

Police Briefing Thursday 24th May 2012 South Herefordshire & Golden Valley

Crime Trends

A cast iron bath, a pressure washer and a battery unit were among items stolen from a field in **Hoarwithy** sometime in the two weeks up to 6th May. We are having several reports of cast iron baths being stolen from fields, they are very useful as water troughs for livestock, but due to their weight they are fetching good money for scrap! Farmers, please be aware if you have any of these.

Incident ref 317-s-070512

Overnight on 7th/8th May, a quantity of timber was stolen from a field in **Longtown**. A locked shed in the field was broken into, and items including hinges, screws and locks were stolen. Incident ref 73-s-080512

Between 7th and 9th May, and possibly linked to the incident above, another locked shed in a field in **Longtown** was broken into, and a Husqvana Professional chainsaw and a fuel can were stolen. Incident ref 124-s-090512

Between 12 noon and 5pm on Friday 11th May, a Bamford Alan Sythe motor mower was stolen from a farm in **Vowchurch**. The machine was in an unlocked shed in the farmyard. Incident ref 167-n-110512

Overnight on 15th/16th May, a shed at **Dorstone** Bowls Club was broken into and a lawnmower, strimmer and petrol can were stolen.

Incident ref 236-s-210512

At 11am on 16th May, an old washing machine that had been left outside a property in **Ewyas Harold** was seen by a neighbour to be taken by the occupants of a white Ford Transit van **AV05ZK***. The neighbour took the registration number and called police. The number was circulated and officers waited at a scrap dealers in Rotherwas, where the van was intercepted and the occupants - who have committed this sort of thing before - were arrested. Another good result, thanks to the vigilance of a neighbour.

Overnight on 17th/18th May, a tractor was stolen from a field near Haywood Lane, **Callow**. It was a Royal blue Iseki 2140 4x4 diesel tractor, registration **DDF857**. It was quite distinctive as one of the two metal arms on the back was missing, and had a custom-made orange attachment at the front, used as a raking system or for lifting bales. Incident ref 419-s-180512

Damage was caused to the pavilion door at **Michaelchurch Escley** Cricket Club between 4pm on Sunday 20th May and mid-day on Monday 21st May. A cricket stump that was found nearby which is believed to have been used to have caused the damage.

Incident ref 630-s-210512

At 7.45pm on Monday 21st May, an isolated house near **Kilpeck** was burgled, and two dark skinned males were seen leaving the property and then seen to be picked up by a saloon car which sped off. The house alarm had been activated, which prompted a neighbour to investigate, and call the police. The offenders had thrown a heavy object from the garden through the rear patio doors to gain entry.

This fitted the description of a similar break in earlier that day in Dymock, when a registration number had been taken, so the number was circulated to all patrols. With the help of ANPR cameras the vehicle was spotted in Hereford city shortly afterwards, and four males were arrested and are 'assisting with enquiries'. Items of jewellery from the break in in Kilpeck were found on the offenders, and it is believed that this is a team responsible for several burglaries in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire and several other force areas. A fantastic result thanks to vigilant members of the public and hopefully with a lot of forensic work and interviews by detectives, these characters will be charged with several offences.

At around 1am on Tuesday 22nd, an attempt was made to steal an old style red phone box in **Ballingham**. Two males in a red Ford Maverick **M259NU*** had attached chains around the phone box and were dragging it away when they were disturbed. They managed to drag it two miles before the chains broke, and the vehicle made off. There is no current keeper for the vehicle, enquiries are in hand with the previous owner. The driver was described as white, aged between 20 and 30, wearing glasses, the passenger was also white, stocky build with blonde hair. Incident ref 18-s-220512

Suspicious vehicles

Keep an eye out for a red Ford Transit van **V935VFH**, the occupants are offering roofing and guttering services. They were calling at properties in **Madley** last week, as well as offering these services they were asking about caravans and other vehicles parked on driveways. These characters are flouting all trading standards legislation, and are not qualified to carry out the services they are offering, let us know if you have a visit from them - or anyone else calling door to door offering similar services. Incident ref 83-n-150512

On Wednesday 16th May at around 11.30am, a white flat bed **X835TE*** called at a farm between **Ewyas Harold** and **Abbeydore** asking for scrap. There were three males in the vehicle. Incident ref 89-n-160512

A white flat bed transporter type lorry called at two addresses in **Michaelchurch Escley** last Friday 18th May. Unfortunately we don't have a registration number at this time, but the driver, a middle aged male, stated he was calling to pick up some steel. The occupier had no knowledge of this, so sent him on his way. He later called at another property where he said he was interested in purchasing the 4x4 vehicle that was parked on their drive. He said his name was Richard and he came from Evesham, and gave a card with a mobile number, enquiries have been made regarding the number but have led no-where unfortunately.

Incident ref 649-s-180512

From Ringmaster

A sophisticated type of fraud is on the rise across the UK - where people are telephoned by fraudsters and tricked into revealing their PIN and handing over their bank card to a courier [23 May 2012]

Pay Your Way is working with The UK Cards Association and Financial Fraud Action UK to raise awareness of how to avoid the 'Courier Scam'.

More than **£1.5 million** has now been lost to the scam, with the same amount - £750,000 - stolen in the first four months of 2012 that was stolen during the whole of 2011. This equates to a three-fold increase in this crime.

The scam involves a person being called by someone claiming to be from their bank and told that their debit or credit card needs collecting.

The caller suggests the person hangs up and calls the bank back to ensure the issue is genuine, but stays on the line; tricking the person into thinking they're calling their bank.

Revealing your PIN

The fraudster will then ask the person to key in their PIN number, before sending a courier to collect the card. The victim is told the card is going to the bank to be changed but is actually delivered to the fraudster to use.

According to figures released today by Pay Your Way, over three quarters of the UK (76%) feel confident they would be able to spot a fraudulent telephone banking call. However, after hearing how the Courier Scam works, over half (56%) of the 4,000 people surveyed were surprised by how sophisticated it is, one third (33%) worried they were more vulnerable than they thought and four fifths (80%) felt that anyone could be a potential victim to the fraud.

With 91% feeling that older adults would be particularly at risk, Pay Your Way is encouraging people to make sure that older relatives and friends are also aware of the scam in order to stamp out this kind of fraud and help older generations to keep their finances secure.

For further information visit the [Payments Council](#) website.

Please note that Action Fraud is not responsible for the content of external websites.

To report a fraud, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or use our [online fraud reporting tool](#).

Farm Machinery Theft In Herefordshire

Police in Herefordshire are investigating after the theft of machinery from a farm in the county.

The incident occurred at a farm at Little Breinton sometime between 4pm on Wednesday 9 May and 8am on Thursday 10 May.

Sometime overnight it appears that thieves made their way across a field and through an orchard to enable them to approach a number of farm buildings.

Once they had reached the buildings they then carried out a search before stealing a plough and a log splitter that had been parked up outside.

The log splitter is described as being dark blue with the manufacturers name 'David Gaines of Weobley' on it, while the plough is described as being a dark grey two farrow plough for a Massey Ferguson tractor.

The total value of the stolen machinery is thought to be more than £750 and police are keen to hear from anyone who may have information about this theft, or where the stolen property can now be found.

A police spokesman said:

"I'd like to remind local people that for the police to be able to tackle rural crime properly we need your help: without it we cannot do our job properly.

"Herefordshire is a big patch, so we need to focus our efforts on where the criminals are operating and local people can really help out by reporting crimes and any suspicious behaviour.

"If they are not reported we cannot analyse where the criminal activity is happening and support those areas being targeted by criminals.

"We would also highly recommend that people mark their property so that it has a better chance of being traced if it is stolen.

"One of the best ways to do this is to use a forensically coded liquid such as Smartwater that is widely available and gives your possessions a unique marking."

Issued: Tuesday 22 May, 2012

Police Investigate Theft From Church Near Ledbury

Police officers are investigating following a theft near Ledbury.

The incident occurred at St Michaels Church in Castle Frome sometime between 10am on Sunday 29 April and 6pm on Wednesday 9 May.

Sometime during the time period in question it appears that thieves entered the church and approached one of the windows.

The thieves then climbed onto a 2ft wide window ledge and used a chisel to remove a stone carving from part of the window frame.

The stone carving depicts a knight holding a heart and is described as being 9inches by 6inches in size.

A police spokesman said:

"It is impossible to put a value on the stone carving but obviously it means a lot to the people that frequent this church.

"They are extremely upset that the carving has been stolen in this way.

"Police officers investigating this incident are keen to hear from anyone who knows who's responsible for this theft, or anyone who knows where the carving can now be found.

"Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact police in Herefordshire on 101 or 0300 333 3000 quoting reference number 0298N 100512.

"Alternatively, please remember that Crimestoppers can also be called anonymously on 0800 555 111 if you'd rather leave information without getting directly involved yourself."

Warning About Overpayment Fraud

West Mercia Police is urging members of the public - particularly local businesses - to be aware of fraudulent activity known as overpayment fraud.

The warning comes as part of Scam Awareness Month, which is run by Trading Standards throughout May, and follows a recent investigation where a business in Worcester was conned out of over £40,000.

"We have received a number of reports regarding overpayment frauds recently," said Robin Longmore, Financial Intelligence Development Officer with West Mercia Police's Economic Crime Unit. He explained: "Overpayment fraud is when a third party, often based outside of the UK, makes an offer to purchase goods and then sends funds well in excess of the asking price.

"The third party will then request that the excess funds be sent back to them, claiming that there has been an employee error or some similar excuse. However, the sent funds are usually by way of a cheque or bankers draft which will either be stolen or fraudulent and consequently not honoured.

"This means that after the overpayment has been refunded to the third party, the original payment from them then bounces leaving the victim vastly out of pocket."

This is what happened to a Worcestershire based manufacturing company in December 2011. A customer from the Middle East placed an order with them for £78,000 and paid via cheque. Before the funds had cleared, the manufacturer realised that the customer had overpaid for the goods in excess of £40,000. The manufacturer then refunded the customer via international transfer. Three days later, the customer's bank established that the cheque used to make the original payment of £78,000 was fraudulent and the payment bounced, leaving the manufacturing company severely out of pocket.

"These scammers take advantage of the system in place to clear cheques and what is meant by 'cleared funds'," explained Mr Longmore. He added: "Although your bank does a preliminary enquiry when you pay a cheque into your account, the physical cheque still needs to be returned to the issuing bank and verified.

"This means that even though funds may appear as 'cleared' on your account, it then takes another few days for the issuing bank to receive the cheque and honour it. It is these few days which provide fraudsters with a window of opportunity to part you with large sums of money."

Unfortunately, as with many fraud offences, it is difficult to establish the true scale of the situation. Often, victims do not report their losses, possibly through embarrassment. Many companies fear bad publicity if it is known that they have been

scammed in such a way.

"Individuals and businesses need to be aware of these types of scam so that they can try to avoid falling victim to them," said Mr Longmore, who has the following advice: "If you do receive an overpayment - be it for a large order or perhaps a car you are selling on the internet - ask yourself: why?"

"These scammers are very plausible and they will offer any number of excuses as to why the overpayment has been made, but in reality this rarely happens. If it does happen to you though, resist any pressure to refund money until you have been reassured by the bank that the funds have definitely cleared. Banks are well aware of these scams and if you alert them to the issue, they may be able to do other checks with the issuing bank in relation to the overpaid funds."

Anyone who has concerns that they may be a victim of such frauds should contact their local police by dialling **101**

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Non emergency number 101 or 0300 333 3000