

Terrorists are now called 'hostiles'; Islamic terrorism is now 'international terrorism'. Anti-terror training for the Easter event

To the village hall last month for anti-terrorist training ahead of an Easter festival I got roped into.

Note to self; the next time somebody says, 'Do help, it will be fun'. Run.

I didn't post this until the event had passed off without mishap, which it did a few days ago. And it was fun.

As part of this open-air Easter event that I was asked to help out with in a minor capacity earlier this month, I was invited to attend some 'Anti-terrorism' training. Which was set out as mainly for the stewards but available for all. So I went along. We anticipated it would be what to look for among the crowds (including drunks and pickpockets maybe), how to approach, or why not to approach suspicious people, evacuation hints specific to this town and its layout. What I was doing wouldn't have involved any of this, but I have an inquiring mind and like to know what's what.



What we got was the standard presentation of the Government scheme [ACT. Action Counters Terrorism](#) presented with powerpoint and

video by two policewomen. It was very interesting to me, but not necessarily for the reasons the organisers and police might have anticipated.

First slide please.

Something to the gist of all nationalities, ethnicities, ideologies and religions are capable of producing terrorism, which is not confined to any one nationality, ethnicity, ideology or religion.

There was a montage of videos and still photographs of terror attacks of the past years. Including two IRA attacks in London in 1993 and 1996, the London bombs of July 2007, Glasgow airport, Parsons Green, the London Bridge and Borough Market knife attacks, the murder of Lee Rigby, the murder of 82 year old Mohammed Saleem by Pavlo Lapshyn a white supremacist originally from Ukraine, the all-female cell of Mina Dich and her daughters, Manchester Arena, Christchurch Mosque.

A quick calculation in my head; 95% Islamic terrorism, 2½% Irish, 2½% right-wing/white supremacist.

“There are four areas where terror threats come from”, said the lead presenter, pointing to a map of the UK with 4 bullet points at each corner

- The Irish threat hasn't gone away. I expect you have heard of the IRA? As most of us were over the age of 40, yes we had heard of them, and I think most young people are not ignorant.
- International terrorism. Groups like Al Qaeda, ISIS, Daesh, Boko Haram, she intoned quickly, you have heard of them and let us move on to...
- Left wing terrorists and single interest groups like Antifa, XR and abortion rights, who she emphasized, have a right to their opinions and a right to demonstrate which brings us finally to...

▪ Right wing terrorism and white supremacists.

And she spoke of them at length. They are gaining in power and prominence, growing all the time. Recruiting disaffected teenage boys in their bedrooms on the internet. We were shown (cue dramatic and sinister music, such as is used to lure small boys) video of a hooded group spray painting a wall with their symbols. The painter in chief was revealed to be Jack Renshaw, a particularly nasty specimen, erstwhile spokesman for Neo-Nazi group National Action, currently serving a term of life imprisonment, and not just for terrorism.

She told us how National Action was now a proscribed group and what proscription means. Then went on to tell us of the other right-wing groups which have been proscribed since. They are the Sonnenkrieg Division, the Fuerkreig Division, the Atomwaffen Division and The Base. The Base is an American foundation. I expect it's all President Trump's fault; he gets blamed for everything else.

We were shown a montage sample of terrorist literature. Something with very small print in Arabic against a background of flames (which I think was from ISIS) and larger pamphlets with easily recognized swastikas, Viking runes and some jagged, lightening bolt symbols with phallic pointy bits. Was that National Action or Linkin Park? Responsible Parents Need To Know.

"Be aware of these if you spot them. Any young person causing concern can be reported to Prevent. I hope you have all heard of Prevent, despite the criticism it receives."

When we broke for 5 minutes one member of the audience asked if we were going to cover anything specific to our event? What to look for? What to do if we do spot anything?

The Run, Hide and Tell module will cover some of them, and other modules to come, was the reply. But fear not, this training is routine once our team know that an event is to

take place in town; there is no intelligence that your event is any kind of specific target.

Run, Hide and Tell is a short video also available on YouTube. As the name suggests the advice if caught up in an attack is to run away if possible. Work out your route in advance in any situation by adapting your existing plans (plans???) to escape a fire. I did once know of a man who eyed up his escape from every pub or café he found himself in. But he was an army deserter on the run from the police. Perhaps it is a mindset we all have to adopt. Secondly, hide from the attackers if it isn't possible to run. Once safely hidden or at a distance ring the police and tell them what is happening. Then be aware that the police who come to deal with the ~~terrorists~~ sorry, hostiles, will deal with you firmly and robustly too, just in case you are also a hostile. Oh, and the fire brigade and ambulance won't be [allowed near you either](#), no matter what [your injuries](#), until the police are happy. So be prepared for that.

There was a module called something like The Hello Strategy. This could actually be something a nosy old biddy like myself might be useful at. When making a hostile reconnaissance of a possible target a hostile will make many visits at different times of the day. He or she will look at things a genuine shopper or tourist would not, like bollards and security cameras. Something as simple as showing they have been noticed by saying 'Hello, can I help you?' 'You look lost? What are you looking for' or suchlike whether from a member of staff or a member of the public can disrupt them. They fear failure and they will feel guilty and be thrown off guard. Having been noticed they may decide to abandon that target. The theory may be a bit naïve, but what the hell?

The most interesting bit was footage taken from the telephone of a young man who had been carrying out a hostile reconnaissance of London Underground (particularly the Northern line) in connection with a foiled plot in 2008. No

name was mentioned and the man's face was pixelated out, but it may have [been this case](#). The angle to which he tipped his phone to catch CCTV cameras, twisted it round to show himself at intervals to prove the footage was genuine, pretending to be a tourist taking selfies is something I had not seen before.

There was a section on IEDs, and what to do. This is very similar advice to what I remember from IRA campaigns in the 70s. Hints how to calculate the distance required to evacuate an area away from the suspect device (in some situations the length of three football pitches, or in others 15 double decker buses, or there is even an app showing concentric rings round the centre of another nearby town.)

The presentation was drawing to a close. Any questions?

Yes. At the event, Is There Anything Specific We Should Be Doing?

Well, keep alert, look for anything unusual or suspicious. Trust your gut. If you think it's odd, it probably is odd. She mentioned Salman Abedi (again). He was odd; he had a big rucksack and had been hovering for 45 minutes but no-body challenged him.

I decided not to correct her. We know, if we have been paying attention, that it was revealed at the inquiry that several [parents](#) thought he was odd and reported him to security. Even a junior security steward [had a bad vibe](#) about him, but his [Muslim colleague](#) insisted that Abedi was OK and the boy was frightened of being branded 'racist'. There were few British Transport Police Officers about to talk to as several were taking an extended meal break and the Greater Manchester Police didn't even know there was a big gig on until the reports of the bomb.

But I decided to keep my head down, listen and then tell.

We ended with a quick module on not putting too much information on Facebook and thus aiding identity fraud. And that was that.

Two hours looking at examples of mostly Islamic jihad, without once mentioning Islam, Muslim, jihad.

Islamic fundamentalist inspired terrorism is now 'International terrorism'. Terrorists are now 'hostiles'.

On the way out as one man said, these neo-Nazis are evil but they are not the threat to us. A Muslim, aiming during a Christian festival, is the threat to us.

The police have done training. The boxes are ticked; we got the certificate. I'm not framing mine.