



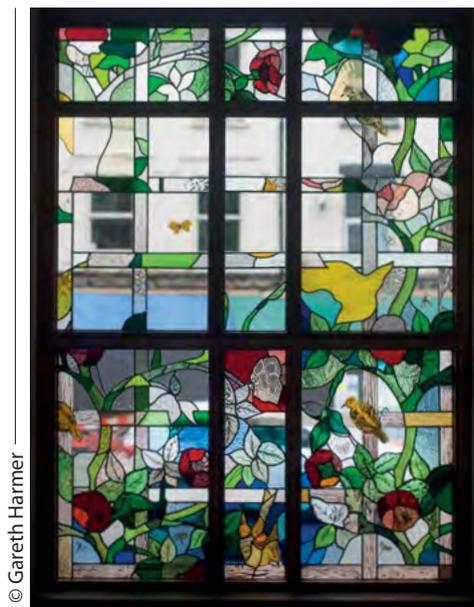
Through the Stained Glass – Wimbledon's radical world

MONICA ELLISON meets local designer **Gareth Harmer**

A SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED stained glass window was unveiled in the Burne-Jones room at the William Morris House, 267 Broadway, on 16 June. The designer, Gareth Harmer, won the commission as a result of a competition held in 2018 for an artwork for William Morris House celebrating Wimbledon's radical tradition and the centenary of the Wimbledon Labour Party.

The idea for the prize was the brain-child of the late Tony Kane, founder of Wimbledon Bookfest and publisher of *Time & Leisure* magazine, who was also a member of the Management Committee of William Morris House. The work was 'unveiled' by Mrs Maggie Kane, who presented the new work to a packed room.

The modern window references the work of William Morris, whose famous William Morris & Co works were based at Abbey Mills. It is large. At 2.7m high and 1.56m wide, it occupies a significant part of the



© Gareth Harmer

frontage of the house at first floor level. The window has a specially designed oak frame, which is double-glazed – a complication with which Mr Morris did not have to contend – but which was resolved for Gareth by craftsmen Juno Glass and Lethbridge Lines in Wandsworth.

Gareth's window, through which can be seen flashes of passing red double-deckers on the Broadway, sits happily at ease with the two intense William Morris works in

recesses of the room, which were given to the Labour Hall in the early 1930s by Emily Townshend and her daughter Caroline.

In 2018, Gareth spotted a poster for the art competition in Wimbledon Books & Music. He had recently completed a stained glass panel in a Morris 'trellis pattern' style with red rose motifs which seemed to be a good fit for the William Morris House brief. His submission caught the attention of both Tony Kane and Steve Spence, who commissioned the work, and as Gareth says, "bravely decided to back the design without any real track record on which to go."

Gareth Harmer was born in Redhill but has lived in Wimbledon since 2004. A freelance photographer by profession, for some years his main clients were the *Surrey Comet*, and *Wimbledon Guardian*. In the increasingly difficult climate for newsprint, Gareth felt the need for diversification and in a digital world driven by computers and screens, the craft aspect of manual work had strong appeal as an outlet for his composition and design (see page 3)

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Chairman's view

I LOVE TENNIS FORTNIGHT and am always sorry when it's over! We were blessed with fine weather this year, and the All England Club was looking at its absolute finest.

This has been a busy period for our hardworking Planning & Environment Committee. Apart from its routine scrutiny of planning applications, it has been active in responding to consultations on a number of significant environmental issues. The increased noise caused by the change to flightpaths in and out of Heathrow has been a particular concern. I am sure we have all noticed more noise in recent months. We are working with our MP Stephen Hammond to persuade Heathrow to restrict aircraft movement directly over Wimbledon.

Another issue has been the planned introduction of 5G infrastructure in the Wimbledon area, and its effect on our health. We are pressing Merton Council to liaise with other London Boroughs and the GLA to conduct research, to satisfy itself as to the safety of this new technology.

Another concern to the PEC is the proposed review of warding arrangements in Merton, and the effect on Wimbledon's representation on Merton Council. We have made detailed representations as to how the several wards comprising Wimbledon Town Centre might best be reconfigured so that a new single Broadway ward covers the area south of the railway.

Our new Communications sub-committee has also been busy recently. We decided that our priority should be the creation of a single website, to replace the now out-of-date separate websites for the Society and the Museum respectively. Asif Malik, Dave Atha and Kevin O'Neil have worked hard to prepare a project brief, which the Board expects to sign off in September. The challenge will then be to find the necessary funding for the cost, estimated to be £5-10,000.

We hope that our Dinner Dance on 19 October will help us towards that target. We already have several very generous donations to our silent auction and/or raffle to be held on the evening. At the time of writing only a handful of tickets remain for the event. I look forward to seeing many of you then.

JEREMY HUDSON

Bookfest's Big Beasts

THE 'BIG BEASTS' of the written and spoken word are heading for the Common this autumn. Once again the festival has produced a fabulous line-up. There are poets, historians, biographers, philosophers, and novelists of many genres: the historical, the gothic, the thriller, tales for adults and children, along with a glittering list of celebrated sportsmen, broadcasters, politicians, climate experts, polemicists, life-stylists and Nadiya the chef with the radiant smile, all will be here with talks from 3 – 13 October.

Lured from North Yorkshire, Bookfest welcomes the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage on 7 October. Wimbledon has

shown a real taste for poetry so there will also be interest in the talk given by the elusive novelist and poet, Ben Okri.

Then there is the return of the historians. The trailblazer was Sir Max Hastings whose astonishing output belies the brilliance of his work. Ed Hussain will be a welcome newcomer to the event, while amongst other returnees are Tom Holland and William Dalrymple. The latter introduces *Anarchy: the East India Company*, which has particular significance for local historians, since the merchant Robert Bell, who built Eagle House, just a stone's throw away from the venue, was a founder member of the famous/infamous company. Nor is the distaff side of history ignored. Dalrymple recommends the work of

Katie Hickman whose work uncovers the exploits of intrepid women in *She-Merchants, Buccaneers and Gentlewomen*. A double ticket should be well worth securing.

If you believe there is nothing left to be said about politics, meet Kamal Ahmed, Paul Mason, James O'Brien, Gavin Esler and that exotic bird of prey Emily Maitlis, all of whom attend this year's *Parlement of Foules*. (Chaucer's cautionary poem ends with the decision to defer the decision until the following year).

Last but not least, Lord David Owen breaks cover to talk about his book *Hubris: The road to Donald Trump*. We hope that Lord Owen can also indicate the way back from the Donald.

MONICA ELLISON

Heathrow and Ward Boundary Consultations

CONSULTATION SEEMS to be the name of the game these days; at the time of going to press there are two affecting Wimbledon – the Local Government Boundary Commission consulting on Ward Boundaries and the Heathrow Airport Authority consulting on the development of Heathrow.

Response to the first was due on 13 August and our Planning & Environment Committee submitted a detailed proposal showing how 'Re-warding' could be achieved in accordance with the Commissions' criteria. Briefly, the requirement is that the new Wards should be roughly equal in number of electors but also take into account local situations and areas of activity/interest.

For Merton the Commission has – for future elections – reduced the number of councillors from 60 to 57 and our

proposals are based accordingly.

The Heathrow consultation is a much more controversial and political concern. The final date for submissions is 13 September. At the time of writing we are still evaluating and making decisions on how the Wimbledon Society should respond. We expect to hold a public meeting on 6 September (after the holiday period but nearly a week before the end of the consultation period) at which members and others will have a chance to express their views. Wimbledon MP Stephen Hammond and representatives from Heathrow will attend the meeting, in the main hall of Ricards Lodge School, Lake Road, London SW19 7HB from 6.30 to 8pm.

We will of course keep members updated.

JOHN MAYS



The Old Fire Station on fire

The Old Fire Station in the Village caught fire after a lightning strike at about 6.30pm on 25 July. The roof and bell tower of the 1890 listed building survived but the lower levels suffered quite serious damage.

Photo courtesy of Richard Holden.

Gareth's Stained Glass

(continued from p1)

skills. A talk by Peter Cormack to the William Morris Society proved inspirational, introducing Gareth to the work and writings of Christopher Whall, who once owned a studio workshop in Hammersmith and whose book *Stained Glass Work* –

A text-book for students and workers in Glass (1905) was a revelation. Gareth sought out stained glass designer Simone Kay, who has a studio/shop in Kingston-upon-Thames and joined her Adult Education Classes to learn the techniques of making both medieval and modern stained glass.



For a short video of Gareth's work see:

www.garethharmer.co.uk

He will exhibit at the Merton Arts Festival on both 21-22 and 28-29 September.

Note: For Wimbledon's Stained Glass tradition see Local History Notes page 5.

The Slips – footpaths in Wimbledon

CHARLES TOASE uncovers an eclectic mix of footpaths, Victorian social welfare and early Methodists.

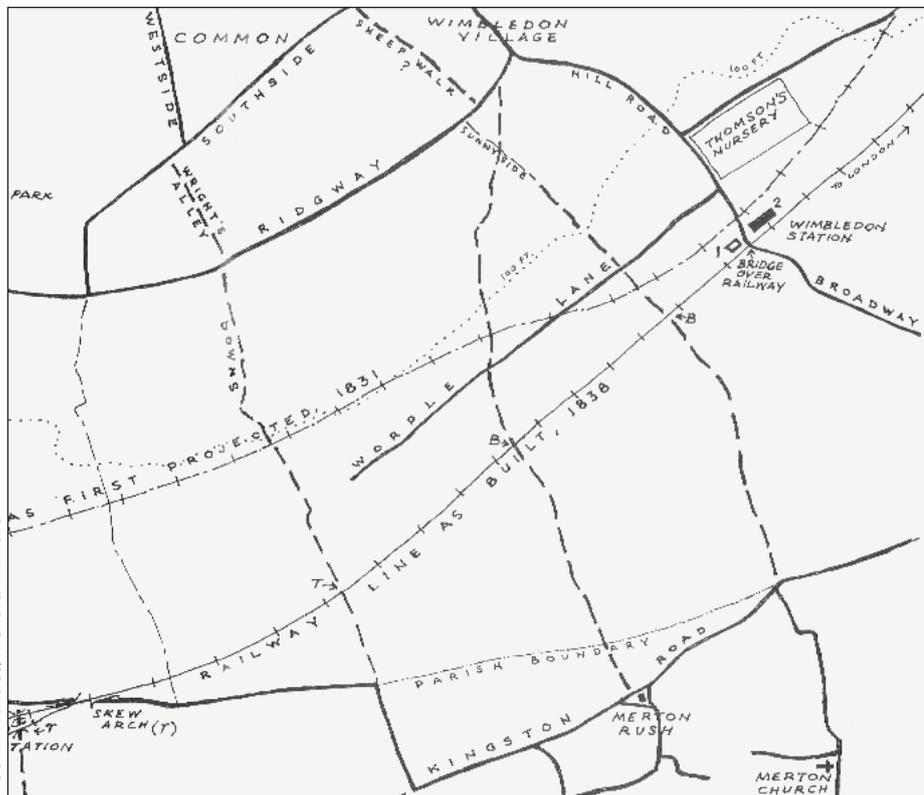
ACCORDING TO Merton Council, there are some 40 footpaths and rights of way in Wimbledon. The more ancient ones, known as The Slips, originally went from the Common down the hill to Merton; Sheep Walk was one of those now lost, but Wright's Alley still exists. The other two ancient ones now begin at the Ridgway, one starting as Oldfield Road (opposite the Museum) and going down the hill at a slanting angle to Worple Road, then crossing the railway and going (via Merton Hall Road) to Merton Rush by the Nelson Health Centre. The other

is a continuation of Sunnyside (via Sunnyside Passage, Malcolm Road, Alt Grove, and over the railway), crossing Dundonald Road and continuing to Merton parish church.

In the 18th century the paths crossed Conduit Fields and included Upper and Lower Conduit Steps. Conduit Fields are mentioned in the deeds of Wimbledon House in 1717 and again in 1780. According to Richard Milward, the lower one was near where Edge Hill meets Worple Road. The name is puzzling,



© Nigel Davies



© John Wallace/Richard Milward

Extract of the map 'Rights of Way & the Railway' by John Wallace from Richard Milward's book *Historic Wimbledon*, showing 'The Slips' (above); photo of the footpath from Thornton Hill to Dundonald Road (top)

suggesting some sort of water supply system of which we have no other record. In other places, a conduit field was a place where there was a spring or well feeding a conduit. There were proposals for an aqueduct later, in the 1820s and 1840s, but these 18th century references remain a mystery.

Beggars in Victorian Wimbledon

PROPOSED CHANGES to the Vagrancy Act of 1864, designed to prevent begging, make this subject topical.

In Victorian times begging was rife in Wimbledon, and in 1869 a Society for Suppressing Mendicity was launched; one of its objects was 'to detect and punish idle vagrants and impostors', while helping genuine cases of distress. In 1870 it distributed bread free to beggars in the hope that this would stop them begging for money. They were allowed to eat as much bread as they liked provided they did it on the spot. Hundreds of beggars converged on Wimbledon, and the scheme had to be abandoned.

Hundreds of beggars converged on Wimbledon, and the scheme had to be abandoned.

Later the Society got a bad name for concentrating on suppression rather than relief. In 1879 Jesse Reeves, the Society's inspector, told a magistrate that he had instructions to prosecute Italians who played organs and accordions; he was told that this was a matter for the police. (Reeves doesn't seem to have suffered from being castigated in this way – the following year he became Head Common Keeper, a post he held for 27 years.)

In 1899 the editor of the *Wimbledon News* wrote ‘It would be difficult to find a Society which has attained to a more merited unpopularity’. However, in many cases beggars were sentenced to hard labour. Mrs Emily Townshend (mentioned on p1 in connection with the William Morris windows) was a donor to the Society (in 1870 she gave 2s.6d.), but in 1911 she wrote a pamphlet called *The case against the Charity Organisation Society*. The Wimbledon branch merged with the Wimbledon Guild of Help (formed in 1907) and the Council of Social Welfare (founded in 1913); in 1918 they became the Wimbledon Guild of Social Welfare.

The Primitive Methodists

IN 1810 a group of Methodists seceded from the main body of their church, to get back to the original Wesleyan practices. They used the word ‘primitive’ to indicate that they were going back to the early state. In Wimbledon they are first mentioned in the 1830s, but didn’t really get going until they built an iron church in Herbert Road in 1870. By 1897 they were flourishing, and were able to

build a large church in Quicks Road with 350 seats, plus a Sunday school and classroom. Like many congregations, they had to borrow the money, but the debt was finally paid off 30 years later in 1926, when the last £4,000 was cleared.

In 1932 the various branches of Methodism were united, and

the Quicks Road church was closed and sold. It is now an office building called The Old Church (left), with a very modern development inside in contrast to the Victorian exterior.



■ NOTES FROM AROUND THE TABLE ■

Father Sinnott

JEREMY HUDSON amused the Group with a store of anecdotes from the renowned prize-giving speeches of Fr John Sinnott SJ, headmaster of Wimbledon College, 1937-50. Below are two relating to the daily commute up and down Edge Hill.

On the advantages of uniform caps:

“I was coming up Edge Hill one evening last year when the light was beginning to fail, and encountered two boys running full tilt down the hill. They were breaking two rules – running down the hill and not wearing their caps. I decided that the double breach was too bad to let pass, so I sent them back, telling them to return to the College gates and to commence their homeward journey all over again. They

retraced their steps ahead of me sullenly and obviously most unwillingly, and near the top of the hill I met them a second time – walking. As they approached I saw that they were both labouring under some powerful emotion, the nature of which revealed itself as I passed, because they both burst out indignantly with: ‘And we don’t even go to your school!’”

And on the good manners of College boys:

“I was proceeding down Edge Hill with all possible care one freezing morning on which the entire hill was sheeted with ice, and suddenly there came a moment when forces over which I had no control got the upper hand. I travelled the next 20 or so yards with unprecedented rapidity in a position of compromised

dignity and came to a halt at the feet of a small boy, who politely raised his cap and cheerily said: ‘Good morning, Father’ and passed on up the hill!”

These stories are taken from A History of Wimbledon College by Anthony Poole (pub. 1992) and the second was verified as true by an Old Boy of the College working at the Vatican, who remarked that he was the boy in question!

Stained Glass Artists

Sheila Dunman recalled the Society’s Artists & Artistes Walk which covered Wimbledon’s tradition in stained glass designers. Leaving aside William Morris, his Artistic Director Henry Dearle, along with others who designed and produced stained glass

at the Morris Works until its closure in 1940, there have been some notable designers who lived here.

The best known was Keith New who lived at 6 Murray Road. His glass designs can be seen in Coventry Cathedral and locally in St Mark’s Church in Wimbledon where the 32 windows with their Creation theme glow with New’s brilliant colours. Earlier there was Hugh Arnold who lived at Stamford House on the Common. Born in 1872 he was killed at Gallipoli in 1915. Arnold’s designs can be seen in St John’s Church, Spencer Hill where his windows are to the right of the pulpit. The church itself was designed by his uncle Sir Thomas Jackson who restored and lived for many years at Eagle House in the Village, now converted into luxury flats.



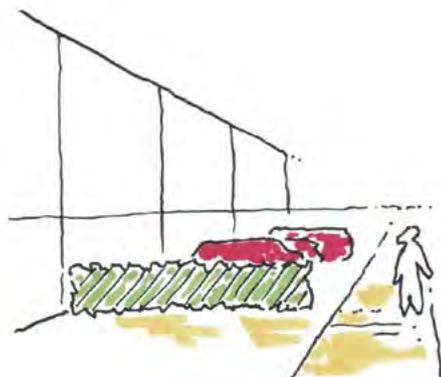
© Alamy

Front Garden Parking – Paving or Greenery?

THE PAVING-OVER of front gardens can cause flooding, overflowing of public drains, pollution of air and water, a loss of greenery, hotter streets. Also, the sight of front ‘gardens’ that are largely hard-surfaced changes the whole nature and character of the street – usually for the worse.

So the Society generally discourages front garden parking, as planting is far more attractive, nature-friendly and ecologically/ climatically beneficial.

However, as not all such paving work needs planning permission (unless the Council brings in what is known as an “Article 4 Directive” to control it) the often crude paving-over of front gardens is going to continue, as is the loss of so much



Keeping hedges or a low wall along the side boundaries helps improve the view along the street

nature and green space.

In order to help those who, for whatever reason, want to use part of their garden for parking, we have produced a simple design guide, together with basic information on when formal approvals are going to be needed from the Council.

Our suggestions include trying to keep good shrubs and trees, and providing strips of planting beside windows and fences; planting hedges along the front and side boundaries – the latter being particularly good in concealing cars in the street view, and using a paving material that allows rain water to filter into the ground, rather than run off at speed into the storm drains, causing local flooding. Not only the car, but the ubiquitous ‘bins’ need to be catered for.

Above all, our message is “think green”.

If any of your neighbours are thinking about front garden parking, why not let them have a copy?

This guide is now available on the Society Website.

Chapels in the fields – a glimpse into our Victorian past

RECENT UNSYMPATHETIC UPVC alterations to the Entrance Lodge (after 1903) at Gap Road Cemetery, have prompted research and drawn attention to the vulnerability of the cemetery’s buildings.

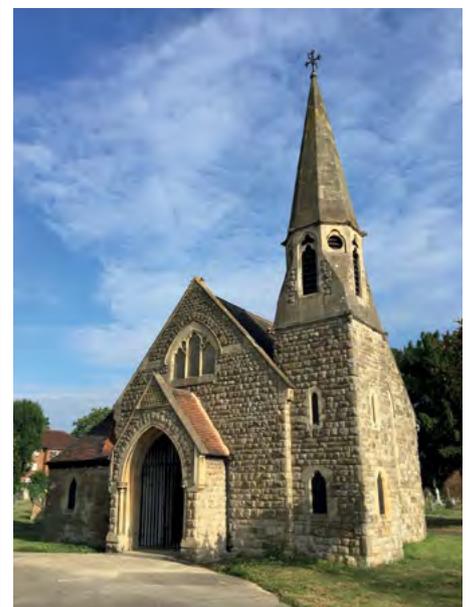
Today most funerals are followed by a cremation rather than a burial. Because of this, while many will know Gap Road Cemetery in passing, it might not be appreciated how significant a part it once played in the lives, and deaths, of Wimbledon residents.

In 1870, St Mary’s Church was the only burial ground in the parish of Wimbledon. An expanding population meant that burial space was rapidly running out. A Burial Board was appointed in 1872 to find new space. Options to extend onto land adjacent to the church were considered, including demolishing the Old Vestry. Ultimately, 20 acres were acquired from the sale of the Cowdrey Farm Estate in 1874. Competitive tenders were invited to include the design of two chapels, entrance lodge, gates, etc. and architect Banister Fletcher (1833-99) was selected. The Cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of London in August 1876.

Today the two chapels, set back from the road, are the only surviving original buildings. They are delightful miniature exercises in Early English gothic. Fashioned in Kentish ragstone with Bath stone details, including broach spires, pointed trifoliated windows, and decorative gargoyles.

It has come as a surprise to discover that while the boundary fence is locally listed, the chapels and lodge are not protected in any way. The Wimbledon Society has written to Merton’s conservation officer to request that they be considered for local listing.

MATTHEW HILLIER



The West Chapel, built in 1876

Greening more of the Borough

MERTON IS ALREADY one of the greenest London Boroughs with its extensive commons and open spaces. But a new Government initiative could see our tree cover grow further.

The Urban Tree Challenge Fund has been established with a budget of £10M and the aim of providing an additional 20,000 large trees and 110,000 small trees in urban areas of England by 2022. There is more information at www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund.

If you know of an area where more trees could be planted and are interested in working on a bid for funding with the Society, please contact the Editor.

You can also find details of existing street trees and those in public parks in London at treetalk.co.uk/map. The rarest trees, where fewer than 10 have been identified, are marked with a golden circle. Would you have guessed, for instance, that the sole Asian Black Birch in the capital can be found in Burstow Road, and that the only two Siberian Pea-trees overlook the tennis courts in Wimbledon Park?

New planning status for the town centre proposed

A PUBLIC EVENT in June saw the launch of the proposed Wimbledon Town Neighbourhood Forum.

There are already two other bodies set up to campaign for or protect the town centre, so the question arises, why is another needed? The answer lies in statutory powers derived from the Localism Act 2010. If the initiative is successful it would enable the Forum to set up its own planning policies – for instance, on the height of new buildings – through a Neighbourhood Plan that would form part of Merton Council’s Development Plan. The

Neighbourhood Forum would also have the right to allocate funds paid by developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The proposed boundary of the Neighbourhood Forum includes the town centre and its immediate residential setting.

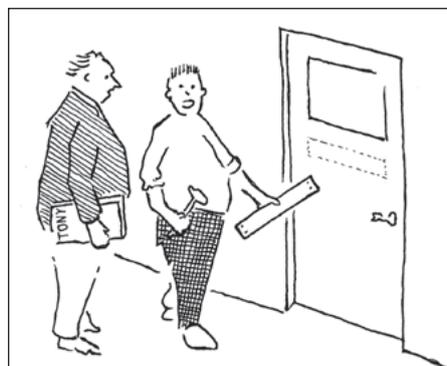
For more information, please see: www.wimbledontowncentre.com/wimbledon-town-neighbourhood-forum.

Celebrate Car-Free Day

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER will be World Car Free Day. There will be 12 miles of traffic-free roads around Tower Bridge, London Bridge and the City of London. Free entertainment is being organised and will include:

- cycling opportunities like e-bike rides and spinning activities;
- exercise and fitness activities including a BMX and skate ramp and pop-up playgrounds;
- guided walking routes and treasure hunts around the City of London and Southwark;
- live entertainment for all ages including roaming performers;
- children’s activities, arts and crafts marquees, a storytelling stage and a themed school sports day.

Merton Council is waiving street closure fees to encourage street parties to celebrate Car Free Day.



“Yes, we have a new Planning Minister: it’s a kind of apprentice scheme I think. Hardly worth putting their name on the door, - the next one will be along soon”



Wellington House

IN 2017 THE PEC objected to the work being proposed at Wellington House on the corner of Wimbledon Hill and Mansel Road. The reasons we gave were the proposed height and the general massing. Now that the scaffolding has been removed it is possible to see the almost finished building and the result is a rather pleasant surprise.

The new building is brick which matches the Bank Building, Library and Foxtons offices across the road. The very modern top floor is set back, reducing the overall feeling of height – though the Society would have been happier to see one less storey. The Committee particularly likes the green glazed tiles around the windows on the ground floor which are a nod to the tiles seen in many Victorian shop and house porches in the area. The curved windows looking up the hill soften the building’s profile, making it feel less aggressive and dominating.

It is important that new buildings on Wimbledon Hill Road, a gateway to both the village and the town centre, are sympathetic to the area. The design of the new Wellington Building shows that it is possible to build modern offices that reflect the heritage of the area without becoming a pastiche of the past.

The Great Achievement of Richardson Evans

In September 2018 Historic England conferred Grade II listed status on the Wimbledon Common WWI War Memorial. *SIMON LEE*, Chief Executive of Wimbledon & Putney Commons, explains how the Memorial area, with its popular community playing fields, came into being.

“A GRAVE PERIL threatens our Commons” remarked the Council of the Wimbledon & Putney Commons Extension Fund in 1910 in a proposal to secure public open lands in both Kingston and Putney Vale.

Their intentions were to save the natural beauty of the Commons from extensive residential building on the west bank of Beverley Brook, and to maintain public lands, in perpetuity, between Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park. They added that these lands ...

“...belong in fact to the Fitz George Estates... A large part of the area is now to be let for building, and if a great effort be not made to avert the danger, ... The pure air, which now sweeps through or over the Vale and the vapours which give glory to our sunsets, will be smoke-laden”

Spearheading the proposal was Mr Richardson Evans, Honorary Secretary of the General Fund (and principal founder of the John Evelyn Club). His scheme sought to acquire through public appeal a further 172 acres of land in four separate tranches, at a total cost of £52,771. The average price per acre was £306.

In August 1908, Richardson Evans and six others, concerned about the need to protect the Commons, and with the support of the Conservators, had acquired a first tranche of land – “The Thirteen Acre Piece” – on the west of Beverley Brook.

By the outbreak of WWI all but 42 acres of the remaining land had been



© Nigel Davies

The WWI Memorial on Wimbledon Common, recently awarded Grade II listing

secured, and in 1917 Richardson Evans set about acquiring the final portion. However, it was not until 1921 that the Executive Committee of the Wandsworth & Wimbledon Memorial Garden offered to secure this last tranche, incorporating a dedicated Memorial to the Great War.

The Memorial, some two hectares in area, is one of London’s largest WWI memorials. The magnificent granite Latin Cross is set in an octagonal base with a moulded plinth and inscribed tablets, one of which records the dedication of the area, on 15 July 1925, to local residents who died in WWI. It was commissioned by the Conservators and designed, unusually for the time, by a woman – Madeline Agar of the Metropolitan Gardens Association. Fifty oak trees donated by the St Andrews Society were planted in concentric rings around the central space, all surrounded by a mixed naturalised hedge. Joining Miss Agar in the overseeing of planting works was Brenda Colvin, one of Britain’s most distinguished landscape architects.

On one of the plinth tablets Richardson Evans’ words are inscribed:

‘Nature provides the best monument. The perfecting of the work must be left to the gentle hand of time but each returning spring will bring a fresh tribute to those whom it is desired to keep in everlasting remembrance.’

The Wimbledon Boro’ News reported the occasion, entitled “Mr Richardson Evans’ Great Achievement”:

‘A scorching sun beat down when the long-delayed dedication of the memorial garden at Kingston Vale took place... the ceremony marking the end of a series of efforts extending over many years to preserve a beautiful open space for posterity’

The Conservators congratulated Mr Richardson Evans on the completion of his great work and assured him that they willingly and gratefully undertook the care and preservation of the same, including the Memorial Grove and its monument, and they confidently believed their successors would equally accept that trust.

Love and Loss in 1915 – Harry and Beattie’s story

LAST MAY THE MUSEUM received a poignant collection of WWI items treasured by Beatrice (Beattie) Amy Fittall until her death in 1972. A four-page love letter written to her from France on Sunday 11 July 1915 by local teenager Harry Channon was accompanied by a small leather wallet and two sachets of pressed flowers. The wallet contained a photograph of Beattie, two of Harry with his fellow soldiers and some local newspaper cuttings about his death.

© Museum of Wimbledon



Wild flowers from the Front

The letter, written just a few months before he was killed, mentions photographs and flowers:

‘Sorry, I must leave off now for they can’t let us alone – got to go digging, I on a Sunday too! ... I have just picked a few wild flowers from the trenches. Hope they will keep alright, straight from the firing line.’

Harry writes of days spent with ‘Reg’ in ‘one of the finest dug-outs in the line’. He describes losing a great deal of his nerve after being wounded, the deaths and wounding of comrades, his concerns for Beattie and his hopes for their future together.

Harry Channon, a rifleman in the 6th (City of London) Battalion (Rifles), died in the Battle of Loos, France, the largest offensive at that point in WWI. He is buried in the Maroc British Cemetery at Grenay in France. The battle lasted from 25

September until 13 October 1915, but Harry died on the very first day when the 6th London suffered almost 300 casualties.

Born on 11 March 1897 to Kate and William John Channon, a gardener, he lived at 118 Gladstone Road, Wimbledon and was baptized at Holy Trinity Church. Harry is listed on the war memorial in St Andrew’s Church, Wimbledon. Beattie, born the year before, was a shop assistant. She eventually married, also at St Andrew’s Church.

We are most grateful to Mrs Pauline Husband, who gave us this collection, and to Mrs Dorothy Halfhide for arranging the gift and for providing information about Beattie and her family. Charles Lamont kindly allowed the Museum to use photographs of the war memorial in St Andrew’s Church.

PAMELA GREENWOOD

Art Exhibition at the Museum this Autumn

70 YEARS AGO the Museum had an Art Exhibition illustrating the ‘The History of Wimbledon’. This year we will have another. The Museum’s Exhibition for Autumn 2019 is ‘Hidden Treasures: Lives and Art’. It will showcase some of the loveliest pictures in the Museum’s very extensive art collection, all associated in some way with Wimbledon. We will tell stories of the artists who created them, and of the people and places depicted in them. There will be a ‘mini trail’ in the Museum, highlighting objects associated with the pictures and artists. We are also producing a beautiful map, showing the location of the buildings, places and landscapes featured in the Exhibition.

The Artists range from a Belgian anarchist and First World War refugee, to a fine lady of leisure, living in the Old



*‘The Pound, Wimbledon Common’
by Gwen Spencer*

Rectory, writing about the adventures of her beloved dog, Wag, the Sealyham. More than half our artists are women, the youngest only 14 when she painted the pictures on display. We have stories about suffragettes, suffragists, and

pioneering lady scientists. We can tell you about their hats, and show you where they had their hair done. We have portraits of Thomas Hughes, who wrote *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, and of Wimbledon’s own King of The Road, ‘George’ (and ‘his Dog’). Visitors can trace iconic buildings like St Mary’s Church, or lovely Commons landscapes, through the centuries, seeing how they have been depicted as the years roll by. Our crack team of researchers has discovered the identity of the artist who painted a mystery picture found undocumented in the collection. Visit the Exhibition and find out more.

An Exhibition for art lovers, local historians and anybody who likes to see a mystery solved ...

Opening 7 October in the Norman Plastow Gallery.

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ELLA, LADY PERRING

20 July 1940 – 19 February 2019

A LARGE CONGREGATION attended the Service of Thanksgiving & Celebration for the life of Ella, Lady Perring held at St Mary's Parish Church, Wimbledon on 1st May. Apple blossom, roses, and early summer flowers decorated altar, pulpit, and pews, in special tribute to Ella, a trained floral designer, who for some years had organised the flowers for St Mary's.

Ella was brought up in Sussex, daughter of Major Anthony George Pelham. Her mother, Ann Margaret Bergengren was from a Swedish family of leading textile manufacturers. Perhaps something of that heritage influenced Ella's air of calm neutrality and charm that made her such a consummate diplomat throughout her life. The service tributes all made mention of this special gift and we were told, that despite legendary disputes amongst flower arrangers elsewhere, no threat to parish harmony was ever possible at St Mary's with Ella in charge.

Members may remember Ella from her days as a kindergarten teacher at the Rowans School where she was known for taking on 'tricky pupils'; or as Chairman of Lee House, where she saw the independent care home through a difficult period of change of ownership and transition, finding an amicable solution for the residents. She also served as Chairman of the Wimbledon Committee of the Children's Society for four years.

Ella was a founder member of WIDFAS and of the Wimbledon Garden Club. The Perring's garden, in Somerset Road, was part of the National Garden Scheme and Ella ensured Wimbledon's successful inclusion in the famous Yellow



Book one year, by 'encouraging' a reluctant entrant into tying 36 pixie hats on her irises to prevent premature blooming ahead of Open Day.

Ella's talent as a floral artist was well recognised and she was invited to take the livery of the Gardeners Company. At the end of her year in office she was asked to take on the Gardeners' responsibility for the flowers in St Paul's Cathedral, the highlight being the magnificent Queen's Golden Jubilee Service which was seen around the world.

Ella and John Perring enjoyed 57 years of happy life with their family of two boys and two girls. Amongst his many City roles, Sir John was Master of Merchant Taylors' Company for four years with Ella, a natural hostess, in support. The Perrings joined Sir Nicholas and Lady Jackson for the opening of our Museum's centenary exhibition in 2016. It was on that occasion that Ella announced simply that she had dementia. As one church tribute said of her "No one managed that condition with more grace, humour and style." The Society extends sympathy to Sir John and his family for the loss of their bright star.

MONICA ELLISON

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN ELLIOTT

14 April 1929 – 16 April 2019

CHRISTOPHER WAS looking forward to celebrating his 90th birthday with family and friends but fell ill just a few days before the event. This was particularly sad, since this charming gentleman and long-standing Society member would have enjoyed his party immensely.

Born in Beccles, Suffolk, where his family had a substantial engineering factory, Christopher's early teenage years were marked by WWII and doubtless the captivity of his elder brother, who died as a POW in Borneo, had a lasting effect on him. He developed a passion for aircraft and was enthralled by the airfields surrounding him and the airmen, both American and British, who carried out their missions from them. Christopher collected aircraft parts as others collected stamps – all the better if finds were foreign i.e. German, which he documented with zeal. It was a hobby which in later life earned him the nickname 'Steptoe' from his family and dumbfounded visitors alarmed to discover the odd shell casing or aircraft propeller on his landing in South Park Road.

At eighteen he joined the *Grimsbey News* as a cub reporter before moving to the local Sudbury paper. Later he worked for the aviation magazine *Air Clues* and other publications such as the magazines of the RNLI and the British Legion. Appropriately, he edited a collectors' magazine *Everything has Value*.

Christopher published two books: *Aeronauts and Aviators* and a miscellany of his articles mainly on the local history, social life and customs of Suffolk, called *Little Chapters in the Making*. His special interest was always the Royal Air Force, Fighter Command, and



Aerial Operations, his enthusiasm for which was partly responsible for the plaque on Wimbledon Common commemorating the WWI Airfield that operated near the Windmill in 1915/16. Members enjoyed his account of those early days – written on his notorious typewriter – which appeared in our newsletter in September 2018.

Christopher was a devoted family man and he and his wife Elizabeth Rue Gregor came to live in Wimbledon in the early 1960s. The Society thanks the family for sharing their tributes with us.

Like his fictional namesake, ‘Christopher Robin’ Elliott will surely remain in our memory ever young, curious and alert to the possibility of ‘noticing something interesting’.

MONICA ELLISON

Correction: Our tribute to Jack Zunz in the June newsletter contained an error and three members of the Society contacted us to let us know that it was not Jack’s wife but his daughter, Marion, who died in the skiing accident we mentioned. We thank those members who alerted us to this mistake, enabling us to contact the Zunz family to apologise for any upset our tribute may have caused.

Cannizaro Park – the challenges ahead

Wimbledon Society Member CATHERINE NELSON visits one of local residents’ favourite spots, and finds that community help is seriously needed.

AS MOST SOCIETY MEMBERS know, Cannizaro Park is one of Wimbledon’s delightful surprises. Hidden behind an unassuming entrance on the Westside of the Common, the former grounds of the Duke of Cannizaro (the spelling was later altered) are an exotic contrast to the wild habitats of the Common itself. Among its 34 acres is an extensive collection of specimen trees, planted in the past two centuries, alongside notable wooded areas of rhododendron and camellia established in the early 20th century.

In recent years Park upkeep has become more challenging. Since 1949, the Park has been owned by Merton Council, and necessarily hard choices have pared back maintenance. Out of this situation has grown the Friends of Cannizaro Park (FoCP). A registered charity, FoCP organises improvements to the Park and liaises with the Council on maintenance.

Volunteers tackle Park projects under skilled supervision. Recent jobs have included clearing and replanting azaleas near the pond and an initiative highlighting the variety and ecological value of Cannizaro’s trees, while the website has been expanded with details of the Park’s wildlife. Free park walks are led by Chris Mountford, FoCP’s chair and experienced horticulturalist, and there are talks and events through the year. Few people realise that it is a Friends’

committee member who faithfully opens the Park each morning.

But as Cannizaro Park celebrates its 70th birthday, it faces a number of challenges. Ten areas of the Park require significant investment, to repair and restore their fabric and horticultural quality. One such is the Italian Garden, originally a kitchen garden but now a rather empty space with few significant trees, intermittent plants and no coherent design. A full restoration would see new planted beds and the renewal of pathways in this popular picnic and arts area. This could cost £10,000-£40,000, depending on scale; expensive, but with potential to create a wonderful space for community activities and leisure.

Another area of focus is the Aviary, with its eye-catching design modelled on Turin Cathedral. The FoCP has funded emergency repairs to the wooden structure, but further works are needed to support breeding conditions and facilitate care of the birds.

In order to continue this work for our community, the FoCP would welcome support. It costs £15 p.a. to join, providing support for core projects and boosting the Charity’s presence. Business and personal sponsorship for individual projects will be key to sustaining the Park for the future. Finally, volunteer help is very important, whether in the Park or in administration.

To become a member or to discuss collaboration, please contact the FoCP at info@cannizaropark.com – or visit the Park on Sunday 22 September, for a 70th birthday celebration day.



Wimbledon Guild
Waggy Walk

4K AND 7K WALKS

Sat 28 Sept 2019

A fundraising walk on beautiful Wimbledon Common. No dog? No problem! All are welcome, dog or no dog!

BOOK BY 21 SEPT & YOUR DOG GOES FREE!
FUNDRAISING TO HELP PEOPLE ACROSS MERTON
WIMBLEDONGUILD.CO.UK/WAGGYWALK

Start / Finish: The Hand in Hand, Wimbledon Common SW19 4RQ Walks Start: 10.30am	Family: £25 (2 adults & 2 children) Adult: £10 Child: £5 (age 4-16) Dog: £5	Family and Adult tickets include: • Pet Pavilion goody bag for each dog • Commemorative rosette for each dog • Pre walk breakfast • Post walk drinks and food
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Greenwatch

SUSANNA RIVIERE advises on several local sources of sustainable and organic food.

Local Sustainable Food

Food production is responsible for up to a third of Greenhouse gas emissions, according to a recent blog post from the World Resources Institute. Of this up to 63% is related to meat consumption.

Most of us know that we can reduce the food element of our carbon footprint by eating locally grown seasonal food, organic where possible, cutting down on meat and dairy products and reducing waste. Fortunately, there are a number of local outlets and local food growing initiatives to help us do just that:

Farmers' Markets – Wimbledon Park Farmers' Market has been running for nearly 20 years. It has a wide range of stalls and is open every Saturday from 9.00am to 1.00pm. See www.lfm.org.uk for details of this and other Markets in London.

The more recently established market in Wimbledon Village at 35 High Street is open on Sundays from 10.00am to 2.00pm www.intownmarkets.co.uk

Zero Waste shop – Wimbledon's first zero waste shop – opened in Merton Abbey Mills last year. It has a wide range of dried food products including rice, flour, herbs, teas and spices as well as oils, cleaning products and much more all completely free of packaging and attractively presented. www.thezeroshop.com

Oddbox is reducing food waste by collecting fresh but slightly misshapen produce, from local farms (often rejected by supermarkets) and delivering "Wonky Veg" to homes and offices in the London area. www.oddbox.co.uk

Wimbledon Guild Community Garden started a few years ago using no-dig methods to produce organic produce for the Guild's Home Food Café. It is run by volunteers and open to the public. www.wimbledonguild.co.uk/community-garden

Sustainable Merton is involved in a number of Community growing projects, the flagship being the Phipps Bridge Community Garden set up in 2008 with the National Trust and other local groups. www.sustainablemerton.org/community-gardening



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