

# Wandsworth Society

April 2015



**Is This the Path Along the East Side of the Wandle?  
If So, You Will Need Your Wellies!**  
*(See Page 2)*

# Is There a Glimmer of Hope on the Thames Path Link?

In February, in an attempt to resolve the decades-old campaign to open up the riverside path round the Feathers Wharf waterfront, members of the Wandsworth Society and the Riverside Quarter Residents' Association (RQRA) met Councillors Madden and McCausland as well as council officers. The Feathers Wharf waterfront at the mouth of the River Wandle is, effectively, a gateway to Wandle Valley Regional Park and therefore of major importance to the Park.

During the meeting one of the council officers explained that the reason nothing had so far been done was that they could see no public benefit until the high-level walkway over the waste-transfer station had been opened, thus linking the Wandle Trail and Thames Path. A strange remark, as local community groups have been campaigning about it for years!

The Society and the RQRA pointed out that this path is already safeguarded by the Council, and that to deny the community access to such a valued open space, which should also include a modest piazza area on the river mouth, seems perverse. The recent influx of new riverside residents means that there is now increasing demand for better access to both Trail and Path and such a link would inevitably promote the growth of Wandsworth town centre towards the Thames and the new riverside developments – something that has long been an aim of the Wandsworth Town Centre Partnership.

Because the path itself is already fenced off, we feel that there is no danger that its use would interfere with further developments at the site. A connected Wandle Trail from the Thames would attract ramblers and could bring many visitors to Wandsworth town centre, which would be of considerable economic benefit to the area. In connection with this too, the wildlife zone on the west bank of the mouth of the Wandle can at present be viewed only from Feathers Wharf (east bank).

There may be funding that could be tapped as a result of planning gain under Section 106 – perhaps some £20,000–30,000. Furthermore, as the opening up of the Thames Path is an aspiration of the Mayor's London Plan, funding might be found through the GLA's 'Pocket Park' scheme.

Recently, an application has been received from a developer for temporary use of the Wharf site, a move that could deny the community access for years to come. However, here it seems the councillors support the campaigners' views, and they have agreed to look at ways of resolving this issue. The Society and the RQRA challenged the Council to move quickly to resolve this problem so that the project would not, as so often before, be deferred indefinitely. Our ward councillors accepted the challenge and another meeting is scheduled in approximately three months' time.

Bruce St Julian-Bown

## What's Still Brewing at the Ram?



A delightful video on John Hatch, the one remaining brewer-in-residence at the old brewery has been made by Chocolate Films. This is part of the '1000 Londoners project' (no. 62), a digital project that aims to present a portrait of the city through 1000 people. Go to [1000londoners.com/londoners/john-hatch](http://1000londoners.com/londoners/john-hatch) or [chocolatefilms.com/global-tags/john-hatch](http://chocolatefilms.com/global-tags/john-hatch).

Fans craving more Ram nostalgia can also visit the site of Wade Brice, who worked as a contractor at the brewery for many years. Wade has put together a collection of photos he took while there and is now adding a photographic record of the current demolition. Go to <http://rambrewery.wordpress.com>.

**President**

Shirley Passmore

**Chairman**David Kirk  
15 Aspley Road, SW18 2DB  
020 8874 9167**Vice-Chairman**Philip Whyte  
49 West Side, Wandsworth Common  
SW18 2EE  
020 8874 4745**Secretary**John Dawson  
210 Beechcroft Road, SW17 7DP  
020 8772 4282**Treasurer**Norman Holmes  
Flat 7, Tiffany Heights  
59 Standen Road, SW18 5TF  
020 8877 9616**Membership Secretary**Gill Gray  
Studio 8, Royal Victoria Patriotic  
Building  
SW18 3SX  
020 8870 4567**Committee**Sheila Allen  
13 Earlsfield Road, SW18 3DB  
020 8874 2341Roger Bone  
208 Chapelier House  
Eastfields Avenue  
SW18 1LR  
020 8877 0208Bruce St Julian-Bown  
39c Heathfield Road, SW18 2PH  
020 8874 6966Iain Gray  
Studio 8, Royal Victoria Patriotic  
Building  
SW18 3SX  
020 8870 4567Harry Waddingham  
61 Magdalen Road, SW18 3NE  
020 8874 8784**Events Group**Valerie Taylor  
Wendy Cater - Diana Godden  
David Kirk - Jenny Massey  
Caroline Pook - Libby Spurrier**Sub-Committee Conveners****Roads and Transport**

Harry Waddingham

**Open Spaces**

Bruce St Julian-Bown

**Planning**

Philip Whyte

**Newsletter**

Celia Jones - Nigel

**Distribution**Paschal Allen - Wendy Cater  
Gill Gray - Iain Gray  
Jan Passey - Charles Walton

# Wandsworth Society

April 2015

Spring again! Doesn't it come round quickly! No sooner have the Christmas festivities been and gone but lo, Easter is upon us! We cannot claim to have lambs gambolling on the Common, but with the trees coming into bud it certainly feels as if winter is past.

Enough of this frivolity. The country will shortly have the opportunity to elect a new parliament with, hopefully, as little disruption to life as possible. There appears to be quite a bit of good news coming out at the moment, unemployment continues to fall, housing starts are continuing to rise and schemes to improve communications in travel on rail and road are being implemented all over the country. In London big infrastructure projects are achievable as we have seen from the delivery of the Olympics and the park which is now largely reconfigured. The Vauxhall/Battersea area is one of the biggest projects in Europe and the ability of the various agencies and developers to deliver the different elements is a tribute to the organisations involved. Locally, we have two major projects that will affect the Society's area and members: the Armoury Way road realignment and Crossrail 2. Both projects are some way off but, a bit like Christmas, it is remarkable how quickly they will become real. The Society has engaged actively with both the agencies leading these projects and in the case of Crossrail we believe that local pressure (the Society's included) has resulted in a rethink of the appropriate line for the track that we hope will leave the open spaces of the Common and Trinity Fields undisturbed.

All areas subject to major projects such as these suffer from short-term disruption, but in the long term they should be to the advantage of all. It is just worth reminding you that another major project which has been under way for the last two years is the new tunnel, running from Wimbledon to near Willesden in north London, to provide extra capacity for the National Grid. Have we noticed any disruption from the tunnelling and extra vehicles on the roads? I would suggest not, however work has continued at times on a 24-hour schedule. The Thames tideway tunnel will be the next major project to be undertaken in the borough, assuming no hurdles arise. I am aware that there is some dispute as to whether the project is absolutely necessary, but London has grown significantly since Bazalgette designed our existing system and it is unrealistic to expect it to cope with a city so much larger and more complex than in Victorian times. We should be grateful that so much is being achieved and not always criticise and potentially delay the implementation of projects likely to have long-term benefit to all.

Philip Whyte

Have you seen David Kirk's interview by *South West* magazine, Issue 25 March 2015, Resident's Journal?

# Farewell West Hill! Greetings Battersea Arts Centre!

Wandsworth Museum's journey has been long and dangerous but dogged and courageous. Support from the community and organisations such as ours have helped it to maintain a secure place in the borough: secure in the knowledge that it was valued but not too sure if it had a secure place to rest its head.

It is almost seven years since I received a phone call from a concerned resident telling me about the imminent closure of the Museum in the Court House and inviting the Society to meet other organisations to examine the situation and to take action. There was a great coming together of all local groups and a determination to save the Museum. A brilliantly run campaign began. Help came from all quarters: from the great and the good; from the people in the street, 24,000 of whom signed a petition; the national press covered our story; and the subject was raised in the House of Lords. Nevertheless, the Council persisted with the closure and the Museum was saved only by an outstanding donation from the Hintze Charitable Foundation, who gave sufficient funds to sustain the Museum until this year.

After much searching and negotiating we were offered the former West Hill Library, sharing premises with the glorious De Morgan Collection. We had a rent-free lease for five years and, after considerable adaptation and modification, we opened to great rejoicing in an air-conditioned building that housed and displayed the collection to great effect. Full accreditation was restored and the Museum worked hard to build a respected reputation in the industry with outstanding outreach and education work and numbers of visitors and activities growing year on year. But always the spectre of financial need loomed and in our fifth year we had to accept that the Council's rent-

free period was not going to be continued and we had, once again, to begin the search for a sustainable new home and future.

Timing is everything, and I firmly believe that we have now got it right. There has been a major reorganisation in the arts: the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) was disbanded in 2012 and ACE, the Arts Council of England, now sees the future of museums as in collaboration with arts organisations – and in Battersea Arts Centre we have one of the most vibrant, innovative and exciting arts organisations in the country right on our doorstep. The Centre has recently been awarded a significant ACE grant towards restoration, and the Museum has negotiated a partnership agreement to become an additional element in the Centre's work. The Museum collection will have a lasting home and can be used to tell the story of Wandsworth in new and innovative ways, integrating with the Centre's performance-based programmes. Static displays will be minimal. Our success will form a template for museums nationwide. We moved on 11 March, when the Director and staff took their places in BAC to carry on the work. They will be joined by the band of Friends and volunteers who will continue in their support roles.

We look to community groups such as the Wandsworth Society to come with us, to get involved in fund-raising efforts and to enjoy the many and varied displays and activities at the Wandsworth Museum collection and Battersea Arts Centre. Arts organisations prioritise engagement with their communities, this is their *raison d'être*, and Wandsworth Museum brings with it a very active and committed community which will ensure the fulfilment of our expectations and dreams.

Sheila Allen



*This piece was written before the recent fire at the BAC.*

© Morley Von Sternberg

# Planning News

## **South Thames College/Council offices, High Street and Garratt Lane**

Following the Council's approval of the application for redevelopment, the Mayor returned the papers to the Council stating that he saw no need to call in the matter for further consideration. We are investigating whether a referral to a higher authority is feasible.

## **The Ram Quarter**

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in late January to mark the opening of the show suite and to report on construction progress. Piling works are due to start soon on the basement area. We congratulate the contractors for the way in which the demolition has been carried out, without any great disruption to traffic, very little disturbance to local occupiers and very little noise. The roads close to the site have also been kept remarkably clean. Well done all concerned.

## **Wandsworth Town Gyrotory System**

Members of the Planning and the Roads and Transport groups attended a meeting with TfL, at which we voiced our concerns on various aspects of the proposals and subsequently wrote a comprehensive letter with a plan demonstrating how we believed the town could be best served, incorporating comments and ideas from many sources (including ours!). There will be a further public consultation in the autumn. A start on site is expected in 2017.

## **Springfield NHS Hospital Trust**

A new application had been lodged with the Council for a first phase of development. This caused some consternation as requirements of the original outline planning consent had not been completed; however, at the last Applications Committee meeting consent was granted.

## **Pocket development, Mapleton Crescent off Garratt Lane**

The application for this 24+ storey building has now been made. Although most of the accommodation will

be 'affordable', which we applaud, the location of the site and the immediate environs leave a lot to be desired. Would you like to live opposite one of the service yards for Southside, right next door to a large electricity transformer substation and opposite the fans cooling the cinema? Surely some other use could be found for the site – a park or open public space perhaps! We will make these points in our official response to the application. We are advised that the Council are the freeholders of the site, with a head lease to the Southside owners. A conflict of interest perhaps!

## **Cross Rail 2**

Following the publication of the proposed line of Cross Rail 2 to safeguard land for future possible use, both above and below ground, two sites were identified for construction, ventilation and escape purposes, both of which caused great alarm. One was on the Common, close to the Skylark café and tennis courts, the other at the junction of Trinity Road and Burntwood Lane on land known as Trinity Fields. After great pressure from various bodies, including ourselves, these sites are no longer considered suitable. Others will have to be found, but more suitable locations for the surface working will hopefully be proposed.

## **Holiday Inn, Smugglers Way**

An application has recently been made for an extension of accommodation and refreshment facilities. We have considered the application but find nothing contentious. The site will then be fully built out, but of course there is always B&Q next door!

The Planning Group will welcome any member who wishes to join or observe our meetings. We generally meet on the first Wednesday of the month at member's homes, and a call or email to Philip Whyte will ensure that you are advised of the location of the next meeting.

PW  
chairman@wandsworthsociety.org.uk



Pocket Development viewed from Mapleton Crescent

# Nine Elms:

## Another part of Wandsworth borough's future

On a rather dreary January evening, an audience of about sixty people attended our first meeting of the year, suggesting that many of us were keen to hear 'Just What is Planned for Nine Elms?' Those unfamiliar with this huge redevelopment project learned much from a stimulating presentation by Helen Fisher, the project director. Assisted by Joseph Baker, she talked us through a lot of pictures and information. (The slides used can be found on the Current Concerns page of the Society's website.) Many questions were raised, but there was not enough time for Helen to answer them all.

What impressed first are the scale, complexity and ambition of the project, a partnership between Wandsworth and Lambeth councils – their Leaders chair the project board – and many commercial firms and other bodies. This is a much bigger enterprise than any other re-development scheme in our borough.

Like it or not, the project, worth over £15bn, will transform Nine Elms, with ripple effects on surrounding neighbourhoods. The stated key reason for re-development is to provide up to 25,000 new jobs and 20,000 new homes (3-4,000 of them affordable; 75% with two or more bedrooms), with 'high-quality public space' and 'services available to all'. About half the 6.5m square feet of buildings will be offices. This is effectively a 'new town', little to do with what Nine Elms was before. But, just as the arrival of the railways stimulated industrial activity, so will the tube extension to Nine Elms and Battersea be crucial for the area's redevelopment. The nine elms disappeared long ago; there presumably won't be any again, but there is quite a lot of interesting-looking green space in the project pictures.

A major aim is to make Nine Elms a 'world-class cultural destination' in which 'Vauxhall's thriving galleries and night life and Battersea's creative hub' will 'bookend the area'. Vanhattan, as it is being called, will also add substantially to London's rapidly changing skyline. Views on its architecture may vary. Helen's description of the new US embassy, a massive cube, as 'brilliant architecture' caused some muttering. Nine Elms will house a diplomatic colony: the US and Dutch embassies will move there; other missions, including the Chinese, may follow suit. The area will, of course, be convenient for Westminster and Whitehall.

It is difficult to predict how this diverse new community will develop. What communal spaces, churches, mosques and other religious accommodation will there be, and what health and educational provision? Plans allow for such developments, but what is actually provided will depend on 'customer demand' and funding. Nine Elms will be something of a global village, with many foreign and temporary residents. The place it will become in a decade will depend not just on architects and planners, but on residents and cultural tourists.

The project website describes the Nine Elms project as 'the greatest transformational story at the heart of the world's greatest city'. Perhaps. But Nine Elms will remain a different place, for a different community, from Wandsworth Town – won't it?

David Kirk



View of the Linear Park



Aerial view of the heart of the Nine Elms site



The new US Embassy

# Redesigning our Streets

John Dales, Director of Urban Movement and a Trustee of Living Streets, attracted an excellent turnout for the February meeting. Originally a traffic engineer by profession, he now describes himself as an urban designer – which, he suggested, all traffic engineers should see themselves as.

John proposed that there should be virtually no roads in London, just streets – and that the design of our streets should reflect and support their various functions, for example social and economic, not just movement. *Manual for Streets* (2007) has helped get this wider thinking onto the agenda.

John amusingly illustrated how streets and roads differ in their representation in our culture, including LP covers, films, book titles and social media ('Streetlife' being a prime example). Connotations of the words street and

road tend to differ – compare 'street party' and 'road rage', or 'the word on the street' with 'the rules of the road'. This reflects John's view that streets are for people; he used a quote from Al Murray (AKA the Pub Landlord) to illustrate the self-perpetuating nature and damaging implications of car-dependence: 'Parents drive their children to school in order to protect them from danger presented by other "school-run" parents; so we'll end up with a generation of flat-footed, asthmatic kids, with no sense of direction.'

Designing streets isn't straightforward, people have differing needs and preferences, and these may change over time. How to measure street changes isn't obvious; making a street more interesting might mean that someone lingers (perhaps indulging in a little chat), thus increasing their journey time.

Although walking is the fundamental mode of transport – nearly everyone walks and the national foot ownership rate is given as c.2/person – it is often



© Warrington Cycle Campaign

undervalued by businesses and decision-makers; TfL research, however, shows that walking is usually the local high street's most valuable mode of access. Even so, we have all experienced environments that seem designed to discourage people from walking, whether it be cutting off obvious 'desire lines' with pedestrian benchmarking study of cycling for TfL (see <http://tinyurl.com/mz9q2n2> and <http://tinyurl.com/qcfegle>). Cities with a high proportion of cyclists take it seriously as a mode of transport, in contrast to the 'lip-service provision' common here. One reason is that designing for cycling in successful cycling cities isn't ghettoised – it's just a normal part of professionals' jobs. A holistic, practical approach to street design is needed – we should be asking 'what are we trying to achieve here?' and 'What is the purpose of the street furniture?' – rather than slavishly adhering to standards.

It was encouraging to see examples of improved streets elsewhere in London, including nearby Clapham. As the wide-ranging Q&A session after John's talk highlighted, Wandsworth Council hasn't, yet, sought John's advice. Achieving change, and especially introducing new street layouts, isn't easy; barriers are political, social, and professional. However, Einstein's axiom that 'We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them' is clearly demonstrated in our streets.

To those expressing concerns about motorists, John reiterated his remarks about the fundamentals: what do our cities need; what makes sense, in terms of transport, for the city? These should be our guiding principles in thinking about how we design and manage our streets.

I couldn't have put it better myself.

Susie Morrow



Side road repaved for pedestrian priority (© Esther Kurland)

# Winter Walks

The lovely summer walks along the rivers of London needed to be shortened for winter, so, in recent months Caroline Pook has concentrated on points of interest rather than mileage.

A winter amble felt just right after Christmas: in January twelve of us pottered round Walthamstow, which had easily enough places of interest to justify the trip. After visiting the thriving local museum, we saw Edwardian terraces; the 15th-century Ancient House next to a Georgian house; former almshouses; and many one-time schools (where did all their pupils come from?). Then on to the impressive Waltham Forest Town Hall of 1941, shining in the winter sun, and and so round into the former back gardens (now Lloyd Park) of William Morris's house, where Caroline's official walk ended. The museum's excellent tea room (always a important part of any walk) was welcome for a light lunch to restore our inner selves. Going round the house we were reminded of Morris's many talents: painter, designer of furniture, tapestry, textiles and stained glass, examples of all of which are on display. Just right for a day of discovery.

In February ten of us walked from Hampstead

Heath station up to the top of Parliament Hill with its stunning views before dropping down to Highgate Ponds. At the men's bathing pond swimmers were going along in a leisurely fashion, chatting the while. Despite the nip in the air, no one was wearing a wetsuit, indeed we were told at the ladies' bathing pond that wetsuits, while not forbidden, are rather frowned upon. Past the rest of the ponds and up a muddy side path to Athlone House garden (the garden and its 1930s house were that day the subject of a planning meeting). And so to Kenwood House, designed by Robert Adam, now clean and gleaming, which several of us recalled from the outdoor concerts on the lawns, and where Caroline's walk ended. Here again the tea room beckoned and didn't disappoint, reviving us for the visit to the house and its outstanding collection of painting and furniture – Vermeer, Rembrandt, Landseer, Gainsborough, Reynolds and more, all for free!

Jenny Massey

*Forthcoming walks are listed on p.12, but for full details of each walk please see the Events programme page of the Society's website.*



# Events of Interest Elsewhere in the Borough

## Wandsworth Fringe Festival

This year's festival runs from 1 to 17 May. The Society's contribution is a talk arranged for 7 May (see p.12). A handful of the events is listed below, for the full programme see [www.wandsworthartsfestival.com](http://www.wandsworthartsfestival.com).

8 May, at All Saints Church, Wandsworth High Street, *Hansel and Gretel*, the National Opera Studio and Burntwood School Chamber Choir. <http://www.nationaloperastudio.org.uk>.

12 May, at World Heart Beat Music Academy, Kimber Road, a workshop with Cleveland Watkiss and the Stardust People Choir. <http://www.worldheartbeat.org>.

14, 15, 16 May, at Mary Magdalene Hall, Trinity Road, *Time and the Conways*, the Magdalene Players. <http://www.magplayers.org.uk/>.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Wandsworth Heritage Festival

This runs from 23 May to 7 June. The Society's contribution is a talk on 4 June (see p. 12). For a taster of the events planned see below, and for the full programme go to [www.better.org.uk/areas/wandsworth/news](http://www.better.org.uk/areas/wandsworth/news).

23 May, Wandsworth Town Library, an all-day programme of talks will include 'Bringing a war memorial to life' by Geoff Simmons; 'Living Wandle Landscape Partnership'; 'Great Ward Poetry' with Simon McNeill Ritchie, and 'Keeping the Lights Burning', Mike Grahn.

26 May, Southfields Library, 'Poetry from the archives', a series of poems drawing on the collections held by Wandsworth Heritage Service.

30 May, Earlsfield Library, 'Archaeology and local history on Earlsfield's doorstep', a family drop-in session organised by the Wandsworth Historical Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

## London Open Garden Squares Weekend

13 and 14 June

The Share Community Horticulture Project at Springfield Hospital will be open, and there will be a stall selling plants and serving teas. Also open are Grove House Estate, Roehampton, and the Thrive Garden in Battersea Park. See [www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org).

575 Wandsworth Road, a modest 19th-century house transformed by the poet Khadambi Asalache and now owned and managed by the National Trust has reopened for the 2015 season. A group from the Society visited the house a while ago. For further information go to [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk).



© Wandsworth Heritage Service

# Wandsworth Society Talks and Events

Unless otherwise stated, all events will be at 7.45 for 8 pm in West Side Church, at the corner of Melody Road and Allfarthing Lane, SW18 2QQ. Please go to [www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk](http://www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk) for latest details.

Thursday 9 April

## Parliamentary Election Hustings

This will be your chance to question local candidates. Five speakers, representing five of the 'main' parties, will be drawn randomly from three constituencies (Battersea, Putney and Tooting).

---

Thursday 23 April

## Walk to Eltham Palace

A 4-mile walk; entrance to house and garden £10.20/£9.20. Meet outside M&S in Clapham Junction Station at 9.40 am. Full details on website.

---

Thursday 7 May

(note change of date)

## Restoring an Artist's Village

Perdita Hunt, Director of the Watts Gallery Trust, will talk about the project to save the artist's house and studio in Surrey. This is the Society's contribution towards the Wandsworth 2015 Fringe Festival.

---

Monday 18 May

## Walk along the River Cray

A 7-mile walk, also visiting Hall Place; entry to house £8/£6. Meet outside M&S in Clapham Junction Station at 9.30 am. Full details on website.

---

Thursday 4 June

## Plots, Plans and Goings-on beneath London

An illustrated talk by Michelle Welbourn of Wandsworth Museum. This is the Society's contribution towards Wandsworth's 2015 Heritage Festival.

---

Friday 19 June

## Walk along the River Pinn

A 7-mile walk. Meet at 10.00 am outside M&S in Clapham Junction Station. Full details on website.

---

**Dates for your diary – full details in the next Newsletter**

7 July: Walk and visit to the Watts Gallery, Compton, near Guildford.  
19 November: First World War presentation: film, music and readings.