



NEWSLETTER

For all residents of Sopwell

Sopwell Residents
Association

Issue 22

Christmas 2012

From your editor

Can it really be the season of goodwill so soon? Where did the summer go? Did we even have a summer? Autumn is upon us and winter is just around the corner but hopefully there are lots of interesting and fun things happening in Sopwell in the next few weeks.

St Julian's Community Cafe – see details on page 2

St Stephen's Christmas Fair 24th November – see details on page 2

Waterstones Book Signing 24th November – see details on page 2

St Julian's Christmas Fair and Crib display 8th & 9th Dec – see details on page 2

Barry Bateman

Inside this issue:

From your editor

Bat Walk

Historical Walk

Bulb Planting

Forthcoming Events

Sopwell History

Project

SAGNS

Did You Know

Useful Contacts

Next Issue

If you live in Sopwell, you are automatically a member of SRA. There is no charge to join and events are free.

Contact Details

23 Tavistock Av

St. Albans AL1 2NQ

info@sopwell.org.uk

www.sopwell.org.uk



Bat Walk 7th September

I was really looking forward to an evening learning about our local bats and I was not disappointed and I could waffle on and on but Jennifer Taylor has written a splendid account of the event, which I am sure you will enjoy reading.

"On a beautifully clear Friday evening in early September, some 30 people (mostly SRA members), including about 10 youngsters, met up at the Sopwell Nunnery Green Space see and hear some bat activity and learn something about them. The event was led by Isabel Crozier of Countryside Management and she introduced Roger, who is an extremely knowledgeable bat enthusiast. We assembled by the ruins and Roger gave a fascinating talk about their habitat and behaviour and dis-



pellled all the bat myths; he even had two injured Pipistrelle bats with him which he showed to the enthralled audience. Before it grew really dark we had been able to see the bats swooping through the air on the hunt for their food - moths and midges mostly - which were extremely plentiful that evening as all the participants were swatting insects away from unprotected faces. We were given bat sensors to share and proceeded to walk from the nunnery green space, following the river, to the wildlife garden at the

watercress beds. Although we could no longer see the bats, we could hear their high pitched squeaks via the sensors and Roger was able to tell us whether we were picking up Soprano Pipistrelle or Noctule bats, each recognisable by their different sounds."



Historical Walk 16th September

I have lived in St. Albans for over 24 years and yet I was astonished by how much I didn't know about the area I live in. Who would have thought that there are still pre fabs existing apart from in outdoor museums. I lived in one for the first thirteen years of my life and the memories came flooding back as we paused outside and listened to Chris Pudsey explaining fascinating details about the buildings and surrounding land. The tour was based around Sandy Norman's book Sopwell: A history and collection of memories and for those of us who have read the book, it was an added bonus to see some of the stories come to life. We were a very happy group of people on that Sunday afternoon and Chris guided and informed us, admirably, throughout. If you get the chance, do go along to the next walk and find out more about our intriguing ward.



Bulb Planting in Abbots Avenue



A small but dedicated band of Sopwell residents braved the inclement weather on 21st October and planted over 300 bulbs in the island on Abbots Avenue... They were planted in clumps and should make a wonderful display in the Spring. Little Ellie Church didn't mind getting her hands dirty while helping the adults plant all those bulbs!

Forthcoming Events:

St Julian's Church Community Café Official Opening

Official opening on **Thursday 22 November**. For further information ring 862589 or email office@ststephensandstjulian.org

Thursdays, between 10.00 and 3.00pm. Tea, coffee, soup, sandwiches and cakes and free WIFI internet access available.

St Stephen's Christmas Fair, Saturday 24th November

11am to 2pm. Christmas goods, activities, raffle, light refreshments etc. Signed copies of Sandy Norman's book will be on sale, for those last minute Christmas gifts.

Waterstones Book Signing 24th November

Sandy Norman will be signing copies of her book Sopwell: a history and collection of memories in Waterstones from 11.00am to 3.00pm. Another chance to buy that last minute gift.

St Julian's Christmas Fair and Crib Festival 8th & 9th December

The times are as follows: Saturday 8th December, 11am to 3pm and Sunday 9th December, 2pm to 4pm. Crib display, Christmas fair stalls, refreshments.



Sopwell history project

Thanks to everyone who has supported our history project by buying Sandy's book – we hope you are enjoying it! We've had some really nice comments from both local people and others who have seen and read it.

For those who haven't read it yet, it's a fascinating read with lots of intriguing information. For long-standing residents, a trip down memory lane, and a chance to see how your experience of life in Sopwell compares with other people. If, like me, you're a relative newcomer, it's an opportunity to answer questions such as 'I wonder what was there before . . .' It certainly makes wandering around the area more interesting when you can imagine the people and places that were there long ago – or even fairly recently!

To encourage more of you to have a read, we're running the 'introductory offer' one more time. This is your last chance not only to get £1 off the list price, but also to have your signed copy (or copies!) delivered in person to your door. We think (although obviously we're biased!) it would make a really good Christmas present, especially for friends and family members who've moved away and would appreciate a reminder of 'the old days'.

There will also be an opportunity to buy the book – and meet the author – at Waterstones on the 24th November, from 11.00am to 3.00pm. The book will also, be on sale at St. Stephen's Christmas Fair on the same day.

And there is some breaking news regarding the wider history project: Sandy has just heard that we've been awarded a grant which will enable us to widen the scope of the project, involve more people and commission a proper dedicated website. We can't say any more yet – but watch this space!

Chris Pudsey

If you haven't bought your copy yet, please support us. It is still available directly from us, also at Waterstones bookshop, the Hatfield Road Museum and the Tourist Information Centre. You can also pick one up at Blacks of Sopwell. We are continuing to give a discount to Sopwell residents using the voucher below:

Yes please! I wish to purchase ... copies of *Sopwell: a history and collection of memories* at the reduced price £14.00. I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to **Sopwell Residents Association**.

I understand that the books will be signed by Sandy Norman and delivered to me by courier.

Name:

.....
.....

Address*:

.....
.....
.....

Tel. No. or email (in case of query)

.....

Please send or take this voucher with payment to one of the following addresses:

Sopwell history book, 23 Tavistock Avenue, St Albans AL1 2NQ.

Sopwell history book, 16 Ashdales, St Albans AL1 2RA

Sopwell history book, 35 Ramsbury Road, St Albans AL1

Sopwell history book, 84 Cottonmill Lane, St Albans AL1 2EP

Sopwell history book, 62 de Tany Court St Albans AL1 ITX

***Offer applies to addresses in Sopwell ward only**

LET'S EXTEND THE 2012 SPIRIT !

COME JOIN THE VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme is urgently seeking new volunteers. You choose the days you want to help and how often.

Duty Officers You work from home, typically one day a month, answering our Helpline to match up clients with volunteers. Telephone expenses are paid and training provided. A friendly manner, legible handwriting and a desire to help others are all you need.

Drivers to accompany local residents to medical and other appointments. Mileage allowance paid.

Our volunteers also do shopping, collect prescriptions, help with odd jobs round the home and visit lonely people on a regular basis.

SAGNS has been helping the local community for 32 years and would appreciate your assistance in order to continue making a difference to the lives of our local residents. Please call 830713, or visit our website, www.sagns.org, for more details and an application form.

Did You Know

The building that is now occupied by WH Smith in Market Place was once the city's Town Hall, complete with cells in the basement area.

Fenny's Boardwalk (funded by a grant which was obtained by the SRA) by the Nunnery, was given a favourable mention at this year's architectural awards by the Civic Society. Buongiorno Italia, in Lattimore Road, won the award. The proprietor, Tony Piccuito, lives in Sopwell. Well done Tony!

The SRA was been invited to send two representatives to the St. Albans Volunteer Thank you party at the House of Commons in December. Our local M.P Anne Main and her staff will host the event. One of the highlights of the party will be a surprise draw, the prizes from which will benefit the four winning charities or volunteer organisations. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

The Nunnery open space has won the Green Flag Award for the sixth year running. Sandy Norman was asked by the council to receive the award from the Mayor of Hertsmere and Paul Todd from the Green Flag Initiative.

The SRA has been awarded a grant to continue the work on the Sopwell Project. We are not allowed to say anymore until 22nd November. Watch out for an announcement in the press and our website.

Useful Contacts for Sopwell Residents

Councillor Eileen Harris: 831611: eileenharris555@btinternet.com

Councillor David Poor: 833670: david.poor@btinternet.com

Councillor Janet Smith: 763907: cllr.j.smith@stalbans.gov.uk

County Councillor Martin Frearson: 761878: mfrearson@ntlworld.com

Litter fly-tipping, graffiti: 0845 1258000 or a.cleanerdistrict@stalbans.gov.uk

Faulty road or pavement surface: 01438 737320 or www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults

Next issue

There will be the usual Spring and Autumn editions for 2013. If you have any items for inclusion or you wish to advertise, please go to the website and leave a message. Advertisement charges: £50 for half a page and £25 for a quarter page.
