



Christmas – presence of mind – thwart the thieves

It goes without saying that Christmas can be the busiest time of the year, not just for you and me, but for thieves as well.

At this time of year we often give thieves more opportunities to profit from our lack of care.

And it hurts to be a victim when it is the Christmas presents for loved ones that go missing.

Let us start at the beginning. Unless you are doing all your seasonal shopping on the internet or by mail order catalogue, you will probably be using your car and parking near to the shops. The thief knows this too and can prey on parked cars with obvious shopping left on view. Try to keep it down to one trip to and from the parked car and avoid leaving tempting parcels on view. Choose a car park that is well lit, has parking stewards on duty and CCTV as well. Some car parks have the 'Park Mark' quality assurance award that means they have achieved a good standard of security and will have signs around to show their status.

If you drive to a distant shopping centre and use a mobile sat 'nav' to find your way there, always take it off the windscreen and keep it with you. It is also wise to wipe off the distinctive sucker ring from the glass, a sure invitation to the thief.

When you have arrived home, be careful as you unload the car and don't leave the doors or tailgate open. It has happened that items have disappeared from cars as quickly as the time between trips indoors.

When the Christmas tree has been dressed, presents left under the tree have sometimes been the invitation to a burglar to break in and steal them. Doubly heartbreaking to not only lose the presents, but to replace them in time for the event.

If you have any Crime Prevention questions you can find most answers on www.crimereduction.gov.uk or by calling Thames Valley Police on 08458 505505 and ask for the Crime Reduction Adviser for your area.

John Oblein, Crime Reduction Adviser, Bracknell Forest Police Area.