



NEWSLETTER

Sopwell Residents
Association

Issue 10
Spring 2007

A date for your diary!

We will be holding our AGM this year on Tuesday 15th May at 7.30pm. The venue will be the Marlborough Pavilion, Old Oak off Cottonmill Lane. Please do come along to give your support for our activities. There will, as always, be an interesting programme of speakers. We are hoping to secure a spokesperson from Hertfordshire Highways.

Our second open meeting this year will be on Wednesday 12th September which will also be in the Marlborough Pavilion at 7.30pm. Suggestions for speakers are welcome. Please contact the Secretary, Sandy Norman at 23 Tavistock Avenue or send a message via our website: www.sopwell.org.uk.

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Larks in the Parks

Larks in the Parks 1st July 2007



All Sopwell Residents are invited to the yearly ‘Larks in the Parks’ event which will be held on **1st July** between **12pm -5pm** in and around the Marlborough Pavilion, just off Cottonmill Lane.

It's an opportunity for the Sopwell community to get together, bring a picnic and enjoy entertainment for all the family. We're hoping to repeat last year's great success and see even more of you on the day! There will be a variety of acts performing for you, activities for the children and the popular plant swap stall is already

booked! Entry to the event is free so come along and bring your friends and family.

We're looking for local volunteers before and during the day. If you're a resident who can contribute with any kind of entertainment, an activity or just help on the day, please get in touch. You can contact us via email larks@sopwell.org.uk, get in touch with the SRA secretary or visit our website on www.sopwell.org.uk/larks for pictures of last years' event and more information about the day as the programme gets confirmed.

Sopwell Blooms

We hope you've noticed daffodils popping up around the trees on some of the open spaces in Sopwell. Over the last 3 years members of the SRA committee have been planting daffodil bulbs each Autumn. So far we have planted over a 1000 bulbs. It all started when one of the St. Albans market stallholders donated a sack of bulbs. Then Anne Kaloczi left us some money for bulbs in her will. This year the financing came partly from Anne's legacy and also from money kindly donated by residents at open meetings and at the plant swap stall during Larks in the Parks.

We hope to continue planting again this Autumn and maybe to extend the programme to planting trees. If you have any suggestions as to where trees are needed in Sopwell, leave a message on our website: <http://www.sopwell.org.uk/>

Sopwell Nunnery - take a pew!

In mid December, members of the SRA committee joined the district archaeologist to watch CMS' contrac-

tors dig the foundations for the new benches, and see what they would find under the grass. Sadly, instead of Sir

Advert

Looking for part time admin/pa work? or know someone who is?

Please call Chantal on 07958 224175. Experience in admin and pa essential.

Richard Lee's driveway, all that turned up was what looked like builders' rubble, probably dating from the 1960s! The two benches (one with a plaque in memory of Anne Kaloczi, SRA founder) were installed shortly afterwards – perhaps some of you have already tried them out in the recent sunshine.

The other piece of news is that the council has now put in a Green Flag application for the Sopwell Nunnery site in combination with the allotments area. As part of this, a

new and more detailed management plan has been written. This incorporates the remaining actions from the original Greenspace Action Plan, with additional suggestions from the Allotments Association, SRA and the council, and seeks to maintain a suitable balance between the recreation, heritage and wildlife/landscape aspects of the two sites. If you have any suggestions for the site, or comments on the work already carried out, please let us know and we will pass them on.

Neighbourhood Watch - are you?

Whether or not you belong to a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, please read on!

Over the years, Neighbourhood Watch schemes have been successful in reducing crime, and bringing offenders to justice. Neighbourhood Watch works alongside residents associations and other bodies that have a concern for the wellbeing of residents. The scheme is for people looking after their interests, and the interests of their neighbours.

Hertfordshire Police now have a much improved communication system, called OWL, which gets messages to individual houses. A Neighbourhood Watch scheme can consist of as few as 4 or 5 houses, or as many as 20+, and roads can be divided into practical groups.

Benefits include a reduction in insurance premiums. Please note that an insurance company will sometimes check to see if a scheme exists.

You should remember that burglars may not just commit one crime in one road -they will perhaps visit a couple of adjacent houses, and then move on to another area. For that reason, some messages will be non-specific.

Schemes can develop a community spirit; becoming a family, readily welcoming new residents, and assisting the elderly and infirm when needed.

To make initial contact, either visit www.owl.co.uk or contact Ken Lane, NHW Liaison Officer (County Police Station, Victoria Street, St Albans, AL1 3JL 01727 796087). If you are living where there is a scheme, you should speak with your co-ordinator, and get signed up to OWL to receive any messages. Anyone without a computer or a telephone answering system will still be given a copy of any message from the local co-ordinator.

Emergency call number 999 Non -emergency: 0845 33 00 222.

Extended Schools in Sopwell

Sopwell looks set to see an increased level of services for children, families and the local community with the inclusion of all of our local schools in the St Albans West Extended Schools Consortium (combined with others in Verulam, Batchwood and St Peters – 17 schools in all).

The government has set a date of 2010 by which time all schools should be providing a range of services and activities beyond the school day by working in partnership with other agencies. Provision will be based on local community need from a core offer of:

- **Childcare** – access to affordable childcare before and after school and during the school holidays
- **Menu of study support activities** – raising pupil attainment through added sports, arts and out of school hours learning opportunities
- **Specialist support**- swift and easy referral to specialists like speech therapists or counselling services
- **Support for parents** – including parenting courses and family learning
- **Community access to school ICT**, sports and arts facilities and to adult learning.

Following a successful pilot year for 15 consortia - including the Cottonmill Consortium made up of Mandeville, Watling View and Marlborough Schools, Herts County Council is rolling out extended schools county-wide. 38 consortia have been allocated DfES funding designated to support the development of extended services. There's more to come, but current highlights include;

- A **4 day film-maker project** over the Easter holidays providing local primary and secondary pupils with the opportunity to acquire the technical skills to operate camera equipment and edit digital film, the personal skills to work together as a team and the artistic talents to act, write and direct
- **Positive Beginnings** - a playgroup for parents and pre-school children with professional input from the school, health visitors, speech therapists & Homestart. At Mandeville, Tuesdays 1.30-3.15pm
- The **Wednesday workout** at Mandeville for those aged 16+ @ £1 per session, pay at the door
- **Drop-in sessions** with health visitors handling any family health/parenting concerns, open to all on Tuesdays at Mandeville 3.00-3.45pm
- **Adult learning** delivered through partnerships with Oaklands College & Herts Adult & Family Learning Service in literacy, numeracy, computing and 'getting that job!'

Schools are often looking for adult volunteers to hear children read or play maths games in primaries and to act as mentors in secondaries. If you have some regular spare time, they'd be glad to hear from you. Training from the Workers Educational Association in practical helping may be available and volunteering is often a good stepping stone to getting back to work.

For further details please contact: Helen Thorpe, Extended Schools Co-ordinator on 01727 754078.

New Children's Centre for Sopwell & Verulam

A new Children's Centre is planned for the Sopwell & Verulam areas of St Albans.

In November 2006 Pippa West was appointed as the Children's Centre Manager.

Children's Centres aim to draw together all relevant services for children under 5 and their families in order to provide children with the best start in life. They provide information about early education, childcare, health and family support services so that all young children & their families get easy access to the services they require. They can help to provide improved support for young children's transition into school and support parents who are seeking to return to work with employment related services.



Because each community is different, Children's Centres should be customer focused with needs led by the local community. If you have a child under 5, we would like your views on both the services you currently use and also any additional services you would like to see available to help support you and your young child. It's important that we start planning now to ensure that the local communities' needs inform the work of the Children's Centre.

We'd also like your ideas and opinions for the name of the planned new Children's Centre. If you can think of an appropriately catchy but informative title, or you would like further information about the new Children's Centre, please contact Pippa on 01727 850560.

Abbey Line News:

Alissa Ede has recently taken over from Maria Cutler as the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership Officer. Alissa can be reached at crp@hertscc.gov.uk or 0777 099 3162 if you have any queries or concerns.

May 19th - 26th : Community Rail Week across the country with community events during that week. If you're a part of a community group that might be interested in participating, please contact Alissa at crp@hertscc.gov.uk.

There has been some concern about tree cutting on the line. Network Rail has started a program to alleviate leaf fall on tracks across the country. The Abbey Line is one of the train lines most affected by leaf fall in the whole country. It

causes slippery tracks and delays the train in the autumn. The amount of tree cover means there's insufficient sun to dry the tracks during the day so tracks remain slippery. To alleviate this problem, Network Rail has decided to cut back trees five meters on either side of the track. If you want more information, contact Network Rail on 08457 11 41 41. Information about tree cutting is also at the following website: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/1034.aspx>

History of Sopwell part three by Councillor Eileen Harris

Berners Drive is named after a famous inhabitant of the nunnery and the author of the first book in England on fishing! She was Dame Juliana Berners who was sometimes said to be the prioress though her name is not on the list of prioresses. It is said that she wrote the *Booke of St Albans* which was first published in 1486. On the flyleaf of this copy appear the words: *This Booke was made by Lady Julian Berners, daughter of Sr. James Berners, or Berners Roding, in Essex, Knight, & Sister to Richard Lord Berners. She was Lady Prioress of Sopwell, a Nunnery neere St. Albons, in Abby of St. Albons this was first printed in 1486, 2 H. 7. She was living in 1460, 39 H. 6. according to John Bals, Centur. Fol. 611.* A later facsimile copy of the book, can be seen in the Hatfield Road museum. Her work is called *A Treatise of Fysshing with an Angle* which is apparently ... "a facsimile reproduction of the first book on the subject of fishing printed in England by Wynkyn de Worde at Westminster in 1496". The first edition covered the subjects of Hunting, Hawking and Heraldry and a later edition included a section on Fishing. It is alleged to be the first printed work written in English by a woman and it was one of eight books printed in St Albans. Juliana Berners put Sopwell on the international map and there are many sporting organisations in the USA today which bear her name. Log on to the web and see. There is a lot about her.

There are royal connections at the priory: Henry VIII arranged for Anne Boleyn to take shelter at Sopwell and they met in secrecy under a cedar tree near St Stephens Church. Also in practically every book that has reference to the Sopwell Priory, mention is made of the fact that Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII married there, though there is no confirmation of this. Other places also make claim to this.

Thanks go to St Albans museum service for their help in some of the details of these articles and of course, most importantly to Donald Pelletier who used to live in Sopwell, for his book *The Mysterious Ruins: the story of Sopwell Priory* without which I could not have easily discovered the history of Sopwell.

HOUSEHOLD REFUSE

For those residents of Sopwell who have been accustomed to take their household waste to the dump on the road to Sandridge, there is an alternative which to date has been little known or used called Waterdale. The Waterdale refuse site is sometimes also referred to it as the "Bricket Wood" dump.

It is situated on the A 405 road to Watford almost immediately after passing the M1 South turn off. The slipway to the left leads not only to a County Council Waste transfer station but also to the well laid out domestic waste collection point.

Much of the dump is on two levels, so that the disposal of garden waste, as an example, is done by throwing from waist level down into the skip - a distinct advantage for those who prefer to avoid walking several steps up.

Distance is greater by about a mile but the cross town hold-ups are avoided. Opening times are 08:00 - 18:00 hrs every day except Christmas day, Boxing day and New Years day.

Contact the Sopwell Residents Association

Sopwell Residents Association, 23 Tavistock Avenue, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 2NQ

Email: info@sopwell.org.uk, Internet: www.sopwell.org.uk

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