

CROHAM VALLEY

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Autumn 2019



Croham Valley Residents' Association Committee

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CVRA newsletter is distributed to all members of the Association.

Cover by Anna Kirton

Your views and comments for publication in the newsletter are most welcome and should be sent to the Chairman or the Editor. Copy should reach the Editor by the 1st of February, 1st of May, 1st of August, 1st of November. Views expressed by the contributors to the CVRA newsletter are their own and are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Residents Association. Publication of advertisements does not imply endorsement by the Association.



Letter from the Editor



Now that Autumn is drawing in, it's time for the Croham Valley Residents' Association to host our Annual General Meeting. We hope you will be able to join us! This year it will be held on Wednesday 23rd of October, in good time for Halloween. The meeting will begin with an address from Croydon South MP Chris Philp at 8pm and will then follow the Agenda printed in the middle section of the newsletter.

All residents are invited and it's a great chance for you to meet the Committee and find out what we have been doing over the last year. We encourage you to tell us your thoughts and ideas about Croham Valley and let us know what we can do for you.

This is also your chance to get more involved and nominate new Committee members. You will find vacancies and nomination slips on the centre pages on the newsletter, along with your AGM invitation and Agenda.

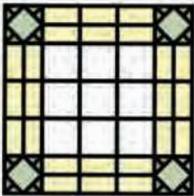
As I was unable to make a Summer newsletter this year I have carried over some of the summer articles to this Autumn edition. While this does mean I haven't had the space to include the usual Listings & Events, there is a tonne of fantastic content for you to enjoy in its place, including planning information, several lovely articles about our local nature and history, and some useful information about Citizens Advice Croydon and the London Fire Brigade. Thank you to all of the contributors for making this edition jam packed with great content.

If you would like to get in touch or send in any of your own contributions, please do so by contacting the email address below.

Anna Kirton, cvara@gmx.com

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Letter from the Chair

An Elected Mayor in charge of Croydon?

Members from your committee have attended meetings of the DEMOC group. DEMOC stands for Democratically Elected Mayor of Croydon and the group want Croydon to have a referendum to decide whether we have an executive Mayor for Croydon. Under recently enacted Government legislation if 5% of registered voters say they want a referendum then one has to be held.

An elected Mayor will be completely in charge. They will dictate policy and tell the Councillors what to do.

You could say that the current system is similar in that the leader of the council dictates policy and tells the other Councillors what to do however the difference is the Mayor will have to be elected. We believe for any candidate to be elected they will need votes from all around the borough and therefore their manifesto might reflect the wishes of all across the borough. We believe it is as simple as that and therefore we enclose a signature sheet for you to sign - if you wish.

You can either post the form off to the DEMOC PO Box stated on the form or you can drop it off to me and I will batch them up and send them off.

My address is 27 Castlemaine Avenue.

Planning Applications

I would like to thank members of the committee for their work on individual planning applications details of which are included later in this newsletter.

As David will explain later. We are at last experiencing some more sensible decisions by the Planning Committee in their most recent deliberations!

Coombe Wood School

As the construction of the permanent school is behind scheduled the some

approval for the temporary school needed to be extended and was therefore presented to the Planning Committee

One again we argued that there is no protection for the pupils crossing Castlemaine Avenue and that Castlemaine is more dangerous than Melville Avenue - where the pupils are protected. Once again the members of the Planning Committee heard our objections and agreed the extension. However they added the condition that if the already delayed crossing of Coombe Road above Melville Avenue is not ready for the beginning of the Autumn term the situation will be assessed. This crossing which will solve all the safety issues is still not started let alone ready and we now have twice as many pupils at the school.

As I write I have not seen what the assessment involves. I was pleasantly surprised when just before the start of term Castlemaine Avenue was made exit only through a temporary barrier across part of the road - therefore making it the same as Melville Avenue. However according to Transport for London this is a result of gas works. We can live in hope.

It might be that the Councillors are correct in saying these are secondary school kids and there are plenty all over Croydon who have difficult journeys. Let's just hope the permanent crossing is completed as soon as possible.

On a second note the frame for the main school is now complete and highlights our concern that it is unnecessarily close to the first few houses of Melville Avenue and reminds us of the failure of the Councillors on the Planning Committee to stand up for the interests of these residents.

148 Ballards Way

We have now completed stage two of the official complaint process against the award of planning permission regarding the design of this property. Not the size for which we do not think we have a legitimate grievance but the design features, specifically flat roofs and glass balconies.

Our complaint is that the design "creates a negative impact" on the area and that the Councillors were unaware of this as the planning officer did not provide sufficient information about the existing architectural styles. As a result of this lack of information provided by the planning officer, the Councillors came to their conclusions based on a questionable statement by one of them.

We know it's a long shot but we feel we must try our hardest when an architectural style so at variance to our area is approved so thoughtlessly

by the system. We know the decision cannot be reversed but we want some kind of acknowledgement it was flawed and that the process can be so much better.

The Council has dismissed our complaint and the next stage is the Ombudsman.

Collaboration

The residents of Winchelsey Rise have campaigned against a plan to build a block of flats in their road and at the moment the developer has pulled out. The residents were planning to use the Whitgift Foundation covenants restricting development to one dwelling per plot to oppose the plan. The developer pulled out before any legal action came about.

The residents were helped by Whitgift Foundation Estate Residents Association who are in the process of trying to enforce a similar covenant in their area along the Addiscombe Road. If their opposition goes to court which it looks like it might we wish them all the best and thank them for undertaking such a significant action which hopefully will help all of us.

Don't Mess with Croydon App

I walked my usual circuit with the dog yesterday and winced again at the overflowing bin in Croham Road by the bus stop and the mess all around the wire framed bins in Lloyd Park. Presumably the mess in the Park is caused by the birds picking at the rubbish through the holes in the frame.

So I loaded the "Don't Mess with Croydon" App on my phone and will photo the offending bins today and report them to the council as there is a specific app for this.

I recommend you load the app and report similar stuff as you walk around our area.

Our Web Site

I apologise that we have not made any progress on our website. Unfortunately, no one responded to our request for help but we will try harder.

CVRA Local Planning Application Web Site

As previously mentioned the above-mentioned application is live and covers all roads and post codes in your Association's area, it's available for use by all CVRA residents free of charge. The application is updated weekly with all new and currently outstanding planning application information, as well as having multiple search capability of planning history. Also if you want to register your email

address within the application, you'll be advised weekly when the Planning Table has been updated, together with a direct link into the application.

The application can be accessed directly from the following web link:

<http://www.localplanningapps.co.uk/croydon/cvra/anupdate/planningtable.html>

Planning

Planning Area A

50 Castlemaine Avenue

In 2018, planning permission was sought for the demolition of the existing detached house and construction of a 3-storey block of 8 flats with 8 parking spaces in the basement accessed via a lift. Permission was refused on several grounds, including insufficient provision of family accommodation (i.e. three bedrooms or more) and excessive provision for parking. The Council took the view that, as the development was only 100 metres from the Lloyd Park tram stop, it was not necessary to provide a parking space for each flat. A revised application was submitted in

May 2019 increasing the number of flats from 8 to 9 and reducing the number of parking spaces from 8 to 4. This revised application includes three 3-bedroom flats, which exceeds the Council's target of all new developments comprising at least 30% of 3-bedroom or larger flats. Planning permission was granted in June 2019.

21 Melville Avenue

The developer originally obtained planning permission for a block of 5 flats to replace the existing bungalow. A second application to increase the number of flats from 5 to 6 was granted in November 2017. Now the developer wants a further increase in the number

of flats from 6 to 7, but instead of applying for full planning permission, the developer has submitted revised drawings as an amendment to the previously consented application.

Coombe Wood School

With the construction of the new school well under way, the main remaining planning issues relate to the highway alterations to Coombe Road to provide a light-controlled pedestrian crossing across Coombe Road near the junction with Melville Avenue and also the widening of Coombe Road to provide a right-hand turn lane into the new school car park. Detailed plans are still awaited.

Planning Area B

11 Ballards Way

Just received the very good news that this planning application which was for the demolition of the existing house and the erection of a building of 9 flats that has been pending since July 2018 has been withdrawn by the developer Aventier.

17 Ballards Way

This planning application is for the erection of a three storey 4 bedroom house with accommodation in the roof space in the rear garden of this property and fronting on to Ballards Farm Road. There have been four previous applications from the owner of this property since 2011 to build in the rear garden, all apart from

the last one in 2014 were refused and this latter one was conditional that the building was not for habitation. This back garden proposal is an over development of the site by virtue of its mass, height and and the overbearing effect it will have on houses in Ballards Way due to its elevated position well above those houses. A good number of local residents and the CVRA will be objecting to this application plus one of our local Councillors has raised a referral.

55 Crest Road

This new planning application follows the withdrawal of a previously submitted application earlier in the year. Like the earlier application it's for the erection of a 4 bedroom detached 2 storey house in the rear garden of 55 Crest Road fronting on to Croham Valley Road and is similar to the earlier one, albeit slightly smaller in size. This application went before the Planning Sub-Committee on the 12th September 2019 and was unfortunately, although not unexpectedly approved.

3 Croham Valley Road

This planning application submitted by Cobalt Construction for the demolition of the existing detached house and the erection of a five storey block of 7 flats with two storeys fronting Ballards Farm Road and

three basement levels going all the way down from Ballards Farm Road to Croham Valley Road adding 14 bedrooms and potentially 24 persons. This is a massive over development of the site and a complete eyesore which is totally out of character with all the surrounding area. The developer has already paid for Planning Pre-Application advice from the Planning Department. We're currently waiting for a date for this application to go before the Planning Committee, at which time David Rutherford will speak as an objector on behalf of the CVRA and the local resident objectors, as will one of our local Councillors.

5 Croham Valley Road

This planning application from the active developer Sterling Rose follows the refusal in April 2019 of an earlier application. The new proposal is for the demolition of the existing house and the erection two blocks of 3 houses with accommodation in the roof spaces. One block will front on to Croham Valley Road being 4 floor 4 bedroom houses with only 2 parking spaces, the other block will front on to Ballards Farm Road being 3 floor 3 bedroom houses with 3 parking spaces. This is a massive over development of the site which is in fact larger in terms of accommodation size than the earlier refused application with there now being in total 21 bedrooms and

potentially 36 persons, in addition to there being a wholly inadequate parking provision for the houses fronting on to Croham Valley Road. A good number of local residents and the CVRA have objected to this application plus one of our local Councillors has raised a referral. Again the developer has already paid for Planning Pre-Application advice from the Planning Department.

10 Croham Valley Road

Progress on the construction of this block of 8 flats is now nearing completion with only internal works and landscaping required.

Land R/O 31/33 Croham Valley Road - Fronting on to Ballards Rise

This planning application for the development of the now enlarged site on the land to the rear of 31/33 Croham Valley Road for the erection of 2 two storey detached buildings with accommodation within the roof space comprising of in total 9 flats (adding 16 bedrooms and potentially 28 persons). This application went before the Planning Committee on the 30th May 2019 where both Maria Gatland and David Rutherford spoke as objectors, much to our surprise the application was refused by a committee vote of 9:0 in spite of it being recommended for approval by

the Planning Department. The main reason for refusal was the lack of on site parking (only 4 bays) with all committee members agreeing that Ballards Rise was too narrow to have parking plus the size of the development. As this site had an approval 3 years ago for a single storey flat roof house with basement level accommodation, this has already established a presumption of development on the site and it was generally agreed by the Committee that the site should be developed but with a smaller proposal and adequate parking provision. There will, no doubt, be a revised planning application submitted.

Roselea Cottage, Ballards Farm Road

This new planning application is for the demolition of the existing side double garage and the construction of a large 2 storey extension which will add two rooms plus a bathroom to the ground floor and 3 bedrooms plus a bathroom to the first floor. There were 20 objections to the proposed extension which is out of keeping with the surrounding cottages in this small picturesque development due to its width, however the Planning Sub-Committee approved this application but with the requirement for a detailed construction plan in order that there's no blocking of Ballards Farm Road which is also part

of the Vanguard Way long distance path.

Planning Area C

148 Ballards Way

Following the approval in December 2018 for the demolition of the bungalow and the erection of a building of 8 flats, the development of the site has now commenced with the bungalow having been demolished and ground works are underway.

Planning Other

1 Winchelsey Rise

There's positive news on this proposed development by Aventier, although there has been no official planning application submitted. The next door neighbour at number 3 has been informed that the developers are pulling out. This looks to be based on two factors:

- * The softening in the housing market has affected economics of the plot, so their financial model no longer fits.
- * They have noted the potential local resistance local residents may offer, in the context of the restrictive covenants

Subsequently the property has now been put up for sale in June 2019.

Croydon Planning - Some Changes Detected

* Since the start of 2019 across the South of the Borough seven planning applications for the demolition of houses to be replaced with flats have been refused planning approval under the Council's delegated authority that would have otherwise been decided at Planning Committee meetings and another eight similar planning applications have been withdrawn, presumably because of advice from the Planning Department that they were not going to obtain approval.

* There continues to be many more planning applications from developers for the conversion of larger houses into flats and at the same time adding extensions to these houses, this is also happening to a much lesser extent even with semi detached houses, although none to our knowledge have been in the CVRA area.

Brick by Brick Proposed Pipeline Developments

* Only site within our area is the green space between 126 and 130 Croham Valley Road which has been earmarked for 7 housing units. Cllr Helen Pollard setup an online petition covering this site and the seven others in her Ward which over 1,500 residents signed. As a result of this and also the issue being raised at one of the Council meetings, three of the sites including our one for the green space between 126 and 130 Croham Valley Road are not now going ahead.

Croydon - Local Plan Partial Review - Call for Evidence on Local Green Spaces

* Only site within our area that was under this category is The Ruffet, which many residents provided information back to the Council on why this site should have some level of protection to safeguard it from potential development. We're still waiting to hear if this has been successful.

Please support your Residents' Association

Renew your membership by sending £4 by Bank Giro Credit or Standing Order to:

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The Croham Park Estate

By Paul W. Sowan

There was no such place as Croham Park. The 'Croham Park Estate' was a developer's name for Edwardian new roads laid out and houses built on the north side of Croham Road comprising Croham Park Avenue, Castlemaine Avenue, Melville Avenue, and the two short roads linking them. Houses had been built either side of the lower end of Croham Road, as far up as Campden Road, by the 1890s. The eastern boundary of building development was the unmade track from Croham Road to Coombe Road which originated as an access road to Croham Farm which stood near the Whitgift Sports Club pavilion.

What little information is readily accessible concerning the development of the Croham Park Estate is to be found in an advertisement in the second edition of 'Where to live round London (Southern Side) by William Hobbs Shrubsole¹³ published in 1907. The new development featured well built and planned freehold and leasehold residences of picturesque design with large gardens 'on high ground overlooking the beautiful Croham Hurst and almost adjoining the far famed Addington Hill'. Railway stations at East and South Croydon, Coombe Road and Selsdon Road were stated to be 'within a short distance'. Interested persons could obtain

further particulars from Douglas Young & Co. in the City of London.

St. Paul's United Reformed Church, on the corner of Croham Park Avenue and Croham Road, was dedicated in 1901, at first as a Presbyterian establishment. Ward's 1903 Directory tells us that in that year it was a 'new hall and church rooms' used until the main building was completed. The architect was Charles Henman junior, who also designed Croydon Town Hall, the former Croydon High School for Girls building which stood in Wellesley Road, and several other local churches.

An influx of well-heeled residents did not go un-noticed by the company operating the Woodside & South Croydon Railway, which had opened its line from Woodside to Selsdon Junction and Sanderstead in 1885 with stations at Coombe Lane (later Coombe Road) and Selsdon Road (later Selsdon) in that year. A very basic station called Spencer Road Halt was opened on 1 September 1906. This was part way along the public footpath from Spencer Road to Birdhurst Rise and appears to have been nothing more than two timber platforms. Whether it ever had a rudimentary ticket office or waiting room or even seats is not clear. Perhaps not surprisingly this Halt closed for ever on 15 March 1915. What remains to be seen is the footbridge over the lines, still in use. The rails are still in place, but

Demolition of Selsdon Station, by contrast, with substantial premises serving four platforms, was finally completed only after passenger services were abolished in 1983. This 'back-garden line', as it was known locally, astonishingly survived the Beeching cuts in the 1960s.

Oddly, this stretch of line has never formally been closed, and is still Network Rail's responsibility. When passenger services on the whole line from Woodside to Selsdon including at Coombe Road and Selsdon stations were withdrawn, sufficient rail was left in place northwards from Selsdon Junction to allow tanker trains continued access to a fuel oil depot at the former Selsdon goods yard which remained in use until 1993 or 1994. Two trains of tank wagons each week could be watched reversing at Spencer Road Halt. This is why the abandoned bridge over Croham Road has recently been repaired for safety reasons. It was probably cheaper to do basic repairs to the bridge deck than to demolish the whole bridge.

Croham Hurst School commenced at 59 Croham Road with seven pupils, two of whom were borders. A second house at 2 Croham Park Avenue was purchased and in 1905 a purpose-built new school building at 79 Croham Road was commenced, opened in 1907. The new building was so designed that, if the school failed to flourish, it could instead serve as two residences. So, as can still be seen, there is a central school hall with a two / three storey block each side. In fact the school was an astonishingly successful independent school for girls for over a

century, and added new buildings and extensions during the rest of its life. It catered for borders as well as day girls until 1961.

In part the school was evacuated to Somerset during World War II, but reunited in 1946 when the previously independent Limes boys' preparatory school in Melville Avenue dating from 1909 was acquired, along with its playing field. The Limes School was also designed as two blocks either side of a central hall. This building was occupied by the Army during the war. The boys' school remained in Sussex, having been evacuated there at this time. The entire Croham Hurst School campus was consolidated on the site bounded by Croham Road, Melville Avenue and Pilgrims' Way in 1957 when a house called Woodhurst, standing between the two main buildings, was added to the school estate. The school has more recently been taken over and operated as the Junior Department of the Old Palace School of John Whitgift. The Limes building is not currently in use, and it remains to be seen what will happen here next. Also out of use is the school's outdoor swimming pool, on the other side of Pilgrims' Way, dating from the 1930s. The parcel of land here is currently used as a staff car park alongside derelict tennis courts. It is believed to have unimplemented planning permission for an additional school building.

There is still open land to the north and south of the Croham Park Estate. Lloyd Park was the property of Frank Lloyd [1854 – 1927] whose fortune was made at paper mills at Sittingbourne. After his

death his daughter and son-in-law donated the land to Croydon Council, who formally opened the park a few years later. Frank had himself already donated a mansion and estate at Walthamstow to the local authority, where is to be found the other Lloyd Park and, standing in it, the splendidly presented William Morris Gallery. On the opposite side of Croham Road lie the pavilion and playing fields of the Whitgift Sports Club. Part of the land of Croham Farm these fields became in 1912 the first Croham Hurst Golf Club, a nine-hole course. This had previously been playing fields for Elmhurst School in South Park Hill Road.

The Croham Park Estate of distinctive, individually designed houses including

several of architectural merit is gradually losing its character. The losses commenced during World War II as a result of enemy action. Perhaps most dramatically, during the night of 14th / 15th November 1944, when a V1 flying bomb completely destroying Eskdale House and 20 Castlemaine Avenue, with the loss of four lives. There was more or less serious damage to several adjoining homes. Since then, substantial houses have been replaced from time to time by smaller ones or blocks of apartments, a continuing process, and large back gardens have been sold off for new smaller houses. Pressure to replace larger individual houses by blocks of flats continues.

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Annual General Meeting

*You Are Invited To Attend
The Croham Valley Residents' Association
51st Annual General Meeting*

St Paul's United Reformed Church, Small Hall
(Corner of Croham Rd & Croham Park Ave.)

Wednesday 23rd October at 8pm

Chris Philp MP will address the meeting at 8pm
His Honour William Barnett QC will chair the meeting

*All members and residents of
The Croham Valley Residents' Association
are welcome.*

Anyone wanting to be member of the committee must be nominated. Nomination forms are included in this edition of the Newsletter and must be handed to the chairperson before the meeting commences. Nominations can also be posted to: The Chair 27 Castlemaine Avenue CR27HU

Agenda

23rd October, commencing at 8pm. St Paul's United Reformed Church, Croham Road. The formal meeting will be preceded by an address from Chris Philp MP at 8pm.

1. To confirm the minutes of the 50th AGM held on 24th October 2018
2. To consider any matters arising
3. Treasurer's report and Annual Statement of Accounts for 2018/ 2019
4. To elect Honorary Auditor for 2019/ 2020
5. Chair's report for 2018/2019
6. To elect the President and up to 4 Vice presidents for 2019/ 2020
7. To elect the Chair, Vice Chair, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary for 2019/2020
8. To elect not more than 9 members of the Association to serve on the Executive Committee for 2019/2020
9. Any other business

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Your Residents' Association needs your help

This is your chance to pay-back or pay-forward, as they say.

Could you please help with one of the following roles?

Web-site Manager

To design and develop a simple Wordpress website.

Deputy Chair

Support for Jeremy and to provide help to residents as required.

Honorary Secretary

Ensure constitution adhered to and take minutes of meetings.

Newsletter Distribution Manager

To arrange distribution of newsletters to our 28 distributors.

Newsletter Distributor

We currently need distributors for:
The top of Ballards Way
The bottom of Ballards Way
Campden Road
Croham Park Avenue
Ballards Farm Road

Advertising Manager

To support advertisers and procure new advertising revenue

We are looking for new committee members. If you would like to join the committee, help with any of these roles or in any other capacity please contact Wendy for further information on 07834 957391 or by email to cvra@gmx.com

ELECTION OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Nominee (capital letters) _____

Address and Contact details _____

Nominated for position of (capital letters) _____

Proposed by (capital letters) _____

Signature _____

Seconded by (capital letters) _____

Signature _____

Signature of Nominee (agreeing to the proposal) _____

Date _____



ELECTION OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Nominee (capital letters) _____

Address and Contact details _____

Nominated for position of (capital letters) _____

Proposed by (capital letters) _____

Signature _____

Seconded by (capital letters) _____

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The Ruffet, South Croydon: Response to a request for historical information. Site visit June / July 2019

by Paul W. Sowan

The Ruffet is an area of woodland (2.05 acres) surrounded by houses on the Chapel View estate. The eastern boundary is formed by the back garden fences of Chestnut Grove, the unfenced remainder by The Gallop. Nearby land in the 1940s was applied for dairy farming, cows being taken daily to Ballards Farm which stood at the east end of Ballards Farm Road.

Once part of the Heathfield estate it was, until purchased by Croydon Council in the 1950s, still open land. As with similarly relatively high ground at nearby Bramley Bank and Littleheath Woods it has been left as woodland while adjoining land on chalky soils was farmed. The areas left as woodland are on Lower London Tertiary Beds (Thanet Sand, Lambeth Group (Woolwich & Reading) Beds and Harwich Formation (Blackheath Pebbles)). The British Geological Survey's (unpublished) six inches to the mile map shows all three LLT beds outcropping within the

area of The Ruffet, although vegetation cover masks these from direct observation. The BGS surveyors between 1900 and 1914 may have used soil augers to identify the geology. Sandy soil can be seen dug out by badgers, and in the root plate of an overturned tree. Details of observations on which the mapping is based may be found in the field notebooks in the GSGB archives at Keyworth, Nottingham.

This small area is shown as woodland on John Rocque's map of Surrey, published in or about 1762, as is nearby Croham Hurst, which is undoubtedly ancient woodland also on LLT soils.

There is no information displayed at the site to identify its name or ownership.

There are points of entry by way of narrow winding paths presumably made and kept clear by local residents. These give access to a roughly circular path mainly some way into the woodland,

away from the garden fences and the road. There is remarkably little litter or obvious dog fouling. There is no fly-tipping, as the road frontage is overlooked by houses opposite. One adjoining garden has a gateway giving access to the woodland, and regrettably at this point garden waste has been deposited, an offence under the Environment Protection Act.

The woodland contains a number of mature oak trees, as well as beech and other native species. At several points the ground flora includes what appears to be (subject to expert confirmation) wild garlic, which may support the suspected ancient woodland status. Only at two points, not close to the dumped garden waste, were two alien species, presumably and regrettably deliberately planted.

The Ruffet is clearly highly valued and well respected by local residents.

References

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Winterman, M.A., 1988, Croydon's parks: an illustrated history. London Borough of Croydon Parks Department: 119pp.

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Nature Notes: Buds and Leaves

By Ted Forsyth

Identifying winter twigs involves examining colour, shape and positioning of buds. An obvious example is the Ash tree which is easily identified by its distinctive black buds. With other species we need to decide whether there are terminal buds, single or multiple, and whether the other buds down the twig occur singly or in pairs. The Woodland Trust has information sheets which can be downloaded, intended to encourage children to get out and discover nature.

Three useful simple sheets are Twig ID (18 species), Autumn Leaf ID (12 species), and Winter Tree ID (7 species). A more comprehensive booklet is produced by the Field Studies Council – Broad-leaved Trees and Shrubs in Winter – more than 50 pages of sketches and description of a wide range of species. There is another booklet on Winter Trees by Price & Bersweden which has photographs of 36 deciduous species showing twigs, bark, etc. There is also Kew's elaborate guide to Identification of Trees and Shrubs in Winter using Buds and Twigs.

Once the leaves start to appear with

the approach of spring it is obvious that leaf shape varies with the tree species. Roughly based on the shape of a circle or ellipse of different sizes we have Hazel, Elm, (the leaves of these two species look very similar but Hazel's are smooth and those of the Elm are rough like sandpaper), Lime, Goat Willow, Alder, Spindle, Apple, Hornbeam, Dogwood, Birch. Hawthorn and Midland Thorn both have leaves whose edges are indented (more deeply on the common Hawthorn), while Blackthorn and Buckthorn edges are either smooth or finely serrated. Both Wild Cherry and Bird Cherry have very finely toothed edges on oval leaves with the Wild Cherry leaf longer than that of the Bird Cherry. Horse Chestnut leaves are distinctive and have five to seven "fingers" – the buds are the equally familiar "sticky buds". Sweet Chestnut leaves are long and glossy and have a toothed edge. Both Pedunculate (English) Oak and Sessile Oak have deeply indented edges but the English Oak leaf has no stalk (but the acorn hangs from a longish stalk or peduncle) and the Sessile Oak leaf

hangs from a long stalk (and the acorn has virtually no stalk. i.e. It is sessile). Turkey Oak leaves are deeply lobed and the acorn cup is covered in many coarse hair-like growths. Holly and Laurel both have thick waxy leaves which are retained through the winter. Unlike most other trees the leaf stalk of the Ash divides into multiple opposite-paired leaflets (pinnate), as do the leaves of Rowan and Elder. Conifers have leaves which are reduced to a needle shape. The above descriptions are rather

vague so a good field guide is necessary to get an ID. Try Collins complete guide to British Trees (photographic) or the Collins Tree Guide which is based on artwork. Many trees tend to hybridise to some extent, e.g. Hawthorn and Midland Thorn, Silver Birch and Downy Birch, and have other trends which mix up the genetics, so the characteristics of an individual tree might not be "pure" and it might not be possible to be certain of the species identity.

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Following a number of fires in the Croham Valley Area the London Fire Brigade have advised us that they offer free home fire safety visits to all residents. This involves local fire fighters, or appointed agents, visiting you in your home. They will identify any potential hazards, offer fire safety advice and fit free smoke alarms if you need them.



LFB in action in Croham Valley

London Fire Brigade offers free home safety visits. Visit their website at www.london-fire.gov.uk

Littleheath Woods – Gravestones, Monoliths or Markers?

By Ian Leggatt, Friends of Littleheath Woods

The Borough of Croydon came into being on 9 June 1883. It was formed largely from the territory of the former parish of Croydon, with the exception of the detached portion of Croydon Crook (Selsdon) which was surrounded by Addington, Farley and Sanderstead Parishes. It was promoted to the status of County Borough, with effect from 29 July 1889 and was enlarged, by taking in the parish of Addington, in 1928. The County Borough ceased to exist when The London Borough of Croydon was created on 1 April 1965. Littleheath Woods straddles the Parish Boundaries of Addington and Croydon and these Borough markers were installed in 1928 when Addington Parish was subsumed by the enlarged County Borough. You may have seen some of these markers on your visits to the Woods.

There are six of these markers in Littleheath Woods, some easy to find, some not so. They were recorded on subsequent Ordnance Survey (OS) maps as a 'B.P.'

but, with the quantity of building which was going on in the area after 1928, perhaps some are not in their original Parish Boundary position. Maybe an opportunity for a family treasure hunt on a warm spring afternoon while you admire the Bluebells? No prizes but a sense of exhilaration when you bag all 6!

If you get the bug then our neighbours on Croham Hurst can provide even more fiendish fun with perhaps 9 markers to find. I haven't managed to locate them all but keep on looking, and with one hiding in plain sight on Croham Valley Road you can get off to a great start. The Croham Hurst markers are Parish Boundary markers defining the extent of Croydon, Addington and Sanderstead Parishes and date from 1888 through to 1920.

Thanks to the website of Croydon Council, the Living History Local Guide No 6, 'Selsdon and Croham', and the National Library of Scotland online OS maps for the above information. Photos by me.



As we approach our 80th birthday, the work of Citizens Advice Croydon has never been more important.

In 1939, the same year the national Citizens Advice service was established, Citizens Advice Croydon opened its doors for the first time.

The service began as an emergency service at the outbreak of World War II, assisting people with a variety of problems such as food shortages, evacuees and bomb damage. Over the decades, the service has evolved and grown to the service it is today, offering advice across a range of problems such as homelessness, money and debt, employment, family and relationships, consumer rights and welfare benefits.

Brian and Donna's story opposite is just one example of the thousands of problems we deal with every year. We are living in an increasingly complex world, where reducing support from statutory services and an economic climate that for many remains bleak, results in an unprecedented demand for our services.

We are only a small charity funded by Croydon Council, grants from trusts and individual donations. Despite the hard work of all our staff and our volunteer team, we know that there are still people in Croydon not getting the help they need.

Make a donation

That's why we are using the next twelve months to celebrate our 80th birthday and to ask local people and local businesses for a little support. Your donation, however small, will make a difference and help us to recruit and train more volunteers, improve our telephone advice service and maintain the opening hours at our South Norwood office.

Volunteer with us

Or maybe you'd just like to donate your time and give back to the community in the form of volunteering. With more volunteer advisers we could listen to more vulnerable Croydoners' concerns and ensure more people like Donna and Brian get the support they desperately need. Wouldn't that be a really rewarding way in which to spend some of your retirement or spare time?

If you would like to help

Please donate via <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1003226>

Or phone Claire on 01689 808139 for donations or to learn more about what CAB do and how you can volunteer.

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Whoever you are, whatever the problem.

Brian and Donna's Story

Brian and Donna, both in their 50's, live together in a small flat in Croydon. Two years ago Donna was diagnosed with breast cancer and forced to quit her office job in order to receive treatment. Her husband, Brian, was struggling to keep up his usual full-time hours as a chef at the same time as caring for his wife.

Unable to manage on reduced wages and Statutory Sick Pay, financial troubles were the last thing they needed when battling cancer together.

Luckily, Citizens Advice Croydon was able to step in and help.

Donna had already made an application for Personal Independence Payment (PIP – a benefit for people with long term health problems and/or disability) before she came to see us but had never received a response.

We helped her process the request, ensuring she was awarded the benefits she was entitled to, as well as a backdated sum that enabled Donna and her husband to pay off their rent arrears. We also helped the couple secure a grant of £380 from Macmillan Cancer Support so that they were able to purchase post-surgery bras and cover the cost of increased heating bills.

**Names have been changed*

Thanks to support from Citizens Advice in Croydon, Donna and Brian are now accessing an additional £215 per week in income, alleviating some of the financial pressures they faced and allowing them to focus on restoring Donna to good health.

Nature Notes: Orchids

By Ted Fordyth

Early Purple orchids are woodland plants which should be in flower by late April. A rival for the earliest orchid to flower is the Early Spider orchid which can be found in large numbers at Samphire Hoe near Dover where the spoil from the digging of the Channel Tunnel was dumped.

Pyramidal orchids are relatively common grassland plants, as are Common Spotted orchids, both occasionally making a sudden appearance in gardens possibly from the dust-fine seed blown in

from another site. As all orchids need the help of an underground fungus to enable them to grow most seed does not succeed in producing a plant but the vast quantity of seed released does at least give them a chance.

In favoured places many species can appear – one such local place is

Farthing Downs where a grassy slope within the woodland can produce Fragrant, Fly, Bee, Man, Twayblade and possibly other species. Marden Meadow in Kent has a field covered in Green-winged orchids.

In Lullingstone Country Park in the



Bird's Nest Orchid



Monkey Orchid

middle of a golf course there is a bank on which grow Fragrant and Lizard orchids (and also has a colony of Dark Green Fritillary butterflies).

Further afield other Kent wildlife reserves produce Lady orchid,

Monkey orchid, Burnt orchid, Greater Butterfly & Lesser Butterfly orchids. On Box Hill can be found Musk orchid, Frog orchid, Autumn Lady's-tresses and Bee orchid. In High Elms in Bromley there is a bank in the middle of the woodland where Bee orchid, Greater Butterfly orchid, Fly orchid and White Helleborine can be found. In the

nearby woodland it is possible to find White, Violet and Broad-leaved Helleborines and Birds Nest orchid. Fragrant orchids grow in another grassy area under the electricity pylons. Along the Featherbed Lane grass verge there have been over 50 Bee orchids seen together with Pyramidal and Common Spotted

Fly Orchid



White Helleborine



Lady Orchid



Man Orchid



orchids. At the northern end, beyond the pumping station, a few White Helleborines grow on the narrow bank under the trees. Some even grow in Forestdale close to the wall of a garage. At the southern end of Featherbed Lane, in the Chapel Bank reserve, as many as nine species of orchid have been recorded including Greater Butterfly orchid, when it has not been eaten by slugs or deer, and in the “set aside” field at the far end there have been up to eighty of the relatively rare Man orchid.

On a visit to the London Wetland Centre you could find Marsh orchid, Bee orchid and others.

On Riddlesdown, apart from seeing Pyramidal and Common Spotted orchids along the way a walk to the far end, where the path starts to enter trees, you might find a few Green-flowered Helleborines growing at the edge of the path. North of London, visiting wildlife reserves will often produce other species some of which are rare and are specially protected – Military orchid, Red Helleborine, Lady’s-Slipper. This last species has one site in Yorkshire and the others are restricted to two or three sites. If there is one plant which has to be considered as rare in Britain it must be the Ghost orchid. There have

been no records for many years but in one area where it did grow it re-appeared after a gap of over 60 years so there is always a chance it will be found again. There is a suggestion that it can flower underground so this might be another reason for lack of sightings. There are over 50 potential orchid species to be found in Britain and Ireland and several books have been written by people who have spent a year trying to find them all – it needs a lot of travelling! (My thanks to Martin Wills who has shown me many of these orchids).



Greater Butterfly Orchid

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Croydon Council

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All the Councillors can be contacted either on the web (My Councillor Croydon) or by post: c/o Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR0 1NX.

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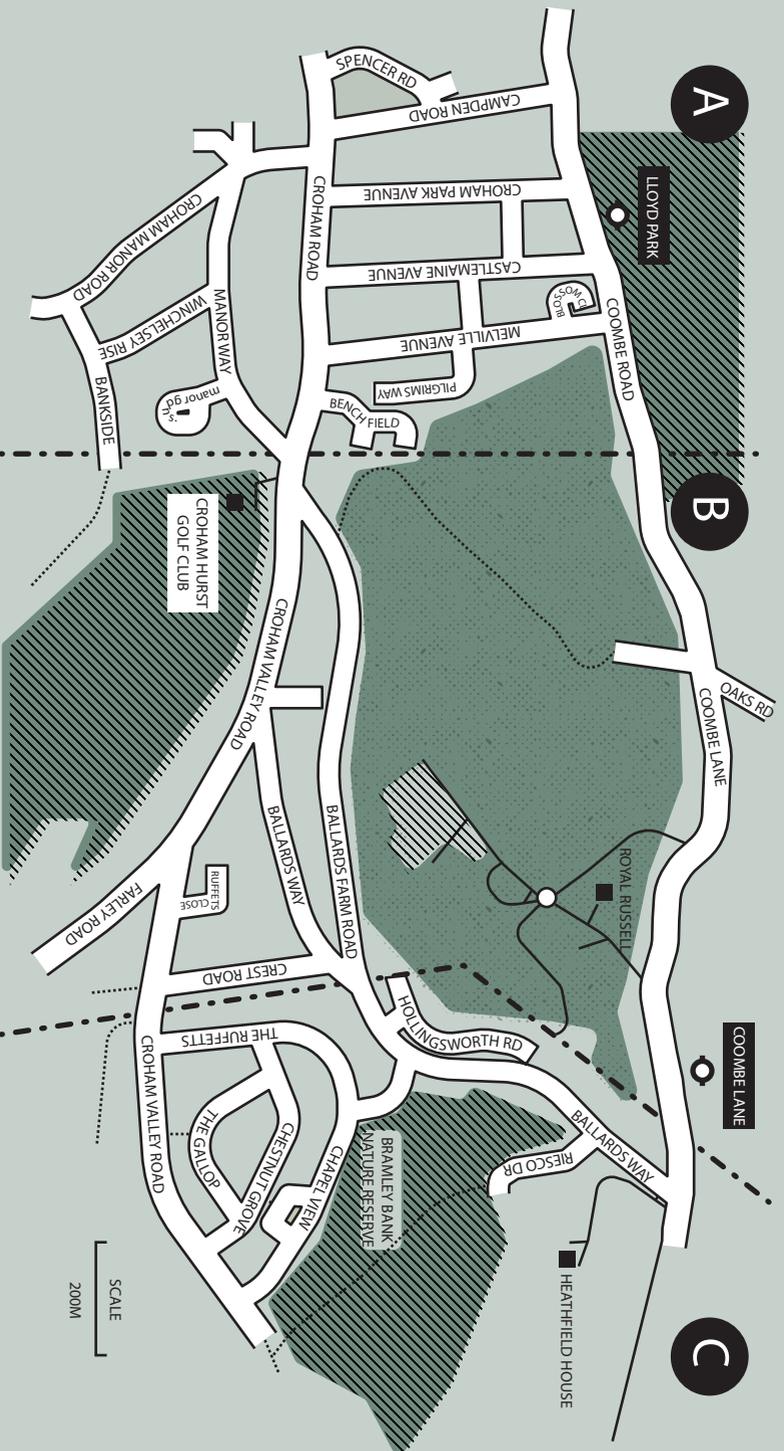
Blue topped wheelie bin: paper. Collection fortnightly

Old large wheelie bin: plastic, glass, metal. Collection fortnightly

New small wheelie bins: landfill. Collection fortnightly

Textiles should be bagged and left out for collection weekly

www.croydon.gov.uk/environment



The above map indicates the areas that are covered by each association's representatives in respect of planning application or any other matters of concern. The phone numbers to contact for each are as follows:

A. 020 8688 9558 / B. 020 8657 8787 / C. 020 8657 6585