Burglars brought to justice

It's been a busy few months in Weston-super-Mare for the Neighbourhood and Priority Crime Teams, with a string of burglars caught.

A 16-year-old boy from Weston-super-Mare has been sentenced to a year in prison for two burglaries and has admitted a further seven. Footprints taken from the suspect's trainers were matched to prints found at a number of victim's homes, which led to the boy being caught.

A 27-year-old man from Weston has pleaded guilty to burglary and theft of credit cards, after he burgled the home of an elderly lady in The Crescent, Weston in March. He stole her handbag and credit cards and was caught after CCTV showed him using the stolen cards at a cash machine.

He is due to be sentenced at the end of May.

A 17-year-old boy has been charged with burgling the home of a 91-year-old man in Torrington Crescent in May. The victim had left a door unlocked and the boy was able to walk in and steal a television. The suspect is due to appear in court at the end of May.

Detective Sergeant Glen Boxer of Weston-super-Mare's Priority Crime Team said: "These results send a strong message to would-be burglars and thieves that they will not get away with their crimes. We also want to encourage householders to protect themselves by following some simple crime prevention tips."

➢ To help keep your home secure this summer, turn to the back page.
Keeping our roads safe this summer

People who drink or take drugs and drive - and so-called 'boy racers' who behave antisocially - are being targeted in the latest Avon and Somerset police campaign to make our roads safer for all.

The annual summer Operation Tonic campaign began on May 31 and runs until June 30.

Thousands of drivers will be stopped and checked during the month. Our message is loud and clear – don’t take a chance on driving if you’re over the limit. It’s just not worth it.

“You put yourself, your loved ones and other road users at risk.”

Chief Inspector John Holt of Avon and Somerset’s Roads Policing Unit, said: “We work to prevent drink and drug driving all year round, not just in our Christmas and summer operations. This is an appropriate time to remind everyone that drink and drug driving is totally unacceptable and is a serious crime. You put yourself, your loved ones and other road users at risk.”

Warm weather and light evenings also bring an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour complaints about young drivers gathering in large numbers for so-called car cruises. Officers will be engaging with drivers at those events, checking that vehicles are safe and legal, and encouraging good driving habits.

Chief Inspl Holt said: “Fourteen young drivers have been killed in collisions since 2011 in Avon and Somerset and we are determined to reduce those numbers. We’re not aiming to spoil people’s fun, but it’s important that the anti-social driving habits of a minority don’t create problems for other members of the public.”

In your area:

- You can use your mobile phone to report drink or drug drivers. Text the word drunk to 81819 and send in information about someone who has got behind the wheel when they are under the influence of drink or drugs.
- These messages go straight to the police communications centre, where they are dealt with in the same way as an emergency 999 call.

Seven months on and the weeks have continued at an extremely fast pace, with a lot of things happening and lots more in the pipeline.

I recently visited North Somerset, attending the official opening of the Town Hall in Weston-super-Mare, also attended by Culture Minister Ed Vaizey. I also visited a drug and alcohol rehabilitation service in the town, hearing from a team of dedicated support workers.

I have recently allocated £2.4 million to tackle crime and disorder including £75,000 for North Somerset. Funding has also been allocated to services to support victims of sexual violence and drug testing on arrest.

I have also set up a new £200,000 action fund where you can apply for up to £5,000 to tackle local issues.

I have seen first-hand how a small amount of money can make a real difference when the community comes together to solve a local concern. For more details visit www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk

Until next time.

Sue

Sue is committed to spending at least one day a week going out and about in the community and hearing about initiatives in your local area.

If you have a project or scheme that you would like her to visit please email pcc@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
Rogue Trader Week of Action

Dodgy builders and distraction burglars were arrested, stop checked and generally given a hard time during our Rogue Trader Week of Action.

We were out in force across Avon and Somerset during April to tackle doorstep criminals who prey on the elderly and most vulnerable people in our communities to con them out of their money.

We joined forces with Trading Standards, HM Revenue and Customs, the Serious Organised Crime Agency and local businesses to hunt down distraction burglars, catch rogue traders in the act and warn potential victims, as well as giving people advice about how to protect themselves.

Beat managers and PCSOs visited schools across North Somerset to recruit children to spread the message to their elderly or vulnerable relatives and neighbours.

They also went out with Meals on Wheels talking to people directly and provided advice leaflets and window stickers to remind them of the doorstep code. A list was made of homes which could benefit from a visit from the Bobby Van to boost their security.

"If you're not sure, then don't open the door."

Neighbourhood Inspector Sharon Bennett, based at Nailsea, said: "We want to remind those people who may be vulnerable that it is your doorstep and your decision.

"If you don't know who is calling at your address or home and you didn't invite them there, don't open your door, be confident and turn them away."

Throughout April, more than 4,000 seven to ten-year-olds were spoken to by PCSOs in Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead, and bank, building society and post office staff were given training to intervene if elderly or vulnerable people try to withdraw large amounts of cash.

Nineteen new 'No Cold Calling Zones' have been set up throughout Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead, together with seven in and around Weston-super-Mare.

Cadets take tea with the Mayor

The Police Cadets have been helping to tackle anti-social behaviour and to keep our streets safe.

Recently, 18-year-old cadets Roxy Madge and Thomas Lewington went out with the dedicated ASB car which patrols Weston, whilst the rest of their team did a leaflet drop and foot patrol around the town centre and in Grove Park. Whilst they were in Grove Park, the cadets were invited into Grove House to take tea with the Mayor and Mayoress.

Weston-super-Mare's Town Mayor, Councillor David Hitchins said: "The Police Cadets' attitude and professionalism are a great example to all of us who are proud of our town and want to make Weston a better place to live.

"By giving up their time to learn new skills and keep their communities safe, the cadets are far more representative of the majority of young people than the few who may cause trouble. I look forward to seeing the cadets' confidence and experience grow as the year goes on and will do all I can to support them."
You said: “I’m concerned about crime on the Bournville estate. Fly-tipping, burglary and anti-social behaviour are making our lives a misery.”

We did:

In partnership with North Somerset Council and Alliance Homes, three new CCTV cameras are being installed in the Grassmere Drive, Windermere Avenue, Baildon Road and Baildon Crescent areas.

Keep burglars out

We are urging people to secure their windows and doors this summer or they might let in more than just a cool breeze.

Did you know that around 30 per cent of all burglaries that take place across Avon and Somerset could have been prevented if people had locked their doors or closed their windows?

Follow this advice and protect your home:
- Always secure all windows and doors when you leave your home. Never leave windows and doors unlocked or open in unattended rooms, even if you are at home or out in your garden.
- Don’t leave high value items like bags, wallets, car keys, laptops or mobiles in display in windows or near doors, especially if they have cat-flaps or letterboxes.
- Remember to remove keys from locked windows and to keep them out of sight in a safe place.
- Download tracking software on all smart phones and tablet devices.
- Register all property, with a serial number, on the national property database www.immobilise.com

Going on holiday? Follow this advice:
- Cut the lawns before you go.
- Cancel deliveries discreetly - don’t announce your departure to a shop full of people. Only tell people who need to know you’re going away.
- Be careful of the kind of information you share on social media newsfeeds.
- Get automatic time switches to switch lights, and a radio, on and off in downstairs or upstairs rooms.

Burglar caught by residents

The quick thinking of local residents led to a man being charged with burglary. People living in Southmead Road, Weston-super-Mare called us when they saw a man acting suspiciously around their properties.

“The support of local residents is vital in our work as neighbourhood police.”

When we arrived on the scene a group of residents had managed to safely apprehend the man, who was subsequently arrested and charged with two offences of burglary and one of going equipped to steal.

Neighbourhood Sergeant Colin Batchelor said: “I want to say a huge thank you to the residents for their courage and quick thinking. This is an excellent example of the community coming together and acting safely, appropriately and with common sense, to challenge a man who was acting suspiciously.

“Whilst I commend their cautious approach, I would stress that we don’t want people to put themselves at risk. If you see someone behaving suspiciously, then always contact the police as soon as you can. The support of local residents is vital in our work as neighbourhood police.”