

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man quizzed over robbery

■ **PORTSMOUTH:** A man is being questioned in connection with the robbery of a building society.

Last Wednesday a man walked in to the Cheltenham and Gloucester branch in Arundel Street.

He demanded money from the cashier, who believing him to have a gun in his bag, handed over £2,000. The robber then made off on foot.

A 24-year-old man from Poole in Dorset was arrested yesterday.

Nursery date

■ **FAREHAM:** A nursery celebrated its 10th birthday by planting a special anniversary rose.

Staff at Good Manors Day Nursery, Church Path, Fareham, organised a fancy dress party for the children with a special magic show last Friday.

The nursery opened in 1998 with just two children and now numbers have swelled to 52.

WHAT THEY SAID

‘The reason this has finally happened is that someone came along with the right price. We are dealers and, if the price is right, we go with it.’



■ Businessman **John Pounds**, who has sold 14 acres of prime land at Tipner, enabling a major redevelopment

Bridge club

■ **TITCHFIELD:** The Titchfield Bridge Club will meet on Monday.

The group meet every Monday and Wednesday at the Titchfield Community Centre, in Mill Street, Titchfield, near Fareham, from 7pm to 10.30pm.

Coastal work

■ **WEST SUSSEX:** Coast protection work is due to start in Selsey tomorrow.

Shingle will be dredged from offshore and transported to Medmerry Beach at the Bunn Leisure complex, where it will be ‘rainbowed’ onto the beach at high water.

www.portsmouth.co.uk

MAKE IT YOUR FAVOURITE

CHARITY: Family of youngster with debilitating disease are heading to holiday home



Tatum gets a break thanks to tragic Hannah

by Adam Kula
The News

THREE years ago, the Westbrook family suffered the ultimate tragedy when they lost 10-year-old Hannah to cancer.

But they have transformed their heartbreaking loss into a gesture of hope as Hannah’s Holiday Home gets set to receive its first visitors.

Set up in tribute to brave Hannah, the holiday home in Oakdene Forest Park in the New Forest will open on February 9, providing free getaway breaks for families whose children have debilitating diseases.

The first to be welcomed are the Kemp family from Clacton-on-Sea in Essex, whose six-year-old daughter Tatum – pictured above – was diagnosed with the rare lung disease interstitial pneumonitis when she was just 18 months old.

Tatum’s mum Khadine told *The News* the family was honoured to be the very first to benefit from Hannah’s legacy.

‘She’s had a very rough ride, but she’s a tough little one,’ said Khadine of her daughter.

‘We’re all looking forward to it so much, especially Tatum. She loves swimming, and she keeps asking



“when are we going, when are we going?” She can’t wait. This is going to help so many people, and we’re just honoured to be the first ones there.’

The opening is the climax of much hard work by the charity’s 10-member committee, which has already raised thousands of pounds, including a £10,000 donation from the Piam Brown Ward at Southampton General

Hospital where Hannah was treated for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.

The charity aims to repay the £45,000 loan taken to purchase the holiday home and are keen to secure long-term funding for the project.

Hannah’s mother Pam, 38, of Nightjar Close, Horndean, said the project would allow people to forget the illness and enjoy themselves, as

well as giving bereaved families the time and space to begin to come to terms with their loss,’ she said.

‘When Hannah died we went away for a week ourselves, just to spend some quality time together, to start grieving. It’s something which really helped us at the time, and we’d like to provide it for other families too.’

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HANNAH’S HOLIDAY HOME

- Hannah Westbrook – pictured left – a former pupil at Padnell Junior School in Cowplain, died on September 19, 2004.
- Children are to be referred to Hannah’s Holiday Home by the Piam Brown Ward in Southampton, but Mrs Westbrook said the charity was setting its sights on widening the project even further.
- She said: ‘We’d like to see it extended to St Mary’s Hospital as soon as we can, and we’re looking at children’s wards right across the area. There’s no reason why it should just be confined to the south, and not take off in other places.’



INFO

■ If you are able to help contact Pam Westbrook on (023) 9257 0810 or 07790 349876, email pamcolandadam@btinternet.com, or visit www.hannahsholidayhome.piczo.com

Dickens’ message sharpened by humour

NOW why didn’t Dickens think of giving Ebenezer Scrooge a teddy called Mohammed?

Why didn’t Dickens think of varying the old ‘Bah, humbug!’ routine with an exclamation of ‘Bog off?’

Why didn’t Dickens think of heightening Tiny Tim’s suffering by having him falling flat or being banged into doorways every few minutes?

And why didn’t Dickens think of recruiting the giant from Jack and the Beanstalk



to play one of the ghosts? Because Dickens hadn’t met Oddsock, that’s why. The latest offering from the company that takes an offbeat approach to classic

texts has arrived in Portsmouth a little late for Christmas, obviously, but that hardly matters.

It is more important that the production is well run-in. So, for example, the gag of the revolving scenery that suddenly acquires a life of its own operates like clockwork.

And no-one should run away with the idea that this is simply a send-up. The essence of the Dickens message remains intact. It is simply sharpened by anarchic humour.

So Rob Laughlin brings some whimsical ad-libbing to Scrooge but also a compelling degree of seriousness.

Four other multi-talented actors share the other 36 parts – and almost as many wigs – in a tour-de-force of high-speed movement and costume changes.

The production, which also features music, slapstick and local jokes, has its final Portsmouth performance tonight.

MIKE ALLEN

Wetland day

AN ENVIRONMENTAL project on wetlands near Fareham is to take place this month.

The project will involve clearance work in the wetlands area at Warsash Common.

The work will aim to improve light levels and water quality for aquatic plants and species.

The event will take place next Tuesday, January 22.

Anyone who would like to be involved is asked to meet at the end of New Road, off Fleet End road, in Warsash, near Fareham, at 10.30am.