

The Community Magazine for the
Sudbury Court and Pebworth Estates

Feb
2017

The Courier

86th
Year





Daniels Estate Agents recently celebrated the opening of a fifth branch in Brent. The community minded estate agents most recent office is located at 33 Walm Lane Willesden Green NW2 5SH. The mayor of Brent Cllr Parvez Ahmed was on hand to cut the ribbon on the new branch together with Francis Henry managing director of Daniels and invited guests. Francis said:

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Treasurer: Pareet Shah, treasurer@the-scra.co.uk
Secretary: Noura Abdul-Cader, secretary@the-scra.co.uk
Courier Editor: editor@the-scra.co.uk
Courier Advertising: advertising@the-scra.co.uk
SCRA Website: www.sudburycourtra.co.uk

SCRA NEWS

Notes from the
Association Committee

Dear Neighbours,

The front cover picture was taken on a very cold January afternoon—I wonder how many of you recognise it?

There are a few updates of note in this month's issue.

Anti-social behaviour and crime reporting.

Again, good to hear that the burglary rate, generally in the area, has decreased, but there are still things that we need to be aware of, and things we can do to help ourselves and our neighbours—see pages 4-7.

Byron Court

Still nothing concrete from the Council following the 'Closed' meeting in December—but one of our neighbours shares some questions asked, and answers received—see pg 13.

One Public Estate

This would appear to be the next thing we need to give our attention to—Cllr McLennan introduces the subject pg 8, and there is further comment pg 24.

Your Community Needs YOU!

I was really delighted to hear from some neighbours following last month's call-out—and we will hopefully have 3 new volunteers joining shortly—but there's more!! See page 26.

And **Batman Returns** to pg 20—we had a number of emails in response to Batman last time around, so here he is again.

The **Letters Page** has also made a return on pg 10—we've had very few letters since the change-over in September—a couple of complaints about late delivery of *The Courier*—but, if I'm honest, the words used were too disheartening to publish! I trust that I can ask for your understanding that we, as volunteers, endeavour to always do our best, and if your delivery is a little late, please accept our apologies; we absolutely want you to let us know the information, in order that we can rectify any issues, but please be patient with us.

And finally. . .

I learned, too late, that the subscription envelopes should have gone out with this issue—rest assured they will be out next month, and we would ask that you PLEASE then pay your sub promptly, it is a bargain! It does help the SCRA keep going on your behalf—and we would like to raise money to do more for our residents (and that includes you!) and keep *The Courier* going—we would also encourage you to think about donating a few pounds to the Tree fund and the Sudbury Court Horticultural Society.

Keep warm!

Kaye

Northwick Park Safer Neighbourhood Team

020 8721 2969 Mobile: 07920 233 752 (Please leave a message)

Email: Northwickpark.snt@met.police.uk

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To report a crime and for non-emergencies dial **101**.

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**SAFER
NEIGHBOURHOODS**
LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

● **BURGLARIES:**

At the time of writing this article (17th of January), the burglary rate in Northwick Park area has decreased – please see the figures below. This maybe for a few reasons: because of the holiday, houses are occupied more; it could be because the burglars have been arrested and remanded. The police do follow up on all viable leads— instances where cars have been seen fleeing scenes of crime, or quality CCTV is an excellent lead for the police. For one recent burglary in this area, a suspect has been identified is and we are actively looking for him.

We urge residents to still be on the look-out and report any suspicious sightings to the police, and use the crime prevention measures listed at the end of this article.

● **COLD CALLER ALERT:**

This continues to be a favourite target of cold callers, particularly the ones who are out to scam people!!!

On the 7th of Jan, police were made aware of a white male (mid 20s) in a tipper truck (white cabin and blue tipper) with "Tree Services" written on the cabin in the Pebworth Estate—he had cold-called on an elderly vulnerable woman and she was charged an excessive amount for 4 hours of minimal work. The male from this "company" is extremely well known to police for all the wrong reasons – the beginning of his registration number of the tipper is SN65***.

● Your team would like to alert you to a cold caller "Roofer" going door to door on Paxford

Road on the 5th of Jan.— a white , 50s, London area accent. He had leaflets - the company name used has two initials, persons from this same "company" had been in the Norval Road area in early December. Police cannot give the name for legal reasons, but the first initial is a "K. _ Roofing". The caller was very persistent and said that the resident's roof looked like it was cracked and needed work doing. This resident told him he had his own builder and so the male went away eventually. There was also a white van in the area with this company name on the side of the van. If anyone saw this van and got the reg. number can you please let me know via email – see below. On receiving the call from this resident, your team immediately went looking for this caller to find out who they were and to see if we could find their vehicle but despite a search around the area for about an hour, no joy. Keep an eye out though.

● Another resident of Nathans Road had a terrible experience with a cold caller roofer in October. The resident agreed to have work done for a fixed price: over the course of a number of weeks this "roofer" used non-english speaking unskilled labourers with no equipment to do his roof, in total they caused over £2000 worth of damage. The name of this company includes a man's name i.e "M***** Home Improvements Ltd". It is not known whether this "roofer" has used the name of this company but police checks on the company name indicate it's "registered office" is a mailbox!

LAWRENCE J MAGNIER

86 NATHANS ROAD, NORTH WEMBLEY

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In some situations, where residents have agreed to have work done by cold callers and the "work" done is substandard/little/none, it may not amount to fraud as per the police definition, but despite this I would urge residents to report it to me.

Bottom line, DO NOT ENGAGE WITH COLD CALLERS.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is not to get them to do any work for you, or to enter into any agreement with any cold caller. Please let me know if you see cold callers in the area, any leaflets they have given you, or other information including vehicle registrations if you have seen any.

• ILLEGAL ENCAMPMENT – ADJACENT TO DUCKERS PATH:

Serg. Cryan worked closely with Mukesh Patel (from Neasden Temple, who own the land between Northwick Park hospital and Ducker's Path). Late last year, after several requests to the illegal occupants to move on, an illegal encampment was demolished. If you were unaware: a middle aged couple had set up a Robinson Crusoe style shack with, outdoor 'toilet' (not plumbed!!) within these grounds and were travelling around the Wembley area collecting scrap metal for recycling. The encampment was there without the permission of the owners, had obvious health and safety risks regarding the untreated human effluent, and was attracting other homeless persons. The homeless charity St. Mungo's were involved with the couple living in the shack, who refused to

engage with them, and UKBA dealt with the couple who were in breach of their treaty Rights.

• ANTI – SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND DRUG TAKING:

Following persistent complaints from a number of residents, occupants of a car were detained under the Misuse of Drugs Act on the 30th of December in HOLT ROAD. Drugs were found in the car and the driver arrested for being in charge of a motor vehicle whilst being over the prescribed limit in respect of cannabis.

Police are now equipped with road side testing equipment that detects drivers under the influence of a variety of controlled drugs. The driver has been bailed pending further analysis of the samples taken. It is suspected that this group are responsible for several anti-social behaviour complaints of smoking drugs in cars and littering at a variety of locations – the other locations that members of this group have been stopped by police/police have received complaints re this group are Campden Crescent, Mulgrave Road and St. Cuthbert's Church. I am sorry to say that at least three members of this group live in the Northwick Park Ward area; it would appear that this group have little respect for their local environment and some may argue no respect at all!

One male from this group dealt with on the 30th of December in HOLT ROAD was arrested on the 7th of January after police followed a car that drove off from Mulgrave Road. He was arrested on suspicion of driving a car over the prescribed limit in respect of drugs. This male and his female companion, who had also driven the car, were both arrested for the same offence and are currently on bail.

Your local police team would urge you as residents to be aware of what your adult children/children are doing, are they loitering on the streets, smoking drugs and littering the area? If so, I would urge you to challenge them.

Police, on occasion, can and do apply to the courts for a Search Warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act – so your children's use of Controlled drugs could lead police, one day, to your address!

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• **WORK OF PC HOBDAY AT NORTHWICK PARK HOSPITAL:**

PC Hobday recently was awarded the Borough Commander's commendation for his work at Northwick Park Hospital dealing mainly with crimes there and building close relations with security in the hospital, staff in the general hospital and the mental health facility, where police receive the majority of the calls. His supervising officer, Sergeant Cryan, also commends him on his commitment to his job and the excellent relations forged within Northwick Park Hospital. PC Hobday is in the throes of implementing Hospital Watch in Northwick Park hospital, basically it is a neighbourhood watch scheme within the hospital.

Overview of offences from period 17th Dec to 17th Jan. (date of writing):

1 *Attempted Street Robbery*: bus stop opposite Northwick Park Hospital 17/12/16 at 0630am.

5 *Residential Burglaries*: Nathans Road (17/12 at 1230hrs – 2250hrs, rear kitchen door forced), Langham Gardens (26/12 1800hrs and 31/12 1730hrs, kitchen window forced, jewellery stolen), Oldborough Road (6/1/17 at 2100hrs, rear bedroom window forced, two white male suspects disturbed), Littleton Road (12/01/17 2015hrs – 14/01/17 0900hrs, kitchen window smashed and jewellery stolen, burglary occurred believed at the same time as the nearby shed burglary),

Oldborough Road (08/01/17 0230hrs and 14/01/17 1450hrs, ground floor front window forced, believed cash taken).

4 Non Residential burglaries (shed/business premises): Peel Road car centre (17/12 – 18/12), Tesco East Lane (26/12), Tesco East Lane (29/12), Littleton Road (13/01 1400hrs 14/01 1145hrs).

4 Theft from motor vehicle: Campden Crescent (19/12 1730hrs – stole cash from unlocked car), Perrin Road (30/12 – 1645hrs – 1755hrs, rear passenger window smashed and designer bags stolen from the boot), Shelley Gardens (6/1 2130hrs – 7/1 1120hrs, bags taken from boot), Aspen Drive (13/01 2330hrs – 14/01 2000hrs – registration plates stolen).

Your team would welcome any information on anti social behaviour or criminal offences that are occurring in the area - please feel free to contact us on 0208 721 29 69 or email: NorthwickPark.snt@met.police.uk

Crime Prevention Advice:

Burglary -

• Ensure that your perimeter fence/wall, your house doors and windows are fit for purpose. Boundary walls and fencing along with shrubbery is the first line of defence to an intruder and should be good enough to keep a potential burglar out. A lot of houses in the Sudbury Court Estate have a shared driveway with easy access to the rear, if at all please try to get this open access gated off - most burglars gain access via the rear of a house.

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- Please ensure that garden sheds are locked and that all garden implements are locked away as frequently these are used to break in to houses.

- Consider getting an alarm / alarm box fitted, CCTV cameras or dummy ones.

- Keep your car keys hidden and not on/in the cabinet near your front door.

- Make sure to secure your side gates when you go out and ensure that your garden fence or wall is durable and designed for purpose - to keep out intruders!

- Consider installing an alarm system and a safe for your jewellery and valuables.

Vehicle Crime -

- do not keep valuables in your car; ideally leave your glove box open and do not leave any goods/property in the car.

- do not leave a sat nav holder on display and rub off all marks of sat navs from your windscreen.

- Be on the look out for tow away vehicles, these are being used to steal cars from people's driveways - if you see someone load your neighbour's vehicle onto a tow truck/a truck with a hoist and your neighbour is not present then you may be witnessing a theft of your neighbour's car so consider ringing the police - try obtain the registration number of the tow truck.

Robbery -

- Stay alert! - try be aware of your surroundings when you are out and about, this is especially important if you listening to an iPod or on a mobile phone.

- Stay clear! - if you think you are being followed or that someone looks like they're up to no good, then cross the road or go into a shop/address - ring the police if necessary.

Bicycle Thefts -

- Ensure that you secure your bicycle with a substantial lock at all times and leave in a well lit place.

- obtain your frame number and register your bicycle on www.BikeRegister.com - this could assist police in recovering your bicycle if stolen.

Please consult the websites below for more crime prevention tips or if you do not have access to the internet perhaps speak to us and we might be able to arrange that you obtain a crime prevention pamphlet.

Useful numbers:

Dial 999 in the case of an emergency, where a crime is in progress or where life is in danger.

For non-emergencies, ring 101

To give information anonymously call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Useful websites:

The website sites below have a whole host of useful information from crime prevention to crime statistics to Identity theft!

www.met.police.uk

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.cifas.org.uk

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Councillor's Comments

Cllr Margaret McLennan - Northwick Park Ward

Email: cllr.margaret.mclennan@brent.gov.uk

Happy New Year to All as my first article contact with you this year. I do hope you all had a good festive period. February brings the conclusion of the Budget consultation process where it seeks resident views on the Administrations proposals for cuts. It is important you have your say on its spending goals and targets for the next two years.

Budget Consultation and Setting

At the time of reading this latest Courier, the Budget consultation process will have concluded on Wednesday 1st February. In principle, the Administration is seeking a rise of 1.99% for Council Tax and 2% for the ring-fenced Adult social care budget. The consultation also asks for comments on the proposed cuts that will hopefully have the least impact to frontline services as a saving of £10 million has to be achieved for 2017 – 2019.

The Council has launched strategies on Civic Enterprise to mitigate any savings that needs to be achieved to further reduce the requirement for cuts. More on this in later editions.

At the end of January the government will

publish the Bill on Business Rates Devolution with chosen pilot sites commencing in April 2017. A London pilot is still being finalised as there needs to be apportionment. Westminster Council currently raises £1.5 Billion in business rates, whilst Brent currently raises £150 million. More details later as the Bill and Act comes into force.

One Public Estate (OPE)

OPE is an initiative delivered in partnership by the Cabinet Office Government Property Unit (GPU) and the Local Government Association (LGA). It provides practical and technical support and funding to councils to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration with central government and other public sector partners.

The programme is about getting more from public sector collective assets with four core objectives:

1. Creating economic growth (new homes and jobs)
2. More integrated, customer-focused services
3. Generating capital receipts
4. Reducing running costs

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Brent recognised the potential of the OPE programme to act as a catalyst to co-operative projects with our public sector partners in the Borough. Brent accordingly submitted a bid for OPE's September 2016 funding round. Brent has been awarded initial funding of £222,500 up to September 2017 with a further commitment of £138,000 from September 2017. Totalling **£360,500**.

There will be a particular emphasis on working with Health partners in order to deliver the Health Service Transformation Plan, which is currently focused on Northwick Park. This includes growth via new homes and development; efficiencies via generation of capital receipts; and integrated services via a new energy centre. Current Partners are: London Borough of Brent, Northwick Park Hospital, University of Westminster, Network Homes Ltd, with anticipated future partners: London Borough of Harrow, Transport for London, Greater London Authority, Care and Commissioning Group (CCG)

Northwick Park Pavilion Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

Northwick Park Pavilion is currently included in the CAT Programme. There is potential for a joint approach to the provision of sport at Northwick Park, with considerable demand generated by the University and Hospital. The pavilion could play a significant role in such provision. Brent's land holdings at Northwick Park are substantial, but are largely made up of playing fields, and the pavilion is one of the few pieces of built infrastructure that Brent can add to the OPE mix. Accordingly it is proposed that the Pavilion be withdrawn from the CAT programme so that the building's use can be reviewed in its entirety.

Resident Surgery – Margaret, Keith and Joshua

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YOUR LETTERS

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Dear Sir,

I am writing to you about the potholes in Spencer Road. As you may be aware, about three months ago the residents were very pleased that the Council were doing something positive. But they were soon disappointed when the biggest pothole was left unfilled—this runs across the road opposite house numbers 13-14. About 3-4 years ago some potholes were marked with white paint including this particular pothole. Not only that but quite a few pavement slabs were also marked in the same fashion. Over a period of 2-3 years the markings completely faded but absolutely no repairs were carried out until about 4 months ago some new markings appeared on the road. Can the SCRA take up this case with the Council and get this particular pothole repaired in a proper manner. Regards, Mr MB

Dear Mr B, and residents.

This letter has been passed on to Cllr Perrin, who is going to do what he can to rectify the issue.

As I understand it, the process is as follows:

- Marking with white lines indicates that the area has been noted and reported on.
- the defect is assessed in terms of risk and therefore urgency
- if a defect is seen as low risk, then it is left unrepaired.

It would appear that a major determining factor will also be allocation of limited funds—Central Government funding having been cut.

If Councillor Perrin is able to find out any further information, we will let you know.

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Hi my name is Shrey and I wanted to say thank you for making 'the courier' it is amazing I love it and I've attached some pictures that you might like





Dear Shrey,
Thanks so much for your email—it's good to hear that our Courier volunteers are appreciated; and we loved your pictures. Your email made us think—perhaps there are other photographers amongst our neighbours—please send us your pictures so that we can include them in the magazine. The only printing requirement is that they are High Resolution.
Looking forward to hearing from you!

Letters to The Courier/SCRA must be signed and include an address; this information will not be published – it will be held by the Editor. The Editor reserves the right to shorten any letters. These letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, SCRA Committee, or policies of the SCRA.

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The Memory Cafe

Support for those experiencing memory problems



I was listening to Claire Balding on Radio 4 over Christmas. She was talking about her new venture into becoming an agony aunt. The interviewer asked what kind of advice she'd be giving, to which she replied that she'd be advising people to volunteer to help combat loneliness, misery and isolation. She's a wise woman, our Claire.

However bad we feel, just getting out and doing something for someone in the same boat as us, or worse-off, is a tonic. The philosophers of the 18th Century knew as much. They spoke about the benefits of altruism - the healing balm of working for others and the humility and wellness that follows.

So I want to put a bold callout to you all. Contact me if you want to get out of the house, enjoy a new challenge; would like to volunteer.

We have a rather wonderful Tuesday group

which meets 11-1pm. We sing sometimes, but mainly chat and reminisce. It is so uplifting. On Thursday we have Memory Café 11-1pm. Did you hear the touching documentary about us? - Christmas day on Radio London. We have a heart to set up a youth club on a Friday night. The first Sunday of every month on Sunday at 10 is Café Church. And your poor old vicar would love folk who might want to come and help get things set up, and other practical stuff at church during the week.

You may be wondering what volunteering entails. Well, helping with some of the practical stuff (teas, coffees etc), but mainly sitting with people and chatting. It isn't hard and we welcome all, young and old.

Do contact me and be part of this wonderful community.

My email is steve_stcuthberts@hotmail.com.

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By the time you read this I trust that the weather will be improving. The older I get the harder I find it the winters here. I found myself dreaming of living somewhere hot and sunny the other morning. But dear old blighty. I'd soon be missing home and would probably start moaning about the lack of rain.

The thing about church life in the Church of England is that it has rhythms. These go back hundreds of years, and indeed many are borrowed from way before the Anglican church was set up. In a society that is so fast-paced and dying to get onto the next thing, these ancient rhythms are really comforting. We talk about times and seasons in the church. We move from Christmas to Easter and we change the colours of our robes and hangings to reflect the different times of the church year. It all goes back to times when folk couldn't read, but could read

the symbolism of church and faith.

When I first began going to church in my 40s I really liked that it was different to the outside world. I loved the sense of peace and pace. We still keep much of that at St Cuthbert's. I know that people appreciate it. I often find people of different faiths quietly sitting in church and soaking up the atmosphere. My sense is that the ancient paths have much to teach us. There is wisdom there and we would be foolish to ignore it. Any of you who have spoken to me, know that I have become fascinated by the life and death of the saint our church is named after - Cuthbert. he was a great friend to all, down-to-earth and loved nature and wild animals. Durham cathedral is build on the sacred site where his bones were finally laid to rest.

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Are you worried about your memory? PART IV

I hope you all had a great seasonal break and Christmas is not yet a dim and distant memory. As a GP I am often asked to assess if someone has dementia. There are some 700,000 people currently in the UK with dementia and there will be twice that number by 2050. There are different of sorts of dementia, the one most of us recognise is Alzheimer's. It is said that an early diagnosis is helpful for both patients and their families. There is no easy test for dementia, there is no blood test, no x-ray, and no psychological test which will clinch the diagnosis. I usually run a set of routine blood tests looking for vitamin deficiencies or thyroid disorder, anaemia or abnormal liver function as all of these are conditions which if present can be easily treated and may improve the quality of life. The memory tests we use to help diagnose dementia and assess progress are varied and will probably involve asking the patient to remember a

name and address or to perhaps draw a clock face and mark the time. All the tests have drawbacks as they are not well done by people whose first language is not English and equally clever or educated people are likely to score higher and have learnt tricks to conceal their memory defects. MRI scans are the most helpful in confirming change to the brain microstructure and blood supply and will help establish the diagnosis and identify some of the more unusual forms of dementia. In the very early stages though, there is no hard and fast test to help decide if the problem is dementia or just deteriorating memory,

Next time we will talk about treatments for patients with dementia. Do please send any questions.

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Byron Court School Expansion—update

As many of you may have noticed, the proposed construction of the new school buildings at Byron Court has yet to materialise.

When asked for information, at various points over the last couple of years, we are told about consultation, and how the Council is 'working with the community', but in reality we're told very little.

In our last issue, Cllr Perrin informed us that Byron Court would be discussed at a 'Restricted' Brent Cabinet meeting. At time of writing, the SCRA still haven't been informed of anything.

One of our local residents, however, did write to the Chief Executive on 10th January, and put these questions:

"1. Has the need for 5 forms of entry in this area been reviewed or revised in view of updated evidence. I understand that Fryent Primary School for example is struggling to fill its recently expanded 4th forms suggesting that the expected demand for places in certain age ranges has not materialised?

2. . Is the contractor involved in the Byron Court project having financial problems and been replaced? Are there any issues with increasing cost of the projects as a result of increases in material prices or other factors which means that the expansion is no longer viable?

3. What are the implications of the 3 months (and growing delays) on both costs of the project and the ability of Brent Council to provide a school place for each child - or has the assessment been revised and a conclusion reached that some of the extra spaces proposed at Byron Court will not in fact be required?"

Paul Lorber

Answers to the 3 questions were received on 12th January, from Amar Dave, Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment Brent Council.

"1. It remains the case that additional primary school places are required to meet current and future demand. The Cabinet decision to expand Byron Court Primary School from three to five Forms of Entry is still being enacted. While Byron Court and Fryent Primary School currently have some spare places, our forecasts indicate that these will be needed.

2. The project to expand Byron Court Primary School remains viable and necessary. The Council continues to work on the appointment of the contractor in line with the two-stage design and build process that was approved by Cabinet in April 2016. Further details will be provided as soon as possible.

3. Delays to the project will not affect the Council's ability to provide the required school places for children at Byron Court."

With evidence of need disputed by the SCRA, and with future plans for Northwick Park being discussed at this month's Cabinet meeting (see pg 8 & 24)—without detail as to exactly what those plans are and how they will affect, among other things, the Park and Stride scheme, which is essential to the School's Traffic Plan, it is difficult for us to comment further.

If we receive any further information, we will update next month.

Kaye

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So we decided to do something to help and have launched our new visiting service.

Suhaib Molina, one of our experienced Foot Specialists will be heading up the service and will be assisted by other members of our team.

Our service is available to those living in private homes, care homes and we also visit hospitals wards.

The service will cover treatment for a wide range of foot problems including simple nail cutting, corns, callouses, hard skin removal, changing dressings and general check-ups.

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The service covers the North West London area and we charge travel time along with our usual clinic rates which are competitive and very fair.

As a starting point I'd encourage people who feel they or someone they know could benefit from the call out service to contact us.

We always encourage people to visit the clinic but we understand this is sometimes not possible and that's why we're delighted to be able to add this service to our range of care options.

Whatever your foot and ankle issue is we're here to help.

Thanks for reading,

Firoz

For more foot care tips visit our website www.footcomfortcentre.co.uk



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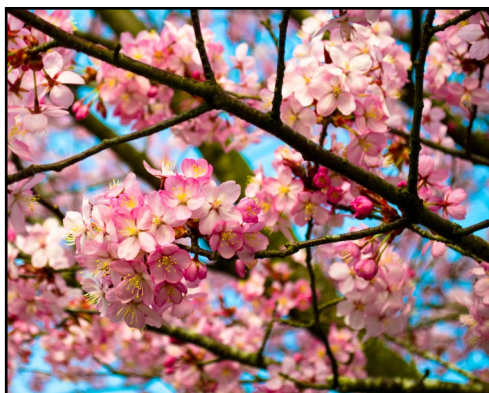
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TREES

The Council's Landscape Architect has obtained funding for a number of new trees in our Northwick Park Ward area. It is with great pleasure that I can inform you that new street trees will be appearing at the following locations: Elms Lane, Oldborough Road, and Littleton Crescent. In addition twelve Cherry trees will be planted on the north side of Sudbury Court Drive. It is hoped that funding can be obtained in the future to replant all of Sudbury Court Drive's lost trees.

Cllr Keith Perrin





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SUDBURY COURT BIRD WATCH

By Rod Lake, 24 Amery Road, Harrow HA1 3UQ

Email: lake510@btinternet.com



I was feeding the fish in my fishpond last month – all 24 of them, far too many for such a small pond as ours, but they will keep on breeding!

Did I ever tell you how I got the original stock for my pond, forty years ago?

I had just finished building it and my elder son, Jim, (then aged twenty) said, "I will win some fish for you at the fairground darts stall this afternoon!"

He had to score one hundred or more with three darts to win a fish. Four tries later, he had won four fish! (He was very good at darts!) Then the stall holder said, "I think you've won enough, son!" So Jim came home with four fish to stock the pond.

The rest is history, as they say!

In due course, they started breeding. We lost some during harsh winters, of course. But overall, their numbers kept on increasing and the current count of 24 are all descendants of those original four fairground fish!

Anyway, as I say, I was feeding them with their winter feed pellets when a female blackbird flew down and hid herself under the holly bush by the pond. I think she hoped that I might feed her as well. Could I feed a blackbird with fish food, I wondered? I didn't want to poison her.

But I threw a few pellets on to the ground for her. She came out of hiding and tried to eat the pellets at my feet. But, being a soft billed bird, the poor thing could hardly bite into them! She struggled on, but it was hard work for her.

The next morning, I took some suet pellets - proper bird food - down to the pond in case she came again. She did! So there I was, feeding both the blackbird and all the fish at the same time. I felt like St. Francis of Assisi!

Three Thrushes



There are three species of the thrush family that can be seen this month, perching in the bare tree branches of the winter. Most numerous are the **fieldfare**, migrants escaping the harsh weather of Scandinavia and Northern Europe. Noisy birds, when perching in trees – you may well hear them before seeing them. They are hungry berry eaters on the estate. They have distinctive blue grey heads and rumps, together with the thrush family's spots on their breasts. Lovely birds, as you can see by our photograph.

Next to look out for is the **red-wing**, which is often seen feeding with fieldfare, and sometimes roosting with them as well. They have distinctive red patches under their armpits, so to speak, and their face markings always make them look cross! Finally, the **mistle thrush**, our largest thrush. It is distinctly greyer than the other birds mentioned. You will distinguish it by its 'bully boy' appearance and it may well be singing for a mate from the very top of a tree in the foulest weather!

Rod Lake

Local Residents



BATMAN RETURNS

(by popular demand!)

This month I thought I might provide details of the bat species I have recorded locally, either on the Sudbury Court / Pebworth Estates or nearby over our local open spaces. Bat numbers have been declining more rapidly over our estate and gardens in recent years due mainly to building activities and disturbance, relaxation of Planning Regulations (permitted development) and loss of many of our mature trees. Trees form a vital role in bats survival and conservation. Mature trees provide roosting opportunities, a habitat for a huge variety of insects, which in turn provide a food source for all of our bats, which are insectivorous.

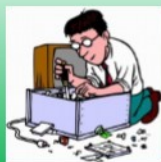
Building works to existing roofs, fascias and soffit boards can lead to a disturbance of bat roosts, whether known or unidentified, especially during the summer breeding months. Anyone finding bats during such works should stop work immediately and contact the **Herts & Middlesex Bat Group Helpline**

on **07517 123200**, to obtain advice and instructions. Alternatively contact the **Bat Conservation Trust Helpline on 0345 1300 228**.

The best locations to observe and hear bats locally, is over the Harrow School open spaces. Northwick Park and the Ducker woodland is another area worth monitoring during the spring and summer months. Bats will start to appear again during April, or slightly earlier if we experience a prolonged period of warm mild weather prompting bats to emerge from hibernation earlier than normal.

The most commonly heard bat species across all of these locations are the Common and Soprano Pipistrelles.

A future article explaining echolocation used by bats to find their way around and to pinpoint insects in flight will follow in a future edition of the Courier.




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Pipistrelle Bat



Bat species recorded in 2016 across these areas include:

Common Pipistrelle (left)

Soprano Pipistrelle

Nathusius Pipistrelle—Very occasionally

Daubenton's Bat—a *Myotis* species which forages over areas of smooth water

Brown Long Eared Bat (below left) - Very occasionally. These bats glean moths from trees and shrubs

Noctule Bat (below) Occasionally. These are our biggest bat species and they fly high and fast like Swifts

Brown Long Eared Bat



Noctule Bat



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CALLING ALL GARDENERS

Sudbury Court
Horticultural Society

Your local gardening club

Though we may well have some cold weather to come, any south-facing gardens are already responding to the longer hours of daylight, buds are fattening and bulbs pushing through the soil. Spring is on the way. Some plants however, relish the idea of flowering in the winter. Often sweetly scented, they offer nectar to early bees or other insects that emerge on sunny days. Violets are among the first to bloom, hiding their flowers beneath protective leaves.

Some time ago a friend paid us a winter visit bringing a bunch of fresh flowers from her garden. Among them was a sprig of Wintersweet, with glossy green leaves and small sweet-smelling white flowers. The perfume filled the room and I vowed to grow this plant in our own garden. I found it at Wisley. The label said 'sarcococca confusa', but the plant I bought was indeed the Wintersweet that I remembered. The bush has now grown into a sizeable clump, strong enough to gather sprigs from it to bring indoors and enhance a bunch of daffodil buds from the supermarket.



Another welcome burst of winter colour comes from the yellow Winter Jasmine. Its colour, rather than its scent makes it attractive. This plant is especially happy growing near a wall, which is quickly covered by its arching branches. I discovered its botanical name *Jasminum nudiflorum* from the Wisley plant-finder web-site; its name reminds us that the flowers come in winter on bare stems.



Wisley is a wonderful place to enjoy plants and we hope you will join us on our SCHS Spring visit to the **Wisley RHS garden on Wednesday 1st March** to experience the new season emerging in the hands of expert gardeners. There will be bulbs and shrubs in bloom and a chance to share the tropical glasshouse with many kinds of exotic butterflies. Whatever the weather there is something to enjoy; including a good restaurant and the garden centre where you may, as I did, find a special treasure. The cost for the whole day is £15 per person. Please reserve your places by e-mail to roake@btinternet.com giving your name and contact details.

We open the SCHS show season with the **Spring Show on Saturday 11th March** and look forward to seeing many of you at St Cuthbert's Hall that day.

Our visit to **Beth Chatto's garden near Colchester on Saturday 24th June** should find the garden in midsummer glory. This visit costs £25 for adults and £18 for children up to 16 years. Beth knows the value of encouraging young gardeners, so welcomes them to her garden without payment. Please bring all the family and register your interest as soon as possible, by e-mail as above. Fares should be paid at least two weeks in advance of each visit.

We wish you a happy gardening year.

Margaret Roake

DEVELOPMENTS—Northwick Park

Residents will be interested in a Brent Council Cabinet paper (16th January) re: potential development at Northwick Park. Information re: a programme emerged first in a paper at the Council's 6 October Health & Well-being Board - One Public Estate, a central government funded project looking at "rationalising" use of public land and generating capital.

The papers appear to cover all of Northwick Park (up to the Tube station, including the University, Hospital, and Northwick Park playing fields). Vale Farm, and the area around Wembley Fire and Police stations and Wembley Centre for Health and Care at Chaplin Road also feature as possible future options.

The Northwick Park project has been approved for further research. The Cabinet and Health & Wellbeing Board papers are on the Council website (**My Council, Democracy in Brent, Meetings Agendas and minutes**).

Some headlines to note: *"landmark residential development"*, attracting *"commercial tenants (mini supermarkets, cafes etc.)"*; *"energy centre"*; *"new access road"*; *"significant areas of land suitable for residential development"*; *"up to 1000 new*

temporary homes". (Unsurprisingly, the Pavilion Community Asset Transfer is no longer available).

According to the Cabinet report:

"Our bid is to fund:

Preparation of an integrated common master plan across The University of Westminster, Northwick Park & St Mark's Hospital, Network Homes land and Northwick Park Open Space, to develop an integrated transport infrastructure across the site, unlocking surplus, previously undevelopable land for mixed use redevelopment, increasing its value, and enhancing access to the entire site. Extensive study of services and resources across the four sites, to develop a strategy for rationalisation, generating revenue savings and freeing up further land."

"Northwick Park Open Space" is Metropolitan Open Land, green space available to all.

Whatever our views, as residents we need to be made aware, and be involved from the very outset. If you have any concerns at this early stage, please do get in touch with us, in order that we keep asking questions of our Councillors.

LUCKY DRAW WINNERS

Here are our lucky winners from January's Draw. Congratulations!

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Titus was a major benefactor helping to set up Wembley Hospital, the Tennis Club in Sylvester Road, providing the land for Barham Primary School & supporting many other causes.

Under his will Titus donated his House & Gardens for "the enjoyment of local people" under the management of the local Council - these became Barham Park.

Friends of Barham Library plan to celebrate the 80th anniversary in partnership with other local groups. We will provide more information as the plans develop.

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On Monday, Wednesday and Saturday between 2:30 to 5:30pm. We plan to expand our open hours in the spring when it gets warmer and the evenings get lighter.

BARHAM WALKERS

the regular walks take place from 10:30am on Tuesday's in Barham Park. You can walk as much or little as you wish. We open the Library for the walkers to have access to toilets and warm drinks.

KNITTING & SEWING SEWCIAL GROUP

This group meets on Wednesday from 10:30 to 12:30. Please bring your own materials if you can although knitting needles are available to borrow. There is a small contribution of £2 towards refreshments. Donations of wool etc can be left with Paul Lorber at 17 Stapenhill Road Wembley HA0 3JF.

PLEASE COME AND VISIT US

Just bring your copy of the Courier with you and we'll welcome you with a choice of a hot drink of your choice and some biscuits.

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Your community needs you!

Neighbours,

Thank you so much for the positive response, we hopefully have an extra 3 volunteers joining us shortly.

Reading Rev Steve's call out (page 14) we thought we'd continue to highlight the need of our local community for people to join in—often it's just as simple as chatting to others, and it makes such a HUGE difference.

We also have people getting involved in Neighbourhood Watch—which is resulting in information from residents on anti-social and criminal behaviour helping the police to help us.

I've just finished reading 'The Book of Joy' - conversations with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu—I highly recommend it if you want to smile through the cold weather! One of their main secrets to achieving happiness is in the helping of others. This belief of theirs is also backed up by research in Neuro-science! It's good for us!

So, maybe we all need our community, as much as our community needs us.

And the more people that get involved with the SCRA, the more we can achieve. . . .



So, here's part of my wish-list:

- I would like to see each street having a designated 'ambassador' - someone that everyone knows; someone who can help get information out to residents, and someone who can relay information back to the SCRA, Councillors, and SNT. Realistically, most weeks, that person will not need to spend any hours of their time; occasionally, maybe a few hours.

- It would be great to organise little teams of people to help beautify areas of our green spaces as the

Council contractors don't do much more than cut the grass. Sunny afternoon spent cutting back some ivy, or planting some bulbs?—getting different generations involved, especially children.

- events which involve neighbours coming together—even if it's just for tea and cake (my personal favourite!) and a chat.

- I would love to see our young people getting more involved—and it's maybe up to them to suggest what they would be interested in doing—I would certainly like to see a young person contributing to The Courier every month.

Get in touch—

editor@the-scra.co.uk

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- preeyaatthecourier@hotmail.com.

Riddles

Q: You walk across a bridge and you see a boat full of people yet there isn't a single person on board. How is that possible?

A: All the people on the boat are married.

Q: A boy was rushed to the hospital emergency room. The A&E doctor saw the boy and said, "I cannot operate on this boy. He is my son." But the doctor was not the boy's father. How could that be?

A: The doctor was his mother.

Q: What can run but can't walk?

A: A drop of water.

Q: How far can a dog run into the woods?

A: The dog can only run in to the woods up to halfway – than it would run out of the woods.

Q: If there are 3 apples and you take away 2, how many do you have?

A: If you take 2 apples, then you have of course 2.

Jokes

Q: What do you call a fake noodle?

A: An Impasta

Q: What do you call an alligator in a vest?

A: An Investi-'gator

Q: What happens if you eat yeast and shoe polish before you go to bed?

A: In the morning you'll rise and shine!

Q: "What's the difference between a guitar and a fish?"

A: "You can't tuna fish."

Q: What is it called when a cat wins a dog show?

A: A CAT-HAS-TROPHY!

Q: Why can't you give Elsa a balloo?

A: Because she will "Let it go".

Q: What do you get from a pampered cow?

A: Spoiled milk.

Q: What do lawyers wear to court?

A: Lawsuits!

Did you spot the deliberate mistake - 'balloo' should be balloon.





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WHAT'S ON

IN AND AROUND THE ESTATE?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

A free community service -
just let the Editor know.



SUDBURY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE— invite you to a Tea Dance on the afternoon of Tuesday 21st February from 2.0 until 3.30pm when the Harrow School Swing Band will be making a welcome return to play for us. Tickets £5 each, tea will be served at 3.00pm.. Phone Katia on 0208 9081220 to book. (The Centre is behind the Methodist Church at 809 Harrow Road, Sudbury.)

HARROW PHILHARMONIC CHOIR— This season's rehearsals, for our Spring Concert, have begun at the Victoria Hall, Harrow.

Anyone interested in joining us, will be welcome: contact www.harrowphil.co.uk

Our first 2017 concert will be showcasing **The Haydn Nelson Mass, Handel's Zadok the Priest and Beatus Vir by Monteverdi**, to be performed on 25th March at St Johns.

BADMINTON – every Thursday 8 – 10pm in local school, Sudbury Court Badminton Club welcomes League level/good club players. Contact Arvin 07748 642706, Alkesh 07956 453734 or Trevor 07771 998729

ELSEWHERE IN BRENT

HISTORY ON OUR DOORSTEP—There is a little known place in Willesden that charts a century and a half of the life and times of one of the earliest minorities to settle in Britain. Hester Abrams tells us about a project to open Willesden Jewish Cemetery to visitors. She will share stories of some of the notable people buried there, from scientist Rosalind Franklin to painters Simeon Solomon and Mark Gertler and film director Michael Winner. 8 February 2017, 2pm to 3pm, The Library at Willesden Green, 95 High Road, Willesden NW10 2SF

HALFT TERM AT WELSH HARP - For children aged 5 years and over. Group bookings only. 1 adult per 5 children must attend with the group. Maximum size 25 children per group. A £2 donation per child is suggested. For more information contact: Edel Fingleton 07734 87172 welshharpcentre@thames21.org.uk. 13-17 February 2017 at 10am to 2pm, Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre, Birchen Grove NW2 6TU. Fun filled winter activities includes –

Birdy treats—create a bird feeder and yummy bird cake for hungry birds this winter

Clay Creatures—get creative! Search for woodland mini-beasts and create a sculpture

URBAN ART! - Street art and graffiti workshop for young people aged 10-16. 13 February 2017, 2.30pm to 4pm, The Library at Willesden Green, 95 High Road, Willesden NW10 2SF.

BRENT CULTURE OPEN DAY—Find out all of the latest news from the Brent Culture teams and Brent's Community Libraries PLUS a variety of fun activities for all the family! 18 February 2017, 12noon to 4pm, Wembley Library, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ.

You can also check the What's On calendar in Brent at:
www.brent.gov.uk/events-and-whats-on-calendar

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30 words £6.70 (min) plus up to 50 additional words at 20p per word.



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