

Neighbourhood Watch - Vehicle crime

All Suburb crime is reducing and the reduction in burglary is particularly encouraging. By the end of February, the figure was down to only 121 burglaries over the previous twelve months, which is a new record. But, although vehicle crime is still on a slow general downward trend, it increased over the December-February period bringing the twelve month total to 391.

Thus, vehicle crimes are by far the most numerous of all crimes committed on the Suburb, and the police are particularly concerned about this because so much of it happens unnecessarily with car owners failing to take the correct actions to prevent it. For instance, during January and February, brief-cases and handbags containing credit cards, cash, jewellery and keys were stolen from cars, as well as car phones, clothing, golf clubs and cameras - all because they were left in full view in the car. Nor is it an answer to transfer items to the boot of a car when parked where thieves observe you doing so.

During the first two months of the year, a total of sixteen car radios or CD players were stolen. Many of these items had been designed to be removed to safety when the car was parked, but instead had been left in the car. Nine cars disappeared complete with their contents.

The police are very concerned by these car crimes, many of which are unnecessary and a waste of police time that could be spent much more constructively, and plan to make the reduction of vehicle crime one of their top priorities for this coming financial year. The police have listed the following ten priority areas for action by Suburb motorists.

Property within cars

Nothing should be left on view in a car when parked. At the parking location, articles should

not be transferred to the boot, or hidden under a seat or in a glove compartment as criminals hang around areas such as Kenwood, schools and shopping areas watching property being hidden in this way, and then break into the car after you have departed.

Driving documents, credit cards or any correspondence which could identify the car owner should never be left unattended in the car as these will aid the disposal of the car by a thief and provide a cover story if stopped by the police.

For safety's sake, children should not be left alone in a car.

Stickers on cars

A '25' sticker should be displayed on the windscreen and another on the rear window of every Suburb car unless it is driven by a young person under 25.

A yellow Vehicle Watch sticker should be displayed on both the windscreen and rear window of every Suburb car that is not 'normally' used between 12.30am and 5.00am. (There are orange Vehicle Watch stickers for cars that are not 'normally' used between 10.00am and 4.00pm.)

Locking cars

Car windows should be closed and the car locked every time it is parked or left, even if for a few minutes - for instance, at a petrol station when going to pay for petrol! If property is stolen from an unlocked car, insurance cover may be void.

Alarm/Immobiliser

Fit an anti-theft car alarm which preferably includes an immobiliser and also conforms to BS 6803.

Radio/Cassette/CD players

The best way to deter theft is to instal security-coded equipment along with warning stickers. Once disconnected, it is useless to a thief as it will not operate until the code has been punched in again.

Removable audio equipment is excellent provided it is always removed from the car when parked and unattended.

Secret identification marks

An owner of an expensive car (or one that is likely to be attractive to a car thief) should consult the Crime Prevention Officer (Tel: 733 5561) about marking the car secretly so that it can be positively identified if stolen, as well as saving hundreds of hours of police time.

Tracking devices

Similarly, an owner of an expensive car (or one likely to be attractive to a car thief) should fit a tracking device which will enable the car to be tracked if stolen. The Crime Prevention Officer can provide details.

Window etching

All windows, radio and hi-fi systems - and ideally wing mirrors and exterior lights - should be etched or marked with the car's registration number, and stickers displayed to tell the thief that this has been done.

Aerials

To prevent vandalism, aerials should be retracted whenever the cars are parked on the street.

Strangers

Be alert to any stranger showing interest in your, or any other, car. He may be admiring it or thinking of stealing it. If in doubt, dial 999 and call the police.

These are ten priority areas which the police believe are the most important in reducing our present level of vehicle crime and which they want us to address. Instead of just reading quickly through them and then forgetting them, please use this as a check list and do something about each area if it applies to you. If all Suburb car owners were prepared to do this, we could have the same influence on reducing car crime on the Suburb as we have already had on reducing burglary.

PETER LOYD

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Perhaps she cackles when switched on ? (7,3)
- 7 Nameless pasta - one lot of it! (5)
- 8,9 Pathologist who's slow to get started? (4,6)
- 10 The aim of the AA? (2)
- 13 All parts of the Far East (5)
- 14 Battle about alteration in wool rate (8)
- 15 First signs of original landlords (7,7)
- 17 Star sign with best predictions (1,1,6)
- 18 Branch of CND (5)
- 19 Essential part of an innings (2)
- 21 Taking the mickey, French fashion (6)
- 22 We stand the weight (4)
- 23 Dot is coming about four to put one of these back on course (5)
- 24 Say yes to twelve months of nostalgia (10)

DOWN

- 1 Essex constituency with Heather canvassing the centre and William the outer areas (10)
- 2 A stumble along the high ground, they say, is one way to get here (10)
- 3 A clipped cigar is the source of this (4)
- 4 He played back the last part of the ballade. Now listen to the whole (4,3)
- 5 Refuse the First Lady a National Trust lad to cope with boring programme? (2,6,2)
- 6 No head cold is good for the aged (3)
- 10 Characteristic of a characteristic (10)
- 11 CAA leg line calls for switch of loyalty (10)
- 12 Joint check, not necessarily in orthopaedics (2,8)
- 16 Left cheese in crumbs - scared of attack by these? (7)
- 19 Retrained island girl (4)
- 20 It's sharp? Stow it in here (3)
- 21 One often waits for half of it (2)

Previous cryptic answers were:

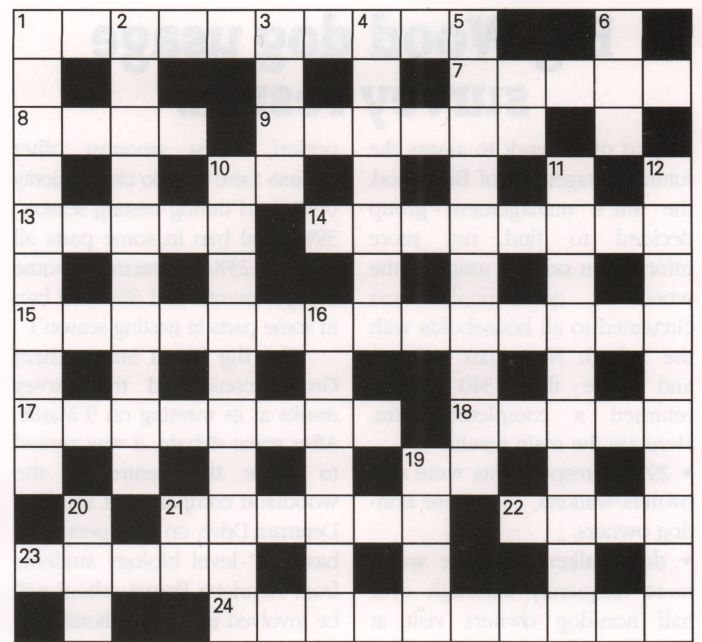
Across: (1) Christmas Cheer, (7) Names in full, (9) Ludo, (10) Like an enemy, (14) Singles matches (16) Friendly fun, (18) Cave, (19) AA patrolled, (21) Mistletoe Berry,
Down: (1) Candlestick, (2) Remaking, (3) SOS Caller, (4) Man, (5) Sauce, (6) Holly, (8) Hours in a day, (11) Ess, (12) Metal comb, (13) Shuffler, (15) Men, (16) Feast, (17) In pie, (20) Too.

A home away from home

The Institute English Centre is looking for hosts for international students who want accommodation in local homes.

Many Suburb families who have had international students living in their homes have found the experience to be rewarding. The students are usually in the age range of 20 - 30 and are mature and responsible. They appreciate the beauty of the Suburb and enjoy meeting local people. The English Centre provides guidelines for both parties in the agreement.

If you have a room to spare and would like to have an international student as a tenant, please contact our Accommodation Officers, Cathy Brooks and Nina Deacon, who can give you further information and advice. You can ring them on 455 8176.



QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1,8 With the earliest symptoms (2,3,5,4)
- 7 Ages (5)
- 9 Affectionate (6)
- 10 Italian river (2)
- 13 Welsh peninsula (5)
- 14 (See 20 down)
- 15 Wiggly shape (10,4)
- 17 Concert without extras (2,6)
- 18 Perfect (5)
- 19 Garter wearer (2)
- 21 Girl's name (5)
- 22 Argument (4)
- 23 Peeler (5)
- 24 Very audible (4,2,4)

DOWN

- 1 Task (10)
- 2 Senator, among others (4,6)
- 3 Pastry (4)
- 5 Leather processor (7,3)
- 6 Plus (3)
- 10 State in advance (10)
- 11 Busy existence (6,4)
- 12 e.g. cow parsley (10)
- 16 Attacks again (7)
- 19 Tied at a wedding (4)
- 20,14 Blessing (3,8)
- 21 Myself (2)

Crossword Winner

Congratulations to Robin Marks who lives in Monarch Court, Lyttelton Road, this quarter's winner of a bottle of bubbly for the cryptic crossword. Answers below.

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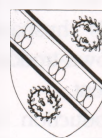
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