

East Division

Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

Issue 1 December 2014



Welcome to the first edition of the East Division Neighbourhood Watch newsletter which I hope you will find both informative and reassuring. It is my intention to produce a quarterly Neighbourhood Watch newsletter and a huge thank you to Mrs Karen Uzzell-Childs, our newest volunteer in the Dover office, for researching and producing this edition. This first edition will concentrate on burglary as a theme; this will align us to the Kent Police Operation Castle initiative – seeking to reduce burglaries in the run up to Christmas. In later editions we shall have similar themes, and I will also update you with Neighbourhood Watch developments around the East Division – i.e. events that are planned, new scheme launches, Committee dates etc. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers who have worked so hard on your behalf in checking the crime reports, sending out the messages on a daily basis and maintaining and updating the database. Thank you to the following volunteers:

Herne Bay – Ivan Barnes, Patricia Turner, Brenda Hunter, Kathy Wilson and Brenda Booth (who left us in June)

Folkestone – Lucinda Green, David Evans, and Richard Denham

Dover – Peter Rothschild, Brian Town, John Guy, Karen Uzzell-Childs and Ronnie Steed (who left us in October)

Ashford – Chris Young and Bob Bowen-Nelmes

Margate – Gordon Eyles and Lynn Wright

With Christmas fast approaching and many of you making preparations to visit family and friends we would like to offer some general advice to ensure all goes smoothly. Historically, as the nights draw in there is unfortunately an increase in the volume of burglaries in homes. At this time of year burglars know that many homes are filling up with new and expensive items, and homeowners are often away visiting or going out to seasonal celebrations. Whilst much of the advice given appears to be common sense we cannot stress enough that simple steps to secure property and vehicles just aren't taken. On a daily basis between 25%-50% of the crime the volunteers and I look at is preventable and need never have happened. We hope the following advice given in this newsletter will make you more aware of the potential risks and how to prevent them so that you and your family will be able to have a safe and peaceful Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Alexandra Harrington. Volunteer and Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer – East Division.

Operation Castle



**Kent
Police**

This initiative ran from 27th October to 16th November 2014 but the advice is always relevant. The campaigns objectives were three fold; ***Light it/Lock it/List it.***

Kent Police commenced Operation Castle to raise awareness around prevention of burglary in the run up to Christmas and the New Year. This initiative is supported by **Kent Neighbourhood Watch** and **Immobilise** (The UK National Property Register).

Light it

- Make your house look occupied – even when it isn't
- Use an automatic timer switch to turn interior lights and a radio on and off
- Light dark or hidden entrances using low wattage timed security lighting

Lock it

- Double-lock uPVC doors and close windows
- Keep side gates locked - burglars often break into homes from the garden where they have less chance of being seen
- If bins are emptied before you leave for work return them to your garden - they can be used as climbing aids if left on display
- Instead use bins in side entrances as obstructions
- Trim high hedging/plant growth - they could provide cover for a burglar
- Secure your shed - tools that are easily accessible can be used to break into your home
- Don't keep large amounts of money or jewellery at home. If you have to, use a safe that is stored out of sight and fixed to a solid floor.

List it

All valuables items should be registered for free on www.immobilise.com - logging details helps us return them to you if we find or seize them. These include:

- ✓ Expensive jewellery and antiques
- ✓ Bicycles
- ✓ Laptop, desktop computers and tablets (Make a note of all model and serial numbers of electrical items)
- ✓ Mobile phones and MP3 players
- ✓ Home entertainment systems including TVs and games consoles

IMMOBILISE 
PROPERTY CRIME

Immobilise - the world's largest FREE register of possession ownership details and together with its sister sites the Police's National Mobile Property Register, a national police database of property ownership and stolen property records and CheckMEND , form a very effective tool in helping to reduce crime and repatriate recovered personal property to its rightful owners. The two websites for more information are www.thenmpr.com and www.checkmend.com

Immobilise, can be used by members of the public and businesses to register their valued possessions or company assets, and exclusive to Immobilise all account holders registered items and ownership details are viewable on the Police national property database the NMPR (www.thenmpr.com).

- For more information and advice on burglary prevention go to the Kent Police website www.kent.police.uk/burglary
- To register your property in event of a burglary go to Immobilise at www.immobilise.com



To further assist the Police with their inquiries and increase the chances of stolen items being recovered it would be useful if you took photographs of all your valuable property, keeping both a hard and digital copy.

Is it Yours - reuniting owners with stolen property

An online initiative by Kent Police to reunite stolen property with its rightful owners has now been rolled out across the county.

A new section of the Kent Police website called '[Is It Yours?](#)' was launched earlier this year, containing photos of items seized during enforcement operations, but where the true owner has not been identified.

The page now includes property recovered from all parts of Kent and officers are hopeful it will help victims of crime be reunited with their stolen property during the burglary campaign.

Superintendent Russell said: "We regularly seize items that we believe are stolen and we carry out enquiries on our own databases to see if we can identify the true owner. However, this isn't always possible, and I hope that 'Is It Yours' will be successful in returning items to the rightful owner. It is often the case burglars will take items that have very little monetary value, but the sentimental value is huge, so it will be really satisfying for us as well as for victims if we can return that property, and all the memories associated with it."

Recovered items are displayed by Kent Police online at the following web address:

http://www.kent.police.uk/appeals/is_it_yours

If you do recognise an item that belongs to you, please call or email:

Tel. 01474 366666

Email: umic.north@kent.pnn.police.uk

Alternatively you can call Kent Crime Stoppers if you wish to remain anonymous on 0800 555111. Please make sure you quote Kent Police and the reference number next to the appropriate property image.

www.crimestoppers-uk.org/in-your-area/south-east/kent



Operation Castle update from Media Services Kent Police

Police in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley have been working together in a major cross-county campaign to tackle burglary – the first of its kind.

Officers from each force co-ordinated activities during the three week initiative from 27 October to 16 November 2014, to halt border-hopping offenders and encourage the public to protect themselves from becoming a burglary victim. The result was a reduction in burglary offences.

The campaign was a joint effort in order to deter those offenders who might simply cross county borders to offend, once aware of targeted police activity in a particular area.

This year's co-ordinated approach stretched from Margate in the east to Chichester in the west and as far north as Milton Keynes - an area of more than 5,600 square miles and more than six million people.

The dates selected to run the campaign reflect a trend from recent years, whereby the south east region has experienced a rise in burglary reports during this period.

A combined total of 2,645 burglaries were reported during those dates in Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Thames Valley in 2012 and 2013.

The campaign ran with the strapline 'Burglars mess with your head, not just your home', reminding potential victims that burglary can leave you feeling scared and anxious long after the crime has been committed. Officers worked with partner agencies to reinforce this message, whilst offering specific crime prevention advice to the public.

The result was a drop in the number of offences, with more than 30 people being charged in Kent. Compared to the same three week period in 2013, the county saw a reduction of over 60 burglary offences (321 offences committed this year against 384 over the same period last year).

Reductions in burglary offences were also reported by Sussex and Surrey Police during the campaign.

Notable results included:

- Eight people arrested and charged after suspected stolen vehicles were discovered in Queenborough.
- A 15 year-old boy charged with committing a burglary in West Hougham, near Dover.
- Russell Dunn sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison for committing a burglary in Herne Bay.
- Shane Doyle sentenced to three years in prison for committing a burglary in Maidstone.
- Darren Morris jailed for five years after stealing jewellery during a burglary in Sevenoaks.

Crime prevention messages were communicated to the public through a variety of channels including railway station platform advertising at busy stations and a radio announcement on Heart FM.

Mobile Police Stations were based outside busy areas at electronic goods stores, with Police Community Support Officers handing out crime prevention material and encouraging people to register items on the property database, Immobilise - so if they are stolen they can be returned to their rightful owner. More than 100 people registered on www.immobilise.com.

Special Constables, Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and Police Community Support Officers delivered crime prevention leaflets to areas identified by police intelligence as at risk, and officers visited jewellers to advise customers about security marking valuables; pawnbrokers were also spoken to about receiving suspected stolen items.

Superintendent Lee Russell, from the Partnerships and Communities department at Kent Police, said: "This is the first time we've teamed up with three other forces for a sustained campaign, and we are really pleased with the results. Comparing the campaign period to the same three weeks last year shows there were 63 fewer offences this year, which is really good news. We've seen lots of people visiting our property marking events and logging valuables, and hopefully residents will continue to sign up to this service. Our work will continue through December in the lead up to Christmas to ensure we continue to pursue active criminals relentlessly. During this operation there have been over 70 arrests for burglary related offences. Already 30 of these people have been charged and remanded in custody or bailed to court. This focused activity will continue to serve our communities by helping to keep the number of burglary victims in Kent to a minimum."

During the campaign Kent Police joined forces with Kent Neighbourhood Watch. More than 7,000 volunteers were passed key information via the Kent Community Messaging Service. The force also provided crime prevention advice to care organisations to pass on during home visits to elderly residents.

Most Wanted

Kent Police released details of its most wanted burglary suspects as part of the campaign. Detectives from Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Thames Valley Police are hunting for a number of men they believe could be responsible for dozens of offences across the region.

The three most wanted suspects linked to burglaries in Kent are:

David Powell - wanted in connection with three burglaries in the Gravesend area between 25 and 27 February. Powell is 26 and has connections with the Gravesend area and London.



Simon Knights - wanted for questioning about a burglary in Margate on 15 July as well as numerous other break-ins throughout the South East. A £2,500 reward is being offered for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the 38-year-old for at least one of the offences.



Patrick Doran - linked to a burglary in Lennox Road, Gravesend, on 16 September. Doran is 39 and has connections throughout Kent and also in the Northampton area.



Some additional things you can do to protect your home over Christmas and the New Year

- **Keep presents out of view:** A tree surrounded by presents in plain view of a window or open door will draw attention.
- **Be careful if you are updating your status on Facebook, Twitter etc.** Do not advertise that you and your family will be away for Christmas or the New Year. Also, don't forget to cancel newspapers and milk deliveries.
- **Dispose of packaging that contained expensive items carefully:** Burglars will look for signs that new presents or electrical equipment have recently been bought
- **Outside Decorations:** Ensure windows and doors are securely locked at night time or when you are away from home. This is especially important if you have outside lights or decorations that have leads coming from inside the house.
- **Sheds and garages:** Keep well secured with goods locks and security lighting. Do not leave tools and ladders unsecured, these could be used to break into your property. Bikes and expensive equipment should be property marked and maybe even listed with your insurer. Check your policy for details of cover.

And finally something to bear in mind:

If you asked a burglar whereabouts in your home he/she might search for hidden valuables, here are some possible answers you might be given:

- In the top drawer of the dresser and every cupboard drawer that can be opened
- Under the mattress
- Under the kitchen sink
- Inside the linen basket
- Inside the kitchen cupboards - especially that milk jug pushed to back, or that old biscuit tin on top of the cupboard
- In the fridge
- In your children's rooms - over the Christmas period many burglars will be on the lookout for the latest toys and electronic gadgets
- Underneath that plant pot by the front door - spare keys should be left with a trusted neighbour, friend or relative

Please look at your home and if any of the above points apply then think about moving items to a more secure location and investing in improved security measures

For further security advice you can go to the national Neighbourhood Watch website which is **ourwatch** website www.ourwatch.org.uk or Tel. **0116 229 3118**

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Additional support and advice can also be found by contacting the Kent County Council Community Wardens, details of which can be found on the KCC website:

www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/community-wardens

KCC community wardens are currently out between 7.30am and 10pm every day in 128 Kent communities.

They:

- can tackle low-level crime and antisocial behaviour (such as graffiti, littering, fly tipping and vandalism)
- can take names and addresses and control traffic
- are a reassuring uniformed presence
- are fully trained to the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme before starting their work
- encourage communities to work together and make things better for everyone
- work closely with Kent Police and other professional authorities
- talk with local people, offering information and advice
- take part in local community activities.



They don't make arrests.

Helpful Contact Details

Keep this page somewhere safe, perhaps by your telephone or computer

Useful Telephone numbers

Dial **999** - Emergencies only, if your life (or that of another) is threatened/in danger or if a crime is in progress

Dial **101** - Non-urgent crime, anti-social behaviour or general enquires. If you need to contact your Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) dial **101** and ask for an appointment.

Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired, Text Police and your message to **600066**

Victim Support **0845 30 30 900**

Crime stoppers **0800 555 111**

Kent Trading Standards **08454 04 05 06**

Kent County Council **0300 041 4141**

Kent Fire and Rescue Service **01622 692121** - Please note: In the case of an emergency, you should dial **999** or **112**

Useful websites

www.kent.police.uk

www.victimsupport.org.uk

www.crimestoppers-uk.org

www.immobilise.com

www.ourwatch.org.uk

www.police.uk

www.kent.gov.uk

www.kent.fire-uk.org

