

THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 104

December 2012

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Firstly I would like to draw your attention to the appeal that was made in our last newsletter for a volunteer to take over from John Angel as our Honorary Registrar who is retiring next year. John admits the job is not too onerous and takes less than a couple of hours a week. No great computer skills are needed; just an orderly mind and access to a computer and training could be provided if necessary. If you can help us out, or would like to discuss this then please contact **John Angel (01737) 242672** johnangel170@btinternet.com

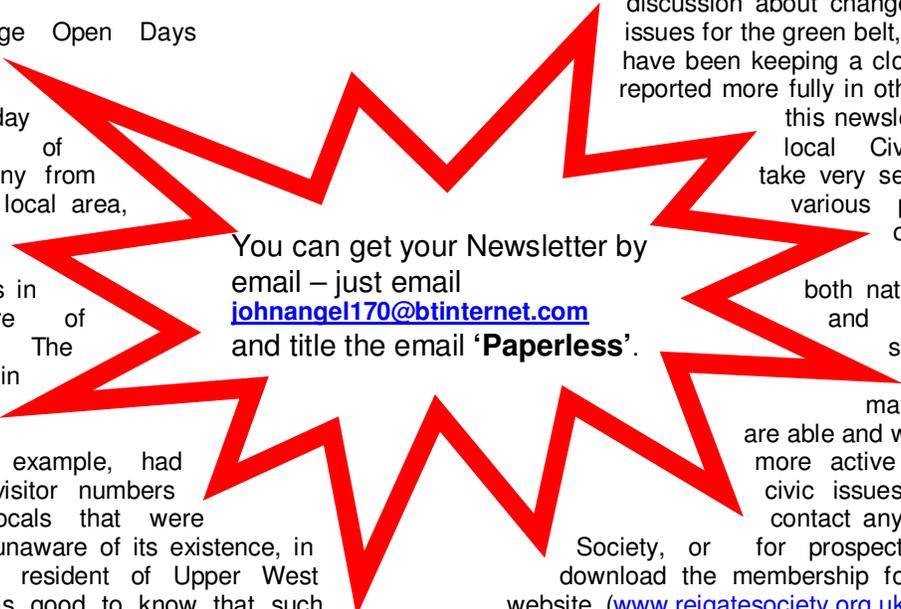
The Heritage Open Days (HODs) was another successful day with lots of visitors, many from outside the local area, coming to visit the various sites in the centre of Reigate. The Undercroft in Upper West Street for example, had significant visitor numbers including locals that were completely unaware of its existence, in particular a resident of Upper West Street. It is good to know that such events are bringing the history of Reigate to peoples' attention. Our thanks go to Michèle Damer for all her hard work and infectious enthusiasm that led to this success.

After a rather slow start I am pleased to report that we have had an excellent response to our request for submissions for a piece of street art to be placed in Priory Park to acknowledge our 60th anniversary. Out of the 50 submissions we are able, after much discussion, to produce a short list of 8 that were the subject of a vote at the recent members' evening. Based on this ballot we have two options that we will be discussing with the Priory Park team. When this has been finalised we will let you know more details.

Also at the recent members' evening we were able to present Civic Awards to four worthy recipients, Gatton Park Parterre, Kidsunlimited Nursery, The Assembly and Churchill Close. You may have seen the excellent article in the recent Surrey Mirror, many thanks to them for recognising such good examples of local architecture. More details of the projects and our comments are given in this Newsletter and also on our website.

Over the last few months there has been a lot of discussion about changes in planning issues for the green belt, something we have been keeping a close eye on, as reported more fully in other sections of this newsletter. As your local Civil Society we take very seriously all the various pressures on our local environment, both natural and built, and need your support in these matters. If you are able and willing to take a more active role in local civic issues then please contact any officer of the Society, or for prospective members download the membership forms from our website (www.reigatesociety.org.uk).

Another initiative we are pursuing is with regard to the long awaited refurbishment and repairs to the Reigate Priory building, in particular the Museum, which has been closed for a considerable period. We have written to Reigate and Banstead Council and Surrey County Council expressing our concern and pointing out their obligations in maintaining this building. The only response to date is a letter from Cllr Joan Spiers indicating that the financial problems of Surrey and R&B Councils are not so severe as to preclude any necessary repairs and maintenance and that she will raise it as an agenda item at the Public Sector Board on 19th November. Let us hope this results in some positive action.



You can get your Newsletter by email – just email johnangel170@btinternet.com and title the email 'Paperless'.

I have not reminded you for a while but free vouchers are available for RS members to visit most Nation Trust Properties and English Heritage properties on limited dates. To download a voucher please go to the address below and add your details, select the Reigate Society option from the drop down menu and print off the voucher.

<http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/partners/the-national-trust/national-trust-special-offer-2012/>

<http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/partners/english-heritage/english-heritage-civic-voice-pass-2012/>

Alan Mortlock

01737 244407

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Members' Evening was held in the Woodhatch Centre on Monday 8th October. The venue was again very full with members who had secured tickets. Some had waited right up until the afternoon of the event to see whether there were any returns which would mean they could attend. The evening followed more or less the usual pattern with the exception of a vote taken for design of the 60th Anniversary piece of Street Art which will be installed in Priory Park. Alan Mortlock welcomed Members and presented the four Civic Award winners with their certificates. These awards are detailed in Gwyther Joyce's Architectural and Planning Committee's Report elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Following the Civic Award presentation, refreshments and the 60th Anniversary vote Bruce Healey, a member, gave an interesting and entertaining illustrated talk on the Croydon, Merstham, and Godstone Railway. The Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Railway (1805 – 1938) was an extension of the Surrey Iron Railway (the World's first public railway). The CM&G never reached Godstone owing to a lack of funds. Looking little like present day railways, the horse drawn CM&G was not a total success and was purchased and superseded by the London & Brighton Railway. There are some remains of the line alongside the A23 north of Merstham. Questions and Answers followed and the evening drew to a close shortly before 10pm.

We are beginning to search for a larger venue which may be difficult to find. The Woodhatch Centre is the ideal venue apart from its size.

The new season of **Open Meetings** starts on **7th November** at Reigate Baptist Church at 8.15pm with Lester Hicks' talk on "Reigate Stone and its History". **Lester Hicks** is a planning consultant and from 1997 to 2007 was Deputy Director of Planning in the Department for Communities and Local Government. He is now Chairman of the UK Minerals Forum. From the 11th to the 16th centuries Reigate Stone was the principal English source of masonry for prestigious church and state buildings in London and the Thames Valley

– used extensively at Westminster Abbey and Windsor Castle. This talk follows and illustrates the rise, fall – and in places survival – of Reigate's major contribution to our national heritage.

Cherrill Sands will give a talk on **13th December** in Priory School, Bell Street at 8.15pm entitled "Twentieth Century Gardens". Cherrill Sands is a garden & landscape historian and her talk covers the period from 1919. It will show the influence of modern architecture, art, space travel and ecology on landscape and formal gardens.

24th January sees the first Open meeting of **2013**. St. Mark's Hall, Alma Road is the venue for the talk "Taking on the Climate Challenge". A look at how global warming affects us and at some possible solutions in the little time we have available. Scientist **Dr. Rob Basto** has been campaigning on climate change issues for the last ten years and has been involved in direct action campaigns, most recently against 'fracking' – the controversial exploitation of shale gas.

Emma Sheridan-Smith is giving a talk on "Local Mills and the SPAB Mills Section" on **February 21st**. This talk in the Tanners and Woolsack Rooms of The Harlequin will cover the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings involvement in all aspects of the survival of buildings which are old or interesting. Emma Sheridan-Smith is administrator of the Mills Section dealing with traditional windmills and watermills. The penultimate meeting on the 2012/2013 Programme will take place on **18th March** at the usual time of 8.15pm in the Reigate Methodist Community Centre. **Rob Davies**, Surrey Wildlife Trust's Ancient Woodlands Officer, will give a talk "Surrey's Ancient Woodland". Woodland that has existed since at least 1600 AD is termed ancient and all the areas in Surrey have recently been re-mapped. This will enable the sites to be sympathetically managed for both biodiversity and sustainable economic development. We then finish the season with the AGM in the Woodhatch Centre at 8.15pm on 1st July. Claudia Payne who organises the Programme of Open Meeting Talks so well, booking venues and speakers, is keeping us guessing about the Talk which will follow the

AGM, so lookout for an announcement in following Newsletters.

Speaking of Newsletters you can receive your newsletter by email if you send John Angel (johnangel170@btinternet.com) your email address. You will be one of the first people to receive the Newsletter hot off the press!

We look forward to seeing you at the Open Meetings; you can also bring friends! Do take a look at the Society's website www.reigatesociety.org.uk. which is regularly updated with what is going on in the Society.

Mrs Michèle Damer (01737 243513) Email: heathfieldstables@dial.pipex.com

TREASURER'S NOTES

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS were due from the 1st April 2012 and the current MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Individual Members | £8 |
| Family Members | £12 |
| Corporate Members | £25 |

Those of you who pay by bankers order should ensure that your Bank has the correct instructions for your subscription payment.

There is a payment form on page 7.

Charles Wragg (01737) 210640.

REGISTRAR'S NOTES

WHERE IS MY REPLACEMENT? WHERE IS THAT VOLUNTEER?

In the last Newsletter I told you that I will be retiring from this post at the next AGM (2013) and asked for a volunteer to take over the job. So far we haven't heard from anyone! If we don't find someone before the AGM then the next Newsletter (March) will be the last one to be delivered! So PLEASE think about it. I have said that it is not an arduous job. You work in your own time. It takes me, on average, a total of about 2-3 hours per week. Surely someone out there can give the Society that amount of time. PLEASE contact me, or one of the other Officers, and let's talk about the job!

Now for the normal report and the good news is that we have enrolled 11 new members since the last Newsletter.

The new members are:-

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mr & Mrs R Bennett | Mr J Stacey |
| Mr C & Mrs C Maidment | Mrs L Lewis |
| Mr & Mrs M Fell | Mrs J Fuchs |
| Mr J Millie | Mrs L McCulloch |

PLEASE THINK about being my replacement or persuading someone else to come forward!

John Angel (01737) 242672

Email: johnangel170@btinternet.com

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

This is the 5th year that the Reigate Society has co-ordinated the publicity for Reigate and Banstead's Heritage Open Days' event and hopefully all members of the Society were aware it was taking place! The Undercroft in Reigate was opened and manned by various committee members and members on the Saturday of the event. So many visitors commented that they regularly walk past the building above the Undercroft but have no idea what lay hidden below.

Twenty- four other venues in nine towns/villages in the Borough took part. Many, not only opening their doors to the public, but put on special events as well, exhibitions, recitals, tours led by volunteers with specific knowledge and some also provided refreshments as well.

I have now received all the post event forms back and am pleased to be able to report that approximately 8,500 visitors took advantage of the event. The Countryside Open day saw most of those but 3 venues had over 400 visitors each. The Brochure and Poster were designed and

collated by a member and printed by CIP. The Society's web master uploaded the brochure onto the Reigate Society's website in June. The brochure was also on the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council web site near the date of the event, and all venues registered with Heritage Open Days were featured on their web site too. The Surrey Mirror highlighted the event twice in their newspaper as did the Borough News.

The 3,200 brochures and 200 posters were distributed firstly to all the venues; then to Libraries and Help Shops in the Borough and then to 53 commercial outlets in Reigate, Banstead, Kingswood, Horley, Redhill, Buckland, Tadworth, Chipstead, Walton on the Hill and Dorking.

We thank Surrey County Council Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) who contributed funding for the printing costs of the brochures and A4 Posters, and also all the volunteers who gave of their time and enthusiasm and who made the event possible.

The 2012 event takes place from 6th – 9th September. If anyone knows of suitable venues which could be include please contact the Society. The initial contact to venues is made in March and copy for the brochure needs to be received by the middle of May.

Michèle Damer

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

CHAIRMAN: GWYTHYR JOYCE (01737) 249434

The last few months has seen our plans for improving the public face of the Society web site come to fruition with the Architecture & Planning pages added, so that all planning applications the A&P Committee have dealt with are exhibited for members viewing. Also the publication of this year's A&P Civic Awards winning submissions. Along with all other committees we will endeavour to continue improving our web site offering, and any suggestions are welcome.

Those who came along to the presentation at this years Civic Awards ceremony in the Woodhatch Centre will have been pleasantly surprised at the quality of offerings, including the Kidsunlimited pre-school facility on Cockshot Hill, reinstatement of the Parterre at Gatton Park, the Assembly development of the old St Bede's school at Frenches Road Redhill, and Churchill Close. All of the projects gave the adjudicators great satisfaction in that they demonstrate there are developers who care passionately about quality building and architectural design and make the effort to carry out their developments to the best standard possible which benefits our community and the Reigate and Banstead built environment. Looking to the wider picture of planning and development applications in the borough, the two which will impact most are the Horley North West Development of 1,500 dwellings with feeder roads onto the A217 and A23, as well as the major new developments proposed for Redhill including 3

supermarkets, cinema complex and station car park development. It remains to be seen what actually is implemented in Redhill as we have already seen Sainsbury's modify their proposal by removing the planned hotel which was to have been set on top of the new store.

More recently, the Committee has taken upon itself the task of making a determined effort to resolve the unfortunate condition of Reigate Priory, Museum and Holbein Hall, which sadly are not being given the care and attention they deserve. This lack of care is demonstrated in the apparent unwillingness of the authorities to rectify flood damage inflicted on the roof of the building in 2010 resulting in the removal of the museum exhibits.

The Reigate Society considers the Priory, a Grade 1 Listed Building to be the single most important Listed Building in the Borough, not just because it is the jewel in the Priory Park crown, at the centre of historic Reigate, but as I am sure you will all know, because our Society began its very existence 60 years ago with the aim of protecting the Priory and its surrounding beautiful parkland. We have therefore set ourselves the task of ensuring long overdue action is taken by the Borough and County Councils to bring the Priory and its museum back to a proper condition by the end of 2013, the 40th anniversary of the Museum.

REDHILL

CHAIRMAN: GERRY MOSS (01737) 765508

Alan Mortlock, Gerry Moss, Gwyther Joyce and I, met with the Policy Division on 12 July. There was a very frank exchange of views on

correspondence in the *Surrey Mirror*, and on a number of issues arising from The Redhill Town Area Action Plan. On the correspondence we

explained our view that the public should be made aware of critical areas of planning developments.

On the Action Plan made plain our views and especially our disappointment with the limited proposals for addressing the improvement of both the public realm in the town and the development areas so far subject to planning permission and the general shortage of vision for a green belt town. It was accepted that the Action Plan lacked a clear vision of the future identity of the town which would be addressed in the next draft. The Society expressed its concerns on the parking policy. It was pointed out that development of the Gloucester Road car park would not take place till the end of the planning period. However, we considered that this, the only interceptor car park, must be retained. If the town flourished but parking facilities were proved to be excessive (perhaps an unlikely event), a site for a departmental store might be required and the exchange of Gloucester Road for Clarendon Road would provide that.

Exchanges on the results of the Redhill Town Centre Traffic Modelling Report were also frank and we gave in a long list of questions to clarify the actual proposals. No response to these has been received. We established that prima facie the traffic advantages of Option 1 over Option 2 are not superficial but substantial and should be further evaluated before a decision is made in favour of Option 2 (which trades traffic advantages for doubtful advantages to pedestrians and cyclists). However, the Borough maintained that, although no decision has been taken between the Options, only Option 2 would be tested for viability. This is most unsatisfactory. With normal growth in traffic after 2016 (beyond which year traffic growth has not been projected), congestion is likely to return, this time in the core of the town.

At the Planning Inspector's meeting to consider the Borough Core Strategy held on 29 August, it emerged that he was either not satisfied or required more detail on a number of points. Accordingly, there is a further delay of between six to nine months for the Borough officers to make good the deficiencies. I really need to

consult the Society's historian to discover when the Core Strategy first began to be considered. If much more time elapses we shall need to consider a revision of an Archimedean law, perhaps as follows:

"When a Council is immersed in the construction of a Borough plan, the time taken to construct an acceptable plan is equal to or exceeds the period for which the plan is designed."

The Society has put in its views to the Inspector on the Borough's proposals for changes to the Redhill roads. The next public hearing is likely to be in April or May of 2013. Council elections are due to be held then.

The following day the A & P Committee with a Redhill representative met with Borough Planning Officers. There it emerged that there is to be a substantial change in the format of the Plans. The Borough Plan will consist of a Core Strategy and a plan dealing with Development Management Policies. After all the exchanges over at least five years there is to be no Redhill Town Centre Area Action Plan. My interpretation of this is that, for all its generalisations, the Plan was likely to be too restrictive for comfort. It would be better to go on with ad hoc development as parcels of land come up for development, as has been the feature of recent years, without the constraints of a Town Plan. The Management Policies will cover aspects which will affect Redhill, such as the roads. As set out above, only Option 2 is to be tested.

The Committee is due to meet representatives from Solum on 27 November to consider the plans for the Station Car Park and associated sites. We are hopeful that such a meeting may be more effective than advancing views at the time the planning application, after consultations with the Borough, is put in. But we shall do that as well.

Members who have read the Newsletters over the past few years will wonder just when this saga of Borough plans will be finalised. I do myself. Perhaps you are confident that your elected representatives will see these plans through to a satisfactory conclusion. I wish I could share such optimism.

Harry Ingram (Secretary)

TRANSPORT

CHAIRMAN: JOHN CHITTENDEN (01737) 242328

The Committee has been considering the implications on transport of the proposed development of additional housing. The bulk of the new residents will use personal transport if self-employed or employed on a part time or casual basis by different employers at different

locations and times, they will require secure off road parking.

Materials for the construction of this housing should be sourced locally or within the UK for it to be in the best interests of the environment, economy and employment. If construction access

to the proposed development site is via a narrow road, this should be strengthened and widened to a minimum width of 7.3m and the standard height clearance. It is suggested that a low cost interchange connection be made to the M23 motorway where there is an existing bridge over or under this "Special Road" and that the highway between this interchange and the development sites be strengthened and widened.

By routing the incoming and returning Construction and Haul Route traffic via the Merstham Motorway Interchange to the proposed new M23 junction the following benefits may be established:

- A reduction in construction and haul route traffic through both Redhill and Reigate with a consequent reduction in congestion and pollution.

- Conservation areas are given some protection.
- A reduction in traffic through the villages of Godstone, Bletchingley and Nutfield, at Reigate Rail Level crossing and at Horley and Bones Lane.
- The Developers transport costs will be reduced.
- The provision of a new Motorway Junction South of the Merstham Motorway Interchange may make it possible to effect a saving by the deletion of the proposed, but relatively poor, improvement to the A23 / M23 junction North of Merstham.

NATURAL AMENITIES

CHAIRMAN: COLIN BURBIDGE (01737) 245264

Reigate Heath

Steve Farrer has been elected the new chairman of the committee.

The new management plan has been produced. The heath users are being kept informed about the various required works being carried out and progress has been made with signage, dog bins and benches. Ensuring that people understand the reasons for carrying out various tasks is important.

The committee is aware of the need for maintaining funding and is taking appropriate action.

70 volunteers from Canon together with Reigate Area Conservation Volunteers and the Council's Countryside team removed 5 tonnes of leaf litter from some of the tumuli on the Heath. Last year's clearing of organic materials from the Glade is bearing fruit.

There are now huge numbers of heather seedlings growing from the natural seed bank.

Jane Sevenoaks from Natural England had visited the Heath and was expected to produce a report.

This is a lively hard working committee which tries to ensure the preservation and reclamation of the Heath whilst taking into account the views of the wide variety of Heath users.

Wray Common

Discussions have been held with borough officers with regard to the mowing regime being utilised on the common. Various alternatives which might increase the wild flower populations in certain areas across the common were considered. A detailed schedule of proposals are awaited for us to submit comments on.

Memorial Park

A revised plan for the proposed overhaul of the memorial Park in Redhill has been revealed. This differs considerably from the original plan which centred on a flood relief scheme to be built into the brook. The brook does not feature in the new scheme and would seem to be confined to an underground culvert. Apparently the bulk of the funding is in place and a project team is to be established before the end of the year. The Society will be commenting on the plan particularly as it provided some of the trees in the existing park and it is not clear what will happen to these. Delivery of the completed scheme is expected in late 2013 / early 2014.

The Reigate Society

President: Nicholas Owen

Chairman: Alan Mortlock, 3 Gatton Close, Reigate, RH2 0HG. Tel: 01737 244407

Hon. Secretary: Michèle Damer, Heathfield Stables, Reigate Heath, Reigate, RH2 8AA. Tel: 01737 243513

Hon. Treasurer: Charles Wragg, 3 Weald Way, Reigate, RH2 7RG. Tel: 01737 210640

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Note that all addresses are of Reigate town and all telephone numbers have the code 01737, unless otherwise stated

| | Address | Business |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Bakers Radio Ltd | 6 Western Parade, Prices lane RH2 8AU (240543 / 242322) | TV, Electrical Retailers |
| Care Unlimited | Chaldon Rise Mews, Rockshaw Road, Merstham RH1 3DE (645171 / 646266) | Care Homes |
| Care Homes of Distinction Ltd | Wray Park, 55 Alma Road RH2 0DN (242778) | Care Homes & Property Development |
| Crow Watkin | 14 Bell Street RH2 7BE (245886) | Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers |
| Dunottar School | High Trees Road, RH2 7EL (761945) | |
| East Surrey College | Claremont Road, Gatton Point, Redhill RH1 2JX (772611) | |
| Iain Johnston | 4 Chart Lane (244160) | Podiatrist |
| Michael Jones & Associates | Crossway House, 8 London Road RH2 9HY (245610) | Engineering Consultants – Building Services |
| Keymex Ltd | 59-61 Bell Street RH2 7AQ (240171) | Domestic Appliance Sales, Service & Repairs |
| Holmesdale Building Society | 43 Church Street RH2 0AE (245716) | Your local Building Society for all your mortgage and investment needs |
| La Barbe Restaurant | 71 Bell Street RH2 7AN (241966) | Restaurant & Outside Catering |
| Micklefield School | 10 Somers Road RH2 9DU (242615 / 224211 / 224212) | Independent Preparatory School for boys and girls age 2 ¹ / ₂ to 11 |
| Ormerods | Suite 4, Chapter House, 33 London Road RH2 9HZ (0208 686 5000) | Solicitors |
| Reigate Architects | 59 Nutley Lane, RH2 9HP (222099) | Architecture and Sustainability |
| Reigate Heath Golf Club | Reigate Heath, RH2 8QR (226793) | Golf Club |
| Reigate Priory Cricket Club | Park Lane, RH2 8JX (244477) | Cricket Club with senior & junior sections |
| Reigate Priory School | Bell Street RH2 7RL (245065 / 240229) | |
| Royal Alexandra & Albert School | Gatton Park, RH2 0TW (649050) | Boarding school for boys and girls ages 7 to 18 |
| Stanton Construction | 1 Castlefield Road RH2 0SA (227430) | Development & construction service to industry, public & commercial sectors |
| Stentor Music Co Ltd | Albert Road North, RH2 9EZ (240226) | Manufacturers and Distributors of Musical Instruments |
| Stoneman Funeral Service | Doran Court, Reigate Road, Redhill RH1 6AZ (763456) | Funeral Directors & Memorial Craftsmen |
| TWM Solicitors LLP | 40 West Street RH2 9BT (221212) | Solicitors |
| White & Sons | 24 High Street RH2 9AY (222600) | Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers |