

THE RIDDLEDOWN RECORDER

A half-yearly publication of the Riddlesdown Residents' Association

No. 188 April 2009











INSIDE: A New block of flats • Commuter parking • Planning applications • Police matters • Common knowledge PLUS: Children's party pictures • Developing without permission Merlot's Tale • Jo-Ann at Tip Top • Early recollections • The Laing Estate • Victim Support in Croydon...and more



RIDDLEDOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Cover photograph: View from top of Copthorne Rise over to Buttermere Gardens

EDITOR'S NOTES

The death of David Slimming last year came too late to report in the October Recorder, but in this issue we write a few words to remember him and all he did for the community and the RRA Committee. He contributed much to both and we all miss him. The death of Sid Harris, another well-known and respected resident of Lower Barn Road, is also reported.

On a happier note, a memorable occasion was the Children's Fancy Dress party in January in which all costumes were good and many stood out. In particular did that of the Invisible Man whose disguise was marvellous yet simple, and well worth the prize we gave it. See the picture on page 23.

On the subject of party pictures, with slight trepidation, I have included some in this magazine. But we decided this year not to place any on the website. As photographer, I felt that before long there might be complaints and, much as I abhor the atmosphere that has given rise to such fears, I thought that I would rather avoid a midnight visit from HM Political Corrections Constabulary. I shall probably take the same approach with the Funday this year.

AGM

This is on Wednesday, 13 May, 7.30pm at St. Edmund's church hall and you are urged to come and take part. While not the only way we get to know what some of you think, it is the only formal opportunity for other residents to do so.

Nick Bygrave

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You may write to **Riddlesdown Residents' Association** at any of the following addresses: **66 Westfield Avenue, Sanderstead, CR2 9JU**

37 Buttermere Gardens, Purley, CR8 1EJ

44 Riddlesdown Avenue, Purley, CR8 1JJ.

Please mark your letter with the committee member's name, if applicable.

You can also use the Website Message Board's open or private email facilities.

RRA Notice Boards are situated by Riddlesdown Pharmacy, by the Church Hall and by Saban's Newsagents. We also use the boards on St. Edmund's Green and in the station waiting room.

Website: www.riddlesdownresidents.org.uk

Email: RRA@bygraven.fsnet.co.uk

NEWS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

A NEW BLOCK OF FLATS

...IF O2 MAST IS MOVED

Brian Longman and Phil Thomas

Following a Local Public Inquiry on 29-30 January a Government-appointed Planning Inspector has allowed the application to build ten 2-bedroom flats on the woodland adjoining 108-110 Lower Barn Road, by the Parade of shops.

However, the Inspector has imposed a condition: 'No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the telecommunications mast sited on the footway of Lower Barn Road adjacent to the site has been removed or moved to another part of the site.' This will not only require the agreement of O2 but also planning permission.

It must be done within three years of the appeal decision – by 18 February 2012. We wait to see whether O2 will move the mast, as we understand that part of the reason for its current position is to provide a mobile phone service for commuters on the railway when trains are in the Riddlesdown tunnel. By moving it further back from the tunnel entrance, it will not provide this service.

All the other objections raised – the effect on the adjoining green belt, ecological interest, proposed amenity areas, flooding, additional on-street parking – were rejected by the Inspector.

What happened earlier

Last year Taylor Wimpey submitted a planning application to build twelve 2-bedroom flats on the small area of woodland adjacent to the parade. The Association made a formal objection and the application was refused.

Wimpey lodged an appeal with the Secretary of State, to be decided at a

public planning inquiry at the Town Hall in September. However a legal dispute between Wimpey and Purley Downs Golf Club, who had managed the land for 50 years, meant the inquiry was postponed. The ownership dispute was eventually settled in favour of the golf club.

The Association was disappointed with the actions of the club following this decision. Up until the time it assumed ownership of the small plot of land on a point of law it was, with the Association, against the development.

We understand that, at the golf club's EGM in early October, members voted and agreed to actively encourage Taylor Wimpey to continue with the planning appeal – which is why it hadn't been withdrawn. The club intends to sell the land to a developer/builder.

It is interesting how views can change when financial considerations arise. We have made our views clear: the golf club sought our help in opposing the application, and then submitted their own application after assurances that this would not happen.

At the January Inquiry both Brian Longman and local Croydon councillor Lynne Hale argued that the development was not in the interest of the local community. They were told that a survey on street parking, recently commissioned by the applicant, found that car parking in Lower Barn Road near the shops was not a problem and, apparently, that there were plenty of places to park. (Interestingly, the survey was completed before the double yellow lines were painted under the bridge.)

The survey findings did not consider the

large 15-metre high 3G-telephone mast, only 12 feet away from some of the flats, to be a problem. Nor that it was an issue that part of the area is within the green belt and is also a designated Site of Nature Conservation. Nor that visitors to the flats, a gated community, might park on the designated shop parking bays. Nor that the large new building and car park on the slope up to the golf course would increase water run-off and increase the risk of flooding under the bridge.

The Inspector seems to have agreed with all but one of these survey points

even though a late-afternoon site visit after the hearing ought to have dispelled the argument that parking would not be a problem and access to the flats on the bend would not be an issue. You can read the full decision on our web site.

COMMUTER PARKING

Brian Longman and Phil Thomas

The last report raised the issue of commuter parking in the relatively narrow roads close to the station. To ensure we had an understanding of what, if anything, you wanted the Association to do, we distributed a simple tick box questionnaire with the last issue of the Recorder. Roads included in the survey were Lower Barn Road, Rydal Close, Barn Crescent, Dalton Close, Coombe Wood Hill, Hill Close, Riddlesdown Avenue and Brancaster Lane.

Parking schemes can be very contentious and this is not an area in which the Association can lead unless it has an overwhelming mandate from the residents involved. While the Association now has a better understanding of some of the issues involved, with only 36 of the 244 questionnaires returned we do not have an overwhelming mandate to proceed and therefore will not be taking this issue forward.

Before leaving this subject it might be worth mentioning just one of the comments received. This was that some local residents drive only a relatively short distance to the station and leave their car there all-day and in some cases several days. Without getting into the rights and wrongs of this debate it might be useful to

tell you about a recent discussion with a resident in Lower Barn Road.

On returning after a big shop at a local supermarket the lady found the nearest she could park to her house was over 100 yards away. It then took her four long trips to the car to carry the heavy bags of shopping in. Most of us can understand her frustration at this situation.

Postscript: We did have some very interesting suggestions in the questionnaire responses! For example, building a multi-storey car park on the woodland beside the shops and widening Lower Barn Road by removing all the grass verges! Some residents felt that some house owners weren't using their own driveways and garages enough and were exacerbating the parking problems on the road. A number of comments were received that many commuters who live in the Riddlesdown area couldn't be bothered to walk the short distances from their homes to the station and thereby clog up the streets around the station. Local residents who do this, please take note!

Parking in Lower Barn Road

Phil Thomas writes: While on the subject of parking, I would like to make it perfectly clear, despite some suggestions to the contrary, that the RRA did not request the Council to place double yellow lines in

Dalton Close and Lower Barn Road near to the station.

Apparently the Council received a complaint from a resident in Dalton Close that lorries and the dustcart, emergency vehicles etc. could not enter or deliver to four houses at the back of Dalton Close because of parking, mainly by commuters.

The RRA did raise objections with the Council in March 2008, during the consultation period, about the double yellow lines returning into Lower Barn Road, at the junction with Dalton Close, as we believed parking would occur on the north side of Lower Barn Road and pinch parking could be a problem when such vehicles as lorries, ambulances, fire engines and dustcarts would not be able to pass through. However the Council ignored our concerns and laid the double yellow lines at the Dalton Close/Lower Barn Road junction, in June 2008. Within a few weeks, as we predicted, pinch parking became an issue through thoughtless commuters parking opposite one another in this narrower section of Lower Barn Road. On many an occasion, HGVs hooted their horns in frustration, because they could not get through the small gaps left by motorists.

We took up with the Council the problem they had created and Ward Councillor Lynne Hale and my namesake, Councillor Phil Thomas (Chairman of Traffic Management), became involved. As far as the Council were concerned, it was a Police matter, because obstructions were occurring and only the Police can ticket and remove vehicles due to obstruction. The Council then decided that further double yellow lines would have to be laid on part of the north side of Lower Barn Road and on the south side near the four-way junction, and also under the railway bridge going towards the shops. Following a consultation period in November, these additional double yellow lines were laid in December 2008. However, by now allowing some parking on the north side of Lower Barn Road, near to the four-way

junction, sight lines for traffic turning left into Lower Barn Road from Brancaster Lane are now partly obscured by parked vehicles and this could cause accidents. This situation may need to be monitored.

As I have said above, only the Police can issue tickets and remove vehicles causing an obstruction. There have been instances recently, where vehicles have been parked either immediately opposite or diagonally opposite, one another in other narrow roads like Buttermere Gardens, Dalegarth Gardens, Riddlesdown Avenue and Coombe Wood Hill. These at times have caused obstructions to large vehicles trying to pass through the gaps left.

Sometimes it is not very easy for a large vehicle to turn around if the road is blocked and this type of parking can lead to some nasty aggressive confrontations. The moral of the story is: beware, if you park in a narrow road in Riddlesdown, that you or someone else don't cause an obstruction. It may cost you a lot of money to get your vehicle back if it is towed away (at least £250 plus any daily storage charges). If you require any Police assistance in this respect then, depending on which Ward you live in, contact the Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams. For the Sanderstead Ward, the telephone number is 020 8721 2470 and for the Purley Ward, the number is 020 8721 2467. Any rapid enforcement action that comes within Croydon Council's remit, such as a vehicle causing an obstruction on a yellow line(s), or if a vehicle is blocking the dropped kerb to your driveway or property, then contact the Council on 020 8760 1966.

MITCHLEY WOODS

Brian Longman

Last April I reported that, despite our best efforts, Mitchley Wood had been sold to two separate individuals for a price in excess of our offer. The Association contacted both new landowners and informed them of our wish to buy the woodland. One owner indicated that he might be prepared to sell but at a price that, in our opinion, was unrealistic and well above its true valuation. We believe this was in excess of £1 million pounds. In October 2008 I mentioned that the slow-down in the

housing market and a commitment from both national and local government to defend the green belt, meant that we remained confident of the opportunity to bid for the land when it eventually came back on the market. Recently a four-acre plot of woodland has come back on the market and while still overpriced, it is beginning to approach a more sensible valuation. We are currently investigating the situation and will keep you informed of any developments.

POLICING MATTERS

Brian Longman

Our Neighbourhood Police Panel was introduced in 2006 and continues to meet up to four times each year. With both Riddlesdown and Sanderstead Residents' Associations as members, the panel aims to represent the views of local residents on local community policing issues. This includes identifying concerns, setting priorities and reviewing outcomes.

Priorities for last year included antisocial behaviour both in the area and on the buses, motor vehicle crime, burglary awareness, and road safety. At the last panel meeting in January it was decided the main priority for the local police team would be burglary awareness and prevention. For the Association to represent your views we need to hear from you, so please use our website or email.

Police meeting

After two attempted burglaries at the Post Office in Lower Barn and a violent robbery at the newsagents in Mitchley Avenue that left shop owner Peter Saban with 11 stitches in the back of his head, the Association received a number of calls

to hold a public meeting. Following discussions with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) a special public police surgery meeting was held on Saturday 18 October at St. Edmund's Church.

The meeting, chaired by the Association, saw around 60 residents attend to discuss crime with our local SNT. I felt the meeting was extremely positive and produced a broad range of constructive suggestions from residents. Several residents felt that areas like Riddlesdown, with their relatively low crime rate, were a low priority for the centrally-based emergency car teams.

Others felt the geographical size of the patch covered by the local SNT was too big and, with only one car between several teams, was a disadvantage. It needs to be said at this point that the role of the SNT is all about local policing issues and not to be confused with the emergency 999 response teams. The Association is in constant dialogue with our local team who have been extremely responsive to issues raised.

An example of this was late last year

when, following concerns of anti-social behaviour in the evenings, the team introduced a new late shift pattern running into the early hours on Fridays and Saturdays to address the problem.

The Association via the police panel will continue to follow up on the thoughts and ideas expressed by the residents at the

open meeting and inform you of any developments. However I think most of us would

agree that the our local SNT team, consisting of one sergeant, two constables and three police community support officers (PCSOs) have made a real difference to the area

THE RRA CITY OF LONDON FUNDAY

Brian Longman

Last year around 900 people enjoyed a picnic on the Downs and relaxed to the sounds of an excellent jazz band. At the risk of repeating myself it just gets bigger and better every year.

If you missed out last year's, this year's date is Sunday, 21 June starting at noon. I have checked the calendar and there are no clashes with Wimbledon, the British

Grand Prix or any other major sporting events. The day has fun for all the family: donkey rides, Punch and Judy, swing boats, tractor rides, children's races and so much more.

It is a really great day out, and remember the day is for everyone young and old and it is completely free. See you there!

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Phil Thomas

As usual, all the planning applications in the RRA area are updated weekly on our website:

www.riddlesdownresidents.org.uk

68 and 81 Westfield Avenue

As reported last time, a number of planning applications have been submitted for two back land developments in this road.

The first site was at No 81, which had two previous applications turned down by the Council and one of them refused on appeal by the Planning Inspector. A third application was submitted and the Council again refused this application for the erection of a three-bedroom detached chalet bungalow at rear, the formation of vehicular access onto Copthorne Rise and provision of associated parking. This application went to appeal again on 11 September 2008. We await the decision.

The second location was at No 68 and was for a third application for a two-

bedroom detached chalet bungalow at the rear, the formation of vehicular access onto Court Hill and provision of associated parking. Again the Council refused and it also went to appeal on 19 September 2008 and we await the decision.

30/32 St James Road

I also wrote last time about this site which is just outside our area but does back on to houses in Downs Court Road. The proposal was for the demolition of the existing buildings (Nos. 30 and 32), the erection of two, 2-storey buildings with ten two- bedroom flats and four one-bedroom flats, the formation of vehicular access and 14 car parking spaces.

The Council refused the application and the applicants took it to appeal which the Planning Inspector dismissed on 18 November 2008.

29 Dalegarth Gardens

Three applications have been submitted

over the last few years for some form of development on this site, but all have been refused. The latest is for a detached three-bedroom house with vehicular access on to Ingleboro Drive and associated parking. The application went to Appeal and the Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal on 22 January 2009.

71B Mitchley Avenue

An application for a change of use for this new ground floor shop, which has recently been built adjoining Saban's Newsagents, was submitted in mid-January. The change of use requested is from A1 (retail use) to A5 (hot food take away) together with new extractor ducting at the rear. We understand the proposed use is for a fish and chip shop, hours from 11am to 10 pm, Monday to Saturday, closed on Sunday. This application has been met with a mixed reaction. On the one hand, there will be the possible noise disturbances, with children, mainly from Riddlesdown School, congregating outside, parking and traffic issues and rubbish, to name a few. But on the other hand, it would save residents from having to travel to either Sanderstead or South Croydon.

The application is expected to be decided by the Council before the end of March.

Former Sainsbury's Store, Swimming Pool and Car Park, 52 High Street, Purley

In mid-October, the Head Lessee of the old Sainsbury's store (Polaska Assets Ltd), set the ball rolling, in respect of planning, by submitting to Croydon Council's Planning Department an application for a decision from the Council as to whether an Environment Impact Assessment for a mixed use redevelopment, which includes demolishing all the existing store, multi-storey car park and swimming pool, would be required. The Environmental Impact Assessment is a prelude to any possible full planning application, likely to be

sometime this year. The Council are the freeholders of all the land but they are not submitting this application. However this scheme has been prepared in consultation with them.

The new scheme, submitted by Polaska's agents, Hyder Consulting Ltd, is for a new library, cinema, four live work units for use as craft shops, a cafe, car parking for 230 spaces (currently 424 spaces) and flats – possibly 286 dwellings but this maybe increased. There are no plans to replace the existing swimming pool and it is not clear whether there will be any parking for the new flats and where car parking will be provided during the construction period.

Polaska Developments, who took on the Head Lease from Sainsbury's about five years ago, were due to refurbish the store but never proceeded with this work.

The full Environmental Impact Assessment can be viewed on the Council's Planning website, typing in the full application number: 08/03428/DT. The Council decided in November that a full Environmental Impact Assessment was required and further details are awaited.

The Council's plans for new swimming pools at Waddon, Coulsdon and New Addington have all recently been thrown into doubt for a variety of reasons. The Purley swimming pool is due to close in 2010 and together with the current run-down state of the car park and the vacant former retail store, perhaps now is the time for the Council to consider demolition of this poorly designed and unattractive building and replace it on the same site with a modern swimming pool and car park. The general consensus seems to be that the people of Purley want a swimming pool rather than a cinema, so why can't Croydon Council do something that the residents want for a change? Over to you, Purley Ward Councillors, to take this forward!

Tesco's wind turbine

Whilst on the subject of Purley, Tesco

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submitted an application in late January for the siting of a 10.6m high (35 ft) wind turbine in the car park, just on the western side of the petrol station. This will mean the loss of four car parking bays (more parking lost in Purley!).

This six kilowatt turbine will just about be enough to boil a 3kw kettle and possibly also heat one 3kw immersion heater on a windy day! Bearing in mind that for many days in both winter and summer, the UK has high pressure over us and therefore very little wind, the turbine could be somewhat redundant. Also bearing in mind the amount of electricity consumed by the Tesco store, this turbine would only provide a very small fraction of their electricity. The blades are not of the conventional type of three or four blades protruding out from a central core but two sets of rectangular vertical blades, one on top of the other, set at 90 degrees to one another. It does look strange!

These wind turbines have now blighted many parts of the countryside and the

majority are located in windy areas near the sea or on hills. Do Tesco really think this turbine will produce much electricity in a valley where their store is sited? I believe this is a publicity stunt by Tesco to try and prove their green credentials and their planning literature says this.

Will this turbine become a blot on the Purley landscape if the Council approve it? Details of the turbine can be viewed on the Council's Planning website - application no. 09/00165/P. Their decision is awaited.

RRA FINANCIAL MATTERS

Nick Bygrave, Treasurer

As you will see from the figures on Page 25, little of financial note happened during 2008; the wider financial crisis did not seem to touch us as we don't get interest on our current accounts anyway.

Our HSBC bonds will have matured by the time you read this and no doubt renewal will produce a much smaller income for 2009.

Our largest unusual expenditure was for two long-needed notice boards outside

Riddlesdown Pharmacy and St.Edmund's Church. Overall, a healthy surplus of £1,394 for the year was achieved, helping to prevent membership fee increases, and providing possible grist for the Woodland Appeal mill. For the latter, we still gratefully receive occasional donations – this year amounting to £150. See Brian Longman's report above on how the Mitchley Wood matter stands.

THE CHILDREN'S FANCY DRESS PARTY

Janice Kedwards, Social

The party was held on Saturday, 17 January. We welcomed 42 children this year, all of whom seemed to have a thoroughly enjoyable time - as did many parents and grandparents who

stayed to help (and join in).

The Fancy Dress was up to the usual very high standard of imaginative outfits and all met the genuine appreciation of those present.

The winners were:

Best Home Made Costume
Rebecca Garrard – Hat Stand/Shoe rack
Most Original Costume
Kyle Theobald – The Invisible Man
Under 6
1st Prize
Jessie Rose Tafazzoli – Ring of Roses
2nd Prize
Daniel McFall – Wall E
3rd Prize
Jodie Lee Tafazzoli – Pirate
Over 6
1st. Prize
Carla Theobald – Cowgirl

2nd Prize
Emily Wallis – Ladybird
3rd. Prize
Emma Rapley – Chest of Drawers

The judges were Cllr. Yvette Hopley, Mrs. Mavis Wilder and Mr. Nick Bygrave who all did a marvellous job.

After looking so serene for the competition our contestants were soon letting off steam dancing to the D.J.'s music and winning prizes in the games.

Tea followed and, suitably refreshed, we were treated to an hour of magic with Scatty Hattie – back by popular demand. Enjoy it again next year.

TRANSPORT

John Rapp

February, for me, has included the joy of being the only passenger on a 412 bus to West Croydon. The turn-up-and-go service provided by our public transport is something to be appreciated. However, an expected service not being available at going home

time is far less acceptable, and I am in dialogue with both our train and bus operators, having heard about our workers being stuck at London Bridge Station and buses not stopping to take Riddlesdown School pupils home.

MEMBERSHIP

John Rapp

It is lovely to detect all the signs of the coming summer. For the first time in a generation, we have enjoyed enough snow to give us a day off work and school, to build snowmen.

While spring is starting gently, and the snowdrops have not yet been joined by daffodils, I have seen the yellow of a car

clamp applied in Lower Barn Road. We need to take care.

To balance this is the news that on April 2009 Saturdays, all the Pay and Display parking bays in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea will be free.

I leave you to enjoy your summers.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL PLEA FROM THE RRA

Some residents have written to us to ask that we make a plea to the few dog owners concerned to take more care in preventing their pets depositing their mess on pavements and grass verges in the area. There seems to have been more than the usual incidence lately and we do ask that some thought is given to this matter and the inconvenience it causes if

only by stepping in it.

Other residents have repeated their irritation at the number of grass verges that have been ruined by vehicles being parked on them. Many will have noticed the examples in Riddlesdown Avenue and Lower Barn Road. There are no doubt others.

DEVELOPING WITHOUT PERMISSION

Councillor Yvette Hopley, member of the Council Planning Committee, writes on the General Permitted Development Order

I thought you might find it helpful if I explained the amendments that were announced on 1 October 2008 to the General Permitted Development Order; this is the arm of legislation which controls what householders can do to their properties without requiring planning permission. The government's aim was to try to scrap the red tape, and make it much easier to convert your loft into an extra bedroom or build on an extension to your property. The government view was that it would cut out 80,000 planning applications per year nationally, saving homeowners about £1,000 in some cases. However, the regulations that were announced have a sting in their tail. It seems that in some instances more control over household developments have resulted from the changes.

The regulations are now impact-based rather than based on the amount of volume added to the property, which was the previous requirement. Basically, many large extensions to houses, including dormers in the roof, not in conservation areas and with large gardens will be permitted development, so long as the materials used are similar in appearance to the existing house, the roof pitch and eaves details also match, the projection from the existing house is not more than four metres on a detached house and three metres on other houses. In respect of two-storey extensions at the rear, they should not be within 2 metres of the side boundary and 7 metres of the rear

boundary. Two storey side extensions will still require planning permission. Similarly, large outbuildings up to 4 m in height, which extend up to half the size of the remaining garden of the existing house, may be built without permission so long as they are not within 2 metres of any boundary.

There has, however, been a tightening up of the regulations in respect of paving over front gardens. Whereas this was previously permitted for householders to carry out, it will only now be permitted if the surface to be provided is of a porous material or you can direct rainwater to a porous area such as a soil border area.

The regulations are far more complex than the previous ones and there is the chance of different interpretations of the regulations between individual councils because of the various conditions which have been attached. If you are considering extending your property or adding an outbuilding or paving over your front garden, I would urge you to contact the planning department on tel: 020 8726 6800 to gain confirmation on whether permission is required or not. You can also obtain advice on the council's website via a power point presentation of the main changes.

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/contents/departments/planningandregeneration/ppt/gpdorevised.ppt>

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COMMON KNOWLEDGE

by Luke Barley, City of London Ranger, Riddlesdown Common

Changing faces

Many of you will have already noticed that you haven't seen the towering presence of Robin Crowther around the site recently. Sadly for us, Robin has moved to a new job working for Waverley council at Farnham Park, an ancient deer park near Guildford. The City of London are in the process of recruiting a new ranger to work in our team and live in the Keeper's cottage on Riddlesdown – keep an eye out on the noticeboard and around the site for a new face! In the meantime, Barry Gutteridge and Luke Barley are covering the practical work and patrolling on the site with help from our trusty band of volunteers.

Robin worked with the City of London for nine years, four of them at Riddlesdown, and did a lot of good work on the site – and especially in building links with Riddlesdown School. We'd like to thank Robin for all his hard work and wish him all the best for the future.

Winter works

We have moved the fenceline at the gate at the bottom of the main grazing paddock into the scrub on the other side of the track and pushed the gate down to meet the fence and simplify the unnecessary extra entrance-way that used to be there. It will open up the vista and mean that an extra patch of chalk scrub is grazed by our herd of Sussex cattle, hopefully leading to an increase in rare wild flowers.

EDF works

EDF have begun work on site to replace the old oil-cooled electrical cable under Riddlesdown Road (the main track). They are working under a strict licence issued by the City of London and Natural England to ensure that no damage is done to the important chalk grassland habitat or any other part of the site. Some disruption will unfortunately be inevitable until the work

is completed in June but if you do have any concerns please phone EDF's contractors, J. Murphy & Sons Ltd, on 01883 343992. In the event of a problem that requires attention from the rangers please phone 01732 279083.

Happy hedge-laying

The Riddlesdown Volunteers are settling into their new schedule (now meeting on the second Thursday of each month) and are continuing to do some great work



around the site. We held a special three day task in November when lots of Riddlesdown volunteers and their friends from other groups came to lay the last section of hedge by the Donkey Field. The whole stretch now looks fantastic and the work attracted a lot of attention from passers-by. Some of our volunteers are very skilled hedge-layers who play an important part in keeping this ancient craft alive.

If you'd like to learn new skills, meet new people and lend a hand on Riddlesdown, the group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 10am by the countryside office – new members are always very welcome!

School days

Students from Riddlesdown School keep on disproving the media stereotype of young people as hoody-wearing troublemakers. Conservation teams from

all the year groups have put in some really hard work to help clear scrub from the chalk grassland and always do it with smiles on their faces and boundless energy that tires out the poor rangers!

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DAVID SLIMMING REMEMBERED

A sad omission this month from the gallery of photographs of the RRA Committee is that of David Slimming who died on 24 October 2008, aged 85.

I knew him as a fellow member for over ten years and always regarded him as a wonderful person, full of humour and wisdom, and always keen to take on some of the RRA's more arduous tasks. For many years he organised the periodical collections of litter around the area and was an authoritative and fatherly figure, along with his friend Gerry Swailes (who died a few years ago), taking parties on nature trails around the Common at our annual Fun Days, sharing his love and knowledge of nature.

But it was not until I attended David's funeral last year that I learned more about his life. A little of it is recorded here. During the war he flew Lancasters in RAF Bomber Command, a dangerous occupation if ever there was one. Returning to civilian life as an engineer, running his own company for many years, he traded in confectionery machinery with firms such as Rowntree's, Terry's and Beeches.

On retirement, he joined everything as a volunteer: the RRA, the New Addington

Women's Centre, the Croydon groups of London Wildlife and Hardy Orchids section of the RHS, the Orchid Society of Great Britain, as well as helping out at the Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows. He was a volunteer at RHS Wisley and Down House, Charles Darwin's home, looking after the orchids and even helping with the latter at Knights Garden Centres.



Orchids were his great love and he led many parties on orchid walks. David and his wife Audrey, married for 63 years, toured the country giving lectures on the subject, showing his stereoscopic slides (he was a member of the Stereoscopic Society).

In recognition of his work around Croydon, London Wildlife has named a rich grassy slope at Hutchinsons Bank, Featherbed Lane, as 'Slimming Down'. This an area filled in the summer with wild flowers and butterflies.

The RRA sends its belated sympathy to Audrey who helped me in writing this appreciation.

Nick Bygrave



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MERLOT'S TALE by Peter Douglas of Westfield Avenue

This is a tale about a dog called Merlot and the difficulties encountered when modern technology fails.

Merlot is an English Springer Spaniel and is our family pet. We wanted to take her on holidays with us to Europe so she was microchipped and vaccinated against rabies to satisfy the requirements of the Pet Passport Scheme. The microchip is an electromagnetic coil in a capsule about the size of a grain of rice and has a unique number which is allocated to the animal and is recorded in the passport. The device remains inactive until scanned by a special scanner and is advertised to be a permanent means of identification throughout the life of the pet.

Merlot was taken to France for a family holiday on 12 June 2008. Just prior to our return and in accordance with the directives contained within the Pet Passport Scheme we took Merlot to a vet in France.

On arrival at the Eurotunnel office in France on 24 June 2008 the microchip could not be read by any of the scanners. The realisation that your animal does not meet the requirements of the PETS scheme and that quarantine in the UK, or a stay in France are the only immediate options, hit us like a hammer. What happens next? What have we done to our dog? Where are the quarantine kennels? How much does it cost? How long does it take? The list was almost endless.

The Eurotunnel staff were unhelpful and unsympathetic and we gained most of our information from other passengers. We decided that under no circumstances would we leave Merlot in France. We discovered that if we wanted to return to the UK on the shuttle we could not return with Merlot and that she would have to travel later. If we returned by ferry our dog would at least be with us. She would know we were there and we would know where she was.

We were eventually provided with a printed record of quarantine kennels within the UK. This list is supplied by

DEFRA, the Government department who, among other things, are responsible for administering the PETS passport scheme. We contacted a number of kennels within the Home Counties. Some of them had ceased trading as quarantine kennels and one of them had not traded as such for ten years! We left messages on answer machines where possible.

As we were unable to contact anyone in the UK who could assist, we had no option but to stay another night in France. Merlot was not in the least bit bothered by the events of the evening. She was fed and had a good run. We ate a meal purely because we were hungry; neither of us enjoyed it. Merlot had a good sleep, we hardly slept at all.

The next day we went to the P&O ferry terminal at Calais. The staff there were helpful even though they too gave us a different out-of-date list of quarantine kennels.

Eventually we made contact with a representative from an English quarantine kennel. He was very professional and once he had the details he obtained an export licence within 30 minutes. He also fully explained what would happen once the dog was back in the UK. She would be X-rayed and the microchip located. The vet would then operate on her to remove the defective microchip and replace it with a new one, thus providing continuity. The defective microchip would be sent to the manufacturer who would be able to identify the chip and forward the details to DEFRA who would in turn release our dog from quarantine. At last there was some light at the end of the tunnel and the stress that we had been going through was being lifted.

Once on the ferry we were parked away from all other vehicles and had to give the keys of the car to the loadmaster. On arrival at Dover all other vehicles were unloaded. We had to remain in our car on the car deck to await the arrival of the

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The meetings are held at the Group's Headquarters:
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vehicle that would take Merlot away to quarantine. Eventually the van arrived and I had to lead Merlot from our car to the van. Merlot is such a trusting dog she happily jumped in. As the van drove away we sat there in numb disbelief.

On 26 June, Merlot was X-rayed and the defective microchip located. It still could not be scanned and was removed by a vet and replaced, ironically with one produced by the same manufacturer. The defective microchip was forwarded to the UK agents for the manufacturer, and transferred to Spain for analysis. In the meantime all we could do was visit Merlot as often as we could, and wait.

Merlot was a fit, healthy, nineteen-month-old lively English Springer Spaniel who needs and is used to at least two hours running off her lead a day. She was confined to a kennel with a run 3'3" wide and 20' long. Through lack of exercise her weight increased. Due to lack of human contact she became distracted and agitated. She was clingy and howled when we left, which was heartbreaking.

Finally the fax we had been waiting for arrived. The manufacturers had identified the microchip, DEFRA was satisfied that Merlot was the dog in the passport and

that she could be released from quarantine. What more could go wrong?

We drove down to the quarantine kennels to collect Merlot. We were delighted to be reunited but on checking her passport, I noticed that the vet who removed the defective microchip and replaced it with a new one had recorded a date of a week prior to us going on holiday!

This careless mistake could have resulted in Merlot having to spend the full six months in quarantine because her passport was invalid. A new correctly completed passport had to be prepared.

We have since discovered Merlot's tale is sadly not an isolated incident!



A reminder of the February snow

ALL CHANGE AT RIDDLEDOWN HIGH SCHOOL

The Principal, Mr Gordon H. Smith writes...

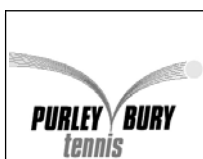
From 1 September 2009, your local school will become Riddlesdown Collegiate. This is not just a change of name but is part of a radical change in the way we work.

The School will be divided up into five small schools, or Colleges, each providing for 400 learners. Four of the Colleges will be for 11-16 pupils and one for post-16; up to 80 of the post-16 students will be at Woodcote High School as part of a franchise arrangement with that school.

Each of the Colleges will be a small school in its own right with a Head teacher, staff and facilities of its own. I, as Principal, will still be responsible for the Collegiate as a whole.

This new way of working will help us to improve our standards at an even faster rate and accelerate our work to be an outstanding school.

A reminder that local residents are welcome at our regular family laboratory evenings. Teams met in January to compete to build a device that would accurately measure a minute. Our next event will be at 7.30pm on Friday the 24 April, when amusing presenter Ian B Dunne will be talking about the best bits of Science. Tickets are free. Just phone the Science College Administrator, Lou Franklin, on 020 8655 8736.



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**THE RRA CHILDREN'S
FANCY DRESS PARTY
17 Jan 2009**

JO-ANN at TIP TOP HAIRDRESSERS Greg Jackson, Jo-Ann's partner, writes...

Tip Top is owned and managed by Jo-Ann Marsden, a hairstylist who received excellent early training at Kennard's, in central Croydon. She then obtained experience at a salon in Selsdon before obtaining managerial skills at Leslie's in Thornton Heath. Jo-Ann acquired her first salon, La Petite, Bencham Lane, Thornton Heath, and ran it for 15 years before moving to 100, Lower Barn Road. She will be reaching her nineteenth year at Tip Top on 24 July this year.

The premises, part of The Parade, built in the 1930s, has been a hairdressers since at least 1956 when it was called 'Annette's (Ladies Hairdressers)'. It is known that a lady named Hazel Coombs and her mother occupied the premises. They operated a hairdressers at the rear and a woollen and linen shop selling baby goods at the front. Later, Mr John Garofalo and his wife owned the shop and occupied the flat above. They continued the business as a ladies and gents hairdressers. Subsequently, John operated the barber's himself and rented out the ladies section. He ran the business for 25 years, departing in 1990 when Jo-Ann took over and refurbished the interior, retaining the barber's and ladies sections.

Jo-Ann has seen various changes in people's lives over long periods – for instance, Riddlesdown children who eventually grow up and in turn bring along their children.

The salon has witnessed many a baby in its midst, as staff have found caring easier having them nearby. Jo-Ann's children, Sarah and Paul, were no exceptions. Other customers have celebrated their sixtieth



Jo-Ann with Nicola, Holly and a little friend in for a light trim and polish

and sixty-fifth wedding anniversaries. Many have continued regular attendance well into their eighties and nineties, with Mrs Taylor (Auntie) recently reaching her 100th birthday. Jo-Ann and the girls love preparing hair for the numerous weddings and keep up to date with the latest trends in fashion and style.

The salon observes special occasions by decorating the shop with themes such as Valentine's Day hearts, Easter bunnies, Christmas and New Year sparkle. Sporting events such as World Cup football, rugby and Wimbledon engender fun.

Two years ago the salon was invaded by a Dalek which helped to raise money for a breast cancer charity.

Catastrophes also occur, such as the flooding of the shop from a faulty washing machine in the flat above. This caused havoc, but 'all hands on deck' enabled Tip Top to soldier on.

Jo-Ann has facilitated the training of numerous staff over the years, many to develop their own salons later.

Currently, the establishment has three

full-time hairstylists and three part-time workers, which include Jo-Ann's daughter, Sarah.

The premises were thoroughly redecorated towards the end of 2008. Jo-Ann and the team feel that fellow proprietors at the parade have been very friendly and helpful over the years, as has the wider neighbourhood. She considers it a joy to have worked for so long in such a pleasant area with such proven loyal customers. In fact, individuals continue to visit the shop from long distances including Cornwall, Eastbourne, Isle of

White, Wales, Scotland and the North of England. Also old regulars have often attended from Spain, Greece, South Africa and the USA.

Jo-Ann wishes to express a big thank you to all the staff and customers who have supported Tip Top over the years.

RRA FINANCES 2008

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AT:	31 Dec 2008	31 Dec 2007
INCOME		
Members' Subscriptions	2,568.00	2,837.70
Advertisers in Recorder	1,519.50	1,168.00
Interest on Investments	1,322.96	284.91
Sundry Donations/Bequests	0.00	0.00
Countryside and Woodland Appeal	150.00	1,180.06
Granby Enterprises Sponsored Walks Projects	0.00	0.00
	5,560.46	5470.67
EXPENDITURE		
Children's Party	362.97	158.52
Fun Day	1,062.39	1,285.53
Countryside and Woodland Appeal expenses	0.00	0.00
Donations and Membership/Affiliation Fees	50.00	340.00
Hall Hire for Committee Meetings and AGM	80.00	137.00
Insurance	250.00	250.00
Equipment - noticeboards	252.13	0.00
Printing: Riddlesdown Recorder	1,724.00	2,018.00
: Membership Cards	202.01	199.16
Phone, Postage (incl.in 2007 £106 for POBox), Stationery	72.23	206.32
Granby Enterprises Sponsored Walk Project	0.00	880.08
	4,165.73	5474.61
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR (a minus = deficit)	1,394.73	(-3.94)
BALANCES AS AT START OF YEAR	42,614.79	42,618.73
TOTAL FUNDS	44,009.52	42,614.79
BALANCE SHEET		
CASH	269.56	199.18
LLOYDS TSB TREASURER'S ACCOUNT	6,367.99	8,230.60
LLOYDS TSB WOODLAND APPEAL ACCOUNT	6,475.06	8,325.06
HSBC TREASURER'S ACCOUNT	896.91	859.95
HSBC HIGH INTEREST DEPOSIT BOND*	30,000.00	25,000.00
	44,009.52	42,614.79
TOTAL FUNDS		
of which committed (ring-fenced) for:		
SARAC Contingency Fund	1,234.00	1,234.00
Granby Walks Project	4,119.92	4,119.92
Woodland Appeal	23,475.06	23,325.06
TOTAL COMMITTED FUNDS	28,828.98	28,678.98
TOTAL UNCOMMITTED FUNDS	15,180.54	13,935.81

* Of the HSBC HIBD, £15,000 pertains to the Woodland Appeal

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS Part I by Leslie Oppitz

My first recollection of Riddlesdown was rushing along Lower Barn Road in an attempt to catch the 8.10am train to London Bridge. If I was in good time I'd see the steam train as it entered the tunnel. If I was late it was bursting out of it surrounded by steam as it pulled into the station. If I missed it I had to catch the 8.20am and change at East Croydon.

That was in 1938 when I attended a school in London's Tooley Street. I used to buy a copy of the Daily Mirror at the newsagent from the shop in a parade opposite the station and, when on the train, have a peek at the comic strip Jane while others around me studiously read the Telegraph or the Times.

But these journeys were not to last. Because of war, evacuation to the countryside came in 1939, but I returned early the following year with no air raids forthcoming during the 'phoney war' period. As is well known, raids began in earnest in 1940. I recall one of the first. We'd spent the afternoon on Farleigh Common when suddenly German Stuka dive bombers appeared from nowhere to attack Croydon Airport. Lysander light aircraft were sent up to oppose them but they were no match for the Stukas.

The raids had a lighter side for us as schoolboys. We took to collecting incendiary bomb fins, bomb splinters, strips of metal foil (dropped to confuse our radar) and the like. I recall that a complete unexploded incendiary bomb (after we'd carefully removed the detonator) would raise 2/6d on the 'schoolboy market'.

In September 1944 I was called up. I was apprehensive about the possibility of becoming a 'Bevin Boy' and working down the mines, but instead I was to find myself, as Corporal Oppitz, serving

with the 4th Royal Tank Regiment.

It was during my army training that I first really found that I was colour-blind (red and green). I was trained as a gunner-wireless operator in a tank, sitting next to a large gun or howitzer in the tank's turret. I loaded shells (very heavy) into the breech block, took aim and fired. I never fired in anger – but had plenty of practice on ranges. After VE Day we were being trained for jungle warfare in the Far East, but thank goodness the atom bomb over Japan stopped that war – a war we could never have really won.

One day we had our tanks at Warcop in Cumbria and in training practice I was asked to load a smoke bomb and fire it at an elaborate moving target (on rails) on a mountain side two miles away. I load, fired, and blew up the target. Shells were identified by coloured rings and in my colour confusion I had loaded an armour-piercing high-explosive shell. The target was completely destroyed.

A Sergeant shouted "Fall in two men" and I was escorted to the Guard Room and charged.

I explained my problem and the Medical Officer was summoned, bringing with him a book with circles of coloured dots. I read the numbers as they appeared to me and was pronounced colour-blind. "Case dismissed," said the Officer. The Sergeant said afterwards I was "a first-class shot" in

the Regiment – at least I think that's what he said! My only excuse for not recognising the actual shape of the shell was youth and inexperience. It also indicates how easy it can be to make mistakes if under pressure of battle as witnessed in the current conflicts.

It transpired that colour-blind people can 'see through' camouflage - I certainly could. It would have been useful in battle. The Germans used this – but the



Leslie Oppitz

British didn't bother.

Visiting Warcop many years later, my wife Joan and I found tanks still there firing shells. I spoke with the officer who took my camouflage comments very seriously and said he would take it up with higher authority. I wonder if he ever did. My legacy is poor hearing at my present age and the need for hearing aids.

Leslie Oppitz, now 81 and a former resident of Sanderstead, lives with his wife Joan, in Wales. He is

author of 'Lost Railways of Surrey' along with many other railway and tramway books.

FROM THE 1968 ARCHIVES

The following appeared in the December 1968 Riddlesdown Recorder Secretary's Report, demonstrating that there is no problem that has not surfaced before. Now, at least, coal lorries don't normally need to get through.

Lower Barn Road

As it is clear that an impasse has been reached over the parking issue, I have written to our representatives on the Borough Council asking them to take action. More and more cars line the

road each day, increasing the danger and the inconvenience to residents. An illustration of this is the difficulty in getting coal delivered. Reluctant to block the road with large vehicles, coal merchants can often stop only many yards distant from their customers' residences. If the distance involved is appreciable, the men naturally refuse to deliver, and the customers have to hope that further attempts will be successful and not too long delayed.

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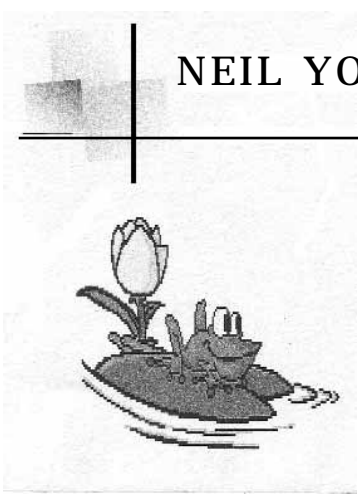
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RRA WOODLANDS AND COUNTRYSIDE APPEAL



Our appeal for funds to put us in a stronger position to secure the Mitchley Woods and to build up a fund for purchasing other threatened parts of the local green belt is still open. If you can help, please drop a cheque payable to **RRA Woodlands and Countryside Appeal** into the box in Wessons Post Office, Lower Barn Road, or in Sabans, Newsagents, Mitchley Avenue, or send it to Brian Longman, 66 Westfield Avenue, Sanderstead CR2 9JU or Nick Bygrave, 44 Riddlesdown Avenue, Purley CR8 1JJ. Please supply your name, address, telephone no and, if available, your email address.

We shall be grateful if you will signify that, if the Mitchley Woods bid is ultimately unsuccessful, you agree that your contribution may be held and used by the Association for future campaigns to protect the Green Belt of Riddlesdown and surrounding areas.

THE LAING ESTATE, RIDDLEDOWN

John Laing – his impact on the Bourne Society’s district from items collated by Gordon Newall and reprinted here with grateful acknowledgement to him and the Bourne Society

John himself warrants a separate article but this one is intended to outline his way of life generally and to indicate something of his work locally. John was born at Carlisle on 24 September 1879, the third son of John and Sarah and the only one to outlive infancy. His parents also had three daughters. The family were active members of the ‘Christian Brethren’; his father’s business was a construction company but, at the time John succeeded him, was facing bankruptcy.

Aware of this crisis in the spring of 1907, John was walking in the vicinity of the ruins of Furness Abbey in Lancashire seeing no way out of the situation that he had inherited.

Explained by the nature of his upbringing, he knelt down and prayed, seeking God’s guidance and vowing that, if the business recovered, he would adopt a simple lifestyle and devote most of the profits to the service of God, supporting Christian and other philanthropic causes.

The following are just a few of those recipients with whom he shared his millions: The Crusaders Union (boys’ bible class movement); Covenanters (similar objectives but church based); founded the Inter-Varsity Fellowship; the London Bible College; building churches, chapels and Coventry Cathedral (ploughing back any profits made to support them – and often charging only the cost price of construction).

John Laing Construction was involved with the building of the first motorway, after manufacturing sections of the Mulberry Harbour and also building a new headquarters for RAF Bomber Command during World War II. They built Middlesex County Hospital; a large bridge at Carlisle; and an extensive estate at Golders Green, London. Grants and gifts were all to remain anonymous.

In our area, the site of St Edmund’s Church in Mitchley Avenue at the heart of the Laing Estate was donated and built, it is reported, at cost price. It includes a spacious hall for community use.

John’s aim was to be ‘the top builder in the country’. He was a very strict employer insisting that all work be completed to the highest possible standard. His own simple life was extended into his working life by his not having a separate Directors’ Dining Room but sitting down with his men in the Works Canteen – few of the men recognized him as their boss. At his 50th anniversary as head of Laing’s he refused to accept a Rolls Royce offered to him by members of his family.

John married Beatrice in 1910. They enjoyed 62 years of contented marriage. They had two sons, Kirby and Maurice. In recognition of his service to the construction industry, John received a knighthood in 1959. Kirby and Maurice were also subsequently knighted.

It would appear that Laing’s interest in Purley dates from the mid-1920s. Planning in those years was not regulated as we know it today. With Croydon having taken over from Coulsdon and Purley Urban District Council when becoming the London Borough of Croydon in the 1960s, many proposed development plans were destroyed if not of a quality suitable to be microfilmed. Only a written record remains. ‘The Laing Estate’ at Riddlesdown is not, perhaps, in a precise delineated area due to the above, to World War II, and, on one side, due to restriction by the Green Belt regulations. Another factor was that houses were not built over the railway tunnel running from Riddlesdown Station towards Warlingham on the Oxted line, because the rumble of the steam locomotives heading the trains

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❖ **Greetings Cards**

❖ **Bourne Society Publications**

Opening Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

- 6:45 am to 6 pm

Wednesday,

- 6:45 am to 7:30 pm

Saturday:

- 7:30 am to 7:30 pm

Sunday:

- 7:30 am to 1 pm

of those days could be heard. In more recent times these gaps have been filled.

Progress of the development can be gleaned from Ward's Street Directories. Those for the years 1930, 1932, 1934 and 1937 are held in the Local Studies Section on the third floor of Croydon Library.

The 1930 Directory lists Mitchley Avenue with 'three houses unoccupied on the left-hand side after crossing Riddlesdown Road, plus one occupied by Wilfred Joseph C Croyde.' On the opposite side there was only 'Building Land'. By way of contrast, Riddlesdown Road was quite well advanced and by 1932, 18 houses had been built on the right hand side of the road.

Riddlesdown Avenue already had two houses on the left.

The 1934s Directory lists Mitchley Avenue (left hand side) with four additional houses, plus some in progress of being built; and seven on the right hand side. Riddlesdown Road's left hand side numbered 3 to 73, plus 11 more, while the Avenue had 17 more than in 1932. (Note: it is not suggested that the progress above was all by Laing's, but it is recorded to indicate the development at the time.)

The 1937 Directory shows houses built during 1934, 1935, and 1936 in Dalegarth Gardens, Derwent Drive, Buttermere Gardens and Eskdale Gardens. However Honister Heights shows no houses built by 1937, but subsequently one side (backing towards Mitchley Avenue) was completed. The opposite side, backing towards the Downs now has seven or eight houses, while Dunmail Drive – the concrete roadway having been laid pre-War – has no development except close to its junction with Honister Heights, namely Riddlesdown High School, the Science College (part of the Bourne Foundation) and a few houses opposite. The remainder is barricaded off and serves as a footpath down to Mitchley Avenue.

Information supplied by Croydon's

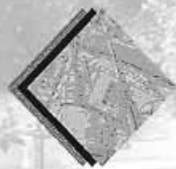
Planning and Transportation Department's Technical Support Team relating to 'Honister' and 'Dunmail' is as follows:

Records show applications for each property in Honister Heights 1930s through to 1950s. In 1957 an outline application was submitted by Laing for the erection of 26 bungalows and extension of the street (ref: UDC 13797) - rejected July 1957. In 1965 (ref: UDC 19735) outline application was lodged for a residential development – this was also refused, in March 1965.

Was John's ambition to be 'top builder' achieved? The following, together with his Knighthood, demonstrate that it was. Information given by a local Valuation Surveyor (see sources below): Laings were pioneers in constructing 'granny flats' on the ground floor of blocks having maisonettes above in Mitchley Avenue and Lower Barn Road. The flatlets comprised a small entrance lobby, a bed/sitting room with a recess that could be curtained off to give room for a bed and wardrobe; the sitting room had an open fireplace with back boiler; kitchen at rear with the latest stainless steel sink unit and drainer, the space below left without an enclosed cupboard which was considered to be unhygienic; and a small bathroom with W.C.

To ensure that these flats were reserved for the elderly, Laing's insisted on single occupancy in order to prevent newly married couples from purchasing an 'easy start on the property ladder'. The price for the flats was £1,850; for the maisonettes £2,650. Garages, if required, were an extra. There were – and still are – no public houses on the Estate.

At a time when other developers resorted to copious advertising to sell their flats, including in the national press, Laings did not need to advertise because their high standards of finish sold theirs. They corrected any faults, such as the fixing of door frames if not 100% true, without question.



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John & David Martin, a subsidiary of Laing's were responsible for marketing until about 1957/58 when Mr Barry Holt, a local Valuation Surveyor, was given the personal responsibility for the final 20 or so units because it was not cost-effective for Martins to keep their own Estate Office open.

instalment of 'Great Britons' Croydon Council Planning and Transportation Department, Planning Support Team's Assistant Manager ; Croydon Local Studies Library: Ward's Street Directories; Barry Holt, local Valuation Surveyor; Bourne Society Local History Records Vol XI, 1972, pp.22-28

John and Beatrice lived in a comparatively modest house at Mill Hill, London, which had a 'glorious view' from the garden; anyone was welcome to come in and sit there to share the Laings' enjoyment. John died in his 99th year.

The value of his estate, as disclosed in his will, was less than £400, in spite of the huge construction company he had built up.

SOURCES:

This England magazine, Summer 2001, first

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SID HARRIS REMEMBERED

A much-loved and well-known member of the community passed away on 5 February, two days before what would have been his 89th birthday. Sid Harris had lived in Lower Barn Road for 50 years. He lost his dear wife, Molly, in 1996 after a long and distressing illness. They had two children, Andrew and Shelagh, both of whom are married. Shelagh lives in France and Andrew in Hampshire. Each couple has a son and daughter.

Sid, Molly and the children moved to Lower Barn Road in 1959 and soon became well-liked members of the community. Sid had served in the war and later trained and qualified as an accountant, working for Mobiloil.

Sid and Molly were keen and knowledgeable gardeners and became members of the Sanderstead Horticultural Society. Sid was interested in natural history and the wildlife in the surrounding woods. They both walked extensively on

Riddlesdown and the adjacent countryside.

Sid was a good neighbour and was always willing to give a helping hand. He liked music and latterly found great comfort from it. In later years Sid suffered with severe arthritis but that did not stop him struggling down the road with his two sticks to the shops each morning. He was an inveterate conversationalist and if you stopped him on his morning walk, you knew you were in for a good chat. It would not be unkind to say he was the sort of man who could make a shopping list sound interesting! He was a teller of anecdotes – in short a raconteur.

There was a wide response from local people at his funeral. Sid was a warm-hearted, kind and intelligent man and we loved him. He will be sorely missed.

Mavis Wilder and Stan Fell

WHITE WONDERLAND

Gardens transformed into dazzling paradise
Thick carpets of pristine white
Covering stone flights of steps
Trees displaying snowy boughs
Dressed in freezing white lace
Icicles hanging from lamp posts
Eerily outlined in mellow orange light
Shining over invisible pavements
Falling snow shrouding bushes, small shrubs
Looming from the dark night
Like sleeping ghosts in a haunted landscape.

*Barbara Carpenter
Riddlesdown Road*

Photo: Phil Thomas

VICTIM SUPPORT IN CROYDON

Helping victims of crime in the borough

If you have ever been a victim of crime you will know that it can be a shocking and distressing experience. Even non-violent crimes like burglary can cause deep and sometimes long lasting effects. Victim Support is the only national charity that offers help and support to victims of all types of crimes, from the theft of a purse to the murder of a relative. To do this we rely very heavily on volunteers who work alongside paid staff members.

Victim Support has been in existence in Croydon for over 25 years, first as an independent charity and more recently as part of the single Victim Support organisation created last year when all the Victim Support charities merged.

Victim Support today serves crime victims, witnesses, their families and friends and offers a range of services, whether or not a crime has been reported to the police. As an independent voluntary organisation Victim Support works alongside the criminal justice system, government and other organisations nationally and in local communities to promote the rights of victims and witnesses.

Victim Support provides information, practical help, advocacy and emotional support to people who have experienced a crime, and to their families and friends. Our services are based on the principle of community involvement – for many people the expression of concern by a fellow citizen can be very helpful in repairing the harm done by crime. We try to ensure that our personnel reflect the diversity of the Croydon community and that our services are equally accessible to all.

In Croydon, from August 2008 to January 2009, we made over 6,000 personal contacts (telephone calls and visits) to people who had been victims of crime. New systems mean that we try to

contact, by telephone, every single person who has reported a crime and who lives in the borough. Once a victim has been contacted, our services will be offered and will vary according to the individual needs of the victim.

Our help could be very practical; for instance we may be able to get a lock changed for a vulnerable victim, or arrange for someone to go into a refuge. Alternatively, we may get involved in 'advocating' on behalf of a victim with a range of agencies, such as the police, the local Housing Department or with schools on behalf of young victims and their families. Most commonly, we just listen to and recognise victims' experience, giving them a chance to express their feelings.

A recent example of our work illustrates the variety of support we can offer. A young woman sought our help after she had been made homeless following a sexual assault in a hostel. A volunteer was allocated who gave emotional support and reassurance, arranged hotel accommodation for the first traumatic weekend (paid for by Victim Support), and accompanied her to meetings with Housing Department personnel, advocating on her behalf in her search for suitable accommodation. This was a struggle through the lack of available housing in Croydon but now, after many weeks, the victim is safely rehoused.

Croydon has a diverse population with a large number of young people and people from different ethnic backgrounds. As a result we have developed two projects, which cater to their needs. A Hate Crime project seeks to reach out to minority and marginalised communities, including those who experience racist, homophobic or religiously motivated offences. Our R U OK? project also reaches out into the community, offering a range of services to young people who have been victims of

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crime and bullying. Currently, we have a regular presence in five of the borough's secondary schools and work in many others delivering workshops on personal safety, healthy relationships and bullying.

As mentioned earlier, volunteers who work alongside our small staff team carry out most of our work with victims. These volunteers are given extensive training to carry out the role and, once they have gained sufficient experience, are able, if they wish, to undertake further intensive training to offer specialist support, such as working with victims of serious sexual assaults or with families bereaved through murder.

So please remember that if you have been a victim of crime and you live in Croydon, you can get help and support if you need it. You don't have to have reported the crime to the police. Just contact us on 020 8681 7711 to speak to someone in confidence or to arrange an appointment to come in to our offices at 250 Brighton Road, South Croydon CR2 6AH.

Alternatively, if you would like to help victims of crime and could offer non-judgemental, confidential support, use the same number to contact us and ask for more information about becoming a volunteer. We ask that you are able to undertake six days of initial training and that you are able to spare about two to three hours a week to help us. The work is highly rewarding and we ensure that you are well supported and have the opportunity to develop your skills further once you have completed the initial training.

*Cathy Pleasance,
Borough Manager, Victim Support, Croydon*

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RRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 13 May 7.30pm

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RRA SUMMER FUNDAY

Sunday 21 June starting at noon

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COMMUNITY PAGES – THINGS TO DO, JOIN, AND HELP WITH

Short pieces on local associations, events and activities are included here free of charge. New material is required for each issue please. Space is limited so please get contributions in early (by end February and/or August) – first come, first served.

Cantilena
singers

This ladies choir started 2009 with a concert in February to entertain senior citizens at Sanderstead Methodist Church. After that we began to work towards the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music intermediate choral singing exam. "It will give us something to aim for," said our Musical Director, Sue Jones.

Last September, a record number of new members joined the choir. They ranged in age from mid-twenties to mid-sixties. There were so many that the choir librarian had to buy more music! The new members have been very enthusiastic. "Singing gives me such great joy that I make it a priority in my busy life," said one.

In mid-December we sang in the foyer of Mayday Hospital. This is always great fun and benefits the Friends of Mayday through the money put in our collecting tins by people visiting the wards. We also took part in the Croydon Federation of Townswomen's Guilds annual carol concert in central Croydon.

Our main Christmas performance was a concert for Sanderstead Literary Society. The programme started with folk songs and contemporary music. After the interval, we sang a wide range of seasonal songs with the audience joining in some well known carols. "I enjoyed it because there was a lovely atmosphere and a wide variety of songs," said one choir member. The concert was very well received and we hope to be invited back another year.

In the spring we start practising for our summer concert at St Matthew's Church, Chichester Road, Croydon, on Saturday 11 July. To find out more about joining the choir (you don't have to be able to read music) or coming to the concert, please

contact Jill on 07957 627783.

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

A GOOD CHILDHOOD: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age

In February, The Children's Society published a disturbing report, the result of a two-year inquiry into childhood. Many of you may have heard about this on radio and television.

The inquiry has eight themes but its main conclusion is that British children's lives are being blighted by the selfishness of British adults.

Bob Reitemeier, the chief executive of The Children's Society, described the report as "a wake-up call to us all". He went on, "The aggressive pursuit of individual success by adults today is the greatest threat to our children. In many ways our children have never lived so well. And yet there is widespread unease that somehow their lives are fast becoming more difficult than they ought to be.

"There is unease about the unprecedented speed with which children's lives are changing; the commercial pressures they face; the violence they are exposed to; the rising stresses of school; the increased emotional distress they feel.

"There is one common theme that links all these problems: excessive individualism. This is the widespread belief among adults that the prime duty of the individual is to make the most of their own life, rather than contribute to the lives of others."

The report blames this 'excessive individualism' for the high rates of family break-up, educational inequalities, unprincipled advertising, and the disparity in incomes that leaves vast numbers of children living in poverty.

In our current recession the poorest are likely to suffer further hardship. Charities

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such as The Children's Society will face even greater challenges raising the funds they need to help the many youngsters who are the victims of violence, neglect, poverty and discrimination.

In Sanderstead and throughout the South East people have been generous in their support and we sincerely hope that support will continue. We all know that our children still need us no matter what is happening with the economy.

So thank you for your generosity and we hope to see many of you at our forthcoming Ploughman's Lunch with Fashion Show and Sale on Thursday 23 July.

*Sanderstead Fundraising
Committee*

CROYDON OPEN GROUP

If you enjoy books and music, you might like to share your interest for a couple of hours each week with a like minded, small group of mainly retired but young-at-heart local people. We meet on a weekday evening and bring along a couple of short extracts from books, or music in any style or format, to loosely fit the subject on the programme. We welcome all tastes and are not judgmental or competitive but very informal, the prime object being to have a pleasant, interesting evening, with a purpose, in friendly company, and maybe discover some things you didn't know along the way.

We would welcome new members so, if this sounds a tempting alternative to whatever TV has to offer, why not come along for a 'taster' session where you wouldn't need to bring a contribution.

If you want more details about the group please ring me, Anne Slatford, on 020 8660 4378.

TALKS AT PURLEY LIT

If this issue arrives with you before 17 March you still have time to hear Percussionist Nigel Bates on that Tuesday talking about **Life Backstage at the Royal Opera House** after the Purley Lit. Society's AGM (7.30pm) – and refreshments. And on 31 March, the

amazing Jan Meek on how she recently travelled **To both the North Poles!**

If not, next season's talks are ready for your diary. Not to miss on **6 Oct** when the Helen Mirren character, Yorkshire WI member Tricia Stewart, whose idea it all was, tells the **Story of the Calendar Girls**. After that, on **20 Oct**, ex-BBC Television Film Editor Colin Jones tours **London Gardens** with his camera.

The **Heart of the Sahara** comes to Purley on **3 Nov** as John Pilkington, with three camels and a Moorish guide, records stunning landscapes and life lived 'much as it was a millennium ago'. On **17 Nov** Richard Thomas gives a **Bird's Eye View of Wildlife Trade in SE Asia** (originally scheduled for this March). **Christmas Music** follows on **1 December**.

Please note at the back of your diaries the topics for 2010: **Pompeii and Herculaneum** (John Wilson, 5 Jan); **Eleanor of Aquitaine** (Alison Weir, 19 Jan); Lady Sally Moon's **Riches to Rags** survival story (2 Feb); **Steeple Jack Fred** (by Fred Dibnah's widow Sheila, 16 Feb); **Underground features of East Surrey** (Peter Burgess, 2 Mar) and the **River Zambezi in Zimbabwe** (Dennis Newland, 16 Mar).

All talks are on alternate Tuesdays, autumn and winter, in the Purley United Reformed Church hall, Brighton Road - £3 at the door or join at a third discount for all eleven talks.

More information (and to be on list for full programme details): Margaret Hall, 8668 1764

RUSEDSKI AT PURLEY BURY

A local tennis club Open Day (for members and prospective members) with a difference: Greg Rusedski on court with, first, juniors, then, after lunch, seniors on Saturday 18 April.

On Friday 24 April juniors thinking of joining the club can play from 5pm on Junior Open Day. Also see page 22.

For membership details ring 020 8668 5250, or visit our website purleyburytennisclub.net. Or simply turn up ready to play at either of our weekend club sessions (Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning) or mid-week – Wednesday mornings for ladies, Thursday mornings for men. We also have a Practice Membership for those taking up the game.

The five hard courts have just been relaid a fresh, bright blue, and there's a practice wall to knock against. Our ten match teams (men, ladies, mixed) are always looking for keen new blood at different levels, and we play friendly matches.

We have a growing social membership, whether for anyone who would just like a drink and a chat in our pavilion bar, or to take part in the special non-tennis events we run.

The club is highly regarded for its extensive coaching facilities, and especially for the development of junior membership, from the age of four to 18 - with plenty of school holiday tennis.

You will find us between Purley Bury Avenue and Brancaster Lane.

PURLEY RIDDLEDOWN TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD

An afternoon of quizzes, jokes and amusing poems got the new year off to a cheerful start for the guild at their January meeting.

The old year had ended with a very enjoyable Christmas party and carol singing. During the autumn the guild had an interesting talk given by a representative of the RNLI who illustrated how important it is to keep the lifeboats afloat. We were also given views of out of the way areas in London in a talk and a slide show by Mary Moore.

Members also met during each month for subsection activities including Scrabble, drama, country walks, pub lunches, outings and knitting blankets and garments for charity.

The guild meet on the first Tuesday of each month at St Edmund's Hall, Mitchley Avenue at 2pm. New members are always welcome. The age of our membership ranges from 31 to 93, so ladies of all ages can be sure of something to interest them ! For further details call Mary Ellis 020 8660 1175.

RIDDLEDOWN LAWN TENNIS CLUB

This year the Club will be offering memberships in conjunction with the Government's healthier life style initiative.

We will be continuing with our Saturday morning Junior programme where coaching and guidance will be provided to small groups of children of similar age or ability at a reasonable price.

We also hope to continue to offer all adults the chance to learn to play or to recommence playing tennis, with experienced players available to join in and give guidance. Coaching can be arranged for those who are interested in taking their game to a higher level.

The aim of the Club is to provide a friendly atmosphere where members can enjoy tennis at all levels of ability as well as organising and enjoying social activities. We do however believe in the spirit of competition.

As a private members Club, all members are expected to join in group playing sessions (if able to do so) at specified times of the week. The courts are not available for use by the general public but there are membership packages available for families or groups who merely wish to play among themselves and not join in the general play sessions.

More details can be found on our web site: www.riddlesdownlawn tennisclub.freerservers.com or by telephoning John Pewtress on 0208 668 4352.

ST. EDMUND'S CARING GROUP

SECG is a voluntary group for the local folk in Riddlesdown; from our leaflet drop

last spring we were pleased to recruit three new volunteers, but we would like some more! If you are a driver and can spare an hour or two we would like you to join us at SECG to help us support our less able Riddlesdown neighbours. If you are not a driver, befriending is another way of helping those unable to leave their home easily.

We hold two volunteer meetings a year and manage to help a variety of clients stay in their own home mainly by shopping and offering transport for medical appointments...last year we managed an impressive 962 tasks, helping 46 clients! We have also been to the pantomime and enjoyed a day out in the summer with our clients, so we have fun too! Do please consider volunteering; it is good to help others and can be very rewarding.

Also if you feel that we could help you as clients don't hesitate to call anytime. Contact coordinators: Julia Rider 8651 6493 or Barbara Towler 8660 8653 for more information.

SANDERSTEAD HORTICUTURAL SOCIETY

The Society's famous Summer Flower Show will be held on 27 June in The Wettern Tree Garden, Purley Oaks Road; as always we will have a wonderful display of exhibits, plant sale, craft stalls, children's entertainer, teas and music from The Crystal Palace Band. We are always seeking new members to come and enter the show; showing is good fun and never as daunting as it may appear. Membership costs just £6 per household and entitles you to enter the two shows, hire our tools, pick our brains, attend six lectures and visit famous gardens. Contact Valerie Burley on 8651 5837 for details.

Colin Jones, Chairman

The RSPB Croydon Local Group Monthly Illustrated Wildlife Talks at Old Whitgiftian Association

**Clubhouse, Croham Manor Road –
off Croham Road. 2pm & 8pm.**

Admission £3, Concessions £2.50.

Everyone is welcome, not just RSPB members. Refreshments are free.

A selection of RSPB goods, nuts & seeds are on sale.

Parking - in adjacent road (no meters), limited on site.

Mon May 11: Nigel Choat is a Surrey photographer and we should look forward to many lovely slides about the 'Natural History SE England'.

June: We have no meeting in June.

Mon July 13 Welcome back to David Darryl-Lambert who is continuing 'Larks, Pipits and Wagtails'.

Mon Aug 10 General Meeting in the afternoon with the AGM at 8.00pm.

Also a London RSPB update on projects and events over the last year.

Mon Sept 14 We shall be travelling to a mysterious land and finding out more about its wildlife with Barry Wright on his 'Travels in Tibet'.

Mon Oct 12 John Wyatt takes us closer to home on a visit to a beautiful area in the 'Chiltern Experience'.

For more information contact John Davis 020 8640 4578.

Our MP

Richard Ottaway (MP for Croydon South) House of Commons SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 6392 (surgery 1590) or visit surgery at 36 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2LG (by appt.)
<http://www.richardottaway.com/>
Email : ottawayr@parliament.uk

Email : derek.millard@croydon.gov.uk
Donald Speakman, 4 Bencombe Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 4DQ Tel: 8405 6752
Email : donaldspeakman@croydon.gov.uk

Our Councillors

PURLEY

Graham Bass, 19 Woodland Way, Purley CR8 2HT. Tel: 8660 7013

Email : graham.bass@croydon.gov.uk

Derek Millard, c/o The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX. Tel: 8660 9329

SANDERSTEAD

Lynne Hale c/o Town Hall, Katharine Street Croydon CR0 1NX Tel: 8405 6721

Email : lynne.hale@croydon.gov.uk

Tim Pollard, Woodside, 42 Lime Meadow Ave, South Croydon CR2 9AR Tel: 8251 8500

Email : councillor@timpollard.co.uk

Yvette Hopley c/o The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX Tel 8657 0973

Email : yvette.hopley@croydon.gov.uk

RIDDLEDOWN/LONDON TRAIN TIMES (OFF-PEAK)

To East Croydon, Victoria (London Bridge): Weekdays: 0906, 0936 then 6 and 36 mins past the hour until 2306. (LB trains: 1846, 1916, 2016.) Saturdays: 0706, 0736 then same each hour until 2306. Sundays: 0821 then same each hour until 2321.

From Victoria to Riddlesdown: Weekdays: 0923, 0953 and then 23 and 53 mins past the hour until 1653 then 1723, 1753, 1823, 1853, 1923, 1953, 2023, 2053, 2123, 2153, 2223, 2253, 2324, 2349. Saturdays: 0723, 0753 then 23 and 53 mins past the hour until 2253 then 2324, 2349. Sundays: 0722 and then same each hour until 2222.

From London Bridge to Riddlesdown: Weekdays: 1715, 1744, 1815, 1847. Saturdays and Sundays: No direct services.

From East Croydon to Riddlesdown: 0910, 0940 and then 10 and 40 mins past the hour until 1710, then 1730, 1741, 1758, 1805, 1817, 1831, 1842, 1900, 1911, 1940, 2010, 2040, 2110, 2140, 2210, 2240, 2310, 2343, 0010. Saturdays: 0910, 0940 and then 10 and 40 mins past the hour until 0010. Sundays: 0943 and then same each hour until 2143, then 2245.

Enquiries: National Rail Enquiries: Tel: 08457 484950, website: www.nationalrail.co.uk/ or www.southernrailway.com/. Southern Customer Services: Tel: 08451 272940

AND SOME LOCAL BUS ROUTES AND TIMES

The 412 starts/ends at West Croydon bus station, passes through High Street/Katherine Street, South Croydon (Swan & Sugar Loaf), Upper Selsdon Road, Selsdon (Farley Road), Sanderstead Church, Riddlesdown (Mitchley Avenue), starting/ending at Tesco's, Purley.

Frequencies (mins): Early: 20, Peaks 15, Daytime 15, Evenings 20, Late evenings 30. (Sundays 30).

First and last: from West Croydon: weekdays and Saturdays: 0620, 2355; Sundays: 0655, 2355.

from Tesco's weekdays and Saturdays: 0552, 2327; Sundays: 0627, 2327.

The 403 starts/ends at West Croydon bus station, passes Fairfield Halls, Park Lane, Swan & Sugar Loaf, Sanderstead Station and Church, Hamsey Green, Warlingham Green and Sainsbury's, Chelsham, Farleigh, starting/ending Chelsham Common.

Frequencies (mins): Early: 20, Peaks 12, Daytime 12, Evenings 15, Late evenings 20. (Sundays 20).

First and last: from West Croydon weekdays and Saturdays: 0530, 2400; Sundays: 0700, 2400.

from Chelsham Common weekdays and Saturdays: 0530, 2400; Sundays: 0650 2400.

Enquiries: London Transport 020 7222 1234 www.transportforall.com/; Arriva 020 8271 0101.

(Sources: Trains: Southern timetable; Buses: Out & About (TfL). Timetables change, so, if in doubt, check with the operators. RRA can accept no responsibility for the accuracy of the above information.)

Our Website: www.riddlesdownresidents.org.uk

Library Closing Days: Purley and Selsdon – Wednesdays; Sanderstead – Thursdays

Croydon Council's telephone number for all enquiries: 020 8686 4433

RRA Committee Meetings 2008: 19 November; 2009: 21 January, 18 March

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