



THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 98

December 2010

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

My appeal in the last Newsletter for possible candidates for the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman has fallen on deaf ears.

As I explained on that occasion and previously at the AGM, under our constitution, I have to stand down and cannot continue in even a temporary capacity. Our current Vice Chair, Claudia Payne, is unwilling to take on the chairmanship yet again and although I am willing to take on the vice chairmanship from July 2011 it would be for one year only. However I am not prepared to undertake that role in the absence of an elected Chairman. The Society is therefore approaching a crisis point and possible disbandment unless these posts can be filled.

There is a notice in this Newsletter outlining what would be required to fill these roles. It is emphasised that all the other tasks currently undertaken by myself (chairman of Natural Amenities Committee, compiling and producing the newsletter, keeping and operating the digital projector and sound system) and Claudia (finding speakers and organising Open Meetings) are **NOT** included. These are totally separate and fall outside the duties of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Please read this notice and, even if you are not prepared to stand yourself, you may know somebody else who you think might be persuaded to do so. **The Society is in severe peril unless there is a positive response.** It needs your help!

You will see from the Registrar's Notes that some progress has been made in moving towards our objective of universal electronic communication with the membership and those of you whose

email addresses we have received already will know that distribution of this Newsletter has been sent to you in this way. Well over a hundred will receive this issue by email. If you have an email address please consider letting us use it to communicate with you.

I draw your attention also to the Treasurer's Notes which refer to the new subscription rates which will apply from next April. This is the last opportunity to remind you to amend your banker's order if you need to do so before the new rates become effective. **Do it now before you forget!**

I make no apology for mentioning the state of our roads yet again. I am convinced that the more complaints that are made the more likely it is that some action will ensue so I continue to encourage as many people as possible to report road problems through www.fixmystreet.com as a very convenient way of doing this.

Daneshill eventually reopened after the last Newsletter was distributed but the state of the surface in Raglan Road is still absolutely atrocious. As I write, this road has been marked up for repair but no repair work has yet been carried out.

In the April Newsletter I mentioned that the change of ownership of **Gatwick Airport** had decreased the possibility of a second runway being built. Since then the Coalition Government has announced its decision not to build any new runways in the South East. This has been welcomed by GACC chairman Brendon Sewill but he also warned that the new owners, an international financial company, were basically only concerned to make the airport more profitable so that it could be sold again in a few years time.

Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Heritage Open Days were held from 9th to 12th September. Twenty four venues and events were involved. In spite of poor weather the feedback has been positive, though some recorded lower visitors. The Undercroft manned by volunteers from The Society had 124 visitors a slight increase from the 118 last year. We also had electricity, so were able to use the normal lighting instead of candles which we had to resort to last year.

Our thanks are due to the volunteers and especially to Michèle Damer for her work in coordinating the whole event and the production of the publicity brochure and leaflets.

We are also grateful to the Borough who funded the printing through the Councillors' Community Awards of Councillors Mantle, Newstead, Wagner and Whinney.

Once again the **Members' Evening** was held at the Woodhatch Centre on Monday 11th October. It was a full house of seventy who turned up to enjoy the evening. After the usual buffet supper and glass of wine the Society's Civic Awards were presented by our President, Nicholas Owen. These are detailed in Tom Godfrey's Architecture & Planning report in this Newsletter. After the formal part of the meeting, Nicholas Owen gave us an entertaining talk which he had called "**Not quite 50 years reporting**". He recalled many of his experiences as a journalist both in Newspapers and broadcasting. It was full of interesting and amusing anecdotal incidents.

The winter series of meetings kicked off on Thursday 4th November at Holmesdale School with an illustrated talk on the "**Old Surrey Downs Project**" given by its manager, Alec Baxter-Brown. He outlined the work being carried out to restore chalk grassland in Surrey and South London involving 25 sites, including Box Hill, Reigate and Colley Hills. This chalk downland, laid down 70 – 100 million years ago, is characterised by being dry and nutrient poor habitat with thin soils. Its vegetation is very diverse resulting in up to 50 plant species per square metre. This results in a wide variety of insects some of which are found only on this chalk grassland. The small blue butterfly is one such species and only lays its eggs on kidney vetch. Much of the work is carried out by volunteers who help to clear the encroaching

scrubland and tend the sheep, cattle and goats which the project uses to maintain the habitat. The work is supported by Heritage Lottery Grants. These will need to be renegotiated soon as the project is in the last year of its present six years plan.

On Thursday 2nd December at The Priory School in Bell Street, Reigate, Ros Black's talk is intriguingly entitled "**Duxhurst, Lady Henry Somerset's village for inebriate women**". This will be based on her recent book about the life of Lady Henry Somerset. Ros Black focuses on the village Lady Henry built at Duxhurst, south of Sidlow, which became a charitable community. It should be an excellent evening.

On Thursday 27th January, at St Mark's Church Hall in Alma Road, Reigate, Dennis Newland will give an illustrated talk entitled "**From Dolphins to Orchids: my British wildlife**". Dennis Newman is a wildlife photographer and amateur photographer. He has travelled all over the world but his talk to The Society will be about our own wildlife which he has photographed in this country.

On Thursday 4th February Pippa Martin will be talking in the Tanners & Woolsack Rooms at the Harlequin in Redhill. Her talk is entitled "**The Redwing Story: a saga in the Golden Era of Aviation**". John Lane (Pippa's father) became Managing Director & Chairman of the Redwing. It designed, built and flew Redwing aircraft at Croydon Airport; briefly owned the now Gatwick Airport; and repaired Wellingtons & Lysanders during the war.

Our last Open Meeting of the winter will be on Thursday 24th March in Redhill UR Church Hall in Hatchlands Road. Sean Hawkins has entitled his talk "**Some famous Reigate connections**".

All these Open Meetings start at 8.15pm and are given on your Programme cards. Details of these and much more can also be seen on the Society's web site www.reigatesociety.org.uk.

Michael Hellings

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URGENTLY NEEDED

The Society is in desperate need of two members who are willing to put themselves forward as

CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

These posts are at present held by Colin Burbidge and Claudia Payne. But our constitution only allows for them to remain in these posts for five years. So at the next AGM in July 2011 they have to stand down.

Unless we find replacements the Society will have to close!

The Chairman is the key representative of the Society and influences and coordinates the Society's activities. There are eight meetings during the year which need to be chaired; one AGM, three Council Meetings and four General Purposes Meetings. The papers for these meetings are sent out by email and the Society is moving towards electronic communication with its members. The Chairman will be supported and helped by other members of the committees especially in the early months and, as you will have noticed, the post is for a limited time of five years.

The post of Vice Chairman is even less demanding and really consists of supporting the Chairman.

We really need to get candidates for the two posts identified shortly after Christmas, so that they can see what is involved and become accustomed to the ways and routines of the Society. The posts are interesting, rewarding and give an insight into the working of the Borough. If you are interested and wish to find out more, give Colin, Claudia or Michael a phone call and we can discuss it.

Colin Burbidge 245264

Claudia Payne 244421

Michael Hellings 245342

TREASURER'S NOTES

Let me remind you that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS were due on the 1st April 2010 and the MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

Individual Members	£5
Family Members	£8
Corporate Members	£25

There is a payment form on page 8.

You are reminded that the rates will change on **1st April 2011.**

If you pay by bankers order you may need to change the instructions to your bank if you have not already done so.

The **new minimum rates** will be:

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

Charles Wragg

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REGISTRAR'S NOTES

After the good recruitment numbers in the last Newsletter, I am sorry to say that we are only welcoming three new ordinary members and one new corporate member this time. Please give me a Christmas present of a lot more members. I can handle as many as you can get me.

The new members are:

Ms R Challis Mr R Williams Ms R Cupper

And the Corporate member is:

Stoneman Funeral Service.

As you may remember from previous Newsletters, we have been asking for members email addresses so that we would be able to canvass for members' opinions, if we ever needed a quick response to a critical issue. It also would helpful to send out the Newsletters by email. We have been doing this for a few members for some time now but we would like to extend it to even more members. This would reduce our printing and postage costs. It would also reduce the amount of shoe leather used by

our corps of members who deliver Newsletters to your door! To this end we have circulated those whose addresses we have and received an almost unanimous acceptance for the receipt of newsletters by this route. Any member preferring the old method can, of course, continue to receive a hard copy. However, for the foreseeable future the Annual Report and the Programme will still be available only as hard copy.

If you have an email address and have not yet given it to us, please let us have it and indicate whether or not you would like your Newsletter delivered by this means.

Can I finish with my usual request: that if you have any query about your subscription payments, would you please phone or email **ME**, not the Treasurer. I have all the payment records.

Thank you.

John Angel

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The Reigate Society

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Hon. Secretary: Michael Hellings, 53 West Street, Reigate, RH2 9BZ. Tel: 01737 245342

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

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Chairman: Tom Godfrey (01737) 243590

As the last Newsletter went to press, we learnt that the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council were consulting on the revisions to the Core Strategy, one of the documents forming a major part of the Local Development Framework which is to replace the Local Plan which, in turn, sets out the policies for determining planning applications in the Borough.

Despite this consultation taking place during the holiday period, both this Committee and the Redhill Committee were able to formulate objections and make representations on this document.

It turned out that the alterations proposed were made to address the criticisms made by the Inspector into the Inquiry into the Core Strategy which took place early in 2010 and which were set out in the last Newsletter. These criticisms were principally the lack of flexibility for the delivery of housing with an unjustified reliance on windfalls, and the failure to engage with transport planning for the Redhill-Reigate hub.

The Redhill Committee looked at the transport issues and we looked primarily at the question of housing numbers.

The Core Strategy retains the figures proscribed for housing numbers following the Examination In Public (i.e. 9240 dwellings) without any comment. The current advice from the Government is that:

“Local authorities may wish to review their plans following the revocation of Regional Strategies. We recommend reviews should be undertaken as quickly as possible.”

We felt that the opportunity should have been taken to carry out such a review, but we have since learnt that a further **draft** edition of the Core Strategy is coming out for consultation in January 2011 with a pre-submission consultation in May 2011.

Any moment now we are expecting an early consultation on the Development Management and Site Allocations Development Document

which starts putting the meat into the policies of the Core Strategy,

We were also promised a further consultation on the Redhill Area Action Plan this October but this has not happened so far.

Beyond this, we are waiting for the Government to produce its Localism Bill which is supposed to tell us about the new approach to Planning.

Turning now to the current applications in the Borough, we are still awaiting progress on the Tesco application and there appears to have been no progress since our last Newsletter apart from some movement on the question of the flood risks. Presumably Tesco are still trying to sort out the relocation of the sub-station with EDF.

There is no progress with regard to the footpath through the Priory but it is believed that consent has been given for the floodlights for the Old Reigatians Rugby Club. The application went to Committee on Wednesday 27th October with a recommendation to approve but the decision has not yet appeared on the Council's website.

It will be remembered that we were concerned (in company with the London Green Belt Council) about the effect of the General Permitted Development Order which enabled landowners to make substantial extensions to their properties in the Green Belt without obtaining planning consent.

We wrote to our MP, Mr Crispin Blunt, raising this point and we duly received a response from the Minister for Decentralisation, the Rt Hon Greg Clark whose responsibilities include planning policy and the Big Society.

He indicated that there was no intention to change this Order and suggested that Local Authorities could remove this concession by imposing what is known as an Article 4 Direction. We had already raised this course of action with the Borough which felt it was an inappropriate course for them to take independently of other Authorities since the Metropolitan Green Belt is a National Policy and the problem requires a National solution. We have made this point to Mr Blunt and await a further response.

Lastly, two awards were made by the Society and

presented at the Annual Members' Evening. They are as follows:

Cullenders Shop Front in Linkfield Street, Redhill.

Cullenders opened their first delicatessen store at the corner of Linkfield Street and Elm Road in a renovation of a long unoccupied building which was converted into flats but retaining the shop.

This development is a good example of sensitive refurbishment to a disused shop and in particular its shop front, which has produced a fitting addition to the area.

The existing architectural features of light coloured brick highlighted by red string courses and arched window heads are found in the row of houses of which the shop forms an integral part.

The quality of the refurbishment can be seen in the shop window sub-cill brick and mortar jointing which matches that of the original building. Windows are simple and the shop signage is elegantly inscribed gold script on a gloss black painted background, while a tastefully etched letter 'C' is found in the glass panel over the entrance door. The overall effect is a reminder of days gone by when the quality of service matched that of the products being sold.

The panel was unanimous in commending the refurbishment of the shop front with an award both for its contribution to the local 'village' community and for its restrained use of materials and finishes. It is entirely appropriate to context.

Reigate Heath Golf Club

Reigate Heath Golf Club is unique in the beauty of its magnificent elevated setting. Therefore the redevelopment of the Club has wisely set out to retain the existing external character of the

building, of pebble dash at ground, red tiled facings at upper level and steeply pitched red tiled roof over.

The resultant improvement has created a new full width first floor balcony, new windows to both floors and replaced all external tile hanging. The near continuous window line at ground floor is well modulated with slim glazing bars to enhance the unrestricted views from the Club Lounge and Bar. Similarly, aperture windows to the Restaurant at first floor provide wonderful views across the balcony which has a glazed balustrade with visual reference to the windmill club logo by employing 'crossed' timber members between posts.

The overall care taken in detailing of the refurbishment both inside and out is exemplified by the new gold and black clock at front roof gable, as well as etched windmill logo placed centrally on the balcony glass balustrade.

The refurbishment to the interior of the whole Clubhouse has preserved its charm while achieving a lightness and spaciousness which enhances the surrounding views over the Surrey countryside.

Because of the carefully controlled way the refurbishment has been carried out and the resultant significant uplift to the building, the panel has felt it appropriate to confer the award.

There were only two nominations this year and the Committee would encourage members to keep their eyes open for next year so that we can have a wider entry.

REDHILL

Chairman: Gerry Moss (01737) 765508

We very much welcome the Society's award for the renovation of the shop at the corner of Elm Road and Linkfield Street. This changes an eyesore into an attractive feature of the area. Also welcome are the extensions of parking restrictions aimed at discouraging street parking by commuters which create inconvenience and dangers for residents, though we retain some sympathy for the commuters who need to travel to find work in an unfriendly job market

On the broader front of the planning of the future for Redhill, it is unlikely that there will be material progress to report on the Redhill Area Action Plan till early 2011. So perhaps this is an opportunity to engage in some speculation and crystal gazing in the hope that the enforced delay will be used to good effect.

The odd hint or two from the Society coupled with financial stringency may well see the death knell of the plans to install the expensive "scoot" traffic signalling system on the two roundabouts at the ends of Princess Way (for the present). That system would have had a lesser capacity to cope

with town and through traffic than the present three roundabouts, and is no loss. The same influences will undermine the plans to create a town square between the station and Maple Square. That is no loss either because it would have been ruined by its proximity to traffic and the bus station which needs extra space anyway. The extensions to the shop fronts below the Harlequin may well go ahead reducing public space in London Road. Unhappily lack of funds will also prevent the Society's pipe dream of the construction of a footbridge between the Station and the Harlequin. Hence the problems of crossing from the station to the town will continue.

So will it be a state of "no change"? We hope not. Lesser money should be found to enlarge and signalise the Lombard roundabout to cope with traffic growth arising from the commercial development of the town which will take place. The Lombard roundabout was always too small for the purpose. That will still leave an unsatisfactory traffic system but it will perform better than "Scoot", except arguably for public transport, and it will prevent the pressure on

motorist to add to the congestion of Reigate.

The other major change should be the planning of a town centre in space created by the development of the Southeast Quadrant, opposite the Belfry. This is the natural location for a town centre and with the development of the Cromwell Road area and with Tesco getting its way as usual, that claim is now irresistible. A square here in this already pedestrianised area would provide a focal point satisfying the planners dream of transforming Redhill from an unattractive failing town to a vibrant attractive modern town attractive even to those who currently prefer the journey to Dorking or Croydon. That would make the town grow.

However, taking this last decision will require our Councillors to think strategically, imaginatively and, yes, bravely. It will require them to place the long term good of the town and borough above the short term financial gains from abandoning every inch of the Southeast Quadrant to commercial developers.

Harry Ingram (Secretary)

NATURAL AMENITIES

Chairman: Colin Burbidge (01737) 245264

Michèle Damer, the Society's Reigate Heath representative writes: At the recent meeting of the Reigate Heath Management Committee it was stated Hanson had submitted a planning application for a five year extension, which would ensure that they would be able to extract the amount they had been permitted to do in their original application. Both the Environment Agency and Natural England had objected on the grounds that there was not sufficient environmental information in the application. A meeting would be held at the end of October between the various parties involved.

There were various concerns expressed by the many users of the Heath some of which were in the process of being resolved. After many requests to Southern Gas Networks the re-instatement of works carried out last year, should, by the time this is read, be completed. The Golf Course has been visited by the RBBC Health and Safety Advisor and a report is expected. Ian Wright and Ailsa Edwards are to organise an activity event with the Scouts to

promote the Heath and acceptable behaviour. The management works to the Heath continue and we were assured that no works would be carried out before assent from Natural England was received and could not happen without the agreement of the Steering Group. Ian Wright reported Funds had been secured from Natural England which would help with the proposed improvements to the car park and protection of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

A photographic exhibition of the Heath is proposed and will take place in the Pavilion in July 2011.

Mountain Bike Code of Conduct.

CTC Senior Off-Road Officer Ian Warby along with partner organisations [Surrey Hills AONB, National Trust, etc], has helped draw up a **Mountain Bike Code of Conduct** [1-page PDF] designed to encourage riders to enjoy cycling safely in the Surrey Hills while looking after the environment and showing consideration to other users. This may also be a useful instrument in other open areas such as Reigate Heath where mountain bikes have been a problem in the past.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

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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 2½ to 11
Ormerods	Suite 4 Chapter House, 33 London Road RH2 9HZ (0208 686 5000)	Solicitors
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
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