Policing and investigating criminal activities by gangs using e-bikes, e-scooters and e-motorcycles: A collaborative community approach.

Abstract: This chapter explores a contemporary road traffic and criminal phenomenon – namely the use of electronic bikes (e-bikes) of various capacities by urban youths and organised crime groups [OCGs] but particularly electric motor cycles. We introduce and define the issues in play before discussing the methodological issues and in particular the documentary research methodology employed. This is followed by a literature review of the scant literature setting out the main problems to be addressed in responding to the criminal use of the ubiquitous e-bikes as well as documenting some of the criminal, antisocial and road traffic issues involved. Four teaching case studies are introduced to inject a sense of realism and context to the discussion. This is followed by a discussion of the traffic policing and community policing measures which are effectively laid out as an action plan. We also develop a useful typology of criminal and anti-social offenders making a number of observations and conclusions.

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Key Words: E-bandit, Wraiths, electric-bike, electric-motorcycles, Roads Policing, Community Policing.

Introduction.

This chapter explores a contemporary road traffic and criminal phenomenon – namely the use of electronic bikes (e-bikes) of various capacities by urban youths and organised crime groups [OCGs] who have adopted the use of such vehicles as a tool of criminality which has greatly enhanced their mobility and operational reach.[1] This emerging phenomenon is a hot-topic and is one which has not had much academic nor universal public scrutiny and also because the *modus operandi* falls between the gaps of policing practices and resources.[2] The phenomenon has been largely brought to public attention by journalists.[3] From research conducted by the authors it is evident that the phenomena have reached the proportions of being an epidemic of anonymous and pernicious law-breaking which takes place in plain sight. In many respects, this is a scoping study documenting and highlighting the epidemic, which constitutes a modern form of banditry whereby youths and organised criminals openly flout the law with relative impunity, often leaving local communities terrified (Smith, 2023a). This is an under-researched and under-scrutinized form of law-breaking. The rationale for the use of the controversial term 'bandit' (Hobbsbawm, 1981; Smith, 2003a) in this context is justified because the term is used to denote self-identified outlaws who belong to a gang and typically operate in an isolated, or lawless area. This is important because the criminal gangs which are

[1] It is of note that this chapter does not relate to the criminal use of mountain bike or BMX style bikes which are regarded as traditional pedal cycles, albeit they may be used by the same gangs who utilise motorcycles and e-motorcycles.

[2] In a similar manner, the journalist Ken Hyder (1999) reported on the then emerging phenomenon of the '*Green Belt Bandit'*, who were predominantly urban organised crime gangs operating with apparent impunity in a rural environment where they were subject to less police surveillance and scrutiny.

[3] See for example - standard.co.uk/insider/london-e-bike-crime-epidemic-b1064229.html

the focus of this study often operate in/and from so-called 'Brown Belt' areas and 'Sink Housing' (Slater, 2018; Watt, 2020) estates of the major cities which are regarded as 'Criminal Areas' (Morris, 2013). In the UK, the term sink-housing estate is used to describe a rundown housing estate (usually owned by the local council) with multiple crime and social problems and as a result are hotbeds of crime and anti-social behaviour. Whilst, both the sociological categories of sink housing and criminal areas are contentious and socially 'stigmatizing' they are relevant in a contemporary operational policing context. This is a UK wide problem and crimes utilizing e-bikes have been reported in Aberdeen, London, Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh. Indeed, in numerous cities in the UK the use of e-scooters is on the increase as documented in the press, but to date little appears to have been done to assess, analyse or tackle the problem. In London, the problem is particularly pernicious and the Metropolitan Police have set up the Operation Venice team to tackle the problem.[4] In London there is an epidemic of street robberies carried out by masked and helmeted robbers using in particular so-called Sur Ron stealth e-bikes.[5] In 2022 there was a 19 percent rise in such reported crimes where the robbers ride silently alongside unsuspecting victims and snatch their valuables such as bags, mobile phones and even Rolex watches. The Venice team operate in marked and unmarked cars and on high powered BMW motorbikes and are trained and authorised in the use of "tactical contact" to bump suspects off mopeds or e-bikes. The emphasis here is upon authorised and trained officers. The standing operation is so successful that the criminals involved share sightings of the team and plot officer locations on 'Snapchat' and other social media. In addition, see details of Operation Red Manna in South Wales in 2016 against anti-social motorcycle use.[6] In Greater Manchester Police area in June 2021 in a pursuit involving

[4] See https://www.standard.co.uk/insider/london-e-bike-crime-epidemic-b1064229.html

[5] Sur Ron e-bikes have been used in at least two fatal shootings on Merseyside in 2021. The silent Chinese-made e-bikes are capable of high speeds with a small modification to their battery output. Birmingham based Sur-Ron UK, is Britain's sole legitimate importer and distributor.

[6] See https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/police-started-seizing-road-11944483

an officer on an unmarked motorcycle who chased a suspect on an e-bike and attempted to knock him off whilst travelling at speeds up to 26mph was found by the IOPC to have acted appropriately even after the suspect suffered a serious head injury. There is clearly a considerable grey area involved in everyday police decision making. This study addresses this obvious lacuna.

Although this phenomenon is discussed in this chapter from the perspective of being a roads policing issue, it can also be viewed through a number of other lenses including Anti-Social-Behaviour [ASB], Serious and Organized Criminality [SOC including the 'County Lines' and 'Rural Wraiths' phenomenon], and Neighbourhood or Community Policing [CP]. In addition, there are also the Fear of crime [FoC] and Health and Safety [H&S] angles to consider. FoC comes into play because urban 'e-bandits' routinely ride their e-bikes whilst dressed all in black and wearing balaclava or skeleton face masks giving the appearance of being criminal.[7] We appreciate that the term e-bandit is a contentious one because not everyone who rides an e-bike illegally is aligned to the criminal fraternity but used in the correct context it is appropriate. Often there are two masked riders per e-bike and on occasion up to ten such bikes in a pack circling an area in a show of strength (Smith, 2023a). Such bikes come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes making discernable identification of them highly problematic, and very difficult to trace. It is doubtful whether witnesses, or many police professionals, could identify the makes of such vehicles. It will become evident that these are all overlapping aspects to the same phenomenon of offending and in this chapter, we argue that it requires a holistic, community-based problem solving approach to tackle it. Moreover, it is a

[7] The term e-bandit was coined by the first author during initial scoping research based on participant observation to cover the deliberate use of any two wheeled electronic cycle in the commission of crime by organised crime groups and gangs in urban housing estates who flout the law and terrorise their local communities acting in an anti-social manner and thereby behaving like bandits.

policy and legislative issue too because the existing laws, rules and regulations in place do not provide a sufficiently robust framework.

So-called e-bikes have become ubiquitous, and we are all now used to seeing fast-food delivery drivers riding a variety of such bikes in our towns and cities. E-bikes are marketed to different consumer groupings and classified by their speed/output and this can be confusing to members of the public. However, although they are ubiquitous there is the paradox of 'ubiquitous non-ubiquity' to consider because the term e-bike covers all types of electronic two-wheeled vehicles as well as a wide gamut of vehicle types including electronic pedal-cycles, electronic scooters, electronic mopeds and electronic motorcycles. Confusingly, electronic scooters come in a variety of different formats from the platform type scooter to scooters which look like motorcycles.[8] In this study, we are concerned primarily with e-bikes which look like motorcycles but without an engine and to any observer or witness they are obviously motorcycles. Nevertheless, criminal gangs may use a variety of different types of e-bikes.[9] All types of e-bike are silent and this is their attraction to criminals because of this, their silent running characteristics have elevated an existing problem to a new level because of their silence which means that they can operate clandestinely.[10] Another factor that elevates their criminal utility is that because they do not yet require to be registered like other motorcycles it makes them virtually untraceable. There is a very real dilemma in respect of e-bikes that the police are simultaneously open to criticism from law abiding citizens for appearing to ignore and failing to tackle the problem professionally and from the families and communities of youths who become victims of police pursuits of being heavy handed and victimising youths.

[8] The platform type are marketed to commuters and children and look like the common child's scooter.
[9] For example, gang members may use e-scooters and motorcycles but drugs runners and spotters may use platform type e-bikes for increased mobility whilst dealing drugs on housing estates.
[10] Indeed, the silence of such vehicles also makes them of interest to the military who use them to enter enemy territory clandestinely for sniping and rocket launching operations.

Another problem associated with the unregistered nature and use of e-bike s is that they cannot be linked to a suspect nominal record or PNC entry because there is no registration number.

In the UK, it is a very topical issue because in May and June, 2023 in two separate incidents there have been three fatalities of youths using e scooters in which there have been accusations that the youths were being pursued by police units. In both instances, the police forces involved have suffered public relations problems after initially denying that the police units were in pursuit of the youths. In both instances, the police have self-reported themselves to the Independent Office for Police Complaints [IOPC] (see Smith 2023b) and in one of the incidents the officers involved are being investigated for gross misconduct. This makes the issue both contemporary and contentious because it is of significant operational interest to everyday policing. These unfortunate incidents have also led to a call for softer policing methodologies and tactics to be used in relation to children on motorcycles or e-bikes with politicians, academics and bike industry leaders calling for a review of police tactics.[11] There is a school of thought that marginalised young people who ride these bikes are being unfairly targeted. However, official statistics released by the National Police Chief's Council indicate that there were 4,473 recorded pursuits in 2018-19 and 11,198 in 2020-21. This provides some context in relation to the potential scale of the problem.[12]

The aim of this chapter is to scope the nature of the problem, identify common themes and concerns and suggest viable strategies and tactics for tackling the phenomenon. In the following sections we will explore issues of methodological concern, present relevant literature informing and underpinning the study before presenting relevant case studies.

[11] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jun/16/softer-tactics-calls-for-uk-ban-police-chases-of-children-on-e-bikes-deaths

[12] See https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jun/16/softer-tactics-calls-for-uk-ban-police-chases-of-children-on-e-bikes-deaths

Methodology.

As this chapter relates to a contemporary policing phenomenon there is very little empirical published material on the topic, making the use of 'Documentary sources' both necessary and vital (Scott, 2014; Blight, 2019). In the absence of publicly disseminated academic corroboration we make use of the methodology to inform and legitimise our informed scholarship. We also break academic convention in this chapter by introducing the methodology section before the literature section. As the phenomenon is a relatively new one, we were not able to utilise traditional academic scoping strategies such as conducting literature reviews and case studies hence our reliance on such documentary research methodologies and also participant observation to document the topic. This chapter relies on the participant observation (Gans, 1999) and the use of case studies (Yin, 2013) to augment the documentary research evidence.

Underpinning literature.

This practical literature review covers the generic utility of motor cycles and also aspects of the ubiquitous e-bike:

The generic utility of motor-cycles as a tool of criminality: There is a long history of criminals utilising motor-cycles as part of their criminal modus operandi – indeed, in recent years, particularly in the UK, there has been an inexorable rise in the number of reported crimes in which motorcycles, mopeds, scooters and e-scooters feature as part of the criminal modus operandi of the offender (Smith, 2023a). Scholars of crime will appreciate that this is not an entirely new criminal tactic, or phenomenon, because criminals are known for their use of innovation and innovative practices in the pursuit of their aims. Motorcycles have been used

by organised criminals because of their superior mobility which allows criminals to both 'outrun' and routinely 'evade' police patrols and also because the wearing of crash helmets enables those who are disqualified from driving and are wanted persons to do so hidden from view. Scholars and anyone interested in organised crime will be acutely aware that motor-cycles are used by 'so-called 'Sicario;' or hitmen (Benavides, 2015) for ride by shootings and by gangs of armed robbers to outrun pursuing police (see Williams, 2013).[13] Another contemporary criminal use of motor cycles is that of gangs of Eastern European criminals using scooters to conduct snatch type thefts in UK cities. Indeed, Clarkson (2019) has raised awareness of such organised crime gangs utilizing motorcycles, trails bikes, mopeds, scooters, and e-scooters to commit street robberies, where part of the organised planning involves training criminal riders on using preferred routes to minimise opportunities for police units to follow them.

The rise of the ubiquitous e-bike: E-bikes have become a ubiquitous part of the UK social scene since circa 2016 when journalists first began to report on problematic issues as the bikes became more readily available to the public and complaints regarding public safety and the excessive nature of injuries began to be registered with the authorities (Smith, 2023a). These problems arise because at present such vehicles do not require to be registered and it is not an offence to use them off road. Yet the legislation covering their use on the road is complex and many youths and criminals utilise them in a highly overt manner and routinely and openly flout road traffic laws.

[13] Williams (2013) discussed the use motorcycles by Dublin criminal Martin Cahill, where cycles were used for robberies because they could outrun the police in any subsequent pursuit.

In this review we cover aspects of 1) road traffic legislation; 2) organised criminality and anti-social behaviour (ASB); and 3) Health &Safety issues and concerns.

Aspects of road traffic legislation: The legislation covering e-bikes is complex and the scenario is a fast moving market. Indeed, this is a rapidly growing market and the array of variations, and their corresponding legal requirements, might appear complex. Indeed, the ubiquitous invisibility of the e-bike or e-scooter, because of their complex variations, is one of their appeals to criminals. There are three main types of e-bikes on the market: motorcycles, scooters and mopeds. Electric motorbikes or mopeds are categorized as those capable of 1) 15.5 mph or less; 2) those capable of 28 mph, or less; and 3) those that can travel faster than 28 mph. These are then linked to restrictions over ages for driving licence purposes (for example an A2 licence is required for a bike up to 35kw, for those aged 19 and over) (Smith, 2023a).

Those in the first category are similar to a conventional bicycle, being legal to ride for those aged 14 or over so long as it has pedals and its 250kw power does not generate a speed above 15.5 mph. The law changes for a faster *S-pedal* bike, which can travel faster than 28 mph, meaning it takes that specification into restrictions onto a par with a moped. E-scooters are currently legal to purchase, but in the UK and in Scotland they are defined as powered transporters or Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEV) meaning they attract regulations around the Ministry of Transport (MOT) road test, tax and licensing. It is currently illegal to ride an e-scooter on a public road.[14] Moreover, it is illegal to use them on a public road without insurance and since private insurance is not possible for such a device on a road, anyone using one could have the vehicle seized under the Road Traffic Act; or under Section 59 of the Police Act if used in an antisocial manner. To rent an e-scooter, there is a minimum age, and an

[14] Unless they are rented under a government backed scheme.

appropriate driving licence is required as well as the requirement to agree to a rental company account.

Aspects of organised criminality and ASB: the aspects of organised criminality and ASB are inextricably linked. The so-called e-bandits, operate by instilling fear, and although they may not be all related to the same organised crime group [OCG], or crime family, they purposefully give the appearance of all belonging to the same group and in doing so flaunt their immunity from identification or prosecution. Importantly, the topic has two interlinked and related dimensions. Firstly, it has both an urban and rural dimension relating to 1) the rise of so-called "*Urban e-bandits"* (Smith, 2023a): and 2) the rise of the so-called "*Rural Wraith*" (NFU, 2022; NFU, 2023; Smith, 2023b).[15] In the UK, rural crime and in particular farm crime is a pernicious problem which increases year-upon-year due to a variety of factors including post austerity cuts in policing budgets, the closure of rural police stations (see Smith & Somerville, 2013) not to mention inflation, Brexit and the Pandemic (NFU, 2022/2023). Traditionally, responsibility for much rural crime has been blamed on the so-called 'urban marauders' (Hogg & Carrington, 1998; Hobbs, 2001; Smith, 2010) who prey on rural areas because they are less policed and protected than urban targets. However, the 'Rural Wraith' phenomenon which is its latest manifestation is even more problematic for both farmers and police tasked with investigating their crimes because there is no likelihood of detecting the offenders unless they are arrested in the commission of their crimes or later when in possession of incriminating evidence. Such

[15] The term 'Rural Wraith' was coined by the National Farmers Union [NFU] to label predominantly urban thieves who use e bikes in the commission of theft from farms. Scholars of Scottish history and mythology and avid readers of J.R.R Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' will be well aware of the 'Wraith' phenomenon. The term is a Scottish word for 'ghost' and/or ghostly, silent apparitions. Tolkien's wraiths are more sinister spectre's, appearing as otherworldly, dark clad horsemen akin to the biblical horseman of the apocalypse but were 'faceless' which is appropriate because the urban thieves are also faceless and unseen because they arrive silently on e-bikes, unseen and steal with impunity slipping away from the scene often unseen and unheard (see Smith, 2023b).

crimes have been reported in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, and Cheshire but are committed on a UK wide basis. The thieves target expensive GPS systems, Quad bikes, All Terrain Vehicles, and expensive power tools. The overall rural crime spree was valued at £2.9 million per annum in 2021 (see Smith, 2023b). This dual dimension has implications for contemporary policing in that its roots lie in urban criminology and policing methodologies and because of this, potential solutions and strategies to tackle the problem require a collaborative community based approach. Rural crime and e-scooter crime are manifestations of the same phenomenon. There are obviously overlapping aspects to the phenomenon of offending but it is necessary to appreciate the disturbing visual semiotics and aesthetics of the phenomenon to better understand it in context. See figure 1 below for a visual representation of what the public routinely encounter in areas with the social problem:

Figure 1 – The semiotics of the e-bandit phenomenon (Author Generated © Lauren Smith).

As can be seen from the images above there are very little identifying features for a witness or investigator to recount or even focus upon, but witnesses are left in no doubt about the nefarious intent behind the use of such attire (Smith, 2023b). Alternatively, the e-bandits may wear scarves, bandanas or snoods and dark sunglasses to cover their faces. They are quite an intimidating sight, particularly when they ride in packs and/or perform anti-social stunts such as riding slowly to hold up traffic or 'pull wheelies' in open view. This phenomenon is also linked to reports of which in turn fuels the fear of crime (Smith, 2023a). In the former case the public often blame the police for ignoring the problem and for allowing the criminals to openly flout the law with relative impunity. Quite often the offenders are young males from underprivileged backgrounds but the criminals behind the masks may also be older men too. The ASB element manifests itself in the form of 'mobbing' by large numbers of bandits riding together blocking the road. There is safety in numbers to avoid police attention. In the OCG scenario the e-bikes may be gang property and most likely obtained by theft. There are several recoded instances of gangs breaking into shops to steal e-bikes. An OCG may use many different types of e-bikes from the smaller for runners to e-motorcycles for gang members.

Aspects of Health and Safety: Health and safety aspects come into play in relation to the danger of e-bikes to both the public and riders because there is a well-documented risk of accidents and injuries to victims in e-bike accidents primarily because of the higher speed and the lack of protective clothing and compulsory crash helmets. There is also an increased potential for fatalities. One of the main issues is that the internal injuries caused from crashes or falls from e-bikes are far more serious than those incurred in other types of road traffic accidents. This makes any form of confrontation or pursuit inherently dangerous and potentially fatal. Moreover, intervention in the act of riding is problematic because many

youths and criminals chose not to stop when lawfully requested to do so. In addition, there are a number of variant policy approaches adopted across police areas, ranging from a no pursuit policy (as adopted by Police Scotland) to tactical interventions such as 'tactical nudging' as (adopted by the Metropolitan Police). Nudging basically entails physically pushing or driving at a suspect on their motorcycle and knocking the rider off. Some officers are not comfortable adopting this tactic for fear of causing injury and a resultant legal challenge in court.

Another Health and Safety issue is that of fatal fires caused by owners of e-bikes charging their bikes overnight often unattended in the communal hallway of a shared building. This is an issue which both the police and fire brigade unions have called into question.

Case Studies of interest.

This section presents illustrative case studies [to ostensibly act as teaching cases] based on real life scenarios for learning purposes. Each case presents details of the criminal modus operandi used by the various criminal gangs and the policing strategies and tactics used in the cases – both effective and ineffective from which lessons could be learned. The first two case studies which are admittedly somewhat dated but nevertheless illustrate the common problems associated with policing two-wheeled crime and ordinary motor cycles. The third and fourth cases are more contemporaneous and illustrate the problems of policing crime committed by criminals on e-bikes in general as well as emphasising their anti-social elements. These are important because of the added situational context. See the case stories below:

Case Study 1 – An urban based OCG targeting trails-bikes and quad-bikes.

This historic case relates to an urban based OCG operating from a large so-called 'sink housing' estate in the Garthdee area of Aberdeen in early 2000s. The OCG consisted of approximately 10 or more

active career criminals who lived on and operated from the estate. All the nominals were in their teens or twenties and were either related to each other, or known to each other from school days. The OCG were responsible for a spate of thefts and theft by housebreaking and from vehicles and part of their modus operandi was to use trails type motor-bikes and/or quad-bikes to assist them in the commission of their crimes and criminal activities. Many of the gang were also disqualified drivers or drove without licences or insurance - making it less likely that they would stop for the police if requested to do so. They were also into using their trails and quad-bikes for leisure purposes and as a participative sport. They regularly attended meetings of like-minded, but law-abiding, enthusiasts at 'meets' across the North of Scotland and used these meetings to 'case' likely targets whom they followed home to find out where they lived. Many of the enthusiasts were from the farming community and used their trails-bikes, quad-bikes and Rugged Terrain Vehicles (RTV) for work purposes. Part of their targeting process was to select victims for future thefts and their interest in the sport allowed gang members to blend into the crowd as spectators. The gang did not look out of place being of similar ages to others taking part. This practice of shadowing target victims was commented upon by the National Farmers Union [NFU] and other insurers, at the time as being a common practice by criminal gangs. Often those taking part in such events were from the farming community. The OCG were very active and either sold on the stolen quad bikes and motor cycles, or used them for their own nefarious purposes. Often the gang was active during the late evening, or early mornings, when police numbers were lower. As well as stolen vehicles, the gang owned legitimately registered motor cycles. If they had to outrun the police they would report their bikes stolen and unless the police could prove otherwise they would get away with it. Although the gang were known to the police they were able to continue their crime spree unhindered for several years. The gang were also forensically aware and used several 'lock-ups' not connected to them or their home addresses to store their motor-bikes and stolen property. As a result they generally evaded capture. The gang were also adept at evading the police by using their knowledge of streets and alleyways where the police could not target them or follow them. If spotted they bolted towards such cut out points. The gang all wore balaclava masks, or dark coloured helmets with blacked out visors to avoid identification when 'working'.

The gang eventually came under wider police scrutiny as a result of a particularly audacious break in at Huntly where they broke into a premises of a newly opened shop selling off road All-Terrain Vehicles, quads and trails bikes. Huntly is a rural market town with a large customer base of farmers. They rode out from Aberdeen two to a motor cycle so that the pillion passenger could ride a stolen vehicle back to the city. The gang made off with about twenty such vehicles riding back to Aberdeen on quieter back roads. The theft by housebreaking was reported widely in the press and police enquires resulted in the gang being suspected. Several weeks later when the stolen vehicles had been replaced the gang targeted the same premises again, making off with all the stock. The theft led to the closure of the business as the insurance company refused to pay up a second time. A police enquiry and surveillance operation led to the detention and charge of several members of the OCG and the recovery of some of the stolen vehicles, but not all of the gang were implicated. The OCG continued to operate unhindered for several years.

The local police community and response officers were all very aware of the OCG and were active in gathering intelligence on them but more importantly, had no off-road policing capability. The traffic department had motor cycle units and Range Rovers but no specific off-road capability or specialist training. These units were routinely directed towards ordinary roads policing duties. Moreover, the crimes were invariably committed in the rural policing areas or in other force areas thus the local police would not always suspect the particular OCG, or even be aware of them.

Note: This case study was compiled from a retrospective ethnographic exercise by the first author based on participant observation techniques and personal involvement.

Case Study 2 – An urban based OCG targeting rural towns and county properties.

This historic case relates to an OCG operating out of Peterhead, Scotland between circa 1970 to approximately 2005. They were a 'craft based' group of professional thieves led by a notorious 'Housebreaker' and 'Crime Lord' Peter Beagrie. They lived in Peterhead and operated from areas of depravation, but not exclusively criminal areas. They targeted commercial and private properties in the town but operated on an Aberdeenshire wide basis but also travelled further afield to Aberdeen, Morayshire and Tayside on occasion if the target was lucrative enough. At its prime the OCG consisted of approximately 40 thieves and were organised into two teams depending on experience. The 'A' team consisted of the experienced professionals and the 'B' team of youths and up and coming thieves. A third team led by Paul Seyton consisting of youths also emerged. In addition there was also a loose affiliation of youths who acted as lookouts and ran interference. They dressed all in black with balaclava masks and rode mountain bikes and BMXs. Their purpose was to bait and engage the police to take them out of play. The OCG later diversified into the drugs trade but lost their coercive influence after Beagrie was jailed for a lengthy sentence for misuse of drugs offences.

Beagrie was very criminally astute and forensically aware and tutored his gang personally. A major part of his modus operandi was the use of Trails bikes. The gang had approximately six such bikes all green identical Kawasaki models. Some were registered to gang members but others were unregistered. If any of the bikes were seen in suspicious circumstances they were always reported stolen to break the chain of ownership and responsibility. This was a deliberate strategy. Indeed, trails bikes are often favored by thieves because it allows them to operate 'off road', and are often used after dark. Yet, their *Achilles heel* is the 'tinny' distinctive noise given by the engines, making them trackable despite non-registration untraceable number plates. The noise factor also made it possible to sometimes predict the course of travel and to arrange for policing intervention tactics. The gang used the bikes to enter and exit the town via the old railway line or footpaths to avoid police detection. Often the bikes were hidden in the countryside near the location of a target property to allow gang members versatility so that the whole gang did not return in one vehicle. If used during the hours of daylight the gang used identical black crash helmets with a blacked out visor to frustrate identification. They all wore identical blue thermal boiler suits for the same purpose. It was virtually impossible to identify the rider. This was deliberate as several of the thieves were disqualified drivers. In addition when engaged in thieving and at night the gang wore balaclava masks, rather than crash helmets, as this allows any approaching vehicles to be heard more clearly, thereby enabling evasive action against policing tactics. This clever operational tactic gave then the edge against the police who did not have access to motor cycles.

Another part of the gang's tactics was to send out youths as young as 12 on the trails bikes to annoy and engage the police whilst the 'A' team went about their work. There were several notable pursuits in the time before there were national rules for engaging in pursuits. In one such scenario an inexperienced 12 year old boy was caught on one of the bikes when he was trapped in a 'safe stop zone'. These were identified areas where there was no chance of escape such as the railway line or a footpath where there was only one way out and in. The youth was reported to the Childrens Panel and alleged that he has stolen the bike. Another gang member was also reported for disqualified driving after a particular surveillance operation. The local police were acutely aware of the dangers of trying to pursue youths on motor bikes and in most instances there was no possibility of trying to interdict them. However, in an attempt to catch the gang 'red-handed' another operation was planned. This time two high powered trails bikes were hired and manned by police trained motorcyclists. On one of the evenings when the thieves left the town the trap was sprung and as they returned to the town on the sand dunes the gang were chased and captured along with stolen property. This innovative police tactic

paid off but it was a one off operation when two such police riders should have been stationed in the town permanently. The beach was another example of a 'safe stop zone'. The operation did not stop the gang's activities but it put a stop to the use of the trails bikes for several months.

Note: This retrospective ethnographic case was compiled from field notes, anecdotal evidence and participant observation techniques by the first author who participated in policing of the events described.

Case Study 3 – A contemporary urban e-bandit scenario in Aberdeen.

This case also relates to a contemporary urban based OCG operating from a number of so-called 'sink housing' estates in the Northfield, Tillydrone, Seaton and Woodside areas of Aberdeen at the present date of writing. These are all areas of social deprivation with an indigenous criminal fraternity present. In 2020, after the Covid lockdowns the first author began to notice a new phenomenon occurring on a regular basis in the housing estates mentioned above in the form of masked riders on motorcycles riding openly during the hours of daylight These riders were always dressed head-to-toe in black or dark coloured clothing wearing 'wraith-like' balaclava masks or sinister skeleton face coverings worn by Mexican cartel members. Often there were two to a bike and several bikes operating in a pack. From their actions and demeanours it was apparent that these were part of an OCG because the first author often saw them meeting up on waste ground near Northfield Swimming Pool and exchanging small packages. As a former thief taker, the first author's interest was immediately piqued. It took some time to appreciate that the youths were riding electric motorcycles or e-bikes of various types. Over the course of 2020 to 2023 the author witnessed several incidents of anti-social behaviour whereby the wraiths would ride on the public road during commuter hours and weave across the carriageways or ride slowly two or three abreast across the carriageways to frustrate commuters. If any showed annoyance the wraiths would verbally abuse them. It is common for them to also 'pull' wheelies and stare into the vehicles of those they ride alongside. It is quite an intimidating sight and experience. This was reported in the local press the P&J and often was the subject of irate victims who reported their concerns to a local media group Fubar News. A common theme of frustration emerged relating to why are the police not doing anything about it? An informal conversation with a serving officer revealed that the police were aware of them but as there was a no pursuit policy in place no attempt was made to stop them routinely in case the attempt resulted in a fatality or injury. Whilst this sounds eminently sensible and pragmatic it is nevertheless concerning because it is indicative of a policy of non-action. In 2022, one of the wraiths was involved in a collision with a police vehicle in a non-pursuit scenario whereby the offender was arrested and prosecuted. This was widely reported in the local press. It transpired that the offender was disqualified from driving, had no insurance and was wanted on several warrants confirming that there was a criminal element to the phenomenon which appears to be normalised on the estates. The author has witnessed a young mother pushing a pram whilst accompanied by two 10-12 year old boys without protective gear riding their e-motorcycles across a public road and on the verges and footpaths. It is the author's opinion that these are possibly the next generation wraiths and OCG members. As an ex police officer it is apparent that many offences are routinely committed including careless driving, reckless driving and riding other than on a road. The gangs use a variety of e-bikes including e-motorcycles and platform type as well as petrol driven trails bikes so the wider phenomenon is not restricted to e-bikes but to all two-wheeled vehicles.

Note: This ethnographic case was compiled from field notes, anecdotal evidence and participant observation techniques by the first author who lives in Aberdeen and frequents the said areas.

Case Study 4 – A contemporary urban e-bandit scenario in Birmingham.

This case also relates to a contemporary urban based OCG operating from a 'sink housing' estate in the Northfield, Birmingham at the present date of writing. This is also an area of social deprivation with an indigenous criminal fraternity present. This is a problem which has been reported widely in the local press and media. The OCGs use a variety of trails bikes and electronic-motorcycles in the commission of crime. The problem was first identified in 2016 when the police in Northfield initiated a publicised crackdown on criminal and anti-social use of mini-motos, off-road bikes and e-bikes.[16] In the operation neighbourhood policing teams seized 10 bikes and issued section 259 warnings. Despite this the matter continues unabated. There is a considerable problem in the West Midlands and on the estate with stolen motorcycles and e-bikes. West Midlands Police are proactive in their approach to the e-bike problem, in one particular incident in 2022 the police in Northfield stopped two men on their electronic bike using a 'Stinger'.[17] This is evidence of good practice. In another incident two local men were arrested after riding in an anti-social manner intimidating road users and their e-bikes seized and crushed.[18] To counter the problem West Midlands Police utilise surveillance operations and their drone team to try and catch offenders. Importantly West Midlands have an off-road motor cycle capability. The unit was financed from the proceeds of crime seizures.[19] Again, this is evidence of best practice.

There is also the potential of organised crime being involved because in one incident in Birmingham area a large number of e-motor bikes were stolen in a burglary of an e-bike retailer where £40,000 of gear was stolen.[20] Five masked men in a white transit van broke into the premises using angle grinders. The audacious theft was captured on CCTV and became an internet sensation locally. It is possible that areas that suffer from the phenomenon are also areas with a high level of availability and a number of retail outlets specialising in them. Birmingham has several large outlets.

Note: This case was compiled exclusively from documentary sources.

What is significant about these case studies is the commonality of policing problems routinely encountered, all of which require practical policing measures, strategies and tactics to be initiated to counter them. It is vital to involve roads policing, community policing, crime

[16] See - https://b31.org.uk/2016/06/northfield-police-crack-down-on-illegal-use-of-bikes/

[17] See https://bromsgrovestandard.co.uk/news/northfield-police-used-stinger-to-stop-two-illegal-off-road-bike-riders-in-their-tracks/

[18] See https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2022/05/14/two-arrests-as-police-seize-and-crush-e-bikes-being-ridden-illegally-in-birmingham/

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[20] See https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/watch-sparks-fly-masked-raiders-26433714

reduction officers and supervisors in drawing up local action plans to tackle the problems in real time.

The above cases are all very useful and in some instances describe best practice such as the use of 'safe stop zones', and pro-active 'trained police riders' and 'Stingers' to interdict offenders, thereby acting as a template for others to use. We now turn to discuss the points raised so far.

Discussions.

As illustrated in cases 1 and 2 above any two-wheeled vehicle offers advantages in terms of increased mobility and manoeuvrability to criminals using them. Whilst traditional motor cycle engines can be heard from a long way off this is no longer the case with the ubiquitous e-bike because they have no engines and run silently thereby imbuing the criminals with the 'wraith-like' ability to operate silently.[21] Their use of dark clothing and face coverings allows them to hear approaching vehicles more clearly allowing them to take evasive action if necessary but it also serves to intimidate potential witnesses, whilst of course acting as a tactic to avoid identification. There is also a palpable aura of 'Machismo', Hegemonic Masculinity' and 'Showmanship' at play in their street level 'outlaw' performances (Montgomery, 1976; Schouten et al, 2012) in which the e-bandits see themselves as operating outside the law. These factors give an advantage to criminal gangs because they know that it is unlikely that they will be stopped by the police. They have come to expect that the police will turn a blind eye to their nefarious activities. It is also evident that the innovative use of e-bikes has elevated this

[21] See https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/ukraine-army-lessons-drones-snipers-b1095030.html. Indeed, this ability to operate silently and stealthily has been adopted by the armed forces in the Ukraine who use e-motorcycles to transport snipers and anti-tank operators to take out the enemy and then move silently away from their positions before retaliatory fire can be returned.

existing problem particularly because of their relative 'invisibility' and because they are virtually untraceable. The Health and Safety fears discussed above also makes interdicting offenders in the act of riding problematic and potentially fatal. One of the most serious but unintended features of the lack of legislation over the use of e-bikes is that their use has in some instances become 'normalised' in certain criminal circles and a new generation of criminals do not regard their use as unlawful. We now turn to consider other miscellaneous policing factors which have to be taken into consideration.

Miscellaneous policing factors to be taken into consideration: Although there is no officially accepted breakdown of the numbers of crimes and offences reported involving e-bikes, either in urban or rural settings, it is an emerging modus operandi because of the silence and manoeuvrability of the bikes and because the criminals (wraiths) can easily evade pursuing police vehicles by going off-road and up narrow lanes and footpaths. Their ubiquitous invisibility is a major problem in investigating such crime because they come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes making identification of them highly problematic, and by extension very difficult to trace. Whereas many witnesses can identify different makes and models of motor cycles this is not the case with e-bikes. Indeed, it is doubtful whether witnesses, or even many police professionals, could identify the makes of such vehicles or even tell which manufacturer made them. In the UK, there are three main distributers / manufacturers of e-motorbikes – namely Sur Ron, Solar E-Clipse and Sting Shadow.[22] Readers interested in familiarising themselves with the different models and styles of e motorcycles should access the companies websites. This problem of identification is exacerbated by the fact that the models of all

[22] See the websites https://sur-ron.co.uk/, https://solarscooters.co.uk/products/e-clipse-bike and https://www.bumblebeebikes.co.uk/bike-range/sting-shadow/ The list is not exhaustive.

manufacturers look similar in style and also because many enthusiasts can add accessories to their models changing their appearance subtly and because of the fact that many e-bandits use stolen bikes and paint them black to hide their original paint scheme and hinder identification. Most look-like motorcycles minus the engines and fuel tank. If they are stolen, they will be virtually untraceable. It is frustrating because witnesses can only report seeing masked offenders on e-bikes and as a result many will not even bother reporting incidents to the police. For a similar reason it is not certain that police control room staff would record such a report or sightings as an incident. One particular make of e-scooter the Sur Ron e-scooter can reach speeds of up to 70 mph and cost up to £8500 new. Thus not many youngsters can afford to buy one unless they are living on criminal earnings.

Moreover, there are very few possibilities of stopping an offender who chooses not to stop for the police when lawfully requested to do so. Police in Manchester recently used the 'Stinger' apparatus to stop and arrest two such e-bandits. Whilst this is heartening from a law enforcement perspective, it is not always feasible, nor advisable, for officers to deploy such apparatus safely. Indeed, as a consequence of the dangers of stopping offenders, police scientists are trying to develop technology to stop electronic vehicles remotely by jamming their electronics. However, until this technology is developed, tested and licensed for use in the public domain it is incumbent upon the police to develop strategies and tactics for dealing with the phenomenon in both urban and rural settings. In the next section some potential strategies and tactics to aid in interdicting criminals using e-bikes are mooted and discussed. As stated above, a major problem is the current lack of legislation and individual police forces are left to interpret the rules themselves and develop their own strategies, tactics and responses. For example, there are extensive guidelines around the rules of engagement in police pursuits,

but police officers do not receive training on how to pursue e-bikes. When police begin following e-bike offenders the situation can rapidly deteriorate into a pursuit situation before there is time for the rules of engagement for police pursuits to be put in place. Indeed, e-bikes are not included in the College of Policing guidelines for police pursuits. It is more than mere semantics, but one can legitimately ask whether following an e-bike constitute a pursuit? This is an area of policing tactics which requires to be urgently addressed. In many urban settings there is an acknowledged shortage of officers and in any case officers may not have time to routinely devote to what may be considered by some to be a low level policing issue. There are two recognised ways of stopping traffic. The first is the traditional police hand signal to halt and the second is by activating the blue lights and siren of a police vehicle. If an offender over reacts or panics and makes off the officer must decide whether to follow and try and stop the offending vehicle. If the suspects fail to stop it is incumbent on the officers to report to their control room that they are following a suspect vehicle which has failed to stop and ask permission to pursue the suspect vehicle. The control room inspector will make a risk assessment decision based on all circumstances including weather, speeds reached, type of vehicle, the availability of resources and the demeanour of the officers – are they calm and collected or excited? In most circumstances pursuits are called off by the control room before they escalate out of control and enquires to trace the offenders after the event are seen as being the safest scenario to follow. But what happens if the offender's crash before a full pursuit is authorised? From an analysis of publicly available information it appears that the police will brief the press (genuinely) that there was no pursuit. This is followed by the press or public releasing mobile phone footage or 'CCTV' or 'Dashcam' footage showing a police vehicle following the suspects. This gives the impression to the public that the police are deliberately trying to 'cover up' a mistake when they were acting on the basic information known at the time. The police are then forced to revaluate the script and this causes a public outcry and even

accusations of a scandal. It can even lead to civil unrest or riots as was the case in the Cardiff scenario where the police are left with no option but to report themselves to the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC). It was a media and 'public relations' disaster that could have been avoided. This is an import issue because there are no official scripts to be followed and it is left to individual officers to deal with the fall out. Drafting an appropriate message to be released in the event of a future fatal scenario must be treated as a matter of urgency by the appropriate police hierarchies at a national level. This is also an important issue because there is a difference between an officer initiating a lawful request to stop, following a suspect and engaging in a fully authorised (or unauthorised) police pursuit. Given all the circumstances is it any wonder that officers may be tempted to look the other way because of the lack of proper legislation or guidelines? It is obvious that there is a need to develop effective strategies and tactics for redressing the imbalance and that frontline officers deserve better training, management and leadership when dealing with unregulated road traffic offences.

Developing effective strategies and tactics for redressing the imbalance: One of the main problems in redressing the imbalance in relation to the so-called 'wraiths' is that it is primarily an urban phenomenon and although they operate in urban settings they also target rural areas. This makes it a crime problem, not just a road traffic problem which requires a holistic approach to deter it. This necessitates a collaborative approach across force areas and divisions because they cross force boundaries. To tackle the phenomenon professionally, it will be necessary to adopt a collaborative community policing approach to enforce the problem at its roots. The 'wraiths' are most vulnerable when exiting and entering their urban criminogenic enclaves where they are subject to the heightened policing presence and surveillance apparatus

(Smith, 2023a; 2023b). Nevertheless, we have read of several exciting potential solutions which we have melded into a potential action plan:

- In Shropshire [West Mercia], the police are adopting a proactive 'Seize-and-Destroy' policy in relation to e-bikes used in criminal activity. Other forces have also adopted a 'seize and destroy' policy but anecdotally this is more effective against law abiding users.
- There is also scope to utilise a rejuvenated model of 'Neighbourhood Watch Schemes' (Kelly & Finlayson, 2015) with a Facebook or WhatsApp capability to report in real time and recruit volunteers to collaborate with local community policing units to tackle the menace by creating a matrix of surveillance cameras on key roads and also to obtain and train volunteers in the use of drones. Council employees who are constantly on the road would make ideal volunteers. There is also scope for covert Neighbourhood Watch activities via a Crime Stoppers campaign.
- Consideration should be given to employing private investigators with surveillance capabilities and training.
- The police must invest in furnishing policing units with their own e-scooters and e-motorcycles to enable them to follow and interdict the wraiths when engaged in their criminal activities.
- Many forces have purchased or can gain access to trails bikes and quad bikes for other purposes and it would be helpful if a register of these could be kept and when operations are being planned if a sharing scheme could be initiated whereby these trained officers could be loaned out to keep interdiction operations cost effective. The Operation Venice model could act as a template.

- In conjunction, with the above it is vital to train police at a local level in safe methods of stopping suspects on e-bikes such as the use of ‘Stingers’ and train officers in their deployment and use.
- Alongside these measures there is a need to train and authorise officers in social media surveillance to track the websites and apps used by suspected gang members to gather more intelligence and evidence so that vehicles and clothing can be attributed to particular individuals in future cases.
- There is considerable scope for utilising ‘Intelligence Led Policing’ (Cope, 2004: Ratcliffe, 2016). There is scope for developing intelligence packages on suspected criminals using e-bikes. Thus, when engaged in executing search warrants for other crimes if an officer locates evidence of the criminal use of e-bikes and evidence permits they should photograph the e-bike for future reference and seize it for destruction if evidence of legitimate ownership is not forthcoming. In addition, police should check that the e-bike has not been stolen. This approach may require appointing a local community beat officer in a ‘Collator’ role (Smith, 2008) to gather and glean local knowledge into an intelligence package. Intelligence officers in HQ functions may not have the time and local knowledge to do this effectively.
- This would entail ensuring up-to-date lists of stolen e-bikes on a national basis.
- The police should seek out and locate evidence from street and other CCTV sites and appeal for ‘Dashcam’ and mobile phone footage of incidents recorded by the public in an attempt to identify offenders. This would bolster the public perception of the police with an increasingly disaffected public.
- There is an urgent need to create a register of makes and models of e-bikes to assist police and witnesses in identifying what type and make of e-bike was involved in their

crime. This would be a time intensive desk-based research activity and could be a commissioned report.

- There is an urgent need to rewrite the national pursuit policy to include e-bikes and also to train officers in the safe use of tactics and techniques for stopping suspected offenders in 'safe stop zones'. It is also necessary to identify such zones and make officers aware of them.
- There is a pressing need to draw up operational standing orders and initiate awareness training to all officers. Unless the bikes and scooters are communal gang property the bikes must be stored at the homes of their users.
- Although the bandits can operate with apparent impunity in their safe areas, 'sightings' are of incredible value for intelligence purposes. A sighting is a recorded instance of a criminal and any associates including a description of where seen, when and a description of vehicles and clothing. Despite the fact that sightings have fallen out of favour in contemporary intelligence circles and as such are seldom recorded on intelligence databases, they are extremely useful in building up a picture of offending. One of the reasons that sightings are not recorded is that they can be so numerous that it is operationally difficult to record them all from a time management perspective and often, alone they are of limited value. If a force does not have a system for recording sightings this should be initiated as a matter of urgency.
- In the age of the mobile telephone, sightings should be actively encouraged. Even if officers cannot safely pursue the bandits, then they can still photograph them and raise a sighting file. This could be extended to the wider community by appealing for sightings from members of the public via Crime Stoppers and for any photographs or dash cam footage to enable a case to be built against the offenders from eye colour, hair colour or visible tattoo's etc. Thus, although the bandits are safe in their own small

communities, they are vulnerable when travelling further afield. Members of the public who do not know them would willingly share intelligence and images of offenders who are harassing them or riding alongside them. In addition, the police should obtain any images from publicly owned CCTVs on their beats. Such sightings would help build up a case for applying for an 'Anti-Social Behaviour Order' [ASBO] or Anti-Social Behaviour Contract [ABC] (see Donoghue, 2008; Squires, 2008).

- Despite their acknowledged shortcomings there is also considerable scope for using existing Anti-Social Behaviour legislation such as ASBOs and ABCs combined with Problem Orientated Policing [POP] (Goldstein, 1990; Scott, 2000) initiatives to target individual criminals and criminal gangs using e-bikes. An ASBO requires court authorization whereas an ABC is a voluntary arrangement. These are well established yet effective tools.
- This approach would entail operating a collaborative community policing approach involving local council departments and community organisations perhaps utilising the 'Prevent First' crime prevention strategy (den Heyer, 2016: Smith et al, 2017; den Heyer, 2021) to coordinate the cooperative approach because although such criminals may feel safe in their criminal areas, they are vulnerable when operating in other areas. The approach entails working with partner agencies such as the local council and its appropriate department as well as with community organisations and councils who have an interest and stake in the problem. A weekly meeting where issues are dealt with in real time is the key to making progress because tasks have to be acted upon before the next meeting thus reducing slippage, procrastination and accusations that a meeting is a mere 'talking shop'.
- In relation to the above, the 'Prevent First' (den Heyer, 20116) approach can be used in conjunction with targeted operations, initiatives and action plans.

- The use of recorded footage could provide evidence to authorise a Problem-Orientated-Policing' Plan [POP or PSP] for a particular area.
- Consideration should be given to the use of surveillance operations and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) regulation albeit such in times of austerity and limited resources it is an expensive option. This is an appropriate suggestion as the use of e-bikes is but one manifestation of the phenomenon and targeting organised crime is easier than targeting their road traffic offences.
- There is a need to research and consider what actual offences from road traffic to breach of the peace to public order offences are appropriate to charge alongside the usual tranche of traffic offences such as no licence, no insurance, riding other than a road, careless driving, reckless driving and even furious and reckless riding. A draft pro-forma charge sheet should be agreed at national level.
- There is also a pressing need to educate the public and the press in contemporary policing practices. Issuing denials and then having to retract previous erroneous communications is not a good look.

To be successful this approach requires police commands to take a robust and positive ownership of the issues and to involve local press, media and radio stations in explaining the approach and appealing for information. This will entail forces making the problem a force priority, otherwise ambitious officers will simply look the other way because no one wants a discipline record for causing a fatality when trying to stop a low priority criminal problem. Engaging actively in finding innovative solutions would give the community and public faith that the police were treating the issues properly and restore public confidence in the police. However, to better understand the issue it is necessary to profile and better understand the different categories of criminals using e-bikes in the commission of crime.

Profiling categories of criminals using e-bikes: From a perusal of the documentary research available, we argue that there are three main types of offender profiles identifiable (Smith, 2023b). The first are essentially law abiding individuals who are e-bike enthusiasts or commuters who will generally obey the laws of the road and stop when lawfully requested to do so by the police. These should be policed robustly and fairly and either educated or issued fixed penalties or cited for prosecution. If circumstances permit offending riders should be subject to having their e-bikes seized and confiscated. E-bikes are here to stay and it is important to normalise their use and integrate their users into everyday traffic. The second category of offenders are youths who may or may not be affiliated with any gang and often use e-bikes infrequently and because they are fun. This category of offender may not be experienced as riders and often ride whilst making no attempt to hide their identity. The problem is that when an officer encounters such youths, they are initially often unaware which category of offender they are seeking to stop. This type of offender may stop for police when requested - however, some may also panic and also ride recklessly and furiously to evade capture. The problem with this category is that the youths may be as young as ten and have limited experience with their e-bikes and with driving per se. They may have only recently acquired their bike and perhaps even received it as a present. They will not make a differentiation between their use of an e-bike, or a pedal cycle. The most problematic category is the third, which consists of criminals often belonging to Organised Crime Groups [OCGs] who use the e-bikes to further their criminal enterprises whether they be drug dealing or theft. These are the most difficult to deal with because they are often disqualified drivers or wanted 'on warrant' and will therefore take every opportunity to evade arrest, riding recklessly and furiously to escape. This category is more likely to wear balaclava masks to hide their identity and because they use e-bikes on a daily basis they are likely to be very proficient in their usage.

The problem for the police is that when 'contact' is made the individual officers will not initially appreciate whether they are dealing with youths or e-bandits. They have a split second to decide whether to enforce the law or use their discretion.

Conclusions and observations.

The material, suggestions and strategies and tactics contained in this chapter are also of use in policing and combatting the criminal and anti-social use of all motor cycles, but in particular trails and off-road motor bikes. Going forward, to simply do nothing about the electric-motorcycle menace is not a viable strategy, nor is treating the problem as a stand-alone road traffic issue when it is a community policing issue. This study may be of interest to scholars and practitioners of policing and criminology in diverse locations where both urban and rural communities may be experiencing similar problems. It is hoped that academics and practitioners can learn lessons from the chapter which will assist them in better understanding and talking such a contemporary policing issue. As ongoing research, numerous suggested solutions are being scoped, including the issue of greater intelligence mapping, use of traceable forensic sprays (such as recently used by West Mercia Police), ASB orders and even the use of drones. There are political interventions to be considered too, because there are ongoing Parliamentary working groups, expressing mixed views, seeking to balance benefits of carbon reduction with concerns about road safety, and potential use in crime. Our focus, for the purpose of this study was to concentrate on electric motorcycles and mopeds but we stress that creative criminal minds will continue to exploit any form of transport. This is a particularly pernicious criminal innovation and practice and as a successful criminal modus operandi, it is likely to be repeated and continue well into the future. We urgently need new legislation and innovative policing practices, strategies and tactics to '*get ahead of the curve'*.

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