

Tekst 5

When did 'hanging around' become a social problem?

By Josie Appleton

- 1 **Police are on high alert across the country. Councillors and police forces have racked their brains for new ways of dealing with the annual threat to national security. No, not terrorists in this instance, but kids hanging around on street corners.**
- 2 The summer holidays are cue for a raft of measures to tackle youths' bad behaviour. Police prepare for groups of young people out on the streets as if for a national emergency. This year, the Home Office minister announced £500,000 in grants for 10 local areas to take action against teenage criminal damage. Discipline measures range from the heavy-handed – including curfews and dispersal orders – to the frankly bizarre.
- 3 The Local Government Association (LGA) has compiled a list of naff songs, such as Lionel Richie's 'Hello', for councils to play in trouble spots in order to keep youths 15. This policy has been copied from Sydney, where it is known as the 'Manilow Method' (after the king of naff, Barry Manilow), and has precursors in what we might call the 'Mozart Method', which was first deployed in Canadian train stations and from 2004 onwards was adopted by British shops and train stations. Another new technique for dispersing youths is the Mosquito, a machine that emits a high-pitched noise only audible to teenage ears. Adults walk by unmolested, but youngsters apparently find the device unbearable and can't stand to be near it for long.
- 4 These bizarre attempts at crowd control provide a snapshot of adult unease about young people. Teenagers are treated almost as another species, 17 reasoning and social sanction. Just as cattle are directed with electric shocks, or cats are put off with pepper dust, so teenagers are prodded with Manilow, Mozart or the Mosquito with just one goal in mind.
- 5 18, bored teenagers do get up to no good and always have, but this isn't just about teenagers committing crimes: it's also about them just being there. The Home Secretary called on councils to tackle the national problem of 'teenagers hanging around street corners'. Apparently unsupervised young people are in themselves a social problem.
- 6 Councils across Britain are using curfews, dispersal orders, and the power to march a youth home if they suspect he or she is up to no good. In 2005, several British towns drafted in the army to patrol the streets at night – a senior Ministry of Defence official said the presence of troops would 'deter bad behaviour' from youths. Police in Weston-super-Mare have been shining bright halogen lights from helicopters on to youths gathered in parks and other public places. The

light temporarily blinds them, and is intended to 'move them on', in the words of one Weston police officer.

- 7 Some have said that these measures 20 young people in general. Certainly, curfews and dispersal orders are what you might normally expect from a country in a state of siege or under a dictatorship, rather than for summer nights in British towns and cities. But the Manilow Method is hardly dictatorial. Instead, these attempts at discipline speak of paranoid adults unable to talk to kids or win them over. Adults are behaving like social inadequates rather than strong-arm dictators.

- 8 Low-level misdemeanours, which in the past might have been sorted out with a few harsh words or a clip around the ear, now require battalions of 'anti-social behaviour coordinators', police officers and other assorted officials. Police authorities carry out 'special operations' against groups of young people who are engaged in such activities as hanging around drinking in the park. They then share intelligence with other authorities, giving each other tips on techniques for getting the cans of alcoholic drinks off the youngsters. Minor annoyances have become the focus for special campaigns. Even that wholesome game of hopscotch has become a concern. West Midlands Police Community support officers asked parents to remove chalk markings from the street, after receiving complaints and reports of 'anti-social behaviour'. A BBC News report noted gravely that 'Several children were involved in the games resulting in several markings on the pavement.'

- 9 As the schools prepare to reopen, no doubt police forces are breathing a collective sigh of relief. Crisis over – at least until next year. ■

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- 1p 14 What conclusion do paragraphs 1 and 2 lead up to?
- A The actions undertaken against youngsters hanging around might be over the top.
 - B The authorities must cooperate to solve the problem of disorderly youths.
 - C The measures taken will not prevent young people from becoming criminals.
 - D The number of teenagers committing crimes has grown enormously.
 - E The troubles caused by juvenile crime cost society a lot of money.
- 1p 15 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 3?
- A alert
 - B away
 - C happy
 - D together
- 1p 16 What becomes clear in paragraph 3 about the music of Lionel Richie, Manilow and Mozart?
- A It can be used to put listeners in a good mood.
 - B It is applied to influence people's behaviour.
 - C It is full of high notes only heard by younger people.
 - D It is generally felt to be relaxing.
- 1p 17 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 4?
- A aware of
 - B formed by
 - C immune to
 - D longing for
- 1p 18 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 5?
- A As a result
 - B Furthermore
 - C Likewise
 - D Of course
- 1p 19 What is the main function of paragraph 6 with regard to "the problem" caused by youths?
- A To defend the methods used to tackle it.
 - B To give more examples of how it is tackled.
 - C To protest against the way in which it is tackled.
 - D To stress why it has to be tackled.

- 1p **20** Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 7?
- A bore
 - B correct
 - C encourage
 - D victimise
- 1p **21** How can the tone of the last part of paragraph 8 (“Even ... pavement.”) be characterised?
- A As objective.
 - B As optimistic.
 - C As sarcastic.
 - D As worried.