

NEWS

Gangsters bankroll illegal raves to sell drugs

Manchester police say DJs are being paid to put on a 'crazy summer' of outdoor parties so criminals can cash in

David Collins Northern Correspondent

DJs are being bankrolled by gangsters to organise "festival-sized" raves across the country this summer, police in Manchester believe.

The gangs have in effect set up marketplaces for class-A drugs by arranging mass gatherings in open countryside around the northwest of England. More than 7,000 people have flocked to raves in Carrington and Oldham and a large street party in Moss Side this month.

At these unregulated parties two men were shot dead, three people were stabbed, a young woman was raped and a 20-year-old died from a drugs overdose.

Police say they have intelligence reports warning of a summer of "giant raves" and have made two arrests in relation to an event being organised in north Manchester next weekend.

Police in Staffordshire, Kent and the capital are also dealing with mass gatherings. Last week 22 officers were hurt when they broke up a street party in south London.

Oli Wilson, son of Tony Wilson, the "Mr Manchester" impresario who founded the Hacienda, the UK's most famous rave club, said the illegal raves were "casting a shadow" on the free party movement.

"These illegal rave parties are being organised by idiots who don't give a shit about what they are doing," he said.

Pat Karney, a senior Manchester councillor, said: "These events require a lot of money to set up. It appears that criminals are providing the cash to set up the raves, which have six or seven DJs along with all the generator equipment."

"The gangs will then make large profits from a ready-made marketplace of thousands of potential customers in one place. These events are dangerous. We are doing everything to stop them. This includes targeting the DJs and the music shops selling them generators."

Karney said police and council officers were informing DJs that they would "never work again" in the bars and clubs of Manchester if they became involved.

Officers disrupted 13 raves in Greater Manchester last weekend. "We have evidence to suggest that some of these events have been financially supported

by organised criminals," said a police source. "The clubs and bars in Manchester are currently shut due to lockdown. Criminals are adapting by using these illegal raves to supply pills, cocaine, cannabis, MDMA and ketamine. Laughing gas canisters are also very popular."

"A gang that controls the drug supply of a 4,000-person rave event stands to make an enormous amount of money."

One teenager at the Oldham rave in Daisy Nook country park said it was "crazy" how many dealers were in attendance. "The dealers were on the roads leading to the park and there were quite a few inside the rave," said Melissa Cook, 18. "They were quite brazen. I saw one guy waving a bag of pills. They offered ketamine and ecstasy."

With official festivals such as Glastonbury cancelled, police fear partygoers from across Britain will travel to the northwest for a "crazy summer" of illegal raves. Unlicensed mass events have not been common in the northwest since the 1990s, when thousands descended on derelict warehouses in Blackburn and farms in Cheshire and north Wales for weekend parties. "Organisers would pay rent to a farmer to use their land for a rave," said Beate Peter, a researcher in electronic dance music at Manchester Metropolitan University. "Some farmers would place provisions on the party, such as allowing no more than 2,000 people."

The police and council in Manchester are trying to stop a big event in Boggart Hole Clough, an area of ancient woodland in north Manchester. Detectives are hunting five DJs involved in organising it.

Word of the event is circulating on WhatsApp: "Wanna see you there. Block Party - 4th July, 3pm till late. Competitions for a chance to win the Cash Prize. Special guest will be there!"

Wilson says Manchester was undergoing a resurgence in "free party" events before the lockdown. "I think these illegal raves we've seen are a real shame and have cast a shadow on the whole free-party movement," he said.

"We had a lot of parties before lockdown. One under Mancunian Way [a motorway] was a beautiful occasion full of great music. It was properly organised and done with the authorities."

"It feels like all the kids are just running around like lunatics in Manchester at the moment. It's perhaps about frustration during lockdown, but I think it's also about wider problems in society."

Lord Blair, the former Metropolitan police commissioner, said illegal protests and raves were putting officers at risk: "It cannot be right that this level of injury to officers is seen as acceptable."

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Scottish sheep destined for Hungary were trucked to Ramsgate in Kent and ferried across the Channel by a private contractor, according to reports

Animal welfare campaigners flock to condemn 'inhumane' export of Scots sheep across Europe

Mark Macaskill

Animal welfare campaigners have raised fresh concern over the "inhumane" export of live animals after it emerged that sheep from Scotland are trucked for 70 hours across Europe to be fattened and slaughtered.

Compassion In World Farming (CIWF) expressed anger this weekend after the UK government's Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) admitted that hundreds of sheep were sent to Hungary in March.

Ministers on both sides of the border are being urged to ban the trade amid claims that after enduring a tortuous 1,500-mile journey, the animals are slaughtered within weeks of arrival.

"It is inhumane to force animals to spend almost three days in transit before being killed," said Peter Stevenson, the charity's chief policy adviser. "There is no excuse for this."

Nicola Glen, from Eyes on Animals, said: "It really is time for the UK to put an end to this abhorrent trade. It is

absolute nonsense that Scotland is exporting sheep to Hungary during a time when the world is looking at ways to produce food more sustainably."

The disclosure, in documents released under freedom of information, have triggered an investigation by Europe's largest ferry operator.

P&O, based in Dover, permits livestock intended for fattening or slaughter to be transported on its route between Cairnryan, on Scotland's west coast, and Larne in Northern Ireland, but insists that animals "remain within the United Kingdom".

Transport logs held by APHA state that some animals leaving Cairnryan are destined for the Republic of Ireland, which is not part of the UK.

Of 18 consignments of sheep - 14 from Scotland and four from England - exported to the Republic of Ireland between January 1 and April 22, five were for "fattening". Each of the shipments left Cairnryan.

The only other ferry operator out of the Scottish port is Stena, but it docks at Belfast which does not accept live imports.

On Friday, a spokesman for P&O, which banned the transport of Scottish calves to Ireland in 2018 after it emerged the animals were being sent to continental Europe, said it was investigating the matter and "will not hesitate to act decisively". A court case raised by CIWF against Scottish ministers for alleged animal welfare breaches over exports of calves to

Spain is due to be heard in Edinburgh's Court of Session in October.

It is understood Scottish sheep destined for Hungary are trucked to Ramsgate in Kent and ferried across the Channel by a private contractor. A UK government official confirmed that up to 680 animals left the English port in three separate consignments in March.

In 2019, sheep from England were sent to Hungary on one occasion.

The official said the government is committed to improving the welfare of animals during transport, and ending excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening. But Glen, who has trailed trucks exporting sheep from the UK to mainland Europe, claims to have witnessed "much suffering", including overcrowding, illness and limbs trapped in the slats of the trucks. "I've seen animals travelling for hours in temperatures of over 30C whilst in full fleece."

The National Sheep Association said animals

destined for breeding or to be kept as pets are transported by P&O from Dover to Calais. The body said it is not involved in movements out of Ramsgate and it does not monitor exports to Ireland, which it classifies as a "domestic movement".

A spokeswoman added: "We are not against the transport of live animals abroad provided regulations are enforced and complied with. Exporting breeding animals is an important part of improving productivity, and ensuring animal genetic diversity at home and abroad."

Andrew McCornick, president of NFU Scotland, said the "world-class quality" of Scottish lamb makes it "highly sought after throughout Europe". He said the number of live sheep exported from Scotland is "a very small percentage" of the total number of sheep sold here. "It is important that any exporting of livestock from Scotland meets the high-welfare transport requirements which we have set here at home."

I've seen sheep travel for hours in temperatures of over 30C

Go directly to lockdown in Covid, the board game

Tony Allen-Mills

Bored with waiting for normal life to resume? It may be time for the family to play *Corona Wars: Survival*, an "exciting" card game inviting you "to fight your friends or form alliances while controlling a faction in a post-Covid virus world".

Or why not try the Monopoly-like fun of *Infected! The Covid-19 Board Game*? Try to accumulate loo paper and hand sanitiser - but don't land on the "self-quarantine" space (you'll lose your turn).

Then there's *Delivirus*, a card game that challenges you to "avoid symptoms at all costs".

The rest of the world may

be desperate to escape the coronavirus, but game developers see a chance to turn disaster into profit-spinning fun. Inspired by the success of *Pandemic*, a board game inspired by the Sars outbreak of 2002-4, designers are rushing out Covid-themed ideas - of varying degrees of tastefulness.

More than 300 games with Covid or similar themes have been counted on fundraising sites such as Kickstarter and in forums such as Board Game Geek. Not all are commercially motivated. One of the first to appear in Britain was *Can You Save the World?*, a computer game to teach children social distancing. Their challenge is

to navigate a street, saving up to seven billion lives by dodging the "infectious radius" of other pavement users. When I tried it I saved only 13 lives before bumping into someone - "Game over: you are confined."

Less lofty aims feature in *Hoarding Time*, a Belgian board game "about crazy hoarders with a toilet paper fetish", while *Bog Roll Builder* is a "two-player dexterity game" in which you compete to build "bog roll" structures such as the Taj Mahal or the Great Pyramid of Giza.

But watch out for *Corona Wars: Survival*. Just when you think you've beaten off the virus, the zombie apocalypse arrives.

Mark Macaskill

Farmers are being asked to "give peas a chance" by growing more vegetables to drive down carbon emissions and help Scotland tackle climate change.

Scientists warn that a sea change in diet and the way land is used to feed the nation is required. This includes cutting down on carbon-intensive foods such as meat and dairy by at least one-fifth per person and reducing food waste by the same amount.

Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS), a publicly funded body, said a "national effort" is needed if Scotland is to meet a net-zero carbon emissions target by 2045.

It urges farmers to cultivate more peas and beans as part of a green-protein strategy that could make farming "circular", reduce waste and emissions, and create jobs.

ZWS highlights peas and beans as valuable crops that absorb nitrogen from the atmosphere back into the soil, to act as a natural fertiliser. Insect farming is also among the opportunities it identifies as a "game-changer". ZWS estimates that up to £800m could be saved each year in the beer, whisky and fish sectors through better use of waste and by-products.

Iain Gulland, the ZWS chief executive, said: "Farmers have always been

the custodians of our natural resources, and now we need them to be custodians of our climate as well. It's a huge ask, and we can't expect them to do it all themselves. It's about all of us."

Jonnie Hall, NFU Scotland's director of policy, said year-on-year reductions in emissions from agriculture between 2017 and 2018 highlighted how Scotland's farmers and crofters are "rising to the challenge" to tackle climate change.

"While recent greenhouse gas emission figures from the Scottish government confirm that the industry has reduced its emissions by almost 30% since 1990, we recognise as an industry that we must go

further and play a full role in supporting the government reach its world-leading targets on emissions," he said.

Professor Derek Stewart, of the James Hutton Institute, said a protein strategy for Scotland was a "rallying call" to deliver on Scotland's carbon emission reduction targets "while offering major new opportunities for growth in the Scottish food and drink sector".

However, farming leaders warn that the "physical constraints" of the Scottish landscape "severely limit" the opportunity to increase production of grains and vegetables. Switching to alternative agricultural production is not an option in

many areas of the country, they say.

"On the other hand, with more than three million hectares of permanent grass, heather and rough grazing, Scotland is ideally placed to use cattle and sheep to convert natural sources of roughage into valuable protein for human consumption through our more extensive livestock farming systems that are anything but carbon-intensive," said Hall.

"The output is world-famous Scotch beef, lamb and milk. That commitment to producing the best in local, sustainable, high-quality food is valued by Scottish consumers."

Dig out your wallet and sound Reveille: coal and military museums first to reopen

Grant Tucker

Arts Correspondent

Big museums are being slow to reopen, but if you like planes, coal or pregnant women you are in luck.

Coping better with the introduction of one-way systems and adapting booking software for timed slots - and in many cases happy to operate at 20% capacity - small museums are racing ahead to open in the next week or two.

The Museum of the Gorge, in Telford, will open its coal and iron museum and replica Victorian town on July 4,

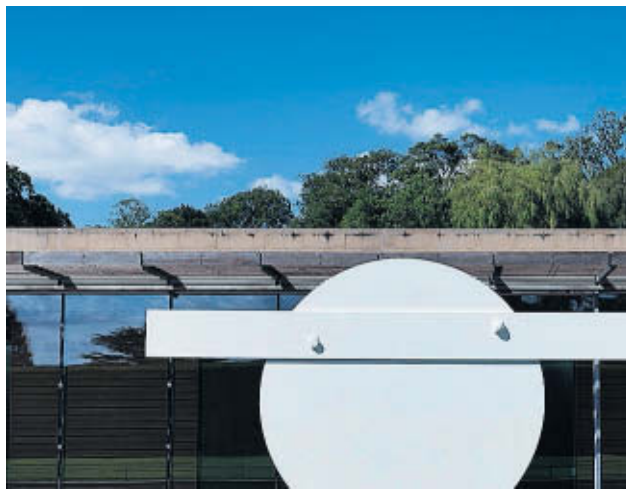
opting for the earliest possible date, as will the Yorkshire Air Museum in York. The Royal Air Force Museum in Hendon, north London, reopens two days later, and on July 7 the National Army Museum in Chelsea, west London, will welcome visitors six days a week. The Foundling Museum in central London kicks off on July 8 with an exhibition about pregnancy.

But Yorkshire Sculpture Park near Wakefield will remain shut, even though it is open air over a 500-acre site, because 80% of its income comes from its gift shop,

restaurants and car parking. With prospective visitor numbers so low, it said it could not afford to take staff off furlough.

It was important for the National Army Museum in Chelsea to reopen, said its director-general, Justin Maciejewski, because it received £6.4m a year of public funds. "The public give us that money because they want us to fulfil our mission, which is to tell the story of our army. We can't tell that story if our doors are closed."

Also the museum had "fuel in the tank" from a surplus last year and had avoided



The open-air Yorkshire Sculpture Park is not reopening yet

furloughing its core staff.

Other national museums will outline their plans this week. Staff still on furlough at the Tate, the British Museum, and the V&A - all in London - have been unable to assist with reopening plans because the job-retention scheme forbids working while receiving government funds.

Drawing up one-way systems is a mammoth task for the British Museum, which covers 277,000 sq ft. It also has to design booking systems that can cope with timed slots and keep visitor details for 21 days to help NHS track and trace.

The National Gallery, in Trafalgar Square, did not furlough staff and is expected to open next week, the first of the big museums.

Up the road, the Royal Academy of Arts is planning to reopen at 20% capacity, Thursday to Sunday from 11am to 4pm, so visitors avoid travelling at peak times.

For the minuscule Sewing Machine Museum in Tooting, southwest London, social distancing is not an option, while the British Dental Museum in Marylebone must wait until its volunteers, most of whom are retired, feel safe to travel in. Steve Gardam,

director of the Roald Dahl Museum in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, said he aimed to open in September with personalised family tours.

In an effort to bring a little levity to the lockdown, curators worldwide are being asked to compete online for the accolade of "best bum" in a museum. The Yorkshire Museum, in York, got the ball rolling with a picture of the marble behind of an athletic Roman statuette, but entry is also open to the derrières of paintings, animals, skeletons, insects and even vehicles. @GrantTucker