18th August 2004

Teen made false allegation of rape

A school girl has been censured by police for making a false allegation of rape.

Cleveland Police say the 13-year-old's lie not only tied up valuable police resources - but in the wide publicity her bogus claims generated, gave the area an undeserved bad name.

Now the teenager who lives at Eaglescliffe, near Stockton, has received a formal caution.

Detectives went to see her yesterday, after a 23-year-old man walked into South Bank police station, Middlesbrough, earlier this week, in connection with the alleged attack, which the girl claimed took place in a Middlesbrough back street at 12.15am on Sunday.

A Force spokesman said: "Following his version of events the 13-year-old was seen today and admitted making a false allegation. As a result the complaint has been withdrawn.

"She will be cautioned for wasting police time. Reported incidents of this nature raise the fear of crime. This is a malicious allegation against a member of the public, that diverted a wide range of police resources into investigating an incident which simply did not happen."

He added: "This was been not only a costly exercise for us, but it blighted the name of this area. The widespread publicity generated by this fictitious allegation paints a bad image of the town which is totally unjustified."

The teenager claimed she was attacked in a doorway in Elliot Street, Middlesbrough, after socialising with a girl friend, also aged 13, in the Purple Onion public house on Saturday night.

The youngster had told her mother she was sleeping-over at a friend's house. Police spent many man hours sifting through film footage shot by batteries of close circuit television cameras around the pub - and interviewed customers, staff and visitors to the area.