

# **COLIN'S EASTER BLOG**

Easter is fast approaching, school children are already on holiday, parents are bracing themselves, as they seek to monitor or control the influx of **chocolate**.

Already good at reducing the size of their products, but keep their prices the same, (apparently in the name of public health and wellbeing), and in keeping with government guidelines, chocolate makers are set to reduce the sugar in their products.

Many people will be celebrating the arrival of Easter in accordance with their religious beliefs, much of which seem to have been lost in our materialist commercially led western world.

Respecting everyone's beliefs, but, putting them aside, as we reflect upon the recent horrific events in Westminster, the tragic events abroad, many caused by famine and natural disasters, but, many more, caused by the greed of humans or the fanatical beliefs of some, who often sight Religion as motive for their actions, as many aggressors have done throughout history, where will it all end!

As individuals, we have little control over such issues, and we often despair for the future of our children and grandchildren.

However, in an effort to 'Make a difference,' there is something that we can all do to try to promote care, understand and tolerance in our own communities.

Although many lessons were learned following past conflicts, unfortunately, in the self-centred materialist world of some people, they have lost sight of the sense of community, (if indeed it was instilled in them in the first place). We need to reach out and to educate people who fall within this category, and to make the effort to embrace them into the true meaning of community, so that they can experience the benefits of looking out for each other, and subsequently reap the benefits of true community cohesion.

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the best ways of working towards this, and, as I have said countless times before, we are still living in times of austerity, sadly, where, in their quest to balance the books, government, does not yet seem to have grasped the fact that when you reduce staffing levels in any sector, to the point when one is left with virtually a skeleton staff, if you keep chipping away at the backbone of society, the skeleton will eventually collapse.

Personally, I am not driven by allegiance to any political party, and my thoughts apply to anyone, from any persuasion, who makes decisions that seriously affect the ability of any organisation, in the public, private or voluntary sectors to operate effectively.

As I prepare to finally retire, I can look back in time, and reflect upon the vast changes that I have seen over the years. Many good ones come to mind, as do

many bad ones, from which lessons have not been learned, and by which we are still suffering the consequences today!

In my blog last week, I briefly mentioned about a fun event which I presided over at my Rotary Club last week.

You may remember, that I was talking about the 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party!'

It was a brilliant evening, culminating with an excellent talk from a representative from our local Brentwood Brewery, who kindly, 'Hopped across,' from Brentwood to entertain us at end of the tea party.

It was great to be able to get away from constantly hearing about the woes of the world and the ongoing saga of Brexit, and to immerse ourselves in a bit of fun, whilst raising money for good causes.



Memories of travelling on the Underground network in Rush Hour?

## SILLY JOKES TIME

Having spent many years as a school's liaison officer, Group Scout Leader, Akela and a Youth Group Leader, it is an occupation hazard that there are times when my humour relates to working with them for so long.

Did you hear about the Boiled egg that was hit on its head by a spoon so many times it suffered from shell shock?

Or about the egg that joined the RAF, but left after a short while because it got fed up with being scrambled?

Or the egg that left the gamekeeper because it was frightened of being poached?

Or the boiled egg that was always accompanied by 'soldiers?'

Of course, telling jokes is not always an eggxact art, and one could risk becoming an egomaniac.

And then of course, there's the one time political joke that 'You shouldn't mix eggs with Curry, after all we don't want a 'Major incident!'

After reading these silly childish jokes, you may feel the need for a cup or tea, or to seek '*spiritual guidance*,' out of a bottle. Either way, sometimes it helps to be silly, and to not take life too seriously!

Having the great privilege of being a grandad to four beautiful grandchildren, ranging from the age of seven, to fourteen (going on 24), I 'am happy to be 'Young at heart,' although somewhat 'Old by bones!' They all know that grandad can't get down onto the floor, for fear of not getting back up again!

Once I finally retire, one of the things that I really look forward to, it making time to explore and appreciate the wonders of nature more, and the chance to rekindle my relationship with the wonders of our natural surroundings and wildlife.

For many a long year, I have threatened to write a book. Hopefully, I might even find time to do that, who knows. (I would have to change a lot of names!)

On a previous occasion, I mentioned to some of my readers, that the Greater London districts who collectively make up London Neighbourhood Watch, are unhappy with the proposed new structure, constitution and aims, of the National Neighbourhood Watch Association, and, at a recent meeting of all the districts and boroughs, they voted to go it alone, and reform as the new 'London Community Watch.' I was honoured to be invited along to the prestigious meeting, together with Sandra Jackson, my opposite number from Hertfordshire. It was a very constructive and positive meeting, which culminated with both Sanda and I being I voted onto their Board of Advisers.

As I am sure that I have stated before, When I finally retire as an Essex Watch Liaison Officer, I will continue my involvement with Epping Forest and Brentwood NhW committees and as a Trustee and Executive member of Essex County NhW association. In the interim, I am also playing an active role in helping to form and to steer the new NhW committee in Harlow.

I will continue to hold the neighbourhood watch side of the database, and, in response to the many wonderful appreciative comments that I receive regarding my weekly blog, I aim to keep writing accordingly.

I am always pleased to receive news of any community initiatives which benefit our areas, and I am happy to mention or promote the initiatives if appropriate.

You are welcome to contact me from now, and indeed, after I retire, using my '**NEIGHBOURHOOD MATTERS**' email address: -

[colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk](mailto:colin@neighbourhoodmatters.org.uk)

I'm even considering setting up a community website under that domain name.

*So watch this space .....*

**NO BLOG ON GOOD FRIDAY** as it is my official

Hot Cross Bun tasting day, before I go to work on an Egg or two, then working towards Spring salads and a diet!

Keep Alert, Keep Secure, Keep Safe as always!



## A FISHY BUSINESS

Unofficial sites 'Angling for your money.'

Don't get Hooked!

Dave Wilkins (Angling Trust, Regional Enforcement Officer, South East)

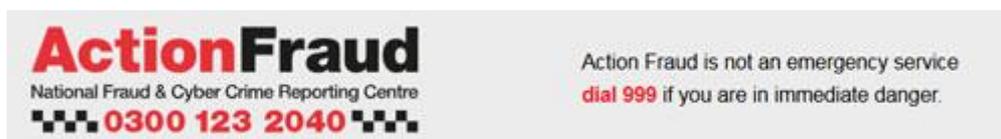
Some websites have been set up offering anglers a "check and send" service to buy rod licences. The Environment Agency is advising that "check and send" services are unnecessary and anglers could end up paying more for their licence than they should. Copy and paste into your web browser: The

New [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/when-you-need-a-licence> is the only one needed to buy a rod licence but if anyone still requires help they should call **0344 800 5386**.

The Agency has also experienced a delay in sending the new fishing licence out to purchasers and issued the following statement: “Please accept our apologies. Your fishing licence will be with you shortly. You are ok to fish using your confirmation email/text or your Post Office receipt until your fishing licence arrives. When you go fishing please make sure you take some identification with you.”

**Subject: Law Abiding Citizen Alert**

This is a message sent via Neighbourhood Watch. This information has been sent on behalf of Action Fraud (National Fraud Intelligence Bureau)



Message sent by Action Fraud (Action Fraud, Administrator, National)

Fraudsters are sending out a high volume of phishing emails to personal and business email addresses, pretending to come from various email addresses, which have been compromised.

The subject line contains the recipient's name, and the main body of text is as below:

*"Hi, [name]!*

*I am disturbing you for a very serious reason. Although we are not familiar, but I have significant amount of individual info concerning you. The thing is that, most likely mistakenly, the data of your account has been emailed to me.*

*For instance, your address is:*

*[real home address]*

*I am a law-abiding citizen, so I decided to personal data may have been hacked. I attached the file – [surname].dot that I received, that you could explore what info has become obtainable for scammers. File password is – 2811*

*Best Wishes,"*

The emails include an attachment – a ‘.dot’ file usually titled with the recipient’s name.

**This attachment is thought to contain the Banking Trojan Ursniff/Gozi, hidden within an image in the document. The Ursniff Banking Trojan attempts to obtain sensitive data from victims, such as banking credentials and passwords. The data is subsequently used by criminals for monetary gain.**

**Protect Yourself: -**

Having up-to-date virus protection is essential; however, it will not always prevent your device(s) from becoming infected.

Please consider the following actions:

- Don’t click on links or open any attachments you receive in unsolicited emails or SMS messages: Remember that fraudsters can ‘spoof’ an email address to make it look like one used by someone you trust. If you are unsure, check the email header to identify the true source of communication (you can find out how by searching the internet for relevant advice for your email provider).
- Do not enable macros in downloads; enabling macros will allow Trojan/malware to be installed onto your device.
- Always install software updates as soon as they become available. Whether you are updating the operating system or an application, the update will often include fixes for critical security vulnerabilities.
- Create regular backups of your important files to an external hard drive, memory stick or online storage provider. It is important that the device you back up to is not connected to your computer as any malware infection could spread to that as well.
- If you think your bank details have been compromised, you should contact your bank **immediately**.

If you have been affected by this or any other fraud, report it to Action Fraud by calling **0300 123 2040**, or visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

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