

LOOK-OUT

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

Local Police Changes

Sergeant McIver, who has been our local Sergeant at Balerno Police Station for a number of years, has now moved on. Our good wishes for the future go with him.

We welcome in his place Sergeant Tony Catlin and trust that we shall continue to enjoy with him the same degree of friendly co-operation which we have had with his predecessors. Perhaps it will be possible for him to come to our next Annual General Meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, 1st November (mark it in your diaries!), when he can meet a cross-section of our community. In the meantime, we wish him well in his new assignment.

PC Stevie Lamb continues as the Community Police Officer for our area.

Next Committee Meeting

The date for the next meeting of the Committee will be Monday, 4th September at 7.30pm in the Currie Kirk Meeting Room. Anyone who has anything to contribute to the meeting or who simply wants to observe is welcome to attend.

Articles for Inclusion in Look-out

If you have an article suitable for inclusion in Look-Out please send it to the Editor. Articles may be attributed or not according to the wishes of the writer but may be edited or shortened to suit the space available.

POLICE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Balerno Police Station

449-5991

Police News Update - January to March, 2006

Vandalism:

- 01/01 **Riccarton Mains Road** - Wing mirrors kicked off several vehicles.
- 01/01 **Lanark Road West** - Office window smashed.
- 13/01 **Riccarton Avenue** - Fiat car damaged.
- 21/01 Forthview Crescent - Nissan car scratched.
- 22/01 Lanark Road West - brick through window of Currie Youth Club.
- 04/02 (or before) Lanark Road West - Small hole (pellet) in house window.
- 05/02 Forthview Crescent - House window smashed.
- 08/02 Forthview Crescent - Landrover scratched.
- 26/02 **Muir Wood Road** - Peugeot car roof dented.
- 05/03 Pentland View Court - Pub window smashed. Youth charged.
- 06/03 **Corslet Crescent** - Car window smashed.
- 06/03 **Muir Wood Road** - Car window smashed.
- 06/03 **Bryce Road** - Car window smashed.
- 24/03 Dolphin Road - Renault car had all its tyres slashed.
- 25/03 Lanark Road West - Electrical Contractors' window smashed.

Theft:

- 06/01 **Riccarton Mains Road** - Number plates stolen from Vauxhall Corsa.
- 25/01 **Muir Wood Road** - Front fog lamps stolen from a Ford car.
- 03/02 Forthview Crescent - Pedal cycle stolen from garden.
- 15/02 Pentland View - Ladders stolen from car roof rack.
- 23/03 Lanark Road West - Raleigh bicycle stolen from rear garden of house.
- 26/03 Cherry Tree Crescent and Stewart Avenue - Attempted theft of two cars. Two females detained and charged.

Break-ins:

- 03/01 Lanark Road - Attempted break-in to house between 13/12 and 03/01.
- 18/01 **Muir Wood Road** - Attempted break-in to house. Alarm activated at 0420 hours. culprit made off.
- 22/01 **Provost Haugh** - Electrical goods stolen. Entry by rear patio doors.
- 04/02 George V pavilion - Phones and wallets stolen from football players.
- 21/02 Curriehill Railway Station - Volkswagen car broken into.
- 09/03 Forthview Crescent - Rear house door forced. Jewellery and cash stolen
- 13/03 Lanark Road West - House entered by insecure kitchen door. Handbag, contents and mobile phone stolen. Male charged.
- 13/03 Blinkbonny Road - Ford van entered. MP3 player stolen.
- 16-20/03 Lanark Road West - Rover car boot forced. Golf equipment stolen.

In the Winter issue of our Newsletter it was reported that a member of Muirwood Watch had her handbag stolen from her in the street. The Police have now advised that their enquiries have resulted in a male being charged.

On Friday, 27th January a bogus workman incident occurred in **Nether Currie Crescent**. Two males wearing white hats, yellow jackets and brown boots and using a white Ford Transit panel van gave a quotation for work to be carried out. Full payment was made but only a small amount of the agreed work was carried out to a very poor standard.

On the evening of Tuesday, 14th March three local youths were charged with throwing snowballs in the Forthview area.

Nipping Garden Crime in the Bud

Police

Spring is upon us and many of you will be dusting down the lawnmower and garden tools in the hope of producing an award-winning garden. Unfortunately, at this time of year, break-ins to garden sheds and thefts from gardens become more common. Many people store bicycles, power tools and expensive gardening equipment in sheds, making them an attractive target for criminals. These criminals consider this type of crime to be low risk as there is no need to force entry to your home but there is much that can be done to outsmart garden thieves.

- Use a good quality closed shackle padlock on your shed door - the hasp should be attached using coach bolts rather than screws.
- Keep valuable items in the house: if they must be in the shed, lock them up.
- Loop a bike lock through the handles of garden forks, spades etc. and secure it to a fixture - these items can be used as tools to force entry to your home.
- Security mark your bicycles, lawnmowers, toolboxes and garden furniture by engraving, painting or utilising a security marker pen.
- Fit an internal wire mesh grille to protect your shed window.
- Install security lighting to illuminate your garden.
- Fit a shed alarm - they can be bought for a few pounds from DIY retailers.

Do you have a good tip to pass on to the other members of our Watch? Is there a subject which you think ought to be covered in Look-Out? If so, why not put it in writing and send it to the Editor.

Spring Thoughts

Now is the time that all our thoughts turn to holidays and perhaps it is worth reiterating the advice given by travel companies on personal safety etc.

Money and Personal Belongings

- Where available, place all valuables in a safety deposit box
- Don't carry too much money or wear excess jewellery when out and about
- Keep all valuables close to you at all times.
- Ensure wallets and purses are not easily accessible
- Ensure your room is left secure when going out
- Do not invite strangers into your room

Out at Night

- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas
- Never walk home alone at night
- Always use licensed taxis

Care in the Sun

- Build up the time you spend in the sun gradually
- Avoid sunbathing between 11am and 3pm
- Apply high factor sunscreen, re-apply frequently
- It is possible to burn in the shade, when it is cloudy and whilst swimming
- At the first sign of burning get out of the sun immediately
- Always drink plenty of water

As far as your own property is concerned:

- **Make it look like you are at home when you are out**
 - Remember most burglaries happen when a house is empty. They are also most likely to happen during the evening or at night
 - Don't leave curtains closed during the daytime
 - Use time switches to turn on lights, radios et cetera when you are out
- **If you are going away**
 - Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries
 - Cut the lawn and so on before you go
 - Don't put your home address on luggage labels on your outward journey
 - If you can, get a friend or neighbour to look after your home whilst you're away. Ask them to collect the post, draw your curtains at night, and open them in the mornings and generally make the place look lived in. Be prepared to reciprocate.
 - Small safes, hidden and securely fixed, are ideal for spare cheque books, credit cards, jewellery and other small valuable items.

Vehicle Crime

It is worth noting the advice given by the Home Office and DVLA, relating to simple steps to reduce vehicle crime, which is:

- Park in well lit areas
- Activate alarm/immobiliser if one is fitted
- Shut windows and lock all doors every time you leave your car – however briefly. Many cars are broken into in the few seconds the car is out of the drivers sight.
- Don't leave anything on display. Even an old coat on the back seat is a target for someone to smash a window. If you have to leave items in your car, put them out of sight at the start of your journey.
- Consider marking all your valuables
- Keep your keys in a safe place at all times and remove the ignition key every time you leave your vehicle. One of the increasing crimes at the present time is what the Police describe as 'Slip ins' where a thief will slip in to your home - even when you are in the house – and steal the car keys or the key card which has been conveniently left near to the door.

Committee Meeting on 2nd May, 2006

Unofficial Summary

The Minutes of the quarterly meeting of the Committee are not yet to hand and this is simply a note of one person's view of the meeting.

It was very encouraging to see a good turn-out of observers from the Thomson and Easter Currie Watches. Naturally, the biggest topic was the situation with regard to the coming together of the three Watches. A number of views were expressed but it seems there is a common desire to prevent the demise of any of the sections. David has spoken to Tony Catlin, the new Sergeant at Balerno, who does not seem to share the previously held belief that a Watch of almost 1300 is unworkable. The meeting of Street Co-ordinators on 15th February had been well attended and at least nine people indicated that they **might** be co-erced into joining the Committee.

David asked for a volunteer to join the Traffic Forum as Watch representative. Jim McCraith was our original rep. but, since his death, had not been replaced. Many of our aims and objectives are common.

There was a warning about a door-to-door sales scam where the caller claims to be from a charity (in the case mentioned it was Tenovus).

Elizabeth reported that the new lamp-posts at Muir Wood Road were not yet in place but she was watching to ensure that our signs were transferred to them.

Distraction Burglary

Some burglars try to trick their way in. They may say they are from the water, gas or electric company or the local council. Or, they may ask for a glass of water, or to wash their hands or claim to have lost a pet. In fact they'll use any story they can to get in. They can be young (even children) or old, male or female, and might work alone or in teams. They often target the elderly.

Remember

- **Lock** - keep your doors and windows locked, even when you are at home
- **Stop** – are you expecting anyone. Do they have an appointment? Make sure the back door is locked – some thieves work in pairs with the other one sneaking in the back while you're at the front door.
- **Chain** - put the door bar or chain on before you open the door
- **Check** – check their identity carefully. Ask for an ID card. Close the door and check using a phone number from the phone book or a relevant bill, not the one on the card.

If in doubt, keep them out, particularly if you're on your own. Ask them to make an appointment or come back later when someone else is around. Genuine callers won't mind. If you are suspicious, report the incident to the police. You may help prevent them from burgling someone else.

Keys

Never leave a spare key in a convenient hiding place such as under the doormat, in a flowerpot or behind a loose brick – thieves know all the usual hiding places.

If you move into a new home, change the front and back door locks immediately – other people may have keys that fit. Look in your phone book or the C&B News for the name of a local locksmith.

Never leave your house or car keys in or near a door or window. Some thieves have been known to use a fishing rod or magnet on a stick to steal them through the letter box

Decide on a safe place for your keys and always use it, so you can find them in an emergency.

Increasingly, burglars are breaking in to steal the keys (or starter cards) of high value cars. So take care of your keys and, if you have a garage, keep your car in it rather than on the drive.

Why Crimestoppers is needed.

Many people have information about criminals or know of criminal activity. They may want to inform the authorities but to them the risks of retribution are too high or the current legal safeguards of witness protection are not trusted. These people would have no prospect of being heard if there was not such an organisation as Crimestoppers. Anonymous calls can be made to the Police but their response to unevaluated information is likely to be given low priority or poor support.

How does it work?

Anyone with information rings the Crimestoppers call centre on **0800 555 111** and gives as much information as they want. They may be asked further questions to see if they have any more information or to confirm how serious the caller is but they do not have to give their name or any other personal information. The call is not recorded nor can it be traced. Very often the Police find they are already working on the crime and the information they receive is invaluable.

Is it really Anonymous?

When a crime is committed someone other than the criminal usually knows but people with information may feel they have good reasons for not wishing their identity to be known. Apart from fear of retribution, they may not want to be seen talking to the Police or they may not wish to compromise a relationship. The fact that they can make a call anonymously removes those fears.

Is there a reward?

It is difficult to conceive that an anonymous call with no name or contact could result in the payment of a reward without disclosing an identity. Crimestoppers has established a procedure which allows for payment of a reward while maintaining the caller's anonymity. When an arrest and charge is made and the caller seeks a reward they are assigned a unique reference number (URN). They may nominate a bank of their choice and date for payment. Using their URN they can go to the bank and withdraw the money without disclosing their identity.

If you have any information about any crime, phone Crimestoppers Scotland on 0800 555 111. Your call is free, you are not asked for your name and you may receive a reward.

***“Sharing Information, Valuing Diversity &
Working in Partnership for a Safer City”***

The City of Edinburgh Policing Plan 2006/07 has now been published to help us tackle competing policing priorities during the next twelve months in terms of national security, the protection of vulnerable members of our communities, the policing of a multitude of events and the reduction of crime and disorder. The plan emphasises that the sharing of information remains key to providing the highest quality of service and so we will continue to engage proactively with our partners and the diverse communities across the City to ensure that Police Officers are working where they are most needed.

Editor’s note:

The plan is a three page A4 document. If you would like to see it please send your e-mail address to me at my home address or to:

jimherbert@blueyonder.co.uk

I shall e-mail it to you as a jpeg file.

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) or by e-mail to: jimherbert@blueyonder.co.uk

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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.
