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 Hanscomb
22 Dickinson Avenue - 449945
and letters and contributions to:-
John Hedges
44 Ludlow Way - 222715
by September 1st if possible.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 23rd March 2000
at 8.00 pm
New Road Methodist Church Hall

followed by an
illustrated talk by John Britten on
Birding - Home and Away
John is Group Leader of RSPB, Watford Members' Group and is a regular contributor to the *Resident.*

Come and air your views!!!

EDITORIAL

In this Millennial year we are proud that the *Resident* is still being produced after more than 60 years. The Residents' Association was founded in 1939 and has produced a magazine, at least two editions a year, ever since. The first edition, in 1939, was entitled the *Argosy*; it later became the *Resident.* We have copies of most editions but if any of you have copies, mainly earlier ones, which you can donate or lend to us, we would be very interested.

The fortunes of the Association have varied over the years, sometimes strong and sometimes weak, but the publication of the *Resident* has always led to its revival at times of weakness. Which brings me to my first point.

Polly Burdis has served the Residents' Association faithfully over many years, most of them as Subscriptions Secretary. Following a spell of rather poor health, she is now on the road to recovery, she has found it necessary to cut down on her activities. Though she will be sorely missed and a hard act to follow, we need a replacement urgently. We acknowledge her work gratefully and I am sure you will all join with us in wishing her a speedy return to good health.

Another loyal servant has been Gwen Larter. Some years ago she took on the role of Treasurer in a temporary capacity. The temporary job has become almost permanent but she now finds that she cannot continue to serve as in this role. Again we are looking for a replacement.

It is dedicated people like these two that are the life-blood of our Association and though we anticipate difficulty in finding replacements, we usually succeed.

Our new Secretary, for instance, has come to the fore through personal contact with one of our Committee Members. Prior to our AGM she will have attended only one meeting but, even prior to this, she has performed admirably. Are there any others like her that are lurking out there only too willing to volunteer. No task is too onerous as we only have about six meetings a year and all affairs will be left in good order. Can you spare just a very few hours each month to serve the community in which we live and, from the evidence of our Millennium Celebrations, we all love.

Please think on these things and attend our Annual General Meeting. We shall be pleased to see you and you will be treated to a pleasurable after meeting presentation. I am a member of the Watford RSPB Group, know John Britten well, and can assure you of time well spent in learning more of our feathered friends.

This edition has a lot about the Millennium, rightly so, but it also includes all our usual features. This time I have had to hold over an article about the Croxley Mummers but I promise that it will appear in the Autumn edition. Nowadays, thanks to our regular contributors and inspiration from others, it is not hard to put together each edition and I feel blessed when I find space the limiting factor. With modern technology and the prevalence of home-computers, many contributions come to me on floppy discs, the saving in time is incredible. If you have a contribution, please put it on disc if you can using Rich Text Format (.RTF) as I only have Word 2.1 and most people have more advanced systems.

One last word, if I may, about Rosemary Hanscomb - our Advertising Manager. I don't have to chase her, on the contrary she chases me. She has a waiting list for advertisements, unfortunately not enough to include an extra page of editorial but enough to keep the wheels turning smoothly. Roughly speaking it requires one page of advertisements to provide one page of text, in order to stay viable. The Advertisers pay for this Newsletter and we must record our gratitude to them. They support us so please support them. Keep this edition by your phone. It will help you.

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

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

All Saints (C of E), The Green
8.00 am Holy Communion
9.40 am Junior Church (2nd & 4th Sunday in month)
9.45 am Parish Eucharist
11.30 am Family Service (3rd Sunday 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

Churches Together in Croxley
Anglican Baptist Methodist Roman Catholic

The Methodist Church, New Road
10.30 am Morning Worship
with creche/Sunday School
6.30 pm Evening Service
Revd César Guidi - 774011
Bookings John Rowe - 234920

St Oswald's (C of E), Malvern Way
8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Family Service (1st Sunday in month)
Family Eucharist & children's groups (others)
Evening services as advertised
Revd Anne Lovegrove - 232387

Memories of the Year 2000
A Scrapbook
We need your help!!!

We are collecting memorabilia throughout the year 2000. Items that we would like to include are details of the activities that take place in Croxley Green during the year 2000. Those programmes and events to do with an organisation that you belong to might include:-

- Youth - Girls/Boys Brigade,
- Scouts/Guides.
- Social - Men's/women's Clubs.
- Photography, Horticultural, Art,
- Needlework.
- Sports - football, tennis, bowls, etc.
- Churches - associated groups.
- Schools -Special events.

Are you involved with a Group that meets in Croxley Green?

Would you like some of the activities, in which you particiapte during the year, recorded?

WHY?????

There have been many changes to the way of life in Croxley Green even over the past 50 years let alone the last 100 years.

Would ***you*** like to have the opportunity to look at a scrapbook that was put together in 1900 - ***now***. It would be fascinating to see how the villagers dressed and their way of life. How they spent their leisure time then - simple as it may have been.

Photographs of people in the local shops queuing for their groceries - sometimes with a book that had a shopping list in it.

Mum paid the bill at the end of the week when Dad got paid!

Transport - even in the past few years cars, bikes, buses etc have changed so much.

Property - changing all the time with housing estates and new designs for the modern world.

Uniforms - how differently they have now become for many of the youth groups.

Leisure time - pastimes that were all the rage:-
a hoop and stick spent whizzing up and down New Road would have given a child endless hours of pleasure!
Playing marbles,
Wacking a spinning top, coloured with chalk, with a leather thong or piece of string tied to a stick was another pastime.
We have progressed from roller skates to roller blades in such a short time.

Buildings
Can you remember ***exactly*** how Durrants school looked?
The Old Boys school? Where was that now?
The previous Library?

Roads
It was only just 25 - 30 years ago that Scots Hill became a dual carriageway. Without seeing a photograph can you remember it how it was?

A group of ladies (so far), 4 in all, are keen to have a book that could become a scrapbook of this year. We would like to include in it as much of the village life as possible, with what is happening during the year.

It could include:-

- Newspaper cuttings of happenings in Croxley Green
- The Revels
- School events
- Changes that are taking place - development?
- A programme of an event that you will hold or have held this year.

Would you be willing to contribute:-

- Just one item to do with your group
- or take one photograph of your group during its usual meeting time.
- Help with saving newspaper cuttings of Croxley Green
- Your own photographs - we have film donated by Jessops and can loan you a camera - we will deal with the developing.

JUST ONE CONTRIBUTION FROM EACH OF THE MANY AND VARIED ORGANISATIONS WILL CREATE A LASTING GIFT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS ON WHICH TO LOOK BACK AS A COLLECTIVE MEMENTO.

Please help!!!!!

We really would appreciate this
You can contact:-
Margaret Pomfret - 720088
42 Repton Way
Judith Turnbull - 772798
127 Frankland Road
Caroline Davis - 772918
42 Bateman Road
Carole Maddison - 770167
51 Frankland Road

Millennium Revels
24 June 2000

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POISONS IN OUR HOME

I was recently reading a report from the Veterinary Poisons Information Services (VPIS) about the number of reported cases of poisonings in animals over the last year. It came to a grand total of 5665. This is probably a fraction of the cases actually seen by vets, as they only record cases that vets have made an enquiry about. Medicines accounted for over a 1/3 of these cases.

The drug that topped the list was *Ibuprofen*, which can be bad news for your dog. This is a common active ingredient in many of the over-the-counter preparations that you can buy at the chemist. While it is a good pain-killer for man it can be absolutely lethal for your dog. Dogs have a very low tolerance for the drug. It causes a nasty gastritis, often resulting in the dog vomiting up blood. If your dog eats too much it will literally burn holes in their stomach and cause kidney failure in a matter of hours.

For cats, paracetamol is a big no-no. Cats do not have the necessary enzymes in their liver to deal with the drug. The drug accumulates and then it is converted to a toxic substance which will result in multiple organ failure. Paracetamol can also be toxic to dogs

Aspirin is another potential problem for cats and dogs. The most common side effect is once again vomiting and diarrhoea from gastro-enteritis. Although it is used to treat some diseases in cats and dogs, the bottom line is that you should not give aspirin to your pet unless directed by a veterinary surgeon.

A new toxin that can cause problem in dogs is *theobromine*. This is in chocolate of all things, and not all chocolates are the same. Dark and cooking chocolates have very high levels. So not too many chocolate treats.

So how can we prevent poisonings occurring?

First of all don't let your pet get hold of any poisonous substances, if at all possible. Don't give any medications to your pet unless instructed by a vet. If you think that your pet is in pain, go see the vet.

Finally if your pet does swallow any potential poison/s please seek veterinary attention straight away. It could make all the difference.

Unfortunately these are but a few of the poisons that are in our homes. Many more exist.

Last but not least keep the anti-freeze locked away over winter. This tastes great, but it's bad for your pet's kidneys.

Robert Bird - Veterinary Surgeon

Donald Charles LLoyd

The husband of one of our most hard-working committee members, Barbara, died suddenly on 27 December after celebrating Christmas with his family. One of his sons, Chris, is well known to us as a former District Councillor.

He was, for many years, a teacher at Merchant Taylors' School and, after his retirement in 1975, taught Maths at Rickmansworth School for six years. He was a valuable member of All Saints' Church and a great friend of the Residents' Association.

With Barbara, he delivered the *Resident* for many years but, more importantly for us, Barbara acting as a delegate to Voice (the watch-dog body to Mount Vernon and Watford Hospital Trust) enlisted his help and both of them, separately and together, covered all their meetings. We have had the pleasure of reading extracts from their reports in the *Resident* from time to time.

I am sure that you will all join with us in our appreciation of a valuable member of our community.

HELP FOR THE *REVELS*

One of our few remaining problem areas at each year's *Revels* is in managing car parking. It is not an onerous task but takes people who are busy in other areas away from their important tasks.

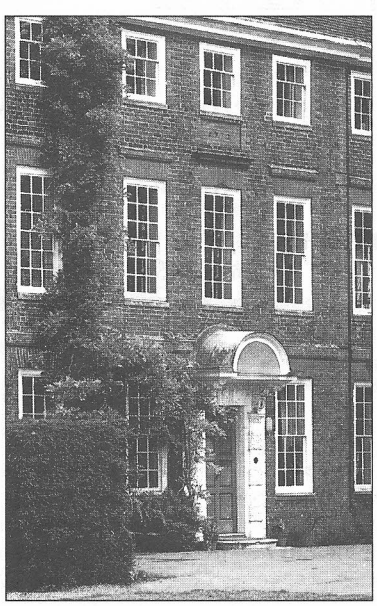
It is fully realised that it can be a thankless task, made even more so by the lack of people to carry it out. Just a few volunteers would simplify the operation and make the car parking manageable.

Clearly many of you are very bound up in the activities organised by your own societies or groups but if we could find a few people who could offer just a half-hour during the course of the afternoon, we could meet this need.

Though the theme of our *Millennium Revels* will be mediæval, obviously cars cannot meet this theme (or at least we think not unless proved otherwise) so you would be provided with a snazzy fluorescent jacket to give you authority. We don't need budding Hitlers but people who can politely direct drivers so that they park sensibly. Unfortunately there are a few thoughtless people who effectively jam the car parking areas, surely not intentionally. A little suggestion to the unwitting offenders would solve this problem

If you are able to offer this small amount of time and are willing to join our team on the day then please contact John Hedges on 01923 222715 as soon as possible.

We believe that this year's *Revels* will be a fit celebration of the *Millennium* and we have a hard act to follow after the New Year's Eve Celebration. We already have a team of about twenty on the day with most of us meeting regularly to plan the event a year in advance. Please help us to make this year the best ever. Twelve offers would be wonderful - **why not be the first?**



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Thur.	8.00 pm - Bible Study & Prayer

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MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS

Chris Hillier and Margaret Pomfret
31 December 1999 - 1 January 2000

Big Ben really did come to Croxley Green

Brilliant! Wonderful!
Fantastic!
Great Community Spirit!
Thanks very much!

These were just a few of the immediate reactions to the evening. It was an overwhelming experience to receive so much thanks from the people of Croxley Green for our efforts, over the past year, organising the event to provide residents a chance to celebrate the New Millennium - all together.

Families and friends, from outside as well as from the Parish, converged onto the Green for a celebration to welcome the year 2000.

But how did it all happen and when did it start.!!

As long ago as June 1997 a group of people from the Revels Organisation met together to discuss how to celebrate the year 2000 - Should there be a special Revels with perhaps an additional evening event after the traditional Revels? Ideas were suggested and a small sub committee was formed. There were rumours that other events were being considered but the idea from the start was that we wanted to celebrate the Millennium with something in Croxley. Green - **"Forget the Dome stay at home"** was a slogan that we came up with. Fund raising was started with a Barbecue Stall at the Revels in '97 and '98. After a while it was suggested that more people might want to become involved and Chris Hillier suggested that a public meeting be held to gauge the interest. This was advertised in the press and by posters around Croxley Green with an invitation to meet in the Parish Council office in January 1999. At this meeting it became obvious that an event should be held on the Green on New Year's Eve 1999. This would provide an opportunity for the people of Croxley Green to come together as a community to celebrate the arrival of the Millennium. It was also at this meeting that the idea of building a Big Ben on the Green was suggested.

A committee was formed and we started to make plans. We were encouraged by offers of help from other members of the community who did not have the time to serve full time on the committee. Since the initial idea came from the Revels Organisation, it was decided to maintain our links with the Croxley Green Society and we thank them for their support and encouragement.

It was decided to produce a leaflet explaining our plans that would be distributed to every house in the Parish. These were designed and produced for us by Joanna Turfrey. We sold advertising space in the leaflets and would like to thank the local businesses that agreed to support us in this way.

Mugs.
In addition to the events on the Green we thought that a lasting memento of the Millennium for the children of Croxley Green would be something to aim for and we have organised a commemorative mug to be made and distributed to all children under 11 yrs.

The Parish Council, who wanted to help with the celebrations, have kindly agreed to fund these mugs.

Meetings continued throughout the year and your committee worked hard on finding ways of making the initial ideas come to fruition. Fund raising was one problem and once again a burger stall at the Revels 99 helped. A TV set, kindly donated by Daewoo Cars, was raffled at the Craft Fair adding to our funds. As the Millennium grew nearer, we began to consider the enormity of what we were planning. We had several meetings with Inspector Crampton of the Hertfordshire Police who was the County Liaison Officer for all Millennium Events. He looked at our plans and gave us advice on the Health and Safety aspects of such a potentially large public event. In the early stages it was thought that a firework display would be a suitable end to the event on the Green. As there was likely to be a shortage of trained people to run public firework displays on Millennium night we had to send members of the committee on a training course to learn how to plan, and run safely, a suitable display.

The month of December saw a great deal of activity from the committee. Peter Rawlings and his team were planning and building with the help of the design department at Hertfordshire University the models of Big Ben and the Christmas tree. There were many unanswered questions - Where could we get First Aiders? We needed stewards to guide the processions along the roads. Would we find space for the disabled people who wanted to attend? What about Insurance and even more the unmentioned question - Would anyone come? Considerable help with publicity was given to us by Alan Monaghan. There were frequent press releases and appeals in the Watford Observer, The Resident and The Parish Pump for help and these resulted in more volunteers offering their help to come forward. Carlton Clocks of Rickmansworth, even said that they could make the clock actually work!

From the outset we all had wanted this to be a free event for the people of Croxley Green and their friends. Many people on the Green on the night wondered why we did not have a collection for charity or to cover the costs. The costs of the event had been raised in advance mainly from Croxley Green residents and businesses.

If you would like to make a donation to mark the Millennium in Croxley Green - there is still time to do so. There are many local, national and international good causes that could benefit by our celebrations.

THE EVENT

Millennium Celebrations -The Green
31st December 1999 -01 January 2000

Big Ben was in place some two weeks prior to the event, lit up during the evening hours and working! As the 31st December dawned and with the final arrangements in place, we were anxious to see how the community would support us on this momentous occasion. The Events Manager, David Tait worked tirelessly with committee members and volunteers to make sure that everything was ready for the celebration. We awaited the "eleventh hour" to see just how many people would actually respond on the night, leaving the comfort of their warm homes and own individual celebrations - great or small at 11 pm to make their way to The Green.

WOW- and how you did!!!!

It was an emotional feeling for us all to experience your response. To see The Green, which has for over a century been the focus of so many village memories, become - yet again - a big affair, where we all joined together as one, cannot be described with adequate words. You flocked, you thronged, and you came as family groups, friends, children in pushchairs as well as the elderly and disabled, wanting to be part of the celebrations. So many of you came that the Revels site was filled to over-flowing on to the Triangle!

Popular music played, waiting for the countdown to midnight with Adrian Simpson at the helm. At the turning point into the next century, **at midnight,** a rousing cheer went up, so did the fireworks - to the chimes of Croxley Green's own Big Ben. Champagne flowed, party-poppers popped and Auld Lang Syne played again and again whilst everyone wished the very best to each other with hugs and kisses for a

"HAPPY NEW YEAR 2000"

We were fortunate that the rain held off until the conclusion as the last of the revellers were making their way back to their homes or continuing their own festivities. Everyone was full of goodwill and no disturbances were reported which is very heartening.

The following morning, the first few hours provided a warm sunny start with the general clearing up of litter and we appreciated the assistance we received and for that we thank those who helped with this task. Trying to pick up party-popping bunting is not easy!

Millennium Mugs

To make sure that we had collected all the requests for the Free mugs (for under school age children) we could not finalise the order for the mugs until 31st January 2000. This was also the last date for requests to purchase mugs at £3 each that have been designed for us by John Kirkham. Allowing for the manufacturing time it is hoped that the mugs will be available for distribution April/May. Many of you will know, and we are pleased to announce, that Croxley Green Parish Council wished to support the celebrations, and have agreed to pay for the mugs that will be given free to the children who meet the criteria.

Thank you

Many people deserve our thanks for making the event possible, too many to mention them all, but a few who must be mentioned are Three Rivers District and the Croxley Green Parish Councils for giving us permission to hold the event on the Green. Walsh scaffolding for all their help and support for Big Ben. Carlton Clocks for the works.

What else is happening this year?

Many of you will be aware that the Revels this year will be extra special as their committee has been working diligently to make this a fabulous event on Saturday 24th June. There have been discussions in our committee to make another opportunity for the community during the May Day Bank Holiday. If this should go ahead we will be announcing the details nearer the time.

ANY IDEAS PLEASE!!!!!!!!!

Committee:-
Chris Hillier – Chairman 779580
Margaret Pomfret – Secretary
Bob Parnell – Treasurer
David Tait – Event Manager
Bob Dingley – Fireworks
Peter Rawlings – Big Ben
Carol Maddison - Publicity
Judith Turnbull – Publicity
Leighton Dann

Croxley Green Society

Dear Sir,

May I through your columns, and on behalf of Croxley Green Society, express a very sincere thank you to Chris Hillier and his hard-working team of the Millennium committee for all their hard work involved in putting on such a splendid show on New Year's Eve Millennium Celebration complete with a giant model of Big Ben and a most spectacular display of fireworks. The public response was tremendous and the rain held off just in time! Once again congratulations to all concerned.

Yours faithfully, Mike Dix - Chairman

LIBRARY COLUMN

Anyone who has tried to ring the library recently will already have realised that all our calls are now re-routed via the County Council's customer service centre. All telephone renewals can now be handled centrally leaving us more time to help visitors to the library. We were very grateful for this facility on January 4th - our first open day after the Christmas break - when over 900 of you visited the library! Some of you may have noticed us sticking new date labels inside the books, tapes etc. every time you see us. We have to re-label every item of stock with the new telephone numbers during the next few months - over 28,000 items. The new numbers are 01923 471333 for general enquiries and 01923 471373 for telephone renewals. If you want to speak to any of us about matters relating specifically to this library - such as arranging appointments for Cub or Brownie badge testing or checking the availability of one of our PCs - the staff at the customer service centre will transfer your call through to the library.

Thank you to the 427 of you who filled in survey forms for us during the last week in November. Once again our library was selected as one of the sample libraries from across the country to take part in the Public Library User Survey (PLUS) which is a national survey. You may remember that during November we also took part in the BBC's Webwise campaign aimed at introducing beginners to the Internet. Several people made use of the CD Rom provided by the BBC, which explains the jargon and simulates browsing on the Internet.

Although the campaign has now finished we still have the CD Rom available for anyone to use. You will need about an hour to work through the Taster sessions, which cover topics such as e-mail, newsgroups and the World Wide Web, and there's no charge for using the facility.

As I mentioned in my last column we now have a book group based at the library, meeting on the third Monday of every month. We have started to choose our books for the coming year and these include **Amsterdam** by *Ian McEwan*, **Birdsong** by *Sebastian Faulks* and *Toni Morrison's* **Beloved.** If you want to find out more about the group just come and ask me or any of my colleagues. You may be interested in some of the most frequently requested books during the last year. These might give you some ideas for your spring reading! Among the most popular fiction titles were:-

Black Notice by *Patricia Cornwell* – one of her Kay Scarpetta series.
The Remorseful Day by *Colin Dexter* – the last ever Inspector Morse story.
A House Divided by *Catherine Cookson.*
Hannibal by *Thomas Harris* – the follow-up to The Silence of the Lambs.
Second Wind by *Dick Francis.*
Harm Done by *Ruth Rendell* – another in the Wexford series

The most heavily requested non-fiction title was *Amanda Foreman's* **Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire.** This was actually published eighteen months ago but still has a waiting list.

For children the most popular books last year were the **Harry Potter** series by *J K Rowling* - three titles published so far and growing in popularity with each title.

Finally, some of you may have noticed that I'm not around in the library as often as in the past. This is because I'm spending some time working at Abbots Langley Library each week as they have no Librarian at present. Those of you who use Rickmansworth Library may also spot me there occasionally as I help to run their Red Fox Reading Gang (a bookgroup for children which takes place once a month).

Sue Durham
Librarian, Croxley Green.

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BIRD WATCHERS CAN DO IT ANYWHERE.....

and they usually do. That is one of the delights of bird-watching, that it can be carried out almost anywhere, with little or no special equipment. And although, as we shall see later, many bird-watchers travel to the ends of the earth to indulge their hobby, nonetheless the vast majority of people who get pleasure from watching our native birds do so in their own gardens or the local parks. Residents of Croxley Green have a very wide range of sites within easy walking distance, including the lakes in the Colne Valley, the wooded areas of Whippendell Woods, and the open farmlands around Sarratt and Chipperfield. At this time of year it is easily possible to see fifty different species within a mile or so of the Green. The familiar *tits* and *thrushes* that are with us all year are joined by winter visitors such as *siskins, redwings,* and *fieldfare*, whilst the resident *mallard* and *tufted duck* at Stocker's Lake now share their habitat with northern species such as *mergansers* and *goldeneye*. Some of the smaller birds - *goldcrest* for example - may be difficult to pick out as they flutter around the tree-tops, and even the larger ducks can be infuriatingly difficult to find if they keep diving, or sheltering on the lake margins. But the bird-watcher's patience may be rewarded by the sight of less common visitors like the *brambling* (rather similar to the chaffinch) amongst the trees, or even a *smew* (a striking black-and-white duck) on the lake.

This influx of less common birds can sometimes be confusing for inexperienced birdwatchers, and so it can be very helpful to walk around the best sites in the company of other *birders*. The Watford RSPB Group, not only arranges excursions for its own members but, also organises local walks for groups such as the Watford Over-50's, or the University of the Third Age. Members of these groups have enjoyed watching familiar birds at close quarters with the aid of binoculars or telescopes, and learning a little more about them - such as the differences in their plumage or feeding behaviour - just as much as seeing some of the rarer species that attract the more committed bird-watchers. They have also found that bird-watching can be an enjoyable social activity, and is not just a lonely pastime for sad young men in anoraks.

But, at this time of year it is not only the birds that move south; many bird-watchers also take to the skies and fly off to see exotic birds in warmer surroundings. Croxley Green may be in the depths of winter, but south of the Equator the spring has already turned to summer, and the birds are at their most active and colourful. Popular birdwatching holidays to the Caribbean, Southern Africa, or Australasia combine sightseeing and culture with the chance of adding new birds to the "life-list". It is easy to enjoy breakfast in Antigua whilst watching the bright yellow *bananaquits* busy themselves with the left-overs, or to see *hornbills* in flight over the magnificent Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, or just to sit on Sydney's Bondi Beach with a can of Fosters whilst watching the *silver gulls* and *welcome swallows*. And of course more specialised trips allow sightings of rarer species in the depths of the rain-forests.

But it's not only the thought of warm sun which draws the bird-watchers. For Antarctica, that most remote of continents, February is the time when many birders visit to see thousands of *penguins* in their breeding colonies. There are few sights more awe-inspiring than that of the Antarctic's icy mountains, snow-fields, glaciers and ice-bergs; when they are filled with the sights, sounds (and smells!) of young *penguin chicks* it is truly an unforgettable experience. Only a few bird-watchers have been lucky enough to visit that distant land (although there are a good number from Watford who have done so in recent years), but many more will remember David Attenborough's television series *"Life in the Freezer"*. As part of its 25th birthday celebrations, the Watford RSPB Group has arranged a special show by the chief cameraman of that series, who will give a multi-media presentation covering not only the wildlife of the region but also describing the background to the making of the television programmes. Ben Osborne's talk will be given at Bushey Hall School on Wednesday March 8th. Admission is not restricted to RSPB members, and it promises to be a most memorable evening.

But, if you can't get to Antarctica, nor even to Bushey, there is still the opportunity of excellent birdwatching around Croxley Green. Bright winter days, and the lack of leaves on the deciduous trees, mean that many woodland birds can be seen better in February than during the summer-time. The shortage of berries and other natural foods means that birds are even more likely to visit our suburban gardens in search of food than they do at other times of the year. So don't forget to fill up the bird-feeders, throw out the scraps, and put out fresh water (especially when other sources are frozen). In return you may be rewarded by visits from *great-spotted woodpeckers, gold-finches,* or over-wintering *black-caps* in addition to the more usual species. And perhaps it will be the start of a new interest in bird-watching.

For more information about the conservation work carried out by the RSPB, and details of the local group's activities, please contact John Britten on 01923 673205. Leaders of Social Clubs, Church Groups or other bodies who would like to arrange a guided bird-watch for their members, or to book a talk on the work of the RSPB or a slide show on birdwatching overseas, should also contact John. Tickets for ***"Life in the Freezer"*** *are available from Peter Draper on 0181 950 2430, price £4.50 each.*

John Britten - Group Leader - Watford RSPB Group.

Millennium Revels

24 June 2000

Don't miss it!!!

CHURCH ARCHIVES

"The year 2000 what will it bring?" Though you will be reading this well into the New Year, due to copy dates I am writing this before the turn of the year. So, I put down my thoughts.

You were probably there, on the Green, having possibly taken part in the torch-light procession and celebrating the arrival of the New Year and the Millennium. This means that you will have taken part in an historical event and thus become part of history.

If you can remember, I would ask you to write down your memories, perhaps children could do some drawings, and send them to me via the Parish Office at All Saints Church, marked for my attention.

It is my intention to create a file into which all these memories can be placed for future generations to read, perhaps in the *Resident, Spring 2050.*

There were two men to whom we must be very grateful, Frank Paddick (who knew everything that went on in Croxley Green) and Godfrey Cornwell (who covered Rickmansworth). Between them their writings give us so much of the atmosphere of the day, for it was a different world.

Frank Paddick wrote many articles which were published in the *Rickmansworth Historian*. This one caught my eye:-

"When the Mill Field grew Turnips" - a local saying like "Oh yes, the day war broke out." I belonged to the generation of schoolboys who made the change from knickerbockers to the bare-faced trousers. The Norfolk jacket and Eton Collar were gladly parted with. Knickerbockers were different - their baggy knees were much favoured by small boys as storage space, for here we carried our apples, pears, walnuts and so on mostly, I fear, scrumped from the local orchards.

Do you remember the tree which stood at the New Road end of Barton Way? If so, can you tell me - was it a nut tree?

No need for clocks in those far off days. The Mill bell called the men to work and the School bell rang the children to school. The cows came up and down the road, three times a day.

In those days the weather came *"from Will's Mother"* for instance. *"It looks like rain over Will's Mother"* or *"it looks bright over Will's Mother's"*. There is no doubt this is an old Croxley Green saying, I myself use it and it is surprising how many lived *"near Will's Mother"*.

I hope these words will give you encouragement to write down your memories and let me have them, so that they may be put into a file and perhaps brought out in 2050.

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

My father used to use the phrase "Will's Mother" but I don't know the origin. Editor.

Millennium Revels

24 June 2000

Will you be there?

We need the whole village to take part - and that means you.

By the time you read this, entry forms for the stalls and the procession will have been sent to all those who took part last year. If you did not take part last year, please contact John Hedges 01923 222715 who will be pleased to pass on an entry form.

CHANGE AND YOUR NHS

Change is usually difficult, and the health service is prone to being first in the queue when politicians feel like changing something. At the time of writing (January) the health service has been getting a worse press than usual. Headlines tell us of hospitals not being able to cope with the flu epidemic, no availability of intensive care beds, even urgent operations being delayed, waiting lists rising and so on. All this in spite of successive governments telling us the National Health Service is safe in their hands. We have all heard of accident and emergency units being closed, wards closed, hospitals closed. How many teaching hospitals are left in London, and if they had all survived how many high quality intensive care units might we have had today?

Yes, we have certainly seen changes. Local medical services have also been shaken up along the way. Fundholding came to general practice, and in its early years gave large practices over-generous budgets to lay on an impressive variety of services to their patients.

But smaller practices were initially excluded and had to make do with a second class service, and by the time they could join the scheme the budgets had been cut down, and any benefits to patients were likewise reduced. A vast amount of money was spent on setting up a management structure for each fund.

And then fundholding went and we now have our Primary Care Groups. It remains to be seen what their impact on availability and quality of local health provision will be. Because they incorporate a wide range of views and interests they could make a real difference and we should wish them well. They have the potential to oversee a period of constructive change at a manageable pace if they are given the funds to work with. But funding is always an issue in health care and PCGs will have to make choices about what services they will provide for their constituents and what they will not. There is no guarantee that these services will be equally available across the country, so that health provision could continue to be just as variable as education or recreational facilities or house prices.

It is unlikely therefore that the provision of health care will ever be perfect. It will always be cash limited, and that limitation will be translated into a degree of waiting for some services and perhaps the complete unavailability of others. Who should decide? Should it be left to "those who know best"? And who might they be? Politicians who want to stay elected, or administrators and health care providers who want to keep their jobs (I certainly do!), or academics who carry out medico-sociological research?

Should expensive fertility services be available on the NHS in Hertfordshire? Or vasectomy or female sterilisation? Is it logical to spend money to stop some couples having children but not to pay for the sophisticated drugs and techniques that would help other couples have them? What about surgery for varicose veins? Should your local PCG spend money on cosmetic plastic surgery or only on plastic surgery for more serious problems like cancer or burns? Where is the line to be drawn? Should more funds be diverted to replacing painful worn out joints or providing better help for people with psychiatric illnesses like dementia?

Well, by now you have got the idea. I just made up these examples, but they are the sort of choices that have been made for years and will become more openly discussed in the future as the NHS gets more and more stretched. And if all of us start to consider these issues and try to think out how we would prioritise the provision of health care we could join in the debate more effectively.

All of which has led me to wonder what the people of Croxley Green want from their local doctors' surgeries. Once upon a time local GPs worked on their own. Patients had great continuity of care and probably easy access to their doctor, i.e. they always saw the same doctor and they could simply turn up and wait whenever surgery was open. Now doctors work in teams alongside nurses, health visitors, midwives and others. Access is usually by appointment, may not always be so easy (especially if you want to go out of your work time), and there may well be less continuity. But there is more choice, and there are more services, better facilities and record keeping.

My computer system now offers me guidance on managing a variety of health problems as well as checking for drug interactions and monitoring all prescriptions. This is now commonplace. The co-operative of many local GPs that provides out of hours cover, by staffing an out of hours centre in the middle of Watford, has proved popular with many patients who might have otherwise hesitated to call out a doctor. NHS Direct now offers phone advice on health problems. Commuters may be able to walk into a health centre at their railway station or airport.

So, what do you want from your local surgery? Appointments at convenient times? When would they be? Would it be helpful if there was a published time when you could easily speak to the doctor on the phone? Should there be more nurse-time available? The average allocated time for a GP consultation in Britain is 10 minutes. Do you want doctors to run to time but only deal with a single item (which means more visits to the surgery for some patients), or doctors who deal with all of a patient's problems even if the patient in front of you has a list a mile long? Do you want a doctor who will always give you what you want? Even if he/she knows the antibiotic is most unlikely to do any good? Did I hear a "No" ?

If you have constructive ideas about what sort of service the community needs, please be prepared to share them. The NHS has been knocked about so much that an injection of ideas from the users of the service could be a breath of fresh air. Doctors' surgeries try to deliver their contractual services in terms of what they think you need, and what they have the resources to provide. The PCG and Health Authority deal with the matter of prioritising health care needs and allocating funds. Individuals can write to them, and ideas from groups of patients should carry more weight. You could send ideas about how you would like to see your own GP practice develop direct to your doctor. I can't speak for anybody else, but I would certainly be very interested.

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