

Neighbourhood Watch - An End of Year Report

This is traditionally the time to take stock of how we have performed over the last year and where we may be going in the future.

BURGLARY

Our greatest achievement is undoubtedly the reduction of burglary which reached its lowest level at the end of October with 93 burglaries over the previous twelve months. Since then it has increased slightly, but credit is due to the great majority of Suburb residents who continue to take the correct precautions to ensure that their homes are secure at all times.

However we are being let down by:

- new residents, many of whom are extremely lax about security. Consequently, their homes are burgled either while being renovated before occupation or soon after occupation when the new owners are lax about using their burglar alarm or leave windows or doors inadequately secured; and
- garages and garden sheds which have inadequate locks and are being broken into.

CAR CRIME

Car crime is still far too high. But this is often not the fault of Suburb residents, most of whom are reasonably sensible about making their cars secure. Much of this crime occurs on the cars of visitors to the area - visiting Kenwood and parking in Hampstead Lane which is just inside our boundary, or people visiting the Heath Extension.

Nevertheless, there are *still* too many of us who have *still*



"FUNNY TIME TO BE HAVING DECORATORS!"

failed to fit a Tracker system or a mechanical immobiliser to prevent our cars being stolen, or who *still* leave items on view in our parked cars - some of which are *still* left unlocked!

THE FUTURE

There are two areas of concern for the future:

- Of the ten thousand people living on the Suburb, only some five hundred do any voluntary work at all for the benefit of our Suburb community. Consequently, a number of our Neighbourhood Watches are so short of volunteers to run them that further Watches are going to have to be closed down during the coming year. Falloden South Watch had to be

closed in 1998, and it looks as if Erskine Hill South Watch may have to be closed shortly. Others at risk, being run by only one person without any help, are Asmunds Place, Norrice Lea & Church Mount, South Square and Vivian & Widecombe Watches.

- Due to cut-backs in police resources and police policy that no police officer should remain in any one posting for longer than ten years, it looks as if police support for Neighbourhood Watch may be curtailed or cut back radically. We have already lost our Crime Prevention Officer, PC Peter Davis, who retired some three months ago. Whoever takes Linda Bailey's

place will have a hard act to follow with a possible detrimental effect on all Watches.

There are a number of us in Neighbourhood Watch on the Suburb who will continue to do all we can to look after your best interests. But it would make all the difference if a few more people would come forward and offer their help.

POLICE RESPONSE TO 999 CALLS REPORTING THE RINGING OF AN ALARM

For the last ten years or more, all of us have been urged to dial 999 and report to the police whenever we heard a house burglar alarm - or even a car alarm. We were told that we did not have to pin-point the exact location of the ringing alarm, and that the ideal community response would be for some half dozen or more householders in the area to all report the same alarm ringing.

However, experience over the last few years has shown that 92% of all these calls are false with 95% of them attributable to user error. Consequently, the police have now had to introduce 3 levels of response to 999 calls reporting an alarm ringing:

- Level 1** - Immediate response determined by available information - ie either that a crime is actually being committed or that there are suspicious circumstances which indicate that a crime may be being committed.
- Level 2** - Response as soon as possible in the absence of specific information indicating that a crime is, or may be, being committed.

Level 3 - No police attendance - under specific circumstances.

In practice, level 3 is rarely activated and applies mainly to commercial premises with faulty alarm systems, or to residences with a history of false alarms, coupled with a failure to correct the faults in the system.

What all this means in practical terms is that when you hear an alarm ringing and dial 999 the operator at Scotland Yard who responds to your call will need to try and determine whether it warrants a level 1 or level 2 response. And, in order to do this, will probably question you as to whether you suspect that a crime is being committed.

This does not mean that you should put yourself at risk in any way by approaching the house or car or, if you are a keyholder, by actually entering the house. But, if you are able, for instance, to report that you heard the sound of breaking glass from the house next door before the alarm went off; or that you saw movement in the house or, at night, someone with a torch moving about; or anything else *suspicious*, this will almost certainly trigger a level 1 response from the police who are as keen as ever to apprehend wrong-doers and who are likely to be at the scene in double quick time.

So, do continue to dial 999 for the police as you have always been urged to do. But be prepared to be asked some questions to help determine the level of response which is appropriate.

PETER LOYD

Suburb Graffiti

If you don't like to see ugly graffiti on our streets, why not report it to the authorities?

Consam member Monica Maimann has been doing some research and has found that there are no less than three different authorities to contact.

Telephone junction boxes are the main attraction for graffiti. Both Videotron (now Cable & Wireless) and BT junction boxes are green. So how do you know which is which?

"BT boxes usually have just a short number printed on the side, e.g. 57. Cable & Wireless boxes have a long number as well as some lettering, e.g. R6789900," Monica says.

"For graffiti on telephone and junction boxes, BT's number is 151." BT told Monica that Residential Repairs in the Engineering Department arrange for the removal or painting over of graffiti. "For graffiti on Cable & Wireless junction boxes, the contact number is 0500 713 162."

Cable & Wireless told Monica that graffiti is attended to within two weeks. BT said they attend to graffiti "as soon as possible".

Where graffiti is on lamp posts or street signs, you should contact Barnet Customer Care on 0181 359 4600. If graffiti is on private property, it is the owner or tenant who is responsible. One of the reasons this graffiti stays for a long time is that everyone assumes that someone else has reported it. If it annoys you, then one phone call may solve the problem.

DAVID LEWIS



GODFREY & BARR

WHAT'S ON IN FEBRUARY



GODFREY & BARR

MONDAY 1 FEBRUARY

Cheap Coach Travel (Up to 25 March) for over-50's from Golders Green to anywhere in Britain served by National Express, for £9.99 return. For details and leaflet, tel 0990 01 01 04.

TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY

8pm. Residents Association Council Open to all, with local issues debated. Questions at 8.30. Fellowship House, 136a Willifield Way.
8.15-9.30pm. Community Night (every Tuesday in February). Courses in Jewish culture. Refreshments available. £5 per session. For details, tel 455 8126. Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, Norrice Lea.

SATURDAY 6 FEBRUARY

10-12.30 and 1.30-4pm. Introduction to Duplicate Bridge (and on Sunday am.) Tactics, scoring, bidding sequences. With a competition at the end. Tea House, Northway. £36 (concessions £27). To enroll, tel the Institute, 455 9951.

10.30-12. Coffee Morning to meet Suburb neighbours. Free. Free Church Hall, Northway.

10.30am-2pm. Traidcraft Fair. Tea, coffee and other fairly traded goods on sale. Free (including a cup of coffee). Free Church Hall, Northway.

7.30pm. Old Time Music Hall Concert. Presented by the Manor House Hospital Operatic Society. Refreshments during interval plus bar, charging competitive prices throughout evening. £8 (£5 under 15). St Alban's Church Hall, West Heath Drive, Golders Green NW11.

SUNDAY 7 FEBRUARY

1-3pm. New Members' Lunch For newcomers to the congregation, to introduce them to the community. Free but please bring a dish. Leo Baeck Hall, NW Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens.

3.30-4.30pm. Dr Rudi Vis MP Advice Surgery for all constituents. Library, 156 Golders Green Road.

THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY

2.30-4pm. Thursday Fellowship Open meeting with discussion of forthcoming programme (your ideas welcomed). Free. Refreshments available. Free Church Hall, Northway.

FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY

8pm. 'There Was an Old Woman' (also on 13 and 14 at 3pm; on 13 at 7.30; 16-19 at 8; 20 at 3 and 7.30). All the traditional panto ingredients, family fun, original music and songs. Refreshments available. £6 (concessions £4.50). Advance bookings, 455 6669. Garden Suburb Theatre, at the Institute, Central Square.

SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY

Deadline for motions for the Residents Association Annual General Meeting (which takes place on 29 March) and for nominations to the Residents Association Council: send to the Hon. Sec. 55 Middleway, London NW11 (for advice on procedure tel 458 9741).

SUNDAY 14 FEBRUARY

3pm. Bosnian Concert In aid of sending a Bosnian student to university. NW Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens.

THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY

8pm. English Catholicism before and after the Reformation Lecture by Dr Lucy Wooding of King's College, London. Historical Association. Non-members £1. Fellowship House, 136a Willifield Way.

SUNDAY 21 FEBRUARY

10am-4pm. Work Day removing exotic species: volunteers welcome. Little Wood (Denman Drive entrance).

TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY

7.30-9.30pm. Arts and Crafts Furniture (a talk). Including the designs of Lutyens and Baillie Scott. In aid of the North London Hospice. Fellowship House, 136a Willifield Way.

THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY

5.30-7.30pm. Police 'Surgery' Drop in with your problems. Library, 156 Golders Green Road.

7.45-9.30pm. Workshop with Beryl Spalding for flower arranging. Flowers provided, at cost, with expert guidance from Beryl Spalding. £3 to visitors. Refreshments available. Fellowship House.

WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH

6.30pm. Are you being comed? Illustrated talk by Trading Standard Officers. Free Church Hall, Northway.

WEEKLY EVENTS ON THE SUBURB

SUNDAYS

6-9pm Alyth Academy Drama group for 13-18 years. North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens.

MONDAYS

11-12am. Yasmin's Exercise Class At North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens. For details tel 455 6763.

7.30-9.30pm Music Group: Opera. The Institute, Central Square, details tel 455 9951.

TUESDAYS

10.30am-12am. Suburb Archives Books, old newspapers and documents, pictures, etc. Bigwood House, Bigwood Road. To view (term-time only), tel. 458 3688.

5-9pm Alyth Junior Academy Drama group for 8-12 years, North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens.

8-10.15pm Mixed Choral Singing Rehearsals and auditions. Alyth Choral Society, North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens. For details, tel. 455 1732.

WEDNESDAYS

2-3.30pm. Elderly Group (over 70's) run by Barnet health visitors. Health Centre, 23 Temple Fortune Lane. Free.

7.30-9.30pm Music Group: Singing. The Institute, Central Square, details tel 455 9951.

THURSDAYS

10.30am-12.30pm. Friendship Group. Coffee, talks etc, 25p; mainly for older people. Unitarian Church, 31½ Hoop Lane.

11.30-3.30pm Alyth Social Club With a game of Kalooki or bridge, ploughman's lunch. North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens. For details, tel. 455 6763

8pm. Choir Practice (newcomers welcome, tel. 201 1196). Free Church, North Square.

FRIDAYS

7.30-9.30pm Music Group: Orchestra. The Institute, Central Square, details tel 455 9951.

Details for inclusion in the April "What's On" should be sent to Samantha Ambrose (Chairman Events Committee) at 22 Denman Drive, London NW11.



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