



Merton Watch

The Official Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter for Merton

ISSUE 11 2009

News in brief



Do you know your NHW Co-ordinator & Safer Neighbourhoods Team?
Not all members play an active role, but you should know who your co-ordinator is, who your Safer Neighbourhood Team?

See Page 2

Keep your vehicle safe this Christmas

Car crime can be distressing and annoying, find out how to avoid becoming a victim.

See Page 3

Website proves to be a success

Since its launch, the website has received over 10,000 hits, not bad for a local website that offers advice on keeping safe.

See page 2

Did you Know?

The new information section within your Merton Watch Newsletter.

See Page 4



Your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator is:



Operation Bumblebee is back...

The Metropolitan Police's well known 1990's burglary initiative, Operation Bumblebee is back!

A two week advertising campaign began on 19th October 2009 to support operational activity to tackle an increase in burglaries.

The advertising campaign takes place at a particularly important time of the year when people often feel more concerned about burglary as the clocks go back and it gets darker earlier.

It features a 'spot the difference' theme encouraging Londoners to take action to protect their property, and to visit www.metbumblebee.org for advice on securing their homes.

Speaking about the campaign, Boris Johnson, Mayor of London said "Burglary is an appalling crime which devastates people's lives and makes them fearful in their own homes.

"I applaud the Met police for responding quickly to the recent rise in residential burglaries in the capital and re-launching the Operation Bumblebee campaign.

"Operations like this deliver the common sense policing that people want, raise confidence in the police service and send a clear message to the burglars that they will be caught and punished."

Think like a burglar.

At the recent London Neighbourhood Watch Association conference I was asked to think like a burglar. It can be hard to do if you are a law-abiding citizen, however, I found imagining the following really helpful:

1. Imagine you have locked yourself out of your house with your newborn baby inside.
2. There is no spare key at the neighbours and your baby is crying.
3. How are you going to get in?

My first thought was to climb over my side gate and kick the back door in, or smash the single pane of glass in it. It's only then



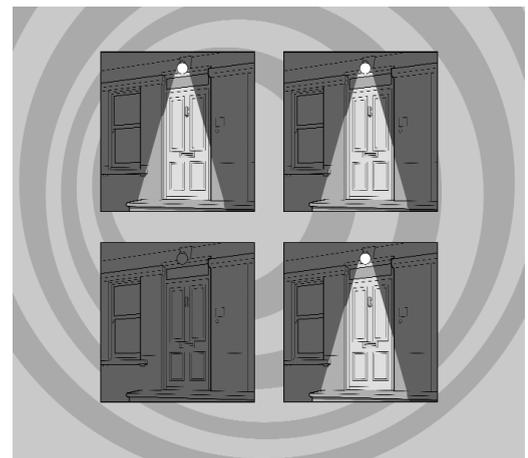
I realised just how weak that part of my house is.

New door for Miss Roberts please!!

How would you have got in?

- Used the ladder in your back garden to climb to the open bathroom window?
- Walked into your unlocked shed, picked up the spade and jemmed open a window?
- Opened the unlocked porch door and booted in the front door?

Thinking like a burglar allows you to identify weak spots in your security and do something about them before a burglar does.



TO STOP A BURGLAR, YOU NEED TO THINK LIKE ONE.

To a burglar, a dark doorway is an opportunity to hide. Fit a security light over your front door to deter burglars. For help securing your home visit www.metbumblebee.org



Welcome back Lee

The Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association are very pleased to announce that our NHW Manager is back from her maternity leave. As many of you may know, Lee left us almost a year ago to become a mother, and her daughter Annabelle is doing fine.

Lee is back with us in her current role as NHW Manager on every other Thursday and every Friday at Mitcham Police Station.

From all of the NHW Association, NHW coordinators and NHW members,
Welcome Back

“We do not buy at this door” stickers

If you would like a sticker to warn callers that you do not buy at your door, please contact the NHW Manager by calling **020 8649 3213** or emailing www.mertonnhw.co.uk. Please specify if you would prefer a sticker for the inside or outside of your door/window.



Do you know your NHW Co-ordinator & Safer Neighbourhoods Team?

If you have received this newsletter it means that you are a member of a Police approved Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Not all members play an active role, but at the very least you should know who your co-ordinator and Safer Neighbourhood Team's are.

If you are not sure who your co-ordinator or Safer Neighbourhood Team is and would like to, please get in touch with the Neighbourhood Watch Manager on **020 8649 3213** or by emailing mertonnhw@met.police.uk



Don't lose your cards this Christmas

Police at Merton are asking residents and visitors to Merton town centres this Christmas to be extra vigilant when using Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). Police have received reports from victims claiming they were deliberately distracted whilst using a cash machine, which later resulted in money being taken from their bank accounts.

ATMs (Cash Machines)

General Advice:

- Try and use a machine that is in a place where you feel safe and secure, like in the bank or a supermarket.
- Be aware of who is around you. If you see anyone acting suspiciously then use another machine.
- If you are distracted at the cash point or think that someone has seen your PIN, cancel the transaction and leave.
- Check the machine to see if there is anything stuck to it or if anything else looks out of place. Run your finger along the slot for your card. If there is something odd, do not use the machine.

Skimming

This is when a skimming device attached to the card entry slot to record magnetic stripe details without the cardholder's knowledge. A miniature camera is hidden over the PIN pad. This enables the criminal to produce a counterfeit/fake card and withdraw money at a cash machine using the legitimate PIN. The cardholder does not know this is happened and so it is often some time before they or the bank notice unusual transactions.

Shoulder surfing

This is when criminals look over a cash machine user's shoulder to watch the PIN being entered, then steal the card using distraction techniques or pick pocketing. Distraction techniques include telling the person using the cash point that they have dropped something or 'accidentally' spilling a drink over them.

Card trapping devices

A device is inserted by a criminal into the cash machine's card slot, which traps and retains the card. After the cardholder gives up trying to get their card back and leaves, the criminal removes the device, along with the card. Withdrawal of cash often happens immediately, before the cardholder has reported the card's loss to their bank. On occasions the criminal poses as a 'helpful bystander' and tricks the victim into re-entering their PIN, which the criminal observes and memorises or records.

The Chair's corner

by W.B.Picano

Welcome to our latest edition of the "Merton Watch" Newsletter, which again is full to the brim with useful information and tips on keeping you safe this Christmas.

Christmas is also that time of year that we all become pre-occupied with things like, who's going to who for Christmas dinner, what presents to buy people, what food and drink to get and will it be enough to last the Christmas break.

Whilst this is happening, it can become very easy to be a victim of crime, like card fraud, stolen car or burglary. Please take the time to read all the useful tips in this edition in order to ensure you all have a very safe and crime free Christmas.

The Merton NHW Association and myself wish all our coordinators and members a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Website proves to be success

The Merton NHW Association announced the launch of their website in the last issue. It has also been promoted in the local media.

Since its launch, the website has received over 10,000 hits, not bad for a local website that offers advice.



The website contains contacts for every ward, upto date crime stats, newsletters and other items and links all of which are downloadable in Adobe PDF format from our website. The web address is www.mertonnhw.co.uk

Happy browsing.....

Two men that could visit you this Christmas

There are two men that like visiting houses at Christmas,

One of them goes Ho, Ho, Ho,

The other stays quite,

One of them arrives in a sparkling red sleigh,

The other arrives in an old van,

One of them is popular with children,

The other is unpopular with everyone,

One of them leaves lots of presents,

The other leaves with lots of presents,

Don't let a burglar spoil your Christmas,

For information on how to protect yourself and your family this Christmas visit www.mertonnhw.co.uk



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Working together for a safer London

Thank you Zoe

The Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association would like to thank Zoe Pullman for her outstanding contributions and efforts as a stand in whilst Lee was on maternity leave.

The role was not an easy one to follow, but I'm sure that we all agree that continuity was maintained throughout her time in office, well done Zoe.

From all of the NHW Association, NHW coordinators and NHW members,

Thank You

Safer Merton

Working Together To Keep Merton Safe & Sound

Police office to open in Mitcham

Good news comes to Mitcham, it has been announced that Mitcham is in line for a new police office for its Safer Neighbourhood Team, opening early next year in the town centre at the old Job Centre, 246-248, London Road.

It will be the base for the Figges Marsh SNTeam, the office will also have a counter where in future, members of the public might be able to go and see a police officer, or report a crime.

Lets all hope that this actually happens, as it would be good for Mitcham and a step in the right direction for the residents of Mitcham.

Focus on Crime

Merton is divided into three police areas, Wimbledon, Mitcham and Morden, supported by Safer Merton. Here, Merton NHW Association offers advice on keeping your vehicle safe this Christmas

Keep your vehicle safe this Christmas

For most people, buying a vehicle will be the second most expensive item they will every purchase, whether it is new or second hand. But despite this, residents of Merton are leaving their cars and contents vulnerable to thieves.

The borough of Merton has seen a rise in vehicle crime in recent months.

Theft from motor vehicles

There has been a 43.4% increase between the last two quarters of 2008 compared against the first two quarters of 2009. During June, 124 crimes took place (this was more than any other month). The highest ranked items stolen were Number Plates (193 thefts) and satellite navigation units (157 thefts)

The most common entry to vehicles is by smashing side windows.

What can you do?

Keep valuables and possessions safe

Remove ALL items such as satellite navigation (including the holder), radios, bags, purses, loose change and items of clothing like coats from your vehicle whenever you leave it, even if it's only for a short time. If you really can't take items with you then put them in the boot out of sight, preferably at the start of your journey. Wipe away any tell-tale suction marks left by your satellite navigation holder.

Protect your number plate

Motorists can replace the regular screws that attach the number plate to their car with clutch screws. These cannot be unscrewed once in place.

Clutch screws are available from car part and hardware stores. They are relatively inexpensive and easy to fit and using them could save motorists the inconvenience, time and expense of having new number plates fitted.

Theft of Motor Vehicles

Is also continuing to climb, although to a lesser degree. There was a 35% increase between the last two quarters of 2008 and the first two quarters of 2009.



What can you do?

Immobilisers and alarms

These are particularly beneficial in putting off car thieves but they must be fitted by main dealers or installers accredited by the vehicle security installation board.

Mechanical immobilisers such as a steering wheel lock can act as a visual deterrent. Don't forget locking wheel nuts, as wheels are an easy target for car thieves.

Keep your car keys safe

Always take your keys out of the ignition when leaving your vehicle, even if it's only for a short time.

At home, always keep you car keys in a safe place, out of sight and away from doors and windows to prevent suspects fishing for the keys via your letterbox or open window.

Parking your car

If you have a garage, use it. If you don't have a garage always try to park your car in a well lit open space. Thieves tend to steal cars or contents from cars that are parked in places where they run the least risk of being seen.



Keeping Safe this Christmas

Christmas isn't just a time for giving, it's also a time for taking. Burglars are very active at this time of year.

Becoming a victim of crime during this Christmas holiday can obviously spoil it. Suffering a crime whilst away or out celebrating, whether it's to you or your possessions, or your home, all have the potential to ruin a relaxing break. The time to prepare for this peace of mind is now.

Remember

- The best burglary deterrent is to make the home look occupied.
- Unless a room is obviously a bedroom to people outside the home, don't close your curtains in the daytime. Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to close them for you when it goes dark. Neighbours can help each other in many ways. They can keep the home looking occupied by maintaining the garden to even parking their car on your driveway, or leaving footprints in the snow if we have a white Christmas!
- Use automatic timer-switches to turn your lights on when it goes dark – don't forget bedrooms.
- Cut the lawn before you go and trim back any plants that burglars could hide behind.
- If there is a chance that mail will pile up on your doorstep whilst you are away, consider the Post Office's 'Keepsafe' service. For a small fee, they can hold back your delivery of mail for up to two months.



- Consider leaving important documents and valuable items with other family members or a bank.
- If you buy expensive new items such as a TV, don't leave the empty box by the bin as an advert.
- Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries.
- Avoid discussing holiday plans in front of strangers.
- If you normally leave valuable pedal cycles or similar items in your shed, consider putting them in the house.
- If neighbours keep your keys, advise them not to put your surname, address or even your house number on in case they fall into the wrong hands.
- Make sure that you've locked all outside doors and windows and, if you have a burglar alarm, make sure it is set.



Did you know?

That nearly half of all crimes committed are carried out by re-offenders.

We are being watched by the installations of 4.5million CCTV cameras in the UK.

Within the 32 London Boroughs there are 630 SNTeams wards.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



THE WINNING COMBINATION



YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS WHEN YOU MOVE WITH

Toomey Estate Agents

020 8715 9333

Do you value your health & safety? If you do, call FIGHTING FIT NOW!



"A DREAM TO SOME, A NIGHTMARE TO OTHERS"

PERSONAL TRAINING & CLASSES

- Self-defence
- Kickboxing
- Kung-fu
- Aikido
- Yoga
- Body Shaping Workout
- Life Coaching
- Sports Injury Treatment

For the best you need the best!

020 8715 0463 or 07774 887 885
www.fighting-fit.com • info@fighting-fit.com

Useful Numbers to Note

Emergencies	999 or 112	Anti-Social Behaviour Unit	020 8274 5974	Highway Safety	020 8545 3206
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111	Fly-Tipping / Fly-Posting	020 8545 3170	Victim Support	020 8545 1637
NHW Office / Manager	020 8649 3213	Crime Prevention Office	020 8649 3245	Abandoned Vehicles	020 8545 3189
Police Non-Emergency	0300 123 1212	Safer Merton	020 8545 4146	Graffiti Helpline	020 8545 3170

Disclaimer

The Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association or The Metropolitan Police are not agents for the businesses or individuals included within the Merton Watch, and are unable to vouch for the professional qualifications, trade certifications and memberships of trade associations which may be shown against individual entries. The Merton Neighbourhood Watch Association and The Metropolitan Police advises the public to satisfy themselves as to the exact type of goods or services offered or qualifications held by the businesses and the individuals advertised in this publication.

This publication of the Merton Watch is supported by the Metropolitan Police and sponsored by the above local businesses