

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH - VEHICLE CRIME

Car crimes are still the most numerous of all crimes committed on the Suburb. There were 374 vehicle crimes in the year ending 31 May 1998. This number is not quite as high as for the previous year. However, we can only achieve a substantial reduction with your active co-operation and help.

By far the most prevalent offence involved breaking into cars and stealing their contents. Police analysis has shown that 55% of the property stolen from Suburb cars had been left on view in the car. Three-quarters of these occurrences were at night outside the owner's home.

During recent weeks, the Co-ordinators and Wardens of many Watches have been visiting houses with Vehicle Watch stickers and '25' stickers, and your first action should be to ensure that, where appropriate, you have both sets of stickers displayed on the windscreen and rear window of your car(s).

But, in addition, whenever you leave your car:

- always remove from view every movable object (including your removable car radio);

- always set the alarm; and
- always lock the car.

If your car alarm goes off in the middle of the night, don't attempt to investigate yourself but immediately dial 999 for the police and then observe discreetly from a window to get a description of the criminals; whether they left in a car or on foot; and the direction in which they went.

## Burglary

The last issue of Suburb News gave the good news that, by the end of February, burglaries had come down to a new annual low of 121. By the end of May, they had reduced even further to a new record low of 101. So that's all right then! We don't have to worry. Or do we?

An analysis of the 27 burglaries that took place during March, April and May highlights the misery these burglaries must have caused to some of the victims concerned. Apart from the damage to jemmied windows and doors, in many cases the houses were ransacked with cameras, valuable jewellery, designer clothes and quantities of cash stolen.

In at least 6 cases, either



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there was no burglar alarm or the alarm had not been set; 2 of the burgled houses were empty but being renovated by builders with valuable items left inside; 2 of the houses were entered by 'artifice' - ie the burglar posed as an official from the Council or from one of the utilities; and in one case, entry to the house was by using an unsecured ladder

removed from the unlocked garage.

But perhaps the most telling statistic is the fact that 10 of these burglaries - ie more than a third of the total 27 - took place in those few area without Neighbourhood Watch coverage. And the question must be asked why there is such reluctance of so many people to come together with their neighbours

for their mutual protection.

## The need for voluntary help

In the Winter '98 Suburb News, I asked people to come forward to give a hand with running Neighbourhood Watch. Three residents did so, and we are most grateful to them for this.

Neighbourhood Watch on the Suburb is run by some 250 people.

However, during the last month, 2 more Watches have ceased to be active and it seems likely that a further one will have to be closed shortly through lack of support. Most of the remaining 55 Watches desperately need more help if they are to continue to be effective.

PETER LOYD

## Notice to Neighbourhood Watch Residents

The police are recommending that car owners have the Registration Number of their vehicle permanently security marked onto the windscreen, rear window and all side windows. This will deter car thieves, as having to replace EVERY piece of glass will cost several hundred pounds.

Security window etching will take place in this road on this coming Saturday and Sunday and will be carried out by Automark. Residents of this Neighbourhood Watch scheme will pay just £18.00 per car - this is instead of the normal charge of £72.00.

All residents wishing to have their cars protected should arrange a convenient appointment by telephoning Automark within the next three days on 0181-556 4602.

Mr. Matthew Marcus.

This notice, or one very similar, has been distributed to houses in parts of the Suburb without the agreement of the police or Neighbourhood Watch.

The first paragraph is correct. But residents covered by Neighbourhood Watch are reminded that, if they take their cars to AUTOGLASS at Unit A, Hyde Estate Road, NW9 (Tel:

0181-450 2455) - opposite Hendon Magistrates' Court on the Edgware Road - with proof (such as a Neighbourhood Watch newsletter) that they are members of a recognised Neighbourhood Watch scheme, Autoglass will carry out the whole simple procedure for them without charge.

PETER LOYD

## Fit to Drop

Jonathan Cohen can often be seen running through Hampstead Garden Suburb with various different people at his side, trying to keep up with their personal trainer! In this day and age having a Personal Trainer is not such an unusual occurrence. On the other hand, what is more unusual is what Jonathan may be doing when he is not making people bend and stretch and breath in and out ... 'I've been killed so many times that that I've lost count' says Jonathan. 'I've been shot, hung, burned alive, crashed cars and trampled by horses!'. Why? ... Jonathan has been a member of the British Equity Stunt Register for the past five years!

I have been working in the film business for many years. I was introduced to the business at an early age. My late father, Norman Cohen, was a film director.

I was often collected from school in taxi and taken to Pinewood or Shepperton film studios to meet my dad at work. Even though I was sort of used to it, it never stopped being exciting. I think it stayed in the blood. In later years after college I did some acting work, but found everybody I met wanted to be an actor. I was

already fit and did various sports. From the age of twenty I spent five years as a reservist in the Royal Marines at the same time as gaining a black belt in karate. One day I met a stunt man by the name of Rocky Taylor. He suggested I train to join the Stunt Register.

This was no easy task, but I decided that the challenge of qualifying in the different disciplines required, was a stimulating one.'

Jonathan says he took two years to qualify and in between running his business, was going to classes in fencing, trampolining, martial arts, horse riding, scuba diving and swimming!

Jonathan has worked on various films and television, including the James Bond Film 'Tomorrow Never Dies'. 'The film was shot in Thailand, France and Mexico, and I got to go to Brent Cross and Radlett! Still, it was a good experience working on a Bond film.'

Jonathan says his fitness business works very well with his stunt work because the film business is very erratic. 'Running my business helps keep my feet on the ground. I employ two instructors to cover my clients if I am working on a film, but this is usually only for a few days at a time.'

Jonathan has been running his personal trainer business for ten years: 'I was one of the first people to get this sort of business off the ground. My clients are usually professional people aged from sixteen to seventy six (older and younger are welcome!). Now there are many more personal trainers that when I began, but health and fitness awareness is also growing. I spend more time in Hampstead Garden Suburb than any other area.'

Jonathan's business is called 'Lohan Fitness'. 'This is a Chinese term for 'the ultimate stage in knowledge or enlightenment one can attain.' I always want to be moving forward and developing in all ways.'

JONATHAN COHEN

## Little Stars

Twin sisters, Sara Bergman and Victoria Alter set up Little Stars a new baby /toddler music group for 6 month to 3 year olds in May this year.

Following a successful first term, little Stars will start again in October. Every Tuesday and Thursday from October 6 to December 10 at 2.00 to 2.45 and 3.00 to 3.45 at Alyth Gardens, the aim of the group is to introduce music, movement and instruments in a fun and exciting way. 'Little Stars provides a way to sing and learn favourite nursery rhymes which is a great way for toddlers to develop listening skills and pick up new words' says Sara Bergman. For more information ring 731 8126.

## Consam update

(continued from page 6)

PC is Linda Bailey on 733 5561/2. To get rid of it ask Barnet on 359 4600. Monica Maimann will soon start to monitor the graffiti situation.

Parking on grass verges is definitely not encouraged. Even parking on kerbs is a criminal offence. Rosalind Josephs is the Consam member concerned with this and is helping develop a warning leaflet.

## Insurance premiums on the Suburb

I read with interest the article that appeared in the Spring issue of the Suburb News by David Lewis headed 'Suburb House Insurance Premiums Rocket'.

Let us not underestimate the seriousness of this problem subsidence, there are now companies who are red lining Hampstead Garden Suburb (red lining is the practice where an insurer refuses to grant cover). The General Accident are firmly committed to the Suburb and will not under any circumstances withdraw cover. They have also given the undertaking that should a property suffer subsidence and the owner wishes to move, they will continue to cover the property with the new owners, and that is guaranteed.

When I joined the insurance industry 42 years ago, subsidence was not an insured peril, now it is one of the most serious problems facing the insurance industry.

To an insurance underwriter there are three main areas of concern: burglary, fire and weather-related claims.

### Firstly - burglary

There is much that can be done to reduce this type of incident and we at Brownhill, Morris and West will not only conduct a full security survey but also photo image valuables; supported by the Metropolitan Police.

In this area we have been extremely successful, for the statistics are that in London you have a 1 in 6 chance of being burgled and a 1 in 20 chance nationwide. However, under the Neighbourhood Watch Household

Insurance Scheme, with statistics gathered over a 14-year period insuring thousands of properties, the incidence of burglary is 1 in a staggering 344.

### Secondly - fire

There were 67,000 domestic fires reported in England last year and apart from exercising safety precautions and fitting smoke detectors there is very little else an underwriter can do.

### Thirdly -

### weather related claims

This is an area where an insurance underwriter simply has no control as we have seen by the 1987 hurricane, the violent storms of 1990, recent serious Easter flooding and the long hot summers which are causing this very serious subsidence problem. Regrettably the Suburb is considered a high risk area for subsidence.

We are able in many cases to obtain a competitive premium, however we have a duty of care to ensure that our clients receive the best possible advice. If we believe that there is the slightest risk of a subsidence claim occurring, we advise our clients to remain with their existing insurer. The same advice is given to new clients who wish to insure their property with us; wise buying is not influenced by price alone. A while ago we were approached by a lady requesting building insurance, but it emerged that she had a serious subsidence problem with her property and we therefore advised her to stay with her holding insurer. However, her story is as follows:-

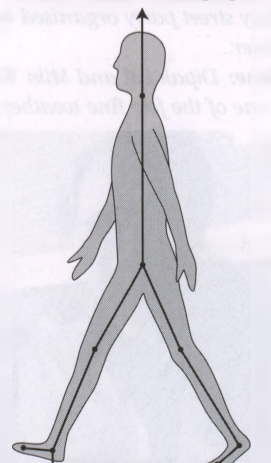
In good faith she changed insurers at renewal because the premium was more competitive and at that time there was no subsidence to her property. When she noticed the first crack she immediately notified her insurer. Upon investigation it emerged that there was a subsidence problem in her area that she had not advised them of when taking out the cover. They therefore repudiated her claim, returned her premium and she was left without insurance cover. Her house was left uninsurable and in time she sold the property at a knock-down price to a builder who repaired the property and now lets it as an investment.

If an insurer charges an uneconomic rate, they either go out of business like Fire, Auto and Marine who left over one million motorists uninsured overnight, or they have no alternative but to eventually hike their premium.

My advice has been and will remain that if there is the slightest possibility of your home being affected by subsidence then stick with your current insurer. Under no circumstances change.

JOHN BROWNHILL, BROWNHILL, MORRIS AND WEST

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