

WANDSWORTH
MCMXXI
MMXI
SOCIETY

Soirées

On Sunday 3 April ...

the Ward's home had a delightful atmosphere, with people anticipating an evening of musical pleasure as they sipped wine and nibbled nibbles. After we had grouped ourselves into an audience, there was a rush of energy as the four brilliant young clarinetists comprising the Clariphonics, Benjie Del Rosario, Helen James, Helen Pierce and Stuart Smith, entered the room.

They began with Mozart's Overture to the Marriage of Figaro, which was followed by Trois Divertissements by Henri Tomasi. Then Helen introduced a captivating 'almost ragtime' arrangement of Brahms's Hungarian Dances 3 and 7.

After Benjie's stark statement, 'Elliott Carter is still alive', the Clariphonics' performance of Carter's Canonic Suite certainly proved a lively affirmation. The first half of the concert ended with Sondheim's 'Send in the Clowns' – after an apology for the absence of Dame Judi Dench as vocalist.

Following further refreshment and chat in the interval, we settled down happily for the second half, which began with a piece by Jim Powell and was followed by (Astor) Piazzolla's 'Histoire du Tango', which involved castanets or rather the simulated sound of castanets, as well as the clarinet, to evoke the Argentinean tango and nightlife.

Helen was proud to introduce a woman composer, the Parisienne Claude Arrieu, whose Second Clarinet Quartet then followed.

Then, after Helen had explained that Klezmer is the traditional celebratory music of East European Jewry, the soirée finished as it had begun – with the happiness of wedding music – as the Clariphonics played Mike Curtis's, 'A Klezmer Wedding'.

I think we all went home buzzing with joy.
Diana Godden

And on Sunday 12 June ...

the day the Great Drought ended: that memorable day of solid downpour. It may have been manna for farmers and gardeners, but hardly meant the balmy sun-drenched evening for al fresco music and Glyndebourne-style supper interval envisaged and eagerly anticipated by the record audience for the Society's Midsummer Soiree! Nevertheless, the drawing-room music and the dining-room supper provided an evening of rich delights, and the Wards' rain-enhanced garden was a more than usually gorgeous backdrop, seen through the French windows.

We enjoyed a programme comprising two of the most substantial and glorious major chamber works for strings: before supper, the Quintet in G minor by Mozart, and after, Haydn's Quartet in B flat. The Mozart, though beginning and ending with allegri in positive vein, had middle movements of troubled moodiness, disturbing but – particularly to modern ears – enthralling, the minuet being in pace and tone more pavane-like. Haydn's Quartet – also containing a minuet and trio – lived up to its nickname of "Sunrise" in its confident sweep of characteristic tunefulness.

It was altogether a deeply satisfying performance by the Ceruti Ensemble, a 3-year old group dedicated to playing the great works of the chamber repertoire. Its founder, Peter Nall, who plays with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, has named it from the maker of his richly mellow 1810 violin, Giovanni Battista Ceruti of Cremona. His colleagues on June 12th were his cellist wife Lucy (hitherto familiar to us as Lucy Ward!), Ben Harte on violin, and his wife Rebecca, and Anthony Byrne on violas. So, a group of friends, spouses, colleagues in harmony – playing with passion and finesse, evidently relishing communicating the music they love to a close and appreciative audience.

Our warmest thanks to those savvy impresarios of Wandsworth, our most genial hosts David and Elizabeth Ward, for a superb finale to the 24th season of Society Soirees at Patten Road. We are already looking forward with impatience to the 25th, starting on Sunday 9 October next with a recital of song with piano.

Wendy Cater

A thank you ...

The Society is fortunate to have people prepared to put in time and effort to represent us on various bodies and to be members of our sub-committees. Two such are Marjorie and Harry Quince. Harry has represented us on the Wandsworth Conservation Area Advisory Committee since its inception and was initially also on our planning sub-committee. Marjorie has been a long-time member of this committee and kept us up to date on all planning matters in the southeastern part of our area. She is an enthusiastic proponent of the local listing of buildings that are important to us, but not quite up to English Heritage requirements.

Harry and Marjorie are standing down from their respective committees, and we thank them for their contribution to the work of the Society over many years.

Wandsworth Society

June 2011

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Jan Passey - Wendy Cater

Sub-Committee
Convenors
Roads and transport -
to be confirmed

Open Spaces -
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Planning -
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The Society's website is
www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk

40 years on ...

In the beginning

The Society was formed in 1971. Forty years on we flourish still. Some of the issues that concerned us then concern us now, albeit in different guises. Whereas then visions of brave new worlds seemed blind to the merits of our heritage and open spaces, now commercial pressures threaten.

In 1971 a vast swathe of our town centre was cleared to make room for an Arndale Centre. When it opened it was the largest indoor shopping space in Europe. A year earlier Trinity Road, the A24, as it passed through Wandsworth Common, was converted from a two-lane road to a six-lane dual carriageway, providing the opportunity for a heady burst of speed for a scant half mile until it returns to a two-lane road again. But doing nothing to improve the Common

These were the major disasters of what now seems long ago. And still they loom on the horizon. The most recent potential disaster of recent years was the proposed redevelopment of the Ram Brewery site. We were immeasurably pleased that the Planning Inspectorate, and then the Secretary of State agreed with our view that granting planning permission would not be good for the town centre.

However, it is unlikely that the Ram Brewery site will not be redeveloped at some point, and we understand a new application is in the offing. Who knows, this time it might be an imaginative scheme that does not exceed the prevailing building heights, is not an overdevelopment and respects the listed buildings on the site – who knows? The possibility that loins will need to be re-girded currently has the shortest odds. And, if you will forgive the infelicity, we need fresh loins to gird.

Our members

We are a relatively ageing bunch: while some of our founding members have maintained the zeal that prompted the formation of the Society, we feel the need for more, and younger, members. Somewhat frighteningly, we realise we are looking to those who were not yet born when we started.

However, we have been encouraged of late at signs that younger people are taking an interest, and wonder if we amenity groups will experience a renaissance arising from the current attempts to foster a local interest in local affairs.

Our president

In this an anniversary year we are more than pleased that Shirley has agreed to become our president. Our purpose was to recognise her incomparable contribution to the Society, a contribution that has continued ceaselessly for these last forty years. Shirley was one of our founding members, has been our Chairman, and remains campaigner, historian and font of wisdom. Roles to which she has brought, and the more remarkable after all those years, continues to bring, energy and enthusiasm, together with an incisive and clear mind.

From the chair at the AGM

First of all I want to thank all the Executive members for their support and patience as I worked my way into the new role, in particular John Dawson the Secretary and my Vice Chairman Philip Whyte.

This time last year we were waiting for the result of the five-week Inquiry of the previous November (2009) into the proposed redevelopment of the Ram Brewery. In July we heard the news that the application was refused. Jubilation!

The Planning Group has continued the dialogue with both Council and developers on the many projects you will have read about in the Newsletters, including the Ram Brewery site, the Skydec battle and Springfield Hospital. They are also involved in painstaking investigations into plans for the Thames Tunnel, the National Grid Tunnel, the Local Development Framework and the provision of Section 106 contributions, which include Affordable and Social Housing provision by developers, for example those at Battersea Reach.

The Open Spaces Group is chaired by Bruce St Julian-Bown. The group's interest is focused on the Common, King George's Park and the rivers Thames and Wandle. Bruce is now also Chairman of the Wandle Forum, a body engaged in the formation of a regional park in the Wandle valley.

Events: it is good to report that attendance has been consistently up this last year, during which we have enjoyed talks on subjects ranging from Diaghilev to carbon emissions and the history of Wandsworth Common to women in espionage.

And then, of course there was the thoroughly enjoyable 'new look' Christmas celebration concert at the National Opera Studio. Many thanks to my co-members on this committee. To 'compensate' for the lack of traditional party, on 16 July we will celebrate 40 years of the Wandsworth Society on Wandsworth Common at the Nature Study Centre. We have had visits and walks, and David Ward excelled himself this year with his wonderful soirées, including a Lieder recital, an evening of music from a string quartet, a piano recital and the wonderful 'Enoch Arden' evening with Timothy West.

The Roads and Transport Committee battled with potholes, the introduction of 20-mph speed limits in areas of the borough and street clutter. A fascinating survey was produced on their behalf by Rita Rummery on street clutter and the unnecessary proliferation of signs which we will be working on. Unfortunately in December Linda Ulrich had to drop out as chairman of the committee.

The inclusion of Society events in the Newsletter has resulted in more regular editions of the Newsletter. Many thanks to Peter Farrow for these, also for 'Treasuring' (until his resignation) and for serving on the Planning Committee. The Newsletter wouldn't get very far without the many deliverers, and our grateful thanks go to them all.

Membership is the bastion of Gill Gray, with Iain helping with the collection of subscriptions and advertising revenue for the Bedside Edition and the distribution of Newsletters. As a team they organise the wine table for every single event – we think it happens automatically, but of course it doesn't.

Trinity River Walk

Come along and show your support for Trinity Hospice by taking part in a 6 km or 11.5 km stroll along the Thames towpath on 3 July 2011.

Starting in Bishop's Park, this sponsored stroll along the Thames towpath will be a great day out and is suitable for all ages and abilities. It's a perfect opportunity to enjoy scenic views with family and friends whilst supporting your local hospice. All walkers are invited to celebrate their achievement at our finishing reception at

The Larrick Inn, Fulham, for a well-deserved barbecue. The 11 km walk starts at 11.00, the 6 km at 12.15. The entry fee: for adults is £10, children under 16 £5

For more information on the event, please get in touch with Zahra on 020 7787 1044 or email zkhan@trinityhospice.org.uk or go to www.trinityhospice.org.uk/riverwalk2011.

We have a new membership form! Again thanks, in the main, to Peter for designing this, produced by committee as it is.

Lose some, gain some

As I have mentioned, this year I received resignations from Peter as Treasurer in April then in December from Linda as Chair of the Roads and Transport Committee. We have, however, gained volunteers, namely Norman Holmes as Treasurer, Heide Pirwitz, who has taken on the Society's representation on the Wandsworth Environmental Forum (WEF), Ian Ralph on the Planning Committee and David Hole joining Roads and Transport.

All the committees could do with more members. Planning on grounds of pure workload – the sheer number of planning applications and the scrutiny of consultation documents are very time consuming; the Events Group to keep new ideas for speakers coming in; Roads and Transport to cover the variety of interests: street alignment, speed limits, public

transport, street clutter, pedestrian interests, and so on. Please do consider joining, or at least give us feedback on what campaigns you would like to see us run, what attitude you want to see the Planning Committee take, what subjects you would like to have debated.

Website. We need someone to take it over – perhaps redesign it but certainly to keep it up to date.

Finally, congratulations are due to two of our members, Susie Morrow and Robert Molteno, for the launching of Wandsworth Living Streets. We look forward to co-operating with this group.

And for the opening of the Wandsworth Museum in West Hill, congratulations to Sheila Allen, Friends and Trustees. May it now prosper!

Thank you
Valerie Taylor

On Being President ... Forty Years On

Wow, what an honour, President of the Wandsworth Society! Thank you all so much for considering me worthy for the role. Hereward Cooke was our last President. I have a hard act to follow.

So many people have done so much for the Society since we began in 1971 that I am indeed honoured to be chosen. I feel like saying, as they do at the BAFTA awards, this is also for all of them (holds up badge of office).

It occurs to me that societies such as ours are made up of optimists. We always believe that our efforts will make a difference, for the better, in our local areas. We make mistakes and do not always win the argument, but we optimistically continue to try to influence the decision makers.

The Wandsworth Society is a good example of 'The Big Society' at work. We represent a sizable chunk of those who live in our part of the borough and we are able to comment on local affairs without having a particular axe to grind.

I really believe that the amenity societies have slowly brought about a sea change in the way the local environment is perceived and in the recognition that a sense of place is so important for those who live in the big urban areas, and I'm proud to have been part of this process.

It's all been so enjoyable too, with our monthly talks and social occasions, particularly the soirées. Even the Public Inquiries have brought their own excitement and anticipation ... we have won more than we have lost and that gives a sense of achievement.

I'm not sure what a President does, Wikipedia is not helpful (Valerie assured me that it would not entail any extra work) but I shall do my best to represent the Society in a good and proper manner.

Thank you again
Shirley Passmore

Edward and Helen Thomas in Battersea and Wandsworth

Following the AGM on 24 March, two members of the Edward Thomas Fellowship talked to us about the writer and poet Edward Thomas, who was born to Welsh parents in Lambeth in 1878 and died after the Battle of Arras in 1917. Richard Purver, who leads walks to and from the houses where Edward Thomas lived in Wandsworth, told us about the poet's Wandsworth connection, and the writer and broadcaster Anne Harvey interspersed the talk with an accomplished and moving reading of some of the poems.

The first house the family lived in was 49 Wakehurst Road. He mentions 'the hills of snow lining Northcote Road' in his autobiography. The family moved in 1889 to 61 Shelgate Road and attended the Unitarian Chapel in East Hill. Then they went to 15 Grove Road (which became St Anne's Hill) and in 1895 settled at 5 Patten Road, between the Commons.

The young Edward started his education at the local Board School, now Belleville Road School, for a time he attended a private school, then went to Battersea Grammar, and finally won a scholarship to St Paul's in Hammersmith. Descriptions of his schooldays range from him remembering '... crawling in and bursting out, but very little about school itself', which brings to mind Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man', to fiercer battles being waged' with the local grammar-school boys on the Commons, and hanging ... about in corners smoking cigarettes of rolled brown paper'.

It is evident from Thomas's prose and poetry how fond he was of nature and animals. He explored the Commons, made natural-history notes in his diary and kept pigeons, rabbits and white mice. He thought nothing of walking long distances, sometimes leaving early on Sunday mornings to walk to Kingston, and returning to Wandsworth in time for the church service. He also liked paddling in the River Wandle, where he caught minnows.

In 1895 Thomas's country book *Woodland Life* was published and his only novel, *The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans* (1913), which was based on his Anglo-Welsh childhood, opens with the Morgans living in Balham. In 1896 Thomas had met Helen Noble, daughter of the literary critic and journalist James Ashcroft Noble. Helen wrote of Edward that the family nicknamed him 'the genius', and her father introduced him as having 'solemn grey eyes ... and a long, hard grip'.

Helen and Edward went for walks on the Commons, grew fond of each other and became engaged. They were married in June 1899, because she was pregnant, thus interrupting his studies at Oxford to which he never returned. Eventually the couple had three children, the youngest being Myfanwy Thomas the writer.

For three months from November 1900 the young Thomas family lived at 117 Atheldane Road, which no longer exists, and from February to October 1901 they were at 7 Nightingale Parade, Nightingale Lane.. This was a flat

above a parade of shops which is still there on the corner of Blandfield Road, close to where Edward's parents moved to, 13 (now No 12) Rusham Road.

Initially Thomas only wrote prose, but in 1914, advised and encouraged by his close friend the American poet Robert Frost, he began to write poetry and it is for this that he is now best remembered.

Anne Harvey's readings included 'Beyond the Victorian', 'Thrush', 'Adlestrop', perhaps his most famous poem, which gave fame to the little railway station in Gloucestershire, 'Birds' Nests', in which his bird-nesting as a boy is not mentioned, 'March', 'And You, Helen', written to his wife in 1916, which reads almost like a will.

Anne rounded off this interesting evening by reciting 'Good-Night', with its apt last line '... it is All Friends' Night, a traveller's good-night.'

Diana Godden

Wandsworth Historical Society

Wandsworth Historian Fortieth Anniversary Issue

Forty years have passed since the *Wandsworth Historian* first made its appearance and the journal celebrates its anniversary with a special issue packed with fascinating articles - £3.00 plus £1.00 for postage and packing.

'King and Constitution': the Wandsworth Volunteer Infantry 1794 to 1809

Thoughts of Dad's Army and a fear of invasion generally conjure up pictures of England in the Second World War, but this was not the first time the country was forced to react to threats from an overseas power. During the long Napoleonic Wars between France and Britain, Wandsworth, merely a village in Surrey at the time, raised a company of armed Volunteers to counter the menace of attack from the other side of the channel. This new book tells the stirring story of those parish forces and shows how a small community responded to a great event - £4.00 plus £1.50 for post and packaging.

Both publications are available from -
Neil Robson, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or
by emailing ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk. Cheques payable to
'Wandsworth Historical Society', please.

The address of the WHS website is
www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk.

Planning matters

May 2011

Ram Brewery

We are not aware that any new application is pending as neither we nor the council have been consulted. We are seeking another meeting with the developer's architects for the scheme, whom we last met in November 2010.

Skydec

A revised application to alter the existing structure was received just before the expiry of the time limit to comply with the Enforcement Notice issued in February 2010. We have objected to the proposal as we feel that the alterations to the building do not properly reflect the original intentions for the structure and are still excessively high. The treatment of the north (Earlsfield Road) roof elevation appears to be without sympathy to either the existing structure or the adjoining properties.

Springfield Hospital

The application for outline consent for the overall site was refused in late autumn 2010, since when we have been advised that the South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust is considering whether to appeal. It is hoped that a public meeting will be arranged for late June to hear of the Trust's decision.

Battersea Reach

A new detailed application has been submitted for the next phase of the overall development. The planning group was invited to attend with the developers, St George, before Christmas of last year to consider the proposed plans for this phase. We are concerned that the current application is at a significantly higher density than was proposed at our meeting. We have written to express our concerns at the increased height of the buildings, the density of the development, the lack of additional car-parking facilities and the loss of open space. We will also monitor the provision of affordable housing as the residential content is significantly increased, due to the loss of commercial space. An amendment to the Section 106 Agreement will be requested if the application is approved.

Thames Tunnel

We are continuing to monitor the progress of Thames Water's proposals for the new tunnel from Hammersmith to Beckton in East London. Since the tunnel will only be able to collect around 10 per cent of the sewage in the Thames, the Society's view is that the environmental damage and cost for such a limited improvement in water quality opens the whole project to serious challenge. Three sites in the Society's area are proposed for the construction works. The second phase of consultation is expected later this year (September). We are liaising with The West London River Group and others in an endeavour to ensure that local interests are properly considered.

Local listing of buildings

English Heritage is revising the national list of buildings of historic interest. At a recent meeting of Wandsworth Heritage, the new group formed to promote the heritage of the borough, it was decided that the Wandsworth list of locally important, but not nationally listable, buildings should also be updated. The list should include not only buildings but also such things as historic shop fronts and street furniture. Society members are asked to keep their eyes open when travelling around the Borough and if buildings or anything of interest is spotted, could they please contact someone on the Planning Group with photographs and as much detailed information as possible. We will then co-ordinate any suggestions and forward to the borough's Heritage Service.-

Local Development Framework and the London Plan

We continue to monitor the progress of these two important items of planning which are proceeding through their statutory process. The adoption of these proposals will form the basis of the local and regional planning framework for the next ten years or so.

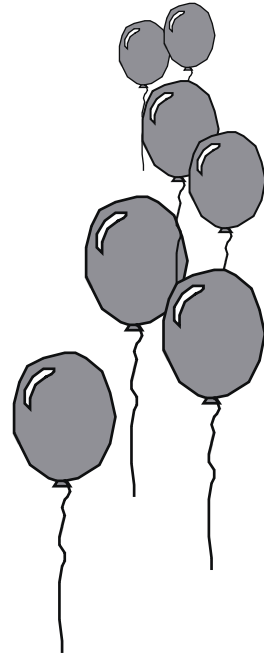
Community Infrastructure Levy

This is a part of legislation brought in last year that alters the basis upon which any local planning authority can require developers to contribute to the area in which their development is proposed. Previously dealt with under the provisions of Section 106 Agreements that planning authorities could impose on new developments, the new legislation will mean that any off-site infrastructure works can be dealt with only under the new legislation, and that local planning authorities are expected to produce a standard tariff that will be applicable borough wide, with specified exceptions. In Wandsworth's case the two exceptions will be Nine Elms and Roehampton, which are considered special cases. We believe that because the assessment is based on floor area, a borough-wide policy will be inequitable, with low-cost housing schemes expected to contribute the same per square metre as high-value schemes. We have made comment on the proposals.

The Planning Group continues to meet monthly and will try to deal quickly with any matters that members wish to raise. Any new member would be most welcome to join the group and should telephone Philip Whyte

Philip Whyte

Come and join us to celebrate
40 years
of the
**Wandsworth
Society**



The Society has had many successes over the years, as well as campaigns which have not turned out as we would have wished ... but we are still here and still working to hold on to, and indeed improve, the best of Wandsworth ...

So - let's party !

Join us on

Saturday 16 July
7 - 10 pm

at

The Nature Study Centre

(between the Common Ground Café (previously Neals) and the Bowling Green)

for a purely social event – time for us to get together and talk to each other, drink wine (and how about some of that Sambrook's beer ... and enjoy some good food on our lovely Common!

There may be some surprises ...

Tickets £5 if pre-booked / £6 on the door, and a contribution of food for the buffet. Please indicate what

you will bring, sweet or savoury, when booking.

Contact Valerie Taylor on 020 88767 3814 or vytprojects@aol.com

For those with disabilities dropping-off and picking-up is permitted in the yard to the rear of the building (accessed from Dorlcote Road). If you require assistance getting to the party please let us know.