

LOOK-OUT

**Muirwood Neighbourhood Watch
Incorporating Thomson & Easter Currie Watches**

Merger!

The question of whether the three Currie Watches should merge was discussed at the Muirwood AGM and the outcome was that it was agreed to support the other two Watches but not to go into a full-blown merger at this time.

You will observe that we are incorporating Thomson and Easter Currie Watches into our newsletter and we welcome the other Watch members aboard. At this moment the combined membership of the three Watches is nearly 1,300.

A meeting has been arranged for 15th February between a steering group from Muirwood Watch and the Street Co-ordinators of the other Watches to try to generate some interest in keeping them going, and a report will be submitted to the appropriate meeting of Muirwood Neighbourhood Watch.

Subscription

It was agreed that the subscription for all three Watches would be maintained at the present level of £1 per annum which would be collected before 30th April.

POLICE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Balerno Police Station 449-5991

Police News Update, September - December, 2005

Theft:

- 13/09 **Muir Wood Road** - Pottery planter with Begonias stolen from garden.
- 27/09 **Riccarton Mains Road** - Vehicle stolen, recovered in Corslet Road.
- 20/10 Palmer Road - Peugeot car stolen - found burned out in a Balerno field.
- 25/10 **Riccarton Mains Road** - Milk stolen from outside a house.
- 27/10 Forthview Crescent - Lights stolen from garden - Juvenile charged.
- 02/11 **Lanark Road West** - In the evening, a white male wearing a dark jacket approached a youth and took from him his mobile phone.
- 03/11 Currie Primary School - Pedal cycle stolen - local youth charged.
- 04/12 Currievale Park - Number plate stolen from a red Nissan car.
- 18/12 Robbery committed outside Gibson Craig Hall - Male arrested.

Vandalism:

- 08/09 **Lanark Road West** - House window smashed.
- 16/09 **Curriehill Road** - Vehicle windscreen damaged.
- 26/09 Lanark Road West - Bus window smashed near Dolphin Avenue.
- 06/10 Library window at Curriehill Primary School broken.
- 08/10 **Muir Wood Road** - Window smashed - possibly by air gun pellet.
- 15/10 **Lanark Road West** - Car rear window smashed with bottle.
- 15/10 **Riccarton Drive** - Vehicle rear window smashed.
- 18/10 **Bryce Road** - Sun-Luk front window smashed.
- 05/11 **Riccarton Avenue** - House window broken overnight.
- 18/11 Palmer Road - House window broken.
- 10/12 **Lanark Road West** - Fence damaged.
- 31/12 **Riccarton Mains Road** - Three vehicles were damaged.

Break-ins:

- 06/10 **Riccarton Grove** - Vehicle broken into - Car CD stereo stolen.
- 21/10 **Riccarton Crescent** - Vehicle broken into - power tools stolen.
- 30/10 Forthview Road - A number of vehicles broken into - the alarm of one was activated at 1am - a hooded male was seen running away.
- 01/11 **Bryce Road** - Attempt to break into a Ford car.
- 03/11 Palmer Road - Rover car broken into - alarm activated - culprits left.
- 04/11 **Lanark Road West** - shed entered - tools and fishing gear stolen.
- 07/11 **Muir Wood Road** - Garage broken into - nothing stolen.
- 18/11 **Lanark Road West** - Car broken into - CD player stolen.
- 03/12 **Nether Currie Road** - Attempt to force entry into a garage.
- Between 21/12 and 27/12 **Muir Wood Crescent** - garage was entered and power tools stolen.

About 1030am on 16th November a woman member of our Watch had her handbag taken from her as she walked along **Muir Wood Road**. The culprit is described as male, white, 5'5" tall wearing a beige baseball cap and beige and blue jumper. She did have a personal alarm with her but it was in her stolen handbag. It is recommended that the alarm be hand held with the cord around the wrist. Thankfully the lady, although badly shaken at the time, seems to have recovered. There have been a number of similar incidents throughout the City and these are being investigated by the divisional CID.

REMEMBER! - BE ON YOUR GUARD - EVEN IN DAYLIGHT.

Bogus Callers:

During the afternoon of 4th October, two males, claiming to be from the Water Board, called on an elderly man in Stewart Avenue. They stole a small amount of cash. One was described as white, 5'6", 16 years wearing a light red and brown anorak. The second looked slightly younger and wore a light anorak. This emphasises the need for us to check the credentials of anyone claiming to be from one of the utility companies, particularly if there are two together, one of whom can keep us engaged while the other robs us. If there is any doubt whatsoever, keep them on the outside of your locked door while you check with their company or with the Police.

Remote Reporting Scheme:

Many people are reluctant to report crimes and other incidents direct to the Police. Remote reporting allows the reporting of such matters to a third party agency which forwards the report to the Police. The agency may also offer support and advice to the individual concerned. Lothian and Borders Police have been operating this system since 2000 with such success that the number of remote reporting sites in Edinburgh has risen to 18. Full details of the scheme are on the Police website at www.lbp.police.uk/takecontrol or by calling 0131 311 3909.

Joining Forces To Fight Fire:

Injury and damage caused by fire concern all the emergency services. Since April, 2004, Lothian and Borders Fire Rescue Service have been running a fire prevention initiative funded by the Scottish Executive and the Council. It allows for any house in the area to have a home safety check and, if necessary, have a battery operated smoke alarm installed **free of charge**. These checks are carried out by local fire fighters and can be arranged by either:

- contacting any one of the 36 local fire stations in this area, or
- calling the free phone number 0800 169 0320

To date, 11,500 smoke alarms have been installed. The idea has proved a great success and service quality checks carried out by the Fire Service have found that 95% of people who received a home visit felt safer afterwards.

The Police have organised joint initiatives with the Fire Service. These have seen Fire Fighters and local Police calling at houses together to offer advice on all aspects of fire safety and home security. These visits have also been very well received.

Summary of Minutes of Committee Meeting on 5th December, 2005.

Present: David Eatock (Chair), 11 Members, 3 Apologies.

In Attendance: Dave Oxenham, Duncan Law and Bill Manson.

Welcome: David welcomed everyone, especially the new members from the AGM and the representatives from the “Mid Currie” Watches.

Thomson/Easter Currie “Merger”: David gave an update on the proposal agreed at the AGM and on correspondence with (their description) the “Mid Currie” Watches. A meeting with Sergeant MacIver had reached agreement despite Police reservations regarding the potential size of the combined Watches.

Dave and Duncan gave more information about their Watches. They would advise their members that subscriptions are due but would not collect them for the moment as this would mean a larger distribution of funds if the Watches had to be wound up.

Gordon felt we should try to kick-start these Watches as it would be detrimental to see them go down. It was agreed to call a meeting of the Mid Currie Watches’ distributors to try to establish a Committee with the help of Muirwood. Gordon would try to organise this as a cheese and wine evening funded by Muirwood.

Treasurer’s Report: Bank balance = £1160.57. Wheelie bin stickers and personal attack alarms are still available from the Treasurer.

Assault in Muir Wood Road: As detailed in Police News, one of our members, Mrs Jean MacKay, was mugged in daylight in Muir Wood Road. Gordon was thanked for the concern shown on our behalf to Mrs MacKay.

Travelling People: David, after a call from Duncan Law, had spoken to the Police about travelling people camped on the Kinleith Mill site. The Police were monitoring the site on a daily basis. It was noted that the travellers have now moved on.

Timetable for Meetings: Meeting dates for 2006 will be:

Monday, 6th February Tuesday, 2nd May Monday, 4th September
Monday, 4th December AGM Wednesday, 1st November

Jet Petrol Station: The planning application (reported elsewhere) has been withdrawn as it was invalid. Provost Haugh’s representatives (who were most affected) would advise the Committee of any further developments.

Muir Wood Road: Cars are being parked in a dangerous position at the entrance to Muir Wood Road from Lanark Road. The Chairman would ask the Council to mark both sides of the hill with double yellow lines.

Condition of Roads and Pavements: Last May, David wrote to the Council about the condition of our roads and pavements but was told there are no monies available for our area. A letter from Alex Kane to our MP, Alistair Darling, elicited a similar reply. It was agreed to invite the roads Network Manager to come to Currie to see, for himself, the problems. Councillor Paisley should also be involved.

Next Meeting: Currie Kirk House on Monday, 6th February.

Volunteers to take Minutes of the 2006 meetings are:

February - Gordon Laing May - Bill Gordon

September - David Eatock November (AGM) - Ian Proudfoot

Garden Security

Your garden, as well as your house, has valued possessions that thieves would love to steal: plants, trees, hanging baskets, containers, tools, lawnmowers, etc. It also has equipment which could help them break into your house.

A few simple, inexpensive precautions can make your garden and your home more secure. Look at the perimeter - planting a prickly plant will not only screen your valuables but will also act as a deterrent, but don't let the plant grow too high as that may then screen the thief from the street or your neighbours. If you have a fence, plant a thorny climbing plant against it.

In the garden, keep tools out of sight when you are not using them. A spade, for example, can be used to force a window and door locks, and ladders - keep them under lock and key - need we say any more. If you have a garden shed make sure its door and window have substantial locks.

The back of your house is more vulnerable than the front and an added deterrent, if there is a side passage, would be the fitting of a lockable security gate. Lastly the installation of security lighting covering the back garden and sides of the house is highly desirable.

Planting suggestions to provide natural protection around your property are: Common Holly, Pyracantha Firethorn, Berberis, Mahonia.

Is your Insurance Company giving you the discount available to most members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes?

Dealings with City of Edinburgh Council

Jet Petrol Station

As you will have read in the C & B News, there is a proposal before the Council to demolish the existing structures at the Jet Petrol Station and to construct a new forecourt (including pump islands and canopy), new forecourt shop/sales building, new parking provision, new car wash, new ATM and new underground storage tanks.

On your behalf your Committee expressed their concern to the Council and have been advised that we will be kept informed of future developments and consulted where relevant. We have also been advised of the following:

There will be 3 fuel deliveries a week and one composite delivery daily. Ideally the deliveries will be at or before 8 am.

The petrol station will be open from 7 am to 11 pm.

There will be no floodlighting on the site.

There will be some cooking of food on the premises, but not from raw. The products will be baked from frozen.

We have still to be advised of the acoustic implications of the car wash, jet wash, vacuum and air/water plant.

State of the Roads

Concern has again been expressed to the Council regarding the state of the roads within the estate and a meeting has been arranged between a representative of the Council and representatives of Neighbourhood Watch to provide the Council with first hand information about the state of our roads and pavements which, in some parts of the Watch area have not been correctly repaired for nearly 40 years. It has also been suggested to the Council that they may wish to consider painting yellow lines around the brow of the hill from Lanark Road in to the estate at Muir Wood Road.

Members will also be aware of the deteriorating condition of the road between the two bus stops in Juniper Green. The Council are aware that the road between Baberton Avenue and the start of Lanark Road West is nearing the end of its useful life and will be looking at the situation along with many other contenders for funds for repair.

Finally, the Council are about to embark on an Accident Investigation and Prevention Scheme for the section of Riccarton Mains Road North of the railway bridge where most of the accidents have happened over the years. This

will include anti-skid surfacing, warning signs and a vehicle speed activated “Slow Down” sign. It is also hoped that the Council will promote a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit from 60 mph to 40 mph in Riccarton Mains Road between the entrance to Currie and Heriot Watt University. We would strongly urge you all to support this order when the time comes.

Points to Ponder

- House breakers do not want to be observed.
- At the front of a house keep fences and hedges low.
- Install security lighting which comes on as someone approaches.
- Arrange for the tell-tale signs of absence to be eliminated e.g. newspapers in the letterbox, milk bottles etc.
- Ranch style fences make good ladders: consider fence panels in their place.
- Always keep the side gate bolted and locked.
- Thick and thorny bushes or trees form a natural barrier and are very effective.
- Consider treating the drain pipes with anti-climb paint.
- A strong trellis makes a good ladder.
- Always ensure that your ladders are securely locked away and not left unattended.
- Garages contain many desirable items, particularly tools, freezers etc, so always ensure that the doors are locked when not in use.
- Keep a photographic record of valuable items in a secure place.
- Keep a record of the serial numbers of such items as Video, T V, Hi-Fi, camera's etc.
- Mark your valuable items with an ultra-violet sensitive pen using your post code followed by the number of your house.
- If you have louvred windows, make the removal of the glass louvres difficult by using a resin adhesive such as Araldite to keep the glass in place.
- Burglars try to avoid breaking glass - it is difficult to climb in or escape through. They are looking for a nice clean entry and exit: don't leave your house keys lying around.
- It is recommended that internal doors should not be locked. If a burglar gains entry he will cause additional damage.
- One of the main objects of burglary these days is, because of keyless cars, to acquire the card for entry into your vehicle.

Car Theft

Police Inspector Alan Grant

The theft of car keys by “slip in” to houses followed by the theft of the car remains a “*modus operandi*” that concerns me, yet it could so easily be prevented.

The car thief relies on the owner abandoning car keys very close to the entry point to the house and leaving the door insecure. By simply getting into the habit of keeping your car keys in a more secure location you will thwart the thief. In many cases you will probably not even know he has “looked” for your key. Of course, you should also get into the habit of securing the house door even when you are at home!

You do live in a safe, low crime area but thieves can try to use this to their advantage and look for complacency!

Editor’s Note on the above

This is not something I have ever done but, since reading the article from Inspector Grant, I have been paying much more attention to what other people do and have been surprised by the number who leave their car keys just inside the front door and do not lock the door.

You have been warned!

Look-out

Articles for inclusion in the Newsletter are welcomed. Copy for the next issue should be sent, as soon as possible, to the Editor at 31 Nether Currie Road, EH14 5HX (449-5566)

Look-out is published quarterly by Muirwood Neighbourhood Watch.
Printed by Currie Community High School
Cartoons by Mr Bert Burnap
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The views expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views held by the Editor or the Muirwood Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
