

A Guide to holiday booking fraud

With the holiday booking season well and truly under way, it is well worth taking note of this advice. We all look forward to our holidays, and often they can cost a considerable amount of money, which most of us simply cannot afford to lose. Unfortunately, more and more people are being affected by holiday booking fraud, which means that not only do you not get your holiday; you normally end up losing your money too.

What do we mean by holiday booking fraud?

Holiday booking fraud is when you hand over money only to discover the holiday, accommodation or flight you've paid for doesn't exist. Fraudsters are making hundreds of thousands of pounds each year through fake websites, false advertising, bogus phone calls and email scams, often leaving their victims without a flight or holiday, or even stranded in another country with nowhere to stay. Research shows that fraudsters are most likely to target you if you're booking airline tickets, package holidays (especially sports packages or religious holidays), or self catering villas and apartments. You could also be targeted when applying for foreign visas.

Booking Online

- A thorough online search will result in reviews that can reveal more about the holiday or company.
- Check the website address that appears in the top window is correct. Fraudsters can clone legitimate websites but will change the last part of the web address, such as from co.uk to .org.
- Make sure the company is a member of a recognised trade association such as ABTA. You can verify membership on www.abta.com. ABTA is the UK's biggest travel trade association with around 1,200 members that adhere to its Code of Conduct.
- When entering your personal payment details online, make sure the site you are booking on is secure by having a padlock in the address bar and an address beginning 'https' or 'shttp'.
- Where possible book with a credit card (or a debit card that offers protection). Do note, however, that there may be a surcharge for this.
- Check the Terms and Conditions to confirm exactly what you are buying and don't be afraid to ask questions. A legitimate company will be able to answer your queries straight away or get back to you with the answers you need.

Booking a self catering villa or apartment

- Fraudsters often use villa rental websites to advertise holiday villas or apartments that don't exist.
- Most scams occur on sites where owners advertise their accommodation directly.
- If you are booking a villa or apartment online, you should avoid using these sites if you want absolute reassurance.
- Book with a company that will arrange the contract on your behalf.

If you have been a victim of fraud

It's important to report a fraud so that criminals can be stopped and others don't fall victim to the same scam. Here's what to do:

- Report it to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or speak to a specialist adviser on 0300 123 2040. You can also use the online tool if you suspect you've been targeted.
- If you paid for the holiday using your credit card, contact your card issuer ■

(source: Metropolitan Police, crime prevention)

Urgent – more committee members needed

We are looking for new Committee members to ensure the future of Nailsea Neighbourhood Watch. If you think you may be interested, you will be most welcome to come along without obligation to our next Committee meeting on Wednesday 15th April 7:30pm at the Tithe Barn (adjacent to Holy Trinity Church) ■

DOARY WATCH

Next public meeting, 7:30pm at the UNNOTED REFORMED CHURCH HALL
Stockway North, Nailsea

WEDNESDAY, 6th MAY

Linda Strong, Pier Mistress, will be giving us a talk about the Clevedon Pier Trust and the new Educational and Visitor Facilities. PC Peter Rooke, our Nailsea Beat Manager, will also be in attendance to discuss all the latest local crime figures.

All members are most welcome at our General Meetings with interesting guest speakers. These meetings are arranged for the benefit of all Nailsea members. It is also an opportunity to meet fellow members in a relaxed social atmosphere. Free refreshments are provided ■

APRIL
2015
Nailsea

NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE HIGHER THE VIGILANCE THE LOWER THE CRIME...

WANT TO GET IT

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

999 Emergency
101 All Non-emergency calls, Nailsea Station

0800 555 111 Crime Stoppers

Chairman/Committee
nailseanhw@gmail.com
www.nailseanhw.org.uk

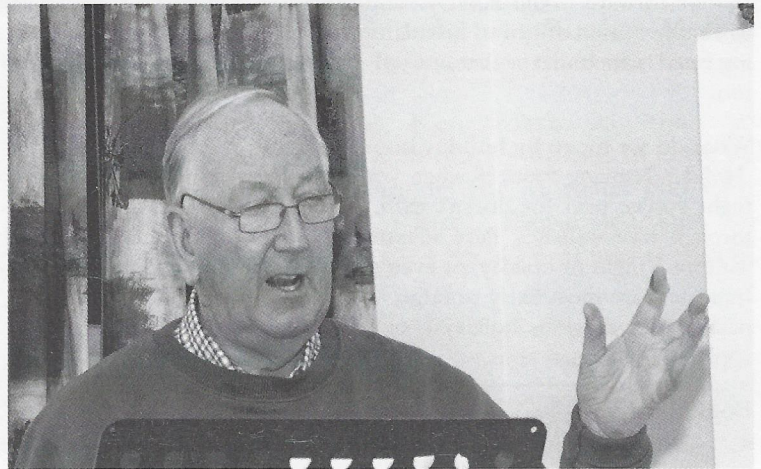
"The 1914 Christmas Truce"

We had a very interesting talk from Gary Gowans, our guest speaker, at the March meeting. He spoke at length about the events from the start of First World War right up to the Christmas truce.—

The Christmas Truce of 1914 was not a myth. It really happened, and on a much greater scale than you could imagine. Over 100,000 troops, both British and German, met in peace in no man's land during the 25th & 26th December. It was one of the most uplifting occurrences in a war of 52 months which resulted in over 10 million dead.

Gifts were exchanged, drinks were drunk and for two days enemies became friends. If only the truce could have been turned into a permanent peace, just think how different the 20th century would have been. Clearly, the front line troops wanted a lasting truce at the time because both sides were utterly exhausted, and by this time over 1 million men had lost their lives. But this was the last thing the Generals and Politicians wanted. Ordinary soldiers and officers exchanged gifts and even played a football match which the Germans won 3-2! In some parts of the trenches, a truce lasted almost until the following Easter.

It was a well prepared and polished performance by Gary supported by many original photographs, newspaper documents, letters etc. written at the time. The Chairman explained that he had only telephoned Gary on Monday afternoon to ask him if he would stand in as our guest speaker at short notice. Gary was only too pleased to help, and he was rewarded with warm applause after he answered questions from the floor. If you were not at the meeting you missed a real treat ■



Scam corner

Online fraud and e-crime ('Cyber Crime') is on the rise in the UK (we ran one article in our February issue). Villains have now moved on line to take advantage of the huge economies of scale the internet offers them for stealing money from consumers. We will be running a series of informative articles on the latest scams to help keep you informed when you are using the computer or the telephone.

Vishing and SMiShing

Fraudsters are increasingly using a low-tech tool—the telephone—to defraud you. They can set up a system that automatically dials a long list of phone numbers and asks for account information. What's more, they can mask the number that shows up on caller display so that the incoming call or text message looks legitimate.

Vishing

This form of fishing is called "Vishing". It's a variant of the term "phishing"—the V stands for voice.

To protect yourself use some of the same techniques you would use to avoid phishing frauds. Don't give information to anybody unless you are certain you know who you're dealing with.

Advice: If you get a phone call about one of your accounts, hang up. Using a different phone if possible, dial the number that appears on the back of your credit card or bank statement. This will ensure you are speaking to a genuine Bank employee. If you can't use a different phone, then wait for some time before re-dialling.

SMiShing

SMiShing scams often direct you to visit a website or call a phone number. If you dial the number, you'll be asked for sensitive information like a credit card number. If you visit the website, it may attempt to infect your computer. Fraudsters continually get more and more creative. SMiShing schemes often try to get information such as credit card numbers which they then either use or sell the information later.

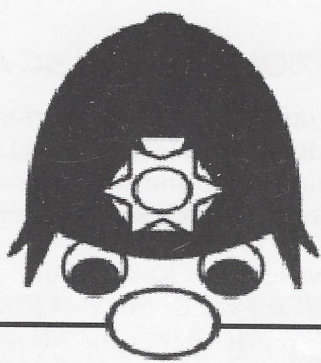
Advice: If you get a suspicious message, DON'T fall for it. Call the Bank from a phone number you trust—one that you get from the Bank's website or from your statement for example. If you get a message about a "service" you've been signed up for and will have to cancel, search the web for other reports of the message. Forward these texts to your airtime provider as follows:

67726 for Vodaphone users

7726 for O2 and EE users

37726 for "3" users

If you have been a victim, you should advise your local Police or Action Fraud. (see front page) ■



On the Beat

The new shop link radio system within the town of Nailsea is proving very popular and has assisted police with identifying more offenders that would have been possible prior to the introduction of the radios.

The stores are regularly contacting each other and passing descriptions of possible offenders and anyone acting suspiciously. By doing this all the stores are able to monitor the described individuals and disrupt any illegal intentions they may have.

Nailsea police station is pleased to welcome a new Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for the town, PCSO 9779 Julie Berchall. Julie is new to the police but is extremely keen to meet as many of you as she can. She is currently shadowing an experienced PCSO and learning about the everyday life of Community Officers. If you see her around please feel free to approach her and introduce yourself.

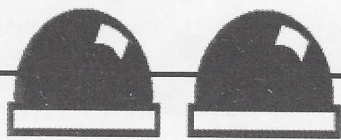
If you wish to contact her about any anti-social issues she is available on:

julie.berchall@avonandsomerset.police.uk
or

telephone her on 101

I look forward to meeting you all again at the next NHW meeting with Julie ■

PC Peter Rooke 3494



www.nailseanhw.org.uk

Our website contains lots of helpful information, including useful contact telephone numbers and all Police Ringfaster messages for the last 12 months. So if you have missed one, look no further ■

Spring has sprung !

We are now into Spring and the keen gardeners amongst you will already be out working in the garden. Please do remember to look after your valuable tools, keeping them locked away when not in use. Apart from the financial loss incurred if tools are stolen, they can also be used to force entry into your home. So don't leave them lying around outside when you are not at home ■

Beat the bogus caller

Before letting anyone into your home, follow the doorstep code:
STOP

Are you expecting anybody?

Do they have an appointment?

Check that you back door is locked and the key removed.

CHAIN

Secure the door bar or chain before opening the door. Remember to use your door chain at all times when answering the door to callers.

CHECK

Ask for and double-check the caller's identity card even if they have a pre-arranged appointment (all genuine callers will carry one). If you are still not happy with the identity of the caller, phone the company they claim to represent or call the Police on 999.

If you are in any doubt *don't* let them in, especially if they came unannounced. Tell them to call back later when someone can be with you or ask them to send you a letter to arrange a more convenient time ■

Police changes

At the March public meeting, Beat Manager PC Peter Rooke announced that in future he will become responsible just for Nailsea i.e. within the town boundary, and he will be assisted by one Police Community Support Officer. Other officers will now take on responsibility for the surrounding villages of Tickenham, Wraxall and Failand. This is a change from the present situation where we have two Beat Managers and two PCSO's covering all the above areas ■

Look after your bike

Record your bike (take a photo, log the frame number etc.) and register it on the National Cycle Register (see www.bikeregister.com)

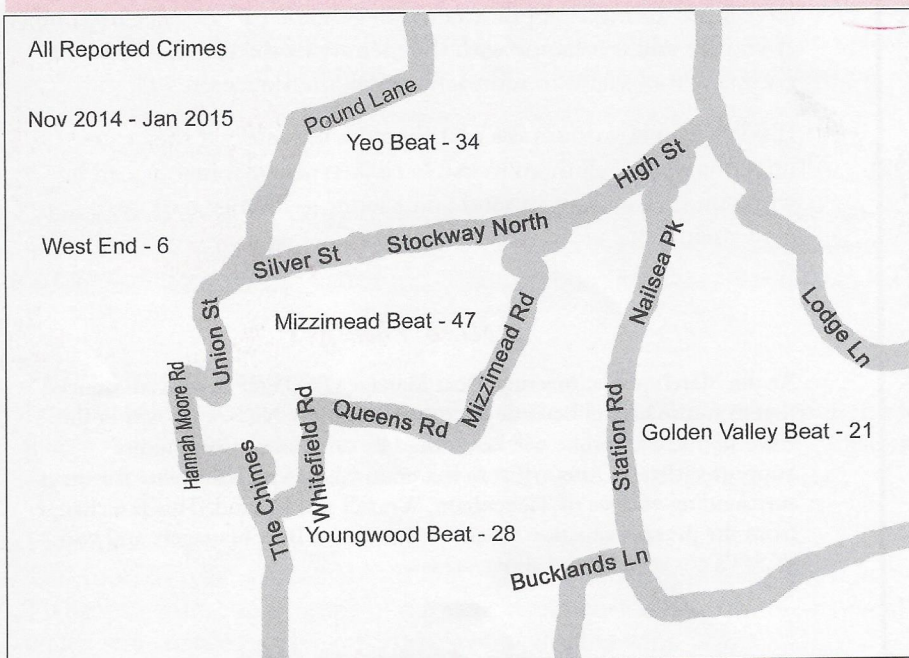
- If you're buying a second hand bike and it's stolen, even unknowingly, you can forget about statutory rights – it'll be recovered and you're unlikely to see a penny.
- If you're buying a second hand bike, use PayPal. The company's buyer protection scheme means that, should your bike later be found to be stolen, you'll be able to recover the money as long as less than 45 days have elapsed.
- Use two different locks (e.g. a cable and a D-Lock) – a thief will have to carry two tools to steal your bike.

Once you register with Bike Register, you will enjoy a number of benefits which mean your bike will be a less attractive target for thieves, and if stolen and recovered by the Police, your bike can easily be returned to you ■



Crime Figures

JANUARY/FEBRUARY	2015	2014
Other	0	2
Criminal Damage	7	16
Assault	0	10
Theft	23	13
Burglary House	0	5
Burglary Shed/Garage/Business	4	8
Theft Cycle	0	0
Robbery	0	2
Theft of Vehicle	0	0
Theft from Vehicle	0	3
Possession of Drugs	3	0
Totals	37	59



The Crime figures shown in the map above were taken from the "police.uk" web site where crimes can be located to individual streets (but not the house). More detailed information is available on this web site ■

Visit to the Houses of Parliament

We are visiting the Houses of Parliament again this year on Monday 20th July. Priority has been given to members who applied last year but were unsuccessful, as the trip was oversubscribed. The details and tickets have been sent to the lucky ones going this year. **Please make sure you have paid your money by 30th April.**

A number of people have asked if we will be running the trip again next year. We haven't decided yet, so watch this space!

Just a bit of fun ...

Did you spot the deliberate mistake in the February edition? Well done if you noticed that the diary dates were all 2014! There is a mistake in this newsletter too ... see if you can find it ■

AROUND THE SCHEMES

We would like to thank retiring Coordinators Mr J Moore (St Mary's Grove), Mr J Wescott (Ashvale Close) and Mrs S Rowley (Morgans Hill Close) for their service over many years.

We welcome Ken Mark as the new Coordinator for St Mary's Grove. We are still seeking replacements for Morgans Hill Close and Ashvale Close. Please contact the Chairman on 01275 857418 if you would like to volunteer ■

Nailsea Police Station

Opening Times

Monday—Friday 10:00am to 6pm
(closed for lunch 1:30-2:15pm)

Saturday/Sunday CLOSED

Dates for your diary

WEDNESDAY 6th MAY 2015

Linda Strong

"Clevedon Pier Trust"

WEDNESDAY 1st JULY 2015 (AGM)

Sheila Round

"Backwell & Nailsea Macular Support Group"

WEDNESDAY 7th OCT 2015

Chris Harrison

"North Somerset CCTV"

WEDNESDAY 2nd DEC 2015

Christmas Social

WEDNESDAY 2nd MAR 2016

Cyril Routley

"Life on board the SS Great Britain"

WEDNESDAY 4th MAY 2016

Jon Yabsley

"The RNLI"

WEDNESDAY 6th JULY 2016 (AGM)

Cliff White

"Behind the scenes: The Antiques Road Show"

WEDNESDAY 5th OCTOBER 2016

Gary Gowans

"The Stately Homes of Roman Britain"

Your newsletter

What topics/items would you like to see covered in future editions? Would you like to promote your business?

This newsletter is delivered to over 3,900 homes in the town, so please let us know by email at 'nailseanhw@gmail.com' or telephone 01275 857418 ■