

The Croxley Green RESIDENT

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**CROXLEY GREEN
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

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www.croxleyresidentsassociation.co.uk

We think it's time to Hug a Croxley Hoodie

CGRA takes an initiative for Youth in Croxley

The CGRA is interested in every group in our community and over the years has demonstrated its active support for residents of all ages and interests, helping to keep our growing village the vibrant, dynamic place that almost all of us love, almost all of the time. But the CGRA is concerned that an often-maligned group—the 'youth' of Croxley—are somewhat neglected in terms of attention, support and facilities to do what young teens like to do—in a safe and positive environment.

TRDC budgets for youth-oriented facilities have never managed to crawl up the hill from Rickmansworth to Croxley—although c.£1m did leap over us to help provide a leisure centre in Watford (still sound crazy, doesn't it?).

CGRA Committee

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Mary Mitchell (Treasurer)

Rose Hanscomb

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Mark Englefield

Mandy Grant

Amanda Mackie

Wendy Jordan

Judith Turnbull

And although there have been specific and periodic initiatives from local organisations and the Parish Council, such as the successful skate-park, there has not really been a sustained and significant move for the 12—17 year olds who we criticise for hanging around street corners, in bus-shelters outside the Co-Op or skulking around outside 'Fosters' on Watford Road, catching a crafty fag or swigging ill-gotten drink. But these hooded youths are our children and grandchildren, and we feel they have been sidelined too long by our community, through successive generations. The CGRA has decided it's time to try something new.

So we are setting up—for starters—a 'Radical Youth Wing' of the CGRA. But don't worry, it's not about political protest in the mean streets of Croxley, simply an initiative to try to get some people below the age of 30 interested, involved and active in creating something for those spotty, noisy, unkempt, ill-mannered and slightly intimidating groups of Croxley youth.

We have talked with a local and qualified volunteer whom we hope will lead this thing—whatever it turns out to be—who is young and having been born and brought-up in Croxley, knows first hand what it is like to live here once you are past the age of 12 and church choirs no longer have the compelling interest they once did, and it's a bit too soon to pass off as 18 down at The Artichoke. Beyond the skate-board park, there are sports clubs, church groups, and scouting for boys and girls (together these days, I've heard). But if you happen to have no particular talent or interest in a sport or doctrine, there is nothing that is generic, that is non-aligned, that comes without an angle.

Old folk of 50+ like me will recall 'youth clubs' that for us, deep in the last century, filled the gap with table-tennis, fizzy orange and a thrilling snog behind the bike sheds. That recipe doesn't do it any more apparently.

So what is the big idea? Well, part of it is NOT TO HAVE TOO MANY IDEAS. Sure, we have views—maybe create a forum for 12-15 year olds, and a separate thing for 16 & 17 year olds. Maybe rotate around existing facilities (such as The Community Centre, The Legion...) or identify a regular home (great use for Yorke Road School, but steady, that would require imagination and money, say, about £1m).

The big idea is to let the YOUTH COME UP WITH IDEAS, and plan it, and make it happen—with our interested, active and only mildly interfering support. That's what will make it a 'Radical' Youth Wing—it will have Youth in it, driving it, getting involved, doing stuff.

So the CGRA committee have agreed to support this initiative in ways that are appropriate and that is informed by the young people who are up for running it or being part of it. Any leadership team will need help of course, so local organisations will be welcome if they want to get in touch. And if you are not quite in the spring of youth but have experience in this field and would like to contribute in some way—get in touch as below. We'd like to hear from you.

And particularly, **if you are a young person and have read this** (probably force-fed by some well-meaning but incredibly annoying parent) and could be interested, text me on 07802 274979 and I'll connect you with Jamie, and you can take it from there.

Of course, you don't have to be spotty, noisy, unkempt, ill-mannered and slightly intimidating—you could be baby-skinned, smart, habitually utter 'please' and 'thank you' and even open doors for old ladies—but you will be welcome too.

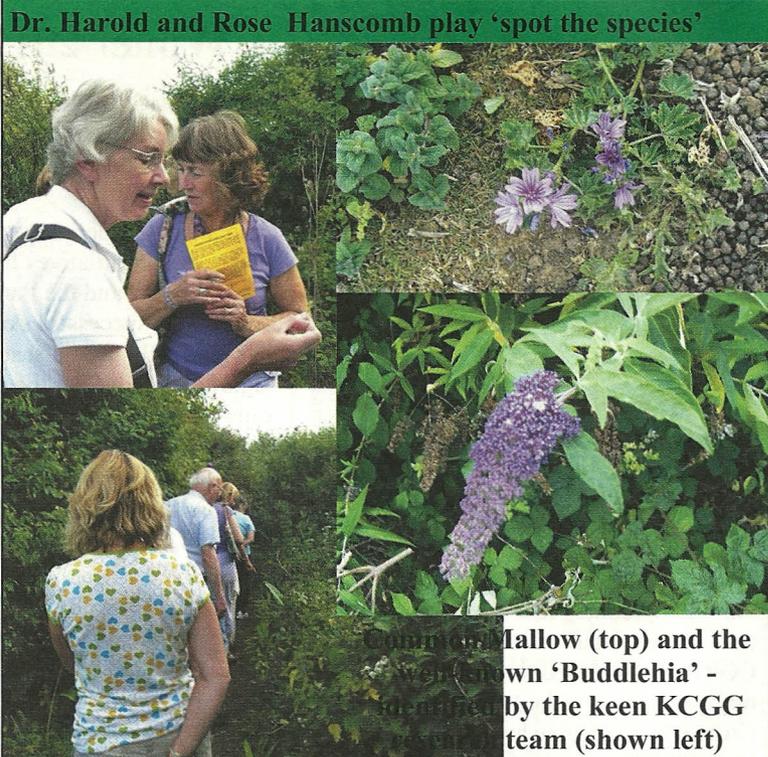
Stephen Martin / Editor

Vice Chair & Chair, Media Sub-Committee
Croxley Green Residents Association

Up Close and Personal: Judith Turnbull reports for the Keep Croxley Green Group

On a balmy night in June the KCGG committee got up close and personal with some wild flowers on the new 'Village Green' (Long Valley Wood) - accompanied by Dr. Brenda Harold, a local and renowned botanist who works with the Herts and Middx. Wildlife Trust. Dr Harold came to help our group identify and count the varieties of flowers.

Armed with cameras and notebooks we learnt that there were at least 40 species to be found in and around our 'Buddleia Walk', some so small we could hardly see them with the naked eye—such as the 'Thyme Leafed Speedwell' and Field Forget-me-not' and some much larger like the 'Common Agrimony', the yellow 'Ladies Bedstraw' and of course the purple 'Buddleia'. Some many of us recognised were the 'Common Mallow', 'White Bryony' and the one that always sticks to you and is difficult to remove—'Sticky Willy'- as well as the pretty yellow 'Evening Primrose' and the purple 'Musk Thistle' - guaranteed to make you whistle if you step on it, so the saying goes. We also learnt that within our seemingly idyllic Village Green, the poisonous 'Hemlock' lurked—to be identified by its' purple spots on the stems. Watch out too for the 'Enchanters Nightshade' with its' pale pink flowers, though not as harmful as its cousin, 'Deadly Nightshade'. Although we didn't find any really rare varieties by the time we reached the boundaries of this village green, we still had enough enthusiasm to discuss our findings back at KCGG HQ with over a chilled glass of wine. So feel encouraged to search for yourselves—for these and any other species that live out there. Spring will no doubt reveal more hidden jewels for the sharp eyed, so you too can get up close and personal with the fascinating wild flowers that Croxley has to offer.



Dr. Harold and Rose Hanscomb play 'spot the species'

Common Mallow (top) and the
purple 'Buddleia' -
identified by the keen KCGG
team (shown left)

Thoughts on membership of The Woodland Trust: Rose Hanscomb

I am a member of The Woodland Trust, an environmental organisation dedicated to buying woodland as it comes on the market using donations from members and grants, to protect and manage the woods for future generations. They own more than 1,000 woods all over the country, including our local Harrocks Wood, which you can get to from Croxley via Chandlers Cross.

As a member, I was invited in September to join the staff in Sandridge (St. Albans) to explore their latest ambitious project — to create over the coming years a new forest, to be called Heartwood. They have already involved local schools and volunteers from all over that part of Hertfordshire and beyond, in planting trees of many species. They aim to join up 4 areas of Ancient woodland on this vast site of 850 acres and to plant 600,000 trees, encouraging wildlife of all kinds. They are creating hedges, a pond and flower meadows to encourage as much diversity as they can so that if climate change really does happen, there will be species that will flourish and adapt as conditions change. They have left an area to regenerate naturally as this wild area is a habitat in itself for many flora and fauna.

Ancient woodland is our richest wildlife habitat but today woodland covers only 12% of the UK, compared with a European average of 46%. Over the last 70 years nearly half of our ancient woodland has been lost—but The Woodland Trust is fighting back. All their woods are open to the public to enjoy and it is possible to dedicate an area or just a tree for birthdays or other occasions to help with their work. I was really hooked and may turn up at one of the tree planting events next year. If you are interested in supporting their work you can go to woodlandtrust.org.uk/heartwood or heartwood@woodlandtrust.org.uk or Telephone 01476 581111 or write c/o The Woodland Trust Autumn Park Grantham Lincolnshire NG31 6LL



**WOODLAND
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WHERE ARE WE NOW WITH YORKE ROAD SCHOOL? The CGRA-led campaign...

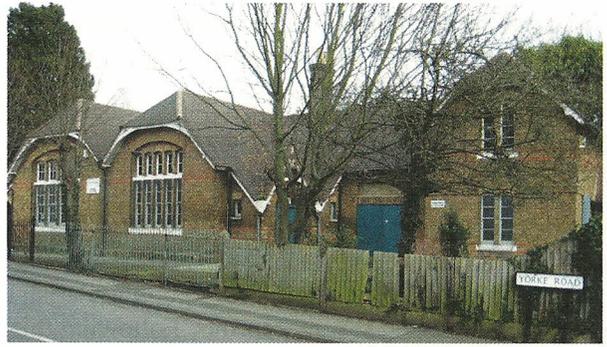
In July this Summer, Three Rivers District Council Planning Department received details of an Appeal from the agents of Leukaemia Research, the owners of the former Yorke Road School, following the Council's **Refusal** last January of the owners' original planning application for the demolition of the school, to be replaced with 5 dwellings on the site. TRDC was aware that the owners wished to redevelop the site but had insisted on a conversion into flats, so saving the original school building, which is listed as a 'Locally Important Building'. TRDC's view was that the building can be retained in much of its present form with a sensitive conversion by a conservation minded architect.

There has been huge public support for keeping this important piece of Croxley history and last year a petition containing over 400 signatures and letters was sent in to Three Rivers Planning Department to meet their deadline (always over a holiday period) in January. We were delighted with Three Rivers decision on 23rd January as reported in the last issue of the Resident, but this latest Appeal means that the decision will be made by the **Planning Inspectorate** in Bristol and will rely on Policy C12 Locally Listed Important Building which states: **"The council will encourage the preservation of buildings on the list of Locally Important Buildings and Planning Permission for development affecting Locally Important Buildings will only be granted provided the character and appearance of the existing building is not adversely affected"** This is in the Local Plan which is a legal document. The decision would also rely on members of the public sending their representations to the Inspectorate. We were again given a very short time to respond to this Appeal (over the Summer holiday period) but managed to obtain further signatures, bringing the original petition to over 650 signatures, plus very strong letters from Three Rivers DC and The Croxley Green Residents Association and many individuals.

As you can see from the photos and if you walk past the site, over the last 3 years the owners seem to have deliberately allowed the site to degenerate into an uncared for, run down condition in the hope that demolition seems the only option. Most the trees are listed but have been allowed to over grow and weeds have been left to flourish, litter has also appeared all over the site. The building is in fact in a good sound condition and could easily be smartened up, which of course is not what the owners want to do.

So a big **Thank You** to everyone who has written, signed the petition or in any way helped to try to save this lovely old Victorian building for future generations. It is one of the last links to John Dickinson and the first school so many of us attended, built with public subscription, run by the dedicated staff, and remembered with such affection. / **Rosemary Hanscomb** / Tel: 01923 449945

LATEST NEWS! ... On Friday November 26th the report arrived from the Inspectorate, and it was great news: the appeal has been dismissed! The 5-page report (available on the CGRA website) outlined why the owners are not permitted to demolish the building. The Inspector concluded that that the removal of the former school building would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and that its historic and architectural value would be lost. I sincerely hope that the building can be sympathetically converted into flats or renovated to provide an additional facility for the community.



A new BIG EVENT for Croxley—February 2011

The Croxley Green Residents' Association is organising the first 'Croxley Community Conference' for local organisations—getting together in the same place at the same time—to promote collaboration, mutual awareness and to promote community integration and momentum into the future.

The event will be held at Harvey Road School on Friday, 4th February 2011; invitations to local organisations are being sent out as we go to print. The brainchild of CGRA Chairman Barry Grant, the centrepiece of the evening will be a 'Question Time' session featuring our local MP, David Gauke, Secretary to the Treasury—along with senior members representing Herts County Council, Three Rivers district Council and the Croxley Green Parish Council, so representing all levels of government. This is a free to attend event with cheese & wine & juice with exhibitions by the Croxley Green Camera Club, Rickmansworth Museum and others. A raffle will help to fund the cost of the event with any excess being donated to a local charitable cause.

This event is targeted at the organisations, clubs, societies and businesses in Croxley Green and aims to provide a unique opportunity to hear from representatives of all tiers of government and also to provide the sort of interaction that would not normally be possible. This will be a major event for Croxley and is one which the CGRA are very pleased to be able to organise.

Not Poet's Corner

Who reads poetry today?

What is it for
and what does it say?

The words of the song—
a Dylan or a Lennon

Are of no more import than
the gin to the lemon

S. Zipp

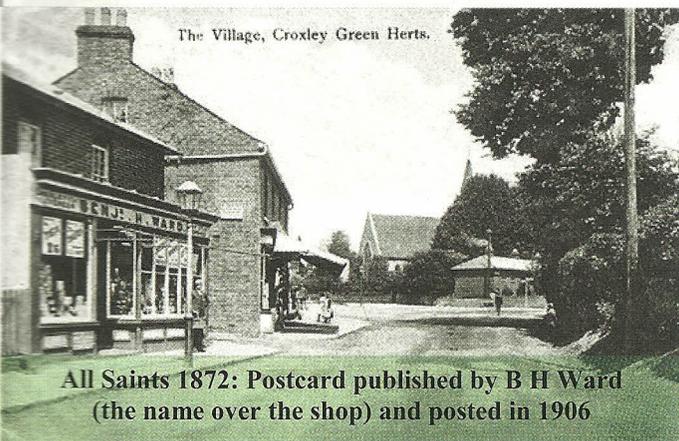
U3A shines a new light on the forgotten origins of Croxley Green

Croxley Green 'Parish Map' author and local historian **Margaret Pomfret** explains the origins of our village in talk for the **University Third Age (U3A)**

Recently John Smallbone formed a local history group, as part of the Croxley Green section of the University of the Third Age (U3A). In September, together with two members of the Residents' Association Committee who belong to the U3A, I was invited to a talk given by Margaret Pomfret.

Margaret is a past member of the Croxley Green Parish Council having resigned some ten years ago. She also served as a past member and Chairman for the Residents' Association. She outlined to us the preliminary work she did in connection with producing the very popular Parish Map. At first printing the map sold 2000 copies within the first year and there have been several reprints. Following this, Margaret undertook a huge amount of research into the history of Croxley Green, all in preparation for a book sponsored by the Parish Council. Unfortunately the funding did not materialise and the project was shelved.

However, Margaret has retained a large amount of material some of which formed the basis of her talk. She spoke of many well known families after whom a lot of our roads are named. We heard of local businesses now long gone but which helped keep Croxley Green a self-contained and viable community, distinct from Watford and Rickmansworth.



Particular mention was made of John Dickinson's Paper Mill and its influence upon the development and prosperity of Croxley Green. This included the provision of housing for Mill workers in Dickinson Square, Dickinson Avenue and of somewhat larger Houses for Mill managers near to the Watford Road. The Dickinson Guild House, now converted into flats, was once also known as The Dickinson Institute. Margaret spoke of the coming of the Co-op; the school in Yorke Road and its early pupils.

We were shown many interesting photographs of Croxley Green in its early days. It was fascinating to hear about Stones Orchard, the traditional cherry crop and to see the excellent booklet Margaret had produced some years ago.

We also saw a copy of the document which grants Stones Orchard to the people of Croxley Green—in perpetuity (developers / TRDC note). At the conclusion of a most enlightening and interesting talk the well attended meeting heard that Margaret had been invited to return at some future date to speak on the coming of the railways as well as other historical aspects of the village.

Contact details for the U3A are as follows: Jane Wray, Membership Secretary / 01923 775889

National Play Day celebrated in Croxley!!!

Amanda Mackie had fun for The Resident

To celebrate **National Play Day (4th August)** and the amazing play space at **Barton Way park**, the council arranged a fabulous free event to which all local children and parents were invited. There were bouncy castles, face painting and many other attractions, including a stall by Doodletots, a local art and craft group for toddlers. There was also the opportunity to make a bug house or bird house, kite making and a tug of war. Despite the (very) damp weather there was a good turnout – even for the water slide!



Thanks again to Charlotte Masters for the photographs and for organising a very successful event. Just one question was on the lips of many of the parents I spoke with
'when is it happening again?'



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- *Provide details of arrests and proactive policing operations.*

It's a two-way process: you can email back to the Police regarding any issues you have; youths misbehaving? Cars speeding? Noticed a suspicious vehicle or person? You are our "eyes and ears" and the quicker you get in touch the more we can do. Let's work together as a community to prevent crime and catch the criminals.

If you wish to be included in the database for the Neighbourhood Watch IT communication system (Online Watch Link – OWL) and receive these alerts directly by email please email me, Gareth Williams, on ...
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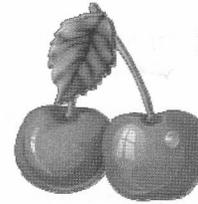
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A Massive THANK YOU to the CGRA — from Keith and Judith Turnbull

For all of you who attended the Fund Raising Gig at the Royal British Legion in Croxley for Keith on the 26th November and or gave a donation towards his German Chemo-Embolization treatment for Mesothelioma — we can't begin to thank you enough for all your generosity.

Despite the really cold weather when it might have been more sensible to stay home, many flocked to the gig to hear the local Band 'The Eleventh Hour' along with guest folk singer George Frakes performing free in order to provide the cracking good music to set the atmosphere for a great entertaining evening.

All this, along with a raffle and nibbles supplied and organised by the Croxley Green Residents Association, staging from Harvey Road School and the use of the excellent venue again provided free of charge, meant that all monies raised have gone towards the essential funds for Keith's pioneering and regular treatment which presently is only available as a trial in Germany on a private basis — and which hopefully will prolong his life considerably.

On the night the CGRA Committee members wore Mesothelioma Ribbon Badges in order to raise awareness of the dangers of Mesothelioma and other Asbestos related diseases (information is available from the 'Mick Knighton Mesothelioma Research Fund' www.mickknightonmesorf.org and 'Mesothelioma UK Trust'). We hope that by helping Keith with his fund-raising for his treatment and by wearing a Ribbon Badge we will have raised the profile of this terrible and terminal cancer.

So many thanks from the bottom of our hearts to all those involved in making the evening a resounding success.

Judith and Keith.



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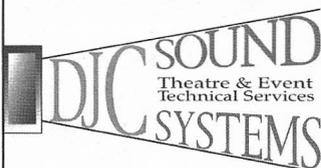


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MALVERN WAY SCHOOL SCOOPS LOTTERY AWARD

Malvern Way Infant and Nursery school was delighted to be awarded a grant from the National Lottery — to 'Enhance the School Community'

Janet English reports for The Resident

Financed by a National Lottery award — Malvern Way School is now open on Fridays between 3pm and 4pm for parents and children at the school to enjoy free activities. Whilst the activities are fun and informal, they are also linked to skills development and many have creative elements. Families and carers will be supported with ICT skills and knowledge development as well as understanding the educational programmes their children use in school. Parents and carers will be helped to understand and experiment with the physical skills needed to help children develop.

Catching hoops and bean bags doesn't just help children develop coordination but helps with writing skills and building confidence to try new things. Some adults are uncomfortable with creative play so the art sessions are designed for adults and children to learn and experiment together. The school library is stocked with puppets to help children and adults tell amazing stories and build creative thinking in children. Gardening plots will help adults and children grow fruit, vegetables and flowers throughout the year. The aim is that local community members, clubs and societies with interests in art, gardening, storytelling or any of the other activities might also like to be involved in the sessions.

The project still needs some session leaders. If you are able to offer expertise or time to the project or would like to attend the sessions please contact the school on 01923 773430.

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Road Safety in Croxley: It's important – so get involved

How safe are the roads around Croxley for both vehicles and pedestrians? The quick response would be: it all depends on whom you ask. People who travel mainly by car will have a different point of view to those who mainly walk, cycle or use the buses. Children and the elderly will see it differently to other age groups. The one certain thing is that whatever means of transport used, road traffic and safety issues has the potential to affect us all at some point.

One example may be on a rainy morning in autumn during the rush hour. When the traffic on the M25 is diverted onto the A412, the kids are being dropped off and people are trying to get to work on time, the main roads through Croxley become congested and the strain on people being under pressure increases the likelihood of accidents. This may be a 'worst-case' example but there have been many experiences like this that have a real effect on road safety when travelling around our community.

These are difficult issues to find real solutions to but the only way that they can start to be addressed is by public involvement. In Croxley we are fortunate that we have a Road Safety Committee that tries to tackle all road safety issues which are brought to its attention.

The committee meets once every two months and is made up of volunteers from the residents of Croxley. Also part of the committee is representatives from the county and district councils as well as from the local police when necessary. The committee has the means to feed directly into these agencies, so any concerns and issues regarding road traffic and particularly road safety in Croxley are heard and taken seriously. The committee has been going for over 25 years but knowledge of its existence and what it achieves is not well known to residents.

Some of its past achievements include instigating of the mini round about between the junctions of Scott's Hill, the Watford Road (outside Ricky School) and the Green; upgrading of the Zebra crossing on the Watford Road by the Shell garage and more recently campaigning for an upgrading of the Zebra crossing at the junction of the Watford Road and Harvey Road to a full pedestrian crossing, which is now agreed.

The influence of the committee is clear, and with the help of committee member, County Councillor Steve Drury, we are tackling current issues such as:

> The traffic congestion around the Shell garage on the Watford Road caused by motorists queuing to use the garage. Herts County Council realises the seriousness of the problem and has allocated £30,000 for consultants to find a solution, especially from a safety prospective. The committee is monitoring events for a satisfactory outcome.

> Concerns about frequent speeding traffic along the Green were brought to the police's attention at one of the committee meetings, resulting in spot speed checks by the police to help reduce speeding traffic along the Green.

> Concerns about frequent speeding traffic along the Green were brought to the police's attention at one of the committee meetings, resulting in spot speed checks by the police to help reduce speeding traffic along the Green.

> Highlighting directly to Herts Highways the traffic issues that will arise with the construction of the new housing estate on the OMT site. The increase in works traffic particularly the use of HGVs is a major concern to residents living in the surrounding area. The site is at the moment in the preparation phase and it is estimated the project will last in the region of three and a half years. This is bound to have a major impact on the community during building.

The only ways the committee can continue to provide this valuable service to our community is by residents coming forward and attending meetings. The committee also needs new members to join to raise numbers and give the committee a greater depth of experience and support. By us all working together we can help make a real difference and get our concerns heard.

For further details please visit the website: www.croxleygreenroadsafety.or.uk or contact chairman Mike Humphreys on 01923 778544.

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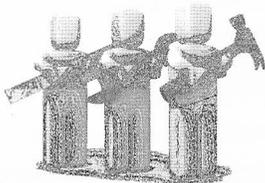
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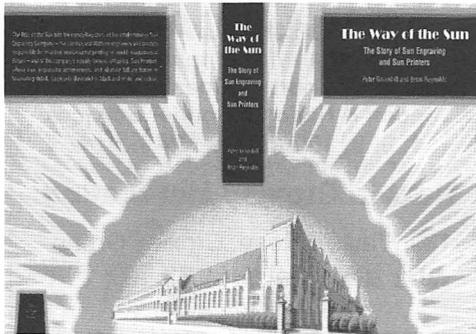
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**A little bit of Croxley history:
'The Way of the Sun'**

In the previous edition of *The Resident* we featured the anticipated publication of a new book covering the history of the Sun Printers, which had such an impact on the growth of Croxley Green. The new book - 'The Way of the Sun' is out now. Shirley Greenman brings us up-to-date.



Whilst reading a copy of the Sun News that had been donated to the Sun Printers History website, I came across details of the building of the 'Sun houses' in Durrants Drive.

After the second world war the Sun Printers had a number of properties in the Watford area to let to employees. A considerable number of loans were also made to employees to help them buy their own homes. As a result, the Sun Printers Housing Society was formed, in November 1950. A suitable site for over 50 houses was purchased in Durrants Drive, in Croxley Green. It was a two-stage development; Dawe, Carter and Partners of Clarendon Road, Watford were appointed architects. and Mr. Hale, a local builder, won the construction contract. Building work began in 1954.

When the Sun employees moved in, most of the men knew each other (printing was a male preserve in those days). Wives became friends, the community thrived, babies followed and new Croxley families grew! And that was the way things stayed until 1991, when following the mysterious death of news mogul Robert Maxwell and the subsequent unraveling of his business empire, the houses were put up for auction after first giving tenants the chance to buy at a discounted price.

This story and many others with relevance to Croxley and Watford are included in 'The Way of the Sun' - a limited edition comprehensive history of the Sun Engraving and Sun Printers companies. Authored by Peter Greenhill and Brian Reynolds, the book is now available at £22.00. Call me, Shirley Greenman, on 01923 227945 for your copy!

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Some members of Sun Housing Society Committee inspecting work in progress. L. to R. Mr. Judd (Clerk of Works), Mr. J. E. Jefferies (Vice-Chairman), Mr. C. R. Greenhill (Chairman) and Messrs. D. Lindsey and G. W. Nixey.



Durrants Drive project—general view of work in progress. Note first six houses up to roofing stage.

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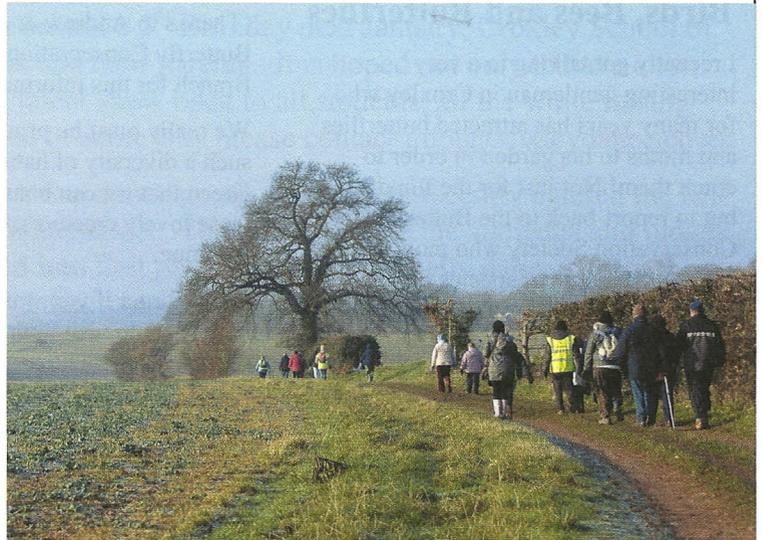
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Beat the Winter Blues: Out and About on Watford and Three Rivers Health Walks

Beat the winter blues and join the popular Watford and Three Rivers Health Walks! Watch the countryside and the stark and sometime ethereal coat of winter changing as spring and growth burst through heralding the summer. Chat with friends, make new ones and best of all keep fit in a relaxed environment, **free of charge**. Some of the county's most popular health walks are in the Watford and Three Rivers area. Established by the NHS, the Herts Sports Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council and Countryside Management Service the walks and walkers continue to move from strength to strength and meet throughout the year, whatever the weather. The aim, quite simply, is to encourage everyone to join the walks as part of the recommended five sessions of physical activity per week.

The Health Walks are led currently by a team of dedicated volunteer walk leaders who are especially trained in leading walks and basic first aid, and start from 10 regular starting points at **Cassiobury Park, Abbots Langley, Croxley Green and Rickmansworth** offering a walk for you every week. All the Watford and Three Rivers area walks are graded, with the **Croxley Green walks** having moderate inclines, possible stiles and taking from 45 to 90 minutes, depending on the walk and what you want to do.



So come and join the Health Walks—all welcome! Just wear suitable shoes, have a waterproof handy, bring some water and arrive promptly at the starting point. And at the end of the Croxley Green walks you can purchase well-earned refreshments. The programmes are updated every quarter to take account of the changing seasons; keep an eye out for the January to April 2011 programme which will ease into the Spring and Summer of 2011. If you would like more information about joining or leading the walks, look for the leaflets which are in public libraries, doctors' surgeries, and hospitals or contact Countryside Management Service on 01727 848168 / email Healthwalks.cms@hertscc.gov.uk / www.hertsdirect.org/healthwalks.

Croxley Green Baptist Church: Building to build the Community



As we know it...

For over 60 years, Croxley Green Baptist Church in Baldwins Lane has played an active part in the life of the community. It began in wooden huts which were replaced by the current buildings in the mid 1950s and 60s. Over the years the life of the church has touched generations in many families.

The vibrant life of the Church continues today, with Sunday services attracting over 150 people. A wide range of activities is held in the week, starting with the Little Sparklers Parent and Toddler groups, moving through Boys and Girls Brigades, and the Quench Youth Café, along with the popular Summer Holiday Adventure Club providing activities for children from 0 to 18. Lite-Lunch is a popular lunchtime venue for all ages in the community to chat over a meal, while Good Companions cares for older folk. For those feeling more energetic, there is

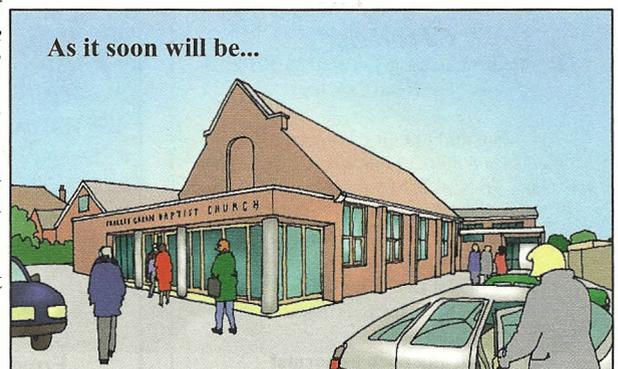
the Church football team. So with the existing ageing facilities pushed to the limit, for many years the church has dreamt of refurbishing the buildings, giving it a more welcoming feel and setting it up to meet the needs of the community in the future.

Thanks to the kindness of Little Green School, Fuller Way Church and Rickmansworth Baptist Church, most activities have been able to continue during the refurbishment which began in June 2010. An extended entrance is being added on Baldwins Lane with a lounge area and small kitchen, providing a fresh and welcoming look. Internally, the worship area and main hall are being refurbished, new toilets and a larger kitchen added, providing for present and future needs. The Sherborne Way entrance is also being upgraded and toilet facilities added to provide a more independent area for groups such as the local stroke support group which meets on the premises.

"I sense Croxley Green is a place where people value community", commented David Gregory, the new Senior Minister who arrived in August. *"I am delighted to be part of a church that over sixty years has been at the centre of this. The refurbishment of the buildings is a sign that as Christians we want to share in building community more for the future, as well as providing a welcoming place where people can gather to discover the relevance of Jesus for life today."*

Refurbishment was completed in early December, with the church returning from Little Green School in time for the popular Christmas Carol services. An open day is being held in the New Year, on January 8th from 10.30am to 3pm to allow people to come and view the buildings and learn more about the life and plans of the church for the future.

More information on the life of the church can be found at www.croxleybaptist.org or by telephoning the church on 01923 710780.



Rose Hanscomb: A page in a Croxley life

In search of Croxley's Birds, Bees and Butterflies

I recently got talking to a very interesting gentleman in Croxley who for many years has attracted butterflies and moths to his garden in order to count them! Not just for the fun of it — but to report-back to the Butterfly Conservation Society who monitor the success or failure of species in Hertfordshire and Great Britain.

I contacted them to find out just how many different species can be found locally and although the numbers for 2010 haven't yet been recorded, 23 different butterflies appear on the list for the years 2000 – 2009 in the Croxley Green area. You will of course want to know which they are, so here is the official list of **Croxley's Butterfly Resident** population: Brimstone, Clouded Yellow, Comma, Common Blue, Gatekeeper, Green Veined White, Holly Blue, Large Skipper, Large White, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Orange Tip, Painted Lady, Peacock, Red Admiral, Ringlet, Small Copper, Small Heath, Small Skipper, Small

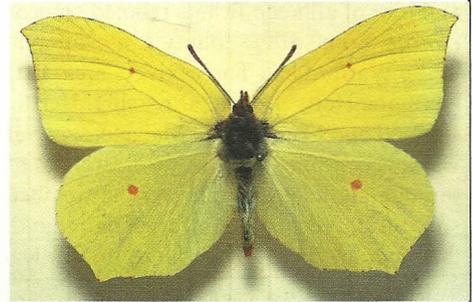
Tortoiseshell, Small White, Speckled Wood and White-letter Hairstreak. (Thanks to Andrew & Jane Wood-Butterfly Conservation Herts & Middx Branch for this information)

We really must be proud that we have such a diversity of habitats in Croxley Green that we can boast so many of these lovely creatures. Long may this continue.

Don't forget if you want to attract butterflies to visit your garden the top twenty plants to have are Buddleia, Ice Plant, Lavender, Michaelmas Daisy, Marjoram, Red Valerian, Aubrietia., Field Scabious, Bramble, French Marigold, Candytuft. Lobelia, Honesty, Mint, Hemp Agrimony, Phlox, Forget-me-not., Aster and Sweet Rocket. (Source: *Gardening for Butterflies* by Dr. Margaret Vickery.)

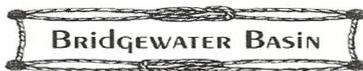
All these plants attract bees too so at least some of them are well worth having if you want to have plenty of wildlife in your garden. I had a nice surprise in the Summer when my old bird box which was supposed to attract blue tits was home to bumble bees.

They came and went in large numbers until July then disappeared as they do every year, I have since learned.



All that seems a long time ago as we sit here in the early but freezing Winter. We were warned — the early arrival of the Bewick swans from Siberia told us what was on the way. So it's time to think about the birds now that the bees have gone (where? Anyone know?). Give them a bit of help by putting out a few scraps, seeds, nuts, sultanas — small and nutritious — especially first thing in the morning and in the early evening, but only start if you are able to continue. Remember too to clean the bird table regularly and provide fresh water.

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It's been a busy term at Croxley School of Dance!

The school, situated at The Studio, Community Way now has around 200 students who attend dance lessons every week, some who come up to 4 times a week! Nicola Mossman took over the school in January 2006 when there were just 35 students, and to celebrate the school's 5th Birthday next January, Croxley School of Dance will hold a family fun afternoon for all students and their parents. It is hoped not only to have a fun afternoon with stalls and things to do, but also hold a talent show open to all students, all the while raising money for charity. If you think you could get involved in some way please contact info@croxleydance.co.uk

In other exciting news, Croxley Dance's own 5 piece street dance group, **Illuminate** recently entered the Michael Sobbell Hospice Charity Talent Show, held at Watersmeet. The group wowed the audience and judges with their fast paced routine and were only just pipped into first place by a group of belly dancers from the Hospice staff. **Illuminate** were worthy runners up and their certificate and trophy will soon be on display at The Studio for everyone to see. The evening was for a great cause and helped raise some much needed cash!

Croxley Dance students took their exams during the half term holiday. The Ballet, Tap and Freestyle exams take place at least twice a year and the students always produce excellent results. Now we are into work for the next show which will be at Watersmeet on Saturday 1st October 2011. Shows are staged at Watersmeet every two years with a Presentation Evening held in the year between shows, which includes demonstrations of class work and the presentation of awards in the various dance disciplines.

For each of the last five years the School has participated in Croxley Revels, performing in the main arena and this year a group of 'senior citizens' showed off their street dance skills. Students are looking forward to next year's appearance at Revels with something special being planned – you'll have to be there to see it!

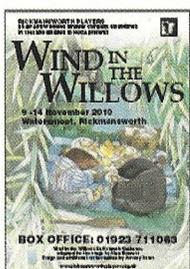
As the School has grown, so has the range of dance styles taught. Classes include ballet, tap, freestyle, hip-hop, boys' street dance and musical theatre. This term has seen the introduction of a new Mini Moverz class – a mix of funky/hip hop dance style aimed at 3 to 6 year olds. Classes for adults include ballet, tap and street dance and, not forgetting the very young, there are baby ballet classes for children up to the age of 3.

Croxley Dance also offers classes at Harvey Road, Yorke Mead, Little Green, St Marys and Rickmansworth Park Schools. Check www.croxleydance.co.uk for Studio classes and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

The Rickmansworth Players: Can you spot your Croxley neighbour?

Rickmansworth Players presented Alan Bennett's brilliant adaptation of 'Wind in the Willows' with music at Watersmeet in Rickmansworth in the early weeks of November. His characters were brought to life with great realism, compassion and of course humour. The play draws many parallels, and highlights satirical imbalances within the English class system. Alan Bennett's version of the story played to appreciative audiences of all ages at the National Theatre for many performances.

First published in 1908, Wind In The Willows grew out of the stories Kenneth Graham told to his son Alistair when he was a boy and although Graham didn't publish any further books, the success of this enchanting tale ensures he has been remembered ever since. Wind in the Willows was wryly humorous and tremendous fun with dapper Ratty (Simon Dresser) adorable Mole (Lee Farman) cheeky Toad (Paul Skinner) and wise old Badger (Jevan Morris) supported by a talented adult cast and by two teams of children playing the creatures of the River Bank. These wonderful friends tackled Toad's passion for speed in caravans, trains and of course the 'new fangled motorcar', rescuing him from many misadventures while doing battle with the wily Weasels and Stoats from the Wild Wood, who threatened the peaceful River Bank community. Great fun for all!



All these Croxley people pictured in the woods appeared in Wind In The Willows at Watersmeet.
Stuart Carter (Albert the Horse)
Jonathan Cox (Stoat Gerald)
Sam Warren (Hedgehog Harold) Alex Puttnam
Matilda Lester-Mosely (Rabbits) Erin Potter,
Georgia Knott (Portley the Otter)
Maddison Billson, Kira Matthews (Hedgehogs)



What have you written recently?

A new creative writing group has recently formed in Croxley, formed after a group of us attended a Three Rivers course held at the library. Everyone had such a good time together writing and reading out stories that we decided to form our own **creative writers** group.

We meet every two weeks and usually each person brings in a piece of work that they have written at home and reads it to the group. There is no pressure to write a piece for each session but we have found that everyone can usually write a decent piece even if only starting to write it on the very same day of meeting up. This seems to happen a lot! During the evening we chat about each other's work and conduct one or more exercises in class to practice various writing techniques and to stimulate creativity, working either individually or in pairs.

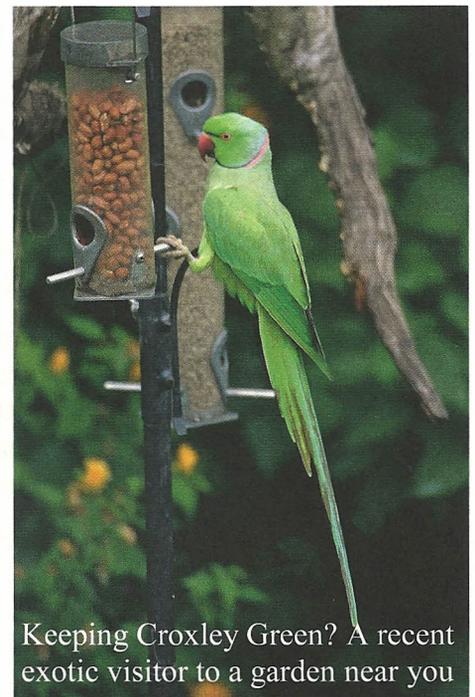
One example would be writing an 'acrostic' poem – which is usually about a person, place, object or theme. The theme is written vertically down the side of the page with one letter per line. Each line must start with that letter.

We decided to carry out an acrostic poem exercise on the theme of "How do you cope with the winter blues?" We chose two characters, "Jack Frost" and "The Greenman", both associated with the season. We wrote ideas trying to describe how they would cope during the winter season. Here's what we came up with:

Jump up and down at the first sight of snow
A good time to stop house work and have crafty afternoon doze
Christmas season approaching with a nice sense of cheer
Knowing that there's always a nice hot cup of tea when coming back home
Football season under way with reasons to moan and cheer
Roast dinners that always make you feel good inside and bring some cheer
Over eating on mince pies and nice winter feasts.
Snuggling up in bed much longer until the sun eventually rises
Taking more time to rest before all that spring cleaning work begins to appear.
Get out your sunglasses and pretend its summer

Rub on the sun cream even when it's five below
Emigrate to one of those nice holiday destinations (If only)
Eat summer fruits from the freezer
Never get out of bed
Make ice-cream and eat it in front of the fire and imagine nice hot sunny days.
Always wear colourful clothes and never forget to smile no matter how cold it is.
Never ever forget that the joys of spring will soon be here.
How do you cope with the winter blues? Do you embrace or deny the winter season?
Why not try and put together a few of your own suggestions? Go ahead have a go!

Tony Munroe



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Secondary School consultation - where should the new school be built?

Your opportunity to influence the decision.

We are in the midst of a Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) consultation period in respect of its Site Allocations Development Plan. The consultation period ends on Friday, 14th January.

TRDC seeks the views of local residents regarding potential sites for a Secondary School, Employment, Retail, Open Spaces and Cemeteries. For most of us the key concern is the siting of a new school. 5 options for a Secondary School site have been selected.

- 1) Mill End/Maple Cross: Land east of A405 (North Orbital)/north of A412.
- 2) Mill End/Maple Cross: Froghall Farm and adjoining land.
- 3) Croxley Green: Land to the north of Little Green Lane. At the end of Links Way
- 4) Croxley Green: Land north-east of Baldwins Lane. Opposite the shops by the railway bridge
- 5) Croxley Green: Land west and north of Little Green School. The former Durrants School playing field and land on the north side of Little Green Lane.

We consider it is important that local residents respond to this consultation with support for whichever of the secondary school site proposals they favour.

Consultation documents and response forms are available on www.threerivers.gov.uk and from TRDC's offices (Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RL) and all libraries in Three Rivers. **Replies need to be submitted by Friday, 14 January 2011.**

CGRA committee members attended the open meeting organised by the WD3 School Action Group on 6/12/10. County and District Council Officers were in attendance and they ran through the pros and cons of the 5 site options. 3 of the sites are the preference of County Council. 2 are preferred by District Council. None are ideal. All are in Green Belt and have differing "Highways" issues. The site over which there is relative agreement between the Councils is the Croxley Green, Baldwin Lane site (no. 5). This site is quite small (the smallest of the 5) and undulating and appears to have little potential for future growth. The other 2 Croxley sites have severe access issues (according to County Council, the former Durrants field site is accessible via a country lane and via The Green (Common land) where the necessary road widening would be almost impossible to obtain. The Froghall Farm, Mill End site has flood plain and adjacent sewerage works issues as well as the likelihood of being overlooked by office buildings and a new high rise hotel. We realise that unless one site emerges as a preference, as a consequence of public consultation, then the choice of site will be solely down to the councils and a site may get the nod – for the wrong reasons!

From the information we have received and the arguments we have heard we are of the opinion that the Mill End/Maple Cross site (No. 1 - close to J13 of the M25) should be the single preferred option. This is currently farmland but the site is large enough, has the best access, can be screened from M25 noise and is in a good geographical location.

It was this time last year that local residents responded to TRDC consultation in relation to the building of dwellings on Killingdown Farm. The overwhelming response was the major factor in removing this site from TRDC's Core Strategy preference list. You may not agree with our assessment of the proposed sites for a new school but your opinion counts and we urge you to respond to the consultation questionnaire.