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# THE Resident



The magazine of Horsell Residents' Association

Spring 2023

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[theresidenteditor.wixsite.com/magazine](https://theresidenteditor.wixsite.com/magazine)  
[www.horsellresidents.com](http://www.horsellresidents.com)

A starling wakes up the spring on Horsell Common.  
Photo: Michael Jones.



# A word from the editorial team

## Greetings...

And here we are in 2023 – Happy New Year!! Yes, I know it's rather late, but this is the time of year where everything is waking up and starting again. It is just very exciting and so full of promise. We thought Michael's front cover photo of a starling on Horsell Common captured this time really well.

If you are thinking about the promise of spring and what it offers in terms of new starts, why not consider being a volunteer? As our HRA chair, Alan Taylor, points out, countless studies have shown how good it is for everyone involved in volunteering: the receiver and the provider. What's not to like?

Two volunteers I want to send a big shout out to are Victoria Bathe-Taylor and Karen Waldron. They join Linda Russell, Sue Waters and me in making up the editorial team for this magazine. Victoria has created the cycle trail for us to follow (along with

Linda's beautiful map) and Karen has collated the big Horsell events that will be coming up over the year. Make sure you put them in your diary now. (To enjoy as a volunteer or as a guest!)

Another group of HRA volunteers, the calendar team, would like to thank Apples & Pears, Premier, Squires and St Mary's who sold Horsell's 2023 Charity Calendar and everyone who bought one. The 2023 calendar profits will support Intergenerational Music Making, Samber Riding for the Disabled, Woking Talking Newspapers and Your Sanctuary.

The Horsell charity calendar has raised over £25,000 for local charities since 2016. We are now looking for pictures for the 2024 calendar and would love to see your photos! See the box on the right for details of what you might like to submit.

*Lucy*



## Horsell Charity Calendar 2024 – your photo could appear!

Do you have photos that could be published in our charity calendar? They need to be something recognisably to do with Horsell, over 1Mb in size to look good in the square shape used in the calendar. How about one of these ideas:

- Our village and common through the seasons or through the years
- Flora or fauna from the common or elsewhere in Horsell
- Shots from Horsell activities – the Village Show or Flowerpot Festival for example
- Shots of beautiful houses or buildings in Horsell – or parts of them.
- Photos of artwork depicting Horsell – but if you are not the person who made that art you need to ask permission of the artist.

We are often short of pictures taken in summer (June – September) so don't forget photos you took then!

Please send your photos to [horsellcalendar@horsellresidents.com](mailto:horsellcalendar@horsellresidents.com) by 1st April 2023.

The Resident – Horsell Residents' Association's magazine about and for our village.

**Editor:** Lucy English [theresidenteditor@gmail.com](mailto:theresidenteditor@gmail.com)

**Editorial team:** Victoria Bathe-Taylor, Linda Russell, Karen Waldron and Sue Waters.

**Advertising co-ordinator:** Ian Berry [theresidentads@gmail.com](mailto:theresidentads@gmail.com)

**NEXT ISSUE:** Summer 2023

**Advertising deadline:** noon Sunday 16th April

**Copy deadline:** noon Sunday 23rd April

*Articles and photographs about our village are welcomed from our whole community.*

# THE Resident

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Horsell Residents' Association

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### Why not support the association that supports you?

Become a member of HRA and help to support our village projects. See [www.horsellresidents.com](http://www.horsellresidents.com) for full details of our aims and benefits.

Annual household membership is £5 by standing order or just pay £50 for lifelong household membership.

To download a membership form go to: [www.horsellresidents.com/home/JoinUs](http://www.horsellresidents.com/home/JoinUs) or email [info@horsellresidents.com](mailto:info@horsellresidents.com).

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# Horsell happenings



## View from the Chair

When I look back on 2022, I am delighted at the accomplishments of our members and friends in the Horsell Residents' Association (HRA) for all the community events they have delivered for Horsell. As you would imagine, if you have visited any of our events, considerable effort goes into delivering each one. Our two 'biggies' - the Horsell Village Show and Horsell Christmas Market both met with increased attendances which is hugely satisfying for all involved and proves we are doing something that Horsell likes.

In reflection, I have been asking myself what motivates people to put so much of their time into building these community events? Of course, these events raise funds and we as a charity are delighted to donate to local organisations. Additionally, our local High Street traders reported excellent business from the Christmas market. That is all good news for Horsell.

Somebody once asked me where the HRA stands on community social responsibility. I don't believe we have a position, but it does offer community inclusion and that is valuable for people's wellbeing. Volunteering can help limit the feeling of social isolation as it keeps you in contact with others and the community. It can help with staying physically fit and there is the "happiness effect" that comes with achievement and involvement.

Volunteering is a two-way thing. Just to continue to deliver our programme of events we require more volunteers to replace those that age has caught up with not to mention any innovative ideas we may introduce. With volunteering comes a real satisfaction of connecting with our community - it is the glue that makes Horsell that special place to live.

Volunteering is one of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships by committing to a shared activity, exposing you to people with common interests, neighbourhood resources, and fun and fulfilling activities.

HRA gives multiple opportunities to volunteer. Our scope for opportunity is wide and includes organisers, coordinators, administrators, communicators, promoters, advertisers and those who can help with logistics, technical aspects and local trader liaison etc. The most important quality is the desire to be involved.

I would particularly like to encourage the younger element within our community to join us. You bring wonderful attributes that may not be too developed in us seniors. Maybe you could offer IT and social media skills, mobility, stamina, enthusiasm or even a "bit of grunt" where necessary and you can offer a different perspective on things. In return we can offer the chance to gain experience in a new field without a long-term commitment and, of course, it looks great on the CV and could help with that job interview!

For all age groups, volunteering can bring fun, fulfilment, a sense of achievement, satisfaction and doesn't come with a requirement of a long-term commitment, just the time you want to offer.

If you would like to consider volunteering, then please contact myself or Lizzie Judson ([secondthursdayclub@horsellresidents.com](mailto:secondthursdayclub@horsellresidents.com)) and we would be delighted to chat with you or just contact someone who you know is already involved.

Yes, we really are **"Powered by Volunteers"**

Alan Taylor (Chair, HRA) [ajrolyat@gmail.com](mailto:ajrolyat@gmail.com)



## Remembrance Day

Hundreds of villagers turned out on Remembrance Sunday to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the two world wars and other conflicts. The



event was made more poignant as it was led by St Mary's Ukrainian vicar - at a time when war is raging in his homeland.

On a still, grey Sunday morning, the Rev Dmitry Lutsenko led parishioners from the church to the war memorial, accompanied by lay minister Roy Wernham and Alan Nichols, bell ringer and the church's lead server.

As the Union Flag flew at full mast from the new flagpole, the names of those who perished were read out and the Last Post and Reveille were played immaculately for the second year in succession by bugler Georgio Dotto, a 15-year-old pupil at Salesian School, Chertsey. Wreaths, crosses and stones were laid first by many of the children in the youth organisations.



Wreaths were also presented by the Horsell Residents' Association, Woking Lions and the two Horsell Women's Institute groups.

Pete Grieve

## Scouts and Guides' May Fayre

**WHERE:** Wheatsheaf Recreation Ground, Chobham Road, Woking, GU21 4BL

**WHEN:** 1st May 2023, 11.45am till 4.30pm

The ever-popular Horsell Scouts and Guides' May Fayre is back for 2023 on the Bank Holiday 1st May.

We are all very excited to welcome Dangerous Steve as the main arena event, with sensational stunts and juggling with 'safe' things like chainsaws and fire - hey and there is audience participation as well - sounds like one not to miss!

In addition to all this excitement there are the more traditional May Fayre elements, this year

with a coronation theme: inflatables, a myriad of different stalls for all the family, Thurstons Brewery beer tent. We have the May Fayre Trophy, the John Marsden Cup and the Tony Bowman Gold Cup that Guides and Scouts will compete for.

We are always very well supported by our most generous sponsors, without whom the Fayre would not be able to take place. This year our main sponsor will be Seymours, Horsell estate agents. Halstead Preparatory School for Girls and Trident Honda (our longest-running sponsor!) have also kindly agreed to sponsor this, our 43rd May Fayre! Other sponsors will be announced in due course. Horsell Scouts and Guides are very grateful for their tremendous support.

The build-up begins for Horsell, with the Guide and Scout programme sellers coming door to door in April, armed with hand sanitiser and a

bag to drop the money in. So, look out for them as this will be your first opportunity to support the 2023 May Fayre which provides valuable opportunities for so many young people across Horsell.

For more information, please contact Dick Mackie at [dick.mackie49@gmail.com](mailto:dick.mackie49@gmail.com).

Kathy Gilbert



Photo: Lucy Longley.

# Horsell Christmas Market 2022 – the best yet!



Photos by Sue Waters, Caroline Hughes, John Morley.

If you enjoyed the day and would like to get involved –  
**WHY NOT JOIN THE TEAM** for the 2023 Christmas Market?  
 Contact: [c.e.hughes@ntlworld.com](mailto:c.e.hughes@ntlworld.com)



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There were over 52 stalls, more than £5,500 was raised and donated to local charities, the High Street was car-free with shops joining in and having a great day's business, and local bands and the ballet school gave lively and entertaining performances.

**Q Who runs Horsell Christmas Market?**

**A** A small group of volunteers from the HRA's Second Thursday Club organise the event, plus over 50 other volunteers help on the day.

**Q Why is there a Christmas Market?**

**A** To promote the amazing skills of local artisans and provide an outlet for them; to bring extra business to the High Street shops; to brighten dull December days and bring the local community together.

**Q Who pays?**

**A** As well as payment from stallholders there's generous sponsorship from Frazers, Hamlyns, Seymours, Prince and Son Butchers, The Crown, Thurstons Brewery, KRB Windows, Horsell Nails and the Village Barber.

**Q What about raising money for charity?**

**A** Charity fundraising stalls are free of charge.

**Q What makes it so successful?**

**A** Skilful and hard-working stallholders and participating shops. Helpful, caring volunteers ensuring everything is well organised. Good communication. Oh – and good weather!

Here are some of the wonderful comments from the fundraising stalls (space doesn't allow for more!):

**The Cricketers** – A huge thank you and congratulations to you and all the team for

putting on such a successful fair. There was such a fabulous atmosphere! The mulled wine & hot chocolate stall raised £3059.50 (the most we've ever done) which will be donated to Woking & Sam Beare Hospice.

**Scouts** – We had a very successful afternoon and raised about £250 for the Woking District Scout Jamboree funds, which is brilliant.

**Children's Bone Cancer Research** – Thank you and all your team for organising such a brilliant Christmas Market. We had a great day and raised £327, which will be doubled by the current sponsor.

Following her daughter Flora's diagnosis of bone cancer in 2020, volunteer Denise has been raising money for the Bone Cancer Research Fund (Flora's Fund), because children's bone cancer research is very low in the fund-raising 'pecking order'.

**MIND charity** – The stall made £272 – every penny is going to the charity.

**Friends of Woking Community Hospital** – We had a good day in a great position (we took £382) – so much better with the High Street closed.

**Woking Lions** – The Tombola/Raffle and Santa raised £571, which is going towards 52 goody bags for families in need, and 120 goody bags for Meals on Wheels. All Santa's presents were provided by Studio 101 hairdressers.

**Samber Riding for the Disabled Group** – We rely entirely on fundraising activities like this and voluntary contributions to fund the hire of safe, reliable ponies and to purchase specialist tack and equipment. We were also one of the

charities supported by 2022 and 2023 Horsell Charity calendars.

Some feedback from other stall holders:

**Dee's Kitchen** – A massive thank you for giving us small businesses a platform to shine!

**Home Made by Ali** – I just want to thank all the wonderful people of the Second Thursday Club for organising such a brilliant event and all the wonderful people who have supported hobby cooks like me. A fabulous day which celebrates the amazing village that Horsell is.

**Julie Stearn hand-made knitted garments** – Horsell Christmas Market is definitely our favourite venue and thank you for all the hard work you put in to achieve such a great event.

It was good to have several returning customers who had bought from us at last year's market. One lady had dressed her baby in the jumper she had bought last year so that we could see it being worn!

And it was great to see the charity shops, Café Primo, Deli Class, Squisito, Beijing, Horsell Kitchen, Prince & Sons and Seymours all taking part too.

Prince & Sons said: "We would just like to thank all of the organisers and helpers of this year's Christmas Market – as always, it was a massive success! We businesses can only do so much, and without your help this wouldn't have gone ahead, so we all thank you. And a HUGE thank you to all of our customers who came out in their masses to see and support us as usual – we thank you all and appreciate you all so, so much."

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# Horsell Events 2023



## □ Saturday 15th April 9.45am-12noon

Open Day at Horsell Bowling Club,  
Queen Elizabeth Gardens, High Street  
(next to the Village Hall, and  
opposite The Crown)

Horsell Bowling Club is a thriving, friendly club established more than 100 years ago and situated in the heart of Horsell. This year's Open Day offers you a chance to get out, get active and try something new with no obligation or cost. This is a sport for all – young and old, men and women, and all ranges of athleticism. Come and give it a go! All equipment will be provided, just wear flat shoes.

Just turn up or contact Alison Ferries on 01483 720201 or email [a.ferries@sky.com](mailto:a.ferries@sky.com).

## □ Monday 1st May

Scouts and Guides' May Fayre  
(see page 3 for details)

## □ Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th June

Horsell Garden Safari

You might be full of winter chill, but it's time to start planning for that happy community event that is the Garden Safari. We are



Photo: David Williams.

looking to make it another bumper year for our local charities, so would love to hear from anyone – new or returning – who would like to open their garden for us. All types of garden are welcome – small, large, manicured, country style, pastel or colourful – the more diversity the better for our visitors. I'm happy to pop round and talk you through the event.

Contact Gail Bromley at [bromleysglad@gmail.com](mailto:bromleysglad@gmail.com) or on 01483 764521.

## □ Sunday 2nd July 12 noon-4pm

Picnic on the Green, in front  
of The Cricketers

Bring your own picnic and enjoy chatting with friends and listening to live music from our favourite bands. Activities for the kids, ice cream van and, in honour of King Charles' coronation, we're looking for a pageant of monarchs, so come along in your crowns and gowns.



Photo: Caroline Hughes.

## □ Saturday 22nd July 12noon

Horsell Village Show, Horsell C of E  
Junior School, Meadway Drive

Join us for entertainment, craft stalls, games, an art show, bottle tombola and more. We'll be tempting you too with Pimm's, beer, ice cream and afternoon teas.

Look out for the schedule and details of the show classes in the shops or go to

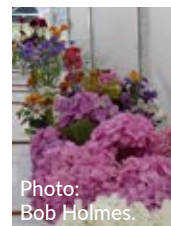


Photo: Bob Holmes.

[www.horsellvillageshow.co.uk](http://www.horsellvillageshow.co.uk). To request a craft stall please contact Marion Piper at [mepiper7@gmail.com](mailto:mepiper7@gmail.com) or visit the website for the form. We welcome help with the show so if you are willing to join our team of helpers go to [horsellvillageshow@yahoo.com](mailto:horsellvillageshow@yahoo.com).

## □ Throughout the Summer

Horsell Flowerpot  
Festival

Make your own flowerpot sculpture, or take a walk around the village and spot the ingenious creations of other villagers and trades.

Look out for details in this magazine.



## □ Thursday 26th October 7pm for 7.30pm start

Horsell Residents' Association  
AGM, Horsell Village Hall

Update by the Board of Directors on the business of the Association and its community activities, followed by a presentation by a guest speaker on a subject of local interest.

Contact Alan Taylor at [ajrolyat@gmail.com](mailto:ajrolyat@gmail.com).

## □ Saturday 2nd December 1pm-5pm

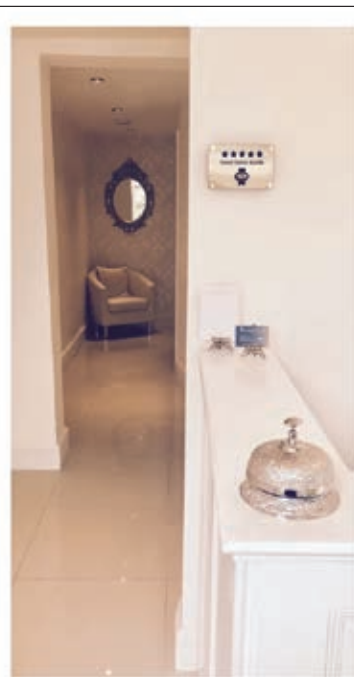
Horsell Christmas Market (see  
pages 4 and 5 to find out more)

Contact Caroline Hughes at [c.e.hughes@ntlworld.com](mailto:c.e.hughes@ntlworld.com).

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## Nigel Longley – a man for all seasons

Our HRA chair, Alan Taylor, talks about our village being 'powered by volunteers' so we thought it time to say thank you to Nigel Longley who can often be found supporting village events with his knowledge and time.

Nigel is an active member of the Village Hall committee and the Quartermaster at Horsell Scouts where he is the contact for all borrowed kit for events. Richard Mackie, of Horsell Scouts and Guides, really values



Nigel is the 'go to' for all village events in terms of First Aid, and his kit includes a bed inside a large tent!

If ever the adage of 'if you want a job done, give it to a busy person' applied to someone it would be Nigel who is forever available and dependable.

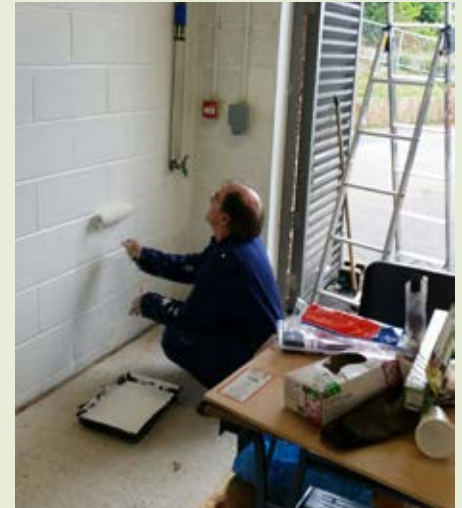
**Thank you, Nigel!**

*With thanks to Richard Mackie, Caroline Hughes and Alan Taylor for their contributions to this piece.*

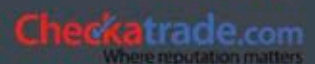


his support, noting the time they spend together decorating and doing maintenance at the Scout and Guide Headquarters. Nigel is always 'the one who can' and will always be there when needed. Richard will be seeing him soon for his three yearly whole day first aid upgrade course – Nigel is the instructor!

As well as being a leader with Baden Powell Cub pack, Nigel is involved with many other facets of Horsell life. In terms of Horsell Prepared (HP), Alan recalls that Nigel was an early recruit and his knowledge and generosity with time is much appreciated. Caroline Hughes, of HRA's Second Thursday Club (STC) is also very ready to sing Nigel's praises, writing of Nigel the 'fixer', particularly in relation to his support for STC's events. Richard, Alan and Caroline all mention Nigel's mobile 'operating theatre' (!) It appears that



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# Horsell Common Perimeter Loop Bike Ride

Horsell Common is a great place to explore, both on foot or two wheels. This ride takes you around the perimeter track of the common, and is great for both leisurely rides and use as a training lap.

- Make sure you obey any access restrictions and areas where cyclists are not permitted. Be considerate of other users of the Common and give way to pedestrians and horse riders.

## The facts:

**Distance:** approximately 5.5km

**Surface:** Gravel, dirt, some tarmac

**Suitable for:** all abilities

**Ride it on:** hybrid, gravel or mountain bike



1 The bridleway at the start of the ride



2 Heather Farm - when you see this, turn right



3 Heather Farm bridleway/Seven Acres junction - turn left here

Route created and recorded by Victoria Bathe-Taylor.  
Map by Linda Russell.



4 View down Seven Acres on the hottest day in 2022



## Sandy Track Car Park to Seven Acres

1. Photo ① With the car park entrance behind you, cross Sandy Track and head down the bridleway directly opposite. You will cross Seven Acres about halfway down. Be aware of vehicles turning into Seven Acres from the main road.
2. Cross Seven Acres and keep following the bridleway until you see Heather Farm in front of you, then turn right. Photo ② Turn right again here.
3. Photo ③ Take a left at the end of this bridleway into Seven Acres. Beware of cars when exiting the bridleway onto Seven Acres.

## Points of interest

- Heather Farm: This is a nice place to stop for a coffee and cake.
- When you get to the end of the Heather Farm to Seven Acres bridleway, stop, turn to your left and look behind you. You will see a bat box on a tree to your left. If you time your ride right in the summer months, you might see bats swooping in and out.



**Seven Acres to McLaren Park**

4. Turn left onto Seven Acres and take the first turning on the right. Photo ④ There is a gate halfway down here. Leave the gate as you found it.
5. Carry on riding past all the houses and exit Seven Acres onto Sandy Track.
6. Keep riding straight on. The path will bear slightly right after about two minutes riding.
7. Take the slight right, being aware of the potholes and puddles.



*Totem pole near McLaren Park*

- The path can get very muddy in poor weather and bikes on slicker tyres may struggle in the mud. There is also a surface change from dirt to loose gravel halfway down this path: be aware of the conditions under your wheels.
8. Keep riding until you see the entrance to McLaren Park on your left.

**Points of interest**

- There is a little chair carved from a tree stump just past the last house on Seven Acres. See if you can find it.
- When you exit Seven Acres onto Sandy Track, look up and to your left. There is another bat box on one of the trees at the entrance to Youngstroat Lane.
- Outside one of the houses near McLaren Park is a rather wonderful totem pole carved from a tree!

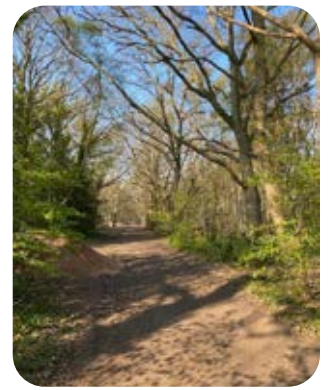
**McLaren Park to Sandy Track Car Park**

9. With the gate to McLaren Park on your left, turn right.
10. After a slight climb, you will see the houses of Anthony's ahead of you. Keep going until you see a wide path with a gate on your right.

11. Ride through the gate. You are now on the main track back down to the car park.
  - If you are on a mountain bike, this is a fun descent to get up some speed on, but please avoid 'full send' to ensure the safety of other users of the Common.
  - If you are not on a mountain bike, please be aware that this path can get boggy and muddy and slicker tyres may struggle in poor conditions.
12. Stay straight on until you see Sandy Track car park in front of you. The loop is complete, and you deserve a cup of tea!

**Points of interest**

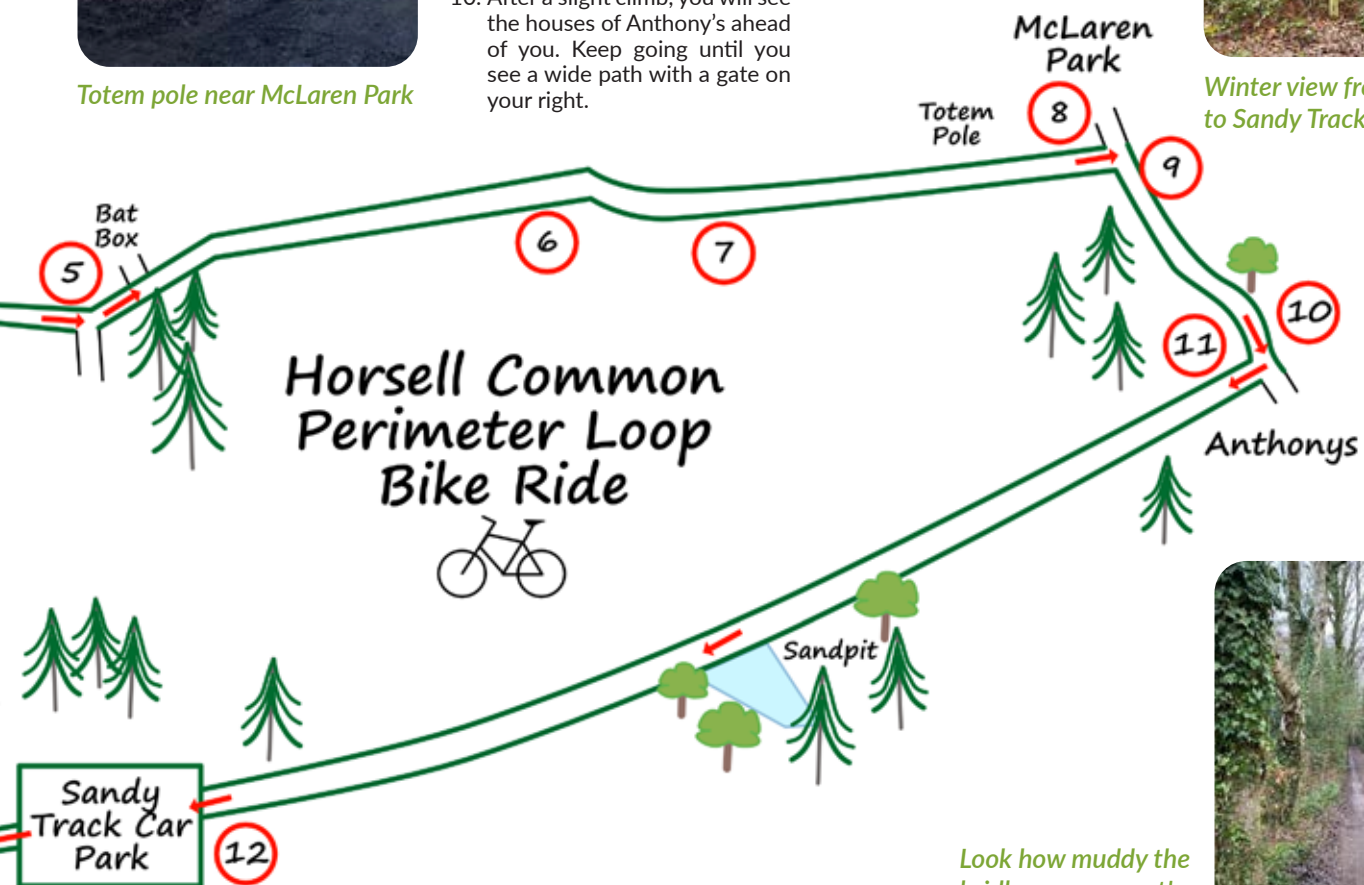
- Your return to Sandy Track car park will take you past The Sandpit, where the Martian cylinder landed in HG Wells' War of The Worlds. Take a moment to admire the natural beach that we are so lucky to have on the Common.



*Summer 2021 view from Anthony's to Sandy Track car park*



*Winter view from Anthony's to Sandy Track car park*



*Look how muddy the bridleways can get!*



Seven Acres Road



*Victoria's bike, "Sherman"*

Victoria has lived in Horsell most of her life but has only recently discovered the joys of exploring Horsell Common by bike. After a medical issue prevented her from participating in her favourite sport of running, she took up off-road cycling, and can be found most Sundays doing laps of the Common in preparation for her first bikepacking adventure. If you see her out and about on her bike (affectionately named Sherman) give her a wave or a ding ding!

# Horsell Winners

## Climbing for Gold!

Rhys Conlon attends Woking High School like many other Horsell 16-year-olds (many may know his dad, Greg, sports injury therapist and paramedic). But, unlike other students, Rhys is also a sports climber who represents GB and is ranked as one of the best under 18 in UK and Europe. Not bad for a local lad who learnt to climb simply because he got stuck on a small cliff on holiday in Wales!

Now Rhys spends all available time climbing, wherever that may be. His coach is based in Sheffield, so he takes a train there at weekends or to London or Milan, or Innsbruck... he really does go everywhere!

He is rightly proud to be representing GB at the World Championships this year in Seoul, South Korea but his goal is to attend the Olympics in 2028 in Los Angeles. He points out that 'climbing is a new Olympic sport and, unusually, has no gender bias - we all get the same prize money and support.'

Rhys explains that climbing is unique: 'Every competition, every wall is different. A skilled

climber needs to have good problem-solving skills along with strength, balance and a great mental focus.'

Travelling to competitions is really expensive, costing around £8-9,000 a year. Rhys uses his prize money from competitions but building up the funds isn't easy. As Rhys says, 'Seoul will be really expensive. In 2021 I got support from Prince & Son, and last year Boz and Woking Football Club.' Horsell residents are amazing and helped him by crowdfunding. At the end of 2022, the Red Lion in Horsell helped raise money through a raffle. As you can imagine, as well as being very grateful for all this support, Rhys needs more sponsorship. He says: 'If there are any local businesses who would like to help me financially please get in touch. Every little really does help.'

If you would like to help Rhys financially with his World Championship bid then please [email rhysconlon@btinternet.com](mailto:rhysconlon@btinternet.com) or call 07948 439078.

Sarah Davidson



Photo: Greg Conlon.

## A Marvellous year for Martians

For the Martians Explorer Unit based at Horsell HQ it's been a tremendous year! During 2022 Martians went from strength to strength to become one of the biggest and more successful Explorer Scout Units in the Woking District.

They have won most of the Woking District Explorers competitions. In June they were champions at the Challenge Camp at Birchmere, the District Campsite, where they retained the trophy from last year. More recently, they retained the annual Dodgeball Tournament trophy held at Winston Churchill School. They were also successful in the district annual inter-unit cooking competition when a two course meal had to be prepared.

Recently, Martians spent a day at Waitrose supermarket collecting for the Royal British Legion Poppy appeal and raised a notable £1409.38 from the generous public.

Martians have attended long camps in Brecon, Isle of Wight and the Peak District together with shorter camps at various local campsites. Throughout the year they have been actively involved in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, undertaking training activities and presentations.

However, it's not only the scouts who have been pursuing an active life. Ed Philips, one of the Martian leaders and Woking District Scout

Youth Commissioner, recently hiked to Everest Base Camp of the Himalayas and supported in uniform at the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in London.

Martians are lucky to have a team of four adult leaders who spend a lot of time ensuring that every scout can have a great time at meetings

and activities. They always need the support of further adults to maintain the safety levels that scouts require. To enquire about this exciting opportunity please contact the Woking District Explorer Scout Commissioner, Roy Thompson, at [explorers@woking.scouts.host](mailto:explorers@woking.scouts.host).

Richard Mackie



Martians Challenge Camp winners. Photo: Richard Mackie.



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Name of Horsell business:

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# Spring on the Heath

Spring is my favourite time of year. I'll probably say a similar thing when we get to the summer too, but please don't hold that against me – they are both brilliant!

As the calendar moves into March, I can feel the claustrophobic darkness of winter's short, dark days dissolving into a distant memory. The lengthening daylight hours feel brighter... fresher... and the sun's rays have a hopeful warmth to them. This is undeniably good for the soul and I feel my spirits lifting as each day passes.

Spring is the season of new life and every moment spent out in nature brings exciting new discoveries. I try to guess which butterfly I will encounter first and I wonder when I might catch a snippet of the beautiful, lilting melody of a Woodlark's song – just to prove that spring has arrived on the heath.

Every pioneering spring flower is worth closer inspection, with each one bringing the chance of an encounter with a solitary bee or hoverfly. I curse myself gently for forgetting many of the bees I thought I had learned the year before, but am buoyed when the long-term memory starts to kick back in.

Whilst the natural world is starting to speed up after its winter torpor, for me there is much joy to be found in slowing down and focusing in on the smaller things.

## #TeenyTinyHeathland

I have been paying extra special attention to the little things that make a home on our heaths – from insects to fungi to lichen – all jostling for space amongst the easier to spot larger species. A heathland walk always reveals a host of fascinating species and, if you slow down and take a closer look, you'll be captivated by what you find – I guarantee it!

If you do spot anything teeny, tiny or teeny-tiny on your walks, do take a photo and pop it on social media and tag it with #TeenyTinyHeathland.

## #TeenyTinyHeathland



I would love to know what you discover.

Search for the hashtag on social media and take a look at what I've found at [www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/news/teenytinyheathland/](http://www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/news/teenytinyheathland/)

## Helping the heath!

The arrival of spring is an exciting time on our local heathlands as it heralds the start of the bird nesting season. At this time of year, our incredible birds, like the Dartford Warbler and Woodlark embark on their mission to raise their next generations. They will be joined in May by jet-setting Nightjars on their return from Africa. As these birds nest on the ground, they are at risk of being disturbed and need our help to give them space. To do this, please always keep to main paths, keep dogs out of vegetation and do all you can to prevent fires. Thank you!

## Heathland connections

As always, if anyone is a local teacher or group leader and would like to find out more about our amazing heathlands, I run a variety of free fun sessions to connect people with their local wildlife, from curriculum-linked lessons (in school or out on the heath) to guided walks and talks. Please do get in touch...

Michael Jones

Education Officer – Thames Basin Heaths Partnership

[tbhschools@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:tbhschools@naturalengland.org.uk)

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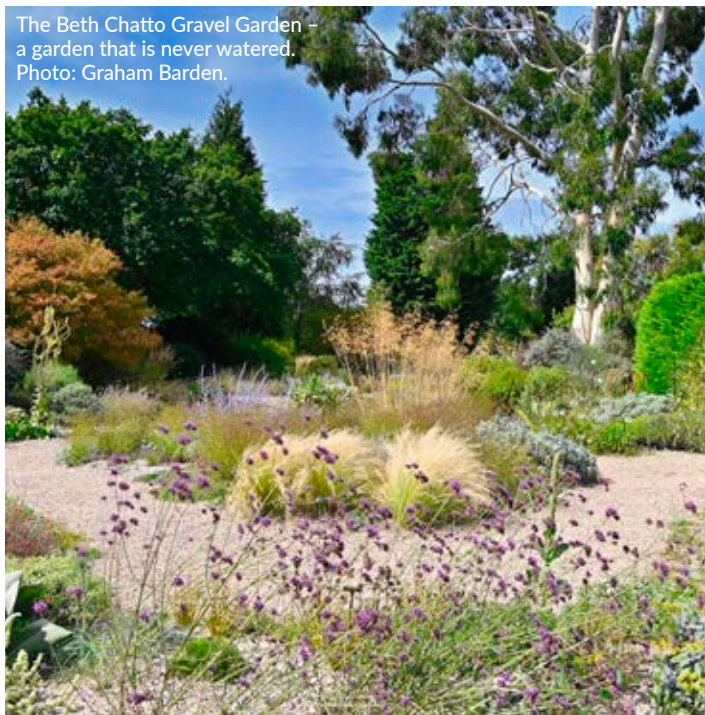
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# Horsell Gardens

The Beth Chatto Gravel Garden – a garden that is never watered. Photo: Graham Barden.



colder winters, plants hailing from the Mediterranean aren't always the answer. As I write this article it's January and feels like it will never stop raining, but at least our ground is building up its moisture reserves ready for whatever spring and summer should bring.

Quality of the soil also goes a long way to success. Many naturally occurring Xeric plants require few nutrients to survive. The soil should be improved when first planting up, but over-feeding leads to flopping plants with many woody types, especially those from the Med, proving short lived from too much food.

You can also reduce or eliminate your grass and replace with tough groundcovers such as *Ajuga reptans* or *Alchemilla mollis* or maybe opt for an area of gravel. By selecting stones of 14mm or bigger you avoid cats using the areas as a litter tray!

Mulching plants to conserve moisture and prevent evaporation can be done with both organic material such as compost or non-organic gravel; both will achieve the same results.

Overall, this type of garden tends to be low maintenance. Grouping plants together by their moisture requirements helps further, so you could try planting varieties requiring more moisture at the bottom of a slope as ground water will naturally gravitate downwards. Areas in sun will also have different levels of moisture to those in shade. Monitoring for pests will be required more during dry spells and for fungal diseases during wet periods.

Pamela Barden, Painted Fern Garden Design

Garden trends in the last year have seen further interest in Xeriscaping, no doubt affirmed by last year's drought. This may or may not be a term you are familiar with, but as we see more evidence in our weather patterns of climate change, it is sure to be a phrase you will come across.

Xeriscaping is the practice of designing gardens and landscapes to reduce or eliminate the need for irrigation, so when established, they should require no more water than what the climate can offer. Xeric refers to an environment or habitat containing little moisture. This style of garden originated in the hot, dry regions of the United States.

Water conservation is the starting point. Maximise any natural rainfall there is by collecting and directing with water butts, tanks and by capturing any run-off from paved areas into natural features such as berms and swales. Reduce the need for irrigation by selecting plants for the climatic conditions and aspect you have without the need for further watering once established. This needs careful consideration as, with our wetter and

Don't forget to clean your bird feeders, tables and bird baths regularly to avoid further spread of avian flu. Dispose of any old food and wash with hot soapy water before disinfecting. Then rinse and refill with fresh food. This should be done, ideally, every week or at least every few weeks.



Photo: Graham Barden



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# St. Mary's Hill School and Pares Vicarage

## A tale of two elegant buildings which lasted 70 years then disappeared

Whilst delving into Horsell's history, I came across a lady called Ethel Saunders. Now, someone with the same surname as mine is interesting anyway, but this very wealthy local lady called for more research.

Ethel was the widow of Major General Percy Smith, an Indian Army engineer. In the 1890s Ethel and Percy were living in Portsmouth Dockyard where he was superintendent engineer, paying frequent visits to Horsell. Initially, I could not understand the attraction of Horsell, lovely place though it is. Then I discovered Percy's daughter by his previous wife was married to the brother of Norman Pares. Norman and his uncle John Back were vicars of Horsell from the late 1800s to 1935.

Percy died in 1893 and Ethel moved to Horsell, building herself a grand house which she named Foelalt next to Church Hill House (the latter now being St Andrew's School). At the turn of the century Ethel married Arnold Saunders. It took place in St. Mary's Church on 1st January 1900 at 8am, presumably to be the first wedding of the new millennium. Norman Pares

was vicar of St Mary's during this time and Ethel the organist. Arnold had been headmaster of Maybury School Woking, but he and his new wife set up a preparatory school for boys in a purpose-built schoolhouse which became St Mary's Hill School (where Lych Way is now), next to the church in Horsell. Ethel seemingly financed the building of the school as well as Foelalt. The couple moved permanently into the schoolhouse and thus Foelalt became redundant. By this time Norman Pares had been vicar for a few years and his aunt, John Back's sister-in-law, thought the vicarage next to the church too old and dilapidated for a vicar of Horsell to live in, so she purchased Foelalt from Ethel and immediately donated it to the church for Norman to use as a new vicarage (we will call it 'Pares Vicarage'). To us mere mortals, this all seems like very incestuous goings on amongst the wealthy in Edwardian society – but is nonetheless very philanthropic.

So, we have two grand buildings in Horsell, both built by one lady about 120 years ago which are now no more. What happened to them?

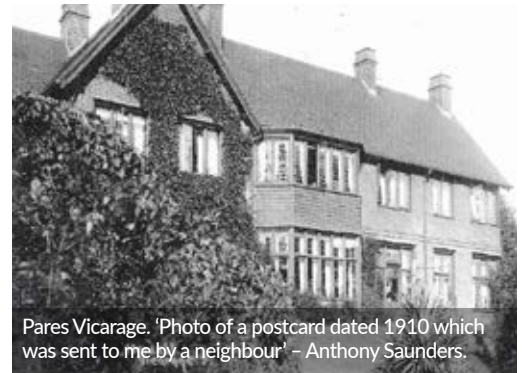
St Mary's Hill School was run by Mr and Mrs Saunders for 12 years when in 1912 it was taken over by Aldeburgh Lodge School based in Suffolk. Ethel and Arnold moved with 12 pupils to Aldeburgh, while St Mary's Schoolhouse and landscaped grounds remained in their ownership.



Alice and Gertrude Du Bochet with their other sister Jess, who was not involved with the school. Courtesy of Mrs B Stoney.



St Mary's Hill School 1910 courtesy of Mrs B Stoney.



Pares Vicarage. 'Photo of a postcard dated 1910 which was sent to me by a neighbour' – Anthony Saunders.





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This is where we meet the Du Bochet sisters: Gertrude and Alice. They had run a school in Switzerland until 1903, after which they established a girls' boarding school at Gwy House in Chepstow. By 1912 they wished to move premises, possibly to be nearer London, and so acquired a lease on St. Mary's Hill. This became established as a private boarding/day school for girls who were prepared for the Oxford and Cambridge Certificates, Matriculation and the Royal College of Music. The Du Bochet sisters lived in the Lodge House by the entrance. St. Mary's Hill thrived under the sisters' management. By 1934, it had beautifully laid out grounds, a gymnasium and two 'Wisden Denys' hard tennis courts. In 1949 the Du Bochet sisters retired and moved to 'The Cottage' on Church Hill. A Miss Auer became headmistress and owner. In 1967 it is recorded that a place at the school cost "300 Guineas per year" (about £6,100 in today's money) and took girls up to the age of 18 as boarders along with some day pupils and a few younger boys, totalling 41 pupils and 11 teachers that year. But in November, the shock announcement came that the school was to close immediately. Miss Auer was away in India and the true reasons for the closure are somewhat shrouded in mystery. Miss Auer later went on to found a girls' school in India. The Lodge still stands today as 'St. Mary's Cottage', but the schoolhouse and extensive grounds have gone to be replaced by Lych Way.

Let us rewind a little: In 1901 the now Canon Pares had moved into Foelalt, which became the vicarage. Standing next to Church Hill House on the highest land in Horsell, the views towards the Surrey Downs must have been spectacular. Anyone who has been up the church tower will have a feeling of what it was like. Canon Pares was vicar until 1935 and then built a retirement home in Hill Close. However, both the church and the new vicar, the Rev. Woodward felt that Foelalt, the 'Pares vicarage', was too large and expensive to run. A decision was taken to sell 'Pares Vicarage' and use some of the proceeds to restore and reinstate the old vicarage. The building was offered for sale through London estate agents Cluttons in 1936 but didn't sell. However, money to improve the state of the old vicarage was obtained from 'Queen Anne's Bounty', which sounds like pirate treasure but was in fact a fund created in 1704 to provide financial assistance to poorer church parishes and was still available in 1935.

'Pares Vicarage' remained empty, but when war loomed in 1939 it was commandeered as a hostel for the Women's Land Army. A few years ago, I met by total chance a lady visiting Horsell who had been a 'Land Girl' living



Horsell in 1934 with 'Pares vicarage' top centre and St Mary's Hill School in the bottom right corner. Taken from 1934 OS map of Horsell.'

at the vicarage. She kindly sent some recollections which were published in *The Resident*. After the war, the building was used for a time by St Mary's Hill School as boarding accommodation, but in 1959 the house and land were purchased by Woking Council and 'Pares Vicarage' was demolished. Pares Close is now built on the site. The house stood where the green area is now at the high point of the close.

So, that is the tale of two large and elegant houses in Horsell which did not last long and were demolished 50-60 years ago. Some readers may well remember them or may even have attended St Mary's Hill School.

Anthony Saunders

Sources for this article include *The National Archives, Kew.*

*Mrs B. Stoney—past pupil and teacher at St Mary's Hill School who provided information and the photos of the school*

*Mr Robert Boynton's notes on Horsell History*

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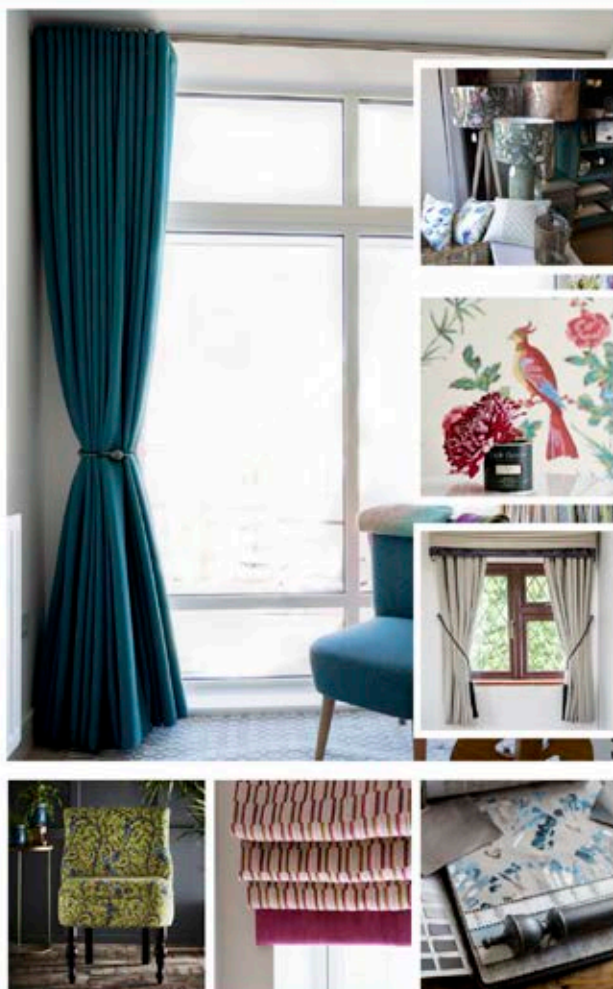
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