

MBX bikers dice with death in railway "chicken" stunt

MBX-BIKERS as young as eight are riding straight at onrushing express trains, leaping from the track just before impact.

Other children are sniffing glue, lying between rails and then letting the Inter-City carriages thunder over them.

Now police and British Rail fear it is only a matter of time before the "chicken" games end in death.

And terrified train drivers have dubbed the daredevil-hit stretch of track near Andover, Hampshire, "Nightmare Valley".

They have visited schools, or written to teachers, to try to warn off the eight to 11-year-olds.

But games have intensified with the end of term. Now extra police patrols are planned. For BR Southern Region, spokesman Graham Coombs said: "The reality of dicing with trains is a gory death. Sadly, often the first that parents know about their children playing on the lines is when a policeman turns up on the doorstep." Three children died on Southern Region's lines last year. But that could be nothing to the toll in "nightmare valley". Drivers say the children ride straight towards them. The specially-sprung MBX bikes, with thick tyres for cross-country riding, easily bounce over sleepers.

QUESTIONS

1. How old are the children?
2. Are they drugged?
3. Has action been taken against these facts?
4. Why do they use MBX bikes?
5. Vocabulary:
 - Dice:
 - Carriage:
 - Dub:
 - Nightmare: