

Disturbances in Tottenham, Tottenham Hale and Wood Green Saturday 6th – Sunday 7th August 2011

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List of abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBM	BlackBerry Messenger
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
HBIAG	Haringey Borough Black Independent Advisory Group
HMIC	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
PSU	Police Support Unit
SMP	Service Mobilisation Plan
SOR	Special Operations Room
TSG	Territorial Support Group
WG	Wood Green

1. Methodology

The methodological approach used to analyse the disturbances in the London borough of Haringey in early August 2011 in this paper essentially follows that outlined by Stott et al. in their examination of disorders in Tottenham and Hackney.¹ The main feature of this method is the use of triangulation to substantiate the veracity of the timing, location and content of a particular incident within an event. There are essentially three types of information that make up the triangle, *post-event* accounts by participants and eye-witnesses, real-time media recorded *during* the events and *physical* evidence of the actions of the crowd. Through directly cross-referencing these forms of evidence and indirectly making reasoned assessments of the quantity and quality of the sources a level of confidence can be determined in a particular incident having occurred and when and where it happened. Validating each incident in this manner generates a solid evidential base for the latter assessment of patterns in the physical movements, actions and reactions of the protagonists in complex group interactions such as urban 'rioting'.

Central to the process of understanding complex features of urban disturbance is the creation of a triangulated timeline of incidents within the overall event. This can be constructed from the collection, collation and cross-referencing of discrete pieces of evidence or, as in this particular case, by adding evidence to existing timelines to substantiate, question or enhance their content. The essentially collinear nature of the timeline was overcome to a degree by creating coded parallel paths to account for the decomposition of crowds into smaller independent units and, conversely, intersection of these paths to cover re-composition of groups into larger bodies. The timeline also functions on a spatial level by interacting with two and three dimensional maps, opening an additional perspective on the events.

2. Data Sources

The structure of the event timeline for the disturbances that occurred in the Borough of Haringey Borough on 6-7th August 2011 that underlies this paper was based on a published report, a book and an academic paper. The first of these was an 'in depth study' into the disorders in Haringey which formed a section of the overall Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) assessment of the unrest in August 2011 which contained a detailed textual timeline.² The second and third sources, also textual timelines, appeared in the accounts of the disturbances given in *Mad Mobs and Englishmen?* (2011) and by Stott et al. (2016) in the *British Journal of Criminology*.³ Combining these accounts provided the initial chronological structure for the timeline which was then populated and triangulated with additional evidence of various forms and from a number of sources.

The bulk of participant testimonies concerning the disturbances in Haringey were obtained via the Guardian/LSE 'Reading the Riots' project and comprised 41 relevant interviews.⁴

¹ (C. Stott, Drury, & Reicher, 2016).

² (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 19-47).

³ (Stott & Reicher, 2011; Stott, Drury, & Reicher, 2016, pp. 5-9).

⁴ (The Guardian & LSE, 2011).

Some additional participant accounts were obtained from the academic literature survey, which yielded only nine papers that make detailed study of the disturbances in Haringey, out of more than a 130 that discuss the 'riots' of August 2011. Local and national newspaper searches yielded 30 sources which provided not only objective information as to the location, timing and content of incidents but also some eye-witness testimony. Outside of the case-study in the MPS report only three other government documents deal with the disorders in Haringey in any detail. These are the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) review, the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning's preliminary assessment, and the transcripts of the hearings given by eye-witnesses to the events to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee in 2011.⁵ A number of other reports published by independent bodies provided limited timelines of the events in Haringey.⁶

An important source of evidence came from 60 online videos, which vary from post-event news reports to real-time footage taken by participants in, or eye-witnesses to, the unrest.⁷ Along with numerous photographic sources, these were cross-referenced using Google StreetView to determine their exact locations and, by examining other time-stamped evidence, chronologically catalogued. Time-lines and real-time reporting on blogs that were created during and after the unrest to track events, and contemporaneous Twitter messages provided additional temporal and spatial evidence. Finally, comprehensive data on sites, times and types of crimes related to the disorders in Haringey provided by the MPS were of particular use in locating events that were less well reported in other media.⁸

These various data sources were used to flesh-out the skeleton timeline and, through the process of comparison and triangulation of the original and new material, significant errors in the sources were isolated and corrected. In addition, existing incidents were further corroborated, new events added to the timeline and others called into question. Emphasis was placed on accurate timing and order of action and reaction by the crowd and police during the incidents, when behaviours amongst the protagonists changed and when groups left the initial event to travel to other locations.

⁵ (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2011).

⁶ (Morrell, Scott, McNeish, & Webster, 2011; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011; Nwabuzo, 2012).

⁷ Fifty-two of these videos, on the following playlists Tottenham Case Study (43) designated T in the references, Tottenham Hale Case Study (5) designated TH and Wood Green case Study (4) designated WG, can be viewed on the YouTube channel, Beyond Contagion (2016).

⁸ 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 it is referenced as *MPS August 2011 Disorders Crime Data* (Metropolitan Police Service, 2017) and the location of specific reported crimes determined by postcode is added to the citation.

3. Analysis

Introduction

The antecedent incident for the ‘riots’ in Haringey was the death of Mark Duggan at the hands of a Metropolitan Police firearms team in the early evening of Thursday 4th August, 2011 in Tottenham Hale.⁹ The events that occurred over the two days after Duggan’s death have been investigated and well-documented.¹⁰ Consequently, this account of the disturbances in the Borough of Haringey over 6th-7th August 2011 focuses on the chain of incidents that occurred after the decision was made by family and friends of Duggan to stage a protest at Tottenham Police station. It should also be noted that in this analysis the Tottenham ‘riots’ are considered to comprise three connected events occurring in the following locations: Tottenham, Tottenham Hale, and Wood Green. The relative proximity of these locales in the north London Borough of Haringey is shown in Figure 1.

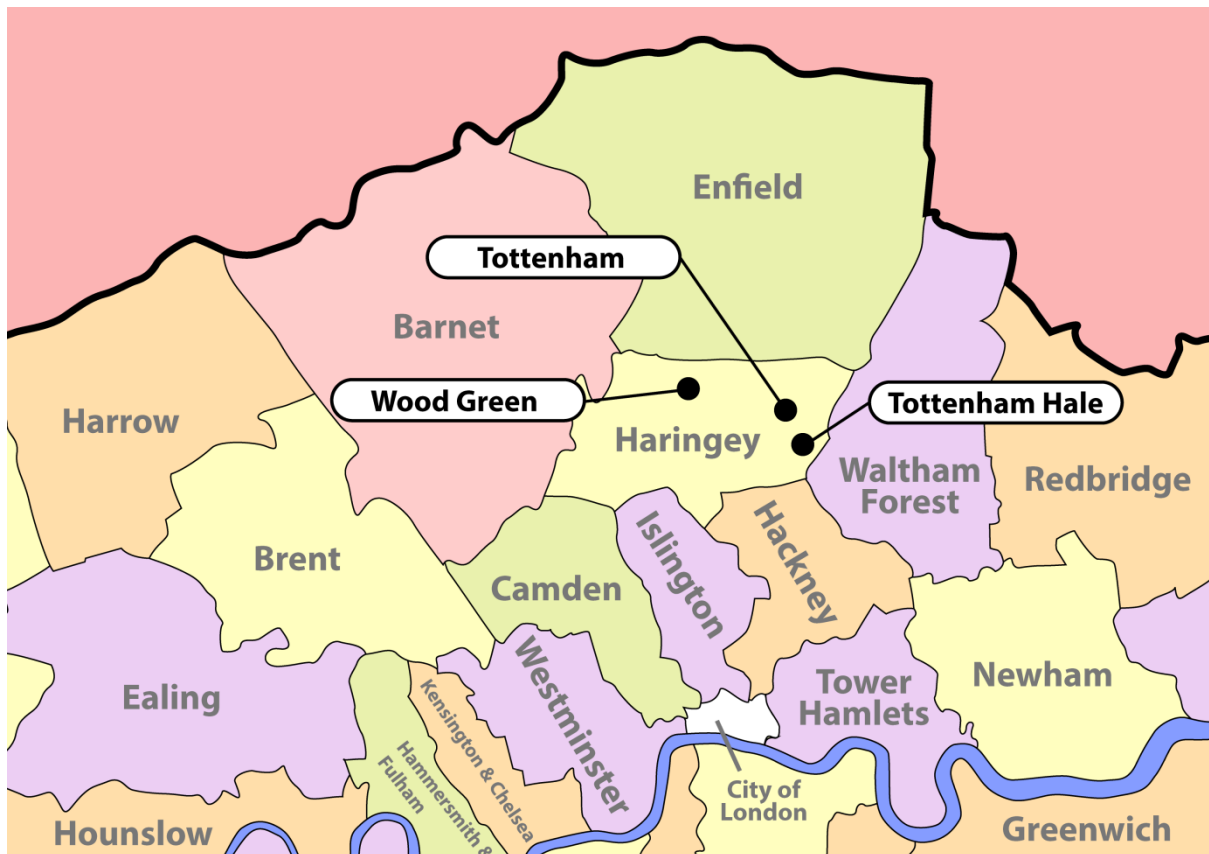


Figure 1. North London Borough of Haringey with locations of disturbances on 6-7 August 2011

⁹ Duggan, a 29-year-old Black man of mixed heritage and a father of six children, grew up on the Broadwater Farm estate in Haringey and was well known in the local community (Prodger, 2014).

¹⁰ (Independent Police Complaints Commission, 2015a, 2015b; Metropolitan Police Service, 2012).

The protest

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) first received information that a protest was planned at Tottenham Police Station (Location 2, Figure 2) over the death of Mark Duggan at 08:35 on the morning of Saturday 6th August 2011. Within two hours they had convened a planning meeting with representatives of the local authority and emergency services and had sourced public order trained officers in the form of police support units¹¹ (PSU) for a demonstration which they believed would take place at midday. The protest failed to materialise and in the early afternoon the PSUs were stood down and released.¹²

At 17:00 a group of about fifty people, including the family and friends of Mark Duggan and led by a member of the Haringey Borough Black Independent Advisory Group (BIAG), left Broadwater Farm estate (Location 1, Figure 2) to walk the half mile or so to Tottenham police station.¹³ Their arrival, twenty minutes later, triggered the Tottenham MPS to declare at 17:33 a 'critical incident' outside the police station. Fifteen minutes later a Chief Inspector who was at the nearby Tottenham Hotspur football ground at White Hart Lane (Location 4, Figure 2), took command of the policing operation. Whilst travelling to Tottenham Police Station he decided to commit further local personnel to policing the protest and to ask for extra resources in the form of public order trained officers:

[The Chief Inspector] made a request for extra resources to be mobilised to the immediate area. These included Haringey officers at the football ground, traffic officers to assist with the blocking of the roads by crowds, the officers deployed on Operation Blunt (two sergeants and 14 constables) and a Commissioner's Reserve PSU.¹⁴

The first of the specialised public order trained reinforcements, the Territorial Support Group¹⁵ (TSG) unit, arrived at 18:45 and within half an hour was deployed in high visibility uniforms outside the police station.¹⁶

¹¹ A police support unit is a mobile group of police officers who have undergone public order tactical training to Level 2 PSU. A typical PSU consists of three carriers (vans) containing an inspector, three sergeants and 18 constables plus three drivers (College of Policing, c).

¹² (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 112; Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 28).

¹³ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 32, 37; futureartists, 2013; Nwabuzo, 2012, p. 7).

¹⁴ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 37). Operation Blunt was an MPS operational response to knife crime and broader serious youth violence. The Commissioner's Reserve is a section of the Territorial Support Group (TSG) that is on standby all year round and acts as a pan-London resource available to MPS borough commanders for public order and similar incidents. The TSG is a specialist crime and operations organisation within the MPS focusing on public order containment.

¹⁵ TSG police officers are trained to the highest level (Level 1 PSU) to deal with serious incidents of public disorder. A typical TSG unit consists of three carriers (vans), 18 constables and three sergeants reporting to an Inspector (College of Policing, c).

¹⁶ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 32, 37).

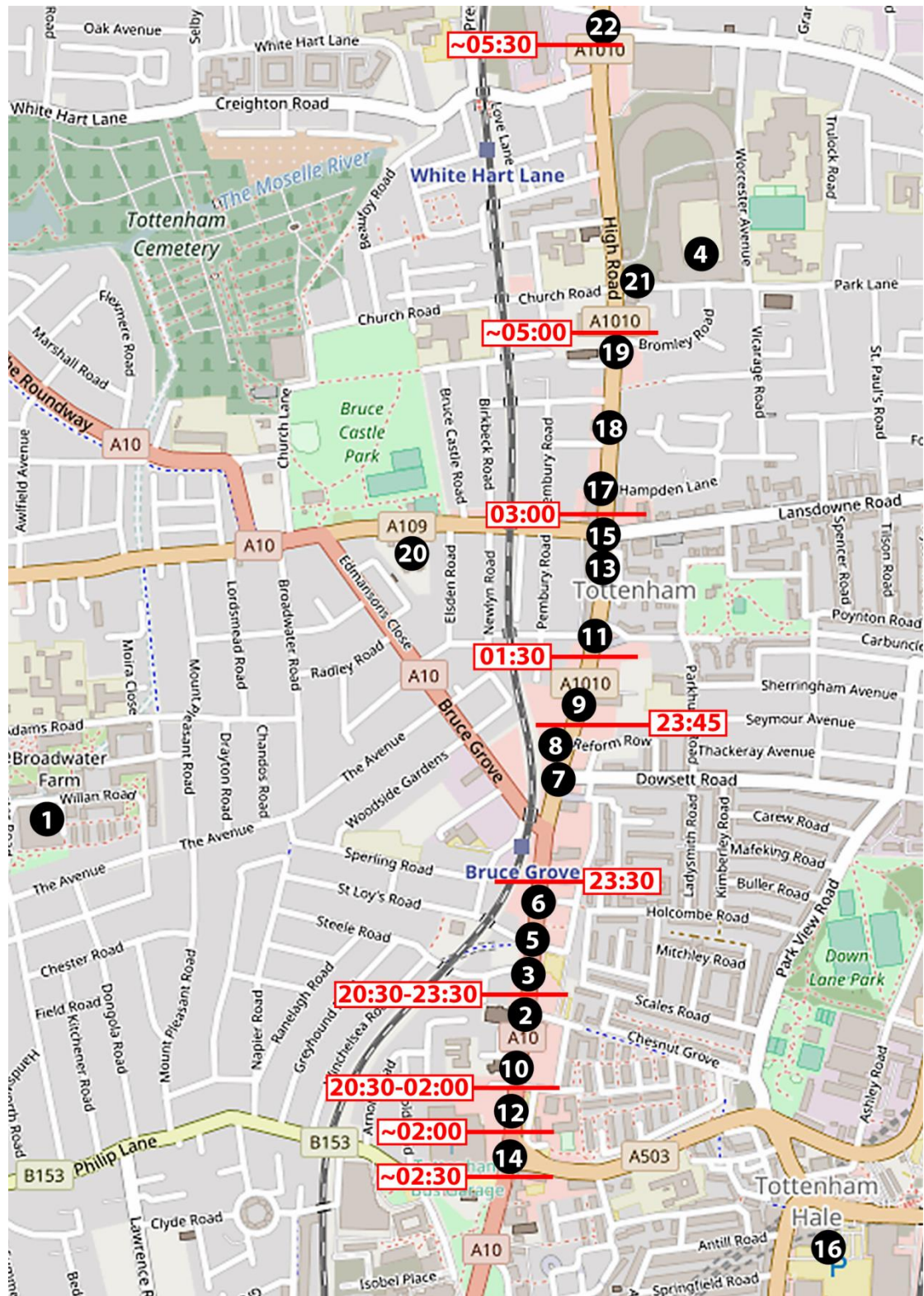


Figure 2. Tottenham and Tottenham Hale

Figure 2: Key

— xx:xx Position and time of MPS cordon

Locations

1. Broadwater Farm Estate
2. Tottenham Police Station
3. High Road – Forster Road (site of two burned police cars)
4. Tottenham Hotspur Football Ground
5. High Road – St Loys Road (arson at solicitors office)
6. High Road – Brook Road (site of burned double-decker bus)
7. High Road – Factory Lane (arson at Post Office and jewellers)
8. High Road – Reform Row (arson at Neighbourhood Police Office)
9. High Road – Aldi and nearby building site burned
10. High Road – Somerset Street
11. High Road – Scotland Green (Pride of Tottenham and Prince of Wales public houses)
12. High Road – Library Court
13. High Road – Rheola Close (site of three burned vehicles)
14. High Road – Monument Way (site of burned police car)
15. High Road – Lordship Lane – Lansdowne Road (site of arson at Carpetright, Haringey Council Customer Services and burned PSU carrier)
16. Tottenham Hale Retail Park
17. High Road – Hampden Lane (site of arson at Jobcentre and Recruitment Office)
18. High Road – Cedar Road (site of burning barricade)
19. High Road – Bromley Road (site of burning barricade and use of Jankel armoured vehicle)
20. Lordship Lane (damage/arson to Tottenham Magistrates Court and Probation Service)
21. High Road – Park Lane (site of looted Tottenham Hotspur ticket office, William Hill bookmakers and Bell and Hare public house)
22. High Rd - Northumberland Park (rioting concludes)

Several hours of apparently fruitless discussions between representatives of the protestors and the police inside and outside the building intensified the frustration of the demonstrators. Initially gathered in small groups, the predominantly Black crowd grew to between 100 and 200 people chanting and blocking the entrance to the police station and traffic on the High Road.¹⁷ TSG officers who asked the demonstrators to clear the thoroughfare were met by refusals to move and a ‘lie down’ protest by a number of mothers.¹⁸ Around 19:00, about 100m north along the High Road out of direct line of sight of the police station, two parked police cars parked on Forster Road (Location 3, Figure 2) had their windscreens and windows smashed and an amateur journalist filming the vehicles and nearby protestors was assaulted.¹⁹ However, barring a couple of missiles launched at

¹⁷ (highsociety2008, 2011a; Bazargan, 2013; Hard Kode, 2011; London RØL G Music 4Passion Never 4Profit Bare Truth, 2011; futureartists, 2013).

¹⁸ The reason given by police officers for clearing the High Road was the end of a pre-season international friendly match between Tottenham Hotspur and Athletic Bilbao at the White Hart lane football ground about a mile to the north of Tottenham police station (Location 4, Figure 2). This explanation was rejected by protestors who threatened to form a cordon across the High Road. Transcript LON2810111706 20-24.

¹⁹ These vehicles had been left unattended by police officers trying to redirect traffic travelling south along the High Road towards the demonstration (*Painstakingly detailed analysis of the 2011 London riots*, 2011; BlissTropicTv, 2011; *Six sentenced for part in last year's riots*, 2012; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 6QD).

the police station over the next hour (19:15-20:15) the situation remained tense but generally free from violence.

From protest to ‘riot’

According to police sources, the Duggan family group and other protestors refused to discuss their grievances with the Chief Inspector, who had arrived at Tottenham Police station at 18:15, on the basis that he “was not a senior enough officer”. At 19:45 the Chief Inspector claimed that he had reached an agreement with the protestors to wait a further hour for a more senior officer to arrive.²⁰ However, at 20:15 after three hours of waiting, the female members of Mark Duggan's family and community leaders who had led the protest left the police station.²¹ This was interpreted by some members of the crowd as the end of the ‘negotiations’ and almost immediately missiles were thrown at police officers without apparent response.²² At 20:20 one of the two vandalised police cars on Forster Road was pushed into the middle of the High Road by friends of Mark Duggan and set on fire.²³ At this point, a photograph of the single burning police car entered the social media arena and was widely disseminated.²⁴ Shortly after, the second police car was moved across the High Road and into the front of a pizza takeaway shop. Sometime after, it was set alight before being pushed by the owner of the takeaway back into the middle of the road close to its counterpart which was already burning fiercely.²⁵

At 20:30 MPS public order command triggered the Service Mobilisation Plan (SMP), an emergency measure to mobilise public order trained officers from other London boroughs to aid Haringey. However, due to confusion in the Special Operations Room (SOR), the SMP was not fully activated until an hour later, delaying the arrival of PSU reinforcements.²⁶ However, at 20:45 a separate request was made to the TSG for another Commissioner’s Reserve PSU to be deployed to Tottenham. At about the same time the TSG unit on the scene, now clothed in full public order equipment, relieved officers in standard uniform on the High Road who were under significant missile attack from a crowd of several hundred to the north of the police station.²⁷ Officers from Haringey (in standard uniforms) were deployed to the south of Tottenham police station creating a filter cordon surrounding a ‘sterile area’.²⁸ This action provided defence for the police station and split the gathering crowd on the High Road into two groups - the larger to the north and another smaller group to the south. Despite the fact that some missiles were launched at the cordon, this period

²⁰ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 32; *Painstakingly detailed analysis of the 2011 London riots*, 2011).

²¹ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 32; Stott et al., 2016, p. 6; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p. 40; Nwabuzo, 2012, p. 7; The Guardian, 2012; *Painstakingly detailed analysis of the 2011 London riots*, 2011).

²² (Barnes, 2011).

²³ (Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p.20; MetrodomeVOD, 2016; Barnes, 2011; BBC, 2011b; *Six sentenced for part in last year's riots*, 2012; The Guardian, 2012; Gallagher & Farrell, 2011a).

²⁴ A number of participants refer to this photograph in their testimony as being important in alerting them to the veracity of the events occurring on Tottenham High Road. See for example transcripts: LON0111110701 7-9, LON0111110702 6-11 and LON0610111803 22-24.

²⁵ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 40, 42; Stott et al., 2016, p. 6; highsociety2008, 2011a; MetrodomeVOD, 2016; Langston, 2011; BBC News, 2011b; Barnes, 2011; Macham, 2012).

²⁶ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 40; Bazargan, 2013).

²⁷ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 40, 42 Banger Racing, 2011; The Guardian, 2012).

²⁸ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 40, 42).

(20:30-21:30) was relatively calm as the police, awaiting public-order trained reinforcements, lacked the numbers to respond and the protestors appeared reluctant to engage directly. At this point the majority of the crowd to the north on the High Road were standing behind the burning police cars, more than 50 metres from the police cordon.

At 21:10 the second TSG unit that had been requested from the Commissioner's Reserve arrived. This unit deployed alongside their colleagues at the cordon to the north of the police station, increasing the compliment of police officers in public order equipment to more than fifty. Although instructed to 'hold the line' the inspector in charge of the second TSG unit took a more aggressive approach, ordering short shield advances to "distance the attackers who were throwing missiles at police and to prevent them from 'settling' in their positions".²⁹ It was during this period of rapid advances by the TSG units, after dusk at around 21:30, that a young woman approached the police cordon.³⁰ Accounts differ as to whether she taunted police officers or threw something at the line. A group of TSG officers surged forward knocking her to the floor with their shields.³¹ This particular moment turned the skirmishing between police and protestors into collective violence.³² Angrily citing the 'beating of the girl', a large number of protestors advanced down the High Road past the burning police vehicles and charged at the police cordon, launching a volley of missiles.³³ Several minutes later at 21:45, three police cars approaching from the north along the High Road in an apparent attempt to contain the crowd were attacked and beaten off by the protestors.³⁴

For over an hour on the High Road to the north of the police station, protestors took bottles and broke up pallets from the front of shops to throw at the police cordon. Others wheeled refuse bins towards the police lines and made rudimentary fire bombs from alcoholic beverages taken from an off licence.³⁵ Whilst most were spectating or fighting the police, small groups of youths attempted to rob a nearby chicken takeaway shop and an amusement arcade. Members of the crowd intervened and then encouraged other businesses to close down.³⁶ The volume and ferocity of the missile attacks on the two TSG units led them to cease making short shield advances. At 22:10 they withdrew towards the police station forming a single line cordon, holding their position and awaiting reinforcements.³⁷

²⁹ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012 pp. 40, 42; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 112).

³⁰ Sunset on Saturday 6th August 2011 was at 20:41 (Sunrise and sunset in London, n.d.).

³¹ (Stott et al., 2016, pp. 6-7; Stott & Reicher, 2011; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p. 41; Nwabuzo, 2012, p. 7; Higgins, 2011; britdog01, 2011; Barnes, 2011; *Painstakingly detailed analysis of the 2011 London riots*, 2011) and transcripts: LON2810111706 26-30, LON1510111704 37-40.

³² The 'beating of the girl' became an oft-repeated story used to justify the actions of some members of the crowd. It also helped generate action amongst the hitherto passive spectators and those who were arriving at the scene due to the exposure of the event on social and mainstream media. In the transcripts, 13 (32%) of the 41 respondents drew reference to the event, with 6 (15%) claiming to have witnessed it and 5 (12%) having heard about it pre-participation or during the event.

³³ (Team HD, 2011).

³⁴ (Kerr, 2011).

³⁵ (Banger Racing, 2011).

³⁶ (*Six sentenced for part in last year's riots*, 2012; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 6QA) and transcripts: LON0810111802 128-135, LON2810111706 31-34.

³⁷ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 43).

At 22:40, just as the first of the delayed PSU reinforcements demanded by the SMP began to arrive, the first building was set alight, a duty solicitors' office (Location 5, Figure 2) on the corner of Stoneleigh Road, 50m north of the now smouldering police cars.³⁸ At about the same time, 100m further north on the High Road-Brook Road junction (Location 6, Figure 2) a double-decker bus was commandeered as described by one eye-witness:

Regarding the bus - it was just the driver on the bus - he drove right it into the crowd - therefore had to stop - people got on the bus - the driver walked off with no trouble and took the keys with him. People asked for the keys but driver said no - no one challenged him.³⁹

A few minutes later the bus was set on fire, burning rapidly, an image broadcast live by several TV news crews that were now in the vicinity of the police station.⁴⁰

By 23:00 Silver level command was in place in the MPS SOR and a Bronze level Chief Inspector had arrived on the scene and taken control of the two TSG units.⁴¹ Shortly after, a serial of ten mounted police officers that had been assigned to the Tottenham Hotspur football match earlier in the evening, self-deployed to the police station after hearing calls for all available police resources to urgently attend.⁴²

Fighting and looting

The earlier withdrawal of the two TSG units to a line defending the police station and their apparent inaction despite the burning of the solicitors' office and the bus directly in front of them seem to have emboldened those in the crowd. It became clear that they had effective control of a large section of the High Road and had done so for several hours. Around 23:15, beyond the burning bus, and out of direct line of site of the police station, at Bruce Grove several groups began looting a number of shops. These included a supermarket, bookmakers, jewellers and the post office. The latter two targets were set on fire⁴³ shortly

³⁸ (Stott et al., 2016, p. 7; Stott & Reicher, 2011; Darlin, 2011b; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; Langston, 2011; The Guardian, 2012; highsociety2008, 2011b; BBC News, 2011c; Diakon Dkn, 2012; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 9JB).

³⁹ (The Guardian, 2011).

⁴⁰ (C. Stott et al., 2016, p. 7; Morrell et al., 2011, p. 14; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p. 20; Nwabuzo, 2012, p. 7; *Tottenham burns after shocking sparks riot*, 2011; Darlin, 2011b; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; BBC, 2011a; Saidi, 2011; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 9JF).

⁴¹ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 43) states that 'Superintendent Elaine Van-Orden...was asked to be the initial 'Silver London.' Superintendent Van-Orden implemented a command structure organising the response into sectors, each under the command of the available MPS bronze public order commanders, including Chief Inspector Ade Adelekan who therefore remained on the ground'. The Silver Commander develops commands and coordinates the overall tactical response of an operation, in accordance with the strategic objectives set by Gold (College of Policing, a). The Bronze Commander is responsible for the command of a group of resources carrying out functional or geographical responsibilities related to the tactical plan. Bronze will work with Police Support Units (PSU's) and other assets as part of the control system structure (College of Policing, b).

⁴² (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, pp. 43-44; Langston, 2011; *Painstakingly detailed analysis of the 2011 London riots*, 2011).

⁴³ Several participants recalled that the reason for these two fires (and others) given by the arsonists was to destroy DNA evidence left at the scene during looting. Transcripts: LON2810111706 61-65, LON1510111704 202-205, LON1910111705 98-99.

after and two nearby banks had their windows smashed with attempted arson in one of the properties (Location 7, Figure 2).⁴⁴

At 23:30 the arrival of further police reinforcements in the shape of PSU carriers on the High Road to the south of the police station was met by missile attack from the hitherto relatively passive crowd in the vicinity (Location 10, Figure 2).⁴⁵ Despite the escalation of the violence to the south, the arrival of further reinforcements and the presence of mounted police officers encouraged the Bronze commander on the ground to go on the offensive to the north. Despite their exhaustion, the two TSG units on the frontline were ordered to advance the cordon 200m along the High Road so that the emergency services could attend the fire at the solicitors and the still burning bus.⁴⁶ Although numerous missiles were thrown by the crowd this was achieved at around the same time as a Neighbourhood Police Station on the corner of Reform Row, around 200m further up the High Road, was torched by another group of rioters (Location 8, Figure 2).⁴⁷

After the success of their initial foray, the TSG units were ordered by Bronze command to continue their advance, pushing the rioters up the High Road beyond Bruce Grove.⁴⁸ Moving through makeshift barricades of burning bins, under an intense hail of missiles and sustaining several casualties on the way, by about 23:45 the TSG units had recaptured Bruce Grove. Their continual short shield charges were eventually halted at a series of barricades constructed from industrial cables, shopping trolleys and burning refuse containers outside the Aldi supermarket (Location 9, Figure 2).⁴⁹ Around midnight, two more PSUs arrived as a result of the activation of the SMP earlier in the evening. This allowed Bronze command to withdraw the two battered TSG units from the frontline, though they were held in reserve “due to the limited resources available to address the escalating situation”.⁵⁰ It was at the makeshift barricades in front of Aldi that the rioters made their stand and an intense battle lasting for more than an hour developed. The barricades held back the mounted police units and plentiful ammunition from a nearby building site was wheeled to the front line in shopping trolleys. The ferocity of the fighting was captured by one eye-witness:

Every so often during the stand-off, protesters, the bravest I've ever seen, would charge at the police lines armed with nothing but their fists as a hail of bottles, bricks and fireworks looped overhead.⁵¹

⁴⁴ (*Timeline of the 2011 England riots*, n.d.; Blake & Gardham, 2011; Rogers & Sedghi, 2011; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p. 20; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; Langston, 2011; Gallagher & Farrell, 2011a, 2011b; *Six sentenced for part in last year's riots*, 2012; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 6SB, N17 6SG & N17 9SX) and transcripts: LON2810111706 59-67, LON1510114302 34-38.

⁴⁵ (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 52; Bazargan, 2013; FlyprintsMedia, 2011).

⁴⁶ (Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, pp. 20, 42; VICE UK, 2011a; highsociety2008, 2011b).

⁴⁷ (Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; Langston, 2011).

⁴⁸ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 43).

⁴⁹ (Stott et al., 2016, p. 8; Stott & Reicher, 2011; Rowland, 2011; Bazargan, 2013; ReelNews, 2011; Langston, 2011; The Guardian, 2012; Intakes: Communities, commodities and class in the August 2011 riots, 2011; Parkinson, 2011; RT, 2011; *Painstakingly detailed analysis of the 2011 London riots* 2011; Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 44) and transcripts: LON0111110703 53-86, LON2810111707 93-151.

⁵⁰ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 43).

⁵¹ (Langston, 2011).

Whilst the battle raged, both the Aldi supermarket and the properties under construction at the building site were set on fire and were subsequently razed.⁵² Repeated charges of the PSUs and mounted police failed to break through the barricades,⁵³ so at around 01:00 the police changed tactics and ordered the helicopter overhead to hover close to the ground, scattering debris and flaming embers from the fires raging nearby into the crowd.⁵⁴ Despite the rioters being able to throw missiles at the helicopter as it was so low,⁵⁵ the tactic was successful and they were driven from the barricades, retreating north along the High Road towards Scotland Green (Location 11, Figure 2).

Tottenham Hale

Around midnight at Tottenham police station, PSU reinforcements actioned by the SMP were arriving but facing an increasing threat from missiles and fireworks thrown from a crowd of several hundred people gathered in front of the cordon to the south. In response, the cordon was extended to Somerset Street, and public order equipped officers were deployed.⁵⁶ The deployment of PSUs to the south of the police station was met with sporadic missile attacks and at about 01:30, an abandoned police car parked at the junction of the High Road and Monument Way (Location 14, Figure 2) was wrecked by members of the crowd and set alight.⁵⁷ Journalists from Sky and the BBC who had been mingling amongst the crowd outside the police cordon for several hours were assaulted and their satellite van was attacked with missiles and forced to drive off.⁵⁸ It was at this point that some members of the crowd changed their targets, as one eye-witness who had just arrived at the scene recalled:

There's a police line by the police station. I don't have a clue what was going on behind the police line. Before I could kind of work out what was going on that's when everyone started shouting "we're gonna go to loot JD sports" and that was the first JD sports to get done over.⁵⁹

A large part of the crowd then moved off along Monument Way heading towards Tottenham Hale Retail Park less than half a mile away to the east (Location 16, Figure 2).⁶⁰ By 02:00, several hundred people were looting a number of large shops in the complex with apparent impunity.⁶¹ The message of the 'free for all' in Tottenham Hale passed via

⁵² (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 44; Blake & Gardham, 2011; The Guardian, 2011; Rogers & Sedghi, 2011; Morrell et al., 2011, p. 14; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; Langston, 2011.

⁵³ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 44).

⁵⁴ (Langston, 2011; The Guardian, 2011; ReelNews, 2011) and transcripts: LON2810111706 77-80, LON0111110703 74-76.

⁵⁵ Transcript: LON0111110702 195-208.

⁵⁶ (Saidi, 2011).

⁵⁷ (FlyprintsMedia, 2011; worldRIOTchannel, 2011; alternativevideos1, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Lewis, 2011; BBC News, 2011d; 4TheRecord, 2011; BILLYKARLOFF, 2011; Saidi, 2011) and transcript LON2610111501 13-14.

⁵⁸ (Blake & Gardham, 2011; Morrell et al., 2011, p. 14; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p. 20; FlyprintsMedia, 2011; Lewis, 2011; BBC News, 2011d) and transcript LON2610111501 14-15.

⁵⁹ (YouHaveBeenWatching, 2014).

⁶⁰ (FlyprintsMedia, 2011; YouHaveBeenWatching, 2014; VICE UK, 2011d) and transcript: LON0111110703 77-94.

⁶¹ (Rogers & Sedghi, 2011; Nwabuzo, 2012, p. 7; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 113; VICE UK, 2011d; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N15 4QD) and transcripts: LON0111110703 131-48, LON0610111801 131-219.

BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) and other devices into the social media arena attracting more people, some of whom began arriving in vehicles. For almost four hours, hundreds of people looted Boots, JD Sports, O2, Curry's, Argos, PC World and Comet. It wasn't until dawn⁶² that the first police units began to arrive in the retail park, chasing and arresting the few remaining looters who were scouring the nearly empty shops.⁶³

Should we stay or should we go?

After the main body of rioters were driven from the barricades at Aldi, they withdrew northwards along the High Road, many halting at Scotland Green (Location 11, Figure 2), whilst others continued on a further 150m to the junction with Lordship Lane and Lansdowne Road (Location 15, Figure 2). Aware of the disposition of the rioters from information provided by the police helicopter, Silver command at the SOR made the decision to divert incoming police reinforcements towards seizing the latter junction in order to corral the rioters on the High Road.⁶⁴ Consequently three PSUs en route to Tottenham police station, comprising nine carriers and a compliment of about 75 public order officers, were instead sent to head off the rioters. Only two of the three PSUs made it to the rendezvous point as one "was attacked and therefore lost into the disorder" ([1] p. 45).⁶⁵ On arrival at the High Road - Lordship Lane - Lansdowne Road junction the MPS Ground Commander described the scene:

I found one PSU deployed with shields. I joined them but after only a few minutes faced a large hostile crowd of 100 plus. We were subject to a barrage of missiles followed by the rioters running at the thin line of officers. I only just managed to get myself and nine officers crammed into the back of a carrier and depart at speed with missiles hitting the rear of the carrier like a ferocious drum beat. I was forced to abandon the carrier I had arrived in and this was promptly set alight by the rioters.⁶⁶

The failure of Silver command's plan had several significant consequences. With the junction now under their control, some of the rioters proceeded to smash the windows of the Haringey Council Customer Services building on the corner of the High Road and Lordship Lane and started a fire inside. At approximately 02:00, others then broke into the Carpetright store, occupying the ground floor of a four storey building opposite, before setting it alight.⁶⁷ Calls to the emergency services by residents of the 26 flats above the showroom were met with no response. As the fire took hold, a number of rioters entered

⁶² Sunrise on Sunday 7th August 2011 was at 05:33 (*Sunrise and sunset in London*, n.d.).

⁶³ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 45; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 113; nocontent10, 2011).

⁶⁴ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 45). Silver command's plan to contain the rioters between the High Road - Lordship Lane - Lansdowne Road (Location 15, Figure 2) and the High Road – Scotland Green (location 11, Figure 2) junctions had some logic in that there are no through roads in this section of the High Road, so major escape routes were limited.

⁶⁵ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 45).

⁶⁶ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 45; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 0LL). The burned out PSU carrier on Lordship Lane features in these post hoc images Kitwood (2011) and Good (2011).

⁶⁷ (Rogers & Sedghi, 2011; Morrell et al., 2011, p. 14; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; RT, 2011; Bates, 2011; *100 days after the riots*, 2011; ODN, 2011) and transcript: LON0111110702 112-16.

the building, warning residents to leave and in some cases helped them evacuate their children.⁶⁸

Further south on the High Road at the junction with Scotland Green (Location 11, Figure 2), four public houses and two shops in close proximity, were broken into and looted.⁶⁹ As police units approached the junction, they were attacked by several hundred rioters throwing glasses, bottles, knives and furniture from the looted properties.⁷⁰ Once again the police advance was halted and a pitched battle ensued. It wasn't until 02:45 that the rioters withdrew past a series of flaming vehicles on Rheola Close (Location 13, Figure 2) towards the now fiercely burning Carpetright building.⁷¹

The staggered withdrawal of the rioters over the preceding hour to the High Road - Lordship Lane - Lansdowne Road junction presented two salient choices to the participants. The first was to continue the fighting retreat northwards along the High Road towards White Hart Lane and Northumberland Park. However, some participants were becoming aware of the looting at Tottenham Hale through BBM and other social media:

When people went to Ferry Lane [Tottenham Hale Retail Park]. When we see people going to Ferry Lane and they're not getting caught for it, we just, the police are not there the police are just occupied with the rioters. When you see people looting and no one, the police aren't doing anything about it, they're not responding to situations like, if we go there and they're not doing anything, what's stopping you from going Wood Green and they won't do anything as well. Do you know what I mean? They're very slow to react. So it's like, gotta take this opportunity.⁷²

The direct route to Wood Green shopping centre, a mile and a half to the west, was via Lordship Lane. There was now a straightforward choice presented to the rioters: continue fighting the police on the High Road or head to Wood Green for apparently unopposed looting of high-value goods. Around 03:00 this decision was effectively made for the rioters by the actions of police when mounted and foot units seized the junction of High Road with Lordship Lane and Lansdowne Road. The crowd was split into two groups by the police advance, one withdrawing west along Lordship Lane towards Wood Green and the other retreating north along the High Road.⁷³ The former group, leaving the fighting on the High Road with a new objective in mind, encountered an MPS unit on the way to Wood Green, as recounted by one participant:

⁶⁸ (*Intakes: Communities, commodities and class in the August 2011 riots*, 2011; Gilligan & Blake, 2011) and transcripts: LON1510111704 174-78, LON1810110701 239-248.

⁶⁹ These were the Pride of Tottenham, Victoria, Two Brewers and the disused Prince of Wales public houses and two hairdressers.

⁷⁰ (Darlin, 2011a; Bazargan, 2013; Langston, 2011; Jestico, 2011; Willreport4food, 2011; VICE UK, 2011c; Gilligan & Blake, 2011; Stanton, 2011a; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 9TT) and transcript LON011110702 66-76.

⁷¹ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 9TR; JKAA, 2011; Stanton, 2011b).

⁷² Transcript: LON2910110843 193-98.

⁷³ (alternativevideos1, 2011e; 4TheRecord, 2011; Langston, 2011; Parkinson, 2011; highnine9, 2011) and transcript LON1210110402 55-73, 315-321.

When we were walking down, like just at the top of Lordship lane...there was police there. And they saw us walk past, and I was thinking to myself...this police person, they know what they're doing...and you can see a whole group of young people running towards...I was running towards WG [Wood Green], cos I knew like, my friends were like, there's nothing gonna be left...and so, they knew what we were doing, but they were still there, they were still sitting there just watching the road...They were sat in the middle of the road, but they didn't do nothing. They didn't drive up to try and stop us, they just sat there.⁷⁴

Wood Green

Analysis of the time spread of disorder-related crimes committed in Wood Green over the night of 6-7th August demonstrates that the disturbance, principally comprising looting, occurred in two phases.⁷⁵ The initial 'spike', which began at about midnight, correlates with the arrival of a small group of local men and youths armed with bottles, rocks and sticks who were later described from analysis of CCTV footage as being "the first on the scene".⁷⁶ They met on the High Road under the shopping Mall (Location 25, Figure 3) and proceeded to attack a passing police car on its way to Tottenham. After smashing several shop windows and setting fire to two private vehicles on the High Road, they robbed a nearby gaming arcade. The group then threw missiles at a passing private vehicle, pushed a cyclist off his bike before assaulting him and, using materials taken from a nearby roadworks, attempted to barricade the High Road (Location 23, Figure 3).⁷⁷ These incidents were followed at around 01:00-01:20 by reports of criminal damage and robbery on Lordship Lane close to Wood Green Crown Court (Location 24, Figure 3).⁷⁸

Due to the urgent need to deploy police resources to deal with the increasing violence on the High Road in Tottenham, reports of these crimes were all but ignored by the MPS. The failure of the police to respond in Wood Green appeared to provide an extra inducement in the subsequent spread of information about the opportunity for looting on BBM and social media. Several participants in the Tottenham 'riot' recalled receiving messages and calls prior to 03:00 encouraging them to travel to Wood Green to loot, which they then passed on to their social media networks.⁷⁹ One respondent recounted a message arriving whilst s/he was involved in the looting at Tottenham Hale:

we heard it was all poppin off in Wood Green, I saw on picture phone, BB [BBM] one store smashed I thought I'm going down there to see what's going on.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Transcript LON1210110402 307-324.

⁷⁵ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 46).

⁷⁶ (Drury, 2012).

⁷⁷ (Drury, 2012; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 113; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N22 6BB & N22 6BH).

⁷⁸ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N22 5JH & N22 5LF).

⁷⁹ Transcripts: LON0610111801 257-87, LON2910110843 214-231 and 453-460, LON1210110402 110-111 and LON2610111501 135-149.

⁸⁰ Transcript: LON0610111801 258-259.

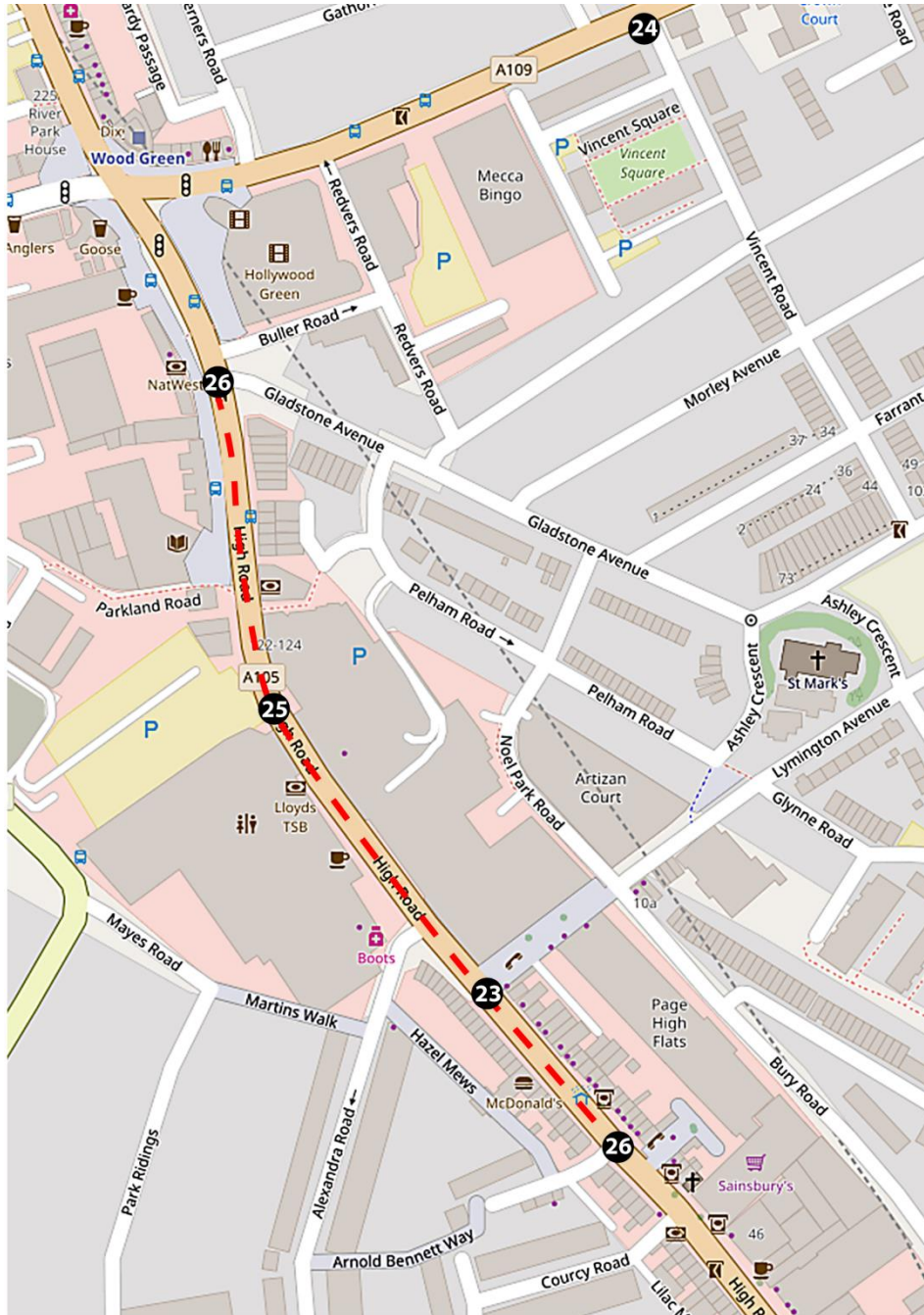


Figure 3. Wood Green High Road

Figure 3: Key

--- Principal extent of looting

Locations

- 23. High Road (police car attacked, shop windows smashed, parked cars set on fire, amusement arcade robbed, attempts to barricade High Road)
- 24. Lordship Lane – Bracknell Close – Perth Road (criminal damage and robberies reported)
- 25. High Road (The Mall overpass)
- 26. High Rd - Gladstone Avenue to Brampton Park Road (principal extent of looting)

Dissemination via phones of text descriptions and crucially images proving the veracity of the disturbance in Wood Green helped generate a second and much more significant period of acquisitive activity. Beginning at around 03:00 and lasting for more than six hours, the second phase was marked by apparently calm and systematic looting by hundreds of people of selected stores in Wood Green shopping centre (Location 26, Figure 3). The targets of the looters were major retail chains, ranging from those selling sportswear, mobile phones and electronic goods to beauty products, health foods and computer games.⁸¹ An eyewitness described the scene:

I was coming home early Sunday morning at about 4.30 am. The night bus stopped at Turnpike Lane so had to walk rest of way home. It took a while to register what was happening. It wasn't remotely threatening, just very surreal. We walked past people with their faces covered - they ignored us, we ignored them.⁸²

This surreal normality of 'shopping for free' was echoed by the testimony of a participant:

Q: And then you went to Wood Green....what was that like?

A: Wood Green was no police officers, just people like...it would have been like a normal shopping day...but just with no staff in the shop...people going in and taking what they want and leaving and in bags...and scanning stuff and getting receipts...and no police officers there whatsoever...

Q: Really? People were scanning stuff?

A: Yep,

Q: Really, why?

A: Just in case they wanna take it back

Q: Get their money back?!

A: Yeah

Q: That's amazing...And then...what was the effect of there not being any police there?

A: You could get away with whatever you wanted to do

Q: Was the atmosphere different?

A: There wasn't much angry people there, just people that wanted to get clothes, really.⁸³

The first police units arrived on Wood Green High Road at dawn and began arresting some of those present,⁸⁴ though according to the MPS sporadic incidents continued for several hours until 09:45.⁸⁵

⁸¹ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 46; Blake & Gardham, 2011; Rogers & Sedghi, 2011; Morrell et al., 2011, p. 14; Riots, Communities and Victims Panel, 2011, p. 21; Nwabuzo, 2012, p. 7; nzflapper, 2011a, 2011b; Roberts, 2011; KommondossChannel, 2011; MacDonald, 2011; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N22 6BB, N22 6BA, N22 6HH, N22 6YD, N22 6EB & N22 6HE) and transcript LON1210110402 133-139, 276-303 and 404-438.

⁸² (Key, 2011).

⁸³ Transcript LON2110110827 193-207.

⁸⁴ (nzflapper, 2011c).

⁸⁵ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 46).

The final acts

The hard-core of a hundred or so rioters who retreated north along the High Road after the police had secured the junction where the Carpetright fire raged, continued to resist. After smashing the windows of the Jobcentre on the High Road (Location 17, Figure 2), they regrouped close to Cedar Road (Location 18, Figure 2). A nearby supermarket was looted primarily for ammunition and a burning barricade spanning the High Road was soon constructed.⁸⁶ A lull in the violence ensued for around half an hour before police units began to advance along the High Road. Before retreating northwards once again, rioters set fires in the Jobcentre and a nearby recruitment office, the former being damaged and the latter, a four-storey building, was completely burnt out.⁸⁷

Some of the rioters who had been forced westwards along Lordship Lane by the police advance set about Tottenham Magistrates Court with hammers, smashing windows and damaging rooms.⁸⁸ Shortly after, the nearby Probation Service building was broken into and there was an attempt to set it on fire (Location 20, Figure 2).⁸⁹

At about 04:00 some of the rioters on the High Road had made their way to Park Lane close to Tottenham Hotspur football ground (Location 21, Figure 2). A number of properties including a bookmakers, public house, convenience store and the Tottenham Hotspur ticket office, were looted.⁹⁰ Further south, the remaining rioters held their ground at the High Road - Bromley Road junction, building another barricade of burning refuse bins and inflammable materials (Location 19, Figure 2). At around 05:00, police units reached the roadblock deploying a hitherto unseen weapon, the Jankel Guardian armoured vehicle.⁹¹ The rioters watched as the armoured vehicle smashed through the barricade and then vainly attempted to halt its progress by launching missiles. As the PSUs on foot, following close behind the Jankel, surged through the breach to chase the retreating rioters, two refuse bins violently exploded in succession lighting up the scene.⁹²

As dawn approached, the rioters continued to head north along the High Road towards White Hart Lane and Northumberland Park where they broke into smaller groups and began to disperse. One eye-witness located the end of the Tottenham 'riot' (Location 22, Figure 2):

...by the time we got to where Sainsbury's, you know where the Sainsbury's is on Tottenham High Road by Edmonton, that's where everything stopped, and the riot officers all lied down on the floor, they could not move, they were mash up

⁸⁶ (Metropolitan Police Service, 2012, p. 45; Langston, 2011; Imfinite210, 2011a, 2011b).

⁸⁷ (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 113; Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, 2011, p. 2; Langston, 2011; Briggs, 2012; Imfinite210, 2011b; *Tottenham disturbances: Councillor fact sheet number 3*, 2011; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 OAB).

⁸⁸ (Rogers & Sedghi, 2011; Lewis, 2011).

⁸⁹ (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 2011, p. 113; Lewis, 2011; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 6RS).

⁹⁰ (alternativevideos1, 2011d; Imfinite210, 2011c; Metropolitan Police Service, 2017, N17 OAG).

⁹¹ 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.).

⁹² (Briggs, 2012; VICE UK, 2011a, 2011b; Stanton, 2011c).

[broken]...because they had broken foot, they had cuts, they have bruises, they were lying, they were breathing like cows, you know asthma attacks...⁹³

At around 06:00 as the rioting on the Tottenham High Road and the looting in Tottenham Hale Retail Park petered out, the MPS SMP had managed to assemble a full command team and mobilised thirty three PSUs (around 825 officers) and other assets such as mounted branch, dogs and firearms officers.⁹⁴

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