



spring 2026

Coney Hall Village Residents' Association

Members of the London Borough Of Bromley Residents Federation



Unleash the power of nature!

**Singing! Sticks! Cider! Our community orchard
receives a supernatural supercharge**

Come to the Residents' Association AGM
Tuesday 26 May, 7pm, The Assembly Halls, Gates Green Road

coneyhallvillagera.org



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Whatever next? It's up to you.

Welcome to another issue of your Coney Hall Residents' Association newsletter. As always, we're sending this ahead of our AGM which is happening on 26 May.

Changes to our magazines and meetings

As you may know, we usually publish two magazines a year. They're delivered in advance of our two public meetings: one in the spring, the other in autumn. We're in the process of deciding whether we should continue in this way.

Over the last few years, we've worked hard to make the magazine self-sustaining, thanks to the support of local businesses. You'll notice that we no longer ask for subscriptions to help towards the cost. But creating each issue is a lot of work for our small band of volunteers. Gathering contributions and writing articles, liaising with advertisers, getting it printed and delivered into your hands all takes time. As does arranging the public meetings and corralling people to attend.

So, should we continue? And if so, how do we do that in a way that's sustainable? Should we cut back to one newsletter a year (or none) and one public meeting? Perhaps you'd like to help, or suggest

change. Is there something that would make the RA more relevant to you?

The Coney Hall community

As you'll see in this issue, there's plenty going on in the community. There are people getting together to celebrate and support the community orchard, to decorate streets on Remembrance Day, to help keep Well Wood thriving and to open their gardens to curious visitors in the summer.

As well as liaising with the councillors about the bad stuff (like the ineffective yellow lines on Layhams Road, vehicle crime or storm drains) we're also here to celebrate the good stuff. The website is updated every week with local news and activities.

While we don't use the website to advertise businesses, we do use it to promote community events. So get in touch if you'd like to write something, or need help to spread the word.

Denise Wilton

*Now is the time to speak up,
either at the AGM on **26 May**
or by email:
coneyhallra@gmail.com*

Sign up for regular news from Coney Hall

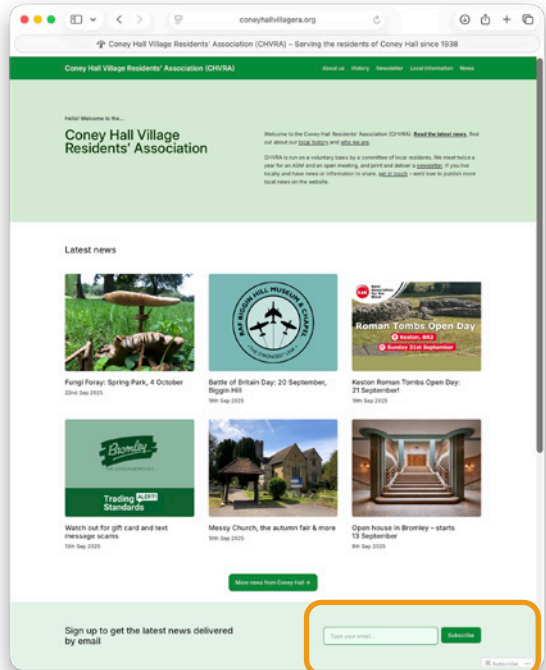
It's easy to get the latest news delivered by email: visit coneyhallvillagera.org

From local events and information to council initiatives and news, the CHVRA website is hyper-local, and, more importantly, it's yours.

To get the latest posts delivered automatically to your email inbox, all you need to do is subscribe.

Visit coneyhallvillagera.org and look for the box that says **Sign up to get the latest news delivered by email**. Put your address in the box and tap **Subscribe**. Next, check your email to confirm your subscription. That's it! You'll get an email each time there's something new.

If there's news you think we should share, let us know. There's a **Contact Us** link on the bottom of every page of the site.



Subscribe here!

Join us for the AGM

Help shape the future of CHVRA and hear from councillors, the local police team and community volunteers

Tuesday 26 May, 7pm, The Assembly Halls, Gates Green Road

If you can't attend, feel free to email questions or issues you'd like to raise: coneyhallra@gmail.com

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An update from the PPG, Addington Road Surgery

Marie reports back from our local Patient Participation Group

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) at Addington Road Surgery wants to promote health in the community. Exercise is a great way to reduce stress and have a positive impact on your health.

Some people visit the gym, attend exercise classes or take part in sport – but let's face it, not everyone is capable, motivated or has the time for rigorous exercise. No matter how many resolutions we make, we need to enjoy exercise or find some motivation and the right level to make exercise a habit.

Walking is good exercise and there are a number of walking groups in the area, which are great for socialising too. If you don't want to join a group there are other ways to get motivated: for instance, meet a friend and walk to a coffee shop (but don't be tempted by the cake!).

We are lucky to live in an area steeped in history, so go and explore. Find the 600 year old tree where a Cavalier hid from the Roundheads during the English Civil War; find the Greenwich Meridian marker; find where five Archbishops of Canterbury are buried; or the Wilberforce

Oak where William Wilberforce announced to William Pitt that he was putting forward the bill to abolish slavery. There are many local points of historical interest which are worth the effort to research and seek out.

Everyone can do something. If you're catching a bus why not consider walking one bus stop. My friend is motivated by a refusal to pay for parking: she parks the car in a side-street further from the shop and has bought herself a 'dolly trolley' to go between her car and the shop. Top tip: use bags in the trolley to make it easier to load the shopping into your car.

Captain Tom walked up and down his garden: it's nice to inspect the flowers and birds on a nice day. Fresh air and observing nature are great for de-stressing. My mother went to an exercise class for the over 60s: the first thing they did was sit in a circle and pull faces at one another. The helpless laughter was wonderful for the stomach muscles!

Everyone can find time and something suitable for their level of fitness, but exercise must be enjoyable and is more fun with a friend. In the spring the PPG

Walking with new friends

hope to guide some walks in order to show people routes suitable for their level of fitness and to highlight some points of interest in the local area. Be inspired by one 91-year-old PPG member who walks at least two miles (sometimes five) every day.

Marie Fuggle
Addington Road Surgery
Patients Participation Group



If you're looking for a way to exercise and connect with new friends, there are groups for that! For example...

Enbro www.enbro.org.uk

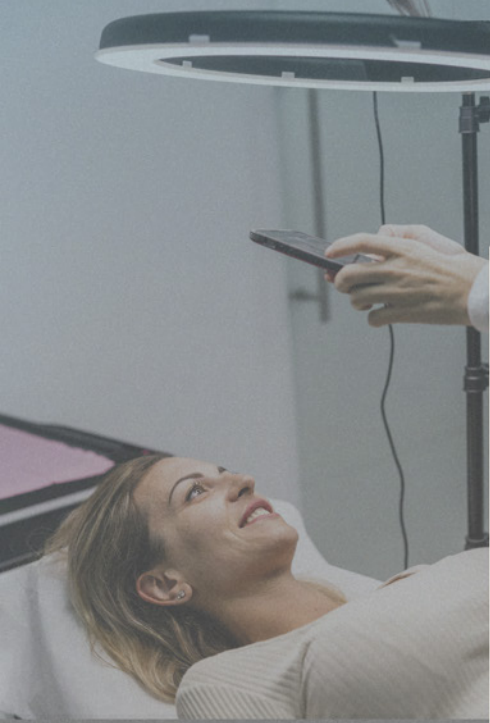
Enbro is a rambling group open to adults aged 18 or over. Assistance dogs are welcome too. Walks range from short, gentle strolls ideal for those getting into walking for the first time, to medium length walks of a few miles, right through to more strenuous rambles for those feeling more adventurous.

Free guided woodland walks symbiosia.podia.com/walks

These walks are for designed for family caregivers, bereaved carers and anyone over 60, and they are dementia-friendly too. Taking place on Saturday mornings and Wednesday afternoons, each walk starts and finishes at The Railway Hotel pub, West Wickham, who offer the walkers a free cuppa and a sit down at the end.

Bromley RSPB Local group.rspb.org.uk/bromley

This group brings people together to enjoy, learn about and protect wildlife. As well as talks and events which are open to members and non-members, they also have local walks. These are a chance to learn about and enjoy the wealth of wildlife in Bromley – and every local walk is free.



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FULL WASSAIL AHEAD!

There was bedlam in the briers in February, as Coney Hall came together to give the saplings in our community orchard a traditional blessing

On a crisp and cheerful afternoon, our community orchard in the park played host to a splendid Wassail – an ancient tradition dedicated to blessing the fruit trees and encouraging a bountiful harvest. And what a wonderful gathering it turned out to be. Residents of all ages came together beneath the branches, proving that few things unite a community quite like fresh

air, a little eccentricity and the opportunity to throw cider at trees in the name of good horticulture!

The orchard rang with music as Maree Waller sang traditional Wassail tunes accompanied by Sarah Chant on the recorder. A large procession of about 50 local residents, including buggies, wound their way between the



fruit trees before gathering around a Bramley apple tree for the traditional blessing.

Voices rose in cheerful wassailing as good wishes were offered for health, growth and a plentiful harvest in the coming year. Once the blessings were complete, a generous amount of cider and an impressive quantity of cake were quickly consumed.

A particular highlight of the day was the magnificent arrival of the Wild Hunt Bedlam Morris



dancers, who were quite the sight in their flowing Gothic outfits and clashing sticks. They represent the wilder side of Morris, where myth and legend abound.

Their energetic performance brought smiles all round and they even taught us a few of their steps but, after some practice, we decided to leave it to the professionals.

Most importantly, the wassail drew a wonderfully varied crowd from across the community. Long-time residents mingled with newcomers, families with young children stood alongside seasoned Environmental Action Coney Hall (EACH) volunteers and everyone shared in the warmth, laughter, and peculiar joy of participating in a centuries-old custom together.

Here's to the orchard, to community spirit and to an excellent fruit harvest in the year ahead. Huge thanks to our local pub, The Rabbit Hole, for generously donating the cider.
Susan Moore

Traditional apple wassail rhyme

*Stand fast root, bear well top
Pray the God send us a howling
good crop
Every twig, apples big
Every bough, apples now*

— 19th century Sussex/Surrey



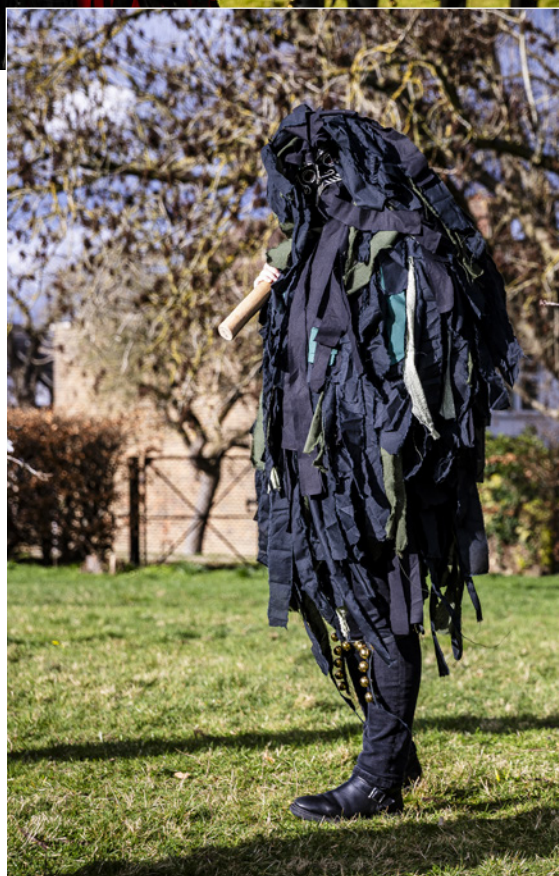


The Wild Hunt Morris Dancers

Morris dancing is a form of English folk dance, based on rhythmic stepping and choreographed routines.

The Wild Hunt are a group of Morris Dancers based in Croydon – but they first came together in the shadow of a hill known as Bedlams Bank at Merstham, Surrey. Their dances blend ancient North European Mythology with their own interpretation of Bedlam Morris.

Find out more online:
wildhunt.org.uk



Planning your garden with help from EACH

Sarah Chant from Environmental Action Coney Hall (EACH), shares tips on making a beautiful, wildlife-friendly garden

Biodiversity loss remains one of the most urgent issues in Britain. But there are plenty of things we can do on a local level to benefit wildlife. And the good news is, we can start by being lazy! Overly tidy gardens take away valuable habitats and food sources for our native wildlife. A small meadow area can help. The photo opposite was taken at last year's Open Gardens event in Coney Hall – and shows just how beautiful a small meadow can be.

I've dug up the majority of my lawn and planted wild flowers including corn cockles, ox-eye daisies, yellow rattle and yarrow. We've been rewarded with a beautiful show of colour and a considerable number of visiting butterflies and various pollinators.

Small mammals, birds, insects, invertebrates and amphibians all benefit from the habitats and food sources provided by long grass and areas of scrub such as brambles.

- **Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral butterflies lay their eggs on stinging nettles**

- **Orange-tipped butterflies rely heavily on Garlic Mustard, commonly known as 'Jack by the hedge'**
- **Ivy is an important source of food for pollinating insects and birds. If you're lucky, wrens and blackbirds will nest in it**

Smart planting helps to cut down on chemicals

Although it's tempting to reach for insecticides, they are usually non-specific in the species they target, so beneficial organisms can be killed as well as the pests we're trying to avoid. There's also evidence that the continued use of pesticides can lead to the development of resistance: there's a growing list of pests, diseases and weeds that are no longer controlled by the chemicals that were once effective.

Instead, encourage natural predators. Hoverflies and ladybirds both eat aphids, and there are plenty of beautiful flowers to attract them. The daisy and umbellifer families are good for hoverflies, as they have easily accessible pollen and nectar.





Coney Hall Open Gardens Weekend

Attract ladybirds with pollen-rich blooms such as yarrow, angelica, fennel and dill, and companion plants like calendula and marigold.

And don't forget, not all slugs are bad. Some are even a gardener's friend. The leopard slug (shown over the page), which in itself *doesn't* pose a threat to your plants, is highly territorial and actually scares off other slugs. In addition, leopard slugs and those small slugs living in our compost

On **Saturday 6 June**, from 12pm to 5pm, we'll be holding our annual Coney Hall Open Gardens for Nature event.

A ticket is just £5 and includes a visit to 12 gardens plus Rouse Farm. There'll be tea, coffee and cakes en route – as well as Pimms if you really want to get into the garden party spirit! This year, all money raised will be used to help native endangered species.

Details to follow on the website:
www.coneyhallvillagera.org



heaps are beneficial for healthy compost too. The RSPB website has more information about what to look out for.

Small wildlife ponds are invaluable

I've just been sitting by my small pond and counted eight frogs basking in the sun, six adult newts and one tiny baby. I did not realise that newts play! I've noticed them floating on their backs, perhaps to absorb heat or to sleep, but today I saw them frolicking together. To top it all, I witnessed a slow worm slithering into the undergrowth.

Research has shown that ponds are invaluable biodiversity sources. Two thirds of all Britain's freshwater plants and animals can be found in ponds, however small. Once abundant in Coney Hall, toads, frogs and newts are under threat. If you include water in your garden, you will also be supporting pollinating insects, birds and hedgehogs which need water to survive, especially in our increasingly hot weather.



EACH promotes and preserves biodiversity in Coney Hall

All members of the steering committee also work as Friends of the Park maintaining the community orchard, the nature trail, the two butterfly banks and the meadow. We also work closely with the Well Wood volunteers. If you would like to help nature in our village, contact sarahlouischant@icloud.com

And finally... please report any sightings of hedgehogs, stag beetles, slow worms and toads to the Bromley Biodiversity partnership. They are keeping records of endangered species in our area. Contact them at: bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com

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Remembering with pride those who served

Susan Moore explains how the streets of Upper Coney Hall celebrate and remember those who served

Every November, for the past nine years, a quiet transformation takes place across the roads of Upper Coney Hall. Lampposts are adorned with approximately 80 bright red poppies, each one paid for and put up by local residents who want to mark the season of remembrance.

Last year was no exception. Thanks to the generosity of neighbours in the community there is a shared commitment to remembering those who served and sacrificed. For some, putting up a poppy is a personal act of remembrance: honouring family members, friends, or simply reflecting on the freedoms we enjoy today.

For others, it is about teaching younger generations the importance of respect and reflection. As children walk past the displays on their way to school, questions are asked and stories are shared, keeping memories alive. The sea of red across our neighbourhood is a testament to what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared purpose.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, organised, and helped install the poppies. Your efforts have not only enhanced our streets, but have also strengthened the spirit of remembrance that unites us all.





Joanne Brown Celebrant



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If you'd like support creating a ceremony that truly reflects you and the people you love, I'd be honoured to help.



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The secret history of Monarch Close

Long-term Coney Hall resident and CHVRA committee member **Stella Etheridge** explains the history of Monarch Close

Monarch Close is a fairly recent addition to our road layout and doesn't appear on Morrell's original plan for Coney Hall.

Between the back gardens of the furthest houses in Queensway and Lime Tree Walk a large acreage of land was left empty, originally intended for tennis courts, in the optimistic days before the War.

But these were never to be and instead the area became a parking lot for military vehicles of the Canadians billeted around Coney Hall. However, locals were concerned this might be viewed as a legitimate target by enemy aircraft, and had them relocated to farmland along Gates Green Road.

The resulting empty area became used for 'Dig for Victory' allotments, a small-holding and latterly a Christmas tree nursery. But, by the 1970s it had become a derelict dumping ground.

With planning permission granted, developers moved in, demolished a pair of adjacent houses to create access and built nine small properties in



what was named Monarch Close. Another royal name to add to the area! Acacia Avenue, although on Morrell's plan, never materialised. If it had, its route would have led from the top of Queensway, down the ancient highway (now a bridle path) alongside Wickham Common School's playing field, ending on Gates Green Road. It was to be the site of more 'up market' properties but was never pursued – although curved paving stones give a clue to abandoned plans.

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Photographs by Michelle Richards Photography

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RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!

An update from **Kieran Waugh**, ranger for Spring Park Wood and West Wickham Common

At Spring Park the focus has been our hazel coppice rotation (they're on a 10-year rotation), which enables us to have a diverse age structure through the centre of the woods, supporting the best biodiversity and allowing more light to the ground to benefit the flora. Spring Park is so well known for.

On West Wickham Common we have done some halo release and scrub clearance around some of the ancient oak pollards on

the site to try and protect their longevity. Pollards are trees that have been cut back at a height above ground level, historically to produce a sustainable supply of timber and firewood while protecting regrowth from grazing animals.

Over time, this management creates distinctive trees with thick trunks and a crown of regrown branches. Many pollards can live for centuries. Clearing around these trees ensures



Species to see this spring

Spring is a great time to explore Spring Park and West Wickham Common. Among the first butterflies to appear are Orange Tips, often seen fluttering along paths and hedgerows. Birdsong is also a clear sign of the season. Listen out for Nuthatches calling and moving along tree trunks, the drumming of Greater Spotted Woodpeckers and the distinctive songs of Chiff-Chaffs and Blackcaps returning for spring to mate.

Visit cityoflondon.gov.uk and search for The West Wickham Commons to find out more, including how to volunteer.

they can be properly inspected and reduces competition from surrounding vegetation, helping to maintain their health. The upcoming survey will provide detailed information on each tree's condition and identify any work needed to support their long-term survival.

Not only are these pollards valued for their cultural heritage by the local community, but they are also incredibly important as 'micro-habitats' supporting hundreds of different species of flora and fauna, so it is important to protect them as best we can.

Across both sites we conduct tree safety checks along paths and boundaries, and any tree risks are removed either by the ranger team or by contractors.

Now that we are out of the cutting season we will be looking towards infrastructure improvement and replacement across both sites during April.

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A visit to Well Wood and a winter update

Well Wood looks spectacular in spring. We asked **Tom Thorne** to share an update on the work that's been happening there over winter and the first few months of the year.

As many of you know, spring is the perfect time to visit Well Wood. As the white flowers of the wood anemones fade, the bluebells take over, creating a thick blue carpet. But it's easy to forget that nature doesn't always take care of itself. There's a trusted band of volunteers who I help organise, looking after the wood year-round and ensuring sure it's a place where nature continues to thrive.

Well Wood winter 2026 update

The volunteer group at Well Wood has continued to work on cutting holly along the woodland edge bordering the fields.

The plan was to create a corridor for butterflies, bees and other insects from the open fields, through the path that we opened up last winter deep into the wood.

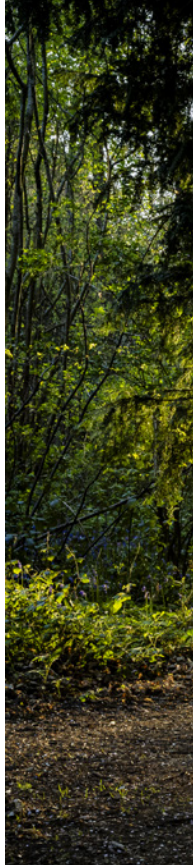
We're pleased that this path has shown to be a hotspot for insects and butterflies – which we know thanks to the regular butterfly monitoring by a local resident. The opened-up area along the fields also seems popular with visitors.

The group managed to get some funding from Bromley Council Jubilee Parks, which has been used to purchase replacement frames for some signs which were past their best. You'll see these as you walk around the woods now.

It also went towards 70 hedge whips, which have been planted to fill a long gap left by the rapidly



deteriorating stretch of the old historical hedge bordering the fields, and some bird boxes which should increase the nesting site options as the wood seems to lack decrepit trees with crevices. The annual spate of falling trees which has happened since the beginning





of the year has further reduced nesting sites. The group deal with these fallen trees across paths where they can. For larger trees we need the help of the council heavy mob – so they take a little longer to clear, as we wait for them to fit us in.

Get involved!

The Well Wood volunteers meet at 10am on the third Saturday of the month, at Layhams Road car park. We carry out tasks which benefit and enhance the wood for wildlife and visitors

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Local Toddler Group

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An update from your local police team

We asked **Acting Sergeant Justin Hulf** to share an update on the local police priorities and activities for the next few months. Don't forget, you can also meet your local Safer Neighbourhood Team in person, and we always share the latest dates and details on our website

Dear Residents,

I am the Acting Sergeant responsible for the areas of Hayes and Coney Hall and West Wickham and am joined by an excellent team of PCs and PCSOs. It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to address you on behalf of your local policing team and to update you of the work local officers are doing to make the area a safer place.

Our current priorities focus on vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour and tackling retail crime. We are working alongside retailers to identify the most prolific offenders and take action against them. We have also been conducting a number of operations aimed at reducing speeding and improving road safety in the local area, as well as making use of cycle patrol to increase our visibility.

With regard to vehicle thefts, we would always recommend physical security devices, such as steering locks, particularly those endorsed by **Secured By Design** which can be particularly effective at preventing offences.

Please also remember to keep valuables out of sight when your vehicle is unattended.

I would also like to take the opportunity to introduce you to **Met Engage**, a platform that allows you to communicate directly with your local police team, voice your concerns and keep up to date with any events and activities. Sign up today to receive updates from your local police officers on the issues that matter most to you. To sign up visit metengage.co.uk

Met Engage is not a crime-reporting platform. If you wish to report a crime you can call 101 or in an emergency call 999.

I hope to meet as many of you as possible in the coming months.
Justin Hulf

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*For research findings on Kumon study, please visit kumon.co.uk.





Coney Hall's link to saving lives at sea

The legacy of the firm who built Coney Hall in the 1930s stretches past just the houses we live in. Barbara Morrell's generosity means lives are being saved to this day courtesy of RNLI's The Morrell lifeboat

A trip to the coast and a stop off at the Dungeness Lifeboat Station uncovered a connection between the present lifeboat and our village. Twins Cyril and Stanley Morrell, entrepreneurs and opportunists, were only in their early twenties when embarking upon the planning and building of Coney Hall in the mid 1930s.

Their aim to build affordable homes earned them the unenviable reputation of 'jerry builders', but their houses survived a World War and a hurricane, and with the condition

that only seven houses to the acre should be built, the properties easily lend themselves to extensions without crowding. Both Cyril and Stanley died in their 70s, leaving a considerable fortune. With no children or grandchildren to inherit, Barbara, the last of the Morrell widows, made generous bequests to various charities with the bulk going to the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, resulting in a state-of-the-art lifeboat stationed at Dungeness: a boat proudly bearing the name The Morrell. **Stella Etheridge**



Scan to donate
to the RNLI



The legacy

Barbara Morrell, who died in 2009 aged 95, had been a lifelong supporter of the RNLI and included a generous gift of £6m to the charity in her will. The specific request was that it would be used to fund a new lifeboat for Kent, and the gift was able to cover not just a new Shannon-class lifeboat – costing £1.5m – but also a new launch and recovery equipment as well as budget for maintenance and long-term upkeep.

The new lifeboat was named The Morrell in memory of Mrs Morrell, and was launched in 2014 by HRH The Princess Royal. Dungeness was the first RNLI station to receive the then-new Shannon-class boat, and is celebrating its 200th year of operation – having been operational since 1826 (just two years after the RNLI itself was founded). It's always a surprise that, as an island nation, we rely on the volunteers of the RNLI to patrol and protect our coastal waters – and the altruism of donors such as Mrs Morrell. Of course, all donations help, large and small: we've included a QR code to the RNLI website above.

The boat

The RNLI operates over 400 boats of various classes, and the Shannon was the first modern all-weather lifeboat to be propelled by waterjets instead of traditional propellers, making her the RNLI's most agile lifeboat. Designed entirely in-house by a team of RNLI engineers and featuring a composite hull, cutting-edge technology was harnessed to ensure this new lifeboat met the demands of a 21st century rescue service, building on systems developed for her big sister, the Tamar class lifeboat.

Two 650hp, turbocharged and intercooled inline-six engines mean the Shannon is almost twice as fast as the Mersey-class boats they replaced, and her waterjets displace an amazing 1.5 tons of water every second! The waterjets allow the Shannon to operate in shallow waters and she can be intentionally beached. A rapid refuelling system can feed her 2,500 litre tanks at 200 litres per second, reducing turn-around times.

Carrying a crew of six and able to recover up to 61 people at a time, the Shannon lifeboat was designed to be launched and recovered from a beach via a new faster and safer launch and recovery system, but it can also be launched from a slipway or afloat. There are now 50 in service around the UK.



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




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