



THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

Newsletter No. 92 December 2008

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As you will see there is still a lack of illustrations in this issue. There seems to have been so much to do since the last issue that there was no time to consider their inclusion. It still remains an aim to add more interest to what is reported on these pages by adding relevant photographs but this may take a little longer than was envisaged. Watch this space.

The current situation regarding the proposed redevelopment of Redhill is dealt with in detail elsewhere in this newsletter but it does appear that the consultation process has not been meeting everyone's hopes and aspirations. One can only hope that what finally emerges from this process is not a below expectation compromise solution brought about through the lack of sufficient funding which will either bring no improvement at all or even make things worse particularly on the transport front.

The planning application submitted by Priory School to replace the existing vehicle barrier with a gated fence across the access road between the Bell Street Car Park and Park Lane has been approved but with some stringent conditions attached. The planning committee appeared to concur with the view that the proposed structure would do nothing to improve the security of the pupils and would be too intrusive on a path much used by the public as a pedestrian route between Bell Street, Morrisons, the High Street and Park Lane. They required the applicant to scale down the replacement barrier and submit a revised design.

To combat the threatened loss of this long established and popular pedestrian route an application has been made to the highway authority for it to be recognized as a public right of way. The application was registered by a member of the society and is being supported by both the society and the Friends of Priory Park. It is now required that evidence be submitted of the use of this route for at least 20 years all of which will then be considered before a decision is

made. Anyone wishing to submit any evidence should contact me and they will be supplied with the necessary forms on which this can be done. Completed forms should then be returned to me as soon as possible when they will be submitted as a bundle together with those collected from other sources. It is our intention to make an impact with this application.

If the application for a right of way is granted, and there are grounds for being optimistic that will be the case, then any obstructing structures erected in the meantime will be required to be removed at the school's expense. That would not seem to be the most sensible way to use their resources.

There have been no further developments as far as I am aware following the consultation on the proposals for the control of on-street parking within the Reigate town area which were put forward by the county council last summer. The proposals were based on an earlier (1996) consultation about parking in northwest Reigate and on numerous complaints received by the authorities about commuter and office-worker parking in residential roads and the ensuing chaos that results. I imagine that there were a large number of submissions on the proposals so it may take some time for all of the comments to be assimilated and it may take a while longer for there to be any more news. After all it took 18 months to produce the last set of proposals. Let us hope the result will be worth waiting for.

On a more positive note you may be interested to hear that the society made a successful debut entry to the Reigate Business Guild Golf Day which was held on 19th September at Reigate Hill Golf Club. This annual event helps towards raising funds for the Christmas lights in Reigate town centre. It was a lovely sunny day and great fun was had by all especially by your team of four who came in third. Congratulations to the team and I am sure they are all looking forward to next year's event.

Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

SECRETARY'S NOTES

To mark the restoration of Priory Park, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council arranged a "Celebration Weekend" on 18th, 19th and 20th July. The Society, amongst other volunteer organisations, was invited to put on a display in the Park. Eight volunteers erected the Society's display boards and took turns to man the stand on the Saturday. The event was well attended; we had a number of interested visitors: and we were able to promote the views on the Society on a number of current issues.

The Heritage Open Days this year took place from Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th September. For the second year the Society, mainly Michèle Damer and myself, coordinated and publicised to event. There were 23 venues this year, plus the Town Hall which came in too late to be included in the brochure. 4,000 brochures and 200 A4 posters were printed and widely distributed in and around the Borough. We have since sent round a questionnaire to get feed-back from those who participated. Generally they thought the event was a great success, with some gratifyingly complimentary comments, and their replies will enable us to implement improvements for next year. The Society once again manned the Undercroft, and received 164 visitors, a slight drop from last year's figure of 172.

The Members' Evening was fully subscribed and held on Monday 6th October at the Woodhatch Centre. Following a drink and some delicious food, the Annual Civic Awards were presented by our Chairman, Colin Burbidge. This year there were three chosen by our awards panel. They were, with some comments by the panel:

Crown Steps Barn, 3c High Street, Reigate "The conversion to a small domestic unit has made imaginative use of a potentially uncompromising redundant outbuilding.....sensitive use of structure.....high standard of workmanship and materials". The client was Stanton Construction and the Architect Burgess Mean.

Reigate Park Pavilion "It is rare for a new building in Reigate to attract attention of the leading architectural press but Reigate Priory Park Pavilion has done this. The new pavilion succeeds by its simplicity in blending with its landscape...." Here the client was the Borough of

Reigate & Banstead, and the Architect Dominique Perrault Architecture.

Wray Common Windmill "This brick built tower mill dating from 1824 has been without sails for many years. To restore the mill to a visual state of completion for which there is not a practical benefit to the owner requires commitment as well as finance and the result is commended....." The client and present owner is Paul Baker and it was project designed by David Tate Design.

There followed a very interesting talk about the History of the Holmesdale Building Society given by their Chief Executive, Kevin Morgan. The Building Society has been operating for 153 years, having been founded by Thomas Buckland, whose intention was to provide a means of thrift and home ownership for local people. This, Kevin said, has remained the Society's aim throughout its history.

The first Open Meeting of the winter was on 6th November in Holmesdale School. About 70 came to hear John Howe talking on "Mediaeval Reigate". However technical difficulties with John's projector meant that without illustration his talk could not go ahead. He answered a few specific questions about Reigate's history and there followed a brief discussion on current issues concerning the Society. The meeting then ended. We can only offer our sincere apologies to those of you who arrived to hear this talk.

Our next meeting, which will probably have already occurred by the time you read this, will be on 4th December when Ian West will give us a talk entitled "Made of clay: Surrey brickworks" This will be in Priory School, Reigate. Ian West is a surveyor who for over thirty years has specialised in the restoration of historic buildings. Although the Romans had brickworks in Surrey, the manufacture of bricks in the county then lapsed and was not revived until mediaeval times. Ian's talk will cover the production of bricks and their use in building design up to the abolition of the brick tax in 1841.

The New Year starts with a talk at St Mark's Church Hall in Alma Road, Reigate on 22nd January by Brenda Lewis. As Surrey County Council's former Gardens Officer Brenda Lewis has an unparalleled knowledge of the history of

Surrey's parks and gardens. Her talk will be entitled "Parks and gardens of East Surrey".

The next meeting will be held in Redhill UR Church Hall on Shaw's Corner, on 12th February. David Williams, the Finds Liaison Officer in Surrey, will be talking about "Surrey Treasures: the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Surrey". This is a voluntary scheme to record archaeological objects found by members of the public and which provide an important source of understanding our past.

The last Open Meeting this winter will also be held in Redhill UR Church Hall on Shaw's Corner on 19th March. Chris Howkins' talk is entitled "Heathers and heathland". He will be talking about the plants of heathlands and the way in which people used them in the past. His talk to the Society in 2007 was cancelled at the last minute due to adverse weather conditions, so we will be watching the barometer closely!

Michael Hellings (01737) 245342

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CHANGE OF LOCATIONS FOR MEETINGS

19th March 2009

The talk by Chris Howkins on 'Heathers and Heathland' will now take place at the Redhill United Reformed Church Hall, Shaw's Corner, Hatchlands Road RH1 6AU.

2nd July 2009

The Annual General Meeting will now take place at the Reigate Methodist Church, High Street, Reigate RH2 9AE.

Both meetings will start at the usual time of 8.15 p.m.

Details of these and much more can also be seen on the Society's web site:

REGISTRAR'S NOTES

I am pleased to say that we recruited 13 new members since the last Newsletter. They are:-

Drs B Vhardra & S Sharma	Mr B Keeley
Mr & Mrs N Duncan	Mr & Mrs A J Morgan
Mr & Mrs R Moncur	Mr & Mrs Darnley
Mr & Mrs S Hawkins	

I have recently been sorting out our collection of the Society's Annual Reports and old Newsletters. It was interesting to see that the first set of 'Reigate Society Notes' was circulated to members as early as November 1953, just 18 months after the Society was formed in February 1952. The next document we have is the 'Reigate Society Magazine' for 'Summer 1956'. Our collection of 'Magazines' runs half-yearly until May 1963, interspersed with 'Bulletins' from December 1958 until January 1968. These 'Bulletins' were numbered from one to twelve. We do not have a copy of numbers Two (in 1959 ?) or Eight (in 1964). There is then a gap until the current series of Newsletters started with Number 1 in January 1979 and running to this present issue, Number 92. Between 1968 and 1979 we have a single issue, unnumbered, dated February 1975.

If any member has any additional information of these 'historical records' or even has a copy of any that we do not possess, I would be very pleased to hear from you. The Society's collection is now in the hands of the Secretary and we would like to make it as complete as possible. Thank you.

John Angel (01737) 242672

TREASURER'S NOTES

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS were due on the 1st April. MINIMUM RATES are as follows:

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

Those still paying by cheque or cash (Bankers Order forms are always available), and have not yet done so should use the Subscription Payment Form on page 8 of this Newsletter, and return it to me with your payment.

Charles Wragg (01737) 210640

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

Chairman: Tom Godfrey

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The activity in the number of planning applications continues to decrease and the number that your Committee looks at has halved. To recapitulate, we look at major housing developments and proposals in and adjacent to Conservation Areas, Residential Areas of Special Control and to Listed Buildings.

This is a sign of the times and, no doubt, members will have noticed the various sites around the Borough which have been cleared and left undeveloped.

However your Committee has not been inactive. As was mentioned in the last Newsletter, two consultations were under way during the late summer. The Borough's Preferred Options for the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework and the Secretary of State's Proposed Alterations to the South East Regional Plan.

In August, the Borough held a seminar for all Resident's Associations in the Borough to set out their views on both these documents. It was well attended and provided an useful oversight of the proposals. The borough was quite clear about its intention to object to the Secretary of State's Proposals.

For our part, we have opposed the two main elements of the Alterations to the South East Plan as they affect the area of influence of the Reigate Society – housing numbers and the review of the Green Belt.

Firstly, we have objected to the further 20% increase in housing provision in the Borough of Reigate and Banstead for the period 2016 to 2026 since it is unlikely to be deliverable due to land availability.

The target put forward by the Regional Assembly in the draft South East Plan was 7,740 dwellings for the 2006 – 2026 period. The Panel Report suggests that 9,240 new homes are required (an increase of nearly 20% against the overall increase for the South East of 10%).

The justification for the further increase in housing numbers by a further 20% is twofold.

Firstly the identification of Reigate/Redhill as the "hub of hubs" and the ability of the area to meet the growth under the New Growth Points agreement where the Borough accepted that housing could be provided on an accelerated basis for ten years and then delivery figures would fall away.

The achievement of 5000 dwellings over the first ten years was possible because of the new housing being developed in Horley (over 2500 dwellings) and the two windfall sites of Watercolour and Park 25 (another 1000 dwellings). This means that only another 1500 dwellings have to be achieved over the next eight years.

In these circumstances, it is unreasonable now to require this delivery level to be continued for the full twenty years of the Plan.

As to the "hub of hubs" argument, this is naïve since the only feature of the area which would qualify the locality for this designation, is the good transport facilities (if Network Rail is given the money to improve Redhill). The centre is too small and restricted so that shopping and commerce are but sub-standard by comparison with Croydon and Crawley and the local highway infrastructure is poor and congested.

Then, we turned to the Green Belt. In Reigate and Banstead, it is at its narrowest and pressure already exists especially on the fringes of the urban area of Redhill/Reigate (which is the locality suggested for the review). There is no justification for a review in such a context.

The additional houses proposed seem to be used as justification for the review of the Green Belt, which is an inappropriate circular argument. In particular the suggestion that such a review is necessary to take account of a period beyond 2026 is unacceptable so far as this Plan is concerned. It is also not clear why similar reviews have not been proposed at other Regional Hubs.

In making our objections we have expressly supported the objections which have been raised by the Borough.

Another duty of your Committee is the judging of the Society's Awards in company with the Chairman. This year we had a good entry of some 10 properties and it was difficult to make our selection. In the end, three were chosen the Pavilion in the Priory Park, Wray Common, Windmill and Crown Steps Barn (tucked away behind the Samaritans). The report of the judges is attached.

“Rear of 4B High Street Reigate (Crown Steps Barn)

This conversion to a small domestic unit has made imaginative use of a potentially uncompromising and redundant outbuilding.

It is a sensitive reuse of a structure without loss of significant original material. This design has accepted the constraints, character and fabric of the existing building and has been content to work within these, at the same time producing a successful result.

There has been a high standard of workmanship and materials, both externally and internally. For someone without a car this would be an attractive and quiet position but close to the town centre.

Reigate Priory Park Pavilion

It is rare for a new building in Reigate to attract the attention of the leading architectural press but the new Reigate Priory Park pavilion has achieved this. Initially many of those not trained to envisage the appearance of a construction which they cannot yet see were wary of this uncompromising contemporary building and fearful that it would conflict with and detract from the Priory itself. It does not do this as it is far enough away for the two to live in harmony. This scheme was by far the best of the four finalists in the design competition and the first English work of the Paris based architect Dominique Perrault. He has designed acclaimed buildings not only in France, but Germany, Spain and Korea for example. It is pleasing that the Reigate Society was invited to have a representative on the judging panel.

The new pavilion succeeds by its simplicity in blending with its landscape, and its serrated glass panels help to diffuse its impact, but this varies with the light and general weather conditions. What better than to quote Perrault himself “not so much a building, but an optical instrument with the capacity to behave like a kaleidoscope with the landscape. We are creating an absence of the building, while increasing the presence of the movement of people. You don’t know if you’re in or out”.

Unfortunately the interior fittings have not been given such an accolade by the press. The RIBA Journal says this – “the interior is let down by some very municipal furniture. Perrault’s glossy-black circular server is compromised by odds and sods of catering equipment and cheap aluminium garden chairs and tables”. Unfortunately this is true, and having had the courage to build this building by an internationally acclaimed designer the project could be said to have been ‘spoilt for a ha’p’orth of tar’.

It should be pointed out that the award is for the pavilion itself and not for the park project in general, some of whose details we are not happy about.

Wray Common Mill

This brick built tower mill dating from 1824 has been without its sails for many years. Many of us can remember when these were last in place but for many years the cap has been deteriorating. To restore the mill to a visual state of completion for which there is not practical benefit to the owner requires commitment as well as finance and this result is commended. The restoration has given pleasure to many. Because the internal machinery is incomplete the cap cannot revolve so the sweeps cannot be made to turn. The sails are therefore not full working replacements but are a good visual compromise. With the new fantail in place (the small bladed wheel on the back) the mill gives a good impression of its working appearance. One of the main beams supporting the fantail platform had fractured and had to be replaced.

To make this restoration worthwhile the current good state of preservation must be maintained. The one feature not quite right is the overemphasis of the added window hoods by painting them white. Not being original features they reduce the effect of this former industrial building by the gentrification of its appearance”.

In conclusion, we were all delighted to receive an invitation to Wallfield House from Richard Good-Stephenson to see the restoration of this building which had suffered at the hands of the Art College and some two years of being left empty prey to vandalism. The restoration of the house has been carried out with skill and care and we were particularly impressed at the level of proficiency in the repair of the plasterwork. An Award entry for next year?

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REDHILL

Chairman: Gerry Moss

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CONSULTATION

The government has prescribed procedures for consultation for the drawing up of plans for the development of towns. A Core Strategy has to be agreed followed by Issues and Options, Preferred Options and finally in this case The Redhill Town Action Plan. Consultation with the community has to take place at each stage and finally there is the opportunity to object to the Plan. In the case of

Redhill we are now approaching the stage of Preferred Options.

During this process Workshops have been held with the representatives of local organisations most of whom are commercial interests and departments of the two Local Authorities, but the Reigate Society has volunteered and been included. The Redhill Group has put in four quite substantial submissions and attended the workshops. The A and P Committee have commented on the Issues and Options. Our offerings have been acknowledged but there has been no other response.

This is the third attempt by the Council to get through the consultation process. The two earlier consultations were too flawed to satisfy government requirements. This has added to the total time for the process and involved the appointment this time of consultants, Tribal Urban, who are steering the present attempt. The workshops have been interesting but dealt only with selected aspects. The latest one has been followed by the issue of a summary of the views expressed. The Issues and Options document was well presented but we are still encountering Issues missed or brushed over in that document. The process is uncohesive and only about a quarter of those attending the last workshop had been to the previous one. Those occasions, so far as I am aware, are the only ones where there has been any form of two way exchange of views, on limited agendas. Discussions took place without reference to poorly displayed drawings on the walls and generally there has been a dearth of factual information to inform those attending.

To be fair the consultants have been short of time. The time scale has been rushed partly because of the previous failures but one cannot help concluding that the main reason is the need to get through what is seen as an unnecessary and tiresome process with the least delay. As a result curiosities have emerged. The most obvious one is that the preferred solution for the problem of congestion has been to narrow the Princess Way and Market field Way carriageways to produce a "town street effect" to replace a ring road and widen pavements leaving the congestion to be solved by an unspecified and apparently absent solution outside the town. Yet the reason for the development of Redhill is because it is a Transport Hub and it is agreed that the success of the plan and retail growth is dependant on the hub operating better than at present.

So, the Redhill Committee has very reluctantly felt it necessary to write to the Head of Policy to complain about the short comings. Better to do so now when perhaps the inadequacies may be repaired than at the close of the process. Our letter has been acknowledged. The matter will not necessarily rest there. Should the expense and time of a fourth round of consultation be necessary the blame should not be placed on the Society.

NATURAL AMENITIES

Chairman: Colin Burbidge

(01737) 245264

The borough council's consultation on **recycling** has progressed to the next stage. The feedback obtained in the summer meetings has been communicated to those who attended the follow-up sessions in September and some more definite proposals are now awaited. When these are revealed there will be further consultations before any changes are made to the current methods by which recycled materials are collected. This may be delayed to reassess the economics as it has become apparent that the bottom has fallen out of the market for recycled materials and local authorities are currently having to stockpile what has been collected. This in itself causes problems because at present this can only be done on licensed waste sites. As an emergency measure the Local Government Association is trying to get the Government to relax the rules on where recycled waste can be stored.

Reigate Heath

The new consultants appointed by the Environment Agency to further investigate the loss of the wetlands areas are now investigating the possibility of rewetting the affected areas. The feasibility of partial diversions of the adjoining streams will be assessed. The source for the Alders area to the west would be Shag Brook and the area east of Bonny's Road would be supplied from Wallace Brook which takes the outflow from the lake in Priory Park.

Priory Park

Some necessary tree work is to be carried out soon. A diseased oak tree by the lake is to be removed and a new one planted nearby. A diseased lime at the rear of Morrisons is to be cut down. However three new additional trees are to be planted in the Arboretum.

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
Coomb Care Foundation	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
James Knight & Sons	8-10 Bell Street RH2 7BG (242195)	Drapers & Soft Furnishers
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
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	1Castlefield Road RH2 0SA (227430)	Development & construction service to industry, public & commercial sectors
The Reigate Tailors Ltd	38 High Street RH2 9AX (245268 / 245566)	Men's and Ladies' Outfitters
TWM Solicitors LLP	40 West Street RH2 9BT (221212)	Solicitors
White & Sons	24 High Street RH2 9AY (222600)	Independent Estate Agents, Surveyors & Valuers

NAME(S)

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(NL 92)

The Reigate Society

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