



Basingstoke & Deane *Over 55's Forum*



Assisted by
*Basingstoke
and Deane*

NEWSLETTER –SEPTEMBER 2014

A warm welcome to you all and hope you will find some interesting reading in this issue of the newsletter. It's hard to believe that autumn is here already, particularly as the weather continues to be more like summer. I have not long been back from a glorious holiday by Lake Garda in Italy. Some days the temperatures soared into the high twenties, making it too hot to want to do anything. There was a minor hiccup when, on our last afternoon, we had a mini tornado, which lasted about two hours. All the lights went out; there were umbrellas and lounge cushions flying about and the palm trees in the hotel grounds were bent double. The staff in the hotel were brilliant and still managed to produce a hot meal for the evening despite the lack of power for quite some time.

Shame I missed George Clooney's wedding – we were in Venice the week before!!

MEMBERSHIP

We have 658 members currently. As Graham announced at the August Forum, the waiting list has been opened and we already have six names on the list. We will continue to reduce your membership to £5, if you renew between 1st October and 31st December. The cut off for renewal will be the end of January 2015.

Our condolences go to the family and friends of Mrs J Cavey, Mrs B Andrews and Mrs Nellie Coates, who passed away recently.

Don't forget to tell us if you are having problems receiving (or not receiving) your paperwork – if we don't know then we cannot rectify it.

As Graham announced at the last Forum, Cllr Cathy Osselton will be holding a "Surgery" for members at the Forum meetings, between 9.00 and 9.30 and at coffee break, to discuss any local concerns or suggestions you may have.

JULY OPEN FORUM MEETING

There was the usual excellent turn-out for our August Open Forum meeting when members enjoyed presentations on diverse topics, from the Home Library Service to the History of the Freemasons. The following is a summary of the Minutes of the meeting. The full Minutes can be viewed on the Forum web site at www.bdover55sforum.btck.co.uk or you can request a copy from Gerald.

Graham opened the meeting, welcoming members and guests and ran through some of the issues taken up by the Forum on your behalf. Firstly, following representations, the number 12 was now routed round the top of the town.

Secondly, the Forum attended the public meeting on bus services to put forward our views. Hampshire County Council will be conducting a review of the services at the end of the year.

Finally, the problem of lorries parking on Kingsclere Road seems to have improved, following representations by the Forum.

Our first speakers were Lois Lang and Jill Reilly who are volunteers, working for the Hampshire County Council, and they cover the North Hampshire area. They described that books, CDs, Tapes etc. can be delivered to people who could no longer get to the library due to health, disability or caring responsibilities.

Over Hampshire there are 328 volunteers and 813 customers. All volunteers go through a recruitment process, involving an informal interview and a DBS check, and are expected to comply with instructions and standards set by the library staff. They wear a distinctive yellow lanyard with the wording

"VOLUNTEER" in black lettering. Where possible, volunteers are matched with customers, taking into account preferences for both parties.

Most volunteers are sent on Trigger Tool training which helps them to identify if the customer is getting into any sort of difficulties. If there are any problems, they can refer the customer to Adult Services or other appropriate agency. Lois went on to give some examples where such help had been given.

Anyone can receive the Home Library Service by calling at their local library or by phoning Hants Direct on 0845 6035631. Lois explained that it was difficult to find lonely isolated people who have become housebound. If you know of anyone in such circumstances, please refer them to the HLS.

Lois went on to describe the Reminiscence Collection, based at the Discovery Centre which could be borrowed for sessions with groups who have memory problems and the posters, quizzes, flash cards and many other items. She also outlined all the other services offered by the Library Service, including the Film Club.

The next item on the Agenda was a DVD of the 4 day visit by members to Belgium and France to see WW1 War graves, with commentary provided by our secretary, Gerald Merritt. Despite problems running the DVD, it was still very moving to see the many graves and monuments from the "Great War".

Finally, we had a very interesting presentation by Chris Rashbrook on the history of the Freemasons which, I think, enlightened many of us into the workings of the organisation and helped to dispense with many of the myths which have grown up around it. He explained that it is not the secret organisation that many people think.

The Freemasons is the largest secular society in the country and takes in all religions. There are also ladies lodges and there is a local one at Dummer. Money is donated to many non-masonic charities - some £15 million. Every hospice receives a 4 figure sum and the first cheque (£500,000) for 9/11 came from the Freemasons in England and Wales.

Chris went on to describe how the Freemasons started, over 300 years ago by the skilled masons when they came to end of building churches and cathedrals. The first Grand Lodge was formed in 1717 when 4 groups got together and there are now 8,000 lodges in the UK. Chris said that they are organised into provinces which are broadly aligned to counties. There are 252 in Hants and the IOW with about 9,000 Freemasons.

Whilst the Freemasons thrived in WW1, it was different in WW2, due to the rise of fascism which was frightened of groups getting together and Hitler promised to execute all Freemasons. Over 20,000 were lost in the Spanish Civil War.

Chris finished by saying that he had been Mason since 1966 and that their belief was that one should live life in the best possible way.

Graham reminded the members about the Variety Show which will be held on 4th October and will again feature the professional theatre group from the New Forest with a new show, Lyrics and Laughter. Tickets were now available and cost only £6.

NEW AGE KURLING

We have 2 more dates for the Kurling sessions: Monday 20th October and Monday 17th November at 2.00. Come along and have a bit of fun and relaxation.

EVENTS FOR 2014

Non-members should add £2 to the cost of trips.

Saturday 25th October – Swindon and shopping outlet. Members £13.00.

Sunday 2nd November - RAF Cosford. Members £17.75 (Coach only - Admission is Free).

Monday 24th November – Birmingham & Frankfurt Christmas Market. Members £15.00.

2014/15 New Year Celebrations 4day event will be at the Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl. Price £299 per person and a monthly saving scheme will operate. **This event is now full.**

CARNIVAL CHORUS

Our choir sessions restarted this month after a break during the school holidays. We will be learning new songs for our repertoire and getting a programme together for the Christmas concerts. Two groups have already asked if we can sing for them. We really appreciate the help and support Keith gives us. Our Forum member, Mel Kent, has very generously donated an electric keyboard for the choir. This is great, as the one we currently use is very heavy to transport to the venues so Gerald will appreciate that! Don't forget, if you want to come along to the Carnival Hall on Tuesday afternoons at 1.30 to 3.00, you will be very welcome. It will cost you £2 a session and it is very good exercise for your lungs!

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

FLU JAB

We are now at the time of the year when you should start thinking about making an appointment for your flu jab. Don't keep putting it off and then forget about making the appointment.

ELECTRIC BLANKET CHECK

This is also the time when you should make an appointment to have your electric blanket checked, before starting to use it again. The Fire Service is offering the free check and the Basingstoke Fire Station is making appointments for Wednesday 22nd October. The number to ring **01962 833358**

Better to be safe than sorry for both of these!!

BEWARE OF SCAMS.

Scam 1

One of our members received a phone call recently to say that back in the 90's they had been incorrectly put into a higher tax band than they should have been. In order to claim the overpayment, they would need to send a one off payment of £55. Our member realised that this was a scam and reported it to Gerald who raised the matter with Cllr Cathy Osselton. She spoke to the Council Tax Office who confirmed that this is a scam that they and the police are aware of. If the Tax Office needs to contact any resident it would be by letter, **never a phone call.**

Scam 2

A lady was flagged down on a junction to the A303 by a man claiming to have run out of petrol. He was well dressed and his car was a mint green colour. The lady took pity on him and gave him £20 and, in return, he gave her a business card with fake details and a 'gold ring', for security. She now realises that this was a scam and has asked for this information to be circulated. Any such incident should be reported to the police on 101 and **think twice before stopping.**

CHEQUES

Although cheque usage has been in decline over the past few years, falling from 4 billion cheques written in 1990 to 718 million in 2013, the Cheque and Credit Clearing Company, who manages the cheque clearing system for banks and building societies, forecast that 275 million cheques will still be written in 2023. The clearing company is working toward improving the process of clearing cheques for companies, charities and private individuals by using new technology which is being introduced. The process is called "cheque imaging". Once a cheque is paid into a bank, images of the cheque are exchanged between relevant banks, thus dispensing with the need to send the actual cheque around the country. If you are really brave you will be able to send an image of a cheque to your bank via a secure online banking app on a smart phone or tablet rather than having to go to the bank to pay it in. New legislation has to be brought in before this process can be implemented and a lot more work and discussions will have to take place before a date is announced – **Watch this space!!**

RECYCLING

I finally received a reply from Cllr Eachus in response to my letter about the recycling of plastics, yoghurt pots and tetra packs and the lack of bins. She has told me that this system has been set up as

a trial to see if they can collect the materials required and ensure that they are recycled through reprocesses in the United Kingdom. The usage levels are being monitored and also the amount of contamination. One bank has already been moved due to inappropriate use. The joint waste team are actively looking for new sites and they are also looking at increasing the material types that can be collected in the kerbside recycling green bins. She has also assured me that those people who are unable to use the new bins will not be penalised if they continue to put the new items into the black bins. Next year is the earliest that this new system will be in full operation.

There is an update to the above.

We have been told that the company who had been given the contract for making these new collections has now pulled out and the council will have to look for an alternative contractor. Further to the above, we understand that a new company has taken on the contract!

BOTTLE TOPS

Instead of putting your bottle tops in the rubbish (**note: they should be removed before putting the bottles in the green bin**) you can take them to Lush, the shop next door to Rymans in Festival Place. I am not sure where they send them but it is to help fund the purchase of wheelchairs. If you want to find out more, call in to the shop and they will be more than pleased to explain it all to you.

STAGECOACH

The new timetables for the buses have been implemented, after all the discussions and meetings. I believe there are still areas where the service is not completely satisfactory. If there is a particular problem in your area which you think needs addressing, speak to Gerald who can take it up with Stagecoach. The company has been monitoring the routes for passenger numbers and found that, for instance, on the Berg estate only 9 passengers used the bus. Their response to this is **“USE THE BUSES”**! Mr Rob Vince (Manager) of Basingstoke depot who came and spoke at one of our Open Forum meetings has moved on and his post is waiting to be filled.

BASINGSTOKE SCRAPSTORE

RCS Play Services are working with local businesses and the community to recycle. Collecting waste and unwanted items helps them to provide local early year settings, schools, after school clubs and community groups a range of creative resources to use for projects. The Scrapstore will be in Chute House at the bottom of Church Street and they are hoping to open during the October half term. They will be collecting a range of unwanted items such as buttons, off-cuts of material, nuts and bolts and all the sort of items you hang onto just in case you might need them.

RACE NIGHT

Shopmobility is organising a RACE NIGHT on Saturday **18th October** at the Masonic Hall, Victoria Street. The evening of races will start at 7.00pm. This is a professionally run evening, using filmed races with low betting rates. The cost of £15 will include a buffet supper and a bar will be available. The numbers are restricted so, if you fancy having a “flutter”, don’t delay and reserve your places. Contact number is **01256 350142**

CHRISTMAS TEA DANCE

We are organising a Christmas Tea dance for Tuesday **16th December** from 2.00 to 5.00 at the Carnival Hall. Tickets £5. Put this date in your diary and you will be informed when the tickets are ready to be issued.

BASINGSTOKE LIONS CLUB is organising an evening of big band music from the swing era, by the Apollo Big Band at Queen Mary’s College on Saturday 29th November at 7.30pm. The leader of the band, Lesley Bruce, is the son of Frank and Dorothy Bruce (members of the Forum).

The proceeds of the evening are being donated to the Basingstoke M/S Society as their daughter Caroline was taken from them with multiple sclerosis. Tickets will cost £12 and will be available from Frank or from John Lincoln on 01256 325280 after 23rd October. For every ticket purchased by a Forum member, £1 will be donated back to the Forum.



Great War Fashion

What ordinary women wore in extraordinary times.
“I was witnessing the death of luxury...” Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel.

Join author and costume historian Lucy Adlington for this inspiring insight into the lives and aspirations of women in World War One, as revealed through their clothes. With fascinating first-hand stories and a beautiful display of original uniforms and fashions, featured in Lucy’s exciting new book “Great War Fashion – Tales from the History Wardrobe”.

South Ham Library

Paddock Road, Basingstoke, RG22 6QB.

Monday 13 October at 2pm

Tickets: £3.00 including light refreshments

Booking line: 01256 336047

Basingstoke Male Voice Choir and Basingstoke Ladies Choir are joining together for a
50th Anniversary Concert.

It will be held at St Bedes Church, Popley Way on Saturday 1st November at 6.30pm.
Tickets will cost £8 (no concessions) and will be available from Jan Hodges on 01256
781035 and from Dawsons Music, Festival Place.

MEMBERS CORNER

MEN!!!!!!

Russ and Sam, 2 friends, very old and frail, met in the park every day to feed the birds, watch the squirrels and discuss world problems. One day Russ didn't show up. Sam didn't think too much about it until after Russ hadn't shown up for a week or so. This worried Sam but since they only ever met in the park he didn't know where Russ lived so he was unable to find out what had happened to him.

A month had passed and, as Sam approached the park one day, he was very excited and happy to see Russ sitting in their usual spot. He told him how worried he had been and said "For crying out loud Russ, what in the world happened to you?" Russ told him he had been in jail. Sam asked him what he had done and Russ told him that he had been to the coffee shop he liked to go to where a "cute little blonde waitress" worked and, one day, she filed rape charges against me. He told Sam that, at 89 years of age he was so proud of himself, that when he got into court he pleaded 'guilty' and "the damn judge gave me 30 days for lying under oath"!!

Sent in by Pam Heyfron

Computer problems

I think we are all probably familiar with the following:-

I was having trouble with my computer so I called Eric, my 14year old neighbour (whose bedroom looks like mission control!!), to see if he could help me. Eric clicked a couple of buttons and solved the problem immediately. I asked him what it was and he said it was an 'ID ten T' error. I asked him to explain so that I could fix it if it happened again. He grinned at me and said "haven't you ever heard of an "ID ten T" error before?" When I said "no" he told me to write it down and then I would be able to work it out. So I wrote down IDIOT.

I used to like Eric!!

Finally, did you know that according to the laws of ancient Mesopotamia you could be fined half a kilo of silver for biting someone's nose?!!!!!!

OPEN FORUM MEETINGS

The Forum meetings will always be held on a Wednesday at the Carnival Hall:
October 15th, December 10th (incl. AGM)

Marian Wilson

Editor –September 2014 Newsletter