

WatchOut

Community safety news for Suffolk

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Las Ramblas, Barcelona- one of Spain's blackspots for crime

Spain tops Euro scam list

By Peter Faulkner

SPAIN is the worst country in Europe for tourist scams, according to new research.

More than one in five UK holidaymakers who visited the country in the last year became victims of misdemeanours from pickpockets to over-charging taxi drivers, a survey by financial comparison website money.co.uk found.

France came second in the scam rankings, with 15 per cent of UK tourists experiencing scams, while Italy came third with 10 per cent. The UK was eighth in the top 10, with 5 per cent.

A similar study from last year found that Barcelona was the worst city in Europe for

scammers, with Paris and Rome following closely behind as places to be on your guard against criminals.

The most common holiday scams were: pickpocketing, paying a hidden tourist tax on arrival at a hotel, hire car excess costs, pushy street vendors, overcharging taxi drivers and street crime, including burglary.

Asking 2,000 Britons who had travelled to Europe in the last 12 months, Money.co.uk found the most common scam UK tourists fell victim to was over-priced taxi rides, with 37 per cent experiencing it. A third (35 per cent) had paid out £11 to £15 in additional tourist tax on arrival at their hotel.

Barcelona's Las Ramblas has long been

considered a hotspot for pickpockets, while the Louvre in Paris is also thought to be the location of choice for thieves.

It has previously reported on research that found that more than 80 per cent of UK tourists thought Britons were targeted for potential scamming opportunities.

Roaming charges, wifi costs and fees for printing out boarding cards at the airports were said to be other sources of financial woe for Britons abroad, according to the survey.

Nearly half (45 per cent) admitted to travelling without insurance.

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Safekey - peace of mind

By Peter Faulkner

IS it worth the risk of leaving the security of your home, business or vehicle to chance?

Suffolk SAFEKey is a comprehensive keyholder service offered by Suffolk Police, which helps support local charities.

It is available to residential and business owners within the county, providing protection and assistance should you lose your keys.

Signing up for SAFEKey allows the police access to your property in the event of an incident occurring while your property is unattended. They do this by contacting the person you have nominated as a keyholder for the property.

By registering for the service, you will have peace of mind knowing that your home or property will be in safe hands when you are not there.

In addition to the keyholder database provision, we also offer a key fob recovery service, which means that all SAFEKey members are issued a with key fob, featuring the force crest and a unique identifying number.

People who find lost keys with the Suffolk SAFEKey fob are encouraged, through a £10 finders fee, to hand the keys to the police or send them to a secure postal address. This allows for the keys to be returned to their rightful owner.

You can sign up for the scheme by phone, post or online and any money above that required to operate the scheme is used to fund community projects.

Thousands of people have already



Ease your worries about losing the door keys

joined the scheme, which has donated over £150,000 to support Suffolk-based charities since its launch.

Some key benefits of the scheme include:

- Suffolk SAFEKey branded key fob meaning there is a 90% likelihood that your keys will be recovered if lost when attached to a fob. Each fob carries an identifying number unique to you.
- Cover for your keys if lost anywhere in the EU.
- £10 reward to the finder of your keys courtesy of Suffolk SAFEKey.
- Emergency helpline 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

■ Access to contact details of a nationwide network of approved locksmiths should you need to replace your locks or keys.

■ Accessible emergency contact and keyholder details recorded on our secure database letting the police know who to call in the event of an incident at your unattended property – your nominated keyholder is someone you trust and lives in the vicinity of your property.

■ A window sticker to confirm your membership to officers attending your unattended property meaning reduced risk of forced entry and potential incurred costs.

Safer Neighbourhood meetings

Babergh West Safer Neighbourhood Team will be holding a Community Priority Setting Meeting at 11am on September 15 at Village Hall. Local residents are invited to come along and raise any issues or concerns directly with their dedicated police team.

Sudbury and Great Cornard Safer Neighbourhood Team will be holding a Community Priority Setting Meeting at 6pm on Thursday September 17 at Sudbury Town Hall. Local residents are invited to come along and raise any issues or concerns directly with their dedicated police team.

Felixstowe & District Safer Neighbourhood Team will be holding a priority setting meeting on Monday September 28 from 6pm at the Kirton & Falkenham Recreation Ground Pavillion, Back Road, Kirton.

This meeting is open to anyone who lives or works locally and gives you the opportunity to have your say about local policing issues and to raise any concerns about crime or anti-social behaviour.

After hearing from those attending, the priorities for police action will be chosen and this is the ideal opportunity to raise any issues or just to meet you after Neighbourhood Team.

Mid Suffolk South Safer Neighbourhood Team will be holding a Community Priority Setting Meeting at 7pm on Thursday October 8 at Elmswell Fire Station. Local residents are invited to come along and raise any issues or concerns directly with their dedicated police team.

Babergh West Safer Neighbourhood Team will be holding a Community Priority Setting Meeting at 11am on November 17 at Village Hall. Local residents are invited to come along and raise any issues or concerns directly with their dedicated police team.

Suffolk news in brief

Electric bikes worth £2,000 each are stolen

POLICE are appealing for information following a theft from an articulated lorry parked in a layby on the westbound A14 at Haughley.

At some point between 9pm and 5am on August 10-11 offenders forced entry into the side of the lorry by cutting the curtain, and stole 23 Kalkhoff electric pedal cycles. The bicycles range in value but are approximately £2,000 each and

include black unisex hybrid bikes and black and white unisex cycles, each with an electric motor on the down tube. Police would like to hear from anyone who may have noticed any suspicious activity in the area, anyone who may have been offered a similar cycle for sale, or anyone who may have information about who stole the cycles.

Anyone with any information should contact PC Colin Taylor at Suffolk Police on 101, quoting crime reference number ST/15/2662, or call Crimestoppers, anonymously if required, on 0800 555 111.



Students warned about landlord scam

HERE'S a warning for Suffolk students looking for accommodation after the summer holidays. Police in Surrey have discovered that a number of student scams have come to light and these generally do the rounds nationwide.

If you are starting University this month, watch out for criminals posing as landlords, and offering 'fake' accommodation for cash upfront or money laundering schemes disguised as student job offers.

When parents see these too-good-to-be-true offers they immediately send off £1,000, and the students turn up with their bags on the day to find out the accommodation doesn't exist.

Free catalytic convertor marking day

POLICE officers in Newmarket held a free catalytic converter marking session to help reduce further crime. The event took place on Thursday August 13 at ATS Euromaster Limited in Bury Road, Newmarket, and follows a series of thefts across the county.

Commercial vans and 4x4s owners were invited to attend to get their catalytic converters marked free of charge by officers to reduce the chances of becoming a victim.

Vehicle owners can also follow these tips

- Keep private vehicles in a well-secured garage where possible, and if no garage is available, in a well-lit public area.
- Park vehicles in such a way as to make access to the catalytic converter difficult, or parallel with another vehicle if you own one.
- Keep commercial vehicles in a locked building or compound.
- Use alarms, lighting and CCTV to deter thieves.

Further marking sessions will be organised in the future. For more details please contact your local Crime Reduction Officer by calling 101.

Don't deal with solar panel rogues

BABERGH and Mid Suffolk District Councils are currently installing solar panels to selected council-owned properties in both districts. These are installed free of charge and remain in the ownership of each council.

The council does not ask for any payment from the tenants and the installing contractor for the whole project is Campbell & Kennedy Ltd. But unscrupulous doorstep traders may try to sell you panels.

If any tenant or resident is approached from any other company claiming to represent either council, and asking for payments or deposits, please be aware this is not a company endorsed by either council and could in fact be a rogue trader.

These companies need to be reported to Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk Trading Standards before they take all your money and disappear.

Builder gets suspended jail sentence after carrying out illegal, dangerous gas work

By Watch Out reporter

SUFFOLK builder David Liptrott has been fined after carrying out illegal and dangerous gas work at a home in Ringshall.

Liptrott, from Stonham, near Stowmarket, was hired to extend a kitchen and replace an LPG-fired boiler at a house in Charles Tye, near Ringshall, in August 2013. He undertook the work even though he was not registered with the Gas Safe Register.

Bury St Edmunds Magistrates' Court heard that when the contract for the work was agreed, Mr Liptrott claimed to be trading as a limited company, DPB Building Services.co.uk, when, in fact, this company had been dissolved in December 2012.

As a part of the building work, Mr Liptrott removed the old boiler and fitted a new boiler assisted by his son.

The homeowners became concerned by the poor standard of work and safety of the new

boiler and raised complaints with Trading Standards officers as well as with Gas Safe Register.

The boiler was found to be leaking gas. It was classified as "immediately dangerous" and numerous other "at risk" faults were also recorded.

The court heard that in 2008, trading as D Liptrott & Sons, Mr Liptrott had also been the subject of a CORGI report and received a written warning from HSE for carrying out unregistered gas work at an address in Ely, Cambridgeshire.

Mr Liptrott was sentenced to nine months in prison suspended for 15 months. He was ordered to pay his victims compensation of £27,490. If he fails to pay this order within 12 months he will be jailed for 15 months.

He was also ordered to pay £16,000 costs after being found guilty of two breaches of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, one breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act,

and three breaches of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

HSE inspector, Anthony Brookes, said: "Having been previously warned about undertaking gas work when unregistered, David Liptrott should have known better than to accept a job he was not qualified, competent, or legally allowed to do.

"People can die as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning and gas explosions. It is therefore vital that only registered gas engineers, who are trained and competent, work on gas appliances and fittings.

"This prosecution shows the willingness of enforcement agencies to work together to bring unscrupulous traders that put safety at risk to justice."

Footnote: If you are looking for a bona fide gas fitter check the **Checkatrade.com** website which is Suffolk's first choice for tradesmen in the county.

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Your laptop secrets may get in the wrong hands



SCAMMERS are buying second-hand laptops to carry out identity crime using personal information the previous owners believed had been “wiped” clean.

An investigation carried out by a national newspaper with the help of security firm Kaspersky Lab revealed that fraudsters can retrieve passwords, bank statements, email accounts and bank logins from victims from old computers they believed had all the data deleted from them.

The investigators bought three second-hand computers, each of which had been “formatted” and asked the cyber security experts at Kaspersky Lab to retrieve the information off them.

From one hard drive, researchers restored 117 user names and passwords for sites and email accounts. They also located pictures, videos and messages, both from the computers and from phones which had been backed up to them.

Tony Neate from Get Safe Online said: “This information would be like gold dust to a fraudster, formatting a computer is like ripping out the contents page of a book — all the chapters are still there, it’s just harder to find.

“If you want to be totally sure that no one can get anything off your hard drive, the best thing to do is take it out of the computer before you sell it on and smash it to pieces.”

From one 28 year old victim the cybersecurity experts managed to extract bank statements, eBay log-in details, a p60 statement,

social media/email passwords and a scanned copy of his passport from his Toshiba laptop.

Kaspersky’s top tips for staying safe

■ To protect your confidential data on any device if selling it on, it must be fully wiped, not just the standard quick “format” option. With laptops and other mobile devices this can usually be achieved by selecting the “restore to factory defaults” option.

■ If you are selling a smartphone, also erase and format the SD card if it is included in the sale.

■ Even if you are not selling your laptop, you should encrypt your data to protect it from being retrieved if the device is lost.

■ If you have to store financial data on a laptop, password-protect the file for added security.

■ Use password protection, authentication, PINs and pattern locks.

■ Users should change all their passwords when they start using a new device.

It has been revealed that more than one in four of us living in the UK has fallen victim to an identity crime, losing on average £1,200 each.

The knock-on effects can also be huge, causing massive personal distress and inconvenience and taking up to 200 hours of a persons’ or businesses’ time to fix.

To report a fraud and receive a police crime reference number, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

New spate of phone scams

POLICE in Cambridgeshire are issuing fresh warnings as a new spate of phone scams targets residents across the area.

Fraudsters posing as bank staff have successfully conned a woman in her 50s from the north of the county out of £5,500 while several attempts to defraud residents in Cambridge have been made by scammers claiming to be police officers, all of which so far have been unsuccessful.

Police are urging people not to fall foul of the scams, which often target older victims.

DI Jamie Stenton said: “These scams are an issue that is hitting Cambridgeshire and a number of other counties across the country.

“The fraudsters are very persuasive and convincing so the victims don’t realise it is a scam until it is too late.

“We are working closely with other police forces, banks, post offices and other partner agencies to raise awareness of the scam and remind people to be suspicious if they receive a phone call similar to this.

“Banks will never ask for your PIN number over the phone and you should never give it out.

“If you’re in doubt about anyone you are speaking to on the phone, hang up and ensure the line has been terminated before ringing back on an official number.

“You should never give any bank cards or cash to anyone at your door, even if they say they are from your bank or the police.”

To report an incident in action always call 999, if it is after the event call Action Fraud on 0300 1232040.

Send your news

HAVE you got an item of news or a picture story you would like us to include in either our bi-monthly newsletter or bi-monthly magazine?

If you have just email it to Editor Peter Faulkner at peter.fau67@gmail.com or phone him at 01268-566743 or 07958-475392.