# Newsletter
# Winter 2021



# West Wickham
## Residents' Association

**www.westwickhamresidents.com**

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
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Advertising in WWRA magazine……

Our advertising rates for 2022 are:-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Full page (A5) inside | £150 | 13 cms wide x 19cms high |
| Half page | £ 75 | 13 cms wide x 9cms high |
| Quarter page | £ 38 | 13 cms wide x 5cms high |

Publication dates are early March, June, September and December

Deadline dates are January 20th, April 20th, July 20th and October 20th

Please contact the Editor for more information

### *There's got to be a better way…….*

The success of the Association is dependent on the co-operation and effort of our 85 Road Stewards. They channel feedback and issues from Members to the Committee, deliver the quarterly Newsletter and collect subscriptions annually. This last exercise has increasingly created some issues for both Members and Road Stewards alike because many Members are out when they call or, due to our increasing reliance on card and mobile phone transactions, they don't have cash readily available. This results in Road Stewards sometimes making several visits and ending up without success in some cases. I am a Road Steward and I know how frustrating and disappointing this can be for the Member and the Steward. To improve this situation, we are some way through negotiations to set up a payment facility with a UK Regulated Financial Services Provider. We think this will be an attractive improvement although the cash based payment will continue to be available. When we are in the position to launch this initiative, we will publish details on our website, Facebook account and this Newsletter.

It would be really useful to have feedback from members about these proposals, either via the Secretary or directly to the Editor – details on page 2.

### *West Wickham's Past*

Following on from Peter Leigh's series of articles, "A look at West Wickham's Past," we have a short new series starting in this issue, contributed by local Archaeologist Dr. Brian Philp. A brief biography of Brian and his item on the origins of Langley Way and his experience of living there through the war and afterwards, begins on page 13.

### *Hopes for the future…*

It has been a difficult 18 months for most people and sadly tragic for some. Businesses and organisations in the Town have also been adversely affected, but we're all hoping that we will be able to celebrate a more normal festive period. However you choose to celebrate, the Committee members wish you an enjoyable Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

## *AGM – diary date*

The next Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on the evening of Friday 8th April 2022 in Wickham Halls, Sussex Road. Further details will be published in the Spring 2022 Newsletter.

# News from the High Street




**The Real Ale Way Free House** (in former Home Comforts, 75 Station Road) opened at the end of September. It has a 'cosy' and convivial atmosphere, much needed in these stressful times. We raise a glass to the owners and wish them well for the future.







**Barman Gregg and two satisfied customers**

Do you have a favourite item of clothing which needs some alteration? Don't discard it before making enquiries at **Gino's 97 Station Road**, where alterations are carried out on Gents and Ladies clothing.







And, for the 'well dressed man' **AG Plado 59 High Street** is offering a barber service, to set off your new clothing.

On the subject of hair, this new sign has appeared above Berry's Recruitment Agency in the High Street




**Wheels 4 sure car leasing** 1 Bell Parade, has closed and will be replaced by a **pizza take-away**. At time of writing, refurbishment is taking place. There are also signs of activity in the former Cafe Talis; more news in the Spring Newsletter.

On the cultural side, **Theatre 62,** off Corkscrew Hill, put on an excellent performance in early October, of ' Barefoot in the Park' by Neil Simon. The next production - 'Bedroom Farce' by Alan Ayckbourn - will be staged 6th – 11th December, around the time this Newsletter will be distributed.

Theatre 62 is a membership theatre, with a licensed bar. Audiences are required to be members or the accompanied guests of members. The theatre is always on the look-out for new people to join so, if you think you might be interested in either acting or helping backstage, log on to theatre62.org.uk where there is a link to follow to register your interest.

## *David Bellringer*

One of West Wickham's longest established businesses, Croft radio, was incorporated in 1946. David joined on 1 April 1961 as a 14-year old, working part-time because of his age. A fortnight later he turned 15 and became a full-time employee. This year, David reached 60 years working at Croft Radio and we congratulate him on achieving this milestone.

## *The Business Community of West Wickham (BCWW)*

The BCWW is an organisation which represents local shops and businesses, and it works with many community bodies such as ours in providing funding and organising events in the Town such as the High Street Christmas festival and lights. Suzy Webster, the Chair of BCWW has given the following update with respect to the future of the Organisation.

"I would like to extend my deepest thanks to businesses and members of the community who have so donated towards this year's Christmas lights. The businesses below (at time of print) were so very generous, I feel it is only right to thank them publicly:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A Crafty Needle | AK Bennett Opticians | Computer Solutions |
| Croft Radio | Farleigh Medical | J&R Killick Funeral Home |
| Karma Studios | Kitchen Range | Lanta B |
| Osteowellbeing | Owen Hearing | Rouse Bathrooms |
| Staff at Salvation Army | Waterways | Ollie Polly Play Cafe |

As of January 2022, once all bills have been settled, I will be stepping down as Chair of the Business Community of West Wickham. It has been a lot of blood, sweat and tears over the years trying to organise events for the High Street and organising the installation and fundraising for the Christmas lights as well as trying to get businesses involved in community projects for our High Street.

Businesses have been reluctant to get involved with the Business Community and that has made the BCWW unviable. I hope in the future someone will step forward to try another approach to unite the businesses on the High Street...without a Business Association of some description, Christmas lights and High Street events will cease altogether.

Suzy Webster, Chair, Business Community of West Wickham"

*Editor's note: Suzy has told me that the Christmas lights will be on in Wickham this year but the outlook for future years is uncertain. I will keep members aware of developments via our website, Facebook account and this Newsletter.*



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## *Pavement parking at Lidl*



The inconsiderate parking on the pavement outside the Lidl's store in Glebe Way, has caused problems for pushchair and wheelchair users for several years

We were trying to get something done about this situation in Spring 2019 but our efforts came to nothing. Because Glebe Way is on the Red Route, the road and its associated pavements come under the control of Transport for London (TfL) and not Bromley Council. Since March of this year, a local resident and our Ward Councillor, Mark Brock, have been pestering TfL about this matter with the result that the posts have been extended to the end of the slip road.



Hopefully the problem for pushchair and wheelchair users has finally been solved.

## *South Eden Park Road safety improvement scheme*

Following safety concerns expressed by the Langley Park Schools regarding road safety in South Eden Park Road, Bromley Council considered the matter at their Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Committee meeting in September. As South Eden Park Road is shared between two wards; West Wickham Ward and Kelsey and Eden Park Ward, Councillors from both Wards met with residents and our Ward Councillors proposed the following changes:-

- A new crossing point, either a zebra or controlled crossing near to St David's School and the existing island.
- 20 MPH warning signs to operate at the period when children are arriving and leaving school.
- 30 MPH warning speed activated signs.
- Widening of the pavement from 12 Beckenham Road to the junction of Beckenham Road with Red Lodge Road.
- New cameras on the traffic lights at the junction with Red Lodge Road/Station Road and Ravenswood Crescent to prevent vehicles crossing on red.

The meeting agreed a feasibility study which could take up to 6 months. Results of the study and any further developments will be given here, on our website and Facebook Account.

## *Mistletoe*



Ask a random group of people to name a Christmas tradition and kissing under the mistletoe (*Viscum album*) is more than likely to come up in their top five responses. There is much debate about how this yuletide tradition has arisen. Research undertaken to inform this article has revealed hypotheses invoking its origins in Nordic mythology, Celtic rituals and there are links to the literature of Charles Dickens or Washington Irving. Yet there appears to be little consensus. Perhaps it's safer to allow the tradition to stand unexplained and stick to botanical science which reveals a pretty remarkable story about one of the most aerial of British plants.

### Life as a hemi-parasite



The most immediate realisation, for anyone studying mistletoe, is that it is not rooted in the ground. How therefore does it obtain the nutrients required for growth and reproduction? The answer is that mistletoe is what biologists call a hemi-parasite. This is to say that it is a plant that derives much of its nutritional requirement from another living plant. Mistletoe seeds find their way (see below) into the bark of a range of host tree species. Shortly after sprouting the roots of mistletoe grow into the xylem of its host plant. Xylem is a vascular tissue present in higher plants that conveys water and dissolved minerals to the photosynthesising leaves. The mistletoe taps into this life feed and uses it for its own purposes. Interestingly, mistletoe does make its own chlorophyll (hence its green colour) and it is able to produce its own energy by photosynthesising. It is only partly dependent on the host. Freed of the need to root itself in the soil, mistletoe grows in three dimensions, hence the globular shape we are familiar with high in the tree canopy. Whilst mistletoe inevitably has an impact on its host, by starving it of some of the water and nutrients intended for the hosts own growth, it's common to see a perfectly health host tree with multiple mistletoe plants in its canopy.

Mistletoe has been recorded as a parasite on numerous tree species in Britain but poplars, common lime, apples, maples and hawthorns seem to be particularly susceptible.

## Dispersal

Birds seem especially implicated in the spread of mistletoe. The mistle thrush is a well known consumer of mistletoe berries. Indeed its scientific name - *Turdus viscivorus* - means the devourer of mistletoe. Mistle thrush reportedly consume mistletoe berries whole, excreting the plants seed along the sticky half digested berry pulp shortly afterward. Seeds may be deposited, and stick on, host trees in this way, but many are likely to miss and fall to the ground where they do not prosper. Interestingly, a noted consumer of mistletoe berries on the continent is the blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), a summer migrant to the UK. However, with the event of climate change more blackcaps are choosing to stay in Britain to overwinter. The blackcap has an altogether different mode of eating mistle berries. The blackcap separates the seed from the berry before swallowing it. Each seed is them wiped off the birds beak onto a branch. It is theorised that the blackcap mode of eating, is a much more efficient means of unintentional seed dispersal for mistletoe, then the mistle thrush's efforts. Through the actions of the blackcap, perhaps climate change may be increasing the spread of mistletoe. The ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula Krameri*), another recent colonist over much of London (including West Wickham), has also been observed eating mistletoe berries and may become implicated in its future spread; one for you avid bird watchers to keep an eye out for.



Mistle Thrush

## A mini-ecosystem in its own right

The globular growth of mistletoe and its position high in the air recalls a planet. In a loose way this is rather a poignant metaphor. Indeed, planet mistletoe supports at least six species of insect that specialise on feeding and developing from this species. These include four true bug species (family *Hemiptera*), a moth species and a beetle (a type of weevil). The mistletoe marble moth (*Celypha woodiana*) lays its eggs on mistletoe and the larvae mine the tissue inside of mistletoe leaves. It emerges as an adult in July/August and flies for only a very short period of time. The mistletoe marbled moth is considered to be a conservation priority in the UK but it's certainly a job trying to survey for this species, given where mistletoe grows.



Mistletoe Marbled Moth

It could be that with further research, and the changing distribution of mistletoe, potentially linked to climate change, that the moth it is found more widely. I rather like the idea of the mistletoe marbled moth hatching on a mid-summer night and launching itself into the air, on an epic journey, to find another mistletoe planet in the nearby forest constellation where it will start a new colony.

## Where will you find it

I tend to finish these articles with some suggestions about where to find things. To be perfectly honest I haven't studied this one closely in our neighbourhood! Winter is the best time to see it, purely as trees have lost their leaves and one may observe it more easily. I am aware of some plants growing high in the canopy of trees near Coney Hall recreation ground. I suspect some of the limes in Spring Park may support a plant or two. This winter I intend to pay a visit to Blake Recreation Ground, just west of West Wickham Station. I've also found it along some of the wide, tree-lined street connecting West Wickham to Bromley.

There have been national mistletoe surveys in the past which you can contribute data to. However, none is running currently. If you do find mistletoe I'm always keen to hear about it (feel free to send records via the editor). If you can note the precise location and the host tree species, all the better. A good information source on some of the previous surveys is the website run by Gloucestershire based ecologist Jonathan Briggs http://www.mistletoe.org.uk/mmatters/surveys.html#

So here you are. Go forth and try to find some mistletoe. When you find some, look up and marvel. Better to observe and enjoy it alive then harvest it unnecessarily. But do be careful whilst you find some, or at the very least ensure that you are in the company of loved ones. There is a tradition that some may feel duty bound to observe! Mistletoe is thought to be toxic as well, so please don't try the berries yourselves!

*Richard Gowing*

## *New extensions, new homes for birds…*

Many residents are busy extending their properties, converting lofts or renewing their roofs. As well as giving yourself more room to live, you could do the same for birds by incorporating the latest generation of nest bricks into your renovation.

Nothing screams summer to me more than families of swifts overhead in August, but they are declining in the UK as repairs and re-roofing denies them access to the holes, crevices and open eaves where they used to nest. This is happening at an alarming rate all over the UK and Europe, and we are losing our swifts fast - 35% have vanished from South East England in the past ten years alone. They will not return unless we recreate the space for them. If you already have swifts nesting, do not work on the roof while the swifts are nesting (May to August) as it is illegal to disturb their active nests.

The eaves of traditional houses can be converted to provide secure, separate accommodation for swifts to make their nest places (see here: https://swift-conservation.org/Re-Roofing.htm ). But you can also easily include swift bricks (see https://swift-conservation.org/swift_bricks.htm for different types and detailed guidance) on new north-facing walls, or where shaded day-long, beneath broad eaves. Don't worry about swifts making a mess, as they are very clean and shouldn't leave the piles of droppings that pigeons do. You don't have to be building new walls to help swifts – you can install external boxes on existing walls too (https://swift-conservation.org/Nestboxes&Attraction.htm#Retro-fitted )

House sparrows will also use nest bricks, and while you could search for different "house sparrow brick boxes", some research has suggested that sparrows frequently use the swift bricks, so you may as well put up as many of those as you can. You'll note I've been using the Swift Conservation website for advice and guidance, having met and been inspired by their founder Edward Mayer, and I'd urge you to explore their website to find out more about these wonderful birds and help halt their decline.

*Richard Barnes,*
*WWRA Committee*

## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WEST WICKHAM

## CELBRATING CHRISTMAS 2021

At the time of going to press, Church Services are continuing as normal providing an important element of spiritual well-being for people in West Wickham and the surround area. However, many of the Christmas Services have had to be re-arranged due to the continuing Covid restrictions. Please see the details of what is happening to celebrate Christmas on the individual Church's website below.

Coney Hill Baptist Church
Coney Hill Road
www.coneyhill.com

St John's Church
Layhams Road
www.stjohnsww.com

West Wickham Methodist Church
Hawes Lane
www.bromleymethodistcircuit.org.uk

St Francis Church
Ravenswood Avenue
www.stfranciswestwickham.co.uk

St Mark's Catholic Church
High Street
Saintmarks7@btinternet.com

St Mary's Church
The Avenue
www.stmarywestwickham.co.uk

Emmanuel United Reformed Church
The Grove
www.godwithus.org.uk

West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church
Wickham Road
www.wwsbc.org.uk

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## A look at Wickham's Past - by Dr. Brian Philp

*Doctor Brian Philp is an archaeologist who has excavated some of the most important Roman sites in Southeast London and Kent. His life-long interest and work in archaeology began in April 1952 while he was attending Bromley Grammar School and his work has included the excavation and preservation of Crofton Roman Villa in Orpington, Keston Roman Villa and a Roman site in Perry Street, Crayford. He has led more than six hundred archaeological projects with the most important being 42 years work in the historic centre of Dover, where he discovered three Roman forts. He has pioneered rescue work on sites threatened by development, preserving and opening sites to the public and running education programmes.*

*Brian lived in Langley Way between 1941 and 1971, his family remaining there until 1990. He has contributed a series of articles about the origins of West Wickham and his life in Langley Way during the War and after.*

### *Langley Way: Part 1 - Origins and Utopia.*

Most of the land upon which Langley Way now stands had for centuries been at the eastern edge of the ancient parish of West Wickham, though the upper third was in the parish of Hayes until about 1938 when the boundary was pushed to the other side of Pickhurst Lane.

The first settlement in the area dates back just 2,000 years. It was then that the Roman army pushed through a major arterial road from the capital Londinium to the Sussex coast near Lewes. This passed right through West Wickham passing close to present-day Wickham Court. In 1964 my archaeological team discovered an important Roman settlement nearby across the actual road and soon identified this as the long-lost Roman town of Noviomagus. For over four Centuries thousands of travellers, iron workers, military and civil personnel had passed along this road every year. Most stopped at Noviomagus before the last stage of their journey to the Roman capital.

With the total collapse of Roman Britain no later than A.D. 450, the town was abandoned and the road slowly went out of use though a long section, Edenbridge High Street, remains in use today. No later than A.D. 800, a minor Saxon settlement had been established near the present parish church which the Bromley Charter of 862 lists as Wicham.

By the Domesday Survey of 1086, Wicheham was much better established with a church, water-mill, several hundred acres of farmland, some 24 small-holdings and several pigs. It then became under the control of the Bishop of Rochester. Thereafter it slowly developed, but remained a rural parish with its established church, manor house (later Wickham Court) small farms and a solid agricultural community. Its focus gradually moved away from the (now) isolated church to the Swan Hotel area. By 1831 its population was only 614 and by 1921 only 1301, following the arrival of the railway in 1882.

The land of Langley Way probably stood at the edge of Langley Court Estate (hence the name), where the underlying heavy London Clay must have supported thick woodland for centuries (hurst = thickly wooded, hence Pickhurst) with their occasional springs. Nearby, a middling mansion with extensive grounds called Longcroft appeared (now replaced by Pickhurst School) with other large houses and estates peppering the London hinterland.

But suddenly this all changed with the spectacular spread of suburbs sweeping out from inner London after the first World War. Avenues of well designed, well built small villas, along wide tree-lined roads spread across much of the ancient farmland. By 1934 the population stood at 10,080 whilst today it may number 20,000. Langley Way formed part of all this. Pickhurst Farm was replaced by Pickhurst Hotel and Longcroft was demolished.

By 1937, for the 800 or so good citizens of Langley Way the scene was near perfect. Many had moved from inner London to the fresh air of a semi-rural location. Here were several churches, sports clubs and residents' associations. With new shops at Hayes and West Wickham, new schools at Hawes Down and Hayes, good cheap buses to Bromley and Croydon and a dedicated train service to the City and West End it largely seemed a utopia. Clearly, here their young children would grow up and develop into fit, helpful and sound citizens! But a few of the older residents had noticed the sinister black clouds that were spreading out with military force from distant Berlin. Just how might this impact on such a promising future?

*Brian Philp*

**See the Spring 2022 Newsletter for…. Langley Way: Part II - The War - Death and Destruction**

If you are interested in reading more about the Discovery of the Lost Roman Town of Noviomagus at West Wickham, there is a new book available from the 'Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit', 18 Highfield Avenue, Orpington, Kent. BR6 6LF. It costs £6 plus £2 postage. Please make cheques payable to KARU.

The book covers years of excavation, mainly across Wickham Court Farm, close to the parish church. It revealed Roman finds and traces of wooden buildings over some 35 acres including the adjacent playing-fields. The site sits across the Roman arterial road that ran from Londinium, ten miles away, down to the Sussex Coast. An ancient list, the Second Antonine Itinerary, identified a lost town called Noviomagus being ten miles from Londinium and 17 miles from Vagniacae (near Gravesend). Scholars have been looking for this lost town for 400 years, but always along Watling Street (now the A2) as the stated destination was Richborough (near Dover). Extensive work by the Group here and elsewhere also found a branch road running north-east exactly to Vagniacae (at 17 miles) that was previously unknown. This new evidence proves that the origins of West Wickham go back to the Roman period when several million soldiers and travellers must have past through during some 400 years of occupation. The Roman road can sometimes be seen in very dry weather crossing Sparrows Den. The Group had the main site scheduled as an Ancient Monument to protect it from treasure-hunters.




**A Photographers Insight.** Three intrepid photographers with similar interests in natural history decided to explore the wilds of Otford, and the Darenth valley, as described in the local paper. After rain the night before, we set off in early mist at silly o'clock (6.30am actually). After negotiating the narrow lane, and finding the lay-by to park as per the instructions, we finally found the footpath hidden by the overgrown hedge. It is marked by a post by the Kent Wildlife Trust as a byway. From the road we were treated to some beautiful views across the Weald with the sun rising through the mist. The rain before had made the leaves of the trees and bushes sparkle with Jewel like drops.





The pathway lead through a gate opening up to a cornfield. The view across was magical. Wild flowers were abundant along the path; cornflowers, ox-eye daisy, poppies, scabiouses, buttercups, and many others which the bees were enjoying. As the sun rose more, the butterflies started to emerge and we took some nice photos of them, including, gatekeeper, marbled white and meadow brown.



If you enjoy trips out with your camera or phone, or want to learn more, please come and join West Wickham Photographic Society. We have outings to other various places of interest also. Club evenings consist of competitions, talks, and practical work.

**WEST WICKHAM PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

We are your local and friendly Camera Club so if you enjoy Photography and want to improve your skills in a sociable atmosphere then you have various options:-

• Come along to Medhurst Hall, Sussex Road, West Wickham at 8.00pm on any Tuesday evening between September and May and meet us.

• Log on to www.wwphotosoc.org.uk to see more of our work and look at our Programme of Events for Season 2021/22.

• Email us at info@wwphotosoc.org.uk We will respond to your queries/questions

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## PLANNING

### *Library and Station Road/Croft Avenue Car Park development*

At the presentation of these proposals in the Library in the Summer, where residents were given the opportunity to talk to the architect and Council Planning officials, a timetable of events was given - this was detailed in the Autumn Newsletter. It was expected that, following the Public Consultation, planning applications would be submitted in September 2021. At the time of writing in late October, no applications have appeared on the Bromley planning website. When these applications are submitted, they will provide an opportunity for residents to make their views known formally. We will publish the reference numbers of the applications on our website and Facebook account when they are submitted.

### *62 Braemar Gardens*

A previous application for the demolition of an existing two storey side extension and the erection of 4 bedroom house on this site, was refused in October 2020. It subsequently went to appeal which was dismissed. A new application for a similar development has been submitted and has attracted objections based on similar grounds, i.e., overdevelopment, out of keeping and character with neighbouring properties, water leakage problems, removal and damage of trees, light pollution and building noise at unsociable hours based on previous development work at this site. If you want to view the proposals, they can be found on the planning section of the bromley.gov.uk website under reference 21/04046.

### *9 Copse Avenue*

The application which proposes the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of two, 3 bedroom semi-detached properties, was refused by Bromley Council and has now gone to appeal. **(20/02367)**

### *An attempt to make unauthorised development an offence*

A bill is currently going through Parliament which proposes to make unauthorised development a criminal offence. It is being presented by MP Gareth Bacon (Orpington) and is supported by, among several other MPs, another local MP - Bob Neill (Chislehurst). An extract from Hansard gives the background:

'The purpose of this Bill is to ensure that everyone who engages with the planning system is on a level playing field and follows the same procedures. It is not to remove permitted development rights, nor is it to target particular communities.

Regrettably, in the current planning system, there are loopholes that are all too frequently exploited and, to ensure fairness, it is important that they are closed.

Under current planning rules, development without permission is not a criminal offence. While failure to comply with an enforcement notice is a criminal offence, getting to that point is rare and is very often an overly long and costly process.

Too often, people are gaming the system by proceeding with development work, sometimes on a large scale, without having first received or even applied for planning permission. Those engaging in such practices are gambling that, even if the local authority becomes aware of an unauthorised development, if the development is sufficiently advanced, it will prove too time-consuming and costly for the local authority to do much about it. Evidence seems to suggest that they may be right. While there are a range of enforcement powers open to local authorities, including enforcement, contravention and stop notices, they do not appear to be a sufficient deterrent'.

We will keep you updated on the bill's progress.

### *Leisure Centre development*

As mentioned in the Autumn Newsletter, development of the Leisure Centre and pools is now divorced from development of the Library. The latest position is that the Council is going through the tendering process to identify partners for the work.

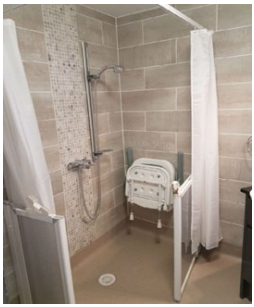
### *AGM – diary date*

The next Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on the evening of Friday 8th April 2022 in Wickham Halls, Sussex Road. Further details will be published in the Spring 2022 Newsletter.

M E Horstead

Disabled Adaptation Specialists





## Would you like to stay in your own home?

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## *Pantomime is Back!*

The West Wickham Pantomime Society has its roots with the Home Guard who decided in 1945 to stage a Pantomime in aid of local children's charities. When the Home Guard was disbanded the annual pantomime had already become something of an institution, so the Society was formed and was bequeathed the residual funds and equipment. Since then, it has maintained the tradition of staging a Pantomime in West Wickham. Since its foundation the society has performed at the Wickham Hall, West Wickham. So close has our association been that when the halls were facing financial ruin the Society mounted a rescue package to keep the halls functioning. The Wickham Hall makes continuing improvement to the facilities for the Society and other hall users alike. Improvement in our storage facilities now means all aspects of our productions are housed under one roof.

Our ethos is to produce a family show at affordable prices, we look to encourage children to enjoy a family outing which is probably their first introduction to theatre and the hope is that they will return again and again to see live shows and performances. Many of our cast over the years were first to be found in the audience where they caught 'the bug' for participating either on or backstage.

A very important part of our strategy is to help local, national, and international charities by making donations to help them with their causes. We have donated to many different groups over the years including Bethlem Royal Hospital, West Wickham Methodist Church, CASPA [Bromley], Kids and Crew [Orpington], Disasters Emergency Committee as well as many individuals. We are especially proud to have been able to donate to **Feed the NHS** during the Covid Pandemic to ensure that the overworked hospital staff were at least receiving a decent meal during their long and arduous shifts.

After everything we have all been through over the past couple of years it is good to be back to some sort of normality and having had to postpone our 2021 show has made us more determined to put together a fast paced, vibrant, and colourful **'Cinderella'.**

If you would like to know more about our charity work or know of a group that we might be able to help, please visit our website and leave us a message: [west-wickhampanto.org](west-wickhampanto.org)

We are always looking for new members to help both on and backstage so, if you would like to help to keep this wonderful tradition of Pantomime going, please visit our website or Facebook page and leave us a message.

**We hope that you will enjoy our 2022 pantomime**

**Everyone at WWPS wishes you a Healthy and Peaceful New Year!**



## *A great contribution to the community…..*

I was aware that volunteers work in hospitals, but I had no idea of the extent, organisation and diversity of the scheme until I spoke with Faye Bedding. Faye is a Recruitment and Training Manager responsible for the 'King's Volunteers' scheme and she is based at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRU) in Farnborough. Our local hospitals involved are the PRU, Orpington Hospital and Beckenham Beacon as well as King's in Denmark Hill.

King's Volunteers provide practical help to patients and visitors, complementing the work of paid staff across the Trust. The volunteers are not directly involved in patient care but help provide extra support. The main roles are Ward Patient Befriender, Mealtime support, Meeter & Greeter volunteers (who sit on main reception), Emergency Department volunteers, and many more. They essentially provide support to patients, visitors & staff by talking to people, listening to them, getting cups of tea, ad hoc admin tasks and generally being a friendly and helpful presence in the hospital.

Volunteers come from all walks of life and represent the diversity of the communities that are served. Current volunteers are aged between 16 and 87 and all are dedicated to making our hospitals a little friendlier and more comfortable for everyone. Here are the views of two of the current volunteers:



**Tim**

"*Volunteering improves your self- confidence and esteem as you develop new skills and knowledge. There is a feel good factor when you finish your shift as you feel that the difference you have made is important however small and you have been contributing to a cause you care about."*



**Ayushi**

"*Volunteering for me is about reaching my hand out to people where they can feel a sense of community and belonging. King's is welcoming, considerate and always keeps patients at the heart of their community, opening their doors for memorable experiences."*

There are roles based at all of the hospitals mentioned above, so if this sort of community activity appeals to you and you enjoy helping others, why not apply to be a King's Volunteer and support patients to have a better experience in our hospitals?

Visit the volunteer's website at www.kch.nhs.uk/about/get-involved/volunteering
Or email them for more information: kch-tr.volunteers@nhs.net

They look forward to hearing from you.

*Editor*

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Since the lifting of lockdown restrictions we have been able to increase the type of activities we can engage in to assist charities. This in turn has meant that we have been able to increase the range of charities we want to support to include Marie Curie, Parkinson's U.K. and the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA). In September we raised £520 for MNDA at a Cake and Plant Sale and in October, over £450 for Parkinson's UK at a Fundraisng Dinner with Musical Entertainment which proved to be a relaxing evening for around 70 people.

Although at an early stage, we are looking at ways that we may be able to help local primary school children learn about the environment and how they can help protect it. We are also investigating ways of supporting local secondary school students develop leadership skills.

As we are always looking for something different to do socially, back in August we met face to face for the first time since March 2020 with a Boules competition in the grounds of The Warren. We certainly did see something different with interesting interpretations of the rules and some very different styles of delivery, neither of which would probably go down too well in France, but no doubt will be repeated in the better weather in 2022.

Remember Rotary is open to anyone over 18, both male and female. To find out about membership of Rotary West Wickham, contact Helen Korro on 07504 305185 or email helen.korro.westwickhamrotary@gmail.com. We look forward to welcoming you.

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***If you're into Crime and Statistics……***

The crime figures by 'Major Class' for West Wickham, were published in September 2021. They are annual figures covering the year from August 2020 to July 2021 and are given in the box below.

West Wickham appears to have a good record as far as Fraud and Forgery is concerned but the statistic for Violence against the Person is very worrying, coming second only to Theft.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arson & Criminal Damage | 30 | Sexual Offences | 9 |
| Burglary | 36 | Theft | 150 |
| Drug Offences | 16 | Vehicle Offences | 129 |
| Possession of Weapons | 5 | Violence against the Person | 135 |
| Public Order Offences | 32 | Historical Fraud And Forgery | 0 |
| Robbery | 10 | Miscellaneous Crimes against Society | 7 |

There was a very comprehensive crime report presented to the Council's Public Protection & Enforcement Policy Development & Scrutiny Committee on 7th September this year.

It covers the last complete Financial Year and compares crime statistics by Ward (such as West Wickham) across the Borough as well as comparing Bromley with the other London Boroughs. It also details the initiatives and actions the Police are taking to prevent crime.

If you're interested, it's worth a read and can be found by going to the Council website at, bromley.gov.uk. In the search box type, 'ASB and Crime Performance June 2021'. Select the Public Pack for the meeting of 7th September 2021 and that will take you to the report.









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## Unlocking Your Property Wealth

I have been very fortunate again throughout the year in being able to help people maximise their personal situations, be it raising money for day to day living, gifting to children to help them get ahead in life or arranging to protect the value of a clients estate for the benefit of their families.

The Equity Release market is rightly becoming more mainstream and I personally have seen more enquiries in the last year than previously.

House prices have generally had another positive year. Of course, we do not know if house price growth over the next 10 years will be as strong as it has been for the last 10 years, but property remains a key asset for most people. It increasingly forms part of financial plans for retirement, with more and more people looking to unlock some of that wealth to enjoy during their retirement.

### And why not?

Interest rates are at an all-time low and when you can fix rates for life, coupled with the flexibility of the modern day products for releasing equity, there is a compelling reason to at least explore the options.

If this is something you wish to find out more about, please give me a call or drop me an email. I have lived in West Wickham for many years and would be delighted to provide any factual information that you need.

**Martyn Lewis CeMAP, CeRER, FPC**
**07801 314149**
**03334 439170**
**mlewis@accessequityrelease.com**




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