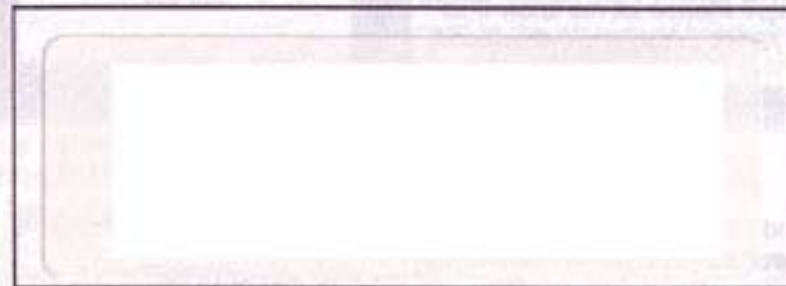


Essential Dates

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Wednesday 7th Nov | Social evening at the Round Hill. From 8pm |
| Monday 12th Nov | Annual General Meeting of The Round Hill Society. Downs Infant School, Ditchling Road, 7pm. |
| Wednesday 5th Dec | Social evening at the Round Hill. From 8.00pm |
| Thursday 20th Dec | Carol singing procession, followed by mince pies & mulled wine - more info in next newsletter, out early Dec. |

Here is your **membership card**. You can cut it out, but it is better to keep it on the newsletter where you won't lose it - why don't you put the whole newsletter on your fridge or noticeboard?

You may need to show this card at any RHS event.



Round Hill Reporter

October 2001

No 7



*Two Round Hill residents enjoy the beautiful scenery
at the RHS garden party in the summer.*

Garden Party report * Round Hill wildlife feature * History
Group news * Update on rooflights * AGM details *
Community noticeboard * Your membership card *

We're late, we're late...

...for a very important date, no time to say goodbye, hello, we're late, we're late, we're late...

First up then, many apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter, which should have made its appearance in September, but (obviously enough) didn't. There is a long and frankly impressive list of very good excuses for this, but I won't bore you with them - after all, you probably have lives to be getting on with, don't you?

I must admit that I'd have assumed that no one out there would even notice, let

alone be remotely bothered, whether or not the Round Hill Reporter comes out on schedule, but apparently there have been enquiries - it's nice to know you care...

Anyway, read on for details of the upcoming RHS AGM, a report on our lovely summer garden party and another on the first local wildlife survey.

And the good news for those of you waiting on the edge of your seats (I know, I know - you're so not) is that, as this issue is so late, it won't be long until the next one is due...

You want to speak to the committee?

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Chair | Rob Stephenson | 51 Upper Lewes Road | 673511 |
| Treasurer | Marian Gerrett | 77 Princes Crescent | 688009 |
| Secretary | Vivien Powell | 66 Richmond Road | 276386 |
| Vice-chair | David Hodd | 17 Round Hill Crescent | 601019 |
| Membership Secretary | Jan Curry | 58 Richmond Road | 601320 |
| Minutes Secretary | Colette Blackett | 8 Round Hill Crescent | 694811 |
| Newsletter Editor | Amanda Evans | 8 Belton Road | 278646 |
| Member without Portfolio | Denise Elliott | 60 Richmond Road | 888216 |
| Member without Portfolio | Ray Knight | 93 Princes Crescent | 681965 |
| Member without Portfolio | Suzie Sharp | 67 Princes Road | 882240 |

Happy 2nd birthday, RHS

RHS Annual General Meeting

The Roundhill Society will celebrate its second birthday in November - and a birthday means it's Annual General Meeting time again. The AGM will be held at Downs Infant School in Ditchling Road on Mon November 12th at 7pm and we hope to see as many members there as possible. David Hodd will give a talk on urban wildlife, and you'll be able to see the pictures Vivien took at the garden party.

Committee elections

Most members of the committee have been nominated for re-election, but if you think you or someone you know could do a better job, then get nominating! There are also a

couple of vacancies. The various committee posts are listed on the right. Normally we require nominations to be in, in writing, some time before the AGM, but as this issue of the newsletter is out so late we're bending the rules to allow nominations at the AGM itself - we look forward to seeing you there...

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Chair | (Rob Stephenson) |
| Vice Chair | (Vacant) |
| Treasurer | (Marian Gerrett) |
| Secretary | (Vivien Powell) |
| Membership Secretary | (Jan Curry) |
| Minutes Secretary | (Colette Blackett) |
| Newsletter Editor | (Amanda Evans) |
| Member without portfolio | (Denise Elliott) |
| Member without portfolio | (Suzie Sharp) |
| Member without portfolio | (Vacant) |

History Group News

Brighton Books

The exciting news from the history group is that preliminary discussions have been held with Brighton Books regarding the publication of a book on the Round Hill area.

Joint venture

Brighton Books already have much information about the area and it's

past, as do our history group and the book, if it goes ahead, would be likely to be a joint venture under some sort of profit share arrangement.

More news next issue

Meetings are continuing and we hope to be able to tell you more in the next issue of the Reporter, which is due out in December.

Rooflights & planning permission update

Amanda Evans brings us the latest news on the issue of planning permission for roof lights on front slopes

You may remember that in the last issue of the Round Hill Reporter Rob Stephenson wrote a piece listing the problems one resident planning a loft conversion was having in obtaining permission for a front roof light.

Extreme interpretation

Rob wondered whether the recent changes in planning permission requirements for the area - with which the Round Hill Society and its members broadly agreed - were being interpreted in a more extreme way than anyone had expected.

Loft conversions scuppered

One worry was that the blanket refusal of front roof lights was likely to scupper most loft conversion applications, since they are the common way of meeting what many people believe are the fire regulation requirements. Rob finished his article by inviting comments from other RHS members.

Roger Barker

Since then, there are two bits of news to report on the subject. Firstly, one member who did write to comment on Rob's piece was local architect Roger Barker. Roger point-

ed out that we (and many other lay people, I suspect) were misunderstanding the fire regulations in thinking that the only alternative to front roof lights as a fire exit is to put walls around all the internal staircases in the house, ruining old banisters etc. Actually, the walls mentioned in the regulations are simply the original internal walls of the house - as long as there is a wall and a closing door between the rooms and the staircases, the house is considered to have an adequate fire exit. The only houses, therefore, that actually *need* a front rooflight are those that have been previously altered internally so that the staircase and hallway have become part of the living area.

Planning Guidance change

If this applies to you and you are one of those who *would* still need a rooflight in order to satisfy fire regulations, don't worry - there's still hope! The second piece of news on this is that a recent meeting of the Conservation Area Advisory Group - which I attended as a representative of the RHS - approved a suggested change in the wording of the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPG) that applies to roof

lights. The suggestion was to change the wording from "In Conservation areas...roof lights will not be accepted...where they will be visible from the street" to "In Conservation Areas...roof lights...will only be accepted in exceptional cases, ie: Where they

would have no adverse visual impact at street level..." Whilst this is a small change, it does seem to offer slightly more flexibility in planning decisions than the previous wording - which can only be a good thing.

Traffic survey news

Vivien Powell reports on the results of the council's recent questionnaire on the proposal to close Richmond Road

You will no doubt have received your questionnaires from the council about the proposed close of Richmond Road to try and stop rat-running through the area.

Good response, tricky result

The good news is that the response was excellent, compared with other questionnaire-type surveys. Over 30% of Round Hill residents responded - over 300 households. The bad news is that the response was split virtually 50/50, with some very vehemently against the idea and some equally vehemently for it.

So, what next?

The council's traffic department has proposed a meeting with local councillors and representatives of the Round Hill area to discuss the situation. Hopefully, there'll be something to report, one way or the other, at the AGM on November 12th.

A couple of points

In the meantime, in view of some of the comments made on the questionnaires, I would like to point out two things:

- 1) The idea for this proposal came from a member of the council, not from any member of the Round Hill Society or its committee. The Society was involved in the consultation process only to deliver the questionnaires and it should be noted that not all members of the committee are in favour of the proposal. However
- 2) It must be borne in mind that this is our only chance for at least 10 years of getting any kind of traffic calming at all. The council has the money NOW to spend on this - if we turn it down, we will go back to the waiting list as a low priority area for traffic calming.

A wild past - and future?

David Hodd muses on Round Hill's past as an area rich in wildlife and fills us in on a survey carried out by some Round Hill kids in the summer...

So what do we know of the wildlife habitats at Round Hill over the years? Well in one small hill we had a microcosm of the whole South Downs landscape - sheep down and arable.

Chalk downland

Before the Round Hill Estate was constructed from the early 1860's, Round Hill was part of the Downs. The steeper east side (Richmond Rd and Round Hill Crescent) was probably chalk downland like that at Whitehawk Hill, or Bevendean Down. As Brighton expanded, part of this slope was planted as an orchard. This still survives near the cat creep. The gentler west side (west of the windmill, down to Beaconsfield Villas) was in fact a "laine" - common arable ground not dissimilar to allotments - for a long time.

40 plants per square metre

In terms of wildlife, Chalk Downland is the richest habitat for plant life in Europe - as many as 40 plants in a square metre of turf. The messy organic laines would have had plenty of cornfield weeds, and rough patches in which small mammals could shelter. Bird life would have been very diverse too. Not only would we have seen Pipits and Skylarks, but there would have

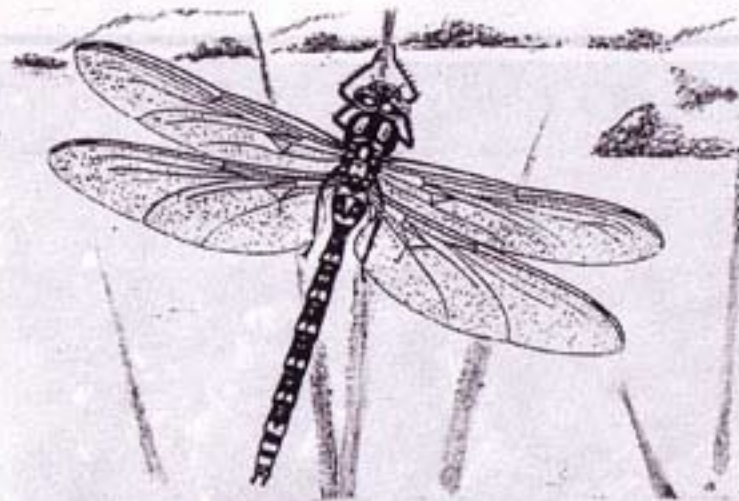
been Corncrakes, and perhaps the Stone Curlew and Great Bustard - birds which today few of us have heard of.

Any survivors?

What we don't really know is if there is anything left of this wildlife rich past. In Bevendean, many people's gardens are still home to the chalk downland plants that the estate was built on in the 1950's. But for 140 years in Round Hill our gardens have been the only place for wildlife. Can there really be any survivors from 140 years of changing garden fashions? Nature is tenacious, and even if there is little which has survived there is every reason to believe that with the right care in our gardens, we can invite wildlife back in.

The hunt for critters

Although we haven't yet established what plant survivors (if any) there are from the past, some local children did get together during the summer holidays to see just how many living beasties they could find in one large garden in Princes Road. This survey was carried out in August by seven kids, who started by making a list of what had already been found in the garden recently. They then spent a long-summer afternoon setting pit fall



Just one of the 63 different creatures - which included toads, Common Newts, Hawker Dragonflies, Hummingbird Hawkmoths, Frogs and Rufous Grasshoppers - that were found during the wildlife survey at 67 Princes Rd

traps and running around with sweep nets and pooters. Two enthusiastic amateurs armed with wildlife guides were on hand to help identify the creatures found. Amazingly, they found 63 different creatures on that day, many of them minibeasts.

More surveys to come

The Round Hill Society are planning to map these findings, conduct more such surveys next summer and gradually build a clear picture of just what is wild in Round Hill. For this we need more kids (with supervising parents) to join in during the 2002 Summer Holidays. We also want to know what wildlife you have seen in the area - birds, foxes, hedgehogs, toads, whatever - drop me a letter (or e-mail david.hodd@bigwig.net) with a list of the wildlife you have seen in your garden, when you last saw them and whether they are or

were nesting in the area.

What you can do to help encourage wildlife in Round Hill:

- Put a pond in your garden
- Have a wildflower meadow in part of your garden
- Never use chemicals to control pests
- Don't have a cat
- Put up nest boxes
- Feed birds through the winter
- Don't have a tidy garden
- Grow a variety of flowers, especially nectar rich ones.

Having read the list you might be sceptical about why you would even want to have wildlife in your garden. The answer is simple - without it Round Hill would be sterile and boring. The only way to stop the area becoming lifeless is for some of us to spare some space in our gardens for wildlife.

Lovely jubbly, beer & bubbly...

The RHS garden party in the summer was a great success, with many members turning up to enjoy wine and strawberries in the sunshine. Marian Gerrett reports.



A couple of residents pond-gazing in Jan's beautiful garden

The members garden party took place on a beautiful summer's day in late June and many thanks are due to Denise (& Ken) and Jan (& Rusty) who opened their large gardens on Richmond Road for us all to enjoy.

New friends and old

Nearly 40 membership households came along to eat fresh strawberries and drink chilled fizzy wine or beer. It was a wonderful occasion to make new friends locally and talk at leisure to old ones. The raffle proved very popular with prizes donated by members and by local and city businesses.

Planters

Round Hill planters were on sale and can now be seen brightening many doorsteps - there are a few left, so if you'd like to buy one, please see the notice on page 11.

Future party plans

During the day, ideas were put forward for future members events, including another garden party next summer! There was also talk of another street party. Your ideas are welcome - contact any committee member. In the meantime, now that



Your hosts - Denise...



...and Jan (husband Rusty is on the left)

we're getting ready for winter, don't forget our music and mince pie & mulled wine event on December 20th - full details of times, meeting point etc will be in the next issue.

More garden party photo's

If you'd like to see more of Vivien's lovely pictures of the event, you can do so at the AGM on November 12th - see page 3 for more details.

Announcements



A warm welcome to a new Round Hill rug rat - this little beauty is Monica Margaret Gates, who was born on the 9th of July. Her parents are Peter & Jo and the family live in Richmond Road.

Jan Curry

We have two pieces of news about Jan (pictured on page 9) who as some of you will know is membership secretary of the Round Hill Society.

Here's the good news...

The first is that she has won the wildlife garden section of the Brighton In Bloom competition again with her stunning plot in Richmond Road. Those who came to the members garden party in the summer will have seen it in all it's glory -

it really is a little bit of inner city paradise, so very well done Jan!

...and the bad

The second piece of news is that, while chasing after a lively grandchild in the aforementioned award winning garden, Jan slipped on some wet leaves and broke *both* of her wrists.

Get well soon

All our sympathies go to both Jan and husband Rusty, who'll have to wait on her hand and foot until she's out of plaster!

The Round Hill Noticeboard

Wanted

Mature reliable person to clean and iron for busy family in Princes Crescent. 4 hours per week, times and pay negotiable.
Contact Penny Denman 620 001 or pennydenman@aol.com

Round Hill Planters

There are just 6 large planters left, they are about 2' long by 10" wide and deep (60cm x 25cm x 25cm) and I want them out of my spare room! At £2 each they're a bargain, so please take one or more and save me from planter surfeit...
Call Rob on 673 511

Ancient tree on The Round Hill?

Several years ago I was in Berlin where I saw streets lined with what I think of as a rare tree - the Ginko. Returning to Brighton I was passing the junction of Crescent Road and Princes Crescent when I saw a Ginko leaf on the pavement. I never discovered where it came from, but have assumed that it must be a local tree - does anyone have any information on its whereabouts? Please let me know if so on 673511 or robs@pavilion.co.uk

Babysitter Available

16 years old, experienced with babies, basic first-aid, £3.50 per hour.
Call Vanessa 688 009

Advertising Rates

The Round Hill Society welcome local companies interested in advertising in the Reporter. Here are the rates:

Quarter Page £5
Half Page £10
Full Page £20

To advertise contact Amanda Evans on 278 646