

News updates – 16th February 2021

Network News is for u3a committee members – please pass relevant details to your membership

New Colour-coded Headings – Reminder

Topic headings are now colour-coded as follows:

For Committee

Send to Members

Diary Dates

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

The following request for help comes from the Chairman of Charnwood u3a, but can you provide any useful input?

“One of our members has recently asked if we could set up a group to offer help and assistance to members who are less able that they used to be.

This might be doing a bit of shopping, collecting prescription, offering lifts, or just an occasional phone call to those who, for a variety of reasons, have become isolated. The Covid situation has brought this to the fore, however I can see an ongoing use for such a group even when some sort of normality is back with us.

I am sure I remember someone mentioning such a group at the last network meeting. So, if anyone is already doing this, it would be really useful to know: how it was set up; how it operates; how members (especially those who might need assistance) were informed about it; what sort of help is offered.

We will all have members who could use sort occasional help, and many of these will be too proud to admit (perhaps even to themselves) that they can no longer do everything, so any approach has to be sensitively handled. How have others gone about this?”

If you can help, please reply directly to Mike Hood at mijoho@gmail.com. Thank you.

Scam Update & Motorists Beware

Your parcel is being held at our depot due to an unpaid £2.70 shipping fee.

Please pay the fees before Sunday, 07 February 2021 otherwise the parcel will be returned to sender.

<https://royalmail.co/schedule-delivery/?GV644356065GB>

If you get a text message like this one, DO NOT RESPOND as it's a scam. This one seems to be cropping up quite regularly just now. Of course, the £2.70 is not what the thieves are after, it's your credit card details and identity, both of which will end up as the proceeds of crime!

If any of your members are getting variations to this message, please forward them to me and we'll circulate them as widely as we can to make as many people aware as possible. However, I am aware of the risk of scaring members to the extent that they won't use online banking or make online purchases, and that would be a shame as many have few alternatives at present.

Enclosed is a document produced by Leicestershire Police about vehicle theft. Two thieves have recently been jailed for thefts in this area and the Home Counties amounting to almost £1m in 3 months – all high value cars with electronic car keys!

Peter Padwick – Potential Speaker

Enclosed are details received via National Office about Peter Padwick, a potential speaker. Please bear in mind his response to the usual questions I ask about u3a membership and fees charged, and make sure your u3a doesn't make a cheque payable to another charity that doesn't have similar aims and objectives to u3a (unless it's a fee for a speaker provided by the charity).

A Warning for Dog-Owning Members



Be aware that there is a new ploy being undertaken by dog thieves. Having a white van with RSPCA stickers on and removing dogs from dog-walking owners under the pretext that the dog matches the description of a stolen dog.

NEVER let your dog be taken by anyone. Insist they follow you to the vets to have the dog scanned to prove ownership by the chip. If they're not for real, they won't go with you! The RSPCA will NEVER take a dog that way.

Phone the Police at the first opportunity with as much detail as possible and if possible, take photos of the offenders and vehicle registration. But don't compromise your own safety! There are also reports of thieves door knocking in residential areas.

*PDFs included with this Network News are:
Is Your Vehicle Attracting Thieves
Peter Padwick – Potential Speaker*

u3a



Is your vehicle attracting thieves?

Don't let thieves get an easy ride. Follow these nine simple rules to protect your car.

1. Lock your vehicle

Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open.

It is actually illegal to leave your vehicle running unattended while you de-ice it or warm it up in cold weather. If someone takes it while it's left like this, your insurer won't pay out because you won't be covered.

If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.

2. Keep the keys safe

Vehicles today are by and large more difficult to steal than ever, unless the thief can access your key or fob to clone them. Keep your keys safe, out of view when at home, and away from your front door. It's not uncommon for car keys to be stolen from inside your home by thieves fishing for them with a stick and hook through the letterbox.

When not in use, keep your electronic car key in a security pouch to prevent it being scanned by thieves to open and steal your car nearby.

3. Be aware of carjackers

The fact that you're in the car isn't always a deterrent to someone trying to steal it.

In traffic, drive with the doors locked and when queuing leave enough space in front of your vehicle to enable you to get out of a tight spot. If your vehicle is bumped from behind, wait to pull over – somewhere safe and preferably where there are people.

After all, you don't know the person who has collided with you; they could well be hijackers. If you're at all suspicious, consider calling the police.

If someone threatens you, it's better to hand over the keys to the vehicle than become a victim of assault. Then call [999](#) as soon as possible, and ask for the police.

If your car is stolen, some modern vehicle alarm and tracker systems have the facility to isolate or shut down fuel systems, bringing the vehicle to a halt and leaving the thief high and dry.

4. Park responsibly

It's always advisable to avoid parking in dark and secluded areas. It's worth an extra five or ten-minute walk if it means your vehicle is left in a well-lit and busier street.

And if possible, always try to park in illuminated and staffed car parks or those with a Park Mark safer parking award. To find one, simply check out [Park Mark](#).

5. Watch for illegal tow trucks

Thieves often attempt to lift vehicles from the street, literally. So, if you see a towaway crew acting suspiciously – especially if their vehicle isn't branded or if they're not in uniform – then please report it immediately.

As with every report of suspicious behaviour made in good faith, we'll never blame anyone for calling us if it proves unfounded.

Car parks with height-restricted entrances help prevent illegal tow trucks and removal vehicles. And fitting a [Thatcham rated](#) category 1 or 2 alarm system with tracking, immobilisation, anti-grab and movement sensors can help protect and trace your vehicle.

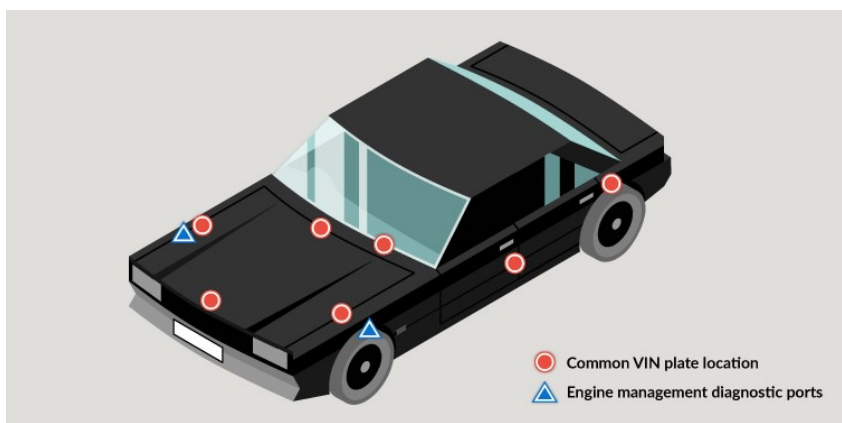
6. Fit good in-car security locks

Bear in mind that built-in steering locks aren't necessarily thief-proof. Many can be forced and broken. Fitting a [Sold Secure](#) steering wheel, gear lever or clutch pedal security device can give your vehicle added protection.

7. Double-check electronic locking

Electronic devices can be used to jam the electronic signal from your key fob to lock your vehicle. Always manually check your vehicle has locked before walking away.

If unsure, lock it manually, then scan the immediate area for anyone hanging around. If a potential thief who's watching feels they've been spotted, they'll probably move off.



8. Before owning, check for cloning

Changing the identity of a vehicle, known as vehicle cloning, can be as simple as adding stolen number plates. When buying a vehicle, always check the DVLA V5 document and make sure the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on the vehicle is the same as on the document.

Make sure you check more than one of the VINs as well as the engine numbers on the vehicle (see diagram).

[Check a used vehicle you're buying.](#)

9. Secure your port

Many modern vehicles are fitted with engine management diagnostic ports, which can unlock and start your vehicle.

If your vehicle has this type of port, consider fitting a lockable cover.

Peter Padwick – Talks by Zoom

The 66 or so live bookings that we have each year having gone down the drain, we are adapting our 28 titles for Zoom. All the talks are informative, light-hearted & colourful with music, literature, songs, humour & facts. Our fee goes to Cancer Research UK.

Peter & Christine Padwick padwick.ball@gmail.com 020 8367 6793

All Things Banned & Censored

The talk is a light-hearted survey of banning and censorship over the past 100 years or so with pictures, songs & anecdotes touching on George Formby, Reith and the BBC, cricket, Marilyn Monroe, Sooty, G.B. Shaw, Donald McGill, the Crazy Gang, Dr. Crippen, Alfred Hitchcock, Eartha Kitt, Thomas Hardy, Henry Hall, adverts, Frank Sinatra, D.H. Lawrence, Max Miller, George Gershwin and much more along the way.

A History of the Smallest Room

This entertainment covers the subject from pre-Roman times to the present day. Filled with humour, anecdotes, illustrations, poems, adverts and even a song, it touches on AA Milne, Barry Cryer, Alan Bennett, Vespasian, Shakespeare's dad, castles, Elizabeth I, the jerry, Hitler, John Simpson, Joseph Bramah, Dick Whittington, Bronco paper & much more.

A Romp Through 200 Years of Entertainment

From the 1802 Widdecombe Fair to the Muppets this social history spans folk, Music Hall & Variety, theatre, cinema, TV, the internet, revue, wireless & radio with dance bands, satire, parodies, protest songs & the monologue all taking a bow.

Scrapbook of the 1920s

That lively 10 years of flappers, prohibition, jazz & hope that followed the 1st WW covering the music, literature & history with Mickey Mouse, Just William, Lindbergh, Wembley Stadium & the General Strike along the way.

The Story of the 1930s

An exploration of the decade through its music, history & items such as the Wizard of Oz, JB Priestley, Vera Lynn, Chamberlain, Hitler, the Olympics, Snow White & the first driving tests.

The Queen: Snapshots of a Life

The saga of her life from 1926 to the present day covering the huge changes in that period: the songs, events & the ups and downs that occurred in those years that began with that errant Uncle. Profusely illustrated throughout.

Peter was asked about fees and u3a membership and gave this response:

"Because all the fees we get go straight to Cancer Research, we are happy to get anything – but a minimum of £50 is what we ask for and hope that people are kinder.

No, we don't belong to a U3A – simply because, until lock down we spent half our time in Enfield and the other half in Salisbury in order to do our monthly talks in both places. This meant belonging to a U3A didn't work as we were invariably not around to join.

We have strong links with Sarum U3A however, and if you would like to check up so that you are not getting 'a pig in a poke' – which I quite understand – Crawley, Chiltern and Yeovil have enjoyed our efforts on zoom I believe. Many others have had us 'live'.

Best wishes, Peter and Christine Padwick."