



## Changes at the Museum

**JOHN MAYS** pays tribute to the retiring Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Museum, and welcomes its new Chairman.

AT THE END OF 2018 Cassandra Taylor, Chairman, and Sheila Dunman, Deputy Chairman of the Museum Committee relinquished their positions and Jacqueline Laurence took over as Chairman.

Cassandra Taylor has been a member of the Wimbledon Society for over 40 years and a stalwart of the Museum Committee for more than 20 of those years. For a time she was the Books Curator, and also editor of the Newsletter. In 2012 she became Vice Chairman of the Museum Committee and Chairman in 2014.

Cassandra's background and wide experience lie in the newspaper sector and as an author. She was associate editor of *Good Housekeeping* and a Director of the Good Housekeeping institute. Among other things she has been a trade union official, ran the Family Planning Association's press office



*Cassandra Taylor*

and edited its in-house newsletter. She has written over thirty books on consumer, household and money management, plus general lifestyle problem solving.

She was a reporter for Radio Wimbledon, a Governor of a leading Independent Girls Boarding School and of the Queen's Road Montessori School. Other aspects of her career include membership of Quangos, of the Electricity Consumers Committee, the Wine Standard Board, the Funeral Ombudsman Scheme's Committee and two Committees in the then Ministry of Agriculture.

It seems that the Museum has fulfilled a life-long dream for Cassandra, who remarked "I've had a

really enjoyable career since leaving university, but I had always wanted to work in a museum. Unfortunately, I didn't realise at the time that I needed proper qualifications! So my involvement with the Museum of Wimbledon has been the icing on the cake, and I have made many good friends as a result."

Sheila Dunman's family connections with Wimbledon go back to her great-grandfather and she was raised and educated here. After graduating from university, she worked in the educational sector and had a number of appointments abroad and in the UK.

She first joined the Museum Committee some ten years ago as Curator of the Ephemera Collection, and she told us: "One of the joys of being the curator of Ephemera has been in building up a social history of Wimbledon through everyday items. For example, adverts in Wimbledon Theatre programmes are invaluable in recalling long lost shops and local businesses. Former residents who have contributed to national as well as local life are also recorded."

Sheila has participated in many of the Museum's activities including a number of Exhibitions in the Norman Plastow Gallery. She became Deputy Chairman of the Museum in 2014. **(continued on p3)**

Photo by Nigel Davies

## Wimbledon Society contacts

**President** **Tony Michael**  
 president@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Chairman** **Jeremy Hudson**  
 chairman@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Deputy Chairman** **John Mays**

**Hon Secretary** **Maureen Field**  
 secretary@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Hon Treasurer** **Corinna Edge**  
 treasurer@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Planning & Environment  
 Committee Secretary** **Liz Newman**  
 secpc@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Membership Secretary** **Simon Ingall**  
 membership@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Museum Chairman** **Jacqueline Laurence**  
 chairmanmuseum@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

**Local History** **Michael Norman Smith**

**Subscriptions** **Jennifer Newman**

**Website** **Asif Malik**  
 info@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

## Wimbledon Society Newsletter

**Editorial team**  
 Sally Gibbons editor@wimbledonsociety.org.uk  
 Nigel Davies  
 Monica Ellison, Asif Malik, John Mays

**Letters to the editor**  
 Please email editor@wimbledonsociety.org.uk  
 or write to Sally Gibbons c/o The Museum of  
 Wimbledon, 22 Ridgway, SW19 4QN

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

**Follow us on Facebook and Twitter**  
 [www.facebook.com/TheWimbledonSociety](http://www.facebook.com/TheWimbledonSociety)  @wimsoc

The name of the Wimbledon Society or that of the Museum of Wimbledon must never be used to promote personal activities or written work without written permission from the Society.

The articles and photos in this newsletter are copyright of those credited or, where no credit exists, of The Wimbledon Society. No part of this newsletter can be copied or reproduced without the express written permission of the copyright holder.



## Chairman's view

THE LAST THREE MONTHS of 2018 proved to be exceptionally busy for the Society and its hard-working committee members. Over 230 people visited the Society's "Wimbledon in the Great War" exhibition in November, and thanks are due to Pamela Greenwood together with Sarah Gould of the Merton Heritage Service for their work in putting the successful exhibition together.

At the end of the year Cassandra Taylor retired as Chairman of the Museum Education & History Committee after five years in the role, and we are most grateful for her dedicated service. We are delighted that Jacqueline Laurence has agreed to take over from her.

Members of the Planning & Environment Committee have had an exceptionally busy Autumn. After numerous meetings with Councillors, Council officials, and representatives of other local groups, first thing in January the Society delivered its response to Merton's draft "Future Wimbledon Masterplan". As well as a detailed critique of the plan, we submitted our own alternative plan, entitled "Vision 2040" (see our website). This advocates a new pro-active approach to planning our town centre. It focuses on increasing pedestrianisation and 'greening', with strict limits on the height of new buildings. We also urged the Council to think about establishing a concert hall/arts facility in the centre.

We hope the Council will see "Vision 2040" as an achievable and constructive plan to make our town centre a vibrant and attractive locality once more. Thanks are due to Dave Atha, and particularly to Tony Michael, for their work in this regard.

Our Membership & Marketing Group is now hard at work preparing for the Society's Dinner Dance which will take place at The Wimbledon Club on Saturday 19 October. You will be hearing a lot more about this in the coming months. It promises to be a very enjoyable social occasion as well as a fund-raising opportunity, and I hope it will be well-supported by the membership.

And finally, please note that the Society's AGM will take place at the Parish Hall, Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill on Saturday 11 May, starting at 5pm. Do come if you can.

**JEREMY HUDSON**

## Return of the Biscuit Brake

A 'BRAKE' OR 'BREAK' is a table for making crisp beaten biscuits, like ships biscuits, or the fine-textured dough needed for a stamped design. This labour-intensive process involved pounding the dough for hours, at a basic level with the cook's forearm or a wooden bat. Bakeries used brakes from the 15th century onwards. Unwanted wooden brakes probably became firewood, especially from the mid-19th century onwards when they were replaced by machines with mechanised rollers.

There is a wooden biscuit brake on display in the Museum donated in 1925 by Anna Louise Radclyffe (LDWIM 1925.21.1). Now about 300 years old, it was suffering from age and damage, so recently it was conserved and set on a plinth by Plowden & Smith Ltd. Perhaps it is now unique? It is certainly extremely rare.

Margaret Grant, the Museum's first curator, wrote in 1953:

*Bread and Biscuit Brake about 230*



Copyright Plowden & Smith Ltd



Copyright Museum of Wimbledon

*The Biscuit Brake after conservation on a temporary plinth (above left); Artefacts curator Sarah Kirkham AMA examines the Biscuit Brake in the Museum (above right)*

*years old from Wallis's Bakery, later Masons, late 'The Carlton' (with Royal Arms of George IV) and now Carlton-Johnston, No. 40 High Street. The Brake is half the circumference of a big tree trunk. A long wooden arm hinged to the straight edge worked the dough all round the crescent over which the arm projected. An apprentice boy would add his weight by sitting or jumping up and down on the end of the arm...The feet were sunk into the floor of the bakery I visited (1925) in Leith to see such a Brake still*

*in actual use. Within living memory the Wimbledon Brake was used for making of three or four kinds of biscuit – each biscuit punched out by hand from the dough on the board – not like the mass-production by the machinery of today.*

We have been searching for some time to see if there is another brake similar to ours. If anyone knows of the existence of one like it, or should come across one, please contact the Museum.

**PAMELA GREENWOOD**

## Museum changes (contd from p1)

Jacqueline Laurence has had a distinguished career. She took a first-class degree in History at Trinity College Oxford and became a barrister after studying Law at City University and the Inns of Court School of Law. She practised as a barrister for fourteen years, but became a full-time mother when her daughter was born in 2001.

Jacqueline has been a Volunteer at the Sir John Soane's Museum where she has had significant training in preventative conservation, including cleaning and caring for antique books; she also volunteers weekly at the British Museum, photographing Iron Age objects. Apart from that



Photo by Nigel Davies

*Jacqueline Laurence*

she has been the photographs curator at the Wimbledon Museum, has an MA in Museum Studies and teaches a course called "Antiquities and the Law" at UCL. She describes

herself as "Devoted to the Museum; I love being Photographs Curator, and I am tremendously proud now to have this wonderful new role".

The vacancy for Deputy Chairman will be filled in due course.

On behalf of the whole Society the Chairman and Board would like to express their gratitude to Cassandra and Sheila for all their years of hard work and diligent service to the Museum. They will both be greatly missed.

The Board would also like to express their very best wishes to Jacqueline Laurence. We are confident that the Museum and the Museum Committee remain in excellent hands.

# When The Guardian became The Times

**CHARLES TOASE** reveals the changeable nature of Wimbledon's local newspaper titles over the years.

BEFORE THE *Wimbledon Guardian*, we had the *Wimbledon News* which had a rather complicated history. The paper was first published under that title in 1894, and when Wimbledon became a borough in 1905 it became the *Wimbledon Boro' News*, (always spelled as Boro'). In 1965, when Wimbledon became part of the London Borough of Merton, the title changed back to *Wimbledon News*. Then, as part of the Surrey Comet group in 1994, it briefly became the *Wimbledon Comet*, but soon reverted back to the *News*.

First published by H Smith & Sons, and later taken over by WH Stoakley with offices in St. Georges Road, the *Wimbledon News* became

part of the South London News Group in the 1960s. It was a 'paid for' paper, and sales were badly hit when a free paper, the *Wimbledon Guardian*, started in 1977. The *News* tried to compete by producing its own freebie called *Midweek*, containing material from the main edition, from 1977 to 1980, but this was unsuccessful and the paper ultimately ceased publication in 2006.

So why has the *Guardian's* title now changed to the *Times*? In 2018 Newsquest, the publisher of the *Wimbledon Guardian*, moved it from the Sutton Guardian group to the Richmond Times group, changing the name to *Wimbledon Times* as from 9 November 2018. Incidentally, the Richmond newspaper was originally owned by the Dimbleby family, and Richard

Dimbleby started as a journalist on that paper before moving to radio journalism.

Not many people realise that the first local free distribution paper was the *Wimbledon and Merton Advertiser*, published in 1889, but it didn't last long – only from 23 February to 18 May. Unfortunately free newspapers, because of their lack of editorial staff, are usually thin on reporting local news, and readers will notice that these days the new paper supplements its Wimbledon coverage with items on Richmond and Twickenham.

The history of Wimbledon's local papers is one of the topics covered in *An A-Z of Wimbledon*, by Charles Toase, published recently and available from the Museum, Wimbledon Library, and bookshops.

## Cromwell's Half-acre

THE TRADITION that the Crooked Billet was 'Cromwell's Half-Acre' arose because Walter Cromwell (father of Thomas Cromwell, Chancellor to Henry VIII) is said to have owned "a brewery and inn at the south-west part of Wimbledon Common".

This tradition was disputed by Richard Milward, possibly because of confusion over the whereabouts of the Green. The modern Green is by the War Memorial, but the earlier Rushmore Green stretched from the Crooked Billet to Southside and Rushmere pond. Recent research in records of licensed victuallers show that in 1727 there were two pubs called Crooked Billet, the 'Old' and the 'New'. It seems likely that the older one may have been there in

the seventeenth century, if not the sixteenth, when Cromwell apparently took possession of an area of land from his son-in-law.

Records of the time are confusing and incomplete, and historians over the years have contradicted one

another about their interpretation. However, it is quite possible that the half acre of land (actually 0.544 of an acre, or 0.22 hectares) forming the green beside the Crooked Billet could have belonged to Walter Cromwell.



A sketch of a corner of Wimbledon Common showing the Crooked Billet, by Percy Meredith

## What was Humiliation Day?

BACK IN 2006 the Local History Group was asked 'What was Humiliation Day?' In 1866 the Vicar, Canon Haygarth, preached a sermon for that day, together with his three curates, and collected £56.8s.1d. as a result.

We found that days of prayer and humiliation had been ordered in the 17th century, including one for 'the Troubles in Ireland', and there are such days in other countries today. What surprised us was the 1866 date. However, with the help of the internet, we now know that following a cattle plague and a cholera epidemic, the Church had asked the Government to declare a Humiliation Day.

This request was rejected by Earl Russell's cabinet, and the bishops declared the day independently. This was significant in marking the growing independence of the Church of England, so Canon Haygarth's sermon was a small part of history.



Reverend Henry William Haygarth

## Closure of the St Andrew Society

THE ST ANDREW SOCIETY, which closed recently after 108 years in existence, was originally the brainchild of Margaret Grant, the first curator of the Wimbledon Museum.



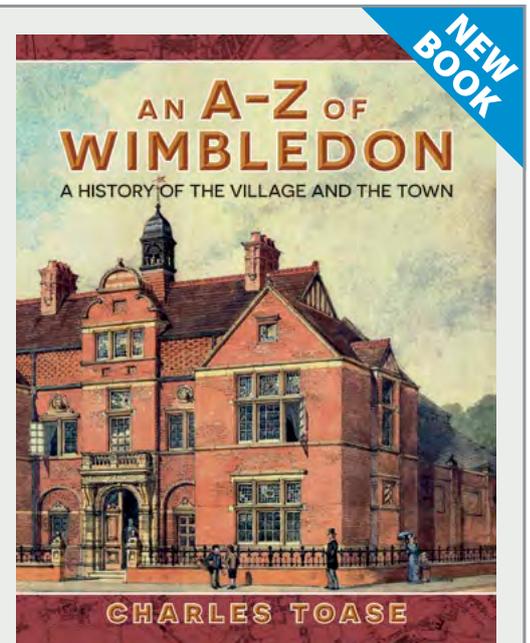
Margaret was a fervent Scot, and in 1910 she put an advertisement in the *Wimbledon Boró' News* advocating the formation of a local society for the support and furtherance of Scottish culture and heritage. A meeting was held and the 'Wimbledon and District Scots Association (1910)' was born, with Margaret Grant as its Secretary, and later its President. The name was changed to the St. Andrew Society (S.W. London) in 1914, but later the 'S.W.' was dropped.

The Society organised Scottish dancing events, held an annual picnic on the Common

to celebrate the Battle of Bannockburn, and planted a grove of trees in 1914 near Caesar's Camp, known as the Scots Grove (which apparently didn't survive World War I). A Burns night dinner was, of course, held annually, and in years when the ice was strong enough, they played curling on the pond. The Society's records have been given to the Museum.



Margaret Grant



### 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 – a History of the Village and the Town' written by Charles Toase, the well-known Wimbledon historian. Perfect for anyone who has an interest in what makes Wimbledon wonderful!

**£14.00 from the Museum of Wimbledon – open weekends 2:30pm to 5pm or online at [www.wimbledonmuseum.org.uk](http://www.wimbledonmuseum.org.uk)**

## NEW SHORT TRIPS ORGANISER

Your Activities Committee is delighted to announce that their appeals for help have been answered. Society member and Parkside resident, **Jane Healey**, will



take over the organisation of the very popular short visits programme from Linda Defriez.

"If something needs doing, ask a busy person", so the saying goes, and to prove it correct, Jane has proposed some exciting ideas for the 2019 /2020 'Around and About' visits. There will be something for everyone; please take a good look at the Activities leaflets accompanying this newsletter.

# Vision for Wimbledon



IN THE LAST Newsletter we reported on the Council's 'Masterplan' proposals for the town centre, increasing office space and encouraging new development in 18 storey slabs. In the local 'Workshops' held by the Council in 2017 it was clear that the public were firmly against this kind of concept.

The Society felt that a different approach should be looked at, based largely on what local people had been saying they wanted to see in their town. *For it is their town.*

We wanted to look further ahead than the next (usually secret) meeting between a developer and the Council staff, followed by a planning application for another lumpy "could be anywhere" development, giving the public three weeks to "object".

Fundamental issues that now face our high streets and town centres also needed to be dealt with.

So we have produced our alternative plan, showing what the town centre could be in 20 years time. We call it **Vision 2040**.

Without such a plan, something to focus on and aim at, nobody knows whether today's decision is the right one. Or what kind of town we will end up with.

We have attempted to cover a wide range of issues.



*The Broadway today (above) and as a new pedestrianised town square (top)*

- There is the future well-being of our 'High Street', following the reports by Mary Portas, Bill Grimsey, John Timpson and others.
- Progressively increasing the pedestrianised and green areas (and improving air quality) throughout the town, by re-routing traffic.
- The two conservation areas can provide the small shops that add character.
- Pressing for the new concert hall, which could be enormously transformative for the town.
- Integrating the future Crossrail 2 works into the fabric of the town. And much more. We wait to see how the Council will respond to this very different approach.

**Vision 2040** is now published on the Society website, and hard copies can be purchased from the Museum for £5 (by post £7).

## Review of the Planning & Environment Committee work in 2018

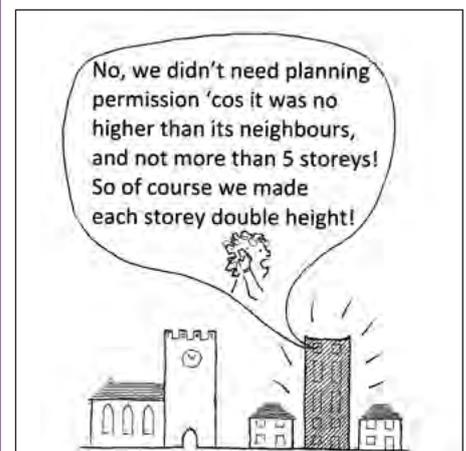
THE SOCIETY'S Planning & Environment Committee met 14 times during 2018. It reviewed the planning applications made to Merton Council in respect of Wimbledon addresses. The total number of applications considered in detail was 213 and in 74 of these we sent comments to the Council.

Our work covered the whole of Wimbledon, as the following analysis of the applications considered by Council Ward shows. The comparative figures for 2017 are in brackets:

*Abbey	14 (15)
*Dundonald	15 (22)
Hillside	34 (32)
*Raynes Park	19 (14)
Trinity	28 (16)
Village	77 (76)
Wimbledon Park	26 (15)

*\* only part of the Ward is in our area*

Our comments can vary from alerting the Council to an omission in the application: proposing a minor change – for instance, suggesting that the side panels of a balcony are changed to opaque glass so that neighbouring gardens are not overlooked: to recommending that the Council refuse the application – for instance, because a proposed new office block is too high and dominant in its environment.



## New Local Plan for Merton

WE REPORTED in the March 2018 Newsletter that Merton Council was proposing to update their planning guidance with a new local plan for the whole Borough; and that the Planning & Environment Committee had written to them with our suggestions.

At the same time as consulting on their Wimbledon Town Centre masterplan (see article opposite) the Council has also put out for consultation their draft of the new plan for the whole Borough, and we have now sent in our comments on that.

Among the points we raised are:

- 1) Clarity about the heights of new buildings proposed in the town centre;
- 2) Support for the proposed new concert hall on the Hartfield Road car park site;
- 3) Protection for space, light and existing views in our streetscapes;
- 4) A ban on basement excavations under Listed Buildings;
- 5) A "Tree Years" policy – where an existing tree has to be removed in a development, it should be replaced with trees of equivalent years.

### Planing free zones?

A CURRENT GOVERNMENT consultation document is proposing that planning permission would not be required for:

- Adding up to five storeys onto buildings to create additional housing;
- Adding storeys onto existing blocks of flats.

Excluding local people and neighbours from decisions on what they feel is appropriate for their area, and preventing the local Council from considering whether such development is appropriate is not supported. We have responded accordingly.

### Another new hotel for the town?

AS REPORTED in the December newsletter, Hartfield Road's parades of useful shops have gradually disappeared, and all that remains now are places to eat and drink.

A planning application has now been received for an eight storey, 175-room hotel on the site of the recently closed Copperfields bookshop. The proposed height would be 28 metres, which we consider too tall. We have suggested that the overall height be reduced and the top floor set back to reduce the "canyonisation" of this busy road.

Elsewhere in the same road, permission was granted in October 2017 for a seven storey, 150-room hotel at 12 Hartfield Road, to replace the Slug @ Wimbledon pub. However, a later application, also granted, was for a seven storey office building to include a ground floor restaurant. The former pub is closed but no development work has started yet.

A nine storey, 176-room hotel at 151-163 The Broadway, between the CIPD Building and Majestic Wine was approved in August 2016 and has now opened as a Premier Inn.

There has also been an application to convert four of the six units of Bank Buildings in Wimbledon Hill Road into a hotel, but no decision has been made yet.

### Haydons Road Streetscape Plans

THE STRETCH OF Haydons Road between Haydons Road station and the traffic lights at Plough Lane & Gap Road

**"Residents have long sought streetscape improvements in our little community ... the only part of the borough seen by visitors to the new stadium"**

contains several terraces of shops. This area is set to become more important locally with the housing developments at the stadium site and visitors to AFC Wimbledon's new ground.

Wimbledon Park Ward councillors have now submitted a Highways & Public Realm Improvement Plan to Merton Council that would increase the amount of street greenery, improve provisions for cyclists, provide a revamp of the pocket park on the corner of Gap Road and Durnsford Road, plus protection for the historic frontages of the shops in The Parade on Haydons Road.

Nicola Thompson from Haydons Road North Community blog commented: "Residents have long sought streetscape improvements in our little community, which is a gateway to Merton and will be the only part of the borough seen by many visitors to the new stadium. Funds are available thanks to Plough Lane development-related S106 and CIL monies, so we are optimistic this scheme will be implemented. We are very grateful to our local councillors for helping pulling it together, and to FutureMerton for receiving it so positively."

### Heathrow Airspace and future operations consultation

AS PART OF Heathrow Airport's planning for the third runway, they have started a consultation on their future operations. This may include revised flight paths for both landing and departing planes and consequently could affect a wide area of south-east England. The consultation can be accessed at [www.heathrowconsultation.com](http://www.heathrowconsultation.com).

At the time of writing the Planning & Environment Committee has not considered its response but will have done so by the time that this issue is published.

**MONICA ELLISON** recalls the life and work of two prominent local residents who died in December 2018:

## TONY KANE

20 November 1938 – 17 December 2018

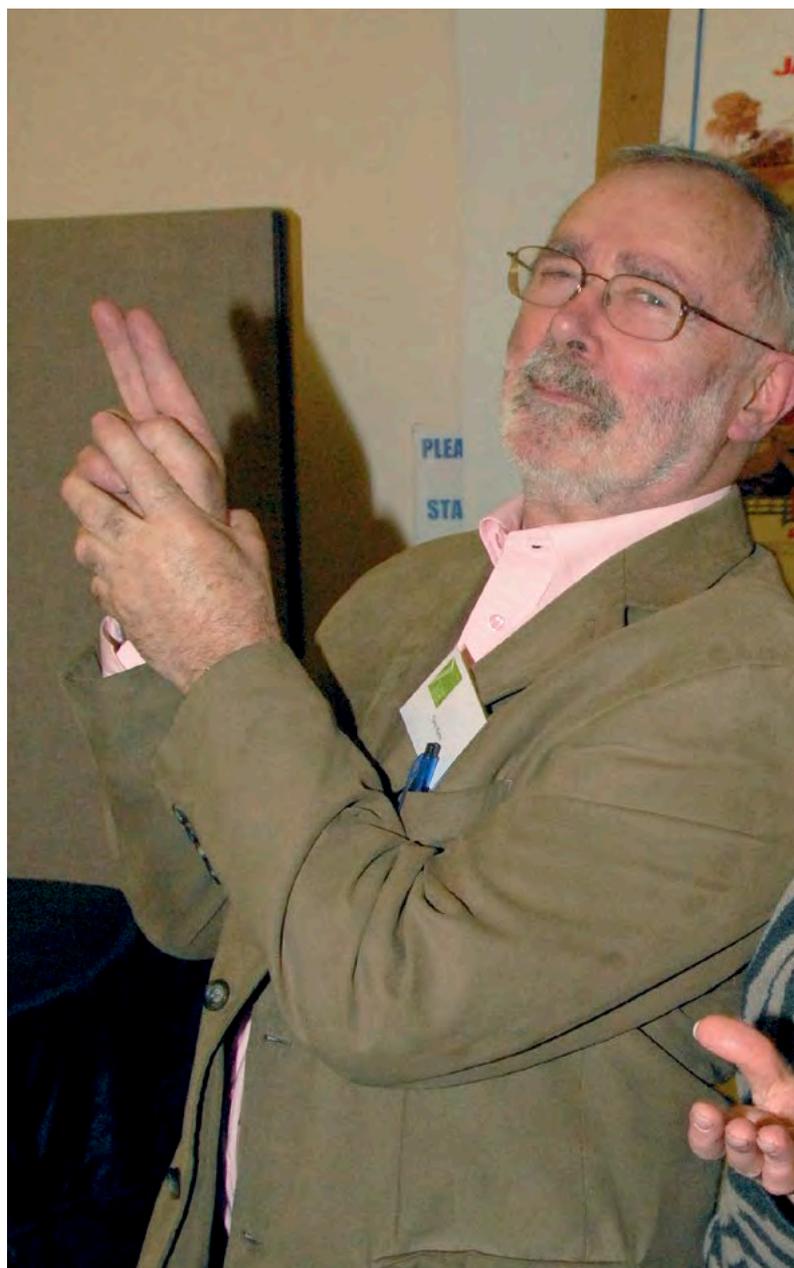
DOMINIC ANTHONY KANE was known to all as Tony. The large congregation at the Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill on 12th January bore testimony to the esteem in which he was held in Wimbledon, the town he made his own as artist, teacher, editor and community campaigner for almost fifty years. The Requiem Mass celebrated by the Parish Priest, Canon John Clark was not a solemn civic occasion, but a loving celebration arranged by the Kane family, whom it was a privilege to join in both laughter and tears and to whom we extend sympathy.

Not known for punctuality in life, Tony's reputation was maintained by the late arrival of the Order of Service booklets, in which many were delighted to discover Tony's distinctive light-hearted illustrations alongside the hymns and prayers. Some watercolours had previously enlivened his quirky editorial columns in *Time & Leisure* magazine, others had migrated – rail mice to church mice – from his series of children's books. Under a sketch of Tony lying in the grass at Hampton Court were the words of Nelson Mandela: "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others."

Tony Kane was born in Croydon to Rachael (nee Stratton) a civil servant and Dominic Kane, an army officer turned teacher. Fiona Razvi, Director of Wimbledon Bookfest, wrote in *The Guardian*: "Art was central to Tony's life ... never bound by convention he took art classes at his local college, when his secondary school could not provide them. After national service, Croydon Art School and teacher training at Goldsmiths College, he became head of art at St Thomas More comprehensive school in Chelsea where he taught for almost forty years. It was there he met Maggie whom he married in 1968 bringing up their four children in Wimbledon." Along the way Tony became a member of the Labour Party and was active in the NASUWT union, which likely fostered his interest in civic issues.

In retirement Tony blossomed. Without neglecting his own art work and also holding art classes, he started a family business – the 'lifestyle' magazine *Time & Leisure* which has grown into the glossy monthly that Wimbledon residents and neighbouring areas turn to for information and entertainment.

The Wimbledon Society was immensely grateful to Tony for the publicity he gave in *T&L* to the Richard



Milward Local History Prize. In similar vein, he saw the value of our occasional book event, notably that given in 2007 on William Wilberforce by The Rt. Hon William Hague MP. That night in Polka Theatre, the idea of a Bookfest was conceived by Tony. He became a co-founder of the event, which now claims its place in the literary calendar.

Tony was a man of vision who had a rare capacity not only for seeing the bigger picture but for turning it into reality. He lived by Mandela's words. He made a difference.



*Tony's Railway Mice*



Tony Kane and June Whitfield  
at the launch of the 2008  
Wimbledon Bookfest

Askey, Wilfred Pickles, Benny Hill, Leslie Phillips and Bob Monkhouse. She held her own playing in the sitcoms of larger than life figures such as Jimmy Edwards, Tony Hancock, Sid James, and Frankie Howerd, participated in the capers of Peter Sellers, Morecambe & Wise, and The Two Ronnies and played an ‘absolutely fabulous’ role latterly in the sitcom with Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley. June supported more not listed, putting her show business longevity down to her being “no trouble”.

June was born in Streatham but evacuated during the war. She was RADA trained leaving the academy with her first prize. She married Tim Aitchison, a chartered surveyor in 1956. The couple moved to a house in Wimbledon at Lincoln Avenue, just off Parkside in 1963. They had one daughter Suzy, who also chose an acting career. The family moved to The Grange in 1969 spending many happy years there until Tim’s death in 2001. The Grange was to remain June’s home for over forty years.

Close neighbour,  
Michael Norman Smith,  
our Local History  
Chairman, writes: “June

**June had  
“supported  
more actors than  
the Department  
of Health and  
Social Security”**

was a family friend and came to tea quite recently. She was a passionate supporter of New Wimbledon Theatre and for more than twenty years was President of the Founder Friends of both Wimbledon Theatre and of the Carlton Theatre Group. In this last role she opened my summer garden party, where her memory and wicked sense of humour impressed all. ”

Norman Plastow recalled June’s visit to reopen the Windmill Museum in 1999 after major changes had taken place. Always generous, she espoused many local causes including Wimbledon Football Club. She was also an avid supporter of South East Cancer Help Centre where she spent hours talking to patients, carers and volunteers.

June Whitfield was appointed an OBE in 1985 and this honour was followed by a CBE in 1998. In 2017 she was made a Dame for services to drama and entertainment. As she became frail, June chose to move into a care home where she died peacefully on 28th December, aged 93. She will be greatly missed.

## ... AND JUNE WHITFIELD

11 November 1925 – 28 December 2018

THE LEGENDARY ACTRESS, Dame June Whitfield, wrote her memoirs in 2001 which she called *...and June Whitfield*. Typically, the title sends up the achievements of her amazing professional career, which she lightly summed up as a life of “gigs, gags and a couple of gongs.” For over six decades, June Whitfield played roles that ranged from the theatre and *Carry On* films to radio and television sitcoms, mopping up fistfuls of awards along the way.

Local resident June was a petite, elegant figure whose air of brisk certainty was a foil for generations of comedians. Writer Barry Took shrewdly observed that June had “supported more actors than the Department of Health and Social Security”. She worked with Arthur

Obituaries for **Sir Jack Zunz** (civil engineer, 25 December 1923 – 11 December 2018) and **Leonard Mostyn** (30 October 1926 – 16 December 2018) will appear in the June issue.

## WIMBLEDON BOOKFEST ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST SPRING WEEKEND FESTIVAL

**Wimbledon BookFest** has announced its first Spring Weekend Festival, in partnership with King's College School, on 15-17 March 2019. Events will take place in the new Concert Hall at Kings College School and at the beautiful historic Southside House.

The Festival will offer a diverse programme of talks, interviews and debates with writers, commentators and acclaimed thinkers from the worlds of politics, global affairs, education, philosophy, history and more.

Speakers include poet **Roger McGough**, philosopher **Julian Baggini**, writer and novelist **Fatima Bhutto**, historian and broadcaster **Lucy Worsley** and world renowned historian **Peter Frankopan** who will be discussing his latest book *The New Silk*

*Roads: The Present and Future of the World*. There will also be a debate on the private education system between **Andrew Halls**, Head Master of King's College School, and social historians **Francis Green** and **David Kynaston**.

"Our audiences continue to grow year on year and this shows there is a huge appetite for the live event. This new partnership with King's College School allows us to develop the festival further and we are incredibly grateful to the school for supporting this new venture," says Fiona Razvi, Festival Director.

This Spring Weekend Festival is in addition to Wimbledon BookFest's annual ten day Autumn event which takes place on Wimbledon Common, from 3-13 October.



*Lucy Worsley comes to Wimbledon Bookfest's Spring Weekend Festival*

Photo © Historic Royal Palaces/Bloomsbury/Ben Turner

Full programme details and tickets at [www.wimbledonbookfest.org](http://www.wimbledonbookfest.org) or [boxoffice@wimbledonbookfest.org](mailto:boxoffice@wimbledonbookfest.org)

## THE MARRYAT PLAYERS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL, 13-16 JUNE 2019

A chance dinner conversation led to one of the distinctive features of Wimbledon life, which is celebrating its 19th anniversary this year. The Marryat Players started out as an educational venture at the Marryat Road home of its founder and Wimbledon Society member, Margaret Lewisohn. The enterprise has flourished in several directions inspired by the family's love of music and of education.

**The Marryat Players Chamber Orchestra** is made up of young musicians who give concerts in the Great Hall of King's College School. This year's concert will be on Thursday 11 April at 7.30pm with a Vivaldi concerto featuring 11-year-old cellist Laura Lin. Admission is free.

**The Chamber Music Festival** in the magical swimming pool/concert venue



that resulted from the chance dinner conversation is, this year, from 13 to 16 June. It will feature a rich array of composers. All the players, including Margaret's daughter Jenny, are professionals from distinguished chamber music and other ensembles. Adding to the atmosphere is the house itself, dating from 1914, built on the site of Wimbledon House which once fronted Parkside.

A 2019 innovation is a one-day jazz workshop for players of all abilities from 12 years old upwards, giving students the opportunity to gain experience with a large-scale jazz ensemble. A concert at 6pm on Sunday 14 April is intended for families and friends, but if you wish to attend please email [info@marryatplayers.com](mailto:info@marryatplayers.com).

**Tickets for the June Chamber Music Festival** will be available from 1 April. Friends of the Marryat Players can book now. Membership is £25 a year (go to [www.marryatplayers.com](http://www.marryatplayers.com)). This goes to support the whole venture which is run for love not money and which needs these and other donations to break even and thus to be sustainable for future years.

Photo © Richard Lewisohn

# Flood remedies for Wimbledon Park Lake

In this summary of a detailed report, **DAVE DAWSON** concludes that work is needed, but the options need reconsideration

MERTON COUNCIL have a *Wimbledon Park Lake Reservoir Safety and Desilting Project*, with a budget of over £1m and a projected cost of £5m. They are seeking funding.

Visitors walking beside the lake may not realise they are on the crest of the dam created for the first Earl Spencer by Capability Brown in 1765. Nor may they notice water levels, but regulars know that levels are so high that waves often break over the path, and the water pools beside the crazy golf. Brown is renowned for his engineered lakes, so why did he get this design so wrong?

He didn't! The level of the lake is some 13 inches higher than it was in Brown's day and the lake outfall weir has been raised. So, it could be fixed tomorrow by taking out some boards from the weir. This would also help with drainage of the golf course and The Wimbledon Club.

Furthermore, with every rainstorm, water enters the lake from stormwater drains, raising the level temporarily. The excess water goes safely over the weir into Wimbledon Park Brook and the lake level gradually returns to normal. Every

few years, however, an exceptional rainstorm causes the lake to overtop the dam crest and run down into the park. Water floods around the café with the tube embankment acting as a dam, holding back the water for some hours. It drains away down the pipe that takes Wimbledon Park Brook underground to Earlsfield. The park has to be closed; we need to prevent this flooding.

For 130 years, since the tube line was constructed, flooding of the park has saved residents between

## The level of the lake is some 13 inches higher than it was in Capability Brown's day

the park and Earlsfield from floods. But 130 years is not long enough to foretell future flooding. New, tight engineering standards assume unprecedented rainfall, and seek to prevent erosion of the dam releasing all the lake water. If implausibly great rainfall is assumed, there would be dangerous flooding in the park, and under the railway embankment at Revelstoke Road, flowing on into the Grid. Such an unprecedented storm would cause widespread flooding anyway, but the study considered only the water overtopping the dam.

Two changes could prevent this. First, to build a much bigger weir, brook and pipe, so that implausible flooding is more controlled in the park and does not back up high enough to cascade down Revelstoke Road. However, such large structures would intrude on the park and would rarely be even half full. The second option would be to lower the weir or raise the dam, increasing the distance between the dam crest and lake level. Visitors would see the water a metre below the dam crest and no-one would live long enough to see it rise even close to the crest. We would all be safe from that implausibly great rainfall.

The obvious remedy is that the weir should be lowered by at least 13 inches, bringing the level down to Brown's design. This alone would be enough to prevent plausible floods from overtopping. It's also the only way to ease flooding on the golf course and the Wimbledon Club. It's cost-free, and could be done tomorrow. Why, then, do Merton propose lowering the weir by only an inch or so and why haven't they lowered it already?

If we must plan for implausible rainfall, lowering the weir may not suffice; we might need to raise the dam a little and improve the brook and pipes. Problem solved.



*Water levels on the lake are so high now that waves often break over the path ...*



*...and water pools on pathways in Wimbledon Park*




**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**DINNER DANCE**  
**19th October 2019**

The Society will hold a dinner dance on Saturday 19th October 2019 at 7.00pm at The Wimbledon Club on Church Road.

This black-tie function for Wimbledon Society members promises to be a very enjoyable event. It will also raise vital funds for the forthcoming renovation of the Museum of Wimbledon.

Full details will be sent out with the June edition of the Society Newsletter. If you would like to know more at an earlier date, please contact Luz Patterson at [luzl.patterson@googlemail.com](mailto:luzl.patterson@googlemail.com)

## Greenwatch

SUSANNA RIVIERE offers some information on a subject which affects us all



### Air quality in Merton

AS MENTIONED in the December Newsletter, the quality of the air in Merton deteriorated in 2017: three quarters of sites tested had levels of NO<sup>2</sup> pollution above the legal limit of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

The health effects of air pollution are serious – the World Health Organisation estimates that one third of deaths from stroke, lung cancer and heart disease are due to air pollution. Links have also been established between poor air quality and dementia, miscarriages and children’s health problems.

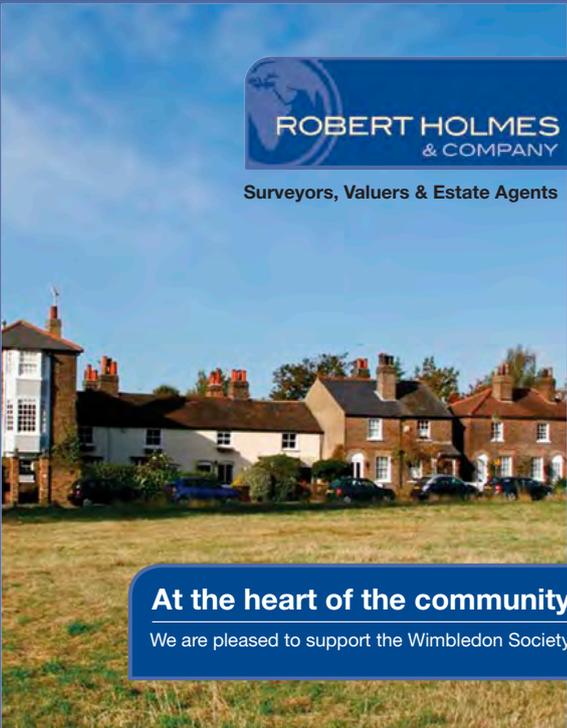
**Drivers** are exposed to more air pollution than cyclists and pedestrians according to recent research studying daily commutes into a congested city centre. So everyone would benefit if we all walked and cycled more.

**Idling is illegal.** Merton Council is about to publicise this fact more widely and take steps to enforce the anti-idling regulations.

**Wood burning stoves** are enjoyed by many Wimbledon residents, myself included. However, they are probably the largest contributors (after traffic) to air pollution in London. They not only affect the general air quality, but also the level of pollutants in the home where they are situated. A wood-burning stove emits more particles per hour than a modern diesel lorry. It is likely that legislation will soon be introduced, under the government’s recently published Clean Air Strategy, to prohibit all but the most efficient wood burning stoves. In the meantime the efficiency of older stoves should be checked and only properly seasoned wood or briquettes used as fuel.

**Air Quality Monitors** for measuring particulates and NO<sup>2</sup> can be borrowed from the Council if you are concerned about air pollution near your house or children’s school. Contact [miar.crutchley@merton.gov.uk](mailto:miar.crutchley@merton.gov.uk).

**Clean Air Merton** is a group of local residents who are campaigning for cleaner air in Merton for more information contact [cleanairmerton@gmail.com](mailto:cleanairmerton@gmail.com).



**ROBERT HOLMES & COMPANY**  
Surveyors, Valuers & Estate Agents

**At the heart of the community**  
We are pleased to support the Wimbledon Society

Sales 020 8947 9833 | Lettings 020 8879 9669  
[www.robertholmes.co.uk](http://www.robertholmes.co.uk)

**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.