

OUTBOARD THEFTS

PSNI meeting in SLYC, 2nd March 2011

There was a meeting in SLYC involving other Sailing Clubs at which the PSNI gave a talk on 'Project Kraken' and updates on the theft of outboards.

The police, acting with other agencies, would like club members to be aware of anything in their areas which might look suspicious and to report it to the police. All aspects of crime including theft, smuggling, contraband and illegal immigration are included.

Numbers to use are:- 02890 650222. 0845 600 8000.

E

Mail, SmallPortsUnit@psni.pnn.police.uk

Information leaflets are available in the club. Sergeant Nigel Donnelly is the local community police officer. He can be contacted at 0845 600.8000(extn 32408) or 07826 866234.

A number of Clubs have had large numbers of outboards stolen in the last two years. For example Killyleagh had over 20 stolen and Down Cruising Club also had over 20 stolen in one night. On Sunday night 27 February SLYC had an 80HP engine stolen from the club, opposite local houses! This exercise must have been slow and it probably took about 6 people to lift an engine of this size. Our club has had a couple of stolen engine incidents during the last couple of years, the latest one being this winter when a small outboard was taken from a dinghy stored on the top caravan site. Evidence suggests that the thief came over the Island and in through the back of the site.

Police intelligence suggests that these are organised gangs of Eastern Europeans coming mainly from Southern Ireland from where the engines are then being shipped to Eastern European Countries. At present all thefts have been by land access although this could change. Very few engines have been recovered. The police believe, that before any theft takes place, the locations have been visited and plans made of how the theft will take place.

The first line of defense is vigilance. Anything suspicious should be reported as noted above. The police also suggest that everyone records the engine serial numbers. Anything that might make an engine unsellable would help. Perhaps painting it or its cover might work. Engraving your post code in a place where it can be seen might also help. The police have started an initiative whereby the engine cover is removed and replaced with a waterproof cover. Anyone stealing this engine would have to purchase a new cover before sale. Engine covers are expensive and anyone trying to purchase one or more will be suspicious to a chandlery!

The police have left a number of covers with the Club if anyone would like to try it. These covers are for larger engines however it should be possible to get a local Sail Maker to run up a few smaller ones. Please speak to the Commodore.