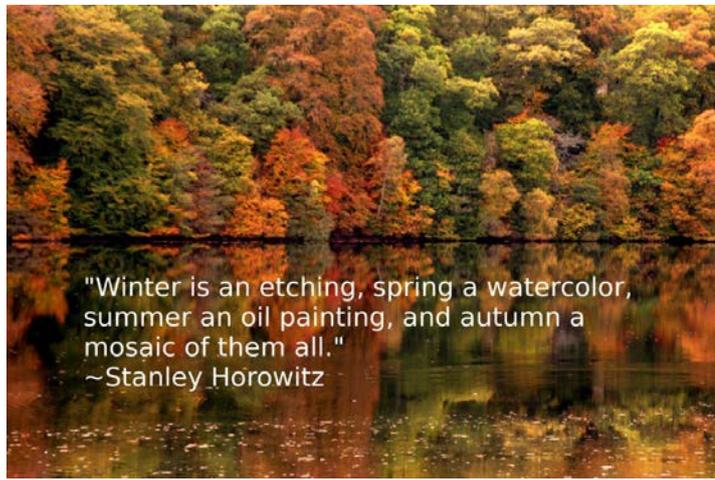


Colin's Blog

Friday 29th September 2017

We have now passed the Autumn Equinox, leaves are on the turn, some are already dropping, and the weather is becoming unsettled. The Winter woollies are about to come into their own again, as we prepare ourselves for

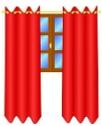


shorter days and longer nights.



With Autumn now upon us, and the nights' drawing in, Essex Police and Neighbourhood Watch, are encouraging residents to: 'leave a light on,' in their property this autumn and winter. If you leave your home without putting a light on or drawing the curtains it could be an open invitation and indication to opportunist burglars that no-one is home. The message is simple:-

Get switched on - leave a light on!



Draw your curtains when it is dark



Fit security lighting around your property



Lock your gates and keep your shed secure



Close and lock doors and windows



Keep keys out of sight



Property mark your valuables

(take photographs of them where appropriate)



Think about buying an alarm



Join or start a Neighbourhood Watch in your area

- **Trust your instincts - if you see anything suspicious call the police**

NON- EMERGENCY CALLS 101 in an **EMERGENCY CALL 999**

So, what's been happening since I last wrote. Quite a lot in the world, it would seem. Wars continue to rage, threats between certain nations abound, with little regard for the possible consequences. It's the Party Conference season, guaranteed, to make us sigh, groan, and even despair, sometimes even causing us to laugh in disbelief, at some of the pronouncements made by different political factions.

Meanwhile, most of us, who are level headed and cannot afford to fanaticise, continue to do the best we can, to keep our heads above water, and to get on with life as best we can, under the cloud of enforced perpetual austerity!

With some exceptions, the fact that we do so, emphasises, the resilience, that we have as decent, caring individuals, who need strive to overcome hiccups and obstacles, in order to support our families.

Then of course, there's the on-going situation as we go forward towards Brexit. Whether you are in the exit camp, or the remain camp, its more political ramblings that are fed to us via the media, on a daily basis. The majority have spoken, now it's time for the negotiators to get a grip, and be sensible in their decisions. Our sovereignty as a nation, is paramount, and must not be devalued or discarded, under any circumstances.

LATEST NEWS FROM ACTION FRAUD

Action Fraud warns horse racing community as investment fraud increases

Action Fraud is warning horse racing enthusiasts following reports of investment fraud cases in the equestrian community.

So far, we have received 20 complaints of investment fraud relating to horse racing since June with a total loss of £11,350. The suspects claim to use software for placing horse racing bets on the victim's behalf. However, once payment has been made to the fraudsters, often methods to contact them are closed down and the victim does not hear from the fraudsters again.

We have also noticed the re-emergence of other investment frauds where an individual is encouraged to invest in ownership of a race horse. People are contacted about these non-existent opportunities primarily by post; however, after the fraudsters have received payments, the individual finds they are no longer able to get in contact with the company.

Protect yourself from investment fraud:

- Investment into a racing horse as part of a syndicate may in some instances fall within a collective investment scheme and therefore may be subject to FCA regulation. Consumers are advised to consult the **FCA guidance**.
- Betting syndicates do not require a licence from the **Gambling Commission** or **British Horseracing Authority**, therefore caution should be exercised before parting with any money.
- Always check that the details of the organisation or company contacting you (such as website, address and phone number) are correct – the fraudsters may be masquerading as a legitimate organisation.
- Never respond to unsolicited phone calls – if in doubt, hang up.
- Don't be fooled by a professional looking website (or brochure) as the cost of creating a professional website is easily affordable and **can be set up by fraudsters**.
- Consider seeking independent legal and/or financial advice before making an investment.

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Fyfe of the City of London Police said: “With such large amounts of money involved, investment fraud in the horse racing community can leave people without a horse and having experienced a significant financial loss. We are urging people to thoroughly check the details of organisations they are dealing with and consider seeking independent advice before going ahead

Counterfeit campaign warns of dangers of identity theft

City of London Police's Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) has launched a new campaign with the warning that *'there's more at stake when it's a fake'*.

The campaign highlights the many consequences of buying **counterfeit goods** online, including **identity crime**. When buying items, people will part with personal details such as their address and financial information which allows fraudsters to set up new websites selling counterfeit goods in their name.

Action Fraud has received over 15,000 reports linked to identity crime in the last year (April 2016 – March 2017) which shows the extent of the growing problem. In addition 400 victims have been contacted by PIPCU in the last two years to inform them that their identity is believed to have been stolen and open websites in their name after they had previously purchased counterfeit items online.

Surf the Web and Find out more about the More At Stake campaign.

How to prevent identity theft with safe shopping

Trust your instincts. If an offer looks too good to be true, then it probably is. Legitimate designer items are rarely discounted, so do not rush and be fooled into believing you are getting a good deal.

Check the website. The spelling and grammar on the website and of the URL will look suspicious, as often the people behind these sites will try to deceive you by slightly changing the spelling of a well-known brand or shop in the website address.

Look to see where the trader is based and whether they provide a postal address – just because the web address has ‘uk’ do not assume the seller is based in the UK. If there is no address supplied or there is just a PO Box or email, be wary.

Only deal with reputable sellers and only use sites you know or ones that have been recommended to you. If you have not bought from the seller before, do your research and check online reviews. People will often turn to forums and blogs to warn others of fake sites.

Ensure the website address begins ‘https’ at the payment stage – this indicates a secure payment.

Keep security software and firewalls up-to-date.

Ask the trader if there is a returns policy or guarantee. Most rogue traders will not offer this.

Watch out for pop-ups appearing asking you to confirm your card details before you are on the payment stage. Never enter your PIN online.

BONKERS CORNER *by Mr. Grumps.....*

Does anyone remember 'My Ding-A-Ling' sung by Chuck Berry?



Well, I also remember when it was once common practice for cyclists to have a bell on their bike handlebars, in order to warn pedestrians and others, of their impending approach. A simple, yet effective warning instrument, especially when approaching walkers etc.,

So why is it, in these safety conscious days, that so many cyclists, do not seem to have such a device?

As a one-time cyclist, and past cycle proficiency trainer / examiner, who always has, used a bell on my bicycle, I become quite annoyed, when walking along towpaths, footpaths and other pedestrian areas, when, a cyclist comes up behind me, often approaching at speed, and with little respect for me and other walkers.

When we buy a motor car, by law, it has to have an audible warning instrument, so why on earth does this not apply to cyclists, and, why aren't bicycles (especially mountain bikes used off road and along farm footpaths and bridleways), sold without a bell or audible warning instrument attached?

On a slightly different point, why is it that so many cyclists treat pedestrian walkways as cycle paths, blatantly ignoring the law. Most offenders that I see, are adults who should know better, and who set a very bad example to the younger generation. One example of this is cyclists using the pedestrian areas of Harlow, blatantly cycling past 'No Cycling signs!' another is the quite common abuse of ZEBRA crossings, when cyclists don't dismount, but cross ignoring pedestrians. TOUCAN crossings are the only ones that they can legally share with pedestrians.

One wonders why so many cyclists think that they are invincible, and thread their way in and out of traffic, ignoring the dangers posed by large vehicles, as they negotiate around them forgetting about the drivers 'blind spots,' then, as I have personally witnessed many times, proceeding to jump traffic lights! Putting aside pollution levels, experts will tell you that

cycling is good for you (provided of course that you obey the law, and don't go along the route of self-destruct).

I could go on and on, but it's time for me to get off my soap box, and return to my normally placid self, (after I have taken a deep breath, counted up to ten, and drunk my mug of tea!)



Right then, freshly composed. Have you noticed that in recent weeks, I have included a link to the Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch website. This is really worth a visit. Surf onto it, meanwhile, if you delete my blog, you can even read it again on the website!

<http://www.eppingforestnhw.org.uk/>



Our friends in the new London Community Watch, are going forward, and doing sterling work, helping to keep London as safe as possible in these troubled times.

Whether we are in London, the Home Counties, or elsewhere in the UK, we all still need to remain alert, secure and help

each other to keep safe, making sure that we report any suspicious activity to the police and security services. Here is a reminder of the Anti-Terrorist Hot Line: -



Crime Stoppers continue to do sterling work in the fight against crime, and have a Hot Line for reporting crime and passing on information anonymously: -



HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND!
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