



Windmill ready to sail again

ANDREW SIMON reports on the exciting renovation of Wimbledon Common's famous landmark

THE WINDMILL will be 200 years old in 2017. Last year on Sunday 2 August one of the four sails broke from its stock, and fell into the roof of the museum.

This happened in the early evening when, very fortunately, no one was around. The damage to the

building was fairly modest, and the museum exhibits were unscathed. But most importantly no one was hurt.

The specialist millwrights cleared away the fallen sail almost immediately and returned to remove the three other sails very soon after. They discovered that the stock of the fallen sail had deteriorated and fractured at one of its securing bolts, a problem that had not been visible at the latest expert inspection two months previously. The museum was able to resume its normal opening schedule after a few weeks.

Since last August, a new system has been devised for attaching the

sails to the windshaft so that a similar incident cannot occur again. An application was prepared and submitted to the Heritage Lottery Foundation (HLF), bringing a grant of £100,000 to cover the work on the sails and their stocks, along with other work already planned to eliminate water penetration at the cap and in the tower of the windmill. The total cost will be about £138,000 and various other donations, all of them most gratefully received, have made up the balance.

Fabrication of the new stocks and repair of the sails has been handled off site at the millwrights' workshop in **(continued on p3)**

Magnificent men and their mowing machines

Jordan Horrocks (left) and Dan Price from the AELTC groundstaff showing off their handiwork at the War Memorial Gardens in Wimbledon Village. Jordan and Dan assisted Grant Cantin, the AELTC's deputy head groundsman who took this photo. As reported in the March Newsletter, the 'One Man Went to Mow' team have much-needed, and very gratefully received, expert help from Grant and his team to transform the Gardens.



Wimbledon Society contacts

President Norman Plastow

Chairman John Mays

Hon Secretary Sue Lang

Hon Treasurer Corinna Edge

Planning Committee Secretary

David Merritt

secpc@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

Museum Chairman Cassandra Taylor

Local History Chairman Charles Toase

Membership Secretary

Jennifer Newman

Activities/Newsletter Distribution

Linda Defriez

Website Asif Malik

Wimbledon Society Newsletter

Editorial team

John Stern

Nigel Davies

Monica Ellison, Asif Malik, John Mays, Iain Simpson

Letters to the editor

Write to John Stern c/o The Museum of Wimbledon,

22 Ridgway, SW19 4QN

Printing: The Wimbledon Print Company,
257 Haydons Road, SW19 8TY

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AGM report 2016

THE SOCIETY held its 112th Annual General Meeting at the Lower Hall, Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill, on 14 May 2016. There were two AGMs; the first for the 'old' Society and the second for the 'new' Company Limited by Guarantee.

The President Norman Plastow opened the proceedings, which were attended by some 90 members and guests. Deputy Mayor Pauline Cowper and her consort, and Leader of the Council Stephen Alambritis were among the guests.

AGM REPORT FOR THE 'OLD' SOCIETY

Introducing his report for the 'old' Society, Chairman Asif Malik welcomed guests and members, and thanked all volunteers. He described coming promotional events, at which all members would be welcome. The Chairman reported the sad death of Janet Koss, a museum expert and member of the Executive Committee.

The Chairman stated that, following approval given by the 2015 AGM, incorporated and charity status as a company limited by guarantee was achieved on the planned date of 1 January 2016. The 'old' Society would continue to exist for the time being to ease the transition to the new form of governance. The Chairman thanked the group, co-ordinated by Iain Simpson, which had ensured that all necessary procedures were followed.

Treasurer Corinna Edge presented the 2015 Accountants and Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the 'old' Society, reporting the healthy state of Society finances. She noted that all assets of the Society had been transferred to the new company.

The President advised members that Chairman Asif Malik was to stand down, after four years in this position. The Board had agreed that John



Asif Malik (centre) with his commemorative certificate presented to him by new chairman John Mays (right)

Mays, current chairman of the Planning Committee, should replace him for the coming year.

Norman Plastow was re-elected President and Pat Keith, Charles Toase and Tony Michael re-elected as Vice-Presidents. John Mays was elected as Chairman, Corinna Edge re-elected as Treasurer and Sue Lang as Honorary Secretary. Elected to the Board were Marsha Beresford, Linda Defriez, Monica Ellison, Asif Malik, Jennifer Newman, Andrew Simon, Iain Simpson and Cassandra Taylor.

AGM REPORT FOR THE WIMBLEDON SOCIETY (Company Limited by Guarantee)

Asif Malik handed over the Chairmanship to John Mays.

John then invited the meeting to approve the appointment of Norman Plastow as President and Tony Michael, Pat Keith and Charles Toase as Vice-Presidents.

The following were elected to the Board: Oliver Bennett, Marsha Beresford, Linda Defriez, Corinna Edge, Monica Ellison, Pamela Greenwood, Sue Lang, Asif Malik, John Mays, Jennifer Newman, Andrew Simon, Iain Simpson and Cassandra Taylor.

John Mays then commended the work of the Society's volunteers and officers. In particular he emphasised the tremendous value of Asif Malik's contribution over the last four years as Chairman and presented him with a commemorative certificate. The audience applauded warmly.

Members commented on the Society's work before the address by the guest speaker Simon Lee, Chief Executive of the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators. Simon described the history of the Commons, their ecology, habitat maintenance, the work of the Ranger's Office, as well as challenges and future plans.

SUE LANG, Honorary Secretary



Photos by Angela Evans and Nigel Davies

Former glory: the windmill before one of the sails broke off (above left) and now

Wimbledon windmill (from p1)

Reading, and they will soon be ready for installation.

Timing of the repairs has been planned for the summer months. The scaffolding is expected to be erected around the end of May. Unless further disrepair or other problems come to light while the repairs are proceeding, the sails will be re-installed in September.

The museum will continue to open at weekends during that time. Readers who have never visited the Windmill Museum are urged to come and see Norman Plastow's superb series of models showing the development of windmills. Other exhibits explain various aspects of milling and there is a fine collection of wood working tools. A further small display deals with aspects of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.

Originally constructed in 1817, it was a working mill for 47 years. It ceased working in 1864 when the 5th Earl Spencer bought in the lease as part of his plan to enclose Wimbledon Common and build on it. Earl Spencer was also a leading committee member of the National Rifle Association. The NRA's championships had by then been taking place on the common for several years and they continued

annually until 1889, with a tented city of organisers, restaurants, and accommodation for contestants around the windmill.

The last of the millers had removed most of their equipment when leaving in 1864. From about 1870 the windmill was converted into living accommodation for six families. A major restoration in 1893 resulted in changes to the cap and tower, and the central supporting post was replaced with a new internal structure.

Further repairs were carried out in 1975, when the first floor was converted into a museum. The ground floor was by then used as living accommodation for the Commons Rangers; that continued until the early 1990s.

In 1999 a Millennium Grant from the HLF enabled the sails to be restored to working order. At the same time the museum was extended to take in the ground floor, taking the form it retains to this day.

After this year's work, plans are already under way to celebrate the bi-centenary of the windmill in 2017. These will include some refurbishment of the flat roof, improvements to the exhibits both out of doors and inside the windmill, and a series of special events.

Crossrail 2: the next steps

TONY MICHAEL outlines the Planning Committee's report to CR2

THE MARCH edition of the Newsletter set out the Society's views on the then current plans for Crossrail 2 (CR2). Since then we have had a clear indication that this project has very significant Government backing.

A new London Mayor has also been elected, and the Society's Planning Committee feels that we now have the opportunity to take a more positive and proactive role, and play a part in steering this project in a more helpful direction.

We have recently met with the Crossrail Team and discussed "where we go from here". Their current thinking is that the basic design and layout work needs to be done before the Parliamentary Bill process, starting in 2018-19, and aiming for Royal assent in 2021-22.

Construction on (and under) the ground will then start and continue up to an opening in about 2032. It is clear that all the discussion on how the scheme is to be designed, and where the new lines etc are going to go, needs to be effectively finalised in the next 18 months or so. After this, very little change can be achieved.

We passed to them our new report, setting out some alternative design options for the CR2 team to work on. We also said that if there is to be

rational discussion about alternative designs, we need to be sure that all the issues are understood, and able to be compared.

Four points we feel stand out. Firstly, the CR2 team should table at least three different options, so that the public can have a choice: a "take it or leave it" approach as in the initial consultation should not be accepted.

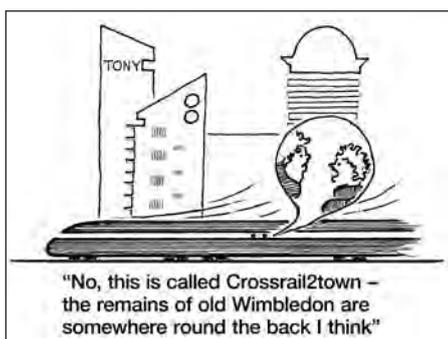
Secondly, each of these options should be accompanied by an evaluation, setting out how it compares against the others. These comparisons should not be solely financial, but include for example, the amount of property demolition required, disruption of the economy and environment of both the town centre and Raynes Park. The suggested range of "performance criteria" is set out in our report.

Thirdly, as the tunnel portal has to be the location for very large and disruptive construction sites, its positioning is highly critical. The previously suggested location at Gap Road meant that these sites required the acquisition and demolition of valuable sites in the town centre, which was seen as highly damaging, and unacceptable.

Our suggested options are based on locating the tunnel portal close to the A3, minimising disturbance to the town and the local roads.

Lastly, one should look at running the new CR2 lines at the same level as the present tracks, being more convenient to passengers.

The existing fast lines (which have either zero or minimal need for passenger platforms) could then run in tunnels beneath the present tracks and stations, minimising the need for additional land at the sides. Details of our suggested approach are shown on the Society website.



NEWS UPDATE

Planning Committee Chairperson

John Mays, who has been the Planning Committee's Chairman for the past five years, relinquished the role in May. Unfortunately, despite an active advertising campaign no suitable successor has emerged and the Planning Committee therefore has decided to have a rolling quarterly Chairmanship.

Wojtek Katny, Chris Goodair, Pat Keith and Iain Simpson have agreed to share the role and will divide it as follows:

- Iain Simpson** – June 2016
- Wojtek Katny** – July, August, September 2016
- Chris Goodair** – October, November, December 2016
- Pat Keith** – January, February, March 2017
- Iain Simpson** – April, May, June 2017

David Merritt, the Secretary of the Planning Committee will provide continuity during this period and undertake some of the communication responsibilities. He is to be designated as the recipient for certain emails and other correspondence.

The Planning Committee hopes that a permanent Chairman can be found in the coming year in which case the arrangements above will lapse. The Board is grateful to all concerned for their help and co-operation.

JOHN MAYS

An interesting challenge for the new Mayor of London

IAIN SIMPSON explains the state of play in Plough Lane

SOME OF YOU will already know that application for redevelopment of the Greyhound Stadium was passed by Merton in December last year and was subsequently referred to the GLA, given its size and importance. The GLA planners recommended the application for approval but the Mayor, Boris Johnson, ‘called in’ the application, which means that the Mayor becomes the planning authority to make the final decision. As it happens the decision will now be made by the new Mayor Sadiq Khan, probably sometime later this year. The main reasons for it being called in are extracted from the GLA letter dated 21 March 2016:

a) The development would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan because the nature of the proposals raise important considerations as to the future of cultural and sporting

venues in London, and involve proposals for a significant amount of housing, including affordable housing, and;

b) There are sound planning reasons for my intervention, because of the scale and nature of public representations received, which raise valid strategic planning matters regarding transport, housing, sports and cultural provision, including significant issues of controversy that require full consideration in a public hearing. Whilst this development proposes more than 150 dwellings and policy test 7(1) (b) does not therefore apply, it also is noted that the application would have a significant effect on one or more borough and raises strategic matters relating to transport and impact on services.

The newly elected London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, made ‘affordable housing’ a key platform of his campaign to be elected Mayor.

The affordable housing content of the application from AFC/Galliard homes, passed by Merton Council,

was a miserly 9.6%. The stated policy of Merton Council is to aim for 40% affordable housing. How did that happen?

Recently we were informed that Paschal Taggart, who represents serious greyhound racing interests and has long expressed the wish to build the ‘Royal Ascot’ of greyhound racing at Plough lane, will be shortly submitting a planning application to Merton Council, which, notably, will feature a 40% affordable housing content. These plans will be based largely on those he put forward for the Planning Inspectors hearing in January 2014.

Clearly this latest intervention of Taggart is aimed at highlighting the poor affordable housing allocation offered by AFC/Galliard and offering an alternative which might well appeal to the new Mayor, given his key election promise to build substantially more affordable housing. It also reflects his continuing passion to continue the great tradition of greyhound racing at Plough lane.

Planning Applications in the Wimbledon Area

The Society’s Planning Committee reviews all planning applications made to Merton Council. Here are some recent cases which we have asked Merton to re-think

■ 17 High Street

An application was made to demolish the existing building and erect a new one, to comprise a ground-floor retail unit with five one-bedroom flats on the upper floors. The Committee is concerned that the proposed new building is over-sized and overbearing in nature in comparison to the ‘cottage’ style terrace neighbours. The proposal also included inappropriate Juliette

balconies looking out on to the High Street and access to the site. The Committee also requested a clause stating that no future permission should be granted to remove the neighbouring retail unit’s partition wall. Removal of the partition wall would lead to a much larger unit, more suitable for chain retailers. **The application was refused permission.**

■ 30 Griffiths Road

The proposal was to demolish the existing block of flats and replace with 23 residential units in three and four storey blocks. The proposals altered the building line by bringing

the development forward and raising the height from three stories to four.

Awaiting outcome.

■ 157 Arthur Road

We have been monitoring the conversion of the old butcher’s shop for some time. The new owners of this important Grade 2 listed building have not adhered to previous conditions, specifically the replacement of removed historic tiling, but the owners now wish to install partitioning and redecorate throughout. The partitioning of the space would dramatically alter the character of the listed ground floor.

Awaiting outcome.



SPRING MEETING OF THE ALL ENGLAND CROQUET CLUB AT WIMBLEDON

Anyone for crinoline croquet?

CHARLES TOASE explains how Wimbledon became the world centre for tennis. It all started with croquet ...

IN 1868 the weekly magazine *The Field* published a letter proposing the formation of a national body to control the game of croquet. Until then it had been primarily a social affair, played at country houses with the space for a croquet lawn, and known by the more serious players as 'crinoline croquet'. The proposal for what was to be called the All England Croquet Club was encouraged by the editor of *The Field*, JH Walsh. Walsh was also interested in shooting, and a couple of years after the Club acquired the ground at Wimbledon he used

it for experiments with cartridges and propellants, much to the annoyance of the neighbours. He was also one of the founders of the Battersea Dogs Home.

For some time the Club was without a ground, but in September 1869 Albert Dixon, a solicitor who lived in Thornton Hill (and was

one of the subscribers to Bartlett's history in 1865, and election agent for Henry Peek in 1869) offered a lease on four acres of land in Worple Road at £50 for the first year, £75 for the second, and £100 for the third. This was a lot of money, and the club would have to spend more on getting the land



Game, set and thatch: Croquet in 1872 – thatched roofs protected ladies from the sun (top); a ball boy chases down a ball during a tennis match in 1879 (left)

into shape, erecting a gardener's cottage, a pavilion, and a 'ladies room', together with laying on a water supply. The ground did have the advantage, though, of being only 600 yards from the station, and had 'a convenient side access' – presumably meaning the railway footpath.

Croquet flourished at Wimbledon for some years, but a rise in the popularity of lawn tennis led to a decline in the support for croquet. In 1875 lawn tennis was added at Worple Road, and in 1877 the first lawn tennis championships were played at Wimbledon, and the name of the club was changed to the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. 'Croquet' was dropped from the title in 1882 but restored in 1899, although in reverse order as the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. It was also in 1899 that FH Ayres (a manufacturer of sports goods) marketed a croquet set (hoops, mallets, balls) under the name 'Wimbledon', showing that at that time the town was still identified with croquet rather than tennis. However, the new game soon took over, and the playing of croquet was abandoned at Worple Road in 1904.

Wimbledon became the host of the international championships, in much the same way that it had been the world centre for rifle shooting in the previous century.

In a gesture toward its early history, a croquet lawn was laid down at the Church Road grounds in 1957 and a club championship was re-introduced. In 1989 the All England Club gave a cup, the Wimbledon Cup, to the Croquet Association; it is awarded to the winner of the World Croquet Association championship, so the name of our town is still associated internationally with both games.

A royal coat of arms on a garden wall

FOR SEVERAL years the Group has had an unsolved query on its books. On a garden wall at Gunsreen, 8 The Drive, there is a large representation of the royal coat of arms. We have researched the various occupants of the house over the years, and can find no one likely to have held these arms. The only answer we can suggest is that they came from elsewhere, possibly 'rescued' when a building was demolished. There have been two similar examples of house name plaques found on demolition sites being removed to other houses, thus causing confusion to later occupants. We would also like to know the origin of the name Gunsreen; there is a well-known house of this name in Scotland, and the house's first owner, Charles Alexander Lockhart



Robertson, a Victorian surgeon and specialist in the treatment of lunacy, was a Scot and may have had a family connection.

Eagle on Eagle House

Eagle House is currently being converted into flats, so perhaps we might look into the origin of its name. In 1860 a school, Eagle House, in Hammersmith moved to Wimbledon, bringing its name but not the two eagles that had adorned the school in Hammersmith. We don't know when (or whence) the Wimbledon one arrived; it is not visible on early pictures of the house. Robert Bell, the original owner in 1613, had an eagle in his coat of arms – but in those days houses did not usually have names. Bell's coat of arms is on the ceiling of a first-floor room – presumably some new owner of a flat will have the benefit of it.



Halfhide the jewellers

HALFHIDE'S closed their shop in December (although continuing the business online). It was one of the oldest established surviving local shops, having been started by Walter Sherborne at 22 High Street in 1870. Sherborne took on Alfred Halfhide as a partner, and a second shop was opened at 23 Wimbledon Hill Road in 1880, with the new partner taking over in 1890. The shop in the village changed hands, but Halfhide's became the leading jeweller down in the town. It moved up the road to No.41 in 1984, and the company became Halfhide & Brown in 1987 with Derek Brown as managing director. The firm has survived for nearly 120 years but the family goes back much further in Wimbledon, having been calico printers at Merton Abbey in the 18th century, and there is even a record of Halfhide as a clock maker in 1814.

CHARLES TOASE

Philanthropy in action

CHRISTOPHER COOMBE, former chairman of Toynbee Hall, on Joseph Toynbee, who died 150 years ago

THE WIMBLEDON MUSEUM is a shining example of philanthropy in action, but did you know about the author of the proposal to set it up, and the philanthropy he and his family have continued to inspire?

The recent exhibition showcased a modest 1862 proposal for a Museum by 'JT, Treasurer to the Society'. JT was Joseph Toynbee (1815-1866), a Lincolnshire farmer's son and pioneering aural surgeon with a country home on Parkside, now Parkside Hospital's Oncology department. Ironically, Joseph died from self-inflicted laboratory experimentation. His granddaughter Jocelyn (1897-1985) and grandson Arnold (1889-1975) forged notable academic careers in archaeology and history, and Arnold's granddaughter Polly (1946-) is a well known political activist and journalist.

Joseph was a visionary in the foundation of the Village Working Men's Club, whose members set up the drinking fountain on Wimbledon Hill in his memory, and in the campaign to save Wimbledon Common for the people. His keen interest in social welfare also inspired his second son Arnold (1852-1883), who attended Wimbledon School, lived in Thornton Hill and is buried alongside his father in St Mary's Church.

Arnold enjoyed a very short career at Balliol College, Oxford as economist and historian, and popularised the expression 'the Industrial Revolution'. Part of the 19th century movement for social reform, he established public



libraries in the East End and gave free lectures to working class audiences. On his early death his colleagues established a project in his name and so Toynbee Hall, Commercial Street, E1 was built.

Opened in 1884 by social reformers Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, Toynbee Hall was the first 'Settlement', where privileged graduates would live and work while advising, supporting and teaching those who suffered the desperately poor conditions of the East End. Toynbee Hall started a Free Legal Advice Centre (1898), the Whitechapel Art Gallery (1901), the Workers' Educational Association (1903) and the Child Poverty Action Group (1967), tangible outcomes from the place where William Beveridge (1879-1963) and Clement Attlee (1883-1967) lived, worked and developed ideas for a Welfare State.

At Toynbee Hall, current day politicians launch major manifesto commitments to continue the battle with Beveridge's 'Five Giants' of want, disease, squalor, ignorance and idleness, as these desperate needs have not gone away: in Tower Hamlets half the population of children and older people live in poverty. Through more than 400

volunteers, many already full-time workers in the City, Toynbee Hall helps more than 13,000 people a year, expected to rise to 20,000 by 2020 as the advice and support programmes expand.

Joseph Toynbee was a keen friend, patron and supporter of the pre-Raphaelites. No doubt he would have approved of Toynbee Hall's 1884 Grade II listed building, strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and decorated internally by CR Ashbee, an early resident. But just as his old house on Parkside has been put to modern use, so Toynbee Hall is developing. The advice centre is to have modern offices, the tired sheltered housing to be renewed and the Hall itself refurbished to illustrate Toynbee Hall's rich history and future direction as a pioneer of social support and change.

The Wimbledon connection continues through support from St Mark's Church, the venue for talks by members of Toynbee Hall. Thanks go to David Ainsworth, Revd Clive Gardner and Sheila Dunman, among many.

To learn more please go to www.toynbeehall.org.uk

July Anniversary – Battle of the Somme

A query from *Darling* magazine set MONICA ELLISON thinking about Wimbledon's plaques and those anniversaries and centenaries commemorated by them

THIS IS PROVING to be a year of notable anniversaries. There have been spectacular William Shakespeare anniversary celebrations throughout the country and currently neighbouring Richmond and Hampton Court are in the throes of events commemorating the life and work of Capability Brown. First World War centenaries continue as the commemoration of the historic Battle of the Somme takes centre field in the coming weeks, with its stories of gallantry and futility in equal measure.

On 22 July 1916, Lt Colonel C Crawshay wrote to Mrs Arthur Perceval Graves:

"I very much regret to have to write and tell you your son has died of wounds. He (Robert von ranke Graves) was very gallant and was doing so well and is a great loss.

"He was hit by a shell and was

very badly wounded and died on the way to the base I believe."

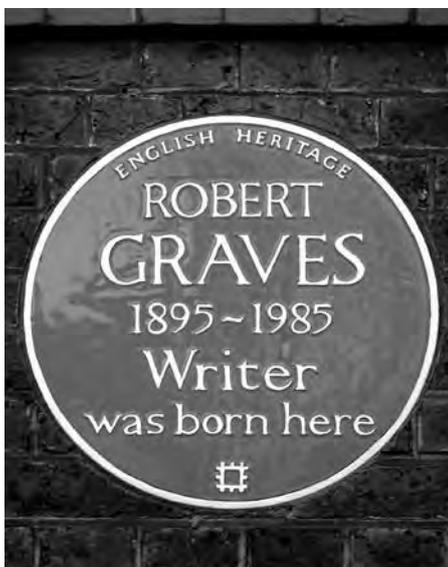
The date gazetted in *The Times* for Robert Graves' death was 24 July. It would have been his 21st birthday. But Graves was not 'done for', as we well know from the blue wall plaque on his former home on the corner of Lauriston Road. Colonel Crawshay later wrote: "Dear von Runicke, I cannot tell you how pleased I am you are alive. I was told your number was up for certain and a letter was supposed to have come in from Field Ambulance saying you had gone under ... I shall drink your health tonight. Tibs"

Graves was wounded at the outset of the attack by his battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers on the ridge called High Wood. The proximity of a French battery firing close overhead and the fierce German riposte, in which a third of the Welch were lost before the real show started, prompted Robert to chant over and over words from Nietzsche which he remembered in French translation "*Non, tu ne me peux pas tuer!*"

Robert was badly hit by shell

fragments, one piercing a lung. His words of defiance served him well, proving to be both talisman and security blanket, for he was picked up by stretcher-bearers and taken to a station where his wounds were dressed. There, in a corner, he was left unconscious for more than 24 hours. Finally, on the morning of 21 July while the dead were being cleared Graves was found among them still breathing. He was put on an ambulance for the nearest field hospital. Later an orderly provided him with a pencil and paper enabling him to write to his mother: 'I am wounded but all right'.

Robert Graves was never completely all right. Nevertheless, that same year, he published his first collection of war poems *Over the Brazier* and went on to become the poet, classicist, mythographer and historical novelist of *I Claudius* fame that we recognise and celebrate. In 1929 he published his classic account of the Battle of the Somme in *Goodbye to All That* from which I have quoted (see pages 177-187). In this anniversary year it is a work well worth revisiting.



Home front: the blue plaque above the front door of No.1 Lauriston Road



A huge lawn!

In the footsteps of Capability Brown
DAVE DAWSON finds traces of the lawn and haha designed for the First Earl Spencer

IN 1764 EARL Spencer, one of the richest men in England commissioned Capability Brown to “improve” his newly enlarged park at Wimbledon. Little is

recorded of the Earl’s use of the house, but forty years later, the second Earl occupied his Manor House in Wimbledon for only a month or two each summer.

The improvement was a place where over 1,000 influential guests were treated to “breakfasts”, which were occasions for the nation’s rulers and their women folk to be seen and to discuss affairs of state, business, intrigue, intelligence, fashion, sport and succession. The Spencers also wanted a prestige setting for their own leisure and that of their close friends. Who but the fashionable rising star, Lancelot Brown, should design the improvements to the park?

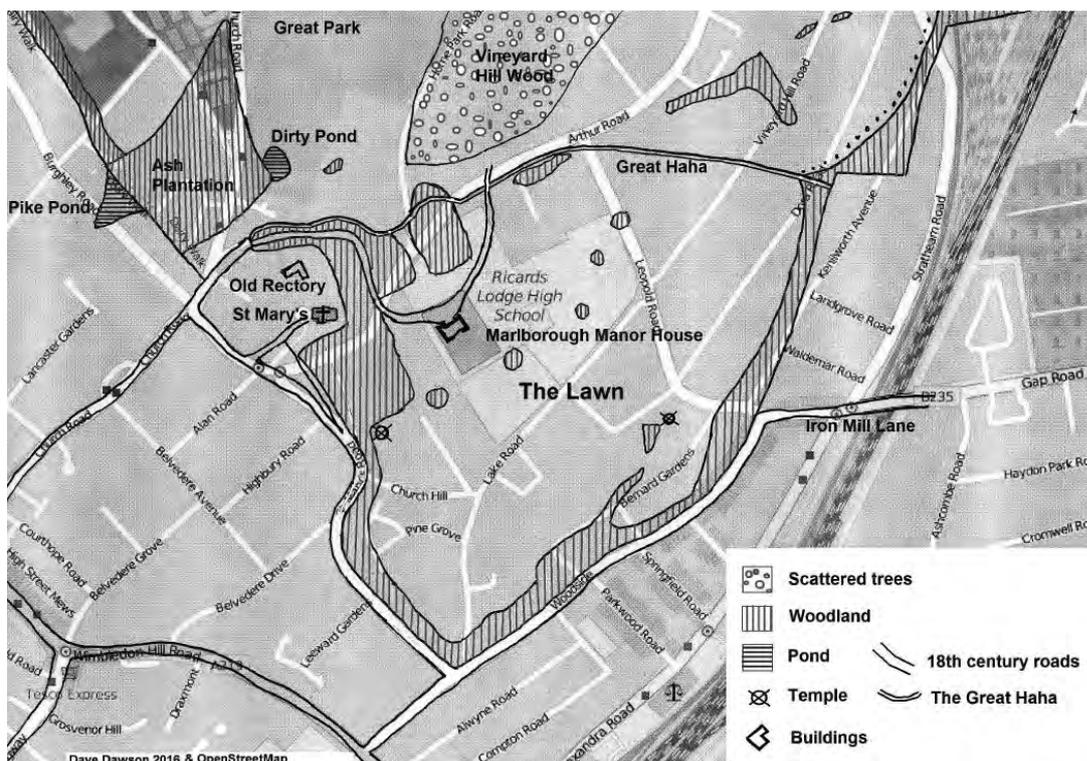
In 1768, Thomas Richardson surveyed the resulting new landscape. On his map we see two innovations that replaced the previous fields, avenues and formal landscape around the manor house. The house was surrounded by “The Lawn”, one of the few features named on all three late 18th century maps of the park. Even by today’s standards The Lawn was huge. It ran, unfenced and with

scattered clumps of trees, from the house on the top of Vineyard Hill, south-east down to the woodland around the perimeter of the park, an area bounded by three of today’s roads: St Mary’s, Woodside and Kennilworth, totalling 85 acres.

Bounding The Lawn to the north was a half mile long haha. This wall and ditch was designed to be invisible from The Lawn, so giving the impression that The Lawn was continuous with the pastures of the Great Park. Looking north, the nobles could enjoy a rural scene with shepherds and their flocks, without the animals and their smell and dung compromising their pleasure.

The western end of the haha was on Church Lane, by the present day Rectory Orchard at the top end of Wimbledon Park Golf Course. From there it snaked east across the high slopes of the hill, passing just south of Vineyard Hill Wood, before descending to the park’s perimeter wood. It crossed the lines of present day roads: Home Park, Arthur, Leopold, Vineyard Hill and Dora. It ended at the wooded perimeter

Then and now: the late 18th century lawn and haha superimposed on a modern map base. The heavy print identifies the 18th century features



Celebrating Capability Brown's 300th Anniversary

The landscape architect Capability Brown, who created Wimbledon Park, was born 300 years ago this August, and the Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP) have organised a celebration to mark this important milestone.

On Saturday 13 August there will be a walk round the 4km Heritage Trail, with talks on the park's ecology and history along the way. A series of commemorative plaques will be unveiled and the event will conclude with refreshments at the Wimbledon Club.

Local dignitaries and MPs are taking part, and we hope that local people will also want to join in – the walk and talks are free, and tickets for the refreshments will be on sale for £5. More details will follow nearer the time on www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk

Did you know?

Capability Brown has been described as "England's greatest gardener", with more than 170 gardens to his name, including Blenheim, Chatsworth and Longleat. As well as Grade II* listed Wimbledon Park, designed for the Spencer family, his London gardens include Syon Park, Richmond Palace Gardens, (now part of Kew Gardens), Gray's Inn Walks and St James Park.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS IN THE AREA

Hampton Court Palace has a range of events throughout the year. 'The Empress and the Gardener', an exhibition of more than 60 views of the Gardens drawn by Brown's surveyor, John Spyers, runs until 4 September.

Museum of Richmond will be showing part of the 'Capability Now' exhibition, supported by a range of events covering poetry, arts and crafts, film and more. From 1 July to 29 October.

Spreading the words



JOHN STERN meets the new chair of Wimbledon BookFest and hears his vision for the literary festival

WIMBLEDON BOOKFEST celebrates its tenth birthday this year with a new chair who is determined to build on the event's huge success and spread its roots even further into the local community.

Toby Mundy (pictured above), the founder and former chief executive of Atlantic Books, runs his own creative management agency, and is prize director of the Baillie Gifford Prize (formerly the Samuel Johnson Prize). He has been a trustee of BookFest since 2014 and replaced co-founder Tony Kane as chair earlier this year.

"In my view it's the pre-eminent festival of its kind in London," says Mundy. "There are juggernauts like Edinburgh, Hay and Cheltenham that have been going for years but we are really up there – very much in the premier league!"

"Our job is not to take over the world. Everything is incremental and none of us believe in revolution. It's about the little things that can we do better."

This year's event was launched at the House of Commons in March, at which it was announced that Jeremy Paxman will be one of the well-known names appearing at BookFest between 30 September

and 9 October. Other confirmed guests include comedy writer and novelist Andy Hamilton, explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy, and broadcaster Clare Balding, who will be talking about her first children's book alongside Michael Morpurgo.

BookFest's children's programme, which Mundy describes as "fantastic", is an area that he wants to build on and communicate even more widely. "We believe we can embed ourselves much more deeply within the community," says Mundy, "and inspire and encourage ever more members of our community to try us out. We have some of the biggest children's authors, stars of CBBC and the likes of nature presenter Steve Backshall."

BookFest's work goes beyond the ten days of autumn on Wimbledon Common. "Our educational programme is a hugely important part of what we do," says Mundy. "That's the bit that our October visitors don't necessarily see: the literacy and reading programmes, the film-making, the short story competition, all over Merton. It's hugely important part of what we do."

In April BookFest held an event at the Wimbledon Odeon, attended by 220 people, where the actor Samuel West talked to the author Gulwali Passarlay about *The Lightless Sky*, which tells the shocking story of his 12-month journey to Europe from Afghanistan as a 12-year-old refugee. It is this kind of "fringe" event that Mundy believes is all part of how BookFest can reach further into the local community.

For more information on BookFest and details of how to enter the short story competition visit www.wimbledonbookfest.org



POSITIONS VACANT

■ Activities secretary

The Activities Group is seeking a volunteer to help with organising the Society's excursions. The duties involve researching possible venues, arranging the trips and taking bookings from members. The committee of five all help with the planning of visits and two of them are responsible for the organisation of the walks and talks programmes. We would like a new volunteer to work alongside Linda in the initial planning of next year's programme until she leaves the committee in September.

Those interested in the post can contact Linda Defriez on 020 8944 6914 or by email at lindadefriez@hotmail.com

■ Planning Committee Chairperson

The Planning Committee is seeking a volunteer to take over the position of Chair of the Planning Committee as John Mays, who has fulfilled this role for the last five years, relinquished the post at the AGM in May.

The duties, apart from chairing the PC's meetings, involve general supervision of its wide-ranging activities including representations to the Merton Planning Department, arranging meetings with planners and other bodies, attending meetings of representational groups and dealing with a variety of telephone and email queries. There is also a PR element involving the press and general public.

Meetings take place monthly on Mondays in the Wimbledon Museum at 7.15pm and are pre-booked for the year.

Those interested in the post can contact John Mays on 020 8946 2198 or 07850 69 77 23 or by email at john@themayses.co.uk

LECTURES

Our varied and wide-ranging lecture programme reached a triumphant climax in April. Estate agent John Collard spoke at the Emmanuel Church Lounge which was packed with an audience interested in local property matters. Numerous questions were raised and hotly debated. We have

another attractive programme to educate and entertain in the autumn and spring months of 2016-17. Full details will appear in the September newsletter, but subject areas covered will include history, sociology, culture and architecture from experts in their fields. **Michael Norman-Smith**

Excursion to Stansted Park

The Society's coach excursions are always an enjoyable experience, and the visit to Stansted Park in Hampshire on a balmy day in May was no exception.

In 1900, a fire destroyed Stansted House, a 17th-century country mansion near Chichester. A new house was built in 1903 on the exact footprint of the previous mansion. Designed by architect Arthur Conan Blomfield, the elegant house is now listed Grade II*. There have been many owners over the years. Since 1924, the Ponsonby family, the Earls of Bessborough, have owned the estate and the house, gifting it to the Stansted Park Foundation in 1983.

The house is set in 1600 acres of ancient woodland, with its park area designed by Capability Brown. The fine interiors contain an outstanding collection of paintings, textiles and furniture, illustrating the history of the Ponsonby family.

In the basement, a remarkable set of fully-furnished Servants' Quarters survives almost unchanged, and were in use until the 1950s. The pantry, pastry room and kitchen are of particular interest as reminders of an Edwardian life style. There were

15 staff in the kitchen, including a cook and four kitchen maids. Much of the kitchen equipment and utensils seen in these rooms date from the early 20th century when the kitchen was in regular use. The copper *batterie de cuisine* (pictured below) is a Bessborough family original and bears their monogram.

After a most interesting tour of the house, members were able to walk through landscaped areas and a walled garden first laid out in the 1820s. A small pavilion by the lawns in front of the house is set alongside a cricket pitch where the game has been played since the 18th century.

After the visit to Stansted the excursion moved on to Goodwood House. **ASIF MALIK**

