COULSDON

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

> Winter 2023





ww.thecwra.co.uk

Litter picking, and more, inside:

Keeping active: ideas for exercising both minds and bodies during the dark days of winter, (and even for the rest of the year)!

Yuletide festivities in Coulsdon

Seen an interesting bird or animal? How to report your sightings.

Together with the latest news about Rickman Hill Park, The Hive, Transport, Parking and Planning.

From the Chair

Since our last newsletter and AGM, back in June, much has happened in, or near, Coulsdon.

Sadly, our treasurer, Keith Edwards, succumbed to cancer at the end of September. Keith was a happy, friendly man, who was always keen to pitch in, and chat over a beer. He joined the committee soon after the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting in 2021, when the 'old regime' were replaced by the seeds of the current committee. Keith enjoyed sailing and telling stories about his boating exploits. Nearer home, he was heavily involved with the Friends of Rickman Hill Park, and he built and installed all of the nesting boxes for the patch of ancient woodland in the corner of the park known as Mother Kitty's Shaw, as well as doing some heavy work clearing the scrub there. He will be sorely missed, as our treasurer, and as a good mate and raconteur.

Another set of Chairman's Ramblings, another World Cup. Who, in the summer, would have given credit to the idea that England would have got further than France or Ireland, in this year's festival of men's 15 a-side rugby? OK, we didn't actually play either of those teams, but we did manage to win our quarter-final (against Fiji), only to be defeated by one point in our semi-final by South Africa, who went on to win against the All Blacks (also by one point). We finished with a play-off, beating Argentina to third place. Well done, Steve Borthwick, Owen Farrell and Company!

Nearer home, a potential development in Purley that would provide us with a new swimming pool is at the centre of discussions around three issues: is the parking provision adequate; how dodgy is Polaska, the developer (registered in the British Virgin Islands); and is it worth a second tower block in Purley (12 storeys) to pay for the pool? CWRA is one of seven RAs seeking answers to these questions.

Other parking and planning issues are moaned about further on in this newsletter!

To make a break from my own ramblings, I am very pleased that we have a number of up-beat and witty articles about activities in and around Coulsdon. Thank you to Jennifer and Rod Sturdy, Bill Kilvington, Maggie Chan, Caroline Avern, Paul Ford, The Hive team and Dave Rawlinson.

Please send in submissions for future editions via **info@thecwra.co.uk -** we look forward to receiving them.

Cheers, Richard.

		Who's Who
Your CWRA Committee		
Position vacant	Chairman	
BILL KILVINGTON	Treasurer	and Ecology
DOREEN RAWLINSON	Secretary	
DURGESH VYAS	Committee member	Membership, Transport
PETER APPLEFORD	Committee member	
JENNIFER STURDY	Committee member	Newsletters
DAVID RAWLINSON	Committee member	
RICHARD WALKER	Committee member	Planning issues, website
KEITH WATKINS	Committee member	Social Media, Rickman Hill Park
General email: info@thecwra.co.uk		
Website: www.thecwra.co.uk		

Our Elected Repr	esentatives
MP for Croydon So	outh
Chris Philp	chris.philp.mp@parliament.uk
London Assembly	Member for Sutton and Croydon
Neil Garratt	neil.garratt@london.gov.uk
Local Councillors	
Mario Creatura	mario.creatura@croydon.gov.uk
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Luke Shortland	luke.shortland@croydon.gov.uk

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this newsletter are personal views of the contributors, and do not indicate endorsement, or otherwise, by any of the current CWRA committee.

AGM and since

Thank you to everyone that came to, and supported the AGM. Guests included Councillor Creatura, and representatives from East and Old Coulsdon, and Cane Hill Park residents' associations.

We had presentations by invited speaker Tom Oliver, our local City of London Commons ranger, about his work on the Coulsdon Commons, Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown. We also heard about the work at Mother Kitty's Shaw and Rickman Hill Park. **Stop Press**: 100 new saplings have just been planted out, and benches funded by Tesco are soon to be installed.

Keith Watkins thanked everyone for their donations for the defibrillator project; this life-saving device is now installed at The Smugglers' Inn.

The financial report was explained and was approved by those present; the new committee was elected en-bloc; and the Independent Examiner, Richard Shore was re-appointed.

Leaving committee members – Lynne Rothberg, Yasmin Dubash, Paul Ford and Yvonne Walker – were all thanked for their work over the years.

I am pleased to report that we have had some new arrivals on the committee at the AGM (and since); see the Who's Who page for the current line-up.

The meeting ended with the usual lashings of ginger beer!

Litter Pick

On Sunday 15 October a group of about 10 of us met at 11am in Lion Green Car Park, to take part in a litter pick in central Coulsdon. Unfortunately the Council representative who was to provide us with litter pickers, bin bags and gloves, was unable to join us due to ill health. However, undeterred, we managed to rustle up our own equipment, and set off in varying directions through the main part of Coulsdon.

It is somewhat depressing to record that we found a large amount of rubbish, some hidden away behind post boxes, telephone boxes, and along the margins of the pavements. In an hour we managed to collect about 10 large bags, and there was positive feedback from the general public, commenting on our public-spirited activity. It certainly was noticeably cleaner by the time we finished.

We hope by demonstrating that CWRA cares for the environment in which we live, that people may make the effort to dispose of rubbish correctly. The reality is that we will probably organise another litter pick. Please check our website for information about future activities. Support is always welcome, the more the merrier! We wore hi viz jackets emblazoned with CWRA, hopefully generating some publicity for the Association at the same time. J Sturdy.

General News:

After much consultation, London Day Travelcards will not be axed, but there will be an increased fee for those purchased outside Zone 6.

Trains:

The rise in regulated train fares in England next March will be 5.9%.

The passenger service currently on offer simply isn't reliable enough, with too many cancellations even when there's no industrial action.

Improvement works on the Reading - Redhill line this autumn are expected to finish by December. More information is available at www.gwr.com/upgrade

New off-peak Thameslink service for the East Grinstead line from 10 December; a current service from Bedford to Three Bridges will be redirected to East Grinstead instead and will arrive at East Grinstead at 08:59. This train will then form an additional Thameslink service from East Grinstead to London Bridge in the morning.

Buses:

407 shuttle services from Caterham to Purley. Still not showing properly on ibus system or apps.

Problems with 463. Go-head London are aware of the long gap between services leaving Coulsdon at 0750 and 0816, and the issues concerning missing out Coulsdon Town and the Mount and starting from Bramley Avenue.

I was travelling on one on a Saturday afternoon from Wallington to Coulsdon. It got to the Mount, and ran out of steam, but not before it allowed the following 463 to overtake it. Doh!

Steam Trains:

The following website provides information of steam services: https://www.railadvent.co.uk/steam-locomotives-on-the-mainline

The timings for special services can be vague; actual timing can be checked on the day using real time trains website:

ww.realtimetrains.co.uk/search/detailed/gb-nr:CDS?

D Vyas

Evening and off-peak Parking at Coulsdon South:

Run by Apcoa, the parking at the station uses a downloaded app, or, if you are reluctant to overload your phone, or do not have a smartphone, you can book the parking slot online at https://www.apcoaconnect.com/buyparking

I think that the cost is reasonable, and worth considering as the cab office EVO, appears to be extinct.

Monday – Friday after 4pm till 4am the following day, is £4.30.

All day Saturday is £3.90 and all day Sunday £2.70.

There is always the caveat that there may not be a free space, but there always has been when I've made use of it. J Sturdy

Planning

Most of the undesirable blocks of flats are now being refused permission, but, sadly one or two are getting approved on our patch. These include a complex of six houses in three buildings on Woodfield Hill. My objection speech at the committee meeting failed to win enough support, so it went through, in spite of dodgy drawings with incorrect boundaries marked.

Many refusals are followed by either appeals (where the planning inspectors usually uphold the Council's decision), or new applications that are a bit smaller. Drawings and descriptions still contain gross errors, especially in the area of ecological reports, which my colleague Bill Kilvington is expert in spotting.

In Summary:

- rear of 7, Julien Road not determined* by Croydon, allowed on appeal.
- 7, Bramley Avenue Outline permission was refused on appeal, another application is still in the system.
- 3, South Drive (several applications) all refused.
- 76, Rickman Hill 1st application refused, another one in the system.

*Not determined: the Council didn't decide the case within the statutory time, and the developer has pressed them for a decision. The developer then appeals to the Planning Inspectorate (a national body), and the council responds by quickly knocking up a poorly thought-out set of reasons why they would have refused it. In the case of the 1st site listed above, the planning inspector found in favour of the developer. Even if you objected originally, it is well worth sending in the same objection to the planning inspector – who might well pay it more heed than the council did.

The local plan is being worked on as we speak. I attended a 'not very illuminating' session in the town hall about its progress, with many other RA representatives. This was about six months after another (similarly dim) session about enforcement. Sadly, lack of staff (and lack of willingness) suggests that enforcement has been abandoned in Croydon. R Walker

Membership

Joining or renewing is simple and cheap! Do so now, whilst the fee is only £3 per household per year (it will have to rise soon). Send us your money by bank transfer (online or telephone) and tell us by email that you have done so!

Account name: Coulsdon West Residents Association Sort code: 20-24-61 Account number: 10293482 Please use your house number and post code as the reference... for example: 47 CR5 3DH

And then email us with your name and address: info@thecwra.co.uk

Angling



Richard Sturdy holding a common carp.

FANCY TRYING FISHING? Maybe you are a 'lapsed' angler, or someone who has never fished, but fancies trying it? First, before fishing, you will need to buy an Environment Agency licence, which entitles you to fish with rod and line. Find out more here about what that will cost, and what concessions are available: https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences

By 'fishing' here I mean coarse fishing, which involves catching river or lake fish and returning them after capture. Game fishing is available in this area, in the form of lake fishing using an artificial fly for rainbow trout, which you catch and take away.

Let me correct one misperception: non-anglers tend to have got hold of the idea that fishing is expensive. It can be, but it need not be. Oh, and there are quite a few ladies who fish too! One way of getting into fishing is to join a local angling club. Here are two, but there are others:

https://membermojo.co.uk/rookeryanglingclub https://ebas.org.uk/

If you simply want to fish occasionally, then a so-called commercial fishery might be what you need.

One I can recommend is: https://www.newdigate-estates.co.uk/fishing Our 'local' tackle shop is: Caterhamangling.co.uk (01833 345 808). You will find all you might require to start you off fishing, as well as staff who can advise you.

And for further advice, please e-mail me on: rj_sturdy@hotmail.com

Rod Sturdy

Croydon u3a

A Winter's Tale

Some people absolutely love the Christmas season – and the thought of time spent with family and friends, of good food and (hopefully) lots to watch on the telly fills them with a pleasant sense of anticipation and excitement. Others are not so keen, and some may actually dread its coming.

But, whether or not we look forward to Christmas - for those of us no longer in fulltime employment, this can be a difficult time of year. As the days draw in and the weather becomes colder, we may find our lives seeming rather dull... we may even begin to feel like prisoners in our own homes and wonder just how to fill the empty hours. Maybe we even feel rather lonely.

But with Croydon u3a there is activity and good company all year round!

Most of our outdoor groups run for 12 months of the year – with members continuing to enjoy walks, cycle rides, and visits. And, of course, there are plenty of indoor active groups to keep us fit over the winter months – table tennis, line dancing, dance exercise, darts, chair yoga... to name but a few.

And just because the days are getting shorter, it doesn't mean that we have to be short of things to do... Whether you want to discuss a book you have read, go to a film or the theatre in company with other members, visit a restaurant to try out food from a variety of different cuisines, enjoy conversation in French, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian, learn about aspects of history, find out more about Africa, be creative with crafts, painting and drawing, enjoy a Quiz night, play board games... and so much more... you are bound to find something to suit you!

And for those who just don't want to go out – or are not able to – there are plenty of groups which meet on Zoom!

To learn more, check out our website or Face Book page or use the QR code.

https://u3asites.org.uk/croydon





Maggie Chan is the Interest Group Co-ordinator/ Publicity for Croydon u3a.

Walking Football

Is your football restricted to the armchair? Think you're too old to kick a ball around now? I would encourage anybody who is wondering about keeping fit in later life to consider Walking Football. And you don't have to travel much further than the Old Walcountians ground at Woodmansterne.

Over 50 is the qualifying age – although we also have some over seventies. We are a good bunch of guys whose main objective is to enjoy ourselves and have some fun.

As for the actual football itself – the main rules are walking only, minimum physical contact, 3 touches and ball in play below head height. The quality of football we play is good. As the name suggests, it is supposed to be WALKING football and we usually have a ref (sometimes a professional ref will come along) to make sure we stick to the rules. The FA are now involved, whilst the WFA were in at the beginning and were a great help. There is a lot of information provided by them and they also run referee courses for anybody interested.

Kick off is at 6.30 every Monday, all year round, with warm up at 6. It is good fun and not too serious - but, once you cross that line!! At a normal Monday night session we average about 16/18 participants. We communicate via a whatsapp group to select the teams prior to the session. Depending on numbers, we use about a third of the pitch, and have bibs for practice and shirts for matches.

Why not come along to see for yourself - if you are interested, I can be contacted at rawlinsons4@tiscali.co.uk Dave Rawlinson.



Ecology Matters

We are very fortunate to benefit from rich ecosystems and a wide diversity of wildlife in Coulsdon West, literally on our very doorsteps in many cases. Most of us will be familiar with our ubiquitous urban foxes or the noisy incomer ring necked parakeets, but we are also surrounded by a great many other interesting species, some of which are quite rare and mostly go unnoticed by all but the eagle-eyed.

My particular interest is reptiles and amphibians, slow worms, newts, and frogs, which are commonplace in our gardens and garden ponds. Incidentally, slow worms may look like a snake but they are in fact a type of lizard. On looking closely (they cannot hurt you) you will see them blink. All reptiles and amphibians are great for our gardens, munching their way through slugs and other invertebrates that we otherwise find annoying.

Speaking of slugs, we found a very large Lemon Slug in our garden this year. Very rare and usually found in ancient woodland where it feasts upon fungi. But Bramley Avenue??

With a perceived need to build more homes in our area, we must be careful to preserve and protect this diverse ecology from careless developments. Many of the species I've mentioned are legally protected; rare; or priority species for protection in London – or often all three. Sadly, planners in Croydon seem to pay scant regard to this, and although planning applications now often include a preliminary ecological appraisal, these are usually focusing on trees and the absence of bats.

Greenspace Information for Greater London – GiGL is the capital's environmental records centre and a rich resource for local people, but also for planners and developers. The National Planning Policy Framework states that 'The right information is crucial to good decision-making.' GiGL recommend that relevant planning applications without evidence of a full data search from GiGL should be rejected on the basis it has not accessed the recognised London evidence base.

This is where we can all contribute, by checking planning applications for the appropriate information – objecting when it is absent. But also, recording with GiGL what we see in our neighbourhood. It's worth noting that nearly 30% of the records for Croydon were submitted by volunteer recorders. That's you and me.

Submitting records with a photo off your phone is easy, via the following link.

https://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-records/submit-a-record/

(it's on the 'Links' page on the cwra website)

Ecology (cont)

If you want to know more about GiGL and planning, follow this link.

https://www.gigl.org.uk/our-data-holdings/data-searches-and-planning/

Finally, if you are interested in what are the priority species for London and those you may see locally, the list is available at this link.

https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-and-strategies/environment-andclimate-change/environment-publications/london-priority-species

B Kilvington



A slow worm left, and a lemon slug right.

I Spy a pothole!

Like me, you may have recently suffered pothole damage when driving on some roads in Coulsdon. I had to have a new tyre and wheel balancing. The good news is that you may be able to claim a refund from Croydon Council.

I had my repair done at TopMarks, see http://www.topmarkstyres.co.uk/ who I can cordially recommend.

They are on the left of the A23 going south, just before the Hooley Esso garage.

On my receipt they printed, *"owing to pothole damage"*. You need to photograph and measure the offending pothole, and also note the exact location: outside house number, street name. Estimated time and date. You can report the pothole to Croydon Council anonymously on this website:

https://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/dont-mess-croydon/love-cleanstreets-app?sconf=Reporting_HighwayDefect

I was greatly helped in making my claim by our local councillor Mario Creatura: mario.creatura@croydon.gov.uk

I sent a report, a copy of the receipt and photos to him, which he in turn took to the appropriate department, and I received a full refund from the insurance team at Croydon Council. It's a bit of a fiddly thing to do, but worth it to get the money back... and subsequently the pothole has been repaired. J Sturdy

Open swimming at Divers Cove, Godstone

Have you ever tried open water swimming? I can only recommend it. The health benefits are well documented: improved circulation, mental health, relaxation. I recently discovered Divers Cove, which was formerly a sand quarry and is now run as an open water swimming venue. It is on the edge of Godstone, only about 20 minutes drive from Coulsdon.

https://diverscove.co.uk/open-water-swimming/

It is not exactly wild swimming, which I also do (lakes, rivers, the sea) because you have to register and pay an entrance fee, and wear a brightly coloured swimming hat and take a tow float, which you can rent for £2. But there is a little coffee kiosk and on a Sunday morning someone sets up a BBQ and makes bacon butties. It seems a very sociable place and people swap anecdotes about where else you can open water swim. In the summer the water temperature was an agreeable 22C. It is cooler now, 16C, and will drop again, but you can wear a wetsuit. You need to be able to swim 450m, about 20 lengths of a standard pool. It remains open throughout the year, fairly limited times, as I think it is manned entirely by volunteers. It is very popular, about 30 cars there the first time I went. Don't trust Google map directions though, it will try to send you down a private road. The access is from the A25 leaving Godstone towards Redhill, first turning right signposted The Orpheus Centre, then right again where there is a very small sign saying Divers Cove. It is a rickety track clearly used by sand lorries in the past. Do give it a try! J Sturdv



Divers Cove

Croydon Camera Club

I recently got asked why I joined Croydon Camera Club: the obvious answer is that I like taking photos, but that doesn't tell the full story.

The truth is that I've liked taking photos since I was a child. I guess back then I liked the power it gave me; how when I had a camera in my hand, I could boss the adults around for the sake of the photo.

I always thought photography was a solo hobby, until I came across the Croydon Camera Club website and decided to visit one evening. I joined up there and then! Why? Well, I guess the real reason is that I no longer wanted to take just "good photos". I wanted to to really learn about photography to let my creative side come through. Joining the club has done this. Seeing the images others are producing has given me the confidence to try taking different types of shots that I wouldn't have attempted before.

So if you want to take better photos or be with other like-minded people check out the club's website **www.croydoncameraclub.org** and come visit us one evening. I can promise we don't bite; we do snap but we only snap photos!



Caroline Avern: "Caution Hot"

Mother Kitty's Shaw

Mother Kitty's Shaw is a small area of ancient woodland adjacent to Rickman Hill Park. To be officially listed as 'ancient woodland' there has to be a record of continuous woodland on the said area for over 400 years. John Rocque's map of 1762 shows mature woodland on this site back in the day when the Rickman Hill area was known as Ruckkenhams and was owned by the Carew family (an influential family within the court of Henry VIII.)

The origin of the name goes back a long way. 'Mother Kitty' may have been Catherine Carew (1485-1545) or Katherine Champernown) (1500-1524 approx.) Many people have researched the identity of Mother Kitty, and this is documented in various places. However, she is rather elusive. Nobody has so far been able to pin down her identity with any certainty.

Over time, Mother Kitty's Shaw fell into a state of disrepair but since the pandemic, it has been undergoing regeneration. The Friends of Rickman Hill Park supported by CWRA and Croydon Council have been working to restore the floor and canopy of the woodland, with the result that the original bluebells have returned. This work is ongoing with saplings donated by the Woodland Trust being planted to replace trees that were lost in the great storm of 1987 and others that have succumbed to disease.

The importance of woodland in times of global warming cannot be over emphasised. Apart from absorbing carbon dioxide and giving out oxygen, every large tree in Mother Kitty's Shaw is absorbing 20,000 litres of water per year that would otherwise be flowing down Rickman Hill and adding to drainage problems in Chipstead Valley.

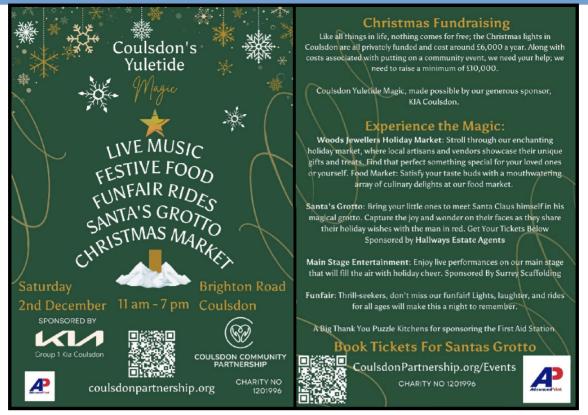
Friends of Rickman Hill Park are keen to find out more about the history of Mother Kitty's Shaw. If you can add any facts or have any stories about the area that have been passed down through your family, we would love to hear from you. You can contact us through our Facebook group:



https://www.facebook.com/groups/thefriendsofrickmanhillpark

A dead hedge feature and a cleared pathway through the Shaw

Yuletide Magic



Please support the **Coulsdon Partnership** by visiting the town centre on Saturday, 2nd December, with your friends and family, and joining in the festivities.

The Hive

As the year winds down and wintering begins, and animals are tucking away for hibernation, you'd think that things would be quieting down in the garden too. But no such thing has happened at The Hive, quite the opposite in fact!

We've had a brilliant few months and The Hive has very literally been buzzing with activity. At the beginning of summer, our garden had an enormous overhaul with landscaping work taking place thanks to the Barratt's Homes very welcome donation! We have been able to create all the wonderful things that we had visualised for the garden, and we are now the proud hosts of a fabulous space with wheelchair friendly paths, planters which are high enough for all abilities to garden, lots of water butts which will be essential in the summer and a beautiful patio area where we hope to host events in the near future. Plant donations (from local businesses and residents) have helped the garden flourish too.

Many new volunteers have joined us, of all ages and abilities, and have helped with the heavy lifting, general weeding and of course helping with the fantastic Coulsdon Partnership-run Halloween event. The community turn out was outstanding. We are so proud to be part of Coulsdon's wonderful community and can't wait for future events. Not had a chance to pop down yet? We're usually open Saturdays from 10-1 but feel free to email us to check or ask any questions. Or better yet, join us as a volunteer! **thehivecoulsdon@gmail.com**

Theatre Workshop Coulsdon

From the 9th to the 17th December, the Theatre Workshop Coulsdon will be performing "A Christmas Carol". In case you are not familiar with the story...

Christmas Eve, a time for joyful anticipation, celebration and goodwill to all!

Perhaps not all. To the poor and the hungry in Victorian London, Christmas Day is just another day to struggle through. And for Ebenezer Scrooge it's a day lost, with business left undone. Happy Christmas? Bah, Humbug!

But Scrooge will be forced to confront the choices he has made, and the bleak future that lies ahead, unless he can change...

A story of redemption, with love, laughter, song and a warmth to melt even the meanest misers' heart, TWC is supporting the Purley Food Hub for this production. Dickens was very much a social reformer and the plight of families and children with little food was a source of concern reflected in his writings.



A Purley Food Hub collection point for voluntary food donations will be set up at the Coulsdon Community Centre for the duration of the run of the show.

Come along, enjoy the show and perhaps make Christmas a little better for someone else too.

P Ford