

'Tonight I have seen grown men crying in cells with remorse (or self-pity)': The tweeting policeman's New Year dispatch from UK's drunken streets of shame

- **Tweets reveal grown men crying in their cells and a mass village fight**
- **Men with 'the strength of ten men' wanting to fight the world**

By Paul Harris and Neil Sears

As drunken men and women took to the streets in a disgraceful display of violence and degradation, police chief James Tozer was watching. And yesterday his chronicle from the New Year front line was revealed. Superintendent Tozer catalogued events on Twitter during a 14-hour overnight shift in and around the historic market town of Shrewsbury.

You naughty girl: Police lead off a Newcastle reveller who looks a little worse for wear In it, the West Mercia Constabulary officer describes how the overwhelming surge in crime and disorderly behaviour filled all the cells in one police station before 3.30am ... how victims of violence and drunkenness had 'dreams shattered' by senseless acts ... and how he had seen his officers 'taunted and ranted at' as they tried to keep the peace. His Tweets begin at 5pm on New Year's Eve and continue until 7am yesterday – giving a rare public glimpse into the role police are forced to play when scores of officers must be deployed simply to keep order in an otherwise respectable town.

More...

- 'He forced me into a cab and I don't know where I am!': Police release 'fake' 911 call of teenage girl 'who staged her own kidnapping'
- 5,000 people investigated by police for something they said on Facebook or Twitter as 'social network crime' soars 800%

Across the country, it was the night revellers brought shame to the nation at the end of its most glorious 12 months for decades.

After Diamond Jubilee patriotism and Olympic triumph did the country proud, hordes of alcohol-fuelled partygoers turned the clock back to show the world a familiar, sickening portrait of modern Britain.

The excitement has got a bit too much for this partygoer as she sits up against a shop window. The pair ploughs on past Subway, heads down, on a mission with that uprooted bush. I never go out without my plant: A woman under the influence of alcohol dragging an uprooted plant through Swansea. They stretched emergency services to the limit as streets became littered with broken glass and pools of blood. Fights broke out within seconds of the bells tolling midnight, followed by stabbings, assaults on police and public acts of debauchery.



Superintendent James Tozer lifts lid on challenges faced by force on one of the year's busiest nights.

One pathetic symbol of the drunken chaos came in Newcastle upon Tyne, where a girl in a red mini dress and high heels sprawled on a pavement outside a kebab shop, too drunk to stand and in danger of suffering from exposure.

Eventually she stumbled off down the street supported by two police officers, struggling to stay upright – and eventually collapsing.

Nearby, an ambulance was fighting its way through crowded streets within a minute of midnight to try to reach a man with blood pouring from his mouth after a brutal attack.

Further snapshots of Britain 'celebrating' included a semi-naked man urinating outside a Cardiff nightclub, two women dragging an uprooted pot-plant trophy-like through Swansea, and small piles of drunken, motionless bodies forming in cold streets swept by wind and rain.

Calls to emergency services could be counted in their hundreds during a period of a few hours in most densely populated areas; as many as seven a minute in the West Midlands, where the ambulance service received 1,293 calls between 1am and 4am alone.

In Birmingham, Sharon Trent, 29, said: 'There were people drunk well before midnight and there were police and paramedics everywhere.

'When it got to 12, people flooded out of the clubs and straight into the streets. The police were struggling to keep control of them. The clubs and bars were crazy. It was a crush inside everywhere – you could barely breathe.'

Reveller John Parsons, 36, added: 'There were people throwing up everywhere even before the fireworks to celebrate the New Year.

'I couldn't believe how many girls were struggling to walk in their heels. A lot had taken them off and were trying not to stand on the vomit.'

Tonight I've seen drunken New Year revellers crying in cells with remorse or self-pity, their dreams shattered by a single senseless act

■ 17.00: On patrol in Shropshire tonight. Looking forward to a busy New Year's Eve. I wonder what mood the good people will be in?

■ 21.00: One in the cells for an offensive weapon. Other staff just located a high risk missing person... More than ticking over.

■ 21.15: Staff dealing with 3 missing people (all found) and 1 overdose in last hour.

■ 21.30: The gentleman who decided to assault another in front of us is repenting in the cells. Lesson learned.

■ 00.00: Now I have a fleece, a stabproof + florie (fluorescent) jacket and I am cold. How come these girls don't have exposure?

■ 00.15: Just issued another Section 27 stay out of town notice - you don't pass go for 24 hrs after one of those!

■ 01.00: One drink driver in custody: 'it can't be me - I don't have a licence!'

■ 01.05: Now trying to find the owners of the two cars he drove into ...

■ 01.30: Now en route to Pontesbury - 20 people fighting - that's nearly the whole village then...

■ 02.00: Insp Harding just arrested 2 for assault in town on solo patrol. All units are stretched but coping well.

■ 03.00: One in custody from the incident. Last cell space at Shrewsbury filled - room will always be found for the deserving!

■ 03.30: Back in town area again. Just assisted with an arrest for d + d (drunk and disorderly).

■ 03.35: Taking him to custody. Also I for suspicion of possession of class A drugs ...

■ 04.00: Has everyone forgotten already? IT'S A HAPPY New Year.

■ 04.05: Just in custody now. Prisoner authorised for drug possession - he seems surprised that he needs to be strip searched.

■ 04.30: It's been a night of alcohol related ... now what's the word? Well actually it's stupidity.

■ 04.46: Some of the prisoners will be surprised when the evidence of what they have done is presented - some will hang their heads in shame ...

■ 04.47: Tonight I have seen grown men crying in the cells with remorse (or self pity) and I have seen raging bulls refusing to see reason ...

■ 04.48: I have seen people wanting to fight the world with the strength of ten - and enough alcohol on board for 10 too ...

■ 04.49: I have seen victims who have had their night, their days and their dreams shattered by a single senseless act ...

■ 04.50: I have seen my officers stand being shouted, taunted and ranted at, and calmly go about their duty making arrests and keeping the peace.

■ 07.00: As I come to the end of my night shift, I give thanks for the many that do this time and again, without fail. Thank you.

DISPATCH FROM THE FRONT LINE
SUPPLY: JAMES TOZER

A couple in Liverpool looking worse for wear last night



Extra police were out in force last night to control the crowds but couldn't be everywhere at once

Police in Newcastle tend to a young man clumped in the street, his trousers awry.

Few cities escaped the scenes of drunkenness and violence. London Ambulance Service control room staff answered 2,603 emergency calls between midnight and 5am, an average of around eight a minute and 10 per cent more than last year.

Thirteen treatment centres were set up with St John Ambulance in the capital to deal with 'alcohol-related injuries', of which 506 were treated by paramedics and a further 49 in hospital. The Metropolitan Police made 96 arrests, nearly 25 per cent up on last year. More than 3,500 officers were on duty along with colleagues from British Transport Police.

Clean-up teams shifted 160 tons of rubbish from Westminster streets. In Northumbria, New Year's Eve arrests rocketed to 220, up almost a quarter.



Shropshire town centre where Superintendent James Tozer was policing and Tweeting on New Year's Eve



The fights in Shrewsbury Supt Tozer tweeted about were replicated across the country on New Year's Eve, such as this man in Liverpool who was left covered in blood after a brawl. These women in Swansea collapsed on the pavement while celebrating New Year's Eve The Great Western Ambulance Service, which covers Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and parts of Somerset, said 999 messages had soared by 9 per cent, with 1,101 calls, the majority between midnight and 3am.

A spokesman for the service said: 'The average number of calls we receive between this time period is normally around 80. On New Year's Eve it was 467.'

Devon and Cornwall Police had to deal with 660 incidents in the first seven hours of the New Year. Elsewhere in England the North West Ambulance Service received 2,265 emergency calls between midnight and 7am – up to one every ten seconds – including 17 assaults and two firework injuries. After all the mayhem, however, there was at least one reminder of the previous year's triumphs. More than 500,000 spectators basked in sunshine as a New Year's Day parade through London celebrated Britain's Olympic glory.