



Watching Brief

The Canterbury & District Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

Registered Charity No 1078269

2019 – Issue 1 (Jan – Mar)

Chairman's Message – David Hayward

Firstly a very **Happy New Year** to all of our readers, and especially the 370 or so within 4 new NHW schemes opened since our last Newsletter – namely in: **Hillside Ave, Richmond Gdns, Cherry Dr & Cherry Garden Rd, C/bury** – run by Miss R Pearson; **Crown Gdns & Princess Wy, C/bury** – run by Mrs C Pointer; **Petham Village** – run by Mr S Seaman-Digby-Collins; and **Norview Road, W/stable** – run by Miss D Nalwadda. In addition, Mrs M Shaw has taken over coordination of the Granville Cliff Estate scheme in Seasalter. Special thanks go to these, and indeed all of our coordinators and volunteers, without whom NHW could not survive. We sincerely appreciate that busy lives can, at times, make it difficult to maintain impetus and interest in NHW but we hope that the new 'more inclusive' daily messaging system, now in place, has helped to improve communication and understanding of what is actually happening in our area. And there has been a lot going on, especially in relation to vehicle crime and burglary. The actual implications of the latter can perhaps only be fully appreciated by those that have had first-hand experience of it, which is why we are particularly indebted to one of our own coordinators, in this edition of WB, for bravely sharing her thoughts on the issue, having herself been a recent victim. The fact that burglary continues to feature more prominently in local crime statistics than either we, or the police, would want just goes to show what efforts continue to be needed by us all to influence a lasting reduction. Most crimes of this sort are either opportunistic, or planned in the hope that we have dropped our guard sufficiently to allow the thieves to succeed. Over the winter period Kent Police have again run 'Operation Castle' – their annual burglary prevention campaign to raise awareness about home security and encourage the public to take extra measures to protect property from thieves. If you haven't yet seen it, please do take a look at <https://www.kent.police.uk/burglary/> We are also honoured in this edition to provide a brilliantly touching article written by a member of the **Canterbury Foget-Me-Nots Group**, in which Carol a middle-aged dementia sufferer, explains her battle with Alzheimer's and the Group's support offered to her and fellow dementia sufferers living with similar frustratingly cruel conditions. **Big date for those new diaries and calendars: Conference & AGM 2019 – Saturday morning, 16th March, at the usual venue of the Canterbury High School.** The programme is currently being finalised and full details will be sent out to coordinators before the end of January. **And finally – hearty greetings to our new Volunteer Watch Liaison Officer Adam Sackett, from whom many will already have seen lots of e-messages. Welcome aboard!**

The Crooks Are After Your Number!

Over recent weeks / months there have been dozens of number plates stolen from vehicles around the Canterbury area. Nationally, in 2016 alone, there were over 20,000 reported number plate thefts, and that number is increasing year on year. The stolen 'legitimate' plates are invariably fitted as 'false' plates on vehicles which are then used to commit crime of some sort i.e. vehicle cloning, fuel theft from petrol stations, speeding, parking or congestion charge offences, and robbery – to name just a few. For the innocent victims who have their plates nicked there is the inconvenience and cost of replacement (upwards of £32 at Halfords), and the possibility of a knock at the door and some difficult questions if the theft has not been promptly reported to the police. For a small sum however (about £5 online) it is possible to purchase a number plate security kit, which can prevent the easy removal of registration plates by thieves. The kit provides tamper resistant screws which simply replace the original 'normal' ones used by the majority of car dealers when supplying vehicles. As always prevention is better than cure, and significantly cheaper in the long run. If your number plates are, however, stolen the DVLA advises you to report the theft to the police. If subsequently you receive fines or correspondence alleging an offence, you should return them immediately to the issuing authority with an explanation and any documentary evidence of the theft – i.e. the police crime report number.



A Victim's Tale

Burglary is a despicable crime which can continue to affect its victim long after physical goods have been replaced. We read about it often enough in the news and the daily NHW crime reports but rarely believe that it could happen to us personally. That indeed is what one of our own NHW coordinators thought before it happened to her. In this article she selflessly provides an account of her ordeal to help us better understand what it actually means to have your home burgled.

"A few weeks ago, after a short break away, I returned home in the late afternoon to find that my world had been turned upside down, quite literally – I had been burgled. Even before I opened the front door, I knew that something was wrong. The curtains were closed, which was not how I had left them. Possessions in the hall were scattered on the floor and I could see that drawers had been pulled out in the sitting and dining rooms too. Since I didn't know if the thieves were still in the house, I asked my neighbour to come upstairs with me. Having discovered, together, that the house was empty, we found more evidence of drawers pulled out, wardrobe doors open and possessions scattered around the rooms. My thoughts turned immediately to my late Mother's jewellery, but alas it was gone, and so too was my laptop on which I did internet banking. Still in a state of bewilderment we returned downstairs where I realised that the connecting door into the garage had been opened and there, where the car should have been, was a gaping chasm. As I fought to gather composure I realised that a treasured clock, a watch and a valuable musical instrument were also missing. Still in shock and a state of complete disbelief I dialled 999 for the police but the operator said they were too busy to send a patrol at that time and I should, instead, report it on 101 to get a crime reference number. I was, however, told not to touch anything until a Forensic Officer attended later that evening. Upon looking around a bit more carefully I noticed that the handle to the 'up and over' garage door lay broken on the ground outside, so I gathered it up into a plastic bag (without touching it). That, apparently, had been how the thieves had made their initial entry, and from there they got into the house through an internal door. No one heard or saw anything though, so it's difficult to know if it happened during the daytime or at night. I contacted my insurance company who said that an emergency locksmith would be called out immediately to fit new locks to the garage, front and back doors. I was told to make a list of all the items that had been stolen, but it wasn't easy to think clearly – I only noticed that a carriage clock was missing when I glanced up to see the time, and it was about two months later that I realised some Victorian Valentine cards were gone. It seemed that the list kept growing longer each time I went to use something which I knew I had once had. If I'd kept a photographic record of valuables it would have helped both me and the police – but I hadn't! A Forensic Officer arrived to take finger prints that evening but quickly established that the thieves had worn gloves. He deduced that they had removed a glass fronted display cabinet and disturbed some tea caddies, apparently looking for money that might be hidden there. They were all checked, fruitlessly, for finger prints. Even with the locks changed I was fearful to sleep in my own home that first night – and have had poor sleeping patterns in the weeks since. The next day I had to set about tackling the longer term issues, starting with the bank where I stopped my online banking account. Every day since, it seems, I have been in touch with one agency/company or another: the Police, valuation companies, home or car insurers. A careful record had to be kept of each call and any action that either I needed to take or would be taken on my behalf by others. The whole thing has been so stressful and time consuming. As time goes by my anxiety levels are reducing – in part due to valuable emotional support and practical advice received from Victim Support and two Police Community Support Officers (PSCOs) immediately after the event – but also because of the new security measures that I have added to my home. These include: an alarm system, special 'snap proof locks', improved garage door locks (that are bolted into the frame), a safe, more security lights and 24 hour timers set with table lamps to make the house look 'lived in' at all times. Four days after the burglary my car was found, burnt out. The police believe that they know the culprits responsible for violating my home, stealing and trashing my possessions but they don't have enough evidence to prosecute them. That just adds to the stress of it all. Despite everything though, I can't help but feel sadness at what might have driven them to commit such a crime. I try to understand their actions from the possibility of a disturbed upbringing, where crime and even drugs might have been a 'normal' part of life. I couldn't understand though why they had to burn my car, which I loved (although probably to destroy evidence I'm told). I found a need to visit the place where it had been found, just to say 'good bye' symbolically, although of course its empty shell had long since been removed. As I continue to come to terms with this horrible episode I would urge everyone reading this to think carefully about their own security arrangements, because I wouldn't wish anyone to suffer what I have been through these past weeks since that fateful short break away."



You Wouldn't Wish It On Your Worst Enemy

More than 800,000 people in the UK live with Dementia (an umbrella term that describes 200+ types of progressive conditions affecting the brain) and the figure is set to rise to over 1 million by 2023. The most common forms are: Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia and Parkinson's associated dementia. Each person will be affected by the dementia in their own way but symptoms often include: difficulty with memory; poor concentration; difficulty recognising people's faces; remembering correct names of people and objects; difficulty with speech; disorientation of time and space; falls; uncharacteristic changes in behaviour and personality; difficulties with language, reading and writing. Although dementia is more common in older people it may affect those under 65 years (described as young onset dementia). This can have significant impact upon families, especially where there are children, as it may affect income if the person is no longer able to work. Living with dementia can cause loneliness and isolation. In recent years there has been a greater understanding of dementia and a drive to get people together that live with it. Six years ago a group of half a dozen such members, called the Forget-Me-Nots was formed in Canterbury. Now its 23 members meet monthly to discuss dementia related issues, supported by Psychologists from St Martins Hospital, Psychology Students from Kent and Christchurch University and Kent & Medway NHS Partnership Trust Volunteers. They tell their stories, to raise public awareness about dementia, by writing and giving talks locally and nationally. Carol, a Forget-Me-Nots member, shares the story of her own particular battle...



"I'm Carol. I am 61, and was diagnosed with Early Onset Alzheimer's disease in December 2015 aged 58. My journey up to diagnosis was very long and difficult. It took over 20 years. I was just 35, at police training school, when I first noticed difficulty with my memory. I somehow, managed to complete my training; I fulfilled my two years' probation then left due to my memory issues. A fantastic career cut short. When I reached 43, I noticed other symptoms, and these were much more obvious and totally out of character. Storing information from reading was now impossible. Added to this, I was forgetting to send out birthday cards, not the end of the world for most people. It's just a card. But for me, this was so frustrating. My cards would be purchased, written, envelope addressed and stamped, ready for posting probably a month ahead of time. I also started putting things in strange places. An example, my husband wears a small hearing aid. I was always nagging him, to put it back in that little black box, to keep it safe. In truth, it was me that would do this, having found it lying about somewhere. One day, the hearing aid could not be found. My husband said I had put it in a safe place. To this day, the mystery of the lost hearing aid has not been solved. It's there somewhere, in a strange place, waiting to be found. Fast forward to age 48. I was struggling daily, with my cognitive function. I had started to search the internet for explanations, regarding my experiences. Everything seemed to be pointing to Dementia. My thoughts on this - Dementia at age 48....no, it can't be. I saw my GP many times over the next seven years. I had various different reasons given for my difficulties, stress, depression, insomnia, anxiety, to name a few. I had lots of blood tests looking for deficiencies, infections, abnormalities. All came back normal. I felt my GP would not take my concerns seriously. By this stage I'd had enough. I summoned the courage to say to my doctor, 'This is not me, something is seriously wrong. I am really concerned this could be dementia and I would like a referral.' I was referred, to my local memory clinic and over the next 12-18 months, had an assortment of memory tests, MRI's, and scans. In December 2015, aged 58, I was given the diagnosis of Early Onset Alzheimer's. I had some lows over the following weeks. I began to think about where this was going. What the end would be like, as I delved into Dementia more deeply. The outcome would not be pleasant. And I shed a few tears along the way. But then, I thought, I'm only 58, and I have some life left in me yet. I want to wage war on this Alzheimer's thing. I will fight this battle with all I have. And so began my battle. I threw myself in 100%. In the first year I attended a 'living well with dementia' session, and a cognitive stimulation therapy group. I visited Age UK Canterbury and found out what was available, which lead me to joining a singing group called 'Songbirds', and a dementia café, which they run monthly. I was invited to join "East Kent Forget Me Nots", which is a private group, run by people living with dementia, along with psychology staff and students. The members of the group work hard, to raise awareness of Dementia, and to change the stigma attached to it. They also fight for equality for people living with dementia. I travel to London, many times, to attend workshops, meetings and conferences. I have been involved in a workshop regarding discrepancies in the Disability Act, which was used at the recent United Nations Convention on the Rights for people living with disabilities. I was involved in the design process, of a new iPhone app, to assist people with dementia to use public transport safely. I can do all these things because a wonderful thing happened when my dementia took hold. My personality changed dramatically. I used to be very shy and introvert. I was the child at school who hid away, somewhere in the middle of the class. Had very few friends and was made fun of. I am now a strong, outgoing and confident person in all the things I do. This has been a huge plus for me. So I guess dementia is not all bad, for me any way...."

Next year, the 'Forget-Me-Nots' are hosting a Kent-wide education day on dementia to discuss topics related to this 'hidden disability'. If you are interested: in attending this day; becoming a the 'Forget-Me-Nots' volunteer or wish to discuss any issue raised in this article, please contact Clare Streeter at c.streeter@nhs.net

How Vulnerable Is Your Garage Door?

Over the past few months there has been a considerable spike in the number of garages broken into across the Canterbury area – see ‘A Victims Tale article’ above. Properties which have access into living accommodation from



the garage conveniently provide burglars with opportunity to work, unobserved, if they can get easy access into the garage, so it is important that garage doors are especially secure at all times. The trouble is that many locking mechanisms on up-and-over garage doors are not difficult to force and are thus a weak point in security, a fact that the criminals know all too well. There are, however, several solutions on the market to robustly improve garage door security. Some are installed externally in the centre of the door opening at ground level (see photo left). When locked in

place these prevent the bottom of the door swinging forward/up to open. But these have to be removed from the outside to gain access within, which can be a considerable nuisance if the door needs to be openable from inside as



would be the case for garages having a connecting door to the house. The device is also only as strong as the ground into which it is bolted, and may not provide an effective enough deterrent on a paved driveway for example. In these situations it is best to install bolts to secure the door to the frame, on both sides. These are locked by means of a special key, which allows operation from either within or outside



(see photos left & right). Both types of device are widely available, at reasonable cost, from security specialists or general internet based retailers. Fitting is easy enough for the ‘average’ DIY enthusiast. At the time of writing no known security issues have been identified with regard to electrically operated garage door locking mechanisms.

Dashcams & Data Protection Compliance

It was a year ago that we first provided information to our readers about forthcoming changes to Data Protection legislation (General Data Protection Regulations – GDPR) which, of course, came into effect in May 2018. And it was in July last year that we reported having raised a query with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) regarding the implications of GDPR on the use of dash and helmet cameras. Well, after much chasing, we can finally advise that the ICO has issued a statement to us on the subject, together with an apology for the time that it took to do so! The full reply, provided below, refers only to dashcams but we think it fair to consider that footage from headcams could be similarly treated. *“The ICO’s position in relation to dashcams is that the purpose and context of their use has to be considered in order to decide on whether or not personal data is being captured and, if it is, whether the data is outside of the remit of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) under Article 2.2(c) in that it is processed by an individual: ‘...in the course of purely personal or household activity.’ There will be circumstances in which dashcam use is unlikely to be for ‘purely personal or household activity’, for example, where they are used for the purpose(s) of insurance or where they are routinely used to record evidence to be provided to the Police to assist their investigations in the event of an incident. In such circumstances, the personal information captured should be processed in line with the obligations set out in the GDPR. Those using such recording devices should ensure they comply with the [Principles set out in Article 5](#) of the GDPR and ensure they can recognise and respond to the [Individual Rights](#) of data subjects. We generally consider that the use of dashcams presents a relatively low risk in terms of data protection but will continue to monitor how this area develops and may then consider whether we need to create more specific guidance on this matter for our website.”* So there you have it, Dashcam footage captured in public places probably will, in most instances, be deemed to fall within the full remit of GDPR. But, for the time being anyway, no further guidance is to be provided regarding practical compliance by users!



Useful Contacts:

canterbury.nhw.association@gmail.com – C&DNHWA email
www.ucanpreventcrime.co.uk/NHW/ – C&DNHWA website
www.canterburycsp.org.uk/ – Community Safety Partnership
www.scambusters.org/ – Online Protection Advice
[environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com/](mailto:environmentalhelpdesk@canterbury.serco.com) – CCC Fly-Tipping
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/ – Trading-standards

www.hoax-slayer.com/ – Online Protection
www.ourwatch.org.uk/ – National NHW
www.firekills.gov.uk/ – Fire Safety
www.kent.police.uk/ – Kent Police
www.ageuk.org.uk/ – Age Concern, as was
www.actionfraud.police.uk/ – Report Fraud