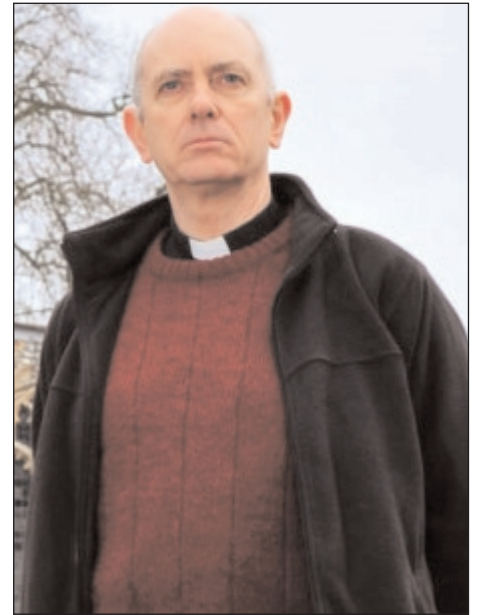


St Marys Church, Combs, a victim of lead thieves

Prayers answered

Lead thieves have struck at churches in Suffolk leaving not only damaged roofs, but hefty repair bills. Now the prayers of churches have been answered as new grant scheme is launched .



Rev Ian Byrne

By Peter Faulkner

CHURCHES in Suffolk are to get better protection following a spate of lead thefts that has left parishes with huge repair bills estimated at £400,000.

The Alarms for Churches Appeal has been launched by the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust (SHCT) and will help churches cover the cost of having alarms installed by providing grants of up to £2,500.

The trust has made negotiations with an approved security alarm supplier as part of the appeal and the first 10 churches to apply are guaranteed to receive a share of the funding.

The scheme comes after Hundon All Saints Church, near Haverhill, was targeted, with around £30,000 of lead roof stolen overnight on September 17-18.

Some of Suffolk's churches were recently found to have inadequate security and would only be able to claim up to £7,000 from insurance companies to help them repair the damages.

Since August 23, when St Mary's Church in Combs was targeted, six Suffolk churches have fallen victim to lead thefts.

On September 14, around 10ft by 30ft of lead was stolen from the roof of St Mary's Church, Dennington; on September 9, St Mary the Virgin Church in Parham had around 25m by 10m of lead stripped from its roof; overnight on September 3, lead was stolen from the church of Stratford St Mary.

The theft in Combs was followed by a theft at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Lavenham on August 25, leaving bills of around £150,000 each.

The SHCT is appealing for the people of Suffolk to donate to the cause to ensure that more of the county's churches are properly protected and can secure full insurance cover should they fall victim to lead thieves in the future.

At Combs reverend Chris Childs and volunteer Hayley Homyer found tyre marks in the Grade I-listed medieval church's yard and saw damage to the stonework at the side of the building.

Church staff and volunteers spoke of their 'devastation' upon seeing the damage.

At Mettingham, scene of another £150,000 lead theft, the Rev Ian Byrne said he was sickened to discover thieves had struck again – just two years

after the church was faced with closure due to having to cover the costs of earlier thefts from its roof. He said the community has now become resigned to the recurrence of the problem.

Villagers had shown "staggering generosity" in raising money for the new roof. This time though Mr Byrne will be using a cheaper roofing material rather than spending more cash on lead only to have it stolen again.

Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore, commented on the crimes saying: "Our beautiful buildings need to be cherished and we must do whatever we can to combat heritage crime.

"A dedicated rural crime team, led by Rural Crime Officer Pc Mark Bryant is doing an excellent job. This team, supported by Suffolk's two dedicated rural Special Constabulary units, has a very good understanding of the negative impact heritage crime has in rural areas."

Pc Bryant said, "Members of the public should always dial 999 to report a crime in progress. Rural churches are often targeted due to their isolated locations.

"Stealing a large amount of lead takes time and a reasonably large vehicle to transport it, so any early reports of suspicious activity will assist police in locating offenders."

"We want local people to take an interest in their local church whilst they are out and about. If you take the dog out for a walk, or go for a stroll, don't ignore anything that you think looks out of place - report anything you think may be out of the ordinary to the police.

"Communities can act as our eyes and ears, and by pulling together to note suspicious activity, we can deter thieves and help keep these historic buildings safe"

Police would like to hear from anyone who may have seen or heard anything suspicious in the area at the times stated.

Anyone with any information about the Combs incident should contact Mid Suffolk South SNT on 101 or ring Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

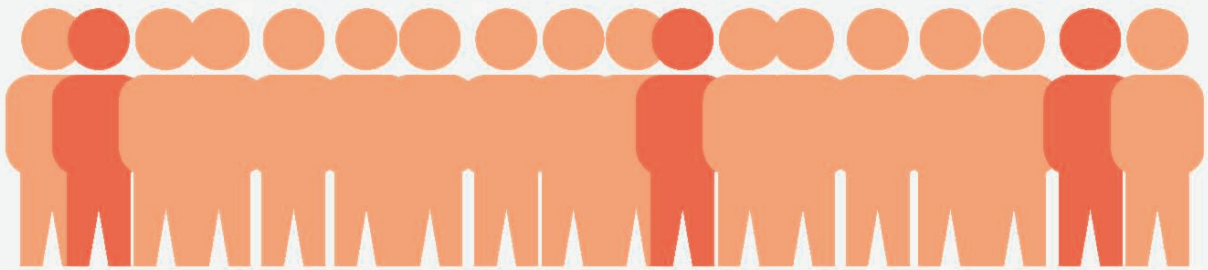


All Saints, Mettingham

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What a nuisance!

Citizens Advice has warned that there has been an increase in the number of companies cold calling their victims and selling them devices that they claim will put a stop to nuisance calls.

By Staff Reporter

ROGUE traders have found another way to make all residents part with their hard-earned cash.

They are aware people are fed up being inundated with cold calls, so they promise to rid people of unwanted calls, and are willing to use all sorts of underhand tactics to get people to part with their money.

Citizens Advice in Essex, Suffolk, Surrey and Kent, has warned that there has been an increase in the number of companies cold calling their victims and selling them devices that they claim will put a stop to nuisance calls.

The charity says it has seen a 72% increase in the number of cases of 'bogus selling' of cold call blocking services - and got 2,500 complaints last year.

Most of these are selling cold call blocking devices, that allow users to screen calls and decide which ones they will accept. Citizens Advice says that in many cases the gadgets are sub-standard, but their main concern is how they are being sold.

The charity says people are complaining about receiving nuisance calls from blocking companies, despite registering for free with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) - which means they should not receive unsolicited sales or marketing calls.

It means that the companies involved are either ignoring the law, or are calling from overseas.

Some people have complained about being told that their friends and family have already purchased the blocking devices, while others report traders falsely claiming to be from the TPS, or to be working with the Government or Trading Standards.

Others say that the callers are using aggressive selling tactics, and that they have continued to receive

calls from these companies even after they bought a device. Others have said they were told they could pay for a blocker in monthly payments - but had the money taken from them in one lump sum up-front.

In these cases customers were assured the cold call blocking service would cost just £2 a month for five years but once signed up, the money for the entire contract was debited from their account.

In August this year Stop The Calls, a company which offered a nuisance call blocking service, was fined £50,000 by the Information Commissioner's Office.

They found that the company had called people registered with the TPS, made repeated calls, sometimes several on the same day, and ignored requests by people to stop calling.

These rogue traders shouldn't put you off a call blocking device entirely. Quality products are available that can effectively and dramatically cut the number of cold calls that get through to your home.

However, Citizen's Advice has warned that legitimate companies who offer call blockers do not make cold calls, so if you want to purchase one, you should head for a reputable company rather than waiting for a bogus seller to contact you.

If you are being harassed by someone trying to sell these products, you should start by registering your number with the Telephone Preference Service on tpsonline.org.uk or by calling 0845 070 0707.

Then you should report unsolicited marketing calls to the Information Commissioner's Office at ico.org.uk/concerns/marketing or by calling 0303 123 1113.

If you still have need any further support you can visit your local Citizens Advice or contact the consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06.

Fraud rises by £80m in a year



THE total value of reported fraud between December 2014 and May 2015 was £798 million, marking an increase of nearly £80 million compared with the same period earlier, according to the Belgian BDO Global organisation.

BDO, an abbreviation for Binder Dijker Otte & Co, claim their fraud-track report shows the average cost per fraud was £3.27 million, almost double the £1.82 million average cost recorded 12 months ago showing fraud is still a "big business".

Around one-quarter of reported fraud involved consumers being conned, with people falling victim to £188 million-worth of losses.

The report found London and the South East had the highest value of reported fraud cases, at £460 million over the six-month period.



Holiday scams

Before you travel abroad make sure you familiarise yourself with the scams we have outlined below so that your holiday doesn't get ruined by criminals

THE weather is cooling down now so everyone's thoughts turn to holidays in the sun – and the barmy days and nights on foreign isles.

If you are one of those people then beware because crooks are waiting to take your holiday cash and disappear.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and travel industry advisor, ABTA, have been working together for your benefit and they want you to be alert to potential frauds.

Findings from a report compiled by the NFIB reveal the scale of the crime and expose common tactics used by fraudsters.

The most common types relate to:

Holiday accommodation

According to the report almost a third (30%) of holiday fraud victims were scammed by the fraudulent advertisement of holiday villas and apartments, with some arriving at their destination to discover they had nowhere to stay.

Airline tickets

Where a customer believes they are booking a flight and receives a fake ticket or pays for a ticket that never turns up. This is

the most second most common type of booking fraud, accounting for 21% of holiday booking fraud reported to the police in 2013. Average losses are more than £1000 per victim, with flights to West Africa a particular target.

Package holidays – particularly group, sports and religious packages.

A YouGov poll for ABTA back in 2013 revealed that one in ten consumers (9%) do nothing to research their travel company, such as checking if it is a member of a trade association like ABTA (which has a code of conduct in place to protect consumers), asking friends and family for recommendations, or running a web search.

ABTA, the NFIB and Get Safe Online have published advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of holiday booking fraud – and on how victims should go about reporting it, including the top tips below:

Do your research

Don't just rely on one review, do a thorough online search to ensure the company's credentials.

If a company is defrauding people there is a good chance that consumers will post

details of their experiences, and warnings about the company, online.

Look for the logo

Check whether the company is a member of a recognised trade body such as ABTA. You can verify membership of ABTA online, at www.abta.com

Stay safe online

Check the web address is legitimate and has not been altered by slight changes to a domain name – such as going from .co.uk to .org

Pay safe

Never pay directly into an owner's bank account. Paying by direct bank transfer is like paying by cash – the money cannot be traced and is not refundable. Where possible, pay by credit card or a debit card

Check paperwork

You should study receipts, invoices and terms and conditions, and beware of any companies that don't provide any at all.

Use your instincts

If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Report it

Contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or www.actionfraud.police.uk

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SUFFOLK



newsround

Beware bank fraudsters

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

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.

Bad medicine

RESIDENTS in Essex are being warned about phone scammers who use a call about medication to find out their bank details.

An elderly lady in the Shetlands has already been conned out of £270 after being duped into giving her details to a man who called to tell her to stop some of her prescriptions.

The scammer then told her that he would provide an alternative herbal medicine and asked for her bank details.

Getting to know you

IPSWICH Police came up with an unusual way to engage with local youngsters - by punching and kicking them.

It's not as bad as it sounds though, just free kick-boxing sessions for young people in Ipswich as a way of getting to know their local officers.

The sessions took place at Stoke Church Hall in Stoke Street towards the end of August and proved a big success..

The classes were run by an experienced trainer and have been made possible with the support of Ipswich Borough Council and the South West Ipswich Councillors.

It proved an ideal opportunity for local young people to engage with officers in a relaxed environment.



The woman agreed to his request and the man took money from the woman's bank account before the police and trading standards were informed.

NHS staff have been told to make sure people are alerted to the scam and to be aware of any suspicious calls.

If they think they receive phone correspondence of this kind, patients are encouraged to end the call and contact their health centre.

Charity Yell Health Support Group meanwhile posted on Facebook that the woman had lost £270 as a result of the scam. etland for at least two weeks.

Converting motorists

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.

Commercial vans and 4x4s owners especially 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.

Microsoft scammers

FRAUDSTERS claiming to be technical support have scammed more than £50,000 from members of the public in the last two months.

More than 120 people have been hit by the telephone scam across Essex and other areas like Suffolk and Surrey with conmen hacking into private computers to raid bank accounts and tricking victims into paying to remove fake viruses.

The tricksters claim to be tech support experts from well-known companies such as Microsoft.

They say they have detected a fault on the victim's home computer and that they can fix the fault by being given remote access control of the device.

In some cases they download a file which they claim is a virus checker and which shows the victim how the computer has allegedly been affected.

By Peter Faulkner

LESLIE Jubb has become Britain's oldest scam victim and his sad story should serve as a warning to every old person out there.

He is 103-years old and it has just been revealed by his daughter that the dear old man from Welwyn Garden City was fleeced-out of £60,000 savings.

The dementia sufferer was targeted by scammers, who got his name from a 'suckers' list and this meant he was bombarded with an endless stream of catalogues promising prizes in return for buying overpriced goods.

Over the past 10 years, he has parted with £60,000. Mr Jubb temporarily went into a care home last September to enable his family to renovate his home. At that point they discovered just what he had lost.

They found a house full of incredibly overpriced products and a pile of scam mail. His bank statements revealed the extent of the scams.

Daughter Nova Jordan, 72, said: "The catalogue companies used to send him prize draws saying that he'd won a plasma TV or a trip somewhere, or he'd won a lot of money. He had been convinced that all he had to do to get his hands on these prizes was to buy expensive items from the catalogues."

Typically this sort of scam will claim there's a guaranteed prize, and that people could receive large cash prizes, holidays or electronics - all they have to do to enter is to buy something from the catalogue.

It's only in the smallest of small print where they reveal the only guaranteed prize is a small sum off your next purchase.

Nova added: "With dad it's sad really and a lot of it was because he was lonely after my mother passed away and it gave him something to do. think that's why scammers target people that are lonely, retired or elderly."

His case was reported by Hertfordshire County Council, who helped uncover the true extent of the story when they visited Mr Jubb.

His name had been on a 'sucker's list' seized from criminals, and he was one of 1,000 vulnerable people visited by the council hoping to prevent these people falling victim to the schemes.

The council hopes that by revealing the details of the scam, they will help stop other vulnera-



Some of the stuff Mr Jubb was forced to buy

Don't be a sucker

Leslie, 103, is a widower with dementia and his name ended up on a suckers list that eventually cost him £60,000 of his life savings. Now Hertfordshire County is investigating this cruel scam.

ble elderly people from becoming victims too. Richard Thake, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, said: "Scams can be very sophisticated and people often don't realise, or don't want to accept, that they're being scammed, so it's important for us to raise awareness of the tactics scammers use."

If you're unsure of whether or not you have been a victim of a scam, Action Fraud has a useful list of common scams targeting individuals, ranging from insurance broker scams to pension liberation schemes and auction fraud.

If anyone thinks they may have been the victim of a scam, they should call the Citizens Advice service on 03454 040506.



Mr Jubb with daughter Nova

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