



ROUND HILL REPORTER

Issue 33

September 2008

NEW DEVELOPERS WITH DESIGNS ON ROUND HILL

Property developers, **Pearl Developments** have been eyeing up new opportunities in Round Hill. When 2 Ashdown Road was up for sale earlier this year, many residents commented on the fact that the asking price was significantly higher than other family homes in the area.

The property has grounds to the rear which have been operated in the past as part of a car repair business. In recent years, most of the garages which occupy the site have not been used.

Now the new owner, has put in an application to convert the house into three flats and build three new houses on the land at the rear.

In the plans, the new houses sit one storey underground - this helps to reduce the visual impact on neighbouring properties but leaves no open vistas for the inhabitants of the new properties and emphasises the problems of privacy with the new designs. *(continued on page 2)*

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2 **Harveys Brewery Trip**

Details of the forthcoming tour arranged by the Round Hill Society

3 James Gray Building a unique photographic record of Brighton & Hove

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How local pubs are being reclaimed as the centres of their communities

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HARVEYS BREWERY TOUR

The Round Hill Society is pleased to announce a planned tour of the Harveys brewery in Lewes.

The brewery and its produce are a familiar sight in Sussex, and has been part of the Lewes landscape since 1838 when beer-making began on the site.

Since then, the operation has grown consistently, adapting the changing trends and tastes of the British market.

(continued from front page)

The proposed new houses are also extremely close to existing properties, much nearer than the 20m which is often used as a 'rule of thumb'.

One of the most striking aspects of the plans is the cramped accommodation of the properties. The new houses have a minimum of outside space, with next to no views beyond the boundary walls of their properties.

The conversion of the house to three flats is similarly claustrophobic and with increased pressure on urban living (Brighton & Hove is required by the regional authority to supply 11,000 new houses by 2026), it seems likely that this will become an increasingly familiar sight on the planning register.

Another issue is the changing nature of the housing in Round Hill. According to Brighton and

Hove's Local Plan, family housing of three bedrooms or more is a priority and yet larger homes are increasingly converted into smaller flats.

There are also concerns over the extra pressure on resources, in the neighbourhood. There is an existing garage which will remain for the use of one of the new houses but the entry way will be used for cycle parking and waste bin housing. The lack of additional



car spaces will effectively create more demand for on-street parking in an area which is already saturated and suffering from problems of crowding. Many pedestrians already complain of

difficulty navigating Ashdown Road where cars are routinely parked on the pavements.

The expected decision date for the application was originally 19 August although the plans were still under consideration at the time of going to press.

David Guest



Tours are conducted by senior staff and places highly sought-after but the Round Hill Society has secured a limited number of tickets which are available to residents.

The tour will take place on Monday, 27th October, from 6.30 to 8.45. Participants will need to make their way to and from the brewery site in Lewes and tickets cost £2.50 per person.

Please act quickly to book a place with Rob Stephenson (contact details on back page).



GARDEN GADABOUT

Four gardens in or near to Round Hill were opened to the public as part of this year's Garden Gadabout.



A spectacular £16,000 was raised for Sussex Beacon over the two weekends, £1,200 of which was contributed by the gardens on the "Round Hill circuit".

Jig Agnihotri, proprietor of *Red, White, Rosé*, also hosted a successful wine-tasting afternoon in one of the open gardens on Springfield Road.

CARELET APPEAL

The latest application by Carelet, to construct eight houses on the open space behind Princes Road, is now with the Planning Inspectorate. The application was narrowly refused by Brighton & Hove's planning committee but was already the subject of an appeal on the basis of non-determination. The appeal was made by Carelet because the planning authority had not resolved the case by the target date possibly due to the legal advice required on a technical aspect of the proposals.

Campaigners on the issue have long held that the developers have deliberately attempted to conflate the the previously undeveloped ("greenfield") status of part of the land with that of the adjoining houses which are subject to a separate freehold.

David Guest

THE JAMES GRAY COLLECTION: A UNIQUE CATALOGUE OF LIFE IN BRIGHTON

James Gray (1904-1998) was a local collector who, in the 1950s, chanced across some annotated antique photographs of Brighton's Western Road.

This accidental discovery sparked a lifetime's passion for collecting photographs of Brighton's streets. Over the ensuing decades, Gray built a collection which grew to encompass nine thousand images of the area, from Rottingdean to Hove, between the sea front and the South Downs.

This unique catalogue charts the changes defining the development of Brighton and Hove from a small fishing town to the vibrant sea-side city of today.

Spread across thirty-nine volumes,

the collection also includes images areas close to Round Hill, including London Road, Lewes Road and Sylvan Hall.

On Gray's death, this remarkable collection was purchased by *The Regency Society* who plan to make as many of the photographs as possible available for the general public. At the moment, they are mid-way through a project to scan all of the images so they can be published online for easy reference by students of Brighton's local history.

The Society are now appealing for donations to help with this work. More information, including some of the images already scanned,

is available on the Society's website: www.regencysociety.org.

David Guest

The Regency Society
The James Gray Collection



Photograph of the 19th Century Brighton

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POCKET PARK RESPONSES

Thank you to everyone who responded to Rob's suggestion in the last edition that we look into the possibility of creating a pocket park in Round Hill, possibly using the piece of land at the junction of Wakefield Road and Princes Crescent.

It appears that many residents in Round Hill are very supportive of the idea. Parents from Crescent Road to Roundhill Crescent are keenly aware that there is no immediately accessible area in which children can play. Although the Level and Blaker's Park are within walking distance, fellow parents will recognise the organisation and even expense involved in such expeditions and a small piece of open ground would provide a welcome alternative for times when a quick trip would be more appropriate.

Some respondents also highlighted the fact that it is difficult to give children a gradually widening circle of independence when the only available open spaces are



on the other side of busy roads, often without pedestrian crossings. For some, this is the only major problem with an area that otherwise meets their needs.

There are possible drawbacks to the proposals of course—we have been in touch with the local Police to consult on the potential dangers as a few residents commented on the possibility that an open space would be too inviting a focal point at which youths might congregate.

The community beat officer for Round Hill was supportive of the plan however, appreciating the

importance of open ground for any community.

The Round Hill Society is also in touch with the Sylvan Hall Residents' Association who are now canvassing opinions from their own members. But if you've not yet been in touch, please let us know if you have any thoughts on the idea—all views are welcome!

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Established December 1983

The Round Hill Society

Annual General Meeting

7pm Tuesday
23 September 2008

Downs Infant School

Details of speakers to be published on the
website www.roundhill.org.uk

Committee places

If you are interested in events in the neighbourhood, please consider joining the committee for a year. Participation is enjoyable, not too onerous and a good opportunity to find out more about the community.



NOTES FROM A WILDLIFE GARDEN

NIGHT CRAWLERS

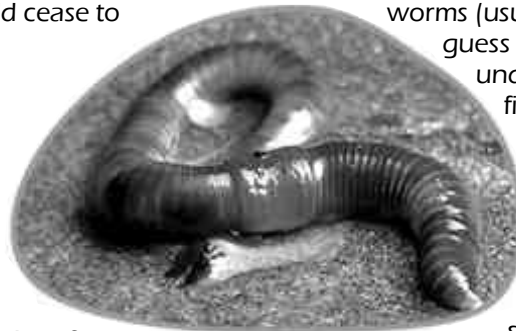
Night Crawler—the name for a worm in earlier times. I prefer earth worm, especially as earth worms should be our favourite garden friends. Without them we would all be in a bit of a mess.

Birds are delightful to watch but it is a bit difficult to feel warm about earth worms and yet if all the birds flew out of our gardens tomorrow, our green patches would be less interesting but they would survive. If worms went, our gardens would cease to function in just a few weeks.

Don't panic (yet)! They've been around a long time, about 120 million years and individual worms barring accidents, can live for ten years or more.

I have read that, if conditions are good, an area of natural grassland (no poisons, no pesticides or lawn mowers) the size of a football pitch may contain five million worms and between them they will shift 8-18 tons of soil a year. In a fertile garden, a spadeful of soil should contain six or more worms. If there are fewer than that, dig plenty of organic matter into the earth to improve fertility because worms and soil organisms — bacteria — need fallen leaves, dead plants and compost to survive.

Worms are great soil improvers: the material they drag down into the soil is attacked by bacteria turning the leaves etc. into humus—fertile soil. Their underground tunnels stop soil compacting and help drain rain down to the roots of plants and trees. Unlucky worms in turn feed hedgehogs, badgers, some birds and



unfortunately provide bored cats with wriggly playthings.

Make friends with your worms. They have no eyes or ears but are blessed with seven hundred taste buds on each square millimetre of body—they are very, very sensitive to vibrations—well they would have to be, wouldn't they? Incidentally, an earth worm has both male and female organs, but it still takes two earth worms (usually) to make more earth worms. I guess with no eyes or ears and living mostly underground, it is useful to mate with the first earthworm you meet—clever stuff.

If, really at the end of a long school holiday tether, you could suggest to your family—tap dampish ground with a stick to imitate the sound of raindrops and see who entices up the most worms. (Have you seen seagulls stamping on grass? It's called 'puddling'— they are doing the same thing but they eat them.)

If this sounds very tedious, think of Charles Darwin. After he wrote "On the Origin of Species", he retired and spent the next ten years—yes ten years!—researching the anatomy and behaviour of...earth worms.

Go on! Spend a minute or two puddling.

(Dear Editor, get the spelling right—'puddling' *not* 'piddling'!)

Jan Curry

NEW PROPOSALS FOR LONDON ROAD

St James's Investments have released new details of their proposed mixed-use development for London Road. The far-reaching scheme includes new offices and accommodation as well as a large Tesco store and car-parking for 1000 vehicles. New England house would be demolished under the proposals as well as some of the properties north of York Hill. The plans also include extensive traffic revisions including changes to the flow of traffic in Viaduct and Beaconsfield Roads.

More details of the plans are available online at www.brightnewlondonroad.co.uk. Other proposals for the area are also likely to be considered as part of the City Council's "master plan" for London Road.

David Guest



Two-way traffic would return to Viaduct Road under the new plan from St James's Investments.



ROUNDHILL READERS

The prize-winning 'Roundhill Readers' has been in existence for five years. We meet every month at a different member's home to discuss a book, taking turns to select the reading material.

The Roundhill Readers

E-mail jrfrancis@hotmail.co.uk

Post Jill Francis
37 Richmond Road
BRIGHTON
BN2 3RL

Our choices include the comedic 'Two Caravans' by Marina Lewycka. The book follows the escapades of Ukrainian strawberry pickers in Kent. A more serious novel we read recently tells the

poignant demise of a farming family from Vermont over four decades. 'Postcards' was written by Annie Proulx, who was also the author of 'The Shipping News' and 'Brokeback Mountain' now made into successful films. Our current book is 'One Good Turn' by Kate Atkinson, a murder mystery set at the Edinburgh Festival. It sounds like a 'good read' for the summer hols!

We are a group of six interested individuals living in the Roundhill area looking for two or three people to join us. We are thoughtful rather than academic and are always open to a challenge. If you are attracted to this scenario, why not contact us.

Jill Francis

Spaceship lands in Hollingdean Road

Well, you could be forgiven for thinking so! From the back gardens of Princes Road, it appears that a sleek, grey, alien form has materialised behind the trees.

The imposing structure of the combined Hollingdean Waste Transfer Station and Materials Recovery Facility is mostly complete and now undergoing testing and internal fitting before its operational life begins in early 2009.



LOST IN ROUND HILL



© Stefan Holmstrom

Every year, it seems that dozens of Round Hill's cats are reported missing. The forlorn notices attached to lamp-posts are a regular sight. So why is it such a common occurrence and where do they all go?

It is tempting for distraught owners to consider the possibility that their beloved pet might have been abducted. After all, some companion animals are purchased for high prices, aren't they? The reality however is more prosaic. Cat smuggling is extremely rare in Britain and restricted to the most exotic species.

House cats go missing for a number of reasons. They often simply become lost and disorientated, especially if the family has recently moved, and simply unable to find their way back home. In these cases, animals often seek sanctuary in other homes and are regularly found through the use of 'lost cat' notices.

Of course, even if they know where they are, house cats used to roaming the neighbourhood often establish relationships with other people and begin to spend longer periods away from their official 'home'.

Ron Ayres, founder of Lost Cats Brighton, is keenly aware of the scale of the problem. The charity he founded can be called upon to take care of up to 180 cats in any given year. But he and his staff are also conscious that cats are often re-united with their owners—including a number of Round Hill moggies.

More details of how best to find your lost cat are given on his website: www.lostcatsbrighton.org.uk.

This edition of the Round Hill Reporter was printed by

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ESTATE AGENTS



NEW LIFE FOR LOCAL PUBS?

With Round Hill's Victoria Pub still 'under offer', some residents are starting to wonder whether there is a better way of ensuring a local pub is a viable centre of the community.



THE VICTORIA PUB

Dear Round Hill Reporter,

thank you for the update in your last issue on the situation with regard to our local, The Victoria Pub (or New Vic as it was when I first moved here). I have watched its decline in recent years with great sadness as I've fond memories of how the pub was when we first discovered it in 2001: large and inviting leather sofas, flattering low lighting, friendly staff, good music, decent Sunday roasts and a welcome for everyone. I enjoyed a quiet drink here with my husband on Christmas Eve in 2001, sharing the pub with a few local residents including a couple who had their newborn baby dressed in a santa suit sleeping beside them in their pram.

It was this inclusiveness and family atmosphere that I appreciated and it became our beacon during the many five o'clock strolls round and round the block trying to get our colicky daughter to sleep, a place to rest with a pint when she'd finally dropped off.

So I wondered whether there was any possibility we could create a co-operative pub for the local community, owned by local residents, managed by a committee who would then appoint the licensee. I don't know the first thing about running a pub, but I would be willing to invest a small amount if there were sufficient other local residents who felt the same. I found this website about the Old Crown, a community owned pub in Cumbria which people might find interesting: www.theoldcrownpub.co.uk.

I'd be really interested to know whether there is the same strength of feeling about our local.

Sam, Wakefield Road

When the licensee of the Kings pub in Reach, Cambridgeshire announced that he would have to close the business and apply to convert it into housing, the locals were so upset at the prospect of losing the last amenity in their village that they were driven to action. They formed a company and with the investment of 49 villagers, raised £178,000 to buy and refurbish the building. Four years later, they sold the pub as a going concern, returned to its place at the hub of village life.

With pressure for new housing in Brighton & Hove so strong, and recent owners of the Victoria Pub failing to attract sufficient clientele to make the business viable, it has begun to look increasingly likely that this drinking place in the heart of Round Hill will be lost.

There is no doubt that a project to buy and manage a pub would require considerable energy and enthusiasm, not to mention investment, but with sufficient interest, the villagers of Reach have shown what can be achieved. Residents of Round Hill know that strong community feeling can exist in urban environments too, and with the population of the city predicted to grow further in the coming years, surely we are going to need these vital hubs of community life?

David Guest

To gain a feeling of well being, restore balance and encourage the body's own healing power, indulge yourself with a holistic aromatherapy massage or reflexology treatment.

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Rob Stephenson
673511



RHS Newsletter Editor
16a Wakefield Road
Brighton BN2 3FP
news@roundhill.org.uk
www.roundhill.org.uk

COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

Chair	Jean Brennan	87 Round Hill Crescent	693100
Secretary	Rob Stephenson	51 Upper Lewes Road	673511
Treasurer	Marian Gerrett	77 Princes Crescent	688009
Conservation Advisory	Ted Power	55 Prince's Road	688102
Newsletter and website	David Guest	16a Wakefield Road	699476
Sustainability	Jo Nean	13 Mayo Court	07724738747
Member without Portfolio	Paul Thompson	29 Richmond Road	883004
Member without Portfolio	Vivien Eliades	66 Richmond Road	276386
Member without Portfolio	Kevin Tansley	11 Wakefield Road	672648

Deadline for next Issue:
FRIDAY 14TH NOVEMBER

OVER THE HILL...



This year's AGM of the Triangle Community was dominated by discussion of the proliferation of off-licences in the area. There is concern that the growing number of alcohol vendors on and around Lewes road is behind an unwelcome

change of atmosphere, with on-street drinking an increasingly familiar sight in the evenings.

The trend continues however, with a new corner shop opening on the corner of Park Crescent Road. Called the "Smart Convenience Store", the shop occupies a former dwelling and sells alcohol in addition to food and household supplies.

Residents of D'Aubigny Road will have noticed the appearance of a new parking bay designated "Car Club". This is to be the location of a new addition to City Car Club's growing Brighton fleet. When the company conducted research into the viability of a car club in Round Hill a few years ago, they judged there was insufficient interest to support the plan, but times are changing and the increase in fuel costs alone is persuading more drivers that membership of a car club might be a more effective means of running a vehicle. More details: www.citycarclub.co.uk



The Reporter is published by the Round Hill Society to keep residents in the area in touch with local news, events and each other. Every effort is made to present a fair and balanced view, while aiming to accept any material from Round Hill residents. The opinions expressed in The Reporter are not necessarily those of the Round Hill Society.

ROUND HILL DIRECTORY

WINDOW CLEANERS

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C R Laker 76 Rugby Rd, T: 501006, F: 507745

Tom Plumb T: 07973 551841

Lynette Ward CORGI registered M: 07910 763689

T: 302574 E: lynette.l.ward@ntlworld.com

Alex Jackson T: 683383

CARPENTERS

SAB Carpentry 27 Prince's Rd. T: 702632

M: 07963 841536

Richard Simpson simpsoncarpentry.com,

richard@simpsoncarpentry.com, M: 07754 850135

GARDENERS

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Please send your recommendations (or warnings!)

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