



## **£500 peacocks stolen**

THREE stunning white peacocks have been stolen from Upton House.

Thieves forced their way into a cage at the country park, which is well known for its peacocks, and made off down the drive with the birds, leaving a trail of feathers as they went.

The three birds could be worth in excess of £500.

Nick Woods, ranger team leader at Upton House, believes the thieves would have been experienced bird handlers.

"The birds don't seem to have been mishandled, so maybe it was someone who knew how to control them," he said.

"Someone has possibly done this knowing how valuable they are."

Mr Woods said the theft of the white birds - the rarer variety of peacock - was a blow to the park.

One male peacock and two female peahens were taken in the raid, which happened overnight on Monday.

PC Danni Knight, of Gravel Hill police, said the thieves appeared to have a getaway vehicle waiting at the park gates.

"The feather trail stopped and the birds would have made a lot of noise," she said.

Peacocks have been a feature at Upton House since they were brought over from Brownsea Island more than 20 years ago.

"We do have a number of the blue peafowl left at the park, so fortunately people can still enjoy seeing the birds," said Mr Woods.

It is the third theft of valuable birds in the area in recent months after two raids on the Three Oaks Animal Kabin store in Lytchett Minster.

Police are appealing for help on 01202 222222 or the anonymous Crimestoppers line on 0800 555 111.

7:00pm Thursday 21st February 2008 *By James Morton Daily Echo*