

LOOK-OUT

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

Satellite Navigation Systems

Since the report of Sat-Nav theft in the Winter edition of Look-out, the Police have issued the following advice:

Satellite Navigation Systems are becoming increasingly popular, not only with motorists, but also with local criminals, especially if left on show within parked vehicles. To help tackle the problem, please consider the following crime prevention advice when leaving your vehicle unattended for any period of time:

- Disconnect the system, taking the electronic route finder with you.
- Remove the suction mounted fitting from the windscreen and clean any suction marks which may indicate the presence of a system.
- Note the serial number of your system and keep the information safe.
- Security mark each part of your system with an ultraviolet marker.
- Register the system free with a tracking agency like www.immobilise.com

For additional advice, contact Lothian & Borders Police Safer Communities Department on telephone 0131 221 2073.

POLICE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Balerno Police Station

449-5991

Police News Update - January to March,2007

Vandalism:

- 17/01 Dolphin Avenue - House window damaged. Further damaged on 18th.
- 18/01 Dolphin Road - White paint thrown over bodywork of parked vehicle.
- 19/01 Forthview Crescent - House window smashed - male charged.
- 25/01 Currievale Park - House patio window smashed.
- 26/01 Palmer Road - House window cracked.
- 26/01 Pentland View - Medical Centre window smashed.
- 29/01 Kirkgate - Car window smashed.
- 05/02 Pentland Place - patio window of a house smashed.
- 07/02 Pentland View - House window smashed.
- 09/02 Palmer Road - House window smashed.
- 11/02 Pentland View - Wing mirror of a car damaged.
- 12/02 **Easter Currie Terrace** - Garden gate and fence damaged.
- 13/02 Forthview Road - House window smashed.
- 14/02 Palmer Road - House window smashed.
- 14/02 Pentland Medical Centre - Window smashed.
- 15-17/02 Forthview Crescent - Convertible car roof damaged.
- 06/03 **Bryce Road** - Vehicle wing mirror damaged.
- 16/03 Palmer Road - Vehicle window smashed.
- 16-23/03 Currie Kirk - Gravestone, flowers and vase damaged.
- 18/03 Lanark Road West - Ford Puma window smashed.
- 20/03 Palmer Road - Vehicle window smashed.
- 23/03 Forthview Road - Vehicle window smashed.
- 24/03 **Weavers Knowe Crescent** - Car panels scratched.

Assault:

- 06/01 Pentland View Court - Male assaulted by a group of youths.
- 08/01 Forthview Crescent - Male assaulted by 3 unknown males.
- 25/01 Forthview Crescent - Female youth assaulted - 2 suspects identified.
- 17/02 Pentland View Court - Male arrested for assaulting two people.
- 24/02 Forthview Crescent - Male arrested for assault and Breach of Peace.
- 13/03 Lanark Road West - Assault by Male, white, 20-22, 6' tall, black hair, medium build, blue tracksuit, blue baseball cap with 2 white stripes
- 26/03 Pentland View - named male being sought.

Miscellaneous:

- 01/01 Riccarton Mains Road - Male arrested - drunk driving.
- 01/01 Forthview Crescent - Female arrested - Breach of Peace and resisting.
- 09/01 Water of Leith walk - Terrier bit female - owner and walker reported.

- 11/01 Pentland View Court - Forged BoS note presented by 2 males 20-30.
19/01 **Bryce Road** - Two males arrested for Breach of the Peace.
23/01 **Nether Currie Crescent** - Male charged - driving without insurance.
11/02 Pentland View - Male arrested for carrying an offensive weapon.
19/02 **Corslet Place** - Male reported - Breach of Peace - racial comments.

Theft:

- 19/02 **Thomson Crescent** - Four wheel trims stolen from parked car.
12/03 Woman fell asleep on 25 bus - Handbag and contents stolen.
20/03 **Riccarton Mains Road** - Metal items removed from front garden.
24/03 Pentland View - Car window smashed - many personal items stolen.

Recorded crime in the Currie and Balerno area is 22% down for year-to-date figures (01/04/2006 to 31/03/2007). This means 87 (398 - 311) fewer crimes recorded by the Police. Solvency figures are up by 12.27%. Vandalism is almost half of all reported crime and successful proactive steps have been taken to combat this problem. This has been reflected in the figures.

Sergeant Sam Butler will take charge at Balerno Police Station replacing Tony Catlin who retires from the Force after 30 years' service. Neighbourhood Watch wishes Tony well in his retirement and looks forward to an equally good relationship with his successor.

From 2nd April PC Mike Smith commenced duties as Community Beat Officer for Currie, Juniper Green and Hermiston.

Capital Scams: Police are warning the public to guard against buying fake goods from street sellers in Edinburgh. Six people were arrested after fake jewellery was offered in the city centre in March. Police urge everyone to guard against buying inferior goods in the street.. If you have concerns about street traders, report them to the Local Council.

Three elderly Edinburgh residents lost thousand of pounds after falling victim to a Canadian Lottery scam. Victims received letters or phone calls from the alledged operator and also from a Spanish lottery. Both promise vast sums of money in exchange for an administration fee. Don't give any money to people offering substantial prize winnings, If you are contacted, notify Consumer Direct on www.consumerdirect.gov.uk or ring 08454 040506.

There has been a report by one of our members of doorstep calls from Rosebud (Scotland) Ltd who claim to be supporting children with cancer. No such company is registered with the Charities Regulator and there have been Newspaper reports of fraud. The Police advise that, if someone calls on you, don't give them anything but ask for information, try to obtain the registration number of their car and ring the Police on 311 3131.

Property Registration

Lothian & Borders Police

Last Autumn, Police in the Pentlands Local Policing Area launched a new campaign under the heading of “Stand Up Together” which focuses on theft, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Here is one of several initiatives they are running in support of the campaign.

In an effort to reduce crimes involving mobile phones and other property we wish to highlight the free of charge service provided by www.immobilise.com

This is a free service to the public to register their mobile phones and there is no limit to the number of items that can be added to the one account. Basically, if a mobile phone is lost or stolen the owner simply reports the matter as soon as possible to their network operator who will ensure that, through immobilise.com, the SIM card and the handset are blocked. This means that the phone will be useless to anyone who has possession of it by illegal means. If your phone is recovered anywhere in the country, registration with immobilise.com substantially increases the chances of you and your property being reunited.

www.immobilise.com can also be used to register any other property including in-car entertainment, satellite navigation, cameras, PCs and Laptops, Ipods/MP3 Players, gaming and music players, art and antiques, furniture, clocks, jewellery and watches. Police Officers in all the police forces in the country who recover suspected stolen property have the ability to search this database which means no matter where property is recovered, if it is registered the owner will be identified.

This is available to the general public, businesses and voluntary organisations. It is an excellent way for anyone to take proactive crime prevention.

If you have any questions regarding the system please call 0131 561 6136 or e-mail police.uk@lbp.pnn.police.uk

Consumption of Alcohol in Public Places

Effective from Monday, 8th January, 2007, the City of Edinburgh Council has created a byelaw prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public places. The byelaw is unique in Scotland, in that it is not to ban completely the consumption of alcohol in public places, but to prohibit consumption where it is associated with antisocial behaviour. Anyone now consuming alcohol in a public place and acting in an antisocial manner could be asked by the Police to desist. To refuse to comply is an offence which could result in a fine of up to £500.

Jet Petrol Station

It is disappointing to hear that the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) determined on 1st March that they are minded to grant planning consent for the above which is now described as:

“Demolition of existing structures and construction of 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 at 57 Lanark Road West Currie EH14 5JX “

The reference number if anyone is interested is 05/03606/FUL and the web site is www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning

Councillor Paisley has brought to the attention of the committee the potential instability of the site being on a dump. He has shown the picture of the landslide at Penicuik on a similar site and has had the committee note the potential dangers set out in the Currie Community Council (CCC) objections. The siting of the storage tanks in the proximity of the Provost Haugh houses was also noted. Progress here should be monitored.

The nature of the site has been well described by CCC to CEC and indeed the CCC letter not only appeared on the Planning Portal website but was obviously used in discussion between CEC and the applicant. It is suspected that a lot of time has elapsed because of design considerations resulting from investigating these comments. Hopefully that would also mean a more robust design based on a greater knowledge of the site.

There will be another opportunity to comment when the Building Warrant drawings are submitted, however this will be advertised only to those who live in the immediate locality, such as at Provost Haugh. Comments can then be made on the detail of the plans.

The concerns expressed regarding the size of the shop have not been taken on board – which is unfortunate – and there are continuing worries about the car wash bay at the rear of the site. Another issue that needs to be kept in mind is the location of the vents from the tanks – the tanks themselves don't seem to be such an issue.

Is there anything else that can be done?

The above is a composite based on correspondence from Councillor Paisley, David Eatock and Archie Clark.

Summary of Minutes of the Committee Meeting on 5th February, 2007

Welcome: David welcomed 16 members and gave 8 apologies.

Secretary for the Night: Tim Shepherd.

Minutes: Minutes of the meeting of 4th December were approved.

Matters Arising:

- Meeting Places: Agreed that meetings this year would be in Kirk House.
- Look-out: Distribution network - carried forward.
Printing - Next issue at Balerno High School.
- David Oxenham to ascertain financial status of both Easter Currie and Thomson Watches.
- Cala Planning Application: The Committee had decided at the December meeting to oppose the application. David reported:
 - a. He had written to (1) Alistair Darling, MP, (2) David McLetchie and (3) Councillor Alastair Paisley to ask for support. Intimations of support had been received from parties 2 and 3.
 - b. Currie Community Council's (CCC) planning convenor (Archie Clark) had written to CEC opposing development.
 - c. Neighbourhood Watch had produced, and distributed to all members, a newsletter and template opposition letter. Thanks to Tim Shepherd for producing documents and to Gordon Laing for arranging photocopying. Watch had received thanks from CCC for this action.
 - d. Watch had been asked to be present at the next CCC meeting (15th Feb) to report on activity. Tim Shepherd agreed to attend.
 - e. David, as Chair, had expressed our objection to the proposal and had subsequently been told that our objection was 'material'.

Road Signs/Street Names: Still to be actioned.

Street Co-ordinators: Planned to have a meeting towards end of March.

Treasurer's Report: Bank balance at 30/09/2006 was £1195.13. the Chairman noted that there were some outstanding expenses to be paid which would reduce the current balance to circa £700 but that subscriptions were due to be collected in March which would add to this balance.

AOCB:

- a. David displayed leaflets from L & B Police where neighbourhood criminal matters could be reported to registered individuals by phone and/or e-mail.

- b. Also promoted the service called “Immobilise” where property could be registered which could assist in recovery if stolen. This was particularly relevant to mobile phones as the SIM card and handset could be blocked. (See separate article giving details.)
- c. The next issue of Look-out will include a warning that satellite navigation systems are becoming a target for thieves.
- d. The meeting discussed the speed humps and speed cushions. It was stressed that parking on speed bumps is not illegal.
- e. It was reported that the accident prevention measures in Riccarton Mains Road included an anti-skid surface and a number of red reflectors on the stone wall.
- f. The Chairmanship of the Neighbourhood Watch was raised as David Eatock had intimated at the AGM that this was to be his last year. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting.
- g. David Eatock proposed that, should Look-out distributors resign from their duties, they should be responsible for nominating a replacement. The meeting agreed to this.
- h. The issue of replacing the pavement surfaces was raised. David Eatock agreed to contact Alastair Paisley to ascertain the schedule for pavement repair.

DONM: Tuesday, 1st May at 7.30 pm in Currie Kirk House.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

The Risk Factory

The Safest Dangerous Place in Edinburgh

Could you spare a couple of hours a week to help to keep children stay safe? The Risk Factory, New Mart Road, Edinburgh, is an exciting new Centre where children learn how to stay safe and out of danger, whether at home or on the street. They work closely with the Lothian and Borders Police and Fire and Rescue Services and volunteers receive full training, enabling them confidently to pass on key safety messages to children. The busiest time is approaching with many schools booked in for April, May and June. If you are keen, reliable and have good communication skills, contact Jess Wade on 0131 455 8932 or e-mail her at jess.wade@edinburgh.gov.uk

More information on their website at www.theriskfactory.org

Peace of mind while you're away

Advice issued by the Home Office on making your home and belongings more secure.

Everyone needs a holiday some time and however much we like our homes there is nothing like a change of scenery. But we all want to come home and find everything as we left it. Almost half of all burglaries happen when a flat or house is empty. By following the undernoted tips you can help to make your home more secure while you are away.

Before you go

- Make your home look like someone is living in it. Don't close your curtains - in daytime this shows the house is empty. Use automatic timer-switches to turn your lights on when it goes dark
- Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries
- Avoid discussing holiday plans where strangers may hear details of your absence from home
- Cut the lawn before you go and trim back any plants that burglars could hide behind
- Uncollected mail is a sign that you are away. The Royal Mail's 'Keepsafe' service will keep your mail for up to two months while you are away
- Consider leaving important documents and valuable items with other family members or a bank. Or lock them in a safe
- Do not put your home address on your luggage when travelling to your holiday destination
- If you normally leave valuable pedal cycles or similar items in your shed, consider putting them in the house
- Finally, make sure that you've locked all outside doors and windows and, if you have a burglar alarm, make sure it is set.

And just before you set off, it's worth spending a couple of minutes checking that you've done all that you had to do and taken everything you need with you. Don't forget your passport and tickets!

General tips on home security

- Fit mortise locks or bolts to all outside doors, and locks to all downstairs or easily accessible windows
- Have an approved alarm system installed
- Try not to leave valuable items, like your TV, hi-fi, video or DVD, where thieves can see them

- Mark belongings visibly and permanently with your postcode and house number. Keep a list of the make, model and serial number of these items and take photos of any valuable items that can't be marked, like jewellery. Give copies of the list and photos to a trusted friend or relative
- Make sure that you have up-to-date contents and building insurance
- Most burglars get in through a back door or window. Make it difficult for them by locking all side or back gates and adding trellis to the top of walls and fences. Fit lights that come on at night to cover the sides and back of your house
- Put all your tools away so they cannot be used to break into your house and lock your garage and shed with proper security locks. If you have to leave a ladder out, put it on its side and lock it to a secure fixture with a 'close shackle' padlock or heavy duty chain.

Help from your neighbours

It's a good idea to get help from your neighbours. You could ask them to collect post, sweep up leaves, mow the lawn, open and close curtains, and so on. They could even occasionally park their car on your driveway. Anything to make the place look lived in.

You can repay the favour by doing the same for them. Warn your neighbour not to put your surname, address or even your house number on your keys in case they fall into the wrong hands.

Let your neighbour know when you will be away and, if you can, give them details so that they can contact you, or someone who can act on your behalf in an emergency.

Want to know more about home security

You can find a range of leaflets on preventing burglary and other crimes at

www.crimereduction.gov.uk and at www.homeoffice.gov.uk

These include:

- A guide to home security
- Peace of mind while you move home
- Coded for keeps
- How to beat the bogus caller
- Be safe, be secure - Your practical guide to crime prevention.

The past year has been a busy and enjoyable one for members of the Friends Group. The highlight of the year was the award of the Improvement Certificate from Beautiful Scotland in Bloom. We hope to be able to enter more advanced stages of the competition in the future. This would include the park and its environs. On May 21st, John MacLaren of Keep Scotland Beautiful (formerly BSIB) has been invited to speak to us on the work of his organisation, the competition and how we, as a community, can be involved.

Members have been frustrated by the lack of progress on the Woodland Management Plan which was produced by Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust. We were led to believe that CEC would take responsibility for the work. Neither the funds nor the manpower were forthcoming, partly due to storm damage throughout the city. ELGT have now taken responsibility for the whole Muir Wood Park project including further paths for wheelchair and buggy access, a wildflower meadow and interpretation board. Grants will be sought in the new financial year.

CEC have replaced the damaged and missing trees along Muir Wood Road with rowans. Cherries were not permitted due to their potential to undermine the path. I have asked if cherries could be planted elsewhere. Large rowans have also been planted in the NW corner. Two seats will be installed soon.

Anne Calder and generous friends have donated a bin in the shape of a teddy bear and I thank them on behalf of the Group. The bin will be set up near the play area and the present bin sited at the W entrance.

The work on the drainage system at the East end of the park is now complete. Time will tell if it has been effective: further root ingress into pipes could occur. This will be kept under review.

‘The Squad’, a small band of dedicated, fit, young at heart members, has done a considerable amount of work on the undergrowth, under the guidance of the Parks Development Officer. The resulting piles will be chipped and spread around the area.

A very useful and enjoyable day of work took place in November, planting bulbs, making and installing bat and bird boxes, litter picking and children’s activities. The Group were delighted that so many families and people of all ages turned up to help.

At the December meeting Cas Robertson, Park Ranger, gave a very interesting talk and slide show on bats. She will supervise the bat boxes.

Nether Currie Primary School pupils and staff continue to have an active and mutually beneficial association with the Friends Group. In April we co-operated with the PTA in a joint event, a Treasure Hunt ending in the Park with refreshments and entertainments.

In November, Holly Strang, P7, represented the School at the BSIB Seminar and Award Ceremony in Perth.

On March 16th Esperanza Martin of ELGT worked with six P5 pupils replacing dead and missing trees in the wildlife hedge. The rest of the class were taken on a walk around the Park. The reasons for the work being carried out were explained and their many questions answered.

I thank all those who have shown their support for the Group by paying the membership of £5 per household. I urge everyone to continue this support and invite anyone with an interest in the Park to join. The membership stands at 47, 18 of whom form the committee. Subscriptions are now due. It is vital that we have sufficient funds to cover insurance and expenses. Please send your subs (cheques payable to Friends of Muir Wood Park Group) and details (Name, Address, Phone number, Email) to Margo Arnott, 42 Riccarton Grove, EH14 5PE or give to a member of the committee.

Further information from and comments to Margo Arnott, 0131 449 4319.

Doorstep Crime - Bogus Callers

Lothian and Borders Police

There are dozens of doorstep scams which bogus callers might use to gain access to your home - people may even pretend to be from the Council or a utilities company. These people often work in pairs with one person distracting you while the other is searching through your possessions. Be cautious - don't let anyone into your home unless you are expecting them. Representatives of companies rarely call without an appointment and if there is a real gas or water emergency, Police and Firefighters are likely to be present. Council or Police Officers may not always have an appointment but will have an identification card. Remember:

- Talk to people through the door rather than opening it when they knock.
- Ask questions and keep the door chain on when checking identity cards.
- Phone the person's organisation to confirm they are who they say they are.
- Make sure your back door is locked before answering your front door - thieves often work in pairs with one entering through the back door while the other knocks at the front.

New Chief Constable

David Strang started as the new Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders Police on Thursday, March 29th.

Mr Strang, formerly Chief Constable of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, succeeds Paddy Tomkins who has left to become her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland.

Mr Strang previously spent three years with Lothian and Borders Police between 1998 and 2001 when he was Assistant Chief Constable. Then he was responsible for all policing in the City of Edinburgh, including a number of high profile events such as the Millennium Hogmanay Street Party celebrations.

Volunteer

In order to promote safer communities and encourage social responsibility, Lothian and Borders Police is offering you the opportunity to become involved in the policing of your local community by volunteering. To note interest contact Christine Harrison, Volunteer Co-ordinator, on 331 3371 (email - volunteercoordinator@lbp.pnn.police.uk)

Further information can be found at www.lbp.police.uk

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.

