



The Round Hill Reporter

Issue 84
June 2021

Playsafe can return – with your help –see page 5

Our very own Big Elm has gone

Fallen prey of the fungal Dutch elm disease



It took nearly 10 hours to set up equipment and take down the huge 80+ year-old elm at the east end of Round Hill Crescent on Tuesday 11th May.

A back-log of diseased elms and ashes meant they came later than ideal to our tree, so the day started with the careful removal of a nest of 4 crow chicks. They were taken to a wildlife hospital to complete their fledging, but that left 2 very confused parent birds behind! Here's hoping the chicks make it.

Heritage Open Door Week

Sat 11th – Sun 19th September

In 2019 we had two guided walks for the event, last year we moved to household exhibitions in front gardens or garden fences and in front windows.

Several people said they would like to join in, should the event return. Well here is that opportunity. If you fancy telling the story of your house, or a nearby building (perhaps gone now) please contact Rob Stephenson (see back page) and provide your contact details.

There is an annual theme available you might like to consider using – it is Edible England. There have been lots of small groceries in what are now homes, selling tea in twists of paper or pickled onions individually to meet financial conditions. Or how about food packaging? Almost all cardboard and paper would have helped get the fire going! Bottles back to the bottler. And plastics? – nowhere. What about market gardens on or near Round Hill? Or the abattoir!

Whatever we put together, it will be publicised on the HOD website. We could combine guided walks and input from individual homes met along the way.

If we get 5, 10 or 20 households involved, then we can meet on Zoom (or real) to plan.

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by



More on the Elm loss:



Most of the tree is down, everything small enough is shredded, and this huge section is taken off.



Now the last section is cut off and lifted across the road, to be loaded onto the flatbed for transport to the burning site at Waterhall, on the edge of town.

Murals on Round Hill

The long wall down Wakefield Rd has received a very pleasing piece of art which makes great use of the hanging bushy ivy. Moon is the artist's work-name, and she had been approached about working on the long wall, but this piece was a delightful surprise



Meanwhile Daryl (work name Sinna1) is working with members of a youth club who are planning some designs for more of the long wall.

Daryl has also been asked to price a toad and newt based design for the Catcreep (see article starting page 3). Money and permission are delays here, but there is hope of the latter from one of the houses at the top.

Blue Plaque for Round Hill hospital

Difficulty agreeing exact wording has caused the June unveiling date to be missed, but we are hopeful that it will happen this summer. 101 Round Hill Crescent was the site of the first hospital in England to offer care and treatment for poor women suffering nervous breakdown, typically caused by overwork, poor diet, too little income and too many children. Dr Helen Boyle opened the house for 12 patients in 1905. She went on to run the first psychiatric unit at the County Hospital, and founded what is today called MIND. (See back page for CLEAN the musical).

Cat's Creep: Toad Tally-awesome.

During the late months of winter and the early months of spring, amphibians return to their spawning grounds to mate. We are delighted to report that the ponds of Roundhill have been very productive for amphibians. More and more seem to be turning up. It is fascinating to see just how successful amphibians have been within this urban, densely-populated, human-created environment. It seems if we create the right conditions to live harmoniously with nature, it is not only foxes that can thrive in our urban world.



In particular, it seems as if the **Cat's Creep**, a stepped-twitten between Roundhill Crescent and Richmond Road, has become a regular strip for amphibians wanting to flirt and court, before returning to their ponds in nearby gardens and procreating. Last year, during the months of February and March, the Roundhill Society, led by **Kate Wolstenholme**, spearheaded a **toad patrol** on Cat's Creep. The numbers of amphibians along the twitten had seemed to be growing since 2015 and the Society was concerned about the amphibians' safety as they could easily be crushed by people walking up and down the steps. This year, during lockdown, a community of toad patrollers has fledged from the Society's initial efforts last year. Up to seven members of our community regularly volunteered to patrol the twitten during their mating period, count amphibians and put up signs warning not to tread on our amphibian friends.

The volunteers communicated via WhatsApp and kept records on Google spreadsheets (other apps are available). Anecdotally the project was a great success. The people using the twitten



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The Roundhill Pub*

were all aware of the amphibians; they were friendly and interested to talk to the patrollers and share experiences. Almost everyone using the steps turned on their phone torches to avoid accidentally stepping on an amphibian. As a result casualties were massively down since last year, with very few squashed amphibians found. Neighbours to the twitten who had ponds

were aware and supportive of what we were doing. One of them even shaved the bottom of his garden gate to allow easy passage for the bigger frogs and toads to move between their garden and the twitten.

The data we collected was interesting. Amphibians were found in much higher numbers on wet and rainy days. February of 2020 was stormy and more importantly warm and wet. In contrast, February and March of 2021 were much colder and drier than last year. As a result the amphibians were seen in high numbers a whole month later this year than last. Unfortunately this year there were fewer sightings.

In **2020** we tallied **four hundred and fifteen toad sightings** and **one hundred and twenty three newt sightings**, but in **2021** we only tallied **three hundred and sixty three toad sightings** and **thirty two newt sightings**. These are still good numbers, but of course this is not a trend we want to see.

We will carry on monitoring amphibian numbers on the steps in future years.

We will, of course, be sharing our data with the amphibian charity Froglife (with whom the Cat Creep Toad Crossing is registered), the Sussex Amphibian & Reptile Group (Sussex ARG - do join for info & events, if interested!) and our local environmental records holder, the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (Sussex BRC - check out their website & get out there recording wildlife!). Amphibians are in steep decline worldwide and we are able to provide evidence that our urban spaces can be an important locale to protect threatened species. We hope the data will be used to make sure passage to the ponds is maintained in perpetuity. Collecting records is a vital first step to protecting wildlife. Without collecting records and having them held by groups like Sussex BRC, the existence of protected species can go undetected and not inform decision-making around our use of our environment, such as the impacts of any proposed developments - every little helps when it comes to recording wildlife.

We would like to thank everyone involved in the project, those of you with ponds that support amphibians (and other wildlife) and all of you who use the twitten and take care to avoid the little creatures courting beneath our feet. Please take care with our amphibians and do not take them or move them; interfering with them can put them at risk from the many dangerous diseases that are now rife - and we've all learnt the importance of biosecurity in recent times!

Next year we will be looking for more people willing to join the toad patrollers. It's great fun so please register your interest via the 'Toads on Roads' Froglife initiative, where you'll find a map of Toad Crossings near you - including our famous urban one!, and one of us will get back to you :)

We look forward to a Covid-free year of toading next year (!), where we will be looking at more diverse ways to keep each other in touch and involved, and ways to coordinate not exclusive to WhatsApp! (Apologies from Kate, who had to dip out a bit this year, and may have missed a few of your enquiries.)

The Toadally Awesome 2021 Toaders: Paolo & Mia Oprandi, Annie Harper, Eva Wendler, Moira Faulkner, Kelly Westlake, Nicola Jackson, Tom Johnson and Kate Wolstenholme.



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Celebrating 38 years on Round Hill

102 Ditchling Road
Established December 1983

The Return of kids street play sessions

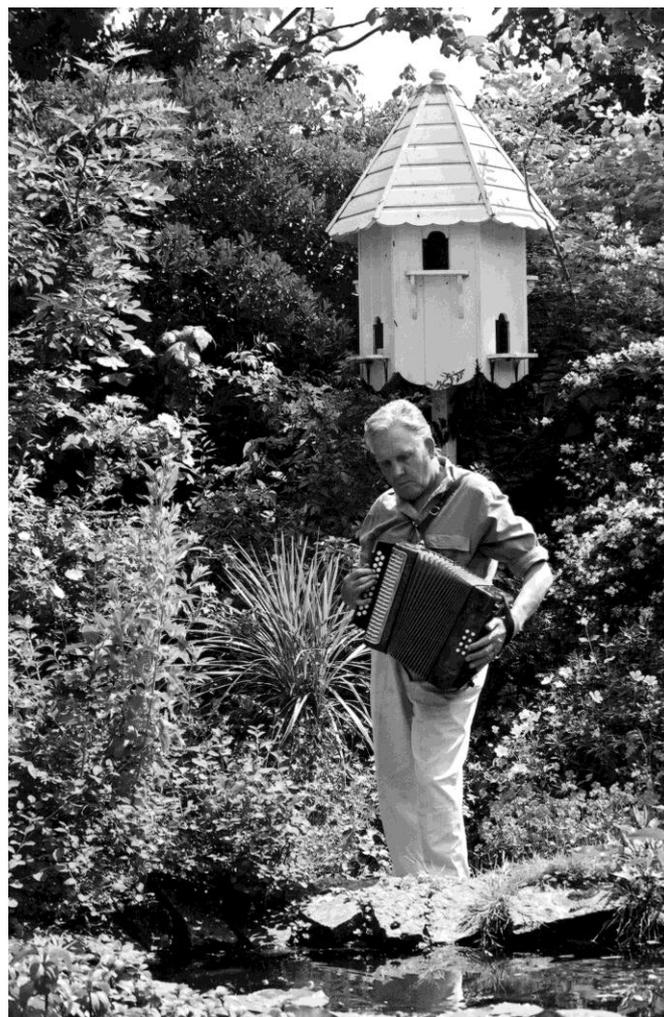
With the loosening of lockdown the Council is accepting applications for road closures to support kids street play/playing out sessions. We think that given the time it takes the Council to process these and the forthcoming summer school holidays we cannot realistically get things in place to run a session until September. We could run 3 between September and our Halloween special event.

To reinstate these sessions we need the help of the community as we need:

- * support from Mayo Rd residents for the road closures
- * volunteer marshals
- * a way of providing refreshments (now Barbara has moved away we've lost access to electricity for the kettle)
- * somewhere local to store the barriers and road closures signs (as Miriam who currently stores them is planning to move away)

If anyone can offer any support or ideas to help problem-solve then please contact Kate Rice at katepotter72@gmail.com

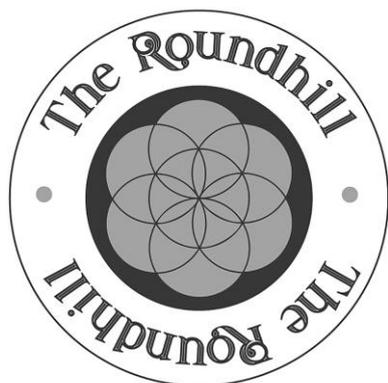
RIP Rusty Curry



Rusty died peacefully at home on 12th May. Jan posted a short, beautifully worded notice on Facebook soon after.

Most people may know him as half of the team that built their National Award winning wildlife garden where they hosted events for the Round Hill Society, Labour Party, Fabians and other favoured causes. Rusty had also been a key element in our one-time regular Seasonal Singing events every December, providing the musical accompaniment which helped others feel able to sing out loud. The funeral will be family only.

Jan plans to host a gathering for friends and neighbours to celebrate Rusty's life in their garden on Sunday 4th July from 2pm (weather and Covid permitting). Just pop in or bring a picnic, at 58 Richmond Rd (basement door) and beware of slippery paths, steps, overhanging branches and ponds!



The Roundhill Pub would like to welcome you back Inside

Now taking bookings for food at

www.theroundhill.co.uk

We now have a Community Library outside

Open 11am-10pm

Thank you for all your support



New light-controlled crossings built *where Ditchling Rd meets Upper Lewes Rd*

Just 19 years after resident Peter Meakins first talked his primary school daughter into writing to the Council asking for a safe crossing to give her independence to walk to school alone, the full crossing kit has been installed.

The Council cannot be entirely blamed for this near 2 decade delay because the works have been paid for from a central government scheme which seems finally to recognise the need for cycling and walking improvements in cities. It will be followed soon by a consultation on a new Walking and Cycling Strategy document.

The Upper Lewes Road is likely to be a key cycling route, but how to make it safer for pedestrians to cross and cyclists to use when 'chicane parking' causes vehicles to queue and dash between oncoming traffic bursts?



One of the new crossings – this one over the Upper Lewes Rd, the other new one allows safe crossing of Ditchling Rd on north side of Upper Lewes Rd.

Communal Bins Update

All but one of the communal bin sites on the Upper Lewes Rd are now overlooked by CCTV, see high in adjacent picture, attached to lamppost, and the notice on bin. It's arguable how good this surveillance is, as people are still leaving large boxes on the pavement* and using the site for unwanted domestic appliances and furniture** without any evidence yet of prosecution.

* Cut the boxes small and put in the recycling bin.

** Perhaps "making it available for others" – please, do that outside your own house.

Poetry Corner

Look Out Kids!

Early February, 2021, and they're out and about again, the oldies,
pepped up on post virus jab crack like bunnies
emerging from
year-long lockdown burrows once the fox has gone,
they're dancing in shopping aisles of supermarkets
turned new kinds
of Darby'n'Joan clubs outside of which the pavements
are strewn with the detritus of oldie raves,
dentures from over-keen snogging, wrecked Day-Glo go faster
ribbon-bedecked Zimmer frames and empty tubes
of popped
Sanatogen and Vimto tabs.
So, like I say watch out kiddies 'cos the oldies are back on
The streets and, a year out of practice with their prosthetic appliances, dangerous.
Now I know correlation is not causation,
still odd how one of the first signs of return to normal life
may turn out to be a rise in the rate of death by collision with mobility scooters.

The anonymous poet



The Council would like to extend Communal Bins onto more of Round Hill – consultation documents will be delivered to households in due course.

Summer Holiday Boredom?

let me help you

Holidays can seem long and with the increasing freedom to travel many of us are seeking new adventures for our loved ones.

I am happy to share a list of our favourite family days out, activities and locations, many which can be reached on public transport and some which are free.
Eva Wendler

- Decorate pebbles
- Use flowerpress for card making etc.
- Geocaching- it requires a mobile phone to approach the treasure hunt. Why not log your own cache and look after it?
- Beach clean ups check dates -
[/www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/beach/brighton](http://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/beach/brighton)
- Rockpooling, building houses from driftwood and beach treasures - best spot - Ovingdean cliff walk.
- Making a little stall to sell books clothing and own art creations, find a charity to have some of your earnings.
- Fly a kite at Stanmer Park, designated cycle lane all the way from Lewes road. Or take the 78 bus.
<http://www.brightonkiteflyers.co.uk/>
- No garden? You can use allotments by joining community food growing projects locally at Saunders Park or at Stanmer Park.
<https://bhfood.org.uk/directory/saunders-park-edible-garden/>
<https://stanmerorganics.com/fork-and-dig-it/>
- Camping in your garden or at a friend's.
- Build a soap box cart from scrap. Maybe we can have a race at street play in 2021/22?
- Visit the local library to get inspiration for crafts.
- Make something using recycled materials.
- Check the activities at the Open Market events page. <http://www.brightonopenmarket.co.uk/>
- Take No1 bus towards Mile Oak spend some time at **East Hill Park** <https://www.easthillpark.co.uk/> then stroll to **Emmaus** charity shop/cafe
<http://www.emmausbrighton.co.uk/> before taking bus back. Or head further on bus to walk to Mile Oak farm/wander on downs from there.
- Canoe at Cuckmere - best views when taking to water. Take the coaster bus no 13x,
<https://www.buzzactive.org.uk/locations/buzz-cuckmere/>



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Community Champion Scheme

Your thoughts invited

There are people in our community who quietly get on with doing things which benefit most of us. They probably do it because it gives them a sense of purpose, they do not seek recognition. But it has been suggested that we might recognise them in some small way.

If it were to happen it would depend on nominations from local residents – so your thoughts are welcomed. Please contact one of the committee.

We are probably talking about a nice letter of thanks from the committee of the Society, and we are hoping the number of nominations will not be overwhelming!



Round Hill Reporter
51 Upper Lewes Road
Brighton BN2 3FH
www.roundhill.org.uk

We Tweet :
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On Facebook at:
Round Hill Community
Noticeboard

If you want to keep current,
check the Facebook page.
And you can register with
the **Friends of Round Hill**
group-email for email
updates. Send a request to
Stefania (see details on
right).

The Round Hill Society Committee

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Veolia Waste Plant issues :

Smell, noise and dust problems – Environment Agency 0800 807060

Illegal parking in the CPZ

Report it on 0345 603 5469 and select option 3 for a traffic warden.

Student liaison officers :

Sussex- 01273 678220 or housing@sussex.ac.uk

Brighton- Andrew Keeffe communityrelations@brighton.ac.uk

Non-emergency police reporting: call 101 if your issue is not urgent or you have a question, alternatively report a crime or incident on www.sussex.police.uk/reportonline.

Report flytipping/ overflowing bins : brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-problem-and-request-clean

CLEAN: The Musical

The story of the women of 'Laundry Hill'

11th to 13th June

You may have seen the play 'Clean', in May 2019 in the garden of Jan and Rusty Curry. You will probably know that Round Hill once had a lot of small laundries. You might have heard that Round Hill hosted the first hospital in England to treat poor women suffering nervous breakdown (see page 2).

But now you can bring the whole story together by attending the full musical version of 'Clean' at One Church, Gloucester Place. Book your places at

<https://www.brightonfringe.org/whats-on/clean-the-musical-146013/>



Times Past

The new Co-op was once an Esso petrol station, but between times it was a community garden.

This stencil message appeared on its fence.

The Round Hill Reporter is published by the Round Hill Society to keep residents in the area in touch with local news, events and each other. We try to present a fair and balanced view but the opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily shared by all.

Letters or ideas for articles are welcome – please contact the editor at the address shown above.

Deadline for the Oct 2021 edition 15th Sept.

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