



# SaferGems

THE JEWEL IN CRIME PREVENTION

## *The Year in Review*

*SaferGems in 2023*



THE VOICE OF THE PROFESSIONAL SECURITY INDUSTRY

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Founding Sponsors:



The National Association of Jewellers

## About SaferGems

**SaferGems** is a major initiative against crime in the Jewellery, Pawn Brokers, Antiques and Fine Art Trades, hosted by the BSIA and funded by the retail jewellery industry through **TH March Insurance Brokers** and **The National Association of Jewellers (NAJ)**.



The National Association of Jewellers

Founding Sponsors:



**TH March**  
Insurance Since 1887

It was introduced in June 2009 following concern about the increase in crime committed against the jewellery industry. It is intended to collate attacks, incidents, and intelligence in relation to jewellery crime around the UK. The SaferGems team, which has strong links to all the UK police forces, records details of crimes against the jewellery/pawnbroking industry, sends alerts to its members, NAJ members and those insured via TH March. A key role of SaferGems is to coordinate data across police forces to improve identification and conviction of criminals, circulates images and new crime trends and assists the police in linking offences and offenders.

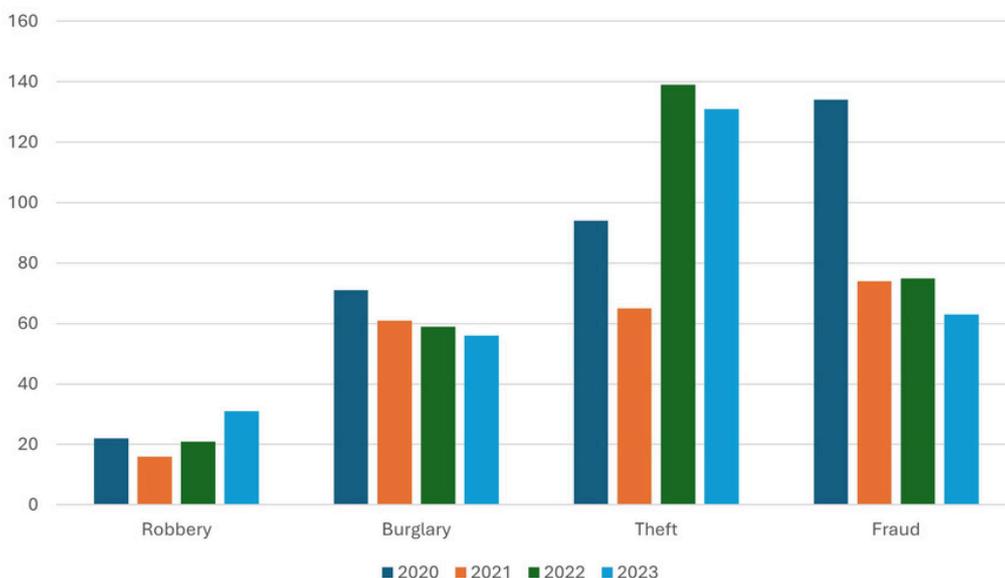
SaferGems is working closely with their sponsors National Association of Jewellers and TH March to provide greater crime prevention advice to all their members.

SaferGems seeks to coordinate data across police forces to improve identification and conviction of criminals by maintaining a strong link between the Industry and Police.

With over **5000** members crime prevention advice is key whilst raising awareness of offences.

- Since 2009 to date over **10,000** crimes and suspicious incidents have been recorded.
- Circulating over **3000** Alerts to the industry.
- Completing **3000** analytical reports to the Police and assisting with over **350** identifications, arrests, and convictions.

## Crime trends since 2020



## SaferGems to date:



ALERTS AND BULLETINS **CIRCULATED**

ANALYTICAL REPORTS PROVIDED FOR THE POLICE



CRIMES BELIEVED TO **HAVE BEEN PREVENTED**

ASSISTED UK & US LAW ENFORCEMENT WITH THE **IDENTIFICATION, ARREST & CONVICTION OF SUSPECTS**



WATCHES LOCATED ON THE BASIS OF SAFERGEMS REGISTRATION **WITH THE ART LOSS REGISTER**

## During 2023 SaferGems recorded:



**31** ROBBERIES (**16** ARMED) WITH **22** CONFIRMED CRIMES AND APPROXIMATELY **£2.1 MILLION** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN.

**131** REPORTS OF THEFT WITH **114** CONFIRMED CASES & APPROXIMATELY **£2.1 MILLION** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN.



**63** REPORTS OF FRAUD WITH **25** CONFIRMED CASES AND APPROXIMATELY **£75,000** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN.

**56** REPORTS OF BURGLARY WITH **48** CONFIRMED CASES AND APPROXIMATELY **£1.6 MILLION** WORTH OF GOODS STOLEN.



## SaferGems in 2023:

SaferGems did not record any robbery series of note during 2023. The robbery offences that did happen were sporadic and committed mostly by local offenders. The only Foreign National Offender (FNO) robbery of note occurred in London during February. An elderly jeweller was targeted and robbed of over **£500,000** worth of goods by two male offenders. In April 2023, seven Romanian nationals from Derby were charged with the offence.

During 2023, SaferGems and UK Law Enforcement recorded an increase in crimes committed by organised gangs from South America. The majority of these offences involved organised high-value retail distraction/sleight of hand thefts. However, travelling sales representatives and traders across England and Scotland were also targeted by these organised South American gangs. The gangs engaged in anti-surveillance techniques, such as changing clothing and disguising appearances before using distraction (money under car) and tyre slashing tactics to steal high value goods from vehicles belonging to traders and reps. A number of tracking devices were also reported being found on vehicles belonging to jewellers and sales representatives across the West Midlands region.



Another continuing crime trend involved offenders snatching and running off with prestige watches or items of gold jewellery with offenders targeting both independent and multi-chain jewellery stores. Over the last five years gangs of young men have travelled out of London and across England and Wales to steal (snatch) gold jewellery and prestige high value watches. These gangs use earpieces/air pods to co-ordinate well executed high value thefts mostly from stores within shopping centres.

Fraud trends include counterfeit cash, fake/lab grown diamond scams, 'Super Fake' Rolex watches, CNP Fraud, IFC Fraud, Bank Transfer Scams and Bogus Traders and Clients. Hole In The Wall and Roof Top burglaries remain a significant threat to the industry.

The **Watch Register** matched **721** watches against its database last year, and successfully completed **156** watch recoveries for victims of theft and insurers. Regarding SaferGems registrations more specifically, the figures are as follows: **56** watches were located on the basis of SaferGems registrations with **45** were concerning stolen watches and **11** were concerning alerts on potential fakes. With regard to the stolen watches located on the basis of SaferGems registrations, **8** watches have so far been recovered with **20** cases are still ongoing. On the basis of SaferGems registrations, **56** watches were located, with **45** were concerning stolen watches and **11** concerning alerts on potential fakes.

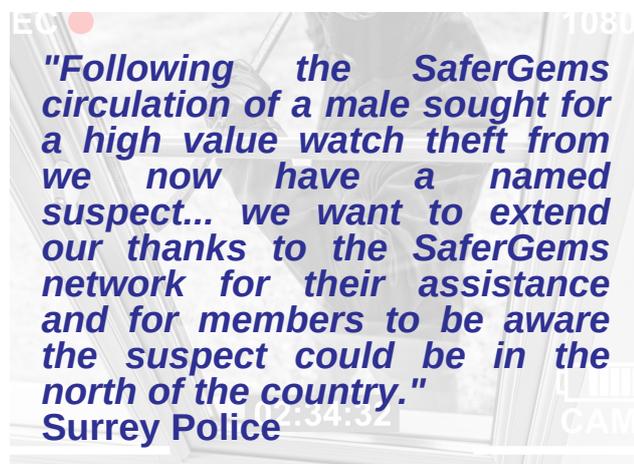


## Incidents of note

SaferGems were involved in a number of incidents whereby active criminals have either been arrested, identified or prevented from committing further offences, whether it be theft, fraud or otherwise. We assisted in the following:

In **January**, SaferGems assisted Kent Police with the arrest of a 23yr Romanian female who had been linked by SaferGems to a series of sleight of hand/distraction/switch thefts from stores across the South East region. During the same month, we were also able to identify two men responsible for selling 'Super Fake' Rolex watches to jewellery stores across England. As a result, SaferGems provided advice and guidance documents to members on how to spot 'Super Fakes' Rolex watches.

In **February**, as a direct result of CCTV images being shared with Police contacts, SaferGems was able to identify a 39yr old man sought by **Surrey Police** following a high value watch theft in Guildford. The suspect was also wanted on warrant for absconding from prison in Derbyshire and was arrested by **West Yorkshire Police**. According to Surrey Police, due to the great evidence which was able to be produced by the store and the circulation by SaferGems, the suspect was very likely to be charged with a number of offences from across the country.



In **March**, SaferGems identified a prolific jewellery thief responsible for a high-value theft in Mayfair. The suspect is known to SaferGems for thefts at jewellery stores across London and Birmingham between 2018 and 2020. SaferGems also assisted **Greater Manchester Police** with an investigation by linking three armed robberies which occurred at jewellery stores within their force area. A 39yr old man was later charged with robbery, attempt robbery and possession of an offensive weapon in a public place. In June 2023, he was sentenced to four-and-a-half-years in prison.



**April** saw the identification of two women sought by **North Yorkshire Police** following a high value theft in Skipton. As a direct result of CCTV images of the suspects being shared by SaferGems with **Kent Police**, the suspects were identified by the Police Facial Recognition Database PND. April also recorded the first sign of the year that criminals were monitoring the movements and activities of jewellers and travelling jewellery reps with two tracking devices being found on vehicles belonging to a jeweller and rep in the West Midlands region.

## Incidents of note

In **May**, SaferGems and its members, recorded a number of incidents across the UK whereby counterfeit Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster £50 notes were used to purchase goods. In conjunction with the **National Crime Agency**, SaferGems were able to provide advice and guidance to members on how to identify these fake bank notes. Also, as a direct result of sharing images of the suspects with Police contacts, were able to identify a male responsible for passing counterfeit Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster £50 notes at stores in Liverpool, Stockport and Birmingham.



In **June**, SaferGems were able to identify a male who attempted to sell lab grown/fake diamonds to stores across the South East region; two males responsible for a high value fraud in St Albans; a Romanian male responsible for a high value distraction theft in Cheltenham and a male responsible for fraudulent transactions in Cheshire and Gloucestershire.

In **August**, SaferGems assisted **Sussex Police** with a high value distraction theft at a store in Crawley whereby **£61,000** worth of prestige watches were stolen by a very organised gang. The suspects were linked by SaferGems to a distraction theft in Glasgow which occurred in December 2022. We were also able to identify a 18yr old Romanian woman responsible for a high-value distraction theft in Reading.

In **September**, three persons managed to gain entry to the exhibition area of a trade fair event in Birmingham. The suspects used false identities to gain lanyards which allowed them access to jewellery products that were on display. However, security at the event were able to take back control of the lanyards before anything was stolen. As a result of this incident and possible threat to the event calendar, SaferGems was able to liaise with partners at **Thames Valley** and **Metropolitan Police** which resulted in target hardening procedures being put in place for upcoming trade events in Windsor and London.



During **October**, SaferGems assisted the **Metropolitan Police Flying Squad** and **Police Scotland** following hostile surveillance on traders and travelling jewellery reps across the UK. SaferGems was able to link and identify a number of offences including incidents in Glasgow, London, Toddington and Cheltenham. It is believed an organised gang targeted the victims in Glasgow and Toddington following trade events in Birmingham and London. As a result of this continued and serious threat to the Industry, SaferGems was able, in conjunction with Police partners and **Secured by Design** team, to provide advice, guidance and tool considerations to members before, during and after attending trade events.

In October, we were also able to identify a 39yr old male responsible for a theft in Sussex; **Devon & Cornwall Police** with the identification and arrest of a male responsible for a series of snatch thefts across the South West region; Devon & Cornwall Police with the identification of a male who committed a theft at a store Dartmouth and Metropolitan Police with the identification of a male responsible for theft and robbery offences in London.

## Round-up and testimonials

In February 2023, the **National Association of Jewellers** won Best Association/Supplier Partnership with **TH March** at the TAF awards for the SaferGems initiative. The Trade Association Forum Awards are the leading awards recognising the work of UK trade and member associations. The awards recognise associations that have delivered for their members and their sector. The Best Association/Supplier Partnership award is a recognition of years of close collaboration between the two organisations, specifically the development of the SaferGems initiative, administered



by the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) since 2009. SaferGems is a vital specialist crime prevention initiative aiming to decrease crime, increase security, and prevent harm caused by crime.



In March, SaferGems attended exhibited at the **Secured by Design** (SBD) ATLAS exhibition and conference, highlighting their work to Designing Out Crime Officers from police forces around the country.

**Ben Massey National Association of Jewellers CEO:** *SaferGems is increasingly important to our NAJ members, providing valuable intelligence and peace of mind to our retailer and supplier members during a period of heightened security risks. SaferGems demonstrates the power of collaboration between the scheme's sponsors and members, who share crucial intel to ensure the initiative's effectiveness. The NAJ is fully committed to strengthening this collaborative relationship to ensure this unique service continues to provide unrivalled security expertise to keep our members and their customers safe.*

**DCI Laura Hillier Metropolitan Police Flying Squad:** *The SaferGems network, knowledge and reach has supported my teams on a number of high value investigations in the past few months. The SaferGems initiative effectively oversees and forecasts new and emerging crime trends as well as providing valuable support to the Metropolitan Police. The Flying Squad have been more productive in shorter time frames achieving cost savings for policing when linking Serious and Organised Crime. A recent briefing regarding jewellery traders being targeted unlock an Organised Crime Group operating in the UK and Europe. Without the concerns raised by SaferGems we would not have been able to set in motion the robust crime prevention and joint working to protect those working in the industry against hostile surveillance. Your team and members have welcomed law enforcement which has benefited a number of police areas. These include identification of suspects offending in Scotland to follow-offs happening in England.*

## SaferGems: meet the team



### Sarah Staff

SaferGems Manager  
[Sarah@safergems.org.uk](mailto:Sarah@safergems.org.uk)

Sarah is responsible for the **BSIA** joint security intelligence initiative **SaferCash** as well as newly appointed manager for **SaferGems** upon this years departure of Simon Gardener. Sarah is former Head of the Flying Squad, with a 30 year career in the Metropolitan Police.



### Lee Henderson

Intelligence Analyst  
[intel@safergems.org.uk](mailto:intel@safergems.org.uk)

Lee joined **West Mercia Force Intelligence Bureau** in 1998 as a researcher before working on the Cheque & Credit Card Fraud desk. Went on to become a Source Co-ordinator (office manager) for the FIB acting as a central point of contact for the bureau, evaluating, collating and disseminating intelligence at national and international levels. In 2008, Lee joined the **BSIA** as an intelligence officer for **SaferCash** before moving over to SaferGems in 2010.

## About the BSIA

**The British Security Industry Association (BSIA)** is the trade association for the professional security industry in the UK.

Our members are responsible for more than 70% of privately provided UK security products and services (by turnover) including the manufacture, distribution and installation of electronic and physical security equipment and the provision of security officer and consultancy services.

The BSIA is the recognised voice of the professional security industry, supporting and encouraging excellence; educating the marketplace on the value of quality and professional security; and creating an environment in which to flourish.

BSIA Membership is the symbol of quality and professionalism in the security industry.

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