

An initiative has been taken by Bradway Neighbourhood Watch to try to curb the unacceptable behaviour of many scrap-metal collectors.

With prices for metal at an all-time high, the number of vans and lorries prowling our streets on the look-out for scrap has increased considerably. Although this is not necessarily a problem in itself, the behaviour of some of the collectors is. We have had several instances of metal goods that were definitely not surplus to requirements simply disappearing, and in some cases neighbours have actually seen the scrap collectors taking the goods, although they may not have known at the time that this was being done without permission. Also some people have come across scrap collectors wandering around their back gardens. When asked what they are doing there, the intruders usually say that they have been asked to collect something, but must have got the wrong address.

Scrap collectors should be registered as waste carriers with the Environment Agency, otherwise they are committing an offence. Most are not registered, making it difficult to identify those who get up to no good.

This is far from being a problem for Bradway alone, and in response to a whole series of complaints, Woodseats Police are looking at ways of deterring unregistered scrap collectors. Measures under consideration include compiling a data-base of all scrap vans operating in the area, checking that the vehicle owners are registered to carry waste, contacting those that are not to threaten them with prosecution, and suggesting that those who are advertise the fact by displaying some sort of insignia (yet to be devised) on their vehicle.

For our part, we have agreed to ask residents to do two things:

1. To take care not to leave metal items out in the open, and especially not to leave unwanted goods at the roadside for just anyone to take. This only encourages the scavengers. Many citizens perhaps do not realise that it is an offence, punishable by a fine, to hand over waste to an unregistered carrier. When waste, including scrap metal, is handed to a carrier, the householder is required by law to obtain a receipt, which must contain the carrier's registration number.
2. If you see a scrap collector acting suspiciously or taking an item that you are not sure they have been asked to take, to make a note of their vehicle registration number and a description of both the vehicle and the individual(s) concerned. If you only suspect misbehaviour, please pass this information to me (236 4564) for collating and passing to the police. If you believe that a theft has taken place, please inform the police directly on Sheffield 2 20 20 20.

The police recommend that members of the public do **not** directly challenge scrap collectors, but the experience of Neighbourhood Watch coordinators is that when challenged the scrap collectors usually put down the items that they were taking and leave. We have no record of abuse or threats, let alone actual violence, and several neighbours' property has been rescued in this way.

Eventually we hope to involve the whole of Bradway in this initiative to deter unauthorised scrap-metal collectors. Unfortunately, by the time we had completed our consultations with the police the deadline had passed for the February edition of the *Bradway Bugle*. An article will appear in the next edition. In the meantime we are asking all Bradway Neighbourhood Watch coordinators to pass on the above to their members. The Chairman of the Bradway Action Group has also agreed to the above information being circulated to BAG members via the members' email list.