

THE REVIEW



EAST COULSDON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



www.eastcoulsdon.co.uk

CONTENTS: WINTER 2013 ISSUE 193

Page 3: Committee and Contacts: ECRA area map	Page 16: Thames Water Flood Prevention Speed Limit on Farthing Way
Page 4: Editorial	Page 18: Looking Back
Page 6: What's Happening in and around Coulsdon	Page 19: Yulefest: Churches in Coulsdon Old Lodge Lane Junction & Cyclists
Page 7: Poppy Café, Marlpit Lane: Remembrance Day	Page 20: Public Transport Report
Page 8: Telephone Scams: ECRA Volunteers Welcome	Page 22: What's on?
Page 9: News from Farthing Downs: Fatal Accidents	
Page 10: Health Report	

ECRA is Your Community Organisation run by Volunteers

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Non emergency NHS – 111, Non emergency Police – 101

Emergency
Fire/Police/Amb.
999

THE REVIEW

The Newsletter of
East Coulsdon Residents' Association

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EDITORIAL

by Pauline Payne

Christmas and Volunteering in the New Year: By the time you receive this Review, ECRA, OCRA, CWRA and HADRA (the four Coulsdon Residents' Associations) will have enjoyed their second joint Christmas Dinner. It's really good to see Coulsdon groups coming together for community events and perhaps there aren't enough of them but we need more volunteers coming forward if ECRA and others are to continue with their good work. (If you read this Review you will see how much is being achieved by a small number of people.) Every group needs fresh ideas and a fresh approach if it is to continue to thrive.

In the New Year, ECRA will be reviewing how we communicate with our members. We need an understudy for the Review editor who, within a year, will be able to take over and lead new developments which may include a 'makeover' and embrace the possibilities offered by new technology. Should ECRA have a facebook or twitter account? This, in turn would create new vacancies for forward thinking volunteers. We need input from members so please contact either ECRA Chairman, Charles King (01737 554841) or Secretary Maureen Levy (01737 555231) if you would like to become involved with these new challenges.

ECRA needs your email addresses: If you would like to be included in ECRA's regular 'e-blasts' to keep residents informed on issues or events of local interest please send your name and e-mail to info@eastcoulsdon.co.uk. Please also send your own concerns to the same address so these can be distributed more widely. The e-blasts will include upcoming local planning applications or you can go directly to the council website: <http://planning.croydon.gov.uk/DCWebPages/acolnetcgi.gov>

The Storm? Having been so badly caught out by the October hurricane in 1987, we took no chances when the Met Office predicted the worst this October. We put away garden furniture, battened down every hatch, kept our animals in and even brought in our three chickens, who live at the bottom of our garden. But somehow it seemed to miss Coulsdon, the fiercest blasts either being to the north or the south of us. It may be that we were protected by the Downs but for whatever reason we escaped the worst of it. However, if there's another weather warning, we must always act on advice given and never liken the meteorology office to the 'boy who cried wolf'.

Pop in to the Poppy: What an asset this newly refurbished café in the Memorial Ground will be to our area. We paid a visit for a mid morning coffee on a sunny morning shortly after the official opening (see page 7). We were made welcome by Terri and Dawn the new owners who were happy to chat to us about their venture. The café is both smart and comfortable with a new glass frontage giving a fantastic view across the grounds to the war memorial. As well as traditional fare Terri and Dawn will add new treats for us to try. The café will provide a warm and welcoming retreat on chilly winter days and a cool, relaxing venue in the summer.

COULSDON
Yulefest
the community christmas festival

Don't forget Coulsdon Yulefest 7th-8th December
See page 19

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AND AROUND COULSDON

by Charles King

Lion Green Car Park: The proposal for a 25,000 sq ft supermarket on Lion Green Road car park site is due to go before the planning committee shortly. Waitrose is the confirmed tenant. The application is being submitted by CCURV, a joint venture of Croydon Council and Laing. Although we are pleased that the tenant will be Waitrose, as they have served the town well for 40 years, we feel that to provide only 150 parking spaces for the supermarket and the town centre together will cause a problem for the remaining businesses if there is no all day parking provision. ECRA has joined forces with the other three Coulsdon Residents' Associations and the local business group and put in objections to the proposal on the grounds of loss of parking, traffic concerns and lack of linkage to the rest of the town centre.

Cane Hill: Barratt Homes have lodged their planning application for development of Cane Hill, but it is still in the validation stage. It is expected to be in the public domain in December or early next year. Until then we are not in a position to make any objections. ECRA are concerned about the increased volume of traffic on the Marlpit Lane roundabout which will be the main exits from Cane Hill and heavily used by the new Waitrose distribution centre in Ullswater Crescent and new housing in Caterham on the Hill. Also the traffic for the Waitrose supermarket in Lion Green Road is likely to feed back to the roundabout and beyond. ECRA along with the other Coulsdon Residents' Associations and business groups will continue to lobby Croydon Council, the Mayor and our MP to increase the parking provision in the new Waitrose supermarket and for an additional exit on to Farthing Way A23 (Coulsdon Bypass) from Cane Hill.

Town Centre projects: *Kia* is near completion of its car showroom on the bypass north of Pipers Road. *Dobles Motor Cycles* have started construction of their workshops behind their showroom. *The Oakwood Group* flats on the Pinewood site has now reached 1st floor level. *Aldi's* application for a supermarket on the Red Lion site is due to go to the council in December or early next year.

This autumn HSBC Bank finally closed along with Vision Bathrooms in the Brighton Road. *The Pembroke* in Chipstead Valley Road, previously a Bramwell pub (Bramwell has gone into administration), has been purchased by Stonegate the owners of Yates Wine Bars and the Slug and Lettuce chains. *Coulsdon Vintage* has opened in the Brighton Road selling furniture, glass and china ornaments. The shop is open from Thursday to Saturday and other days by arrangement (tel: 07575 850975).

Around and about Coulsdon: The former Bidwell's estate agents in Tudor Parade, Old Coulsdon has been taken over by *Taylor's Property Care* who offer electrical, plumbing, gas installations and general property maintenance and repairs (tel: 01737 553370, www.taylorsmaintenanceandrefurbishment.co.uk). *Ullswater Crescent:* Having obtained planning permission earlier in the year *Waitrose* have now announced they intend to go ahead with a new online distribution depot and warehouse which will create over 400 jobs.

POPPY CAFÉ OPENS IN MARLPIT LANE MEMORIAL GROUND

by Charles King

We are delighted that on Saturday 9th November 2013 the café in Coulsdon Memorial Ground, Marlpit Lane reopened after being closed for nearly four years. The café has been opened by local residents Dawn Douglas and her mother-in-law Terri Douglas as a family concern. After a number of delays and setbacks the building has been refurbished by Croydon Council and tastefully decorated and by Dawn and Terri.



After careful consideration they decided the café should have a name in keeping with the Memorial Ground and have chosen the name **Poppy Café** and they were pleased to be able to open on the Saturday prior to Remembrance Sunday.

The café will be open from 8.00 am in the mornings Monday to Saturday but later on Sundays. It will close at 3.00 pm during the coming winter. There will be a range of home cooked food aimed at those playing sport, using the park, businesses in Ullswater Crescent Business Park and people just passing by. Free wifi will be available.

Dawn and Terri will be offering cooked breakfasts, lunches with “a daily special”, sandwiches, homemade cakes and a range of teas and coffees. For children there will be a small range of confectionary and ice cream and lollies in the summer.

The Poppy café will be an ideal place to take a break while watching the children or grandchildren work off their energy on the park equipment. Those playing bowls, tennis or putting will once again be able to take refreshments after their game.

It is really great to see the café open again and providing a service to locals and visitors in Coulsdon. Dawn and Terri welcome feedback and suggestions. We wish them well and ask local residents to give Dawn and Terri all the support they can in their new venture – the Poppy Café (www.poppycafe.co.uk).

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN COULSDON

Our Chair, Charles King, represented ECRA at the memorial service and laid a wreath on our behalf at the War Memorial in Old Coulsdon on Sunday 10th November 2013.

On Armistice Day, 11th November, there was an additional service at Coulsdon College to dedicate a memorial to Squadron Leader Caesar Hull who was shot down at 16.45 on 7th September 1940 while flying over Old Coulsdon. He was leading a squadron of Hurricanes from RAF Tangmere to intercept a German bombing raid on London's docks. His plane crashed into the grounds of Purley Boys Grammar School, now Coulsdon College. He was found nearby having died of a bullet wound. His remains were buried with fellow fighter pilots at St. Andrews Churchyard at Tangmere (near Chichester Sussex).

Squadron Leader Hull was born in Shangani, Rhodesia in February 1914 and moved to the UK joining the RAF in 1935. He had a very distinguished career and by 1940 he had been promoted to Squadron Leader at Tangmere and then to Commanding Officer, 43 Squadron in August, one month before his death. The memorial, at the rear of the College features a Hurricane within a dove of peace.



TELEPHONE SCAMS AND NUISANCE CALLS

by Ian Payne

Going ex-directory helps, but if your phone number is out there, there are many unscrupulous companies who will sell your details over and over again. You could register with the Telephone Preference Service (make sure it's the real TPS that doesn't charge for its services) but most companies flout the rules and don't refer to the list and of course callers from India haven't even heard of it. A survey by Which? found that people registered on the TPS list received twice as many marketing calls as those not on the list! Enforcement is the responsibility of the Information Commissioner, but he relies on the likes of you and me reporting abuse by quoting precise details and corroboration from several users. Not surprisingly, there have been very few prosecutions. Calls purporting to be for "market research" are not covered by the TPS, but as we all know, such calls are often made to extract marketing details for later abuse.

Nuisance or scam – by all means invent your own responses – but never give any information even by way of 'yes' or 'no' except perhaps to acknowledge your name. If a foreign sounding voice asks "Is that Mr Payeenè?", then of course, feel free to say "No" and hang up. Don't acknowledge a phone number, don't give an address, don't give a marketing preference, don't give your age and don't give any information about your circumstances or family. If you enjoy the badinage, then fine, but hang up if you don't. ***Never give any banking or credit card details if they have phoned you.***

The distinction between phoning and being phoned is paramount. If you've been phoned by your energy company, phone company or your bank, how do you know that it's really them? They may be genuine and offering you a new service, but when they ask you to give them your details for confirmation, you must say, "I can't do that because you have phoned me, not I you, so I do not know who you are". When they offer to give you a phone number to call back on, refuse it. You can ask for the name and department details and call back on the number printed on your most recent account or on the back of your card.

Here's something many people don't know. For a landline to landline call, only the caller can cut off. Try it with a friend – get him/her to phone you – put the receiver down then pick it up again – your friend will still be there. There are tricksters who use this information by asking you to verify their identity by putting the receiver down and phoning the number from your bill/card. But they're still there and can pretend to be an operator/call centre until the point at which you think you've been put through. Best to make a call to a friend to verify that you have control of your phone.

Remember, unless you make the call, you don't know who's at the other end.

ECRA – VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME

As always ECRA needs volunteers – see page 3 for contacts. We need Road Stewards for Birchfield, Chaldon, Cordrey, Fairdene, Marlpit Lane, Meadway, Reddown, Rutherford – currently your committee is covering these duties. New committee members are always welcome including understudies for all the major positions.

NEWS FROM FARTHING DOWNS

by Pauline Payne



Attacks on sheep: The City's Rangers continue to urge all dog walkers to keep dogs under proper control when walking in fields containing livestock. Unfortunately, only recently, a ewe was attacked by a dog on New Hill but despite injuries and stress she survived and is currently being cared for by the rangers. She is recovering slowly and has had a very lucky escape. However, since then two sheep have been attacked by a dog in the same field and were not as lucky

as neither survived. Also, a number of stock gates are being left open across the site, which has resulted in sheep escaping from Eight Acre Field on New Hill and ending up in Farthing Downs car park, a potentially hazardous situation! So **please be vigilant**, remember the safety of animals and others and close gates after you. Be aware of notices advising of grazing animals and, most importantly, keep dogs under control to avoid the risk of sheep being attacked. The sheep, along with seven cows will be grazing Stoney White Piece field on New Hill for the next few weeks.

The trials of motherhood: If you live close to the Downs you will probably have heard some noisy complaints from the cows as some of the young calves are being weaned in the next few weeks and will be moved off site. However, the calves will be well looked after and the mums will settle down as the benefits of the break from motherhood become apparent.

Friends of Farthing Downs have sponsored a reprint of the up-dated **Happy Valley and Farthing Downs Nature Trail** booklet, which is easily recognisable by its new bright green cover. The wooden direction posts have also been renewed and been given smart new red discs. The trail is an excellent afternoon's walk for both adults and children alike and is seasonal – so walk it at any time of the year and you will see something new. **Both Coulsdon and Bradmore Green Libraries have a supply.**

Ranger Neil Sibley is taking a relaxing walk around Farthing Downs and New Hill on **Friday, 27th December at 11:00am**. Neil is inviting visitors and local residents to join him to both burn-off some Christmas pudding while asking anything they want about the site and its management and the sterling work done by volunteers both local and corporate. Meet in Farthing Downs car park.

FATAL ACCIDENTS

Sadly there have been two tragic deaths of pedestrians during the last few months crossing the Coulsdon Road near the junctions of Byron Avenue and Cearn Way. ECRA is deeply concerned about the safety of pedestrians and has supported Hartley and District RA in asking Croydon Council to look at improving road crossing facilities in the vicinity.

HEALTH REPORT

by Reg Baker, Coulsdon Forum, Health Correspondent

Refurbished Purley War Memorial Hospital – An Unveiling

Although this facility had virtually been fully operative since July/August this year, management, in the interest of public relations, decided to host an ‘open evening’ on Wednesday 25th September. Members of the Trust were invited to register and reserve a place for the evening. Approximately sixty members were in attendance.

The meeting opened with a presentation by Roger Packham, President of the Bourne Society, outlining the history of the site from the opening of the Cottage Hospital by Princess Christian in 1909, (*daughter of Queen Victoria, Helena; married Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein*), to the present day. Although there were hopes that a form of time capsule might be found during work on the site, nothing so far has come to light. Roger Packham’s talk was followed by a second presentation. Project Manager Suzanne Joyce explained the process involved in reviving the 18th century building to create an up-to-date community hospital transforming the site into a centre for integrated care services to serve communities in the south of the borough, “closer to home”. As such it improves access (minimising the need to attend CUH/Mayday Hospital) and integration of primary and secondary health services along with those with social care. The fully refurbished facility has a catchment area including some 100,000 people. Parking considerations have not yet been fully resolved, but interim measures are now in place.

A comprehensive list of health services and treatments available at the new facility was provided in ECRA Review No 189 (qv), but during the presentation two further health treatments/services were mentioned; DEXA, an imaging process for scanning bone density; and an eye clinic. The GP practice is due to move into the building during November of this year. Suzanne Joyce concluded her presentation by advising those present that the formal opening of the new facility would take place on November 7th with Richard Ottaway MP officiating; this to be followed by a royal visit early next year.

The evening ended with conducted tours of the building’s ground floor to view the spacious rooms for clinics, consultancies, treatments and diagnostics, together with commentary and brief descriptions of in-situ medical equipment using state-of-the-art technology. All told the consensus of opinion was that of a most revealing and informative meeting.

Social Care and Support of the Elderly – An Update

The status of this longstanding, crucial and highly sensitive issue has been considered in Review Issues 189 and 192(qv). Since that time, although basic parameters remain unchanged, there has been some worsening of the situation, again without any resolution. Each case is still to be means tested with a lower threshold of assets remaining at £23k as before, and the figure for a life-long cap, at present, remains at £72k (previously £35k). No financial contribution will be available from either a local authority or government until the assets of an elderly person requiring social care have been reduced to the threshold value or the cap has been reached. (*Assets include a home and any other property, shares, savings, bonds, and any other financial packages or investments such as PEPS*). Please note that Health Care will continue to be provided as present, free of charge at the point of delivery.

THAMES WATER FLOOD RETENTION TANK REDDOWN ROAD

by Charles King

Over the last couple of years as part of their Flood Prevention schemes, Thames Water has constructed a number of retention tanks on the sewage system in Coulsdon. These tanks can fill at times of heavy usage or heavy rainfall, which is more frequent these days, and then discharge when the flow of sewage or rain water subsides. All these tanks have been very successful except for the one at the start of Reddown Road between Marlpit Lane and Fairdene Road. This tank has filled on a number of occasions, but failed to empty when the flow subsided and unfortunately this has affected a small number of properties in Reddown Road.

Last year residents met Thames Water along with Croydon Council and Cllr Lenton to see if this problem could be resolved. They introduced regular emptying of the tank by mobile tanker. However, this has caused a number of other problems in that after a period of heavy rain the area around the tank smells of sewage and local residents cannot open their windows. Also the tanker frequently turns up at night and noisily pumps out the sewage again preventing residents from opening their windows in summer due to the noise and smell. Thames also undertook some work to remove a manhole from one of the houses in Reddown Road which often overflowed with sewage affecting their garden and footpath to Coulsdon South station.

We met Thames again in November. They have visually inspected the tank with CCTV on a number of occasions and tell us that the internal flow control mechanism becomes jammed by a mixture of wet wipes, disposable nappies and cooking fat. We have put to them that the problem is that this tank is different from the others tanks because the flow is in and out the same end and it suffers by not having a permanent flow through from end to end as do the others.

Thames have agreed to monitor the situation and if there is no improvement to look at a more permanent solution. While we were on site we also looked at the problems of the sewage smell under the bridges at Marlpit Lane. Thames Water has agreed to investigate the sewer here with CCTV and see if there is a blockage. They also remarked that they had very few public reports of this problem. ECRA would like to suggest that if these problems are not resolved in the coming months that you should contact Thames to report the smells and blockages (tel: 0845 9200 800 www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/9783.htm).

SPEED LIMIT ON FARTHING WAY

Last summer ECRA approached TfL to ask that the speed limit on the A23 Farthing Way (Coulsdon Bypass) be raised to 40 mph throughout rather than 30 mph at the northern end. After initially rejecting the proposal our GLA member Steve O'Connell was able to arrange a meeting between ECRA, himself and TfL Streets.

We are pleased to say that TfL have now agreed to an experimental raising of the speed limit to 40 mph. The road will be monitored for signs of excess speeding and any increase in accidents prior to making it permanent.

LOOKING BACK

by *Pauline Payne*

.....to 2003, ten years ago, when the year ended with the promise that work would begin in 2004 on the Coulsdon Inner Relief Road (to later be named Farthing Way by popular vote). Residents and businesses alike were hoping that the Relief Road would bring with it the answer to everything but it is sometimes better to travel hopefully than to arrive as the saying goes.

Town Centre regeneration was promised to follow the building works and Coulsdon was selected by Mayor Livingstone as one of his 100 places and worthy of additional funding for planned town centre improvements. Residents seized the initiative to ask for a public space to be created at the Brighton Road/Chipstead Valley Road junction on part of the Red Lion site and your editor reported that 'we have indications that the plans for the improvement scheme will include a town square'. However, new owners of the Red Lion site were not so keen and although it may be that some space will eventually be made available it's just not what we had hoped for.

Residents also supported, whole-heartedly, the local campaign organised by the then Coulsdon Millennium Partnership for an extension to Coulsdon Library on the disused land to its rear. It seemed the right moment to press for more central community facilities i.e. meeting rooms. The Library extension has since been downsized and it is now proposed that the land be cleared and re-created as a public garden. The project is regularly discussed at Coulsdon Forum meetings but is on the 'back burner' until outsourcing of the libraries has settled.

Croydon Reports and Neighbourhood Partnerships were in full swing throughout 2003, both bringing regular communiqués from Croydon. '*Wheelie Bins – Friend or Foe*' headlined in the December Review reflected the raging discussion at Partnership meetings – Coulsdon's hilly terrain would make it difficult for elderly and infirm residents to get their bins to the street – assisted collections were offered. Concerns over the street scene in conservation areas (Old Coulsdon) were countered with the reassurance that 'special arrangements will be made'. By the end of 2003, Coulsdon residents were 'demanding' changes to the way the Partnerships were organised telling the Cabinet member responsible at the time in no uncertain terms that they wanted a smaller agenda focused on debate rather than Council presentations and better feedback to concerns raised! The Partnerships ceased in 2011, much lamented by Coulsdon residents.

The Coulsdon Green Belt Action Group (CGBAG) was formed in 2003 in response to the threat to Green Belt land in Coulsdon and the proposed sale of two Council owned plots near Woodplace Lane. The Council withdrew Lot 49 (Woodplace Farm Fields) at the request of the City of London when it was realised that the land was immediately south of Farthing Downs. In December the City were still considering buying Lot 49 which eventually they did with the help of local fund raising organised by CGBAG. Unfortunately, Lot 48 was sold to a developer as a 'speculative acquisition, despite a bid by residents. A leaflet issued by the CGBAG warned of the 'emerging pressures' on green belt land due in part to the Council's commitment to build 850 new homes annually until 2016. On a brighter note, earlier that year the City of London had invited residents to join them for the opening of New Hill which had been bid for and acquired by the City the previous October.

Finally, a word of advice from 2003 on how to protect your rubbish sacks and bins from fox attacks – spray them with furniture polish (the sacks and bins not the foxes).

Coulsdon *Yulefest* is almost upon us and we have some exciting things lined up for the weekend of the 7th & 8th December 2013. We have children's rides and games; Christmas Market, with

loads to buy for stocking fillers, and Santa's Grotto, courtesy of **art rebellion**, not to mention a full line up of live music throughout the weekend.

On Saturday, 7th December at 5.20pm the town centre Christmas lights will be switched on by The Worshipful the Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Yvette Hopley, accompanied by a Candlelight Parade of young people from various uniformed organisations and the Coulsdon Theatre Workshop.

It promises to be a weekend to remember bringing Christmas back to Coulsdon.

CHURCHES IN COULSDON

Information from The Bourne Society: 'Village Histories No 5: Coulsdon'

Coulsdon Methodist Church: Proposed changes: The church celebrated its centenary in 2011. It is built in a traditional Surrey/Sussex style using bricks and local flint stone. The site was purchased in 1910 and a stone laying ceremony took place on 5th April 1911 (in a snow storm). The finished church was opened on 11th November the same year. The final cost was £7,835. The building is one of the few listed buildings in Coulsdon and has become more prominent since the construction of the bypass in 2006, enabling the Church to be seen from the town centre. The Church is currently in discussions with English Heritage to make some minor changes to the interior and to improve step free access.

St Andrews Church will celebrate its Centenary in 2014. The Church was built to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding community in Smitham Bottom. The congregation temporarily met in school class room in Smitham School in Chipstead Valley Road until in 1906 when the parish of St Andrew was constituted for West Coulsdon residents. The congregation then moved to a corrugated iron mission hall but when a better hall was built (behind the Comrades Club) services were held there. This hall is now the HQ of the South London Harriers. Construction of St Andrews Church began in 1911 and was completed in 1914. The tower contains one bell which was cast in the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. In 1962 the Church was extended at the west end.

OLD LODGE LANE JUNCTION AND CYCLISTS' SAFETY

When the work has been completed on the modified Old Lodge Lane/Brighton Road junction, the southbound bus lane, just north of Old Lodge Lane will be removed to see if it improves traffic flow. If this is successful it will be removed permanently.

Tragically the number of cyclists killed on the roads is continuing to rise – 15 in 2012 and 14 so far this year. The main cause of fatality is by large vehicles (buses, coaches and HGVs) turning left at road junctions. A Bath company has marketed a convex mirror suitable for road junctions enabling drivers to see cyclists on their nearside. Since 2012 DfT have allowed these to be installed without special permission. One hundred mirrors are currently being installed at junctions in London and Old Lodge Lane is the first junction in Croydon to have one.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT REPORT

by Charles King

Trains:

To clarify the position for concessions for travel from Coulsdon South prior to 9.30am: **Off-peak tickets and travelcards:** the first train these can be used on is the 09.23.

Freedom Pass: no change – i.e. 09.28 to London Bridge. If you wish to catch the 09.23 with a Freedom Pass you will have to buy a single ticket to East Croydon.

There are two changes to train times from the 8th December 2013: The **23.47 Victoria to Coulsdon South will now depart 7 minutes earlier at 23.40** (Southern has told us that a connection from London Bridge will be maintained at East Croydon from the 23.42 FCC train). At **Coulsdon Town** the first train on Sundays will be 1 minute earlier at 08.02. As the new rolling stock comes into service some Tattenham Corner trains will increase from 4 to 5 carriages. **East Croydon:** The new exit with stairs and a lift to Dingwall Road is due to open at beginning of December 2013.

Christmas Engineering Works and Services: There will be Major Engineering at Victoria, Stoats Nest Junction and Gatwick Airport. This will mean that **no trains will run between Purley and Three Bridges from Christmas Eve 24th December 2013 until 2nd January 2014.** Alternative train services will run to Coulsdon Town and Tattenham Corner with buses running between Coulsdon Town, Coulsdon South, Redhill, Gatwick and Three Bridges during the day and from Purley at night. Rail tickets will also be valid on bus routes 405 and Metro buses 100 and 400. Check services on www.nationalrail.co.uk

Buses: No changes to bus services in our area.

Christmas and New Year services: Christmas Day: There will be no local services. Coaches Excetera will run a coach service from Gatwick to Victoria via Croydon. **Boxing Day Buses:** There will be a slightly reduced Sunday service starting between 8.30 & 9.00am on routes 60, 166, 405, 434, 463 and 466. N68 will run as normal after 23.30pm. **National Express 025** will run an hourly service between Victoria, Gatwick and Brighton calling at Coulsdon South station www.nationalexpress.com. Between **December 27th and 1st January** there will be a mixture of Saturday and Sunday services.

Fares 2014: These will go up at the beginning of January 2014 by 4.5%. At the time of writing the prices of TfL bus fares, Travelcards and Oystercards have not been published.

Steam trains: Due the hot weather a lot of summer steam trains had to be replaced with Diesels. Fortunately a number of these will now run in December. **Orient Express** (Loco Clan Line Merchant Navy Class) Victoria to Guildford return to Victoria via Redhill; Saturday 7th, Friday 13th and Saturday 21st December 2013, Friday 24th January and Saturday 8th February. Coulsdon South approximately 15.15 pm. **Sussex Bell** (Loco Battle of Britain 34067 “Tangmere”) Wednesday 11th December. Coulsdon South approximately 11.00am. **Cathedrals Express** (Loco Black Fives) Wednesday 18th December. Coulsdon South approximately 08.15am & 22.00pm and (Loco 2 Black Fives) Sunday 22nd December 2013. Coulsdon South approximately 12.15pm and 17.40pm.

Note: Train times/routes can be altered/cancelled at short notice even on the day and may run up to 15 mins early/late. Check these and other steam trains at www.uksteam.info/tours/trs13.htm (14 for 2014)

What's on ?

Coulsdon Theatre Workshop : 'Twelfth Night' (not by Shakespeare): Saturday/Sunday 7/8th, Thursday/Friday/Saturday 12/13/14th December

A riotously funny pantomime, full of unexpected twists and turns. Forget Illyria - a freak storm blows a day-trip to Boulogne way off course and, shipwrecked off the coast of Australia, Auntie Podes and Sheila have to find work to earn their passage back to Coulsdon. Coulsdon Community Centre: Barrie Close, Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon. Bus: 166 & 434; Box Office: 07709 266728 or visit the website on: www.twcoulsdon.org.uk

City of London: Farthing Downs Health Walks: Silver Route – Saturday, 7th December, 10.00am; Gold Route (Happy Valley) – Sunday, 16th December, 10.00am: meet in Farthing Downs car park to join these friendly walking groups.

The Bluegrass Plus Club: Christmas Event: Saturday 14th December, 8.00pm: Resident Band 'Alive & Picking' with guest bands: 'Hatful of Rain' and 'One Tree Hillbillies'. Hillcrest Hall, The Mount, Coulsdon. Bus: 463. Contact Shelia on 07956 266534 or visit the website on: www.bluegrass-plusclub.co.uk

Downland Chorale: Winter Choral Music: Saturday, 14th December, St John's Church, Canon's Hill, 7.30pm, Tickets £10: An evening of relaxing and atmospheric choral music: Messe Basse – Fauré, Cantata – Dobrogosz, O Magnium Mysterium – Lauridsen . . . and a selection of festive music with sing-a-long carols. Special guests: Eric Thiman Singers from Caterham School. For more information visit www.downlandchorale.org.uk or phone 07729 618226.

City of London: Farthing Downs: Post Christmas Dinner walk with Ranger Neil Sibley: Friday, 27th December at 11:00am. Neil is inviting visitors and local residents to join him to burn-off some Christmas pudding while asking anything they want about the site and its management and the sterling work done by both local and corporate volunteers. Meet in Farthing Downs car park.

Courtyard Theatre: 'Oliver': Wednesday 8th – Sunday 12th & Wednesday 15th – Saturday 18th January 2014: With so many well known numbers, you'll be 'reviewing the situation' if you don't book for this New Year treat. Music and lyrics by Lionel Bart, directed by Ian Brown. Contact Box Office: 01737 555680 or email boxoffice@chipsteadplayers.org

Old Coulsdon Camera Club: Tuesday Evenings, Cameron Hall, Cannons Hill, Old Coulsdon, 7.45 for 8 pm: New members welcome. The club meets every Tuesday (September – June). December meetings: 3rd: Portrait Competition and 10th: Christmas Social with fish and chip supper at the hall. Buses Nos: 60, 404 and 466. For details visit: www.oldcoulsdoncameraclub.org.uk