



“The Battle’s O’er”



Photo by Nigel Davies

Piper John Shipton plays *The Battle’s O’er* at the War Memorial on 11th November

JEREMY HUDSON reports on Wimbledon’s contribution to the First World War.

AT 6 AM ON Remembrance Sunday Piper John Shipton played “The Battle’s O’er” at the Wimbledon War Memorial, to mark 100 years since the Armistice was signed and the guns fell silent on the Western Front. The ceremony included a reading of Rupert Brooke’s “The Soldier” by James Leek, whose essay on the War Memorial was entered in the Richard Milward Essay competition in 2014. A crowd of over 200 braved teeming rain to witness

this event, and to remember the men and women of Wimbledon who perished in the Great War.

Over 10,000 men from Wimbledon and Merton did military service during the War, many of them volunteers. At least 1,200 were killed, and the devastating effect on the local community can hardly be imagined. Families which suffered included that of Private James West from Effra Road whose death the previous June was reported in the *Wimbledon Borough News* for 5th February 1916: “*This young soldier was mentioned in these columns as missing, but no tidings ever reached the wife or*

parents until now ... He was married and leaves a widow and three little sons.”

Over 700 local men responded to the initial call for recruits in 1915 and joined the 190th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, which became known as “Wimbledon’s Own”. This was the last ‘Pals battalion’ formed during the War, units which comprised friends, workmates and people from the same town who enlisted on condition that they would remain together. Sadly, this meant that they often died together.

Information about, and photographs of, the 190th Brigade were displayed in the recent exhibition at the Museum featuring material gathered as part of Merton’s “Carved in Stone” project. The Society is extremely grateful to the Merton Heritage Service, and in particular to Sarah Gould, for their help in putting our exhibition together.

As the exhibition showed, the War touched Wimbledon in other ways too. 200 acres of the Common were requisitioned to create an Army training ground and temporary billets for recruits. 192 barrack blocks were located by Camp Road. 240,000 troops passed through the camp during the War. Two training aircraft from the Royal Flying Corps were stationed near the Windmill, (continued on p3)

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Chairman's view

I RECENTLY ATTENDED my first-ever Bookfest event, on Wimbledon Common. According to the organisers, 18,000 attended over the course of 10 days in early October, including 4,500 Merton school children, which I think is remarkable. Wimbledon's International Music Festival is coming up later in November – a rich and varied programme comprising 17 concerts.

There is manifestly a real appetite in the local community for high-quality cultural events in Wimbledon. How attractive it would be then to have our own Civic/Arts/Concert venue in our town centre. Alas, Merton Council's draft "Future Wimbledon Masterplan" does not make any provision for an arts centre, which I personally regard as one of its major failings.

The importance of the draft plan cannot be overstated. The Society has for some time been urging the Council to produce a plan for the town centre, and indeed we produced a plan of our own two years ago. So, the Council's draft is to be welcomed, and indeed it is clear that a huge amount of work has gone into it (it runs to 136 pages!). However, as we explain later on in this Newsletter the plan appears to be anchored to a proposal to convert Wimbledon's current status to a Metropolitan Centre which means doubling the amount of commercial floorspace. This in turn would necessitate trebling the height of some office buildings. Is that really what we desire for our town centre? Who would benefit from this change of status? The Society is preparing its response and your input will be greatly welcomed.

The Council's plan was the major topic of discussion at the Society's 'Away Day' on 3rd November, and it was good to see so many of our members there. By the time you read this the Society's "Wimbledon in the Great War" exhibition will be over, and I hope that many of you will have had a chance to visit this.

Finally, a couple of dates for your diary. The Society's AGM will be on 11 May. On 19 October we will be hosting a major social event for members at the Wimbledon Club.

JEREMY HUDSON

Comments on our story of Maud Ingram Croft



From Hong Kong,
Maud's niece Audrey
Dunnithorne writes:

“The Ingram family was not academic. At that time, any boy with money could get into Oxbridge, if he could pass an entrance exam easier than O levels.

Like many British professional people of that generation, the Ingrams had a certain pragmatic, perhaps rather sensible contempt for university life, as something which might have to be gone through but which, like adolescence, was thankfully soon left behind.

Books, except for the Bible, a few religious and some necessary professional volumes, did not play an important part in life at the Priory. The only bookshelves I can remember were in my grandfather's old study which his widow Victoria used as her sitting room.”

Audrey's Memoirs are soon to be published and we look forward to following the Ingram story and that of Audrey herself.

From Cllr Kelly Braund:

“Thank you very much for the Wimbledon Society's newsletter.

In particular, as a solicitor and a feminist, I very much enjoyed reading about Maud Ingram Crofts.

It is wonderful that Merton has so many pioneering women and a thank you to the Society for taking the time to remind us of their colourful lives.”

The Boundary Commission Review

THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION for England (BCE) presented their final recommendations to Government in September 2018, following two consultations (2016 and 2017) based on their review of Parliamentary Constituencies in England, published in February 2016. Nationally the objectives were to reduce the total number of MPs from 650 to 600 (in London alone from 73 to 68), and to balance the number of voters per constituency at c. 71,000 – 78,000.

As far as Wimbledon was concerned the first Review was completely unacceptable and we made representation to this effect, both verbally and in writing. We also decided not merely to protest but to make constructive suggestions on how to attain the Commission's objectives in our area.

Happily the Commission accepted virtually all the suggestions we submitted and the final proposal can be seen on the BCE website, www.bce2018.org.uk.

Stephen Hammond's website also has interesting comments.

The BCE's submission of their review is the first stage in the process of Parliamentary approval and if that is forthcoming the Government will issue an appropriate Statutory Instrument. However, Parliamentary approval is by no means certain. Opposition may come from MPs likely to lose their seats, or because of a perception that one political party will be disadvantaged.

There are two further comments. Firstly, the BCE review is based on electoral register data as of December 2015 which may well be out of date. The second is that this review has nothing to do with ward changes and does not have any impact on Council Tax etc.

Merton Council has announced a “re-warding” exercise for next year, ie: a consideration of the boundaries between the Merton wards. It is not yet known what the basis or criteria will be.

JOHN MAYS

WWI remembered (contd from p1) but only saw action once, in January 1916. This ended in disaster as one plane stalled and the other clipped a chimneypot and tree before crash landing in a garden. The temporary airfield was abandoned soon afterwards. Mercifully, only one bomb landed on Wimbledon (by the Ridgway) but failed to explode.

Wimbledon's women were also hard at work during the War. The Wimbledon Division of the Red Cross was mainly staffed by women, and they distributed 77,062 items of clothing and medical supplies to British hospitals and medical stations abroad. More than 60 women joined the Wimbledon War Workers Depot in Homefield Road.

During three years of service these volunteers produced an incredible 287,223 surgical appliances!

The number of casualties was so high that it was regarded as impractical to list any of their names on the War Memorial officially unveiled on 5th November 1921. Instead, their names were recorded in a Roll of Honour (a copy is kept in the Museum). There is, however, one name that is now commemorated at the War Memorial, namely that of George Edward Cates. Born in Hartfield Road in 1892 and one of nine children, George died in Northern France in March 1917 and was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross “For most conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice”.

The WWI Camp on Wimbledon Common

CHARLES TOASE offers some fascinating details of “Tommy’s” welcome home.

AS THE CENTENARY of the Great War draws to a close, we recall that the large training camp and assembly point which had been set up on the Common in 1916 for soldiers on their way to France and the Somme, had a swift change of purpose after November 1918. The main part of the camp which lay along the Robin Hood Road, near Caesar’s Well became the Wimbledon Dispersal Camp for those who survived the onslaught and came home.

Mostly the troops arrived by train and had to march up the hill to the Common and the large demobilisation camp. “Thus”, as the local paper the *Wimbledon Boro’ News* put it “giving all the Tommies an unnecessary walk up a steep hill in their full kit, to remind them of what a good thing they were leaving”.

There were six such dispersal camps, the others being at Shorncliffe, Oswestry Chiseldon, Ripon and Duddington. The

Wimbledon Dispersal Camp was capable of handling 2,000 men every 24 hours and most men went through it in four hours.

On arrival each man was given a substantial meal, then a medical check; his arms were collected and he was offered either 52s 6d, or to be measured for a suit to be sent to him by post within 28 days. Each man was given two new £1 banknotes, a railway voucher to his home and an unemployment policy, giving him 20s a week for up to 24 weeks until he got a job. Finally he was given £1 for his greatcoat (he could keep his uniform for a month, by which time he should have his new suit).

But 1918 was not the end of the camp; it lingered on the Common for years, in spite of complaints from Wimbledon people. In 1920 Wimbledon’s MP Sir Joseph Hood raised the matter in the House of Commons, and in 1921 some of the huts were removed. In 1921 there were still 3,787 occupants and it took another two years for the camp to be cleared completely, in March 1923. Something similar happened at the end of the Second World War, when a camp on the Common remained until long after the end of the war; in 1947 there were still 130 men occupying the huts.



Part of the camp on Wimbledon Common, circa 1918.

© London Borough of Merton. More historic images of Merton can be found at www.merton.gov.uk/memories

Shop closures

HARTFIELD ROAD once had as many as 40 shops, but from the end of August this year it has none – only houses, offices and restaurants. This follows the closure of Copperfield’s Secondhand Book Shop, at No.37. Copperfields opened in 2001, and was run by Joe Thubron, a former probation officer, and his wife Jane. It was a charming shop, with four rooms packed from floor to ceiling with over 30,000 books. Its closure is a loss to the community.

However, a bookshop and family

business that has survived for 90 years is still thriving, although no longer a bookshop. Actually founded a hundred years ago by Alfred Fricker at 54 Wimbledon Hill Road, on Fricker’s retirement it was bought by Ernest and William Fielder, partners of James Russell in Russell’s photography business. The Fielders were worried that the introduction of cheap cameras such as the Box Brownie might affect their business, and took up bookselling; as it happened both enterprises thrived, and Fielders is still a family business, although now an art shop rather than a bookshop.

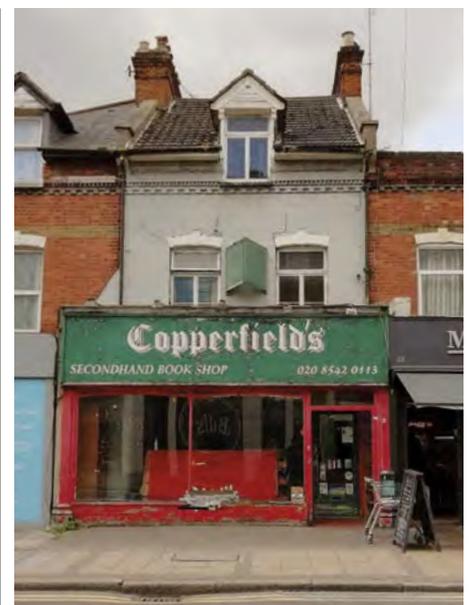


Photo © Nigel Davies

Organ transfer

AN APPEAL FOR a new organ for the Guards Chapel at Wellington Barracks began a curious enquiry. The Guards' publicity stated that their existing organ was originally at Cannizaro, and later went to Glyndebourne. The first statement is incorrect and the latter creates confusion.

Boustead's famous organ at Wimbledon was a colossal affair, with five manuals (keyboards), thirty gongs, and over seven thousand pipes. The average organ has a thousand or so pipes. It was built for John M Boustead at Westfield, Parkside, and not for his father, also called John Boustead who then lived at Cannizaro. The organ was built by Alfred Hunter & Sons of Clapham and at the time was thought to be one of the largest in the country. (One might wonder how such a monster was housed at Westfield. Fortunately for nearby residents, the answer is that much of its workings were housed in the cellar).

After the death of John Boustead II, the organ appears to have been 'broken up'. On the website www.organmatters.com a post from a Mr. David Drinkell suggests that the Boustead house organ was reduced from its five manuals to three

and just over forty speaking stops; "still a lot of organ for a small church". The church in question was St Mary the Virgin, Ringmer, East Sussex. The transfer was paid for by John Christie of Glyndebourne.

John Christie had his own house organ at Glyndebourne and his early amateur opera productions were played in the organ room. This was removed to make way for his first opera house in the 1930s. Since the organ at the Guards Chapel came from Glyndebourne, the suggestion appears to have arisen that it might have contained parts which once belonged to the great Boustead organ which started 'life' in Wimbledon. The Archivist at Glyndebourne says that there is no connection between the organs, other than Christie's involvement with both.



The current organ in the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks

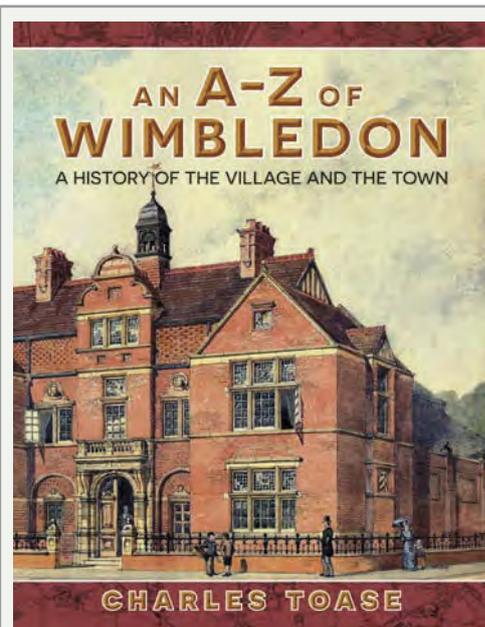
Max Coton

In our WWI airfield article (September) the name of the boy witness to an air accident was given as Max Cotton. In fact, Max's family name was spelt Coton.

Max was born in 1904, the son of a barrister's managing clerk, and went on to become a solicitor

with offices on Wimbledon Bridge. He served in the RAF in World War II, and after the war he took up amateur dramatics, becoming Chairman of the Wimbledon Repertory Players.

When he retired, he went to live in Rottingdean in Sussex. He died in 1979 aged 75.



NEW BOOK: AN A-Z OF WIMBLEDON – A History of the Village and the Town

The Museum of Wimbledon is delighted to announce publication of a new book, 'An A-Z of Wimbledon' written by Charles Toase, the well-known Wimbledon historian. Charles is among the longest serving of all members of the Wimbledon Society and is a former Chairman of both the Local History Group and the Museum of Wimbledon Committee.

His eclectic and exciting new book 'An A-Z of Wimbledon – a History of the Village and the Town' has just been released in time for Christmas. The perfect present for anyone who has an interest in what makes Wimbledon wonderful!

To source the stories and material for this work Charles read his way through all Wimbledon's local newspapers from their beginnings in the 1860s, as well as Council minutes from the same date, and uncovered a mine of long-forgotten information.

From Epidemics to Elections, Huguenots to the Home Guard, Witchcraft to Wombles, almost anything you can think of has probably happened in Wimbledon and has now been covered in this volume of facts, anecdotes and stories.

If it's not in this book it probably wasn't important!

Price £14.00, available from the Museum of Wimbledon – open weekends 2:30pm to 5pm or online at www.wimbledonmuseum.org.uk

Photo © Sally Gibbons

Umckaloabo or Abracadabra

MONICA ELLISON relates the story 'from the Chair' of a serendipitous find ...

WIMBLEDON'S BRIC-A-BRAC is the Local History Group's treasure trove, and no audience is more appreciative of an Oxfam 'find'. At a recent meeting, Chairman Michael Norman Smith produced a cloth-bound gold embossed tome with the unpromising title *The Treatment of Pulmonary and Surgical Tuberculosis with Umckaloabo* by Dr Adrien Secheyaye of Geneva, translated from the French, published by B Fraser & Co, of 62 Pepys Road, Cottenham Park. Only the address sparked mild interest.

The story begins with the History of Stevens Cure. Umckaloabo, states the author, is a South African plant (Polygonaceae). It was 'encountered' in 1897 by a Mr. Charles H Stevens who "though not a doctor became convinced of the curative properties of the plant in cases of tuberculosis both in himself and in others". Dr Secheyaye was then in correspondence with Charles Stevens who was resident at 204 Worple Road.

Hopefully, Stevens found Wimbledon a haven from the storm that arose as a result of his presentation on Umckaloabo to the British Medical Association. The reception was so hostile that Stevens felt obliged to bring two lawsuits for defamation against the BMA (1912 and 1914). He lost both, incurred a huge fine and was "branded with infamy". According to champion Dr Secheyaye, the final hearing was biased and beneficial experiments made by

some English doctors with umckaloabo were declared inadmissible.

Charles Stevens' colourful personal story could not have helped his case. As a 17-year-old bicycle mechanic in Birmingham he contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. His doctor diagnosed

"My boy, you are in for it", and advised the young man to go to sunny South Africa, to enjoy what little time he had left

a serious lesion: "My boy, you are in for it", and advised the young man to go to sunny South Africa, to enjoy what little time he had left.

Accordingly Stevens set out and on hearing rumours of a native cure for lung disease travelled to

Maseru on the border of Basutoland. There he consulted a witch doctor of the Xhosa tribe who, in leopard-skin regalia, administered an infusion of the ground-up bark of the root of umckaloabo. Stevens recovered, declaring the plant a cure for his condition. Convinced of the value of his discovery, he formed a company and sold the remedy in the Cape and Johannesburg under the name 'Sacco', until prosecuted for illegal trading without medical qualifications. In 1907, he returned to England with a stock of roots and founded the Stevens Company, trading with his remedy as before.

Despite the court case and the opprobrium that followed, Stevens continued his business from Worple Road. Due to the strength of Dr Secheyaye's testimony, the use of Steven's Cure survived in Germany and Russia where it is still used as an alternative medicine for the treatment of respiratory

infections. It continues to have followers here and is sold in some health shops and online, sometimes called Kaloba. Studies occur spasmodically and inconclusively, while the 'catechins' in green tea have been found to bear some similarity to those in Stevens Cure.

Dr Peter Taylor Professor of Microbiology at University College London wrote about umckaloabo in *Wellcome News*, No.3, 2001. His study deciphered the Xhosa tribe's click language, which had been a problem in identifying the plant. It was found to be bark of the root of *Pelargonium* species – i.e. geraniums.



Umckaloabo (Pelargonium sidoides)

Photo © Alamy

Wimbledon Guild Community Garden



CHRIS GOODAIR reveals a new pro-active community project from Wimbledon's own long-standing local charity.

WIMBLEDON GUILD, based on Worple Road, has been providing charitable support in our community since 1907. One of their most recent projects is a Community Garden in the alley between Dundonald Tram Stop and the Kingswood Road roundabout. It all started in 2014 when the Challenge Network asked Wimbledon Guild if they had a two-day project for their students to do and they came up with the idea of making a community garden from the piece of neglected wasteland that they owned behind Dundonald House.

The plot was originally two gardens belonging to the rear Dundonald House building and allotments alongside the former railway line (now the tram). The gardens were significantly reduced in size with the installation of new fencing, and the remaining plot,

which no longer had any access into it, became very overgrown with head-height brambles and rubbish. The usable area is approximately 51ft wide at one end, 25ft at the other end and 89ft long with a further 23ft left overgrown for wildlife.

The first task in June 2014 was to break through the fence to install a gate and, in order to get ready for the students' two-day visit that September, a local company sent a working party to do a day for charity starting to clear the site. Subsequent company working parties came on at least eight occasions and have run a water pipe from Dundonald House, erected a shed and a poly-tunnel, created compost bins from old pallets and built several raised beds from donated cases, scaffolding boards and railway sleepers. They have also dug a pond, laid paths and paving, and planted native hedging.

The garden will be managed in accordance with permaculture principles using a no-dig methodology and aims to be a productive and wildlife-friendly



The garden (left) and volunteers with a bumper crop (above)

community garden which will supply, from time to time, Wimbledon Guild's HomeFood Café with organic vegetables. This year they have grown so many different fruit and vegetables including courgettes, tomatoes, swiss chard, onions, potatoes, red currants, blackberries...the list goes on and on! However, they also want it to be beautiful with lots of bee-friendly flowers, a wildflower meadow, native hedging and bird and insect habitats.

Volunteers work in the garden throughout the week, and there is usually someone there every Saturday. If people are working in the garden, the gate will be open, and visitors are welcome to come in and look around.

Donations to the garden are most welcome, and the current wish list includes bags of compost, micromesh to protect the vegetables from insects, wooden wine cases for shelving and planting, seeds and plants to name but a few.

If you have anything that you would like to donate to the garden, please email **Dawn Canham** at dawn.canham@live.co.uk. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact **Nick Linney**, Volunteer Manager, on **020 8946 0735** or email nlinney@wimbledonguild.co.uk.

Wimbledon Town Centre masterplan

THE COUNCIL has produced a draft plan for Wimbledon Town Centre, and is asking the public for its views. This new 'Masterplan' is seen as a guide to new development into the 2030s, supplementary to existing planning policies.

Public 'Workshops' were held in 2017 to establish what local people felt was important for the future of the town.

What does this 'Masterplan' propose?

- To change Wimbledon's current status as one of south London's Major Town Centres (like Putney, Wandsworth, Clapham Junction, Richmond), to a Metropolitan Centre (like Croydon, Sutton, Kingston, Bromley).
- To achieve this by promoting growth by significantly increasing the amount of commercial floorspace.
- This additional floorspace would require large new developments up to 18 storeys high, the tallest buildings being around the Station, St George's Road, and the eastern part of the Broadway. These height increases are described as 'moderate' or 'mid-rise'.
- To intensify development on the railway lands.
- If Crossrail 2 goes ahead, the largest developments would be concentrated around the rebuilt Station, and two new road bridges would be constructed across the railway.
- Hartfield Road would become two-way again, with parts of the Broadway used mainly for buses etc, after another road bridge is built by Crossrail 2.
- Pedestrianisation of parts of The Broadway is dismissed as undesirable.



THE FUTURE?
SHOWING A VIEW FROM
THE STATION'S EASTERN
ENTRANCE TOWARDS
HARTFIELD ROAD, WITH
THE PRINCE OF WALES
PUB ON THE LEFT

- Taller buildings would be excluded from the two 'historic' areas (presumably the Conservation areas around Wimbledon Hill Road, and the Old Town Hall/Broadway/Queen's Road), where there would be mews and 'laneways' and the smaller, specialist businesses would be accommodated.

Some issues for consideration?

- How will a large increase in 'commercial development' improve the town?
- Why has the clear public wish (in the Workshops) for lower height buildings been ignored?
- Why is there no proper Town Square as a civic focus, eg beside the Old Town Hall?
- How will there be a better pedestrian experience in the heart of the town?
- Where are the improvements to air quality, traffic noise and traffic danger to pedestrians?
- Why would people want to linger and enjoy this new town centre, rather than, as now, just use it and depart?
- Why is there no proposal for a well-

integrated public transport 'hub' for buses, taxis etc at the Station?

- Why is there no commitment to supporting a new Civic/Arts/ Concert Hall on the Hartfield Road site?
- Why is there no attempt to anticipate changes that town centres face as technology develops and our energy needs increase? How do these proposed 'developments' differ from those designed 20 years ago?
- Where is the Council commitment to invest some of the financial resources it gains from the town centre, (ie: some £7m in business rates)?
- How will this 'top-down' approach improve on a more collaborative approach, with the Council and public working together?

The Society has already produced its own vision for the future of the Town (Newsletter December 2017) and is currently preparing a more detailed response for submission to the Council. Members' input would be welcomed. All responses need to be sent to the Council by 6 January 2019.

Planning decisions

Historic Interest prevails

ALTHOUGH Merton Abbey Mills is outside the Society's Area of Benefit, it does contain many locally listed buildings and is of great importance to the industrial heritage of the area. It is also part of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area. It is a Heritage Asset and an Archaeological Priority Zone because of its proximity to former medieval buildings ancillary to Merton Priory.

We objected to a proposal to build a five-storey building on the site of some temporary pavilions mainly occupied by food outlets. Our grounds were that, apart from the temporary pavilions, all the buildings within the site are historic and all are listed; the Wheel House and the Colour House are Grade II listed while the Showhouse, Coles Shop, the Apprentice Shop, the Long Shop, the 1929 Shop and the Block Shop (now the William Morris pub) are all locally listed. None of these buildings is more than two storeys high.

We felt that the proposal was out of keeping with the rest of the Craft Village because of its height and

scale. We considered that any development should be sympathetic to the other historic buildings within the site and in particular should not be more than two storeys high.

We are pleased to note that the Council's Planning Department has now refused permission.

High Path Academy

Further down Merantun Way, there is a proposal to build a Harris Academy on a thin sliver of land between the main road (A24) and High Path. It would be a five-storey building containing a six-form entry secondary school, plus a 250-place 6th Form, housing a total of 1150 pupils.

Many concerns have been raised by the Wimbledon Society and other bodies. These include the lack of outdoor space for the Academy students and the loss of outdoor play space by the adjoining Merton Abbey Primary School. In addition, there is a high level of pollution on Merantun Way, at a level that exceeds the maximum permitted.

Phone Kiosks Limited

We reported in the December 2017 edition of the Newsletter that the Planning & Environment Committee had objected to an application for the installation of nine telephone kiosks at various locations in the town centre. It is understood that many other London Boroughs also received similar applications for new telephone kiosks, and it may be significant that the proposed kiosks were to carry advertising panels.

Merton Council subsequently refused planning permission for all nine kiosks but the appellant appealed. The Planning Inspector has now adjudicated and has refused seven of the appeals but allowed two of them – on Wimbledon Bridge and outside Centre Court Shopping Centre.

Greenwatch

Focusing on environmental issues affecting Wimbledon

The Society's Planning and Environment Committee is giving greater attention to environmental issues, both local and national, which affect Wimbledon residents. This is timely in view of the latest report from the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which made it clear that a huge reduction in the use of fossil fuels will be needed in the next 12 years to keep global warming below the crucial figure of 1.5 degrees.

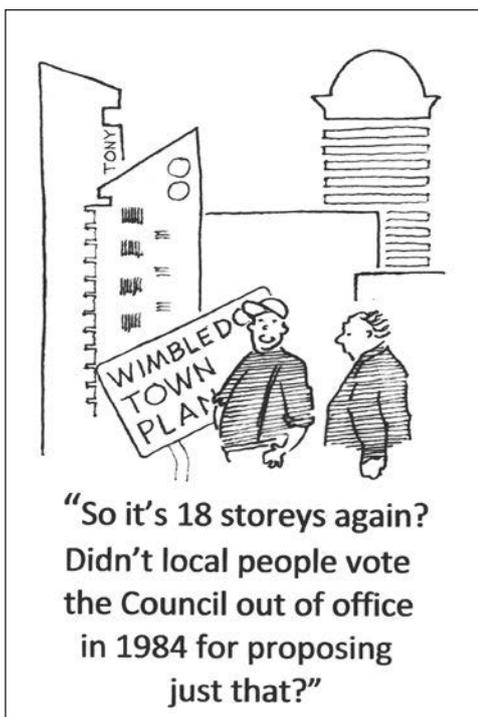
Clean Air

The quality of the air in Merton deteriorated in 2017; three quarters of sites tested had levels of NO₂ pollution above the legal limit of 40µg/m³. In October we wrote to Merton Council raising questions about their updated Air Quality Action Plan. We intend to take this further by suggesting how their Planning Department could work more effectively to reduce air pollution from building work and new buildings.

A 19th century cartoon about air pollution in London



© Alamy



Jennifer goes to Knightsbridge

JENNIFER NEWMAN continues her perambulations around London with a visit to the Faringdon Collection in Brompton Square.

ON A WET summer's day I left the hustle and bustle of Knightsbridge and entered the tranquillity of the London home of Lord and Lady Faringdon in Brompton Square. The house backs onto the mature trees and grounds of the Holy Trinity Church and feels like it is in the country.

I was one of 15 lucky members to have a chance to visit The Faringdon Collection. We were given an introductory talk by Philip, the house manager, and were free to wander around with a guide book to identify the various works of art and furniture.

The house in Brompton Square was built in the early 1830's and began life as a girls' school, one of three in the square, with 26 pupils, teachers and staff. It was then turned into bedsits before being bought by Gavin, the 2nd Lord Faringdon, in the early fifties who restored the house to the lovely home it is today. The house was later transferred to the Faringdon Collection Trust, with a 75 year lease.

The 2nd Lord Faringdon led a colourful life following Eton and Oxford, where he was one of the 'Bright Young Things' and developed a strong interest in politics, public affairs and the arts. During one of his speeches in the House of Lords, he addressed the Peers as 'My dears'! He extensively remodelled his country home, Buscot Park, and continued to add considerably to the collection of pictures and furniture established there by his grandfather.

The Brompton Square house reflects more accurately his eclectic taste and his love of the unusual, which came as a bit of a shock to people after the austerity and drabness of the war years. There is a wonderful picture of him painted by Simon Elwes in the Green Drawing Room.

After Gavin's death in 1977, his partner continued to live at Brompton Square, and then moved to North America. After his death, the present Lord Faringdon bought back most of the furniture, ornaments and pictures at auction and returned them to Brompton Square.



The Yellow Drawing Room (top) and a portrait of the second Lord Faringdon in the Green Drawing Room (above)

In 1992 the lease of the house was bought back, the contents given to the Trust and a fund established which allows the Trustees to refresh the contents.

The current Lord and Lady Faringdon use the house as their London base, and personal touches like a dressing gown and an open book on a bedside table reflect this. Two flats have been created out of the top two floors, which, alongside the opening to the public of the collection on the three main floors, provide an income.

This excellent excursion was organised by Linda Defriez, but sadly this is one of the last.

Our thanks go to Linda for all the hard work she has put in over the years in creating and organising an excellent programme of activities for us and she will be greatly missed. We sincerely hope that someone will be able to step up and follow in her footsteps.

URGENT TOWN VISITS ORGANISER

There must be someone out there with the enthusiasm and organisational capabilities to take on the job of Town Visits organiser. If not, as Jennifer Newman says in her article, these interesting and thoroughly enjoyable trips will cease in March 2019. It is a varied and satisfying job, and greatly appreciated by Society members – so you'll be very popular! Support and back-up will be available from other members of the Activities Committee.

If you'd like to take it on, please email **Jenny Humphries** at jenny_humphries@msn.com

Photos © Jennifer Newman

'Red Teddy' and 'Dolly' come home

PAMELA GREENWOOD fills in the human stories behind two new exhibits in the Museum.

'RED TEDDY' and 'Dolly', the names given to them by their young owners, are recent donations to the Museum, joining the only other toy for younger children currently in our Collections. All three toys are now on display.

Both have travelled some distance, Red Teddy the furthest, returning from Virginia, USA in 2016. Both once belonged to former curators at the Museum.

Red Teddy (right) belonged to the late Audrey Noël Hume (née Baines) (1927-1993) whose family lived at 10 Melbury Gardens in Wimbledon. Five-year-old Audrey badly wanted a red teddy bear for Christmas 1932. After trailing around the shops her father eventually arrived at Harrods, the department store that claimed to be able to get you anything, and so Red Teddy came to Wimbledon. He is less red now as some dye has worn off, and he is rather battered with a heavily scratched left eye.

During the day on 30 June 1944 Merry, the family's cocker spaniel, insisted in sleeping in the air raid shelter in the garden rather than the house. The family had not used their shelter for years because it was damp, slimy and uncomfortable. An account of this event, published in 1974 in *Riddle of the Future* by Andrew MacKenzie, a book about premonitions, contains quotes from interviews with the Humes and information from a local resident and the air warden, interspersed with premonition theories.

That night the Baines and their neighbour decided to join the dog in the shelter, so saving all their lives. A flying bomb hit their house during the night at 2.50 am, completely demolishing it. Only three objects were rescued from the rubble – Mr Baines's top hat, a chamber pot, and Red Teddy. Sadly only the bear still survives.



Dolly (left) had a quieter life with the late Connie Curry (1914-2002).

Connie lived in West Place by the Common for most of her life and was just old enough to remember the World War I soldiers' camp on the Common, recalling it in her book *Memories of My Side of the Common* (1988). Nobody today knows when Dolly was given to Connie, but she shows plenty of

signs of wear from play rather than being just decorative. In her family very small portions were always called 'Dolly's bit'.

Until the late Victorian period dolls were usually copies of elegant women or royalty. Then realistic baby dolls like Dolly began to be made, becoming very popular in the early 20th century. Dolly is probably made of 'composition' – a mixture of sawdust and glue with other added ingredients such as starch, resin and wood flour, a material eventually replaced by celluloid and then plastics.

Thanks to the creative skills of Sue McLaren, the two toys are displayed on specially made conservation-grade fittings. We are very grateful to the late Ivor Noël Hume and to Linden Leeke for the donation of Red Teddy and Dolly respectively and for providing their background stories.

Photos © The Museum of Wimbledon

NEW CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR 2018

The Museum of Wimbledon has now revealed the new Christmas cards for 2018.

Capturing iconic and woodland scenes from Wimbledon Common in the snow, they are the perfect cards to wish friends and family Happy Christmas.

They are available at the Museum of Wimbledon (open weekends 2.30pm to 5pm) or at St Mark's Church, Wimbledon, £5 for a pack of 10.





Activities

WARNING

Your Committee will be unable to organise a full programme of short visits for 2019-2020.

So far we have not found an enthusiastic volunteer to help us continue this hugely successful and much appreciated part of the society's programme begun by Linda Defriez.

If you have been on even one of our 'short' visits, you will know how enjoyable, interesting or even 'life-enhancing' these can be. (If you want to know why the latter – you will have to join the 'Faithful Few' to find out). So please come forward. You will have plenty of support, and encouragement.

Please contact Jenny Humphries at jenny_humphries@msn.com

EXCURSION: As always there will be an excellent excursion. But one only this year organised by **Jenny Humphries.**

WALKS: **Ann Cantrell** has planned four intriguing Spring/Summer walks.

TALKS: **Michael Norman Smith** is busy retaining speakers for the coming season.

Details of these events will be in your blue membership card delivered with your March newsletter.

DIARY DATES 2019

Growing up in Lingfield Road in the 1940s

by Tim Albert

The third talk in our present series is confirmed. Based on Tim Albert's memoirs, it promises entertainment and nostalgia in equal measures. We will be taken back to the days of Sunnyspread sandwiches, Miss Potts' ballroom dancing lessons, no refrigeration, little heating and a precarious future. But, concludes Tim, whose career spans journalism and training, particularly in the medical profession, "Mostly we had it good".

Thursday 24 January, 2pm.

In defence of Emma

by Raglan Tribe

Raglan promises a different perspective on the role of Lady Hamilton in the life of Nelson, our national naval hero. He was much celebrated, decorated with titles and monuments, but what of 'poor Emma'? Raglan Tribe, (a descendant of one of the best known past local residents) informs us about Emma's contribution and colourful career.

Wednesday 3 April, 8pm.

Venue: Emmanuel Church Ridgway Wimbledon.

Doors open 30 minutes before the talk; refreshments available.

SUSTAINABLE MERTON

Sustainable Merton – Merton's leading environmental charity, was founded by a local resident in 2007. Its aim is to "inspire local people to live more sustainably" by focussing on reducing waste, improving air quality, lowering energy consumption and tackling food waste and food poverty. Past projects include, among others, Dig Merton, Wandle Valley Low Carbon Zone, Schools Gardening Project.

Currently they are building a team of local **Community Champions**, who are "passionate about improving the environment" and want to make a positive difference in the community. Their aim is to inspire residents, local businesses and key decision makers to 'think global, act local', to make Merton a healthier, happier and more sustainable community.

They are also recruiting **Business Champions** – in partnership with Merton Chamber of Commerce and Love Wimbledon. These are businesses which support the #PlasticFreeMerton campaign by making their own small changes, trying to influence others to do the same, eg: by switching from single-use plastic to plastic-free alternatives, such as paper straws and compostable cutlery, and encouraging the use of reusable bags and bottles. These efforts are producing good feedback from customers.

For more information see www.sustainablemerton.org or to get involved email info@sustainablemerton.org

SUSANNA RIVIERE

The Wimbledon Society was founded in 1903. It is a Registered Charity (No 1164261), and a company limited by guarantee (No 9818707). **Annual subscription rates:** Individual £15; Couple/family £20; Affiliated: £25. Membership application forms can be downloaded from the Society website or collected from the Museum. **The Museum and Bookshop** (020 8296 9914), 22 Ridgway, near Lingfield Road, are open from 2.30 to 5.00pm Saturday and Sunday. Admission free.

Data Protection. The Wimbledon Society is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office for Data Protection Purposes as a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998, reg no: ZA244625. All personal information supplied to the Society by members will be used solely for communication with them concerning the Society's Membership, Governance, Events, and only matters concerning the Society. It will not be shared with any other organisation, except where there is a Statutory obligation to do so. Full details of our Privacy Policy are published on our website.