



Croxley Green Parish Council,
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Croxley Green, WD3 3SU
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The Parish Pump

The Croxley Green Parish Council's House Magazine

Autumn/Winter 2007

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views or policy of the Parish Council.

COUNCILLORS

North Ward:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Nik Bennett | 773623 |
| Frank Brand | 248704 |
| Brian Norman | 710250 |
| <i>(Chairman of Council)</i> | |
| Hazel Seeley | 772696 |
| <i>(Chairman of - E&A Committee)</i> | |
| Wendy Shafe | 441638 |
| <i>(Vice Chairman of Council)</i> | |

Croxley Green Ward:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Marion Birch | 449092 |
| Leighton Dann | 778484 |
| Christine Jefford | 771769 |
| <i>(Vice Chairman - E&A Committee)</i> | |
| Janet Martin | 774514 |
| Roger Seabourne | 770629 |
| Cliff Vassiliou | 779927 |

South Ward:

| | |
|--|--------|
| David Bains | 441480 |
| <i>(Vice Chairman - P&D Committee)</i> | |
| Phil Brading | 492893 |
| Jeremy Hollands | 448382 |
| Mark Saxon | 772581 |
| David Wynne-Jones | 251905 |
| <i>(Chairman - P&D Committee)</i> | |

Chairman's Editorial

On behalf of the incumbent Council, I would like to welcome the two newly elected Councillors, Nik Bennett and Frank Brand (both representing North Ward) to the Parish Council, thereby giving the community full elected representation. Likewise, we welcome the Clerk's new Administrative Assistant, Amanda Taft, to her new job and wish her well.

Slowly the newly formed Council from May 2007, past and new Councillors, are becoming acquainted with the role they can play within the community. Being realistic, we have the capability to manage most tasks relating to woodland and open space land management.

Many residents have already requested the rejuvenation of our village tree lined roads but only some sites can be considered due to the change in residents' property access. The Council, therefore, will be investigating what procedures need to be taken on board for a suitable programme to be formulated. Existing trees also need to be reviewed to see if preventative work or replacement would be best and who is best placed to do that work.

Another blot on the landscape is certain redundant pieces of street furniture which add clutter to our village. So if you see any street furniture that you think is redundant, why not get in contact with the Parish Council office and let them know.

These are only but a few ideas that can benefit the village and its residents.

We look forward to your suggestions that could be beneficial to the whole community.

Brian Norman
Chairman

New Village Green in Croxley

Croxley Green is even greener now following Hertfordshire County Council's agreement on 2 October that the 28 acres of land known as Long Valley Wood and the Buddleia Walk is to be registered as a town/village green.

Long Valley Wood and Buddleia Walk, which lies adjacent to the canal behind Frankland Road, has long been used by residents for recreation with unimpeded access to the area. The 'Keep Croxley Green Group' has led this very successful campaign to achieve village green

(continued on page 2)



The Councillors and staff of Croxley Green Parish Council would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

(continued from page 1)

status and is to be congratulated for the enormous effort and dedication it has put in to get village green status for this area.

The village green status follows months and months of gathering evidence from residents of their use of the area for leisure pursuits and also demonstrating that such use had been going on for some 20 years.

The campaign culminated in a public enquiry with evidence being given for and against the village green proposal. One of the part owners of the land, Transport for London and London Underground, objected to the proposal as they wanted to use part of the land for a track renewal depot. The other landowners are Three Rivers District Council and a private individual.

Indeed, now village green status has been granted, any form of development there would be illegal.

Now comes the next question though - who is going to maintain Croxley Green's new village green?

And now for the bad news..!!

The Parish Council has received notice of termination of its contract with Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) to maintain The Green and Stones Orchard.

The notice of termination, which takes effect in October 2008, came as a shock to the Parish Council, coming as it did, totally out of the blue.

The reason? TRDC want to have a 'global contract' with a contractor to undertake all open space maintenance within the District.

The Parish Council will be trying to persuade TRDC to exclude Croxley Green from any 'global contract' in order for the Parish Council to continue to maintain the area. The local Parish Council staff are committed and dedicated to making the Green and Stones Orchard look excellent for the residents.

A Great Place to Live

Have you bought the newest monopoly board as a Christmas present yet? If you have, you will notice that the most expensive property is not in Mayfair in Central London any longer – it is Hertfordshire's St. Albans. Yes, the area we live in is becoming the most sought after in the whole of the United Kingdom!

This fills me with enormous pride in that I chose to live here by chance forty two years ago and now it is a highly sought after location for everyone.

As a Parish Councillor, I meet people every time I go into one of our village shops or just walking along the road – after so many years I know a lot of them. They are nearly all interested in the way our Parish is run efficiently and tell me about it. Of course we have a chat but I always remind them that if you want your problem discussed you must WRITE, either to the Clerk or to me or any other Councillor. In that way, we can put it on the agenda for discussion at one of our meetings.

We have an Environment and Amenity Meeting on the first Tuesday of every month and a Planning and Development Meeting on the first and third Wednesday, a Finance and Administration Meeting on the second Thursday plus a full Council Meeting on the final Thursday of each month. *[Please note there are some exceptions to this timetable, see page 17].* This

may not be many people's idea of fun but it is well worth a try to come along at least once, just to see how your Council works. You will have three minutes to tell us what is worrying you; if anything. It is a sad fact that the more comfortable people become, the less interest they take in their Council. I suppose it is a compliment in a way but it makes it much harder to get feedback from those who we are there to serve – you!!

Our Croxley is such a great place and we want to keep it that way. We look forward to hearing from you.

David Wynne-Jones

Henry "H"

I was chatting to my friend Jessie about hedgehogs and their name which implies that they frequent hedgerows and snuffle like pigs.

Anyway, as I was saying, Jessie and I agreed that slug pellets in the garden make hedgehogs ill when they eat the tainted slugs. In fact you can buy garden friendly slug pellets.

Hedgehogs are lovely little animals that do no harm, but lots of good. So let the hedgehogs clear the slugs not the slugs clear the hedgehogs!!!

My own garden is frequented by Henry, a rather large hedgehog that eats my slugs, beetles, caterpillars and worms etc. Henry is fast on his little feet and quite ferocious when his territory is threatened, although he tolerates the large frog that hides in the damp bushes!

Little 10 months old Toby, the King Charles Cavalier, had his first encounter with a hedgehog and could not understand why this small strange dog had lots of prickles that pricked his nose! He will remember in future.

Rover Reporter, Bess

The Cost of Vandalism and Anti-Social behaviour

I wonder whether those youngsters, girls and boys alike, who are behaving in an anti-social way and causing damage to street furniture realise that it is their parents who are having to pay for the damage they cause.

Indeed, it is not only their parents but all the residents of Croxley who are paying for it - through their local Council Tax to the Parish Council. Unfair? Yes, it is. If the kids or their parents had to pay directly for the damage, I bet the vandalism would stop pretty quickly!

When the fair was on the Green in July, about 12 youths vandalised a litter bin near Copthorne Road. The cost of replacing the bin was £505. That would be £42 for each youth who took part in this wanton act of vandalism.

The Multi-Sports Court in Barton Way Recreation Ground is another example. In June 2005 over £1,000 of damage was caused to the fencing.

In June 2006 vandalism to the

basketball backboards resulted in them having to be replaced at a cost of over £900.



In March this year over £2,300 damage was caused to the fencing surrounding the Court.



Not only is this expensive but whilst waiting for the repairs to be undertaken the Court had to be closed on safety grounds - depriving those who genuinely wanted to use the facility from enjoying it.



Damage to bus stops, graffiti, newly planted trees in Stones Orchard; all of this has to be put right and there is a cost.

There is another cost upon which a price tag cannot be attached - that of the quality of life of the vast majority of residents of Croxley Green who have to suffer this hooligan behaviour.

Will this sort of thing ever stop? Let's hope so!

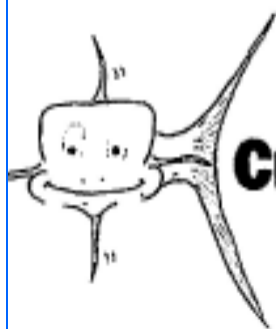
What a picture!

Local artist Mari Gordon-Price held an exhibition of her work in Croxley Library between 22 October and 9 November.

Mari works in all mediums but prefers watercolour, having evolved a style in which she builds up colour, giving the resulting effect of gouache or acrylic, yet

still retaining the delicacy of watercolour where needed. *[The Parish Council is grateful to Mari Gordon-Price for permission to use the pictures below].*





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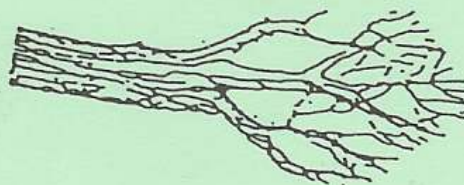
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The Parish Council's 15th Garden Competition - the winners....

Despite the very poor summer this year and the fact that the competition was not held until later in the summer, there was a good response. Once again, it was a pleasure to judge the gardens and to meet the respective gardeners. I am always both surprised and impressed by the 'gems' there are in Croxley Green which, of course, makes the judging a difficult but very pleasant task.

Many thanks to all those who entered this year (despite the inclement weather!) and the excellent results achieved. Also, many thanks to the preliminary judges, and the three judges who undertook the final judging on 1 September i.e. Mrs Kathleen Perry, Chairman of Croxley Gardening Club, Mr Ged Meador, Secretary of the same club, and Mr Tim Davis a former Parish Councillor. Lastly, congratulations to all the winners and runners up. The pictures here show the winners in each category.

Cllr Christine Jefford

FRONT GARDENS

- 1st Mr Jeffreys
- 2nd Mrs S Denton
- 3rd Mrs Kane

SMALL BACK GARDENS

- 1st Mr Jeffreys
- 2nd Mrs Waterman
- 3rd Mr & Mrs Edwards

LARGE BACK GARDENS

- 1st Mr Mays
- 2nd Mrs S Denton

COMMUNITY GARDEN

- 1st Shaftesbury Court
- 2nd 136 - 142 Grove Crescent

PUBLIC HOUSE

The Artichoke Public House

BEST FLORAL CONTAINER DISPLAY

- 1st Mr & Mrs McLachlan,
- 2nd Mr Maclean



(left)
Front
garden



(right)
Small
back
garden



(left) Large back garden



(right) Community garden



(left) Public House



(right) Best floral
container display

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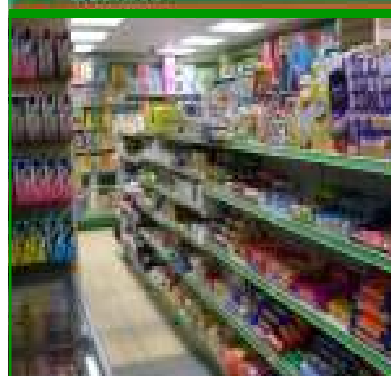
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Social Afternoon Tea

The Parish Council tried something new this year – mainly for the users of the free community bus provided by the Parish Council on Fridays (the timetable is printed on page 12).

With the use of the hall at the Community Centre and organised by Cllr Christine Jefford and Helena Flynn, our Social Afternoon Tea was a great success.

About sixty people were offered a great selection of cakes and biscuits as well as tea, coffee and soft drinks. Everyone had a very enjoyable couple of hours and we received many letters to say so, as well as verbal thanks.

Having tried this out we would like to make this event bi-annual if possible. We are really glad that all of you who joined us had such a good time.

Cllr Hazel Seeley

The Surgery

I recently attended the New Road Doctors Surgery, and this made me think of times past, particularly because of a picture of a mother and child which has followed this practice over many years.

The forerunner of the practice goes back to the 1930s, when Doctor Harvey had a surgery at the corner of Nightingale Road and Uxbridge Road, Rickmansworth. Dr Harvey was a dour Scot, who, when I was 7 years old, pulled a fish hook from my leg declaring that he had caught bigger salmon with a better lure! I didn't understand what he meant at the time but all I knew was it hurt like hell.

The Doctor's District Nurse was Nurse Carter who, over the years, delivered many Rickmansworth babies including me. She was a formidable woman in a long blue trench coat who wore a large brimmed hat and rode a bicycle with a frame that would take 10 strong men to lift. However, she had a heart of gold.

The practice moved to Uxbridge Road, Moneyhill where Dr Parrot and Dr Rope resided. It was Dr Rope's prompt attention that saved my life when I had a brain haemorrhage. They then moved to the back of Yorke Road with its entrance off Watford Road (now known as "Outspan"). I can't quite remember whether Dr Russell was there or not but he became the first senior partner of the current practice. "Outspan" is still used as a base for a chiropractor.

The current New Road practice has some 8,500 patients. There are 7 practising GPs at the surgery some of whom are part time. There are a number of receptionists who work varying hours.

There are 5 part time nurses two of whom are specially trained and 1 healthcare assistant. Just a special mention that Nurse Marge has been there for 25 years! She tells me she only originally came for 2 months! And then there's our blood lady (phlebotomist) who has the touch of an angel, not like the bayonet practice that service doctors carried out!



The practice runs a morning clinic in Sarratt and staff take turns there to provide the necessary services for patients. Home visits are still carried out for people unable to attend the surgery but obviously the surgery has better facilities.

Appointments are nationally 10 minutes per person but this

practice gives at least 12 minutes.

Attendance times can sometimes be an issue, but apart from the daily bookings a third of appointments are pre-bookable up to 5/6 weeks in advance with a proportion left for urgent cases. Having said that, at times, demand can be spasmodic as there can be no way of preplanning for illness!

The receptionists are always very helpful and will do their best to fit patients in. They have a difficult job continually answering the telephones, dealing with patients' queries and generally keeping the surgery going by a combination of togetherness and team work.

Things have changed dramatically over the years from a small single doctor's surgery in Rickmansworth, but two things remain constant: this is still a caring practice and the picture still hangs in the surgery.

David Neighbour

Chairman's Charities '07/08

Following suggestions put forward by Councillors and staff, Cllr Brian Norman (Chairman of the Parish Council) has chosen Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and the Prostate Cancer Charity as those to benefit from any fund raising activities during this year.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People provide vital support for deaf people and alert them to sounds we all take for granted providing greater independence, confidence and security to their owners. Most of the dogs are selected from rescue centres or are donated as unwanted pets.

The Prostate Cancer Charity undertakes vital medical research in this long neglected health issue and provides support to thousands of men and their families. The Charity's vision is to achieve for men, in relation to prostate cancer, what has so successfully been achieved for women and breast cancer.

Carers in Hertfordshire

We are an independent organisation providing information, support and advice to **unpaid** carers across the county – they may be caring for a family member, friend or neighbour with an illness, disability (learning or physical) or mental health illness.

There are approximately 15,000 carers in Watford & Three Rivers and at the moment we are in touch with about 900!! So I hope you will be able to help 'spread the word' about our organisation.

So what can we do for carers?

Information & support

We can listen to the needs of carers and look at what might help them in their caring role, by helping them access statutory and voluntary organisations. They receive the quarterly newsletter & carewaves which informs them of events and support from other organisations.

Financial help

40-60% of disability benefits go unclaimed each year. Many people simply are not told about benefits they can claim. We can refer people to the Department of Work & Pensions, Citizen Advice Bureau or the Money Advice Unit.

Respite

Carers need a break and we can help by pointing them towards organisations who offer a sitting service, such as Crossroads.

Someone to listen

If a carer wants to talk we can offer a listening ear. We also have a Linkline service where a volunteer will call the carer on a regular basis to give support.

In Watford & Three Rivers there is the 'Carers Meeting Point' – an opportunity for carers to come along for a chat and a cuppa on

the first Thursday of each month.

A voice

We know that many carers want their voices heard in local planning & implementation, so we make sure they get to know about events.

How to contact Carers in Hertfordshire:-

Julie Crossley
Carer Support Worker –
Watford & Three Rivers

22a High Street
Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP1 3AE

Tel: 01442 253344

Email:

julie.crossley@carersinherts.org.uk

Website:

www.carersinherts.org.uk

To skip or not...

I am sure that we are all making a conscious effort to reduce our impact on the environment whether it be by recycling or restudying our travel plans. Financial incentives are the new proposals to those people who upgrade their homes to be more energy efficient, especially to those who have recently purchased properties. There is a negative account to those proposals that does not seem to be considered against any homes provenance. The true worth of any product, whether it be a car or house, lies within the value of the materials that can either be re-used or recycled.

Until the middle of the 20th Century, the majority of house building materials had a re-usable value. However, with the introduction of man made products with differing chemical origins many have little or no chance of being recycled. These can only be discarded to either a landfill or incinerated, thereby adding toxins to the soil or atmosphere.

So, when we make over our homes, whether it be a new kitchen or bathroom (which again may need to be replaced or renewed every ten years), the materials used to give us that "Ideal Home" finish will eventually be disposed of in the inevitable skip. Exterior doors and windows, in many instances, also utilise materials whose toxins are waiting to pollute the environment for future generations.

Now, with the prospective house energy efficiency certificates being part of the house sale, it is worth considering the negative energy value that the house contains for the disposal and renewable costs in money and energy.

So let us be aware of the potential skip fodder.

Brian Norman
Chairman

DON'T FORGET!

Need to contact the Police?

0845 33 00 222

In an emergency always dial 999

An emergency is when:

- **There is a risk of injury to someone or a risk of serious damage to property;**
- **You suspect a crime is *in progress*;**
- **There is a serious incident which needs immediate police attendance.**

And don't forget about your local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). They are there for you, so why not talk to them about anything that concerns you.

Lost and Found.....

Who's lost a pair of prescription sunglasses? If you have please contact the Parish Council office.

Hobbies and Crafts Taster Day

The Parish Council held a second very successful Hobbies and Crafts Taster Day at Little Green School on 7 October.

The day focused on stall holders demonstrating their hobby or craft and getting the visiting public, both adults and children alike, actively involved in having a go.

There was a wide range of activities to see and try including portrait painting, clay work, silk painting, flower pot painting, jewellery making, paper crafts, card making, knitting, weaving and toddler craft activities.

And to make sure the day went with a swing a children's entertainer was there keeping the small (and big!) kids amused.

Yet again there was a huge turn out of visitors to the event. Although admission was free, over £200 was raised from a raffle for this year's Chairman's Charities these being the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and The Prostate Cancer Charity.

For more details about this year's Chairman's Charities, see page 7.

Bobbin Lace making – is it a dying craft?

Not in Croxley Green!

We have a very thriving group which meets regularly in the library reading room on Thursday evenings from 7.30pm for 2 hours. We lend equipment to anyone wishing to have a try at lace making and organise outings to lace days or suppliers fairs at Havant or Birmingham.

The group demonstrated its craft at the Rickmansworth Canal Festival and Environmental Fair this year and exhibited some of the work that they have produced whilst helping many people who showed an interest to "have a go".

We had our lace day on Saturday 3 November 2007 from 10.00am to 4.00pm at Harvey Road JMI School. The proceeds from the raffle will go to the London Air Ambulance who gave us a talk on the day.

We are currently making a lace tablecloth which will be raffled in aid of a local charity. The last tablecloth we made a few years ago raised £500 for the Lynda Jackson Unit at Mount Vernon Hospital.

If anyone is interested in joining us or is interested in any of the above events please telephone Elaine Norman on 01923 779331.



Reflexology

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Reflexology is very relaxing and relieves stress. Regular treatments will encourage the body's own healing processes and can be beneficial for pain relief and a variety of disorders.

Fungi

As summer ends and autumn approaches we often see mushrooms and toadstools appearing in gardens, parks and woodlands. They emerge from the ground or from trees seemingly coming from nowhere.

These fungi are the fruit bodies of much larger organisms, often forming large fairy rings on our lawns. Their roots travel through soil or wood, breaking down organic matter to feed themselves. Unlike plants, fungi cannot obtain energy from sunlight so they usually rely on rotting matter to sustain themselves. However, many can combine with the roots of plants and trees to obtain nutrients from them, whilst returning water and salts to their hosts. This forms a relationship from which both can benefit (symbiosis).

Fungi reproduce by releasing spores from their fruit bodies which are then transported by wind. They must settle in a location with exactly the right conditions to suit them in order to grow.

The fruit bodies of most species appear in late summer and autumn when there is sufficient moisture in the soil to sustain them. Different types of fungi grow in different locations, some preferring grasslands and some woodlands. They have preferences for varying soil types. Many are associated with different types of trees. Fly Agarics, Birch Boletes and Birch Polypores are often found under or on Silver Birch trees.

Some of the fungi commonly found on the Green are the Pavement Mushroom (*Agaricus bitorquis*), the Parasol Mushroom (*Macrolepiota procera*) and the Giant Puffball (*Langermannia gigantea*). All three of these fungi are edible and taste nice. However, only eat them if you are certain of their identity.

Also, the Pavement Mushrooms often grow very close to the road and can absorb lead from the exhaust fumes of passing traffic, so it is probably best to leave them alone. Another fungi often found in the hedgerows surrounding the Green, usually on dead Elder wood, is the Wood Ear (*Auricularia auricular-judae*). As its common name suggests, it looks like an ear and feels jelly-like when wet, grows

in groups and is brown to black in colour.

In the woods around Croxley there are also many species of Polypore, a type of fungus which is reliant on trees and usually grows directly from the wood. Most frequent is the Birch Polypore (*Polyporus betulinus*) and fairly common is the Dryads Saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*). However, this year, I managed to spot a rather rare polypore which lives on the roots of Beech and Oak, known as *Polyporus umbellatus*.



Dryads Saddle



Birch Polypore

Other fungi found within the woods include Trametes versicolor and Dead Man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*) which have a very unusual appearance and are found on old Beech stumps.

Through the public footpaths within the Parish there is a wide diversity of habitat and countless species of fungi thrive in the differing conditions. I have encountered two

of the tastiest varieties of wild mushrooms on the footpaths in Croxley, the Field Mushroom and a variety of Morel with a black cap known as *Morchella conica*.

When gathering wild mushrooms for food, remember that you must be certain of the type of mushrooms you are picking and that you can recognize them. It is easy to confuse edible mushrooms with poisonous ones that look similar.

The consequences of misidentification of mushrooms could be fatal. If you are in any doubt whatsoever do not eat them!

Although mushrooms and toadstools may not be regarded by some as being as beautiful or as delicate as wild flowers they are every bit as interesting, if not more so. Why not go for a walk, keep your eyes peeled and see what you can spot?

Andrew Goddard
Assistant Ranger



Fly Agaric



Field Mushroom



Dead Man's Fingers



Parasol Mushroom



Pavement Mushroom



Trametes Versicolor



Polyporus Umbellatus

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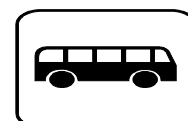
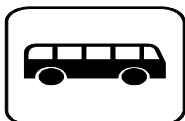
| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Winton Drive Approach | 9.30am |
| Shaftsbury Court | 9.32am |
| Malvern Way/Barton Way | 9.34am |
| Fuller Way/Barton Way | 9.36am |
| Hanover House | 9.37am |
| Sherborne Way/Baptist Church | 9.40am |
| Return from Watford | 12 noon |

2ND JOURNEY

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Sycamore Approach | 10.00am |
| Valley Walk (Green) | 10.01am |
| Valley Walk/Beechcroft Ave | 10.03am |
| Frankland Rd/Harvey Rd | 10.05am |
| Chalmers Court | 10.08am |
| All Saints Lane (outside church) | 10.10am |
| New Road | 10.12am |
| Return from Watford | 12.30pm |

3RD JOURNEY

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Junction Links Way & Warwick Way | 10.30am |
| Junction Links Way & Dover Way | 10.31am |
| Junction Links Way & Little Green Lane | 10.32am |
| Junction Little Green Lane & Durrants Drive | 10.33am |
| Junction Durrants Drive & Dover Way | 10.34am |
| Kenilworth Drive/Baldwins Lane Footpath | 10.36am |
| Manor Way | 10.38am |
| Grove Court | 10.40am |
| Return from Watford | 1.15pm |



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A brief history of Parish Councils

English Parish Councils have their origins in the old manorial areas which, in turn, had some affiliation to the church.

As the manorial system began to decline, the influence of the church increased and the general public, (who were in general illiterate) congregated in the church halls for meetings to discuss local matters such as poor relief.

There were, over the 17th and 18th centuries, great changes to the way people lived and how the land and agriculture were administered. Poor relief was totally administered by the church who raised monies by levy. However, this system became unworkable because of land enclosures and private ownership. In addition, the move of country workers to the industrial centres meant that a Parish rate levy and

administrative system again became unworkable, thus the church rate was abolished in 1868, reducing parish administration to a minimum.

Gladstone's government passed the Local Government Act 1894, which gave status to the Parish Council by giving them civic duties, thus excluding the church and passing the administration to laymen. However, the Parish Councils did not flourish because the laymen in each village were the rich, well educated gentry who maintained their hierarchical system of control.

The Parish Councils did not, therefore, have the backing of the influential gentry and their finance was reduced by down rating many sources of their income. It is doubtful if there was much use of the Parish Council structure until after the Second World War when, in the 1950s, legislation to reform the Parish Council system was passed. In 1969 a Royal

Commission recommended empowerment of a parochial nature to support local people.

The passing of the Local Government Act 1972 is the framework for the current Parish Councils and at the present time there are over 10,000 parishes in England. Funding is from the residents within the Parish and is collected through the District Council.

Our current Parish Council has a number of tasks to carry out, not least of which is acting as a liaison with the District and County Councils on any matters which local residents may bring forward. Comments are made on town planning issues and our footpaths, woodland areas and green spaces are looked after as well. Generally the Parish Council tries to keep a watchful eye on any matter that may affect the residents.

It's your Local Council: USE IT!

David Neighbour

Wildlife in Croxley

Our beautiful Croxley may be only two square miles in area but it is a haven for wildlife nowadays. Coming home at night, at this time of the year, one can see foxes caught in the headlights as they cross The Green. Indeed, you can hear the dog foxes howling in the small hours on frosty winter nights on Croxley Common Moor as they search for a mate and stake out their territory. There are also several badger families in Long Valley Wood, together with numerous Muntjac and a family of three Roe deer – two adults and a fawn. We also have some wonderful birdlife starting with the white egrets in the Chess Valley near the restaurant at the bottom of Scots Hill. Tawny owls are also recolonising our area, one can hear their evocative tu-whit-tu-woo calls over the Windmill Estate,

down Copthorne Road and on Croxley Common Moor, where we have put up several owl nest boxes. Indeed, we have had one successful nesting with two owlets produced. Kites, buzzards and



even parakeets have also been spotted on The Moor together with the rare and elusive water rail along the River Gade. Now is the time to put up nest boxes – try buying (or making) boxes with a flap on the top so that they can be cleaned out each year and NEVER position them facing

south into the sun. It is also time to put bird feeders in the garden – they should be squirrel-proof but if placed close to the house or conservatory they can give tremendous entertainment during the long winter months.

Don't make your garden too tidy – leave a few berries on bushes for the birds to eat and shelter in (they use nest boxes too) and a small 'wild' area for hedgehogs.

More and more people are realising that their gardens are the main habitat for so many of our small birds and the importance of making them bird friendly. On a sunny winter's morning don't just sit at home – stride out onto our Common Moor, into the woods or along the Chess Valley – you will be surprised at what you will see and how good it makes you feel as you banish the winter blues.

CLlr David Wynne-Jones

I do like to be beside the seaside....

Earlier in the summer, the Parish Council funded a day trip to Brighton for a group of senior citizens from local sheltered accommodation.

I was privileged to accompany the group to act as their guardian angel and ensure that they had a nice day out.

Considering the poor summer weather, we were extremely lucky to have a bright sunny day throughout. I think it's fair to say that a good time was had by all.

It was one of those times when everything went according to plan, from having a good coach and excellent driver, lack of traffic hold ups both there and back, the wonderful sunshine and the great, happy group of pensioners.

David Neighbour



Going off with a bang!

Reading the youthful exploits of John Pilgrim in his book about Croxley Green, I was taken back many years to some of the things that I used to get up to. One in particular stands out for all time in my memory and concerned not only me, but another well known Croxleyite, Bill Penney, whose father Harry had a successful watercress business in the area between the River Gade and the canal in Cassiobury Park. Bill, on leaving school in 1938, joined his father and eventually took over running the business.

In the late summer of '37 our footsteps took us to the lower reaches of Langley Way. This area was being cleared for the building of a new housing estate and entailed the felling of numerous large trees. The method employed was to cut the tree down leaving just enough trunk to get chains around it, excavate around the base and expose the main roots. These were then severed and a further hole was dug alongside the tap root. Then gunpowder was used to loosen this stump so that

horses could drag the remains clear.

Close inspection of the site revealed that the gunpowder was kept in a ramshackle hut with no lock on the door and just a spike pushed through the hasp and staple to stop it being blown open – no challenge to two 12 year old boys! Inspection revealed numerous bags of gunpowder and it was decided that we should remove one of the bags and go and blow up our own tree!

Selecting a small bag of approximately 5-7lbs we set off through Cassiobury Park to the top of Jacots Hill where we found the ideal bush/sapling. At the base we discovered the start of a rabbit hole and this we thought was ideal. At this stage ignorance reigned supreme! We had no idea that for a successful explosion the powder had to be compressed and capped. We just tipped the gunpowder into the hole and as Bill had the matches he would set fire to it. We both crouched down 3 or 4 feet away and Bill struck the match and threw it in the general direction of

(continued on page 15)

A Big thank you!

The Parish Council would like to thank Mr and Mrs Cullup for their tireless work in delivering the Parish Pump magazine throughout Croxley Green year in year out since the 1990s. They have decided to take retirement from their delivery role and we wish them a long and happy retirement.

The Parish Council

Can You Help?

The Parish Council is putting together a list of all clubs, societies and associations in Croxley Green.

Please send or email us details of who you are and how you can be contacted.

Our contact details are on the front page. We would like to hear from you.

(continued from page 14)

the bush. For what seemed an eternity nothing happened. Bill said "I think it's gone out, I'll go and see". He rose and took a pace forward and at that moment there was an almighty blinding light, the most intense heat, and a flame roared about fifteen feet into the air! In all my 82 years I have never again witnessed such an intense light. My vision was completely gone and all I could see were thousands of green dancing lights and nothing else! Gradually my sight cleared and the first thing I was aware of was the bush being completely devoid of all its foliage, every twig, every leaf gone. At the same time I became aware of a figure hopping about, flapping his arms and saying "Wow! That was close" (or words to that effect!). I turned to look at Bill. I was speechless and it must have been the look of horror on my face that alarmed him, for he immediately said "why are you looking at me like that?"

Now Bill was a true blonde and his crowning glory was the sort of thing that females would die for. Well, that was all gone, plus his eyebrows and eye lashes, and to cap the lot his face was the colour of a ripe tomato! As soon as he felt the top of his head and realised what had happened, he set up one agonising yell and took off for home with me close to his heels. We parted near home and I waited in fear of my life for either Mr or Mrs Penney to arrive at our house and acquaint my parents as to what we had been up to. Mercifully this did not happen and I escaped the serious good hiding I was sure was coming my way. Bill was kept off school while his hair grew again and the lesson I learnt from this; NEVER dabble with anything you know nothing about!

W J Roberts

Letters

Dear Parish Pump,

I read with interest David Neighbour's letter about red kites (*Parish Pump Spring/Summer Edition*). I am pleased to report that I spotted one over my garden on 17 May this year. Shortly afterwards my neighbour and I saw 2 green cockatiels or parakeets in her trees. This year I also saw the smallest toad I have ever seen in the garden. At least all this wet weather is good for the wildlife.

Whilst writing, I am a leader with the Countryside Management Service (CMS) and I agree with the "Try Walking in 2007!" article. Readers may like to know that there is a walk every Friday morning at 10am come rain or shine! We meet at The Artichoke Public House or The Two Bridges Harvester Pub on alternate weeks. The CMS can be contacted on 01727 848168 or pick up a leaflet at the library.

Irene Waterman (July 2007)

Dear Parish Pump,

A BIG THANK YOU!

I am one of the residents of The Green - and I would like to express my thanks to all the mindless young vandals who provide us with such fascinating entertainment. We do so enjoy being kept awake by the screaming, shouting and crashing which accompany your demolishing of litter bins, benches etc when you roam around Croxley Green at all hours of the night - and early morning! Your parents must be so proud of you, in the knowledge that you are putting your acquired skills to such good use, and they must be thankful too that they don't have to worry at night as to your whereabouts; you never seem to

travel far from home, possibly due to the fact that not all of you have the benefit of bikes, although one supposes that it would prove difficult at times to both ride and brandish all the 'trophy' you collect on your rounds. In fact, we are so impressed by your dedication to 'duty' that we are in the process of compiling an album of photographs of you all in action; should you wish to browse through it when it is complete you will be able to do so at Watford Police Station. If anyone reading this would like to contribute to this memorable album, please send your photographs to the Parish Council Offices, I am sure they will be happy to pass them on to us.

Name withheld for fear of reprisal (July 2007)

Dear Parish Pump,

MAKING THE GREEN BIGGER

I read with interest a recent article on making The Green bigger in a magazine called 'My Croxley'. What a splendid idea. The side road could be made wider with a very large roundabout at its junction with Baldwins Lane, so that in the mornings and evenings there would be complete traffic chaos for us all to enjoy!

But why stop there with this half baked idea? Let's go for an underpass from New Road to Sarratt Lane, with the tunnel boring soil used to fill in the road across The Green, never mind access to/from other side roads and houses fronting The Green. All I can say is that no wonder the person suggesting this is an ex-Councillor.

Mr I Diot, Flat Green Society (October 2007)

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As part of the New Year Celebrations you are invited to attend

FIREWORKS ON THE GREEN



New Years Eve

**Assemble at 11.45 pm.
Fireworks will commence at 12 midnight sharp.**

This is a pedestrian event so no provision
will be made for car parking.

Free admission - No private fireworks please

CROXLEY GREEN
PARISH COUNCIL



British Red Cross Christmas Charities Market 2nd December 2007

10 am to 12 noon

Red Cross Centre, Barton Way,
Croxley Green

Various charity stalls and Raffle

Come and enjoy the morning at our
Christmas Market

Refreshments Available

Christmas Bargains

Why not try the Red Cross and charity
markets for your Christmas shopping?
Many new and used items at bargain
prices.

Call in and see for yourself.

Red Cross Market December 15th

Charity Market December 2nd

Parish Council Meetings - *general public welcome*



Council meeting - last Thursday of each month
(except May and August)

Annual Parish meeting - last Thursday in April

Annual General meeting - second Thursday in May

Environment & Amenity meeting - first Tuesday of each
month (except May and August)

Planning & Development meeting - first and third
Wednesday of each month

Finance & Administration meeting - second Thursday
of each month (except August)

Carls Wild Wild Mushroom Parcels

A vegetarian offering this time in the form of seasonal and ultra sexy wild mushroom parcels. This is a fantastic way of cooking, retaining the texture and flavours of the individual ingredients. This should serve four !!.

300g wild mushrooms (if you are unsure of picking them yourself, most supermarkets now stock a great range)

300g baby button mushrooms

200g cooked, baby potatoes (skins on)

3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

8 tbsp of fresh chervil, chopped

4 tbsp fresh tarragon, chopped

4 tbsp quality olive oil

8 tbsp double cream

2 tbsp Ricard or Pernod (now you're liking it)

Salt and Pepper to taste

Ok, here goes. Pre heat your oven to 200c / 400f or gas mark 6. Now cut out four 32cm circles of grease-proof paper (Blue Peter time). Clean off the mushrooms if needed but do not wash them. Size depending, either leave them whole or cut them into largish pieces. Now cut the cooked new potatoes into approximately 1cm thick slices. With your clean hands, gently toss all the ingredients in a large bowl, taking care not to break the delicate mushrooms. Now have a little taste and season as required.

Place one of your discs onto a large flat baking tray and spoon a quarter of your mixture over one half. Fold the other half over and seal up your parcel by crimping up the edges. It should look like a Cornish pasty. Repeat with your remaining discs and transfer your tray into your hot oven. Now bake those gorgeous little parcels for about 17 minutes and try not to drink the remaining alcohol while you wait. When the time is up, remove them from the oven and let them settle for a minute or two.

Transfer them to your serving plate, still sealed, to allow your guest to savour the sexy aroma on opening.

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| City Airport | £65.00 | £75.00 | £85.00 | £110.00 |
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| West End | £50.00 | £60.00 | £65.00 | £110.00 |
| Euston/Kings X/St Pancras | £45.00 | £50.00 | £55.00 | £90.00 |
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| Liverpool Street | £55.00 | £55.00 | £60.00 | £80.00 |
| Victoria | £55.00 | £65.00 | £70.00 | £100.00 |
| Waterloo | £55.00 | £65.00 | £70.00 | £100.00 |
| Milton Keynes | £50.00 | £65.00 | £75.00 | £90.00 |
| Chessington | £55.00 | £65.00 | £75.00 | £90.00 |

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Estate car prices plus £5

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Camellias

It was some 30 years ago that my wife and I bought our first camellia. On our first visit to the Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Wisley we admired the beautiful large red semi double flowers of "Adolphe Audusson". The flowers were beautiful, the plant stood at least 5 feet high, and I found the leaves, which are a glossy green, very attractive too. Camellias do shed a few leaves every year, but not many, only a very few drop off, and the lovely glossy green lasts all the year. This is only one of the attractions of camellias. Wisley had this large specimen for sale in a pot around 2 feet across for which they were asking £50. This was about 1975! My wife very kindly offered to buy this for my birthday, and I gratefully accepted. This was the start of a collection of camellias, bought for a small garden over the past 30 years all of which give us a great deal of pleasure, year round. We now have over thirty.

The flowering period for most camellias is from February/March to May, and this year 2007 seems to have been a year when the summer looked to come in March and then turn wintry again in late April. The flowering period had started in February, and with the cold spell in late April, the plants seemed to stay on hold until the warmer weather again so we have had quite prolific flowering in early June. The flowers vary in size; we have one that has a small white/pink flower about an inch in diameter, to some that have a double type flower on one truss. Others have large six to eight inch blooms that are similar in style to a rose. The leaves are

interesting too, as they come in all sizes and shades of green.

The Adolphe Audusson has a leaf 4-5 inches long and 2 inches wide, these leaves are a beautiful, waxy, dark green whereas Donation has leaves that are a paler green, half inch wide and 2 inches long and without much shine - others vary in size and shades of green.



Adolphe Audusson

Camellias are, in general, woodland plants and thrive in a light soil; I always re-pot in ericaceous soil, and do this about every two years. They thrive best in a shady position in this area, although of course in areas where the sun is not so strong, and the days not so hot they can be planted in a position that will get full sun. If you see there are rhododendrons and azaleas growing in and around an area you can be sure that the soil will be suitable for camellias.

We have a south facing garden, where it is difficult to get any shade. We plant some of the larger and older plants in pots. The pots are sunk into the ground and you would not be aware they are not planted directly in the ground. We started to move them around the garden in mid summer, but some of those that have grown to six feet or more became too heavy as the plant

pots were 2-3 feet in diameter. In the summer we plant annuals in the pot at the base of the camellia, and train the foliage to run down the side of the pot in most cases completely covering the plastic from view.

Watering with the correct water is very important for their survival; we have about six barrels which collect water from the down pipe of the house. This water is ideal, and we think this is one of the reasons for our continued success in keeping such a varied collection. I don't remember the last time we lost one. They need rain water to grow vigorously.

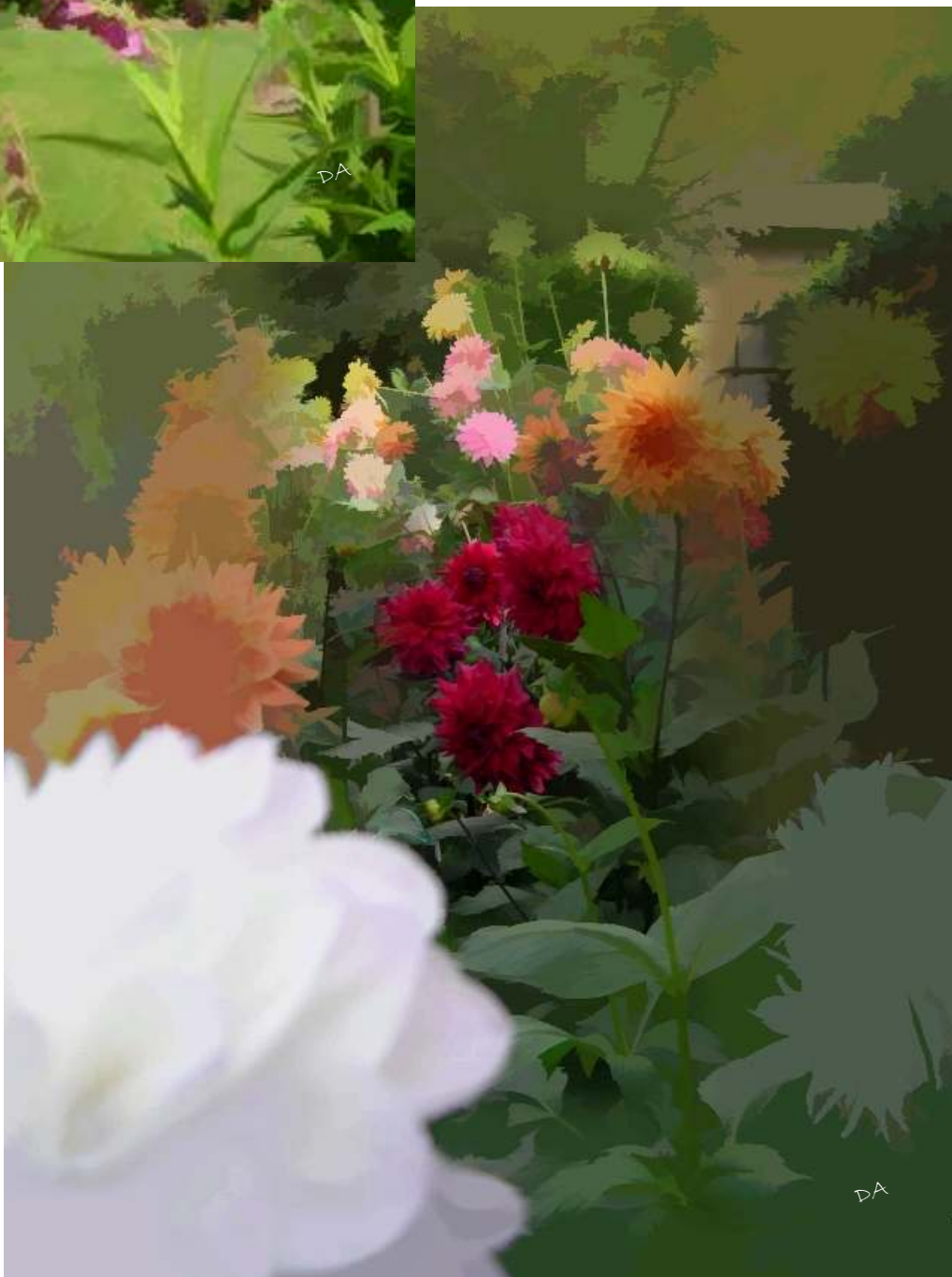
We now have over 30 mature plants, most of which stay in the same place all year, some in full sun all day, the younger plants being moved out of the sun in mid summer. I have been asked why it is that sometimes the buds grow and swell up only to go brown and drop off just before flowering. This is caused by plants needing constant care, i.e. if, when the buds are forming, August/September to January they do not get sufficient water on the top part of the fibrous root the buds do tend to drop.

Also, the early spring frosts do not harm the buds as long as they are kept out of the sun when they are iced up. If the sun gets on the frosted buds they also tend to go brown and drop off. The large mature plants are always available and make a long lasting and wonderful present. Many that we have, have lasted 20 – 30 years.

Brian Sainsbury



*Please note that the Parish
Council offices will be closed from
3pm on Friday 21 December 2007
until
Wednesday 2 January 2008*



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