



HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Summary of Operation Tarpaulin

Reducing dwelling burglaries via insecurities on the Western Area, of Hertfordshire (Summer 2003)

In 2002/2003 there were 297 'insecure' burglaries recorded on the Western Area. This equates to 18.3% of all dwelling burglary offences (20% nationally).

The problem is that leaving premises insecure provides easy access for offenders to commit opportunist or pre-planned burglaries.

Analysis indicated that three wards within Western Area had exceptionally high numbers of insecurity burglaries. Adeyfield East (40%), Woodside (32%) and Meriden (25%).

The frequency of crimes where the offender gains entry via an insecure door or window increases between the months of May to October. Undoubtedly, people will open windows or doors during warmer months and leave them open or forget to close them.

In 41% of cases the offender gained entry via an insecure window mainly midweek and during the afternoon/late evening. Most victims were over 60 years of age.

The aim was to reduce insecurity burglaries on these three wards by 20% by the end of 2003.

The lead agency were the Police assisted by West Herts Against Crime (WHAC); the local authorities; Crime Prevention Panels and Community safety support groups; PCSO's, Special Constabulary and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

The project was planned using the Herts Problem Solving Process Template and was managed by the C/Inspector Partnerships who reported back to the Western Area Tasking and Co-ordinating Group where the problem was raised initially.

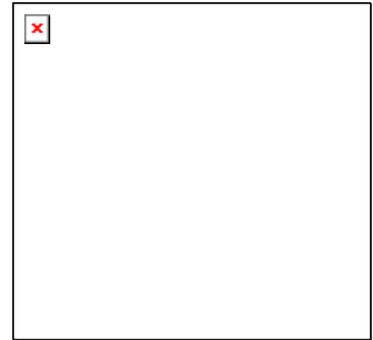
The main intervention used were

- 1) Communication Strategy. Press release May/June 2003 in local papers raising the profile of the problem. Named the Hotspot wards for last year and outlined the response to reduce the problem.
- 2) Targeted high visibility patrols - weekday/afternoon/evenings by Intervention, Community Team, Traffic, ARV, Dog section, Probationary Training Unit and PCSO's. during June/July
- 3) Leaflet distributed to every household on targeted wards. This informed the householder of the high insecurity burglaries and action being taken - dates and times free independent advice available from officers in the mobile police station or crime prevention trailer.

Key success factors.

- 1) Community engagement. Raising the awareness of the local community of the previous problem last summer and providing them with support/advice
- 2) Increased patrols. Public reassurance

Summer 2003, although very hot, saw a dramatic reduction in burglaries across all three wards. In particular, Adeyfield East insecurity burglaries as a percentage of burglary crimes dropped from 39% to 0%.



OPERATION TARPAULIN

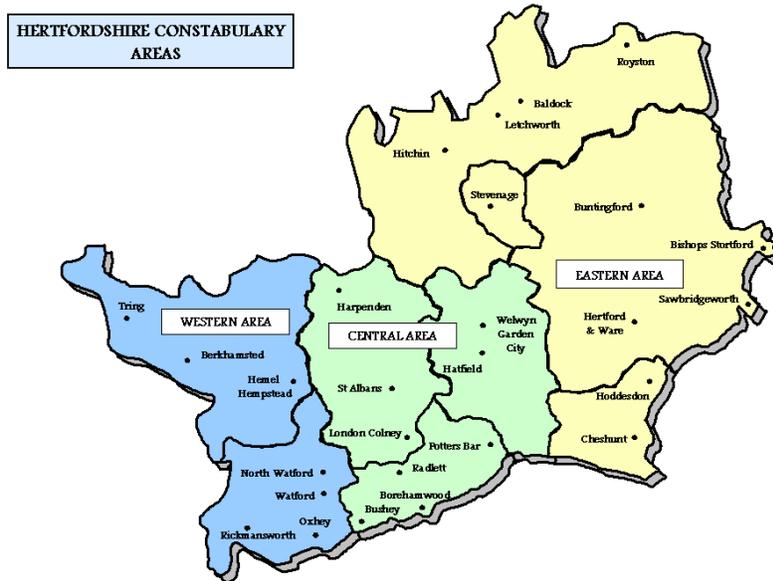
**Reducing dwelling burglaries via insecurities on the
Western Area of Hertfordshire
(Summer 2003)**

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POLICING CONTEXT



The Western Area is one of three Basic Command Units (BCUs) that make up Hertfordshire Constabulary. It comprises three policing/council districts; Watford, Three Rivers and Dacorum. The area contains the two most densely populated towns in the County, Hemel Hempstead and Watford.

Population

The total population for the area is 300,373, an increase of 4.6% since 1991. The 2001 census breakdown is:

Borough / District	2001 Census Population
Watford	79,726
Three Rivers	82,848
Dacorum	137,799
Total	300,373

Households

Information collected from the 2001 census shows that there are a total of 121,697 households across the Area, an increase of 9.1% since 1991. The 2001 census breakdown is:

Borough / District	Number of Households	Owner-Occupied
Watford	32,350	23,605 (72.9%)
Three Rivers	33,439	25,775 (77.0%)
Dacorum	55,908	39,361 (70.4%)
Total	121,697	88,741 (72.9%)

SCANNING

The Demand

What is the demand?	To reduce the number of Dwelling Burglaries that occur in the Western area
Where is the demand coming from?	Force/Area Control Strategy and CDRP Community Safety Strategies
Who are our Partners?	West Herts Against Crime (WHAC); Local Authorities; Neighbourhood Watches; Crime Prevention Panels; Community Safety Support Group; PCSO's; Special Constabulary.

The Problem

What is the problem?	In 2002/2003 there were 297 recorded crimes of 'insecure' burglaries on the Western Area. This equates to 18.3% of all dwelling burglary offences. (20% nationally). The problem is that leaving the premise insecure provides easy access for any burglar to commit opportunist or pre-planned offences
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The Aim

What is it we wanted to achieve?	A reduction in dwelling burglaries in designated hotspot wards. Specific offence whereby the offender obtained entry via an insecurity. Reduction of 20% in targeted wards by the end of 2003
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ANALYSIS

Burglaries via insecurities in the Western Area have remained at around 19% of all burglary offences for each of the three financial years from April 2000 to March 2003. The second quarter of the year (July-Sep) has consistently recorded the highest proportion of such offences.

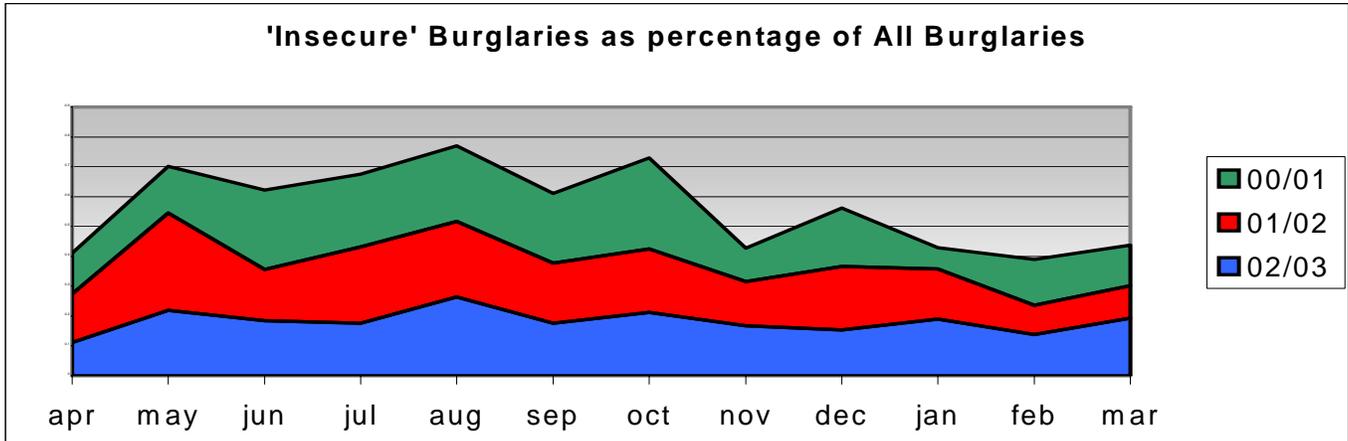
'Insecurity' offences as percentage of all burglary crime by quarter.

	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04
Qtr1	18.0	22.4	17.5	21.1
Qtr2	24.0	23.4	21.3	?
Qtr3	21.4	19.1	17.3	
Qtr4	11.0	12.4	17.5	
	19.2	18.7	18.3	

In 2002/2003 there were 297 recorded crimes of 'insecure' burglaries. This equates to 18.3% of all offences which was a slightly lower rate than the previous two years (19.2% in 00/01 and 18.7% in 01/02).

As we might expect, the frequency of crimes where the offender gains entry via an insecure door or window increases between the months of May to October. Undoubtedly, people will open windows or doors during the warmer months and leave them open or forget to close them.

WESTERN AREA OFFENCES



The above chart shows that the rate of 'insecure' burglaries as a percentage of all burglaries has gone up in May and then it stays at these relatively higher levels until November. The rate is lower in the winter months than it is for the rest of the year. This pattern is also evident in 2002/2003 although the percentage of offences was not as high in the warmer months compared with the previous two years.

It is worth noting that in each of the last three years, August has been one of the peak months for recorded offences.

TYPES OF INSECURITIES (2002/2003)

In 41% of cases (where the means of entry was reported), the offender gained entry via an insecure window. The back door was used in 26% of cases while the front door was used in 15% of crimes. It is also worth noting that in 11% of offences, although a door was mentioned, it was not clear whether this was a front or back door. Furthermore, in 15% of the offences, no means of entry codes were entered other than the fact that the burglaries were committed via an insecurity.

District/Ward

Nationally, burglaries via insecurities account for approximately 20% of all burglary offences. The rate in Western Area since April 2003 is 21% (15% in Dacorum, 17.8% in Three Rivers, **31.1% in Watford**)

The wards mentioned below have had 36 or more burglary offences recorded in 2002/2003 and at least one in four of these have been due to insecurities.

Dacorum

Adeyfield East (D1C) had the highest rate of 'insecure' burglaries in the Area (39%) in 2002/2003. There were 46 burglary offences recorded in this ward of which 18 were via an insecure door or window.

Flats/Maisonettes suffered 6 offences out of a total of 9 burglaries while 4 out of 8 crimes were committed against Semi-Detached houses.

Watford

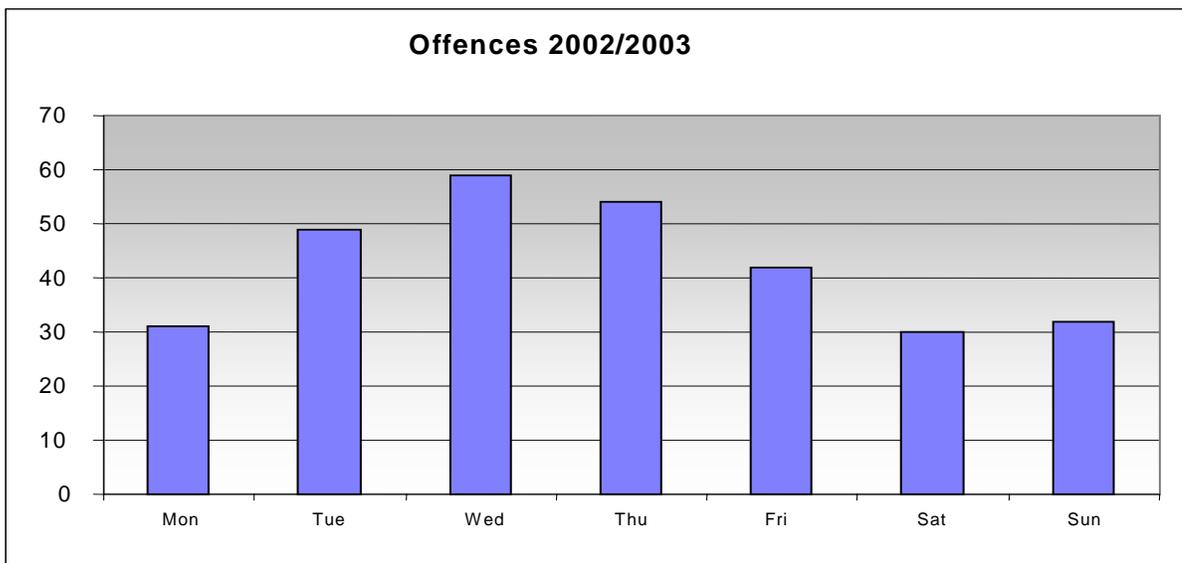
The following wards within Watford were the most prominent in terms of both the number of burglaries of any type and the number of 'insecure' burglaries. (2002/2003)

Ward	Burglary Offences	Insecurity as percentage of burglary
Meriden (C4E)	60	25%
Woodside (C4C)	50	32%

When are the offences occurring

Western Area Graphs

Days of Week

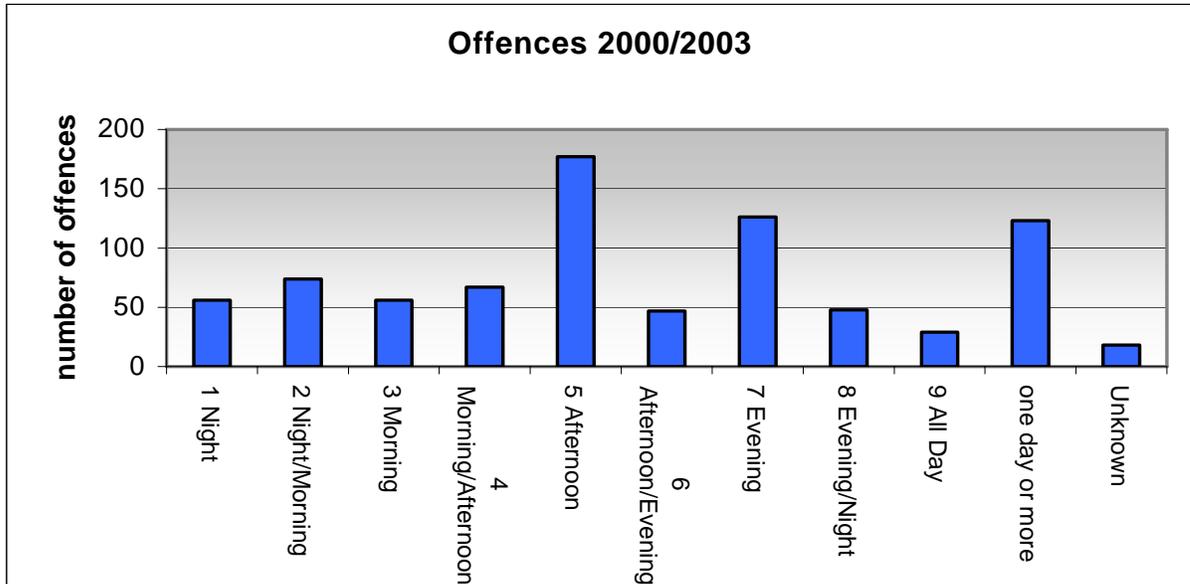


Clearly, the number of offences appears to increase during the weekdays before tailing off over the weekend.

In fact, 55% of all offences recorded in the previous year occurred between Tuesday and Thursday.

Times of the Day

The following time periods are confirmed times of offences as recorded on CIS.



The majority of offences have occurred during the afternoon and evening periods and account for around 1/3 of the crimes in the Area.

This pattern of offences for both the days of the weeks and times of day has remained consistent throughout the three years since April 2000.

Types of property (2002/2003)

As we might expect, there is a correlation between the proportion of dwellings in an area and the proportion of these dwellings that suffer burglary crime.

The following tables illustrate this point.

Watford

	Percentage of houses	percentage of burglaries	percentage of insecurities
Detached	11.6	10	12
Semi-Detached	30.7	30	25
Terraced	30.8	24	20
Flat	26.7	17	19
not recorded		16	11
Other		3	13

Dacorum

	Percentage of h/h	percentage of burglaries	percentage of insecurities
Detached	23.4	14	24
Semi-Detached	25.0	19	21
Terraced	33.3	21	16
Flat	17.8	22	16
not recorded		11	12
Other		13	11

Although information on the dwelling types by ward is unavailable, it would be expected that the types of houses targeted would correlate with the make up of the dwellings in these wards.

Offenders

22 of the 297 (7%) offences in 2002/2003 have resulted in a detection. Therefore, it is not possible to draw a meaningful conclusion about the people who utilise an insecurity to commit crime from this size of data.

All the detected crimes in Adeyfield East (5 offences) were committed by (N39826). This nominal has been responsible for a further 10 offences in the year of which 9 were as a result of a forced entry.

Therefore, offenders will obviously make use of an 'insecurity' if it exists but will, nevertheless, resort to forcing a door or window open if they are determined to gain access. An interesting question thus arises, if (in the 297 cases of gaining access via an insecurity to commit an offence) the house or flat was secure, then would the offender have walked away or just forced open the door or window to commit the offence.

Victims

There is no significant pattern to the types of people who suffer from burglaries via an insecurity.

The sex, ethnic background and age of the victims were very much in correlation with the population mix of the respective districts and wards.

The largest number of all types of burglary crimes last year were committed against the over 60 age group. This age group also suffered the largest number of 'insecure' burglaries.

It is also important to note that in 21% of cases the age of the complainant or witness was not recorded.

Detailed Analysis

Victim(s) profile

Simply by leaving their dwelling insecure

Offender(s) profile

Typical burglar is fuelled by a Class A drug habit. They will be on the look out for an easy target. An open window gives a point of entry without having to take timely and attention attracting methods of entry. This also reduces the chances of leaving forensic evidence behind. Open door entry is often when the occupier is in another part of the house or garden. This is more risky for the offender.

Location(s) profile

The fact that a window/door has been left open. Semi-detached with side access and poor natural surveillance all increase the vulnerability of the dwelling.

Summary of analysis.

From the initial findings the number of burglaries committed via an insecurity was less than the national average. However, further analysis revealed that there were three wards across the area where during 2002/2003 had a disproportionate amount of burglaries carried out in this way.

This gave the Operation three wards to focus the resources towards. Also we knew on what days and at what times to focus our attention. Weekdays and late afternoon evening.

If you were over sixty, lived in a semi-detached house in Adeyfield East and you left your window open on a Wednesday afternoon, the chances of you getting burgled were very high!

Response Options

Victim

- Short Term Raise awareness within prominent vulnerable groups regarding 'insecurities'. West Herts against Crime (WHAC); CPO's and Community Safety Support Group (sub group of Watford and Three Rivers Crime Prevention Panel) to give advice to prevent repeat victimisation.
- Long Term Re-enforcement of above. Encourage to join/set up NHW schemes

Offender

- Short Term Ensure all known targets are briefed to all officers
- Long Term Main offenders picked up by Choice Project (Tower project in Lancs.)

Location

- Short Term As above – Surveys carried out by CPO's/Specials
- Long Term Consider alley gating if appropriate.

RESPONSE

Victims/locations.

Communication Strategy

Raise awareness of project in NHW schemes in hot spot areas. If no NHW scheme exists then pro-active work to encourage initiation (NHW co-ordinators)

Week Commencing 16th May

Press release in Watford Observer and Dacorum Gazette highlighting the problems that existed last year on the three wards regarding people leaving their windows and doors open. Also mentioned was the fact that there were going to be increased police patrols in these three wards.

W/C 23rd June

T&C brief the following teams for high visibility patrols during **week** afternoon and evening in Woodside, Meriden and Adeyfield East Wards until the end week ending 25th July. Each team will carry out one patrol in each ward/day during this period and record details of patrol and any consequences on a patrol template.

- Intervention Teams
- Community Teams
- WARPU (Western Area Roads Policing)
- ARV (Armed Response Vehicle)
- Dog Section
- PTU (Probationary Training Unit)
- Special Constabulary

LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION

A Leaflet was distributed to all dwellings in the three wards. Delivered by CSSG; CPO's, PCSO's, Crime Prevention Panel's, Specials, Community Teams, WHAC and NHW.

Crime Prevention Advice on Burglary for Meriden Area

Between April 2002 and March 2003 there were 60 house burglaries in the **Meriden Ward** of Watford: **25%** of the burglaries occurred when the house was left insecure, i.e. such as an open window. The majority of these burglaries occurred during the afternoon and evening. Now Summer is here, please remember to lock windows and doors when out and about.

Police have increased patrols in the area.
Please report any suspicious incidents on
01923 472000 or, if urgent, 999.

FREE INDEPENDENT ADVICE

from the Crime Prevention Officers and the Watford and Three Rivers Crime Prevention Panel, can be obtained at:

**The Shopping Precinct
Meriden Shops, Watford
SATURDAY 19th JULY 2003
10.00 am – 1.00 pm**

Free house Security Surveys will be available as well as Property Marking (Bicycles, Mobile Phones etc..)

For further advice contact: Mike Powell or Ralph Durbridge,
Crime Prevention Officers
Watford and Three Rivers Area, Hertfordshire Constabulary,
On 01923 472030 / 472020



**HERTFORDSHIRE
CONSTABULARY**

Saturday 28th June

Mobile crime prevention trailer at the Brow (Woodside Ward) as designated on leaflet. Crime Prevention Panels/CSSG/ CPO's/ Community Team present in situ offering advice and taking details from community for security surveys. They also carried out mobile phone and Bike marking

Saturday 19th July

Mobile crime prevention trailer at the Meriden and Adeyfield East Shops as designated on leaflet. Crime Prevention Panels/CSSG/ CPO's/ Community Team present in situ offering advice and taking details from community for security surveys. They also carried out mobile phone and Bike marking.

ASSESSMENT

1) NUMBER OF HOUSES LEAFLETED

On the Three wards in the region of 6,000 households were leafleted

2) NUMBER OF PEOPLE COMING INTO CRIME PREVENTION TRAILER/MOBILE POLICE STATION FOR ADVICE

Over the three days a total of 370 people made contact with the Crime Prevention Panel members/Community Safety Support Group/Crime Prevention Officers and Community Team Officers. The vast majority asked advice regarding security advice, however at the same time they had their mobile phones and other household goods security marked

3) NUMBER OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES ON TARGETTED WARDS

Adeyfield East 11

Woodside 25

Meriden 3

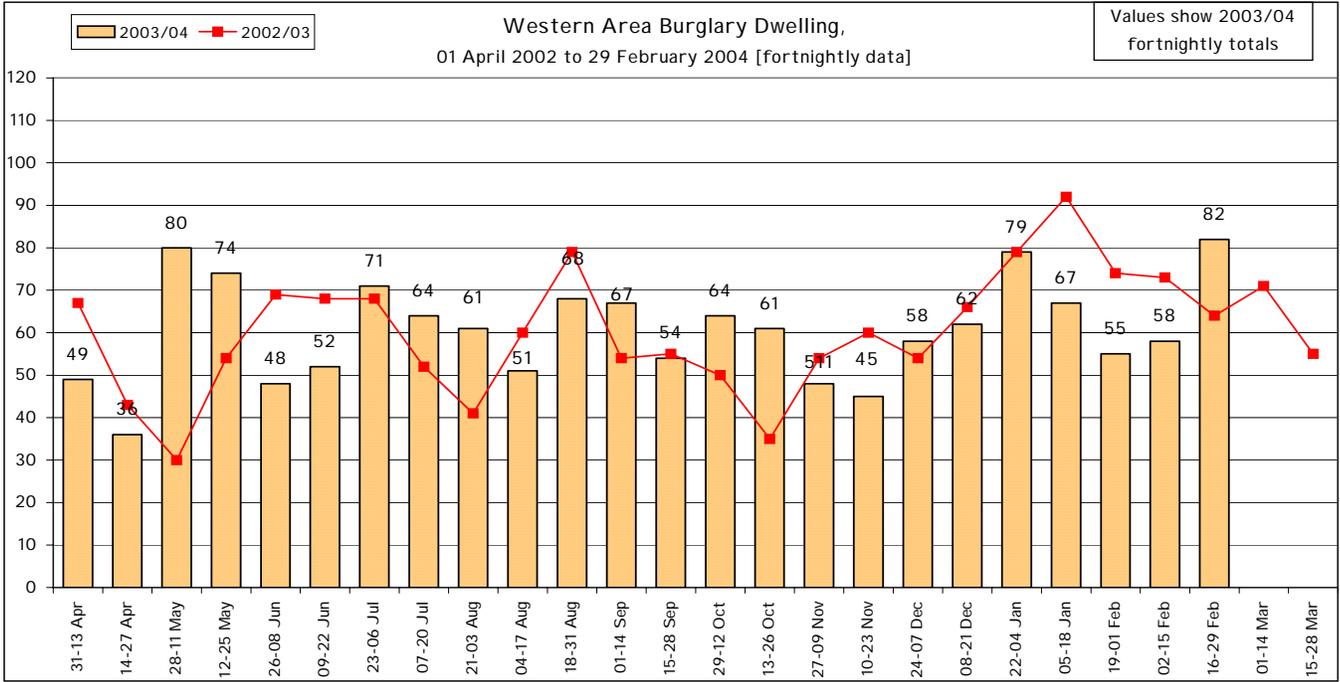
4) BURGLARY CRIMES COMMITTED(VIA INSECURITIES AND OTHER MEANS) ON TARGETTED WARDS

Ward	Burglary Offences 02/03 (03/04)	Insecurity as % of Burglary 02/03 (03/04)
Adeyfield East (D1C)	46 (12)	39% (0%)
Meriden (C4E)	60 (24)	25% (17%)
Woodside (C4C)	50 (17)	32% (12%)

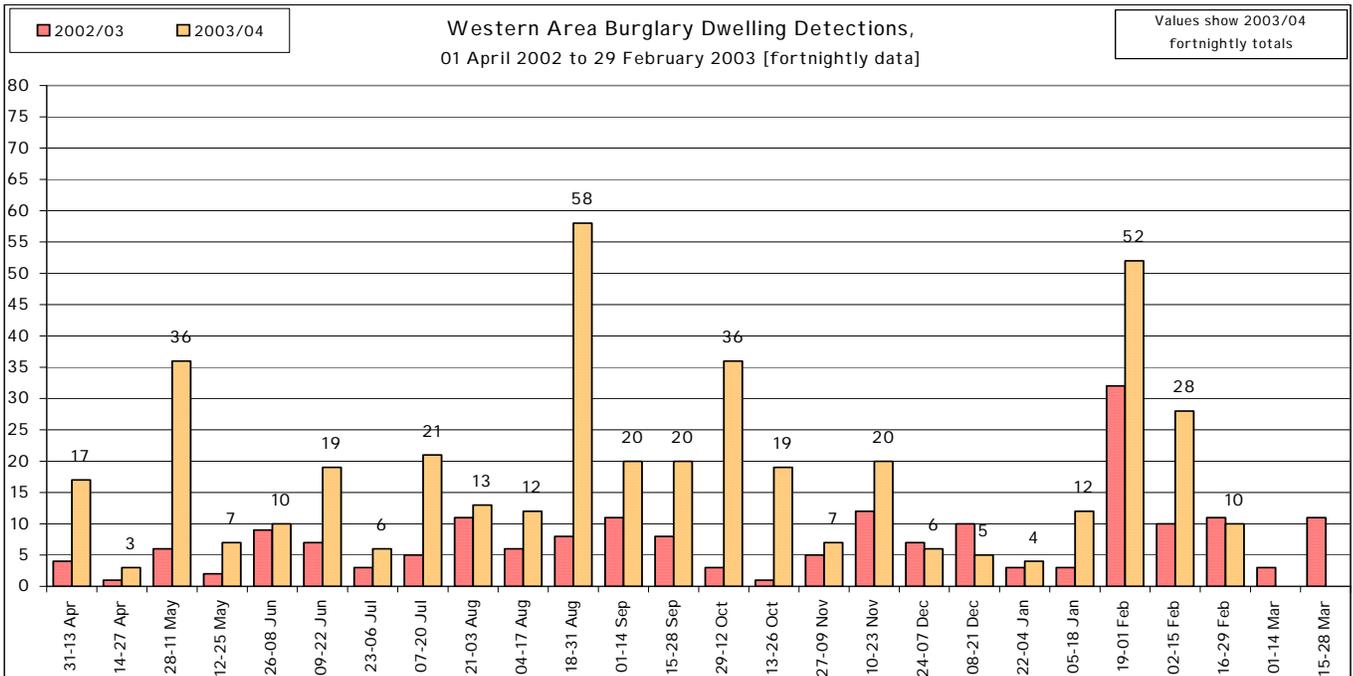
5) INSECURITY OFFENCES AS A % OF ALL BURGLARY CRIMES ACROSS THE WESTERN AREA

	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04
Quarter 1	18.0	22.4	17.5	21.6
Quarter 2	24.0	23.4	21.3	18.5
Quarter 3	21.4	19.1	17.3	9.9
Quarter 4	11.0	12.4	17.5	9.8
Year Average	19.2	18.7	18.3	15.6

Control Strategy Priority 1: Burglary Dwelling - Performance Indicators



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total to date	% change on last year
2002/03	110	126	129	116	144	122	95	117	143	192	137	140	1,436	1.3%
2003/04	106	154	118	147	129	125	138	113	143	134	147	-	1,454	



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total to date	% change on last year
2002/03	7	13	12	15	15	19	6	20	15	35	18	17	175	152.0%
2003/04	27	38	31	34	72	41	55	30	8	66	39	-	441	

CONCLUSION

HAS THE OPERATION MET THE AIM?

The figures speak for themselves. We have surpassed the target of reducing insecurity burglaries by 20% on the targeted wards. It should be noted that across the area during 2003/4 we have reduced the percentage of insecurity burglaries to 15.6%.

Looking at burglary crimes in their entirety there is a clear pattern of reduction when this problem solving approach was utilised. The tasking and co-ordinating group identified emerging hotspots for burglary and the operation was implemented on specific wards across the area.

This was re-enforced by press releases in the lead up to Christmas.

The last two charts show the excellent work regarding burglary dwelling detections.

These successes have been achieved by having excellent analytical products. We have been able to channel our resources in the right areas at the right times. Officers were properly briefed as to purpose of the operation and what they had to do.

Communication played a very important part in our success. The press releases covering the high level of insecurity burglaries in the previous year on the targeted wards coupled with the personal distribution of leaflets to individual households.

Finally this project would not have been a success without the commitment of our volunteer groups who, in their time, delivered leaflets and provided advice and assistance when on the Crime Prevention trailer and Mobile Police Station.

Paul Newell
C/Insp. Partnerships
Western Area
Hertfordshire Police

March 2004