

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Crime on the Suburb

The article in the last issue mentioned how one could hear of a spate of petty burglaries in some part of the Suburb which seemed to make a dent in the crime statistics. And this is exactly what happened in houses near to Falloden Way and Lyttelton Road in the early Autumn. An analysis of Crime on the Suburb over a 12-week period shows that 171 crimes were committed consisting of nine cases of attempted burglary, 51 cases of burglary, 86 vehicle crimes and 25 others. Further delving into these figures reveals several interesting lessons.

● **Attempted Burglary:** In every case, was on houses without 'Marked Property' stickers displayed, the villains presumably either being surprised or startled, or more likely, realising that the house was too well secured for them to break in without making an unacceptable amount of noise. Thank goodness more and more households are now getting their property marked and have Marked Property stickers displayed. Why others continue to invite an attempted break-in is a complete mystery!

● **Burglary:** 33 burglaries occurred by cutting out, breaking or removing glass from windows or by forcing windows, the conclusion being that when the glass was removed, it was a relatively easy matter either to open the window or to climb through the gap left by the removal of the glass. The lesson must be that, in the majority of these cases, there were no window locks and the window was not adequately secured. Eight occurred by forcing an outside door, in most cases either back door or a patio door. Again, the lesson must be that the locks were not adequate or the frames not substantial enough. There were various other reasons given but two are worthy of special mention — a handbag was stolen while a front door was left open, and a front door was opened with a key which was attached to a length of string inside the letter box! As far as is known, none of the

houses burgled had 'Marked Property' stickers displayed. The lesson is all too painfully obvious!

● **Vehicle Crime:** The figures demonstrate the seriousness of this category of crime which can be further broken down into 11 cars stolen, 19 windows removed or smashed and radio/cassette players stolen, 17 windows removed or smashed and other property stolen, two soft roofs cut open and property stolen, 20 windows smashed but property not stolen, six cars not locked and property stolen, three cases of wheels being stolen and eight cases of windows being broken, bonnets forced, body work scratched, cars kicked, sprayed with paint or other vandalism. Presumably, if all cars had been fitted with a good alarm activated by movement inside the car, all of these crimes, with the exception of the last four categories mentioned, might have been prevented. The three occasions where wheels were stolen, could have been prevented by wheel locking nuts, a set of four costing only about £16.00.

● **Other Crime:** This ranged from one indecent assault, six cases of indecent exposure and two indecent 'phone calls to one stolen pedal cycle, one snatched handbag, four cases of property being stolen by employees and two domestic arguments.

Many of these crimes could have been prevented by



common sense action by residents, but there is one further major factor in all this. Because of the sudden increase in burglaries concentrated into a relatively small part of the Suburb, the police put some 30 additional officers on patrol in this area from 4.00pm to 4.00am for four weeks. Most of them were not in uniform but dressed in old jeans and often with several days growth of beard looking anything but members of the Force. And they proceeded to comb the area peering over hedges, going down twittens to back gardens and in some cases even climbing trees. Several reported that they had been seen by residents and others reported that they knew they had been heard because residents opened windows at night and looked out. Yet, in spite of the police urging us to be alert and to report all suspicious looking characters or, indeed, anything suspicious such as an unusual noise, not one person dialled 999! Clearly we have a long way to go before we, the residents, can claim to have made the Suburb a 'no-go' area for villains.

Neighbourhood Watch Coverage
In the Summer issue details were given of 32 Suburb Watches which were, or were about to be, formed. In the event, Bigwood Watch was not formed. But, instead, Bigwood Court is joining Southwood

Watch	Co-ordinator	Address	Tel. No.
Blandford and Lyttelton	Mrs Judy Woollett	4 Blandford Close	455 9358
Cornwood Close	Mrs Sandra Levine	14 Cornwood Close	455 7880
Heathcroft	Mr Peter Bryan	74 Heathcroft, Hampstead Way	458 6326
Hill	Mr Gabriel Kaufman	10 Hill Rise	455 7502
Ingram Avenue	Mrs Linda Tanner	39 Ingram Avenue	458 3409
Maurice and Ossulton	Mr Charles and Mrs Vanessa Flynn	19 Ossulton Way	455 6406
South Willifield	Mr Rupert Terry	11 Willifield Way	455 9243
Vivian Way	Mr Patrick Gibson	37 Vivian Way	883 6095
<i>and also:</i>			
Rotherwick and SE Corringham	Dr Conrad Graham	23 Rotherwick Road	455 5080
which has been reformed from the Suburb part of the old Corringham Watch.			

Court Watch, and Bigwood Road and Hurst Close are joining Southway Watch.

Since then a further eight Watches have been formed.

Three quarters of the Suburb are now covered by Neighbourhood Watch. But an analysis of the quarter not covered shows that all but some 360 of the houses in the Suburb are now covered, whereas very nearly 1,000 of the 1,350 flats are still not covered.

There seems to be a belief among many flat dwellers that somehow they are in a different category to those who live in houses and therefore at less risk. The reasons for this are really not known but may be something to do with the idea that those who 'manage' the flats are responsible for security and will somehow provide all the protection that is necessary. Sadly this is not so as can be demonstrated by the attention which burglars are now giving to flats.

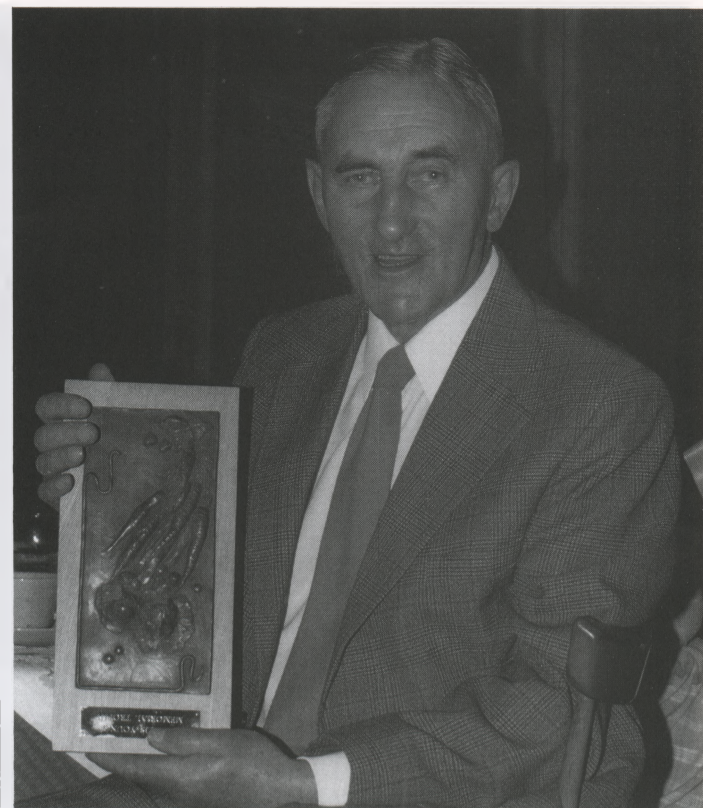
Areas of the Suburb still without Neighbourhood Watch coverage include:-

Houses

- Asmunds Place and upper Hampstead Way;
- Heath Close, lower Hampstead Way, Wellgarth Road, Morland Close and Romney Close;
- Falloden Way south side;
- Winnington Road, Winnington Close and Kenwood Close.

Flats and maisonettes without coverage are too numerous to list in full but include all blocks overlooking Finchley Road, all blocks overlooking Lyttelton Road as well as Emmott Close, Queens Court, The Orchard and Waterlow Court.

If anyone was prepared to take a lead and act as the Co-ordinator in any of these areas, they are invited to contact Peter Loyd, (455 4543) the Suburb Area Co-ordinator, who will be delighted to advise how to get a Watch started and organised.



Bob Hoime, whose allotment plot on the Asmunds Place site was adjudged Best Cultivated Plot of the year, with the Phyllis Young Memorial Trophy presented to him by the Rev Ralph Baldry at the Harvest Home Party at Fellowship House. An ex-Royal Navy man, Bob runs his plot in a proper seamanlike manner to produce a result which can best be described as "shipshape". The panel of judges, headed by Ralph, awarded honourable mentions to Mrs Eason and Mr Benjamin for their plots on the sites at Willifield Way/Wordsworth Walk and The Orchard respectively.

SUBURB CHARITIES ACTIVE AGAIN

During 1988 the Charitable Trust Council set out to identify areas of need on the Suburb not already covered by other bodies. A number of interesting proposals were put forward which exceeded the very limited funds which the Council had at its disposal. While a number of them were for equipment for voluntary organizations catering for young people, individual needs were also discovered.

The Council decided that if it was to serve the purposes for which it was established, it would need to raise funds from the community and to make some grants to show that it was active again. Thanks to a generous donation from the RA we have been able to make grants for equipment to a mother and toddlers group, two youth groups and help an individual.

Since our initial investigations we have heard of the Barnet Care Attendant Scheme which does not have sufficient funds available to meet the present needs across the Borough. This scheme provides help to those who are caring for the elderly in their homes: people who are often committed to the care of elderly relatives and unable to leave them unless someone else can come in to relieve them for a short period. A Friends of Barnet Care scheme has been set up to raise additional funds for this purpose and through

this organization money could be directed to the work being done on the Suburb. The problem is likely to increase as time goes on: it has been estimated that the number of people over 85 will increase by 37% over the next ten years.

A leaflet giving further details of how you can help the work of the Charitable Trust is enclosed. So please send in your cheque as soon as possible using the Freepost envelope enclosed. Additional copies are available from Chris Kellerman, 862 Finchley Road, NW11 6AB (455 1066 or 458 8085).

LEAD LEVELS

Back in 1984, Suburb News carried a report on findings on lead pollution of vegetable crops in a study by the Campaign for Lead Free Air (CLEAR) and a subsequent allotment survey carried out in Southwark. The first had suggested, among other things, that 22% of land in outer London was not suitable for vegetable growing. The second, by contrast, had concluded that soil over 4km from London Bridge appeared to be satisfactory for the purpose.

The CLEAR study having given rise to widespread concern in London, the Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers joined forces with the Association of Public Analysts in designing and carrying out a further study on London soils and vegetables. This has confirmed four of CLEAR's five findings, namely:

- the probability of finding land uncontaminated by lead within 10km of Marble Arch is negligible,
- there is a smooth 'distance/lead concentration' relationship as one moves away from the centre of London,
- vegetables cultivated in these soils are contaminated by lead, and
- unwashed vegetables are more contaminated than those which are carefully washed or peeled,

but has not confirmed their worrying finding that 20% of

peeled roots and 34% of washed leaves contain lead in excess of the limit laid down in the Lead in Food Regulations, 1980. Among the new study's recommendations are:

- all leafy produce from allotments in London is carefully washed and all roots are peeled,
- lettuce and blackberries are unsuitable crops to be grown in inner London, and
- investigation is required to identify unacceptably contaminated allotments.

Following up the last of these recommendations, the Allotments Committee arranged for Barnet's Environmental Health Department to check the level of lead contamination at the Creswick Walk/Addison Way allotment site, the one thought most likely to be affected because of its proximity to Henly's Corner. The result is reassuring. The soil samples analysed contained about one-half of the accepted safe lead concentration and blackberry samples about one-fifth of the limit for lead in food laid down in the 1980 Regulations.

For existing and would-be plotters alike, the message is clear: your produce is safe to eat if it is prepared for the table in accordance with normal culinary procedures. A few plots are currently available. For details contact David Meyler, 34 Wordsworth Walk, NW11 (telephone 455 0691). DM

Estate Agents
And a Little More



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