



GRAND VISION TO 'TRANSFORM LONDON'S MUSICAL LIFE'

ANTHONY WILKINSON reports on his ambitious plans to turn Wimbledon into an International Arts District

I FIND MYSELF leading a third attempt to bring a world-class performing arts centre to Wimbledon town, so I am delighted

to have the support of your Society and this invitation to explain and promote the project, and to build strong community support in moving it forward. I am pleased to say that Darcey Bussell, the great dancer and local resident, has agreed to be an Ambassador.

Many members of the Wimbledon Society will be aware of the saga, ongoing for more than 20 years, and a number of brave but failed attempts to create a concert hall and performing arts centre to serve our Merton community and fill the void left by the demolition of the 1,500-seat Wimbledon Town Hall in the late 1980s.

It has taken Sir Simon Rattle to make people aware of what performers have **(continued on p3)**

The best of our young local artistic talent

The first Young Wimbledon Artists Summer Show took place at the Norman Plastow Gallery in July. The exhibition showcased work by students from ten of our local schools, colleges and academies.

Prizes of £50 were awarded to Bassam Awalli from Rutlish School, Huiya Huang from Raynes Park High School, Aimosson Scott from Cricket Green School and a best in show prize of £75 went to Kodai Dow, also from Rutlish School.



YWA is a scheme to promote Young Wimbledon Artists. It offers schools, colleges and academies in Merton, local young artists and groups of young artists who live in the borough a

platform to exhibit their work in the Norman Plastow Gallery, which is part of the Wimbledon Village Hall Trust. Visit www.wimbledonvht.org.uk for more information.



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Chairman's report



We are keeping a close eye on progress relating to the Plough Lane development. This is an important issue for Wimbledon, and has far-reaching implications. The Society is keenly aware of the strong support for football and for AFC in particular, and appreciates that the return of AFC to Wimbledon will be welcomed by many. This is not only on sporting grounds but also for the community benefit which AFC considers would be brought to local residents by the presence of the Club.

When the Council was finalising its Local Plan in 2012, the Society supported the retention of sporting activity, and asked the Council to explore how a football stadium could be accommodated for AFC. We proposed that communal facilities should be an integral part of the development so that there was use of the site throughout the week, all year round. The Society does not object to the provision of sporting activity on the site, but does feel that the implications of the complete scope of the proposals need to be taken into account.

In order to make a balanced assessment of the current proposals, we have looked at the potential impact of the 602-flats proposal that is part of the developer's scheme. The site is on a flood plain, and this brings a range of constraints to avoid flooding risk. The proposed development would also impose demands on local infrastructure – traffic and public transport. Residents in the vicinity of the stadium have expressed concerns about football crowds and traffic congestion on match days.

It is the Society's view that these issues need careful consideration and we will be urging Merton Council to take a balanced view in arriving at their decision on the planning application.

I would like to highlight another issue. We would like to hear from members who may be interested in joining the Executive Committee of the Society. You would help us in ensuring that the Society is properly run, and we would welcome the element of fresh thinking that a new committee member might bring. Please have a look at the note on the back page.

ASIF MALIK

Grand vision (continued from p1)

been saying for a long while, that the acoustics in most London concert halls leave much to be desired. David Whelton, CEO of the Philharmonia Orchestra, believes that a high-quality mid-sized hall in Wimbledon “could provide a ‘transformational moment’ in London’s musical life”.

Following a detailed appraisal of the P3 Hartfield Road car park site, and extensive discussions with major figures in the arts world the overwhelming view is to go for a 1,250-seat hall with 300 spaces for underground parking.

The vision is to build a world-class, state-of-the-art, performing arts centre with acoustic flexibility and digital technology that will put it at the forefront of concert venues in London. With a capacity of 1,250, an intimate and friendly ‘vineyard’ layout (where the seating rises up around the stage), the main hall will be a prime venue for all styles of music, dance and semi-staged opera. A smaller hall of up to 350 seats will be ideal for chamber music, jazz,

piano recitals, discussions, seminars and use by local community groups and schools.

It is anticipated that the centre will become a base for a major professional orchestra and a music academy, as well as providing an ideal home for the Wimbledon International Music Festival and local music groups. It will develop Wimbledon as an important Arts District, and consolidate its position as a local and international educational hub, as well as offering huge re-generational opportunities.

Following positive meetings with Merton Council and Future Wimbledon Planning, the Leader of the Labour Council, the Conservative planning committee, and Stephen Hammond MP, we are currently engaging top-level consultants: Grimshaw Architects, Quartet Cultural Consultants, The Audience Agency, and acoustic and venue consultants, to define the business plan, sustainability, enabling developments, visualisation of the project on site, costing, and major fund-raising strategy.

Our aim is to present a fully worked-out plan to the Council by the end of 2015, before work begins on the Future Wimbledon master plan, and to achieve a first refusal commitment on the site before going ahead with Phase Three to planning application.

To achieve the current phase will require funding of £80,000 to £100,000. We already have pledges in units of £5,000 towards this goal, but are keen that there should be a strong community element so are inviting more people to have a stake in the project with (gift-aided) donations of more affordable units of £1,000.

Whether music and the performing arts are your passions or not, this is a project with great significance for the community we live in, with enormous potential for the regeneration of Wimbledon Town Centre.

In a recent poll the project gained 80% of the community vote. Please add your support by adding to our fighting fund and help make great things happen in our community. Third time lucky!

I shall be continuing fund-raising in September when people are back from holiday. Please contact me on wilkinson.a@outlook.com or through the Wimbledon Society.



A model for Wimbledon: a view inside the New World Symphony Hall in Miami, designed by the world-renowned, Canadian-born architect Frank Gehry.

Photo by Sean R Sullivan, www.seanwashere.com



An uncertain future

WE REPORTED in the December 2014 issue on an application relating to Bank Buildings, a major feature of the lower end of Wimbledon Hill Road, dating from 1885. It is a locally listed building, in a Conservation Area, and it gets a mention in the South London volume of Pevsner's *Buildings of England*. The application was for a major overhaul of the centre of the building (the two ends are in separate ownership) – a large rear extension, converting the upper

floors into 23 flats, and combining the three shops on the ground floor (one being an estate agent) into a single unit.

The Society objected to the proposed alterations on the basis that they were not consistent with the Local Plan. There was particular concern about the height and style of the new extension, the poor quality of the residential accommodation, and the idea of a single unit for the street frontage, replacing the individual shops,

which are an essential feature of the area. These objections, and representations from other objectors, in particular residents of the roads at the rear of the building, were upheld by the Council which refused permission. The applicant appealed against this decision.

A Government inspector recently reported on the appeal, and she upheld the Council's refusal of permission. The key points for the inspector were the poor quality of the flats that would be created, many of them with a single aspect, and the fact that the proposed changes to the building would not protect or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. These are important issues, which the Planning Committee will be able to refer to when commenting on applications both in the Town Centre and more widely. Meanwhile the future of the central part of Bank Buildings remains undecided – the upper floors appear to be unoccupied and in poor condition – and the Committee will, as usual, maintain a close scrutiny of applications in this important Conservation Area.

Affordable housing

GOVERNMENT HOUSING policy is usually seen as focused on total numbers, but it is concerned also with the housing mix. A particular concern here is the supply of affordable housing. Developers can be required to make a contribution here, either by including some affordable units in their schemes, or by financing the building of affordable housing elsewhere. These requirements on developers operate either through the planning system – where planning permission can be subject to the inclusion of a set percentage of affordable units

– or though the operation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

In 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework allowed the percentage of affordable housing to be varied if a developer could show that a reduction was essential to the viability of the whole scheme. This has led to a situation in which achievement of affordable targets has become a matter of negotiation between Councils and developers – in some cases reducing the affordable percentage to zero. This is of great concern to Councils – and also to the Society – and the situation is made worse by the fact that details of the negotiations are not made public, so

that we cannot get a clear view of the basis on which decisions are made.

The London Forum of Civic and Amenity Societies has expressed concern about this situation, and we ourselves have written to our MP, Stephen Hammond, asking him to bring our views to the attention of Ministers. We have also arranged a meeting with Council Officers to discuss the effect that the viability principle – and also recent Government reductions in the scope of the Community Infrastructure Levy – are having on the provision of affordable homes in Merton. We shall also be pressing for greater public access to the details of viability negotiations.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Plough Lane: why it must happen

WE RESPOND to the article in the June 2015 Newsletter concerning AFC Wimbledon's application to develop the Plough Lane site, thus allowing a return home for Wimbledon's football club. It presents mainly the negative elements of the proposal, which does not accord with the views of many members, perhaps a majority of whom would be proud to see Wimbledon playing in Plough Lane again after the shabby treatment of the Club and its followers.

Wimbledon has a proud football tradition. Formed in 1889, as an amateur club, and playing since 1912 in Plough Lane, Wimbledon FC achieved a remarkable rise from non-league to the top flight of English football in 1986 only four seasons after being elected to the Football League. Two years later they won the FA Cup, famously beating Liverpool, and became the only club, still extant, to have won both the FA Cup and its amateur counterpart.

AFC Wimbledon was founded in 2002 following the FA's infamous decision to relocate the club to Milton Keynes. As a result the fans started a new 'phoenix club' from scratch. AFC Wimbledon is emulating its predecessor, rising from the ninth (amateur) tier of English football to the professional fourth (League Two). The club longs to return to its 'spiritual home'.

A new football stadium will regenerate an area badly in need of investment and development. New homes will assist Merton's London housing agenda. Sporting infrastructure investment is a catalyst for community engagement,



Image copyright: Sheppard Robson

enterprise development and local employment. Currently the club provides over 900 contact hours each season via a range of social and community programmes. The club reaches approximately 2,875 residents of Merton per season, mostly children, young people and groups at risk, generating around £1.4 million in social value. This would only increase if the club returned to Wimbledon.

The development of a new AFC Wimbledon Stadium will also generate economic benefits. The construction phase will produce in excess of 350 annual full-time equivalent jobs. The ability of the club to achieve attendances of circa 10,000 will represent a total economic impact of £12.7 million.

The Newsletter article raised concerns about the impact on local residents, transport, infrastructure planning and flooding. There may well be a need for improved transport facilities and infrastructure – a revamped Haydons Road station would be an ideal access point. Supermarket developments are often accompanied by improved roads so why not for a stadium? Impact upon surrounding areas can be controlled by detailed matchday management.

The causes of flooding are two-fold: from the river and from the

surface water drainage. Major river flooding occurred in 1968 but is thought to have a return period of 100 to 200 years. Extensive improvements resulted in the current highly canalised river network with no subsequent river flooding. Surface water flooding from extreme rainfall in 2007, was caused or exacerbated by, failure of drainage pumps. Surface water drainage system would be redesigned, resulting in a reduction in run-off. The National Planning Policy Framework places an emphasis on flood risk but recognises the need to balance the risks against other matters.

The provision of a football stadium for AFC Wimbledon is a unique opportunity for the club to return to their historic home after more than 20 years. The social benefits for generations to come should not be underestimated. Such a milestone scheme will help to facilitate LB Merton's aspiration for regeneration and transformational change and will assist in achieving a step change in the perception of the whole area.

From Simon Joseph and Cyril Maidment

Some of the data and descriptions derive from AFC Wimbledon's application to LB Merton, submitted by Savills Planning

THE RETURN OF THE ADMIRABLE NELSON

CHARLES TOASE
reveals the
115-year-old
history of the
recently rebuilt
Nelson Hospital

THERE HAD BEEN a cottage hospital in north Wimbledon since 1869, but by the end of the century there had been such an increase of population in south Wimbledon

and Merton that there was a need for additional facilities. The prime mover in founding the hospital was a local GP, Dr Frank Deas. When a nurses home was built later at the Nelson Hospital in Kingston Road, it was named Deas House (used recently as an overflow surgery for GPs), and there is a memorial plaque to him on one of the 'pavilions'. His daughters edited his notes on the origins of the hospital, published by Merton Libraries in 1981.

The South Wimbledon & Merton District Cottage Hospital was opened in 1900 at 173 Merton Road, one of the tall houses that still stand there; there is a plaque on the house now.

The house was grossly inadequate; if an operation was needed, patients had to be carried down to the basement, which served as an operating theatre. The mortuary was in a loft over the stable. There was a need for a purpose-built, and larger, hospital. After ten years at Merton Road, a site was found at Merton Rush in Kingston Road, on land once owned by William



Rutlish. The south Wimbledon area being a poor one, it was difficult to raise money; hospitals at that time were charities, and not state-funded. There had been celebrations of Nelson's centenary in 1905, and there was surplus money from the fundraising for that, but it had to be used for the commemoration of Nelson.

It was Richardson Evans who suggested the solution – naming the hospital after the Admiral – and that secured over £1,000; the idea was extended to naming the wards Trafalgar, Copenhagen, Victory, Vanguard, Hardy and Collingwood. The new building opened in 1911 with three separate pavilions linked by a corridor. The men's ward was in the building on the left (or east); the middle building contained the 'operating room' at the front, with the women's ward behind; children were presumably upstairs. The third building was the matron's house which had a room labelled rather oddly by the architect as the servants hall. A separate building at

the back provided a 'post-mortem room' – perhaps an early mortuary.

A new wing was added in 1922 as a war memorial, and there is a ceremony held there each Armistice Day. A maternity wing was built in 1937, and a mortuary in 1938; when the Nelson stopped having inpatients, the mortuary was no longer used (outpatients don't usually die on the premises), and it was used by the nurses for their parties. It has survived, but the other buildings have now been demolished except for the facades of three original 'pavilions', left with dummy, non-opening, doors.

The hospital was, of course, taken over by the National Health Service in 1948; services were considerably reduced in 1980, with the closure of A & E, and it closed altogether in 2012. Now no longer a hospital, it has been renamed Nelson Health Centre, with surgeries for local doctors as well as outpatient clinics for St George's, diagnostic and mental health services, a pharmacy and a café. It opened on 7 April 2015.

The work of the Local History Group

THE GROUP WAS FOUNDED in 1971 to encourage and organise research into the history of Wimbledon. More recently it has extended its remit to include the recording of changes, as local newspapers can no longer be relied upon to provide

such a record. Members of the Group watch for, and report, developments such as the foundation of significant local societies, sports clubs, schools, churches, shops, pubs and other businesses, and the closure of older ones. It also notes the erection of new buildings and the demolition or change of use of others. Deaths are listed and obituaries collected, and the retirement

recorded of leading citizens such as councillors, head teachers and vicars.

The Group also watches for new publications on Wimbledon, especially the histories of organisations, making sure that copies are acquired for the Museum. Where valuable historical information appears on websites, this is printed out for preservation.

Inventor who took the biscuit

WIMBLEDON HAS been home to many inventors, including designers of pipe cleaners, cardboard boxes, fireworks, Rawlplugs and Harpic. The Group has started a study of the subject, beginning with biscuits and hairpins. The Carr family lived at 10 The Downs; Arthur Carr joined the Peek Frean company, and was responsible for the first Bourbon biscuit and also the custard cream. (Incidentally Sir Henry Peek of Wimbledon House in Parkside was the father of James Peek who introduced the Garibaldi, invented by Jonathan Peek, uncle of Arthur).

The hairpins were an improved variety, the brainchild of Louisa Ousey of 72 Hartfield Road; she also thought up stockings that didn't fall down, and clothing to wear under your corset. In her spare time she campaigned for public lavatories for women.

'Wimbledon columns'

ANOTHER INVENTOR, Santo Crimp, engineer to the Wimbledon Local Board, solved the problem of the foul smells emanating from the sewers by installing tall ventilating pipes (nowadays called stench pipes or stink pipes). These were adopted in other areas such as Dorking and Streatham, where they are known as Wimbledon columns. There are still five of them



Landmarks: William Santo Crimp's 'stench pipe' at the top of Murray Road (top) and Crimp (inset); the electricity transformer at the bottom of Sunnyside (above)

in Wimbledon, and the Group is concerned about the poor condition of the one at the Southside end of Murray Road. Another example of industrial archaeology is the electricity transformer in Sunnyside, which has been restored three times (twice by art students, and once by members of the Wimbledon Society), and now needs further attention. It was erected in 1904, and is now a 'listed building'.

Wrapping up the Cardigans

IN THE MARCH Newsletter I mentioned Thomas Dann, the miller who arrested Lord Cardigan after the duel on the Common in 1840; he named his son Cardigan, and that son in turn named his son Cardigan. That report was seen by John Dann, the great-great grandson of Thomas, and he tells me that, far from being embarrassed by the name, they were proud of it. The second one was actually called Cardigan Byron Dann, and another of Thomas's sons named a child Augustus Cardigan Frederick. That stimulated more research, and I found that Augustus Cardigan Frederick Dann emigrated to Australia, where he had a son – another Cardigan Byron. So there were at least four Cardigans in the Dann family, and it was not such an uncommon name – there were over 100 of them in England and Wales.

CHARLES TOASE

A Society stalwart with depth and vigour

MARTYN HARMAN
27 June 1946 – 3 May 2015

MICHAEL THEOBALD,
Emeritus Professor,
Mifranthe Associates,
gave a moving tribute
to Martyn during the
service in Putney Vale



Crematorium on 28 May 2015. We have permission to reproduce this extract.

MARTYN HARMAN was born in 1946 in Maidstone, Kent, the second son of Christopher and Florence Harman. As such, he was a Kentish Man and his deep affection for Kent and other southern counties was a defining characteristic. Martyn always said that he was immensely grateful for what he felt was an idyllic childhood, when his family lived in Penenden Heath, Maidstone. He often recalled stories of roaming widely (even wildly) on the heath, illicit smoking and even some frightening heath fires!

After Maidstone Grammar

and then Borden Grammar, Martyn went up to Durham University to study Zoology, a life enhancing experience, though subsequently he followed a family career path in

becoming a chartered surveyor. Animals, particularly dogs, always featured in his life and in his youth he was very involved in the training, hunting and showing the family bloodhounds at shows throughout the UK. Later Martyn and his wife Liz were to get a huge amount of pleasure and satisfaction from their West Highland Terriers, Timmy, Sam and Ben. Even their love of pub lunches necessitated ensuring that there was availability for four – two dogs and two people, in that order!

The Harmans married in 1983 and lived in Wimbledon for their entire married life. This was something of a homecoming for Liz, as she had lived in Wimbledon

when a young girl. Their joint love of France led to many holidays there and visits to Spain usually included a drive through France en route. Happily they were able to have one last holiday together in Catalunya last autumn.

Martyn was a man of many interests and activities and in this he touched many lives. When he took an interest in something he pursued it with depth and vigour. He was a much appreciated stalwart of the Wimbledon Society for many years, chairing its Planning Committee and subsequently the Executive Committee.

In letters of commiseration, many people highlighted just what a happy couple Liz and Martyn were. Many more remarked upon Martyn's strong and some times wry sense of humour along with his ready smile. He had a focused, independent character, which guided him through a life of achievement and also through his final illness.

All right on the night A personal portrait by MONICA ELLISON

CHAIRMAN Martyn Harman assured us it would be 'all right on the night'. The night in question was Cannizaro 1998, and the first attempt for a nascent Activities and Events Committee to revive what had once been a regular Society event, the summer party. Members' letters showed what a success it was.

Under Martyn's unassuming chairmanship, the Society made a determined, and successful, effort to reach parts of the community it had not yet reached. After nine years as Chair of the Planning Committee, where his professional knowledge

was of particular use, Martyn became Chairman of the Executive Committee in 1998. Chairman for ten years, his quiet style was determinedly proactive even if, on occasions, meetings were of legendary length.

He backed many 'firsts', notably Wimbledon's first Literary Book Event in Christmas 1998, which raised funds and recruited members justifying Martyn's support of new initiatives.

This was evident again in 2003 when he steered the Society through its centenary celebrations, including a dinner at the AELTC. The entertainment, in partnership with

the Wimbledon School of Art was a preview of their Elizabethan costume parade, which the school's graduates were to display at Greenwich for the 400th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's death. Tragically, Michael Pope, the Costume Design Department Director died suddenly a few months before the event. Quiet diplomacy and steady nerves were required to keep arrangements on track. Martyn never wavered and that memorable event also proved to be 'all right on the night'.

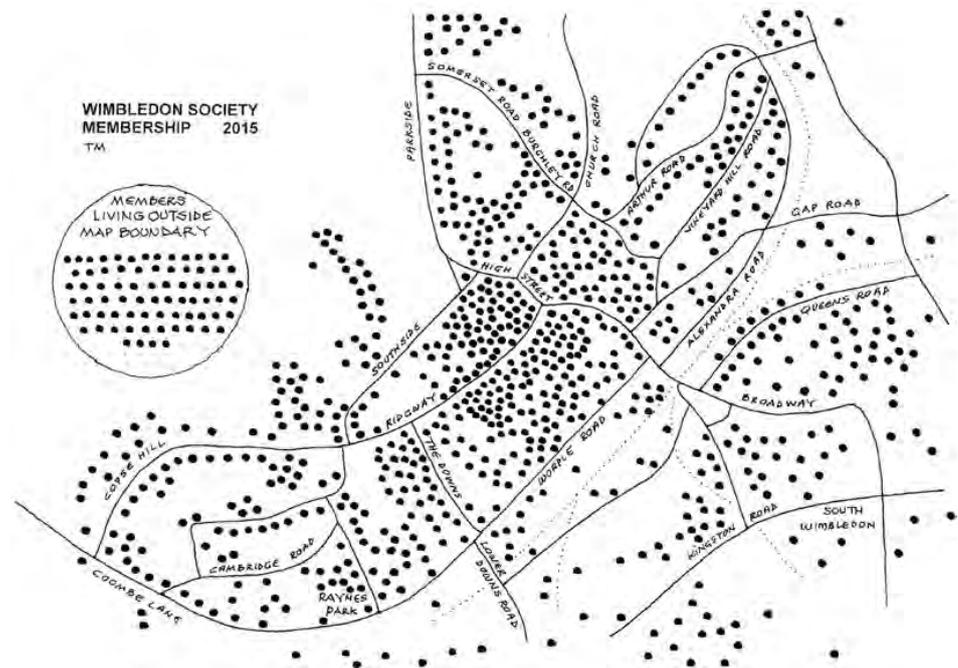
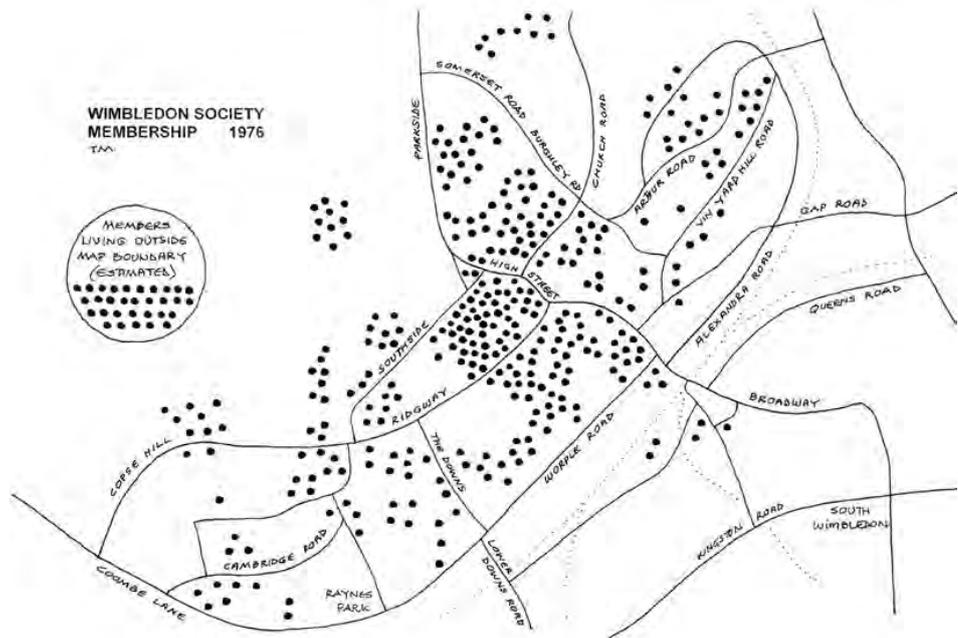
Our deepest sympathy and gratitude goes to Liz who so often generously shared Martyn with us.

Where do today's Society members live and how has the society membership grown?

In 1976 some 370 members' addresses were recorded in the area extending from Bathgate to Coombe Lane, mostly to the northwest of the rail tracks. Information on how many were joint memberships, and how many lived outside the area of the map was not recorded. It is likely that each of these figures could have been between 30 and 50. In which case the total membership of the Society at that time could have been approaching 500.

In 2007 the total number of addresses had grown to some 910. Of these some 820 lived within the SW19 and SW20 postcodes, with some 90 outside these areas. Again there is no information on how many were joint memberships, but it is possible that the total membership was approaching 1000.

The 2015 survey lists some 930 addresses. Of these, 74 members (17 being joint) live outside the boundaries of the map. The majority are in the London area, but some live in the home counties or further afield in the UK, with 2 currently being abroad. Of the 930, some 150 are for joint membership. So the total Society membership



is now some 1080, with addresses in 294 roads.

So what changes have we seen over the past 40 or so years, apart of course from the totals? Firstly there are many more members in the Town Centre, where previously there were very few. Perhaps this started

when the Society and the local groups got together in 1984 and commissioned the Residents' Plan, in opposition to the plans of the then Council (that was then voted out at the next election, most satisfying).

Also we see a far greater spread of membership

on all sides, and a wider 'catchment', and when members move away, many still seem to retain their links to Wimbledon.

The maps above show the general distribution of members in 1976 and 2015.

TONY MICHAEL

A right royal flock

DAVE DAWSON reports on the surprising news of increased numbers of swans being seen on Wimbledon Park lake

MUTE SWANS are owned by the Monarch, and perhaps she should be told that there's been strange goings-on at Wimbledon Park Lake.

For 30 years there had been just the one breeding pair of mute swans on the lake. Any other birds were quickly seen off by the resident pair. Then a record high number of 13 birds was seen in February 2014, but this was little higher than previous counts and did not seem exceptional. However, another record count, of 25 birds, was made in October 2014 and numbers kept on rising over winter to a peak of 70 birds in February 2015. Numbers remain exceptionally high, with over 50 birds in July 2015. So the swans have increased ten-fold in a little over a year. What's going on?

Despite this huge increase, as in all previous years, only one pair hatched any young in 2015. Swans don't breed until they are four years old, and it seems that many immature birds have descended upon Wimbledon Park Lake. Flocks of immature swans occur elsewhere in the Thames valley. Mute swan numbers in England have not changed appreciably in the last 20 years, so the huge increase locally doesn't seem to be part of a wider trend. We expect the cause to be local.

It could be that an adverse change on a nearby site has displaced the birds to our lake, but we haven't heard of any such change. Our swans feed on



Flocking to Wimbledon: the number of mute swans seen on Wimbledon Park lake has increased from 13 in February last year to 70 in the same month of this year

bread provided by the public and on submerged waterweed. The provision of bread seems the same as previously, but there was an abundant growth of the waterweed rigid hornwort last summer and there's much waterweed again this summer. The anglers report first seeing this weed about five years ago and that it increased to peak abundance last summer. Merton Greenspaces report that their lake was treated to control silt about six years ago. Perhaps this allowed the weed to spread, but coincidence is no proof.

Most other waterbirds have not shown any large recent trend in numbers on the Lake. However, the only other waterbird that feeds on waterweed, the coot, has also increased. Autumn and winter coot numbers averaged below 50 birds for 30 years until the winter

of 2013 to 2014 when they rose to 90 birds. Then, like the swans, coots increased to unprecedented high numbers in the 2014 to 2015 winter, with a peak of 230 birds in October 2014. Numbers averaged three times those in previous years. The timing of the significant increase in coots was the same as for the swans. Many of our wintering coots come here from further north and east in Europe to escape from the more severe continental winter, but there's no evidence for an increase in winter coot numbers in recent years; again, pointing to a local cause. It may be just a coincidence that the two species that feed on waterweed are the only ones to show a remarkable increase over the last two years, but the finger points to an increase in waterweed in the Lake.

A millionaire's modest abode

A Society visit to a National Trust property in rural Oxfordshire, the home of Lord Nuffield, philanthropist and motoring pioneer. *ASIF MALIK* gives an account of this interesting excursion

FOR THOSE OF US who live in Wimbledon, the name William Morris of Arts and Crafts renown will be familiar as the man who set up Merton Abbey Mills in 1881. But it is the home of another equally important William Morris that members visited on a sunny day in June, on a trip organised by Linda Defriez.

Near Henley-on-Thames, Nuffield Place was the home of William Morris, later Lord Nuffield, from 1933 until his death in 1963. For someone who made a vast fortune as an industrialist, reputedly earning £2,000 a day at the height of his career, he and his wife Elizabeth lived a modest life in their home near the village of Nuffield. The house was hardly the typical home of a millionaire. It was comfortable and practical, but never lavish.

Built in 1914 for Sir John Bowring Wimble, chairman of Bowring Insurance, the house was designed by the architect Oswald Partridge Milne, a pupil of Edwin Lutyens, whose influence can be clearly seen in the Arts and Crafts-style exterior. A theme of homeliness and comfort rather than opulence and display is apparent in the 4-bedroom house. Reproduction furniture with some antiques, flower paintings and oriental carpets fill the house, rather than opulent furnishings.

Each room reflects particular aspects of the home life of the Nuffields. The Billiard Room, for example, was 'the boys' room', a comfortable space for Lord Nuffield and his male friends,

with a feeling of richness and warmth created by the wood panelling and floor. By contrast, Lady Nuffield's bedroom is light and soft, with flower and bird pictures and china ornaments.

Lord Nuffield's bedroom gives us a good idea of his true personality. The furniture is basic, and there is no artifice or showiness. The simple bed is placed against a blocked-up fireplace, with a reading light rigged up by Lord Nuffield himself, all tangled wires. Opening the doors to what looks like a wardrobe reveals a mini-workshop, with a bench and shelves, and a neat display of practical tools – spanners, screwdrivers and saws. A light sleeper, he would often occupy himself with mechanical work during the night, making and repairing.

William Morris, the man, was a fascinating character. Born in 1877, he left school at 14 and started work in an Oxford bicycle repair shop. He started his own business at 16, and by 1903, he was manufacturing motorcycles. His passion for engineering and a keen business sense led to the creation of his first car in 1913. Competitively priced at

£175, the car sold in large numbers. During the war, car production was replaced by military products, and experience was gained in mass production techniques. Car production resumed after the war, and by 1923, 20,000 cars a year were being manufactured. The Morris Minor came into being, a cherished example of British motoring tradition, reliable, economic and iconic. This stage of his career laid the foundation of his immense wealth.

Lord Nuffield was never extravagant with his money. A strong sense of social justice, and a passion for medicine, led him to become a philanthropist. Over his life, he donated over £30 million, the equivalent of £700 million today. His philanthropy arose out of his desire to relieve the sick, the crippled and the poor, and to alleviate social injustice. The name Nuffield is associated today with medical research and social relief. He was lauded with public honours - an OBE in 1917, later becoming Viscount Nuffield, and a Companion of Honour in 1958. A remarkable man indeed. When he died in 1963, one newspaper headline simply described him as the 'Millionaire who never sought the limelight'.

Having no children, he bequeathed the house to Nuffield College in Oxford, an institution set up with his donation. The College kept the house until 2012, when it was given to the National Trust.





LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Tony Matthews

WITHOUT WISHING to detract from Norman's appreciation of Tony Matthews, I think that to say the Newsletter that he took over in 2009 "evolved from an information sheet to a mini magazine with pictures as well as articles on a wide range of subjects" is way over the top.

It may not have had colour but it had plenty of very good black and white pictures with interesting stories. In fact, when I was Chairman of the Museum Committee, although I had nothing to do with the magazine's production, I was frequently told by members how much they appreciated it. I also think it is rather derogatory to those people who were involved with it in the past.

Prudence C Hartopp (Lady)

POSITIONS VACANT

■ **Your Society needs you** We are looking for members to join us in managing the Society's affairs by becoming members of its **Executive Committee**. This Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Society is properly run, keeping an overview of its main activities through its principal committees – museum and planning. It also has a watching brief on other Society activities – newsletter, activities and excursions, and local history. The Committee meets six times a year in the Museum, usually on a Wednesday evening. **If this is of interest, please contact Asif Malik at asifamalik@aol.com or on 020 8946 6435.**



■ **The Museum needs two new Duty Officers** to join the existing team. Duties involve greeting visitors, helping them see round the Museum, dealing with any queries and selling Museum publications. Opening hours are 2.30 – 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays and we ask you to do one duty a month. Computer literacy is essential for accessing the catalogue.

Full training is given and you will always work as a pair, at first with someone experienced. No knowledge of local history is required initially and any queries which cannot be dealt with on the spot can be referred to the relevant curator.

Contact Cassandra Taylor at casskent@talktalk.net or on 020 8946 1544.

■ **The Museum also needs a Publications Officer** to oversee the website sales of publications, deal with the weekly sales taken during opening hours and manage the stock. More details of the post are available from Liz Courtney at courtney28@blueyonder.co.uk or **020 8946 7960**.

That's right – no matter what or where you want to build, you just put your planning application in here, and this new Government machine approves everything automatically



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Classics in the Park takes place at 7.30pm on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 September in Wimbledon Park. The City of London Sinfonia, conducted by Stuart Stratford, will perform a range of popular classical pieces before a fireworks finale. www.seetickets.com/tour/classics-in-the-park/.

Wimbledon BookFest is back for its third year from 2-11 October at a variety of local venues, including Wimbledon Common. Headliners include Sebastian Faulks, Louis de Bernières, Vince Cable and Boris Becker. There are also events for children. www.wimbledonbookfest.org or **0208 545 8342**.

Wimbledon International Music Festival returns for its seventh season from 14-29 November. This year's theme is dance, from around the world. And on the 21st there is a celebration of the 150th anniversary of Alice in Wonderland. www.wimbledonmusicfestival.co.uk or **020 8543 7533**.

The Wimbledon Society was founded in 1903 and has had its present name since 1982. (Originally the John Evelyn Club, it was known as the John Evelyn Society from 1949-82.) A Registered Charity (No 269478), its main objectives are to preserve Wimbledon's amenities and natural beauty, study its history, and ascertain that urban development is sympathetic and orderly. **Annual subscriptions** are at the following rates: Individuals £10; Families £15; Organisations: Non-commercial £25, commercial £50. Please send membership applications to the Membership Secretary.

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.