

SPRING 2008 EDITION

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Although at the time of writing the first day of spring - 21 March is still a couple of weeks away - it seems as though the season, given the mild weather, has been with us for some little while. By the time this Newsletter reaches you the clocks will have gone forward and hopefully any mad March winds will blown themselves out and we can look forward to some refreshing April showers!

This edition contains a membership list for completion and delivery to your Road Warden whose details are highlighted at the back of this Newsletter. I am pleased to report that yet again the annual subscription remains unchanged at a £1 coin for each adult member of your household and this is needed, of course, to meet the running costs of the Association. We do like to try and complete the subscription process during April and if you are unable to deliver your subscription and membership slip direct to your Road Warden then expect a call around the end of that month! This edition goes to every house in our area whether or not you are currently a member; if you are NOT a member then we do hope this newsletter will encourage you to join along with the vast majority of the residents in the locality. Membership currently stands at around 80% of houses which is quite impressive but we do like to try and raise that figure every year. So this edition of Knoll News gives every one the opportunity to join or rejoin and pay our modest subscription for the current year. It also gives a brief account of our Annual General Meeting and reports on a number of current issues and items of general interest.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Over 100 members turned up to the meeting which was an impressive turnout on a dull and dark November evening. Your Committee take great comfort from this degree of support as it reflects a keen interest in the work of the Association. Amongst the attendees were our local Councillors and in particular Pauline Tunnicliffe who despite being very active as Mayor of Bromley still found time to be with us. Once the formal business of the meeting was completed we heard from a number of speakers. Mrs Cheryl Curr, our Town Centre Manager updated us various matters concerning the High Street. Sergeant John Kemp gave a presentation on the work of his Safer Neighbourhood Team and Mr Anthony King, the Bromley Council Rights of Way Officer for our part of the Borough, gave an interesting talk on the pathways in our locality. All of the speakers dealt with a range of questions asked by various residents. Following this we adjourned to sample some tasty snacks, tolerable wine and converse with friends, neighbours and fellow residents. Following the meeting the new Committee met and received the resignation of John Mangold who was standing down due to his other heavy commitments in the coming months not least some charity work in India. We are grateful to John who was an assiduous and keen member of the Committee including being one of our Road Warden Secretaries and we will miss his work for the Association. This means we have a vacancy on the Committee which we are anxious to fill so any one who wishes to fill his place will be very welcome. Being a Committee Member is not particularly onerous; we meet about every 6-8 weeks to discuss current issues at the St John's Church Hall, Lynwood Grove and the evening meeting start at 8pm and is usually over in less than 2

hours. Please contact me if you wish to volunteer - I await your call!

TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

Cheryl Curr, our Town Centre Manager, has informed us that she has received funding to erect a fenced enclosure in the passage way from Clinton Cards to Berwick Way/Vincent Close to house the large refuse bins used by the residents in the flats above the shops. Hopefully, this will improve this area which has been an eyesore for far too long. I have reported in earlier Newsletters on the progress of the work, commissioned by Bromley Council, on an Orpington Town Centre Master Plan. Apparently the timetable has slipped but the consultants are now scheduled to present their report to a meeting of the Council on 25 March 2008. Thereafter it is planned that the draft Master Plan will be published for public consultation sometime in May. The draft document will set out suggestions for improvements to the High Street and to the square within the Walnuts. It will also give guidelines for possible developments and refurbishments within and around the Walnuts with the aim of improving the retail performance of the town. We will be taking a keen interest in the details and intend to take an active part in the consultation exercise.

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE TEAM

Sergeant John Kemp, the leader of the Petts Wood and Knoll Team, has provided the following:

"Domestic burglary traditionally rises as the warmer weather approaches as some people leave their houses unoccupied during holidays and short visits away. We have already had instances of burglary - two in Oatfield Road, one in Keswick Road and two in Lynwood Grove - my advice is make sure you lock up properly and don't forget sheds and outbuildings and let your neighbours know if you are going away. Something else to watch out for is that due to the current high value of scrap metal a number of churches and other buildings are being targeted by thieves stealing lead. If you see anything suspicious then dial 999 immediately - do not assume they are legitimate workmen. I have a witness appeal just in case anyone from the Knoll area happened to be in Station Square, Petts Wood on the evening of Monday 28 January. Two men dressed all in black forced entry to the Nationwide Office at around 6.20pm and forced staff to empty the cash machine which was being replenished at the time. Then they got away in a dark coloured car which was driven by a third man. All the suspects are described as being black. Any one with information about this incident should call Detective Constable Jim Simmons at Tower Bridge Flying Squad on 0207 407 6319 or can provide information anonymously via Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111. I should mention that this was an isolated incident and the first commercial robbery in the area since 2006. You may have read in the local papers about the successful apprehension of two Orpington sisters for pickpocket offences in Orpington and Petts Wood; both are now in custody and one has already been sentenced to 6 months in jail. Their modus operandi was to target elderly ladies and then to either strike up a conversation with them in a supermarket, charity shop or card shop about the cost of certain items or jostle past them and steal their purses. Following a surveillance operation they were arrested and charged with 4 offences and they then asked for a further 17 offences to be taken into consideration. As a result of this matter, Bromley Police would like to issue the following crime prevention advice regarding pick-pocketing:

- Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards. Keep it zipped up and make sure your wallet or purse can't be seen. Don't carry large amounts of cash.
- When at a bar, restaurant or cafe keep your belongings safe. Keep bags where you can see them but out of reach of passers by. Use bag hooks under tables if they are available.

- If you use your mobile phone on the street be aware of your surroundings whilst you're on the phone and after your call has ended.
- Spread your possessions about - keep your mobile phone separate from your purse and your keys separate from your credit cards.
- Beware when using cash dispensers. Criminals target people when using these.
- Cover up any expensive jewellery and if you must carry other valuables, be discreet.
- If your mobile phone is stolen, immobilize it by calling your network provider or by calling 08701 123 123.

Whilst all this may make depressing reading let me reassure you that Bromley is one of the safest boroughs in London and Petts Wood and Knoll remains a very safe place to live and work. Let us all make sure we keep it that way."

PLANNING

We subscribe to the service provided by Bromley Council whereby we receive details of all planning applications in our locality including the High Street. Carol Gray, our Planning Secretary, keeps a close eye on these and submits a written report on all of them to each Committee Meeting. In addition, members do from time to time seek her advice about planning applications which they consider may have an adverse impact on their property or neighbourhood and where the Committee thinks it appropriate we make representations to the Planning Committee of Bromley Council. Whilst we rarely comment on individual house extensions we have made representations about concerns raised with us about plans to demolish existing properties and/or "in-fill" with a larger number of properties. Such an application to build two properties at the rear of 55 and 57 Vinson Close was rejected by Bromley Council and their decision was upheld on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate who dismissed the appeal. Another significant recent outline planning application has been made by the Trustees of Orpington Halls in respect of the New Village Hall in the High Street which apparently is having difficulty in remaining financially viable. They propose to demolish the existing building and replace it with a five story block comprising a restaurant on the ground floor with the replacement community hall being on the first floor and some nineteen flats on the upper floors. The Planning Committee has granted permission for the development in principle subject to a number of planning conditions being met. A new building on this site will probably be an improvement to the existing structure but whether yet another restaurant is desirable is a matter of opinion but clearly the Planning Committee were content with the proposal.

STATION MATTERS

The work on providing new access to all the platforms is well underway and is scheduled for completion in May. The bridges are in place as are the lift towers and once open this facility will greatly enhance the facilities for passengers particularly the disabled, elderly, people with heavy luggage and Mothers with pushchairs.

EXTRA BANK HOLIDAY

10 Downing Street has approved the creation of an on-line petition requesting a new public holiday falling on the Monday after Remembrance Sunday in November each year. To be known as the National Remembrance Holiday it has three aims:

1. To emphasise the remembrance of those servicemen and women who have given and continue to give their lives for Britain;
2. To remind people of the importance of protecting our Nation and what it stands for and

3. To break the three month period between August Bank Holiday and Christmas when there are currently no long weekends, especially as the UK has fewer public holidays than most European Countries.

This apparently is not about just getting another bank holiday but more importantly about having a designated day to remember all those people that sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

POT HOLES HOT-LINE

Bromley Council has set up a hot-line to enable people to report any holes in the road. These affect both cars and cycles and if you happen to cycle sometimes you will have swerve out of the way to avoid them with the potential risk of an accident. The number to ring is 0208 313 4621.

ROAD WARDENS

Mr Norman Farrow of 5 Orchard Grove is moving away from the area as part of the re-development of Orchard Grove so has had to relinquish his position as Road Warden. We are grateful to him for being our Road Warden for a number of years. So we need a volunteer to replace him, preferably from the remaining residents of Orchard Grove. With the demolition of most of the houses it will be quite a small task to take on delivery of the Newsletter to the remaining so I hope a volunteer will be forthcoming. All you have to do is give me a ring!

PLANTS & TALENTS EXHIBITION AND SALE

St John's Church is planning on the 10 May 2008, a day when their talented gardeners who have spare plants and seedlings may offer them for sale and when the many hobbies followed by church members will be displayed and or demonstrated. Whilst fundraising is not the main object of the event, any funds raised will be donated to the church Commitment for Life appeal. The sale runs from 10am to 2pm so please make a note in your diary of the date 10 May 2008.

GLA ELECTIONS 2008

On 1 May this year all Londoners will have the opportunity to choose who will be London's Mayor for the next four years and also who will serve on the London Assembly, the body which scrutinizes the London Mayors activities. Any one not on the electoral register by 16 April will be unable to vote in these important elections so if you did not return your electoral registration form last autumn, or have moved into the Borough since then, you need to register now. Also if you have married or moved within the borough since then, you can correct your details. Students studying away from home can vote by post as long as they are on the register. Contact 0208 313 4364 or email electoral@bromley.gov.uk. Application forms can be found also under Electoral Services on the website www.bromley.gov.uk.

WEA - PETTS WOOD AND ORPINGTON BRANCH

The local WEA Branch have provided details of a Short Summer Course entitled " Three American Masters - John Singer Sargeant, James McNeill Whistler and Childe Hassam". It is designed to complement the exhibition "American Art 1850s-1950s" taking part at the Dulwich Picture Gallery in the spring. The Course will run on Wednesdays for three weeks, starting 23 April between 2pm and 4pm at the Poverest Centre. For further details, please contact either Penny Stewart or Rosin Baldwin.

The WEA are also interested to hear about when you may have first heard of them in Orpington and Petts Wood. The records of their early days are sparse and they are

hoping that members, past and present will be able to help them flesh out the history of the organization here. Unfortunately, their records do not tell them when the WEA was first set up locally although they do know that classes were being held in the early 1950s and that there was an Orpington and St Mary Cray branch as far back as 1918. They would like to hear from anyone with information about when they first joined the WEA, what classes they attended, who their tutors were and where the classes were held. Photographs of people involved in the WEA would be greatly appreciated. If you have a WEA story to tell please contact Penny Stewart or Rosin Baldwin.

HARRIS HOSPIECARE EVENTS

Here are details of some forthcoming fund raising events:

- Sunday 20 April - Open Gardens Festival 2008 at Orchard End, 12 The Meadows, Chelsfield Park, Orpington from 2pm-5pm, admission fee £3. A large and mature garden designed to provide much variety and many natural features with diverse shrubs, trees and borders including two large hellebore beds and two ponds teeming with koi carp. A mystery garden has also been incorporated into the overall design for the children to explore and enjoy. Wheelchair accessible. Raffle, refreshments and plant stall.
- Saturday 26 April - Plant Sale, Harris Hospiscare, Caritas House, Tregony Road, Orpington 10am-2pm, admission free. Collection of bedding plants for sale. Refreshments available (including home made cakes), fun games and produce stalls.
- Sunday 11 May - Bluebell Walk, Cudham Recreation Ground. Sponsored walk of 3,5 or 9 miles across the beautiful countryside in Cudham

Should you require further details of any of these events just ring Harris Hospiscare on 01689 825755.

KNOLL LAWN TENNIS CLUB

This news update including notification of the Open Day on 13 April has been submitted by Robert Andrew, Chairman Knoll Lawn Tennis Club (LTC).

The Knoll Lawn Tennis Club is now looking forward to the new 2008/09 season after a year of membership growth, regular participation from Men's, Ladies and Mixed teams in county interclub leagues and the staging on many successful social events. Our membership is mainly drawn from the local community. Everyone is welcome at the club, whether you are of competitive team standard, regular club player or looking to restart or improve your game after a few years sabbatical. Likewise all ages are welcome with mini-tennis, junior, adult mid-week and veterans play on offer and supported by the services of Head Coach, Tielman Meyer.

After successful events in 2007, another Open Day will be held at the club on Sunday 13 April, catering for all standards and interests. Junior players are welcome in the morning from 11am to 1pm and adults in the afternoon from 2pm onwards. Just turn upon the day and join in! Head Coach, Tielman Meyer and club members will be on site to play with and advise prospective members and their families on how they can enjoy tennis at your club in the heart of the Petts Wood and Knoll community.

The Club enters over twenty adult and junior teams into Kent county leagues and offers a programme of active club play and social events at weekends and throughout the week a supervised junior club afternoon runs mid-week after school and a LTA Sanctioned Junior Tournament will be held at the club from 7-12 April. Mini-tennis groups are available for the very young with tailor made racquets, balls and special nets available to encourage

those on their first steps to becoming a champion!

More information can be obtained from Tielmen Meyer. Alternatively, just turn up at the club, which can be found off Mayfield Avenue (opposite Eastcote), on any week end.

OLD ORPINGTON

I have recently been shown a pocket guide to Orpington published just after the end of the first world war which proudly states it is "Issued with the approval of the Orpington Parish Council". It is full of fascinating gems such as the third class train fare from Charing Cross was one shilling and two and a half pence! Here is a small extract from the guide to illustrate its flavour:

" Upon leaving the Station, one is met by views typical of rural England, the old village being hidden away in the dip of the valley, whilst on higher ground the more recent development of detached residences has taken place. To fully appreciate the advantages of Orpington, one leave Cannon Street on a stifling summer's day, for, upon emerging from the train, one breathes freely and realizes that here is a health-giving and bracing air. For the tired and worn city toiler, here is nature's remedy ready at hand, and with purer air and the charming views on every hand life is freed of its turmoils and worries. So that to those seeking rest and quietude from the strife of livelihood, Orpington undoubtedly holds forth great attractions, and to those who may not be sufficiently fortunate to reside here, a few hours of leisure spent in the district will be as balm to the tired toiler."

So not much has changed then!!

AND FINALLY

As mentioned earlier in the Newsletter, subscriptions are now due and the payment slip is on the next page. This one edition goes to every household in the locality so if you are a NEW reader and therefore not currently a member, I do hope you will consider joining our Association for the modest sum of £1 per adult in each household. Would all existing and new members please deliver the sum direct, if you can, to your Road Warden together with the payment slip. Many thanks.

Mike Fogden CB Chairman

LB Bromley Road Safety Panel - 20 Mile/h zones for non-priority roads

Motorists speeding through residential areas are a frequent source of complaint and cause of accidents and it is often asked whether anything can be done to reduce excessive speeds.

There are currently seven zones in Bromley Borough where speed is restricted to 20 Mile/h. Some of these are near schools and others cover whole residential areas.

Nationally and particularly in London, there are proposals to roll these zones out to cover all non-priority roads, which would include the bulk of residential areas.

Some European cities have successfully operated such area-wide schemes for many years and they are overwhelmingly popular with residents and very effective in reducing excessive speeds.

Existing well-tried area-wide schemes usually use signage only, without additional traffic calming and have perimeter signs on entry to the area covered and then 20 Mile/h signs and road markings at all points where vehicles leave a priority road to enter a 20 Mile/h

zone. The scheme is simple, easily understood and relatively cheap to implement.

Would a lower speed limit inconvenience us?

Experience with existing schemes shows that motorists who drive safely within 30 mile/h areas do not reduce their speed much when 20 mile/h zones are introduced and therefore find little difference. However the top end speeders, the dangerous ones who are the cause of the complaints and accidents, are dramatically reduced in number and residential areas become safer and calmer.

You can download the response form for this consultation from [here](#) (pdf)