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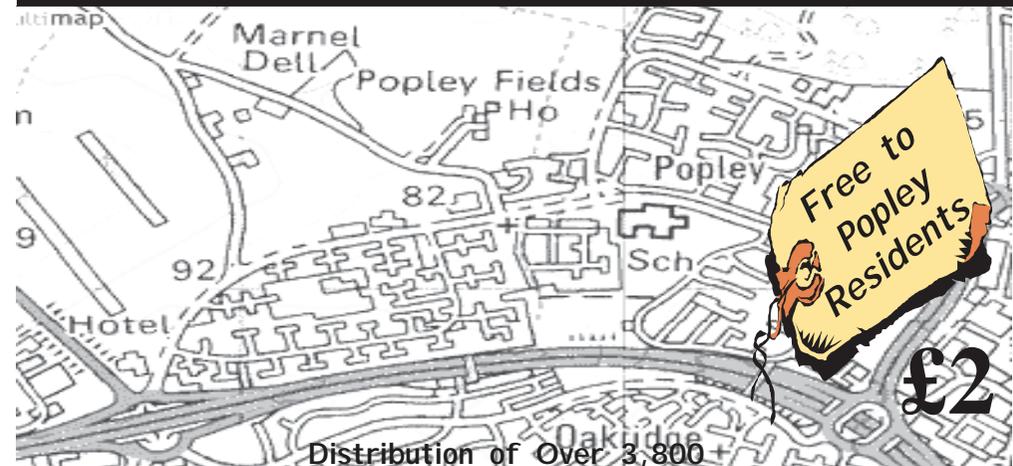
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POPLEY MATTERS

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

January 2008

Issue 71



FULL OF LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS

Contents

Message from the Editor	Page 1	Travel Tokens	Page 18
The New Junction Six	Page 4	New Age Kurling	Page 18
Popley Fields News	Page 6	Walking The Way To Health	Page 18
Air Scouts Report	Page 7	What's Happening in Basing Wood?	Page 20
Arthur at St Gabriel's	Page 8	Fire Safety Smoke Alarms	Page 22
Award for Popley Team	Page 10	Councillors Page	Page 23
Magic of Christmas Report	Page 11	NCT Nearly New Sales	Page 24
Marnel Football Club	Page 12/13	Melrose Community Hall	Page 26
The Old Codger	Page 13	Letters to The Editor	Page 27
Table Top Sale	Page 14/15	Over 55's Forum	Page 27
Everest Health and Leisure Club	Page 16/17	Simone's Column	Page 28
Saturday Night?			

www.popleymatters.org.uk

Closing date to submit articles & adverts (20-01-08)

Message From the Editor:- Here we are at the start of 2008- I wonder what this year will bring for Popley? It certainly will be a difficult year in that there will be more building and the massive work around the Aldermaston Roundabout. I just keep thinking that if it makes for safer roads and better flow of traffic away from Popley Way when we have all the new homes, it will be worth it in the end.

With the start of a new year comes the start of some new events. On page 18 you can learn Kurling, and go on organized walks on Fridays. For the youth I am happy to say that Junction 6 will be back in full action, details on page 1. There is also an opportunity to see what the proposals are for Carpenters Down Woods. Details of the meeting are on page 20. If you have children you might like to read about the sale of items to help raise funds for the National Childbirth charity. On page 4 we are asking for your ideas for Aldermaston Open Space. There will be a considerable amount of what is known as developers money to be spent on leisure facilities and we would like to hear your suggestions. On Page 8, read about the special award our Popley Safer Neighbourhood Team won

Is there a "Knight in shining armour" out there somewhere in Popley? We need a volunteer distribution manager that will take on the distribution of Popley Matters. Many of our volunteers come and pick up their copies to deliver, but we need a driver who can deliver those that can't. We need to get them to some of our delivery team. Please contact me on 819924 if you can help. We also need more volunteers to deliver to the houses in Popley. Just an hour a month would make a huge difference. For articles, letters, advertisements or to volunteer you can email me at jane@popleymatters.org.uk, write to PO Box 6727 Basingstoke, RG24 9GG, phone Jane on 819924 or Iris on 411113. Then there is also the website www.popleymatters.org.uk

Hits on www.popleymatters.org.uk website for month of December: 2489

To pass back ideas, comments, suggestions, articles or to offer help please write to:- Popley Matters Group, PO.Box 6727, Basingstoke RG24 9GG, email editor@popleymatters.org.uk. The views in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Editorial Team, the members of the committee, or Popley Forum/Matters.

Editorial Team:- Editor Jane Frankum; Sub-Editor Paul Frankum; Chair Terry Jones; Vice Chair Ron Rowe; Acting Treasurer/Distribution Iris King; Committee Members Louise Tuck, Kate Lomas;

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Youth Volunteers: Joseph Doran, Matthew Stokes.;

More Volunteers Welcome

Advertising Index

1st Response	Page 2	Affordable Man & Van	Page 9	Kylie's Whippersnappers	Page 21
Rune or Card Reading	Page 2	The Ovencleaner	Page 9	WJM Home Solutions	Page 25
Your Country Florist	Page 2	C.M. Hills Capentery	Page 9	Accountancy (Small Businesses)	Page 25
New Testament Church	Page 3	Everest Health & Leisure Club	Page 15	MAD Academy	Page 25
Paul and Lee Plumbing	Page 3	Treasure Island Playgroup	Page 19	Mechanix2u	Page 25
Youngs Chinese & Fish Bar	Page 5	PKG Plumbing	Page 19	Cornerstone Nusery	Inside Back Page
Computer Services	Page 5	In-spirations	Page 19	Fastfare Pharmacy	Back Page
Basingstoke Parcel Services	Page 5	NITE	Page 21	Thank you for your continued support	
Slimming World	Page 5	TCG Computer Services	Page 21		
KJ Young Decorators	Page 9	Adam Window Cleaning Service	Page 21		

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Simone's Column

Hi everyone, hope you all had a lovely Christmas, eating hundreds of mince pies, and a great start to the New Year. This month I would like to talk about road safety and our route to school at Everest Community College.

Firstly I am really concerned, as are a few other students and parents about the route to school as there is only one way to get to school, as there is extremely dangerous!! For instance we don't have much of a path to walk on because the school is basically situated on a building site, with cars, vans and other various vehicles parked alongside the pavement, and builders working having to close most of the pathways off. Also the vehicles that are parked alongside the footpaths are even more dangerous to us students, because not only do we not have a pathway but we can't really see if a car is driving up either side of the road. Therefore we are being put in even more danger when we are crossing the roads. Another hazard is that we have to walk through a construction site everyday, with loads of heavy machinery being used. I think something should be arranged because so many accidents could happen.

Another thing I would like to mention is Daniel's progress, and I thought I would just inform the people who don't get to hear about how he is doing. Well as you all know Daniel had a terrible accident last month, and the school has been very good on keeping us informed of his situation. So far all we know is that he is very poorly and is being treated in Southampton Hospital. Our Head Teacher Ms Rose has kept in contact with Daniels parents as well. Also the students can read about Daniels condition on the year sevens notice board, which I thought was a good idea. The Year Sevens have sent Daniel a get well card signed by all of the pupils in his year group which I am sure he will like. All my thoughts are with Daniel and his parents, and I hope that he can regain a full recovery.

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone that has been reading my articles and commenting back on it, because it is nice to know that some people are interested in my views and opinions, so thanks everyone.

I would like to wish everyone in Year 10 (my year group) the best of luck as we all have some science exams. What a rubbish way to start the year! Happy birthday to my friends Kelly, Rachael, Chloe, and my dad Will. Thanks for reading, hope everyone enjoys the New Year.
Simone.

Footnote:- there is a safer journey to school route that avoids the main building site I will make sure that the school informs the students as we noticed that many of the students prefer not to use it.

The New Junction Six!

Following the closure of the old J6 youth centre at the old John Hunt School site we now have a brand spanking new one at the new site! We have been open for a couple of months and we're eager to encourage new young people to come and visit and find out what the project can offer them. We hope to develop a members group to steer the project and begin to meet the needs of young people in Popley.

The building boasts a music studio, photographic dark room, kitchen café area, and dance/drama space. We are still installing equipment which includes a massive flat screen TV and computers.

We are currently open on Tuesdays - Open Evening between 7 and 9.30pm and on Wednesdays for a café between 3 and 4.30. For music studio use 5.30-7pm and open evening 7-9.30pm

As part of our programme we will be offering trips and various opportunities for young people to become involved in exciting activities. We will be visiting London's IMAXX cinema and go karting in the next few weeks and recruiting some budding chefs for our Christmas meal.

We are planning a project bringing together older members of the community with young people in Popley to share skills and experiences and begin to break down barriers and misunderstandings between these generations. So if you're a pensioner, have a talent or interest you can share and would like to learn something new with young people please get in contact.

A big launch event celebrating youth work across Basingstoke is planned for the centre for early next year. I'll be keeping you posted!

If you have any questions about the project or would like to come and see Junction Six for yourself, give me a call on 07983 995393

Thanks Bianca
Bianca Webb
Youth worker

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Basingstoke Youth Team

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Letters to The Editor.



Dear Editor, I really enjoy reading the Popley Matters, and thank you for all the good work you do throughout the year.

I am writing in response to the article by Simone. I, and many other people I have spoken to, am quite disgusted that Ms Rose is not allowing the children to celebrate Christmas as she “doesn’t do it”. I feel she has lost out on an excellent opportunity to further promote the good of the new school. Surely the views of all the teachers and pupils should be taken into account, not her own personal feelings. I trust that no other multi-cultural celebrations will be taking place within the school in the future. We are supposed to live in a Christian country, and the celebration of Christmas is part of our heritage. The birth of Jesus is also celebrated by many other religions. I can understand that some of the older children may not want to take part, but the new first year children must be quite disappointed not to be doing anything at this time of year.

I hope she will reconsider her views before next year. A disgusted grandmother

Editors Reply: Yes we are indeed a multicultural society therefore have many views I think it was perhaps unfortunate to say “I dont do Christmas”. I could understand it if it were because that with the move and setting up of the school things were hectic and perhaps there was not time to organise events. Like you I have had many people say how disappointed they were not have some seasonal celebrations. I hope like all those people that Christmas 2008 will have some celebrations. The old school had a fantastic reputation for its excellent shows. I will ask Ms Rose to advertise them in Popley Matters.

Editors 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, Basingstoke
RG24 9GG or email:
editor@popleymatters.org.uk
or phone 819924**



Over 55's Forum

Just to say that on 5th & 6th December 2007, 3 coaches were booked to take 159 members and guests for a ‘Flight’ on the London Eye, London Christmas Lights and a supper at the ‘Cittee of Yorke’ at Holborn. The meal was brilliant. We still had a reserve list of members wishing to go.

Our December Open Forum meeting and AGM was held on Wednesday 12th December at the Carnival Hall, Council Road, Basingstoke. Some 150 plus attended. There were 22 new members who joined at the door and we are still getting applications to join as a result of the Basingstoke & Deane Today booklet. anyone wishing to join to contact myself on 07792535116.

Our next Open Forum meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th February 2008 at the Carnival Hall 10.00am to 2.00pm.

I wish you a very Prosperous New Year.

Gerald



Happy new year! Hope you all had a great Christmas. We welcome our new regular group this month - Molly Moocows Moosic. Call 01428 658858 for more details, or visit www.mollymoocow.com.

Our garden club is going strong, with the new season just round the corner there is lots to do and all are welcome on the 5th and 19th January 1-3pm tools and refreshments are provided just bring your wellies!

MONDAY:

9.30-12pm Friendly Café

7.30-10.00pm Peregrine Healing and Holistics

TUESDAY:

TBC - Molly Moocows Moosic

4.00-7.30 Petite School of Dance

WEDNESDAY:

10.00-11.30 - Popley Little People, Mother and Toddler group

10.00-11.00 NHS Quit Smoking Clinic

12-2pm Oasis Lunch club

7.15 - Slimming world

THURSDAY:

9.30-12PM Friendly Café

6.30-8.30 Weight Watchers

FRIDAY:

10-3 Together

6.00-7.45 Youth Club - age 5 to 10 years

8.00- 9.15 Youth Club - age 11 plus.

SATURDAY:

9.00-12.30 Petite School of Dance

SUNDAY:

Melrose Christian Fellowship - Contact Pastor Phillip Keeble on 462351 for times of services.

Melrose Community Hall is available to hire for Birthdays, Wedding Receptions, Conferences and all your private hire needs. We take bookings for both occasional and regular events.

Please Ring Vicki Jackson on 01256 420676 for more information or e-mail us at Melrosehall@tiscali.co.uk.

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Sunday morning 10.30 to 12.00 noon

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We would like to wish everybody a Happy New Year from all the committee and staff at Popley Fields.

We would like to inform all our user groups that the Centre is now being run by 2 new managers Tracey Judge and Christine Hamp and it is business as usual.

Popzone Youth Club Monday Nights

Youth club is still very busy with an average of 40 to 50 children turning up every week. If anyone is interested in joining the club then please contact Tracey Judge at the Centre

We run 2 sessions 5.30pm to 7.00pm and 7.15pm to 8.45pm.

Family Prize Bingo Night – As the last one was successful, there will be another one to be held on Friday 22nd February 2008. Doors open at 6pm and eyes down about 7pm. There will be lots of great prizes and it is a joint venture between Popley Fields, Bermuda and Melrose Community Associations with proceeds being split between the three charities.

Computer Courses – New courses will be available in January at The Popley Fields Community Centre. There will be courses in Digital Photography with Desktop Publishing; Internet and email; Learn how to help your children, or yourself, by revising basic grammar (in a fun way!); Basic maths with spreadsheets (useful for helping Junior school children); Trace your family history using the internet; Writing a CV with interview practice. All classes run for a 10 week period and take place on one morning or afternoon per week. For a full list of classes or to enrol, please contact Queen Mary's College on 01256 417517. Classes are free to anyone who does not have 5 GCSEs grades A*-C.

Mad Academy – This is a new opportunity for toddlers and will run on Tuesdays 9.15am-12.15pm – 'Mad Academy' will be holding high-energy music and dance classes combined with learning for babies from 3 months to 5 years.

Popley Fields Community Centre is also available for hire for conferences, meetings, private parties, weddings and kids' parties at very reasonable rates.

Call us now for more information on any of the above or to find out more about any of the other activities which happen at the centre every week!

Tel:01256 414494 or email:popleyfields@hotmail.com

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The National Childbirth Trust in Basingstoke has been running Nearly New Sales in Basingstoke for over a decade, and we have grown and grown, just like your little ones. The sale is run by volunteers, who sell items for local parents of children who have outgrown them. Over the years the popularity has grown and, after moving venues several times, we now use the Basingstoke College of Technology to accommodate the goods from the 130 sellers and 300+ shoppers on our sale days.



We have over 7000 items on sale, so they're a great place to purchase baby/child equipment if you're on a budget, want to stock up for the grandchildren, or simply want to find a bargain.

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Children grow so fast and clothes barely get worn, so these sales are a fantastic opportunity to grab bargains of high street brands in near new condition at a fraction of the price in the shops. Some items still have their tags on them. All items are aimed at Children from 0 to 7 years, but also include maternity wear for expectant mothers. But it's not just clothing. It is also character toys, games, puzzles, videos, DVDs, and books. Not forgetting buggies, cots, baths, bedding, high chairs, nappy bins, change mats, stair gates, and just about everything a growing baby needs.

Money raised from these sales goes to helping support new parents in our community, funding drop-in groups, breastfeeding counsellors, postnatal illness support, and antenatal training.

We only have two sales a year and our next sale for Spring / Summer wear is Saturday 8th March at BCOT on Worting Road. Doors are open from 2.15 until 3.30, and the parking is free. For more information call 0870 066 9301, email nearlynewsales@basingstokenct.org.uk or check the website: www.basingstokenct.org.uk

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The Cub Pack ended the autumn session with a once only performance of 'Jack and The Beanstalk' to family and friends in December and all the cast were awarded the Entertainers badge at the conclusion of the performance. District Commissioner Andy Cullen also presented Chief Scout's Silver Awards to Claudio and Robert who have worked hard to achieve the necessary badges and taken full part in all activities. We wish them well as they move on to the Scout section in January.

The Beaver colony collected a number of gifts and Christmas fare which have been passed to St. Gabriel's Church and will be distributed as part of their annual parcels for less fortunate people in the area. The last meeting in December took the form of a Star Trek party.

Several members of the Scout section have completed the Aviation badge recently and their final meeting for the autumn session will be a swimming evening. (Hope they don't have to crack the ice as there is a hard frost this morning!!)

The District Commissioner has yet to appoint a Group Scout Leaders to replace Jerry. A Group Scout Leader is responsible for the overall management of the Group, co-ordinating the sections and promoting Scouting in the locality. He/she is also responsible for making sure leaders take up training opportunities relevant to their appointment and overseeing the work of the Group Executive Committee who look after financial matters. Anyone interested in taking up the post is urged to contact the District Commissioner, Andy Cullen, on Basingstoke 477275.

Scouting's Centenary Year has drawn to its close but plans are already in the making for activities 2008. More adult help is required especially in the Cub section if the programme is to remain active and progressive. Please contact Elaine on Basingstoke 323453 if you would like to know more.

Section meetings will recommence from Monday 7th January.



Boy and girls 6-8 years

Meetings: Tuesday 5.30-6.45p.m.

Eve Alexander 346510



Boys and girls aged 8-10½

Tuesday 6.30-8.15p.m.

Elaine Devenport 323453



Boys and girls aged 10½-15

Monday 7-9p.m.

Colin Karslake 410559



Councillors Page - Jane Frankum

Since our last report in Popley Matters where the Community Wardens looked like they were losing their jobs it has turned round so many times my head is spinning. Moments before the report was going before Cabinet the paper was withdrawn and the press told, and they reported that there was a problem and that the Wardens would be with us for some time. Soon that was followed by the resignation of the deputy leader of the Tory led council. As the paper was withdrawn it meant we could not debate the issue in the council that is webcast for anyone to watch. However we had put in a motion to Council that made it possible to talk about, but the time was limited. Only three days before that Council meeting Paul and I had been at the Magic of Christmas that was organised by the wardens. We walked round with the over 200 people and children around some of the roads in Popley Islands. We saw how the children looked up to the Wardens and the youths joined in too. It seems that the Tory council have made up their minds no matter what. If you read the Councillors Page last month you would have read some of the FACTS that show how effective the Wardens have been in the areas where they work, this seems to be getting ignored at the moment. But it was fine when they were picking up the awards and being photographed with our Wardens! If we sincerely believed that Popley and Basingstoke would be better off with losing the staff of 20 to be replaced by 5 PCSO's whoops sorry make that 3 because the Tadley councillor changed his mind when he was promised 2 PCSO's for his Ward. My calculations make that 3 to be spread around the town and villages of Basingstoke and Deane. I wonder what kind of Christmas the wardens and their families had with news like that 10 days before Christmas?

With the accident on Carpenters Down early in December we now have got the promise of speed reduction to 30 mph in Carpenters Down, something we have been calling for for some time now. We have also asked that the placing of the crossing and bus stop be reviewed as a matter of urgency. It appears at the moment that there is nowhere else to place the bus stop so we have asked that a formal crossing is put there and at least signage be put around the area warning drivers and pedestrians alike. There were some amazing people who were involved in one way or another, the Fire-Fighter who took over and took charge. The Children's Nurse who assisted, and the ambulance service, the drivers that Paul diverted away from the accident who were all polite and said they hoped that all will be well, Daniel's parents and family who have been pretty amazing too. Their thoughts have also been, once Daniel is better, how can they make a positive out of it. We will be campaigning together once things are back to normal. Last but not least, Daniel who has surprised everyone with his bravery and road to recovery.

Aldermaston Roundabout will be causing some disruption as the works begin to signalise and make it better and safer. The intention is to give an alternative route for the new housing in Merton Rise so that all the traffic does not come through Popley Way. If you have any concerns or questions the number to ring is 01962 846099.

Finally what would you like to see for leisure facilities in Aldermaston Open Space. There is money put aside from the developers and we would like us the residents to say what we would like. I have asked for a picnic area with fixed tables and seating, an assault course and a nature area for the children to study about the environment. These are ideas that many residents over the years have suggested. What do you think? You can contact me by phone 819924, or on the web at jane@popleymatters.org.uk or at 405 Abbey Road.



Making Hampshire Safer



Smoke Alarms

At least one smoke alarm should be fitted to each level of your home. In order to make sure your smoke alarm can save your life, it is important to maintain it properly and test it regularly.

Looking after your smoke alarm

Most budget smoke detectors will come with a battery already fitted. This battery will last for at least one year. Make a point of changing that battery annually. Consider using one of your children's birthdays, or a special occasion, to remind you to change it.

Remember:

- *Once a week* - test the battery: press the button until the alarm sounds.
- *Once a year* - change the battery (unless it's a 10 year alarm).
- *Twice a year* - open the case and gently vacuum the inside to remove dust from the sensors. If it doesn't open, vacuum through the holes.
- *After 10 years* - replace your alarm with a whole new unit.

Useful contact points and further information:

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service homepage: www.hantsfire.gov.uk

Community Fire Safety Department: 02380 626809

Email: community.firesafety@hantsfire.gov.uk

Dear Friends

Okay, let's all say a big welcome to 2008! Christmas and New Year celebrations are done and dusted for another year and its time to take down the tinsel and lights – my bank account is a few pounds lighter and I'm a few pounds heavier so it's time to sit down and seriously consider my New Year's resolutions. Actually, a few years ago I made the one and only resolution that I've managed to keep and that's NOT to make any more New Year's resolutions.

That doesn't mean to say I don't have hopes, plans and dreams for the coming year, without them life could be really dull. So what are your hopes for the coming year? Perhaps you're looking forward to a family wedding or a birth; or maybe that holiday of a lifetime in the summer; perhaps a career change or a move of home. Perhaps the year ahead looks uncertain – career prospects looking dodgy, finances stretched or ill health.

Hopes and plans are important to us as they provide something to hang onto when times are tough. Hope for something better lying just around the corner, planning for a brighter future. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews in the Bible writes "*who hopes for what they already have?*"

Before I became a Christian I used to dream of career and financial success in the belief that it would bring an end to all of my life's worries and anxieties. I used to believe that if I worked hard enough for the family the kids would grow up without suffering any of the storms of life that I'd had to sail through. Unrealistic or what? But it's what we spend a lot of our time doing for ourselves and those we love – isn't it?

In the Bible I read this: "*I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you not to harm you..*" One of the first things I discovered when I became a Christian was the truth of those words and that God has the most amazing plan for my life. God doesn't promise to take away the stresses and strains of daily living but what he does promise that whatever happens he'll be their right in the thick of it with us (have you ever read that well known verse 'Foot-prints'?) and he promises to fulfil that longing that is deep within our hearts. Whatever your hopes and plans for the coming year I'll be praying that you may discover the eternal hope held out in the message of Christmas and fulfilled at Easter. St Paul wrote: "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" Perhaps you might consider making it a New Year's resolution to discover God's plan for your life – you won't regret it!

I wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year and look forward to seeing more of you.

God's blessings.
Arthur
(Vicar of St Gabriel's)

Popley Team Wins an Award

We have great pleasure on informing you about the award given by the police to your Popley Safer Neighbourhood Team. The citation was from District Commander Jill Baldry. We were privileged to be guests at the ceremony where Mark Chatterton, Commander in Charge of Policing in North and East Hampshire, presented the award. The Citation is below.

Citation for Popley Safer Neighbourhood Team

PC Paul Thorne, PC Dan Carter, PCSO Phil Rapley and PSCO Steve Smith

I wish to commend the above officers for their collective efforts in significantly reducing crime and ASB across Popley. Their hard work with partners and public have resulted in glowing praise from a variety of sources within Popley – including residents, local businesses and councillors alike.

Specific examples of their longer term project work includes the Festival Project (joint initiative to reduce ASB in and around Glastonbury Close), Operation HEARDSMAN (PRIME project to reduce ASB in Longfellow Parade) and the formation of a Community Action Group involving key stakeholders from a number of locally based agencies. Much work has taken place on the latter to the extent that it is reaching a state of readiness to be a successful Neighbourhood Panel for the Popley area.

These longer term projects are complemented with excellent individual pieces of work working with other agencies, including:

- the successful ASBO application brought against a prolific juvenile offender, which has notably reduced his offending behaviour and improved the quality of life for local residents
- Over 400 C12 forms being submitted and 350 VAS1 forms between January and September of this year
- Successful community engagement through a CREW (Crime Reduction and Environment Week)
- Excellent rapport with partner agencies (ACSO/Community Warden)

All are committed team players who have gained a reputation within their communities for tackling local issues in a timely and co-ordinated manner. Collectively they portray a positive and effective image of neighbourhood policing and as such I commend them to you for their ongoing commitment to serving the public to the highest standards



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What's happening in Basing Wood?

Also known locally as Carpenter's Down Wood



After Public Consultation during November 2007 a Feedback Session will take place

at Popley Fields Community Centre
Carpenters Down

on Tuesday 15th January 2008
starting promptly at 7.30 – 8.30pm



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The Magic of Christmas

After months of organising and planning led by the Community Wardens, once again the "Magic of Christmas" was indeed magical. I am not very good at judging numbers but I would guess that more than 500 people attended. The weather was kind to us and we set off with a band leading the way. There were about 200 people including some fearsome looking pirates, clowns and many others dressed as their favorite toys. We stopped several times and sang a few carols. When we got back to Popley Fields Centre there was tea, coffee, orange juice, mulled wine and mince pies.

The local entertainment got off to a rocky start with some technical problems with the disc and the computer. But once that was sorted we were on a roll as they say. There were two groups who danced for us, some teenagers first then followed by some younger children. We then had the choir from the Christian Fellowship Church and some of us joined in (sorry to the folks near me but I have never claimed to be a singer and they could verify that). Then the pirates gave an exciting demonstration of sword fights. It was really colourful and I know the children enjoyed it because their faces and laughter showed it. There were several Christmas trees in one raffle all ready decorated and ready to take away. The sight of people carrying their decorated trees home was so funny and a great deal of laughter was heard by all. There was also a free raffle with three prizes of store vouchers.

Thank you to the Community Wardens, Police, Churches, Sentinel and volunteers for a fun night that Paul and I enjoyed and was also by all the residents. The saddest part was that we all thought that there was a stay of execution for your wardens, only to find out

within hours that there was yet another turnabout and it looks like the 20 Community Wardens and team will be replaced with a "Community Development Worker" and 5 PCSOs. We wait to see exactly what will happen in the new year.



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Travel Tokens

The new travel tokens will be purple and available for those entitled to pick up at designated places. For Popley it is at Melrose Community Hall on January 22nd from 9 am to 11-30am and from Popley Fields Community Centre from 1pm to 3pm. For Sherborne St John the pick up place is the Village Hall on February 12th from 9am to 11-30am. Oakridge is at The Hall for All on Feb 7th at 1-30pm to 3-30pm The tokens will be valid from 1st April until 31st March 2009.

The last date to use your Ruby colour tokens is 31st March 2008. If you don't use your tokens, or have a few left over, you can donate them to Neighbourcare. Iris King would be glad to see that they are used for this worthwhile charity.

You can post them to Iris at 55 Tintern Close or Iris King c/o Melrose Community Centre. For more details you can phone Iris on 411113.

For more details on claiming your Travel Tokens Contact Concessionary Fares Scheme, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, PO Box 191, Basingstoke, RG21 7EA

TRY NEW AGE KURLING

Would you like to have a go at this new fun activity which is suitable for everyone and anyone! (Special equipment is available for those with reduced mobility so that they may play on an equal basis).

It is based on the game of Curling which is played on ice, but this is an indoor version. No experience is needed, just wear comfortable clothes and shoes. For further details please telephone Jane Wilding on 01256 845574 or e-mail jane.wilding@basingstoke.gov.uk

I will be organising another FREE session in Popley in the New Year - if you are interested in coming along or would like further information please contact Jane Wilding on 01256 845574 or e-mail jane.wilding@basingstoke.gov.uk

WALKING THE WAY TO HEALTH

Do you want to improve your health and fitness and meet new people? Winter can be a very lonely time, so why not join our friendly group and come along for an hours walk every Friday morning. Meet us inside Popley Fields Community Centre at 11am, whatever the weather - just wear suitable clothes and shoes. if you are interested in coming along or would like further information please contact Jane Wilding on 01256 845574 or e-mail jane.wilding@basingstoke.gov.uk



First things first, I hope everybody had a fantastic Christmas and a great New Year from all at M.F.C Popley.

Well we didn't get a lot of football in, in December. Due to the weather, all of our games were called off.

We have now been going for 2 years, which is amazing! Because it only seems like yesterday we started it all. And we have had some great performances from all teams.

I would like to thank all of our coaches, players and supporters for all of their efforts over the 2007 period, thank you.

I personally met one of our supporters on the 7th December at Abbey Court. Now she doesn't come and watch, but reads and comments on every single Popley Matters edition, which means a lot to me, because she was 100 years old on the 4th December, Happy Birthday Phyllis, lots of love from all at M.F.C Popley.

I hope we have more to report next month.

Thanks for your support.

Lee Austen

Tel: 07810444995 **Email:** mfcpopley@hotmail.co.uk

Diaries from The Old Codger

Well, I hope you all had a good Christmas and have stayed safe. Did you all cut out the I.T.M.A page and put it up? Have you sorted out your living areas around the house; are the tatty slippers in the bin? Don't forget all of these things they may be small but it could save you a long stay in hospital. Not a lot of you have access to the web site of Popley Matters but if you have I hope you all like the continuing story of Baby G. It is just for a laugh to help put a smile on your faces and I hope not offensive to anyone.



Christmas is a time of celebrations not everyone will say the same thing and some do not like Christmas. Christmas brings back sad times and you tend to remember family and friends that are no longer with us, however they would never want you to feel sad. I try to remember the good times not just the sad. The schools and churches in Basingstoke always get into the Festive Spirit It upset the Old Codger when I read Simone's page before Christmas, when asking the Head of the school what are we going to do this year for the Christmas play only to be told "I don't do Christmas". BAH HUMBUG! That is all I want to say on the matter.

The O.C. was ill leading up to Christmas. It started with an ear infection, then a sort of cold you know the ones that you have but take weeks to come out so I had this for over four weeks. Then it went to my chest and lungs. Boy did I go downhill quickly after that! "Her Indoors" is upstairs sorting out insurance papers, and everytime she goes out she keeps coming home from town with black dresses. I even found a set of handkerchiefs with black borders around them. I have not finished my life's ambitions yet I tell her, so you can take that lot back to the shop you got it from. Seriously, I know that if you have something you to fight for you will do that no matter what is thrown at you in life. I got lumbered with "Her Indoors" so that is my burden. Ambition in life gives you a goal, if you are a quitter then what fun and adventures in life you will miss out on. When I look around our town then look back over my life the youth of this era have so much going for them to carve out great futures. The education we have is FREE and one of the best in the world. People knock our health service, just look at the amount of people around the world who come to our country to get medical help! And do we pay, no it is FREE. The amount of our doctors and

from the terraces up and down the country are not allowed in any Ice Hockey arena and this is monitored closely. I have a boy of five and niece of nine who watch the majority of games not just for the Hockey but for the whole package. The atmosphere is electric, everyone gets involved with lively music played when there is a break in play for all fans home & away to clap in time to. The Bison have a reputation for the noisiest arenas in the country with a band of fans who bring a selection of drums, horns and rattles and bang away on these throughout the game, and as for the celebration dance and Bison wave it has to be seen to be believed.

After a game you can catch up with the whole team who join us in the family bar and are always happy to chat or have a photo taken with them and give autographs happily. There aren't many top flight sports that I know of where that happens. Family tickets are available and every ticket also allows you a free skate after a weekend game. So I urge you to pop down, parking is free and easy, doors open a hour before face off (That's the start) and I will be surprised if you aren't entertained and hooked just like I was over twenty years ago. So set your video for your TV programme, it can wait and come



on over, you will be welcomed by one and all. If you would like to find out more please have a look at www.bstokebison.co.uk or email me at bisonmusic@hotmail.co.uk for current prices, fixtures and special offers, I look forward to seeing you in the very near future and a happy new year.

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Saturday Nights?

Have a little think back about your last few Saturday nights, were you with the family, or out with friends? Chances are you were stuck in front of the TV catching up with the latest reality or celebrity show, maybe waiting for a result to see who will be the next big thing for 2008. You may

however have been jumping up and down with excitement with another 900 fans of the Basingstoke Bison. I have been a fan of Ice Hockey since the Bracknell Bees inception just over 20 years ago, as a teenager me and my friends heard about something different on offer at the new ice rink. None of us were really into live sport and really didn't know what to expect, we didn't know a dot about the rules, how many players on a team or even how long a game was but went along on the off chance we may enjoy it. It was love at first game, two decades on the passion is still there and things have changed tremendously for the better in that time. Having moved to Basingstoke just over 6 years ago I am now privileged to be involved with the Basingstoke Bison and the enthusiasm is stronger than ever, my reasons? Let me explain.

Think about Ice Hockey for a moment, what are your first impressions? I guarantee most of them will be unfounded, many people don't even know we have a top flight Ice Hockey team in Basingstoke. A visit to the Arena, situated at Basingstoke leisure park ticks all the boxes for a perfect evenings entertainment with the family, and family to me is paramount. The sport itself is fast, it doesn't work well on the TV so if that has been your first impression please discard it and try it again live. The rules are very simple, so simple in fact that by the end of your first visit you will have been able to work out the majority without any help, however there are FREE guides available at every game. The offside rule, unlike football it really is simplicity itself. There is a Blue line on the ice, if the attacking player is the wrong side of the line before being passed the puck, you got it, he's offside. The other rules are just as simple!

The biggest plus point of the sport is it really is a family night out, it doesn't matter if you are 5 or 105 as it offers something for everyone. The game is split into three 20 minute periods with overtime and then penalties if it remains a draw, this adds to the watching through your fingers nervous excitement, the intervals between periods are filled with figure skating displays and games that fans participate in with names like Chuck a Puck, the Shootarama and even Chuck a Duck. I wont even try to explain here just come along and try it for yourself. But for me as a parent it is key for my children to be able to come along and be involved with something that is so family friendly. The sort of language and gestures that can be seen and heard

nurses that go to the Third World to do operations for the poor and needy on the medical ships they do that for FREE. The places our youth have now. I and many of my era stand in amazement at the things they have and places to go. I can remember a roller-skate rink and ice rink and then when old enough dance halls with big bands like Ray McFay and his orchestra. We also had youth clubs. I loved my pigeon racing with my grandfather, his dad and his brother. We would sit at the top of our garden just looking out over an old aerodrome, it was about a mile or so off and if we saw one of our pigeons come from that direction we would know we had a good bird and would stand a chance in winning the race. Nowadays it is all about money. Pigeon racing as I knew it has gone to the professionals who have it with big money to be made. The sport as far as I was concerned died.

Well, I went off on a tangent again didn't I? It is getting to the end of this month so just a few things more. Don't forget the birds; I have noticed that a lot of finches have not migrated this year. A lot of our bushes that have usually have berries on them are bare, why I don't know. Please keep feeding them. It is a good idea to buy some fat balls for the blue tits and the finches they love it, if you put pea nuts out in the wire tubes remember to tip any out after about a week or they get a mould over them that can kill birds.

Lastly summing up, it was people like my great grandfather, your great great grandfathers who carved this life out for you all so youngsters can all have a good start in life with an education, and dedicated people to guide you all so do not throw



Table Top Sale on January 23rd 2-4pm at Magnolia Court,
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