



THE INDEPENDENT

# MILL ROAD NEWS

N°22 March 2019

## Nature, in Montreal Square



Photo by Paul Wardley

### Every species has its needs

Montreal Square's mature gardens, central open space, 30 trees and its connectivity to the adjacent school grounds of Coleridge Community College make it a favourable habitat for garden birds and other wildlife.

### Our Amber residents

We have a good population of House Sparrows, Song Thrush and Dunnocks which are all on the RSPB's Amber list of conservation concern. For a species to be put on the Amber List its overall numbers will have declined by between 25% to 50% over the last 25 years or it is a species which reached a critical decline during the nineteenth or twentieth century which has made a robust recovery over the last 25 years.

### Plentiful populations

Blackbirds are plentiful along with Blue Tits, Great Tits and Long tailed Tits. More than most song birds blackbirds live happily with humans, they are brave and tame and will boldly walk into houses in search of nesting material.

Two Robins patrol the gardens regularly keeping an eye on their territory and their distinctive song can always be heard amongst the singing of other birds.

All species of bird have individual songs or calls of course. These evoke a whole palate of emotions in human listeners.

## We are not the only species on the block

Mill Roaders spend a lot of time thinking about the virtues of bicycles over cars or new buildings over old. We talk about the needs of residents and the needs of traders or the ideas of here-for-a-while students versus the ideas of long-term inhabitants. We very rarely notice that we are not the only species on the block. This issue intends to broaden our perceptions just a little.

We look at local wild life and our love for some animals versus our antagonism towards others. We look at our pets, working animals of the past and the contribution that mini beasts make to our planet's ecology.

We are just scratching the surface and may return later to look at the lives of local cats, bats and rats but in the meantime we hope that these contributions will help us enjoy the rich variety of animal life that is present in our corner of the city.

*Mill Road News is not associated with any religious group and is a not-for-profit community group whose aim is to serve the Mill Road Community. Our Committee is staffed by volunteers.*

**Charlotte de Blois, Chair of Mill Road Bridges and John Caldwell, Vice Chair.**

A thrush's song is often used in the sound track to films to create the atmosphere of a peaceful and secure rural life.

While the cooing of doves conjures up the feelings of lazy hot summer's days. As for owls their battle cries are alarming and their regular hoot is a cold pensive sound used in the movies to accompany subterfuge and



Photo by Francesca Pegazzano

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>> continued from front page

the supernatural. They are frightening beasts.

Montreal Square does not have a resident owl to the relief of our small mammals. A woodpecker is also a regular visitor to all the feeding stations in the gardens. Its presence is announced by a rapid tapping.

## Mammals that fly and shuffle

As dusk falls between May and October feeding bats appear and fly between the trees and around the houses. Of course bats are not birds but mammals their flight patterns are distinctive and they do not sing but squeak. It is a high pitched squeak which they use to navigate, as their sight is very poor.

Hedgehogs also like the Square and three have been seen on the green together. These are animals which were plentiful less than a human lifetime ago but are now in rapid decline. See later in this issue for advice on how we can help them survive.

An urban fox is a very cagey visitor but has been seen in the early hours on the green. It is interesting to learn

from other contributors that he may have been motivated to wander over the Cherry Hinton Road to visit Morley Primary School. Of course the Morley fox may have been someone else. Grey squirrels can be seen playing up and down the trees. They are fun to look at because their movements are so joyful but they are not everybody's favourite animal and their numbers are increasing rather than decreasing.

## Working Animals

Bees feed on the flowers in the gardens. This of course aids pollination for fruit trees, tomato plants and other vegetables.

They are not the only species to fulfil this ecological function but despite the occasional sting they are probably a humans' favourite insect helper.

## A Barren World

As human residents of the Square we are lucky to live so close to this wildlife. If it goes it will not only be a loss to Montreal Square but will add to a wider decline which may result in a barren world.

**Andy Smith. Montreal Square Resident**



Photo by Paul Wordley



Photo by Andy Smith

# Bushy-tailed gymnasts and winged genius!



Photo by Richard Wood

It is fun watching squirrel acrobats as they hang upside down from branches, swing, jump, balance, negotiate verticals and raid bird-seed and fat-balls from feeders isn't it?

Yes and no. If one goes away for a weekend, small birds that rely upon the food in one's seed-feeder will starve by midday Saturday – and the amount of spillage squirrels create can all too easily attract rats.

Not to be outdone, I concocted a defence strategy which involved squirrel-proof seed-feeders, designed so that an outer cage descends to cover the feeder tray when a squirrel lands on it, triggered by weight. A clever idea in theory, except the cunning little blighters reach out horizontally and grab the feeding tray with their front paws. I

upped my game and hung the feeders from a steel-cored washing-line raised by a pulley out of the grasp of squirrels. Job done!

Not quite – pesky pigeons found a way of landing with the claws of one foot grasping the feeder-tray, overriding the cage mechanism. Like the squirrels, not only were they snaffling too much, they were spilling rodent-enticing seed on the ground.

Not to be outdone, I decided that the feeder needed to be tweaked. The outer cage was modified with some long, thin bolts positioned over the feeding hatches. No problem for the small birds, but it disrupted the pigeon's landing path. Job done as far as seed dispensing is concerned.

Now for the fat-ball feeders – with inner and outer cages they were entirely squirrel-proof.

Job done? Well, not quite – as small birds pecked away at the fat balls, significant amounts were falling onto the ground. Rat alert!

Not to be outdone, yet again, modification was needed. With a plastic plant-pot saucer, fastened underneath, spillage was caught and holes punched in the saucer allowed water to drain out.

So, job finally done!

**Richard Wood**

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# Managing a cemetery: past meets present



I never expected to receive a letter with a Victorian stamp. But I knew of the sender: John Claudius Loudon, the famous landscape architect. While designing the Histon Road Cemetery, opened in 1843, he heard that Mill Road Cemetery was being planned, to provide extra burial space for the city-centre churches. He was now curious to know which of his principles for laying out cemeteries had been followed.

I was naturally keen to show him Mill Road Cemetery, opened in 1848. He was easy to identify among other visitors, who probably thought that he was taking part in a drama project.

'I'm delighted to see how this cemetery has become a park,' he said. 'This is exactly what I recommended should happen to a closed cemetery!'

We walked down the main central path so that he could see the Irish yews, as old as the cemetery itself. 'Excellent!' he exclaimed. 'But you have too few cypresses and pines for a place of mourning.'

I explained that times have changed, so we have deciduous varieties as well. He seemed unconvinced, but he was even more astonished to see areas of long grass with wild flowers. Why was the grass not mown, and these weeds removed? Surely this was no place for a meadow?

'When you were last in Cambridge,' I protested, 'this area was surrounded by fields, but now it's all built up. It's the same everywhere: real meadows have been disappearing, and the habitat of butterflies, bees and other insects is being lost. Leaving some areas unmown in rotation can offer refuge for flowers and insects.'

'If that is indeed the case,' Mr Loudon conceded, 'then this makes sense. But you must remove all the undergrowth and brambles!'



'Not if we want to keep any hedgehogs, field mice, birds or other wildlife,' I said. 'We must keep cover and food for them; it's a County Wildlife Site. We aim to balance orderliness and the needs of wildlife. Some people say we're not respecting the dead. Others say that we're not caring for God's creatures. What would you do?'

He shook his head. 'I know how strongly people feel about cemeteries,' he said. 'We ensured dignified burial for everyone when cholera and other diseases had filled up the churchyards, and people expected the graveyard landscape to be sombre. Your problems are different. Yet in my day, many clergymen were naturalists, and managing cemeteries for wildlife could be their legacy.'

'Indeed,' I said, 'and it was because of your belief in cemeteries as future parks that cemeteries acquired and developed their grassland and plantings. You expected the living to benefit from these places as schools of many things, including botany.'

'Yes,' he replied. 'The Prayer Book Burial Service says, "In the midst of life we are in death", but in cemeteries like this we can also say, "In the midst of death we are in life".'

And with that interesting thought, we parted and returned to our own times.

**The Revd Margaret Widdess. Secretary, Parochial Burial Grounds Management Committee**

**Notes** John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), botanist, agriculturalist, landscape architect, educationalist. His views in this piece are deduced from his book, *On the laying out, planting and management of cemeteries* (1843). For information on the history and wildlife of Mill Road Cemetery see [www.millroadcemetery.org.uk](http://www.millroadcemetery.org.uk) and for guidance on environmentally-managed churchyards [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

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# New paths in Mill Road Cemetery: Q&A

Thanks to a major grant from money that developers are obliged to give to the Council for open spaces (Section 106), the restoration of the paths in the Cemetery is now complete and appreciated. We now have safe surfaces that are accessible to all. Here are some answers to questions you may have.

**Q: Why are the paths narrower?**

**A:** To conform to the conditions of restoration, the paths have been reduced to the width they originally had. The old paths became wider because their poor state encouraged both pedestrians and cyclists to use the verges on either side. Here and there they have been widened slightly to provide 'passing places'.

**Q: My favourite path has been fenced off! Where's my short cut?**

**A:** The old paths were in such a bad state that in some places people had no choice but to walk on the grass. And yes, people love to take a short cut! But there are many of these informal paths, that were not part of the original layout and encroach on graves. We want to reclaim this land for grass that will produce wild flowers, and food and habitat for many birds, small animals and insects. The



fencing that you will be finding on these informal paths is a sign that they are to be left alone, and that we are asking you to use the new paths instead. You will lose hardly any time at all, and you'll have a nice surface to walk or cycle on. Notices by the Cemetery gates have always asked people to keep to the paths, and now there are proper paths to keep to! The Council will be improving signage to remind everyone.

**Q: What's happened to the grass verges beside the paths? They've gone to mud!**

**A:** The major work on the paths could not be done without losing some grass. It has been reseeded, so that grass will grow and improve the paths' appearance. So please keep off the verges: there are obvious signs of walking and even cycling on the reseeded areas which is delaying the restoration of the grass.

**Q: I've noticed the new paths were quite soft and muddy again in the recent bad weather. What can be done about this?**

**A:** The material used continues to harden over quite a long period, so the surface is expected to improve. There may still be some softening following rain or snow, but the situation is being monitored by the Council.

**Q: Is there a speed limit in the Cemetery?**

**A:** No, but we have always asked people to be considerate. Please don't take advantage of the excellent surface to cycle or run in a way that might cause an accident.

**Q: Who owns the paths?**

**A:** While the burial plots are owned by the parishes, the paths and the Avenue are owned by the Bishop of Ely. The Council is responsible for maintenance.

**Q: Can I park my car in the Avenue?**

**A:** No. This is not public parking space. Like the rest of the Cemetery, it is in church ownership. The surface has never been designed for regular car use. The only vehicles allowed are a few with official access, including Council vans, rarely a hearse, and vehicles needed for Cemetery works or occasional events.

**Summary: Please keep to the paths, and enjoy them!**

**Cambridge City Council  
The Parochial Burial  
Grounds Management  
Committee  
(representing the  
churches with plots in  
the Cemetery).**



Photos by Margaret Widdess

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# Hedgehog Street: Q&A



Photo by Alan Baldry

**With the needs of our local hedgehogs in mind, Mill Road Bridges approached Hedgehog Street for advice. We were lucky enough to get an interview with hedgehog officer Emily Wilson.**

**Q:** *Is there a significant hedgehog population in the Mill Road area of Cambridge?*

**A:** Our BIG Hedgehog Map (which shows data from 2015 to the present and which is currently posted on [Mill-Road.com](http://Mill-Road.com)) Cambridgeshire had 636 records across the county and was ranked 7th out of all counties in the UK. In terms of the Mill Road area there are 28 records since 2015. With regard to the cemetery specifically, we do not have any records of hedgehogs within it.

**Q:** *Is the cemetery the right kind of environment for hedgehogs?*

**A:** Any quiet, green space with access to food, shelter and mates makes an ideal hedgehog habitat. We know that there is often strong populations of different species found in cemeteries, particularly if they are allowed to become slightly overgrown, shrubs are encouraged and the level of disturbance is very low. An issue with some older sites are brick walls, these are difficult to make accessible to hedgehogs.

**Q:** *How can the cemetery maintain a hedgehog friendly environment?*

**A:** Through it's ongoing garden maintenance programmes, remembering that hedgehogs prefer slightly wilder places with some areas left as long grass, plus areas of leaf and log piles will benefit any hedgehog present. Maintaining a compost heap would also be great and taking care when using strimmers in case hedgehogs are around. Making gaps in walls would be ideal – this

could be done by removing a brick or drilling a hedgehog size hole in the structure. Alternatively tunnelling underneath could help allow hedgehogs to enter the site to forage and find mates.

**Q:** *Are our hedgehog populations declining?*

**A:** We have lost over a third of our hedgehogs in the past decade alone, due to habitat loss and fragmentation – where walls, fences and roads are making it impossible for hedgehogs to move from one greenspace to the next. Hedgehogs can travel up to a mile in just one night so our fences and walls frustrate their ambitions.

**Q:** *How can residents in the Victorian quarters of busy towns preserve a hedgehog friendly environment?*

**A:** We know tidy, fenced or walled gardens are not good for hedgehogs as they do not allow them to roam. Remember to make a hole in your fence. You can also encourage natural hedgehog food like insects into the garden by planting a wild corner or by having a compost heap. You can supplement this by providing hedgehog food or meaty dog/cat food, and water. We also ask that you remove hazards such as litter, tie up loose netting and do not use pesticides or slug pellets and make sure there is a way for hedgehogs to get out of your pond. If you are lucky enough to see a hedgehog, please log your sightings (dead or alive) on the BIG Hedgehog Map.

**Q:** *Are urban foxes a threat to urban hedgehogs?*

**A:** Foxes and hedgehogs can and do coexist at high densities in the suburban matrix.

For further information visit

<http://ptes.org/get-involved/surveys> or  
[www.hedgehogstreet.org](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org)



# K9 esprit-de-Corps

Many dog-owners like me are grateful to live close to the Mill Road Cemetery. From dawn to dusk, the Cemetery is the focus of intense concentration by perhaps a hundred dogs and their walkers. No blade of grass goes unsniffed, no oddly-behaving person is left unbarked at, no squirrels unannounced.

One or two muntjac deer are sheltered by the larger bushes, and are sighted and scented. Our dog-walking community has been called "the eyes and ears" of the Cemetery, by one City Council volunteer gardener who appreciated our constant vigilance.

## Woof Tweet Woof

So I'm astonished that last summer a small encampment of immigrants was discovered by the Council living in dense growth in a far corner near Norfolk Street – with mattresses, barbecue, and tents – as apparently none of our customarily curious canines had alerted their owners!

Dog-walkers can be gregarious, seeking each other out for a daily bit of light chat.

Others prefer their earphones and peaceful environs, and we leave them untroubled by the ennui of our bonhomie. I count on a few regulars to jumpstart my day; we are from every "dog-walk of

life" and exchange observations I would never hear from anyone else. Some of our friendships have spilled past the gates into each other's homes, but in general this random and diverse cross-section of Cambridge society enjoys independence. Walk-times are never coordinated, tweeted or texted in advance.

The Summer of 2015 saw a special crop of pups, more than a dozen, meeting to play in the centre while we cheered on their antics from the sidelines. They've grown up, sobered down and dispersed, but some of the Old Guard still sniff rears and frisk a bit just to show they remember the old days (the dogs, not their walkers.)

## Poop and Scoop

And a word about poo: 90% of us are obsessed by our dogs' leavings and swoop in immediately with baggies. Unfortunately it seems that the other 10%, who also have the largest dogs, leave their leavings. These endanger and annoy those volunteer gardeners who grope the ground every day to create a managed lively wilderness, and disgust those who stroll down the lovely new paths in this fascinating and beautiful Cambridge landmark.

**Pam Wesson.**

*Illustration by Klerwi Dowson-Le Lay, then age 8 (2016)*



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## Eating al Fresco in Mill Road

If one lives on Mill Road and one wakes before sunrise on a winter's morning, it is not necessarily traffic that rouses one but the dark shapes of low flying gulls. They can cruise at a height of no more than one or two metres and are surprisingly silent, possibly that is because there is enough food for everyone and they have no need to squabble. What their food is I am not sure. The RSPB website states that they eat rubbish, fish, small animals and smaller birds. So possibly they are clearing up the previous night's takeaways before the rats get there – or possibly they are eating well stuffed rats.

As dawn gives way to daylight they become fewer but a small number continue to glide up and down the road as traffic becomes heavier, just above the car roofs. They do not seem to stray into the surrounding streets but remain focussed on finding food in the gutters and on the pavement of the High Street. From their size I think they are herring gull, a species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, their wing span is larger than that of a normal gull, possibly up to a metre and half.

It is interesting to see how pigeons behave in their presence. Pigeons are perceived to be real town birds but they do not like Mill Road, preferring instead life in Station Square. This might be because our pavements are narrow but could it be because of the gulls? I have seen a flock of pigeons perching on the ridge pole of the old Sally Ann shop, as still as statues while the gulls fly by. But as soon as the gulls have passed, the pigeons frantically whizz off to the north, possibly to the cemetery or to some other less hostile environment.

By the time the school run starts there is not a gull to be seen, nor a pigeon.




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*Children seem to be more observant than adults and can often spot quick moving animals in the distance while their elders worry about the practicalities of life.*

## A Fox at School

I saw a fox at my school, it was standing in front of the bike shed. Some people were eating lunch and the teachers said they might call the zoo to talk about the fox.

Everybody liked having him there and he was alone. At first I thought he might be a baby because he was smaller than I thought foxes are. It is the first time I have seen a fox.

I have heard stories about foxes and seen pictures. I think a fox is a sensible animal, it plans has cunning ideas and it is sneaky.

*Mill Road News'*  
 Correspondent. Morley's  
 Crimson Class.



*Photo by Paul Wordley*

# Mill Road's vanished working class



*Photo by Paul Wordley*

Apart from pollinators, worms that work the soil and other mini-beasts who promote the healthy growth of plants in a variety of ways – oh yes and at least one guide dog and possibly some guard dogs – Mill Road is no longer home to working animals.

At the turn of the last century our horse population was significant as the two photographs on the right from Cambridgeshire Collection testify and these horses worked for their living. They would have needed stabling and shoeing and it is strange that the whereabouts of their stables are not widely known. Dales Brewery kept horses and local history enthusiast Sheila Cane reports that they were stabled on the site that is now the Gwydir Street car park. Stable to car park is a logical transition but where did these horses get shod? There is some evidence that as horseless carriage took over from horse drawn carriages blacksmiths retrained themselves as mechanics and smithies became garages.

Did this happen in Mill Road? It is as if the age of the horse has vanished without trace but possibly we do retain one relic. Set into the wall of 55 Mill Road on the corner of Emery Street there is a slab of stone, it has been suggested that it be the remains of a stone trough. Is this where our horses were watered? Or maybe it is some form of drainage system. Any thoughts please.

**Charlotte de Blois**



*Mill Road, Cambridge*







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# Feed the birds...



Photo by Paul Wordley

Birdwatching is enjoyed by millions of people throughout Britain and just because the Mill Road neighbourhood is an urban one, doesn't mean that you can't enjoy a variety of birds too.

The winter months provide the opportunity to see birds very well, not least because of leafless trees. Birds come readily to bird feeders especially at this time of the year, so why not hang up some suet balls or nut and seed feeders. This is particularly important in very cold weather when birds need more energy.

My garden is small but because it has trees and bushes it has already attracted more than 20 species in early December including Blackcap and Siskin. Rotting apples readily attract wintering Fieldfare and Redwing and well as resident Blackbird and Song Thrush.

The Mill Road Cemetery is a great place to birdwatch especially when they are actively feeding in the early morning or afternoon dusk.

Different species need different foods: seeds for sparrows and finches, nuts and suet for tits, fruit and worms for thrushes. Try to place them where squirrels can't easily get to them or buy a squirrel proof feeder. Keep bird tables and bird baths clean to prevent spread of disease. Remember to add hot water if the ice freezes! Birds will welcome leftover fruit cake, mince pies, dried fruit and over ripe fruit. Mild cheese on the ground is good for Wren and Dunnock which are unlikely to come to the bird table.

Do avoid turkey fat (which can stick to their feathers) and salty food (which can poison small birds). Put out small amounts of food regularly so that all of it is eaten by birds and not by rats.

Winter is a good time to get to know your garden birds. The RSPB provides lots of identification advice online and why not take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch which is held every year?

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## A Fox on a Mill Road roof

I saw it a couple of years ago really early in the morning when our family was walking to the station to take a train, to catch a plane to Majorca. It was standing on the flat roof of a Mill Road café absolutely still; it was literally on the edge, but not fazed. At first I thought it was a wolf but then I thought that is a silly guess because wolves do not live in this country. It began to walk along the bricks at the very edge, it balanced well and I thought maybe it's a big cat escaped from a zoo – some sort of panther or something – there was something about its walk, it loped, it prowled, it meant business. Then it turned from the edge of the roof and like trotted away and I realised it was probably a fox although it was greyish. My mum, dad, brother and sister yelled at me that I would make them miss the plane, I said I was looking at a fox on top of the café and they yelled that there wasn't a fox on top of the café, that there never had been a fox on top of the café nor would there ever be a fox on top of the café and I was going to make them miss their holiday. Of course it was there and I had seen it really clearly. I think it may have been a British Grey Fox. I have spent a lot of time looking online at photographs of foxes to see if I can identify its species.

*A 14 year old kid who would like his identity to be withheld*

The Federation of Cambridge Residents Associations invite you to their 2019 event

## Making an Inclusive City



### Robin Hambleton

Emeritus Professor of City Leadership, University of the West of England, Bristol and Director of Urban Answers

### With a panel of Cambridge experts

- How can we empower communities to shape our future and give priority to the key issues - climate change, biodiversity and social justice?
- What can we learn from progressive city leadership in other countries?

Come and join in the discussion on ideas for a positive way forward

**Friday 5th April 2019**

**6:30-8:30 pm**

**Perse School, Hills Rd, CB2 8QF**

**All welcome**

Drinks & nibbles from 6:30pm, meeting starts 7pm

Book at [fecra.org.uk](http://fecra.org.uk) or Eventbrite <https://bit.ly/2ICG5GS>

## Making an Inclusive City

### ROBIN HAMBLETON

Emeritus Professor of City Leadership, University of the West of England, Bristol and Director of Urban Answers

## With a Panel of Leading Experts

### MEREDITH BOWLES

Director at award winning Cambridge-based **Mole Architects**, Cambridge Quality Panel and RIBA Awards Panel

### PROFESSOR BRIAN EVERS HAM

Entomologist, Chief Executive of the **Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust**

### COUNCILLOR KATIE THORNBURROW

Cambridge City Councillor for Trumpington, Executive Councillor for **Streets and Open Spaces** and Lead Councillor for **New Communities and Sustainable Food**.

### BARONESS YOUNG OF OLD SCONE (BARBARA YOUNG)

Chair of the **Woodland Trust** and President of the **Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust**

### DANIEL ZEICHNER

MP for Cambridge

**Join us to consider ideas for a positive way forward!**



Mill Road News is published by the non-profit organisation Mill Road Bridges, c/o The Six Bells Pub, 11 Covent Garden, Cambridge, CB1 2HS UK. Mill Road Bridges is a volunteer community group serving Petersfield & Romsey wards in Cambridge.

We welcome your submissions on any topic about the Mill Road community.

Send images and short articles to [info@mill-road.com](mailto:info@mill-road.com). Please note that our articles cannot favour a political party, they should not be of a purely commercial nature, and we reserve the right to edit, refuse, or postpone use of

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Care to help? We need volunteers! It merely requires delivering a bagful to your own neighbourhood mailslots.



MRB logo: Sam Motherwell, Gwydir Street

## Mill Road Bridge Closure latest news

On 18th December 2018, GTR wrote on their web site: 'Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has listened to residents' and traders' concerns about the temporary closure of Cambridge's Mill Road Bridge next year, and promised to install a temporary footbridge and move its work to the summer.'

The last public communication to Mill Road residents from GTR was in November last year despite saying they would keep all residents updated into 2019 and hold another public meeting in January this year. Shapour Mefta, Chair of the Mill Rd Traders' Association, unsuccessfully tried to get the 27th November meeting re-scheduled as he knew many Traders were too busy in preparation for the Mill Rd Winter Fair to attend.

The slide show that outlined stages of the 8 week work schedule was shown at The Earl of Beaconsfield in November but has not been 'released' into the public realm which is disappointing as many residents also could

not attend on that day. However GTR have agreed that the work will now take place in July and August.

### Meeting with Councillors pulled at last minute...

On 28th February at 2pm Romsey and Petersfield councillors were due to meet with GTR to firm up on the detail of the bridge closure but on the day before that GTR cancelled this meeting.

Since 29th January Ward Councillors have been asking GTR to change the planned dates of closure to avoid term time at St Matthews, and despite two chasing emails they are still waiting for a reply (at the time of writing). The question is: are Govia Thameslink serious about working with Romsey and Petersfield residents over the bridge closure?

For latest updates see [www.mill-road.com](http://www.mill-road.com) and [www.overmillroadbridge.org.uk](http://www.overmillroadbridge.org.uk)

## Dates for your Diary

**29 March, 7.30pm**

**How to celebrate a Mill Rd Summer – regarding bridge closure**  
Public meeting Romsey Mill.

**29 March, 2.30-3.30pm**

**Launch of Workplace Chaplaincy**  
The Methodist Church Hall.

**2 April, 7-9pm**

**Workshop Cambridge 1888-1988. Chronicle of an English University City.**

Bath House, Gwydir Street.

**9 April, 7.30-10pm**

**Mill Road History Society, Louise Jordan – The Hard Way.**  
St Barnabas Centre, Old School Hall, St. Barnabas Church, Mill Road.

**13-18 May**

**6th Annual Exhibition**

Call To Artists – Apply Now!  
St Barnabas, Mill Road.

**14 May, 7.30-9pm**

**Mill Road History Society AGM and talk. From Vice to Virtue – The Cambridge Female Refuge.**  
Ross Street Community Centre. £3.

## Announcements

**David Parr House** in Gwydir Street is now training volunteers to act as guides in preparation for their opening.

Become one of the first Founding Members of The David Parr House. Enjoy access to the latest research, an annual members' event and a limited edition hand-printed docket and lapel badge.

100% of every membership gift is matched by National Lottery Heritage Fund.  
<https://davidparrhouse.org>

**Wood Green Animal shelter** has opened at 41 Mill Road.



Visit our webpage, [mill-road.com](http://mill-road.com), to discover more about Mill Road and add your own contributions. Scan the QR code.

**Letters and opinions can be addressed to the editor at [info@mill-road.com](mailto:info@mill-road.com)**

*Letters published here express the views and beliefs held by their authors*

**Topic for next issue: Recycling, up-cycling and up-purposing.**

## Letters to the editor

**Dear Editor,**

We have recently opened a hair and beauty Salon adhering to eco-friendly principles and we use only plant-based products. The salon also has a large number of live plants to refresh the air.

A client suggested that spider plants, are particularly good at absorbing poisonous chemicals from car fumes, is this true? Are there any botanists or chemists out there who can recommend other air-purifying species?

*Holly Meddings and Vanessa Evans*

**Dear Editor,**

The spare land next to railway lines has been identified as an aid to many species of wild animals; allowing them a sanctuary where they can hunt and move safely from one location to another when circumstances dictate.

Mill Road is lucky to have a railway passing through its midst and this may well have enriched our urban biodiversity.

As a commuter to London I am acutely aware that railway embankments are being cleared of trees and shrubs at a pace never seen before.

I realise this is to enable unrestricted passage of trains and possibly to reduce the number of suicides on the line but will it cause damage to our ecology and are there

any measures that railway companies can take to preserve wild habitats?

*James White.*

**Dear Editor,**

I welcome the recent news that 'Govia Thameslink Railway and Network Rail' have agreed a temporary footbridge during the Mill Road Bridge closure. The seeds for this agreement were sown at their initial public meeting in the 'Double Tree by Hilton Hotel' in Granta Place on 1st November last year, where the proposal was put cogently and sensibly by representatives of the 'Mill Road Trader's Association' and 'Camcycle', together with several residents of the Mill Road Area.

The 'Thames Govia' Managing Director, accompanied by a Chief Engineer for the project, listened attentively and recorded the contributions; and at subsequent open meetings in Mill Road the Company took on board further ideas for the construction, positioning and design of a temporary bridge in that location.

It is good to know that a balanced democratic approach has worked so well and, in my opinion, would have probably achieved this welcome result without making it into a Local Party Political Issue!

*Edward L. Jenkins*