



# Thames Valley Horsewatch



**Welcome to Horsewatch.**

Your details have been added to our database and will be sent on to your nearest co-ordinator. They will contact you soon with their area news and local information. Most areas send out checklists, security advice and have an emergency contact routine. A small charge is sometimes made to cover this administration and to provide a fund for printing lost animal posters, etc.

In the meantime there are three important things for you to do.

- 1 Identify your horse.**
- 2 Security mark all tack and property.**
- 3 Tell your friends about Horsewatch.**

**Horse identity.** Ideally, we would like to see all horses freeze branded.

This makes them easy to identify, easy to trace and the mark remains unique. Micro chipping is a good way to confirm ownership but unless it is known a chip is in place and there is a chip reader to hand it can be missed. Consider the scenario where we receive a phone call in the early hours asking if we know 'who the loose brown horse belongs to?' One simple question, 'is there a white number on its back?' can save an awful lot of time and investigation, reuniting horse and owner after a simple check. Stolen horses are usually recovered if they are freeze branded as most sales and dealers insist on having the registration papers. Think about it, would you buy a second-hand car with no number plates or registration document?

**Security marking** with your home postcode is absolutely essential.

Mark every piece of tack you can. Lorries and trailers are especially valuable and readily stolen. Postcode these clearly inside and out. Horsewatch can provide you with self-adhesive lettering to stick to the roof of vehicles so they can be easily recognised. These become difficult to remove and, long term, leave a 'ghost' in the paint. Property marking acts as a deterrent to thieves but more importantly recovered items can be traced back to their owner. Even if you can identify your saddle by the mark underneath, no one else can. When it turns up in a hoard of 100 others there is only one way the Police will be able to return it to you, via your postcode. Did you realise that if it cannot be proven that seized property is stolen it is handed back to the thief? Your local co-ordinator can help you with marking methods and equipment. Some will also visit your yard and mark tack on site for you. Please contact us and ask.

**Spread the word.** Please tell your friends about Horsewatch.

We would like to involve as many people as possible so that everyone watches out for each other. If all the feed merchants, tack shops, farriers, saddlers, dentists, riding clubs, etc. are involved there can be an army of observers looking out for signs of trouble. Always encourage anyone about to buy second-hand goods to check where they have come from. If the deal is 'too good to be true' then it probably is. Are you about to promote the theft of more tack by providing the thieves with a way of disposing of it? After all, for them, if stolen goods cannot be sold there is no point in stealing them in the first place.

For those of you with access to the Internet the following sites might be of interest.

[www.ukhorsewatch.org.uk](http://www.ukhorsewatch.org.uk)

[www.trailerwatch.com](http://www.trailerwatch.com)

[www.stolenhorseregister.com](http://www.stolenhorseregister.com)

[www.thamesvalleyhorsewatch.org.uk](http://www.thamesvalleyhorsewatch.org.uk)

[www.farmkey.com](http://www.farmkey.com)

[www.freeze-mark.biz](http://www.freeze-mark.biz)