

HOME SECURITY

Forget all the myths that a burglar is some type of “Master Criminal” who “cases the joint”, studying your movements. In the world away from television, a burglar is usually a young man looking for the easiest way into a home without being seen or disturbed.

The evidence suggests that, once a thief has broken into your home and got away with it, he may be back again in a short space of time unless you do something to prevent it recurring. If positive action is taken, you will substantially reduce the chance of a repeat visit.

There are many things you can do to deter a burglar from breaking into your home. It is a mistake to rely on only one or two deterrents - the more you have, the safer you are.

Read on for details

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OUTSIDE - THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

Fences

Making the thief feel exposed when he approaches the front of your property can help. Low hedges and low fencing (or transparent high fences) will increase the feeling, as will outside lighting.

Most burglars break into a house from the back. Good rear garden fences or hedges, coupled with a side gate, will help protect your home.

Side gates are best positioned level with the front of your house so they can be seen.

When choosing the type of fence, you should consider the view neighbours or the public have of the front and rear of your home. A high fence may be difficult to climb over but can stop people casually observing your house. A low fence is easy to climb over but enables everybody to see a burglar.

The type of fence which has a trellis on the top is difficult to climb over but does not obstruct visibility.



Lighting

There are several types of external lighting systems:-

Floodlights

This type of system uses a sensor which, when it has detected a person in its range, automatically switches on a light. The light is usually a high powered floodlight, but may be any type of lighting unit.

The quartz halogen-type floodlight coupled to a Passive Infra-Red (PIR) sensor is now very popular, with the prices falling considerably over the last few years. This type of unit may help to reduce the fear of crime. If you have to go out to the rear of your property



at night, it's great to be welcomed by a bright light. Be sure however that it is adjusted not to shine into your neighbours' rooms.

The better systems have the sensor in a separate unit from the light. This enables you to have more than one PIR sensor or light, linked together in one system.

Low Wattage Lights

Some people prefer external lighting that comes on automatically at dusk and stays on all night until dawn.

The photocell darkness detector unit can operate any number or style of light, from ornate coach lights to practical bulkhead lamps.

If low wattage economy bulbs are used these can cost less than 1p per night in electricity.

Siting of these lights is important to ensure that dark shadowed areas are not created. Unlit areas can provide a hiding place for a thief or instil a fear that someone *could* be hiding there.

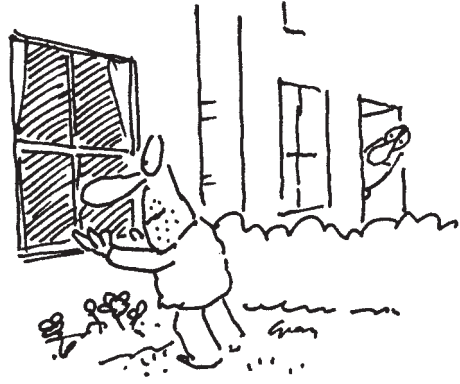
Control Units

These units are either electronic with a digital display or resemble a normal clock face. They allow you to automatically switch outside lights on or off at any given time.

ARE YOU IN?

Lighting

Burglars do not want to be disturbed. You can convince them that someone is at home by having plug-in timer controls for lamps. Technology has now made it even easier with the invention of cotton bobbin-sized gadgets that fit between the bulb and the light socket. These automatically switch on the light as programmed.



Don't just have the hall light switched on when you're not in; have the lights switching themselves on in the bedroom, bathroom (not many people get out of the bath to answer the door), kitchen and lounge.

Internal Sounds

A plug-in timer for the radio would provide sounds from the living room. It is better to tune the radio to a station which has more talking than music.

Curtains

Curtains can now be opened and closed electronically, although it is quite expensive.

As an alternative, you can arrange for your curtains to be closed in your absence by giving a trusted neighbour a key. Most neighbours never mind the little trouble as you may be doing the same for them soon.

If curtains are not going to be drawn while you are out, use timer switches on low table lamps around the room, instead of the main ceiling light.

Set the lighting timers to come on when it goes dark, especially if you tend to be late home in winter.

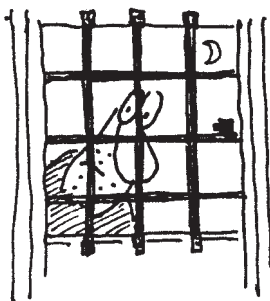
PHYSICAL SECURITY

Check Insurance

Most insurance companies now insist on a specified level of physical security, detailed in your policy. Check the small print and, if in doubt, write to your broker before it is too late.

Many insurance companies offer discounts to houses with alarms, good-quality locks and if you are in a Home Watch Scheme.

Mortise Lock



If you only have a traditional cylinder rim night latch on your wooden front door (a very common type that locks whenever you slam the door) you would be advised to fit an additional mortise dead lock that needs a key to open from either side of the door. If you choose one that conforms to British Standards (BS3621) or has at least five levers, this should be acceptable.

Check the door is thick enough to accept the lock and keep its strength, although it may be better to approach a qualified locksmith for advice.

Bolts

As a mortise lock may be a little expensive, some people fit mortise bolts instead to a wooden back door. These are more secure than the ornate little draw bolts which are suitable only for wardrobes and not as unsightly as a big draw bolt. With a mortise bolt one key fits all which, when rotated in the keyhole, makes a bolt shoot out of the door itself into the door frame. The key can only be used on the inside of the door, so put them only on doors by which you do not leave your house.

Doors - External

Locks are only as good as the quality of the wood in the door and frame, or as the security of the frame. Before fitting any additional locks it may be better to have a builder or joiner further secure the door frame to the brickwork.

Check your door to see if it has weak wooden panels. Some traditional back doors which are glazed at the top but have a plywood panel at the bottom can be vulnerable. You can strengthen it by screwing on a piece of 1/2" exterior grade plywood. Cover the screw heads with filler or use security screws (see Shed Security). Painted the colour of your door, it isn't that noticeable but is much harder to force.

For a stronger fit, the new panel can be bolted straight through the door itself using round headed bolts on the outside.

Doors - Internal

Locking internal doors while you are away from the house can sometimes stop a burglar from going further into the home, but in other instances the locking of an internal door can result in a lot more damage if the door is smashed down.

The locking of internal doors while you are in the house may make you feel more secure, but consideration must be given to escaping in the event of fire.

As with exterior doors consider the strength of the wood in the door and how well the door frame is secured before fitting any lock or bolt.

Window Locks

To obtain the correct type of lock for a wooden framed window, try to choose the sort which does not involve any of the window catches. The type of lock that pulls the window into the frame with a key are normally stronger. They may even stop a person forcing the window open or leaning through a smaller window to undo it.

If the opening section of the window is quite large, fit two window locks.

Window locks can be supplied and fitted by a locksmith, but most types can be fitted by anybody who can use a screwdriver.

Self-locking window locks are a little more expensive than other types, but may be more convenient to use on windows which are frequently opened and closed (bathroom windows, etc.).

Louvre windows on the ground floor should generally be avoided. If you cannot replace a louvre window, consult a glazing firm who may be able to secure each pane of glass in each frame with strong adhesive.

Double Glazing

If choosing double glazed windows, it may be preferable to check to see that it is not just the handle that stops a window from opening. Many windows use a number of bolts coming out of the opening frame into the fixed frame, operated when the handle is turned. You should need a key to unlock the window.

It can be argued that laminated glass is preferable to toughened glass, for security and safety in double glazing. When broken, toughened glass breaks into many small pieces over the entire pane of glass. Laminated glass will break as normal glass, but will hold in place in the window, slowing down a burglar from entering, or stopping a child from cutting him or her self.

Whether your window unit is glazed from the inside or outside you should be satisfied that the glass cannot be removed without it being broken. A good glazier familiar with UPVC frames may be able to secure existing externally beaded frames.

Fitting extra locks to UPVC or aluminium framed doors is usually beyond the amateur DIY person. If the door does not lock along its full length, consult a glazier or locksmith for advice, or ask them if they can do the job.

It is advisable to check with the company which installed the double glazing before fitting any additional locks to windows or doors. Unauthorised fitting may invalidate the guarantee.

Patio Doors

Sliding patio doors can be protected by fitting one or two of the popular purpose made locks or a security bar. Again a locksmith's advice would help. If you are lucky enough to have a patio door that slides on the inside of the fixed panel it can be secured very effectively and cheaply. Put a piece of wood in the full length of the floor track between the door and the frame - on the inside of course. The piece of wood could be made to match the wooden sill. This will make the door difficult to force even with a crow-bar.

It is wise to check that doors which slide on the outside of the fixed panel cannot be lifted off their runners. Some double glazing companies or security firms can fit a metal block onto the frame just above the door in its closed position. This makes it impossible to lift up a closed door.

French Windows

If both doors in the french windows open, then remember that the lock which secures one door into the other is only as strong as the door the lock goes into. The glazed wooden doors in a french window should be protected by fitting mortise bolts to both the top and bottom of each opening door. They should be fitted to go into the frame and not the other door.

If the wood in the door is not thick enough to allow mortise bolts to be fitted, or the style of the doors does not allow it, you may have to consider traditional draw bolts or surface-mounted bolts which lock.

Always remove the keys from the locks to stop someone breaking a small pane of glass and entering by using the key.

Keys

It is always wise not to leave spare keys for your windows, doors and car about your home. By forcing a criminal to leave the same way as he entered, you will not only shorten the visit, but minimise your loss. You try getting a TV through a small kitchen window!

Keys kept as spares in case you lose your main set are always best left with a neighbour, friend or relative.

In any instance never leave keys in the door locks (see also Fire).

If you use only one sort of window lock in your home you would be able to keep the one key on your main key ring, and not have to keep a key near every window.

Safes

Hiding belongings might be an inconvenient way to live, but using a hidden safe as a jewellery box can be a lot safer.

Most domestic safes now rely as their main defence on not being easily seen. Safes may be hidden in cupboards or under the floorboards and fastened to the joists.

If you wish to protect items of high value, check with your house contents insurance company first to see what type of safe they recommend.

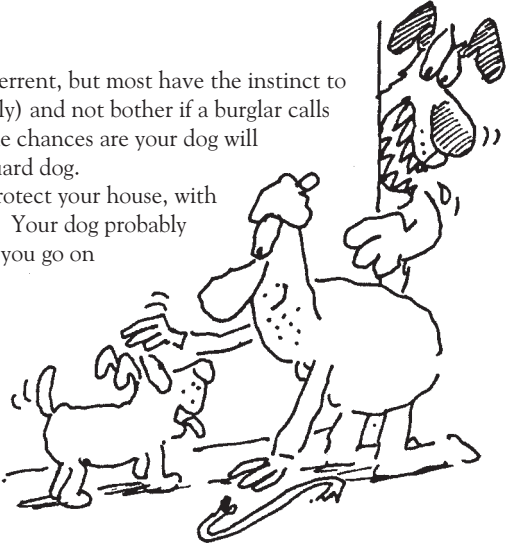
Some safes appear cheap to purchase, but are very difficult to fit. Discussing your needs with a qualified locksmith will help.

Dogs

Sometimes a dog can be a deterrent, but most have the instinct to protect their “pack” (the family) and not bother if a burglar calls when you’re not at home. The chances are your dog will be a pet and not raised as a guard dog.

Do not rely on just a dog to protect your house, with no other security precautions. Your dog probably will not be in the home when you go on holiday or go out for the day.

If you are a Council tenant please refer to your tenancy agreement or contact your local housing office to obtain details of the Council’s policy on dogs.



Fire

With all this security some people worry about escaping from a fire. Good security is designed to stop burglars getting in, not people getting out. Burglars want to operate quietly without being seen, whereas if there was a fire you want everybody to see and hear you.

It is essential to fit a smoke alarm to give early warning of the outbreak of fire.

It is wise not to lock internal doors that could block your escape route. Also, always keep handy any keys needed to let you get through an external door so as not to delay your escape in an emergency.

The best place for a door key is on your person or at the side of your bed when you retire. Do not leave them in the lock. Window lock keys should be kept near to the window but out of the sight or reach of intruders.

Remember to be safe as well as secure.

ALARMS

The sight of an alarm box outside the average home is still a deterrent. Many a burglar, however, doesn't notice an alarm box until the bell starts ringing.

The sound of an alarm will cause most burglars to grab what they can quickly before making their escape, without exploring the rest of the house.

Choosing an alarm system can be quite difficult due to the variety of features available.



Which type of system?

In a nut shell, there are two types of alarm system: Type A and Type B. Both types of alarm system should have an automatic cut off so that the noise doesn't continue for more than 20 minutes.

Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms

A monitored alarm system, also known as a "remote signalling" system or "Police Call", is similar to a Type B system, but is monitored by a private central station 24 hours a day.

On activation the alarm system automatically informs an approved monitoring station somewhere in the country, who will notify the police on a dedicated line. You can give a password or code number to stop a false alarm.

Unlike monitored alarms at commercial premises, systems at domestic properties can make any audible sound at the scene immediately the alarm is activated.

This type of alarm system is particularly suitable for isolated buildings away from residents, or where you do not wish to rely on the assistance of neighbours.

Discuss with the alarm company the various ways in which the alarm system can be protected from attack by a burglar (eg if the phone wires are cut, will the alarm still activate?). Enquire about the additional annual charge for the monitoring.

Type B (Audible Only) Alarms

If a thief sets off the alarm, or you press a personal attack button, it will ring instantly outside. This system then relies on someone hearing the noise and calling the police as it does not automatically signal to a monitoring station or the police.

The police receive many thousands of such reports each year. Only a few are genuine.

The police have therefore adopted a national policy in relation to reports of Type B alarm activations. To obtain police attendance Type B alarms require some additional indication that an offence is in progress. This could be the sound of breaking glass, seeing a suspicious person, an unusual light, etc. The police do not rely just on the alarm system itself.

To help with this, we ask people to check premises before telephoning the police *but without putting anyone in danger*. Neighbours could look through a window, attend with a friend, look for suspicious signs or noises. Knowing whether the occupant is away on holiday, at work or if there is a key-holder all help.

If there is an additional suspicion, then all calls to the police reporting the alarm should be a 999 emergency as you think an offence is in progress.

You are advised to leave key-holder details with your local police. The key-holder may be any person you trust.

The cost of this type of alarm system should be for the installation only, although some customers prefer to take out a service and maintenance contract.

DIY “Bells Only” systems are currently available, but make sure that the system you are considering conforms to BS 6707. If you are considering fitting an alarm yourself, you should be fully competent in working with electricity. You should also ensure someone else is totally familiar with the system for the occasions when you are not opening or closing the premises yourself.

Most people prefer to choose an alarm company recognised by their insurance company.

Which Alarm Company?

Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms

Police will only attend remote signalling alarms installed by alarm companies whose business is subject to inspection by a recognised Independent Inspectorate organisation.

Currently, these Inspectorates are:

NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Systems)	Tel. 01628 637512
SSAIB (Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board)	Tel. 0191 296 3242
AISC (Alarm Inspectorate Security Council)	Tel. 01704 500 897
Integrity 2000	Tel. 01277 262 000

These organisations publish lists of authorised alarm fitting companies.

Type B (Audible Only) Alarms

The police do not recommend individual alarm companies (or even “recognised” companies). Of course, most of the companies that install Type A alarms also install Type B alarms.

What Should I Ask?

You should seek answers to the following questions:

1. Before disclosing personal security details, have I checked the address and credentials of the company and seen proof of identity from their representative?
2. Is the company subject to an independent inspection process and if so by which organisation?
3. Is the installation of an alarm a requirement of my insurance company and if so, is the company acceptable to my insurer?
4. Have I sought written quotations from at least three alarm installers?
5. Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms only - Can the company representative provide me with a list of police rules for occupiers of premises with alarms and written confirmation that the alarm and the company are currently acceptable to the local police for the transmission of alarm messages from new installations?
6. Does the quotation:
 - i) specify that the installation will be to British Standard 4737 or BS 7042 (high security systems), or if it is a wire free alarm, BS 6799 clause 6 as amended by NACOSS Code of Practice NACP 12?
 - ii) include the terms of maintenance and monitoring contracts?
7. Do they operate a 24 hour call-out service and emergency attendance within 4 hours?

Personal Attack Buttons

Type A (Remote Signalling) Alarms

Personal attack buttons should not be used as an easy way to summon the police, unless you are unable to get to the phone without putting yourself in danger. A “999” call is always preferable, both to you and the police.

Type B (Audible Only) Alarms

The only purpose of a personal attack button in a Type B alarm system would be to make a noise, thus attracting attention, and hopefully scaring the attacker away.

Generally...

Consider an installation contract carefully before you sign, checking all details. Check such things as whether you own or rent the system, the maintenance contract, the cost and whether it could be easily operated.

An alarm system should cause no mess to the decor, since the wiring will be concealed.

False calls will result in the alarm response being withdrawn by the police, which may affect your insurance cover.

Try to avoid false alarm calls. False calls can cause a loss of credibility with neighbours, who may stop taking any notice of your alarm.

DOORSTEP CROOKS

Some criminals won't go to the trouble of breaking into your home if they can just knock and be invited in.

People assume that these doorstep crooks only prey on elderly residents, but anybody may be a victim. All of us can help to prevent the crime.

You've probably had many genuine callers at your front door and not one trickster, so it's not worth losing sleep over something that may never happen. It is worth getting into the habit of taking a few extra seconds to check every caller at the door properly.

Bogus callers come in many shapes and sizes. They could be children, pregnant women, and men in all types of clothing (from overalls to suits). These are just a few of the trends.



Bogus Workmen

The bogus repair man may use a very good and insistent sales patter to get you to employ him straight away.

If you haven't had your drains cleaned or your roof fixed for many years, then another day or two whilst you get another estimate won't make any difference.

If you need to get the building work done it makes sense to get several written quotes from trustworthy firms and then decide who is best.

Bogus Dealers

This sort of fraudster will try and buy that piece of furniture you thought was worth nothing for far less than its true value.

The solution is easy. If you decide to sell something, you will almost certainly get more money for it by first speaking to other dealers.

Bogus Officials

This is perhaps the most common category but also the easiest to prevent.

Officials from the Water Board never need to come into your home to test water pressure or repair a leak, even in an emergency. If for any remote reason they do need access they will always send you a letter to make an appointment.

The genuine meter readers from the Gas and Electricity Boards want you to check their identity before letting them in.

Check their identity card but, if in doubt, ring up and confirm that the caller is genuine.

Keep the telephone numbers handy and don't keep the caller waiting by an open door.

If you have difficulty reading identity cards, ring the number given on your bill and ask to join the password scheme. Every time a meter reader calls they will then always give the password you have arranged. The scheme is free and could stop a thief from tricking their way into your home.

Look Before You Open

Always look to see who is at the door before you open it.

Door Viewer

If you do not have glass in your front door, fitting a spy hole door viewer will help.

Alternatively, get into the habit of always looking through a window near the door to see who is calling.

Outside Light

An outside light over your door will enable you to see a caller if it is dark. Position the light so that it would light up the caller's face, rather than make a silhouette.

Door Chain

If you need to open the door to make further checks, use a door chain or similar device.

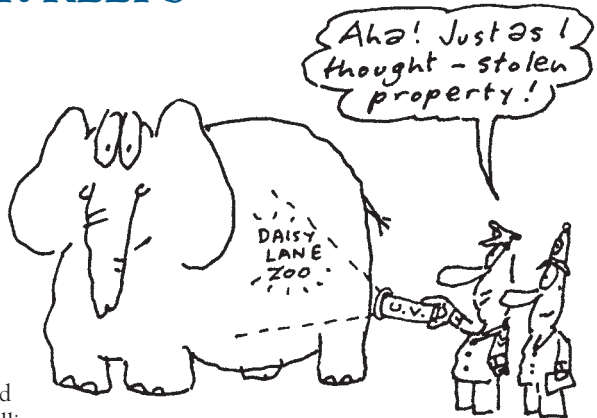
Only put on the door chain as you answer the door. Don't keep it on all the time as this could delay your exit in a fire. It could also delay a neighbour or relation who has a key, getting to you if you were ill or needed help.

In Summary

- * Don't let people in until you are satisfied you know who they are and what they want. Check their story.
- * Keep the door locked while you use the phone to verify their story, or ask them to come back later.
- * If you let someone in, stay with them at all times.
- * Never part with money, documents or other things, whatever they say
- * IF YOU ARE SUSPICIOUS - RING THE POLICE.
- * Get more than one estimate for work.
- * Official organisations usually write first. Have you had a letter?
- * Check identity cards thoroughly.
- * Don't let callers put pressure on you to let them in.
- * IF IN DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT.

CODED FOR KEEPS

If your television were stolen, would you know its make, model and serial number? If you can find the receipt, you will probably be able to find out the make and model. Unless, however, you've made a special effort to write the serial number down, your television would be no different from the millions of others stolen all over the country.



If the serial number of a stolen item was known, it could then be circulated as stolen in a similar way to a registration number of a stolen car.

Not only are your chances remote of getting unidentifiable possessions returned, but also, without being able to prove an item was stolen, it can be very difficult to substantiate a charge against a suspect. Arresting offenders isn't difficult. Getting evidence is!

Ultra-Violet Marking

Available in all good stationers, security shops, etc., are ultra-violet marker pens for about £1.00.

These felt-tip pens are designed for writing on your ornaments and audio/visual equipment in an ink which is invisible to the eye under normal light.

All police stations in the country have portable lights that clearly illuminate the writing on such possessions.

By printing your postcode followed by the house number, or first three letters of your official house name, it is possible to trace an owner from anywhere in the country.

Just a few tips, though. Always mark your items underneath as the postcode can be slightly visible on non-porous surfaces, and try to renew every twelve months. Don't worry about an impending move. Simply postcode your items again. Then the police only have to make two or three 'phone calls to trace an owner instead of two or three thousand.

Photographs

For small items like jewellery, which obviously cannot easily be postcoded with an ultra-violet pen, a picture is worth a thousand words!

Photographing all items against a ruler is better than any jewellers' description, making it easier to make comparisons with found items.

If you have a video camera with a "macro" lens (for close-up filming), then video record all your possessions with serial numbers and your jewellery.

On flatter items like watches, a photostat machine takes a pretty good picture.

SHED SECURITY



With all this security now around your home, don't forget the garage or shed. Any valuable electrical items should be kept in the home if your shed is particularly vulnerable, but if it is, do something about it!

Remember to postcode tools (see "Coded for Keeps"). If it is impractical to postcode with ultra- violet ink because of the wear an item would get with use, consider engraving the postcode.

Padlocks

A good-quality hasp and staple with a padlock is important on all sheds and side doors to garages.

Remember to choose a hasp and staple that is bolted to the door and frame for extra strength.

Screw Heads

Glue smeared over the heads of screws in the hinges of shed doors or the side door of a garage may stop a thief from simply unscrewing them. Alternatively, replace a couple of the screws in external hinges with a special type that cannot be unscrewed (sometimes called "clutch-head", "anti-tamper" or "coffin" screws).

Windows

When your door is secure, don't forget the windows.

Perhaps the most effective way of securing a shed window is to fit internal bars or grilles.

Cycles

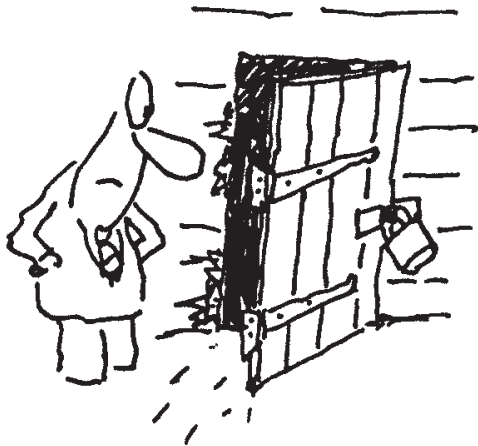
Always lock cycles to something fixed or bulky while in the shed or garage (ladders or work-bench), and have them post-coded. Many cycle dealers provide this service for a small charge. Alternatively, contact your local police station for advice.

Lawn Mowers

Lawn mowers can cease to be attractive to a thief if you paint your postcode and house number across the top with house paint.

Garden Tools

Don't leave tools for the burglar about the garden, like spades, ladders, etc., and ask your neighbours not to either.



GARDEN SECURITY

The importance of stopping prowlers and burglars from wandering through your rear garden is obvious. The only trouble is that not everybody wants to live with a back garden that resembles a prisoner of war camp, with barbed wire fences around the perimeter.

It's for this reason that most residents prefer to use Mother Nature's own barbed wire, a prickly bush.

A hedge made from a prickly bush would deter most thieves from trying to get through it. Alternatively, growing prickly bushes next to a fence or wall would also deter most trespassers from climbing over it. It should be noted, though, that they will need to be maintained and can attract litter in certain situations.

Trees

Trees are often chosen for their quick growing ability rather than with a view towards aiding natural surveillance.

Hedges made from *Cypress Leylandii* are ideal for providing privacy, but they may stop neighbours from seeing a burglar breaking into a home after he's pushed through the bushes.

If a holly such as *Ilex Aquifolium* was planted instead, you would still have privacy, but few thieves would get through.

The hawthorn Paul Scarlet (*Coccinea Plena*) not only bears beautiful scarlet coloured blossoms, but has prickly thorns. This is normally the best choice for an average rear garden, as being deciduous, it sheds its leaves in Autumn, letting neighbours see your home in Winter.

Climbing Plants

Drain pipes giving access to flat roofs and windows, can easily be protected by barbed wire or anti-climb paint. Think how much nicer a rambling rose such as *Leverkusen*, which grows to about 10' in height and produces pale yellow flowers, would be.

There are numerous other species to suit your needs, whether you want height, colour or scent. Some types are more vigorous in their growth, with *Lawrence Johnston* reaching a height of 30'.

Shrubs

There are numerous varieties of prickly deciduous shrubs, which may be used as an effective barrier. Growing prickly shrubs next to your wall or fence would deter most criminals from climbing over.

Suitable Prickly Plants

- *Berberis x Ottawensis* - Medium sized deciduous shrub with green or oval leaves. Red berries in autumn. Reaches 6'. Good for hedging.
- *Berberis x Stenophylla* - Medium sized evergreen shrub. Golden-yellow flowers in April/May. Berries in autumn. Reaches 6'. Good for hedging.
- Pink Lady (*Chaenomeles x superba*) Deciduous shrub with pink flowers in spring & yellow quinces in autumn. Fast grower. Can be trained against a wall.
- Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) Fragrant white flowers in May & red "haws" in autumn. Forms an impenetrable hedge.
- Sea Buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) Shrub growing up to 10'. Silvery leaves in summer followed by yellow berries. Plant in groups for pollination.
- Winter Sun (*Mahonia x media*) Vigorous evergreen shrub up to 10' tall. Yellow flowers in autumn/winter. Berries in late winter.
- Blackthorn or Sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) Dense shrub, white flowers in April/May. Good hedging plant.
- Firethorn (*Pyracantha Orange Glow*) Evergreen shrub, reaching 16' as a wall shrub. White flowers in May, red berries into winter.
- Firethorn (*Pyracantha "Golden Chamber"*) Vigorous evergreen shrub. White flowers in May, followed by yellow fruits. Ideal as a wall shrub.
- "Rubra" (*Rosa rugosa*) Strong perpetual flowering shrub up to 6' tall. Crimson flowers followed by red hips. Forms dense thickets & excellent hedges.

HOME WATCH

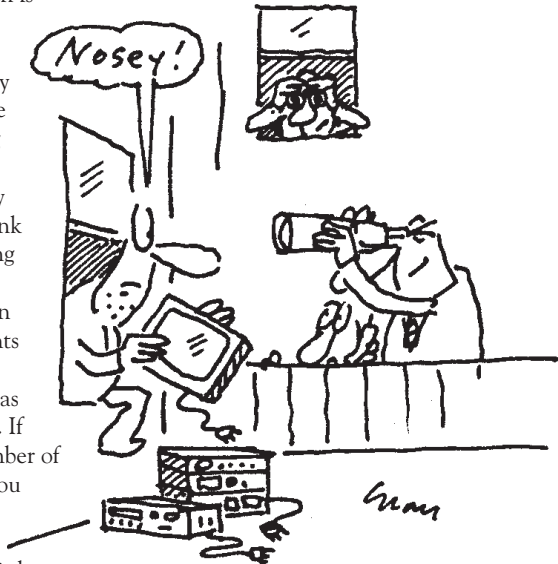
An enthusiastic Home Watch Scheme will deter burglaries.

Protecting your home with locks is fine but you will enjoy greater security and peace of mind if everyone around is working with you. Residents of a community possess a very specialised knowledge of their neighbourhood that even the proverbial “village bobby” would take years to achieve. A police officer might not recognise someone in your garden as a stranger, but a neighbour would.

By letting the police know of anything suspicious you see or hear, you are helping to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur. Even going to the trouble of letting a stranger who is wandering about your area know you’re keeping an eye on him helps tremendously.

This is what Home Watch is all about.

Some residents think they should not ring the police when they see something suspicious going on at a neighbour’s house as they don’t want anyone to think they’re being nosey, prying around net curtains at other peoples’ business. In Home Watch the residents all agree that they want each other to be vigilant as far as crime is concerned. If you have the ‘phone number of the man next door and you ring him up at work to check that a removal firm should be clearing his house, who wouldn’t be grateful?



If you want to start a Home Watch scheme or find out if one exists in your area, ring the Home Watch Administrator at your local police station.

YOU AND THE LAW

This section is not meant to be an accurate statement of the law, but to offer guidance only. You would not be able to rely on it to provide a defence to any criminal charge or civil claim.

Self Defence

The most important point to remember in the use of self-defence is to ask if what you are doing is reasonable.

The Criminal Law Act 1967 says that you may use reasonable force depending on the circumstances, to prevent crime or arrest an offender.

If you are attacked you may defend yourself, but you only do what is reasonably necessary. You are entitled to defend your family and your property. Where a person is merely trespassing without using force the trespasser must be requested to leave before hands are laid on him and no more force than necessary may be used to remove him. In the case of self-defence it is also good advice for you to show that you did not want a fight. In most circumstances you must show you are prepared to withdraw from the situation.

The Use of Barbed Wire

Barbed wire may be used to defend your property, but the law puts certain restrictions on its use.

Section 164 Highways Act 1980 says that where on land adjoining a highway there is a fence made with barbed wire in or on it and the wire is a nuisance to the highway, a notice may be issued by the local authority for the nuisance to be removed.

Being a nuisance means that it is likely to cause injury to people or animals using the highway.

In practice, most local authority highways departments usually consider that barbed wire lower than eight feet from the ground could be a nuisance to highway users.

The term “barbed wire” means anything with spikes or jagged projections, so would also include the wooden carpet gripper strips which have nails sticking up through the wood.

If the barbed wire is not adjoining the highway and an injury results, you could still be faced with a claim for damages under the Occupier Liability Acts. Occupiers of premises have a duty of care to people entering or using their premises. This duty even extends to trespassers, although it is not as extensive as it is to people lawfully using or visiting the premises. So a burglar, who could not be aware that barbed wire was on top of a fence and injured himself on it, could have a claim against you despite the fact that he was a trespasser.

If you wish to have some sort of barbed wire protecting your property, it may be a good idea to check with your home insurance company that they would cover you in the event of a person claiming for an injury caused.

It is for the above reasons that most residents prefer to use Mother Nature's own barbed wire - a prickly bush. Details are given in the chapter Garden Security.

CONCLUSION

Find You?

If any of the emergency services have to attend your home, make sure they can find you!

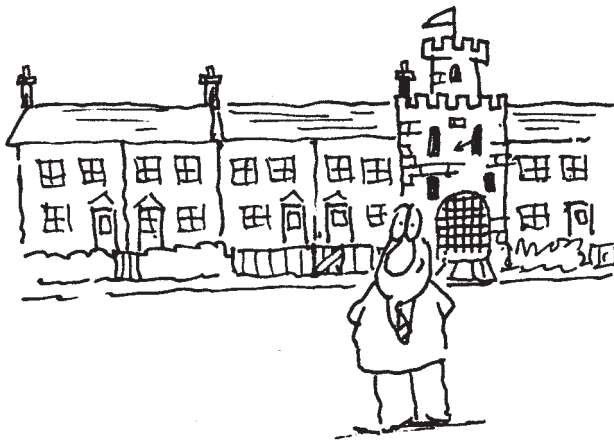
It would be wise to step outside your home tonight and see if your house number is visible from the road. People insist on putting small brass numbers on their front door which can only be seen when you've run up the path.

Prevention is better than cure

Crime prevention, in a way, is a type of insurance. You hope you'll never need it, but you want to be prepared in case it does happen.

If you take practical steps in crime prevention you reduce your fear of crime, improving the quality of your life.

A house doesn't have to be a prison, but it should be your castle.



RECORD OF VALUABLE PROPERTY

Item	Serial Number	Description (Size & Colour)	Make & Model	Value £	Where Marked

Item	Serial Number	Description (Size & Colour)	Make & Model	Value £	Where Marked

Use this to keep a record of your valuables.
Keep this form in a safe place for future reference.