

POPLEY MATTERS

PROUDLY SERVICING THE COMMUNITY SINCE MAY 1992

December 2013

Distribution of 5,000

Issue 142



Seasons Greetings

From the Popley Matters Team

FULL OF LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

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Closing date to submit articles & adverts (5pm 10-12-13) editor@popleymatters.org.uk



Editor
Jane Frankum

Message from the Editor:-Christmas season and here we go again, with all the rushing around getting presents and all the things that go with it. We went to my Aunt and Uncles' 70th wedding anniversary in October and there were about 100 of the family there, I saw cousins I had not met for 30 years or, in some cases, even more years, and yet we recognised each other. But there were so many faces of relatives I have never met in the younger generation. It made me think of all those families that will be apart or who haven't seen each other for years. How times change, no longer near each other and now we live all over, in different parts of this country and in different parts of the world. So give all your family and distant friends a thought this year. Send a card or even write a letter!

The weather experts are warning already of another harsh winter so I will make sure I have all the emergency items ready, we all need to keep safe and warm. My thoughts will go out to the unfortunate who won't have the comforts of a warm home and friends and family.

Christmas is also a time for reflection on the past year so I will take the opportunity to say a big thank you to the volunteers that deliver Popley Matters, with a special thank you to George Cousins who has delivered to three roads in Popley Poets for many, many years but now is unable to carry on, Thank you to Lorraine who proof copies for us and picks up my awful spelling and grammar. Thank you to Iris who was the distribution Manager since the first issue who now, through failing health, has reluctantly had to give up. My thanks to Richard and Jeremy who are Distribution Managers in Popley Islands and Marnel and Merton areas. Thank you Codge, Ellie, Arthur, Ian and our regular writers and thanks to our advertisers without whom we could not afford to produce your community magazine. A big thank you to Paul who spends hours laying out the magazine and designing many of the ads. All are voluntary and without them and our delivery team, Popley Matters would not happen every month. Thank you to; last but not least, the kind readers who let us know that all the effort and time are not wasted and that you enjoy reading Popley Matters.

You can email me at editor@popleymatters.org.uk call me on 01256 819924 or write to me at 405 Abbey Road, RG24 9EL.



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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Christmas Extravaganza

On Monday 16 December 2013
From 6pm to 9pm



6pm candlelit processions to the Basing Wood
Processions beginning from Dryden Close and Marnel Park. Please note that children are the responsibility of their parents or guardians.

6.45pm Carols in the Basing Wood
followed by fun in Popley Fields Community Centre including seasonal refreshments, Santa's Grotto, games, Christmas Jumper competition, performances and a mega raffle.

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Melrose Hall Christmas Dinner



10th December 2013

11.40am - 2pm (doors open 11.30)



Come along to the 3rd Annual Melrose
Community Christmas dinner. All
welcome including children and babies.



Raffle



2 course dinner and refreshments (served at
12pm)

Carols sung by

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Adults £2 (includes 1 child)

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E-MAIL: MELROSEHALL@BTCONNECT.COM

Councillors Page: We are waiting for the revised plans for the Merton Schools expansion. The Basingstoke and Deane planning and transport officers went over the report produced by the contractor for the county and pointed out a whole host of comments, and some inaccuracies. The County are now going through this and are at last all working together to come back with the best plan they can achieve. I would like to thank the residents that came or sent in their comments, because together we have achieved a great deal and though not perfect, it is about as good as we could get.

The building on Merton Rise is certainly progressing fast with only one hiccup reported so far and that was put right immediately. It is a pleasure when you get so much cooperation from at least one of the developers.

I have asked for more grit bins, but unfortunately Marnel Park is not fully adopted yet and we are still waiting for David Wilson Homes to make good the issues, especially on the roadway. *Cllr Jane Frankum 819924 jane.frankum@hants.gov.uk*

Popley West: We had another chance with the residents to see the proposals for the expansion of Merton Infant and Junior Schools. Around 50 more people came and spoke to the school Heads and planning officers. This followed the meeting last month with Basingstoke and Deane planning officers, County officers the school Chairs of Governors, The architect and Cllr Paul Frankum and myself where we frankly talked about the concerns of the residents. After both these meetings some fresh ideas were put and will be incorporated in the final designs. It has taken many meetings and leaflets and mentions in Popley Matters but at least the residents and schools have had time to put their ideas and concerns in. We have asked for some more grit bins but would like to remind the few people that use it for their own paths and driveways that it is for public areas and is paid for in our Council Tax. The use of cat litter to clear snow is dangerous as it absorbs the liquid and when it defrosts can cause sheets of slippery ice. also the residue can stain and rot your carpets.

Cllr Paul Frankum 01256 819924

Cllr Jane Frankum 01256 819924

Popley East: We have just had the results in for the quote vote for the stone feature in The Dell. The most popular quotation (as supplied by pupils of Marnel School) was ‘Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none’ - William Shakespeare. The second most popular was ‘Youth comes but once in a lifetime’ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It is hoped that both will be engraved into the stone sculptures with work starting by the end of November. Footpaths are being upgraded in Browning Close, as part of a programme of works being undertaken in Popley East by Operation Resilience. The work is due to start on Monday 25 November 2013 and is expected to last for 4 weeks.

We would both like to wish all the residents in Popley East a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Cllr David Potter tel. 07941507801

Cllr Viv Washbourne tel. 07900890088

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‘We Wish you a Merry Tiff-mas’

Relate North and East Hampshire & Border’s guide to avoiding arguments this Christmas

Relate NEHAB is warning that the Christmas period can become fraught with arguments. Alongside buying presents and baking mince pies, the charity is calling on everyone to put relationship maintenance on their ‘to do list’ this festive season.

Relate counsellor Judy said: “We all want to have a happy, relaxing Christmas with our families, but in reality it can be a stressful time. Lots of couples and families experience some of their biggest bust-ups over Christmas because there’s a lot of pressure on everyone. Common causes of arguments range from money issues over buying presents, to deciding where to spend Christmas and who’s cooking the dinner.”

Research by Relate found that over a third of parents argue at least once a week, with money being the biggest cause of rows. “And we know that the extra pressures of Christmas can be the final straw for couples and families on the brink,” adds Judy.

Here are Relate NEHAB’s tips for keeping the peace this Christmas:

- **Plan ahead.** Christmas can be stressful so avoid arguments by planning ahead. Getting some of the jobs done ahead of time means everyone will be less stressed, and planning the festivities as a family is likely to make sure everyone feels like their hopes and expectations are being listened to. In particular, talk to your partner in advance about where you plan to spend Christmas so it’s not a shock to anyone come Christmas Eve.
- **Don’t overspend.** For a lot of people this Christmas money will be tight, so try not to succumb to the pressure and spend more than you can afford. Splashing the credit card on presents might be fun but getting yourself in a mountain of debt is not a good way to start the New Year. Money worries put a huge strain on relationships – it’s not worth it in the long run.
- **Think of the kids.** Who goes where and when can be a huge issue for parents who have split up and for step families, especially if you are at loggerheads. As hard as it is, try and keep as calm as possible and keep your children’s best interests at heart.
- **Talk to your children.** If you are a single parent, talk to your child about who they want to spend time with over the holidays. Christmas is important to children but they can easily feel divided and guilty about who they spend time with and worried in case anyone is left on their own. Sit down with your children and talk it through with them if they are old enough and if not, then try and come to an agreement with the other parent that works for you and the children involved.
- **Plan something special.** If arguments are likely over the festive period, have a few special events that everyone knows about so you have things to look forward to. It might be decorating the tree, or hanging the stockings up. The important thing is that you agree that these things will go ahead, and everyone makes the effort to get along.
- **Give yourself space.** The oven’s on, the heating’s on, the kids are excited and everyone arrives at once. Christmas can be hectic, and tensions can rise quickly, so plan in a little time when you can be alone to gather your thoughts. Getting some fresh air is a good idea, or having a hot bath on Christmas Eve when the children have (finally) gone to bed.
- **Think of others.** Remember family members or friends who might be alone, or who find the festive period difficult. Just popping in, dropping them a card, or giving them a call can really help.
- **Delegate.** Don’t feel like you have to do everything yourself. If you are not careful, you can end up in the kitchen slaving away whilst everyone else is enjoying themselves, which is no fun. Share out tasks amongst your family and guests and make a plan of all the chores. The kids might not like it at first, but it will ensure you don’t get to the end of the festive season feeling like a nervous wreck!
- **Go easy on the booze.** We all like to toast Christmas with a nice glass or two, but if there is any tension in your family then steer clear of too much alcohol, it will only aggravate the situation.
- **Have fun!** Don’t forget, it’s supposed to be fun! Make sure you remember to give yourself a few treats, and remember it’s more important to have a good time together than to make sure everything is 100% perfect.

Relate’s free ‘Arguments Check-Up’ is an online questionnaire which helps people to find out about their own arguing style and their compatibility with other arguing styles. Visit www.relate.org.uk/argument-check-up

Silver Sherpas at Everest

This well established and welcoming over 50s social group offers a great mixture of activities throughout its termly programme. This month we have the following sessions being organised - Art, Science and our Christmas Meal!!

The Silver Sherpas meet up every Friday during term time between the times of 3-5pm at the small cost of just £1 per session. If you would like to get involved or just receive some more information, please contact Danielle on 01256 337573 or alternatively email the following address, ddickinson@everestcommunityacademy.org

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Home-visiting volunteers support families for a couple of hours each week. **We need volunteers to:** Visit local families, who for many reasons, are struggling to cope with the demands on them. Volunteers will undergo an eight week preparation course. Our next Volunteer Preparation Course will commence on Tuesday 28th January - 18th March 2014 (9.30am - 2.30pm).

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BATS Next Gen
Basingstoke Youth Musical Theatre Group

'BATS Next Gen are pawfecting their moves for upcoming West End musical!'

Basingstoke England, October 2013 – taking a peek into the dance studios, rehearsals are well on their way, as we see an excited new young cast devising their musical numbers with great energy and enthusiasm.

The cast of youngsters has been learning lyrics and clawing their way through the script in preparation for the musical that we hope will go down in 'hisstory'. New costumes have also arrived to transform these talented performers into our favourite furry friends. Performer Hattie Branham, 14 is enjoying 'being around a friendly cast' and expressing her talent of tap dancing whilst learning new styles.

Both cast and crew determination along with hard work is evident at rehearsal, as this marvellous musical begins to take shape. Grasping new skills within the process is difficult to contend with.

Max Harwood, 16, acting the role of 'Rum Tum Tigger' admits that he finds 'some of the high energy, fast paced dance routines challenging' when he is not a dancer. Each Musical number requires its own demanding skills. 'Gelical Cats' is ballet piece entailing point work, balance and accuracy. Co-ordination is required in busy numbers such as in 'Mungo Jerry', featuring two cheeky cousins creating mischief, musicality and great characterisation.

An older performer, Alyssa Medalla, 17, has been cast in previous BATS Next Gen shows, but believes her experience through the rehearsal process has altered this year... 'This show greatly differs from the previous BATS Next Gen show "Rent"'. Whilst the former was emotionally demanding, the new production has been more dynamic and movement orientated.'

The performance itself is planned for Thursday 20th Feb through to Saturday 23rd Feb 2014 and shall include a matinee.

As a winter warmer, we have 10% off tickets in December following this link and using code 'XMAS10'

<http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/event/42999>

Follow our latest rehearsal updates and view our rehearsal photographs by finding us on Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/BATSNG>. We are yet to have a *catastrophe!*

BATS Next Gen - Established January - www.batsnextgen.co.uk
Written by Danielle Ashby - 9th Nov 2013 (Student Performing Arts)

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A word from the experts, OFSTED said "Children make good progress in their learning and development at this happy and stimulating playgroup." The Playgroup received a GOOD rating at their last inspection in September 2013.

Children on the waiting list will be invited along to a transition afternoon on 6th December 2013.

Contact Carey West on 01256 353100

Email: 511077@childcare.hants.org.uk

Please email during school holidays.

Merton Poppits Playgroup.
c/o Merton Infants School,
Romsey Close,
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RG24 9HB

NAOMI HOUSE BAUBLE HUNT – Saturday 7th December

Bring the family along to our annual Bauble Hunt in the beautiful grounds of The Vyne at Sherborne St John, RG24 9HL.

Entry is £4 per child and £1 per accompanying adult and includes the Bauble Hunt trail and a free gift from Father Christmas for each child.

There are also side stalls including: face painting, toy tombola and lucky dip, a Christmas raffle and lots of lovely gift stalls for Christmas shopping.

Doors open at 11am, so we really hope you can join us for this lovely event.

LIGHT UP A LIFE SERVICE – Thursday 12th December

Naomi House and Jacksplace would like to invite you to share our special Carol and Light Up A Life Service at St Mary's Church, Old Basing at 7pm on Thursday 12th December.

Everyone is welcome to light a candle to celebrate the life of a loved one and give thanks for the work of our local hospice for children and young people.

Seasonal refreshments will be served in the parish room after the service.

For more information about these and other Naomi House events please call 01962 760060 or email

Tina.Starback@naomihouse.org.uk

www.naomihouse.org.uk

Over 55s Forum

The last Open Forum meeting for 2013 will be on Wednesday 11th December 2013 at the Carnival Hall, Council Road, Basingstoke 10.00am to 1pm.

The Forum have again this year broken it's membership record which stands at 624.

This proves that the Forum is working for all the Over 55s in the Borough.

Our Swinging Sixties Show to celebrate the "International Day for Older People" held on 28th September at Aldworth Science College was a brilliant success with over 330 people attending. The Mayor opened and closed the show. We are now planning another show for 2014. "Lyrics & Laughter".

Our coach trips for 2013 have proved very successful and were thoroughly enjoyed by all who have purchased seats. The trips are now being planned for 2014 so watch this space,

I would like to close by wishing all our old and new members a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



Headquarters:

Base 2000 Carpenters Down, Popley RG24 9AE

Group Scout Leader: Colin Karslake 01256 410559

Scout section: John-Paul Keetch 07899 087 275

Cub Scout section: Douglas Gowan 01256 412326

Beaver Scout section: Eve Alexander 01256 346510

The Beavers' Paultons' Park Father Christmas visit, although wet and cold, was enjoyed by all and some very tired Beavers returned home clutching their first Christmas gift of the year!

Work has since commenced on their 'wish lists'! Six Beavers were presented with Chief Scouts' Bronze Awards by the District Commissioner, Andy Cullen recently. Three of them are already 'linking' to Cubs ready to 'swim-up' at Christmas.

The Colony will be fundraising together with the Cub section in aid of the British Heart Foundation by having a sponsored skip before Christmas.



The Cubs had a 'Spook-tastic' time at a sleepover during half-term and did activities such as Wand Making and then had great fun running round and casting all sorts of weird and wonderful spells. They went on a Hallowe'en themed scavenger hunt in the woods and attempted to build a large twig skeleton. The Hallowe'en costumes were great and they enjoyed party games and a supper of 'Minced Zombie in a Spicy Blood Sauce on a Bed on Witches Intestines' - a hot favourite! Later in the evening they went on a Spooky Night Walk in the woods to see if we could hear any creepy night

noises. The evening finished with them watching Casper and Scooby Doo DVDs before going to bed. Surprisingly all were asleep before midnight but the 'early-birds' awoke before 6a.m.!!

Other activities in recent weeks included a Remembrance themed evening when the Cubs wrote their own prayer for Remembrance Day, played a couple of themed games and observed a 2 minutes silence to close the evening. The Pack also enjoyed a Games Night and a St Andrew's themed night.

The Scout section attended the Civic Remembrance Parade in Basingstoke War Memorial Park.

New recruits welcome (though you may have to wait for a vacancy in the Beaver section which is often oversubscribed) – for more information, contact the leaders or use www.facebook.com/BasingstokeAirScouts.

Base 2000 is available for use by any community group at special rates either for 'one-off' or regular bookings. It can also be used for childrens' parties or family gatherings. Hiring rates range from £3.50 per hour for the smaller hall to up to £10 per hour for the larger hall. Enquiries to bookings@base2000.co.uk or call Colin on 07796 772 500 / 01256 410559.

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Keeping Christmas under Control

Whatever you think of Christmas, there's one thing we all know – it's going to cost us money. And more than we can afford, unless we're very careful. Here's some top tips to help you have a happy and debt-free Christmas.

1. Talk to your partner, family and friends about Christmas spending. Chances are they want to keep the costs down too, so you can all agree to spend less on each other.

2. Make a plan for all your festive spending, not just the presents. Think about what worked and what didn't last year. How many of those "stocking fillers" were abandoned or broken two minutes later? And how much of all that "bargain" festive food was thrown away?

3. If you think you'll need to use credit for Christmas spending, plan it carefully. Read the small print on any credit deals; make sure you know exactly how much you'll have to pay off each month. Check you really can afford it after all the other bills have been paid.

4. Always find out the total cost of something you're thinking of buying on credit. You'll be shocked at how the cost rockets if you make monthly payments to a catalogue, for example.

5. Manage your children's expectations – there may be different ways to achieve what they want. Perhaps you can afford to pay half the monthly payment on that smartphone if they get a Saturday job to pay the rest?

6. We can't all be creative types (baking and making low-cost presents) but what about personal gift vouchers, promising future treats? A summer picnic in the park perhaps? Or how about offering to take on extra household chores for a month?

7. If you think you're going to struggle with paying your rent at Christmas, get help now. You'll find more helpful advice on our website at www.sentinelha.org.uk or you can call us on 0800 195 5515, or 0300 6665515 from a mobile.

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A warm tale aimed at children eight and under, suitable for children with additional needs. Performed at the new Proteus Creation Space.

Devised by **Mary Swan, Umar Ahmed and Becky Barry**. Directed by **Mary Swan**

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Friday	20th December	11am & 4.30pm
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Sunday	22nd December	11am & 2.30pm
Monday	23rd December	11am & 2.30pm
Tuesday	24th December	11am & 2.30pm

Tickets **£5** per person. **1 parent goes free** with three children or more.

Tickets available from wegottickets.com/proteustheatre or call **01256 321621**. You can also book at the Creation Space.

"The audience of children were held spellbound right from the off"
Basingstoke Gazette on previous production The Mission

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Proteus Creation Space, Council Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 3DH



Basingstoke Lions Club

Website www.basingstokelions.org.uk

I think the autumn blues struck our monthly business meeting last month. The members were all present but the normal high spirits seemed to have gone walkabout. Fortunately a Skittles Evening coupled with a very nice supper at the Red Lion in Overton put the world to rights for us. The explosive nature of the game, coupled with the warm environment and chat, seemed to lift everyone's spirits.

Our main event in October was World Sight Day. The day was designed to raise awareness of the causes of blindness (which are many), and the global efforts that are being made to tackle the affliction. Lion Ann Vicars organized a stall to show by means of leaflets and equipment the effects of different forms of blindness and the sort of support and advice that is available locally. We were particularly grateful to Faye Chatten-Smith of **Helping Hands for the Blind** and members of the **Macular Disease Society** who came along to help us with the stall, and to our local opticians and Breeze FM for their support. As a result of this, and a poster campaign, over 500 pairs of spectacles were handed in on the day for recycling to some of the poorest nations. Throughout the day **Lenny the Lion** prowled the Malls inviting people to guess his weight and drawing attention to our stall. Over 200 people visited us to see the variety of instruments on show and in quite a few cases to seek advice which was readily given.

Local sources of help for the blind and partially sighted are the **SIGHT LOSS SPECIALISTS IN THE SENSORY TEAM** (part of Basingstoke Social Services) on 0845 6035630: **HELPING HANDS for the BLIND** www.helpinghandsfortheblind.org.uk : The **MACULAR DISEASE SOCIETY** on 01256 356844: **OPEN SIGHT EASTLEY** with Clubs across Hampshire 02380 64124. If you know someone who is having a sight problem you might like to pass this information on to them.

LIONS CLUBS YOUNG AMBASSADOR COMPETITION: We know that there are young people between the ages of 15 and 18 within our community who work selflessly for others. If you know of such a person, we would like to nominate him/her as a candidate for the title of District, National and European Young Ambassador. Please contact John Lincoln tel. 01256 325280 Email jomolincoln@btinternet.com for details The Club is now gearing up for our Christmas collections – polishing Santa's sleigh and refreshing his parcels. If you see us when you are out and about, please help us out with some loose change. Our Treasurer (Ebenezer) loves counting it. We need to raise around £3,000 to cover our Christmas donations. Thanks for your help! But before that, on the **16th November** we have one of our twice yearly **Quiz Nights** at the **Cliddesden Millenium Hall**. If you'd like to attend please **contact Maurice Hockley 01256 421867 or Philip Wilson on 01256 352393 as soon as you can.**



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Dear Friends

I read the following recently: REASONS WHY SANTA CLAUS HAS TO BE A WOMAN ... men can't pack a bag; men would rather be dead than caught wearing red velvet; men don't answer their mail; men aren't interested in stockings unless someone is wearing them; men don't think about buying gifts till Christmas Eve when it's too late; men refuse to stop and ask for directions when they get lost; finally being responsible for Christmas would require a commitment!

I also read the following .."The hinge of history is to be found on the door of a Bethlehem stable" (both quotes from J. John & Mark Stibbe, *A Barrel of Fun*).

The season of goodwill, peace to all is upon us. Though looking at the world around us you wouldn't think so! Apart from Afghanistan there are so many other areas of conflict in the world, there are droughts, famines and diseases, extremes of climate such as those experienced in India and the Philippines with such a terrible loss of life and livelihood. Some of the world's problems may seem to dwarf our own personal difficulties but they are no less important – anxiety over health, relationships or jobs and money can all combine to block out the light. This is especially true at Christmas when all we really want, perhaps, is some peace and quiet and some time to enjoy our families and friends. Archbishop Justin Welby has spoken out recently about the stresses and strains that the so-called season of goodwill can bring for many. All these demand our quiet consideration and prayer.

In December the church moves into the season of Advent, a time of preparation. Similar to the season of Lent, it's an opportunity for taking stock, a chance to examine our lives and see where we've gone wrong, and make a commitment to change those attitudes of our hearts and minds that cause hurt to those around us and to God and to do so before its too late. It's a tough call, but once we make it we can feel renewed, refreshed and ready to start again. I hope this year you'll take that opportunity.

Amid all your Christmas preparations and as you're putting up the Christmas lights I hope that you will take time to consider the baby in a manger who came as *'the light of the world'* and will one day return in majesty and power to draw us all before God. May the light and peace of Christ be with you and yours this Christmas season and in the year ahead.

With warm Christian greetings

Arthur

Vicar, St Gabriel's.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Please feel free to join us at one of our Christmas services. We're having two Christingle Services on Sunday 15th at 4pm and again at 5pm; A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight on the 22nd at 6.30pm; a Nativity performed by the 'grown-ups' on the 24th at 4pm and Midnight Communion at 11.30 on Christmas Eve. There is also a family service on Christmas morning at 10.00a.m. please do join the celebrations.

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Tips and Advice on Clearing Snow and Ice

- Start early - it's much easier to clear fresh, loose snow compared to compacted ice that has been compressed by people walking on it.
- Don't use hot water - this will melt the snow, but may replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury.
- Be a good neighbour - some people may be unable to clear snow and ice on paths from their property.
- If shovelling snow, think where you are going to put it so that it doesn't block people's paths or drainage channels.
- Make a pathway down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on.
- Spreading some salt on the area you have cleared will help stop ice forming.
- Table salt or dishwasher salt will work, but avoid spreading on plants or grass as they may be damaged by it.
- Pay particular care and attention to steps and steep gradients.
- Use the sun to your advantage - removing the top layer of snow will allow the sun to melt any ice beneath; however you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight.
- If there's no salt available, sand or ash are good alternatives.

DO NOT USE CAT LITTER The clay granules in cat litter soften when they absorb moisture and turn into a watery sludge. Although this sludge may freeze at a slightly lower temperature, the clay content acts as a lubricant with the ice, making the ground more slippery and longer to thaw. It also walks into your house and stains and rots your carpets.

Fireworks at the Office Christmas Party



Gill Brown, the Head of the Employment Law team at Phillips Solicitors, says that there are some do's and don'ts to think about as the Christmas party season approaches.

The most important thing to remember is that a Christmas party arranged by your employer counts as work time and, while it is important for a good time to be had by all, there are some serious considerations. Careers can be destroyed through excessive alcohol consumption, drug taking, fighting, inappropriate language, unwanted advances and inappropriate use of the photocopier! It is also important to avoid talking about work especially discussing staff, clients or customers in a social environment. If you are a manager then make sure you do not start agreeing pay increases after a few cocktails as this could be a promise you later regret.

The general rules relating to discrimination still apply in a party environment. Respect must be shown to those who do not drink, have specific dietary requirements or have a disability. If this applies to you then be sure to notify your employer so that they are able to cater for you appropriately. Remember that jokes that you would not tell in the office because they might cause offence are just as likely to cause offence in a party situation even if they do get a laugh from others.

Getting home afterwards is also important – check whether your employer is arranging transport back from the office party and if not ensure that you have arrangements in place so that you do not, under any circumstances, drink and drive.

Have fun, enjoy the party season, keep safe and make sure you turn up for work the next day!

Gill Brown is a lawyer specialising in employment law at Phillips Solicitors in Basingstoke. For more information please call Gill on 01256 854605 or email at: gbrown@phillips-law.co.uk and visit our website at www.phillips-law.co.uk”.





Another fabulous month for MFC Popley Youth has seen all our age groups put in successful, battling performances on the pitch.

We are now being courted by two Premier League outfits as the club begins to reap the rewards of all the hard work put in behind the scenes.

The Under 7s continue to go from strength to strength, with a particularly successful morning at Sherborne St John recently.

The U8s have been on a strong run with successes over Overton and Oakley FC this month.

The Under 9s have been playing some scintillating football, most notably four superb performances against a strong AFC Newbury squad.

The U10s are proving hard to beat with wins over Basingstoke Town Colts and Thatcham Tornados keeping them on a strong footing in their divisional table.

The U11s, 12s, 13s and 15s have all had convincing wins in recent weeks to put them through to their next respective rounds of the Peter Houseman Youth Cup.

The U14s are continuing to do the club proud playing some great tactical football in their Premier Division fixtures.

The Allstars are making rapid progress whilst showing a great attitude to learning. If you know a Year R or Year 1 child who wants to get into football, text 07884 2185 693 to arrange to bring them along.

The MFC Popley Youth Halloween Race Night proved, yet again, to be a fantastic fundraiser for the club. More importantly it was a superb community social event and a chance for everyone from all the different age groups to meet and bond.

OPAL - Older People's Area Link

Free telephone and home visiting service to help people over 50 find activities and services.

Opal can provide you with details of local information and services by phone.

If you need a little more help, there are Opal volunteers in your area who can visit you at home.

Telephone 0800 328 7154



Volunteering for Opal usually takes up only a few hours a month. To find out more about becoming an Opal volunteer, please call 01962 868545 or email sara.nicholls@ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

Festive Bin Collections

Rubbish and recycling collection crews will be working on Saturdays to catch up on changes over the Christmas break, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has announced.

If your normal collections day would be, put your grey bin (and green bin if it is your recycling week) out on

Monday 23 December _____	Monday 23 December _____
Tuesday 24 December _____	Tuesday 24 December _____
Wednesday 25 December _____	Friday 27 December _____
Thursday 26 December _____	Saturday 28 December _____
Friday 27 December _____	Monday 30 December _____
Monday 30 December _____	Wednesday 31 December _____
Tuesday 31 December _____	Thursday 2 January _____
Wednesday 1 January _____	Friday 3 January _____
Thursday 2 January _____	Saturday 4 January _____
Friday 3 January _____	Monday 6 January _____
Monday 6 January _____	Tuesday 7 January _____
Tuesday 7 January _____	Wednesday 8 January _____
Wednesday 8 January _____	Thursday 9 January _____
Thursday 9 January _____	Friday 10 January _____
Friday 10 January _____	Saturday 11 January _____

Christmas can mean extra rubbish, for example wrapping paper that can't be recycled. Therefore, in the first collection after Christmas ONLY extra sacks will be collected.

Unless adverse weather affects bin rounds, collections should return to normal from Monday 13 January.

For more information about bin collections see www.basingstoke.gov.uk/go/recycling or call 01256 844844.

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Page 24 E-mail: sue@suesdrivingschool.com

Christmas at Museum of Army Flying

The Museum gets the festive period off to a flying start.

On 14th and 15th December the Museum of Army Flying will host its first Home Front Christmas. This event transports visitors back in time to the 1940s to celebrate a bygone era of festivities, under wartime conditions. Re-enactors from Homefront History will bring the event to life with a variety of characters and they will be providing displays and demonstrations on different aspects of life during a wartime Christmas. The event is FREE to enjoy with normal Museum entry.

The event will also feature a photographic display by C and A Photography who are renowned for using re-enactors to recreate incredible historical scenes and the Museum is especially delighted to welcome the Bletchley Park Post Office team who will be talking about and demonstrating wartime code-breaking.

Homefront History's founder John Leete said about the event "This event will provide the perfect atmosphere to get people in the Christmas Spirit. Christmas during wartime was a very different affair to the modern Christmas. This event will use re-enactors to help visitors learn about Christmas during the 1940s"

This year Museum of Army Flying are hosting their annual Christmas Band Concert on the 19th December at 7:00pm in conjunction with the Army Air Corps Band. The Army Air Corps Band will be joined by guests from The Band of the Prince of Wales' Division and the Middle Wallop Military Wives Choir. The Museum's Hangars will be ringing with the sound of traditional music, perfect for getting visitors into the Christmas Spirit. During its short history, the Army Air Corps Band has earned a reputation for musical excellence, every year impressing concert goers with their favourite carols. The event is a charity fundraising Christmas Band Concert to raise money for two military charities. The event is free and there will be an opportunity to make a donation. Booking is essential as places are limited. Reservations can be made through the website www.armyflying.com or by phoning reception on 01264 784421. The doors will open at 6.30pm.

The Museums restaurant the Apache Café will be open serving wonderful hot freshly prepared meals and festive treats including homemade mince pies and mulled wine.



Diaries from The Old Codger

Well he is getting ready to stop at every child's house this month. Yes it's Christmas time again, but he will only come to your house if you are very, very good, I know I have been, so I hope he will turn up at my house again this year.

Mums and Dads I know it is hard but try not to spend more than you can just to please your child as it is so easy to do and you will be in debt for the next year.

Your fuel bills will go up in the coming year, you do not want any cut offs of gas or electric. You can enjoy so much without excessive media hype on expensive toys. Children all want great gifts but look after all your needs, do not go to these moneylenders as it will not pay you, only the fat cats that leech off the vulnerable.

When I was a young lad it was great fun going around all our families: they lived within about five miles of each other. At Christmas we would all go from one house to the next each day. If we slept over it is surprising how many kids could be fitted on a bed the mums, dads, grandparents, aunts and uncles would lay you all across the bed or top and tail you all. As kids it was great fun. staying up late, dads with pints of beer, stout or sherry for the mums, all the kids sitting on stairs in the living room together. We were never allowed in the posh room, it was only be used on special occasions. On Boxing Day all the family would go to the pub at lunchtime, all the kids sat outside by the cockle and jellied eel stall. Boy I loved them and still do now. If mum or dad said sit there you did what you were told. No one would bother you; every now and then a load of the old Smiths crisps, with the blue salt pack inside, would be tossed out to us all sometimes with a glass of lemonade; a real treat back then. You were grateful, you would never make a fuss. When we all got home to dinner we were all given a treat for behaving as we were told to OK, out of sight we would all get up to pranks, but nothing that would hurt or disturb people. The local bobby somehow would turn the corner just as you started any mischief. How it was they knew I will never know. The local bobby would often take off his jacket and have a game of footy with you.

On another note, if you can get on the net look up "Saving Nature" It will show you what small part kids and the rest of the community can do to help our local wildlife.

I wonder how many of you have seen the TV programme Ripper Street. I love it, as although it had changed a lot when I lived near there, I remember many of the street names. Yes it was a grubby old place even when I was young, much of it damaged after the war years. I look back and think of my mum; she was so quiet and never said boo to a goose but to think in the war she was teaching men how to shoot, and boy was she a good shot! I know that when we went to funfairs in the end they would not let her on the stalls. If given a chance she would clear them out, bless her. The OC and 'Er Indoors" would like to wish all our local council members a Happy Christmas. You have worked so hard in difficult times. Kids again have a good Christmas and stay safe. If the snow and cold come think who could do with help. Last but not least all the family of Popley,

**Happy Christmas and good New Year.
Until next month, the Old Codger**



BERMUDA COMMUNITY CENTRE

To all the people of Popley I would like to tell you about the great things that are happening at the Bermuda Community Centre.

We have Popley Explorers pre-school Monday to Friday from 8.30am until 3pm .They also do a breakfast club. For details ring Elaine on 01256 363156.



We also have lots of exciting things going on in the evenings; Monday night is kick boxing which is from 6.30 until 8pm, and kickboxing again on a Thursday night from 7 until 8.30pm. Come along and join.

Tuesday night is BINGO NIGHT, doors open at 7pm and eyes down at 8pm. New members are welcome; come along, meet and make new friends. Refreshments are available and it finishes usually



The hall is currently being used on a Wednesday by the kick boxing club as they are getting ready for competitions but will be available to hire in the near future. So if anyone would like to try something new and would like to hire the hall please get in touch with Janet Ward on 01256 363156. The committee would like to wish the kick boxing team good luck for their future competitions.



If you like to dance we have Street dance and ballet classes on Thursdays, for two and a half year olds to adults - 4.30 till 5.30pm. For full details ring Samantha on 07811299484.

On a Friday evening, come along and join the Friday Club for children which is from 5pm till 6.30pm. The hall is also available to hire for parties etc at reasonable rates for more details ring Janet on 01256 36315.

Friday Club



We would like to thank all the families for coming to the Christmas family bingo on 8th November. Thank you all for your support in making it a great night once again.

ALL THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL THE RESIDENTS OF POPLEY A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Dear readers,

Wow I have had another spectacular month.

I went to Blackpool and competed in the Winter Gardens. Although I didn't win anything, it was mostly the experience I went for but it was also to represent my dance school. I don't mind that I didn't win anything at least I know I tried my hardest and I have a lot of room for improvement. I had some very tough competition but I enjoyed the day. I even went up to the highest balcony and it was AMAZING. There are little models and paintings on the ceiling and they all looked very spectacular and the chandelier lights were very pretty and bright. The dance hall looked very posh and sophisticated. Me and my Mum love "dress spotting" and WOW there were some very sparkly and stunning dresses. I can't wait till July when I turn Junior and I'll be able to wear some of those amazing dresses. The atmosphere of the dance hall was intense and electric. This was my brother's first time at Blackpool and my last as a Juvenile.

I'm sure you have all heard about the disaster in the Philippines that has affected thousands of people. My thoughts are with all the families who have lost family and close friends. It has got me thinking about how we can all volunteer and help raise money to help those less fortunate both at home and abroad.

Volunteering is another way to help others, like working in a soup kitchen. Even if a little bit of money is raised it can make a huge difference. £5 can provide someone less fortunate with a meal or the means to provide meals. I would like to volunteer when I am older.

Christmas is coming up soon, have you got an advent calendar?, I prefer the chocolate ones. Don't leave your list for Father Christmas too late if you haven't done it yet. I know sometimes it can be hard to get the perfect present for someone. Are you one of those people who leave all your Christmas shopping till Christmas Eve (yes Dad I'm talking about you!) I'm usually easy to find a present for because I normally ask for art things or writing equipment, or one of Jacqueline Wilson's new books (Diamond, hint hint Mum & Dad) but trying to find a present for a parent can be a pain when you are wandering round town for ages with no ideas what to get them. Don't give up, that has happened to me but soon I saw something I thought would be the perfect present. Don't worry, you'll find something; it just might take a bit longer. Why not try the local independent shops that are around, there are quite a few and you're sure to find something there.

Thanks to all of you who donated filled shoe boxes to the appeal I mentioned last month, you've made a difference??

Speak to you next month when it will be the New Year (where has 2013 gone???). Have a fantastic Christmas and New Year.

Ellie

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