

# MILTON MATTERS

Issue No 1 Milton Neighbourhood Forum Sept 1995



### *The Old Farm Building - Milton*

I am very pleased that Milton will be receiving this newsletter in support of what has already been happening in our area.

The Forum has held regular meetings in the University Milton Site Lecture Room on the corner of Locksway Road/Milton Road at which many issues affecting the ward and adjacent wards have been aired. Peter Mills has very ably chaired these meetings. Unfortunately he has had to resign as Chairperson due to other commitments and we must all thank him for his dedication to the interests of the area both as Forum Chairman and General Improvement Area spokesperson.

The task of Chairperson at the meetings is not easy. As Vice Chair I shall be taking on the role until our next election/AGM and hope to be able to keep residents well informed of local issues.

Janice Burkinshaw - Vice Chair

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**Forthcoming Events:** Wednesday 27th September 1995 - Forum Meeting -  
7.00pm - Portsmouth University Lecture Theatre Milton Campus  
Subject: Update by Peter King, City Engineer on the proposal for traffic calming

## It's a Small World!

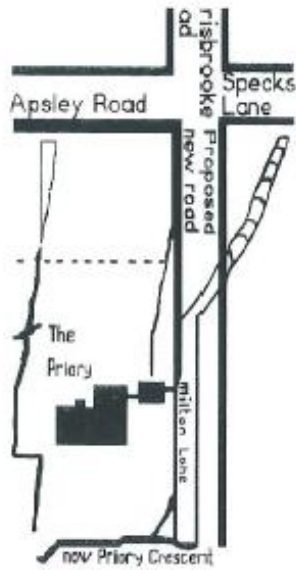
Five years ago in preparation for retirement we moved to Milton, complete strangers. I was born in Southampton, and we moved up to Farnham on the Surrey and Hants border before I was one-year-old. In 1942 I joined the Merchant Navy for 11 years by which time I had married and we lived in that same border area until coming here.

My granddaughters were born in Australia and having seen 'Roots' on TV decided to find out about my family so they would have 'Roots' too. The trail was long and took me to Derby, Bethnal Green, Basingstoke and eventually Hayling Island and Portsmouth. My great-grandfather joined the RMA in 1859 and was sent to the new barracks at Eastney. While there he met and married Rosetta Goldring, a girl from Hayling Island who at their wedding in 1867 at St Mary's church gave her address as The Priory, Milton. I had months of searching for the location of the site of the Priory when a friend who has a house in Apsley Road said she thought she had seen it on a map in her deeds. Sure enough it was, and it shows that it was in the area now occupied by 35 - 33 - 31 Carisbrooke Road.

Great-grandfather Alexander Barber Sgt. RMA ret'd. was a widower in 1905/6 and was, according to Kelly's Directory for that period, the householder at 31 Carisbrooke Road. In 1908 when he died his address was 35 Carisbrooke Road. During those last years he must have watched Mr Wilkinson, the builder from Essex Road, erecting the six houses opposite known as the Gables.

Where do I live??.....in one of those six houses !!

*Its a small world !!*



If any one has any information  
or knows of a picture of the  
Priory I would be very pleased  
to hear from them.

Harry Wright -  
Tel: (01705) 730650

#### FRATTON PARK

I live in the shadow of Fratton Park  
Now you might think this 'Quite a Lark'  
I'm not a one to moan or grouse  
But I can never park outside my house

On match days we're controlled by the Bill  
I sometimes wish I lived over the Hill  
As kick-off time is drawing near  
One side of the road must be kept clear.

I may be working on my garden path  
Or even relaxing in a nice hot bath  
But the man in blue will knock my door  
"You'll have to move this car, you know the score"



The ideal is for the Premium League  
With undue effort and less fatigue  
But if Pompey are doing as they are able  
They're very close to the foot of the table

So their answer is a brand new ground  
That won't change things I'll be bound  
Without being cynical, or even harsh  
They'll probably sink into Farlington Marsh.

Frank Bennet - Ruskin Road



## Reminiscences of a

The evening sun shone through the bedroom curtains of my Pleasant Road home and my parents' voices rose from the front door below. Crawling to the foot of my bed, I peeped out of the window just in time to see my father turn the corner carrying an armchair upside down on his head and shoulders, heading across the piece of waste land that stood between the two old canal towpaths and is now a site of a new development, to our new home to be in Berney Road.

"Don't come home here mired in mud," my mothers words rang in our ears, as my two older brothers and I set off with our bag of jam sandwiches and a bottle of home-made lemonade. We set off up Ironbridge Lane and turned on to the southern towpath that ran high above the allotments. The bushes along either side of the path made perfect hiding places for a child and we had our dens as had most children in the area. From somewhere we had acquired an old piece of carpet for the floor, an upturned wooden box from the greengrocers made a table and we even had an old chair. Here we would play house for an hour or so then boredom eventually set in and we would wander on along the path until we come to The Locks. The boathouses along the front of The Thatched House were a great draw and a little community of wooden shacks stood where the car park now is, with an incongruous little pond in the middle surrounded by a white picket fence. My brothers convinced me that the old lady who lived in one stole little girls, so I stayed close to their sides. On to the little wooden bridge, now replaced by a metal construction, that crossed the canal. Following my brothers, we worked our way out across the remaining top spar of the old gates, scrambled down the upright and back along the bottom beam. The trouble was, I was much smaller than my brothers and as I dropped from the top beam to the bottom, I would often lose my footing on the slippery beam and end up in the mud below. My brothers would rinse me off in the sea and a very soggy little girl followed them home to face my mother's wrath.

# Milton Childhood

The outbreak of World War II and the evacuation brought a halt to our childhood adventures at Milton Locks for a while. After evacuation to the Isle of Wight, Haslemere and Guildford, we returned home to Berney Road in time to be on the receiving end of a near miss by one of Hitler's rockets. With Southsea seafront closed for the duration, 'The Locks' became our beach, but our dare-devil exploits were curtailed when a school friend's brother dived off a boat and never surfaced again. Saturday was my favourite day of the week, for this was the day to go to St James Church to watch the weddings. The game was to try to work your way into the group photographs, and there must be many a couple who still wonder who the young girl was that is in their wedding pictures. Accompanied by a nurse, groups of patients from St James Hospital would walk through Ironbridge Lane out to Bransbury Park. We were afraid of them, so it was very daring to squeeze our way through the railings of the Hospital to help ourselves to an apple or two from the Fruit trees. Round on to Warren Avenue and the hospital's rear entrance, where our sense of smell quickly directed us to the pigs. The old boar and sow seemed absolutely enormous but we loved the piglets and would try to catch them if the keeper wasn't around. On along the sea wall and past the houseboats on Velder Creek, no longer there alas. Behind the tall railings, some of which still exist to the rear gardens of Longshore Way, stood the chalets for the TB patients, and the building that was the children's ward still stands but is now a private house. Round the corner on the grass by the Lock, the fishermen would sit repairing their nets which were hung over the railings to dry.

We had few possessions compared with children of today, but the freedom that we had allowed us to enjoy the natural surroundings that MILTON had to offer.

Lynn Brown, Longshore Way.



# YOUR

Dear Resident

I am pleased to take the opportunity in this our first newsletter to thank everyone for their support of our Forum which in turn has made it the most successful in the city. From its inception and first meeting held on 28th September 1993 our Forum has enjoyed overwhelming success with well attended public and committee meetings. This enthusiasm has been reciprocated by officers of the City Council who, in addition to their daily routine, have spent many hours at all of our meetings exploring local opinion in order to determine, and hopefully resolve, problems that beset MILTON, be it traffic, health and safety etc.

I express our sincere thanks to these officers on behalf of our committee of Street Representatives and, of course, yourselves.

As a Forum we have achieved a great deal as the now well lit footpath across Bransbury Park – the well-used walkway connecting Milton and Eastney, is a classic example of what can be done to improve our local amenity. Another notable achievement was the eventual removal of a shellfish processing plant in Milton North which had cast its odorous presence over that area. Much remains to be done such as traffic related issues, the development or otherwise of St James' Hospital site and the increasing student population as envisaged by Portsmouth University with its attendant increase of traffic on our roads and it is by your continued support that we hope to be able to give your opinion in redressing any possible problems that these eventualities may bring.

We are working in close harmony too with the Forums of Eastney and Southsea as any issue that affects one community will invariably affect the other especially that of traffic and any major developments in Portsmouth South as a whole. Whatever the political content, we have a *Listening* City Council who are keen to hear your opinions and views if it means that by doing so the quality of our district of MILTON can be improved and bettered. I appreciate fully that not everyone can attend our Forums so there is a 'Freepost' system in being that can be used so please make your views know.

TONY KNOTT, Secretary, Milton Forum, Kingsley Road.

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*If you have any interesting facts about Milton, any poem or article, of human interest or any comments on the Neighbourhood Forum, please send them to*  
**The EDITOR, Milton Matters, Milton Neighbourhood Forums, FREEPOST,  
Portsmouth, PO1 2XY**

# LETTERS

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT ???

A young family man was made redundant. There followed a long and painful period of search for work. The spare time available to him was the waiting period for replies to the immense correspondence he conducted for 'job hunting'. He used his spare time to find out more about Milton area. In the meantime he joined Portsmouth University as a part-time student. He used the knowledge of his studies of Milton as part of the 'Thesis' for his University degree, which he has recently obtained with honours.



A young retired gentleman became a victim of Alzheimer's disease, a slow crippling condition which reduced the once highly intelligent individual to a mere shadow of his former self, resembling a grown up child with learning difficulties. He died some years later.

Throughout his long illness his only companion and support was another young retired. His wife.

*Both stories are true. Both individuals residents of Milton.*

In some street or corner of the Neighbourhood there might be something or some building with a background of historical interest known only to a few today but it will be known to even less people tomorrow.

A Community Magazine could be not only the platform that would generate opportunities for all to share knowledge and sentiments derived from and within our community but similarly would present opportunities to reveal one's hidden talents; but most importantly, it will encourage the kind of neighbourly relationships that used to exist a long time ago.

**DIMITRI PAPANICOLAOU**

## Lament of a Hairless Co-ordinator

Ow I wish I took care of me hair  
'Cos I can't now it's no longer there.  
When I was a lad, I made it look bad  
Didn't comb it, and brushing was rare.

It is true that I pinched dad's Brilliantine  
And was known to melt down Vaseline.  
But it just took a jiff, to put in a quiff  
So I nicked mum's liquid Paraffin.

Ow I wish I'd looked after me hair  
Before it become so darned rare.  
But the truth must be told  
And now that I'm bald  
It's a darn sight less trouble, so there!

(Apologies to Pam Ayres)

My dentist, Mrs P Shergold of London Road, tells me  
that whilst I was a PoW of the Japanese they (the Nips)  
did me a good turn, by keeping me off sweet stuffs like  
sugar, Chocolate, Jelly Babies etc for nearly four years.  
They probably contributed to preserving my teeth.

Frank Bonnet - Ruskin Road



## BIRTH

'YOUR' life begins on this planet,  
at the moment you arrive.  
So hurry , and don't delay,  
its great to be alive.

Your won't know how you got here,  
its very scientific.  
The mysteries of the Universe,  
they really are terrific.

You don't arrive by spaceship,  
or on a rocket from the moon  
You're delivered here,  
in what they call, a loving mothers  
womb.

Carried through another body,  
for nine months in time and space  
and arriving here, at 'a' set time,  
to join **THE HUMAN RACE.**

*Milton Resident*

## Days gone by

We met and we married a long time ago  
We worked long hours when wages were low  
No TV, no wireless, no baths, times were hard  
Just a cold water tap and a walk down the yard.

No holidays abroad, no carpets on floors  
We had coal fires, and we didn't lock doors  
Our children arrived, no pill in those days  
And we brought them up without state aid.

They were safe to go out to play in the park  
And our old folk were safe going out in the dark  
No vandals, no drugs, no LSD  
We cured all our ills with a good cup of tea.

No vandals, no mugging, there was nothing to rob  
We felt well off with a couple of bob  
People were happier in those far -off days  
Kinder and caring in so many ways.

Milkmen and papers boys would whistle and sing  
A night out at the pictures was our weekly fling  
We all had our share of trouble and strife  
We just had to face it, that's the pattern of life.

Now I'm alone, I look back through the years  
I don't think about bad times or troubles and tears  
I remember the blessing, our home and our love  
And that we shared them together, I thank God  
above.

*Anonymous*

## The Black Geese

One of the magnificent sights to which those residents of Milton who live in the vicinity of Langstone Harbour are treated to daily throughout the winter, is the sight of a thousand or more Brent Geese rising from the mudflats with the incoming tide and flying inland to continue their feeding. Their return flight is equally spectacular. These small black geese, only about 22-24 inches long (56-61cms) and with short, stubby, fast beating wings, seldom if ever fly in the V-formation of the larger grey geese but adopt a large irregular mass formation in the air, wavering and undulating in a distinctive and graceful manner. When only a few choose to move they usually do so in oblique or diagonal lines. The goose normally seen on the south coast of England is the dark bellied species, nominated *Branta bernicla bernicla* and breeds on the arctic tundra of Russia from Kolguev to the Taymyr Peninsular, breeding further north than any other goose, reaching 80 N in parts of its range. Occasionally one may see an odd individual of the other European race, the light bellied of *Branta bernicla brota*, caught up with them but this is indeed an odd bird, one who has lost its way and flown in from Spitzbergen or Franz Joseph Land. The normal area to find the light bellied species is Northumberland and Ireland. The writer was once lucky enough to observe thirteen Russian red breasted geese, or *Branta ruficollis*, flying and feeding among the visitors to Langstone - an occasion to be remarked upon.

The food of the Brent is obtained by grazing and in shallow water, by pulling and tearing underwater plants; its favourite food being the drifting eel-grass, *Zoster marina*. It was in fact an epidemic disease which devastated the eel-grass beds on both sides of the North Sea, which led to the decline of the large flocks of 40-50 years ago and incidentally, led to a change in the feeding habits of the birds. By the 1950's, the numbers of Brent in NW Europe dropped dramatically to an estimated 16,500 but since then has risen with fluctuations due to breeding seasons. Following two highly successful breeding seasons, namely 1972-3 and 1973-4, their numbers rose to some 80,000 (*The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, volume 1 p438 Oxford 1977). Since then, due to mild winters and successful breeding seasons, they have almost doubled to around 140,000. The average count in Langstone Harbour over the last few years has been in the region of 8,000+ which is half of the entire population of the 1950's.

I mentioned earlier that the decline of the eel-grass not only had a deleterious effect upon the Brent population but brought about a change in their feeding pattern. An old book published in 1881 has the following to say "It is far more numerous than any other species of wild goose that visits our shores .....



## Of Langstone

whatever the winter may be, severe or open, Brent geese visit us in thousands ..... unlike other geese the Brent is never known to rest on dry land..... personally we never saw geese fly over dry land .... they fly out to sea to rest by day or sleep by night" - (Badminton library, Moore & Marsh, Lord Walsingham & Sir Ralph Payne Gallway pps 159-160 Spottisowood 1881). Only 100 years later, due to the deterioration of their food supply, Brent can be seen feeding in their hundreds on fields in the Portsmouth area. If it were not for the protection afforded them by various Acts of Parliament and the ready availability of grass to graze upon in the south, these small geese, as a race, might well have died out in Europe or at least been reduced to a mere handful from their hundreds of thousands of a hundred years ago. The area around Portsmouth has been built up to such an extent that the birds now have nowhere else to feed but on playing fields if they are to survive. To say "They will always find somewhere else" is to show an appalling ignorance of the situation. Disease has robbed them, of their main food, the eel-grass, and in order to survive they have adapted to feeding inland; to build upon the playing fields is to break their food chain and once again man will, by ignorance and avarice, have brought yet another species close to extinction, especially if they suffer from poor breeding seasons on their arctic breeding grounds. How true it is I know not but I was told, some years ago, that when the numbers dropped so drastically in the 1950's a law was passed in the USSR prohibiting the removal of eggs or otherwise interfering with them on their breeding grounds. This law carried the death penalty. Rather a draconian law for England but, judging from their increased population since, if true - it worked!

The next time you see them flying over you stop for a moment and think. Think of their home in the short arctic summer. Think of their incredible flight there and back to Langstone on their short, stubby wings, their will to survive and breed among Peregrine falcons, Skuas and arctic foxes. Think of their will to survive by adapting their feeding habits in the past 50 years. Would not the world be a poorer place without them? Have they not a right to protection?

Milton Anonymous



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