



# PLUM

**Puddletown Library, Upkeep and Maintenance**

## We hit the jackpot

**...and so now we need even more volunteers**

**WITHIN WEEKS** new computing equipment will be arriving at Puddletown Library. The machinery is nothing to do with the two PCs that the Dorset Library Service has installed there already. These computers will be owned by us — by the Friends.

The new equipment is the first stage of a challenging new phase in the work of FoPL. It comes as a result of two grant applications made by your committee. The Friends' AGM heard that the Community Foundation for the Dorset area was about to stop taking applications for grants — and that it was keen to support voluntary effort. To cut a long story short, we were awarded £1250. We said we'd use it to buy computers to teach anyone in the area who wants to learn to use them. But that's not all.

**by our technology correspondent**

We also heard about Connecting Dorset, the scheme to equip village halls with computers. So we asked for one...and again we were successful — to the tune of almost £1400. This money will not only buy us a laptop with freestanding monitor and keyboard but it will also provide a telephone line to the internet and the installation...and leave us with £400 to buy paper and ink. Chairman Mike Chaney says these grants will help us to

**Continued overleaf**



*MICK and BILL at work on repainting our entrance lobby*

SPORTING a fetching Easter bonnet Mick Oddy (left above) joined Bill Mauger for some practical volunteering over the bank holiday weekend — they gave a face-lift to the entrance lobby of our library. 'As the place was shut for five days for Easter we got the job finished before we got paint on anyone's clothes,' says Bill.

He adds that they had more offers of help than they could use, due to the confined space they had to work in. We may need that help on some other job soon... 'We hope,' says Mick, 'that now the entrance is so sparkling the people who've been gathering there will find somewhere else to scrawl their graffiti.'

HELPING HAND: Although she was unable physically to do any of the painting, one of our members (who wants to remain anonymous) has offered to pay for the paint. Now that's true friendship...from all three of them.

# Doing our bit for the kids

## The same old gang's in charge

THE ANNUAL General Meeting of the Friends produced no big surprises, though it did come up with the splendid idea of bidding for funds to teach computing in the library.

The officers remain the same: Mike Chaney (11 High Street, chaneatley@tiscali.co.uk, 848352) was re-elected as chairman and Stephen Buck (3 High Street, sbuckpuddletown@hotmail.com, 848575) agreed to continue to keep our books as treasurer. The committee (Rosie Wyndham, Peter Bishop, Chris Leonard and Bill Maunder) was re-elected en bloc.

*CASHPOINT: Stephen stresses that although grant money has made our books look good, it will soon be spent so we still need members' subs: are yours up to date?*

Puddletown's library friends, on top of their work keeping our library open, are also doing their bit for the children of the area. Our people are now involved in two schemes that we are sure will help spread the word about the importance of books in the business of growing up.

The most ambitious of these schemes is to stage a competition to encourage reading to be run in conjunction with the Puddletown Carnival. We will be providing prizes for the best entries for each year group. Exactly what the children will have to do will depend on their age: it could be a drawing or, for the older children, a description of what they've read. The principal organizers are Lizzie Peckover and Diana Foreman — but they'll need help with the judging: watch for details on our notice board in the library. Our second enterprise, again with Diana and Lizzie in charge with help from Mary Berry, is to show off the library to the Pumpkins Playgroup.

## Summertime challenge

WE'VE BEEN asked to support a children's reading challenge this summer. The Reading Challenge reaches 690,000 children, from 4 to 12, every summer through libraries like ours. It is run by The Reading Agency, the independent charity trying to inspire people to read more. It is supported by children's publishers. Every child who joins is encouraged to read six or more books of their own choice during the holidays — with collectable incentives and rewards, plus a certificate or medal for all who complete the Challenge. Children can sign up in our library from 17 July. The books will be free.

The Pumpkins — a parent-run group for pre-school children — will spend an hour in the library once a fortnight, starting after Easter. Nothing beats getting the message over early.

## Sharing the benefits of the web world

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increase the use of the computers already in the library. 'Our volunteer librarians have noticed that many library users would like to use them but are unable to do so because they lack the necessary know-how.

'We're sure,' says Mike, 'that among the Friends and in the wider community there are plenty of people who've got the necessary keyboard and computing skills to teach such people how to send e-mails and to get the benefits of cheaper prices that internet shopping often provides.'

This initiative has been given warm support by the Dorset Library Service. Tracy Long, the manager of the service, will allow us to run training sessions in the library when it is not open to the public.

'There are obviously a lot of details yet to be decided,' says Mike. 'We have all summer to get the new equipment installed and to get used to it ourselves. Then we have to decide how best to store and safeguard the computers, monitor screens and keyboards.

'Then will come the biggest test of all: identifying the people who would like to learn computing. There are, of course, many places that offer such instruction but we hope that, being local and being run by familiar faces will overcome any shyness people might have over signing up.

'Finding enough suitable instructors is also going to be a big job but we already have some qualified teachers on our books so we are hopeful that, over time, we'll be able to teach anyone who wants to come along and learn.'

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