



The Round Hill Reporter

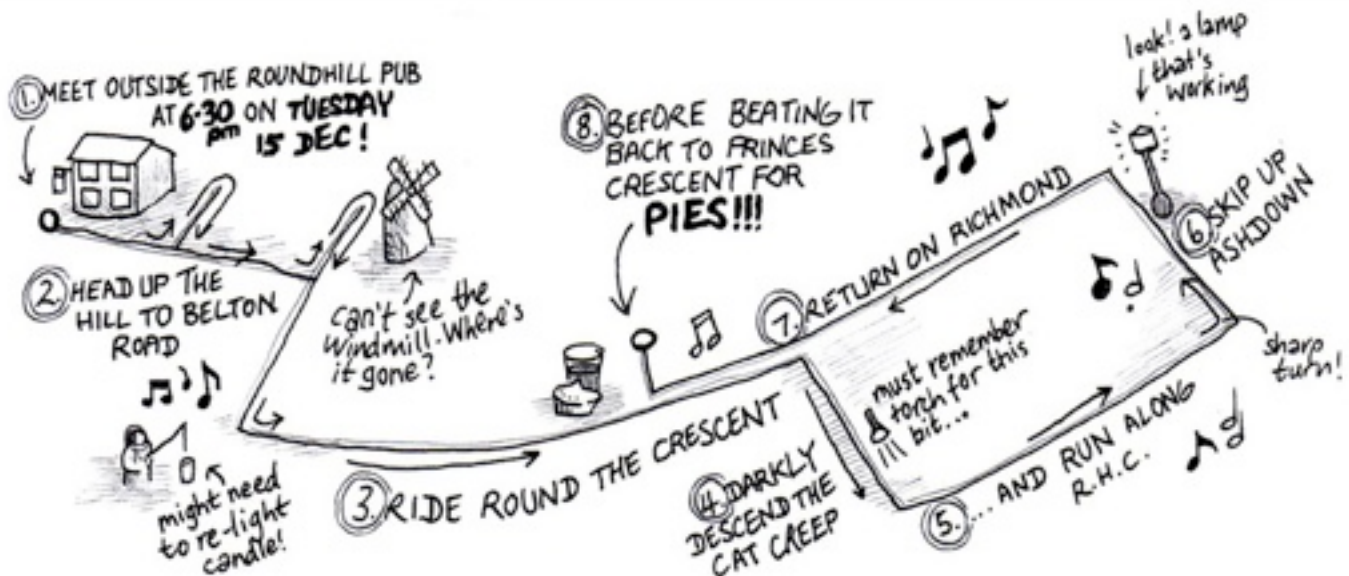
Issue 38
December 2009



Waste mismanagement Local anger after a toxic summer blighted by noise and air pollution- page 4

Banish the midwinter gloom

Round Hill carols are a popular & welcome tonic in the darkest nights



The annual procession of Christmas carol singing in Round Hill is now a popular fixture in the calendar. In the depths of winter it provides a unique opportunity for neighbours to put rusty vocal chords through their paces and enjoy a friendly and relaxed stroll. After a gentle walk through the lamp-lit streets, the event culminates in a warm mince pie and a cup of mulled wine.

Father Christmas usually finds a break in his packed timetable to make an appearance and the only requirements to take part are a warm coat and scarf – even those who resolutely refuse to sing are appreciated for their moral support!

As ever, musicians are welcome - please contact us (see back page) if you can help. Lanterns will also be available for any who want to borrow them for the

evening - just collect one from the steps at 77 Princes Crescent on your way to meet the procession.

Don't worry if you're a bit late either - just go hunting. Follow the route shown above (and your ears) until you track down the rest of the singers.

As well as being an enjoyable diversion, the event raises money for charity and this year the proceeds will go to the **Multiple Sclerosis society**. About a hundred thousand people suffer with MS in the UK and the society helps to provide respite care as well as education and training and invaluable reassurance for the recently diagnosed. Since its foundation in 1953, the charity has also raised around £50 million to fund vital research into the condition.



View from the hill

CPZ, London Road, Ashdown Road, community garden, park life

● The City Council confirmed in October that the Controlled Parking Zone for the London Road station area would not be extended to surrounding streets. Round Hill was one of the neighbouring areas which was consulted over the summer but as reported in the September newsletter, the majority of residents were against the idea. Although the scheme will go ahead, it will be restricted to the streets close to London Road station which suffer heavily from commuter parking. Round Hill residents will then have to wait to see how far they are affected by the 'domino' effect when commuters are compelled to range further afield for parking spaces.

● There have been hundreds of responses to the City Council's consultation on the London Road masterplan including a high turnout to the exhibition which was hosted in the old Co-op building. Council officers have stressed that the new plans do not include any large-scale supermarket applications at present. Last year's proposal


from Tesco and St James's Investment to construct what would have been one of the largest superstores in Britain on the site of New England House were squarely opposed by locals and the plans were later withdrawn. The new Open Market continues to feature heavily in the plan however. The project has been progressing slowly due to its intricate funding structure and the number of agencies involved. However, a revised planning application, to include affordable homes in place of the City College premises on Frances Street is expected soon.

● Neighbours in Ashdown Road and the area nearby have been waiting to hear if plans for the property formerly used by Raj Motors will be approved. The application includes two new houses in addition to the conversion of the existing house into three flats.

● The Lewes Road Community Garden has continued to be an unexpected and lively addition to the neighbourhood. Since its occupation by a local band of guerilla gardeners, the formerly abandoned space has become a vibrant centre and even informal community resource. The garden has been open daily and the base for yoga classes as well as film screenings and barbecues.

● The Round Hill Society AGM was held in September with the first screening of "The Round Hill Year" highlighting the range of concerns which occupy the thoughts of residents as well as a talk on the next steps for the London Road masterplan. The debate included animated discussion on a number of topics and Keith Taylor, one of the ward's Green party councillors spoke to residents about a number of recent developments.

● A Kemp Town man has been charged with the murder of Andrea Waddell in Upper Lewes Road in October. The body of the University postgraduate student was found when authorities were called to a fire in her flat on the top floor of a building near to the junction with Round Hill Crescent.



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Grassroots action on traffic

Local groups are fighting back amid growing concern over the noise & pollution caused by intense traffic levels in the area

Two local groups have formed recently amid fears that the city's leadership is failing to confront a major issue for residential neighbourhoods.

People living in streets near to Round Hill are convinced that the volume of traffic crossing their area is increasing rapidly, representing a growing threat to the health of local residents as well as disturbing their quality of life.

Lewes Road for Clean Air was formed earlier this year in response to concerns that the welfare of residents in the area was being ignored. The Vogue Gyratory has been known as a dangerous hotspot for some time. A 2005 report showed that levels of Nitrogen Oxide at the junction were in excess of safe levels and locals are convinced that the situation has worsened in the last few years, especially with the additional heavy traffic drawn in by the waste facilities at Hollingdean.

Then in April this year came the shocking news that a planning application for a property in Lewes Road was turned down on the grounds that the environment was unsafe. Planners asserted that windows could not be safely opened at because of the prevailing levels of pollution.

The group launched their activities wisely by gathering information. A series of traffic surveys over the summer highlighted the huge volume of traffic passing along the Lewes Road corridor and is already being used as a reference by other local organisations. The Group produced a booklet detailing different aspects of the problem as well as a striking set of posters depicting the scale and nature of traffic.

Then on Car Free day (20 September) the team held a party and

market at the Lewes Road Community garden, implementing their own 'park and ride' scheme for the day in partnership with the Lemon Bus Company and Brighton University.

On the other side of the hill, a second group is forming around the London Road area. **Transport21** is an action group bringing together a number of local societies including the London Road Action Team and Another London Road. The same 2005 survey which identified excessive pollution at the Vogue Gyratory highlighted similar problems at Preston Circus. As congestion at the Circus and Viaduct Road grows, residents in areas such as Ditchling Rise are exasperated with the heavy traffic attempting to negotiate their steep, narrow streets.

The councillors for the ward have been supportive of the group which is hoping to galvanise the Council into restarting its stalled transport policy and develop a proper strategy to address the issue.



917
Private cars

185
Commercial

48
Buses and coaches

45
Taxis

24
Motorbikes

19
HGV

5
Minibuses

5
Emergency

Average hourly weekday traffic on Lewes Road based on surveys at the bottom of Franklin Road. Lewes Road for Clean Air



Noxious neighbour

The waste processing facilities in Hollingdean have been noisy, smelly neighbours this summer but are residents' complaints being heard?



Residents in the Princes Road area have endured an uncomfortable summer as new neighbours, the Hollingdean Waste Transfer Station and Materials Recovery Facility ramped up their operations.

The complex processed a growing volume of waste materials during the warmer months and locals have had to become used to a foul stench invading their houses and property. Keen gardeners have been dismayed to find their plants and vegetables frosted with a film of particles from the plant.

Then there is the noise. In disregard of the planning restrictions which were imposed on the site, Veolia have persistently operated the facilities with the large vehicular access doors left open. The thunderous sound produced as waste and recyclables are emptied into enormous hoppers inside the buildings has disturbed residents, not just on weekdays but also weekends and often into the early hours of the morning.

People living near to the site have also been angered to see that so many of the trucks arriving in their neighbourhood full of rubbish have travelled considerable distances. The facility has been dealing with waste from all over the south of England, East Anglia and counties even further afield. Although this had always been part of the plan, it has left Round Hill

What you can do

The system in place for dealing with complaints about the Hollingdean facility is confusing and potentially ineffective, but here is our straightforward guide to taking action if you notice a problem:

1 Complain to the EA

If you have a complaint about smell, noise, dust or emissions, then please do contact the Environment Agency. Many residents are doing this and they are more likely to take action if they receive a steady flow of reports. Reporting a complaint is quick and easy with a short call to **0800 807 060**, quoting the licence number EAWML100185.

2 Complain to the City Council

If you have a complaint relating to a breach of planning conditions, then the City Council are responsible. Condition 16 for example, states that the access doors should only be open long enough for vehicles to enter and exit and should be closed while waste is unloaded. Contact **Scott Castle**, Senior Environmental Health Officer on **01273 292248** or e-mail scott.castle@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

3 Tell the Round Hill Society

If you have had cause to complain, please let the Round Hill Society know. We will keep a central record of the problems that residents are facing and make statistics available on our website. You can let us know by e-mail (news@roundhill.org.uk), by post to one of the committee members (addresses on back page) or using our quick comments page at www.roundhill.org.uk/waste.



Next level for local parks

residents with the impression that they are paying a high price for Veolia's pursuit of profits.

But there are concerns that the City Council is now refusing to shoulder its responsibility for the plant. There is no requirement for the site operators to conduct any monitoring of their own activities and when residents have tried to complain to Council officers, their calls have simply been referred to the Environment Agency. But the EA have a narrow remit and will not respond to certain types of complaint. In an attempt to clarify the process, the Round Hill Society is now producing guidance on how to raise an issue (see left).

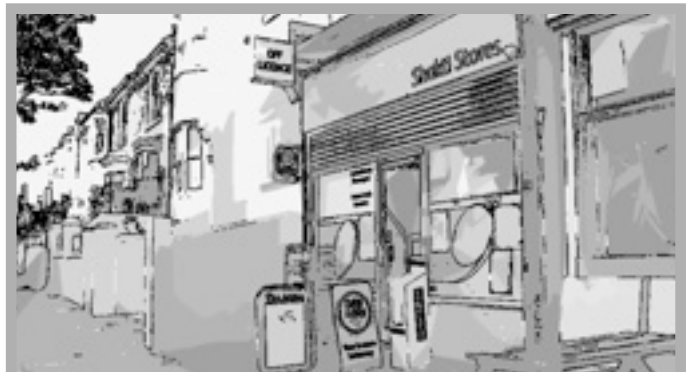
With different agencies involved, there is also a concern that no authority will have a complete view of the problem. To counter this, the society is also launching a project to catalogue as many of the complaints as possible. This information will be made available on the website (www.roundhill.org.uk) and used in support of reports from the Society to council officials.

It is thought the access doors are left open because of problems with the layout of the site which cannot deal effectively with the large volumes of trucks queueing to deposit waste. Conditions inside the plant are also understood to be difficult. The buildings are of such rudimentary design, described by the Brighton Society as "basic metal sheds, the cheapest form of building" they do not feature the filtration systems which might be expected in a modern waste processing facility.



Radical new designs for **the Level** have been unveiled by the City Council. Consultations during the autumn gave residents the chance to comment on proposals for a new skate park and children's play area as well as general improvements to the park.

On the other side of the hill, plans for **Saunders Park** were also finalised over the summer. Development is focused on the play facilities with the introduction of a treehouse, climbing boulders and floodlighting for the ball games court. There are also plans to overhaul the water play area at a later stage.



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Woolly work in the Sussex hills

With Brighton's parks to be used for grazing land over the winter, Round Hill's resident shepherd advises on what to do with all that wool

© Stefan Holmström



I've written in the past about the joys of conservation volunteering – a great way to keep fit, get out in the fresh air and see parts of our beautiful countryside I never knew about. I also mentioned being a sheep 'lookerer' and you may have spotted me recently in the press, out on the hills with said sheep. I get quite a bit of teasing and am often referred to as 'Bo Peep' but I do enjoy it and thought I'd give you an update on the spinning endeavour.

Blimey! It's a hell of a process. First the wool has to be washed. You can imagine the state it's in. 'Dags' is one of the words in my new sheep-centred vocabulary. Look it up. You can't agitate the fleece, or it will turn into felt,

so it has to be gently washed in lots of hot soapy (washing-up liquid's best) water and then rinsed. I did one carrier bag full and it used up gallons of water and a whole afternoon. Then you have to find somewhere to dry it and that takes ages too. In the meantime the whole house smells of lanolin and dirty sheep. Once the fleece is clean and dry, it then has to be carded with special spiky brushes to get the fibres all going in the same direction. Then it's ready to spin.

With six fleeces to treat I gave up after the drying stage and my new friend, Sue the Wool, she of knitting-the-map fame (www.knittingthemap.org), has carted the lot off to a wonderful place called Diamond Fibres where they're doing everything and I'll get back loads of wool ready to knit things for me and my ever-growing family (grandson on the way in February – much excitement). You can buy ready-carded wool from Diamond Fibres ready for spinning at very reasonable cost. If only I'd known!

The awful truth about sheep's wool is that sheep farmers are paid less for a fleece than it costs to shear the sheep. If it's dark coloured they're paid nothing at all because it can't be dyed. The fleeces are transported to (you guessed it) China where it's processed, often mixed with man-made fibres (cheaper and less messy to process) and, once dyed, spun and labelled, shipped back to the UK for us knitters to buy in the shops. So if you care about the planet and like knitting, learn to spin. Sue has now set up a spinning group that meets on Friday mornings in Kemp Town. If you're interested, please contact Sue Craig on info@knittingthemap.org.

Vivien Eliades

Committee news

The Round Hill Society welcomed a new committee member at this year's AGM. **Robin Morley's** contribution to the street party last summer was immeasurable and we are very pleased to have access to some of his expertise despite a busy schedule.

We also say a huge thank you to **Paul Thompson** who stepped down from the committee in September. Paul has been a valued member of the team since 2002, fulfilling the vital role of treasurer for most of this time. His wit and encyclopedic local knowledge have been much-appreciated by his colleagues and committee meetings will never be the same without him.

Exterior House Painting Now taking bookings for 2011

Some local jobs:
3 D'Aubigny Road (2004)
85 Round Hill Crescent (2006)
14 Mayo Road (2008)



Rob Stephenson
673511

A walk on the Wild Park side

Wild Park is a slice of the South Downs within easy reach of Round Hill, offering invigoration & a new perspective on the locality

The details of this walk have been provided by a resident of Round Hill who uses her bus pass to get out to the Downs for scenic walks. She says the start of this hike will do your cardio-vascular system no end of good and having tried it myself I can say it should take between an hour and ninety minutes, depending on how much standing and staring you do – bus stop to bus stop. An extra bonus for doing the walk now is that almost every yard of it is within the new South Downs National Park.

First, take the bus along the Lewes Road to a stop just after the entrance to the Wild Park and walk in along the road. Within 50 yards take the tarmac path rising to the right. Before the third short sets of steps leave the tarmac and take the path which branches off to the left. This path rises up through the trees. You get occasional glimpses of the playing fields in the valley below, which were excavated as a work-creation scheme by unemployed miners in the 1930s. On the opposite valley-side you may spot a grassy slope running almost the height of the hillside. This is the site of a planned dry-ski slope which, unlike the playing fields, was never built.

After about 15 minutes you will reach a signpost pointing left. Follow it, and keep on the winding path until you come to a second post pointing out into the field ahead. Just afterwards turn left, staying within the woods. Soon you will see the grassy field through the trees on your right, and you should walk through to it before the woodland path starts to break up.

In the field look left to see the Universities of Sussex and Brighton plus the new Falmer Stadium and above it, in the distance, County Hall in Lewes. Now turn around and walk west, up the edge of the field. Turn left just before the corner, taking a straight, sandy path heading south through the trees. The golf course is on your right and it becomes more apparent as the trees on that side thin out. Carry on down this path as it becomes grassy. Further on it turns left and gets chalky, stay on it until you enter a large field where you turn right and follow the boundary about a third of a mile to a skateboard rink and car park. Follow the path down to the road and turn right to the glass-walled Children's Centre. Just down to the right you will see a bus stop on the other side of the road which will take you to Shaktis Stores and the Round Hill pub on the Ditchling Road.

Rob Stephenson



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Round Hill Society Committee

Chair	Jean Brennan	87 Round Hill Crescent	693100
Vice chair	Marian Gerrett	77 Princes Crescent	688009
Secretary	Rob Stephenson	51 Upper Lewes Road	673511
Treasurer	Kevin Tansley	11 Wakefield Road	672648
Conservation Advisory	Ted Power	55 Princes Road	688102
Newsletter & website	David Guest	16a Wakefield Road	699476
Committee members	Carol Hall	36b Princes Road	687636
	Mandy Jones	81 Princes Crescent	
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Please send your recommendations or warnings to the editor, including your own details for verification.

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 March edition
14th February