

Wandsworth Society

Newsletter September 2016

A view across the Old Burial Ground, in early August 2016

The demolition of the old council office building reveals the Old Court House, and the cranes ready to raise the Ram Quarter to new heights

And here there will be a 26-storey tower, right on the boundary of the Old Burial Ground to help *transform it into a much more useful and welcoming green amenity space* (see the Editorial on page 3)



and what's coming next ...



Planning News - Late Summer 2016

The new Mayor of London has announced that one of the policies he will be pursuing is a higher proportion of "affordable" homes in new housing schemes. One of the problems in the past has been that developers have been allowed to subject their proposals to a viability test which "could demonstrate" that, with any greater provision of "affordable" content, the scheme would be unviable. This, with all due deference to any members who are actuaries, is like asking two actuaries to agree a suitable figure for inclusion in accounts!! What it really has meant is that too much has been paid for the land in the first place. Time will tell if Sadiq's aspirations can be achieved.

Homebase, Swandon Way

We were very pleased that the latest application, considered on 27 June, with the officers' recommendation to grant, was refused. Fairfield Councillors presented a case for reconsideration which supported the Society's and many other objectors' grounds for refusing the revised proposals. But there will no doubt be further proposals for the site. Among other concerns, we shall seek advice about the retention of the mature trees along the road frontage that were planned to be removed and replanted.

Point Pleasant, Osiers Road

The application by Frasers Property for a 19-storey tower has received many objections, including the Society's. No further advice at time of writing, but we are keeping a hopeful eye on developments.

Garratt Place, East Hill and Garratt Lane

Demolition is now well under way (see cover). It appears that the contractors are managing the site well – little noise or disturbance (as yet), it seems. Somewhat surprisingly too, vehicles entering and leaving the site do not seem currently to be adding significantly to traffic congestion at the northern end of Garratt Lane.

Crossrail2

Further information has been published by Crossrail. Interested parties in and around Balham have presented their views to the project. The Society continues to support the original proposed route, with a new station at Tooting. We shall be writing to the Council Leader to emphasise the long-term benefits of the 'Tooting option', despite the problems of ventilation shafts and access requirements, and expected additional costs.

1-9 Church Row (2016/3558)

As part of the redevelopment of the Brewery site, buildings on Church Row were retained by the original developers, Minerva, whose architects, EPR, recently invited the Society to consider plans for their redevelopment. The buildings will be principally returned to residential use, with welcome plans to extend the riverside walk. We shall be commenting on an application that appears to be a sympathetic restoration – plus new buildings that are not 20 storeys high!

Wandsworth Gyrotory

TfL has revised some of its plans following consultation (see page 6), but the scheme remains pretty much as previously designed. One good adjustment is to permit all traffic to proceed down East Hill to the junction with Garratt Lane and make a left turn there. The scheme is evidently on course for a 2017 start.

100 Garratt Lane – Big Yellow Storage (2016/3025).

A revised application has been submitted to rebuild the frontage building which will reduce the delivery/parking area and restrict views across the site to the River Wandle. We shall be commenting, but, as the application does not add significantly to the height of the building and is not seeking a change of use, our comments will be restricted to 'public realm' improvement and signage.

The Limes, Lime Avenue

An application (2016/3054) has been made to raise the roof height of the existing buildings to provide additional residential accommodation. The buildings are not listed, but considered an attractive, mostly unchanged, 1930s example of residential development. We were asked by Society members and others to support the many objections and have done so. A previous application was refused by the PAC, and an appeal lodged, but then withdrawn.

Thames Tideway Tunnel

An application has been received by the Council to discharge one of the many conditions imposed by the Development Consent Order. This is of significance – but it is a matter, I fear, that we can do nothing about. Several mature trees will be felled at the northern tip of King George's Park to permit a dig site.

Finally, this is the last call for buildings, landmarks, or anything else which is considered worthy to be added to the 'locally listed' buildings list. I have to confirm the Society's suggestions to the Council in mid- September.

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Wandsworth Society

September 2016

From the Chair This Newsletter reflects the range and diversity of the Society's interests: the manufacture of early gramophone records in Earlsfield; the excellent new buildings of Burntwood School; bees and honey; forthcoming Society talks, on the development of the new 'Ram Quarter' (note a 7.30 start!) and Council policies on street trees; a commemoration, in music, words and pictures, of an English composer killed in 1916; and of course our ongoing environmental concerns, on all of which we seek to represent community views and work constructively with public bodies.

Our cover illustrates a transition: the Old Burial Ground, Wandsworth Town (photographed by Peter Farrow in August) and its surrounds are changing rapidly. Work has started on a "landmark... regeneration and investment scheme", the Council announced recently. "[S]ites in the high street and Garratt Lane are being prepared for construction to begin on 200 new homes, a better public library, new shops and *a more attractive town centre green space*". The scheme will "make better public use of ... *an important but underused green space*". New pedestrian links will be opened up... The new state-of-the-art library will... form part of this route... The Old Burial Ground will... benefit from a facelift ... [with] new public art and additional seating ... [and become] a *much more useful and welcoming green amenity...*".

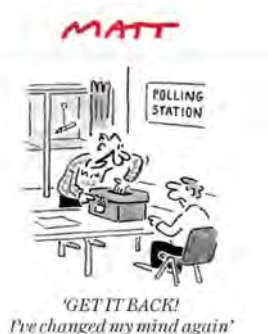
The Council's accompanying publicity images do not show the overwhelming 26-storey tower that will replace the 9-storey building currently swathed in white (see cover picture). The fine Old Courthouse (our former Museum, currently a good library in an appropriate setting), visible in our picture, will be 'sold off'. The Society will continue to take a close interest in all this, from new towers to trees and gravestones.

The principal focus of our and many others' objections was of course the excessively tall tower. It was therefore very welcome, as Philip Whyte notes (opposite), that the Society, working closely with other local groups and Fairfield Councillors, was able recently to persuade the PAC to reject a similarly excessive development on the Homebase site, Swandon Way.

PS Our 'workers' (more always welcome!) are all volunteers; our activities cost money. The Society's November meeting will therefore be preceded by a short Special General Meeting when approval will be sought for an increase in subscription rates, following earlier discussion at our AGM.

David Kirk

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The most important event this summer? (From the Daily Telegraph)

Columbia Graphophone Company in Earlsfield – talk by Tom Going



For the Society's meeting on 9 June – part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival – Dr Tom Going gave a fascinating, multi-media presentation about Earlsfield's Columbia Graphophone Company. The audience of about 70 (almost a record itself?!), members and non-members, were treated to locally-made recordings and the opportunity to examine recording discs, a recording cylinder and records themselves.

The company was established in the USA in 1887, first producing wax cylinders and then shellac discs. Shellac, the product of an Indian insect, was mixed with powdered rock and slate dust to form the records in huge hot presses.

Columbia records had a better quality of sound than the competition, owing to the records' unique three-layer structure – clearly seen in the examples passed around the audience for closer scrutiny. The Bendon Valley factory, first built in 1906, employed over 2,000 men and women in the late 1920s, only closing in the 1930s after a merger to form EMI in 1931 - a response to the Depression and competition from the 'wireless' ('radio', for younger readers!). Much of the Wandle-side factory still stands in Bendon Valley, now housing small business units.

A highlight of Tom's presentation was an excerpt from a film, 'How a Columbia record is made', that was shot mostly in the Earlsfield factory in 1928. Perhaps some of us wondered if great-auntie Madge was among the people shown working here, or streaming out of the factory at the end of the working day? Footage included Stravinsky, making a master recording on wax in France, sent over to Earlsfield for mass production. The factory also recorded 10" records, often for dance music; the River Wandle was put to good use, 60,000 gallons a day of Wandle water being used to cool the 160 record presses and newly pressed records.

Our thanks go to Tom for a most engaging and enjoyable insight into a previously neglected part of local history. Some media-related companies, on a rather smaller scale, remain a focus of Wandsworth's riverside industry, forming a direct lineage from Columbia Graphophone Company.

Susie Morrow

Visit to Burntwood School, RIBA Stirling Prize-winner

On the evening of 12 July some 50 Society members and guests were able to enter the distinctive archway entrance of Burntwood School, not as apprehensive teenagers, nor as prospective parents, but to take part in a guided tour. The redeveloped school buildings won the Stirling Prize, awarded annually by the Royal Institute of British Architects, in 2015.

We were led in two groups, one by Helen Dorfman, the Principal, and the other by Howard Jackson, a Deputy Principal who is in charge of the built environment of the school.



Burntwood was originally designed in the 1950s on a campus site by modernist architects, including Sir Leslie Martin, designer of The Festival Hall. The original buildings were past their "sell by" date and the school fortunately just squeezed in as one of the last of the "Building Schools of the Future" (before that programme was halted by the coalition government). It enabled the redevelopment of almost the whole campus between 2011 and 2014.

The design of the new school by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris has been clever in making the £41 million budget go a long way, incorporating quite detailed requirements from the client, including the need to keep the school running effectively during the build period. The lay-out is now a cluster of eight blocks, including two refurbished original buildings and six new ones. The new buildings use pre-cast concrete technology which produces a

sculptured façade with interesting shadows. The blocks are discrete and not connected by passage ways, because the staff were keen that students should have a bit of fresh air between teaching periods.

Most distinctive are the clever interiors of the new buildings, with double height voids and mezzanine levels which bring internal interest. Throughout, natural daylight is a major feature as the school wanted all students to have a connection with the outdoors. Colour is used cleverly to differentiate the buildings so that they don't all seem the same to the students.

Consultation groups with older students were used at various stages to determine what they wanted, and to find solutions to the perennial problems of teenage behaviour and care of their environment – for example, the seating in the grounds has been designed in such a way that the students cannot sit on the backs of benches and put their feet on the seats! And a sixth former told me that standards of behaviour, such as litter-dropping, have improved markedly.

For me the abiding memory will be the central walkway. As the school did not want covered ways between buildings, they were not included in the build budget. In the event, the school realised that the distance from the main entrance to the sports hall was enough to deter even the hardest from wanting to exercise on a wet day. So they acquired a series of “off the peg” bus shelters which, placed end to end, make an effective and economic shelter from rain (see my picture below).



Burntwood is a great example of good building practice, fit for purpose and delivered to a tight budget without major disruption during the building process. Those who were able to repair to the Leather Bottle*

for the remainder of the evening had a lot to talk about – even if our planned al fresco supper around the Shepherd's Shack had to be abandoned owing to earlier heavy rain.

Caroline Pook

**A hostelry that played a significant role in the mock elections of the 'Mayor of Garratt' in the late eighteenth century (see cover of April Newsletter).*

A Society visit to the Hive Honey shop in Northcote Road

A 'full shop' of Society members and guests spent a fascinating hour on 20 July with our host, James, a fourth generation bee- keeper, hearing about all aspects of honey production through to marketing. We were shown a collection of old and foreign beehives, heard about the overblown claims for Manuka honey, learned how the bees' 'wobble dance' means 'where to go', how 'single flower' honey can be ensured, and how far bees fly.

We were given the exact measurements for bees to operate happily in a hive without feeling crowded or 'spaced out', told they fly at around the height of a bus and how long it takes before the honey is ready to 'harvest'. And James recounted how he had watched Asian workers clambering up swaying rope ladders to cut honeycombs on a sheer rock face with a blade on the end of a stick.

The shop itself has a wide range of honey and bee-related items, including a huge selection of different honeys, cosmetics, health products and gifts - and you can see some 20,000 of his honey bees at work on five frames at the rear of the shop (their exit to Wandsworth's flowers is through a tube to the rear of the shop). Local unpasteurised honey is made at James' bee farm in Surrey as well as from his other hives.

Pay a visit to this interesting place or have a look at its website thehivehoneyshop.co.uk.

Jenny Massey



‘Round and round’ – TfL’s revised plans for Wandsworth Town Gyrotory



Transport for London announced in July three changes to the Gyrotory proposals consulted on earlier this year:

1) TfL has agreed that it no longer needs the short section of the westbound bus lane along Wandsworth High Street from Wandsworth Town Hall to Garratt Lane. Local traffic would therefore continue to be able to make the left turn from Wandsworth High Street into Garratt Lane.

2) Following discussion, TfL agrees that closing Barchard Street’s western end onto Ram Street (with full access allowed from Fairfield Street) will mean that residents have access, but ‘rat running’ will be discouraged.

3) ‘Black cabs’ will have access to the ‘bus and cycle only’ section of Wandsworth High Street. TfL will continue to consider details such as loading, parking and exemptions for taxis.

David Kirk

Twenty's Plenty...



...argues Robert Molteno, a member of the Society's Roads and Transport Group, and the Secretary of Wandsworth Living Streets.

On 5 July Conservative and Labour members of the Council’s Community Services Committee decided unanimously that **all local residential streets in our borough will soon have a speed limit of 20mph** (currently about three-quarters have a 30mph limit). The decision followed borough-wide consultation earlier this year: 3,382 residents responded, 59% wanting to make the streets where we live safer, quieter, and less polluted.

When will the 20mph speed limit take effect?

The money – £725,000 – is already available in the Council’s Local Implementation Plan for 2016-17. It will be spent on signage, including 20mph roundels on the carriageway. And we can expect full implementation ‘next Spring’.

Exceptions?

Yes. Unlike some Inner London boroughs, Wandsworth will for the present retain a 30mph speed limit on 38 bigger roads. In our area these A and B roads are: (north-south) Garratt Lane, Buckhold and Merton Roads, and Bolingbroke Grove; and (southwest-northeast) Spencer Park and Earlsfield Road, and Burntwood Lane, Bellevue Road and Nightingale Road. And 30mph stays the limit for TfL’s Red routes – South Circular, Trinity Road and Tooting High Street.

Is it really a ‘transformation’?

Local residents’ decision, endorsed by the Council, could be the harbinger of the biggest change to our streets in generations. It will help create a public space that is safer, quieter, and more attractive. It recognises the diversity of street users – local shoppers on foot; commuters and pedestrians accessing public transport; cyclists; users of local markets, cafes, bars; children playing on quiet residential streets. And it recognises that streets not only facilitate movement, but often have a ‘place function’— where we live and where we want to enjoy local facilities, including local shops.

Challenges ahead?

Changing the speed limit is only a first step. Compliance requires drivers to accept the logic of lower speeds in heavily populated, built-up environments. As well as a change in attitudes, enforcement is needed to deal with the minority of drivers who may seek to break the law. Wandsworth Living Streets is urging the Council to make a real effort to raise public awareness of the benefits of a lower speed limit for all, including drivers.

There is a strong case for some stretches of A and B roads also to get a 20mph speed limit. Many local people live on these roads. 17 (20%) of Wandsworth schools are located on them. (Children at St Anne’s C of E, High View and St Mary’s RC schools suffer from particularly bad air quality). A and B roads are also where shops, cafes and bars are concentrated, so they have many more pedestrians than purely residential streets. Little wonder that in 2011-14 some 45% of all road casualties occur on such streets, including over half (53%) of those killed or seriously injured in the borough. This is why 36% of ‘consultees’ wanted a 20mph speed limit on some stretches, or all, of these busy roads. More needs to be done to make these bigger roads, as well as the Red Routes, safer, less polluted, and more attractive places for shoppers and others.

But be in no doubt. Our borough has made a significant step forward, along with most of the rest of Inner London, in transforming our city.

Wandsworth's Diversity

The new Tara Theatre, Earlsfield



(Picture – Helene Binet)

Sadiq Khan, along with the Mayor of Wandsworth and our new local MP, opened the – specially sourced – Indian doors of the ‘new’ Tara Theatre (256 Garratt Lane) on 1 September, a theatre which, he said, “has always held a special place in my heart... This new space embodies all that is great about London, with diversity and creativity built into the very fabric of the building. It proves that London is open to all and that the capital’s cultural gems are not confined to Zone 1”.

Tara is the oldest diverse multicultural theatre company in the UK. Its founding Artistic Director, Jatinder Verma (who has directed at the National Theatre) says that “Connecting the worlds of story and imagination have been in Tara’s DNA since our first play [at the now Battersea Arts Centre] in 1977...This is the realisation of a life-long dream to create a world class building right in the heart of the community we serve.”

The new theatre, developed with support from Arts Council England, other trusts and foundations and over 1,400 individuals, was designed by Julian Middleton. It has a 100-seat auditorium, a fully sound-proofed rehearsal studio and workshop space, rooftop offices, a bar and a patio garden. There are solar panels and a green sedum roof.

Ravi Govindia, Council leader, said: “For decades Tara

has been a positive voice for the Asian community.... Their imaginative, challenging programmes explore different cultures and beliefs and have done a great deal to strengthen and celebrate the common threads which connect us.

The first major production (15 September – 18 October) is an adaptation of Abdul Halim Sharar’s 1899 novella, *Paradise of the Assassins* – written and directed by Anthony Clark who directed the company’s first professional production (“*The Lion’s Raj*”) in 1983. It is the first theatrical staging of a “resonant tale of a young man seduced into a terrorist creed, before love redeems him”.

Tara collaborates with regional theatres under the ‘Black Theatre Live’ umbrella. This season offers Britain’s first all-black *Hamlet* (25 to 29 October), directed by Jeffrey Kissoon, and a production by Ambreen Razia of *The Diary of a Hounslow Girl* (1 to 3 November). This is described as an “acerbic comedy told through the sharp, straight-talking voice of an aspirational 16 year old British Muslim girl”.

An Anglo-Japanese children’s theatre company, ‘A Thousand Cranes’, offers a magical Shakespearean adventure for children, *Round the World in 40 Minutes*, on 22 October. A new company, *Leviathan Goat*, will be presenting Robert Mountford in ‘*Vagabonds – My Phil Lynott Odyssey*’ on 4 – 5 November. And the season ends with Tara’s Christmas ‘panto-with-a-twist’: *Jack (and the Beanstalk)* is re-invented as ‘*Bollywood Jack!*’

It’s really worth having a look at www.tara-arts.com/search

History of Battersea Park

The Friends of Battersea Park – which is no ordinary park – have just published a lively new history of the park by Jennifer Ullman, Manager of the Park from 1998 – 2008 and a Trustee of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and the RSPB. Copies are available (£10 + £2.50 P&P) from www.batterseapark.org/book.

Congratulations...

...to Rosena Alin-Khan on winning Sadiq Khan’s former Tooting seat (with an increased Labour majority). **For the first time Wandsworth’s three MPs are women!** The Society’s area of interest straddles their constituencies, so we shall welcome their continuing interest in our concerns. Congratulations, too, to our Conservative MPs on their recent promotions: Justine Greening, (Putney) now Education Secretary and Jane Ellison (Battersea) Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

David Kirk

Wandsworth Society Calendar of Events

Meetings

Members and visitors welcome. For updates, see www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk

Thursday 15 September, **7.15 for 7.30 (NB!)**,
West Side Church, Melody Road, SW18 2QQ

The 'cultural strategy' for the new Ram Quarter (the former Ram Brewery site)

an illustrated presentation by Steve Still, Greenland's UK Project Director, and Alessandra Grinasci, 'Future City' project manager. They will welcome your comments and questions.

Thursday 13 October, 7.45 for 8,
West Side Church, Melody Road, SW18 2QQ

Street trees of Wandsworth: purchase, planting, maintenance and removal.

Why we do what we do and why we do it when we do it.

Illustrated talk by Pat Langley, Arboricultural Manager (Enable) for Wandsworth Council.

Thursday 10 November, **7.15 for 7.30 pm (NB!)**,
West Side Church, Melody Road, SW18 2QQ,

7.30 (prompt): Special General Meeting; 8 o'clock: A World War 1 Centenary

commemorating the untimely death in battle of the brilliant young English composer, George Butterworth (best known perhaps for his setting of Housman's A Shropshire Lad). Andrew Neill, Society member and English music expert, will present an account in words, pictures and music of that event. Andrew was responsible for the much-admired programme, 'The Woods Cry Out' (which the Society helped to organise), at Wandsworth Town Hall last November.

Friday 9 December, 7 for 7.30,
St Anne's Church Hall,

The Society's Christmas Party

details TBA

Walks and Outings

In July, Caroline Pook reports, we held the last of our 6-8 mile walks along London's rivers – a programme begun in 2014 to give us at least a glimpse of how the Thames tributaries within London compared with the Wandle. We have enjoyed walking along 10 rivers (some in two excursions) and were amazed at the variety of open-space and wildlife that we have seen, whether in manicured parks, golf courses, open countryside or urban areas undergoing redevelopment. The Society's outings programme will continue, however, some on weekdays and some in the evenings; some needing to be booked and some 'turn up and go'; some with a walk and some without.

Friday 7th October:

Visit to 575 Wandsworth Road

at 3.30pm.

Cost £7, payable on entry (free for National Trust members). This fascinating tiny house, with its fretwork walls (pictured below), can take only six visitors at a time – so places are very limited! To book, email caroline@pookfamily.co.uk.



Friday 18th November:

Visit to Sutton House & Breakers Yard

in Hackney to see a small Tudor house (pictured below) - in an unexpected setting. The visit will be followed by an optional canal side walk, with a stop for lunch. Entry to Sutton House is £5; free for National Trust members. No booking required. Join the group at 10am outside M&S Simply Food, Clapham Junction Station.

