

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

(Christmas)

Unfortunately, Christmas brings out the thieves. With the approach of Christmas and the shopping areas becoming even more crowded than usual, the likelihood of handbags being snatched or “lifted” and pockets being picked, increases. Do not leave handbags or purses on the top of shopping baskets when you are in a busy shopping area, even momentarily and be especially careful when boarding a bus at a crowded bus stop. When you all push forward on the bus it is the favourite time for the pick-pocket who often works with an accomplice whose job it is to slow the queue down.

Do not leave Christmas presents on view on the seats of your car – put them in the boot.

From time to time, householders have callers selling small household items who claim that part of the proceeds will go to charity. If challenged, the seller often produces a peddler’s licence. If it is claimed that any part of the proceeds will go to charity, then the seller should carry a certificate and a badge under the “House to House Collections Act 1939”. If they do not, they should be told they are breaking the law and the police informed.

When you leave the car take care where you park it. The more people who can see your car the better. A thief is generally shy and does not like to be seen at work. A few seconds making sure that all windows are closed and doors locked is time well spent. Why not treat yourself to an early Christmas present of a car alarm or an immobiliser for added security? Incidentally, presents left on view inside a car can be very attractive to a thief. Try to complete shopping in one go so that presents do not have to be left in the car but if this is not possible lock them in the boot or at least hide them from view.

If you have the opportunity, go shopping with a friend, not only is it more fun but it can also be safer. We have already spoken about cash being a thief’s best friend. He does not mind if he takes it from your house or from you and will be very grateful if you make it easy for him. Christmas shopping crowds are ideal for him to pick some of your hard earned cash with very little effort. Make life difficult for a thief and carry handbags securely and wallets in a safe place. The more cash you carry, the better he likes it but remember that cheque books and cards should be kept separately.