

METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

27 July 1972
..... day of 19.....

1. This report is an analysis of the use of motor vehicles by the Special Demonstration Squad and proposes an alternative system which would be more economic, more efficient and more secure.

2. In 1968 when the SDS was formed to deal with the large 'Vietnam' demonstration it was accepted that the officers engaged 'in the field' required the use of vehicles other than police transport. The reasons, which experience has confirmed, were:

- i. The routine of the undercover officers life is to travel from his home address to his 'cover' address, to the HQ flat, to meetings, demonstrations or appointments with extremists and often entails considerable journeys which public transport would exacerbate.
- ii. The officers are frequently still engaged after public transport has ceased and need to return to their homes.
- iii. The possession of a vehicle aids the officers acceptance by the extremists - in the absence of hard evidence the extremists seem to be reluctant to be too critical or suspicious of anyone who is useful to them.
- iv. The vehicles are sometimes used to transport extremists of interest to and from their homes, meetings and the like which in itself provides useful intelligence but also encourages the passengers to talk more freely than they would in a less relaxed atmosphere.

3. In 1968 when it was anticipated the SDS would have a brief existence the most practical and economic solution was to hire vehicles from a private car hire firm and Home Office authorised the hire of these vehicles.

4. Under this system three vehicles are currently on 'permanent hire' and a fourth is obtained as and when necessary. One of the 'permanent hire' vehicles is in fact a non-descript van which in many ways is more suitable for the work than family saloons.

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The system has worked reasonably satisfactorily but it has its limitations:

- a. Knowledge within the hiring company of the true hirer is unavoidable and although those in charge are aware of the need for discretion it would be foolish to trust implicitly in this system. In addition, the very fact the hiring company is common to all vehicles presents obvious risks.
- b. There are at present 12 active officers on the SDS competing for the use of the 3 - 4 cars. As time progresses they are becoming not only more deeply entrenched in the extremist field but in some notable cases more flexible. This has enabled them to penetrate a greater number and variety of organisations - which their work rate clearly illustrates - but it also increasing the demand for vehicles. Of late the fourth vehicle has been required more frequently and in fact on an increasing number of occasions more than four vehicles could effectively be utilised.
- c. The limited number of vehicles necessitates their use by several officers and, as it would be extremely unfortunate if a vehicle was noticed by the extremists to be driven by two different officers, the occasions when our officers can "show out" as possessing a vehicle must be curtailed. This of course restricts the possible benefits of points (iii) and (iv) above. To some extent the restriction is lessened by the frequent changing of the vehicles but even this complicates matters as it is then necessary that the officers 'cover' employment should justify the use of several different vehicles.
- d. With the exception of the van, all the hire vehicles are new, which is neither necessary nor at times desirable for the work for which they are needed.

5. As the cost of hiring these vehicles is about \$4,450 a year it seems reasonable to examine an alternative method of providing vehicles for the SDS.

6. Ideally, each officer should have his own vehicle, registered in his "cover" name and address which would eliminate most of the risks mentioned above. It would also improve coverage of the extremist field; officers could range further attending meetings and demonstrations without arousing curiosity - the first step to suspicion - and greater use could be made of "cover"

addresses than is at present possible.

7. The cost of hiring this number of vehicles would undoubtedly be prohibitive but purchasing them is considerably more economic than even hiring only four vehicles and it is understood that there is precedent for the purchase by police of "non-police" type vehicles for special operations.

8. The twelve current "field officers" on the SDS were asked what type of vehicle would best suit their individual requirements and listed at Appendix 'A' are their replies, together with the market price of such vehicles.

9. As can be seen the total estimated purchase cost is \$3,625; the anticipated yearly cost of running them is:

	£
Purchase price	3,625
Insurance	600
Road Tax	300
Maintenance	<u>1,080</u>
	5,605
If the vehicles were then sold, allowing for 25% depreciation, for	<u>2,718</u>
the cost of 12 vehicles for one year would be	2,887
The cost hiring 3/4 vehicles is	<u>4,450</u>
Saving:	<u>£1,563</u>

10. Some of the figures quoted appear arbitrary but an attempt has been made to be realistic. If the proposed scheme is accepted, there are, of course, several points which will require elucidation:

- (1) Whether 'B' Department would require to supervise or be able to assist in purchasing the vehicles to ensure their quality.
- (2) Whether an official approach should be made by police to an insurance company to ensure full legal coverage in spite of the irregular method of registration.
- (3) Whether the maintenance of the vehicles should be the responsibility of the officers to whom they are registered or whether a contract should be obtained with a specific garage.

(Y33)

(4) Whether the present arrangements for reporting accidents would apply or need alteration.

11. None of these problems appear insurmountable and it is hoped that the possibility of saving £1,500 a year, although not of itself justification for changing a reasonably satisfactory arrangement, will at least add weight to the arguments for examining a proposition which, in my opinion would significantly improve the quality of work and the security of the SDS.

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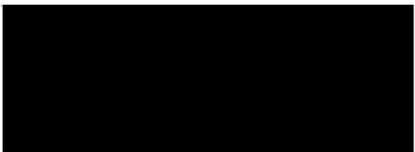
Detective Inspector

APPENDIX 'A'

Specimen list of 12 vehicles which would be required by present staff of 'S' Squad.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Make</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>
A		67	420
B		64	270
C		67	400
D		66	150
E		66	350
F		66	180
G		66	350
H		68	380
I		68	350
J		67	250
K		69	175
L		66	350
			<hr/> <u>£3,625</u> <hr/>

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MEMORANDUM

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Commander Operations

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1. With reference to Special Operations Squad expenditure:-

2. As you know, in December 1971, we received approval of our proposed 1972 budget of £4,500, with a pro rata additional sum (£1,125) for the period ending 31 March 1973. We have so far drawn £2,400 of which the balance is now £97.18½.

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3. I ask therefore that  F.2 be requested to provide a further £800 as a fourth instalment of our allocation. Such a sum, according to present outgoings, will meet our requirements until the latter part of September.

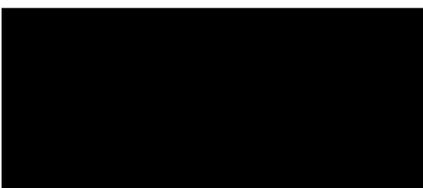
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Chief Inspector

S. B.
12.7.72



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J H Waddell Esq CB
Deputy Under-Secretary of State
Home Office
Whitehall
SW1

Our reference: 588/Unreg/694
Your reference: QPE/66 1/8/5

21 February 1973

Dear

I now write in reply to your letter of 21 December 1971 concerning the expenditure we have been applying to special purposes since 1968, and to seek authority for a continuance of these activities for a further year.

Time and experience have brought increased sophistication and professionalism to these operations, and the potential for violence and public disorder in London in the year ahead fully justifies their continuance. The Commissioner and I have taken a close personal interest in these activities and are satisfied that the security aspects of the work are controlled in such a manner as to minimise all such risks as are inherent in any operation of this type.

While there has been no significant growth in the manpower applied to these tasks since authority was first given, the numbers and types of accommodation necessary to provide adequate security cover have increased, as have the rents and other costs of maintaining them.

Thus, whilst permitted expenditure was agreed at £4,500 for 1972/73 (with an additional £1,000 to cover the extra period January to March 1973), we shall in fact have exceeded this budget by about £100 by the end of March, and £5,500 is the forecast estimate of required expenditure for 1973/74. In addition, if suitable accommodation can be found, it will be prudent to rent a second premises of a type where a number of persons might meet fairly regularly without attracting comment. This would entail an increase in the year's budget of £1,000, making a total forecast budget for the year of £6,500.

The Receiver has been consulted and has no financial objection to the proposed increase in expenditure.

I would be grateful if formal approval could be given to these proposals.

Yours

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C/P J Woods
Assistant Commissioner (Crime)



MEMORANDUM

Commander Rodger

1. The present strength of the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) is one Detective Inspector, two 1st Class Sergeants, two Sergeants, nine Detective Constables and two Women Detective Constables, numerically the same as at the last review,

2. As the Squad matures it becomes correspondingly more adept at fulfilling its primary role of gathering advance intelligence of demonstrations by left-wing extremists and identifying the organisers and participants, particularly those promoting disorder or likely to engage in acts of violence. In the field covered by the SDS - the extreme left and the main Irish organisations - no large scale demonstration (and few small ones) nowadays takes place without the organisers' overt plans and the extremists' nefarious intentions being obtained in good time for police to take effective counter-measures.

3. In addition, as was predicted, the technique of penetrating the extremist field with undercover officers is producing intelligence by-products of increasing value to police, the Security Service and other government departments.

Coverage

4. Organisations penetrated by the SDS are:-

Sinn Fein (Provisionals)

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- Anti-Internment League
- Irish Solidarity Campaign (now Central London AIL)
- Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
- Irish Civil Rights Association
- International Socialists
- International Marxist Group
- Red Defence Group
- Vietnam Solidarity Campaign

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- Friends of China
- Marxist-Leninist Workers Association
- Mao-Tsetung Thought Institute

Schools Action Union
London Alliance (in Defence of Workers Rights)
Revolutionary Women's Union
Women's Liberation Movement
Claimant's Union

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'Commitment' Group
Croydon Libertarians
Ceylon Solidarity Campaign
Action Committee Against Racism

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5. Information has also been provided on the Northern Minority Defence Force, the Black Unity and Freedom Party, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Black Defence Committee, the Stoke Newington Eight Defence Group, Justice for Rhodesia Campaign and 'Indochina'.

6. As stated in earlier reports, any organisation which is considered a threat to public order is a justifiable target for penetration but some are inherently difficult to cover -

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and the underground press - but progress has been made in the past year and there are grounds for anticipating that many more of the factions will be identified and assessed even if the comprehensive coverage achieved with the larger, more centralised organisations is never possible. Coloured and foreign organisations, because of their exclusivity, continue to be resistant to penetration, due to the shortage of ethnically qualified officers; when such groups solicit the support of less racially selective organisations, for their demonstrations, however, they become immediately, if temporarily, more susceptible.

7. The Communist Party and right wing extremist groups, who in recent times have not posed much of a threat to public order, are not covered by the SDS, but there are no technical reasons why they could not be, should the position deteriorate.

Product and distribution

8. Statistically, in items of intelligence obtained, meetings and demonstrations covered, the Squad in 1972 produced four times that of 1969 and almost twice that of 1971; the result of increased penetration both laterally and in depth.

9. Qualitative assessment is less precise but the Squad can be judged by reference to the departments it was formed to serve; viz:

- (i) Special Branch: all the leading personalities and the majority of the rank and file of left wing extremism have now been identified, documented and photographed and as new leaders emerge they are quickly assessed for their potential. The expert coverage of meetings and the knowledgeable interpretation of extremist plans by the SDS have added considerably to the quality and accuracy of Special Branch assessment reports on coming events. The Branch's peripheral techniques of intelligence gathering - enquiries, observations and technical operations are now more accurately aimed; there is little likelihood of time and effort being wasted on targets which turn out to be insignificant. The thousand or so meetings and demonstrations attended by the Squad annually relieve the Branch from covering many of them by other means and much enquiry work on individuals and groups is rendered unnecessary.

- (ii) 'A' Department: can make plans for the coverage of major demonstrations with greater confidence than was previously possible. Police estimates of likely support for extremist events almost invariably prove to be closer than those of the organisers and even the ostensibly "spontaneous" or "impromptu" variations to announced plans are handled with subtlety and despatch.

- (iii) The CID: have been assisted by the Branch (with contributions from the SDS) in the detection and prosecution of a number of extremist criminals in recent years and there are indications that, in addition to identifying likely suspects for offences committed, the SDS is becoming increasingly capable of gaining intelligence of crime planned by political extremists in time for them to be prevented. Provided that this kind of information is handled with discretion and it continues to be accepted that the source must not be compromised, there is no reason why this facet of the SDS should not develop.

- (iv) The Security Service: benefits similarly from the SDS efforts, copies of most reports are passed to them and a close and friendly liaison is maintained.

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They say this benefits their operations
against subversive elements

A recent example arose when a leading extremist told an SDS undercover officer, in confidence, of his suspicions of the parentage and motives of another extremist group. The Security Service reacted swiftly to the allegation of subversion

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Specific example given where SDS intelligence assisted the Security Service

Review

10. The alteration in the timing of this report as a result of the decision to synchronise the Squad's financial year with that of the rest of the Force reduces the need for a detailed study of the extremist field during 1972. The following general observations on the activities of the extremists insofar as they affect current and potential targets of the SDS, may be of value.

11. Once again Ireland dominated the public order scene. In February, following the 'Derry massacre' a demonstration in Whitehall prompted the most militant outburst of the year and resulted in several arrests. It underlined the lesson police have learned in recent years - that a demonstration held about a week after an emotive event, though small, is likely to be violent. Those held sooner, on the day or day after, tend to be disjointed and poorly supported; those later (e.g. the Anti-Internment League demonstration on 31 March) although planned for several weeks and attracting many more participants, are usually too far removed from the motivation to achieve anything like the sharpness of the more immediate protest. The biggest danger of violence is of course from the large well planned demonstration which happens to coincide with an emotional incident.

12. The most vocal and consistently active support for any issue, whether it was Ireland, Vietnam, Palestine or Womens Liberation came from the trotskyists. The International Marxist Group was as usual the most flamboyant of the three main trotskyist factions although the International Socialists were often the most numerous. The Socialist Labour League continued to be insular in its public activity but is gaining increasing support for its indoor meetings.

13. The maoists have had a comparatively quiet period: MAN CHANDA and his adherents failed to make any impact except with the Schools Action Union which experienced some success in the middle of the year. The strength of support for the SAU cause however seemed to have been more attributable to latent truancy than a genuine desire by many children to follow the teachings of Chairman Mao.

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14. The anarchists inherent lack of organisation restricted their public activities. Poor communication between themselves and sympathisers prevented their attendance at many meetings and demonstrations. There are signs however that their introspective period is ending and it is likely that more of them will be seen. Their biggest threat is their potential for violent 'Angry Brigade' type action by small select groupings which, as has previously been said, present difficulties in surveillance and penetration.

15. Industrial affairs, however, put everything else in numerical perspective: the miners strike attracted more support for their marches, meetings and pickets than extremists factions could ever hope for; the building workers dispute was also well supported. The trotskyists, particularly the International Socialists, intervened with offers of help on the picket lines; the use of their printing facilities for leaflets and so on and were generally well received. They established a rapport with the militant strikers which they regard as a good base for future activities.

16. The disturbing implications are that whilst such extremists justify their intervention in industrial disputes on the grounds of showing solidarity with the workers, it is never their intention to assist in resolving the disputes, but to exacerbate them and the massive demonstrations the trades unions can conjure up provide ideal cover.

Security

17. One of the main advantages of a field officer assuming a fictitious name, using a cover address and employment and radically altering his appearance is that - unlike an informant - he can resume his proper identity and appearance at any time and immediately be "lost" to the extremists. Political history, however, being easily checkable, cannot be invented. It is therefore axiomatic that an oblique approach to a target is the most efficacious and secure - to join a relatively innocuous organisation and to be recruited into a more significant one. Most of the current team of officers have been through several organisations which has not only established their identity firmly but has increased coverage of the extremist field.

18. The inherent risks to security are:

- i. Visits by field officers to New Scotland Yard - these are kept to a minimum and entry and exit are whenever possible conducted in a closed vehicle.
 - ii. Squad headquarters accommodation
and
iii. Vehicles
- } see later

- iv. Use of information obtained by SDS - when it has had limited circulation amongst extremists indiscreet action could compromise the source but all senior Special Branch officers, 'A' Department and an increasing number of senior divisional officers are aware of the need for discretion.

19. It is the fate of most noteworthy extremists, whether genuine or not, to be suspected of being a spy so care must be taken to avoid being precipitated into withdrawing an officer merely because its his "turn" to come under suspicion. Whenever there has been doubt the officers personal safety and the security of the operation have been given priority and the officer has been withdrawn. This judgment has been exercised in the case of four officers in the past year in spite of the fact that their withdrawal left temporary holes in coverage. The result has been that since the formation of the Squad no officer has been irretrievably exposed or identified, but all are aware that unfortunate coincidence or mischance could defeat even the most stringent precautions.

20. The strength of the present position is that with increasing flexibility several officers are acceptable in common organisations so that it is possible that an officer could get advance warning that a colleague was under suspicion in time for action to be taken to dispel it or, if necessary strategically withdraw him.

Accommodation

21. The detached, anonymous, headquarters premises remains of supreme importance to the functioning of the Squad. It provides secure facilities for briefing and debriefing, communication, the preparation of reports and the exchange of information. It also enables officers who can only rarely enter police premises to relax in each others company thus fostering the team spirit which is a feature and the strength of the Squad.

22. Of necessity these premises must be changed from time to time but security imposes stringent qualifications which are not easily fulfilled. However, after several months search fresh accommodation was recently found which should meet the Squad's needs for the immediate future.

23. The inherent weakness of such premises has always been that the number of people using them might attract unwelcome attention. Two years ago this was reduced by having two HQ flats but circumstances necessitated leaving both of them and it was possible to replace only one. The Squad's 1972 budget would ordinarily have been sufficient for a second HQ (had one been found) but changes of personnel, which involved periods of overlapping, the tactical desirability of moving

other officers' individual accommodation (see below) and the spectacular rise in the cost of renting all property, made it financially impractical. The 1973 budget should make allowance for a second HQ flat if a suitable one becomes available.

24. The officers individual "cover" addresses are an integral part of their assumed identities. They are changed periodically for security and also, as the officers develop and achieve greater flexibility, for tactical reasons to give a broader coverage of the extremist field. These rents too have been affected by the soaring property market which will be reflected in the estimated expenses for the coming year.

Transport

25. The nondescript hire cars, used since the formation of the Squad, continued to be of invaluable assistance to the officers in carrying out their duties. Home Office authority exists for the hire of three vehicles on a 'permanent' basis and a fourth as and when necessary; all vehicles being frequently changed for security and to comply with the law on hiring. Home Office have recently approved a Special Branch proposal for an alternative method of supplying transport for the SDS - the purchase of an older vehicle for the exclusive use of each field officer - registered, taxed and insured in his cover identity (Secret file No. TR/19/1968/1 refers). This will undoubtedly be more secure and will probably be cheaper, than hiring. It can be anticipated that the greater mobility it gives the officers will be reflected in the Squad's work.

Finance

26. Statements of account are attached. Of the £5,500 Home Office allocation for the 15 month period ending 31 March 1973, approximately £506 remains, but with the monthly expenditure averaging £400, a deficit of about £100 is anticipated. This is entirely due to the rise in the cost of renting all property in the past year beyond what could have been foreseen. Estimates for the coming year allow for the trend continuing which is essential if we are to avoid the possibility of financial considerations influencing decisions which should be based only on security.

27. £5,500 should cover the anticipated expenses of the SDS for 1973/4, but if second HQ premises become available an additional sum would be necessary, the actual amount depending on how soon they were acquired. A reserve of £1,000 would cover this contingency.

Future activities

28. As the situation in Ireland appears to be approaching a climax, further reactions here - either in the form of an IRA operation or increased demonstrations by sympathetic groups - must be expected. The SDS fortunately has officers well placed to supplement the Branch's surveillance of the main Irish organisations in London, but they are few in number

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29. The majority of big demonstrations in recent times have, because of the lack of sufficiently emotive home-based issues, been in protest against traumatic events abroad - Hungary, Biafra, Bangla Desh, Vietnam - and the most successful were those which could be related to the prejudices or fears of a large section of the public such as "Ban the Bomb" and "Stop the Seventy Tour" campaigns. The feeling amongst extremists now is that they no longer need to look outside this country for issues which will attract mass opposition to the policies of the government - unemployment, inflation, "anti-trade union legislation" and the record number of strikes in 1972 are seen by them as evidence of the breakdown of capitalist society which they have every intention of speeding. All the main extremist groups, the marxists, maoists, trotskysts and anarchists are therefore re-emphasising their determination to participate in industrial affairs and are insisting on their members joining trades unions. They are unlikely significantly to influence trades union decisions but they may succeed in introducing greater militancy into industrial demonstrations. The fact that their approaches have not been rejected out of hand by the trade unionists is ominous.

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30. Students too are showing signs of greater affinity with the workers - the economic situation is affecting the value of their grants and their chances of satisfactory post graduate employment - and they are likely to contribute more significantly to demonstrations than they recently have. They are traditionally the least inhibited of demonstrators and, because their campuses are sacrosanct and nationally widespread they are not easy to identify. The most politically extreme students in London, however, tend to be members of extra mural groups which bring them within the aegis of the SDS and the possibility of advance warning of their intentions.

31. The extremists however see the recent entry of this country into the Common Market as the ideal issue for uniting all factions of the left - and even attracting substantial moderate support. Opposition to, or at least doubts about the merits of membership of the EEC pervades the political spectrum and only the extremists

inefficiency and inherent distrust of each other has so far prevented a serious attempt to mould this into a cogent force. Something along the lines of the National Convention of the Left - the last attempt at uniting the Revolutionary Movement in 1969 - seems inevitable, and whilst such an amorphous grouping would pose few problems of penetration, if its components succeeded in suppressing factional differences long enough to mount a sustained campaign, it could test the resources of police.

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Detective Inspector

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

Cash carried over from previous account	£658.30 $\frac{1}{2}$	To: Rent	£5,305.27
1972 budget	£4,500.00	Electricity and Gas	14.77
1973 (January-March) budget	£1,000.00	Telephone	172.23
		Incidentals	159.24
			<hr/>
			£5,651.51
			<hr/>
		Cash in hand	£506.79 $\frac{1}{2}$
	<u>£6,158.30$\frac{1}{2}$</u>		<u>£6,158.30$\frac{1}{2}$</u>



	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>RENT</u>	<u>ELECTRICITY AND GAS</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>	<u>INCIDENTALS</u>
1971	NO VEMBER	203.50	-	-	-
	DE CEMBER	277.41	-	-	133.28
1972	JANUARY	380.75	3.96	-	13.02
	FEBRUARY	311.33	2.44	-	-
	MAR CH	384.48	-	-	-
	APRIL	336.05	-	6.86	1.14
	MAY	382.95	-	-	0.75
	JUNE	440.70	-	-	-
	JULY	240.00	-	-	-
	AUGUST	581.60	1.36	-	-
	SEPTEMBER	343.75	2.97	-	5.74
	O CTOBER	365.00	-	-	-
	NO VEMBER	263.00	-	119.87	-
	DE CEMBER	365.25	4.04	45.50	0.31
1973	JANUARY	389.00	-	-	5.00
	FEBRUARY	40.50	-	-	-
		<hr/>			
		5,305.27	14.77	172.23	159.24
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Grand Total: £5,651.51

Balance in Hand: 506.79½

£6,158.30½