

News story: Slough people smuggler jailed

On 12 February, Border Force officers at the UK inward tourist controls at the Channel Tunnel in Coquelles, France stopped a hired British-registered Ford Luton van. They questioned the driver of the vehicle, Harbans Lal Doll, 61, who said he had left the UK the previous day to go to Calais to collect some furniture. He had stayed overnight before collecting the furniture that morning.

When officers asked to examine the load they found the van 3 quarters full of beanbags and chairs with a double mattress stood upright part way inside the van. Hiding behind the mattress the officers found 16 people, including 5 minors.

Dave Smith, Deputy Director of Border Force South East and Europe, said:

Border Force officers are on the frontline keeping our borders safe and secure. We will continue to work with law enforcement colleagues to ensure that people smugglers and traffickers, whose actions often put the lives of others at risk, face the consequences of their crimes.

Doll was arrested and the investigation passed to Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) officers. He was subsequently charged with assisting unlawful immigration into the UK.

Doll pleaded guilty yesterday (23 November) on the first day of his trial at Canterbury Crown Court and was sentenced there immediately.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the CFI team, said:

Although Doll offered no explanation for his behaviour, the Judge considered in his sentencing that the motivation was financial. Offences like this, where individuals take advantage of the desperation of others for personal gain, are among the worst that we deal with in CFI.

We work closely with Border Force colleagues to rigorously investigate allegations of immigration related criminality and this case should serve as a warning to anyone tempted to get involved with this kind of offending. We will catch you, and put you before the courts.

The 16 people, 14 Iraqi nationals – comprising 3 families – and 2 women from

Albania, were passed to the French Police Aux Frontières.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit their [website](#).

Press release: Youngsters help give fishery a boost

The Environment Agency has released 1,500 fish into a recently re-established fishery this week to give stocks a pre-Christmas boost and encourage angling.

Lockwood Beck reservoir, south of Guisborough, opened earlier this year to coarse anglers and they've since been catching fish such as roach and perch.

Now the Environment Agency has stocked bream, tench and crucian carp to provide more variety for anglers and encourage participation at the fishery.

The fish have all been bred at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, which is solely funded by rod licence money.

The Environment Agency's Phil Rippon with Ali Jamaliour and John Speight.

Young anglers help stocking

To mark the fish stocking on Tuesday a group of young anglers from Eastern Ravens Trust in Stockton-on-Tees received expert angling tuition from the Angling Trust and had the opportunity to see the new fish being released into the reservoir.

Eastern Ravens Trust is a registered charity based in the Community Zone, North Shore Academy, which provides open access youth activities to young people aged 10-18 in the most deprived ward in the borough alongside supporting isolated and disadvantaged children, young people and families.

The owners of the reservoir, Northumbrian Water Ltd, provided support on the day and are committed to providing the venue in the future for organised coaching events for anglers aged under 16.

Jack Canham with the fish he caught during the event.

Happy with the development

Phil Rippon, Fisheries Technical Specialist from the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

We are happy to help with the development of Lockwood Beck fishery,

working with the Angling Trust and Northumbrian Water to encourage more participation in angling.

The reservoir is an excellent venue for future coaching events as well as providing a resource for local anglers. The fish provided by us will help to support the fish stocks and provide a more interesting variety of species.

The Angling Trust's David Munt with Amie James.

Great news for fishing

Don Coe, Leisure Operations Manager at Northumbrian Water, added:

This is a fantastic way to get young people interested in fishing and we're very pleased to be supporting the Angling Trust with their activity.

Also, the stocking carried out by the Environment Agency will also enhance the appeal of Lockwood Beck for anglers of all ages and experience, so this is great news for fishing in the area.

Angling is a great way for everyone to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to find work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a rod licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online at <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence>

[Youngsters help give reservoir a fish stocks boost](#)

News story: Defence Secretary announces £250M investment in new homes for service families

The significant investment will see nearly 1000 new homes built in three locations across Salisbury Plain, the British Army's largest training area in the UK. The locations for the new housing are Bulford, Larkhill and Ludgershall.

The new homes, which will be built by British construction company Lovell, will offer modern three and four bedroom accommodation, as well as a number of bungalows and adapted homes for families with specific needs, such as wheelchair access. Work on the new homes, which are being built under the Army Basing Programme (ABP), is expected to be completed in May 2020.

The new homes will support Service personnel and their families relocating from Germany in 2019 and also units moving within the UK.

Pre-construction work on the project has already begun, including off-site highways to facilitate access to the new homes. The returning troops can expect modern accommodation, as well as access to catering, retail and leisure facilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This considerable investment in nearly 1,000 new homes is a reflection of our commitment to supporting Armed Forces families. Service families make an immense contribution to our country and I'm delighted to announce this £250 million funding for new homes to welcome our troops relocating from Germany.

The £250 million investment comes alongside a further £90 million in road and utility improvements in support of the three developments. £1.1 billion has already pledged to the Salisbury Plain area for living and working accommodation 'behind the wire' including 2,500 bed spaces for single soldiers and the construction, conversion or refurbishment of nearly 250 other buildings such as offices, garages, workshops and mess facilities.

The Army is also working closely with Wiltshire Council to ensure that the soldiers and their families have access to all of the services they need, including education and health facilities. Wiltshire Council is spending over £20 million of the MOD's contribution towards local community services in support of education provision across all age ranges.

Defence Minister Tobias Ellwood said:

Investing not only in new homes but in all the things that help to make a place feel like home, such as education, infrastructure and leisure facilities, will make a big difference for those returning to the UK after being posted abroad. This boost to the area will provide a close-knit community for Armed Forces and their families for years to come.

The Army Basing Programme has also recently completed building and refurbishment of accommodation at a number of other sites across the country in support of Troops relocating from Germany and within the UK. The ABP has also invested in new facilities in Kinloss, Leuchars, Catterick, South Cerney and North Luffenham, and significant refurbishments have taken place at a

number of other MOD sites including York, Aldershot and Thorney Island.

News story: Cold weather alerts and health warnings issued

Keep warm keep well warnings are being issued by Public Health England (PHE) today (24 November 2017), as weather forecasts suggest the winter's first blast of cold weather is on its way.

Met Office forecasters have said today that by tomorrow (Saturday) temperatures in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber will fall below 2°C.

This first drop in temperatures has prompted PHE's Extreme Events team to remind people all over the country that before cold weather arrives is the best time to prepare.

Dr Thomas Waite, of the Extreme Events team, said:

We're well used to winter in this country so most people know what to do to protect their health before and during cold spells.

But there are people who may not take precautions and who are at a very real risk. We know that every winter thousands of people fall ill and many die because of exposure to cold both in the home and while outdoors.

Those most at-risk include older people, very young children and those with conditions like heart and lung disease. That's why every cold season we urge people to look out for family, friends and neighbours who may be at risk. Ask yourself if you could check on a neighbour to see if there's anything they need?

Paul Gundersen, Chief Operational Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Colder air has now reached most parts of England, with temperatures expected to fall further by Saturday, when the cold will be accentuated by strengthening winds. Wintry showers are also likely in places, but any snow showers are expected to be confined largely to higher ground. A temporary incursion of warmer air is expected on Monday, with the colder air forecast to return by Tuesday.

You should:

- look out for friends and family who may be vulnerable to the cold and ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their homes adequately
- try to maintain indoor temperatures to at least 18°C, particularly if you are not mobile, have long term illness or are 65 or over
- stay tuned for weather forecasts, ensure you are stocked with food and medications in advance, have deliveries or ask a friend to help
- take weather into account when planning your activity over the following days
- seek entitlements and benefits such as Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments, which are available to some
- avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at a higher risk of cold related illness or falls.
- discuss with friends and neighbours about clearing snow and ice from in front of your house and public walkways nearby

Power and utility companies have schemes which make at-risk groups a priority for reconnection following power cuts. Find out if you meet the criteria and if so, sign up. Visit ofgem.gov.uk for more information.

There's lots of useful advice on the [Stay Well This Winter website](#).

Dr Waite added:

We know that more deaths occur every winter in the UK than in the summer due to a wide range of causes including cold weather, influenza and other respiratory infections. The flu vaccination is the best protection we have against flu and it's really important to have it if you are eligible. If we all keep a close eye out for each other over the coming months hopefully we'll all be able to stay well this winter.

News story: MSPs discover more about life in the naval service

The purpose of their visit is to help MSPs to better understand the range of social and welfare issues relevant to armed forces personnel, and their families, within their community.

During their visit the MSPs saw displays of Royal Marine marksmanship, all terrain driving, stalking, artillery, and met with the Royal Navy's bomb disposal experts from HM Naval Base Clyde. They also met with the families of RM Condor and the Naval Families Federation.

Naval Regional Commander Captain Chris Smith said:

While Defence is clearly reserved to Westminster, it is the Scottish Parliament's policies and decisions that affect the day to day lives of Scots-based service personnel.

This is why it is essential that our elected representatives better understand military life, all the more so given that Scotland will be home to the entire Submarine Service from 2020, as well as an Army Infantry Brigade, the RAF's Quick Reaction Alert interceptors (North) and submarine hunting Maritime Patrol Aircraft flying from Lossiemouth.

As part of the Armed Forces Visit Programme, a group of MSPs visited the Royal Marine base at Arbroath.

Launched by Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh MSP and the Ministry of Defence in April, the Armed Forces Visit Programme has already had successful fact-finding visits to the Army's Glencorse Barracks, Penicuik, and RAF Lossiemouth, Moray.

The MOD has around 10,000 sailors, soldiers, and air personnel living permanently in Scotland, supported by 8,000 reservists and civilians.

Scottish industry benefits from Defence spending £1.5bn with it each year, supporting 9,750 private sector jobs in Scotland.

The Defence Board confirmed in February 2017, that £1.7 billion would be invested to upgrade Scottish military bases over the next decade.

List of attending MSPs:

- Keith Brown MSP, SNP, Clackmannanshire/Dunblane, (Cabinet Secretary Economy, Jobs and Fair Work/Veterans)
- Maurice Corry MSP, Conservative, West Scotland
- Graeme Dey MSP, SNP, Angus South
- Murdo Fraser MSP, Conservative, Mid Scotland and Fife
- Daniel Johnson MSP, Scottish Labour, Edinburgh Southern
- Liam Kerr MSP, Conservative, North East Scot
- Gordon Lindhurst MSP, Conservative, Lothian Region
- Lewis Macdonald MSP, Scottish Labour, NE Scotland
- Graham Simpson MSP, Conservative, Mid Scotland and Fife
- Annie Wells MSP, Conservative, Glasgow