



FEBRUARY 2007 - SUMMARY

In our last summary (for January 2007) we highlighted the disturbingly high level of involvement of young people as perpetrators of gun crime. This month's events in south London were a shocking reminder that young people are too often also the victims of gun crime, including the most brutal. Considerable attention was given to the fatal shootings of the three teenagers in Streatham, Peckham and Clapham, and what followed was a flood of media and political opinion about the level of gun crime in Britain and its causes. The Government's response was to organise a summit, chaired by the Prime Minister. Following the summit the Government announced a **3-point plan** to tackle gun crime, which focussed on crime in inner cities and its link with gangs and drugs.

In view of the circumstances that led up to the summit this focus was not surprising. However, as the following summary of all the gun incidents from February shows, there are other types of gun crime which impact on the lives of a much wider section of the public across the country. Although the consequences of some of these crimes might be viewed as less serious than those occurring in inner cities, the effects on the victims should never be underestimated. Measures should be in place to tackle these crimes too. It is essential, therefore, that in its attempts to deal with the problem of gangs and guns the Government does not take its eye off the ball and ignore these other aspects of gun crime and their causes. For example, crimes involving imitation guns occur all over Britain and the problems caused are not restricted to urban teenage gangs. Airguns may not be seen as a major problem within gangs but there are hundreds of victims every year some of whom, often young boys, suffer serious and sometimes fatal injuries. If through an emphasis, however understandable, on one particular and topical concern, there is a failure to deal with all types of gun crime, this would send out completely the wrong message. Misuse of any gun is totally unacceptable wherever or however it occurs, as the following summary shows.

- **Gun Deaths and Injuries - Six people were killed in deliberate shootings during February, five in London, and the young age of three of the victims, all in their mid-teens, brought gun crime back into the headlines.**
- A 16-year-old was shot dead at an ice rink in Streatham, a 15-year-old was shot in the bedroom of his home in Peckham and another 15-year-old in his home in Clapham North.
- In a second shooting in a Peckham home one man was killed and another seriously injured. Another victim was shot dead in a car in Hackney, east London.
- A man was shot in the head in a park in Horton Bank Top in Bradford and died later in hospital.
- A man died after he was shot in the face with his own rifle in Stanley (Derbyshire) in what appears to have been an accident.
- Three men were injured in two separate shootings in Harlesden (north west London). In Manchester a teenager was shot in the back in an incident in Moss Side, where two men were injured in another incident

later in the month, and two men were injured when their car was fired at in Longsight. A man was recovering in hospital after being shot in St Ann's (Nottingham). A man was shot in the arm at a house in Burgess Hill (Sussex). A man was shot and injured in the leg in an incident in Sheffield.

- **Armed Hold-Ups and Assaults - The weapon used in many of these incidents is often described as being or looking like a handgun, but if the weapon is not recovered and identified there is always a possibility that it was actually an imitation gun.**
- There was a further spate of armed raids on shops around the country. There were robberies or attempted robberies in St Peter's Bridge (Staffordshire), Reading (a 19-year-old has been charged over five robberies in the town), Allerton (Bradford), Littlemoor (Chesterfield), Leeds (two corner shops), Sholling (Hampshire), Kilmarnock and Rhu (Dunbartonshire). Bookmakers was targeted by armed men in Bracknell (Berkshire) and Bulwell (Nottinghamshire). A man fled empty handed after a robbery on a financial services office in Glasgow, but nearly £1m of jewellery was stolen in another raid in the centre of the city. A gang raided a bingo hall in Famley (Leeds) where shots were fired. A petrol station in Haydock (Merseyside) was robbed by a youth, thought to be aged between 15 and 17, armed with a handgun. Post offices were raided by robbers armed with handguns in Craigmillar (Edinburgh) and Church (Accrington) (the robber was believed to be aged 16).
- CCTV photos were released of a raid on a shop in Merridale (Wolverhampton) in December 2006 in which a shotgun was aimed at a shop worker.
- A security guard was robbed outside a supermarket in Kilmarnock. A cash box was stolen from a security guard by two armed robbers in Wanstead, east London. Another cash box was stolen by an armed man during a cash delivery in Borehamwood (Hertfordshire).
- In two incidents in Battersea (south London), which may be linked, two people in a house were assaulted and property stolen and a couple walking in the street were robbed of their credit cards: in both cases a gang of five or six young men were involved.
- A puppy was stolen from a house in Peckham (south London) by a gang of four armed men. A 15-year-old girl was robbed of cash when a gunman came to a caravan in Rushton (Northamptonshire). In Stretford (Greater Manchester) two boys, aged 12 and 14, were attacked by four men, one of whom had a gun and stole a PSP console and a mobile phone.
- Two taxi drivers were robbed by armed men in separate incidents in Sheffield (Arbourthorne and Burngreave). In one of the attacks the driver was left with a pellet in his head after being shot with an airgun (see below).
- Two men, later arrested on suspicion of supplying drugs, were abducted by three men, armed with a shotgun, from a pub car park in Whitnash (Warwickshire).
- **Other Incidents** - Damage was done to a house in Shirecliffe (South Yorkshire) when someone opened fire on the property with a shotgun. Shops in Dovecot (Merseyside) were also damaged in another shotgun attack.
- A teenager aimed a gun at other youths in a fast food restaurant in south west London and fired one shot. See Imitation Gun Incidents below for another incident in which children were targeted in a fast food restaurant.

- A gunshot was heard following a fight between youths in Chadwell Heath (east London). Two shots were fired in a Blackburn alleyway: one of them passed through the boot of a car.
- A man was arrested after brandishing a shotgun at a salvage yard in Baxenden (Lancashire).
- Detectives were searching for a gunman thought to have been stabbed during a fight between criminal gangs in Burnley.
- Armed response units were sent to a nightclub in Liverpool after reports that someone had a handgun: no weapon was found.
- Police recovered a handgun and ammunition during a raid in Edinburgh when £100,000 cocaine was found: a 17-year-old was arrested.
- Four people in Urmston (Cheshire) were arrested on suspicion of possessing a firearm. Four people were arrested in Nelson (Lancashire) on suspicion of being involved in gun crime.
- **Smuggling, Thefts and Losses** - Two British men and a Lithuanian have been convicted for their involvement in smuggling handguns from eastern Europe. One of the British men was jailed for ten and a half years, the other will be sentenced later, and the Lithuanian has been jailed for seven years.
- A dangerous firearm and ammunition were stolen from a house near Leven (Fife)
- A number of air weapons were stolen during a robbery at a house in Wilton (West Yorkshire).
- **Convictions** (see also **Smuggling, Imitation Guns** and **Airgun Incidents**) - The four teenagers responsible for the death of a woman at a christening in Peckham were given long jail sentences (see December 2006 Incidents for details). One 18-year-old was given a 30 year sentence for murder, the other three received minimum sentences of eight years detention for manslaughter and robbery.
- A man who admitted the manslaughter of a man shot dead on a doorstep in Effingham (Surrey) has been jailed for 6 years.
- A man was convicted of attempted murder after he shot a doorman at a Widnes club because he was asked to remove his hood: he will serve a minimum of 20 years in prison.
- Another men was convicted of attempted murder and jailed for a minimum of 15 years after randomly shooting two people in Islington and Finsbury Park (north London): he attempted to shoot a third victim.
- Two people, a woman and her ex-boyfriend, were given life sentences after being convicted for the murder of the woman's former husband who was shot at Bramcote (Nottinghamshire) in 2003.
- A man who used a double barrel shotgun to shoot an old friend whom he met by chance when he was going to shoot ducks in Ince (Wigan) has been jailed for at least five years.
- **Airguns - This month we heard from a correspondent whose teenage son is a tetraplegic as a result of being shot with an air rifle by another teenager in August 2005 (see [Details](#)). Sadly the catalogue of incidents involving the reckless or wilful misuse of airguns, especially by youths, continued in February.**
- A Sheffield taxi driver has been left with an airgun pellet in his head after being attacked in Arbourthorne.
- A 12-year-old boy was taken to hospital after an airgun attack in Workington. A 14-year-old girl also required hospital treatment after being shot in the leg with an air rifle in a field near Barnsley. A pupil at a

school in Archway, north London, was hit in the eye socket with an air pistol fired by another pupil.

- A 14-year-old was arrested for five offences including possession of an air pistol after a group of youths stole from a supermarket in Ham (south west London).
- Three teenagers were arrested after pointing an unloaded airgun at a driver on the A41 in north London. Two youngsters are being sought after stones and pellets were fired at vehicles on the A14 in Ipswich: one youth was spotted with a gun just before a driver's windscreen was cracked.
- At least 20 homes have been damaged in Stockton as a result of attacks by youths with airguns. Two cash machines in Portsmouth were riddled with holes after being shot at with an airgun. A travel agents and three other premises in Warwick with hit by pellets, possibly fired by an airgun.
- A car was apparently hit in Eckington (Derbyshire) when a gang attacked four men who were travelling in the vehicle.
- An air rifle was confiscated from a youth by police in Waltham Abbey (Essex) after reports that he was aiming the gun at a road. A bus passenger was arrested in Bishop Auckland (County Durham) after being found by the driver asleep and holding an air rifle.
- A 13-year-old boy who was responsible for the death of 12-year-old Mitchel Picken, whom he shot with an air rifle in Stockton Brook (Staffordshire), was acquitted of manslaughter.
- A footballer who ended the career of a former colleague when he shot him in the eye with an airgun in Durham in 2002 has reached a settlement with him. **Although described as a "freak shooting accident" there have been too many incidents of this type. The circumstances are too familiar and avoidable to continue describing them as freak accidents.**
- An 18-year-old was given a suspended nine-month prison term and a community punishment after shooting his girlfriend in the face in Bolton-on-Dearne (South Yorkshire): she had asked him to 'pretend to shoot me'. A 20-year-old was sent to a young offender institution for nine months after admitting possessing a .22 air rifle which was used to shoot at members of the public in Lupset (West Yorkshire): a 16-year-old girl and a man pushing his child in a pushchair were hit.
- A man who caused an armed siege at his home in Melksham (Wiltshire) whilst brandishing an air pistol has been given a 36 week suspended jail sentence.
- A man found with two airguns, ammunition and a silencer at Kenfig Hill, Glamorgan, was given a 12-month suspended sentence and ordered to do 250 hours of community work.
- **Imitation Guns - A number of youngsters were targeted with imitation guns and an Oxford man was convicted for blinding a 13-year-old in an attack with a ball-bearing gun.**
- Two 11-year-olds were hit with pellets from a gun fired by one of a group of children whilst they were queuing in McDonalds in Dundee: another 11-year-old was later charged.
- A 17-year-old was shot with a ball-bearing gun in Blackburn during an attack by a gang of up to 20 men.
- A 16-year-old boy was taken to hospital after being hit on the head with a BB gun when two teenagers tried to rob him and a group of friends in a playground in Fulwood (Preston): a 14-year-old and a 15-year-old have been charged.
- A man was taken into custody after firing a starting pistol at a group of teenagers in Sunderland. A man was charged with possession of an

imitation firearm after he chased children in the street in Darwen (Lancashire).

- Five people were arrested after reports of a weapon being fired from a car in Middlesbrough: a BB gun and two paintball guns were recovered.
- Armed police went to two incidents in Bermondsey and Surrey Quays (south east London) involving youths with imitation guns: in one, five boys, aged 10 to 13, were arrested.
- A man in Axminster was arrested after reports of a man with a firearm: what is believed to have been a ball-bearing gun was recovered.
- Five people were taken into custody in Felixstowe after a number of weapons, including three BB guns, were seized by police: four were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit robbery.
- A man who admitted shooting a 13-year-old with a BB gun in Greater Leys (Oxford) has been told he faces a jail sentence: the boy has lost the sight of one eye as a result of the shooting.
- A man from Whitehaven (Cumbria) threatened his mother in her home by holding a ball-bearing gun to her head: sentencing has been deferred.
- **A number of people were convicted for robberies in which imitation guns were used.** Two men face long jail terms for a robbery at a Dundee pub where one of the men had presented an imitation gun. A 13-year-old has been detained for four years in a young offender institution for a series of offences in West Norwood (south London) in which he used an imitation gun. A man was jailed following a robbery at a shop in Shirley (south London) in which he was armed with imitation guns. A post office manager and a former employee were jailed after a fake robbery involving a toy gun was staged at the post office in Grangetown (Cardiff). An 18-year-old used a ball-bearing gun to rob a petrol station on the A14 in Northamptonshire (he has received 46 months detention).
- A man was jailed for six years after an incident in which he brandished a ball-bearing gun at police in Rugeley (Staffordshire). Another man was given a 14 month sentence after an incident in Middlesbrough in which he pointed one of two handguns, apparently imitations, at a police officer.
- **Incidents Involving Animals** - Reports from around the country, including one from a correspondent to GCN, show that attacks on cats with air rifles are still occurring with a sickening frequency. Even if the pet survives the attacks inevitably lead to distress for the animal and expense and upset for the owners.

GUN INCIDENTS – February 2007

ENGLAND

Southern Daily Echo, 28 February 2007

A shopkeeper in **Sholling**, Hampshire, was kept at gunpoint by two armed robbers who forced him into a back room before grabbing the safe which contained a substantial amount of money.

Shields Gazette, 28 February 2007

Former Sunderland footballer John Oster has reached a settlement with a former team mate whose career he ended in a "freak shooting accident". The other man was hit in the eye by an **airgun** pellet at Oster's home in **Durham** in April 2002. The pair were playing with the gun which they believed was not loaded when it discharged.

Mid Devon Star, 28 February 2007

A man was arrested in **Axminster** after police received a report that a man was seen in possession of a suspected firearm. Officers recovered what is believed to be a **ball-bearing gun**.

Hucknall Today, 28 February 2007

A betting shop in **Bulwell** was robbed by a gunman who threatened staff and demanded money. He left the shop on foot after stealing a quantity of cash.

Coventry Evening Telegraph, 28 February 2007

The windows of a travel agents and three other businesses in **Warwick** were hit by a pellet fired either from an **air pistol** or a catapult. The travel agent's windows were smashed.

Wigan Observer, 27 February 2007

James Devenay blasted a former friend in the leg with a double barrel shotgun at **Ince**, Wigan, in November 2006. After he had been drinking he had taken out the loaded gun to shoot ducks but by chance met his victim with whom he had fallen out. The man, who was with his partner and two young children, was left with 21 pellets between his hip and knee. A firearms expert concluded that the gun could not have gone off accidentally. Devenay was jailed for at least five years after pleading guilty to wounding with intent, possessing a firearm and a bladed article.

Liverpool Echo, 27 February 2007

Armed response units were called to a club in **Liverpool** after reports that somebody may have been armed with a handgun. No shots were fired and it is not believed a weapon was recovered.

Liverpool Echo, 27 February 2007

A gunman opened fire on a row of shops in a street in **Dovecot**, Liverpool. The shots were believed to have been fired using a shotgun and caused damage to the window of a pizza shop and pharmacy.

Lancashire Telegraph, 27 February 2007

A masked raider thought to be just 16 threatened the staff of a post office in **Church**, Accrington, with a black handgun before leaving empty handed.

Asian Image, 27 February 2007

A 20-year-old man was fatally injured when he was shot in a park in **Horton Bank Top**, Bradford. He had suffered a single gunshot wound to the head. The police have not yet established a clear motive for the attack. The victim died from his injuries in hospital. A 20-year-old man and 19-year-old woman have been arrested in connection with the murder (*BBC*, 1 March 2007).

Northern Echo, 26 February 2007

A bus driver noticed that a passenger slumped asleep on the back seat of his bus in **Bishop Auckland**, County Durham, was holding a gun. Armed police were called and closed the bus station for an hour. The gun was out of its case, although the man had brought the gun on the bus in a locked case when he had boarded in Ferryhill. Police confirmed that an **air rifle** was found at the scene and had since been sent for tests. A man has been arrested and released on police bail. He was heavily under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Black UK Online, 26 February 2007

Armed police officers were called to two separate incidents in Southwark, south London, involving **imitation guns**. In one the police surrounded gangs of youths in **Bermondsey** and **Surrey Quays**. One gang member was seen brandishing a gun outside a bingo hall. A 10-year-old among the gang had a fake firearm. Five boys, aged 10-13, were arrested. On the same day a man was arrested after being caught with a BB pistol tucked into his belt in **Bermondsey**.

BBC, 26 February 2007

A 16-year-old boy, who was one of a group of five youths approached by two men in a playground in **Fulwood**, Preston, was in hospital with severe head injuries after being hit with a gun. The men produced a **BB gun** and demanded money. The group were trying to escape when the victim was hit over the head. The robbers escaped with the boy's wallet. Two teenagers, aged 14 and 15, are due to appear before magistrates charged with the attack (*Citizen* (Preston), 2 March 2007).

BBC, 26 February 2007

A man was being treated in hospital for gunshot wounds after being shot in the legs in **Sheffield**. His injuries are not said to be life threatening.

The Star (Sheffield), 24 February 2007

Four men were attacked by a gang armed with an **airgun** who smashed up their car as they drove home in **Eckington**, Derbyshire. They believe that an airgun was fired at the car as they heard a bang and found four indentations in the back of the vehicle. They had stopped their car but as they got back a man ran towards them. The car windscreen was smashed as the men drove off again.

This is Lancashire, 23 February 2007

Armed police went to **Baxenden** after reports that workers at a salvage yard were threatened by a man brandishing a shotgun. A man was arrested and questioned on suspicion of making threats to kill and attempts to endanger life. The weapon was not recovered.

The Star (Sheffield), 23 February 2007

A taxi driver has been left with a pellet embedded in his head after being shot repeatedly with an **air rifle** in one of two armed attacks on cabs in Sheffield in as many days. He was attacked in **Arbourthorne** by one of two men he had picked up in the city centre. The men demanded money and the driver was shot when he tried to open his door. In the second attack another driver was held up at gunpoint in **Burngreave**. He was forced to hand over cash.

Richmond & Twickenham Times, 23 February 2007

A 14-year-old youth was arrested for five offences including possession of an **air pistol** (a Glock 9 mm lookalike), theft and going equipped for theft and admitted 26 counts of criminal damage. He will receive a final warning at a youth offender's clinic. He had been tracked by a PCSO from a description given by the manager of a supermarket in **Ham** where goods had been stolen. The manager had caught one youth and spotted a black handgun in his rucksack.

Oxford Mail, 23 February 2007

Christopher Bowsher admitted shooting a 13-year-old boy in the eye with a **ball-bearing gun** in September 2006 (see [Incidents](#)). The victim was left blind in one eye. Bowsher fired a carbon dioxide-powered self-loading BB gun at the teenager while he was playing with friends in **Greater Leys**. A pellet lodged in the back of the victims' right eye, and a two-hour operation failed to save his eyesight. Sentencing was adjourned but Bowsher has been told he faces jail. He has had nine previous convictions in the past 14 years, including affray and firearms offences.

Mirror, 23 February 2007

A man with a history of gun crime, drugs and violence, who is also described as a sports shooting fan, was arrested after firing his Brocock Specialist Revolver and an air rifle for target practice on private land. However when he answered bail he was told no action would be taken due to insufficient evidence, and he was given his guns back, despite the fact that, like other gas cartridge airguns, the Brocock was banned in 2003 and could only be kept with a firearms licence. The man from **Edmonton**, north London, returned to the police to hand in his weapons.

Note: According to the article some 75,000 Brocock air cartridge guns are thought to have been sold since 1989, but by 2004 only 1,524 had been surrendered and just 5,791 have been registered on a licence.

ic South London, 23 February 2007

A gang burst into a house in **Peckham** and stole a puppy at gunpoint. The four masked men threatened the victims with two handguns before taking the Staffordshire bull terrier worth at least £500.

Evening Telegraph (Northampton), 23 February 2007

Scott Minter, 18, robbed a petrol station at the A14 **Thrapston** exit using a **ball bearing gun**. He was confronted by the cashier and stole just ten cigarettes. He pleaded guilty to robbery and possessing an imitation firearm and was sentenced to 46 months detention.

BBC, 23 February 2007

A teenager, aged between 15 and 17, stole a quantity of cash from a garage in **Haydock** after threatening staff with a weapon. It was reported that a handgun had been used.

Whitehaven News, 22 February 2007

Andrew Taylor threatened his mother with a plastic **ball-bearing gun** which he held to her head at her home in **Whitehaven** in September 2006. She believed it was a real weapon. He pleaded guilty to the public order offence of affray. His case was adjourned for social inquiry and psychiatric reports. Taylor blamed depression for his actions.

This is Lancashire, 22 February 2007

A man has been charged with possessing an **imitation firearm** after police responded to a report of a man dressed in camouflage gear who was chasing children in **Darwen**. When police arrived an imitation gun was allegedly pointed at them.

Metro, 22 February 2007

John Laidlaw, who said he would 'kill all black people', was found guilty of firing a pistol at two people in north London in May 2006 (see [Incidents](#)), weeks after being convicted of a violent race attack. One of his victims was left fighting for life and has a bullet permanently lodged in his throat after being shot at random in **Islington**. Half an hour later Laidlaw shot a woman at **Finsbury Park** station whilst aiming at a man with whom he had clashed earlier in 2006. A bullet was plucked from the victim's back and she was later treated in hospital. Laidlaw was found guilty of three counts of attempted murder and was jailed for life, with a minimum term of 15 years (*Guardian*, 24 February 2007).

BBC, 22 February 2007

George Stevens has been jailed for six years after admitting the manslaughter of a father of five whom he shot in the chest on the doorstep of a house in **Effingham**, Surrey, in February 2005 (see [Incidents](#)).

This is Cheshire, 21 February 2007

A deaf 12-year-old boy and his older brother were attacked by a group of four men as they walked home in **Stretford**. The men shouted at them to hand over a phone and the elder brother tried to explain his brother couldn't hear. One of them threatened the boys with a gun. The man, aged between 18 and 20, took a PSP console and a mobile phone.

BBC, 21 February 2007

A man brandishing a small handgun threatened staff at a bookmakers in **Bracknell**, Berkshire, and forced them to hand over £500 in cash.

This is Lancashire, 20 February 2007

A 17-year-old was shot with a **ball-bearing gun** in an unprovoked attack by a gang of up to 20 men in the centre of **Blackburn**. The boy was left with two deep cuts to the back of his head and an injury to his right shoulder where it is believed a pellet from the gun hit him. He and his friends were also attacked with baseball bats and metal bars which were used to smash up cars. The victim thought it was a proper gun because of the sound of the echoes but police recovered ball bearing pellets from the scene.

Press Association, 20 February 2007

A jury has cleared a 13-year-old of the manslaughter of 12-year-old Mitchel Picken whom he shot through the eye with an **air rifle** at a house in **Stockton Brook**, Staffordshire, in August 2006 (see [Incidents](#)). The jury believed the boy's story that the gun had gone off accidentally in spite of the fact that the defendant admitted that he pointed the loaded weapon at Mitchel and intended to "scare him a bit". A third boy told the court that the defendant had been laughing as he pointed the gun and said: "Are you scared? Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Barking & Dagenham Recorder, 20 February 2007

A gunshot was heard following a fight between youths in **Chadwell Heath**. Frightened residents were warned to stay indoors.

Borehamwood & Elstree Times, 19 February 2007

A delivery driver was robbed at gunpoint outside a post office in **Borehamwood**. The driver was loading a cash box into a security van. The gunman drove off in a red car, which was later found abandoned.

Argus (Brighton), 19 February 2007

A court has heard how a teenager was kidnapped at gunpoint in a row over a runaway girl. One man has denied kidnap, false imprisonment and possessing a firearm with intent to cause fear, and another has denied kidnap and false imprisonment. The first man is said to have pointed a pistol at the teenager's head and ordered him into his car in **Gossops Green**, Crawley, where the victim had arranged to meet the second man who said he wanted to repay some money he had borrowed. After being challenged about the whereabouts of the girl the victim was let out of the car in Crawley. The pistol allegedly used was never found. The trial continues.

Sky News, 18 February 2007

A man was shot in the leg in a street in **Harlesden**, north west London. Police were called to reports of shots being fired. Two men were seen running away from the scene, one carrying a handgun.

Guardian, 17 February 2007

Gerry Smith and Evaldas Cinga have been jailed for ten and a half and seven years respectively for their part in smuggling handguns from eastern Europe. Sentencing for a third man, Tony Magee, was adjourned. The deal between Magee, Smith and the Lithuanian arms dealer Cinga was negotiated in **north London** and witnessed by undercover police. When police moved in they found that Cinga had sold 18 pistols to the other pair.

Evening Star (Ipswich), 17 February 2007

Police are searching for two youngsters who fired pellets and stones, possibly from an **air rifle** or catapult, at traffic on the A14 in **Ipswich**. Three vehicles were damaged and one car passenger was hit in the eye with a stone and could now face an operation. The windscreen of another car was struck and cracked by what is believed to be a pellet fired from an airgun. The driver spotted a young lad with a gun who fired it just before the windscreen shattered.

BBC, 17 February 2007

Five people have been arrested following reports of a weapon being fired out of a car window. Three men and two women were in a vehicle stopped by police in **Middlesbrough**. Police recovered a **BB gun** and two **paint ball guns** from the car.

AOL News, 17 February 2007

A man was shot dead in **Hackney**, east London, whilst he was sitting in a car. He was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

AOL News, 17 February 2007

Three people were in hospital after two shooting incidents in Manchester. An 18-year-old was shot in the back in **Moss Side**. In the second incident two men were in a car waiting at traffic lights in **Longsight** when someone in a passing car opened fire and hit the two men, one in the arm and one in the back.

Yorkshire Evening Post, 16 February 2007

In one week there have been three armed raids in Leeds. In one a gang, at least one armed with a handgun, struck at a bingo hall in **Famley** and robbed staff in the foyer. Shots were fired when the gunman opened fire to frighten the staff who had grabbed one of the robbers outside. Two corner shops have also been targeted by gunmen.

Northern Echo, 16 February 2007

Denis McCormick has been jailed for 14 months after an incident in which he pulled two handguns from the waistband of his trousers whilst walking home in **Middlesbrough** in December 2006. He pointed one of his guns at a police officer and finally put down the Smith and Wesson revolver and **Skif pistol** moments before he would have been shot by armed police.

The News (Portsmouth), 16 February 2007

Two cash machines in **Portsmouth** have been left riddled with holes after being shot at with an **airgun**.

Islington Tribune, 16 February 2007

A school in **Archway** failed to call police for almost two hours after a 15-year-old pupil was shot with an **air pistol**. The victim was playing basketball in the playground when one of a group of Year 11 pupils pointed the gun at him and fired it. A plastic pellet hit him on the bone of the eye socket. The deputy head teacher took an hour to find the suspect. The gun was then seized and the two boys responsible sent home. The victim's mother was not contacted until almost two hours after the incident. The deputy head is quoted as saying "The children involved are not naughty students. We took rapid action and dealt with a stupid playground incident".

Evening Star (Ipswich), 16 February 2007

Five people were taken into custody after an armed response unit was deployed following a report from a member of the public in **Felixstowe** who had spotted a handgun. The people were arrested from cars, a property and in the street and three **BB guns**, a machete, a crossbow and some knives were seized. Four were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit robbery, the fifth on suspicion of possessing a Class A drug with intent to supply.

East London and West Essex Guardian, 16 February 2007

Wanstead High Street was brought to a standstill when armed robbers threatened a security guard at gunpoint. The guard was attempting to deliver a cash box to a bank when he was approached by two men on a bike. They made off with the cash box.

The Citizen (Blackburn), 16 February 2007

Two shots were fired in a **Blackburn** alleyway. Police were carrying out fingertip searches. It was later reported that a man had come within inches of death. He was in the front passenger seat of a car when a bullet passed through the boot of the car (*This is Lancashire*, 20 February 2007).

BBC, 16 February 2007

David Shepherd has been jailed for six years following an incident in **Rugeley** in August 2006 (see [Incidents](#)) in which he was shot in the arm and hand by police after he pointed a **ball bearing gun** at them. The police had found Shepherd waiting in a car brandishing the weapon after Shepherd's former partner received threatening texts. He was told several times to lower his gun during the incident, in which baton rounds were fired followed by four shots, two of which hit him. He was charged with assault, two counts of threatening to kill, affray and possession of an imitation firearm.

BBC, 16 February 2007

Two men were abducted by another three men carrying a shotgun and a pick axe in the car park of a pub in **Whitnash**, Leamington Spa. The victims were forced out of their car, bundled into another one and later abandoned in **Offchurch**. They have been arrested on suspicion of supplying drugs. Police are still looking for their abductors.

Sky News, 15 February 2007

A third teenage boy has been shot dead in south London within 12 days. Reports say that the 15-year-old was found by his 12-year-old sister. He was killed in his own home in **Clapham North**.

Norwich Evening News, 15 February 2007

Armed robbers who held up a **Norwich** jewellers bought **replica guns** on the same day as the raid in July 2006. The three men were chased from the shop empty-handed. Kuldar Ojaara was jailed for 11 years after pleading guilty to attempted robbery and carrying a firearm. Staff at the jewellers were praised by the judge. One was pistol whipped and another had a gun held to her throat. Ojaara asked for an earlier, almost identical robbery on a jewellers in **Cambridge** to be taken into account.

Hendon & Finchley Times, 15 February 2007

Three teenagers, aged 18 and 19, were arrested for possession of a firearm after one of them stepped in front of a car on the **A41** and pointed a gun at the driver. The driver ducked down and swerved to avoid the youth. A silver and black handgun, an unloaded **airgun**, was found on one of the young men. The youths had been drinking and had decided to "role-play".

Yorkshire Post, 14 February 2007

Matthew Bryan, 20, has been sent to a young offender institution for nine months after admitting illegally possessing a .22 **air rifle** which was fired at members of the public in **Lupset**, Wakefield in November 2006 (see [Incidents](#)). A 16-year-old girl was struck by a pellet on her shoulder and a man pushing his two-year-old child in a pushchair was hit in the head. Police were not able to prove who had fired the weapon when people were struck: Bryan admitting firing the weapon from a window, as had others. Speaking of those who were hit he said "it was their own fault if they got hit because it was only a bit of fun".

Sunderland Echo, 14 February 2007

Armed police were called to an estate in **Sunderland** after a pensioner fired a **starting pistol** at a group of teenagers. He is believed to have challenged them before firing. The man has been taken into police custody.

Lancashire Telegraph, 14 February 2007

Detectives are searching for a gunman thought to have been stabbed during a fight between criminal gangs in **Burnley**. Police were told that a man who had fled the scene was carrying a handgun. There were no reports of shots having been fired and the police did not know whether the gun was real or imitation.

ic South London, 14 February 2007

An e-fit image of a man has been released following an incident in which a gang of five people burst into a flat in **Sydenham** in November 2006. The man was armed with a silver handgun. The gun was pointed at the householder and the raiders snatched money. The victim was pistol-whipped during a struggle and suffered a cut to the back of his head. The gang fled with mobile phones, more cash and the man's flat and car keys. Four of the gang are thought to have been aged between 13 and 17.

Evening Gazette (Middlesbrough), 14 February 2007

At least 20 homes of elderly residents in the Hardwick and Norton areas of **Stockton** have been damaged during a two week period. It is believed that the windows and doors have been broken in attacks by youths with **airguns**.

Wiltshire Times, 13 February 2007

Gerard Jordan, who caused an armed siege by brandishing a .22 calibre **air pistol** at his house in **Melksham** in November 2006 (see [Incidents](#)), was given a 36 week suspended jail sentence after admitting a charge of affray. During the incident the airgun may have been fired at police who used a stun gun to incapacitate Jordan. His counsel said he suffered from depression and drank to try and ease it. The judge ordered the confiscation and destruction of the gun.

Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 13 February 2007

A number of **airguns**, including a .22 BSA air rifle, a BSA Merlin air rifle with telescopic sight, a .177 BSA air pistol with a hexagonal barrel and a Webley Junior air pistol, were among items stolen from a house in **Wilton**, Batley.

Willesden & Brent Times, 12 February 2007

Two men were left needing hospital treatment following a double shooting in **Harlesden**. Neither victim was seriously injured.

Ealing Times, 11 February 2007

Two incidents in **Battersea** involving armed men may be linked according to police. In the first attack five men, apparently in their late teens, and a youth broke into a flat. One, aged around 19, pulled out a gun and demanded to know where the money was from the man and woman who were at home. The man was punched to the floor, knocked unconscious and tied up. The woman was sexually assaulted. The gang took mobile phones, a DVD player and jewellery amongst other belongings. In the second attack a married couple were robbed at gunpoint in the street. The incident involved a group of five or six young men. One pointed a handgun at the couple and threatened to shoot. They stole credit cards and demanded that the victims reveal their pin numbers.

Croydon Guardian, 11 February 2007

James Hensby has been jailed following a robbery at a shop in **Shirley** in September 2006. He threatened an assistant with a **ball-bearing gun**, demanding she empty the shop's till. He also threatened a customer and revealed a second gun in the waistband of his trousers. The next day he handed himself into the police. He said he got the guns from a friend. He was given three years for the robbery and a minimum of two and a half years on two charges of possession of imitation firearms while committing an offence, the sentences to run concurrently.

BBC, 11 February 2007

A female assistant was threatened with a handgun during an attempted raid on a shop in **Littlemoor**, Chesterfield. She managed to activate an alarm and the man ran off empty handed.

BBC, 9 February 2007

A man was recovering in hospital after being shot in **St Ann's**, Nottingham. His injuries were not life threatening.

BBC, 9 February 2007

Two men armed with a gun threatened staff in a shop in the **Allerton** area of Bradford before fleeing with cash from the till.

BBC, 9 February 2007

A 19-year-old has been charged over five armed robberies which were carried out over two days in **Reading**. He had threatened staff at various shops and a betting shop with a silver handgun. He has been charged with armed robbery and firearm offences.

Express & Star, 8 February 2007

A man fled with £200 of Lottery scratchcards after he had aimed a shotgun at a shop worker in **Merridale**, Wolverhampton. The worker triggered an attack alarm and refused to give the robber any money. CCTV pictures of the incident, which occurred in December 2006, have just been released.

BBC, 8 February 2007

A gang of four men, one armed with what is thought to have been a handgun, robbed a supermarket in **St Peter's Bridge** in the Burton area of Staffordshire. They demanded money from staff and a quantity of cash was taken.

BBC, 8 February 2007

A 15-year-old girl was alone in a caravan at a farm in **Rushton**, near Kettering, when a gunman knocked on the door and demanded money. He took about £80 leaving the girl extremely traumatised.

Ilkeston Today, 7 February 2007

A man has died from gunshot wounds on family-own land in **Stanley**. He is thought to have shot himself in the face with a rifle as he tripped climbing over a fence whilst out lamping. An inquest has opened.

BBC, 7 February 2007

Yvette Luffman and her ex-boyfriend Wayne Briscoe have both been sentenced to life in prison for the murder of her former husband on a canal towpath at **Bramcote**, Nottinghamshire, in October 2003. They had paid Thomas Convery £30,000 to carry out the murder. Convery shot the victim twice in the back and twice in the head with a shotgun and was himself convicted of the murder in 2004.

The Star (Sheffield), 6 February 2007

A 14-year-old girl needed hospital treatment after being shot in the leg with an **air rifle**. The pellet went through the girl's leg, smashing into the bone. The incident occurred when she was with a group of teenagers in a field near **Smithies**, Barnsley.

The Press (York), 6 February 2007

A jury in **York** has been hearing details of a robbery on a takeaway in the town in July 2006. Masked armed raiders smashed a cook's teeth and herded staff into a freezer as they carried out the robbery. The men were said to be armed with a handgun, a shotgun and one set of nun chucks used in martial arts. The cook had also had a shotgun put to his head. One man has denied charges of robbery, carrying a firearm or imitation firearm during a robbery and wounding. The trial continues.

ic South London, 6 February 2007

One man was executed and another was in a serious condition in hospital after a double shooting in a flat in **Peckham**. The murdered man is believed to have been shot several times at close range. The injured man alerted police to the shooting on his mobile phone.

East London and West Essex Guardian, 6 February 2007

Police confiscated an **air rifle** from a youth near **Waltham Abbey** following reports that he was seen aiming the gun at a road.

BBC, 6 February 2007

A 15-year-old boy has been shot dead in the bedroom of his home in **Peckham**, south London. Two men, believed to be in their late teens or early 20s, forced their way into his home. A police spokesman said he believed the premises were specifically targeted and this was not a botched burglary. Four men have been held over the murder (*Times*, 8 February 2007). Police have revealed that they suspect up to 30 people were present when the murder was planned. It has also been revealed that police believe that the murder weapon was a Mac 10 machine gun (*itv*, 5 March 2007).

This is Cheshire, 5 February 2007

Frank Kinder has been found guilty of the attempted murder in March 2006 (see [Incidents](#)) of a doorman in **Widnes** who had asked him to remove his hood before entering a bar. Kinder shot the man at pointblank range. He has been sentenced to a minimum of 20 years' imprisonment with 5 years to run concurrently in respect of firearms offences. His victim will be paralysed for life from the chest down as the bullet severed his spinal cord.

News & Star, 5 February 2007

A 12-year-old boy was taken to hospital after being shot in an **airgun** attack in **Workington**. He was out walking at the time of the incident. Police are keen to trace two youths who were shooting at crows in the area.

Citizen (Burnley), 4 February 2007

Four men have been arrested on suspicion of being involved in gun crime after police officers stopped a car in **Nelson**.

BBC, 4 February 2007

A 16-year-old boy has been shot dead at an ice rink in **Streatham**, south London. About 300 people were in the venue at the time of the shooting. Six youths and an 18-year-old were being held by the police.

Yorkshire Post, 3 February 2007

Ryan Vickers, 18, who shot his 17-year-old girlfriend between the eyes with an **air rifle**, has admitted grievous bodily harm. The victim suffered life-threatening injuries after the incident in **Bolton-on-Dearne**. Vickers had bought the gun to go shooting with friends in woodland near his home. He fired at targets in his garden when the rifle jammed and believed the gas canister that propelled the pellets had become empty. The next day he pointed the rifle at his girlfriend after she suggested he 'pretend to shoot me'. Two pellets were discharged and remain lodged dangerously in her brain. Vickers was given a nine-month prison term, suspended for a year, a 115-hour community punishment order and placed under the supervision of a probation officer. His girlfriend had pleaded on his behalf.

BBC, 3 February 2007

Police who were called to an incident in **Moss Side**, Manchester, found two men who had been shot, one in the foot and one in the leg and back. The injuries were not serious.

BBC, 3 February 2007

A man was shot in the arm by a gunman in **Burgess Hill**, West Sussex. Several shots had been fired at the property where the victim was found. The weapon has been described as a small handgun.

BBC, 3 February 2007

A teenager aimed a gun at about 14 youths in a McDonald's restaurant in Wandsworth Road, **South West London**, and fired a single shot, before running off. No-one was injured and there have been no arrests.

ic South London, 2 February 2007

A 13-year-old schoolboy has been locked up in a young offender institution for four years for committing a series of five offences in the **West Norwood** area in May and June 2006. The boy kept a detailed diary of his crimes which included muggings, a carjacking and an armed shop raid. The majority were committed with an **imitation firearm**. The boy was only arrested after he smashed up his kitchen in a fit of rage and his mother called the police. She handed them an empty gun box, ammunition and a bag of stolen property.

This is Cheshire, 1 February 2007

Four people, two women, and man and a youth, have been arrested on suspicion of possessing a firearm after a handgun was found in a property in **Urmston**.

The Star (Sheffield), 1 February 2007

A family is living in fear after gunmen twice opened fire on their home in **Shirecliffe**. Pellets broke the outer pan in a double glazed rear window and damaged a side door after the attacks occurred on successive evenings. Police recovered shotgun pellets from around the house and in the trees.

SCOTLAND

Scotsman, 27 February 2007

A 17-year-old youth has appeared in court on drugs charges after police seized £100,000 of cocaine, a handgun and ammunition in a swoop on a home in **Edinburgh**.

Daily Record, 23 February 2007

A post office worker was threatened by a robber with a handgun who fled with several thousand pounds from the **Craigmillar**, Edinburgh, branch. The staff were shaken but otherwise uninjured.

Courier (Dundee), 19 February 2007

Police were trying to track down a gang of children responsible for shooting two 11-year olds in a fast-food restaurant in **Dundee** with a **pellet gun**. One of the victims, a girl, was hit in the face at point-blank range (see [photo](#)), the other victim, a boy, was hit twice in the back of the neck and head. The group who attacked them were aged between eight and 13. A boy believed to be only seven years old was being sought by police, according to later reports (*Courier*, 20 February 2007). One 11-year-old boy has been charged (*ic Scotland*, 20 February 2007).

Courier (Dundee), 16 February 2007

Ronald McKay has been found guilty of presenting an **imitation gun** at two members of staff in a pub in **Dundee** and robbing them of £650 in August 2006 (see [Incidents](#)). Charles Craig Renton had pleaded guilty to being part of the robbery. Even though the weapon was only capable of firing plastic pellets it was realistic and McKay repeatedly pointed it at the staff saying "I'll put a bullet in you". When staff wondered if it was a real gun he asked "Would you like to find out?". The pair have been told that they face long jail terms.

Herald, 15 February 2007

An armed robber held up a shop in the centre of **Glasgow** making off with a quantity of jewellery. He threatened the staff of the shop with what appeared to be a firearm. He is reported to have stolen nearly £1m in diamonds and jewellery (*Daily Record*, 16 February 2007).

Evening Times, 9 February 2007

A gunman threatened staff at a shop in **Rhu**, Dunbartonshire. He made off with an unknown quantity of cash. Police searched the area but the suspect was not caught. The gun was not fired and no one was injured.

BBC, 9 February 2007

In another robbery in **Kilmarnock** staff at a shop were threatened by a man with a gun. The robber escaped with a three-figure sum of money.

Scotsman, 8 February 2007

Gavin Brown shot and killed a complete stranger in a street in **Glasgow** in May 2004 (see [Incidents](#)) because he wolf-whistled at Brown's brother's girlfriend. Brown armed himself with a sawn-off shotgun and tracked down his victim. He faces an automatic life sentence and has been remanded in custody pending reports.

Evening Times, 7 February 2007

An armed raider fled empty-handed after a robbery bid in the centre of **Glasgow**. The man dropped two bags of cash when dye exploded over him as he ran from a financial services office. Staff had been threatened with a firearm.

Daily Record, 7 February 2007

A security guard was robbed at gunpoint outside a supermarket in **Kilmarnock**. The incident came just a week after a robbery outside another supermarket in the town (see [January 2007 Incidents](#)).

BBC, 7 February 2007

A firearm and ammunition have been stolen during a break-in at a house near **Leven** in Fife. The firearm could be extremely dangerous, according to police.

WALES

South Wales Echo, 20 February 2007

Simon Morelli was found with two **airguns**, a silencer and ammunition when he was stopped by police at **Kenfig Hill** in June 2006. He was seen to bend down, take a pistol from his sock and throw it into undergrowth when he saw the officers approach. Morelli has admitted possessing all the weapons and a Class B drug. He had a record of 46 offences including shooting someone with an air rifle in 1991. He was given a 12-month prison sentence suspended as long as he completes 250 hours of unpaid community work, observes a night-time curfew for four months and attends an enhanced thinking skills course.

South Wales Echo, 17 February 2007

A betting shop manager was held at gunpoint in an armed robbery and left traumatised by the attack in **Lakeside**, Cardiff. He was tied up and threatened by two men. A second related robbery occurred at a travel agents in **Pontyclun** three hours later. It had similarities to one that occurred at a travel agents in **Whitchurch**, Cardiff, in October 2006 when staff were threatened with a handgun.

BBC, 2 February 2007

Aperpreet Taak conspired with his former employee Mohammed Akram who staged a fake hold-up with a **toy gun** at a **Grangetown** (Cardiff) post office run by Taak. The business was suffering from competition from a newly opened Tesco. Nearly £63,000 was taken during the robbery and has never turned up. Taak was given an 18-month sentence and Akram was jailed for two-and-a-half years.

INCIDENTS INVOLVING ANIMALS

Shropshire Star, 28 February 2007

A woman from **Leegomery** has called for a change in the law governing the use of **air rifles** after her two pet cats were shot. Both animals had to undergo life-saving surgery following the attack. Her daughter had found one of the cats bleeding on her bed - the pet had been shot and her leg was hanging off. When the other cat was checked he too was found to have been shot - a pellet had gone right through him.

Hornsey & Crouch End Journal, 21 February 2007

A cat brought to the **Wood Green** Animal Shelter by its owner died after being shot twice with an **air rifle**, once in the eye and once in the body. The cat did not make it through surgery.

Evening Star (Ipswich), 20 February 2007

A swan that was shot in the chest with an **air rifle** in a park in **Needham Market** was so badly injured it had to be put down. A reward of £250 has been offered to catch the person responsible. A spokesperson for the RSPCA said that there were 58 reports of animals being shot in East Anglia last year, of which 29 were attacks on water birds. Local MP David Ruffley has called for a review of airgun legislation (*Evening Star*, 21 February 2007).

Herts24, 15 February 2007

A cat owner in **Cheshunt** has spoken of her horror after discovering her pet had been shot in the head with an **airgun**. The cat is still alive but has a pellet lodged in his skull. A police spokesman said that "Cruelty to animals is a serious offence and we will take action against those responsible for committing such acts".

Correspondent to GCN, 13 February 2007

A correspondent from **Mexborough**, South Yorkshire, has written to us about one of her cats who was shot with an **air rifle** in the vicinity of her house. The cat has had to undergo extensive and expensive treatment at a vets. She had a pellet in her chest that had gone in one side, through her ribs and lungs to the other side where it had shattered one of her ribs, narrowly missing her heart. More details can be found on our [Personal Accounts page](#).

Shropshire Star, 12 February 2007

A pet cat was shot in the face with an **airgun** in **Wellington**, Shropshire. His owner found an airgun pellet when the cat returned home, and anaesthetic was needed to enable a vet to remove it from his face.

Oxford Mail, 9 February 2007

A pet owner has been left distraught after her kitten died following an **airgun** attack in **Bicester**. A pellet lodged deep inside the kitten's body after puncturing its intestine several times.



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