

Crime Prevention

Roland Taylor looks at ways of preventing the greenkeeper's worst nightmare



▲ Close up of Ramlok

It is tournament day and an early start is necessary if the course is to be immaculate for the first tee off. The greenkeeper arrives at the machinery storage buildings and is immediately aware there is something wrong.

He swings open the doors to find the building empty and a large section of the back wall gone. This fictional situation would be any greenkeeper's worst nightmare, but it could happen to anyone, at anytime.

With the considerable investment that now has to be made in course equipment tight security needs to be high on the list of priorities.

The loss of any machinery is very stressful and considerable costs are incurred. Replacements have to be found at short notice.

Valuable time is taken up, dealing with the police and the insurance company and if a prosecution is made then days will be lost giving evidence at court. Insurance payment delays can occur, putting further strain on resources. A hefty increase in premiums is likely to follow and in some cases there is the possibility that the company will no longer insure the equipment. All this results in considerable inconvenience and hassle.

There is not a 100% solution for stopping thieves, but plenty of deterrents are available and a combination of these plus vigilance may be enough to make them have second thoughts.

Generally, courses cover large areas of open countryside and often the machinery stores and workshops are located in remote places, far away from the main buildings. This makes them highly vulnerable, so protection is essential.

There are three types of thieves, the professional, small scale and opportunist.

THE PROFESSIONAL

The chance of being hit by professionals is relatively smaller compared to the other two, but this fact should not be ignored as many of the security systems cover all aspects of robbery.

Larger equipment is usually targeted and is likely to be stolen to order, possibly for abroad. Considerable planning is needed for his type of robbery and will involve a number of people, who have made themselves thoroughly familiar with the course and buildings. Because of the machinery's size having suitable transport has to be part of the plan.

SMALL SCALE

These are less likely to be planned. A weakness in the security system is spotted and advantage taken of this flaw. The thieves are more likely to make a quick entry and grab whatever is available. They may well have been reconnoitring a target for a while.

OPPORTUNIST

They take any opportunity that presents itself and this is the most common form of theft. The haul is mainly small items, although cars, vans or tractors are often taken in this manner, because they have been left unlocked with the key in the ignition.

There are numerous ways of protecting against theft, but all situations are different, so it is necessary to determine what is best in each individual case.

BUILDINGS

No thieves like hanging about for too long, trying to get inside, so the objective is to make it as difficult and time consuming as possible to gain entry.

Whatever type of building is used must be of sound construction. It is pointless to bar the windows and doors if the walls can easily be breached. Thieves will not hesitate to ram a wall. Windows should be heavily barred inside and the door hinges impossible to get at from the outside.

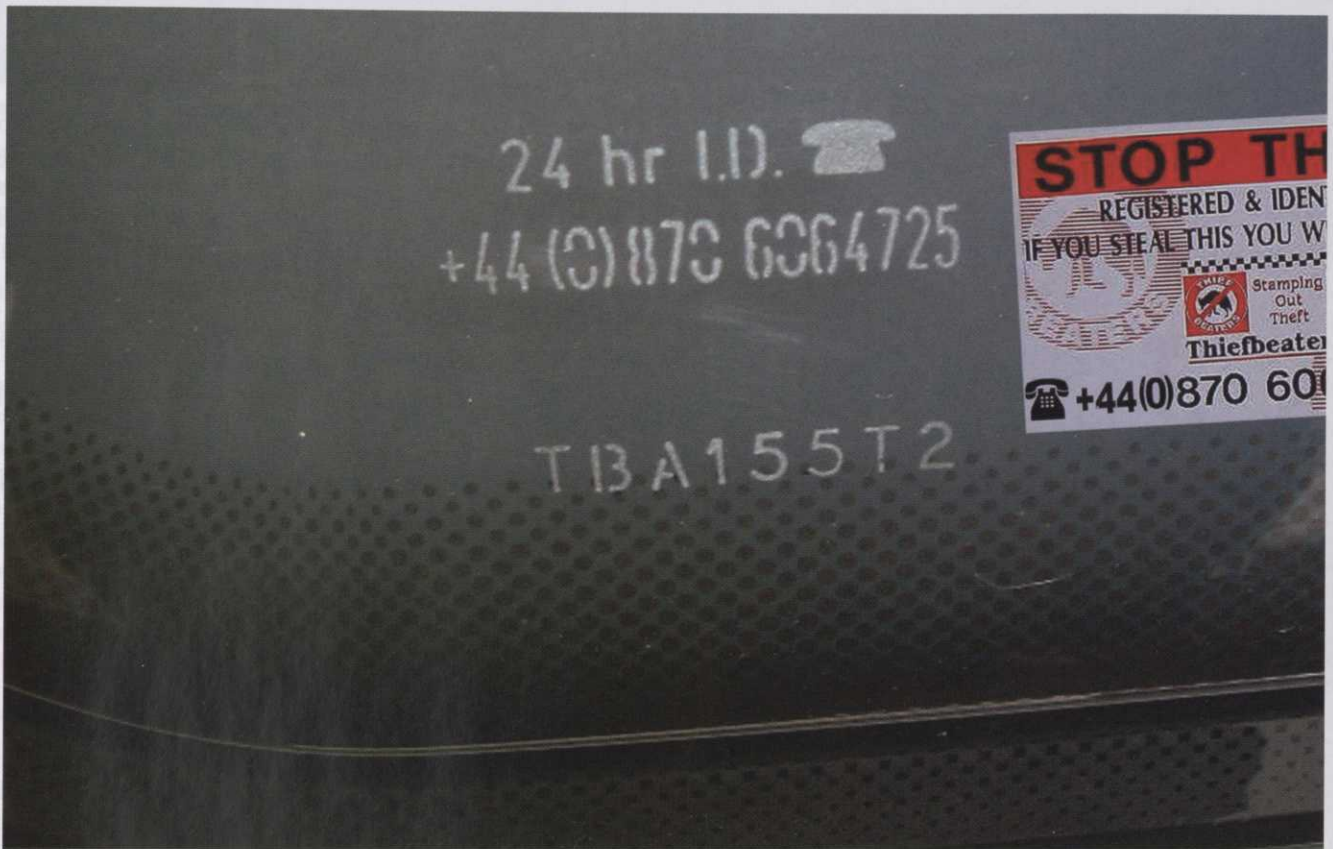
There are plenty of purpose built units on the market for storing equipment and it is worthwhile contacting one of these specialist companies who can advise on the most appropriate to specific requirements.

There are steel units, which are said to be extremely secure and with the host of interior options that are available they can be tailor made.

For existing building these companies also offer cabinets or cages constructed from heavy-duty steel for interior storage of smaller equipment. While this type of unit is ideal for secure storage what happens when the smaller machinery or tools are out on a course? No one is infallible and there are going to be occasions when equipment is left exposed in the back of a trailer or truck – a temptation for the opportunist thief.



▲ Trailer drawbar warning



▲ Thiefbeaters warning

An all-steel truck or transport box will overcome this problem as long as it is left locked. In addition to the security these units are weatherproof, so the tools and your sandwiches will not get wet.

LOCATION

If there are plans for a new machinery store then it needs locating as near to the clubhouse or hotel complex as possible. Wherever the store is sited the area around should be free of trees and shrubs as these provide ideal cover for thieves to go about their activities unnoticed. In addition heavy-duty, perimeter fencing, topped with razor wire will make potential intruders think twice about gaining entry.

Security posts are another form of protection. These are anti-ram and theft resistant, so they can be used to form a major obstacle in front of doors or across gateways. Signage should be displayed in prominent positions, warning the public to keep out of certain areas and informing prospective intruders that a high level of security is in place.

ALARM SYSTEMS

These come in all shapes and sizes. The wire free ones send radio signals to a central control panel that activates either an audible alarm, flashing lights or fills the building with dense smoke. There are also acoustic systems, which emit a high-pitched signal that disorientates any intruder within the vicinity.

Exterior lighting is another deterrent and these can be fitted with infrared sensors that automatically detect when someone is about and switch on the lights.

If the buildings are miles from the nearest habitation, some of these systems may not provide much protection as no one is going to see or hear them.

MACHINERY

All ignition keys should be removed and securely locked away when the machinery is not in use. To immobilise equipment there are a number of devices on the market. For a tractor fitted with backhoe and front loader leg locks – fitted to the stabiliser leg with the machine's rear wheel lifted off the ground, are ideal, as they make it virtually impossible to move the unit. There are also ram locks that are fitted to a full extending hydraulic steering ram.

Towing eye locks enable a number of units to be chained together. Wheel clamps, wall and ground locks are also useful for securing equipment. Whatever type of system is used it is important to fit recommended security chain and padlocks.

One of the biggest problems for thieves is the disposal of their ill-gotten gains and the ability to identify stolen property is a deterrent because they then become far less saleable. If the property is recovered it is necessary to identify who owns what?

This is an area that has been addressed by some highly specialist companies and the latest development is a system that involves applying a unique designated number to 50 random locations on a piece of equipment as well as electronic tags and microdots.

All the sites are recorded together with photographs of the machine and the information is then stored on a central database. If a stolen

Registration Document

THATCHAM
VEHICLE SECURITY
"Q - Listed"
Recognised by Insurance Companies



Thiefbeaters

REGISTERED OWNER

Name **Thiefbeaters Ltd**

Address **PO Box 5789**
Town **Towcester**
County **Northants**
Postcode **NN12 8ZJ**

Tel **0870 794 0111**

DETAILS OF PROPERTY

Manufacturer **JOHN DEERE**
Model/Type **LTR. 166**
Year **2001**
Colour **GREEN**
Reg No **N/A**
Serial No **E092224**
Vin No **N/A**
Engine No **GH47-1984536**
Est Value **£3160.00**
Other



UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: TBA89TIF

MARK	LOCATION	INSTALLED
ETCHED	REAR PANEL	23/05/99
ETCHED	REAR MUDGUARD	23/05/99
ETCHED	INSIDE ENGINE COVER	23/05/99
ENGRAVED	RH REAR CHASSIS	23/05/99
ENGRAVED	TOP LHS RADIATOR	23/05/99
ETCHED	LHS ENGINE BLOCK	23/05/99
ENGRAVED	FRONT AXLE RHS	23/05/99
ENGRAVED	ALL WHEELS	23/05/99
ETCHED	DRIVER SEAT REAR	23/05/99
ENGRAVED	REAR AXLE BACK RHS	23/05/99

DEVICE	CODE	INSTALLED
ID100A	DC00058Y90	23/05/99
MD0001	ID00006328	23/05/99

**EMERGENCY
PHONE NO:**

0870 606 4725

Thiefbeaters Limited

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Towcester
Northants
NN12 8ZJ**

**Tel: 0870 794 0111
Email: info@thiefbeaters.co.uk
Web site: www.thiefbeaters.co.uk**

▲ Thiefbeaters Passport

machine is recovered it can be quickly matched to its rightful owners.

Plenty of signage displayed around the storage areas and on the machinery warns that they are security marked and registered. This system is definitely proving a deterrent in the thieving fraternity. There is little point in nicking it if you cannot sell it on. When a piece of marked machinery is legitimately sold then the registered information passes to the new owner.

STAFF

Personal possessions left in view are vulnerable. For example, it is a warm hot day and a member of staff is out on the course cutting greens, he takes off his coat and leaves on the grass.

He then moves on to another green. On returning to pick up the coat he finds his mobile phone or wallet are missing.

Another example is that the rest room door is left unlocked; when the team breaks for lunch they find personal items missing. These are just two situations that could occur if staff are not vigilant.

If strangers are seen wandering about in areas where they are not supposed to be or a vehicle is parked in an unusual spot then these incidents need to be reported. In most cases they will probably be harmless, but someone maybe reconnoitring the course and its buildings.

One human error could undo everything a security system, costing several thousands of pounds, was designed to achieve. Staff awareness is essential. It is easy to forget to close and lock doors, leave tools in the open or keys in an ignition.

As far as security is concerned if something is amiss communicating with other local greenkeepers is a good idea. In rural locations it is also worthwhile being in regular contact with the members of the local Farm Watch Scheme. Having a good rapport with the local police is important.

Their Crime Prevention Officer is a mine of information and can outline the best possible security for your establishment.

Robberies will continue to happen, but by seeking the best advice and correctly securing your equipment you will reduce the odds, that your course will be targeted.

To contact Security Companies see Security in the Buyers' Guide.



▲ HD Hitchlok and HD Security Chain