£100,000 drugs find on Borth beach

by Peter Roberts

Customs and Police officers have mounted an intensive sweep of all beaches near Borth following the discovery on the resort's beach of a package containing high-quality cocaine with a "street" value of £160,000.

And as soon as weather conditions permit further searches of more inaccessible beaches in the area will be made by the Customs sea-craft, it was disclosed this week.

"Clearly, the recent storms may have a bearing on the discovery which could have been washed overboard from a craft many miles away from Borth," said the Carmarthen-based Customs and Excise assistant collector Hugh Barnard.

Although the small 12" x 4" x 3" polystyrene-wrapped package, weighing 1.1 kilo, was discovered by an unaided member of the public at the end of January, Dyfed-Powys Police and the Customs did not reveal details until last Monday.

Mr. Barnard said the package was passed on to the local police and when its contents were examined they were found to be high quality cocaine. It was now at the Government's forensic laboratory in Chester being examined.

Dyfed-Powys Police press

Inspector David Davies said on Monday: "The package contained a white substance which had been contaminated by sea water. If the cocaine had reached the streets of Britain it could have had a street-value of £160,000."

"It is believed the package had been in the water for a considerable time and with the recent storms could have traveled many miles from its source before being washed up on the beach."

"This is the first time a package of this nature has been found in the Dyfed-Powys Police area. It could have originated many miles out at sea and have been disturbed anywhere in the world," said Mr. Davies.

He urged that if any further packages were washed up during the winter storms the public should inform the police if they found anything similar on the beach.

"They should notify their nearest police station or police officer and not touch the package, if at all possible, with bare hands but just mark its position," he added.

Mr. Barnard said enquiries into the possible origins were continuing and he too urged any packages, particularly those containing unfamiliar substances, which may be discovered on beaches in the area should be handed into Customs Officers at Fishguard, Pembroke Dock or local police stations.

"Caution in handling packages with bare hands should be exercised as leakage of the contents may occur after lengthy exposure to sea water," he warned.

The Pembrokeshire coastline has often been used in recent years by drug smugglers because of its many miles of rugged coast and isolated coves.

During the past ten years successful drug-smuggling operations in the area prevented about 64 million worth of drugs reaching Britain's streets.

Aberystwyth police this morning revealed they had checked on another suspicious package found at Borth yesterday but they did not believe it had anything to do with drugs.

A spokesman said: "It was smaller in size again and not wrapped in polythene like the package of cocaine. Although it contained a white substance it does not show any signs of constituting a controlled substance.

"However, we will carry out further checks on it to positively identify the contents," he added."