**P = Presenter О = Police Officer**

P: And now it’s time for our regular 'Crimewatch' slot and here with us today is Police Officer Richard Woodcock from the **Crime Prevention** Unit of the Metropolitan Police. Richard, perhaps you could begin by telling us what characterizes a typical burglary.

O: Well, burglary is one of the crimes most people worry about, not so much because of the **loss of property**, but more because of the sense of invasion it causes - the idea that someone has gone through all your personal belongings. Many residential burglaries occur because of common misconceptions. For example, while people typically worry about night-time thefts, nearly 50 per cent of **residential break-ins** happen during the day, when homes are vacant because owners are out working. What’s more, robbing a house takes less time than many people think. Most burglars get in and out in less than ten minutes.

**P:** And how does the police go about **combating** the problem?

O: Police forces all over the country have targeted burglary. Operation Bumblebee, for example, was a major crime prevention campaign run by the Metropolitan Police and aimed at beating the burglars. The scheme has included raids on criminals who are known to sell **stolen goods**. At the end of Operation Bumblebee’s first year burglaries fell by 13 per cent, a figure which has to be considered a success.

P: Mm. And what would you say are the most important measures our listeners can take to protect their own homes?

O: Most householders are aware of the risk of being burgled and the majority have already installed locks on **doors and windows**. What many of these same people don’t do, however, is use them! So rule number one is lock up before you go out. And whatever you do, don't leave spare keys under the doormat, thinking that no one is going to find them. It’s the most obvious place for a burglar to look and an **open invitation** to walk in unchallenged. If you have another set of keys leave them with a trusted neighbour or friend. A home **alarm system** is another must, and a good deterrent to any would-be burglars, but make sure you have it put in by an installer who works to the British standard. Your local crime prevention officer can give you advice on how to choose an installer. And 1 mentioned locks earlier, but don't forget about the garage door as well. This can provide **easy access** for burglars, allowing them to gain access not only to your car, but directly into your home if there’s an adjoining door.

P: Thank you. Richard. Now, many listeners have phoned in asking about Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and how to set them up. What information can you give them?

O: Well, the best thing about these schemes is that they bring the community together and provide everyone with the chance to fight **local crime**. Your neighbours look out for you, your family, your home and your street, and you do the same for them. If you see anyone acting **suspiciously** near a neighbour's house, you contact the police, it especially enables people to check on vulnerable members of the community, such as the elderly or disabled. The schemes have come a long way since the early view some people held of nosy neighbours **interfering** in other people’s business. There are now more than 155,000 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the country, with more than ten million residents directly benefiting from them. It’s the largest **voluntary organization** in the country and one of the most effective for beating crime.

P: And where should listeners go to ask about starting one?

O: The local police station will tell you all about it or you can phone the National Neighbourhood Watch Association on - and I have the number here - 020 72 72 3348.

P: Thank you Richard. We’ll give that number again at the end of the programme ...