

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

## Burglaries in Hampstead Garden Suburb

Burglaries in the Golders Green Division were down by 30% last year which the Police attribute almost entirely to the growth and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch. But this is still not anything like good enough: in 1987 there were still some 110 burglaries and 35 attempted burglaries in the Suburb alone. There are two basic ways in which the typical opportunist burglar works — the first is to get into your house while you are out, and the second is to talk his way in while you are at home.

### Burglaries while you are out of the house

So, how does a burglar know that you are out of the house? January's article explained how he rings your doorbell to see whether you are in or out — and this is the reason why house-

holders really must be suspicious of EVERY stranger who calls at the door. It is quite extraordinary how few people dial 999 and call the Police when a stranger calls, the excuse always being "Well, he looked such a nice young man", or "Of course, she wasn't a burglar: she



looked far too respectable". But real life burglars don't walk about in striped jerseys with a bag marked "swag": they deliberately set out to look as ordinary and respectable as anyone else in the community.

However, another very good way to check whether a house is unoccupied is just to walk round the Suburb, especially in the early evening or just after dark. You don't have to be an expert to spot any number of houses that are quite obviously unoccupied — by day, full milk bottles left outside the front door, or newspapers left half way through letterboxes or on doorsteps; and, after dark, the house obviously in darkness and often with the curtains not drawn — clearly ripe for a break-in.

### Confidence Tricksters

The second way of gaining entry is to get you (or preferably your children or your 'au pair') to admit him or her into your home by talking you into doing so. The Conman, who purported to be from the Trust or Residents Association collecting for the maintenance of swimming pools and tennis courts, came out of prison in January and was up to his old tricks again immediately before being re-arrested in early

February. We may have 6 months or even a year before he will be free to do it again. But there are many other confidence tricksters around, and some of many known tricks are:

- two children call asking for a drink of water. Once in your house, they separate — one remains with you while you go to the kitchen, the other 'explores'!
- two men point to a British Telecom van outside (not actually theirs) and say they have called to check your telephones for a fault on the line. One goes downstairs, the other upstairs knowing you can't be in two places at once.
- a woman says her car has broken down and asks to use your 'phone to contact the breakdown service. She then asks if she may make a personal call to her friend to try to get you to leave her alone in the room.
- seeing you go out, a man calls on your 'au pair' saying you have sent him round to measure the master bedroom immediately as you have asked for an estimate urgently for re-decoration of the room.

Once any of these people get into your house, you are at serious risk either of discovering, after they have gone, that your jewellery or other valuables have been stolen, or, at the time, of being assaulted.

- The conclusions must be:
- never open your front door to a stranger without using a chain or limiter. And keep it on the whole time you are talking to him or her.
  - be suspicious of ALL strangers, however plausible they may seem.
  - unless you have a very good reason for NOT doing so,

DIAL 999 and give the Police a description of the person and the direction he, or she, is going.

### Marking Property

Of course, if you really want to deter the more sophisticated villain, one of the best ways of saying "don't come to this house, try somewhere else", is to mark your personal possessions with your post code and house number and then to display the circular yellow and black MARKED PROPERTY stickers on all sides of your house — but more of that in the next issue. **PL**

## FRENCH EXCHANGES

We have received a number of requests from Le Vezinet asking for the names of children on the Suburb who are interested in exchanges with French families. The particular requests are

from:	Age
Name	
Nicolas	13
Sylvie	14
Claire	14
Thomas	14
Beatrice	15
Olivier	17
Sabine	18
Pascale	25

If anyone is interested could you please contact Christopher Kellerman at the Trust Office. (Tel: 455 1066 or 458 8085).

## BUYING A HOUSE?

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## Nineteenth Dame Henrietta Barnett Memorial Lecture

Particulars of the lecture are:

**Date:** Wednesday 27 April 1988 at 8.00 p.m.

**Place:** The Institute, Central Square

**Subject:** The three J's — Judges, Juries and Justice

**Memorial Lecturer:** His Honour Judge John Slack, TD

**Admission:** Free by ticket obtainable in April from The Institute or The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, 862 Finchley Road, NW11 6AB.

**Collection:** Retiring collection — proceeds to The Hampstead Garden Suburb Charitable Trust.

## WANTED

DO YOU HAVE ANY UNWANTED:

BOOKS  
BROCHURES  
PAMPHLETS  
POST-CARDS  
NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS  
MEMORABILIA  
MEMENTOES

CONNECTED WITH THE HISTORY OF THE SUBURB?

IF YOU DO PLEASE CONTACT

CHRISTOPHER KELLERMAN  
(Trust Manager).

WE ARE INTERESTED IN BUYING ANY MATERIAL YOU MIGHT HAVE

## FOR SALE

14 WORDSWORTH WALK



FREEHOLD UNMODERNISED  
2 BEDROOM COTTAGE  
FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE  
CONTACT

MARK FOLEY OF BERNARD THORPE  
ON 499-6353



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