

## **Wimbledon man convicted after stealing poppy collection box**

At Wimbledon Magistrates Court at the beginning of December, a 21-year old man of Montague Road in Wimbledon was convicted of stealing a Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal box from the Spar shop in Grand Drive, Morden.

In mid-November, just days before the main Remembrance Service on the borough, the unemployed offender entered the shop. He grabbed the Poppy Collection box with contents of up to £300, and left the store.

The staff alerted police and an immediate investigation was launched. Thanks to local enquiries and hard work by the Lower Morden Safer Neighbourhoods team (Merton borough), the man was identified and arrested at his home address.

Once in custody at Wimbledon police station, he was interviewed and fully admitted the offence, but claimed he was very drunk. The poppy collection box and contents were not recovered - the offender said he could not remember what he had done with the items.

He was charged and later appeared at Wimbledon Magistrates Court, where he was convicted of theft. The man received a Community Order for 12 months, directed to do unpaid work for 40 hours and pay compensation of £75, with costs of £85.

The arresting officer, ex-Royal Marine, PC Keith Stewart said:

“Being a thief is bad enough, but stealing a full Poppy Appeal box, just days before Remembrance Sunday, is really low. I was pleased to give the thief a shock a few days later, when we knocked on his door early in the morning. We’ve worked hard to put him before the court, supporting both the staff at Spar and our local Royal British Legion by solving this disgusting crime”.

## **Barking and Dagenham residents say no to bogus callers**

Eastbrook Safer Neighbourhoods team (Barking and Dagenham borough) visited the ward's elderly and vulnerable residents recently in an effort to deter would-be artifice burglars (otherwise known as bogus callers) targeting such residents.

PCSO Ken Spickett, of Eastbrook Safer Neighbourhoods team, endured the icy conditions to speak to residents about bogus callers and provided them with a handy sheet listing contact numbers for public utilities and amenities. The advice was simple...“If you are unsure about the validity of who is calling at the door, the telephone numbers can be used to verify whether or not the caller is genuine”.

It is hoped that the residents will now feel more confident about dealing with people at the door and will be encouraged to contact their local policing team if in any doubt.

PCSO Ken Spickett said:

"Artifice burglary can be devastating for victims and by providing a list of telephone numbers so that the ID of a caller can be verified, the older and more vulnerable residents can be better protected".

Since the initiative, the idea has been forwarded onto other Safer Neighbourhoods teams throughout the borough hoping that other like residents can benefit from the advice.

### **'PCSO Steve' meets and greets nursery children**

Children at Independent Place Nursery in Shacklewell Lane, E8, received a special visit from Dalston Safer Neighbourhoods team (Hackney borough).

PCSO Steve (a police character costume), accompanied officers to the nursery and visited the children, ages 2½ to 5. In a fun and friendly environment, the children met PCSO Steve and the officers. For many of the children this was the first time they had ever spoken to anyone from their local police.

The children were invited to shake hands with PCSO Steve and try on various items of the officers' uniform and equipment.



PCSO Tina Harvey, from Dalston Safer Neighbourhoods team, said:

'It was very rewarding to visit the nursery; it gave us the opportunity to help the children understand who we are. I hope this will give them the confidence to say hello if they see us in the street and understand that we are there to help them and keep them safe".

## Hillingdon 'Santa' visits the elderly bearing gifts

Towards mid-December officers from the Barnhill Safer Neighbourhoods team (Hillingdon borough) attended a Christmas afternoon tea for elderly residents organised by the Warren Park Residents Association and Yeading Junior School.

Yeading junior school pupils performed part of their Christmas play "Christmas around the world" and sang carols for the residents whilst Warren Park Residents Association put on festive refreshments.

As some of the elderly residents are housebound or disabled, PCSO Jackie Blade arranged transport to and from the school enabling them to attend. As the performance was about to end Sergeant Mick Hewett (dressed up as Father Christmas) of Barnhill Safer Neighbourhoods team made a surprise visit to give gifts of 'light switch timers' and advice to "leave a light on" over the festive period, which were gratefully received.



PS Mick Hewett said:

"We are always happy to attend such events and it helps us to forge good links with the elderly in our community. We were able to speak to residents and give advice about burglary prevention".

Rachel Mustafa from Warren Park Residents Association said:

"The elderly residents Christmas tea has been a great success bringing residents together that otherwise would not have met. Some of these elderly people may not have otherwise been able to take part in any festivities. We hope to hold more resident get-togethers in partnership with Yeading Junior School and Barnhill Safer Neighbourhoods team in the future".