 The friendly attitude of PC Stratton contrasted with the activities of the special units that came in from time to time. Malcolm Sargison, community worker at the time, described the two kinds of policing:—

"Whenever there was a spate of burglaries on the estate, they'd send in the SPG and clamp down on everybody, especially Black people. I could see that there was something missing in it all. We had Ginger, and he was a friendly sort of chap. He didn't seem to realise the effects of the SPG being sent in."

3.25 A number of incidents occurred in 1982 which served to harden attitudes on both sides. On 12th August 1982, PC Andy Holland, who five months before had joined PC Stratton as a second home beat officer, was struck on the head with a bottle while inside the office of the Youth Association talking to Dolly Kiffin. Dolly Kiffin agreed that this happened. She explained that there had been a heavy police presence on the estate shortly before, but that did not excuse what was done:—

"We called a meeting as an effect of that, because as we said at the meeting, that should not ever happen. We called the meeting to say that two wrongs don't make a right."

PC Holland said later to the press: "How can you talk to people under those circumstances?" It was a disgraceful incident, which must have reinforced the view that the recently formed Youth Association was hostile to the police.

3.26 On the next occasion, it was the community that had cause for bitter complaint. Late on the evening of 1st November 1982, a group of police officers, with dozens more in support, ran into Tangmere and arrested Roger Scott, an active member of the Youth

Association, saying that he had just burgled the Social Club. There were dozens of other youths present who had been watching a film with Roger and knew that he could not have done it. The Social Club had been entered and messed up, though nothing had been stolen. The burglar alarm had not gone off, and Youth Association officers are convinced that it was not a genuine burglary. The police claimed later, according to the press, that they acted "as a result from a tip from a member of the public".

3.27 A crowd gathered outside Tottenham Police Station. Several witnesses have described to us how, because of the lack of trust in the police, it has become an important community reaction when an injustice is thought to have been done, for people to go to the police station and to demand information. Indeed, we shall see that it was this intention to make a stand at the police station itself, which directly led to confrontation with the police on 6th October. Clasford Sterling described what happened when he reached the police station in the early hours of the morning after securing the Social Club:-

"I just found myself being dragged backwards by police. Not only me, but all the people that were outside the police station, which were young kids, women, adult people as well. It was just disgusting really. I ended up with a broken nose and charged with obstruction."

What had happened was that a special unit of police in riot gear happened to return to Tottenham Police Station after attending a demonstration in Brixton. Seeing what they took to be trouble at the police station, they lost control. Four people were arrested for obstruction, all of them officers or active members of the Youth Association. Two, Clasford Sterling and Diane Anderson, were acquitted in the Magistrates Court at their trial over a year later. Roger Scott was released the same night without any charge.

3.28 This was a disgraceful case of a mishandled operation escalating into violence and inflaming an already tense state of affairs. It is to the credit of Clasford Sterling, who suffered a broken nose and false charge, that he continued to be a highly responsible vice-president of the Youth Association, seeking the maximum co-operation with the police.

3.29 On the following day, 2nd November, there were two attacks against the police, two metal beer kegs were dropped onto a police

car off one of the overhead walk-ways. No one was hurt, but it was said afterwards that an inspector was fortunate to escape serious injury. More seriously still, the home beat officer, PC Brian Stratton, was struck on the head with a billiard cue while he was inside Manston block investigating a complaint by a black woman about racist graffiti on her front door. There followed an immediate incursion onto the estate of riot police in large numbers. They remained for the next two days. Clasford Sterling recalled that period:-

"Every morning they would pull up, they would don their black gloves inside the van, and while they were putting on their black gloves they would be smiling at anyone who was around. They would come upstairs and they would position themselves totally around the deck of Tangmere. That was the only area of the estate they actually policed. They were just trying to incite and antagonise the youth as far as we see it."

3.30 From then on, the amount of police attention devoted to Broadwater Farm increased considerably. A team of eight home beat officers patrolled the estate on a continuous rota. PC Stratton never returned. Even before he left, secret surveillance had started from one of the high floors in the Northolt tower block. Millard Scott told us:-

"We could identify the windows because we saw the reflection from the sun on several occasions. We saw the curtain being moved and what looked like equipment being put in front of it. We have seen people actually looking from out of the windows. We got binoculars and we looked and we saw someone with binoculars looking at us."

Malcolm Sargison had been told by PC Stratton how the council co-operated with the police by allowing empty flats in tower blocks to be used during "surveillance weeks."

3.31 Sometimes there were flare-ups, when the risk of major trouble was averted by the intervention of senior people from the council, usually in the middle of the night: particularly Councillors Bernie Grant and Ernie Large, and the Chief Executive, Roy Limb, whose actions went far beyond the normal call of a Chief Executive's duty. We heard of three incidents in particular, two caused by insensitive policing and one by a criminal act. There was the case of the man who laughed at the police just after Easter 1983. Two men were working on a car. Two patrolling officers came by and one of them tripped.

The men laughed. Immediately they were questioned about the car; they refused to answer; others came over to see what was happening; the police called reinforcements; a van load came down, and the two men were taken off to the police station. The other insensitive incident could be called the case of the quiet football match. In the spring of 1985, when Chief Superintendent Couch's approach appeared to be working, three vans from special units swept down onto the estate and spread out in a show of force. The superintendent expressed his regrets at the incident, explaining that the officers had been at the Tottenham Hotspur football match where they had not had enough to do.

3.32 The criminal act, and in our view also a disgraceful incident, was the stabbing of a police officer, PC Betts, on 4th August 1983. Officers had gone to arrest a woman in the Manston block, a crowd gathered and the police radioed for assistance. In the melee which followed PC Betts was stabbed in the back. Great numbers of other officers were called onto the estate. Feelings were high on both sides. Councillor Bernie Grant, who arrived on the scene, was ordered to move on and almost dragged from his car before Mr Limb intervened. Mr Limb, Councillor Grant and Councillor Large then stood between the residents and the police and succeeded in preventing further trouble.

3.33 The more that incidents of this kind occurred, the more they created a vicious spiral of mistrust and fear. Conservative Councillor Andrew Mitchell described it as a "chicken and egg situation", since in his view it became impossible to discover who was originally to blame. He gave this analysis:—

"Conversations after the riot confirmed to me that there is an understandable perception that the police do not like the youths, and particularly did not like the organisations which were on Broadwater Farm. By the same token, giving a balanced view, there is a perception by the police that they cannot go to an area like Broadwater Farm to carry out normal policing, without being in some way attacked, victimised or abused. So you start to develop the chicken and egg situation. The police officers, because they are scared, rather than going in twos to investigate crime in the ordinary way, start to go mob-handed. Then those that are being investigated get the feeling that they are being victimised. You

want to say: 'Forget what's gone on in the past, let's start again and treat each other normally'."

We have described above how, in our view, the leadership of Commander Dickinson had made it impossible to make a fresh start, which Councillor Mitchell rightly said was needed.

CRIME ON THE ESTATE

3.34 The sad irony is that these dangerous clashes with the police were taking place over a period when crime on the estate was decreasing. Figures were provided from police sources to Haringey Council's police committee, which have been often quoted and never disputed by the police. The figures were for the numbers of crimes reported, which occurred in or near the 12 residential blocks on Broadwater Farm Estate, during each six month period from June to November, from 1982–1985 (except that in 1985 the period taken was from June to October).

Year	Vehicle Crime	Beat Crime	Major Crime	Robbery	Burglary	TOTAL
1982	103	44	34	13	72	266
1983	122	59	68	34	135	418
1984	66	35	11	21	40	173
1985	48	31	22	30	30	161
Rate of increase						
1982–3	50%	32%	63%	8%	62%	50%
Compared with 1984–5	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Decrease

3.35 We have no doubt that the remarkable decrease in crime, which is revealed by these figures, was due to two principal causes:—

(1) The programme of security improvements such as the strengthening of doors and the installing of entry phones, which, in particular, was responsible for the decrease in the number of burglaries.

(2) The achievements of the Youth Association in providing activities for unemployed young men and a sense of purpose in the community generally. Stafford Scott described the effect of the Youth Association's work in terms which precisely echoed the sentiments of much more conservative witnesses, who spoke about the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes:

"We believe there was a rekindled community spirit. I used to

watch a lot of programmes when I was younger about pre-war Britain, when people used to come out of their houses and leave their front doors open, and everybody knew everybody on the street. And although people weren't actually leaving their doors open, there was a different kind of atmosphere."

Cliff Ford, an estate sweeper and member of the Tenants' Association Executive, as well as other witnesses, confirmed that the Youth Association was as concerned about crime as anybody else and was trying to get it down.

3.36 The police were annoyed that the Youth Association would not agree to a Neighbourhood Watch scheme being set up on the estate. Youth Association workers were concerned about such schemes in other areas. Their experience was that Neighbourhood Watch schemes targeted Black youths as objects of suspicion.

In any case, they thought that they were making progress in reducing crime in the community in their own way, without the need for a formal scheme. On one occasion they had 'solved' a crime in a way which provoked considerable anger. Councillor Glenys Atkinson told Dolly Kiffin that her handbag had been stolen on the estate. Councillor Grant described what happened:—

"Dolly Kiffin had the youths going around trying to find her handbag, and apparently they found the handbag within five or six hours, and they brought it back intact, with the purse and so on in it. And the police were angry. I remember there was a meeting afterwards, and the police kept referring to this incident. Why was it that the Youth Association could do something like that and they couldn't?"

3.37 Chief Superintendent Couch and the Community Liaison Officers had some understanding of the achievements of the Broadwater Farm community in reducing crime. But most of the rank and file officers, we believe, were infected by a venomous antagonism towards the estate. The point was made politely in an article in *The Police Magazine*:—

"It has to be said that the very high opinion of Mrs Kiffin's sense of civic responsibility and qualities of leadership, expressed by senior officers, appears to find little concurrence among rank and file officers dealing with the problems of the Youth Association's members on the estate."

One can only wonder how this view was expressed within the confines of the police canteen or the Instant Response Unit van.

3.38 It is necessary to stress the factor of racialism in the response of the rank and file police. The report of the Policy Studies Institute, *Police and People in London*, was based on a prolonged study carried out by experienced and reputable researchers. It was commissioned by the Metropolitan Police themselves. On the general level of racist feeling within the police, they reported as follows:—

"Our first impression after being attached to groups of police officers in areas having a substantial ethnic minority population was that racist language and racial prejudice were prominent and pervasive and that many individual officers and also whole groups were preoccupied with ethnic differences... On the whole, our further research confirmed these initial impressions."

3.39 For the police, the characteristic feature of the Broadwater Farm Estate was that the prominent community leaders were Black people. Since no effective steps were being taken to educate junior officers out of their racist feelings, or into some genuine understanding of the community, the prejudice intensified with every incident. The evidence which we have heard about the treatment of Black people is startlingly confirmed by the evidence of remarks passed to White people:—

"Oh you've had some coons breaking in, have you? I don't know why you live around here with bloody nig-nogs trying to break in to your house." (Police officer to White woman after a burglary.)

"We've been burgled four times. On each occasion when the police came to investigate, they have said automatically they had been done by Blacks. They said: 'Oh it must be somebody off the Farm'."

"If we could have gone into the Youth Association we might have found the person who did this."

3.40 Over 1984-5, as Chief Superintendent Couch tried to exercise his authority, a new element entered into the attitude of the rank and file — one of discontent at their own superiors for not letting them deal with the people on the Farm as they wanted to. One officer said to a nearby resident, who had been burgled:—

"It's a no-go area, we can't go onto there because we'll end up with a riot."

3.41 It is necessary to look closely at the use of this term "no-go area". It seems to reflect a perception which is felt at the highest levels of the Metropolitan Police. The Commissioner in his report for 1983 spoke of Broadwater Farm as one of:—

"Those areas identified as 'symbolic locations' where Black communities, often the young, come to view a particular location with something of a proprietorial attachment resenting intrusion, especially by the police to enforce the law."

He was claiming, therefore, that it was Black people who did not want the law enforced. Junior officers took up this theme, claiming they were not being allowed by their superiors to police the area properly.

3.42 But when we look at the reality of the actions and words of the representatives of the Broadwater Farm community, the idea of "no-go areas" or "symbolic locations" are seen to be a myth created by the police as far as Broadwater Farm was concerned. The Youth Association never asked the police to keep out. As we have seen, they wanted more contact not less. During the 21st public hearing of the Inquiry, Lord Gifford said:—

"We have not heard from anybody who is not pro law and order. We have not heard from anyone who does not want the police to do a job for the community."

His remarks drew applause from the largely Black audience in the hall. They reflected the evidence which we had heard. For in fact there were regular police patrols through the estate in the 1980s, and visits made frequently by senior officers, without molestation or opposition. The community did react in opposition to arbitrary policing, oppressive policing, and racist policing. But they did not, as alleged by D.A.C Richards in his report, seek to resist normal and lawful policing methods.

THE POLICE AND THE COUNCIL

3.43 Under the present law, the police authority for the London area is the Home Secretary. Local authorities have no legal role in the policing of their borough. In practice, however, there needs to be co-operation in many areas, and officers and members of the Haringey Council met frequently with the police. Chief Executive Roy Limb described the pattern:—

"There was a sort of myth around that Haringey Council never talked to the police. That's a load of nonsense, because going back

certainly as long as I have been Chief Executive, there have always been meetings with senior police officers. What usually happened if an issue arises on an estate or something of that nature, I would suggest, or be asked by a chair of committee or by the leader, to fix up a meeting with the local police chief, and I would."

There was, however, no structured basis for these meetings; they depended on ad hoc co-operation on each side.

3.44 Difficulties arose in Haringey because of the views held on both sides about police accountability. The council had resolved to support changes in the law which would make the police accountable to a locally elected authority. In 1983 they established a police sub-committee, comprising councillors and over 30 non-voting delegate groups representing Black and minority ethnic groups, youth and women's groups, the elderly, lesbian and gay communities, and a number of other recognised organisations such as the Haringey Community Relations Council. Its terms of reference included the monitoring of various aspects of policing, making recommendations upon matters relating to the police, and advocating democratic accountability of the police. Clearly it was hoped to achieve some form of accountability in practice, even though none was possible in law. From 1984 the sub-committee was serviced by a police research unit consisting of three officers.

3.45 The police through Commander Dickinson were invited to participate in the work of the sub-committee, but Commander Dickinson refused saying:—

"My constitutional position, as police commander responsible to the Commissioner and the Home Secretary, debars me from involvement in the schemes outlined in the letter."

This was not correct. The law precluded the Commander from being answerable to the local authority, but it did not prevent co-operation and consultation with the council through any appropriate channel. We understand that local senior officers in other areas co-operate with the council police committee and in at least one case attend meetings as observers. As we have said earlier, the attitude of Commander Dickinson in refusing to speak or write to the council's police sub-committee was petty-minded and unhelpful for community relations.

3.46 The next attempt at a structured dialogue involving the council,

the police and the community concerned the Broadwater Farm Panel. The council were anxious to include the police in what was developing into a very useful forum for the discussion by different agencies of problems concerning the estate. The process was that each agency on the panel presented a brief report and answered questions from local residents. The chair of the panel, Councillor Bernie Grant wrote to Chief Superintendent Couch on 23rd January 1985, to confirm the invitation.

3.47 Chief Superintendent Couch replied on 5th February 1985:—

"I and my officers attend numerous meetings to respond to community issues and demands, and never has a request been made for a 'written report' in the council style. If we did, I and my staff would be permanently preparing reports instead of combatting the increasing crime rate, racial harassment and the problems of minority groups.

"In your position as ward councillor, I am always willing to inform you of current trends and issues affecting local policing, but I am not prepared to report in advance to the council-sponsored 'panel' which makes recommendations to the appropriate committee of the council."

This reply does little credit to the reputation of Chief Superintendent Couch as a community policeman, and rather bears the imprint of Commander Dickinson. Councillor Grant agreed to have further discussion at a meeting, and he wrote on 10th April 1985:—

"I would therefore like to propose that we do meet together with a representative from each of the Broadwater Farm Tenants' and Youth Associations. I would also be accompanied by Neale Coleman, the Broadwater Farm Neighbourhood Officer, and an officer from the police sub-committee research unit."

Chief Superintendent Couch replied on the 9th May 1985 expressing "reservations" about the number of people proposed:—

"If you feel that such numbers are required to meet police, then I doubt if we are starting off on the right foot. I would like to know what you require of the police before I meet what appears to me to be a vetting group."

3.48 The negative result of this exchange of correspondence was that police officers never attended the Broadwater Farm Panel before the 6th October disturbances. They never had the chance to discuss, in the valuable open forum which the panel provided, any of the policing problems which began to emerge during the summer of 1985. Councillor Grant views this as a tragedy:—

"I would suggest to the Inquiry that if the police had come onto the Broadwater Farm Panel from as early as January 1985 when we had invited them to, then I believe that we would have not had those disturbances on 6th October on Broadwater Farm. Because if the police had any problem with regard to the estate, they would have been able to put it down in front of the panel, we would have discussed it properly, it would have been reported on. The Youth Association was represented there, and the Tenants' Association, and the matter could have been resolved."

We certainly agree that another valuable opportunity had been lost because of the attitude of the police. We are glad to record that Tottenham's new senior officer, Chief Superintendent Alan Stainsby attended the Broadwater Farm Panel meeting of 15th April 1986 and submitted a written report on crime figures and arrests on the estate.

3.49 The next chapter in this history of failed opportunities between the police and the council concerned the Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group. The proposal made by Lord Scarman for a statutory consultative scheme had been implemented by section 106 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which provided:—

"Arrangements shall be made in each police area for obtaining the views of people in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area and for obtaining their co-operation with the police in preventing crime in the area."

In London, it was the duty of the Commissioner to make the arrangements in accordance with guidance issued by the Home Secretary. The Commissioner was obliged to consult with the council of each London borough as to the arrangements that would be appropriate for the borough.

3.50 On 27th February 1985 Commander Dickinson wrote to Mr Limb asking for a discussion about these arrangements "with the leader and yourself". On 2nd April 1985 Councillor Narendra Makanji, chair of the police sub-committee, replied to Commander Dickinson. He observed that membership of the existing sub-

committee broadly coincided with the recommendations contained in the Home Office guidance. He concluded:—

“We believe that the terms of reference of the council’s police sub-committee provide an appropriate basis for this area’s consultation arrangements and accordingly invite the Metropolitan Police Y District to enter into an arrangement for consultation on the basis of these existing terms of reference.”

3.51 We think that in writing this letter the council was itself indulging in obstructive tactics. It must have been quite apparent to them that Commander Dickinson could not possibly agree to enter into consultative arrangements on the basis of the police sub-committee’s terms of reference, when the Home Office guidance stressed the importance of such arrangements being independent of local authority structures. The reply from Commander Dickinson was swift and inevitable:—

“I am not able to discuss consultative arrangements on this basis further.”

3.52 Neither side had left any further room for movement. The next communication about the consultative group was from D.A.C Richards on 24th May 1985 when he invited the council to attend an exploratory meeting at which a good section of community representatives would be present. The council considered that it had not been properly consulted, and did not attend this meeting, or any other meetings of the Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group which was subsequently formed. We will return later to consider this state of affairs.

THE SUMMER OF 1985

3.53 Morale on the Broadwater Farm was high. In the 3rd June edition, “*Broadwater Review*”, the Youth Association magazine of community news, led off with an article headed: “Plan for new jobs.” Other articles reflected the spirit of a community on the move:—

“SERVICES FOR TURKISH SPEAKING RESIDENCES.”

“ASIAN ACTIVITIES AT THE MOTHERS’ PROJECT.”

“MINISTER TO VISIT.”

“DISABLED PEOPLE START TO ORGANISE.”

“HAIRDRESSING SALON OPENED.”

The fourth annual festival was announced for August, with “the one and only Junior Delgado” and many other talents. The pool team and the junior football team had done well in their leagues. The Mothers’ Project announced a crowded programme of events.

3.54 In July the Youth Association organised a trip for its members to Jamaica. The Youth Association had raised the funds for this trip through fund-raising events, and no council money was involved. Four councillors and Mr and Mrs Limb were invited on the trip by the Youth Association, at their own expense. Mr Limb explained the purposes of the trip:—

“One, it was to mark the enormous progress that the Youth Association had made. It was a sort of reward to itself for all the efforts that it had made over the last three or four years to arrive at that stage. And secondly, and as a really marvellous example of the stage it had arrived at, it was going to Jamaica to help a Youth Association over there called West Park to raise its sights and to do some actual work for it.”

This was a valuable international exchange. The youths from Broadwater Farm built a fence around the West Park club in Clarendon, and repaired the access road. Even more, they learned about Jamaica, where many of their parents had been born. There is to be a return visit by the West Park club in August 1986.

The main party returned at the end of August. Dolly Kiffin stayed on in Jamaica until 23rd September.

3.55 Before the Jamaica party left, a number of youths from outside the estate had begun to congregate on Broadwater Farm. Norton McLean, Principal Youth Officer for Haringey explained one of the reasons why, in his view, so many youths were attracted there:—

“One of the major points is that there were subsidised meals. And there were large groups of unemployed young people that, if they can go somewhere where you can get a good cheap West Indian meal for about £1.60 which, in other places, you would pay £5 to £6 for, quite clearly that’s an attraction.”

The youths were not accepted inside the Youth Association building, and they used to hang around the Tangmere precinct,

kicking footballs, and sometimes riding motor bikes around the precinct.

3.56 While the party was away in Jamaica, a new set of strangers arrived – drug traffickers. They came in expensive cars and parked along Willan Road. They had been pushed out of their former patches in Stoke Newington and Hackney after a police operation. They were selling drugs in little square packets. They were remarkably conspicuous in their activity:–

“It was horrible. You couldn’t walk without someone propositioning you to buy drugs. Even if your mother walked under there, they would ask your mother if she wanted to buy drugs. It was not nice. They were out there day and night making a noise, driving their cars up and down. It was really horrible.” (Joanne George, community worker).

“I was confronted with an individual walking up the steps with fists spread out with a joint sticking through each gap in the fingers.” (Mike Bates, Youth and Community Service Officer).

3.57 The officers of the Youth Association wanted the police to get the pushers off the estate. Rupert Downing, the other Social Services community worker on the estate, remembers one of the meetings with Chief Inspector Stacey at the Youth Association in August 1985:–

“It was a completely unanimous policy that the police should be identifying the vehicles that were being used, and that there was no reason once they had identified the vehicles for those vehicles not to be apprehended off the estate prior to them coming on and causing us all the hassle.”

Chief Inspector Stacey’s view was that there was a vacuum in the community because the leaders were away in Jamaica. Those present replied: “What leaders? we are all working together here.”

3.58 In September, when Roy Limb returned, he spoke to Chief Superintendent Couch. He was told of the large numbers of strangers on Broadwater Farm, and accusations of drugs being sold. There had been some incidents involving things thrown at policemen. There had been parties late at night at the Social Club. Mr Couch said that he was in a dilemma whether to send in considerable numbers of police, or “try and keep it calm and hope that normality would be restored in due course.” The conclusion reached by both men was:–

“That it would be better for us to avoid a major confrontation until

the leaders returned and hope that they could control things.”

By the leaders, Roy Limb was referring to Dolly Kiffin and to Clasford Sterling, who was also away. Chief Superintendent Couch made the same point in an interview with “*World in Action*” in October 1986:–

“There were two ways I could deal with it. One was through the community representatives. Regretfully both of them, as you may well know, had gone on holiday and I had no-one to talk to.”

3.59 We believe that this was, with the best of intentions, a misjudgement. It was not the case that there was “no-one to talk to”. There were other officers at the Youth Association in the absence of Dolly Kiffin and Clasford Sterling. There were many people with whom the drug trafficking problem could and should have been discussed, and action taken. If, as was the case, there was general agreement that the police ought to act, an operation could have been mounted which had the Youth Association’s consent. As one of those workers, Millard Scott told us: “There is not going to be no riot for drug pushers”.

3.60 The inaction of the police leadership through August and September had the further consequence of infuriating the team of home beat officers. To them it was the final proof of the lunacy of “community policing”. Cliff Ford, a sweeper on the estate, was approached by one of the beat officers:–

“He came up to me and said ‘Are you a member of the Tenants’ Association? Could you get your Tenants’ Association to write a letter to our Superintendent, because we want to come in and sort this estate out.’”

Woman Sergeant Gillian Meynell in her report leaked to the press, records that on one occasion, at the request of Mr Couch, the home beat team collected 50 of the empty drug packets and brought them back to the station:–

“Mr Couch said ‘Oh how many have you got?’ I said 50. He said ‘Oh just throw them out.’ Why we bothered, I do not know. Needless to say morale plummeted once again.”

The *Police* magazine recorded later that constables were being stopped by members of the public and asked why police were unable to control the drug taking on the estate. It is a sad irony that the same question at the same time was being asked by the Youth Association of Superintendent Stacey. If the Youth Association and the home

beat officers had known each other, they would have found much to agree about.

3.61 The pages of the *Police Review* for October 1985 suggest that in addition to the selling of drugs there were frequent attacks by people on the estate against the patrolling home beat officers. In the light of this we have examined very closely the Richards report. D.A.C Richards has listed a large number of incidents, some only supported by rumour, suggesting that violence was being prepared during the weeks prior to 6th October. There is one incident, and one incident only, of an attack upon the police. On 11th September, the day after the Handsworth disturbances, two home beat officers were attacked with missiles by a gang of Black youths, and one was struck on the head and injured. We deplore this attack, but if there were others, D.A.C Richards would surely have recorded them in his report.

3.62 On 23rd September Dolly Kiffin returned. She immediately noticed a "an enormous amount of cars, and strange faces that I have never seen in my life". Within hours she was meeting with Superintendent Stacey. He told her about the drug traffickers. He said that they were coming from Brixton, Stoke Newington and Finsbury Park. Dolly Kiffin asked him what he was going to do about it. He replied that the police were waiting for her to call them in. Dolly Kiffin described her reaction:—

"I jumped off my chair. I said you are waiting on me, Dolly Kiffin, to call you in and use the law? You get paid as the police and you work as an officer, and you are waiting for me to call you in? That means you are putting my back against the wall, so that if there is anything, you can say that Dolly Kiffin called you in and publish that. And then what happens? I get a knife in my back or shot in my back, with these strange people? No, I am not going to call you in."

Neale Coleman was also present at one of the discussions with Dolly Kiffin during that week. He agreed that the police appeared to be trying to put the responsibility onto the Youth Association:—

"And I think their feeling and Mrs Kiffin's feeling at the time was that this was not her responsibility. Her view was clear that this was undesirable, and that action should be taken, but that it was not for her or for anyone else in the Youth Association to give authority for this. It was felt that if there were undesirable or criminal elements involved, that was a matter for the police."

3.63 We think that there was another serious misjudgement here about the nature of community policing. It should not be a question of abdicating responsibility for policing decisions to community leaders, particularly in a matter so dangerous as drug trafficking. Rather, there should have been close communication about the nature of the operation which the police would have had to mount, in order that responsible people in the community could understand it and support it. This did not happen. It seems that there well may have been conflicting views between the Scotland Yard Drug Squad and the local force as to the nature of the operation required. As to this, we are lacking evidence from the police which might enable us to understand what, if anything, was being planned against the drug traffickers. But that does not excuse the mishandling of the situation which continued after Dolly Kiffin's return.

3.64 On Saturday 28th September Mrs. Cherry Groce was shot and seriously injured in Brixton, and there were disturbances in the streets. It must have been appreciated by police in Tottenham that the shooting of a mother in her home by a police officer would cause feelings of outrage in their community as well. Following on the Handsworth disturbances three weeks earlier it was a time for particularly sensitive policing and close liaison with community representatives.

3.65 On Tuesday 1st October the police took action without any such consultation. Black people in cars were stopped and searched as they went in and out of the estate. The relevance of this operation to the drug trafficking problems is far from clear. Nick Wright of the Police Research Unit, having had discussions both with local police and Scotland Yard officers, told us that this stop and search operation was unconnected to any drugs surveillance, and that the police themselves said that they were looking for stolen property. He believes that the drugs' officers were annoyed that a careful operation which they were mounting, which depended upon a degree of subtlety and discretion, was being disrupted by this crude stop-and-search. Whatever its purpose, the operation was called off after only a day, having achieved nothing except further resentment. As Mr Limb said:—

"The day of action was a disaster. The police ended up picking people up who were just entering and leaving the estate. It was the old routine all over again. It had no effect except to wind up all of

the young people on Broadwater Farm."

The home beat officers were angry as well. In the words of *Police* magazine, they believed that "The smack of firm policing suddenly descended on Broadwater Farm", only for the operation to be called off before it had hardly begun.

RUMOURS OF RIOT – TRUE OR FALSE?

3.66 The Richards report states that in the week immediately preceding 6th October there were:—

"Persistent rumours that there were plans afoot for a major disturbance and looting, Wood Green Shopping City being identified as the prime target. It is emphasised that these were only rumours, but there were a number of occurrences which tended to indicate that there may have been some substance in them."

Later the report states that "it is a matter of conjecture what would have occurred had Mrs Jarrett not died." Sergeant Meynell in her leaked report states explicitly that she and her team had warned Chief Superintendent Couch of the possibility of a riot at a meeting with him four days before:—

"He balked at the idea of rioting on the estate, saying they would not damage their own property. We told him that we had received information that they would riot there and that it would be that weekend."

3.67 Rumours there undoubtedly were. They started after the Handsworth disturbances on 10th September, and they intensified after the shooting of Mrs Groce and the subsequent disturbances on 28th September. Arthur Lawrence, a West Indian community leader, heard it from the manager of an off licence ("There is going to be a riot in Wood Green"). Russell Simper, the Estate Supervisor heard it from his children from school ("trouble at the High Road or Wood Green"). Residents close to the estate heard it in the local shops ("something would happen at the weekend, at Wood Green or Broadwater Farm"). Mrs Kemp, who worked for British Telecom, heard staff at Wood Green were being allowed to go home early. Dolly Kiffin was twice told by police officers that there was going to be a riot, by Superintendent Stacey on 23rd September, and by Inspector Gee at a reception at the Civic Centre on 4th October ("there is going to be a riot tomorrow").

3.68 What foundation of fact did these rumours have? We have

closely examined the eleven "occurrences" listed in the Richards report. Six of them are pure hearsay: "unconfirmed reports", "information was received". In the course of our Inquiry we met people who had given "information" to the police. We interviewed one person who lived in a high tower block who believed that things were going on which she could not possibly have seen. She was making assumptions rather than visual observations, as many people do. We do not therefore place any weight upon "unconfirmed reports". On the contrary, they were themselves part of the rumour, and a small example from the pages of *Police* magazine indicates how unwise it is to rely on them. During September 1985, an arsonist went about burning cars, seven in all. He was finally caught and found to be a White youth with a mental illness. But the police diary records:—

"Attended scene of arson on car. It appears Black youths from off the estate did this."

3.69 The other five occurrences recorded in the Richards report are:—

(1) The daubing with graffiti of the Asian-owned supermarket on the Tangmere precinct on 20th September. It is alleged in the Richards report "that the perpetrators of this offence are believed to be known to a council officer" — an allegation much resented by Neale Coleman, the Neighbourhood Officer, who witnessed the daubing by a single Black man who was a stranger to him and telephoned Chief Superintendent Couch while it was actually going on. As Mr Coleman says, and we agree:—

"I take it rather ill, having done that, and as far as I know the police having done nothing whatsoever about it, that it should then be suggested that a council officer had in some way not co-operated about the matter."

(2) The shooting of a man in the Social Club on 22nd September — an offence for which a man has been charged. It was in relation to this incident that an officer had made an entry in his diary, later printed in *Police* magazine, which revealed his attitude of mind:—

"As predicted, trouble last night at the IC3 (i.e Black) party. One IC3 shot twice and police car damaged. (At least it's one of them!)"

(3) The robbery of a post office in Mount Pleasant Road near to the estate by masked Black youths on 1st October.

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(3) The robbery of a post office in Mount Pleasant Road near to the estate by masked Black youths on 1st October.

(4) The finding of a petrol bomb in a drain under one of the walkways on 2nd October.

(5) Reports on 4th October that postmen delivering mail to the estate were being subjected to harassment. The Post Office have been good enough to supply us a list of all incidents in N.17 during 1985, from which it appears that there were three unsuccessful attempts to get at postal vans around the estate, on 4th September, 5th September, and 2nd October.

3.70 Only the fourth of these incidents can fairly be said to have any relevance to the issue whether people on the Broadwater Farm Estate were preparing to riot prior to 6th October 1985. And that reference to a single petrol bomb is itself significant, in view of other rumours that were going about concerning petrol bombs. Cliff Ford, a sweeper on the estate, said that the police were going around collecting every little bottle they could find. He himself was asked by Sergeant Meynell to hand in any bottles, as they might be petrol bombs. But as he said to us:—

“I just saw bottles scattered in normal litter, and normal litter could be quite a lot of bottles. I can’t keep running up to a policeman with every little thing bottle I find.”

In the light of that, the finding of one petrol bomb on 2nd October, the day after the police operations, hardly suggests preparations for mass riot.

3.71 We have carefully examined the evidence presented in the Richards report. It was undoubtedly true that there were tensions between the police and members of the community in the week before 6th October. The police were fully entitled to take precautions. We recognise that police officers are exposed to physical dangers which the rest of us do not face, difficult decisions have to be made in order to reduce the risks to their safety. However on the evidence before us, the tensions were in fact under control.

There had been rumours of riots every summer since 1981. But there was in fact no riot after Handsworth, or after the shooting of Mrs Groce, or after the stop-and-search operation. During that operation, Youth Association workers told us that they were actively speaking to their members, telling them to keep calm and not be provoked. There was, as we have seen, little basis of hard fact for the rumour that was going round. We do not believe that a riot was being planned by members of the Broadwater Farm community.

Chapter 4 THE DEATH OF MRS JARRETT

INTRODUCTION

4.1 Mrs Cynthia Jarrett was born in June 1937 in Clarendon, Jamaica, and came to England in 1958 to join her husband. Mr and Mrs Jarrett lived in Tottenham for some 25 years, during which time they raised a family of five children. The family never lived on Broadwater Farm, but when the children were young they lived in Mount Pleasant Road and had many friends on the estate. Mrs Jarrett worked for National Plastics in Walthamstow for 11 years before being made redundant in 1983. She was grandmother to ten children, and often looked after the children of neighbours and friends. Her daughter Patricia remembers her as “loving and kind to everybody”. Mr Jarrett says with great affection: “Cynthia was very understandable and a lover of kids.” She was a deeply religious woman who attended the local Catholic church. She bore no ill-will towards the police.

4.2 The death of Mrs Jarrett was the subject of an inquest which lasted for seven days from 27th November to 4th December 1985. The police officers who were involved in the search of her house, and members of her family who were there, gave evidence and were represented by barristers. Many other witnesses were called. The Coroner gave a full summing up to the jury, instructing them as to the different verdicts which were open to them, depending on what view they took of the evidence. The jury of 12 people delivered a verdict of accidental death. This meant, following the Coroner’s direction, that they considered that Detective Constable Randall, while searching Mrs Jarrett’s home, had given her a push, but not deliberately, causing her to fall and contributing to her death through hypertensive heart disease.