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WEST

**RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION**



Fancy some interesting wildlife in your garden?

**Christmas
2025**

Read on page 17 about Bill's trial pond, and what it attracted in the first week.



**Yuletide Magic
Saturday
6th December**

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From the Chair

Season's greetings!

We hope that you will support the local Yuletide Magic Christmas Festivities on Saturday 6 December 11am – 7pm, the market in the centre of Coulsdon, Santa's grotto at Fine Toad, just follow the signs. Food stalls and funfair, what could be better? Please look at our Whats On page for other events coming up over the next 3 months. If you have something you would like highlighted in a subsequent newsletter, do get in touch.

The latest news on the banking hub, and the new medical centre, are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. You will have seen fencing going up around the medical centre site: it is scheduled to open mid 2026.

Replacement waste and recycling bins will now be charged for; information that has only been forwarded to me recently: I personally was unaware of the new charges. Local residents associations are together registering dismay, fearing that as bins disintegrate and are not replaced, all rubbish will end up in one bin and not separated for recycling.

Charges for new bins or boxes will be:

- Paper 55 litre (Paper and card box) - £8
- Recycling 55 litre (glass and plastics box) - £8
- Refuse 180 litre (general rubbish) - £39
- Paper 240 litre (paper & card bin) - £33
- Recycling 240 litre (glass and plastics bin) - £33

If you believe that your container has been damaged or lost by the collection crew, you can request a free replacement. **You will require evidence such as video footage or photos to support your claim.** All claims must be submitted through the **“contact the council” form.**

Details about this is on this link to the Council's website:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bins/new-bin-fees>

Do give us feedback on any issue: info@thecwra.co.uk

Please also let us know if you would like to join the committee: it is not too arduous, about 10 meetings a year with the opportunity of supporting the local community.

Jennifer

Who's Who?

Your CWRA Committee

Jennifer Sturdy	Chair	Newsletter Editor
Richard Walker	Vice Chair	Planning, website
Bill Kilvington	Treasurer	Ecology
Julian Roche	Secretary	
Peter Appleford	Committee member	
Durgesh Vyas	Committee member	Transport
Keith Watkins	Committee member	

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Yvonne Walker	Membership
Paul Ford	Social Media

General email:

info@thecwra.co.uk

Website:

www.thecwra.co.uk

Our Elected Representatives

Local Councillors

Mario Creatura	mario.creatura@croydon.gov.uk
Ian Parker	ian.parker@croydon.gov.uk
Luke Shortland	luke.shortland@croydon.gov.uk

Executive Mayor of Croydon

Jason Perry	mayor@croydon.gov.uk
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MP for Croydon South

Chris Philp	chris.philp.mp@parliament.uk
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London Assembly Member for Sutton and Croydon

Neil Garratt	neil.garratt@london.gov.uk
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Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this newsletter are personal views of the contributors, and do not indicate endorsement, or otherwise, by any of the current CWRA committee.



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Account name: Coulsdon West Residents Association

Account type: Business

Sort code: 20-24-61 Account number: 10293482

Reference: house number, space, postcode, e.g. 47 CR5 3DH

Please then email your name and address to:
info@thecwra.co.uk

Not being prepared could be a crime!

It never ceases to amaze me how the natural world prepares itself to face adversity, whether it be predators, securing their home or storing food for the winter. Some are fortunate enough to be able to hibernate until Spring. In some situations, I think we humans often wish we could do that.

One thing the natural world doesn't normally have to face is crime. For humans, it's all around us. We don't have to seek it out, it comes to our door or through our phone and other electronic devices. We don't want it, but it is ever present, just like predators in the natural world, and it has no conscience or sympathy. If you have ever watched a bird eating, every other mouthful its head is up looking around ever vigilant. In our current world that is exactly how we must be. We cannot afford to drop our guard at any time.

One of the favoured sayings in crime prevention is "if it's out of the blue it's not for you" and that really does sum up the situation. Crime will come to you and there will be no warning, so you must be prepared. There is no pulling up of the proverbial drawbridge; criminals no longer need to come in through the 'front door' so to speak. They don't even have to be in the same country. They are very smart; their methods evolve, get refined and are harder to detect. We must be smarter.

The festive season is almost upon us and opportunities for criminality abound. Be particularly vigilant in crowded places. Keep your valuables close to you when out and about. Be wary of those around you when using an ATM or your mobile phone. Make sure you use legitimate websites. Be cautious about online bargains and pressure-to-buy things which are "almost sold out." Treat every phone caller you don't instantly recognise with suspicion. Don't yield to persuasion or to threats of dire consequences if you fail to act now. End the call and check it out. Be mindful of keeping your home secure and well lit after dark. A roomful of Christmas presents is very tempting to the opportunist burglar. Neighbours must look out for each other.

Think of that little bird looking up every few seconds and take a tip from him.

Julian (Croydon Neighbourhood Watch)

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Reflections on Commuting

Thinking back over 35 years of commuting by train, mostly from South Croydon, Coulsdon South, the old Coulsdon North and Woodmansterne to London Victoria, makes me aware of the many changes which have taken place over three decades. Some things never change however: train drivers seem to have remained well paid.

In the 1970s and 80s commuters bought an annual or monthly season ticket which was shown to an inspector at the start and destination stations. I can remember that I once forgot to renew my ticket, which by some fluke nobody else noticed, and I enjoyed a couple of weeks of free travel!

The 1980s were characterised by rail strikes ('days of action') about which the (Thatcher) government's policy was to do little or nothing. The travelling public was thus forced to grin and bear it. An abiding memory is me one day leaving the office where I worked at 3 pm, changing twice to get from Victoria to Coulsdon North station, sitting for a solid hour in a motionless, cold train and finally arriving home at 9 pm. This works out at a rough average speed of two miles per hour!

I well remember the chaotic scene one evening at Victoria, when it was announced that a particular train standing there at around 8 pm was going to be the last train of the day. Commuters struggled to board it and it rapidly became packed. There was one elderly gentleman in a first-class compartment yelling excitedly through the window that on no account were they to travel in 'his' compartment. I seem to remember that he was quickly outnumbered by those he clearly regarded as plebs and had to give in!

There have been improvements. When trains were packed in the 1980s and you decided to risk sitting in a first-class compartment, ticket inspectors would often board the train and ask you to pay an excess. Nowadays train staff are much more understanding when trains get crowded. Many passengers had difficulty using the old slam doors, many forgot, or did not bother to close them when leaving the train. The modern sliding doors are so much safer and easier to operate.

One of my abiding memories is of a lady wearing high heels who boarded a moving train at East Croydon and in the process left one shoe on the running board. By some miracle, and much to her relief, it was still there when we reached Victoria!

Now with my freedom pass, I can now enjoy free travel on London overground, tube and buses. So much pleasanter to travel at a time of one's choosing than to be forced to endure rush hour travel!

Rod Sturdy

Your Councillors

Coulsdon Community Centre

After six years of work with local groups and Council officers, we're delighted that the Coulsdon Community Centre has now secured a new 25-year lease from Croydon Council. This agreement guarantees the centre's long-term future at the heart of our community - a well-deserved outcome for the volunteers who have kept it running through thick and thin.

New Coulsdon Health Centre

Residents will have noticed fencing going up and activity on the site of the new Coulsdon Health Centre - construction is finally about to begin. This long-awaited project will bring much-needed GP and health services back to our town. We're particularly grateful to our MP, Chris Philp, for his tireless support in helping make it happen.

Yuletide Festival Help & Advice Stall

We'll once again be running our popular stall at this year's Coulsdon Yuletide Festival - just outside Aldi from 10am to 5pm on Saturday 6 December. Do pop by for a chat, raise any local issues, or simply say hello while enjoying the festivities!

Croydon Council Finances

Croydon's finances are finally stabilising after years of turmoil. Independent auditors have confirmed that the council's accounts are now up to date and financial governance is back on track - real progress that allows us to focus on improving local services and delivering value for residents.

Cane Hill Chapel

A planning application has now been submitted to restore the much-loved Chapel on Cane Hill - transforming it into a café and workspace with a lounge, breakout area, and meeting rooms for community use. The project will create a social hub for residents including rental space for studying, meetings, or socialising. We're grateful to the developer for working closely and constructively with local councillors, residents and community groups.

Cllr Mario Creatura mario.creatura@croydon.gov.uk

Cllr Ian Parker ian.parker@croydon.gov.uk

Cllr Luke Shortland luke.shortland@croydon.gov.uk

A local update from Chris Philp MP

First, while it is great that we recently secured the Coulsdon Banking hub, I am aware of urgent concerns that Lloyd's/Bank of Scotland customers may no longer be able to deposit cheques in the hub from 31st December. So I have written urgently to their Chief Executive, as well as to Cash Access UK and the Post Office who run the hub, to query this decision and strongly urge them to reconsider. I will keep you updated.

On this, as everything, I continue to work closely with your local councillors Ian, Luke and Mario, and Executive Mayor of Croydon Jason Perry.

Another piece of work includes pressing Westfield to get on with the desperately needed redevelopment of Croydon town centre, where I know many Coulsdon residents want the retail, leisure and cultural offering dramatically improved as fast as possible.

So I hope you've seen the beginning of this transformation in the recent opening of the fantastic new shops in 'Allders Parade'. The frontage of the iconic building has been refurbished, creating four new shops and two food outlets – occupied by lifestyle retailer Miniso, women's clothing brand Abaci, digital provider Sky, florist Isle of Flowers, independent café Coco & Nut and ice cream shop Meltin' Moments.

Finally, I wanted to highlight again the opportunity for Coulsdon residents to join me in Parliament for a free, personal tour, giving me a chance to answer any questions you might have and helping keep that vital democratic link between constituents and your local Member of Parliament alive.

Typically lasting about 60-90 minutes on a Thursday evening, including plenty of time for questions, please do get in touch if you, your family or your community group are interested in coming along.

If interested, or if there is ever anything I can do to be of assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch via:

chris.philp.mp@parliament.uk

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Planning and Transport

Plans to knock down a house and replace with multiple flats/houses...

132 St Andrews Road: not decided in time; gone to appeal

54 Woodcote Road: Refused.

25 Woodfield Hill: Awaiting decision.

Other planning items:

Cane Hill Chapel: Plans submitted to create retail space (cafe etc) in half of the ground floor, flats for the rest. Pity!

Medical Centre: work has started. At last!

Transport: Little change for our end of Croydon.

Bridge works at Coulsdon South should be finished when this newsletter comes out.

Gas main replacement continues to close roads off for weeks at a time, which causes bus routes to be diverted. Often, these are not very sensible diversions. **Come on TfL, do better!**

Electric buses for routes 60, 166, 412, 466

What's On

Coulsdon Community Partnership: Coulsdon Yuletide Magic: Saturday 6 December 11am – 7pm, Brighton Road Coulsdon. Find out more about the activities: <https://coulsdonpartnership.org/pages/funded-community-programs>

Chipstead Players: 7 -17 Jan: Sleeping Beauty; 23 -29 Feb: Dixon and Daughters More information: www.chipsteadplayers.org

Bourne Society: local history society with a range of talks and other events: full details on bournesoc.org.uk/whats-on/

Coulsdon Club: Third Thursday in December, January and February: 7.45pm stand up comedy. Every Tuesday: Tuesday Night Music Club. Other events: www.coulsdonclub.co.uk

St Andrews Church: details available from the parish office: 020 8676 2966 standrewsoffice@yahoo.com or visit standrews.coulsdon.net

Sunday 7th December at 3 pm: Nativity Scene Festival: a celebration of the Christmas story through a collection of nativity sets with a special guest appearance from the Holy Family! All are welcome to sing some favourite carols and share a glass of mulled wine/ hot Ribena and mince pie after the service.

Sunday 21st December at 6 pm Festival of Nine Lessons and carols followed by refreshments.

Christmas Eve - 4 and 5 pm Family Crib services, 10.30 pm Choir Carols, 11 pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 9.45 Parish Eucharist

The Hive is Coulsdon Library's community garden which is situated behind the library. It's open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10am-5pm, subject to volunteer availability and the weather. It's closed on Wednesdays and Sundays. Volunteers are on site on Saturdays from 10am-12pm. There is an accessible entrance off Railway Terrace.

Please respect our neighbours and take any litter away with you.

Purley Lit: 8pm Thursday, December 4th: Medieval and Renaissance Musical Instruments, Christ Church, Purley. Then fortnightly from 15th January 2026. See the website for details: purleylit.org.uk

RSPB Croydon: Talks usually second Monday of the month at 7:30 Croham Road Baptist Church, 52 Croham Road, South Croydon, CR2 7BA. 8 Dec – “Swift” and 12 Jan 2026 - “Speyside & Mull Wildlife”. More details: group.rspb.org.uk/croydon

Croydon Camera Club: 11 March 26: 8pm Shirley Methodist Hall: Margaret Raggett MBE “10 years of remembering wildlife.”

What's On at the Library

Free events for adults:

Saturday 13th December 10am-11am.

Join **Churches Together in Coulsdon** for Christmas carols and mince pies. This is a free drop-in event.

Talks: Pre-booking is essential via libraries.croydon.gov.uk/events and then search Events by Location (Coulsdon Library) or Events by Category (Author and library talks).

Tuesday 13th January from 10:30am-11:30am, Alan Robson is a Thames mudlarker who'll give a talk about the Thames and some of his finds. He's had 82 finds recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database, a scheme managed by the British Museum.

Tuesday 24th February from 10:30am-11:30am, Roger Packham from The Bourne Society will give a talk entitled The Bourne Society and Bourne Villages.

Mondays 10:30am-12pm:

Adult colouring and knit, stitch and crochet club. There are colouring books and colour pens at the library which can be used. Please bring in your own knitting needles, wool, crochet or stitching project.

Mondays 1:30pm-3pm: Reading Retreat:

This group welcomes people to read poetry and stories aloud. An inclusive and non-judgmental space gives everyone the opportunity to share their thoughts on what is read. Listening to different perspectives and life experiences creates powerful moments of connection and results in a deeper enjoyment of reading for pleasure.

Second Thursday of the month 2-3pm:

Monthly adult reading group..

Coulsdon Library would welcome donations of 500 piece puzzles for our popular adult jigsaw puzzle table.

Free event for children:

Every Friday from 4pm-4:30pm: Storytime.

Come and join in the fun at this free weekly session where you can listen to stories being read aloud. There are colouring sheets to complete each week after the stories have been read.

Merry Christmas!



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Create a simple wildlife pond (front cover photo)

One of the delights of living in the Coulsdon West area is the rich variety of wildlife living in and visiting our gardens. People of course have differing opinions about the ubiquitous urban fox, and they hardly seem to need any encouragement to visit. This year for the first time, we've had a badger visiting. These are usually seen further along Bramley Avenue, where gardens back onto the golf course.

There is also a huge range of birds, the noisy and invasive Parakeets that are here to stay, but also Jays and the occasional Woodpecker. Our Cotoneaster trees are especially heavy with berries this year so we can expect a good number of Redwings later on.

One thing my garden has lacked is any sort of wildlife pond. There is a pond in a neighbouring garden, and we have come across the occasional newt or frog foraging for invertebrates in our garden, so we know they are around. So, this year I decided to do something about it and create a wildlife pond.

Key considerations for us were an appropriate space and, crucially, young grandchildren visiting. You can never underestimate the precautions you must take with young children around garden ponds. With this in mind, I'm trying something I've seen online – using an old Belfast sink.

I was fortunate as a relative had an old one, but you can pick them up in salvage yards. I've located it in an area that gets mixed sun and shade but is close to shrubbery. I've also created a log pile, which should be perfect for amphibians to hide in and also access the 'pond'. Some rocks for them to climb out and a few native pond plants from a garden centre complete the build. I've chosen to add a small solar powered fountain to keep the water circulating. This was only about £12 from Amazon but is perfect in that it only works intermittently when there is enough light.

I set this up in September, although I was not really expecting any activity until the spring, when amphibians are seeking out ponds for breeding. Surprisingly, water insects colonised it quite quickly and now there is a colony of water snails. Presumably these were from eggs on the pond plants I added.

To my delight, a frog moved in for a week at the end of September, which I take as a good sign for the spring. I'll let you know.

Hopefully this will encourage others to try something in your own gardens and share in the delight of helping some of our rarer wildlife to thrive.

Bill Kilvington

Medical History - Leeches and Larvae 1

Leeches

Those who watch nature documentaries, with explorers tramping through jungles and wetlands will probably be familiar with those blood sucking worms, leeches. They are also a staple of the horror genre.

There are 37 species of leech in the UK, 17 living in fresh water. The largest of these has the scientific name *Hirudo medicinalis*, common name The Medicinal Leech. You can see where I'm going with this!

The use of leeches has a long and fascinating history - they have been employed in medical practices since ancient times; earliest records of this are circa 1500 BCE in Ancient Egypt, where wall paintings depict their use for bloodletting.

Leech therapy reached its zenith in mediaeval Europe, especially between the 17th and 19th centuries. Physicians, influenced by the teachings of Hippocrates and Galen, widely adopted 'leeching' as a standard treatment for a range of ailments from headaches and fevers to more serious conditions such as hypertension and infections. Apothecaries and barbers alike stocked leeches, and the creatures became an essential commodity, even leading to over-harvesting and scarcity.

Larvae

Larvae are the immature but mobile form of insects, perhaps most encountered in the form of maggots, the larva of flies. We often encounter maggots around food waste or perhaps when we come across an animal that has died. They play an important role by feeding on and breaking down decaying organic matter.

Because of this attribute, maggots have been used since ancient times to clean wounds, notably by the Mayan and Australian Aboriginal cultures. This is quite often depicted in films, notably in *Gladiator*, where Russell Crowe's character, Maximus, has maggots applied to a wound. These were applied deliberately by his fellow gladiator Juba, although it's most likely that the practice emerged because ancient peoples observed that wounds infested with maggots naturally healed faster than otherwise.

Medical History - Leeches and Larvae 2

The 21st century

So, where might we find these practices persisting into the modern age? You'll be astonished to learn in the National Health Service! Both leeches and maggots are available to hospital doctors through a hospital's pharmacy department.

Medicinal leeches experienced a revival from the late 20th century due to their effectiveness in microsurgery and reconstructive procedures. Leeches secrete anticoagulants such as hirudin, which help prevent blood clots and promote healing, making them invaluable in modern plastic and reconstructive surgery.

While the use of the leech has evolved for very specific, specialist applications, the humble maggot is employed much as it always was – to munch their way through dead and decayed tissue, leaving behind only healthy tissue. There are especially valuable for treating persistent leg ulcers.

Leeches are now bred on specialist 'leech farms' before being starved to ensure their gut is empty, before being disinfected. The maggot of the greenbottle fly is used in medicine today as these only eat dead tissue. Greenbottle maggots are specially bred under sterile laboratory conditions and applied under a special dressing.

So, if you or a relative are offered treatment with leeches or larvae, while probably unpleasant, this is not quack medicine but grounded in science. Our forbears may not have had the understanding we enjoy today, but there were certainly on to something.

Bill Kilvington



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