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HOLIDAY SCARE ON THE CARDS

As millions prepare for a summer holiday chill-out this year, new figures reveal that 51% of Britons fear having their credit or debit cards stolen over the summer months.

Despite recent announcements of new initiatives such as PIN number transactions in shops and restaurants and the launch of the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Police Unit, new figures released today reveal that of those fearful of credit and debit card theft (51%), half of those believe their cards will be stolen in the UK (24%). Furthermore these findings come at a time when fraud committed abroad on UK issued cards has increased by 34% in one year, costing £138.4 million in 2001. In fact, one-third of fraud on UK cards now occurs abroad.¹

The survey, released today by The CPP Group – the leading provider of credit and debit card protection in the UK – asked a representative sample of 2,000 people in what country they most feared having their credit or debit cards stolen.

Key findings:

- Overall, 54% of women and 47% of men fear having their cards stolen this summer.

¹ Card Watch (part of APACS fraud protection)

- ❑ The age group most fearful of this crime is the 16-24 year olds, with 62% of these concerned about their plastics being stolen. Those over 55 show least concern with only 44% fearful of this crime.
- ❑ Topping the poll of most feared country for credit and debit card theft is the UK – with 24% of those interviewed citing this as the country in which they thought they would be most likely to have their plastic stolen. Those who feel most threatened by UK plastic card theft are those from Yorkshire with one in three (32%) concerned for their cards this summer, whilst those most fearless of this form of crime are those from the south of England and Scotland. In a similar study last year, the UK was also seen to be high on the target list for fraudsters with 46% of people viewing the UK as risky for credit card theft. Such fears appear to be founded, as UK plastic card fraud losses topped £411.4 million in the UK in 2001², this being a 30% increase on the 2000 losses of £317.0 million.
- ❑ Spain is the most feared overseas country for credit and debit card theft with 7% believing this country to be the most risky for their plastic.
- ❑ From a global perspective, 36% of people fear having their cards stolen in Europe, compared to just 2% in the USA and 1% in Africa, South America and the Far East. This suggests that despite many Brits travelling beyond Europe for holidays this year, it is actually far closer to home where they fear for their cards.
- ❑ In reality, the overseas countries where fraud on UK issued cards occurs the most are the USA (19%), France (17%) and Spain (16%)¹.

Paula Widdowson, from The CPP Group, commented; *“Plastic card fraud losses cost the UK banking and retail industries £411.4 million in 2001, a 30%*

increase on 2000. Yet despite this, our figures reveal a complacent 49% of people to be unconcerned about the theft of their debit or credit cards. With around 137 million cards in issue in the UK, and approximately 90% of adults holding one or more cards, millions of cardholders are at risk from fraudsters whose scope for further theft and fraud this summer appears endless."

The CPP Group constantly reminds its customers to take action to prevent the loss or theft of their cards. Such actions include:

- Never lose sight of your cards. Never leave them unattended, such as by the pool or in a car, and don't let them out of your sight in a shop or restaurant.
- Check sales vouchers carefully before you sign them.
- Check your statement carefully as soon as it arrives. Check your receipts against each transaction that appears on the statement and advise your card issuer immediately if there are any transactions that you do not recognise.
- Regularly check that you have all of your cards. Keep them in the same order in your wallet or purse as it will be easier to spot if one is missing.
- Report a missing card immediately so that a stop can be placed on it.
- Keep your receipts.
- Never disclose your PIN.

The CPP Group already covers almost 7 million cardholders against the loss and theft of their cards. Yet many consumers are still unaware of the benefits of the card protection service offered. For a minimal annual premium, it provides complete peace of mind for the cardholder, leaving them safe in the knowledge that in the unfortunate event of card loss or theft, a single call to CPP from anywhere in the world can see the cancellation of all registered cards in seconds. Requests can be made for replacement cards from the card issuers as well. There are also additional assistance benefits. To find out more, call 0870 120 1251.

² The Guardian April 2002

-ENDS-

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Notes to editors

The CPP Group's Corporate Background

The CPP Group was founded in 1980. It is a leading provider of assistance products and services throughout Europe with an outstanding reputation for anticipating and responding to customers' needs, and is committed to creating profitable partnerships across each of the industries it serves. It has operations in York, London, Leeds, Northampton, Banbury and Tamworth in the UK and in Madrid, Milan, Frankfurt, Lisbon and Sao Paulo internationally.

The CPP Group employs over 1000 staff who handle 2.2 million service calls and almost 6.5 million telemarketing calls per year. It is the business partner of choice for over 250 leading consumer brands in the financial services, utilities, telecom, and retail sectors. In addition, the CPP Group has a worldwide base of 7.3 million customers.

The CPP Group Operates in the Following Areas:

Card Protection Plan: Europe's first and largest credit and payment card protection service, providing assistance for 6.8 million policyholders in over 140 countries who entrust the details of 27 million card records.

KeyCover: A 24-hour emergency service providing assistance and protection if keys are lost or stolen. The service has a 90% key recovery rate and also provides up to £1000 of cover in the event of loss.

Support Services: Taking advantage of the CPP Group's ability to provide any combination of products, distribution channels and exceptional customer service, the company offers a wide range of customised outsourcing solutions to its business partners, including contact management, revenue generation, data management and full helpdesk facilities.

Debt Management: As part of the drive to provide a wider range of customer assistance services, Debt Management Associates Ltd (DMA) was acquired in 2001 - bringing experience in the services arena from the CPP Group along with unparalleled relationships with financial institutions to increase the ability of DMA to help borrowers whose indebtedness exceeds their ability to repay.

Homecare: The CPP Group acquired Homecare Insurance Ltd in 2001, enabling the company to become a major provider of mobile phone insurance and assistance services through network providers and retail distributors.

An Award Winning Organisation:

- ☐ Award finalist for the 2001 RBS / The Sunday Times Business Enterprise Award
- ☐ Listed in the Independent on Sunday's "Fastest Growing Companies" for eight consecutive years
- ☐ Featured in The Sunday Times PricewaterhouseCoopers Profit Track 100 in 2000 and 2002
- ☐ Recognised as one of the Growth Plus Europe 500 companies

- ❑ Named in 1999 and 2001 by the Corporate Research Foundation as one of the Top UK Companies Of The Future (alongside companies including Vodafone, Virgin, Cable & Wireless Communications and COLT Telecom)
- ❑ CPP founder and Chairman, Hamish Ogston, won the coveted Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2000 in the Financial Services category beating off competition from over 400 other entrants
- ❑ Certificate of Excellence Award, European Call Centre of the Year Awards 2001
- ❑ The UK's 16th most successful entrepreneur / company, Enterprise Top 100, 2001

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