

POPLEY MATTERS

PROUDLY SERVICING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1992

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Distribution of 5,000

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FULL OF LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

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Closing date to submit articles & adverts (5pm 15-03-13) editor@popleymatters.org.uk



Editor
Jane Frankum

Message from the Editor:- March and time is doing just that. Good Friday is on 29th March and Easter Monday 1st April. March winds and April showers, I wonder with all the changes in the atmosphere if the old rhymes hold up? I love to see the bluebells out with the promise of warmer weather just around the corner. We had to have major electrical works done so we were without electric and hot water during the daytime for nearly a fortnight. Then, when we thought all was well, the boiler decided to pack up on us, thanks Nigel for all your hard work. I will not take electric gadgets and warm heating for granted again!

I was pleased to receive some letters and I think it would be good if we could start the page dedicated for readers' letters again? Read them on page 9 We welcome Ellie as our new, and youngest, writer on the youth page. Ellie is in her last year at primary school and moves up to senior school in September. I must say I was delighted at how well Ellie writes. Ellie is on page 28.

Merton Junior and Marnel Infants have written articles on page 4 and on page 27. From the young to the old, Old Codger sent me The Apron and it brought back so many happy memories, I hope you don't mind me sharing it with you on page 25.

Popley Islands Community Group are asking for volunteers to increase the range of things they can do. If you're interested see page 6 for more details.

If you feel like helping your community, meeting people and keeping fit for just an hour or so a month then Popley Matters need you. We still need more people to help us deliver your magazine please call me on the number below.

If you want to write an article or advertise contact me by email jane@popleymatters.org.uk or phone 819924 or write to Popley Matters 405 Abbey Road, Popley, RG24 9EL. We have a distribution of 5,000.



Sub Editor
Paul Frankum

The views in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Editorial Team, the members of the committee, or Popley Matters.

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Thank you for the support

More Direct Bus Journeys to Hospital for Popley

A more frequent bus service to link Popley to the hospital is to start in April, responding to residents' concerns raised at drop-in sessions following public transport changes.

Extra buses and more frequent services have been arranged by bus company Stagecoach, working with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital.

The move comes after residents raised issues about long journey times into and out of Basingstoke town centre to get to the hospital for people who worked there or needed to attend appointments or visit relatives and friends. The comments were made as part of a public feedback session in September arranged by the borough council after Popley residents raised issues with ward councillor Jane Frankum. The drop-in session gave residents the chance to give their views to senior managers from the bus company and Hampshire County Council, which subsidises services that are not commercially viable for the bus operator to run along with the borough council.

Now new timetables are set to come into force from Sunday 14 April, with increased frequency of the current route Jazz 5 from West Popley to the town centre, route Jazz 2 from the north of the town centre to the hospital, Tadley and Baughurst and 'The Link' from the town centre to the hospital, Park Prewett and Kingsclere. There will now be six direct buses per hour during the day between the town centre and the hospital.

Route 4 running from the east through the top of Popley to the hospital will also be more frequent all day, with additional half hour journeys from Abbey Road to the hospital in early mornings. The return journey will also run four times between 6.20am and 8.25am, then hourly until 8.30pm. People working at the hospital will particularly benefit from these changes, as they will mean extra buses running just before the morning shifts start and later buses at night. The increased frequency on Route 4 will mean that fewer people will have to rely on travelling via the town centre with the associated bus change.

The bus company did look at the possibility of providing a direct bus link between the hospital and Popley Way, but given the very low passenger numbers, it was not found to be viable.

The borough council's Cabinet Member for Partnerships Cllr Cathy Osselton said; "I am really glad that Stagecoach has taken such a positive approach to improving journey times for residents following the sessions. This is an example of a company working together with public services – council and the hospital - to make things better for a community we all serve. I'd like to thank the people that took the time to come along to the public session and share their experiences with us and also the ward councillor for working so constructively with us to address issues for her residents. This should help to make bus journeys quicker and more convenient for those who work at the hospital or need to go there."

Stagecoach is currently producing updated timetables and leaflets that will be available throughout Basingstoke from 1 April in good time before the new services start.



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Councillors Page: At long last and after questions at both full councils, we will be getting some improvements to the bus service. The number 4 will increase its frequency to hourly and half hourly at peak times. There will be more detail and hopefully the timetable in the next Popley Matters next month once it has been printed. The new timetable should be available from Stagecoach from 1st April.

The building of Phase 3 and 5 on Merton Rise should begin soon which will bring much needed housing and protect the area from the massive invasions of illegal camping and all the disruption and mess that brings. I am pleased that this developer listened to our ideas and comments from us and residents and there will be 6 bungalows now, and bigger green and play spaces. In the later phases we will also get some shops. We also pressed hard the need for better broadband from the beginning of the build.

We continue to press for the adoption of Marnel Park so that we can at least make a start on better parking at the moment it is the responsibility of the developer. Cllr Jane Frankum 01256 819924 jane.frankum@hants.gov.uk

Popley West: All your Popley Councillors have been working on the Kiln Farm Fields appeal that is now in the long process to be heard. It will not be till the autumn that the final outcome will be known.

You may notice over the next few months work being done in parts of Popley West: Tintern Close, Buckfast Close, Fountains Close, Glastonbury Close, Romsey Close and parts of Abbey Road, where there will be some landscape and tidying up being done. There is also some work being done in the play areas. We have also been assured that there will be more picnic benches in Popley Community Park as we have requested.

There is a new BT cabinet in Appleton Drive so that's good news for some residents in Marnel Park. We continue to press for a better service and congratulate Basingstoke Broadband Campaign for the fantastic work they are doing.

We have requested more grit/salt bins although we hope the warmer weather is now just around the corner and they won't be needed, but just in case!

Cllr Jane Frankum 01256 819924

Cllr Paul Frankum 01256 819924

Popley East: We are getting an increasing number of complaints from residents living in the Aspire flats, about the failure of Sentinel to manage them properly.

As local councillors we have responded to the complaints we have received and Sentinel have dealt with some but problems still remain.

Shortly we will be distributing a leaflet and questionnaire to residents. We will also organise a public meeting with residents. This will help us to pressurise Sentinel to fulfil its responsibilities to the residents of the Aspire flats.

The Kiln Farm inquiry will begin at 10am on 30th April at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Civic Offices. The report will be submitted to the Secretary of State around 24th July 2013, for a decision to be issued. later

Housing Benefit changes in April 2013

If you receive Housing Benefit and have one or more spare rooms, this may affect you from April 2013. Further information about how these changes may affect you can be found by visiting Basingstoke Deane Civic Offices or online at www.basingstoke.gov.uk/browse/advice-and-benefits/changes-to-housing-and-council-tax-benefit or <http://www.sentinelha.org.uk/housingreforms/benefits>

Cllr David Potter tel.07941507801

Cllr Viv Washbourne tel.07900890088

Merton Junior School



What a busy spring term we have had so far...



The school has been buzzing with excitement at all the thrilling activities we have been up to over the last few weeks. The whole school took part in our annual Pancake race last Tuesday and the week before that we celebrated UNICEF

'day for change'. Children came to school dressed as their favourite food and the staff held a Muffin 'Bake-off' competition. Well done to Mrs Pike and Miss Palmer who won with their raspberry and white choc chip recipe.



Year 3 have been busy after having a visit from the 'Managing Director' of 'Hasbro Toys'. They designed and made their own new board games in their topic 'Myths and Ladders!' This week they invited parents in to play their games - a fantastic afternoon enjoyed by everyone.

Year 4 became archaeologists and actually discovered an Ancient Egyptian Tomb under the hall of school! In their topic 'Tomb Tastic!' the children have written newspapers on the flooding of the river Nile, learnt how to write hieroglyphics and investigated pyramids. The topic culminated in an amazing performance of 'Glint of Gold' to a packed hall of friends and family.



Year 5&6 have been learning all about "Lurgies and Germs", looking closely at how bacteria is spread from person to person. The children decided that the best way to spread this vital information about the prevention of spreading bacteria was a leaflet drop around the local area. Throughout the last 3 weeks the classes have worked exceptionally hard to produce factual, informative leaflets containing fundamental information regarding the rules of basic hygiene and how to prevent illnesses such as norovirus and the flu spreading like wildfire once again. All classes took part in the leaflet drop which saw many houses receiving one of our leaflets that have been hand produced by all upper school children. If you have been lucky enough to receive one of these through your letterbox, please do not hesitate to contact the school with your feedback, the children would love to hear your thoughts.



Upper school have also been enjoying 'Bikeability', Every class had the opportunity to learn cycling skills, some children even learning to ride for the first time - we are so proud of you all. Congratulations in achieving your awards.

Keep up with all our news and events at www.mertonjuniorschool.co.uk

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Whats on in March

MONDAY: 9.30am-12.00pm Little Rainbows (child minders)

7.30-10.00pm Peregrinus Healing and Holistic

TUESDAY: 9.30-11.00am Popley Little People

AFTERNOON AND EVENING AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

WEDNESDAY: 9.30-11.00am Slimming World

9.00-10.45 am Quit Smoking Clinic

12-2pm Oasis Lunch club

5.30 and 7.30pm Slimming World

THURSDAY: **AVAILABLE FOR HIRE**

FRIDAY: **DAY TIME HIRE AVAILABLE**

6.30-7.45pm MCF Youth Club - age 5 to 10 years

8.00- 9.15pm age 11 plus.

SATURDAY: **AVAILABLE FOR HIRE**

SUNDAY: MCF - Contact Pastor Phillip Keble on 462351 for times of services.

4.00pm Beginners - Phoenix Dog Training Club

5.00pm Improvers - Phoenix Dog Training Club

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You can also find us on facebook: Melrose hall.

Popley Islands Community Group (PICG)

Support for the Popley Islands Community Group is slowly growing. We now have a Treasurer, and once we have our bank account sorted we will be able to access grant money available for projects in the Popley Islands neighbourhood. Last year we held an end of summer BBQ and just before Christmas, joined forces with Shakespeare Road residents to host a carol service in the woods and a children's party at Popley Fields Community Centre. We still need more people to get involved, both regularly on a monthly basis to serve on the Committee, and as ad hoc supporters to assist at events. We particularly need someone with IT skills to set up a Facebook page. If you are interested in getting involved please contact Stephen Bate, Community Support worker at stephen.bate@basingstoke.gov.uk or on 07500 987638. This year we will be sending out a survey to all Popley Island residents. Please do complete and return it, as it will provide us with critical information for future community plans and projects. Don't just gripe - get a grip and get involved - together we can make our neighbourhood a better place.

Suzanne Denness. Chairperson, Popley Islands Community Group.



IT has been a very frustrating month for MFC Popley Youth, and all grassroots football clubs generally. The weather has caused a series of postponements. But at the time of writing, the sun is out, the temperature has hit double-figures and all the children have lots of football to look forward to every Sunday until May as the fixtures backlog is slowly worked through.

The Club is keen to recruit more Under 7s players so any parent who has a Year One or Year Two who would like to get into football should contact Ian Davies, Club Chairman, on 07884 185 693 or Marcus Green, Under 7s Manager, on 07738 665 285 and arrange for their child to come training. The Under 7s are making rapid progress and acquitted themselves well in a game against Oakley recently where, despite the bad weather, they all battled very courageously.

The Under 8s, managed by Andrew Williams and David Gambrell, continue to impress and enjoyed a day out at Aldershot Town's excellent facilities recently, with no fewer than six of their players being invited back to train with the League Two outfit afterwards.

The Under 9s, managed by Warwick Sear Jarvis, continue to improve and at Under 10s, Tom Bartlett's boys, are on a roll winning game after game and motoring up the league table.

Russell Graves Under 11s continue to do well and Danny Oates Under 12s have got to the semi finals of the Peter Houseman Youth League Cup.

Paul O'Shea's Under 13s are pushing for promotion while Dave Wright's Under 14s are also improving.

Off the pitch, the Club has another race night coming up on Friday 22nd March at the Rucstall Club in Black Dam.

And the countdown continues towards the Club's annual tournament on 11th/12th May at Carpenter's Down. Entries are looking good and it should be another massive celebration of youth football, played in a carnival atmosphere.

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Letters to the Editor.



Dear Editor, As a local business owner trying to compete in a very competitive world for work, I am finding more and more that people are undercutting costs by charging cash in hand and working weekends.

I know that the cheaper option may be very attractive but wonder if people realise that if you employ these people they are not likely to have any insurances, so if they damage your home, or dig up a gas main/power line/telephone line, there will be nothing in place to ensure a proper repair is done. You will also have absolutely no comeback as there is no paperwork linking these people to you!

There is also the more obvious matter of the tax avoidance.

So whilst the money saving idea seems attractive, if any problems occur during or after the work is completed, the chances are you will be left out of pocket.

Just a thought for the future.

Editor's reply: I have been caught out myself once (though they came by recommendation). My kitchen worktop was fitted so badly we had to pay all over again plus the cost to remove the abortion of a job they did. We also had our garage roof done and that too had to be redone. It cost a lot of money and embaressment so you can guess we are much more careful now. Check any good tradesman will have an accredited

scheme that acts as any guarantee

Dear Editor, I just wanted to let you know that there was a pair of teenage boys clearing everybody's paths so they could access their bins and the roads. I didn't realize what they were doing at first and missed them when they did mine but thought that they deserved some sort of recognition, so I thought that I would let you guys know as it's not often that bored teens are so helpful.

Mrs L. Popley Poets

Editor's reply: Yes I too saw some great acts of kindness from people of all ages and it reminded me of the times when neighbours went out and helped each other clear the roads and pathways. I think people are worried that if someone falls they will be sued. Of course that is very unlikely and another of those myths that you read about in the papers or on television.

I have asked for more grit bins and a thank you to Paddy who walked a long way to get some grit to clear the paths for his neighbours in Abbey Road.

Editor's Note: We look forward to reading your letters on all sorts of subjects. We do not print your name or address if you wish us not to but of course we cannot accept letters that are sent anonymously.

Please send your letters to:
The Editor, Popley Matters,
PO Box 6727, Popley
Basingstoke RG24 9GG or
email: editor@popleymatters.org.uk or phone 819924.



Thank God for Mum!

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Mothering Sunday

St Gabriel's Church

Sunday 10th March at 10:30a.m.

Easter at St Gabriel's

Palm Sunday 24th March 10:30a.m.

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Maundy Thursday 28th March

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Good Friday 29th March

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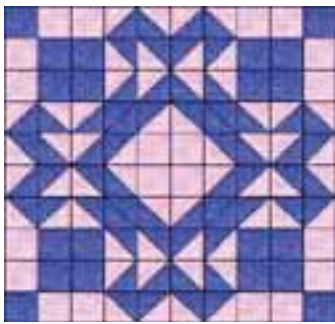
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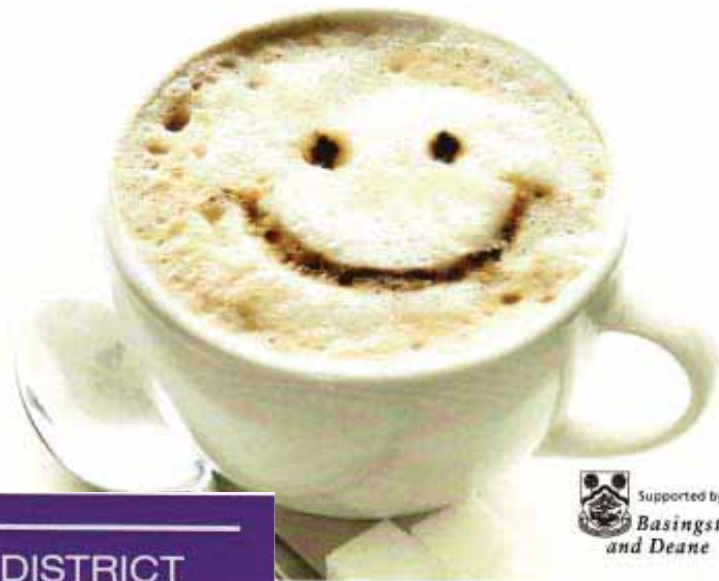
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Friday 22nd March
2013

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All the family are
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Desirable Knowledge

- An interest in museums, history, arts, culture and science and technology;
- A knowledge of the history of aviation and/or the British military; and
- A knowledge of Health & Safety at Work.

Desirable Experience

- Experience of working in a customer focused/ visitor services role;
- Experience of delivering talks or tours to the general public; and
- Experience in giving presentations to a wide range of ages and taking part in education programmes / events.

Creating Great Visitor Experience

These are the Museum of Army Flying's Customer Service Standards:

1. Greeting the Visitor

- Ensure each and every visitor you come into contact receives a warm welcome – a genuine smile, appropriate eye contact and approachable body language, and a 'hello';
- Acknowledge all visitors and when visitors have to wait, let them know that you will be with them as soon as you can; and
- Be pro-active – look for natural opportunities to greet visitors.

2. Determining Visitor Needs

- Ensure that you actively listen to your visitors;
- Repeat important requests to make sure you do know what they are looking for; and
- Demonstrate patience and ask relevant questions to engage and determine their needs.

3. Meeting Needs

- Go out of your way to ensure that your visitors get at least what they expect from their visit;
- If the visitor is looking for something a little more complicated, demonstrate flexibility and explore solutions; to assist If the visitor says something negative, listen and try and find a positive solution; and
- Do things promptly and where possible attempt to under promise and over deliver.

4. Making the Moment Memorable

- For example, if you can, instead of just giving directions, walk them there or direct them to another colleague;
- Demonstrate knowledge and highlight relevant events, exhibits or even other attractions that they might enjoy in the vicinity; and
- Actively seek opportunities to find ways to please your visitors.

5. Checking Results

- Ask as many visitors as you can what they thought about their visit;
- Ask them if they will come back again or if they would use the services again; and
- Ask them for opinions on how you can improve service.

6. Leaving the door open

- Invite visitors to come back by offering them an events list or a relevant brochure; and
- Explain forthcoming events or exhibitions which may interest them.



Helping you every STEP of the way

Launched in January 2012, Academy 4 Housing (A4H) is an innovative social enterprise that includes Sentinel and three other housing associations as joint partners.

A4H have recently created the Support To Employment Programme (STEP) to deliver training and employment for both customers and staff. A key success of A4H for 2013 is winning a substantial Big Lottery bid to help young people into training and employment over the next three years.

Looking for work? Join the job club

Job hunting can be hard on your own, so why not join the Basingstoke and District Learning Partnership's Job Club? They'll help you to prepare your CV, develop interview skills, search and apply for jobs and learn the computer skills you'll need in the workplace. Sessions are held every Friday at Popley Fields Community Centre from 9.30am to 12.30pm

For further details go to www.basingstokejobclubs.wikispaces.com, email basingstokejobclubs@gmail.com or call **01794 522106**. You can also follow Basingstoke Job Clubs on Twitter at **@BasJobClubs** or find them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BasingstokeJobClubs

Careers advisers at your service

Don't forget careers advisers from the National Careers Service will soon be visiting our offices in Basingstoke.

The advisers will help you to boost your confidence to look for a job, write an effective application and be successful at an interview. Individual 45 minute appointments are available in the morning, as well as afternoon workshops from 1.30-3pm where you can share ideas and learn from others.

Afternoon workshops:

21 March How to write a successful CV and effective job searching

18 April Interview skills

To book your place call the National Careers Service on **0800 1954 700**.

Be Your Own Bodyguard!

How to Improve Your Awareness

By Hampshire Self Protection

This short article offers a few suggestions to improve awareness without being paranoid. When we get in a car we put our seatbelt on, almost without thinking, in case we are unfortunate enough to crash but not because we expect to. This is how good awareness and self protection should be, an instinctive precaution that doesn't overly concern us. Like most things, it's all about getting the right balance.

Here's a simple test of your everyday awareness.

Visualise a place you know well such as a restaurant or community centre. If a fire were to start while you were there, where is the nearest fire exit (not normal exit) for you to make your safe escape? When you're next there, check if you were right. If so, well done it shows good awareness. If not, don't worry, most people are the same. Next time you enter an unfamiliar place make sure your first priority is to make yourself aware of the nearest fire exit. From an 'Avoidance' perspective, it would also be a good idea to position yourself as near as possible to an exit. This could be life saving when any kind of danger, including the drunken lout who wants to pick a fight with you, presents itself.

You can also make yourself more aware of people and things around you. Advanced drivers perform 'commentary driving' anticipating possible dangers like parked cars that may suddenly pull out, or a child running out from behind it. Use this method to improve your awareness (not out loud if you don't want strange looks though!) Make a mental note of things like someone hanging around on a street corner or a concealed entrance you are approaching. They are probably not a concern or threat but being aware of their presence means, if the worst were to happen, you would not be taken by surprise and could act accordingly. Again, it is important to keep a balance and note the positive things, such as safe places you could escape to if needed.

You could also practice the 2nd 'A' of self protection, 'Avoidance' and avoid that street corner or give the entrance a wider berth if your instincts tell you to. Don't confuse instinct with ego. Instincts will, often correctly, tell us to avoid something or someone. Ego will tell us we have every right to do something such as walking past the dark alley or towards the suspicious looking stranger. Acting on instinct has saved many a life, following ego has cost more! Until next time, please enjoy yourselves but stay safe 😊🙌

Hampshire Self Protection is a martial arts club with a difference, offering practical martial arts and self-defence/self protection classes for Children, Adults and Ladies only with clubs currently at Cranbourne School and Rooksdown Community Centre. The Instructor trains with World Class Self Protection expert Al Peasland (longest serving student of Number One Self Defence Instructor in the world, Geoff Thompson). For more information please see www.hampshireselfprotection.co.uk or call 07888 660225.





Headquarters:

Base 2000 Carpenters Down, Popley RG24 9AE

Group Scout Leader: Colin Karlake 01256 410559

Scout section: Andy Welham-Jones 07971 491 145

Cub Scout section: Douglas Gowan 01256 412326

Beaver Scout section: Eve Alexander 01256 346510

Sadly the Beaver section had to say 'goodbye' to Karl (alias Blue Beaver) due to working schedules. He has been the assistant leader in the Colony for over four years organising many activities specialising in science experiments and technology and been invaluable in making sure that Beavers' moving-on' to the Cub section make a smooth transition. He will continue his association with the Colony as an occasional helper at 'sleepovers' and special events. On his last evening he was presented with presents from the Group as a gesture of thanks for all the effort and time he has given over the years.



The Colony is now in desperate need of another adult leader if it is to continue to organise activities for 20 lively active 6-8 year olds. No more new recruits will be admitted until a replacement for Karl is found. Previous experience is not necessary as Scouting offers a full training and support programme for leaders. Contact the Group Scout Leader Colin on 07796 772 500 colink@base2000.co.uk or the Beaver Scout Section Leader Eve on 07790 018 171 alexander.yvonne@sky.com for more information. All adults working in Scouting are required to complete a CRB clearance application.



Recent Beaver programmes have included a visit from a member of REME and dressing up in combat gear for fun; finding out about the Year of the Snake (Chinese New Year); the origin of pancake day and celebrating the birthday of Lord Robert Baden Powell. In March they will be celebrating both St David's and St. Patrick's Day and hopefully taking a spring trail through Basing Woods.

The Cubs too enjoyed a Pancake evening in February and have started 'training' for the annual District Cub Scout Six-a-side Football competition which takes place early in March. Later in the month they will make a 'behind the scenes' tour of Festival Place Shopping Centre. The Pack will also take part in District Badge Day where they will have the chance to earn a couple of more unusual and challenging activity badges. Excitement is starting to rise for summer camp in June being held at Longridge Water Activity Centre. The Cub section The Cub section is open to boys and girls aged between 8 and 10½ years. Contact for new recruits is Douglas - akela@thescoutingpages.org.uk.

The Everest Silver Sherpas Over 50s club

2013 is moving on and as I write this report we are part way through February and still experiencing cold, snowy weather. Never mind, the days are getting longer and spring is on the horizon!

We've had plenty of activities to keep us busy. Apart from the ballroom dancing, (the Waltz and American Smooth) we attempted the Salsa, which was very entertaining!

We have a full timetable of events leading up to Easter which include, the popular Body Balance, an informative health talk, helpful home maintenance, enjoyable cookery and another popular activity, drama, we can get very dramatic!! Apart from the main activities we have Badminton and Table Tennis in the sports hall and the use of the gym.

So come and join us, Friday afternoons, in term time, 3-5pm for the small fee of £1. For more information ring the community office at Everest Community Academy on 01256 337573 to speak to Dean or Danielle. Otherwise just turn up on a Friday afternoon and register.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Hitting the Cold Spots - practical assistance for vulnerable people

Now in its second year, 'Hitting the Cold Spots' is Hampshire County Council's response to winter fuel poverty and builds on last year's successful scheme, funded through the Department of Health's 'Warm Homes and Healthy People' fund.

The purpose of the campaign in Hampshire is to reduce deaths and ill health due to cold weather by providing a range of local services, including:

- A free local information and advice phone line staffed by friendly, trained advisors - 0800 804 8601;
- Hitting the Cold Spots advisors who will visit individuals in their own homes
- Help with hot water and heating systems repairs;
- Support with alternative heating measures (electric oil filled radiators) for those without heating;
- Access to small grant support to help cope with winter fuel emergencies –open and available now!;
- Advice and access to current insulation offers – (loft, cavity and solid wall insulation);
- Assistance to switch energy provider or tariff to help make savings on fuel bills;
- Debt advice tailored to individual circumstances; and
- Free Home Safety visits including a carbon monoxide monitor, smoke detector and a fire safety plan.

Please phone the advice line (in office hours) to find out how the project can offer practical assistance to a vulnerable individual or family you are in contact with or visit Hitting the Cold Spots to use the online referral form to request a home visit.

Marnell Bowling Club

Two years ago due to bereavement, I found myself suddenly living alone after 50 years of married life. The first winter brought home to me the poignant fact, and I knew I had to do something about it. Around that time I saw an ad in Popley Matters by the local bowls club promoting their open day. They mentioned, club, games, a bar and healthy exercise. In my mind that represented, social life, something to do, and a quick half in congenial company. Could that be what I needed? Never bowled in my life before, it can't be too hard, can it? The thought of the club bar atmosphere as opposed to a lonely drink in a public house was very tempting. So I turned up for the open day! This proved to be a very wise decision. I was warmly welcomed and within a week I found myself playing in a club competition one Saturday afternoon. Despite my ignorance of the game and very little ability I was treated very well by a friendly group and I felt very comfortable in the situation. You can put in as much or as little as yourself as you choose but it wasn't long before I wanted to put in more and today in my second year I am playing in three leagues, two competitions and the inhouse club competitions. For someone completely new to the game perhaps that is overkill, but as I said the degree of involvement is a personal choice, nobody persuaded me (or tried) to get more involved, it was what I wanted. As a result of joining, my circle of friends and acquaintances has magnified beyond recognition and I am playing a game I had never previously considered but discovered it was really enjoyable. We have members of 15 years old and up to 84 years old. Some men some couples and some ladies. Some have bowled for thirty years and some only this year, so with such a broad spectrum there is always going to be someone in your age bracket or ability level to bond with. I think the most gratifying sight recently was a 15 year old playing alongside a 70 year old each treating each the other as equals. Absent was the pre-conceived ideas that the young are disrespectful trouble makers and the elderly are all dodderly old codgers always complaining about something. It was heart-warming to see and illustrates the lifestyle I accidently discovered when I joined Marnell. So see if you too feel you need something extra in your life or your back's playing up so you can't do the gardening nowadays, or you could like the idea of being competitive in something, or your husband is spending too much time glued to Sky Sports and neglecting you, then give it a try. If necessary drag him along too (it's good to share). I want to share what I have found. So young, old, male or especially female, do as they say on the TV "Come on Down". Whoops just realised the specially female makes me sound lecherous. The fact is some types of match demand mixed teams so ladies are always welcome. Don't go thinking you are joining a man's world and would be intimidated, just not true. Neither should younger people get the idea it's an old man's game. Tell me that after you have played a three hour session or been in a competitive league match. Your response is more likely to be " I thought this was an old man's game, how wrong I was".

So whatever your own choice is, competitive league or friendly in-house competition, don't let me keep this all to myself. I stumbled across by chance you can do it by design and there is always that drink waiting at the bar. **Ray Wheatley**

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Dear Friends

This month my wife and I will be celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary, hopefully we'll escape somewhere nice for a day or two to mark the occasion. I was surprised when visiting St Michael's Church in town to find on a table in their Pastoral Centre a stack of copies of the Basingstoke Gazette from the same year I was married – 1973, in fact July.

The headline from Friday July 6th stated “The Town of the future – with nine more estates!” The article concerned the continuing growth of Basingstoke from a small market town into one with a population of 113,000 by 1986. There were also other articles highlighting the need for facilities to be built on the already completed new estates including a post box and telephone on Popley 2; there were also cuts in the grants from central government to local councils. There was something of an employment boom and you could buy a home in Oakley for £8,500 and a new car for £1,200.

It all made for fascinating reading but what began to strike me as I read was that some things do not seem to change, perhaps the scale changes, but the fundamental issues remain the same. Basingstoke continues to grow (for some, at an alarming rate) with somewhere between 12,000 and 14,000 homes built between 1996 and 2011, including 2,000 in and around Popley; and a further 9,000 or so between now and 2026.

The question back in 1973 and today are how do we support this kind of growth in the population of our town without effort being focused on infrastructure, by that I mean education, health, transport and communications. Already this is coming under extreme pressure in Popley. Schools places, appointments at the health centre, volume of traffic, to name just a few, are a cause for deep concern. If infrastructure is not included in the planning and made a priority then it can lead to tensions in the future community as folk strive to lead normal lives.

I believe too, that the church has important role to play in growing community. St Gabriel's is increasingly a focal point of community activity throughout the week as the hall and other facilities are in constant use by community groups of all ages. It is also a community of people of faith seeking to follow the example of Christ and to show his love in the place where they live and move and have their being. We are also part of the community of Christians who worship at Popley Fields, Melrose Hall and St Bede's.

I mention this for two reasons; the first is that we care about our community and regularly pray daily for each of the roads and the homes of the folk that live there and secondly that church is a place to always feel welcome, a place central to the community that offers a refuge from the pressures we can find ourselves under, and a place to belong to a family.

As our community continues to expand and grow we welcome all our new neighbours and pray for your settling in and that you will soon feel part of this great community of Popley.

With every blessing

Arthur

**Vicar, St Gabriel's Church
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Thinking of Marrying Abroad? Beware the Red Tape!

February is traditionally hailed as the most romantic month in the calendar as many couples will have got engaged and are now planning their wedding. For those of you that are in this happy position, Rob Parker, solicitor in the Family team at Phillips, has some timely advice.

“Exotic destinations are becoming ever more popular for couples to get married and honeymoon in but it is important that you check with the tour operator and/or local consulate or the embassy of the country

in which you wish to marry as to what documentation you may be expected to produce - all prior to the ceremony. Failure to do so could jeopardise the big day.”

So what documents might you need to produce?

Requirements vary, but typically these include your birth certificate, a valid 10-year passport, a declaration confirming single status, your Decree Absolute (if divorced), your previous spouse’s death certificate (if widowed) and the written consent of your parents if you are under 18 (or even 21 in some countries).

How you can organise your declarations as to single status

The declaration confirming your single status is usually a Statutory Declaration or Affidavit. This is a legal document that can be obtained from a solicitor who can authenticate oaths on statements. The declaration can only be made individually, not jointly, so you and your partner will both need one. It normally sets out your full contact details; your status as single, divorced or widowed; your nationality; your occupation; and your passport number. The document then has to be signed by you and sworn on oath as correct before it is signed and stamped by a solicitor.

Whose responsibility is it?

It’s your responsibility to get in touch with the tour operator and/or the local consulate or embassy and find out exactly what information they need for the declaration, which varies from country to country. One important thing to bear in mind is that some countries require that the declaration as to single status is entered into no sooner than 6 months, or sometimes even 3 months, before the ceremony, so timing can be important.

How much might this cost?

“Fees vary” says Rob, “but Phillips is presently offering a fixed fee service to our clients who plan to marry abroad, so you’ll know exactly where you stand, upfront.” Give Rob Parker a call now on 01256 854676, or email Rob for more details at rparker@phillips-law.co.uk



ARE YOU CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH DIVORCE OR A SEPARATION?

DIVORCE RECOVERY WORKSHOP can help DRW is a six session course which helps divorced or separated people to come to terms with a relationship that has irretrievably broken down.

It is run and facilitated, not by professionals but by those of us who have experienced the breakdown of a marriage or relationship and who have benefited from the support both during and following the workshop.

The workshop can enable people to have a better understanding of what they are going through, provide them with support from others in the same situation and assist in the process of adjustment in their lives. We offer a secure environment for discussion and understanding of feelings. A new circle of friends is often made during the workshop and afterwards in the social events.

The DRW is a registered non profit making organization, registration number **1041178**

The Workshops run twice a year, generally April & October. We run in various locations in the south.

Our next Workshop will start on 11th April 2013 in Basingstoke.

For further information telephone :- Alan 01256 325329

Or visit our website www.drw.org.uk



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- We have an excellent Popley Explorers pre-school here Monday to Friday 8:30am-3:00pm
Also available-Breakfast and Lunch Clubs (for further details contact Elaine on 363156)
- Monday evening - C.M.A Keep Fit & Kick Boxing from 6:30-8:00pm
Tuesday evening - Community Bingo, doors open at 7:00pm, eyes down at 8:00pm.
Finish around 9.45pm (light refreshments available halftime).
Wednesday evening - Dance to the beat. 5pm -7pm.
Thursday evening- Street Dance and ballet classes for two and a half years to adult.
4:30-6:30pm. Please contact Samantha Pike on 07811299484.
Friday evening- Friday Club (children) 5:00-6:30pm

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For details ring 01256 363156.

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Page 24 E-mail: sue@suesdrivingschool.com



Remember making an apron in Home Ec?
Remember Home Ec?

If we have to explain "Home Ec" you may not want to read this.



The History of 'APRONS'.

I don't think our children know what an apron is? The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few, and because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses. Aprons required less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids, and when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the autumn, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

REMEMBER:



Grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw.

The Government would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron.

I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron- but love...



Diaries from the Old Codger

I would like to go back to the last month's OC. I talked about the docks in the war and the bombing of them. During the war London was hit hard. Many lost all they had and were homeless the only way the government at the time could get round this was to build what was known as prefabs and millions were built across the country on the areas around the worst of the bomb damage. One such estate I remember well was in the country in Coulsdon, Surrey. I know we still have a few in Basingstoke today. Have things changed over the years, or have they? We have gone back in time to prefabs, houses that look like they have been built in green timber and slotted into place then bricks and cladding covering this over. I wonder what is the life span of these houses, not long from what I saw being built a couple of years ago. We had that bad winter and things ground to a halt, the buildings were left with no roofs and soon filled up with snow and ice then torrential rain. Will these houses last? I am not sure on that. I have a great photo collection on the building of these houses at different stages. Would I like to live in one (Well I guess you know the answer to that)? The cost to maintain it would be as much as it costs to buy one. Yet do we learn from this? It doesn't appear so as we keep seeing the same sort of houses being built: I just feel for the people that buy them. I do not think they will last, but this is just my own feeling on the matter. As yet I haven't heard anything to suggest they will last as well as the brick built houses but we will see.



I read Popley Matters every month; not only to read my own little contribution, and enjoy doing it but why is it when every month I read the same things that go on around Popley but hardly ever see what is going on in the Poets. What is left of a once lovely neat estate that had a thriving community spirit made it very special to us all? We lost the pub and with it the hall where a lot of community events were held. I do see, however, that other areas of Popley still have community halls and are well used, not just for a cup of tea or drink but social events that bring people together as they used to on the Poets.

We see kids at a loss just walking around aimlessly, not doing any damage just that they have nothing to do. I know not everyone liked the Play Centre but it gave many something positive to do. This is sad as at one time we had kids at the centre of the community and took great pride in that fact.

I rang around for some costings for scaffolding, boy I fell off my chair how much costs have gone up over the years. I had this idea of scaffolding and an electric hoist to tackle the pointing. It will have to be the ladders and that should be fun, ouch! Her Indoors just clipped me round the ear "no ladders allowed".

As I am writing this, my five-year-old grandson is home from school and wants carrot cake. So Her Indoors and he have started baking. The way he is going they will still be baking at midnight but he has fun doing it, and I know her Indoors loves teaching him, The big plus is she is not going on at me! I see that our council members are still hard at work trying to stop the building on Kiln Farm; if this fails I ask every resident on Popley and Sherborne St John to picket the field when the builders turn up even if they try to erect fencing around the field. Can you imagine what our skyline will look like, not fields and trees but matchboxes. There is so much wildlife to see if you go up there and sit, or just walk the path to the wood. It will have far reaching effects on the wildlife in the forest as well, that they have not taken into account. I noted that our council has said they want to take care of our local environment. I think they are using this for the Manydown fields and not north of our town and in particular the Popley area. Very soon they will be building down the grass verges. A good example is when they gave the go ahead for the build on John Hunt field they gave us the promise that they will only cut enough for access to the site, then they put up hoarding all around it and cut every bush and shrub down along Popley Way. This is what is deemed environment protection? They're keeping a close eye on it. Sorry they fell asleep!

As long as they have their jobs and little warm offices to hell to what is going on in the real world. Then again could I and many others I prove to be wrong? That's enough for now, plenty to think about

Till next month
The Old Codger



FITNESS FOR EVERYONE

Come and join in a class for all ages - Come as a family
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A session to be held with all income going to the Mayor's Charity Appeal for RadCam, The Camrose Centre, The Basingstoke Consortium and Age Concern Basingstoke.

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Further details from Alison Howard – ah.fitnessleague@gmail.com

Marnel Infant School

This half term children in Year R have been learning about Emergencies! They had visits from a nurse and 2 firemen. The children are now experts in bandaging and fire fighting. They have also been exploring the story of 'Whatever Next' by Jill Murphy. They have been able to learn about outer space and have shared some of their learning activities with their parents when they came in for the topic outcome.

In Year 1 the children were challenged to write new books for the Emperor. The children were able to work interdependently to produce a storybook which was then recorded on a CD for their parents. The children held a book afternoon for their parents which raised nearly £50 for Naomi House.

In Year 2 the children have been exploring the underwater world through 'Commotion in the Ocean'. They have written and illustrated books that they were able to share with their parents. Year R were also invited to the Year 2 classrooms to have the stories read to them which they enjoyed very much. Year 2 have also been learning the skill of sewing and have made some wonderful glove puppets to go with their story characters.

Playtimes have become even more fun as January saw the arrival of the brand new Snug play equipment for our playground. The children are enjoying setting it up in a different way every day and using their imaginations. Yesterday when we unusually saw the sun, it became a row of sun beds for Year R!

Mrs B. Cole. Head Teacher

Dear Readers, hello my name is Ellie, and I am 10 ½ years old. I'm in Year 6 and will be moving up to Secondary school in September.

I have just come back from my first residential trip with the rest of the Year 6's. We went to Stubbington Study Centre for 5 days. It was the first time that I had ever been away from my family for that long and at first I felt very sad about leaving them behind but after a while I got used to things and only felt a little bit homesick. Monday night was hard to get to sleep but after that it was ok.

I had a really good time at Stubbington, we did lots of activities every day and it started off with the Rising Bell at 8am. After breakfast in the Snuffle Hole, we went to our first activity. We did lots of different things like shelter building and the eggstreme challenge, orienteering, Earthquake and lots more.

In orienteering me and my partner got a special award because we had to go round the course and follow the instructions on a sheet and there was an extra bit which was where you had to work out the bearings of something. No one else did the bearings part as the teacher has not taught us that yet but we worked out how to do it and got them all right. We got a rarely given out Badger badge.

Another one of my favourite activities was the shelter building. We got put into teams and there were piles of sticks in our area and we had to make the sticks into a shelter big enough to fit all 7 of us in and make it waterproof. Our team made a big extension on the back of ours, the front was waterproof but there were lots of gaps and holes at the back. Me and 2 of my team mates had to squash into that area and when they poured water over it, we all got soaked!

On Thursday, my dorm got the highest amount of points for the inspections and we won the Tidiest Dorm. We all felt very proud and it made me realise that it is better to have things tidy rather than messy and since I have been back I have been helping my mum and dad lots more to keep the house and my bedroom tidy.

When I got back from Stubbington my brother and sisters gave me big hugs and told me they had missed me loads. I brought them back some presents and after I had given them their presents we went out for a big family dinner to welcome me home.

Before I went to Stubbington I thought I would be glad to escape tidying and the family but when I went I missed them loads and realised how important they are to me and what they do for me.

See you next month

Ellie

Choosing the right care home for Mum was made easier.



From the moment my mother and I first visited Marnel Lodge, we knew we had found somewhere pretty special. Elegant surroundings, delicious food and beautiful gardens were made even more appealing by the presence of like-minded residents with whom she can socialise and enjoy activities. For my part, knowing that she's safe in the care of such a dedicated and compassionate team gives me great peace of mind. And for that I'm extremely grateful.

- Nursing Care
- Residential Care
- Dementia Care
- Respite Care

*Thank you,
Marnel!
Lodge*



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information or to arrange a visit

Call 01256 441 459



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