

February 2024

BASINGA



Colin Follett



Old Basing and Lychpit Parish Magazine
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FEBRUARY COVER PHOTO, NOTES AND NEWS

This month's **cover photograph** is a view of **The Street under the Railway Bridge**, on a wet, miserable and cold afternoon in January, taken by **Colin Follett**.

February will soon be upon us and is the shortest month even with the extra day this year. February is named after the purification ritual Februa, which was a sort of early Roman spring cleaning festival. In Old English, February was called Solmonath (Mud month / Cake month) or Kale-monath (Kale or cabbage month). Gardening hints and tips on page 36 makes no mention of either mud or cabbage! February frequently occurs in lists of the most commonly misspelt words in the English language. Reasons to love February: Valentine's Day; Shrove Tuesday; Daffodils; the driest cold month of the year, with less rainfall than the preceding four months.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BASINGA

We welcome both regular and occasional items for the Basinga. The very **last date for copy** to the Editor for the **March edition** is **6pm on Saturday, 10th February**. Please use the forms on the **Basinga** website **www.basinga.org.uk** to get your dates, articles and letters to us (*see box on page 15 for further instructions*).

All advertising enquiries – classified, free adverts or inserts (flyers) can also be made via the website. **Don't forget that we only accept articles with about a 300-word maximum and articles are only published at the Editor's discretion.**

PHOTOS AND LOGOS FOR THE BASINGA

If any reader would like to offer a **photograph of the village environment** we would be happy to receive them, either for immediate use or to build up a portfolio of 'village views'. We now have a web form that you can use to send a photograph for the website archive and possible use in the magazine, go to **www.basinga.org.uk** and the form can be found on the '**Contributors Submission**' menu. Should you wish to submit multiple photos, or a photo is too 'large', they can be emailed directly to the **Editor** at **editor@basinga.org.uk**

This feature should **NOT** be used for Free Ads or article photos, which can be attached to their own forms. We welcome **club** and **society logos**, with the option to use them within articles. Please send graphics to **editor@basinga.org.uk**

BASINGA ADVERTISERS

The Basinga magazine is distributed free of charge to over three thousand households and premises in the Old Basing and Lychpit area, and a growing number of web 'browsers'.

The magazine is produced and distributed by teams of volunteers. While our printing costs are covered by paid adverts from local businesses, without the income from adverts we would not be able to function and our readership's support for our advertisers is crucial in maintaining this magazine.

When you are looking for a plumber, electrician, roofer, builder or anyone/anything else, please look in the Basinga first. Our advertisers are well-established and most of them have been with us for a long time, reliable and would welcome your custom.

Our website **www.basinga.org.uk** has a list of our advertisers, either alphabetically or by page; from the home page choose 'OUR ADVERTISERS' then 'OUR CONTRACT ADS'.

NEWS FROM ST. MARY'S CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

At the start of January, St Mary's was lucky enough to have a visit from The Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen, the next Bishop of Winchester. He came into lead an Act of Worship on Epiphany. As part of his visit he 'chalked the school door'.

In the Epiphany tradition of 'chalking the doors', Christians chalk the doors at home and at Church with : '20 † C † M † B † 24' on a day during Epiphany. The numbers refer to the calendar year; the crosses stand for Christ. The letters mean two things C, M, and B are the initials for the traditional names of the Magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar), but they are also an abbreviation of the Latin blessing 'Christus Mansionem Benedicat', which means, 'May Christ bless this house/dwelling'.



The **Year Three** classes have a very exciting term ahead of them, including a year group disco, where they will have lots of fun dancing, chatting with their friends and playing with their glow sticks! As well as that, rehearsals will begin for their year group play. Even with those exiting activities, their learning will continue with "Enter the Classics" and learning about some classic books like 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe', 'Matilda' and other great books.

This term, the **Year Five** children will be heading off to Queen Mary's College for swimming lessons, where they will be split into 3 groups, judged by their skill, and they will learn to swim or improve their skills once a week. What an exciting term they have ahead of them! Their topic this term is the ancient Greeks and during their journey to the past, they will be writing their own Greek Myth with heroes, monsters, victory, and tragedy!

Year Four are learning all about how the geography of our local area compares to a different locality in Europe – they will enjoy their French café later in the term.

Year Six have started their spring term topic which looks at entertainment through the ages; they will learn all about entertainment in the Tudor and Elizabethan times and look at the work of William Shakespeare. They are also being treated to a movie night this term!

We are all really happy to see our old and tired Rainbow Room redecorated and refurnished to help support children who may be sad or upset. Thank you to the Village Café who raised money for us to improve this space, we all love the lights!

This spring term looks set to be busy and exciting at St Mary's and we are looking forward to the spring weather to play out in and to seeing the daffodils grow all around our school.

Abi and Leon

V&A

Threads of India

Design inspiration from the V&A archives

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CHRISTMAS AT THE RECREATION GROUND

Following the success of this event – perhaps now a distant memory – we should like to offer belated thanks to those that helped to make it such a success. Firstly, Johnny Hammond whose suggestion spurred us into action and who carried out his MC duties so professionally; the ladies from the Village Café who produced the most amazing array of festive bakes and helped on the night; our long-suffering Grounds Contractor, Stephen, and his team who provided essential back-up including putting up (and taking down) the thousands of fairy lights and generally made the evening possible; lastly, Hampshire County Councillor, Elaine Still, whose generous grant enabled us to “pull out the stops” ensuring everyone had a good time with plenty to eat and drink. A total of £729.69 was raised for St Michael’s Hospice thanks to the generosity of those attending. Thank you to all and we look forward to next Christmas!

CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Since the Parish Council decided to reduce the carbon footprint of its buildings, we have had consultants’ reports and surveyed and upgraded the insulation of these buildings. We have now received planning consents to install solar panels on the workshop roof, and for heat pumps. By storing the power the panels generate in a battery we hope to get about one third of the power the parish office consumes; a heat pump will provide a more efficient heating system and, by adding better control systems and cheap night tariff power, we expect to reduce our carbon footprint. At the Cottage in Riley Lane, installing a heat pump will enable us to remove the gas boiler. At the time of writing this article, we are out to tender, and by early February should be close to initiating the necessary work.

RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY

After providing 12 years of financial expertise, our Finance Officer will be retiring at the end of May and we will be seeking someone with a financial background to take over this role. We are currently reviewing the job specification, however this is again likely to be a “Contractor” role of approximately 20 hours per month plus some additional hours when required. If you have a financial background or experience of managing accounts and think this may suit you, please register your interest with the Clerk and further information will be provided when available.

Parish Clerk: **Mrs Sandra Tuck**

Deputy Clerk: **Mrs Kate Hope**

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Stay Connected



OLD BASING SCOUTS



We are now well into our Spring term with all the Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts at Old Basing enjoy the new activities this year has to offer!

This term will see the introduction of our new Squirrel section for four to five year-olds on which the team are currently working hard to launch. We're expecting the sessions to be packed with fun, games, badges, laughter, and so much more to help our youngest members learn the skills they need for life. Of course, none of it would be possible without the support of the amazing leaders who plan and deliver such an inspiring programme.

The rest of our sections are also looking forward to exciting events this month in addition to their weekly meeting. The Beavers are looking forward to going 'Around the World in 80 minutes' and learning about cultures from all over the world! Meanwhile, both the Cubs and Scouts are looking forward to their own individual overnight adventures this term where they will get a chance to develop traditional scouting skills.

We are always looking for new people to join in the fun! If you're interested or want more information, then please contact us by email: group@oldbasingscouts.org.uk

Danny Evans

LINGUATASTIC LANGUAGE SCHOOL



2024 is a leap year. Of course, nowadays, it's just as common for women to propose to men, but back in the day, it was only in a leap year that a woman might ask. And if the man declined, he

would be "punished". In Denmark, he would have to give the woman 12 pairs of gloves; possibly to hide the lack of engagement ring. In Finland, he would have to provide enough fabric to make a skirt. – Any thoughts on the reasoning behind this?

In southern Germany, there's a tradition where boys leave a small Liebesmaie (a birch tree decorated with ribbons), on the doorstep of their crushes on 1st May. During a leap year, the girls leave them at the doorstep of the boy of their dreams, instead.

In Aurora, Illinois, women were sick of the sexist leap day traditions. So, in 1948, they took over male-dominated city positions and arrested unmarried men for "the crime of being single!"

In Taiwan, there's a belief that old people are more likely to die in a leap year. (Well, there is a tiny percentage increase in the chances of a mishap just by having an extra day in the year). To help increase their chances of survival, daughters (again, why the daughters?) return to their elderly parents' homes and cook up pig trotters, which are thought to be good for the health and bring good fortune!

And finally, in Scotland, leap years are regarded as a bad year for livestock, especially sheep. There's an old saying: 'Leap year was ne'er a good sheep year.' Perhaps it's something to do with the weather:

"Schaltjahr wird Kaltjahr" is a German proverb meaning "leap year will be a cold year".

Be it a bad year for sheep or a cold year for us all, LinguaTastic can offer you (and/or your children) some warmth in its language lessons. E-mail info@linguatastic.com

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THE BIG TURKEY LUNCH

An enjoyable festive community meal to meet new people and join old friends – that is what we try to bring you at The Big Turkey Lunch!

This year, it was well attended and held on Friday 29th December 2023, in the Village Hall. I think it is fair to say that all the attendees – guests and volunteers - had a good meal and drinks, caught up with old friends, met new people, puzzled over the quiz and generally enjoyed this wonderful community event. It is always a pleasure to put on this festive meal BUT it would not happen if it were not for the organisers led so well by Rosey Stevens, all the volunteers and cooks, all the donations and good spirit. Our main donations came from The Carnival Committee and The Good Neighbours Committee. Other donations were from The Co-Op, Tesco, Waitrose and cash donations on the day. Also, thanks to the Village Hall Committee for the favourable rate for the hire of the hall. All donations are appreciated as it is fairly costly to cater for 175 people! (photo Alison Marras)



Please contact **Rosey** at roseymarshr2@gmail.com if you would like to join us in the organisation and preparation of the day or have helpful suggestions.

We look forward to welcoming you all again in December 2024 – watch this space!

HELPING DOGS & CATS UK RESCUE



Knitting for a Cause: Supporting Animals in Need!

Calling all knitters: please help make a significant difference for animals in need by knitting jumpers to be sold at the **Helping Dogs & Cats UK Rescue charity shop**, located at **4 Feathers Lane, Basingstoke**.

Helping Dogs & Cats UK Rescue is committed to the welfare of dogs, cats, and other small animals. Their invaluable work spans rehoming, rehabilitation, veterinary care, microchipping, spaying, neutering, and supporting our local community through an **Animal Foodbank**, currently assisting over 70 families struggling to care for their pets.

Here's how you can join in:

Knitting for a Cause: Whether you prefer provided knitting patterns or using your own, all sizes of jumpers are required. Your contribution is incredibly valuable.

Materials Matter: Choose soft, washable yarns and suitable materials for the jumpers to ensure the animals' comfort and simplify caring for the garments.

Unleash Your Creativity: Add your personal touch to each jumper. Consider blending colours, experimenting with patterns, or even embroidering delightful designs to make them distinct and appealing.

Drop-off Point: Completed jumpers can be left in the animal foodbank box outside St Mary's church entrance. (Food donations also welcomed please)

Spread the Word: Share this initiative with friends, family, and fellow crafting enthusiasts. Together, we can amplify our impact in raising funds for vulnerable animals.

BASINGSTOKE AND DISTRICT RAILWAY SOCIETY



Tales On and Off the Footplate on Wednesday, 14th February will be presented by Bill Davies. Bill will take a light-hearted look at his long railway career working as a cleaner, fireman, driver and manager going back as far as the steam era.

The presentation at our meeting on **Wednesday, 28th February** will be by Society member Terry Foulger. His topic is not decided at the time of writing, so keep an eye on the Society website for details to see what he comes up with from his extensive knowledge of the railway scene.

Our meetings are held at **7.45pm** at **The Wote Street Club**, which has a licenced bar, in New Road in Basingstoke town centre, and visitors are most welcome. More details are on our website at www.bdrs70d.com or call the Secretary on **07837 320790**.

KEYLESS VEHICLE THEFT

Keyless vehicle systems offer convenience to drivers; however, they have also become a top target for vehicle thieves. High-end vehicles are particularly at risk, increasing the rates of crime across the UK.

A fictional case study to illustrate: The vehicle owner woke up one morning to an empty driveway. After reviewing her CCTV footage, the unsettling truth came to light: her car had been stolen using a 'relay attack.' Two individuals worked together to intercept and clone the signal from her key fob, which was inside her house. In under three minutes, her car was driven away without any obvious signs of theft.



Recognising suspicious behaviour. Unlike traditional car thieves, those who specialize in keyless theft often don't fit the typical 'criminal' profile. Here are some indicators to watch out for: **Individuals hanging around your property or car for extended periods** could be a red flag; Be cautious if you notice **someone using multiple electronic devices near your car** or residence or if you notice the **same individual or vehicle near your property multiple times**, especially at odd hours.

How can I protect my vehicle? Keep keys/fobs (don't forget the spare) away from doors, windows or any place where they can be seen or easily located. Invest in a signal blocking pouch (Faraday bag). This can block the transmission of the signal from the vehicle key fobs once they are inside the pouch. Wireless signals on some keyless fobs can be turned off. Look in your manual to see if this is possible. If not, contact your vehicle manufacturer. Purchase a steering wheel lock. This can be an effective tool in the fight against keyless car thefts, as of course it cannot be compromised via technology. Park your vehicle in your garage if you have one. If you have more than one vehicle on your driveway, park the more expensive vehicle behind the other, to block its access.

Vehicle theft can involve thieves breaking into a vehicle and accessing the ODB port to start it. Contact your local dealership or an auto electrician to relocate the OBD port in your vehicle. Consider the use of the following: An OBD port protective cover or lock guard; a remote central locking keyless system upgrade or an upgraded immobiliser system to protect your vehicle. Invest in a tracker. It won't stop your vehicle being stolen, but it can significantly increase the chances of the police locating it.

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ADVERTISERS NEWS

Welcome to GMK Decorating Services on page 20 and Renown Renovations on page 25.

We ask for submissions to the magazine and website to be made via www.basinga.org.uk using the web forms:

Selection for Articles/Letters and Diary Dates will be found on the “Submissions” drop down and for Free Ads and Concession/Poster Ads on the “Advertise with us” drop down. Paid advertising enquiries can also be made from the same dropdown menu.

Submissions made via the forms now provide a common input for both the magazine and website and are automatically routed to the member of the team responsible for processing them. All submissions must be received by the 10th of the month (6th in December) previous to the magazine issue month.

If you have trouble finding the forms, you can of course contact us and we will advise.

Our Privacy Policy is available to read on the website which includes the GDPR requirements for publishing photographs.

Contacts for general enquiries and assistance:

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Note: All ads are processed in received date order. Ads not included this month will be entered in the next issue, space permitting. If you do not want your ad to appear later, contact the Advertising Manager (*see page 42 for contact details*). Ads also appear on the website: www.basinga.org.uk (with photographs if available).

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HIS MAJESTY'S ROYAL MARINES AT THE ANVIL

Basingstoke Deane Rotary present **His Majesty's Royal Marines at The Anvil on Sunday, 4th February**, at **3pm**. The majestic full concert Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines, the Corps of Drums and everyone's favourites, our very special guests, The Chelsea Pensioners, will again make this a fantastic event. So much more than just a military band! Tickets on sale from Anvil Box Office.

MENCAP CHARITY DINNER AND QUIZ NIGHT

A fundraising event to make a difference to the lives of people with a learning disability takes place at **The Restaurant, Basingstoke College of Technology**, Basingstoke RG21 8TN, **Thursday, 1st February**, at **7.00pm** (doors open from 6pm).

A fun-filled evening, delicious food and brain-teasing questions. Welcome drink on arrival. Price **£28.50** per person for a two-course dinner. Up to six in a quiz team. Guest speakers, a bar, raffle and a prize.

For information and tickets visit www.CharityDinnerQuiz-01Feb24.eventbrite.co.uk

DEMENTIA EDUCATION SESSIONS

Bluebird Care are holding **Community Practical Dementia** education sessions over the next few months as part of our new Dementia Care Adviser Service.

These sessions are aimed at supporting **Family Carers in the North Hampshire** area who are looking after someone with dementia. To attend and reserve a seat at one of these sessions, email: kingsclere@bluebirdcare.co.uk to book the venue you wish to attend and we will contact you to confirm your booking:

Thursday, 29th February, 10am to noon at **Viables Community Centre**, The Harrow Way, Basingstoke RG22 4BJ



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Supporting Hampshire Hospitals Charity, the NHS charity supporting patients, staff and volunteers at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust across Basingstoke, Winchester, Andover and Alton hospitals.

Media movers and shakers are attending **THE GALA DINNER LAUNCH** of Max and Molly Burdock's new TV channel MBC, and you are invited to join them! But as well as a two-course meal with coffee and mints there may also be a murder to contend with - which you can help solve. Commencing at **7.30 pm on Saturday, 17th February at Test Valley Golf Club. RG25 3DS £35.00** including two course meal including coffee (choice of menu with vegetarian option). Tickets available from the Golf Club

THE BASINGSTOKE AREA YOUTH ORCHESTRA AND CHOIR

Saturday, March 2nd at 7.30pm. Returning to **The Anvil** and showcasing some of the best musical talent from across the borough. The wind, strings, percussion, guitar, and vocal ensembles will perform well-known favourites. The evening will also feature guest choir Hampshire Harmony to celebrate their 60th anniversary, in a programme that will appeal to all. This 'one night only' concert, is a great opportunity to support your community, whilst raising money for the Mayor's charity appeal. This year's concert will support Shopmobility Basingstoke and Citizens Advice Basingstoke and Tadley.

The Mayor and Mayoress will greet you in the main foyer on arrival to welcome you to join them for an evening of entertainment.

Purchase tickets in person or by telephone. The **Box Office** is only open **Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm**, telephone number: **01256 844244**

Tickets: **£20**. Over 65s and f/t students **£16**, under 16s **£13** (includes £3 booking fee)

For information on the venue please contact The Box Office or visit the website at **Anvil Arts**. There will be a bucket collection at the end of the evening for the Mayors Charity which we hope you will support.

We do hope you will be able to join us.

THE LIONS CLUB OF BASINGSTOKE CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT

On **Saturday, 17th February, 7.00 for 7.30pm** at **Old Basing Royal British Legion, Crown Lane, Old Basing.**

Featuring: 100 questions; Raffle; Top Team Prize; Bar.

Cost **£5** per person for **teams of up to 6 people.**

Contact **Tony Bamberger** on **01256 850254** or email **tony.bamberger@hotmail.co.uk** or visit: **www.basingstokelions.org.uk** to book your table.

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CHINEHAM REPAIR CAFE



Many people are aware of the TV show **The Repair Shop**, but did you know that many communities, including ours, now have a local repair café? The **Chineham Repair Café**: chinehamrepair.org.uk runs **every third Saturday** of the month at **Christ Church Chineham, Reading Road**, between **10am** and **1pm**.

Running for over a year now the café and its volunteers have repaired or extended the lives of many items and reduced the amount of material that goes to landfill. Whether it's computers, electrical items, garden tools, clothes, furniture or toys, the café volunteers can take a look. Maybe you want to be a volunteer – come and see us at the next event, on **Saturday, 17th February**.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

At a meeting of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Cabinet on 9th January, it was decided that the Local Plan Update is ready to move to the next stage, known as Regulation 18. Residents will be given the opportunity to have their say on the draft plan through a six-week public consultation commencing imminently.

The Plan is a framework for guiding development and planning decisions in the Borough until at least 2040. Updating the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan has been a key priority for the Borough. It intends to introduce a more ambitious planning policy framework to meet the area's needs. The associated report of the Borough Council sets out the benefits of moving forward with the Local Plan Update (LPU).

Residents will be aware that the Parish Council and the environmental campaigning group, OBLEC, have been actively opposing large scale housing developments in the Parish. We are delighted to report that the Borough Council have acted on many of our representations. Lodge Farm and Hodds Farm have been excluded from the shortlist, although building developers may still seek to have those two sites included in the LPU.

On Land East of Basingstoke, the Borough Council concluded that 'the landowner is now promoting the site for the full 900 units (rather than the 450 units in the adopted Plan). It is considered that the site can be reallocated for development (subject to the sequential flood risk assessment process) and this can be broadly on the basis of the full 900 units proposed.'

The Parish Council and OBLEC remain opposed to such an enlarged development of the Land East of Basingstoke. We will continue to make the case for protecting the Loddon, restoring chalk streams and protecting the landscape, ecology and local heritage sites. We are unconvinced that the infrastructure is in place to support such a development, nor even that promised facilities will actually be delivered. The close proximity of the sewage works and incinerator plant will not be conducive to the health and well-being of those living nearby. Finally, the proposed access route into Pyotts Hill is clearly unworkable.

The Parish Council is also currently developing a new Neighbourhood Plan which will feed into the LPU in due course.

The Consultation is an opportunity for residents to express their own views about the Local Plan. Details of how to do this will soon be made available on the Parish Council and OBLEC websites.

Murray Campbell, Vice Chair, Old Basing and Lychpit Parish Council

Dear friends,

Happy New Year to you and your families as 2024 begins. I suspect that it feels a bit late to be beginning this letter with new year greetings especially as by the time you read this we will have moved on from all the festivities and we will be on the brink of another significant moment in the life of the church which is Ash Wednesday -the start of Lent - as we prepare for Easter. You may have already realised that Easter is early this year as Easter Sunday is on March 31st which means that Lent begins on the February 14th (Valentine's Day!). So, after syrupy, sugary pancakes on the 13th we are invited into a period of fasting, penitence and self-examination. Mmm.....how inviting does that sound?

Traditionally, Lent is that time when we might consider giving something up and try and stick it out for 40 days or so (if you take the Sundays off). Some folk might manage this. Many do not. A little like making a new year's resolution. If you made one, maybe your resolve is still going strong. I suspect for many of us it probably lasted a few days at most and leaves us, at best, feeling as if we have let ourselves down a bit and, at worst, beating ourselves up and forgetting to be kind to ourselves in what is already a harsh and unforgiving world.

I have a confession to make. I have never made a new year's resolution and I have never given anything up for Lent, especially not chocolate. I have no good reason for this except that I lack willpower and a bit of chocolate along with other things helps me navigate my way through each day. I do wonder if the 'giving something up' means that all we do is just postpone our want of something until we get to a later date, in this case Easter Sunday, when we can then gorge ourselves and overdo it and pat ourselves on the back and say we did it for a time, but now we can get back to normal again. I'm not sure that really achieves anything, does it?

For me, I've found a different way to mark the season of Lent. Rather than give something up, it is to take something up and to do something different that will make a lasting difference to my own wellbeing and hopefully the wellbeing of others. It's something that helps me grow in my relationship with God. This might be a solitary task like being quiet, reading, writing, being creative in some way or 'decluttering' some part of my life. It might be spending time with someone or people who I've lost touch with or who I want to build a new relationship with. It might be simply doing a task each day more mindfully and consciously, slowing down a little and appreciating something which usually passes me by. Whatever it is, it's intentional and the doing of it isn't something that will come to an end as Easter is celebrated but it will hopefully continue to embed itself in my life going forward.

What might work for you? Who do you need to help and encourage you on your journey between now and Easter? The doors of your local churches open to places and people where you are always welcome. The Methodist and Anglican church communities will be coming together for a Lent course which will run on Thursday afternoons between our two buildings. You are most welcome to come along and be part of it.

Go well in Lent, be kind to yourself and others as we journey towards the hope of Easter and all that it offers to us and the world.

With love,

Claire

ST MARY'S CHURCH

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday	8.00am	BCP Communion
	9.30am	Sung Eucharist
Monday	8.45am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion
Thursday	8.45 am	Morning Prayer
Friday	8.45 am	Morning Prayer



All are welcome to join us – please just come along. If you'd like to join the **9.30am** Sunday service from home, you can do so via St Mary's Facebook page.

You can keep up to date with services and events at St Mary's via our Facebook page or our website: www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

All are welcome to **St Mary's Ash Wednesday Service** on **14th February** at **7.30 pm**.

LENT STUDY GROUP

You are invited to join us for our joint Lent study group for six weeks from **15th February** to **21st March** at **2.30pm**. Meeting at **Old Basing Methodist Church** for the **February** sessions and then continuing in **St. Mary's Parish Room** in **March**. Come and join us for friendly discussion. All are welcome.

Any questions? Please call: **01256 323103** (Revd Claire) or **01256 363612** (Revd Jo)

The Revd Claire Simpson & The Reverend Jo Mulliner

FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH

At St Mary's we are very fortunate to have a team of flower arrangers who enhance the beauty of the church with their arrangements. If you'd like to donate towards the cost of an arrangement in memory of a loved one please do get in touch with Debbie.

BASINGSTOKE FOODBANK & PET FOODBANK

A huge thank you to everyone who is supporting the Foodbank at this time. A reminder that we have a collection point outside the church or please drop items off to the Co-op on Linden Avenue or Tesco at Chineham. For a list of items that are in particular short supply please visit www.basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk We are also taking in donations of pet food/items on behalf of Helping Dogs & Cats Rescue UK, based in Basingstoke. There is a separate box where donations can be left.

WEDDINGS AND BAPTISMS AT ST. MARY'S

Did you know that if you live in the parish of Old Basing and Lychpit, or have a strong link to the parish (what we call a "qualifying connection") you may be able to marry at St. Mary's. Please do get in touch if you'd like to explore the possibility of having your wedding at St. Mary's. We also welcome all baptism enquiries.

continued on page 24

continued from page 23

PASTORAL SUPPORT

If you would like pastoral support please contact **Revd. Jo** by phone: **01256 363612**, by email: **vicar@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk** or contact **Debbie**, St Mary's Administrator, telephone: **07541 698235**, or email: **admin@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk**.

HALL FOR HIRE

The Parish Room at St Mary's Church, including the kitchen, is available for hire. There is availability for both regular bookings and one-off bookings. All enquiries to Debbie.

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Every week we send out a bulletin with information about what is happening at the church. If you'd like to be added to our distribution list please contact Debbie. We are also able to hand deliver bulletins to those without internet access.

ST. MARY'S CHURCHYARD CONSERVATION GROUP (PIOCC)



This month's working parties will be on **Saturday, 3rd February** at **10.00am** – meet by the PIOCC noticeboard at the entrance to the Conservation Area. We will continue our seasonal conservation work and woodland management. On **Thursday, 15th February** (the third Thursday of the month) at **2.00pm** we will meet by the shed as we plan to help Rev Jo tidy up some of the wilder areas in

the Vicarage garden: once again to encourage the wild flowers and help the wildlife. All are welcome. We look forward to seeing our regular volunteers and also new participants.



Churchyard Conservation is a community project, not just for churchgoers, so please come along if you would like to be involved. You will receive a warm welcome. Just turn up in gardening clothes and bring gloves. The tools are provided. Our Saturday morning sessions last about three hours (with a coffee break and chance to relax).

The days are lengthening and spring is arriving. The beautiful drifts of snowdrops (*Caroline Crawford, left*) are at their best this month, the catkins are lengthening and

the birds starting their spring songs. The WI seat offers a calm spot for reflection and relaxation. The Conservation Area is for everyone to enjoy. For further information phone **Fay Farrant** on **01256 476863**.

Margaret Carr www.stmarysoldbasing.org.uk

OLD BASING AND LYCHPIT GOOD NEIGHBOURS

2024 has proved to be a very busy year so far, and long may being able to help our local community last. If we can help you, then please call **0333 0440116**. If you don't call us then you will not know if we can help.

Sue Wilson

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OLD BASING METHODIST CHURCH



The news from the Methodist Chapel. We had very enjoyable Christmas services, particularly the well attended Carols on Christmas Eve.

Now, well into January as I write, we are still to look forward to our Church lunch which is always a joyous occasion.

Dates for February

Wednesday 14th

MHA members have their lunch with us **11.00am to 3.00pm**

Tuesday 20th

Cameo Club will be on for a light lunch with time to chat and do or show crafts. **11.30am to 1.00pm**

We will be having a **joint study** group with St. Mary's during **Lent** again. Three sessions at the Chapel and three at St Mary's. These are all on **Thursday** afternoons at **2.30pm**:

February 15th, 22nd, 29th at **Methodist Chapel**; **March 7th, 14th, 21st** at **St. Mary's**

Our **Sunday morning worship** is at **10.30am** followed by a time to get to know each other better and share news over a warm drink. You will be made welcome on any of these occasions.

CHINEHAM AND OLD BASING NWR



Are you new to the area, or possibly just retired from working and looking for a group to join? The NWR might just be the right way for you to make some new friends, widen your social sphere and have some lively discussions to get the "Alpha Waves" firing!!

Chineham and Old Basing NWR meet at **2.00pm** on the **first Monday** of the month. Currently we number 17 ladies and average between 8-10 at a meeting. We meet in each other's houses which makes for a very relaxed atmosphere and we take it in turns to host the meeting, if we are happy to do so. There is a **monthly lunch club** at various local venues on different weekdays and a **'Book'** subgroup which meets at **8.00pm** on the **fourth Thursday** of the month to discuss a chosen book.

In January we had a very lively discussion about "anything beginning with the letter I" which ranged from "Inverness", to "Iceland" to "Insects" to name a few!!

This month (February) we have our annual planning meeting when we decide democratically what we want to do in the year ahead. As well as discussion meetings the programme might include a cheese and wine event, a supper evening, walks and visits. Our group prefers to participate rather than listen to outside speakers.

New members would be made very welcome. To find out more visit nwr.org.uk or contact our Local Organiser: **Dusty Brough**, tel **01256 356276** or email **dmbc861@gmail.com**

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION

A General Meeting will be held on **Thursday, 22nd February** at **7.30pm** in the **Jack Morris Hall**, RBL. The competition is "A winter Scene": a picture; snow globe; ornament.

ALL ARE WELCOME

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PROBUS LEARNS THINGS ABOUT CRICKET

The fact it was a bitterly cold day encouraged the members of the Probus Club of Basingstoke to think about summer days and hearing the strike of willow on leather as their guest speaker, Mike Brook, reminisced about his interest in that most English of games, cricket. Hampshire is home to the Hambledon Cricket Club, founded in 1750, known as the cradle of cricket, where many of the laws of the game were formulated.



Most people learn something new every day and this occasion was no different. Because this was Mike Brook's 222nd speaking engagement, the cricket aficionados understood that this could be termed a double Nelson. Apparently, a Nelson in cricket is when the score is on 111 runs and considered unlucky. It was named after Admiral Lord Nelson who, history incorrectly recorded, had one eye, one arm and one leg, which is not strictly true as he lost his sight but not his eye and had two legs when he died. And when the three wickets are viewed without the bails look like 111. Tradition has it that on this score the batters and umpires raise a leg to salute the Admiral.

But many question what it is about cricket that keeps many middle-aged men interested and playing the game long after much younger men have retired from other field team sports. It certainly is not an easy game and because the fear of physical injury is very common in recent years much protective equipment is worn by the two batters at the crease, the wicket-keeper and those fielders positioned close to the batter. These days it is not correct to call them batsmen as more ladies take up the game.

It is said to be character building although each match score book clearly shows the failures. The greatest number of wickets being lost is when the score is at zero, so there is real pressure on the opening pair of batters. Pre-game nerves are only sated when the game is won. However, batters would prefer a good personal run total in a losing game than a poor score in a winning team.

The radio programme Test Match Special has changed over the years. One of the greatest commentators was Basingstoke's own John Arlott who was born at the lodge house at the old cemetery on Kingsclere Road. He was broadcasting the first time a streaker ran across the pitch and called her a freaker. Something that women find fascinating with many copying this act over the years.

During wartime, a cricket match was abandoned due to fog, but the commentators continued to broadcast this fictitious game so as not to let the Germans know about the weather.

Mike Brook finished off by considering the closeness of cricket to golf by recalling the story of the radio programme with Eric Sykes coming home frustrated at his performance on the golf course and threw his bag of clubs into the corner. Hattie Jacques questioned why continue playing if it gets him into a bad mood, with the reply coming, "because it's the only pleasure I get". See www.probusbasingstoke.club for more information about this social club for retired professional and business managers.

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VILLAGE CAFE

I am writing this on a dull, grey, very windy afternoon, wishing for dry, bright weather and the first blooms of spring! Winter has certainly been wet and dull for all of us; I am sure when I was a child they were bright, cold and snowy!

Many of you will have attended the Carol evening at the recreation ground in late December, and I have to say a huge thank you to Kate and Sandra for their tireless organisation, along with the Parish council. The recreation ground was decked out with festive lights which provided a lovely Christmas glow.

I have to mention Johnny Hammond, who came up with the idea for the event and provided sing-a-long music on the evening,

The Village Cafe provided festive bakes which went down a storm and we received some lovely feed back. I would like to thank the bakers who helped provide around 400 baked goods. Well done team, you are amazing!

The cafe is currently opening on the **first Friday of the month**, in the **Parish Room, St. Mary's Church**, but we return to our **weekly Friday afternoon** slot on **1st March**, from **2.00pm to 4.00pm**.

Opening dates for **March** are **1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd**.

We will continue our fund raising for the local community and it's your support that enables us to do so. We have been overwhelmed by the projects we have been able to donate to and look forward to continuing in the coming months.

Deborah Thorne



THE IVY CLUB

Our welcome back afternoon started with a favourite, BINGO, and we will continue with our quiz afternoons and book and jigsaw exchange. We have decided that, as The Ivy Club falls on Valentine's Day, we will celebrate this with a fish and chip luncheon which is always enjoyed by all. We are also giving thought to planning our next outing when the weather warms up a bit with a trip possibly to Exbury Gardens and Steam Railway, so watch this space for more information. We would still like to welcome more members, so why not pay us a visit, **we meet weekly** at the **RBL** from **1.30pm to 4.00pm** cost is **£2.00**, which includes refreshments and a raffle, we just ask that you bring a mug as we don't do washing up.

If you would like further information then please call me on **01256 328196**

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IS IT A WAXWING WINTER?

By Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

The waxwing is an undeniably beautiful bird. It's a touch smaller than a starling, with a pleasingly plump body. Its silky feathers are soft hues of grey, brown and apricot, with some stylish accessories. There's a bright yellow band across the end of the tail, white and yellow dashes on the wings, and a black patch on the throat and above the beak, which sweeps back through the eye and up, like the perfect winged eyeliner.

Waxwings are winter visitors, travelling here from Scandinavia when the food supply there runs low, typically residing here until early spring. Another big part of their appeal is that their arrival is never guaranteed. Some winters, we might only see a handful across the country. In others, there can be flocks of hundreds of birds. An influx like this is called an 'irruption'. These years are known as 'waxwing winters' and they don't come around very often.

It all comes down to berries. Waxwings love them. Poor berry crops in Finland and Sweden have apparently pushed waxwings much further than usual this year, and with a berry bonanza reported across the country this autumn, Britain looks set to enjoy its biggest 'Waxwing winter' for at least a decade.

In Hampshire, waxwings are not seen every year, they are a rare visitor. One of the largest irruptions in Hampshire was in the winter of 2010 when over 2,000 birds arrived. However, when they do turn up, it might not be where you'd expect.



One of the waxwing's endearing quirks is that they regularly turn up in urban areas, particularly the car parks of supermarkets and shopping centres. These commercial areas are often planted with ornamental trees with aesthetically pleasing, berry-laden fruit trees – and these always prove popular with hungry waxwings.

But it seems not all berries are equal in the eyes of a waxwing. Red ones appear to be the most in-demand, including cotoneaster, viburnum, hawthorn and particularly rowan. As stocks of these are depleted, they'll settle for orange or yellow berries, or white berries like mistletoe.

Waxwings are chatty and their pleasant high-pitched trills, which they use to call to each other with,

provide one of the best ways to help detect them. Fittingly for a winter visitor, the sound is often likened to soft, jingling sleigh bells.

For more information please visit the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife trust website at: www.hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/birds

Waxwing_(c)Jon Hawkins_Surrey Hills Photography

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THE MILL FIELD CONSERVATION GROUP



The next work party is planned for **Sunday, 18th February**. We will be clearing scrub on the lower path at the stream end. No special skills are required, but volunteers are asked to bring their own gardening type gloves and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Tools will be provided as well as refreshments. We will

meet on the lower path at the stream end at **10.00am** and will work for around **two hours**.

What's around this month:

Look out for Winter Finches, particularly larger numbers of Siskins, Bramblings and Redpolls, in particular see if you can spot the Mealy Redpoll which is slightly bigger than the normal Redpoll. We should also be seeing the Winter Thrushes such as the Fieldfare, large numbers of Linnets will be roosting in the field too and the Waxwings should still be around. This winter we have had good numbers of Little Egrets coming in both onsite and around the fish ponds by the barn where the Yellowhammer maybe roosting amongst the reed beds and Kingfishers are seen regularly.

Remember we have a Facebook page, search for "**Mill Field Conservation Group**", there you will find posted events, photos of wildlife and other information will be shared.

Email: millfieldnature@gmail.com

OLD BASING WI

The 2024 National Federation Resolutions were discussed and debated at our January meeting. A vote was taken on which Resolution our Members supported and these votes have been passed onto the Hampshire Federation of WIs to be included in the National totals. At the end of the month many of us enjoyed an evening meal at Barton's Mill.

Our February meeting takes place on **Tuesday, 6th February at 7.30pm** in the **Parish Rooms, St Mary's Church**. Our speaker is Nigel Knott who is making a return visit, this time to talk to us about his job as a Customs Officer trying to thwart those who tried to smuggle illegal goods through the port of Dover. His talk is entitled "The Bootleg Years". The competition is "An Unusual Drinking Vessel".

In **March**, we celebrate **105 years of the WI in Old Basing** with a visit from the Mayor of Basingstoke and entertainment from the Belle Canto Trio. Later in the month, we are booked to see the BAOS production of Evita at the Haymarket.

If you would like to join our long-running and thriving group, please come along or contact our President **Sue Stewart** by email at oldbasingpres@hampshirewi.org.uk

LES CLARKE

Les passed away at the Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital on 30th December 2023, aged 95. He will be much-missed by his family, friends and neighbours. A celebration of his life will be held at **Basingstoke Crematorium**, on **Monday, 5th February at 2.00pm**. Family flowers only, please.

Donations to Royal British Legion, Gurkha Welfare Trust or Dementia UK, and tributes can be made via: leslie-clarke.muchloved.com.

Philip Clarke



FEBRUARY IN YOUR GARDEN

February might be the last of the winter months, and should be a quiet time of the year, but that's anything but the case for gardeners.

Flowers: Ornamental grasses need to be cut back before fresh shoots appear, and large clumps of snowdrops and winter aconites can be divided and replanted after they've flowered. Prune late-summer flowering clematis, cutting stems back to healthy buds about 30cm from the base. Similarly, prune winter-blooming shrubs such as mahonia, winter jasmine and heathers, once they've finished flowering. Divide congested clumps of herbaceous perennials and grasses to make vigorous new plants for free and move deciduous shrubs growing in the wrong place, while they are dormant. Trim back ivy, Virginia creeper and other climbers if they have outgrown their space, before birds start nesting. Sprinkle slow-release fertiliser around the base of roses and other flowering shrubs

Fruit and vegetables: Finish winter-pruning fruit trees and soft fruits, including apples, autumn raspberries and blackcurrants. Chit first-early potato tubers by standing them in trays in a light, frost-free place. Prepare vegetable beds for sowing by weeding thoroughly, then covering with a thick layer of garden compost. Feed fruit trees and bushes by sprinkling sulphate of potash fertiliser around the base to encourage fruiting. Now is the time to sow mustard and cress in a small seed tray on a warm windowsill for pickings in just a few weeks. Put cloches or fleece over strawberry plants to start them into growth and encourage an early crop, and while doing so, hunt out overwintering snails huddled in empty pots and hidden corners, to reduce populations. Plant rhubarb into enriched soil, or lift and divide established clumps.

Check if old seed packets are worth keeping by sowing a few seeds on damp kitchen paper, to see if they germinate, and start planning for your seed sowing year, something you could do from the comfort of your armchair after a hard day's work in the garden!

Your greenhouse or cold frame: Sow sweet peas in deep pots and keep them frost-free in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill. Pot on and pinch out autumn-sown sweet peas to encourage side shoots to form, and sow summer bedding and tender annuals now, including cosmos, lobelia, dahlias, nasturtiums and snapdragons. Sow tender crops such as tomatoes and chillies in a heated propagator or on a warm sunny windowsill. Plant dahlia tubers in trays to encourage shoots to develop, which you can then use as cuttings. Monitor greenhouse temperatures with a maximum / minimum thermometer to ensure heaters are working efficiently and get heaters serviced as soon as possible if they fail. Start planting summer bulbs in pots indoors. Hand-pollinate the blossom of peaches and nectarines in the greenhouse using a soft paintbrush. Cut back overwintered fuchsias and increase the frequency of watering to spur them into growth. Wash your greenhouse glazing inside and out to let in as much light as possible.

House plants: Reduce watering for almost all house plants apart from Christmas cactus and poinsettia which will need watering whenever soil feels dry. Increase the amount of light your house plants receive in darker months by moving to brighter spots. Some house plants, like snake plants, are particularly prone to collecting dust on their leaves, so be sure to give these a wipe regularly. And finally, check your house plants for pests like aphids, scale insect, thrips and mealybugs.

Visit www.gardenersworld.com for more details advice and growing tips.

NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY

A Large White butterfly on the wing is not something I was expecting to see just before Christmas, despite it being a sunny and mild Sunday. Then, on Boxing Day, a great big bumblebee staggered past me in the air, either cold and regretting he'd come out, or suffering from too much nectar the night before! Nature is confused dot com obviously!

Other sights that appear out of context with the season are small birds using nestboxes, and readers have occasionally been fooled into thinking there must be a very early nest inside. Of course, what this is likely to be is a bird escaping the worst of the cold and using the shelter as a roost, and why not? Cleaning out that box is quite an important task so if there is no sign of activity as mentioned, then please do take the box down just to empty the contents, giving it a good brush out then replacing it straight away. I know that in the wild, holes in trees don't get cleaned out but solid wooden boxes will harbour mould, mites and fleas which may remain when the birds do return to breed, creating a recipe of problems for baby chicks.

Heartening news from my good friend Jim Andrews that a Waxwing or two have been seen around the Bramley area so whilst not cold enough to produce a 'fall' of them, there is at least a chance you might spy one of these cracking winter visitors.

The more common sights of Fieldfares and Redwings are now being recorded around the area, Stephen Thair noticing about a dozen of the latter out on the Common last month. If you've any berry-laden shrubs remaining, do keep an eye out for these unusually marked Thrushes or listen for their short, almost argumentative contact call.

Another great sight during Winter is that of a Starling murmuration. RSPB reserves are the very best places to see a really good one but Brighton's derelict Pier or Titchfield Haven are two decent venues within quite easy reach. My good lady and I made a day/night trip to Brighton a few years ago, taking in a superb murmuration and it was very worthwhile.



Not a murmuration but Terry MacAnish's feeder station continues to break records I suggest (*picture left*). This time a Blue Tit tries to get in on the act but the Goldfinch gang were having none of it.

A smashing photo of a Heron perched on a fence (*right*) makes this month's gallery for Alan Dowley. There must have certainly been a pond in the



close proximity that attracted this prehistoric-looking creature to Alan's garden, although it's not unknown for a very hungry bird to come and snaffle food items left out on lawns for other birds.

And finally, a sign of Spring? Ann Price just informed me that a snowdrop and a crocus have both popped their heads out in her garden so whilst there maybe several months of cold to come, lets take that as a big positive!

Rick Bourne.

Don't forget to send all your nature related stories and photos to rickbourne@yahoo.com or naturenotes@basinga.org.uk For all your bird food requirements, order from me at 'Bird Drop-ins' use the former email address or ring/text me on **07900 648675** to place an order or get a form.

DIARY DATES FOR FEBRUARY 2024

For details of services and events at St Mary's Church please see page 23

February

Thu 1	7.45pm / 8.00pm	RBL Branch Meeting in the Jack Morris Hall.
Fri 2	2.30pm – 4.00pm	Village Cafe in the Parish Room, St. Mary's Church.
Sat 3	10.00am – 1.00pm	PIOCC Churchyard Conservation. Meet at noticeboard.
Tue 6	7.30pm	Old Basing WI meeting. Parish Room, St. Mary's Church.
	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting. Pavilion, Recreation Ground.
Wed 7	10.00am – noon	Civil Service Retirement Fellowship. Beekeeping Talk by Fred Swift. Brookvale Village Hall. See Basinga Extra.
	1.30pm – 4.00pm	IVY Club at the Royal British Legion.
Sat 10	6.00pm	Deadline for copy for March Basinga files to Editor.
Wed 14	1.30pm – 4.00pm	IVY Club at the Royal British Legion.
	7.45pm	BDRS. On and Off the Footplate talk. See page 13.
Thu 15	12.25pm	Ploughman's Lunch in the Parish Room. See page 17.
	2.00pm – 4.00pm	PIOCC Churchyard Conservation. See page 24.
Sat 17	10.00am – 1.00pm	Chineham Repair Cafe. See page 21 for details.
	7.00pm	Lions of Basingstoke Quiz Night. RBL, Old Basing.
Sun 18	10.00am – noon	The Mill Field Conservation working party. Meet at the stream end of the lower path.
Wed 21	1.30pm – 4.00pm	IVY Club at the Royal British Legion.
Thu 22	7.30pm	RBL Women's Section General meeting. Jack Morris Hall.
Wed 28	1.30pm – 4.00pm	IVY Club at the Royal British Legion.
	7.45pm	BDRS talk by Terry Foulger. See page 13 for detail.
Thu 29	10.00am – noon	Bluebird Care – Practical Dementia education. Page 17.

March

Fri 1	2.30pm – 4.00pm	Village Cafe at the Parish Room, St. Mary's Church.
Sat 2	7.30pm	Spring Charity Concert at The Anvil. See page 19.
Tue 5	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting. Pavilion, Recreation Ground.

BASINGA EXTRA

The following articles, that we couldn't find room for in this printed version of Basinga, can also be found on **Basinga Extra**, our website: **basinga.org.uk**

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VICAR: Revd. Jo Mulliner The Vicarage, Church Lane, Old Basing. email: vicar@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk	01256 363612
ADMINISTRATOR: Debbie Filer email: admin@stmarysoldbasing.org.uk	07541 698235

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