



St Stephen's Residents' Association Newsletter: Autumn 2019

www.ststephensra.org Facebook: St Stephen's Residents' Association E-mail: admin@ststephensra.org

It seems that quite a large number of SSRA members were able to participate in one or more of the seven successful 'Love Gardens' events or the garden party that took place during the summer months. The 'Love Gardens' events offered opportunities for residents to meet their neighbours while visiting some very beautiful gardens on a summer evening. Those members who went to these events were able to gain gardening inspiration from a variety of attractive gardens and could also benefit from others' gardening knowledge, share tips on gardening achievements and failures or just enjoy chatting to their neighbours and meeting new ones. Thanks are due to those generous and hospitable members who hosted these very enjoyable events and to Pauline for organising the occasions.

Thanks are also due to Jo and Chris Molony who welcomed members to the Old St Stephens' School, St Stephen's Green for the SSRA summer garden party. The beautiful garden at the Old St Stephen's School made a perfect venue for the event. It was an afternoon of excellent weather for a garden gathering, where visitors were able to enjoy a variety of delicious food contributed by those present, including everything from Asian specialities to home-made ice cream. The comfortable seating arrangements provided space to talk to neighbours so that everyone present was able to enjoy a sociable and relaxing afternoon. I hope that we will be able to repeat this successful event in future years.

We would like to welcome a group of new members to St Stephen's Residents' Association who belonged formerly to Market Way Area Residents' Association which was open to everyone living along Market Way, the roads leading from it or those with homes backing on to it. When circumstances led to the recent dissolution of that organisation, it made sense to transfer their existing membership to St Stephen's Residents' Association since they have always worked very closely with us and are very much part of the St Stephen's neighbourhood. I think that SSRA will benefit tremendously from the fresh ideas, experience and enthusiasm that this group of people will be bringing to us and hope that you will enjoy reading the article in this newsletter on the topic of 'Market Way' written by Chris McDonnell

who formerly produced the lively, interesting and amusing 'Market Way Bulletin' for distribution to MWRA members.

AGM 12th November

All members are invited to the **St Stephen's Residents' Association AGM** which will be taking place from **7.00pm** for a **7.30pm** start on **Tuesday 12th November** at **St Stephen's Church Hall**. Everyone is very welcome to attend this event which will provide an opportunity to meet neighbours as well as to ask questions that can be answered by local councillors and put forward proposals and ideas for things that could be undertaken by the Association over the coming year. This will also be an opportunity to hear our **County Councillor Graham Gibbens** talk about the 'Civic Role of the Chairman of KCC' from the perspective of the Vice Chairman role which he is currently undertaking.

Other news:

- Please note that St Stephen's Residents' Association now has a new email address, **admin@ststephensra.org** for the receipt and sending of emails. This can be used for contacting members of the committee, secretary, treasurer and chairman, although of course, it is still possible to make contact via the website contact form or Pauline's email address. If you wish to receive occasional emails from the new email address, please add it to your contacts so that any sent emails from will not be filtered into your spam box.
- We were very sorry to hear that Don Packham, our street representative for St Stephen's Court, died recently. Don was one of the first people to volunteer as a street rep. and has supported the Association for ten years, always willing to help and always reliable. We send our condolences to his family.
- It is a great achievement that **17 plaques** asking motorists to switch off their engines when stationary when the level crossing gates are closed, have now been attached to the front walls of properties in St Stephen's Road. We have been assured by Professor Stephen Peckham from the University of Kent that research indicates that good signage does make a difference to motorists' behaviour so that these signs should encourage idlers to switch off their engines. Any other residents of St Stephen's Road who would like to have a sign fixed on their wall paid for by the SSRA should contact us via the new email address (see above) or Pauline's email address. Thanks are due to those people who have already agreed to have a sign

fixed to their wall. Perhaps with a concerted effort we will be able to make a difference to the level of polluting emissions in St Stephen's Road!

- Members may have noticed the new **covered litter bins** situated in St Stephen's Church Field and Beverley Meadow. Two of these have been funded by a successful bid to County Councillor Graham Gibbens' Combined Member Grant Scheme and a third paid for by SSRA. Three other bins have been purchased by St Michael's Road Area Residents' Association so that all but one of the open topped bins in both St Stephen's Church Field and Beverley Meadow have been replaced by those with a covered top that we hope will result in less litter being scattered in the immediate vicinity of bins.
- The third **SSRA Art and Crafts Fair** is planned to take place on Saturday 16th November from 11am until 4pm when a wide range of good quality arts and craft items will be offered for sale. Tables are fully booked by familiar and new stall holders and makers presenting art-work, prints, pottery, paper craft, stitching, quilting and more. The League of Friends will have a stall and provide refreshments including home made cakes. Come and source some unique Christmas gifts and meet your neighbours over a cuppa. Thanks go to Mary Cunningsworth who is taking over the organisation of the event for this year from Pauline.
- Proposals are being considered by the Canterbury Diocese and PCC for the enhancement of St Stephen's Churchyard as a safe place for quiet enjoyment of local residents and visitors to the area and as a haven for wildlife. Initially some diseased trees will need to be removed before residents are updated in the near future about opportunities for volunteering in order to maintain and improve the churchyard.
- Families who took part in the **River Fun Day** that was held on Kingsmead Field on a sunny Saturday in September were able to participate in a variety of riverside activities as well as river dipping. 'Our Stour' Officer Lauren, who was leading the sessions, helped to identify various species including elvers, bullhead fish and freshwater shrimp that were closely observed before being returned to the river. This enjoyable and educational event was jointly organised by the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, SSRA and Friends of Kingsmead Field.
- SSRA has produced a '**welcome**' leaflet to be distributed to new and returning students residing in our area. The leaflet contains a list of useful contact phone numbers and addresses as well as providing information about being a good neighbour and the opportunities that would be available to students if they joined SSRA.

With all good wishes - **Jennifer Holland**

A big Thank-You from Residents of Market Way

Former members of the Market Way Area Residents' Association have been heartened by the warm welcome we have received from the St Stephen's residents since we have recently joined their residents' association or, should I now say, our residents' association. It was lovely being able to visit the open gardens and join in the summer garden party and we look forward to more events and projects. We have undertaken to maintain certain local responsibilities such as the litter and tree watering rotas for Market Way and the autumn bulb planting. Keeping up appearances we believe helps to lift the spirits of all who live or pass through the area.

Since joining, I have consulted the St Stephen's website and have been very impressed, especially with all the historical articles and links. It's wonderful to learn that at our heart is the ancient village of Hackington with its mediaeval church and farm, Elizabethan pub, almshouses and a Victorian school, not forgetting the grand avenue of plane trees that lead to the terrace of an, alas, demolished Georgian mansion and Jesuit seminary. At first glance, our Market Way end of the parish may not have much to offer to the historical riches of the area but that isn't entirely the case. However, I was very disappointed to learn that roads of Market Way such as Monk's Close and Abbey Gardens, names redolent of religious associations, are not former monastic sites.

Market Way however does lay claim to being the site of a Roman pottery and ancient burial ground and Saxon settlement. In fact, agronomy and industry are perhaps our strongest historical claims to fame for we have the site of the last livestock market in Canterbury, hence the name of the road. For centuries, the cattle market was held in the shadow of the city walls opposite the Odeon cinema but, with the creation of the Canterbury orbital road, moved to this side of the city in the 1950s before finally closing in the late 1990s. All that remains are the reinforced concrete sections of roadway built to withstand attrition from the heavy lorries that brought the animals to and from market. However, a couple of streets occupying the Market site, Charolaise Close and Dexter Close have been named to recall well known breeds of cattle.

Further up the way from the market, there used to be a number of light industrial units; light but not insignificant in terms of employment or scale. Triang, which included well-known brands such as Pedigree, Hornby and Meccano, claimed at one point to be the largest toy manufacturer in the world. For a while, it employed over 500 staff in Market Way and I am

told that the stampede of employees, exiting at the end of the working day, was an impressive sight. One of the most important toys produced here was Sindy, the teenage doll. Over 100 million Sindy's were created, many of them on this site. Of great significance, so my expert advisor, Mrs Google, tells me were her clothes and accessories. Top fashion designers, such as David and Elizabeth Emmanuel, who were responsible for Princess Diana's wedding dress, created miniature collections for Sindy. Alas, every doll has its day, and despite several attempts to revive her, Sindy's popularity has declined, ousted in part by the more unrealistically proportioned and aggressively marketed Barbie. Triang, a victim of over-expansion perhaps, also folded though some of its brands like Hornby are still made, though, sadly, mostly abroad.

Now the only business, other than B&Bs, to be found in our road is Jewson the builders' merchants. People have long speculated on how long it would be before another small housing estate would appear on their site. In fact, during the summer Jewson did close which fuelled further speculation. However, this was only temporary as the facility was being changed from that of general builders' merchant to one supplying more specialised, large infrastructure products such as large pipes and drains. I believe it is now known as Jewson Civils. Whether this means more or less traffic, we are yet to find out. What further changes and challenges lie ahead it is good to know that we are part of a wider community group.

Chris McDonnell

Gardening Interest Group

The Gardening Interest Group is an opportunity for St Stephen's Residents to get together informally to swap ideas and enthusiasm for all things garden-related and absolutely no expertise is required. A wise man (and it may well have been Monty) said that a "gardener" is someone who has some ground where something grows. Most of us have a bit of ground with things that grow to some extent and, regardless of how magnificent (or otherwise) that plot is, if you want to talk about it, show it off, seek advice or bemoan the fact that despite your best endeavours that special plant still looks ill, then this group is definitely for you. If you have no idea which end of a bulb is "up" then come along and one of us will help or commiserate.

We have had some interesting weather to contend with this year and, glorious though much of the summer has been, it has been a challenge in the garden and we all have to re-think how to garden in a time of unprecedented climate change. This year we focused on the benefits of growing herbs because of their resilience to drought and their great taste. Starting in spring with a giveaway of plants to get everyone enthused (hopefully), our penultimate

meeting in September was an excellent demonstration of cooking with herbs and a delicious fun lunch together.

I think that most gardeners would agree that one of the pleasures of gardening is being able to share plants or seeds with someone else who will love the end result and, as always, everyone has enthusiastically provided all sorts of plants to share over the last few months.

In July we thought a visit to a “grand” garden would appeal but for whatever reason there was not a massive turnout; however, wandering around the spectacular gardens at Godinton House, (near Ashford), marvelling at the luscious planting combinations and refreshing the inner gardener with tea and cake was a lovely way to pass the afternoon so maybe we could try again next year. Views and suggestions are welcome.

At the time of writing, our last event (see below) in October will not yet have taken place. By now, we are all aware of the importance of protecting and encouraging wildlife and providing suitable habitats so our last event of 2019 will be an experiment in making bug hotels for the garden out of readily available materials that we all have. Jenny has spent the last few months researching and collecting material to use and has made all the hotels from old pallets, which we are giving away.

We had a hilarious afternoon practising filling them and we hope that everyone who comes has as much fun...and those insects will be falling over themselves to secure a place in these luxury dwellings....

The Gardening Interest Group is a great way to meet each other and everyone is very welcome, especially children. If you are unsure if this is for you, then maybe if we say that cake is also included you will be tempted to come along and see for yourself! Details of Gardening Interest Group events are always circulated through the SSRA e-mail list so keep a look out for forthcoming events. If you would like to find out more, please contact Jenny Robson (jvkrobson@aol.com) or Sue Herivel (srjherivel@talktalk.net).

Sue Herival