



The Croxley Green RESIDENT

Published by
CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

Editor: John Hedges
Assisted by: Molly Hedges

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Material published in this newsletter does not necessarily represent the views of the Association nor its committee.

Please send advertisements to:-
Rosemary Handscomb
22 Dickinson Avenue - 449945
and letters and contributions to:-
John Hedges
44 Ludlow Way - 222715
by January 1st if possible.

EDITORIAL

Well, you responded to the first part of our plea. We now have a good committee and are in business once more. However, we still need response to our request for people to offer themselves as candidates for election to the Parish Council next May. The time scale is such that we need to know before Christmas and we need a Special General Meeting to adopt them. A Parish Councillor is required to attend two or three meetings a month. Clearly, many give much more but that is their choice. Election is for four years. **Don't delay contact the Editor now.**



FEEDING THE BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN

If the residents of Croxley Green are representative of the population at large, most readers of this newspaper will feed the birds in their garden. Some just throw out the occasional kitchen scraps, many hang up peanuts or put bread and bacon rind on bird tables, and others spend a great deal of money on specialist wild bird food. People feed wild birds for a variety of reasons, but as we move into Autumn and Winter our suburban gardens become more and more important for the birds' survival.

From September onwards the birds' natural foods (seeds, fruits, insects etc) become harder to find, and so the food on bird tables or other feeders provides a major source of energy and nutrition for species such as blue-tits, green-finches and thrushes. Natural feeding become even more difficult once the first frosts have hardened the ground, so if you do begin to put out food for the birds, don't stop halfway through the winter. Many birds are creatures of habit and will make a special visit to your garden once they learn that food is there.

Kitchen scraps make a welcome meal for many birds, but if you want to attract a wider variety of species it is worth thinking a little about the food that different birds prefer. There is not usually much difficulty in attracting a robin to your fork when you're digging the garden, but if you put out a handful of tasty(!) mealworms you'll not only get a very grateful robin but you may also attract other insect-eating birds such as pied wagtails. Familiar birds such as tits and finches will take peanuts and sunflower seeds from feeders, but if you put

fatty food (such as suet) onto a post or a suspended log you may also see nuthatches and woodpeckers. The type of feeder also makes a difference - it is said that you stand more chance of seeing a siskin if you hang out peanuts in a red nylon mesh bag, rather than the standard wire feeder. But of course nylon bags are not squirrel proof!

It's interesting to experiment with different foods, to see just what foods are favoured by the birds in your area. Left overs and scraps can go from the kitchen table straight to the bird table. Cooked potato, chopped bacon rind, scraps of uncooked pastry - almost anything that you put out will be welcomed. The only items NOT to provide, are things like very dry bread, or desiccated coconut, which can swell up inside the bird's stomach (But fresh coconut is fine, and will be seized upon by the blue tits.) Soft food, including cheese or fruit, is particularly useful in dry weather, and in a hard winter you may see thrushes, including the migrant fieldfares and redwing, pecking at apples left on the ground.

Finally, water is just as important as food. Birds need water not only for drinking, but also to preen and keep their feathers in good condition for the winter. You don't need to have a formal bird-bath. Any shallow dish or tray is suitable, but remember to break up any ice which forms during the cold winter nights.

Putting out food for the birds in our gardens is important for their survival, but it is also a source of much pleasure and enjoyment to us all as we watch them throughout the year. If you haven't got a bird table in your garden, there is still time to put one up before the onset of winter. You won't regret it, and the birds will definitely thank you for it.

This article is based on information given in the booklet "The birds in your garden", published by the RSPB. Copies of the booklet are available, free of charge, from RSPB, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL. When writing please give your full post-code and quote reference WATFORD GROUP 1127.

The Watford RSPB members' group meets monthly to hear talks on various aspects of bird watching and bird behaviour. The 1998 programme includes an illustrated talk on Garden Birds. For details of the Group's meetings please phone:-

John Britten Chairman - 01923 673205
RSPB Watford Members Group.

The Churches in Croxley Green warmly invite you to share in our Sunday worship:

All Saints (C of E), The Green

8.00 am Holy Communion
 9.40 am Junior Church
 9.45 am Parish Eucharist
 11.30 am Family Service (3rd Sun in month)
 6.00 pm Evensong
 Revd Luke Lee - 772109

St Bede's (RC), Baldwins Lane

Saturday 6.00 pm Vigil Mass
 Sunday 10.00 am Mass
 6.00 pm Mass

Father Bert Haines - 231969

The Baptist Church, Baldwins Lane

9.15 am Morning Worship
 11.00 am Family Service
 6.30 pm Evening Worship

Revd David Walker - 231403
 Dave Steell - 241191

St Oswald's (C of E), Malvern Way

8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Family Service (1st Sun in month)
 Family Eucharist & children's groups (others)

Evening services as advertised
 Revd Anne Lovegrove - 232387

The Methodist Church, New Road

10.30 am Morning Worship
 with creche/Sunday School
 6.30 pm Evening Service

Revd Stephen Fulcher - 263248
 Bookings John Rowe - 234920

What's up Doc?

Ask any vet and he will tell you that in recent years one of the noticeable increases in pets seen by the vet has been the rabbit. And it is understandable as they have a lot of endearing qualities.

However one of the most common problems that we see in rabbits kept as pets are teeth problems. And often, even if the problem appears to be something completely different, the teeth may be the cause or a factor in the problem that your rabbit has got.

So why would this appear to be the case when wild rabbits appear to have so few problems with their teeth? Well, I believe that there are two major differences between our pet rabbits and their country cousins that contribute to teeth problems. Firstly, rabbits have been kept in captivity for such a long time that we have slowly selected for rabbits with teeth problems. This is really supported by the fact that Dwarf rabbits appear to have more teeth problems than other rabbits. So one way to avoid this in the future would be to only breed from rabbits with excellent teeth and, to be fair, a lot of rabbit breeders are now looking to breed this problem out of their rabbits.

Secondly, I believe the diet of the pet rabbit plays a major role. A lot of the foods that I hear people feed their rabbits are a long way removed from the diet of the wild rabbit. A wild rabbit basically eats a high fibre diet based on grass and other vegetation. Their whole digestive system has been adapted

to eating this type of food and they do not need those sweet treats, although I am sure they love them. Everything they need is in grass and good quality hay. The other important thing about this type of diet is that the rabbit will spend a large part of the day eating and chewing the food ready for swallowing and digesting. This is time well spent as grinding the food is essential for wearing the teeth down. Rabbits' teeth are always growing. If they are not worn down their teeth will get long and the abnormal forces created in the mouth will either cause the teeth to actually stop growing or grow at funny angles. In contrast some of the new rabbit foods are very calorie dense or full of energy. Your rabbit only has to have a small amount of this type of food to meet their daily requirements. However, the amount that we often give them is far greater and this leads to overweight rabbits. Also, the rabbit spends a lot less time chewing and grinding this type of food before they swallow it. This means that the rabbit is not wearing its teeth down and, I suspect, that due to the different nature of the food the rabbit grinds the food in a slightly different way and this leads to abnormal wear.

All of this can lead to teeth with very sharp edges, which can be very painful, and this will stop your rabbit eating. If teeth problems are left they can lead to cuts to the mouth and tongue. Teeth problems can be the cause of that runny eye, that never goes away. Teeth are a common cause for your rabbit having a dirty bottom and finally teeth that get really bad can lead to abscesses and infections of the jaw.

So next time, if your rabbit is a bit off colour think teeth. It is an easy problem for the vet to diagnose and often treat if caught early.

And finally, think what you feed your rabbit. Are you giving him the best that he deserves?

Robert Bird - Veterinary Surgeon.

Morris Minors Pre-School

A new venture is being opened at Durrants Club and, in the spirit that we support any local effort, we include a few notes on this venture. Morris Minors opened on 7 September in the Coach House at Durrants Club, Lincoln Way. Children from the age of two years and nine months rising to five are very welcome. It is open from Monday to Friday, morning sessions 9.15 am to 12 noon, afternoon sessions 1.00 pm to 3.45 pm. Full days are also available. Charges, excluding lunch, are £7 per session or £16 for a full day.

The aim is to make children feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents and carers. Children are encouraged to learn through their experiences and to share this learning with their parents. There is a dedicated and qualified staff, who are there to encourage and support the children. There is a high adult to child ratio that is essential in providing good quality pre-school care. It is the intention to provide children with a happy, friendly atmosphere, with a wide range of activities, that will ensure a firm foundation for their future education.

For further information please contact:-
Delia Morris - 01923 442386

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COMMUNITY VOICE

The *Community Voice* has continued to offer support to the Trust Hospitals - Watford General and Mount Vernon.

Members of the Health Authorities - Hillingdon and West Herts - as well as, in July, the MP for Ruislip & Northwood and a senior plastic surgeon, have attended meetings of *the Voice*. The main topic for discussion has been the Consultation Documents which propose drastic changes to the hospital services.

Few readers can be unaware of the main proposals viz. for West Herts to build a new hospital on a green field site, taking many years, or to make either Watford or Hemel Hempstead the Accident & Emergency hospitals. This would inevitably be Hemel Hempstead as it is claimed, by the health Authority, that it would be cheaper to close A & E at Watford and down-grade it to a community hospital.

For Mount Vernon, Hillingdon Health Authority proposes to move some services to Hillingdon Hospital, to move the Plastic Surgery & Burns Unit to the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and Oral & Maxillo-facial Surgery to Northwick Park. They propose to keep cancer surgery on the site but this needs the other units as support services. The well known Gray Research Laboratory and the RAFT unit (rehabilitation of appearance and function), enormously prestigious units, are funded privately not by the NHS. If these proposals are implemented, it can only mean the eventual closure of Mount Vernon Hospital, which is not only dear to the hearts of local people, but which has an international reputation.

The *Community Voice* has representatives from 36 local organisations, including all the political parties. They are unanimously opposed to the Health Authorities' proposals.

The Health Authorities have organised public meetings, at which Croxley Green Residents' Association or the *Community Voice* have been represented. At some there has been standing room only as people have been left outside. Signatures have been collected by the W.A.T.C.H. committee and by supporters of Mount Vernon. Letters, in their thousands, must have been written to the Health Authorities.

People feel angry and passionate about the proposed changes and helpless in the face of the power of unelected bodies.

In April, the local health authorities are to be replaced by much larger authorities. The Government is to merge the North Thames and the South Thames regions.

The consultation period ends on 25 September and final decisions are to be made in October. At the time this goes to press, the outcome will be unknown and the future uncertain.

Barbara Lloyd - Rep. to the Voice.

The Parish Council, after meeting the Health Authority and W.A.T.C.H., submitted their objections which included the statement that the proposals had not been properly researched nor costed. As the proposals stand it is not possible to form an informed opinion and they suggested that the authority reconsider, research properly, and re-submit their proposals in a comprehensible form. This stance was closely echoed by the four SW Herts District Councils. Hopefully they will get the message and do as we ask but - if not- we might have a massive campaign on our hands.



WOMEN'S LAND ARMY 1939-50

At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, 70% of Britain's foodstuffs were imported together with 90% of our timber. As agricultural workers joined the armed forces, there was a shortfall of 50,000 agricultural workers. German U-boats targeted ships in the Atlantic, sinkings caused serious food shortages until only a few weeks' supplies existed in the country.

This need, therefore, created the Association of the Women's Land Army. In 1939, 17,000 volunteers enrolled rising to a peak, in 1943, of some 83,000 working on farms and another 6,000 meeting our timber needs. In 1940, fewer than 50% of farms had piped water and only about 25% had electricity.

Given the circumstances, the task ahead was both daunting and difficult, yet it was met with determination,

commitment, good humour and success by the girls of the Land Army.

Apart from these difficulties, living conditions, rations and pay were generally less than reasonable. Then, at the end of it all, the Land Army received no form of recognition from the government of the day nor, indeed, from any successive administrations. There is now a determined move to correct this serious anomaly, bringing pressure to bear on government to persuade them to recognise the importance of the girls' work.

I am working on a project to tell the story of the Women's Land Army and in assisting the Watford Re-union Group of former Land Army girls (some of whom live in Croxley Green) to achieve some form of recognition - a medal, memorial or whatever.

So that we can make more people aware of our mission, a number of events have and will take place e.g. an exhibition in Three Rivers Museum this summer, articles in the Watford Observer and a display in Croxley Green Library at the end of September. I have put together a slide presentation which I am very happy to show to any interested organisations.

Our local Members of Parliament, Claire Ward and Richard Page, are supporting our cause and the government has promised a review of the Women's Land Army claim.

If anyone would like to know more about our campaign, please don't hesitate to call me.

Ernest Burdis - 01923 770599.

WE NEED YOU NOW!

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CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION

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of, Croxley Green
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Polly Burdis 17, New Road, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth WD3 3EJ

CROXLEY GREEN ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Committee are pleased to report that, at long last, it now has a secretary. Miss Gina Ayres, The Coach House, Lavrock Lane, Croxley Green has valiantly volunteered for the post. Residents with road safety problems, or comments, are asked to address them to Miss Ayres.

The Committee occupied its usual position at the 1998 Revels and, this year, included a Sight Testing Facility in its activities which generated a degree of interest. It is hoped that those who took advantage of the opportunity to check their sight, left reassured.

Once again the Committee organised a Road Safety Quiz. Unfortunately, it did not receive a great deal of support and there were only 22 participants. Nevertheless, it was possible to identify four winners, with scores of 10 out of 12, and four runners-up with 9 correct answers. They are:-

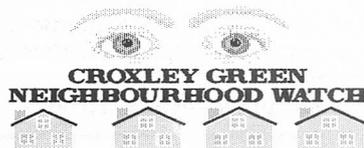
Winners:-

Mrs Holmes, S Bertrand (Milton Keynes), Tatarek-Gintowt (Leeds) & D Fineberg.

Runners-up:-

R Jewett (Watford), Miss Sanders, Mrs R Withers & P Marriot.

J Wesson - Treasurer.



Neighbourhood Watch at the Revels on Saturday June 20 1998

The Croxley Green Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators would like to offer their sincere gratitude and thanks for the generous way in which they were supported by local business and shops at the Revels on The Green on Saturday June 20 1998. The competitions that were held, for both the adults and young people, enabled us to have the most successful stand we have ever had.

There are still many roads/streets in Croxley Green that are without a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and we have for a number of years been encouraging more residents to come forward and set up schemes in these roads. These competitions enabled us to draw many local residents to our stand so we could offer information to allow them to understand how easy it is, and how much support can be given to them, to have their own scheme.

The WINNER of the adult Competition "Can you list ten things you could do to protect your home whilst you are on holiday" was:- Mrs Pat Tubb of 15 Linden Lea, Leavesden.

This prize was sponsored by
M25 SECURITY SYSTEMS Ltd
276 New Road Croxley Green
Home Security to the value of £250

The WINNERS of the "Spot the 10 Differences between two bicycles" were Miss Helen King of 22 Knutsford Avenue, Watford and Thomas Crother (11yrs) 55 Hamble Drive, Walton Court, Hemel Hempstead. Their prizes were a Cycle Computer and a D LOCK both valued at £25 each and was sponsored by:

Mountain High (Cycles)

125 High Street Rickmansworth
Six cycle locks were donated by

Lock and Key Services, 32 Market Street, Watford

One other cycle lock was donated by
Poores, Lower Road, Chorleywood

The WINNERS were Nicholas Rees (6yrs) 28 Owens Way, Croxley Green; Hayley King (13yrs) 22 Knutsford Avenue, Watford; Chris Adams (12yrs) 52 Repton Way, Croxley Green; Victoria Marriot (6yrs) 57 Harvey Road, Croxley Green; Terry Green (14yrs) 5 Anglesey Road, Oxhey; Rebecca Stansell (9yrs) 8 Fuller Way, Croxley Green and Gregory Fahey 90, Beacon Way, Rickmansworth.

The Croxley Green Co-ordinators would like to express their thanks to all those who helped to make our day at the Revels a success.

Other News from the Co-ordinators

Another very successful property marking day was held earlier this year at the bottom of Baldwins Lane adjacent to Bones the greengrocer on Sat 25 April. A further 70 cycles were postcoded besides marking/recording other property.

Croxley Green Neighbourhood Watch holds the record in the Three Rivers District and Watford for the highest number of bicycles coded in the area.

A booklet is now available in the library called "JOB WELL DONE" and has been compiled with a list of reliable names, recommended by residents, who have had a good/ satisfactory job done for them.

For more information about us and /or setting up a scheme please contact:

Derek Thompson 239a New Road,
Tel: 778979

Or come to our meeting on Monday 16 November at 7pm in the Parish Council Offices, Community Way (off Barton Way near the Library).



CROXLEY GREEN REVELS 1998

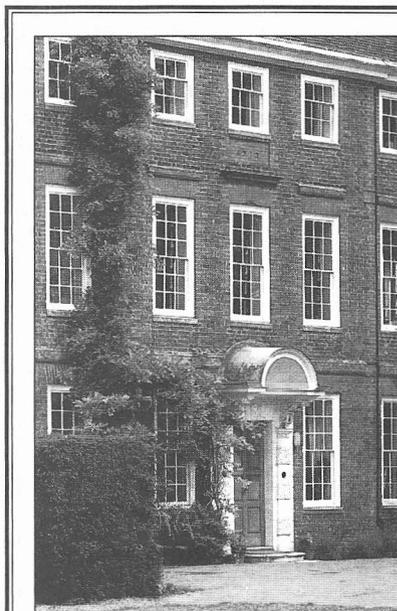
May I, through your columns and on behalf of the Croxley Green Society, express a very sincere thank you to the members of the Organising Committee for all their hard work in organising the Revels and making it such a fun occasion.

I should also like to thank all the children, and grown-ups, who participated in any way whatsoever in the day's events. At the same time, I should like to mention the very practical help we received from our sponsors in the terms of money and from the Parish Council for provision of Toilets.

After a rather shaky start to the day during the morning setting-up, the clouds rolled away to present us with a truly glorious afternoon, ending up in one of the best Revels ever.

Finally my thanks go to you - the general public - who come along and give such great support. Here's looking forward to a repeat performance on 19 June 1999! Put the date in your diaries now.

Mike Dix - Chairman, C G Society



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York House School

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Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 4LW

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CALLING ALL GARDENERS

Croxley Green Horticultural and Allotment Holders Society was established at least 79 years ago, because the 79th Annual Show was held on 12 September. We may be a little older than this but, as yet, no one has delved into the archives! It is, however, common knowledge that many local horticultural societies date from the development of allotment gardens which, largely, came into being towards the end of the First World War.

The Society currently has some 500 members. Over the Winter period we hold monthly meetings on a Friday in St Oswald's Church Hall which are open to all. Usually, these meetings take the form of slide shows with speakers on a variety of topics of interest to gardeners. We also hold an annual show, in the same hall, each September which includes members' displays of flowers, fruit, vegetables and handicrafts. In the Summer period a series of coach outings take place when we visit gardens, houses and towns of particular interest.

At our Trading Centre, located at the entrance to Barton Way Allotments, members can purchase a wide range of gardening aids such as tools, seeds, fertilisers, composts and pesticides. All are sold at competitive market prices, most being at a discount. The Centre is open on Sunday mornings from 9.30 am to 12 noon from late February until the end of October each year. Annual membership subscription is £2 per household, per year and is renewable in March.

If you are a gardener, either seasoned or just beginning, there is sure to be something of interest to you. Why not enquire about membership by calling on one of the committee members listed below or, alternatively, just drop in at the Trading Centre? We look forward to meeting you.

Ged Mealor - Hon Sec'y - 775912
Ernest Burdis - 770599
Kath Perry - 246683.



THE DICKINSON CENTENARY

(From the Watford Observer
5th. Nov. 1904).

What is to be known as the John Dickinson & Co. Centenary Building was formally opened, on Tuesday evening, by Mr. Alfred Moseley CMG promoter of the Moseley Industrial Commissions. Mr. F Pratt Bartow, Chairman of the Company, and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Institute, presided at the opening ceremony which took place in the Assembly Hall of the Institute.

Also present were Sir John and Lady Evans, Mr & Mrs Woolwych, Mr C W Kennedy, Misses Barker, Mr Charles

Barton Smith, Rev C E & Mrs Donnel, Mr & Mrs Tunstall, Mr & Miss Gurney, other members of the public and Councillors from the Rickmansworth Urban District Council.

Mr C Barton Smith, Chairman of the Institute Committee, in opening said: "Briefly, the History of the Dickinson Institute is that prior to 1830, when the original mill was opened, the hamlet of Croxley Green consisted of a few houses at the west end of the present village. The advent of the paper mill led to some additions but, it was not until 1886 when the preparation of pulp and making of paper, previously carried out by six others of the firm's mills, was transferred to Croxley that any great growth took place.

The enlargement of the mill necessitated the employment of a much increased staff of workers and, for their accommodation, a large number of houses were erected by the firm. Many cottages were built by private persons and the village shortly attained its present proportions.

With a view to improving the social condition of the mill workers and others living in the village, various plans were from time to time considered and, in 1895, a house was taken over and fitted up as a men's club. In 1896 the Hall, in which we are now sitting, was erected and later the Men's Club Rooms were added.

It was reserved for the year of the Centenary of the firm to complete the whole scheme by the erection of the building to be opened tonight. The object of the Institute has been, on the one hand to add to the social attractions of the district and, on the other to provide the means of educational improvement for those desiring it. In both these directions the committee consider they have succeeded and the additional building, now erected, will make it possible to still further increase the Institute's usefulness.

The whole of the work is controlled and carried on by the members. The main principle is to give the members the opportunity of helping themselves and organising such operations as shall best meet their needs.

For many years past, Technical and Educational classes have been held during each Winter session including:- Wood Carving, Notation and Harmony, Needlework, Joinery, Engineering and Machine Drawing, Chemistry, Dress-making, Sick Nursing and Papermaking. The teachers, for many of these classes, have been provided by the Technical Education Committee of the Herts County Council, to whom we are much indebted. Scientific and other lectures, Concerts and Entertainments

are regularly held. Two Dramatic Companies have been formed entirely of Institute members and give Theatrical Performances at fixed periods.

A Gymnasium for Girls meets weekly and the Hall is used for Drill purposes by the boys of the village Lads' Brigade, for whom a club room is also provided. The buildings are the Headquarters of the local Benefit Society and of the Cricket and Rifle Club.

The finances of the Institute are on a sound basis and its operations are self supporting. The new Centenary building includes a Science Room, for the equipment of which the County Council has been good enough to make a grant of £50, a Men's Reading Room, Club Room for women and girls, a Library and Private Baths. With the completion of the whole scheme, the Committee is in the position to amply supply the educational needs of the mill workers and villagers. We are proud to possess a thoroughly alive and energetic institution which is possibly unequalled in any similar village in our country.

The Chairman then introduced Mr Mosely who spoke, at some length, on the value of education, adding that he was much impressed with the buildings and paid special tribute to John Dickinson & Co. to whom the inception of the building was due. He then declared the building open.

Mr Lewis Evans then thanked Mr Mosely for opening the building and expressed his thanks to those who had helped in the erection of the building. They were much indebted to the architect, Mr L P Ayres, and Mr C Brightman, the builder.

John Dickinson and the Institute are so involved in the history of our village for so many of the inhabitants were employed at the Mill, men and women. I, myself, worked there in 1936, moving into the village in 1952 and, my own memories of the Institute are still vivid, especially when one paid the rates to Godfrey Cornwall, who took your money with a Welsh lilt in his voice. It was almost a pleasure to pay. Have you any memories of the Institute? Also, has anyone memories of the Schools, in particular, Durrants? I shall be pleased to hear from you.

Norman Spring - 01923 776933
Archivist - All Saints' Church.

We are seeking residents who would be willing to candidate for the Parish Council next May.

Are you interested?
Please contact John Hedges on 01923 222715, who will be pleased to advise.

FULLER WAY CHURCH

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THE ALL-TO-COMMON COLD.

You know how difficult it is to go food shopping when you've just eaten a big meal. The brain can't cope with planning the next few meals when the bowels haven't even begun to process the last one. Mental indigestion ensues and the only answer is to beat a graceful retreat and digest in peace, ideally sitting upright to avoid the heartburn caused by acid reflux. Perhaps this could be the answer to the ever-expanding problem of obesity. Well that's how I feel sitting down to write an article with a health theme. I am completely full of the common cold, and the brain is struggling to think beyond it. The virus and I are as one, and no doubt will journey together for a week or so before we part company, leaving me to regain my normally bright and cheerful disposition and the virus to pass on to who knows however many new recipients. Starting no doubt with my wife, to whom I apologise in advance. You could be forgiven for thinking that the cold virus exists as a spiteful ethereal being that takes over your body at a whim and chooses its moment carefully. Medical textbooks hardly mention the common cold, but we sufferers know that colds are not just trivial infections, but malignant forces that conspire to spoil our enjoyment of the finer things of life. And this is not just paranoia, as evidenced by the large numbers of patients reporting at the surgery because they have been struck by the virus just before their holiday, or before any other important event, even a bank holiday weekend. An infection as annoying as the common cold deserves a medical answer. From its first dry burning tickle, through its streaming, aching, wetness, to its climactic generation of revolting sticky fluids on a scale not far short of the diabolic possession in *The Exorcist*, this nasty virus is a prime candidate for annihilation. Yet sadly, as we all know (but still hope against hope), there is no magic bullet to kill the cold virus. Antibiotics like penicillin are powerless against all viruses. In fact, as we have heard so often in recent weeks, antibiotics are also becoming ineffective against many bacterial infections as their overuse, not just in the practice of medicine but also in farming, has led to the emergence of more resistant strains of bacteria. This is a serious problem with major implications for ourselves and our children in the future. The European Union conference on "*The Microbial Threat*" that took place in Denmark on the 9-10th September recognised that resistance of micro-organisms to antibiotics is a major health problem in Europe, leading to increased deaths, illness and costs. It recommended research on a broad front, including criteria to define better clinical diagnoses in patients with infections, protocols for treatment, and

looking into the prescribing habits of doctors and the level of compliance of their patients with treatment. All of which adds up to the fact that we are part of the problem. What happens in the doctor's consulting room when a patient requests help with an upper respiratory infection, in a small way, either adds to the problem of emerging superbugs or helps to reduce it. Modern general practice consultations (this may come as a surprise to you!) are, in the jargon, much more patient-centred than they used to be. In other words we have hopefully moved on from the "*doctor knows best*" style of practice to one where the doctor tries hard to listen to the patient's concerns and ideas. And when a diagnosis has been made the treatment plan is negotiated and agreed between the patient and the doctor. Together. So what you say when you attend your surgery full of catarrh and heartily fed up with your cold, affects the treatment you get. If you demand antibiotics for your cold there is a danger you may be given them. I have often done my best to explain to a patient why I think antibiotics have nothing to offer their particular problem, only to be told that *just to be on the safe side* they would rather take them anyway. At that point in the consultation it is only the most determined of doctors who digs in his heels and sends away an angry, empty-handed patient. From my experience in Croxley Green though, I am pleased to say that attitudes are changing and many local patients express a reluctance to take antibiotics. Sometimes, with serious infections, I have had to try hard to persuade patients that they really do need them. But, when we are stuffed to the gills with catarrh, coughing, spluttering and unable to breathe through our noses, we clutch at straws and that is when doctor and patient together may make a bad decision which contributes to the resistance problem that is in reality international. Well, if there's no point in swallowing antibiotics for a rotten cold, what else can we do? Often the symptoms are worse at night and a hot bath or shower before work in the morning often helps to clear the head. Paracetamol taken regularly for a day or two eases achiness and keeps your temperature down. When your nose runs like a tap a decongestant nasal spray will dry it up, but these are best used for a few days only to avoid rebound congestion when you stop. If you have a more flu-like virus and are sweating with a fever, resting and drinking extra fluids are helpful. And that is about it. Your cold has a set timescale, and nothing will make it go faster, only ease its more annoying symptoms. Which is why my nose is glowing from the attention of too many tissues. There is however something you can do about flu, and if you are elderly, or suffer with any chronic illness such as asthma, bronchitis,

emphysema, diabetes, recurrent heart disease, kidney trouble, or have had your spleen removed, you should consider getting immunised against it. Most surgeries get their stocks of flu vaccine in early October, so don't miss out. And finally, you may not forgive me if I finish without a word about the famous Viagra. As you know the Secretary of State for Health has (at the time of writing) put an NHS ban on prescribing Viagra but this may change in time, so a restatement of some plain facts about it may be useful. Published studies, in spite of the dramatic media hype, are fairly few, but on the evidence so far it seems that Viagra is both fairly effective and fairly safe. Its most common side effects are headaches, flushing, dyspepsia, nasal congestion and transient disturbance of colour vision. It cannot be used in men taking nitrate drugs (usually used for angina) because of a serious reaction. Any doctor prescribing Viagra, if it becomes available on the NHS, is likely to want to examine the patient before starting treatment. As the newspapers say, the cost of providing this drug to the many men who might benefit from it is potentially enormous. Viagra raises many issues, not least the urgent need for a public debate about rationing of limited health service resources, but that is for another day..... I've got a headache!

Nigel Corp - General Practitioner.



MOOR NEWS

As winter approaches now is a good time to reflect on the year's goings-on at Croxley Common Moor.

Despite the efforts of petty vandals and their fence cutting activities, cattle have remained on Common Moor for the grazing season. '*Rounding up*' by would-be cowboys on motorbikes doesn't seem to have dented bovine appetites and the efforts of their grazing are starting to show on the ground. The presence of cattle is absolutely crucial to maintaining the diversity of wildflowers on the Moor and, besides that, they look really good.

There has also been plenty of human activity on the Moor. Volunteers from various groups have been busy over summer pulling out and removing ragwort from the site. Although this task tends to induce brain numbing boredom, progress has been made in starting to limit the spread of this particularly problematic weed. Limiting scrub invasion onto the open and sensitive parts of the Moor also remains a priority. Work will continue to take place over this winter to clear out some more of the thorn bushes which not only detract from the open views across the Moor but also threaten its invaluable ecology.

Work has also been carried out in trying to raise awareness of the value of the

Moor. This has included a number of guided activities on-site and the production of a new self-guided walk leaflet which should be available in the local library and the Parish Office. This process will continue and will be all the more important in the very near future given the development of the new housing estate on the 'doorstep' of the Moor.

The site remains one of the most valuable in the county for its diversity of flora and fauna. If you would like to be involved in looking after it, please give me a call at the Countryside Management Service:-

Jonathan Wilshaw - 01707 650041



LIBRARY COLUMN

Thank you to everyone who completed a PLUS (Public Library User Survey) questionnaire during April. Almost 500 borrowers were asked to complete forms about their use of the Library and very few people were either unable or unwilling to take part. Once the forms have been analysed (it's a national survey and therefore the process inevitably takes some time) the comments sections should be returned to me. I had a very quick look through them before they were sent for analysis and most comments were complimentary about the service and staff. I was concerned however that some borrowers could not find what they wanted and did not ask us for help. That is what we are here for - please don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it. We don't expect everyone, who uses the Library, to know where to find everything - it took us long enough to find our way around when we first opened!

During the summer holidays we had our most successful ever reading challenge - 'Go Bananas' The notice board in the children's library was covered with colourful cut-out parrots. This year's challenge was sponsored by Sainsburys who paid for the printing of thousands of attractive log books which were distributed across Hertfordshire. Over 100 children started the challenge at our Library and with a week of the school holidays to go over 50 had finished. Each child had to read and review ten books to complete the challenge and they were awarded small prizes such as book marks and recipe cards at the end of each stage. Those who completed the challenge received a certificate and were entered in a Countywide prize draw.

Whilst on the subject of the Children's Library, I would like to thank the Parish Council for buying the Library a colourful kinderbox to house some of our picture books.

In my last column, I mentioned cuts in funding. As many of you are aware the

cuts were partially managed by not buying adult fiction in hardback format for the current financial year and by reducing the range of newspapers and magazines stocked. Within our local group of libraries (Croxley Green, Rickmansworth and Chorleywood) we have tried to minimise the effect of cuts by buying collections of paperback books - both fiction and non fiction - to circulate between the three libraries. This seems to be working well.

We have also been lucky enough to receive donations of newly published hardback fiction which have been very welcome additions to our stock. I am always happy to receive donated books for stock as long as they are in good condition and suitable for library use. Anything we can't use is passed on either to other libraries, to charity shops or may be sold in our book sale if the donor is agreeable. Any money raised in book sales is ploughed back into the service.

Many of you are aware that you can buy green garden refuse sacks and labels from us. We sell them on behalf of Three Rivers District Council so you don't have to go to the council offices in Rickmansworth every time you need some sacks. We seem to have had a bumper year for sales so far despite the miserable summer weather - all that rain must make the weeds grow faster.

Dog owners can now get rolls of 'pooper scooper' bags from the Library. There is no charge and we are distributing these on behalf of the Parish Council. All we ask is that you don't bring the used ones back!

Look out for our displays to celebrate the National Year of Reading (NYR) which was officially launched on the 16th September. As part of NYR, I am hoping to launch a "Red Fox Reading Gang" for children during the next few months. Posters with details of the dates and times of sessions will be on display in the Library.

Finally, we have had seven Charter Mark nominations during the last year and we also came top in a quality audit of Hertfordshire Libraries so we must be doing something right.

Sue Durham - Librarian



CARELINK

Are you caring for someone? If you are looking after a relative or friend who has a long term illness or disability, are not being paid for this but are caring out of love, friendship or family responsibility, then you are a **Carer**.

It does not matter if the person you care for is young or old, related or not, living with you or some distance away. You may be working full time or part time, you may be a student. It doesn't matter what your country of origin is, or what

language you speak - you are entitled to have help and support at home because you are a **Carer**.

Carelink is a registered local charity which was set up, over 7 years ago, to support carers of the elderly. This is achieved, primarily, by finding a volunteer who is able to sit with the person being cared for to enable the carer to get a short break from their caring responsibilities. **Carelink** also runs a monthly carers support group, based at St Thomas' Centre, Langley Road, Watford, providing information, a regular newsletter and telephone support and advice.

The first **Carelink** leaflet which was produced declared that there were six million carers in Britain but, since then, the number has risen to seven million and, by the year 2000, there is likely to be a million more. This means that, at present in the UK, one person in seven, over the age of 16, has some sort of caring responsibility. Almost 3 million are men and 4 million women. They save this country over £30 billion a year which is comparable to the whole of the National Health budget!

They care out of love and affection, and sometimes a sense of duty, for the person they look after. When someone close to you becomes ill or frail, it is the most natural thing in the world to want to look after them. One local carer said "My need to look after my husband is only as great as his need for me to look after him".

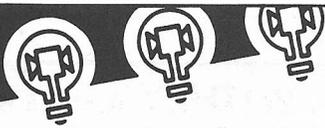
Carers need a short break from time to time - to leave off all their other hats and wear just one, the one that says ME. A **Carelink** poster depicts a care juggling balls in the air. These balls are labelled **CARING, FINANCE, JOB, FAMILY, HOME** and the ball that is dropped is the one marked **ME!**

If you look after an elderly friend or relative, or know someone who does, please contact Heather or Jenny at **Carelink**, St Thomas' Centre, Langley Road, Watford WD1 3PN - 01923 239003 to find out about the support that is available. If you care for someone who is not elderly, the Carer's Register will be able to help you with advice and information - please contact Eileen at the same address - 01923 237727. We are here to help you.

Alternatively, if you have a few hours to spare - weekly, fortnightly or even monthly - and would be prepared to sit with an elderly person to enable their carer to get a much needed break, **Carelink** would like to hear from you.

Heather Aylward - Co-ordinator.

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