

BROOKWOOD NEWS

May 2015

THE GREAT HOLE OF BROOKWOOD

Hopefully by the time you are reading this the hole will have disappeared again and traffic will be flowing normally through Brookwood. But as we go to print the road is still closed after 10 days' work excavating the sink hole. Thames Water is responsible for the maintenance of sewers and their sub-contractors have been working long hours to get to the root of the problem. It seems that a stretch of Victorian cast-iron sewer, about 1.5m long and 3.5m below the road, had completely disintegrated. Workers are replacing the length of pipe, and will then refill the hole and re-surface the road. It is expected that the road will be re-opened by 27 April.

It's been a long fortnight for drivers in Brookwood with queues of traffic snaking in and out of the village for lengthy periods. Commuters have been especially badly affected but even journeys to the village hall or Pirbright surgery have become adventures for many.

In a statement to the newsletter, a spokeswoman for Thames Water said, 'We're very sorry for the disruption, but it's essential for the safety of drivers that the road remains closed until all repairs are finished.' Thames Water also says that this is not the same bit of sewer that they repaired last year which in itself is rather worrying. Cllr Kevin Davis, who notified Surrey County Council of the sinking road over Easter, is less than happy; he says, 'I shall lobby SCC and Thames Water to find out if there are plans to bring improvements across the village. Surface water is a constant problem, and that is due to a lack of capacity.'

In an area which is under constant development, perhaps this is an early warning that we need to care for our infrastructure better.

It's not all bad, of course. Residents living either side of the hole have enjoyed the peace it has brought. 'It is nice to be able to garden in the evening and hear nothing but the birds and the sound of shoe-leather as commuters walk down the road,' said one. And a certain butcher remarked that although business had been quiet during the week the weekend had been busier than usual; 'so it hasn't been too bad, on the hole'.



THE NEWSLETTER IS ONE YEAR OLD!

Twelve months ago a group of us were still talking about reviving the village newsletter. How time flies! This month sees the completion of the first year of the new Brookwood Village Newsletter and we think it is worth celebrating! So we are holding a party at the Memorial Hall on Friday 22 May, 6 to 8pm, and everyone in the village is invited to come along! We want to thank those who have sponsored the newsletter, those who have worked on it and those who have delivered it. It really is a team effort and we have been delighted by the enthusiasm of so many people who have made a contribution. We also want to hear more ideas for the newsletter – so do come and talk to us if you think we can do something better or differently. We'd be delighted to see you.

CANDIDATES FOR THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION

Rob Burberry .....UK Independence Party (UKIP)
Jonathan Lord.....Conservative Party
Jill Rawling .....Labour Party
Martin Robson.....Green Party
Ruth Temple..... Magna Carta Conservation Party Great Britain
Chris Took..... Liberal Democrats
Declan Wade.....Cannabis is safer than alcohol
Angela Woolford.....The Evolution Party

Voting takes place on Thursday 7 May from 7am to 10pm at the Small Memorial Hall.

This month's newsletter has been sponsored by an anonymous donor. Thank you very much!

EDITORIAL

A couple of weeks ago I was travelling back from London and picked up a copy of the Evening Standard. In an article, entitled 'Waterloo takes you to 10 top towns', it announced that 10 stations in Surrey and Hampshire beyond the M25 offer quick journeys home, value for money and quality lifestyle away from the smoke. It listed Winchester, Winchfield, Hook and Old Basing as good places to live. But top of the list is Brookwood.

According to two estate agents price growth is up 11.7% in the past year and our village 'has outperformed the rest of the line since 2007 with a healthy 34.4% growth.'

One of the biggest advantages of Brookwood, and maybe why many of us choose to live here, is the train service into London. The average commute is 35 minutes, though if you happen to be able to catch the 17:41 out of Waterloo you can be stepping on to the platform at Brookwood only half an hour later.

It is great for those of us who live in the village but the downside is the traffic the station generates and parking issues. There are constant problems about traffic outside the Brookwood Club and one resident has written to the newsletter about her concerns. Cllr Kevin Davis is working on reversing the entrance and exit points to the station which may help, but the reality is that there are too many vehicles trying to use Connaught Road.

Tony Burley, the ever-patient booking clerk at the station, is no longer able to accept requests for season tickets for the car park. He reckons he is asked two or three times a week for new season tickets and, although he manages some 400 spaces, plus loads of cycle racks, there is no further capacity. And Tony is not a magician.

The new path from Brookwood Farm is very welcome but development there and the planned development at Deepcut are not going to make things any easier on the roads.

One way to help relieve congestion may be for commuters to park on driveways as has been the case in places like Wimbledon for some years. There are websites on which you can register your car parking space but they take a handsome cut for themselves (beware the small print), so I wonder if there is some way in which we can connect commuters who want to park and people who have space on their drives? Would it be possible to have a noticeboard at the station? Or communicate through this newsletter or ads in the local shops? For commuters the advantage is that they know they have a guaranteed space and don't have to queue to get into the car park, and residents who have an empty drive during the day could reasonably expect in the region of £90 per month. Let us know if you have any thoughts on this.

Judith Male – Editor

NEAR MISSES OUTSIDE BROOKWOOD CLUB

Hi Newsletter Team

I would like to share my experience regarding the above. I live almost directly opposite the club and have seen so many near misses over the years it is frightening. My grandson recently had one and only today (2 April) it was my turn to suffer a near miss by a Parcelforce van. On both occasions it was in the afternoon and there was no traffic coming from the station.

The problem is not so much the station traffic exit or entrance, but that people will not give way no matter what. The only and I mean only way to stop this, is to have some sort of bollards/metal posts along the side of the road in front of the club.

And yes, if you get some idiot parking right on the end by the station exit, then of course that's an additional problem. So why don't WBC put double yellow lines on that end of the bays? But believe me when I say people will still mount the kerb. Is someone going to be seriously injured or killed before the authorities take notice?

Regards Rose Donovan

THE CATHEDRALS EXPRESS STEAMS INTO BROOKWOOD FOR DAY OUT TO BOURNEMOUTH, CORFE CASTLE AND SWANAGE



Steam train buffs may like to know that steam locomotive Mayflower will be calling at Brookwood on Tuesday 19 May at 10.10am to pick up passengers for a day trip to The Swanage Railway. The train will return that evening at 21.30pm. There are a range of prices starting from £89. Alternatively, you can just go up to the platform and see the train go through – and that costs nothing! Full details from The Cathedrals Express booking office on 01483 209888 or visit www.CathedralsExpress.co.uk.

DON'T BE THE VICTIM OF A FRAUDSTER

I'm afraid I have to report a high value fraud in Guildford at the end of March. An elderly gentleman received a phone call from someone claiming to be a Metropolitan police officer. They said they were carrying out an investigation into his bank distributing counterfeit money. They asked him to assist them with their investigation by withdrawing money from his account and purchasing several expensive items, which were later handed over to a person pretending to be an undercover officer. These actions resulted in the gentleman losing nearly £28,000.

Fraudsters can be extremely persuasive – do not be fooled. Your bank or the police will never call you and ask you to withdraw money. If someone phones and asks you to do this, hang up immediately.

If you believe you have had one of these calls or know someone else who has had this experience, please report it to us by calling 101.

Kind Regards
Mark Saunders
(Surrey Police Crime Reduction Advisor)

ROAD SAFETY ON GOLE ROAD

Following a serious road accident at Cowshott Bridge, Gole Road in January when a 5 year old boy was badly injured, we (parents, military, school, church, parish council, police, etc.), are trying to get Gole Road made safer to cross. We have had a meeting with Surrey County Council's Highways Department and they are proposing to improve signs and road markings within the next few months.

However, we have been told any significant improvement to make it safe to cross Gole Road, at Cowshott Bridge (opposite Pirbright golf course) or at the junction with Dawney Hill at the railway arch at the top of Connaught Road, will not take place until 2016/2017.

There were 4 road traffic accidents in 23 days in March, the last one resulting in the driver being seriously injured. There are about 100 school children and their families that need to cross Gole Road to get to school, plus other pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers and commuters – they all need a safe place to cross.

Our next step to improve this dangerous situation is to petition the Guildford Local Committee asking them to create a safe crossing and reduce the speed limit to 30mph. So I am asking you please to support this petition either online at http://petitions.surreycc.gov.uk/GoleRoadSafety/ or on paper at the Pirbright Parish Shop, Brookwood PO, St Michael and All Angel's Church or at the Army Welfare Office. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Jane Lynch

NEWS FROM BROOKWOOD CLUB

BROOKWOOD CLUB

Our annual Charity Birthday BBQ will be on Saturday 2 May, starting at 4pm. All proceeds go to our nominated charities of BAN and Woking Hospice, so do drop by the Club, enjoy a burger, and support our local charities too!

This will be followed by our regular 'first Saturday' cash bingo evening on Saturday 2 May, 8pm for 'eyes down' at 8.30pm. £1 per book. Everybody welcome to both events, including non-members.

Liam Brennan is writing a piece on the Brookwood Club for its website, and is looking for any information about its history including old photographs. If you can help, he would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact him on liam@djst.com or 07739 403237.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL?

The answer is a surprising amount!

Sadly the swans have gone but the Canada geese are still there.

Toads and frogs and newts were making their way down to the water at the end of March, and lots of toad and frogspawn was produced in early April.

Narrow boats are using the canal again. It is a great pleasure to see them.

Most of the female mallards have disappeared for the last few weeks and if you do see one there are usually at least three males in noisy attendance. Ducklings should be born any time now. Please let us know when you see the first ones – and if you can send us a picture, even better.



The new path from Brookwood Farm across the meadows, behind the allotments and down to the canal, has been started. We have not been able to find out when it will be open but it looks like soon. It will provide a pedestrian/cycle link for commuters living at Brookwood Farm and also a pleasant walk from the village to Sainsbury's.

SHEILA'S GARDEN

If you have ever taken a walk up to Sheets Heath you have probably noticed Sheila Barrows' garden and it has almost certainly made you smile. Sheila's father bought the land many years ago and it soon became a wild garden with a clearing in front of the house. The family saw (and still see) wild deer there and the first animal that they bought 15 years ago was a willow sculpture of a deer. He was the beginning of a collection that grew rapidly.



Some of the animals have come from Canada and Switzerland. A number are from a shop called Woolworths which many of us will remember well. 'We always know what to buy for Mum's Christmas and birthday presents,' laughs her daughter, Ruth.

Friends often bring small items to add to the displays and rabbits and squirrels have been known to turn up on the doorstep with a note saying 'please can we come and join you?' Sometimes animals just appear overnight.

Sheila has lived in the village all her life. She was born in her house on Sheets Heath, later moved into the village and then, as her parents needed more help, moved into the house next door on Sheets Heath. After they died, she moved back into her house and her daughter stayed living next door. Sheila regularly sees foxes as well as deer and is frequently visited by a badger family who call in for supper. It is good to know the wildlife have a safe haven so close to the village.

You will notice that the displays in her garden change. Recently she has set up Easter, Boat Race and Grand National displays. In May there will be a maypole with animals dancing around it.



Whilst we are talking a car pulls up and a mum stops to show her children the current display. The postman stops to have a look too. Sheila waves to them.

Thank you, Sheila, for giving us so much pleasure over the years.

LOOKING FOR BEDDING PLANTS?

In the warmest spring for a long time, you may be thinking of getting your bedding plants now. Please consider using Briarwood Nurseries in Saunders Lane. They are a local family who grow a lot of bedding plants of their own and sell them during May and early June. Mr Smith (senior) is still growing vegetable plants and is always happy to give advice. Briarwood opens on Friday 1 May at 10am.

AND Dance

Latin and Ballroom for Beginners starts Sunday 10 May, 7 to 8pm at the Memorial Hall.
Book now or for more information contact us on enquiries@anddance.co.uk or call 07889 749897.

VILLAGE DIARY DATES

Also see the village website at www.brookwood.org.uk

1 May Briarwood Nursery, Saunders Lane, opens for May and first part of June.
2 May Annual Charity BBQ, 4pm at Brookwood Club followed by Bingo Evening at 8 for 8.30pm.
3 May Railway Walk led by Ian Devine. Meet at 2pm at the Cemetery Office in Cemetery Pales. Follow the route of the old Necropolis Railway and visit the graves of notable persons associated with the railway.
7 May General Election. Voting at Memorial Hall, 7am to 10pm.
10 May AND Dance Latin and Ballroom Beginners starts at Memorial Hall, 7pm.
19 May 'Mayflower' steam train stops at Brookwood station at 10.10am.
22 May Village Newsletter Birthday Party, 6 to 8pm at the Memorial Hall.

Would you like to sponsor a newsletter?

We would be very pleased to hear from anyone interested in sponsoring the newsletter. Please contact us by email: community@brookwood.org.uk.

Deadline for the June issue is 20 May 2015

Preferably by email to: community@brookwood.org.uk or telephone 01483 480273 or a note through the door of 78 Connaught Road.

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