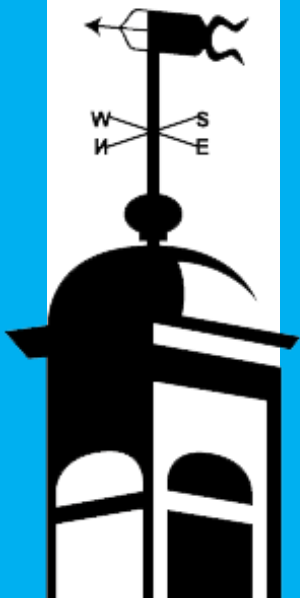


COULSDON

# WEST

RESIDENTS  
ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN  
2024



WWW.THECWRA.CO.UK

# CELEBRATING SEVENTY FIVE YEARS!



CWRA -  
WORKING FOR  
THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1949



ONCE YOU'VE  
READ ME,  
FORWARD ME  
ON TO A  
FRIEND OR  
NEIGHBOUR

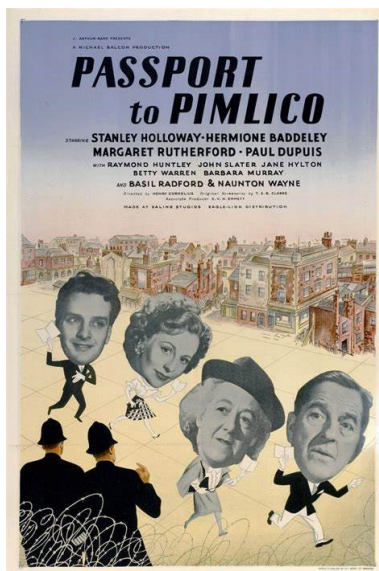




King George VI  
(Reigned 1936 - 1952)



Clement Atlee  
Labour Prime Minister  
1945 - 1951



## 1949

Let's time travel a little. What was the world like in 1949? Well, then as now, we have a King on the throne. George VI has ruled Britain since his brother abdicated in 1936, and his eldest daughter, Princess Elizabeth, is currently the Duchess of Edinburgh. Her first son, Charles, was born last year. There's a Labour government too, led by Clement Atlee as prime Minister. They've been in power since a landslide victory in July 1945, and have already brought about some major changes, not the least of which was the creation of the National Health Service.

Locally, the Chairman of the Coulsdon and Purley Unitary District Council (Coulsdon wouldn't become part of the London Borough of Croydon until 1965) was the Conservative Stanley Littlechild, a lifelong politician who would go on to be Croydon's Civic Mayor in 1973 and leader of Croydon Council from 1979 to 1980.

Fancy a trip to the cinema? Well, you might have to get the bus into Purley, and visit either the ABC Regal on the Brighton Road (Where Screwfix is now) or the Astoria on the High Street, but it's a good year for the movies, and one of the best for Ealing comedies, with *Passport to Pimlico*, *Whiskey Galore!* and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* all being released. Hollywood provides blockbuster action with John Waynes' *Sands of Iwo Jima* and Gregory Peck in *Twelve O'Clock High*, musicals like *On The Town* with Gene Kelly, and dramas such as the Oscar-winning *All The King's Men* and the British-made *The Third Man*, with Orson Welles.

Television hasn't really made inroads into our daily life as yet, and radio remains the most popular at home entertainment. The adventures of *Dick Barton - Special Agent* thrill us nightly in fifteen minute episodes on the BBC's Light Programme, where you can also catch *Woman's Hour* and *Mrs Dale's Diary*. On the evening of the 14th September, after we get back from the inaugural CWRA meeting, there's a documentary that commemorates the 5th anniversary of the battle of Arnhem on the Home Service. Broadcasting is restricted however, and the Light Programme is only available to listen to from 9.00am until midnight. The Home Service closes down at 11pm.

The restrictions don't stop there. The licencing laws, brought in after the outbreak of war in 1914, are still in force. So pubs outside urban areas, like The Red Lion, can only open between 6.30pm and 10pm of an evening. For some reason, pubs in urban areas can stay open an extra hour, until 11pm. Obviously we 'out of towners' aren't to be trusted!

Ealing Studios' 'Passport to Pimlico'  
Starring Stanley Holloway  
and Margaret Rutherford



Still sober then, let's hit the road, and jump into our Austin A70, or Morris Minor, or, if we're feeling a bit flash, a Vauxhall Velox. There are no motorways of course, the Special Roads Act of 1949 has only been passed this year, and though that paves the way for motorway construction, the first one won't be ready for a decade yet. The M25 is a distant dream, the first section not opening until 1975, despite the first proposal for a London Orbital road or bypass being made back in 1913.

Maybe we stick to using the train instead, after all we're well served by railway stations. Coulsdon South, Coulsdon North and Smitham can take us quickly into the heart of London, and a third class return ticket will cost you 3s 1d (or 3s 3d from Coulsdon South). The West End debut of Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon* is showing at His Majesty's Theatre on Haymarket. Or perhaps you prefer the revival of *Me and My Girl*? Ticket prices range from 2/6 to a just over a pound. (Oh, a shilling or 1s works out at 5p in modern currency, though that doesn't allow for inflation.) A bargain, surely...



Dick, Jock and Snowy broadcast  
'Dick Barton - Special Agent'



**To the Shops and Shows with a  
CHEAP DAY TICKET  
TO LONDON**

WEEKDAYS BY ALL TRAINS AFTER 9.30 a.m.  
SUNDAYS AND BANK HOLIDAYS ALL DAY

**SPECIMEN RETURN FARES**

From	3rd Cl.	From	3rd Cl.
Addiscombe	...	Purley Oaks	...
Anerley	...	Reedham	...
Beddington Lane	...	Sanderstead	...
Carshalton	...	Selhurst	...
Carshalton Beeches	...	Selsdon	...
Coulsdon North	...	Smitham	...
Coulsdon South	...	South Croydon	...
East Croydon	...	Thornton Heath	...
Norbury	...	Waddon	...
Norwood Junction	...	West Croydon	...
Purley	...	Woodside	...



A 1948 Vauxhall Velox



### CWRA - The beginning, the present and the future

On 14 September 1949, the first AGM of the newly formed Coulsdon West Residents Association was held, with the main objective stated in the constitution as : “to advance and protect the common interests of residents and to improve the amenities of the district.”

They duly elected 4 officers, 12 committee members and two auditors to do just that. There was a new sense of purpose and enthusiasm in the community, freshly released from the hardships of the war. Throughout the 1950's there were often more nominations than places on the committee, so elections were carried out by ballot for a 2 year tenure. In that first year, 512 households were registered as members of the CWRA. The figure rose to 1818 by 1976, but sadly that appears to have been something of a high water mark. By 1999 membership had dipped to about 1600. Today it is something around 320. Why? It's not the cost. The subscription in 1999 was just £1, and even now it remains a modest £3 per year. We've tried to make it easier to pay too. You can set up a standing order on your phone or with your bank and then forget about it. We have mobile handsets to take card payments. Our road stewards even take cash! But the downturn in interest also means that the CWRA has far fewer road stewards than it needs. They're tasked with collecting subscriptions and delivering the quarterly newsletter, but more importantly they're the local, neighbourly face of the CWRA. And the friendly smile is free. Fancy joining us?

Naturally we have a website, [thecwra.co.uk](http://thecwra.co.uk), where information about the constitution, membership, and upcoming events can be found. We also have a mailing list for email contact as this has proven to be one of the best way of keeping in touch with our members. We work together with other local residents associations, and local initiatives such as the Coulsdon Community Partnership. We enjoy the support of our local councillors, Ian Parker, Mario Creatura and Luke Shortland, and also our local MP, Chris Philp.

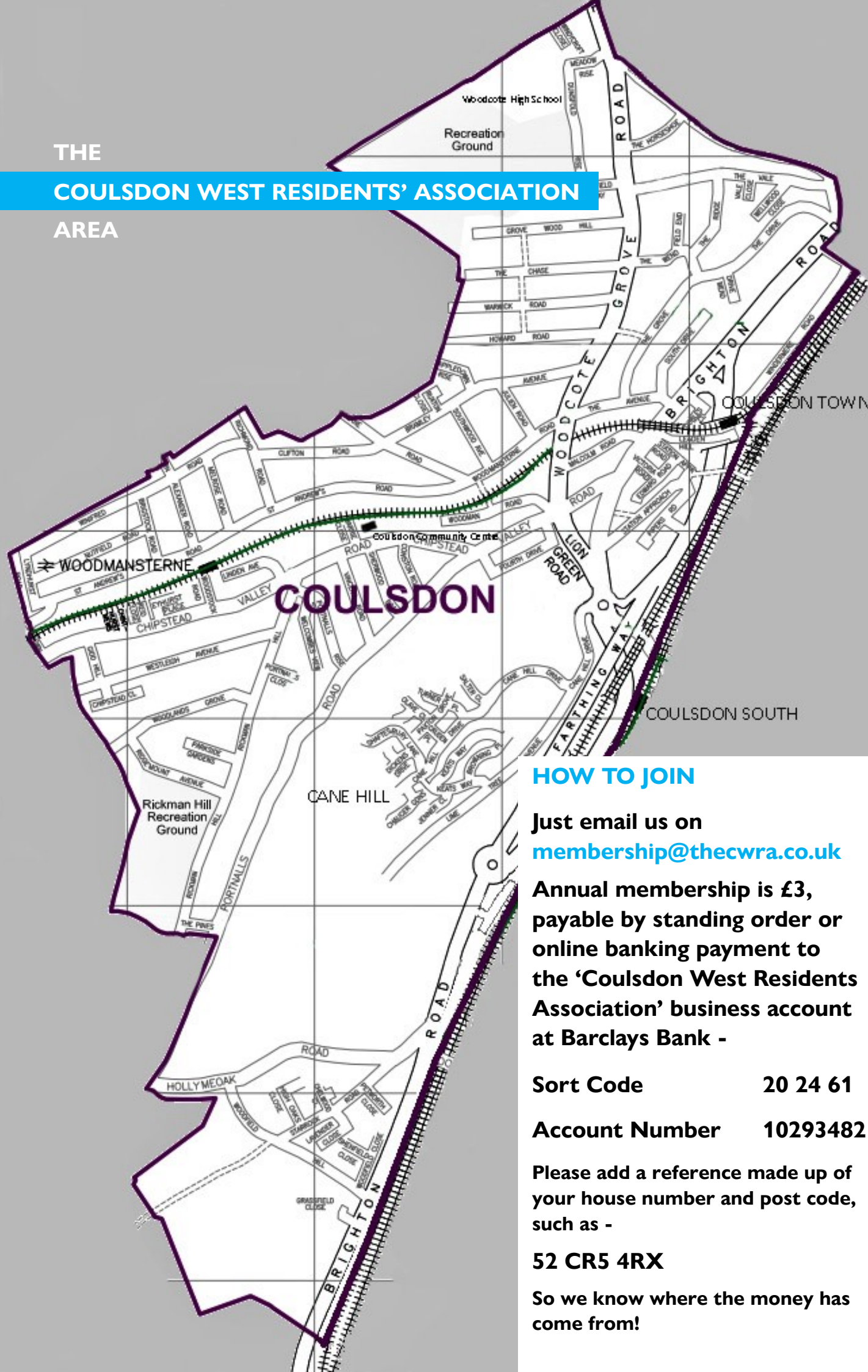
Coulsdon has changed much in the last 75 years. The closure and redevelopment of Cane Hill Hospital and Coulsdon North station, the building of the bypass, the going of The Red Lion, the coming of The Pembroke and Aldi. Changes in the shops on the high street caused by the rise in online purchasing. However, it remains a lively and vibrant community and the CWRA looks forward to being a vital part of it in the coming years. Our objective, from 75 years ago, remains the same. It's your association, please, be a part of it.



THE

## COULSDON WEST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

AREA



### HOW TO JOIN

Just email us on  
[membership@thecwra.co.uk](mailto:membership@thecwra.co.uk)

Annual membership is £3,  
payable by standing order or  
online banking payment to  
the 'Coulsdon West Residents  
Association' business account  
at Barclays Bank -

Sort Code                      20 24 61

Account Number        10293482

Please add a reference made up of  
your house number and post code,  
such as -

**52 CR5 4RX**

So we know where the money has  
come from!



## BEFORE CWRA

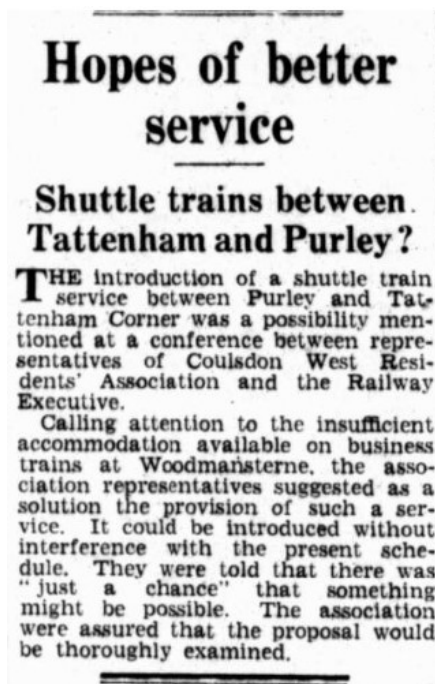
There must be something in the water. The residents of Bramley Avenue have always shown an interest in local matters and this can currently be emphasised by the fact that both the Chair of the CWRA and the Treasurer live in this attractive tree-lined road.

But this is not just a recent thing. Twenty years before the formation of the CWRA, the Bramley Avenue Residents' Association was prepared to take on large organisations to improve conditions, not just for its members, but for all who live in the area.

One such example was recorded in the *Surrey Mirror* of Friday 8 March 1929 which described the AGM of the Coulsdon Ratepayers' Association, which had been held the previous week at the Smitham Council Schools in Malcolm Road, where 'Coulsdon Ratepayers had their usual grouse.'

A Mr J.M.Powell complained of 'the illegal imprisonment of passengers when they alighted at Smitham Railway Station', (now Coulsdon Town Station) and hoped the Association would take the matter up with the Company. 'I have been lately one of 40 or 50 passengers who have had the gate slammed against them and have had to wait in the cold while the only man in charge gets the train away.', added Mr Powell.

An early mention of the CWRA getting involved with local transport issues  
From the  
Sutton and Epsom Advertiser  
Thursday 21 July 1949



**Hopes of better service**

**Shuttle trains between Tattenham and Purley?**

**THE** introduction of a shuttle train service between Purley and Tattenham Corner was a possibility mentioned at a conference between representatives of Coulsdon West Residents' Association and the Railway Executive.

Calling attention to the insufficient accommodation available on business trains at Woodmansterne, the association representatives suggested as a solution the provision of such a service. It could be introduced without interference with the present schedule. They were told that there was "just a chance" that something might be possible. The association were assured that the proposal would be thoroughly examined.

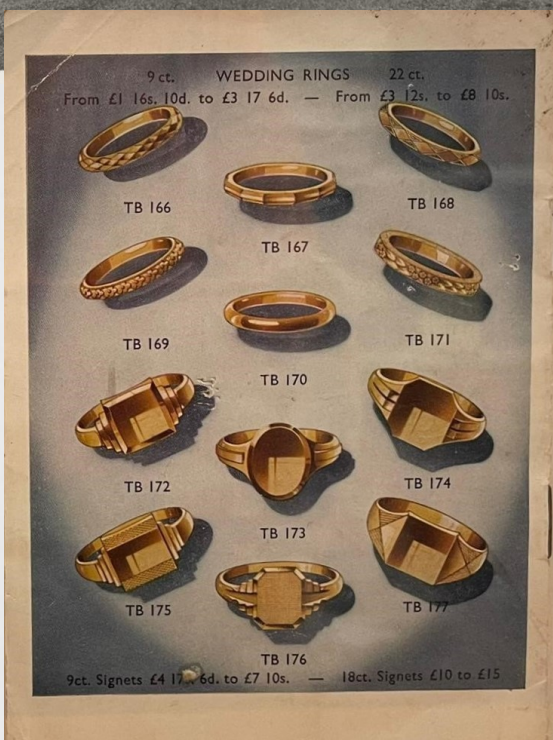
A member of the Coulsdon Ratepayers' Association said that representations had been made to the Company on this point by the Bramley Avenue Residents' Association, and they had been informed that the gate was closed more to prevent passengers boarding the train than to hold up those who were leaving the station.

Although there's nothing recorded that we've found so far, it's most likely that the Bramley Avenue Residents' Association, and probably other small Resident Associations in the area, were absorbed into the CWRA in 1949. It's certainly true that there is strength in numbers, and the local residents associations, including the CWRA, OCRA, ECRA and HADRA are at their most effective when they work together, whether it's challenging the Council, developers or transport companies.

If there's some local issue you want to 'grouse' about, talk to us. Even better, join us, and help make a difference to your road, and your community.



## WOODS JEWELLERS



PHOTOS KINDLY PROVIDED BY WOODS JEWELLERS

In 1948, Woods Watches & Clocks Ltd opened its doors for business at its new shop at 5 Chipstead Valley Road Coulsdon. The original shop, and 'Head Office' of the company, was located in Whyteleafe, at 52 Godstone Road. The photo shows the 'Woods of Coulsdon' van from those early days where one of the tasks they used to undertake was the regular maintenance of large clocks, such as the ones at Cane Hill and Netherne hospitals. The man standing at the back of the van is watchmaker Cliff Baker, who had bought Woods in Whyteleafe and then opened the Coulsdon shop shortly after. He continued to own and run the business until 1983, when Terry Dunn, the current owner, took over. Woods began as a watch repair shop, hence the original name "Woods Watches and Clocks" but as the demand changed so did the business and Woods is now predominantly a jewellers, specialising in on-site repairs and bespoke designs, and also creating their own jewellery.

Seemingly in anticipation of the changes to come, the brochure images on this page, again taken from those early years, focus on the enticing prices for wedding rings, some costing as much £3 17s 6d (or £3.88 in modern terms)!

The original Coulsdon shop was half as big as it is now, being just the part where the door currently is. Twenty years ago the shop next door, which had been a barber's, was bought in order to extend the showroom. Though the business has changed dramatically since 1948, it remains a cornerstone of Coulsdon's high street.

HEAD OFFICE:  
52 GODSTONE ROAD  
WHYTELEAFE

5 CHIPSTEAD VALLEY RD.  
COULSDON

SURREY

## CHRIS PHILP MP



Chris Philp succeeded Richard Ottaway as the Conservative MP for Croydon South in May 2015, having previously been a councillor for Gospel Oak ward in the London Borough of Camden. He has held several cabinet posts, and is currently the shadow leader of the House of Commons.

Congratulations to Coulsdon West Residents' Association (CWRA) and all your members on celebrating your 75th anniversary. This is a well-deserved milestone, given the CWRA has continued to do outstanding work in championing local issues and fostering a great local community throughout this time. I am sure I speak for everyone when I say a huge thank you to the current and past Chairs, Officers and Committee for the fantastic work they have done over the years. This work is carried out in their spare time and makes a huge positive difference to our neighbourhood.

You don't need me to tell you what a fantastic place Coulsdon is to live, with multiple train stations offering connectivity to central London, and at the same time benefiting from the natural beauty and green spaces of the Farthing Downs and beyond on our doorstep.

The hard work of CWRA and others means, since CWRA's 50th anniversary, amongst other successes, the Farthing Way A23 bypass has moved heavy commuter traffic off Coulsdon's local roads, Coulsdon South train station has been upgraded with lifts and a new footbridge, and a new medical centre for Coulsdon, including GP surgery, has been approved.

Alongside these local successes, CWRA's milestone marks a good moment to consider protecting and conserving the character of our area for the next 75 years. That's why I'm pleased so many local residents responded positively to last summer's consultation on extending the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to include parts of Happy Valley and Farthing Downs. 98% of respondents said the Happy Valley area has sufficient natural beauty to be designated as an AONB, 98% said it was desirable to designate this area as an AONB and 96.2% said 'yes' to the proposed areas being designated as part of the Surrey Hills AONB, with or without making comment on the exact boundaries. Consultation is ongoing, but I'll keep pushing this onwards.

The character of our residential neighbourhoods here in Coulsdon, and protecting family homes, remains important to safeguard too – developers have even written to me at my own house in Coulsdon with repeated offers over the last few years to buy it! So I will keep fighting to protect the character of our neighbourhood here in Coulsdon from over-development.



I am grateful for everyone in Coulsdon and across the constituency that you put your trust in me in four separate elections to work for you and our local area.

Whether that is dealing with personal or local issues or listening to Coulsdon residents' views on national issues, my priority remains getting things done for our local area, working closely with CWRA and your local councillors Mario, Ian and Luke. I will continue to work with the Department for Health and Social Care and Croydon Health Services NHS Trust to deliver Coulsdon's promised new medical centre, and I am also working to ensure that Coulsdon gets a new banking hub, which is scheduled to open in March 2025.

Congratulations again on the 75th anniversary of the CWRA and sincere thanks to all the Committee Members, past and present, who have served with true commitment and dedication, and without whom the CWRA would not be able to be the excellent voice for local residents that it is. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Kind regards,

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP  
Member of Parliament for Croydon South

Brighton Road, Coulsdon  
circa 1940s

Image provided by Brian Quattrucci



SHOPPING CENTRE. I. COULSDON.

PHOTO BY CROLL  
STATIONER, COULSDON



## COULSDON LIBRARY

Croydon Council have, for some time, seemingly regarded its libraries as a problem to be solved rather than an opportunity to be taken, and treated them with a certain amount of disrespect. Coulsdon's excellent Art Deco building on the Brighton Road, originally designed to look, from above, like a opened book, is presently opened only on a limited basis, and not so very long ago discussions were even had about its closure and conversion to residential use. It's not a recent development. Even in the 1970s, public spending cuts targeted the libraries, reducing hours and opening.

It wasn't always this way. When it opened on Saturday 23rd May 1936, it was a big event. Coulsdon Library was just one of five new libraries being opened simultaneously, joining with Selsdon, Sanderstead, Kenley and Purley. The Lord Mayor of London was at Purley for the official opening, but the ceremony was broadcast to the other four locations. Coulsdon had an initial stock of 3,752 books, all hardback, which cost £733 10s 9d, and borrowers were entitled to two tickets, each allowing you to take out a book. You were allowed more if you were a student, at the librarian's discretion, and one extra if you took out a music score. And the tickets were good for use in Croydon, Wallington and all Surrey libraries. Opening times were 10.30am to 8pm Monday to Saturday.

After the initial excitement, usage levelled off a bit. Residents from Old Coulsdon were reluctant to use it as there was a lack of transport down the hill, and though the idea of Old Coulsdon getting its own library was suggested quite early on, it was well over twenty years before the Bradmore Green library was finally opened.

By 1963, Coulsdon was lending 200,000 books a year to 10,000 registered borrowers and space was becoming an issue, especially for events held there. It had always been planned that the library would be extended at some point, forming the pages in the open book that the existing building represented. However, it's thought that the funds were available for only one project, either the library extension, or the building of Bradmore Green library, and the latter was given priority.

Now that space to the rear of the library, long neglected, is abandoned no more. The Hive, a community garden project, has converted the area into a delightful haven of nature, a pocket of serenity seconds from the Brighton Road. Sadly the library itself is closed more often than not, with the ever reducing opening hours cheaply tacked to the battered sign outside. Under a new Council proposal there's a possibility its services may be restored to something like their previous levels, but in a reversal of history, that restoration may cost us its sister library in Old Coulsdon. The CWRA does not agree with the Council's position on this, and will strenuously defend the community's needs for both libraries to be open and invested in.





## ARTHUR CHAPMAN - BUILDING COULSDON



Arthur was born on 20 April 1873 in Croydon, attended Whitgift Middle School, and afterwards joined the army, starting as a Private with the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment in 1888. He'd been promoted to Second Lieutenant before retiring on grounds of ill-health in 1899. Three years earlier he'd married his wife, Frederica, and made a home in Bletchingley, and in 1898, at just 24, Arthur had become the Chairman of Chapman and Sons, Builders Merchants, of Tamworth Road, Croydon.

Shortly afterwards, the company purchased land north of the Brighton Road and proceeded to develop it as the Smitham Downs Estate. The Avenue, The Grove, The Drive, The Rise and The Vale were all laid out. The stretch of Stoats Nest Road onto which this estate fronted was renamed Smitham Downs Road. An advertisement in the Croydon Guardian in 1904 stated: "The Smitham Estate...a notably healthy and rising residential district, close to Smitham, Coulsdon and Stoats Nest Stations (about 30 minutes by rail from London) and within easy walking distance of the Purley Electric Tram Terminus, whence cars run every few minutes to and from Croydon. The first portion of this important and promising estate, comprising 165 very choice freehold building sites...is suitable for the erection of attractive and artistic private residences, which are so much in demand"

He also purchased land to the west of Smitham Bottom Lane and developed it as part of the Woodcote Grove Estate. He laid out Howard Road, Warwick Road and The Chase on this land. Strips of land were used to widen Smitham Bottom Lane, and this stretch of the road was renamed Woodcote Grove Road. The Woodcote Grove Estate was marketed in 1904 as "Occupying a charming and healthy position 400 feet above sea level and commanding extensive views over beautiful undulating country...ripe for the immediate erection of detached and semi-detached country villas, for which there is an exceptional demand"

By 1911 Arthur and Frederica had moved to "Trevista", on The Grove.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Arthur joined the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion East Surrey Regiment as a Lieutenant, and was attached to the Hampshire Regiment on 13 September 1914. He was promoted to Captain in February 1915, but was killed just two months later, near Zonnebeke, during the second battle of Ypres.

Arthur is commemorated at St. Andrew's Church. The chancel screen and gates were erected to his memory by his widow and friends before a large congregation in March 1918. It bears the following inscription:

"In loving memory of Arthur Thomas Chapman, Captain 3rd East Surrey Regiment, attached 1st Hampshire, who fell in action in Flanders on April 26th 1915. He was a pioneer of modern Coulsdon."

Here's a question for you.  
Does anyone know which house  
on The Grove was 'Trevista'  
where Arthur and Frederica  
Chapman lived?  
If you do, please let us know.

## MARTIN JONES - A COULSDON HISTORY

1949 was clearly a momentous year. I'm celebrating my 75th birthday this year too!

Home for my family from 1946 to 1991 was No 1 Bramley Avenue. My parents, Trevor and Nancy, had bought the 1920s house from mum's Uncle Frank just after the end of the War. I came into the world in December 1949 and lived at 'Kenley Cottage', as it was sometimes known, with dad and mum, older sister Margaret and younger brothers Philip and Colin.

I can recall, back then, postmen in full uniform delivering post 7 days a week, the Council dustcart coming round on Thursdays, (woe betide you if you didn't give the dustmen a good Christmas tip) coal deliveries, and the milkman coming round on a horse-drawn cart. It was later replaced with a hand-drawn battery-operated cart which once tipped over on the cobbles at the end of Bramley Avenue, with disastrous results for those waiting for their milk deliveries.

1 Bramley Avenue,  
Coulston, in August 1949.  
The young girl is Margaret  
Jones, all dressed up in  
her best birthday frock

Our neighbours were good people. Paul Howard had designed Nos 1, 3 and 5 Bramley Avenue and lived at No 3 until his death in 1968. Mr and Mrs Ellis and their daughter Bess lived at No 5. Others include the Wain family, Stuart Champion, the Wigg family and Mr Sharp. Opposite us lived





the local GP, Dr Simon Davis. He was a kindly, professional man who practised from the family home at 39 Woodcote Grove Road. In 1954, Dr Davis sold us some land to the side of No 1, giving us an additional children's play area, a well-used vegetable plot, plus, as it turned out, an investment for the future.

That same year, I had my first taste of school at St Anne's Preparatory School on The Drive, while my sister attended St Peter's School nearby. The Headmaster at St Anne's was a Mr Fearn, who I found to be a dour and severe man. I can't say I enjoyed it there.



The front of Coulsdon North station, pictured here in the 1970s

We didn't have a car during the 1950s and trips out were taken by bus or train. We enjoyed picnics in the field over the footbridge at Coulsdon North station (closed back in October 1983). It's now the location of the Coulsdon Woods estate, and I enjoyed playing in the woods nearby. At the age of five or six, I acquired my first bicycle, giving me scope to explore more widely, and I recall visiting the 'Lord Roberts' on the Webb estate, the 'pub with no alcohol' (William Webb, the estate agent and developer who had the estate built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was teetotal) and collecting conkers close to where the new Woodcote schools were being built on former farmland.

St Andrew's Church featured often in our life on Bramley Avenue, mainly through the efforts of mum, who was a faithful member of the congregation for many years. I was baptised at St Andrew's in April 1950, attended Sunday school in the 1950s and was confirmed there in March 1964. I recall mum keeping a 'best set' of teacups available for the Vicar's pastoral visits. Douglas Robb, who was vicar there from 1955 to 1963, would often turn up unannounced on his bike!

In 1957, my dad was posted as a civilian to Singapore and we joined him for his three year tour of duty at RAF Changi, and No 1 was let out to an Australian family whilst we were away. When we returned, it was clear that the house needed updating and a TV (our first and with only two channels), a washing machine and central heating were quickly purchased. Additional rooms for a growing family were added later, plus a new garage for the large Ford Zephyr which accompanied us back from Singapore.

My brothers now went to Smitham School in the centre of Coulsdon, my parents deciding against St Anne's and the dreaded Mr Fearn. My sister resumed her studies at Whyteleafe Grammar School and, having passed my 11+ while in Singapore, I found myself travelling on the 190 bus up to Old Coulsdon and Purley County Grammar School for Boys. I enjoyed my time there, but my love of football was never likely to be satisfied at this rugby-playing school, so I played for a team outside of school hours and began a 60-year association with Crystal Palace FC.

When I left Purley Boys in 1968 I continued to live at home after starting work in London. The price of houses in the Coulsdon area were £10,000 or more, well beyond the means of a junior civil servant. However, by 1977, I was able to afford a flat in Croydon and moved out in March that year.

My parents continued to live at No 1 however, and I recall them commenting on the new housing which was being built in Bramley Avenue during the 1980s. In 1989, I moved north for work, but less than six months later my dad died suddenly at home. It was good to see many of our neighbours and friends at his funeral. Faced with the sudden challenge of living in the large family home on her own, with its large garden, mum initially sold off the side garden which we had acquired back in 1954. A new detached house took shape on what was previously a lawn. Soon after though, she then decided to move to the South coast where she had old friends, and in December 1991, our family home of 45 years was sold. Given that my Great-Uncle had bought it as a new build in the 1920s, our family had got very good value out of living at 'No 1'.

Even though I lived elsewhere, I still visited the area regularly, and was pleased to be able to attend the St Andrew's Centenary weekend in November 2014 and an earlier reunion of the 20th Purley Scout Group, which though no longer running, had been based at St Andrew's. I'd been a leader there for over twenty years, a time I thoroughly enjoyed.

In our respective 75th years, I wish the Coulsdon West Residents Association all the very best for the future.

Martin Jones



Martin Jones with his brother Colin, young nephew Luke and mother Nancy at No.1 Bramley Avenue the month the house was sold in December 1991.





## CANE HILL

Now a sprawling estate of desirable residences, Cane Hill, in its previous incarnation, can with some justification claim that it created Coulsdon as we know it. It began as the 3rd Surrey County Pauper Lunatic Asylum, constructed in two stages from 1880 using land that had once been the property of Edmund Byron, the Lord of the Manor of Coulsdon. A shanty town grew up, housing around 300 workers employed to erect the immense brick-built edifice on two fields, Snagging Grove and Doctors Commons, as well as Dunstons Wood. The buildings included not only wards, an administrative block, kitchen, dining hall and stores but also an 800 seater chapel and a recreation hall that could seat 500 (with a stage, orchestra pit and dressing rooms). The kitchen alone was 90 feet long and 80 feet wide. Overall, it covered 12 acres, with no less than three miles of corridors, and could hold well in excess of a thousand patients, the first of which would arrive on 20 December 1883.

The number of staff remained at what seemed relatively small numbers in comparison, probably due to the patients being employed within the asylum to undertake various roles from laundry and farming to working in the wards. In 1886 there were 44 male and 53 female attendants, but cottages were already being built to house both married and unmarried attendants down on Lion Green Road and Chipstead Valley Road. And that wasn't the only development. From the beginning, there had been plans to link a railway station to the asylum. A direct branch line was ruled out for reasons of cost, but a new station nearby, with a small goods yard, would be good for both the asylum and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. The asylum would benefit from improved staff recruitment by being less isolated, and the railway would get business from the asylum and from those who would move to live close to the station. Stoats Nest and Cane Hill station still didn't open until 1899, by which time the South Eastern Railway had built its own Coulsdon and Cane Hill station (1889) complete with a covered walkway that linked it directly to the asylum. Later these would become Coulsdon North and Coulsdon South, but the stations created the demand for yet more housing as people were attracted to the area. Smitham Bottom, a small, mainly rural area with a scattering of cottages grew quickly in the early part of the 20th Century, and even took the name of its neighbour in an odd, cuckoo-like move by the parish council and post office in 1905.

The asylum, which had expanded to 2000 patients by 1889, changed too. During the First World War it dealt with those injured both physically and otherwise. It was renamed a hospital, though its remit was much the same. But by 1991 the 'Care in the Community' programme and chronic underfunding had endangered its continued existence, and it closed its doors finally in 2008, by which time arson and vandalism had taken its toll.

The water tower, one of the few remaining pieces of Charles Howell's remarkable architecture, employed in the original building of Cane Hill

## COULSDON - A SCHOOL FOR SPIES



On the front line in Cold War  
Alan Bennett above and  
Michael Frayn below



I am indebted for much of this  
information to "Secret  
Classrooms" by Geoffrey Elliott  
and Harold Shukman, published in  
2002. Both were graduates of the  
JSSL in Bodmin and their  
anecdotes are  
very entertaining

Jennifer Sturdy.

In 1949 Britain was facing the beginning of what became known as The Cold War. Germany was divided and the Russians were no longer our allies. The British government realised that there was a severe shortage of Russian speakers and so set up the Joint Services School for Linguists, or JSSL. In the early 1950's two main centres for teaching were established, one at the Walker Lines Barracks near Bodmin, and one next to the Brigade of Guards depot on the border of Coulsdon and Caterham. The recruits were National Service men who had shown some aptitude for languages, although in many cases they decided it was a better alternative to 'square bashing' for two years. They were talented young men, many of whom went on to glittering careers, authors and playwrights Alan Bennett and Michael Frayn among them.

The entrance to the JSSL hutted "ghetto" in Coulsdon was behind The Fox public house. Its NAAFI overlooked the Guards' drill square and observing the ferocious discipline to which the Guards were subjected, they decided that the better option was to keep their noses to the academic grindstone. The main drawback was the cold, it was a Siberian winter. Michael Frayn remembers a complaint from the adjutant that one of the huts had been dismantled in order to provide fuel for the students' stoves. The teaching programme at Coulsdon was the same as in Bodmin: intensive tuition in elementary Russian, initially requiring a mastery of the Cyrillic alphabet. Many students, or "kursanty" as they were known, had never met a real live Russian before. Finding suitable tutors was of course a challenge. Emigres had to be scrutinised for possible Soviet sympathies, although there was a distinct advantage in being taught by a native speaker. The course was carefully constructed and very rigorous, with frequent testing.

Social life in the Coulsdon centre was better than at Bodmin. There was the NAAFI, a couple of pubs and The Orchid Ballroom in Purley. Croydon had a little more life, for example the Davis Cinema. Sunday was the only free day and some took advantage of walking on Coulsdon Common and the surrounding Downs. Although sometimes the footpaths ran close to the grim Victorian "lunatic asylums" in the area. The status of the camp seems to have been an open secret, with local bus conductors calling out at The Fox stop, "Moscow Corner! All change!"

The Coulsdon centre closed in 1954, Bodmin a couple of years later. Many of those who completed the course went on to become translators and interpreters, some engaged in intelligence work. It was regarded as a successful project, and encouraged many universities to set up Russian Departments.



## MANDIR



Established in August 2022, the South London Sanatan Mandir and Community Centre (fondly called The Mandir) was founded with the broad objective of making a meaningful difference in the community and society, rooted in the values of Seva (service), Bhakti (devotion), and Vidya (knowledge). Since its inauguration, the Mandir has already made significant contributions. It offers a serene environment for the community to engage in prayer and Satsang, where people come together to celebrate Hindu festivals, share joy, and uphold the values of Sanatan Dharma. Major festivals are hosted on a grand scale, either at the Coulsdon Community Centre or in open parks, such as Holi at Manor Park and Rath Yatra at Beddington Park.

The Mandir also organises a variety of events, including Sanskrit lessons, Indian music lessons, and Indian dance lessons, welcoming participants from the broader community, irrespective of faith. Additionally, the Mandir actively collaborates with local schools to enhance their Religious Education (RE) programmes. This partnership involves either visiting schools or hosting school children at the Mandir, where they learn about Hinduism and its values through engaging storytelling. This year alone, the Mandir has visited 80 schools, hosted 14 school visits, and over 22,000 schoolchildren of different faiths have participated in these RE sessions, enjoying the enriching experience.

Furthermore, the Mandir maintains a close relationship with local food banks, collecting essential items from its devotees for donation. A dedicated team of volunteers also works with local charities to provide hot meals to the homeless at regular intervals. Last year, the Mandir delivered numerous loads of items to Purley Food Bank and Croydon Night Watch and served over 800 hot meals to those in need.

The support from local community leaders, administration, and parliamentary representatives has been immensely encouraging. These dignitaries often attend Mandir events as special guests, showing their solidarity and support. The Mandir's operations and events rely heavily on volunteer support.

**If anyone is interested in volunteering,  
please contact us on**

**07956 169356**

**Su Kamat**

## FROM OUR COUNCILLORS



Councillors Luke Shortland, Mario Creatura and Ian Parker outside Aldi in Coulsdon for one of their regular 'meet the people' events.

It's with pleasure that we write for the Coulsdon West Residents' Association magazine in its 75th anniversary year. Residents' Associations play an important role for elected representatives bringing concerns straight to our inboxes or to our regular and popular street surgeries. We work together in Coulsdon's best interests. Long may that continue.

### Medical Centre

In recent years we've seen many new developments in the town (some welcome, some less so) but all too often the supporting infrastructure hasn't been improved to match demand. In this respect, CWRA has long been a champion of a much needed new medical centre for Coulsdon. This year, thanks to the CWRA and other local RAs, Chris Philp and Mayor Jason Perry working collaboratively, there has been some rare good news. We might also say, modestly, that your Coulsdon Town councillors may also have influenced the decision for the NHS to make a bid for the car park site adjacent to Malcolm Road. Council officers can now progress Heads of Terms, contracts and planning permission for a new medical centre, including a GP surgery, which should benefit local residents for years to come.


The NHS will also continue to hold a long lease on the neighbouring old Smitham School / CALAT site for use as a Dialysis Centre.

### Coulsdon Library

The most recent consultation on Croydon's libraries closed in mid-April, and following an initial review that involved speaking to local community groups (like the CWRA) and library staff, a set of proposals has now been developed. However, there will be winners and losers. Given the Council's current financial position it can no longer maintain facilities which it feels aren't sufficiently well used.

It's been proposed that six of Croydon's thirteen libraries will open five to six days a week, including Saturdays, and will deliver an extensive offer of books, Wi-Fi, PCs, study spaces and events. These libraries have all proven to be well-used, accessible, and meet local needs. Coulsdon is one of the libraries proposed to open longer, with a recommendation for additional investment to improve the facilities and extend the opening times and services available. We hope it will be one of the winners.





However, these proposals also make clear that in order to fund the expansion of services at the six selected libraries, four other libraries would need to close. Bradmore Green in Old Coulsdon is almost certainly one of them, though no final decision has been taken. All things being equal, the future of Coulsdon library at least looks bright. If you responded to the consultation in support of Coulsdon library – thank you. Let's hope your efforts pay dividends.

### **Red Clover Gardens**

Croydon Council recently announced that the sale of the last of the large Brick by Brick developments had been completed.

The site at Lion Green Road, now called Red Clover Gardens, consists of five blocks, with two blocks designated for private use and three blocks for affordable housing. In total, there are 157 properties across these blocks, with 85 of them intended for affordable use.

Regen Capital has bought all five blocks and will retain two for private rental or sale. The Council are taking on the three affordable socially rented blocks through a sub-lease with the Mears Group. Mears will be responsible for managing the blocks and the tenants whilst the Council retains the right to nominate who lives in the affordable flats. They will be used to offer homes to residents on the Council Housing Register, many of whom will have been living in temporary accommodation for some years. So as well as providing a secure home for residents and their families, the Council will also be driving down the cost associated with providing temporary accommodation.

We wish the CWRA many more years of success looking after the interests of Coulsdon and I hope we can continue working together in the future.

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## ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

St Andrew's didn't start on Woodmansterne Road. As an iron building with a tin roof, and referred to originally as the Mission Room, it stood, in 1893, where the Coulsdon Club does now. Sometime after that, the decision was made to move to a more permanent brick-built structure. By 1949 the church was in its current position but incomplete. It had been consecrated in 1914 but was not finished because of the two world wars. The west end was finally finished in 1964. The vicar at the time of the founding of the CWRA was the Rev C.E Fisher (1940-1955).

According to the History of St Andrew's, in 1949 the church finances were not in good shape - a series of events were planned for 'Autumn Bazaar' week - the net profit from these was £330 - not bad going at all – probably equivalent to over £12K today.

There were problems in the musical department - the organist was under notice to leave for insubordinate conduct! Work amongst children was deemed a priority thanks to the Bishop's letter in the Diocesan Gazette - but there was a shortage of helpers and teachers with the Sunday school. Times don't change much do they?

A large cross was placed on the tower in 1938 for a "Mission for the Evangelisation of the Parish". It wasn't intended to be permanent but subsequently it was decided to have it illuminated, so lighting was duly installed and today it has become something of a landmark for many residents and travellers.

St Francis church in Rickman Hill was still in use as a chapel for St Andrews. It was declared redundant in 1987, and in 1988 was taken over by the Coptic Orthodox church, and dedicated to St Mary and St Shenoudah.

### COULD YOU BE A ROAD STEWARD FOR THE CWRA?

HELP US DISTRIBUTE OUR  
NEWSLETTER IN YOUR  
STREET, JUST FOUR  
TIMES A YEAR.

EMAIL US ON

[INFO@THECWRA.CO.UK](mailto:INFO@THECWRA.CO.UK)

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION.





## FANCY GOING FOR A WALK? CHIPSTEAD

As the last of summer ebbs away and the ruddy glow of autumn takes its place, what better time to stride out and see a bit of the countryside that we're lucky enough to have practically on our doorsteps.

This relatively easy walk, with some excellent views, starts at Chipstead Station and ends up at either Woodmansterne or Coulsdon South Stations, depending on the choice you make. It's a good three hours of quality ambling, so take walking boots or your most sturdy weathproof trainers, especially if it's rained recently. Don't worry about refreshment or other necessary facilities. The walk takes in The Rambler's Rest, The White Hart and The Smuggler's Inn (if you wish), so depending on the timing of your walk, you should be suitably looked after.

From Chipstead Station, head down past the parade of shops on Station Approach (including the excellent butchers, JWCC, open Thursday to Saturday only) and turn left onto Outwood Lane. Pass Lower Park Road and the cottage on your right, and Stagbury Avenue on your left, then cross Outwood Lane and pass into the parkland through the pedestrian gate. Follow the path up towards the corner of Banstead Woods car park, and veer left when you reach it. Follow the path up to the entrance to Banstead Woods but don't go in. Instead turn left onto a path going gently uphill, and keep the woods on your right. On your left there will be grassland running down to Outwood Lane. Keep on this path, which runs roughly parallel with the road. Keep to the right of the patch of overgrown brush, and then on until you pass through a large gap in a line of bushes. The path you will have just crossed runs from Banstead Woods down to the rear of the Ramblers' Rest pub. It's a bit early in the walk, but if you need a breather, well, it's five o'clock somewhere...

So, back on track, pass through that gap, and head straight on, towards the corner of another clump of trees and bushes, where you bear slightly to the right when you meet a long hedge on your left. Keep straight on until you hit the woodland. Continue straight for a few paces, and then, after descending a short steep section, you'll meet the main path from Banstead Woods. Turn left onto this path which will bring you quickly to a pedestrian level crossing over the railway. Taking care, cross the line, and then down a short path between the cottages and gardens to bring you out into Chipstead Bottom, and Outwood Lane again.

Immediately opposite is the Old School House and just to the left of this house is a kissing gate and a public footpath signpost. Enter the field and take the faintly defined path to the right, uphill. Once past the garden of the house, the woodland on your right is now part of the Long Plantation, and you follow the path along its edge through a field boundary, and uphill





around the next field until a path enters the wood. You can often see birds of prey on this stretch. It's all right, they're not after you. Follow the path into the wood and when you reach a well-defined path, turn left onto it and continue on through the Long Plantation. It takes a while, but when you come across a fork, take the left branch and then continue until a cart track crosses at right angles. Turn left again on to the track to exit the wood at the top of a large field with a residual hedge line on the line of the path. You are now crossing the Hogden Valley, and when the path meets a corner of woodland, stay inside the field on a permissive path, which runs to the left and hugs the field edge with the woodland. Head for the corner of this field.

When you get there, turn left, and keep going in a straight line towards a gate. This path runs parallel to the Long Plantation, and (out of sight to you) High Road, Chipstead. Leave the field by the gate, and head straight down a farm track, which follows the top of a field, with Porters Wood to the right. Watch out for large Roman Snails along the track (Latin: *Helix Pomatia*. About two inches tall, with a light brown shell, they're edible, but if you're feeling peckish I advise you to wait until we get to The White Hart. Not long now.) Continue straight on at the end of the field, with a hedge to the left of the path and woodland on the right. The path skirts left around a bit of woodland, and eventually passes through a thick hedge. Keep straight on along the top of the next field, with Poorfield Wood to your right, and terrific views back to Banstead Woods and the railway viaduct over Outwood Lane. When you reach the corner, turn right on a path which enters the wood briefly, and then emerges into another field; cross over it towards the left to the field edge at Castle Road. Cross again and continue uphill on a (once tarmac) path. Keep going, staying to the right, and after some stables come into view, you'll be soon be passing the splendid Chipstead Courtyard Theatre (a quality amateur theatre group, with excellent facilities) and its car park. Flint garden walls will then guide you to Hazelwood Lane, and when you turn right onto it, The White Hart pub is only yards away, and at this point, after all your explorations, a pint (for medicinal purposes, clearly) may well be in order.

The pub has been on this spot since the reign of King George II, built in 1731. After nearly 300 years, it has to be worth a visit even if only on historical grounds. After, cross the High Road, turn left, and the path quickly enters Chipstead Mead Recreation Ground. Stay on the footpath as it skirts the border of the Recreation Ground, and it will lead you on to Starrock Lane. Turn right and then follow the lane down to the junction with Starrock Court, and now you have a choice, head for Chipstead Valley Road and Woodmansterne Station, or the Brighton Road and Coulsdon South.





### Chipstead Valley Road and Woodmansterne Station

This is the easy one. Continue along Starrock Lane and then cross Coulsdon Lane to go through a gap in the hedge into Chipstead Village Field. Take the path along the field edge to the right, hugging the hedge by the road. Leave the field again, and then walk along Coulsdon Lane until it meets a road junction with Hollymead Road, Hollymeoak Road, Portnalls Road and, pretty much straight across, the private Rickman Hill Road. Note the Coal Post and old Rural District of Coulsdon sign on the grass island. Take Rickman Hill Road, and follow this through both gates, and you are now on Rickman Hill, and next to Rickman Hill Park. Continue on downill, and on the left is Ridgemount Avenue, where the 434 bus stand can be found. If there's one waiting and you're ready to call it quits, it'll take you back to Coulsdon, Purley or even far-off Caterham. Alternatively, head all the way down to the bottom of the hill to meet up with Chipstead Valley Road. For a 166 bus toward Banstead and Epsom, the stop is just to the left, and over the road, the small but perfectly formed Smugglers' Inn provides refreshments and facilities, if you've so far resisted temptation, and the 166 bus stop just outside will whisk you towards Coulsdon and/or Croydon when you've finished. If you want Woodmansterne Station, take Linden Avenue, almost opposite Rickman Hill, then through the alleyway at the end, and the station is on the right. A word of warning. After a long walk, the last thing you need is a lot of stairs. And that's just what Woodmansterne Station offers.

### Brighton Road and Coulsdon South Station

So, you want to do it the hard way. Right, take the right-hand lane towards Apple Tree Farm, then keep your eyes peeled on the left for a small patch of cleared ground where the a Public Footpath sign should be seen – look hard, it's almost completely hidden by overgrown bushes on the left of the lane. At this clearing, ignore the sharp turn back into a gated field, but take the half-left to a footpath with an ancient London Borough of Croydon signpost at a stile. This section of the walk includes old stiles and the path is very overgrown, and at some points in the year may be impassable. The path runs along the top hedge of the field called Millstock, which is listed by the London Borough of Croydon as a Public Open Space! If you can't use the path, you can use a stile to enter Millstock Field itself and walk along its top edge, but the stiles between each of the fields are high, and in a poor state of repair, so be careful. After one last decrepit stile, the path works its way between a couple of houses and comes out onto Woodfield Hill. Now, again you have choices. You can go straight on down Starrock Road, which is just opposite, to Hollymeoak Road, turn right and shortly after that junction, you'll meet the A23 Brighton Road. Cross the road at the traffic lights, then turn left and continue on until you reach Coulsdon South Station. Alternatively, go straight down to the bottom of Woodfield Hill and the 405 bus stop is just along the Brighton Road on the left. The decision is yours and your aching feet...



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AND WE'LL RESPOND AS  
QUICKLY AS WE CAN.

### TADWORTH LINE TRAIN SERVICE COMPLAINTS

Woodmansterne and Coulsdon residents are keenly disappointed at the inactivity of the Railway Executive in dealing with overcrowding complaints. They have now, through the Coulsdon West Residents' Association, protested to the Divisional Superintendent that old railway coaches, which the Executive had told a deputation from the Association, were unfit for main line traffic, had been re-introduced, and have also protested that nothing had been done to eliminate "sheep-like" exit arrangements at Woodmansterne station.

In their latest letter to the Divisional Superintendent, the Association complained that the old railway stock they were told was unsuitable for main line traffic had "again become suitable" for traffic during the Epsom race meeting. "We had assumed," the letter stated, "that racegoers might possibly have been regarded as a lower order of life with whom more risks might be taken than with the comparatively precious season ticket holders. This assumption is now disposed of by the continued use since of the old stock for normal service, and whilst we appreciate that race traffic must cause much disorganisation, the fact remains that if this stock is safe enough even for season ticket holders during the week following a race meeting, it is surely just as safe for normal working until the platforms (at Purley) are completed. Of course, there may be an explanation, but to laymen like ourselves, standing on other people's feet in a four-coach, old stock train, it is somewhat bewildering."

The Association say they are not completely convinced that their proposal for a cross-over between Smitham and Reedham (to enable the Coulsdon North service to extend to Tattenham) is impracticable. "We have also noted," they say, "that there is still no sign whatsoever of anything being done, even in the small matter of the gates at Woodmansterne station. Even the sight of someone with an oil can to render them movable would be encouraging, whilst a small, even typewritten, notice of the Executive's intentions, posted on the notice-board, would do much to reassure the disgruntled passengers and fortify their patience."

From the Surrey Mirror of Friday 12 August 1949.  
The CWRA protesting to the Railway Executive over the use of extra carriages on the Tattenham Corner line for Epsom week in early June. These same carriages had previously been stated by the Executive as being unsuitable for use on the line when they were requested to take the pressure off the normal commuter traffic, but strangely were good enough for race-goers.