

Disabled woman's home burgled as she lay in hospital

by EMMA YOULE

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THIEVES broke into a Crouch End flat and stole a computer specially adapted for its disabled owner just days after she broke her leg in an accident.

Distinctive pieces of family silver were also snatched from the flat in Shepherd's Hill sometime in the early hours of Saturday, January 5.

Owner Pam Moffatt, who has muscular dystrophy and limited mobility, was in hospital at the time after an accident.

She slipped out of bed on Christmas Eve morning while on holiday in Somerset to celebrate her 70th birthday.

Her leg became trapped when paramedics assisted, resulting in a snapped thigh.

"I was in agony," she said. "I heard it go crack. It was pain that I had never experienced before."

A neighbour visited the flat while she was in hospital and discovered a pane of glass at the back had been removed allowing the burglars entry.

A computer, two valuable silver Georgian cream jugs, a digi-box and a Sony radio were taken.

"I think they'd been watching," said Ms Moffatt. "It would have been fairly obvious that I wasn't here."

Brother Peter, from Inverness, asked the neighbour to check the flat after finding he could not remotely log into the computer – a silver Hewlett Packard, bought for £799 in March 2006 and specially adapted to work without a keyboard.

Friend, Dolphi Durkens, 69 of Muswell Hill Avenue, said: "It has voice recognition and switches on literally with a wiggle of her toe."

Ms Moffatt works with Transport for London and the Commission for Social Care Inspection, and received an MBE 10 years ago.

"All the data in relation to the work is on my computer and it's all gone," she said. "I'm angry and depressed over how I'm going to get back much of this information."

The stolen silver had great sentimental value and is easily recognisable by the name on it – JR Moffatt.

"The silver was presented to my father while he was at college because he was a good swimmer," said Ms Moffatt. "One was a rose bowl which was well inscribed, and there were two other cups – matching wine goblets – with his name and date on."

The family did manage birthday celebrations before the traumatic Christmas.

"My family had given me a fabulous 70th birthday party in Scotland in November," said Ms Moffatt. "So all was not lost"

Anyone with information is asked to contact DC Reid from the burglary squad in Haringey on 020 8345 0887.



■ PAM Moffatt was a burglary victim while she was in hospital
Picture: Tony Gay

Boom in home rentals market

CROUCH End's trendy "village" image has made it so popular it now costs the same to rent here as it did to live on the edge of the City just two years ago.

And the rise in rental prices shows no sign of slowing, says Ran Carmon, lettings manager at Crouch End's branch of Greene & Co estate agents.

With homes more expensive than ever, families and young professionals are looking further afield and renting instead, he said.

A two-bedroom flat in a Crouch End Victorian terrace costs around £1,220 per month.

In 2005 that money could have secured an equivalent flat at the Angel, Islington.

The same goes for an average three-bedroom family home in Crouch End, which today goes for around £1,800 per month.

Two years ago, that could have paid for a home within 10 minutes' walk of Angel Tube, an area now well beyond the reach of most pockets.

Mr Carmon said: "People can't afford central London. In Crouch End you have fantastic transportation into the City. It is a middle-class suburb with a village feel."

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HORNSEY & CROUCH END
JOURNAL

Homes plan set for go-ahead

PLANS to build seven family houses on the site of two semi-detached cottages were approved last week.

The cottages and disused shop unit in Archway Road, just north of the junction with Muswell Hill Road, look set to be lost despite complaints from The Highgate Society.

The group reiterated its objection to the original, similar plans, calling the cottages "an important element of the historic character of this part of the

conservation area – indeed they are probably the oldest surviving elements of it – and their loss would, in our view, cause harm to it".

The society called for the restoration or rebuilding of the cottages.

The new development, approved by Haringey Council's Planning Committee last week, is made up of a row of four terraced houses with another row of three behind them, all

with gardens and parking spaces.

Councillor Bob Hare (Highgate) said the design was "not very good" and he would "rather see an application which respects the area".

Committee chairwoman Sheila Peacock (Northumberland Park) said: "I actually think the design is quite nice and fits in well with the streetscape."

The nine-strong committee voted five to four in favour of the plans.

Scheme aiming to kill off plastic bags

RESIDENTS of a Muswell Hill street have launched a shopping bag (pictured) with a personal touch to cut down on use of plastic.

Hillfield Park Neighbourhood Watch has produced a bag for £7 with the logo "Hillfield Park says NO to plastic bags".

It echoes Anya Hindmarch's iconic "I'm not a Plastic Bag" – a fashion hit of 2007.

Peter Thompson of Hillfield Park, who runs the project, said: "People are buying them like hot cakes."

It follows the arrival of the Crouch End shopping bag across the borough at the end of last year. For a bag call Mr Thompson on 020 8883 0371.



Meetings on web prove a success

A PILOT scheme by Haringey Council to podcast key meetings on its website has resulted in a record number of hits, a report confirms.

The pilot runs until the end of March 2008 with Haringey Youth Council, Planning Committee and full council meetings broadcast.

New portable web casting equipment will also allow meetings held outside the central rooms to be shown in future.

War events best attended in years

REMEMBRANCE Sunday events in 2007 were the best attended for years, Haringey Council has confirmed.

Young people in particular were well represented with groups from the police cadets and the fire service.

The report also says the Mayoral reception which included an exhibition dealing with the effects of war, was a hit for the second year running.



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