

Country Eye

Issue 09 3rd February 2012



To all rural neighbours,

Here is your 9th issue of the Country Eye Newsletter.

Let's start this edition off with some good news

Two men have been charged with burglary following a policing operation in Headcorn.

To help tackle residential and shed burglaries, extra neighbourhood officers worked in Headcorn area during December, both in uniform and in plain clothes. The extra policing presence was designed to both prevent and detect crime in the area.

Following a report of a burglary on New Year's Eve in Oak Lane, Headcorn, information was gathered relating to two suspects, who were subsequently arrested and charged in relation to the offence.

Neighbourhood Inspector Geoff Wyatt explained: "Traditionally, Christmas is a time of the year when we see an increase in the number of burglaries reported. Having identified an increase in the area, we deployed extra officers to prevent and detect further offences. Their presence has been extremely positive as vital intelligence gathered by a local police community support officer led to the arrest of the two suspects."

Both men, aged 19 years-old and 20 years-old, and from the Headcorn and Smarden area, have appeared in court and have been given bail conditions.

Attempted Tractor theft

On Tuesday 10th January between 6:50pm and 7:20pm, there was an attempt to take a tractor from some stables in Fairbourne Lane, Harrietsham. The offenders were disturbed after they unhooked the trailer and moved it a small distance. Three males were seen wearing dark clothing and jeans and they left the area from Fairbourne Lane. The Police helicopter was used to look for the offenders, but no trace was found. If you have a tractor, keep it secure when not in use and call the Police on 999 if you witness an attempt to take the vehicle and do not challenge them yourself.



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Theft from electrical sub stations

We have had two thefts from electrical sub stations in the Chart Sutton area, the first was on Friday 6th January at about 3:00pm in Norton Road where four metres of copper earthing cable was stolen and the second on Friday 13th January at 3:00am on Chart Hill where three aluminium conductors were taken.

If you see anyone acting suspiciously around a sub station and you believe they are tampering with any of the equipment please call 999. If it is after the incident call 101 for any vehicle number or descriptions of suspects.

Theft of heating oil

We are still receiving reports of the theft of heating oil and we would like to ask you to continue to keep vigilant for anyone acting suspiciously around homes that have heating oil tanks. Tanks that contain heating oil are usually found in rural areas and are used to heat the home. Keep an eye out particularly for vehicles that look as if they have been adapted to carry heating oil by installing a tank inside. We have had five since our last newsletter:

- Headcorn Road, Grafty Green between 00:01am and 6:30pm on Thursday 19th January, 700 litres of oil were stolen
- East Sutton Road, Headcorn between 11:00pm Wednesday 11th January and 7:00am Thursday 12th January.
- Stickfast Lane, Sutton Valence between 6:30pm Monday 19th December and 10:30am Wednesday 11th January
- New Purchase Cottages, Frinsted between 6:00pm Thursday 26th January and 11:07am Friday 27th January, the pipe work of a heating oil tank was cut and fuel was taken.
- Oast Cottages, Frinsted between 00:01am Friday 20th January and 8:47am Friday 27th January, the tank was tampered with and fuel was taken.



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Police make headway in hunt for counterfeit cash criminals

Kent Police is warning shopkeepers and shoppers in Maidstone to keep their eyes peeled after counterfeit currency was reportedly used in Maidstone.

Two men, a 19 year-old from Orpington and a 20 year-old from Woolwich, are currently on police bail after they were arrested on suspicion of passing counterfeit currency earlier in the year.

Inspector Dave Coleman from Kent Police said: "We have already arrested two people on suspicion of using these notes. We will be working closely with businesses in the town centre to ensure anyone in possession of these notes cannot get away with using them. Criminals can be very plausible and often play on people's good nature. If you are approached by someone asking for change for a note the best advice is to say no."

There are some key things you can do to check whether a note is genuine:

- Firstly feel the paper - if the note is in good condition it should be crisp and slightly rough and not waxy, limp or shiny.
- Feel for raised print in areas such as the words "Bank of England" and in the bottom right hand corner.
- It should carry a watermark that can be seen when held to the light.
- A genuine note has a metallic thread embedded into the paper. When held to the light this should form a bold continuous line.
- Genuine banknotes are designed using fine lines and images should not appear in soft focus or fuzzy.
- It is also advisable to use a detector pen which reacts with most fake notes.

If you believe that someone has passed a counterfeit note check it against a genuine one as this may help clear confusion. It is a crime to try to pass or possess a banknote that you either know or think to be counterfeit. If you inadvertently receive a note that you believe to be counterfeit, you should take it to the nearest police station.

Shops and licensed premises are within their rights to refuse banknotes that they think are fake, and we would urge businesses to contact Kent Police if they are suspicious.

You can find out more about how to check if notes are genuine or not at the Bank of England website: www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes



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KCC Community Wardens Do you have one in your area?

What do Community Wardens do?

- Community Wardens work closely with Police, local authorities and other agencies and are a useful source of information.
- They raise community awareness of problems such as bogus callers preying on vulnerable people in their homes. They also address environmental issues such as fly tipping, graffiti and vandalism.
- They engage with the young, elderly and vulnerable in activities such as youth clubs and sporting events, coffee mornings and advice surgeries.

What can I expect from my Community Warden?

- Community Wardens work flexible hours between 7.30am and 10pm, Monday to Sunday, enabling them to address local problems as and when they occur within the community in which they work.
- Any member of the community can contact their warden by mobile phone.

There are currently five wardens working in the community in Maidstone

Loose, Boughton Monchelsea , Chart Sutton

Liz Lovatt

07813 712107

liz.lovatt@kent.gov.uk

Harrietsham and Lenham

Martin Sherwood

07977 981993

martin.sherwood@kent.gov.uk

Staplehurst and Marden

Mira Martin

07969 584179

mira.martin@kent.gov.uk

Headcorn

Rob Graham

07969 583923

rob.graham@kent.gov.uk

District Support Warden

Dawn Riach-Brown

07773 397131

dawn.riach-brown@kent.gov.uk



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Theft from garages on block

Garages are often no more secure than a garden shed, and yet they are regularly used to house valuables like bikes, power tools, freezers etc. We have had a number of thefts from garages that are on block and are set away from the resident's home.

- On the weekend of Saturday 14th January we had four incidents in the Walderslade area.
- Between Thursday 19th January and Monday 23rd January many garages were targeted in the Vinters Park area.
- Staplehurst was hit between Wednesday 18th January and Friday 27th January.

The items that were being taken were mainly bikes, gardening equipment e.g. mowers, strimmers, chainsaws, on some occasions the door was forced and nothing was taken. In an incident in Staplehurst a white van was seen in the area, unfortunately no car registration was seen. If you have information call 101.

Crime Prevention Advice

More often than not the garage will be entered from the front main door, on occasions it can be from an insecure side or rear wall or windows or even from the roof. If possible install dawn to dusk lighting, most of these crimes have happened at night and they are more likely to stay away if they are illuminated.

Keep your garage door closed at all time, do not advertise what you have in it. Secure the windows shut and replace any broken ones and consider fitting wire mesh on the inside of the window. Fit a simple shed alarm, it is very likely to scare the person away before they have a chance to enter the property. Install an anchor point inside the garage that can be used to padlock items to, such as ladders, bike etc. Property mark all your items, if they do get taken you are more likely to have them returned to you.

If you see anyone acting suspicious in the area of these garages call the Police Immediately on 999.



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Post Office robber jailed for four and a half years

A man who robbed a post office, armed with a metal bar, has been jailed for four and a half years.

Christopher Williams, 20 years-old, of Dunton Road, Lambeth, raided the Grafty Green post office on Headcorn Road shortly before midday on 23 November 2011. During the robbery, a post office worker was hit three times in the face.

As Williams made off from the scene, a member of the public was able to note the registration plate of the car he was in. Within one hour of the offence being reported, the suspect car was spotted in Quarry Road, Maidstone, where Williams was arrested. When the detaining officer told Williams, "I am detaining you as I suspect that you have committed an offence", Williams responded, "What robbery?" He was charged with robbery and remanded in custody.

Appearing before Maidstone Crown Court on 27 January, Williams was sentenced to four and a half years in prison.

Upon sentencing, Detective Constable Dave Taft from Kent Police said: "This was a violent crime, fuelled by greed, which stunned a quiet village post office. Despite their ordeal, the employees were quick to provide us with the registration plate of a car that left the scene. With that vital information we had Williams in custody within an hour of the offence and I applaud their actions in getting such crucial information. The court has passed a substantial sentence that I hope pleases and reassures the people of Grafty Green."

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