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Wimbledon Society Newsletter

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Chairman's report

AT THE TIME of writing I am recovering from a long but extremely enjoyable trip to Australia via Vietnam plus the effects of a wonderful Christmas and New Year. By the time this is published all that will be a distant memory.

Since the last Newsletter there have been a number of developments in the various Society Committees. First, Chris Goodair will be taking over as permanent Chairman of the Planning Committee in June and has been co-opted to the Board. Wojtek Katny becomes deputy Chairman, and Liz Newman has assumed the role of PC secretary. The Board and I are most grateful to them for their commitment and work.

Following suggestions at the Away Day in November and discussions within the PC the Board has agreed that the Committee shall be renamed 'The Planning and Environment Committee', reflecting the Committee's widening role in dealing with matters affecting Wimbledon.

The Museum Committee has commenced the first stage of its long awaited refurbishment; use is being made of the Norman Plastow Gallery for storage purposes while the Perry Room is restructured. This work will be finished by the beginning of April so that bookings for the Gallery can be fulfilled.

The MC aims to complete the renovation of the Museum itself by the end of the decade.

One suggestion which came from the Away Day was that the Society should hold more general meetings. At present the only members' meeting is the Annual General Meeting but this year we are planning another Away Day to include the membership as a whole. This will be held at 2pm on 4 November at the Wimbledon Park Hall in Arthur Road; please note the date now. Further details will follow in due course.

The transfer of subscriptions etc., from the old Society to the new company is continuing. If you have not yet completed the paperwork please do so as soon as possible. If you have any queries please contact Jennifer Newman.

Let me say how grateful I am for the help and support of Board and Committee colleagues without whom the Society could not function.

JOHN MAYS

Chair change for the Local History Group

ALMOST ALL of the regular members of the local history group were in attendance on 6 January for their first meeting of 2017, for it was known that the session was to be the last to be chaired by Charles Toase. At the December meeting Charles announced his retirement, explaining to a saddened group his reasons for relinquishing the post which he had carried out ever since it had been handed over to him by Richard Milward. No one was sure how many years that represented but hazarded guesses of some twenty years.

Michael Norman Smith was away and so missed the commemorative photo-shoot, which was a pity, since he has agreed to take on the chairmanship in the coming year with back-up from Sheila Dunman. Also unable to be there was Museum Chairman Cassandra Taylor, whose letter to Charles expressed the thoughts of the entire group when she wrote:

“... so sorry not to be with you on this special evening when the Local History Group meets to thank you for your inspiring and encouraging leadership of it since the departure of Richard Milward. . . . Your support of the group’s members, huge input



Nigel Davies

The Local History Group: (from left) Monica Ellison, Sheila Dunman, Matthew Hillier, Rosemary Evans, Charles Toase, Neal Ransome, Clive Whichelow, Ann Bremner, Norman Plastow and Cyril Maidment

into to all publications and articles for the newsletters along with your acute judgment, in particular with regard to the Richard Milward essay prize, has been invaluable and will, I hope, continue.

The Museum is especially grateful for the calm and tactful way in which you handle the myriad of enquiries which come in from the public – some seriously research based, others which are what you might call of ‘green ink’ provenance – but all treated with equal respect.

I know how much the Group will miss your overall guidance but am delighted to learn that you will

continue as a member with any help you need and that they can give. Your knowledge of Wimbledon is unequalled and we hope to continue to have the benefit of it for many more years to come and are especially looking forward to reading your ‘Encyclopaedia’ when you feel ready to show it to the world.”

The Local History Group are happy to report that the Newsletter will not be deprived of its local history pages, since Charles feels that he has sufficient material to carry on writing this much appreciated feature [see page 6].

MONICA ELLISON

Milward Essay Winners (from p1)

Alice Fookes lives in Southfields, working part-time in Adult Education. Since 2006 she has been



an active volunteer member of the UN WOMEN UK NC London Committee – which is the youngest of the United Nations agencies

promoting the rights and equality of women and girls. She speaks and writes regularly on UN WOMEN’s work, programmes and initiatives, including at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held annually at the United Nations in New York.

Alice was intrigued to discover that Eleanor Roosevelt had spent formative years at Allenswood School under the influence of its Headmistress Marie Souvestre. Since Eleanor had written quite

extensively about those school years in her memoir *This is my Story* (1937), Alice’s brief for this competition was to research Souvestre’s English connections, giving a picture of the school in its Wimbledon Park setting. This she has done with style.

The essays, which are very different in content, period and style will be published shortly and available from March online or in hard copy in the Museum of Wimbledon.

From Design & Access Statement by Hopkins Architects for AELTC



Set to expand

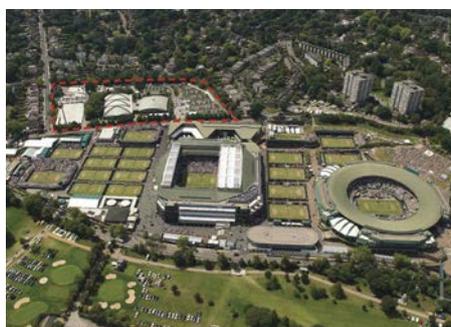
The Society has been giving some thought to the AELTC's latest plans for the Championship site

THE ALL ENGLAND Lawn Tennis Club has submitted a planning application (16/P4651) to demolish their five covered courts beside Somerset and Marryat Roads, which are coming to the end of their useful life.

The intention is to construct six new covered courts, together with another six outdoors, an underground garage for about 330 cars, and other support facilities. The roofs of the covered courts are said to be no higher than those that are to be demolished.

However, this site is 'zoned' in the Council's Plan as Open Space, and the Plan has clear policies to protect open spaces from inappropriate development. As the proposed building has a somewhat larger building footprint than at present, one result is that the open green area beside Marryat Road, much used and valued by local residents, is made appreciably smaller. Also, a significant number of trees will be lost.

The Society has therefore asked that, if the Council is minded to approve such an application, the following points should be addressed:



Artist's impression of the new development (top) and an aerial view showing the site (above)

- Continued public access to the Marryat Road green space should be protected:
- The new recreational facilities should be made available to the general public where this is possible:
- New trees should be planted, and the ages of the replacement trees should match the ages of those lost; ie: using the "Tree Years" approach, rather than having merely one-for-one, which means saplings replace mature specimens:
- Improving the walking and cycling routes from the site to both Wimbledon and Southfields stations, as the enlarged facilities will attract more participants:
- There should be a study of the local hydrology, to ensure that likely ground water movements are fully understood, and that nearby property is safeguarded.

Berkeley Homes part three

IN DECEMBER, Berkeley Homes (BH) exhibited proposals for the third and final phase of redevelopment of former hospital sites on Copse Hill. The approved scheme for eleven houses would be replaced by four blocks of flats, rising to five/six storeys including mansards providing 85 residential units, 25 of these social housing and 85 car parking places.

The site is within the Copse Hill Conservation Area, characterised by mature trees, two-storey houses with gardens and open views into the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) to the south. The Society responded, listing objections to the creation of a "canyon" effect with loss of open views, doubling the permitted density for the site and the adverse impact on both Conservation Area and the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within the MOL.

As we go to press, BH have registered a new application (16/P4853) based on the same proposals. While there is insufficient time to analyse the detailed impact, the drawings shown on Merton's website (BHH12 P001 & BKH12 P051), illustrate the oppressive, urban impact on the area of the two sites already developed.

The fall in demand for the large luxury houses originally planned by BH has driven them to seek permission for this high density development which would have a profound and adverse impact on the environment of the area, its character and residents of the surrounding neighbourhood. The Society believes that in its present form, it should not be permitted.



Flowers blooming

AN APPLICATION for a small, freestanding and removable flower kiosk outside Raynes Park Methodist Church in Worple Road has been approved by the Council. It is a more substantial wooden structure, replacing the former open gazebo flower kiosk on the opposite corner of Tolverne Road.



Nigel Davies

Glass shattered

A PLAN to add an additional floor to the Glass House in Arthur Road, Wimbledon Park, has been turned down. It would have provided additional office space.

Many objections were made to the Council, including by Wimbledon Society and Wimbledon Park Residents' Association. These comments stressed that the existing building was as tall as any in Arthur Road and already overlooked gardens in the adjoining Strathmore and Farquhar Roads. The Council agreed and refused planning permission.

Planning and Environment Committee

The Planning Committee has been renamed to reflect its widening remit, and it is now looking for potential new members who are interested in environmental issues.

Please contact secretarypc@wimbledonsociety.org.uk

Waitrose appeal allowed – but more parking for Leopold Road shoppers

IN 2009 Waitrose were granted permission to convert the former B&Q store into a supermarket but certain conditions were imposed, the stated reasons being to preserve the existing retail facilities of the town centre and of Leopold Road.

In 2015 they sought to overturn one of those conditions, in order to make a small café area next to the in-store bakery towards the rear of the store. The Wimbledon Society objected to the proposed change, on the grounds that the reasons for the conditions were undiminished particularly in respect of the shops in Leopold Road. In addition, we suggested to the Council that they

review the parking arrangements in Leopold Road so as to maximise the number of short stay parking spaces.

The Council refused the planning application, but Waitrose appealed. The Planning Inspector has now allowed the appeal subject to a limit of 12 seats in the café area. The Inspector's report concludes by requiring the supermarket to provide two hours free parking for customers shopping not just at Waitrose but also in Leopold Road and Wimbledon Town Centre. Waitrose also has to direct customers to the Leopold Road shops and provide details of goods and services available there.

Historic buildings grants

THE COUNCIL has recently conducted a survey, asking residents for their views on how a share of about £500k could be used to improve their community. This sum has been collected by the Council from various development projects, under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) scheme.

The Society has responded by suggesting that some of the money should be used to give grants to repair Listed or Historic Buildings. This would reflect the Society's principal objective of preserving and enhancing Wimbledon's amenities.

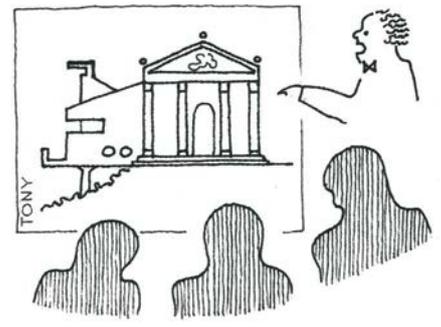
Other possible schemes suggested by the Council include improvements to green spaces, community facilities, local shopping centres etc. Whilst these works would be worthwhile, there is always the risk that the additional sum would be 'lost' in the far bigger maintenance

budgets, and the public would not be able to see clearly that the CIL funds were actually delivering a specific benefit.

The repair of historic buildings, by contrast, would deliver a more tangible and visible end product. The results of the Council's survey are awaited.

... SCENES AT THE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL ...

"Well, the Wimbledon Society wanted something modern, but the Council wanted pastiche to fit in ... at least I think it was that way round"



The Bachelors' Ball

CHARLES TOASE waxes lyrical on a highlight of the Wimbledon social season in 1878

IN 1878 some bachelors living in Wimbledon had the notion of holding a party and inviting those people who had been kind enough to entertain them. This was not actually a new idea – there had been a big bachelors' ball in Leeds a few years before, and the Scots (who always knew how to party) had one as early as 1824 in Edinburgh.

There were 35 of these bachelors, with many well-known local families represented: Bazalgette, the Bousteads of Cannizaro, the Burrells, Devas, Gribble, Peek and Preece. And who did they invite? Well, just about everybody who was anybody in Wimbledon – 310 of them. It was a fancy dress ball, and the guest list tells us what costumes they wore. Many costumes were supplied by John Simmons & Sons, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. They must have been hard pushed to provide 300 outfits for one evening. The band was that of Mr Dan Godfrey, bandmaster of the Coldstream Guards.

But first to set the scene. The ballroom, lit by chandeliers, measured 90 x 40 feet. On each side and at the bottom of the marquee were large pier glasses 10 x 5 feet, and at the base of these were flowers in pots of the choicest description, provided by a gentleman resident in the parish. The sides of the marquee were lined with blue satin,

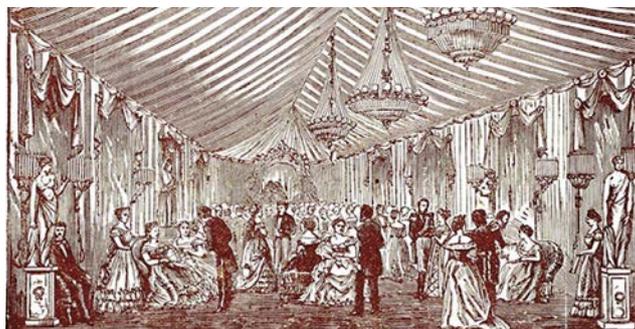
relieved with columns of blue velvet. On each of these columns was a girandole, and placed round the hall were crimson velvet settees. At the bottom of the room in the two corners were statues.

The bachelors took over Lingfield House, on the corner of Lingfield Road and Southside. The house had long been empty and uninhabited, and was later pulled down. It was “transformed into a palace, and the

John Brackenbury, Headmaster of Eagle House school, was there with his family and Thomas Devas with his daughter and sons. Francis Penrose, the architect, was dressed as an astrologer (‘a loose black robe bespangled with numerous golden stars, thrown over a blue underdress painted with mysterious devices, and begirt with a blue belt on which were the signs of the Zodiac. He,

moreover, looked his character completely, poring over an old black-lettered book and casting the horoscopes of his friends’). His wife was dressed to represent ‘Needles and pins, when a man’s married his trouble begins’. ‘Certainly if the miseries of a Benedict are to be measured by the variety of pins and needles stuck all about Mrs Penrose’s apron and hat, the bachelors are to be congratulated on their immunities’.

There were two guests I recognised as having written diaries, so I thought we might have their accounts of the ball. One was Mr & Mrs Walker of Ridgway Place, but their diaries don’t include 1878. The other was Henry Forde the engineer, dressed ‘in a real Turkish dress brilliant with golden embroidery’. We have his diaries in the Museum. And what did he write on the 2nd May 1878? He records that, after dinner, he went to a meeting of the Wimbledon Local Board from 6pm to 7.30, ‘and went to Bachelors Fancy Dress Ball at Wimbledon’ without further comment. However, the next day he stayed at home all day, recording that he ‘got to bed this morning about 4 o/c’.



Watercolour of Lingfield House (top), by John Hassell, dated 1823, from Museum of Wimbledon; an illustration of a Temporary Ball Room from Piggott Bros & Co of Bishopsgate (above)

deserted apartments with aid of crimson carpets and brilliant lights and chandeliers were converted into splendid reception rooms, whilst a large tent thrown out in the garden behind made a magnificent ball room. The tent was beautifully hung with blue satin and velvet, and decorated with large mirrors and gilded ornaments, and in each corner stood palms”. The marquee and decorations were supplied by Messrs. Pigott.

Cyril Maidment/Museum of Wimbledon
Courtesy The Gentle Author/spitalfieldslife.com

The wrong pub

THIS PHOTO from the Museum, showing old men outside and tankards on the fence, was originally labelled as the Hand in Hand pub. In 1998 Clive Whichelow noticed that one of the signs had William Willians as the licensee; Willians was known to be the licensee of the Crooked Billet, not the Hand in Hand. It is correctly identified in Milward's *Wimbledon Past*.

It is one of the tasks of the Group to identify and correct errors, and we now have quite a long list, starting with Bartlett's *History* in 1865.

Some are well-known; Tibbett of Tibbett's Corner was not a highwayman but a gate keeper. Others involve the misattribution of photographs. The most common



Photograph © Museum of Wimbledon

is the misspelling of the name of the local paper, which was the *Wimbledon Boro' News*, not the *Borough News*.

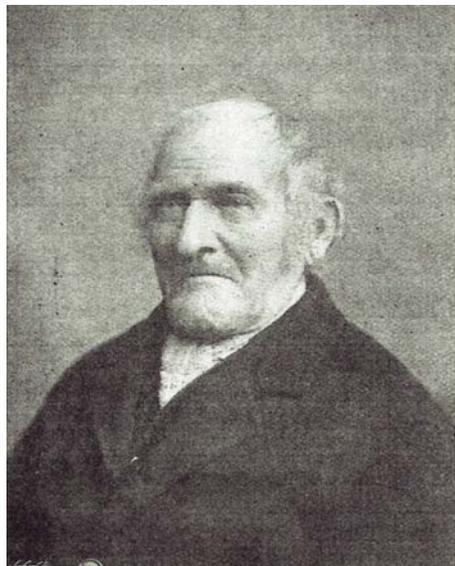
The Crooked Billet pub, correctly identified in Clive Whichelow's book Pubs of Wimbledon Village (Past and Present), on sale in the Museum

Looking after the staff

Do you remember St George's Road before Ely's was rebuilt? There were three tall houses with steps up to the front door, which were used for the accommodation of staff. Large drapers often looked after

their staff; Bourne & Hollingsworth in Oxford Street providing accommodation at Warwickshire House on Gower Street for up to 600 female workers. A hundred years ago, Joseph Ely had three houses for the accommodation of staff, at 12, 14 and 16 St George's Road, where the back entrance of the shop is now. The census

for 1911 shows 16 drapers' assistants living there, with two housekeepers, two housemaids and a cook to look after them. They were still there in 1939, although then mostly described as shop assistants (because the drapers had become a department store) – 20 of them, and a housekeeper, a cook, a kitchen maid and a housemaid.



From December 1987 edition of *Wimbledon and Putney Post*

The oldest inhabitant

FOR MANY YEARS Robert Churchyard (left) was a local legend as Wimbledon's centenarian; a carpenter who lived in Hartfield Crescent, he was 101 when he died in 1897. But people were starting to live longer; Bridget Richardson lasted for 107 years, dying in 1924, and Annie Day, also 107, died in 1977. 'Granny' Woodham's birthdays were celebrated regularly

in the *Wimbledon Boro' News* until her death in 1962 aged 106; others who lasted to that age were Emma Dutton in 1975 and Sarah McCray in 1987. Those of 105 and younger are too many to list.

Until 2016 the record was held by Thomas Taylor, who has a memorial in St. Mary's recording his death in 1827 at 108, but he was overtaken by Dorothy Adams who died on 28 September 2016 aged 110; currently she is the oldest person ever to have lived in Wimbledon.

CHARLES TOASE

Rose Cottage – last echoes of Paradise Merton

Tucked away in the southeastern corner of Wimbledon parish, and surrounded by late Victorian terraces, stands Rose Cottage, a rare Georgian gem with a fascinating history. **MATTHEW HILLIER** explains why, as we go to press, its fate hangs in the balance

A LOST LANDSCAPE

In 1810, Hamnett Pinhey, a successful young London importer and shipping insurer of New London Street, Crutched Friars, set his heart on a plot of rural land in Wimbledon. It had until recently been part of the Merton Place estate of Emma, Lady Hamilton, consort of the late Lord Nelson. In 1803 Hamilton had described the house and estate in a letter to Nelson as ‘Paradise Merton’. The eight acres in Wimbledon Pinhey purchased from the subsequent owner Asher Goldsmid, had been part of what was known as the ‘Great Lawn’ at Merton Place. It was bordered by Merton Road to the west and Merton High Street to the south, both boundaries well wooded, with the land behind gently rising towards Wimbledon and an aspect of open fields to the North and East.

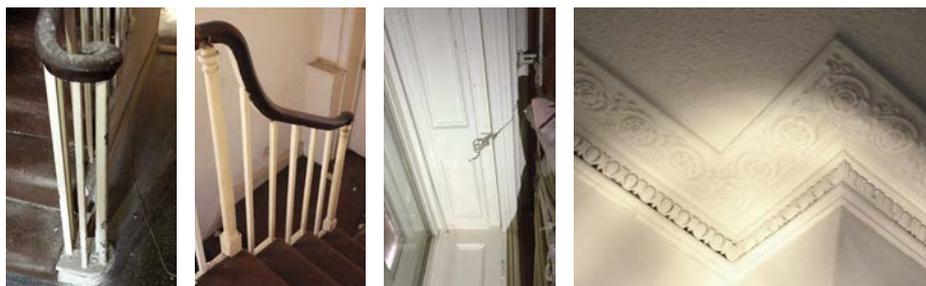
It is hard to imagine today, in the area that London Underground definitively named ‘South Wimbledon’ in 1926, rolling fields, pasture and parkland, but this is the landscape that Rose Cottage once stood in and to understand the house, we must imagine it as it was.

THE HOUSE AS BUILT

We are fortunate that there is a wonderful record of surviving documents which bring Rose Cottage to life, help us interpret its surviving features and which could in turn enable a sympathetic restoration.



Watercolour reproduced with kind permission of Pinhey's Point Foundation



Photographs by Matthew Hillier

Top: the watercolour of Hamnett Pinhey's Rose Cottage; Above, left to right: bottom of the main stair, showing scrolled mahogany balustrade; fine turned newels, square plain balusters and mahogany handrail, typical of the late-Georgian period; the window soffit panelling and shutter box in one of the principal rooms; high-quality plaster cornice with egg and dart motif

A watercolour of the house and the construction document survives. This contract between Hamnett Pinhey and builder Thomas Young dated 16 July 1813 specifies a two-storey brick cottage villa, with a façade rendered in ‘Parkers Cement’ and scribed to imitate ‘ashlar’ or stone. The main façade was to have a semi-circular classical porch with fluted columns (now lost) but visible in the watercolour. Either side were two fine ‘Venetian Sashes’ glazed in ‘the very best Newcastle crown glass’. The glazed entrance door led into an attractive arched hallway with a main staircase with

‘Mahogany moulded handrail with ramps & twist to follow the stairs and landings’, which survives intact. Either side of the Hall were two principal rooms – a Dining room and Drawing room – both originally with marble fireplaces. Fine plaster cornicing with egg and dart moulding and floral motif survives in these rooms. Although the sash windows were lost in the 20th century, remarkably the internal shutter panelling survives.

PINHEY'S JOURNEY AND LEGACY

By all accounts Hamnett Pinhey and his family loved Rose Cottage.

However it is believed that he had greater ambitions and this combined with an unsuccessful business partnership and the then economic downturn meant that he sought a fresh start in the 'new' lands of the colonies. In 1819 Pinhey set sail from Plymouth and settled on land overlooking the Ottawa River in Canada. Today the house he built, 'Horaceville' with many echoes of Rose Cottage, is a museum and heritage site.

THE PLIGHT OF ROSE COTTAGE

Rose Cottage remained in Pinhey's ownership until his death in 1857. It survived intact for another 23 years, but on 5 August 1880 the house, land and all contents were sold at auction and '180 noble trees' were felled. Its loss was lamented by the *Wimbledon Courier* with the words: "Thus passes away one of our ancient landmarks".

While the grounds of Rose Cottage became Hamilton Road, the house itself survived. The façade was crudely altered in the late 20th century but the bones of the building remain.

Planning permission was granted in 2016 for the redevelopment of the site with retention and restoration of Rose Cottage. A new owner has however sought permission to demolish, which was granted as a formality in December 2016. Following a local outcry and petition, the owners are now considering their options.

With permission granted to demolish, this somewhat weather-beaten survivor currently sits forlornly behind a hoarding in Hamilton Road awaiting its fate.

If you are interested in helping protect Rose Cottage, please sign the petition at www.rosecottagewimbledon.com or email the Conservation Officer Jill.Tyndale@merton.gov.uk

Lectures

On Thursday 30 March 2017, Mike Grundy, an expert on the art, history and architecture of London, will give us a talk on 'Architecture of the London Underground'. **The venue is Emmanuel Church on the Ridgway, and the start time is 8pm.** This lecture was originally planned for Wednesday 29 March – please make a note of the new date. We do apologise for any inconvenience caused by this change.

Earlier date change

There was a change in the date of a lecture in January 2017. With the topic 'Pantomime', the lecture took place on 18 January 2017, a change from the original planned date of 26 January. We are very sorry if this caused any inconvenience.

Windmill Bicentenary

This year, the Wimbledon Windmill celebrates its bicentenary. The Windmill Museum, which is housed in the Windmill, offers free entry to all visitors throughout the 2017 season, from 25 March to 29 October. Opening hours are Saturdays 2pm to 5pm, and Sundays 11am to 5pm.

The bicentenary celebrations will be launched at a special event at the Windmill on Monday 17 April from 10am to 4pm. There will be gazebos, a baking demonstration, children's activities and much more. Entry will be free.

See the Windmill Museum website – wimbledonwindmill.org.uk



Dudley Smith / www.wimbledonwindmill.org.uk

Membership offer to RAs

I HAVE BEEN visiting Residents' Associations' AGMs over the past few years to encourage membership of the Society and have had some success. However, following the Away Day in November, it was suggested that the Society offer free membership for one year to members of local Residents Associations. As a result, I contacted Wimbledon Park RA and the Residents Association West Wimbledon. So far, 25 responses have been received and they will receive their first Newsletter this month. It is hoped they will join at the end of the year once they realise what the Society has to offer.

New subscription and Bank

THERE HAS BEEN a great deal of confusion over this double change. It is difficult enough to arrange for members to change the amount payable but the change of bankers from Barclays to CAF has doubled the problem.

Any duplicate payments have been or will be reimbursed and any members who have not completed and returned the new standing order have been contacted again. It is hoped that the situation will become clearer by the end of the year.

JENNIFER NEWMAN

Restoring Wimbledon Park's lost glory

DAVE DAWSON has been looking into the work being done by **The Friends of Wimbledon Park** and local volunteers

WHILE MERTON COUNCIL has been working on a masterplan for the public park, volunteers have been getting on with improvements. The public park is only 7% of Earl Spencer's original 18th century park, but has important features surviving from the original design. The lake, brook, Horse Close Wood and Ashen Grove Wood all date back to those times and are essential features of a Grade II* heritage landscape.

Volunteers from the Friends of Wimbledon Park are working on two projects in the 17th century Horse Close Wood. This old wood has suffered losses at both ends. Aerial photographs from 1945 show that the western end was recovering nicely from previous use as a farmhouse, polo stables and piggery. Soon afterwards, however, the Municipal Borough of Wimbledon developed an untidy car park there, compromising the view of the wood from the park.

A year ago, the Friends joined with the Council and Merton Tree Warden Group to restore woodland around the car park. 85 volunteers turned up to plant 1,000 native trees and shrubs. As befits such an old wood, the species were chosen to match the woodland type: Oak, Small-leaved Lime, Field Maple, Wild Cherry, Alder, Aspen, Crab Apple, Hawthorn, Hazel, Blackthorn and Dog Rose. Further planting is planned for the mornings of February 24th and 25th this year. As the trees grow, some of the lost views and wildlife habitats will be restored.

At the other end of the wood a



Volunteers planting trees beside the car park last winter

huge underground electricity cable runs under the wood on its route between Plough Lane and Wembley. This vital link in London's grid has needed maintenance twice in the last 10 years, leading to the loss of many trees and shrubs. As the National Grid are likely to come back again unpredictably, it was decided to develop a woodland

The aim is to establish the sort of vegetation that could have been there 300 years ago when the wood was an essential part of the local economy

glade there. This was begun by the Friends and the Council last summer. The aim is to establish the sort of vegetation that could have been there 300 years ago when the wood was an essential part of the local economy.

The Friends are also working with local schools and their Duke

of Edinburgh Award schemes. The first project was begun last autumn, when flowering bulbs were planted near two of the park entrances. Some were planted in the ground right by the gates and some with shrubs in two new raised beds. This has introduced the pupils to horticulture and it will help to alleviate the otherwise harsh surrounds of the entrances.

Another planned project is an assessment of the condition of the lake. The school children will use test kits to contribute to the "Thames Water for Wildlife" citizen science scheme. The water quality of the lake is a concern to all those who use and enjoy it, including for angling and water sports. The children will learn about science, whilst contributing valuable information.

There are several other projects planned to restore some of the lost glory of the park. The Friends of Wimbledon Park welcome others who share this aim.

The best way to tackle air pollution?

The Council is about to introduce a surcharge on Diesel vehicles in the borough, based on parking permits only. Therefore this will not include those that can park off road or the huge amount of daily through traffic in Merton

ON 14 NOVEMBER 2016 the Cabinet agreed to the introduction of a levy charge for all diesel vehicles that have a Resident, Business or Trade parking permit with the introduction of £150 surcharge phased over a three year period – £90 in 2017-18, £115 in 2018-19 and £150 in 2019-20. Also a resident parking permit charge for electric vehicles is to be set at a discounted rate of £25 per annum.

The Council is to review the impact of the diesel surcharge for a period of two years, with a view to the introduction of comprehensive emissions based parking scheme.

To implement the above, the Council undertook a Statutory Consultation from **12 January to 3 February 2017** to amend all the Traffic Management Orders pertaining to Controlled Parking Zones.

According to the Council the introduction of a diesel surcharge is designed to highlight the disproportionate impact these vehicles have upon local air quality and ill health.

The Council says the overall aim of the scheme is to influence residents and business users to consider changing to lower or zero emission vehicles with any revenue derived from the scheme reinvested to support local sustainable transport initiatives and necessary infrastructure. Successful introduction of this type of scheme demonstrates the local authority's

commitment to reducing emissions and improving air quality towards national objectives.

According to research carried out on behalf of Merton Council there are 15,074 vehicles with parking permits. These are represented by vehicles split 63% petrol and 35% diesel.

The introduction of these measures was discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 12th December after being 'called in' by Councillors David Simpson and Daniel Holden.



During the 1990s people were encouraged to buy diesel vehicles on the basis that they produced lower carbon dioxide emissions

Councillor David Simpson said that he was in favour of measures to improve air quality but that this should be done at a regional or national level. His view was that the surcharge is a piecemeal measure that has been used as an opportunity to raise revenue for the council. He said that the impact of the surcharge would be felt predominantly in the west of the borough as that is where the majority of controlled parking zones are located and that this was therefore a punitive and tokenistic measure.

Councillors Simpson and Holden made further points in response to questions: Vast majority of hotspots are caused by vehicles from outside the borough; Although the level of pollutants from vehicle emissions is certainly higher than that indicated by manufacturers' tests, modern cars have lower levels of emissions; Air quality is affected by lots of factors across London and can't be controlled by local measures taken in isolation; A surcharge should be imposed at London or national level for all diesel vehicles.

A motion for the matter to be referred back to Cabinet was defeated.

The key legal framework for allowing for parking operation and enforcement duties comes under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Road Traffic Act 1991. Designation of parking is achieved through traffic regulation orders.

During the 1990s people were encouraged, by the introduction of road tax incentives, to buy diesel vehicles on the basis that they produced lower carbon dioxide emissions. At that time there was apparently little or no appreciation of the health impact of particulate matter or nitrogen dioxide.

Now diesel vehicle owners are to some extent being punished for following what they assumed was good advice. A fair way of dealing with the problem needs to be found. Low emission zones have been introduced in many big cities throughout the country. This surely must help but perhaps the most sensible thing would be for the Government to introduce an age related program of scrappage of diesel vehicles over an agreed time frame.

IAIN SIMPSON



YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Help wanted at the Museum

Duty Officer The post involves greeting visitors to the Museum, showing them how it is laid out, dealing with simple inquiries and directing other queries as appropriate. Training will be given and Duty Officers are asked to volunteer for one weekend afternoon per month. Museum opening hours are 2.30-5pm on Saturdays and Sundays. A quarterly rota is issued and DOs are free to swap their duties around if necessary. Must be computer literate. **Please contact Cassandra Taylor on casskent37@gmail.com with a brief cv.**

Designer

We are looking for a designer or graphic artist to help out with small ad hoc design projects for the Society and the Museum – maybe a poster or a mug. **Please contact Kevin O’Neil at oneilk@blueyonder.co.uk with a cv and portfolio.**

Keen photographer wanted

The Society occasionally has need of a photographer to record its social gatherings. **Please contact Asif Malik at asifmalik@wimbledonsociety.org.uk**

New editor for the Society’s Newsletter

We were sorry to lose the services of John Stern as Newsletter Editor, following his move away from Wimbledon. The new Editor is **Sally Gibbons**, whose credentials include editing a newsletter and a magazine for an international music club. Design of the Newsletter remains in the capable hands of Nigel Davies. The rest of the editorial committee is unchanged.

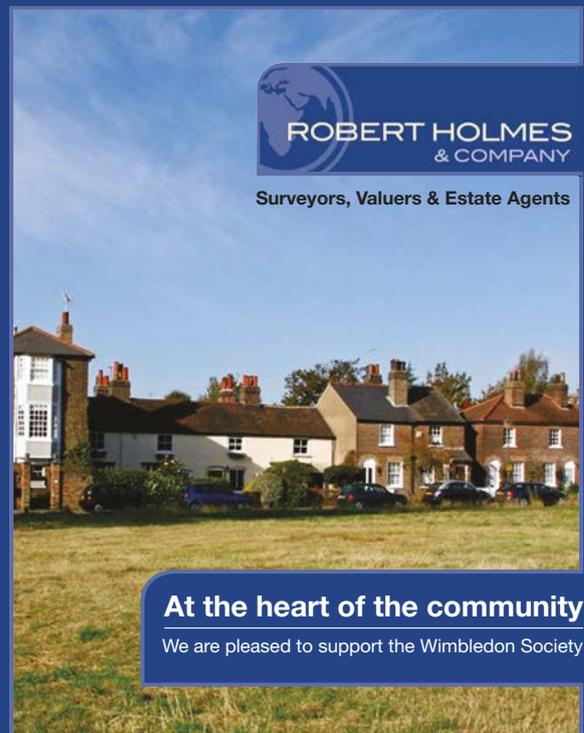


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The Wimbledon Society was founded in 1903. It is a Registered Charity (No 1164261), and a company limited by guarantee (No 9818707). **Annual subscription rates:** Individual £15; Couple/family £20; Affiliated: £25. Membership application forms can 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.