

We are fortunate to be able to draw on the combined knowledge of four Neighbourhood Watch schemes in our area. This shared knowledge gives each resident a fuller awareness of current crime and recommended practical precautions.

The Police advised in November 2009 that burglaries had increased in the Pittville Area. However, they advise there is now a reduction in burglaries but an increase in car break-ins.

This message doesn't mean that you can relax security in your homes. Counter measures against the possibility of a break-in should be in place rather than being complacent and saying "it won't happen to me."

Most break-ins committed in the Pittville area, of which we have been made aware, took the form of:

1. a silent entry, via a forced window or door, between the hours of 23.00 and 03.00
2. in some cases no forced entry was made as windows/doors were already open
3. rummaging through all downstairs rooms, not upstairs rooms
4. stealing handbags, wallets, laptops, car keys
5. in some cases driving away the family car (one was later driven into Pittville Lake)

We know that in all cases the residents slept soundly through these break-ins; in one case a resident noticed a downstairs light on and mistakenly thought he left it on. In fact, it had been an extremely confident burglar using the resident's electricity to assist him identify what goods were best to steal, and who assumed no one would come down to investigate.

So, what counter measures should **YOU** have in place to prevent this happening to **YOU**?

Since we have seen plenty evidence that burglars do not like light or, especially, noise, it is recommended that:

1. a burglar alarm is fitted in every home, ***set when out, and part-set before going to bed***
2. security lights are also a deterrent and can safeguard cars in the drive.

**A last-thing-at-night-drill is highly recommended in every home.**

1. Check all doors and windows are securely locked
2. remove all laptops, wallets, handbags, car-keys from downstairs rooms
3. remove keys from front and rear doors
4. part-set the burglar alarm.

Following these basic and simple rules means you can be assured that should someone break-in, an ear splitting alarm will sound and when you get downstairs you may find that you've had a forced entry, but not a burglary.

During the daytime you should be conscious that there is always the possibility of a passing opportunist criminal, looking for any weakness which he can exploit, such as:

1. a downstairs window open
2. a door open even for 30 seconds
3. someone working in the front garden could mean a rear door is open
4. unloading shopping and leaving the car unattended

Run-in-run-out burglaries are very common as are reach-in-and-out thefts.

Please note that all the above is based on actual incidents which have recently occurred in Pittville.