

Full triangulated account for the 2011 “riots” in Clapham Beyond Contagion

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The Clapham Junction “riots” Sunday 7th – Tuesday 9th August 2011

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List of abbreviations

CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
IMD	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
LSE	London School of Economics
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
PSU	Police Support Unit
RtR	Reading the Riots
RVP	Rendezvous Point
TSG	Territorial Support Group
UK	United Kingdom

1. Methodology

The methodological approach used to analyse the disturbances in the vicinity of Clapham Junction in early August 2011 essentially follows that outlined by Stott, Drury, and Reicher (2017) in their examination of disorders in Tottenham and Hackney.¹ The main feature of the method is the use of triangulation to substantiate the veracity of the time, location and content of a particular incident within an event. This comprised of the use of official reports and literature; conventional and social media taken at the time; and retrospective accounts by participants and eye-witnesses. This process of analysis of the reliability of reported events was utilised to form a detailed, corroborated analysis and timeline of actions and movements of the crowds, and police responses.

2. Data Sources

The event timeline for the disturbances that underlies this narrative account was based on a wide variety of sources. A literature search of over 185 documents related to the August 2011 riots revealed eight journal articles and 11 reports containing significant references to the Clapham disturbances. However, the structure of the timeline from Sunday 7th to Tuesday 9th August 2011 came from three principal sources. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) report “4 Days in August”, contained a detailed timeline of the disturbances from Monday 8th to Tuesday 9th August in Wandsworth (the London borough in which Clapham Junction is situated).² Similarly, Wandsworth Council commissioned an independent review, “Disorder in Wandsworth”, which also contained a timeline of the occurrences in Clapham Junction, based on evidence from the MPS, local stakeholders and CCTV footage.³ In addition, crime data obtained from the MPS was useful for locating sites of disorder and corroborating other sources.⁴ These three sources were trusted as they had specific time recording. Clearly there was a need to be cautious of the perspective from one side of the events; however, these accounts gave us a generally reliable overview of the proceedings.

The majority of participants’ testimonies were obtained through the Guardian and LSE⁵ “Reading the Riots” (RtR) project, comprising 41 transcripts of interviews carried out within a few months of the disturbances. They were particularly important for describing events from the participants point of view, the crowd response to police actions and thus provided an example of “history from below”.⁶ However, the time recording of events in the transcripts was often vague and occasionally there were seemingly false, uncorroborated reports. Thus, notwithstanding the undoubted value of these accounts, this data source was used more as a corroborative tool than an initial indicator of events.

¹ (Stott, C., Drury, J., & Reicher, S. (2017). On the role of a social identity analysis in articulating structure and collective action: The 2011 riots in Tottenham and Hackney. *British Journal of Criminology*, 57(4), 964-981. doi: 10.1093/bjc/azw036).

² (MPS, 2012, p. 82-88).

³ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 6-7).

⁴ This information was provided in Excel spreadsheet form as part of a Research Information Sharing Agreement between the MPS and the Beyond Contagion research team (February 9, 2017). In the following account the data is referenced as (MPS, 2017) with specific crimes referred to by their unique Record ID.

⁵ (2011)

⁶ (Rudé, 1964).

National and local newspaper searches yielded 32, mostly national, accounts providing information on the location, timing and content of incidents. Sixty-eight *YouTube* videos were sourced which included real-time footage by participants, conventional media coverage and eye-witness recordings of the unrest. These were saved on to a *YouTube* playlist⁷ for the Clapham Junction occurrences and, along with photographic material, used as corroborative evidence giving more in-depth context and understanding. Eleven tweets collated from *Twitter.com* at the time of the event were included in the analysis as part of a wider search of 200 tweets. These were used corroboratively, mostly to confirm the timing of events. These various sources were cross-referenced alongside *Google Maps* and *StreetView* with the emphasis placed on determining accurate timing and locations. A project researcher also undertook a field visit. This process enabled an enhanced and more definitive timeline, with new events added and corrections made to the original MPS and Wandsworth reports.



Figure 1: South London Boroughs.⁸

⁷ (Beyond Contagion; Biddlestone, Lovell & Bell, 2017).

⁸ (Nilfanion, 2011).

3. Analysis

Introduction

As a result of the controversial killing of Mark Duggan by an MPS firearms team on Thursday 4th August, “riots” broke out following a demonstration against the unsatisfactory police response to events at Tottenham Police Station on Saturday 6th August. That evening, anti-police violence, property damage and looting occurred in Tottenham Hale and Wood Green. On Sunday 7th August riots spread to the districts of Enfield, Waltham Forest and Islington. That evening and night further disturbances broke out on the other side of the River Thames in South London, most notably in Brixton following a local community music festival, and in Croydon. It was in the early hours of Monday 8th August that sporadic looting first arose at Clapham Junction in Wandsworth (see Figure 1).

A major feature of the Clapham area is the presence of one of the busiest railway stations in Europe, at Clapham Junction. There is a socio-economically deprived area comprising the Winstanley Estate and its environs that is situated to the north side of the railway junction (see Figure 2). To the south are the main retail thoroughfares of St John’s Road and Lavender Hill, with the former leading to Northcote Road and the much more affluent district to the west of Clapham Common. Accordingly, the main thoroughfares contain different types of retail premises, with the big chain stores situated on St John’s Road and Lavender Hill and designer “boutique” type shops on Northcote Road. Northcote Road and the surrounding area are sometimes referred to as “Nappy Valley” due to the number of young, wealthy families who are resident.⁹ Compared to other outbreaks of “rioting” in London, the Clapham Junction disturbances are notable for their lack of spread, with the bulk of incidents clustered around the two short main streets, St John’s Road and Lavender Hill.

Evidence from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) demonstrates that the main sites of disturbance were located in or on the periphery of the more deprived areas in the borough (see Figure 2). However, as with many parts of London, these deprived areas (such as the Winstanley and Patmore estates) lie adjacent to some of the most affluent parts of Wandsworth such as Northcote Road, Lavender Hill and St John’s Road. Furthermore, the majority of arrestees connected to the disturbances lived relatively close to the location of their crimes, with a clear majority coming from the Winstanley Estate, followed by other lower socio-economic areas nearby to the north such as the Patmore Estate and South Lambeth, and also south-east including locations adjacent to Streatham and Brixton (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). It can be seen that there were few participants travelling from north of the river to the riot areas (see Figure 5). Figures 6 and 7 demonstrate that the majority of the arrestees were young (67.7% 21 or under), male (81.7%) and black (40.6% vs 35.4% white). This proportion of white to black is greater than that demonstrated by earlier reports.¹⁰

⁹ (Self, 2010).

¹⁰ Kinghan (2011) reported that 66% of arrestees were of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity, suggesting a higher proportion of black arrestees than the current analysis, but his report was completed just a few weeks after the event. This may be due to the grouping of ethnicities, with the current analysis combining White Western and

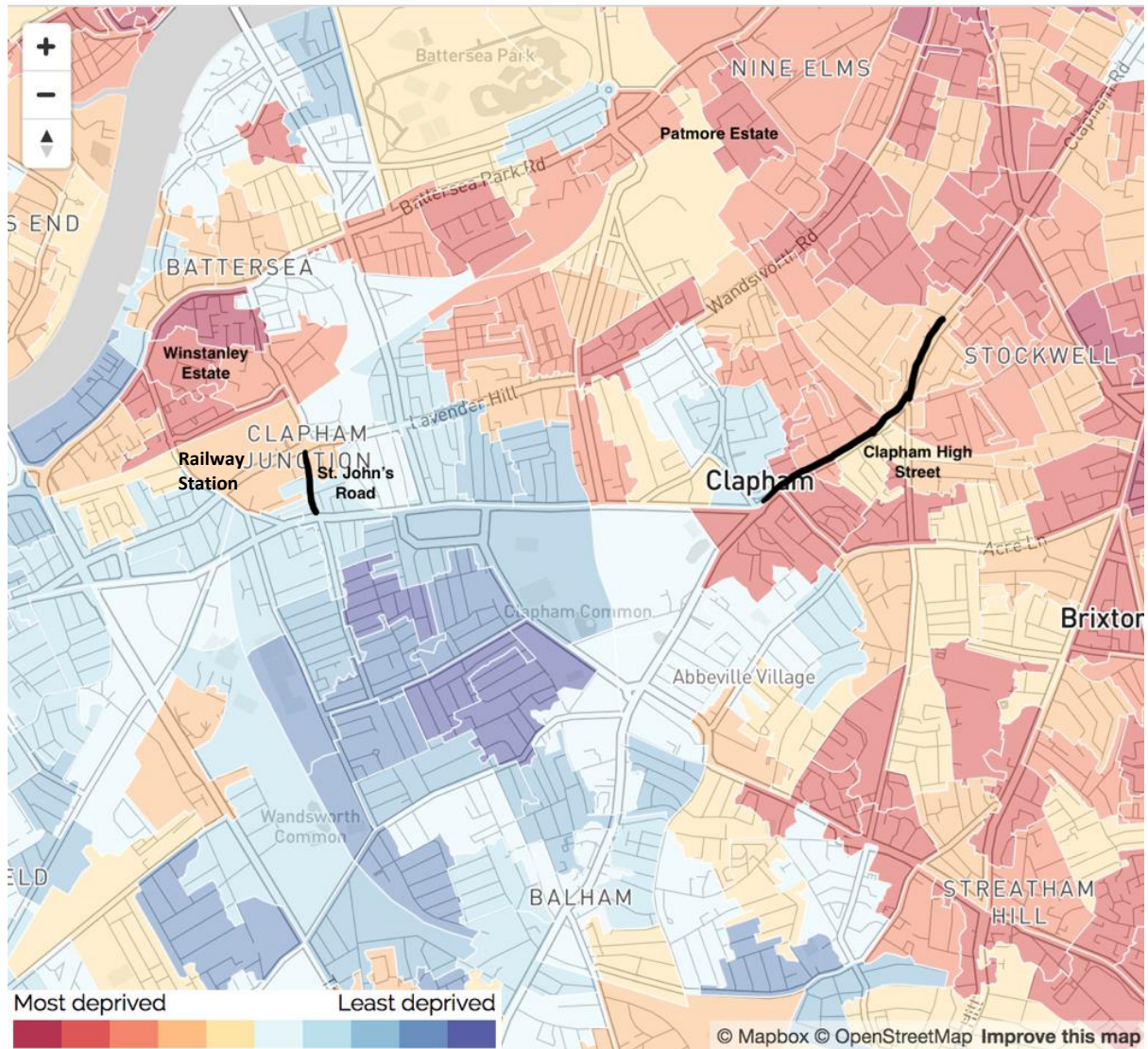


Figure 2: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) heat map for Wandsworth (2010).¹¹ Central areas of the disturbances labelled.

Eastern Europeans into the 'White' ethnicity category; alternatively, Kinghan only reported White Western European ethnicities. It also suggests the effects of initial arrest bias; (see Ball & Drury, 2012).

¹¹ The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a UK government qualitative study at the level of Lower Super Output Area considering income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime and living environment. The mapped data is from Trimble (2015).

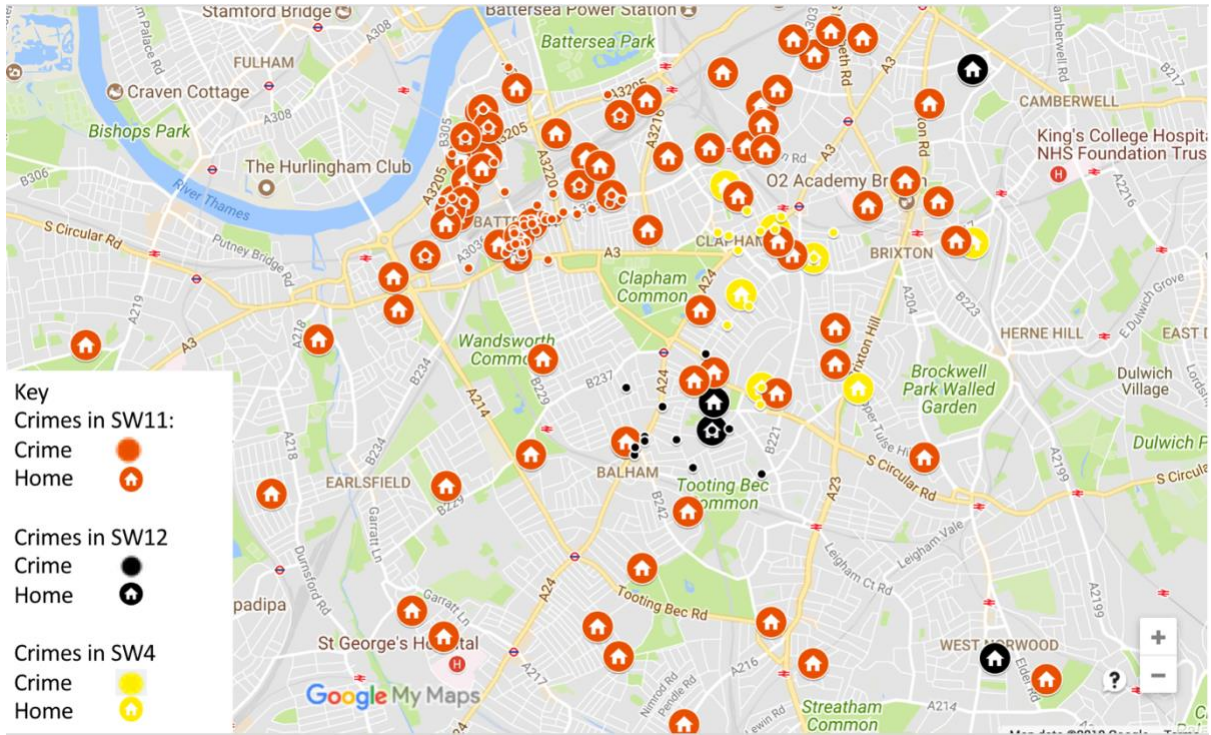


Figure 3: Disorder-related crime and arrestee home locations in the Wandsworth area



Figure 4: Frequency of arrestee home locations in all crime locations, SW4 (towards Clapham High Street and Brixton), SW11 (Lavender Hill and surrounding area), and SW12 (Balham and surrounding area).

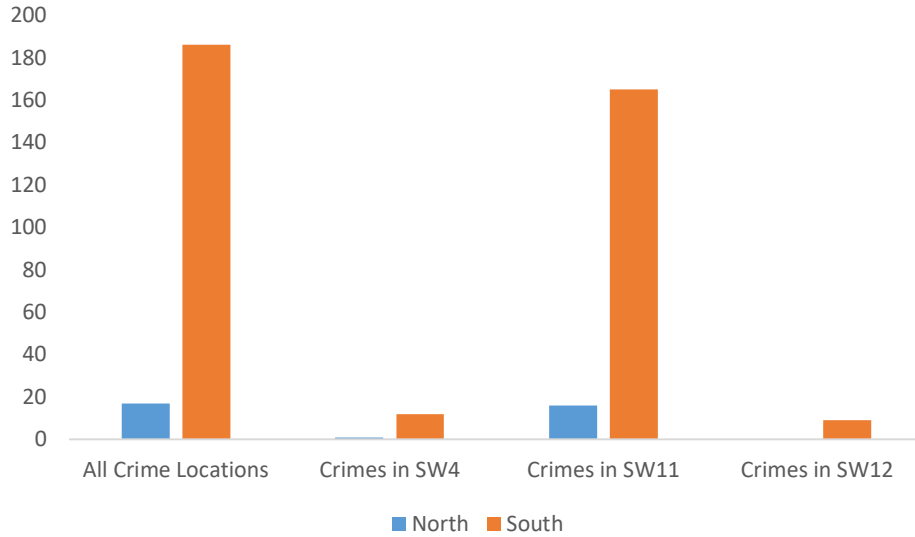


Figure 5: Frequency of arrestee home locations North and South of the River Thames in all crime Locations, SW4 (towards Clapham High Street and Brixton), SW11 (Lavender Hill and surrounding area), and SW12 (Balham and surrounding area).

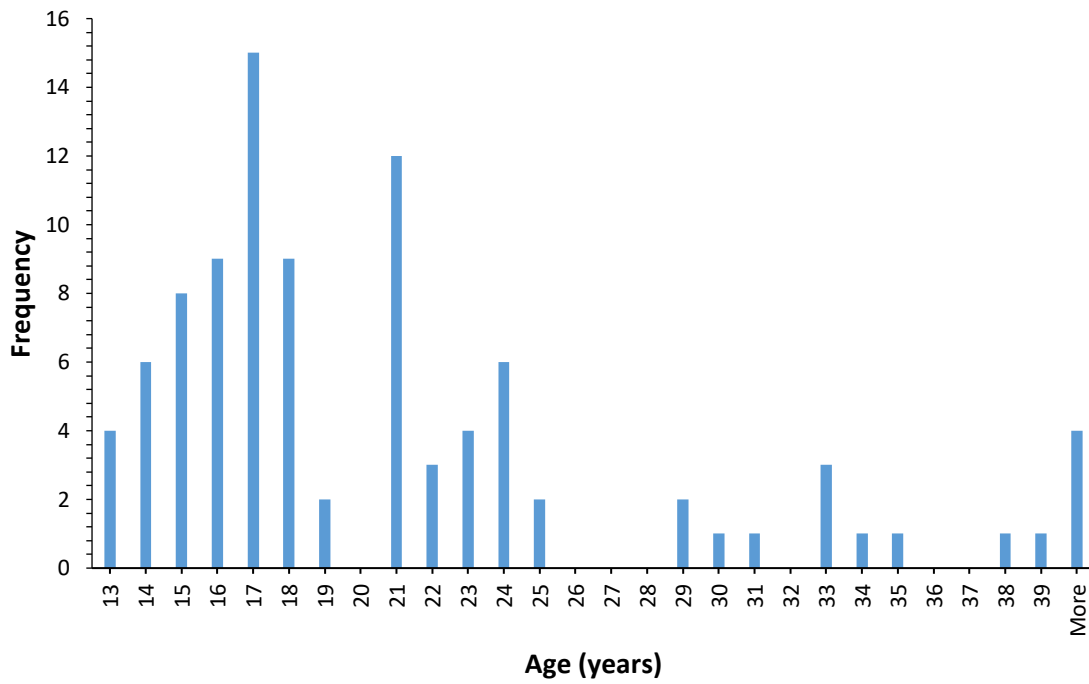


Figure 6: Frequency distribution by age for all arrestees.

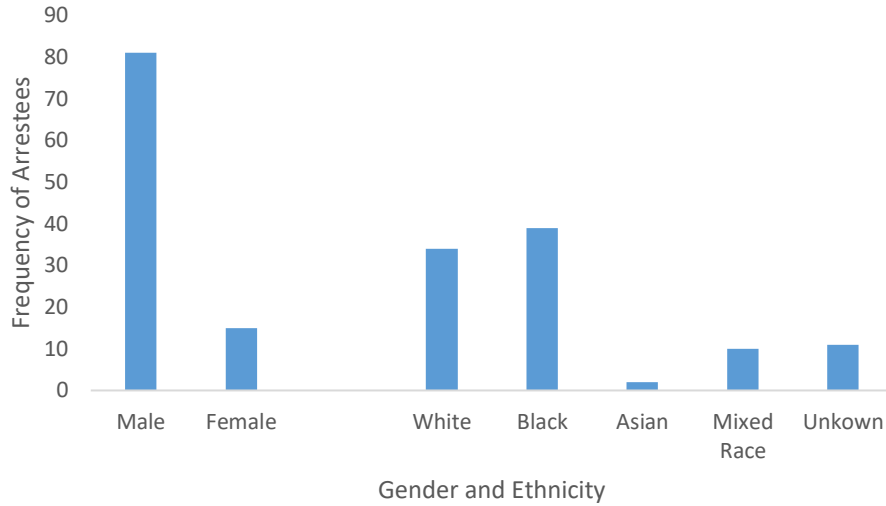


Figure 7: Gender and ethnicity demographics for all arrestees.

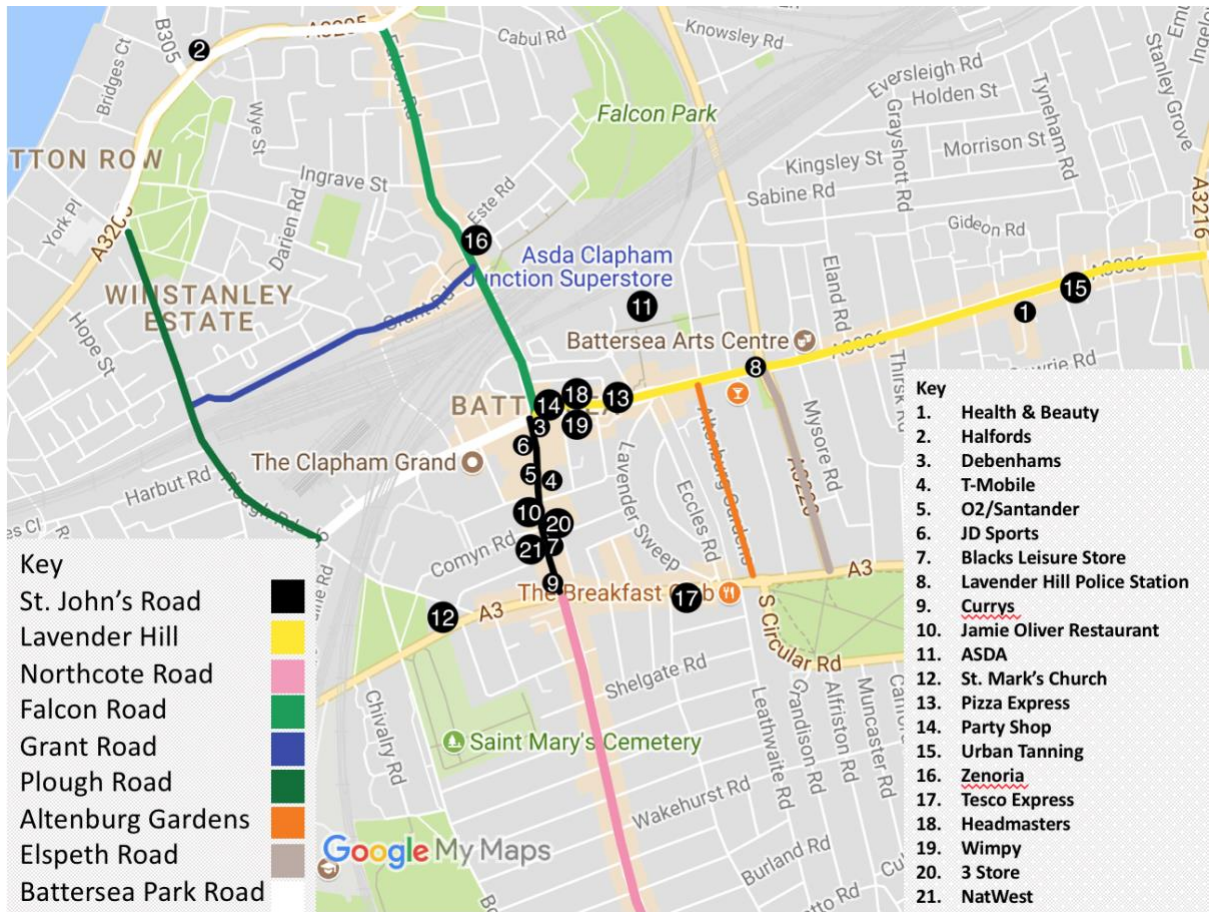


Figure 8: The main sites of disturbance in the environs of Clapham Junction.¹²

¹² Locations 18-21 shown on Figure 8 are not mentioned in the text but were indicated to have been looted or damaged during the riot. The following list gives the function of businesses and premises listed: 1. Health and beauty salon 2. Car accessories, bicycles, camping equipment 3. Department store 4. Mobile phone shop 5. Mobile phone shop/building society 6. Sports footwear and shoes 7. Outdoor clothing and camping 8. Lavender

Initial Disturbances

The first signs of the spread of disturbances into the London borough of Wandsworth occurred during the evening of Sunday 7th August. Eight shops were attacked and a group of 30 to 40 young people forced entry to an amusement arcade in Tooting (4 miles, 6.5 km to the south of Clapham Junction).¹³ The first indication of disturbances in the vicinity of Clapham Junction came in the early hours of the following morning. Between 01.00 and 02.00 the MPS received reports that Coral, a bookmaker, on Clapham High Street¹⁴ had been looted. This was followed by groups vandalising and breaking into shops on Clapham High Street and St John's Road in the vicinity of Clapham Junction (see Figure 2).¹⁵ From around 03.30 there were reports that hand grenades were to be used against police, but these threats never manifested themselves.¹⁶ Thus, it appears that there were some incidents in the early hours of Monday 8th August, but these did not escalate into a major disturbance. From this point on the key events occurred close to Clapham Junction itself on St John's Road and Lavender Hill.

Emergence

Around noon on Monday 8th August and for the next five hours, there were social media reports of potential riots to occur at Clapham Junction¹⁷ which led to multiple reports from shopkeepers and members of the public calling 999.¹⁸ For instance, a participant recorded in the RtR transcripts reported receiving a Blackberry Message in the early afternoon telling them where to meet and at what time.¹⁹ By 16.00, some shops and other businesses decided to close early.²⁰ However, no disturbances actually occurred during the afternoon.

At 17:00 a multi-agency Gold meeting was held,²¹ where the information was described as "scrappy".²² However, an eye-witness claimed the following day that "...we knew they were going to hit. I was in my salon when a brick came through the window...".²³ The MPS crime data contains an entry that describes a brick being thrown through the window of the "Health and Beauty" salon on Lavender Hill at 17:30 (see Figure 8, Location 1).²⁴ In terms of police resources, like most districts, Wandsworth had been required to send officers to support

Hill Police Station 9. Electrical goods 10. Restaurant 11. Supermarket 12. Church 13. Fast food restaurant 14. Party accessories and goods 15. Tanning salon 16. Clothes shop 17. Small convenience supermarket 18. Hairdresser 19. Fast food restaurant 20. Mobile phone shop 21. Bank.

¹³ (Kinghan, 2011 p. 5).

¹⁴ Clapham High Street is roughly 2 miles, 3.2 km east of Clapham Junction.

¹⁵ (MPS, 2017, ID: 350, ID: 2, ID: 370; @laurenxwatson, 2011).

¹⁶ (MPS, 2012, p. 84).

¹⁷ Other potential targets were Tooting, Balham, Putney (ref. Kinghan, 2011, p. 9) and Southside Shopping Centre, Wandsworth town centre.

¹⁸ (e.g., @Ladyshipyasmin, 2011; MPS, 2012, p. 84).

¹⁹ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON041011081).

²⁰ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 8).

²¹ "Gold" meetings are given this name by public sector plans for civil emergencies and are so called because they consider the highest level strategic issues. Gold group meetings are attended by the people in charge of public services to plan for or respond to emergencies. [http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Professional-Training/Command/Pages/Multi-Agency-Gold-Incident-Command-\(MAGIC\)-Training.aspx](http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Professional-Training/Command/Pages/Multi-Agency-Gold-Incident-Command-(MAGIC)-Training.aspx)

²² (Kinghan, 2011, p. 6; MPS, 2011, p. 84).

²³ (Davies, 2011).

²⁴ (MPS, 2017, ID: 79).

other areas. At 18.00 there were 51 officers in the borough posted at locations where potential disorder was predicted.²⁵

Winstanley Estate – The Catalyst?

Just before 19.30, groups of youths were reported to be gathering at the Winstanley Estate and immediate area (see Figure 8).²⁶ It appears that the police response so far had been general, with a tweet from someone spotting a helicopter in the sky at this time.²⁷ However, the situation escalated “at an alarming rate”.²⁸ A civilian reported that 12 youths with petrol cans, and their faces covered, were gathered on the grass at Grant Road/Falcon Road (which border the estate) and shortly afterwards, on responding to this call, police found a group of 50-60 youths present (see Figure 8).²⁹ They subsequently armed themselves with bricks and bottles, moving into the Winstanley Estate. One sergeant and seven constables, the only Level 2 officers available, were deployed towards the estate.³⁰ Officers without protective equipment gathered at a rendezvous point on the junction of Grant Road and Falcon Road (see Figure 8).³¹

From 19.40 to 20.00 a group of 60-100 youths attacked the police and their vehicles with sticks, bricks and bottles, with reports of smoke grenades now being thrown.³² The Level 2 officers managed to disperse some of the crowd.³³ At this time a member of the public called the police stating that they thought the youths were baiting officers onto the Winstanley Estate. CCTV shows them using bins to create roadblocks and a request was made by the Acting Borough Commander for additional Level 2 officers.³⁴ Meanwhile, some youths were reported leaving the area and heading towards Battersea Park Road, on the other side of the estate, with 30-40 people smashing the windows of Halfords bike shop nearby, stealing an unknown quantity of bicycles. Two were arrested by police (see Figure 8, Location 1).³⁵ Shortly after, masked youths on bikes were reported cycling towards Clapham Junction.³⁶

Meanwhile, just before 20.00 the disorder on the estate started to move towards the main shopping areas on St Johns Road and Lavender Hill. Sixty to seventy youths robbed a shop on Plough Road, a local housing office vehicle was attacked on nearby Wynter Street and 20 youths smashed a shop window on the estate (see Figure 8).³⁷ Police were slow to respond

²⁵ (MPS, 2012; p. 84).

²⁶ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 85; Kinghan, 2011, p. 6).

²⁷ (@RelicDelic, 2011).

²⁸ (MPS, 2012, p.85)

²⁹ (MPS, 2012, p. 85). Kinghan (2011, p.8) reports youths throwing bottles at cars on Falcon Road, which could be achieved at the junction with Grant Road.

³⁰ Level 1 trained officers are full time public order trained officers and members of the Territorial Support Group. Level 2 officers receive training every six months and deal with public order issues on a part-time basis, alongside normal police work. Level 3 officers have basic public order training.

³¹ (MPS, 2012, p. 82).

³² (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 85; Kinghan, 2011, p. 6; The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcripts LON061011086, LON061011084 and LON2410110834).

³³ (MPS, 2012, p. 85).

³⁴ (MPS, 2012, p. 85).

³⁵ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 85; MPS, 2017, ID: 11).

³⁶ (MPS, p. 85).

³⁷ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 85; Kinghan, 2011, p. 6; MPS, 2017, ID: 86; The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON061011086).

to the looting on Plough Road and the Winstanley Estate because of commitments elsewhere.³⁸ At around 19.50 a tweet reported that the police were now stopping all buses from coming into Clapham Junction.³⁹

Wider Escalation and Police Withdrawal

Just after 20.00, 35 youths were seen putting on masks outside at the Falcon Pub on Falcon Road at the junction between St. John's Road and Lavender Hill (see Figure 8).⁴⁰

It was now apparent that there were multiple groups, varying in numbers, who were able to mobilise quickly and that local officers were wholly outnumbered.⁴¹

Finally, at 20:10, police could no longer withstand the sustained attacks on the Winstanley Estate and Plough Road and withdrew.⁴² This actually seems to be the point where the disorder escalated on to the main thoroughfares.

Between 20.30 and 20.45 a group of youths broke into Debenhams department store, a process that was to take some time; and the T-Mobile and O2 phone shops were broken into (see Figure 8, Locations 4 and 5).⁴³ During the break-in at Debenhams, a group of eight Level 2 police officers turned up with riot shields and there was a series of advances, attacks and withdrawals against 50-60 youths.⁴⁴ The evidence suggests that as only one riot-trained group of officers was available in the district that these were the same ones who were dealing with the disorder on the Winstanley Estate. The events started with a certain degree of nervousness.

When I first got there I see max about a hundred people just wandering around, every one stood at there each station, just posted up there, not doing anything, everyone minding their own business, small police presence, maybe a couple of cars, couple on foot, and then I say within twenty minutes of me being there suddenly within 2 minutes like 100s of people flying out side roads from every direction and overwhelmed within a couple of seconds and the police wasn't even ... and that was it, just everyone for themselves, complete anarchy, do whatever you want, warriors, and just that...⁴⁵

The disturbances escalated along St John's Road in a continuing pattern of attacks and withdrawals between police and "rioters".

The action then moved along St John's Road and at its height dozens of youths were smashing their way into almost every shop, using fire extinguishers and rubbish bins, and probably 100s were then dragging stuff out.⁴⁶

³⁸ (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 116; MPS, 2012, p. 85; James, 2011).

³⁹ (@danhardaker, 2011).

⁴⁰ (MPS, 2012, p. 85; The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON0610111303).

⁴¹ (MPS, 2012, p. 85).

⁴² (MPS, 2012, p. 82; The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcripts LON061011086, LON11101101 and LON0710111904).

⁴³ (Kingham, 2011, p. 7; Clements, 2011; MPS, 2017, ID: 139; see Hewitt, 2011).

⁴⁴ (Clements, 2011).

⁴⁵ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON11101101).

⁴⁶ (HRI, 2011).

As dusk descended,⁴⁷ pockets of disorder were being reported in a variety of locations making police coordination almost impossible.⁴⁸ It should be borne in mind that, due to the size of some of the stores, quantity of stock and the security of the windows, break-ins and looting occurred over a period of time.

The RtR transcripts suggest a strong anti-police motivation to the disturbances, but there was likewise a “free shopping” impetus, also referred to as “criminal opportunism”.⁴⁹

It was a lot to do with the police but a lot of people just saw it as free. As getting free stuff. It was quick and easy. And not a lot of people have money these days so they just see loads of people getting free things and then a lot of people just went out that don't have money. Just got what they needed and they didn't have to pay. Just free. So, yeah, that's what I saw a lot of people there for as well.⁵⁰

The nearness of the locations to where some of the participants lived was illustrated by the number of people going to and from home with looted goods.

I went to Junction came back here, I made about three, four trips in all just back and forward and with more people and some less people, people going and coming it was just crazy, like every single person I could ever of seen in my life just my age was there, everyone there was loads of people.⁵¹

Youths were breaking into JD Sports⁵² and at around 20:45 two police units approached Debenhams, where a group of 200 males had smashed the windows (see Figure 8, Locations 3 and 6).⁵³ Looting was in progress as police came under attack, with one of their vehicles being damaged in the process. The O2 store and Blacks Leisure were also broken into and a member of the public was reportedly hit by a brick trying to fight them (see Figure 8, Locations 5 and 7).⁵⁴ Meanwhile, a group armed with bricks and stones headed down Lavender Hill towards St John's Road.⁵⁵ By around 21.00 the crowd reportedly consisted of 250 looters, swelling to 300, some of whom possibly possessed knives, at which point there were just 13 public order trained officers and two dog units performing a series of advances and withdrawals in order to protect businesses and residents.⁵⁶ A petrol bomb was thrown, injuring a police officer. The public order officers and dog units became isolated after performing a series of advances and withdrawals.⁵⁷ A supervisor radioed in:

⁴⁷ Sunset was 20.39 and street lighting up time 21.06.

⁴⁸ (MPS, 2012, p. 86)

⁴⁹(Kinghan, 2011, p. 19).

⁵⁰ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON041011081).

⁵¹ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON0710110810).

⁵² Kinghan, 2011, p 7, reports this at 21.56, but there is video footage showing some daylight which indicates this being earlier. Also, it is opposite Debenhams, so it is unlikely to have been left until so late.

⁵³ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7; MPS, 2012, p. 82, 86; Clements, 2011; arrdextra, 2011a, 2011b).

⁵⁴ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 86).

⁵⁵ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁵⁶ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 86; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7, 24; The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON041011081). Contradiction with Kinghan (2011, p. 10) who states just one sergeant and seven constables, Level 2. Also, Kinghan reports CCTV footage with just eight officers outside Debenhams, (2011, p. 7).

⁵⁷ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 86; The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcripts LON061011083 and LON0710110813).

We cannot get out. Large group at junction of Falcon Road. Unable to withdraw.
We are under attack ... we can't withdraw ... it's not safe to withdraw.⁵⁸

The superintendent requested Territorial Support Group (TSG)⁵⁹ assistance but it became apparent that no additional resources were available; thus they were instructed to withdraw to the rendezvous point (RVP) at Lavender Hill police station which eventually they were able to do.⁶⁰

Police Withdrawal – Empowerment?

Aside from about seven police remaining outside Clapham Junction station, there was just the small number of public order trained officers who were obviously outnumbered.⁶¹ The police were instructed to withdraw from the area and pulled back from St John's Road towards Northcote Road.⁶² This was upon learning that not only were there a large group of rioters approaching from Lavender Hill, but vehicles being readied to drive at them at Elspeth Road, near the RVP at Lavender Hill police station.⁶³ Level 3 officers were moved to a second RVP further down Elspeth Road at Clapham Common Northside and subsequently sent to Earlsfield Police Station for safety.⁶⁴

Police were absent for an hour and a half from 21.08 to 22.38. Much of the looting occurred during this absence as the electronic shop Currys and sportswear shop Foot Locker further down St John's Road were attacked, followed by the Jamie Oliver restaurant and Asda (see Figure 8, Locations 9, 10 and 11).⁶⁵ Many of the participants described a feeling of excitement, even community spirit:

Kids came out of Debenhams with trolley-loads of looted items. There was a carnival atmosphere amongst the looters, as people realised that the "feds" had fled, other than a group of about seven police who were standing two minutes' walk away outside Clapham Junction rail station.⁶⁶

Basically, imagine a road yeah, it's kind of dark now. There was cars filling, people filling up their cars. People holding up shutters for people. People still smashing windows when it's dark. People running in the roads with goods filled up in their arms. Erm, people going into TK Maxx, getting suitcases and filling up suitcases. People using everything that was around to just fill up with things really.⁶⁷

Residents on nearby streets saw people deposit goods in gardens and elsewhere, including the churchyard of St Mark's Church, and then return for more.⁶⁸

⁵⁸ (MPS, 2011, p. 86).

⁵⁹ This unit provides the MPS Strategic Reserve for public disorder and critical incident response.

⁶⁰ (HRI, 2011).

⁶¹ (HRI, 2011).

⁶² (see Figure 8).

⁶³ (see Figure 8).

⁶⁴ (MPS, 2012, p. 86).

⁶⁵ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7; MarkStoneSkyNews, 2011a).

⁶⁶ (HRI, 2011).

⁶⁷ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON041011081).

⁶⁸ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 13).

With police withdrawal, 450 rioters were now reportedly in the area.⁶⁹ However, this was not perceived by the participants as just a “free shopping” exercise. There was undoubtedly a feeling of power, of taking control of the streets.

A lot of people were just not because they had hate for the police, but just the opportunity for them to rebel because obviously normally it's me getting stopped and searched and harassed every day, but I got the power they had the power, you can't do nothing, you can only sit there and look at me, because you come anywhere close to me 500 angry people are probably gonna ran at you, I'm not saying they're gonna kill you, but in obviously the mayhem and confusion everyone's trying to get a quick punch in or something, you know it was everyone's day to get their own back I'd say. I'd say a lot of people are angry, but it's more of a thing of, today's the day that I'm untouchable.⁷⁰

It was just excitement, fun. Just the opportunity to be in something that will be remembered throughout history.⁷¹

Also, there were a large number of spectators generally walking around amid the riot, watching the action and taking pictures with their phones.⁷²

During the police absence, at around 21.15, Pizza Express on Lavender Hill was broken into and the staff and some customers decided to lock themselves in a back office. Despite making emergency calls they were informed there were no police to assist (see Figure 8, Location 13).⁷³ Due to the growing disorder, British Transport Police were requested to disperse members of the public away from Clapham Junction station for safety.⁷⁴ At 21:30 CCTV footage showed that rioters outside Pizza Express had dispersed enough for officers to advise those trapped to escape.⁷⁵ At this time, rioters placed barriers across St John's Road near the Party Shop (see Figure 8, Location 14).⁷⁶

Initially, it had been thought by the press and authorities that gangs were behind an organised attempt at criminal activity.⁷⁷ However, a consistent observation by the participants was that there was an unofficial “truce” that night.

There was nothing like, gangs that actually hated each other and they was just together, like beef stopped basically. Like, fights and everything just stopped. It was like there was a few little robberies of people trying to rob each other but otherwise beef stopped that night. Everyone was on each other's side against the police.⁷⁸

⁶⁹ (Kinghan, 2011).

⁷⁰ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON111011101).

⁷¹ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON061011084).

⁷² (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁷³ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 86; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁷⁴ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 87).

⁷⁵ (MPS, 2012, p. 86).

⁷⁶ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁷⁷ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 37; de Castella, 2011; Samuel, 2011).

⁷⁸ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON041011081).

At 21.57, 75 public order officers, at Level 2, and a Bronze commander⁷⁹ were deployed, “conducting shield advances”, arriving at Lavender Hill police station for briefing.⁸⁰ However, it appears that they didn’t arrive at the disturbances for a while, as a video shot at 22:00 showed looters still running in and out of Currys with no police officers in sight.⁸¹

At 22:20, there was an altercation where a member of the public appeared to be stopping youths from entering JD Sports which resulted in the youths shooting a fire extinguisher in the person’s face.⁸² From 22:30 Urban Tanning on Lavender Hill was broken into and a large quantity of hair products were stolen (see Figure 8, Location 15).⁸³

Police Return

At 22:35 three Police Support Unit (PSU) carriers were spotted on their way to Clapham Junction.⁸⁴ A superintendent described the difficulty encountered in controlling the crowd:

When I arrived we ended up driving straight through a large, frenzied mob of around 450 that were actively looting Debenhams and the whole of St John’s Street. We were then joined by one TSG public order and started to clear St John’s Street [sic] to stop the looting, but with only one unit the rioters simply looped around us and back into the street.⁸⁵

With reinforcements, police were then able to move back into St John’s Road at 22.37, using several shield advances.⁸⁶ Cordons were lifted and crowds were dispersed by 20-25 officers outside Currys, as arrests were made.⁸⁷ At this point three police carriers arrived on St Johns Road.⁸⁸ A large crowd of spectators gathered behind the police lines, many filming and photographing with phones, cheering and shouting “shame on you” and “scum” at the looters.⁸⁹

A sense of class division was apparent at the scenes around Currys and the Northcote Road end. A blogger at the location reported:

At the more gentrified end of St John’s Road, where the bars serve the upper-middle class, a few hundred of the rugby crowd stood, most in stunned disbelief, a few booing. Finally at around 20:50 [sic] three police vans turned up and a cheer went up: “Kill them, beat them up, the scum”.⁹⁰

⁷⁹ The bronze commander is responsible for the command of a group of resources, as identified by the silver commander. Number and roles determined by size of incident.

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/operations/command-and-control/command-structures/>

⁸⁰ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 87; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁸¹ (MarkStoneSkyNews, 2011b; see also Cabinet Office, 2011, p. 18; Kinghan, 2011, p. 26).

⁸² (steviesteviesteviec, 2011; MPS, 2017, ID: 146).

⁸³ (MPS, 2017, ID: 77).

⁸⁴ (@thebluewalrus, 2011; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁸⁵ (MPS, 2012, p. 88).

⁸⁶ (MPS, 2012, p. 87; titian410, 2011).

⁸⁷ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7; skynewsyourvideos, 2011).

⁸⁸ (HRI, 2011).

⁸⁹ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7; skynewsyourvideos, 2011).

⁹⁰ (HRI, 2011).

A participant informed a researcher:

Q: Where did you go to?

A: Clapham Junction station...and I was there on St John's Hill [sic] at first when the police had arrived just after an hour and a half and there was a line of residents from [Northcote Road] onwards, which er everyone [refers to as] Nappy Valley where you got all the richest...Yeah all the richest women pushing their prams whilst their husbands go and work in banks or whatever...couple of cars, possibly a scooter and a bike, a big fucking million pound house, shopping in Waitrose and M&S only...you know...I think...and those people were clapping like they formed a line of three/four deep, all armed with camera phones, and then you know, they were clapping away while there's kids from the other side of the street who they haven't taken the time to speak to. If they had, they would've realise these are decent people, but some of these people had broken into Dixons [sic] and as they were coming out the front of Dixons, the police arrived, started whacking the kids with batons. Now I noticed a couple of the kids were black and those two black kids got severe beatings from the police. And the people were still clapping while they were getting beaten.⁹¹

An interesting question is why, given that there was a sense of antagonism towards people perceived as being "rich", the disturbances were contained within two short streets when high value goods could be targeted nearby? A researcher, who asked a participant why people did not venture into Northcote Road, offers one interpretation:

He looked at me as if I was mad before explaining that the Northcote Road was a totally different world to Clapham Junction proper. Those up-market, boutique stores catered to a different demographic and, consequentially, it is experienced as a radically different space, despite being a continuation of the same street. The rioters were staking a claim to the places in which they lived.⁹²

It is also apparent that at the end of Northcote Road, while police were absent, people who had been eating and drinking in bars and restaurants, along with some local residents, formed something of an ad hoc barrier between them and St John's Road (see Figure 8).⁹³

Shortly after the police returned, three looters, one brandishing a hammer, pushed a police officer.⁹⁴ A tweet indicated that a helicopter was flying around above Clapham Junction.⁹⁵ By 23:00 arrests had been made outside both Currys and Debenhams, dispersing the crowds, allowing the police to re-establish their cordons.⁹⁶ And by 23.15 Lavender Hill was quietening and police were described as bringing the area under control.⁹⁷

It appears that although arrests were made and the crowds were being dispersed, some of the disorder may have changed nature. For example, at 23:10 a terracotta box was thrown

⁹¹ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011, transcript LON2510110836).

⁹² (Tiratelli, 2018, p. 74).

⁹³ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 13).

⁹⁴ (MPS, 2017, ID: 126; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

⁹⁵ (@galihmelon, 2011; see Lewis, 2011).

⁹⁶ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 87; jimmygaynor, 2011; Alwo, 2011).

⁹⁷ (Hough, 2011; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

through the front window of a house.⁹⁸ Similarly, a crowd of youths were reported to have broken into someone's building through the front door at the same time.⁹⁹ Also, at 23:30 some people pulled up the shutters for the clothes shop Zenoria on Falcon Road and stole a large amount of goods (see Figure 8, Location 16).¹⁰⁰ However, these were sporadic incidents.

Party Shop Fire and End of Night

Although the situation was calmer, there were still a lot of people milling around.¹⁰¹ Just before midnight an inspector reported a fire at the Party Shop on Lavender Hill (see Figure 8, Location 14).¹⁰² Police attempted to put it out with fire extinguishers; however, the fire was so fierce that residents living above were evacuated. The fire brigade arrived at 00.10. Police reports suggest that the Party Shop was broken into to steal masks in order to conceal the identity of those engaged in subsequent looting.¹⁰³ However, some eye-witnesses claimed that when some of the looters saw the "gas cylinders" in the shop they decided to set a fire.¹⁰⁴

As Monday turned into Tuesday, the looting at Asda appears to have escalated with 20-30 youths breaking in using bins and trolleys (see Figure 8, Location 11).¹⁰⁵ Between midnight and half past seven armoured police carriers (TSG units, commonly referred to as Jankels¹⁰⁶) arrived to clear the streets that were still populated with some looters.¹⁰⁷ The Jankels drove slowly down Lavender Hill, spaced out, two abreast, with a number of Level 2 police officers advancing and withdrawing between the gaps.¹⁰⁸ At other times, Jankels were crowded together, still moving slowly, three or two abreast with Level 2 officers walking beside them.¹⁰⁹ The streets were described as "relatively clear" by half past, with Jankels and Level 3 officers deployed to manage crime scenes.¹¹⁰ However, Kinghan noted in the Wandsworth Council Report:

By that time, most of the looters had left the area, and the 75 level 2 trained officers had regained control of the streets. The armoured vehicles made their way down Lavender Hill accompanied by Police with riot shields. They stopped before they reached the junction with St. John's Road. These vehicles were clearly intimidating to the people still on the street at the time and may well have deterred those who caused trouble earlier in the evening. By the time they arrived, it is not clear that their presence was any longer needed.¹¹¹

At 00:30 there were rumours of the police debating whether to use rubber bullets.¹¹²

⁹⁸ (MPS, 2017, ID: 132).

⁹⁹ (MPS, 2017, ID: 47).

¹⁰⁰ (MPS, 2017, ID: 54).

¹⁰¹ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

¹⁰² (eo384363, 2011; Raw Cut Archive, 2015; Vachkov, 2011; Jennings, 2012; HRI, 2011).

¹⁰³ (MPS, 2017, ID: 12, 3703).

¹⁰⁴ (Vachkov, 2011 [0:57]).

¹⁰⁵ (MPS, 2017, ID: 71).

¹⁰⁶ Thirteen Jankel Guardian armoured vehicles were supplied from 2002-2007 to the Metropolitan Police for counter-terrorism operations (*Special feature: War and terror change the face of '999' fleets*, 2003; Jankel, n.d.).

¹⁰⁷ (MPS, 2012, p. 82; Kinghan, 2011, p. 7; MrPrash888, 2011).

¹⁰⁸ (titian410, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ (MrPrash888, 2011).

¹¹⁰ (MPS, 2012, p. 82, 87; Morgan, 2011).

¹¹¹ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 26).

¹¹² (Cabinet Office, 2011, p. 18; James, 2011).

There were a few more incidents, such as an attempt to break into the front entrance of Tesco Express just off St Johns Road (see Figure 8, Location 17)¹¹³ and at 01:15 the front door of William Hill bookmakers near Clapham High Street was smashed by two people (see Figure 2).¹¹⁴ Due to road closures and cordons, the MPS report claimed that by 01:30 “calm was fully restored.”¹¹⁵ However, there are various reports of unrest at this time further away on Clapham High Street, such as a group breaking into Nando’s restaurant and attempting to loot items. A large group were also reportedly looting Blockbuster on Clapham High Street (see Figure 2).¹¹⁶ These incidents are likely to have been recorded at the same time that “calm was fully restored” because this is the point when the police were able to make a note of the incidents, but nevertheless by 02:00 there were just a few small pockets of disorder spread over the area.¹¹⁷ Later, at around 03:30 one of the pumps at a petrol station was purposefully set alight.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, just after 03:00, eight fire engines and 40 firefighters were reported at the Party Shop¹¹⁹ and by 3:20 the fire was extinguished.¹²⁰

From 19:00 on Monday 8th August to 8:00 on Tuesday 9th August, there were over 600 recorded incidents, with over 1000 “linked” calls (i.e., that the police were already aware of).¹²¹ No-one was seriously injured during the disturbances, but many people were extremely frightened in the cafes and restaurants.¹²² Ninety shops and businesses were attacked.¹²³ Many shop owners and businesses felt abandoned by police. However, the conclusion of the independent inquiry was that if the more inexperienced Level 3 officers had been sent in, there was the risk of a much more violent encounter with the police and looters, the first priority being to preserve human life.¹²⁴

Clean-up

The first tweet suggesting a clean-up (to start at 9:00) was posted at 06:52.¹²⁵ At 08:00 on Tuesday 9th August, local residents began arriving to clean-up, both from Twitter conversations and spontaneously.¹²⁶ At 08:30 a crisis management team meeting was held.¹²⁷ At 14:30 London Mayor Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Theresa May arrived to observe the scene,¹²⁸ which by this time the clean-up crowd contained around 400 people.¹²⁹ Boris

¹¹³ (MPS, 2017, ID: 16).

¹¹⁴ (MPS, 2017, ID: 269).

¹¹⁵ (MPS, 2012, p. 87; titian410, 2011).

¹¹⁶ (MPS, 2017, ID: 300).

¹¹⁷ (Cabinet Office, 2011, p. 18; James, 2011). 01.00-03.00 Varying reports across Putney, Southside, Balham and Tooting of disorder, fires or looting. Units deployed to each area and no further disorder reported or observed (Kinghan, 2011 p. 7)

¹¹⁸ (MPS, 2017, ID: 296).

¹¹⁹ (BBC News, 2011).

¹²⁰ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 7).

¹²¹ (MPS, 2012, p. 88).

¹²² (Kinghan, 2011, p. 13).

¹²³ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 13).

¹²⁴ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 26).

¹²⁵ (@Crofty, 2011).

¹²⁶ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 15).

¹²⁷ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 17).

¹²⁸ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 17).

¹²⁹ (Kinghan, 2011, p. 15).

Johnson addressed the crowd, and was aggressively heckled by members of the crowd complaining about the lack of police during the rioting.¹³⁰

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