

## Oban Officer

'ON

THE

BEAT'

in the USA

**'THEY have better equipment and bigger cars but our communications system is far superior.'**

That was the conclusion Oban Police Constable Jeremy Moore came to after a fortnight's stay in Laurinburg shadowing Depute Larry Tunstall, who had spent time with PC Moore in Oban in June.

After arriving at the police station in Laurinburg, PC Moore was sworn in as a Depute and was given his own badge.

That was the beginning of an eye-opening fortnight.

PC Moore travelled with the Oban High School exchange students who also spent the fortnight with their American hosts.

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'These are things I think we will need to look at in the future.'

PC Moore recalls one incident in the school on his first day where a 16-year-old pupil was caught one-dollar's worth of cannabis.

After being interviewed by the school he was arrested and taken into custody with the bail bond set at \$3,000. Because the bail could not be met, he was held for 10 days before receiving substantial community service and a fine. Jeremy said: 'The severity of the sentence surprised me

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'It wasn't at all like I expected it to be,' said PC Moore.

'The police have even more paperwork than we have!

'In terms of IT we're miles ahead of them with our computer systems and communication. They don't use e-mail to communicate between officers and our database of criminal records etc is better.

'On the other hand, their uniform and equipment is far superior to ours and more money is spent on the individual officer.

'Larry carries a gun but in 11 years' service he has never once shot it in anger.

'When we were on patrols his feeling was he treats everyone like they have a gun, whereas we don't. When I joined him on raids it really sharpened my attention watching where people's hands were.

'Larry was shocked we didn't have more to protect ourselves and was surprised at how laid back we were; how we were more friendly with the general public.

'However, one of the big things I noticed was in the high school. They had an electronic ID sys-

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They all went to the state fair where the constable was interviewed by state and national media.

He said: 'A stranger in Laurinburg really does stick out but they reacted very openly to me and welcomed us all into their homes.

'I was very lucky to travel with a great group who were fantastic ambassadors for their country and their school. There were 140 people, including sheriffs and judges, at a Rotary lunch we attended and all the Oban pupils had to speak at it.'

In summing up the experience PC Moore said: 'The advantage for me as a police officer was the opportunity to experience another culture and watch how the police operate in another country. 'Both the pupils and I have fond memories of the friendships we made and the hospitality that we received, which we in Scotland are so famous for.'

