

Casebook

YOUR CHANCE TO SOLVE A CRIME . . .

Festive gifts to avoid

By ANDREW COONEY

POLICE in Wigan will be calling on a powerful ally in the fight against anti-social behaviour – Santa Claus.

Officers are calling on the man in red to ensure that everyone in the borough has a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year by refusing to bring youngsters presents that could be used in anti-social behaviour, particularly motorised bikes.

The worst gifts include off-road bikes, realistic imitation, replica and ball bearing guns, knives, alcohol and fireworks.

Top of the list of presents that cause annoyance in the community are off-road bikes and that includes mini-bikes, quad bikes, minimoto, electric scooters, buzz boards and go-peds.

These can only be ridden on private land with the landowner's permission – riding them anywhere else is illegal.

Riding a motorbike on roads requires the motorbike to be built for road use, have a valid MOT, registration documents and road tax.

The rider must be aged over 16, be adequately insured and wear an approved safety helmet.

Many parents are not aware of these extra necessary costs when agreeing to buy the bikes and do not realise that they can be more than double the cost of the bikes.

Destroyed

Motorbikes being ridden illegally can be confiscated and destroyed.

In many instances, they present a real danger to riders who are not adequately trained in their use or maintenance and also to other road users and pedestrians.

Ball bearing guns and realistic imitation firearms are also on the list of gifts to be avoided and can be confiscated and destroyed if they are reported to be causing alarm in the community.

Legislation passed in October 2007 makes it an offence to sell, manufacture or import any realistic imitation or replica firearms.

Lisa Mogan, crime reduction adviser for Wigan police, said: "I would urge parents to look carefully at what young people are asking for, stand firm against pester power and refuse to let them have potentially anti-social and dangerous presents this Christmas."

Double raid is cruellest cut for hairdressers

By CHARLES GRAHAM

THE owner of a Wigan hair salon today told of her despair after her business was burgled and ransacked for the second week running.

Mandy Noonan had not even got her Cut Loose premises straight from the first raid when thieves struck again on the same night of the week.

Again getting in through the Poolstock Lane studio's roof, this time they deliberately tampered with an upstairs toilet to cause it to overflow and the water to flood through into the rooms below.

The intruders stole hairdryers, straighteners, shampoo and conditioners and Christmas gift sets, most of which were found rain damaged in a hold-all dumped at the back of another property which they had tried to break into.

Detected

But the water itself has caused the biggest problem for the Mandy. It leaked onto the office fridge, microwave and toaster's electronics which, the police told 39-year-old Mandy, would have caught fire and possibly burnt the shop down had the break-in not been detected as early as it was.

Both burglaries took place late on Friday evening or in the early hours of Saturday.

The first was discovered when Mandy and her colleagues turned up for work on the morning of December 6, to find the business had been turned upside down during the raid and £1,000 worth of damage caused and property taken.



DEVASTATED: Cut Loose owner Mandy Noonan with staff Carly Scrivens, Amy Davies and Samantha Barton

The burglars had also urinated on staff furniture.

But last Saturday she got a phone call from police at 5.30am saying they were at the scene again and she needed to come down.

Mandy said: "Once was bad enough, but two weeks running is a real kick in the teeth. I was beginning to think that someone had got

a vendetta against me, but the police say that on this second occasion mine was one of several properties burgled in the same row.

"And apparently at one of them, the intruder cut himself really badly and bled everywhere so the detectives are confident of getting some DNA evidence.

"But we have to deal with the af-

termath. The appliances are all ruined, we've got stock to repair and for the second Saturday running we had to close, losing important business in the run-up to Christmas."

Mandy said she was probably looking at another £1,000 bill for the latest break-in. Anyone with information about the burglaries is asked to call 0161 856 5307.

THE FINGER OF JUSTICE

A HI-TECH crime fighting gadget will soon be in use on the streets of Wigan.

Police officers in Wigan will be trialling a new device that can establish a potential offender's identity within minutes.

Officers across Greater Manchester will be issued with a mobile electronic fingerprint device that will help save hours of time in identifying criminals.

As part of a national project called Lantern, 35 of the hand-held devices will be given to officers in Wigan.

Assistant Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "This device will be absolutely invaluable in our fight against

BY ANDREW COONEY

criminals and will have a hugely positive impact on front-line policing in Greater Manchester.

"It will enable officers to prove whether someone is who they say they are within minutes.

"It can take hours to arrest someone and transfer them to a police station just to establish their identity, so the hand-held device will mean officers can spend more time on the streets and less time in custody suites, which is what the public want.

"It also sends a powerful message to

criminals. With this piece of kit, they cannot lie to police about who they are. For instance, if we stop someone who gives false details, within minutes we will know their true identity and officers can decide on the spot if further action is needed. There will be no place to hide.

Identity

"With this excellent piece of equipment, more criminals will be brought to justice."

Officers can check a person's identity with the machine if they are already on the National Fingerprint Database, Ident1, which is linked to the Police National Computer (PNC).



CRIME RECORD: The hand-held fingerprint device

The device will allow officers to see if offenders are wanted for any other crime in the country.

Within minutes, their identity can be established and officers can quickly decide if further action is needed.

Anyone stopped will have to voluntarily agree for the device to be used, but refusing to provide prints may result in officers arresting and detaining someone until their identity has been established.

The fingerprints taken from anyone not on Ident1 will be discarded and not stored on a database or used for a speculative search.