

The Ram Brewery on the way to becoming the The Ram Quarter ...



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Wandsworth Society

Newsletter September 2015

Restoration of an artists' village

A talk by Perdita Hunt on 7 May 2015



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Found_Drowned

Perdita's talk to the Society, a Wandsworth Arts Fringe event, began with an introduction to the works of GF Watts (1817-1904), one of the greatest Victorian painters, self-taught by copying pictures at the National Gallery.

He painted in a wide range of genres, including many portraits – there are notable ones of Lillie Langtry, and of Lilian, the orphan whom he and Mary, his second wife, adopted. And he sculpted too. One of his most famous 'social' paintings is "Found Drowned" (above) – the dead body of a woman washed up beneath Waterloo Bridge: presumed to have drowned herself to escape the shame of a "fallen woman", she is depicted against a dark industrial cityscape of south London. For much of his life Watts lived in London, for many years in Little Holland House (alongside Leighton House) – where his studio was open to "dockers and duchesses". He believed that art was for all.

In the 1890s he employed the architect Ernest George to build a house, Limnerslease, at Compton, near Guildford., a beautiful house, now being restored and well worth a visit. The house was followed by a gallery, the first concrete building in the Arts & Crafts style. A barn was converted into his studio and a pottery for Mary, who continued the work she had done in teaching pottery in London's East End and provided

a hostel for apprentices. The De Morgans* installed Mary's kiln. She employed 70 people to decorate a lovely cemetery chapel (the couple were buried nearby), which she designed and built. And she was the first woman to have her designs sold by Liberty's.

Thus came into being at Compton a small 'artists' village', according with the couple's 'art for all' vision. Their local activities extended to taking art into a prison, with materials supplied to prisoners, whose work was put on display for sale.

After both these amazing artists were dead (Mary, much younger than her husband, died in 1938), the village sadly decayed, but what joy that – with the guidance and expertise of Perdita and her colleagues in recent years – so much has now been restored for our enjoyment.

Some Society members followed up Perdita's excellent talk with a visit to the village in July. As well as Watts work, the gallery is currently showing 'The Art of Bedlam – works by Richard Dadd' (until 1 November). To plan a visit to the lovely Compton 'village', go to www.wattsgallery.org.uk.

Valerie Taylor

* Part of the De Morgan collection is also now on display see <http://www.demorgan.org.uk>.

Wandsworth Society

September 2015

President

Shirley Passmore

Chairman

David Kirk
15 Aspley Road SW18 2DB
020 8874 9167

Vice-Chairman

Phillip Whyte
49 West Side Wandsworth Common
London SW18 2EE
020 8874 4745

Secretary

John Dawson
210 Beechcroft Road SW17 7DP
020 8785 0077

Treasurer

Norman Holmes
Flat 7 Tiffany Heights
59 Standen Road London SW18 5TF

Membership Secretary

Gill Gray
1 Keble House Manor Fields
SW15 3LS
020 8780 0866

Committee

Sheila Allen
13 Earlsfield Road SW18 3PB
020 8874 2341
Roger Bone
208 Chapelier House
Eastfields Avenue SW18 1LR
020 8877 0208
Bruce St Julian-Bown
39c Heathfield Road SW18 2PH
020 8874 6966
Iain Gray
Studio 8 Royal Victoria
Patriotic Building SW18 3SX
020 8870 4567
Harry Waddingham
61 Magdalen Road SW18 3NE
020 8874 8784

Events Team

Valerie Taylor 020 8767 3814
Wendy Cater – Diana Godden
David Kirk – Jenny Massey
Caroline Pook – Libby Spurrier

Other Sub-Committee Leaders

Open Spaces

Bruce St Julian-Bown

Planning

Phillip Whyte

Roads and transport

Harry Waddingham

Newsletter

David Kirk

Distribution Team

Paschal Allen – Wendy Cater
Gill Gray – Iain Gray
Jan Passey – Charles Walton

The Society's website is

www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk

From the Chair

Some of us, as Philip Whyte reports (page 4), have recently been thinking hard about whether we should seek a judicial review of the Council's decision to build a 26-storey tower alongside the Old Burial Ground in the town centre. The Council's decision was wrong. Of course, I would say that (wouldn't I!) – I live nearby. So I'm a 'Nimbyist'? I plead guilty to caring about what is done in my 'back yard'. We all should, I believe.

I do not accept the Council's view (also, sadly, that of 'Historic England') that the harm done will be 'less than substantial' and outweighed by the 'benefits': only 25% of the new residential housing will be 'affordable' (by earners of £70,000 pa); better use is made of the fine Old Court House as a library (installed there quite recently) than by new 'retail space'; the 'burial ground' does not need further 'modernising'. It beats me how a policy to replace an 8-storey building with something less intrusive can allow its height to be trebled. One Councillor commented that "we can't be expected to follow all our policies" – so that's OK, then?

But we had better look on the bright side. Diggers and cranes have been at work at the old Ram Brewery for several months – where, despite our and others' best efforts over the years, a 38-storey tower is in prospect. Greenland, the developer, does now deserve congratulations for its efforts to engage with the local community about the 'Ram Quarter'. It was good to be back recently in the brewery's stables (sans horses) – the perhaps improbable setting for a presentation on the 'cultural strategy' for the quarter – to hear interesting and impressive proposals for heritage and art on the site. The Society will want to take an interest in this.

How can, and should, the new 'Ram community' try to 'connect' with the place's 'heritage' – or be connected? (To my surprise, a 'show flat' has furniture that is pure 50s – but so what?) Thinking about the past and how things change can, I suggest, make a difference to how we think about the meaning of a local 'community' and its 'heritage'. If so, relevant stuff for the Wandsworth Society – and a good reason, perhaps, for encouraging the 'return of the plaque'.

It is good that the Council has revived its Green Plaque scheme. The Heritage Service and others organised an impressive, moving ceremony – a 'community event' – to commemorate Summerstown victims of a devastating bomb attack in 1944 (see page 7). The history of the Society's plaques is told by Peter Farrow on page 10 – a history I hope not over.

We are very grateful to Peter for stepping into the breach to design this Newsletter when Nigel fell ill. We hope that Nigel will be better soon.

David Kirk
davidcameronkirk@hotmail.com

Planning matters

The work of the planning group has not dropped off over the summer. It can be hard to keep up with it all, but we soldier on, with only occasional lapses of our usual sense of humour! Thanks to all members of the group for regular attendance at monthly meetings – and unfailing application. Our main concerns have been:



Garratt Place coming to an Old Burial Ground near you – and, hidden among the towers, is the small Quaker burial ground behind the Friends' Meeting House in the High Street.

Garratt Place

(South Thames College and Council sites)

With the Section 106 agreement completed, the Council granted planning permission in July. We are aware that the Council have invited developers to make proposals for the scheme but have yet to learn who has been selected. We have had some serious discussions about whether we should mount a judicial review of the Council's decision. We do not believe that the Council, as planning authority, properly considered all relevant circumstances, the conservation area, the site's proximity to listed buildings, the scheme's massing, its overlooking the open space of the Old Burial Ground and other factors. We were fortunate to obtain some pro bono legal advice from an Environmental Law Foundation barrister. With considerable regret, we eventually

concluded, following that advice, that the chances of the Council's decision being quashed were insufficient to justify the risks and costs involved.

Wandsworth Gyrotory

A TfL report of the first round of findings from the initial public consultation earlier this year (available on the Society's website) has been sent to the Council. The consultation appears to have largely confirmed that a majority favour alterations to the current through traffic routing. The next round of public consultation will take place this autumn and we have asked TfL for a prior meeting to discuss what they have in mind. The merry-go-round may never stop!

Crossrail2

Further discussions with "interested groups", including ourselves, took place in July, focusing on Tooting Broadway and Clapham Junction stations and the Common. We are pleased to report that TfL seems to have taken on board our and others' serious concerns about the 'areas of surface interest' on the Common and is investigating alternative options. At the Common meeting a plan was tabled showing an enlarged area for the possible line of the track – potentially leaving the Common unaffected. There will certainly be further work before any new 'area for surface working' is recommended. At the Clapham Junction meeting the areas to be used were discussed; a masterplan is being prepared to bring the interests of all parties (Crossrail2, Network Rail, TfL and the Council) together. TfL expects to start a further round of wider public consultations in October. The decision-making process will take some time. On current plans, construction could start in 2020 and be completed 2030 - the planning group have booked our tickets ...

Feathers Wharf

A pleasant surprise, following repeated requests to the Council and the Western Riverside Waste Authority to do something about the riverside walkway around the perimeter of the site – we have been invited to meetings with the Waste Authority. How so? It turned out that Cringle Dock, a transfer station in Battersea, needs to be altered: new residents close by, including the US Embassy, would not like the smell from the existing plant (poor darlings!). More seriously, we are delighted that, at long last, something may be done to get this part of the riverside path completed (at little or no cost to the Council). We shall wait and see.



Another development causing unhappiness... the former Fishmongers' Arms (more recently The Alchemist). On the left the building as it was, on the right all that remains following the illegal demolition of the front elevation.

Digital advertisement hoardings

We are disappointed to report that the Council has approved a hideous hoarding, some four storeys high, on the south-eastern corner of East Hill at the junction with Trinity Road. We hope the Council will reconsider its decision and not pursue this money-raising venture (it could be for no other reason). Users of Trinity Road will not have failed to notice the digital hoardings already in place on the Trinity Road underpass. We believe that they do not comply with the planning consents in respect of their size and projection above the horizontal parapet of the bridges (you cannot now see down Trinity Road from the southern bridge!). We have sent drawings and calculations to the enforcement officer and await a response – this is not just a grumpy complaint but, in our view, a breach of a planning consent that should be taken seriously. We await, too, a Council policy statement on digital advertisement hoardings across the borough.

The Alchemist, St John's Hill.

You may have noticed a new 'gap' in St John's Hill recently – not the ground opening up, but the demolition of the former Fishmongers' Arms, a site that has been vacant and unused for some years. Consent was granted for rebuilding most of the site some time ago, but, the building being in a conservation area, consent to demolish it was required before rebuilding. The original consent required the retention of the whole façade; all that is now left is part of the ground floor. The Council stepped into action quickly, when

it was clear that unauthorised demolition had taken place, and refused a retrospective application. An enforcement notice was served, requiring the owner to rebuild a facsimile. Not ideal perhaps, but it shows that the Council can act when required. (Shame it has not yet done so on Trinity Road advertising!)

Local Plan Review

Planning group members participated in the Inspectors' hearings, following our written representations. Our main concern was the Council's tall buildings policy.

Homebase site, Smugglers Way

An application has been made for the Council's opinion on the scope of the environmental statement to be submitted with the planning application for a redevelopment of this site. We advised that we believed a full Environmental Impact Assessment would be required. There is no planning application as yet, but already much concern about the tall tower that is mooted – to which we would expect to object, on grounds of access, content, and the area's inability to deal with another massive development.

That's not all that has taken up our time and energy over the summer. Offers to help spread the load will be welcome!

Philip Whyte

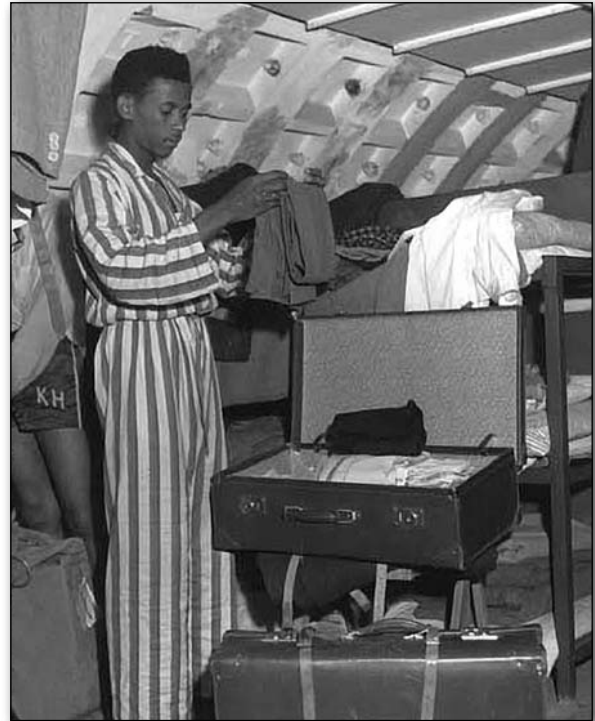
Plots, plans and goings-on under London

A talk by Michelle Welbourn on 4 June 2015

Michelle, Schools and Formal Learning Manager for Wandsworth Museum, gave us a talk as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival. As she explained, there are various ways of thinking about 'underground London'. There is, first, the 'secrecy' of the subterranean – sometimes 'state secrecy'. The Kingsway Telephone Exchange - two half mile tunnels beside the Central Line – was a well used area in WW2 and the Cold War. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, supplies were maintained there to enable staff to stay in the tunnels for many months. Since then, many organisations have used them to store documents. Access is via an unobtrusive door in Furnival Street. An earlier example of a 'place to hide' concerned the 'Silk Weavers' Riots' in 1769. When the (mainly Huguenot) weavers' wages were undercut, Wandsworth weavers linked up with Spitalfields' and held secret meetings in underground vaults.

The 'underground' has often been linked with marginalised people. Over a century ago, hundreds were forced through poverty to live 'below', both north and south of the Thames. Entrances were often accessed from narrow walkways and 'dead end' courtyards. There was no natural light; families lived close together; flooding was frequent; disease spread easily. In the 19th century Brunel built the first tunnel under the Thames, intended for goods traffic across the river (now part of the Overground's East London Line). It proved too expensive, however, to build the means for wheeled vehicles to use the tunnel. It became, instead, the 'Eighth Wonder of the World'. Two million visitors a year paid a penny to walk through. Booths sold souvenirs. A contemporary recorded that some people never emerged and the tunnel became the haunt of prostitutes and thieves.

Wandsworth Prison had 'dark cells', built either underground or with no windows, to simulate the 'underground'. These cells housed men and women, sometimes even children as young as 12. One cell, the one most hated by prisoners, had just one chink of light. 'Hauntings' are another aspect of 'underground' history. Several tube stations have ghost stories. During construction of the Tube and Crossrail, a number of graves, including plague pits, have been dug up. Deaths have often occurred underground. In WW2 173 people were killed in a panic causing a crush during an air raid test in Bethnal Green; 37 died in the fire at King's Cross station in 1987. Both stations have stories of hauntings. Closer home, there is a tale that a tunnel connected St Nicholas' Church, Tooting with a former monastery nearby. The "treasure hiding myth" may have been generated simply by tales being repeated and thereby acquiring a reality.



Tunnels can often offer 'sanctuary'. In WW2 tube stations such as Elephant and Castle and Clapham South were used as places of safety. Such use had been frowned on in WW1, when the authorities feared that people would stay in the tunnels until the war was over. After the blitz in 1940, planning began to use Clapham's three tube stations as places of safety. They were ready in 1942, but until 1944 used only by the military. After that there was public use, with tickets distributed. Tunnels at Clapham South provided shelter for Windrush immigrants in 1948: some 230 people, mostly men, had nowhere else to stay (see picture).

Now disused tunnels are getting a new lease of life, with food grown in the Clapham North tunnels - zero carbon and reduced food miles! From comments by Michelle's audience we also learned that there was a reputed tunnel running from the 'London Reception Centre' for World War2 internees at the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building to Wandsworth Prison – and a 'possible crawl space' below the Great Hall. Until recently there were dedicated metropolitan tunnels used by the Post Office to transfer post to/from Mount Pleasant and other sorting offices. TfL is now opening disused stations to the public and seeking proposals for business use.

Jenny Massey

PS Many interesting websites on this subject, with evocative pictures, can be found by searching for 'Tunnels under London'.



A community event: the unveiling of a Green Plaque in Summerstown

BOMB ON WORKING CLASS HOUSES

Casualties and Damage

was the South Western Star's front page headline, recording the V2 rocket that landed at about 8.30am on Sunday 19 November 1944 on Hazelhurst Road, Summerstown, SW17, close to Smallwood School. The bomb killed at least 35 people, including 14 children, and injured many more. On 6 June 2015, a pleasant summer's day over 70 years later (the anniversary of D-Day, as it happened), there was a ceremony to mark this event: the unveiling of a Council green plaque (the first for some years) by two survivors, both boys at the time. As an 'outsider', I felt rather privileged to be present and 'joining in'.

After a walk by some to the graves in Streatham Cemetery, a 'congregation' of perhaps two hundred people, seated and standing, assembled alongside Sutton Courtney House, part of a post-war housing development that replaced the scene of the destruction in 1944 (see picture). The current Mayor of Wandsworth (Councillor Nicola Nardelli) gave an introductory address. Sadiq Khan, the local MP, read an almost lyrical letter from a young corporal, looking forward to his return home on leave in November 1944 – a letter received shortly before he was killed by the blast. A boy from Smallwood Primary read a very good poem, composed for the event, imagining the bomb's impact. Wreaths were laid. The Reverend Roger Ryan led the assembled flock in the Lord's Prayer – "the traditional words, please" – and delivered a brilliant, short homily: "Why are we here? Two words: people matter." A piper played a lament. We were led back to St Mary's Church for tea.

This was no ordinary 'civic event', it seemed to me, nor was it too solemn or gloomy. There

was a large and diverse crowd of survivors and their descendants, ranging in age from a spry centenarian to young children, some present still living locally, some coming from much further afield – returning to or re-uniting, as a community that has changed enormously since 1944. The effort entailed in bringing them together seemed to have been very worthwhile – Geoff Simmons, who has researched local involvement in both world wars and leads the 'Summerstown 182' project, played a major part.

For a long time it had seemed for many survivors best to forget the war and the tragedies it caused. Maureen, a survivor, just four at the time, had been the last person to be rescued. She told me that she had no actual memory of the event; her parents had also survived, but her sister (13) and brother (10) were killed – "there was a photo, but my parents never spoke of them or about what had happened". She had come up from the south coast for the event, with a sister, born after the war, and laid a wreath on behalf of the survivors' families.

People of all ages, and a much more diverse community of people than seventy years ago – no longer just 'working class', as local people were described in 1944 – was brought together to share, to remember, to reflect on what happened and wonder about the world, how things change and how "people matter". I was impressed and moved by the event. Everyone seemed to have been. Were there "lessons"? "Lessons for both the Council and the Wandsworth Society", the vicar told me.

David Kirk

World Heart Beat Music Academy – transforming lives on our doorstep

We had been considering the possibility of inviting members of the Academy to perform for the Society. This article by Society member Tony Martin encourages us to do so – and to attend their annual youth big-band concert – 51st State Band – at Putney Arts Theatre in November.

Steve Rubie is the owner of the 606 Club in Lots Road, Chelsea, where the world's best jazz musicians perform. He is also renowned for fostering the talents of young musicians. In July his club hosted a packed charity evening where students of World Heart Beat Music Academy performed an exquisite first set, followed by long-time Wandsworth resident, doyen of jazz piano and the Academy's chief patron, Julian Joseph with his trio.

Afterwards Steve Rubie wrote: "Learning to make music isn't just about learning notes. It's about commitment, sensitivity, understanding, mutual support and a love for what you are doing. The team at World Heart Beat ... epitomises the dedication and passion that is necessary to convey those qualities to all the young musicians who pass through their doors."

When next in Kimber Road, look for the unlikely juxtaposition of Charles Wilson's plant hire premises and the first floor, pink and pale blue themed home of the Academy. Its staircase is adorned with photographs of music and exotic objets d'art. Its spacious performance area, enveloped by a warm red ceiling and carpet, plays host to an array of drums, guitars, a fine grand piano and many more instruments, and some splendidly ageing leather armchairs.

Here some 300 young people – from five to nineteen and beyond – come after school and at weekends to learn to play musical instruments and sing. Around 50% of tuition is in classical music; other genres for its 15 teaching programmes



include jazz, Celtic and gypsy music, Asian tabla drums, reggae and vocal improvisation. As well as the 606 Club, World Heart Beat students have performed at Speaker's House (Westminster), Kensington Palace, the All England Lawn Tennis Club and Joe Macari's sparkling showroom. Their annual youth big-band concert – 51st State Band – will perform at Putney Arts Theatre in November.

A registered charity whose doors first opened in 2012, World Heart Beat is a social enterprise with an 'open-to-all' policy, providing free or supported places for many of the children, 70% of whom are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds (many with troubled family backgrounds). The

Academy was founded and is directed by the inspirational Sahana Gero, who has taught music in Wandsworth for many years and has played in concerts and taught all over the world. Chair of trustees is Veronica Bradbury, now retired from the headship of Allfarthing School, where she left a superb legacy to many – including Julian Joseph!

Sahana has deep faith in World Heart Beat's ability through music to help transform lives. She says: "Our ethos is grounded in social change. We inspire and motivate young people to reach beyond the limitations circumstances have placed on them. We teach skills enabling students to lift their own aspirations and maximise their potential as musicians and citizens of the world."

However, the Academy is bursting at the seams. Its premises are now too small for comfort. To cater

Varia or miscellany

Our summer social

On 23 July some two dozen Society members enjoyed an excellent fish and chip supper (including a vegetarian option – we are the Wandsworth Society!), excellent conversation (of course) and the pleasant accompaniment of saxophonist Graeme Airth. And we were, as you would expect, warmly welcomed and well served by Amelia and Luke Brady, proprietors of the Brady's Fish Restaurant and Bar – and also Society members.

Ahead of their times?

Did Wandsworth Conservatives want Home Rule for Scotland in 1923?

In that year the Conservative MP for Central Wandsworth, Sir John Norton-Griffiths* asked the Prime Minister, perhaps not entirely seriously, "in view of the fact that for the last 40 years the English electors have uniformly returned a majority of Conservatives to this House, if he will consider the introduction of legislation for the establishment of a free state for Scotland?" Unsurprisingly, Mr Bonar Law responded "The answer is in the negative". Plus ça change...? (But what exactly was meant by a 'free state'?)

*'Empire Jack', the maternal grandfather of the late Jeremy Thorpe, Liberal Party leader 1967-76

On our website

www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk:

You can read about, among other things:

- Society views and news on air pollution in Wandsworth, what we might do about it, and our response to the Council's cycling strategy
- Henry Smith (1549-1628), a philanthropic property developer, born in Wandsworth: there is a new book about his life and legacy (and an associated lecture at All Saints Church, where there is a fine monument to him, on 17 September)
- What's on at art galleries in Wandsworth Town
- Latest news on issues that concern the Society, and on our events.

NADFAS

The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies aims to 'open up' the world of the arts through its 375 societies across the world (21 in Greater London) and national events. Margaret Barrie has written to us about its "monthly lectures, days of special interest, educational visits and cultural holidays... a great way to learn, have fun and make lasting new friendships, with members involved in conservation and volunteering projects in churches, museums and stately homes. We now hope to start a NADFAS society in the Clapham/ Wandsworth area. If you are interested in joining, or helping to set it up, call 020 3206 9331 or email membership@nadfasc.org.uk." You can read more at nadfasc.org.uk.

for demand, it needs to build a larger permanent new home in Wandsworth, more suitable for both teaching and performance. Its hope is that a developer now engaged in local regeneration will see how the housing of this unique entity could add a vital, rich dimension of youth and culture to otherwise largely commercial environments.

Steve Rubie says: "A visit to World Heart Beat is a joyous event, where students and teachers alike delight in the pleasure of music-making and you leave somehow feeling that you have participated in something life-affirming and unique. World Heart Beat is not just important to the musical life of London, it's essential." The Academy assesses that, through teaching, concerts and partnerships with local schools, it has reached out to well over 7,000 people in the last year. Wandsworth is benefiting hugely from the innovation and inspiration of a magical place of music and social transformation.

Tony Martin

You can explore the Academy further and see performance clips at www.worldheartbeat.org.



A short history ...

... of Wandsworth Society plaques

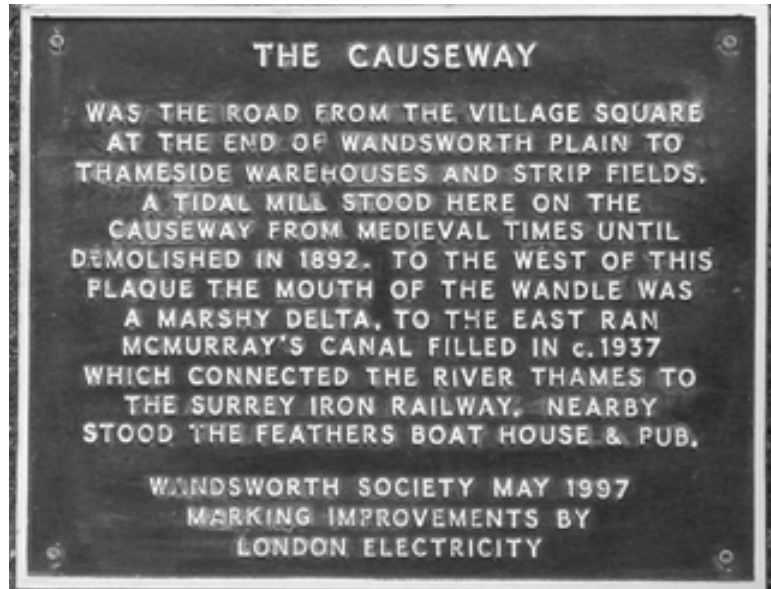
A slightly edited piece from the 2004 Bedside edition of the Newsletter, with annotations by the author who notes: "Plaques are seemingly back on the local agenda. The Council is reviving its Green Plaque scheme; there are stirrings in the Society to add to its own series, dormant for the better part of quite a while. A delve into the archives revealed what follows..."

Should you have an idle moment, an hour or two to spare, possibly an afternoon of leisure, what could be more enjoyable than a tour of the Society's plaques? What indeed ...?

The Society has put up plaques in and around the town since 1985 when the first was placed on a boundary wall of the Huguenot Burial Ground behind Book House ¹ on East Hill. It is placed at the northwestern corner of the cemetery, and is visible from the road, but is better seen from within the burial ground. It was put up to mark the three-hundredth anniversary of the Edict of Fontainebleau or, as it is perhaps better known, The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes 22 October 1685. As a consequence many Huguenots, finding France increasingly inhospitable, headed towards Wandsworth, helping to turn it into the cultured and civilised place it is today. In front of the plaque is a mulberry tree, planted to tempt any silk-weaving Huguenot descendants to remain in the area.

Our second plaque is fixed to the brick base of the remains of the windmill on Windmill Road. Although it is pleasing to have a windmill on Windmill Road it, the windmill, looks a little forlorn without its sails. But although a little dowdy it had an interesting purpose, not milling but pumping water into an artificial lake ². It is said that William Wilson, the builder of the artificial lake, created an island in the lake on the birth of each of his children; and at his death there were thirteen islands. Artificial lakes are not as commonplace as once they were, or thirteen siblings.

The next plaque to be put up commemorates a distinctive first for Wandsworth, that of being a terminus of the first public railway in the world



– eat your heart out Stockton or Darlington. It is to be found on the brewery wall on Ram Street ³. Set in the wall below the plaque are some stone sleepers from the railway. Not far along the wall is a panel of glazed bricks, which are all that remains of a pub, whose name eludes me.

Back up to East Hill to see our fourth plaque, put up to identify the gates that once formed the entrance to the Fishmongers' Almshouses, good to know that fishmongers falling on hard times were cared for, and pleasing that they chose Wandsworth to site their almshouses. The Fishmongers' Company is one of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of the City of London and most, if not all, had a charitable basis. The plaque the Society put up is on the righthand pier. Another has appeared on the lefthand side. Although it makes a valuable contribution to the symmetry of the piece, and is almost certainly worthy, it seems to be one plaque too many on a relatively small structure.

And at last to the last, down at the delta. Well, once it was a delta, it still is the place where the Wandle enters the Thames. So discretely fixed to a wall that you will have to turn around to see it if you have strolled up from the waste transfer station, is our plaque. As you will see, it describes The Causeway and notes that it marks improvements by London Electricity. This sop was added as London Electricity were to pay for the plaque. We are not entirely sure that they ever did, and are now hard pressed to recall what those improvements were.

The Woods Cry Out

Words and music commemorating World War One

The Society is supporting – and participating in this charitable event organised by Putney Music for Remembrance Day and the day after (November 11 & 12 at 7.30pm) in the Civic Suite, Wandsworth Town Hall.

Actors performing include Society members Wendy Gifford and Timothy West, and also Simon Callow and Clive Merrison.

The programme will commemorate Wandsworth's role in the Great War. The title is taken, however, from 'At nightfall the autumn woods cry out', the first line of an Austrian poem of the period. There will also be readings from German poets who, like their English counterparts, such as Edmund Blunden, stress the need for compassion and comradeship. Works by Wandsworth poet Edward Thomas and by the men and nurses of Wandsworth's Royal Victoria Patriotic Hospital are also featured – and there will be material from The Wipers Times too!

Devised by Sue Rolfe and Andrew Neill, the programme includes music by classical composers, such as Elgar's settings of Rudyard Kipling's poems from *The Fringes of the Fleet*, and popular songs of the time (plus Eric Clapton!).



The event, also supported by other local societies, is in aid of SSAFA – the charity that offers lifelong support to members of the armed forces, veterans and their families.

Tickets cost £12, or £7.50 for 18 and under (suitable for 11+) – available from Tara-arts.com or on 020 8333 4457. Doors open at 7.00pm; refreshments available (licensed bar). Early booking recommended.

David Kirk

Hopefully, the plaques provide a pleasing interlude, fragments of information, a pause for thought. That is what they are intended to do. The next might be on the Scope, that piece of the common on which once stood The Craig Telescope⁴ or in front of the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building⁵. We wait on inspiration as to where to place a Scope plaque, and with patience for the arrival of a brick pier to be built in front of the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building⁶.

If you have any ideas of a place or an event that would benefit from a Society plaque, contact the Clerk to the Plaque Commission, who is presently (2004!) ... and possibly is still...

Peter Farrow
wandsworthsociety@mac.com

1 Alas – no longer Book House, but now The Book House, soon to be 16 'stunning apartments'. Once the Wandsworth District Board of Works and

then the home of The National Book League.

2 That may be wrong, the purpose of the windmill possibly being to pump water out of the cutting on which it stands that had inadvertently flowed from the lake. The subject of an article in the 2003 *Bedside*, and possibly one in the future.

3 Again, alas – it is no longer fixed to the wall, having been removed for safekeeping by the builders constructing the Ram Quarter, more stunning apartments, a lot more – alas no longer the brewery wall since Young's upped sticks to Bedford. And the stone sleepers now sleep elsewhere (where exactly?).

4 The subject of an article in the 2003 *Bedside*, and possibly one in the future.

5 The RVPB, once an orphanage, then a school, now apartments – although, to be fair, with the ground floor in commercial use, together with the splendid ALRA (Academy of Live and Recorded Arts).

6 The pier is now built, but is possibly a little narrow for a plaque; another inspection is required.

The Society walks and talks

are not to be missed !

Thursday 10 September

A walk in the Brent River Park

A seven-mile walk along the River Brent to the Grand Union Canal and on to Brentford. The walk starts at Hanger Lane tube (Central Line). Meet outside M&S Simply Food in Clapham Junction station at 9.30 am.

Thursday 17 September

Local planning forum

West Side Church, 7.45 for 8

Join a debate about the planning process, the Council's local plans and conservation areas, with Councillors, officers and members of the Society's planning group.

Saturday 19 September

A walk along the Wandle Valley

Join the 9.30 train at Clapham Junction (Platform 15), arriving 9.56 at Waddon (check with Southern; if cancelled, wait for next). Then walk from Waddon Ponds to Merton Abbey Mills via Beddington Farmlands, including the newly opened riverbank nature reserve at Watermeads by Poulter Park. About 1 pm: lunch at a Merton Abbey Mills restaurant; possible visit to Priory museum. At 2pm: walk to Earlsfield (about an hour). Walking will be on both paved and dirt paths (proper walking shoes recommended). Walk led by Bruce St Julien-Bown. Book your place with him at: bsjb@onetel.com. Maximum numbers: 20.

Thursday 8 October

Buying, Growing, Eating Local

West Side Church, 7.45 for 8

Why local food is important, how 'buying local' is better and where to get tasty, healthy local food. Hear about the possibilities from EcoLocal who deliver their services through both a charity and the EcoLocal Services Ltd social enterprise (see www.ecolocal.org.uk).

Monday 12 October

A walk along the New River

Starting from New River Head, Islington, we'll see how far we get, walking north. New River (neither new nor a river) is an aqueduct built in 1613 to bring drinking water to London from Hertfordshire. Meet outside M&S Simply Food, Clapham Junction at 9.30am.

Our walks, except for the Wandle walk on 19 September (see details above), are led by Caroline Pook (no booking needed), but if further information is required, contact caroline@pookfamily.co.uk

Later dates for your diary ...

Tuesday 3 November

A walk from Falconwood to Woolwich

part of the Capital Ring).

Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November

The Woods Cry Out

Town Hall Civic Suite, 7.30

A reflection in words and music on World War One – see page 8

Thursday 19 November,

'Municipal Dreams' an illustrated talk by John Boughton

West Side Church, 7.45 for 8

Thursday 3 December

A walk and visit to Osterley Park

likely to have Christmas displays

Saturday 5 December

Christmas Party

with Porchlight Smoker (who play a range of instruments, including banjo, guitar, lapsteel, stand-up bass and mandolin, even clarinet, to accompany their trademark four-part vocal harmonies) at St Anne's Church Hall.

Not a member?

Join us at

www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk

or at our next event.

Our meetings are usually held at West Side Church

Allfarthing Lane, SW18 2QQ (corner with Melody Road).

Let us know what you think ...

... about any matters or issues that may be of interest to the Society and its members – our events and activities, the work of our policy groups, this Newsletter, the website. Perhaps you would like to contribute to the Newsletter? – an article or a letter. The Society's management (all our members?!) wants to hear from you. You can call us – see page 3 for details – or send an e-mail (see contact details on www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk).

And we have some jobs available – well paid, by the appreciation of other Society members. We shall always be happy to discuss opportunities and how use can be made of your talents and skills.