



Wandsworth Society

Newsletter June 2010

Twenty is plenty : what do you think?



*based on the paper Civilising Our Streets
by Susie Morrow
Wandsworth Friends of the Earth
April 2010*

The Wandsworth Environmental Forum is putting together a proposal for a 20 mph speed limit on non-arterial roads throughout the borough. So far the council has accepted a 20 mph limit in a piecemeal fashion in Wandsworth, causing more signage on the roads and an unclear vision as to what speed cars can travel where. Before the benefits of the speed limit (see below) are presented to the council the Wandsworth Society is interested in asking its members for their views.

The proposal is backed by research into health, social, and environmental concerns which show a reduction in deaths and injuries, an easing of congestion and an increase in walking and cycling. All transport forms would become more pleasant, less dangerous and easier to manage. Did you know that child obesity figures put Wandsworth as the 8th worst in England? If the journey to school were more enjoyable by foot or by bicycle,

both children and parents could benefit from a better quality of life whilst residential areas would be quieter and safer.

So – what do you think?

Simply
e-mail Yes or No to
pf@wandsworthsociety.org.uk
with **twenty is plenty** as the subject

We'll take your views to the council and keep you informed of the progress.

Linda Ulrich
Roads and Transport Sub-Committee
ulrich.linda@gmail.com

Wandsworth Historical Society Wandsworth Historian

2010

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the first issue of the Wandsworth Borough News, and to celebrate the event the latest issue of the Wandsworth Historian opens with a major article assessing the influence of that newspaper on the life of the community it served. Inserted in every copy is a free reprint of the WBN for 31 January 1885, which cannot fail to fascinate anyone with an interest in the history of the Wandsworth area in Victorian times.

Other features in the magazine include an evocative account of growing up in working-class Battersea in the 1920s, a description of the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls when it was situated on the fringes of Wandsworth Common, and a

scholarly discussion on the location of the ancient boundaries of Battersea west of the Wandle.

All this and much more of great appeal to all local-history enthusiasts can be found in the Spring 2010 issue of the Wandsworth Historian (ISSN 1751-9225), the Journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society. Copies are available price £3.00 plus £1.00 for postage and packing from Neil Robson, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or by emailing nrobson@tiscali.co.uk.

The website address of the Wandsworth Historical Society is www.wandsworthhistory.co.uk.

Wandsworth Society

June 2010

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Taking the chair

As the new Chairman it is my pleasure to introduce myself. I joined the Society in the early 90s on my return to Wandsworth after 22 years by the sea, looking to meet people with aims in common and regain a sense of identity with the area. A few years later I found myself serving on the Events Sub-committee and subsequently on the Executive where I am in my third term.

Now that the Ram Public Inquiry is over, my aim and that of the Executive will be to increase membership. Our number has been dropping for some time due both to ageing and people moving house. If we are to carry weight in our campaigns and protests we must represent as high a percentage of the population as possible.

Therefore I am asking each and every one of us to introduce one new member

Please - pass on this newsletter on and encourage others to join the Society, by contacting Gill Gray, details on page three.

Numbers are not enough, however. We need also encourage active membership, to take part in our activities viz

The most important of the Committees is of course the -

Planning Sub-Committee
where we benefit from the expertise of a number of professionals. New blood is necessary will always be welcomed from members with some knowledge and interest, as keeping up with publications from Council and Government, monitoring planning applications and reading plans is a heavy load quite apart

from the following up, investigation, meetings and correspondence. Contact Philip Whyte.

Roads and Transport
is another busy sub-committee under Linda Ulrich. This group is small and actively looking for new members with an interest in any aspect from buses to street furniture, from talking to TfL to cycling and trains.

Open Spaces
under Bruce covers the Common, parks and rivers, the Wandle and the Thames. Join Bruce's River Walk this summer, and perhaps his committee too.

The Events Group
entails attending 4 or 5 afternoon brainstorming sessions. Fresh perspective is essential with at least ten events per year to plan. Publicity falls here too and we would greatly appreciate some help on this, contact me, Valerie Taylor

There are many other ways to contribute: distributing Newsletters in your locality, hosting a coffee morning to welcome new members, leading walks or visits, getting involved in a campaign such as 20mph in side streets; not all entail long-term commitment. Or simply give us your views and suggestions on any topic whatsoever. Telephone numbers are on the inside cover - just make a call and pass on this Newsletter!

Valerie Taylor

The Festival Chorus

The Festival Chorus, a community choir based between Wandsworth and Clapham Commons, was thrilled to win a BBC Performing Arts Fund grant to enable it to put on one of the most ambitious choral works, J S Bach's St Matthew Passion.

Their St Matthew Passion was performed on 27 March as part of the St Luke's Music Society concert series and was a sell out. Frelith Hordon, Chair, said "The St Matthew Passion is one of the biggest and most challenging concerts ever staged by the Festival Chorus. It is such a magnificent work requiring a big orchestra, many soloists and a huge choir so it is a real financial and organisational challenge particularly for an amateur choir like ours. The BBC grant helped make it possible, along with much hard work and long term planning and saving by the choir over several years. This was one of our best concerts ever."

Rehearsals for the concert started back in November and were preceded by adverts encouraging new members to join the choir to sing this great work.

Over 140 singers signed up to sing the Passion and some choir members took small solo parts as well.

The Festival Chorus puts on three concerts a year in St Luke's Church as well as holding other social events. The choir is open to all comers irrespective of ability or experience – there are no auditions, you just turn up to a rehearsal at the beginning of term. Rehearsals are held weekly on a Monday 8-9.30pm, term time only at Broomwood Methodist Church Hall, Kyrle Road. They will be singing Brahms' Liebeslieder (love songs) next in June. If you are interested in joining them for their next concert (rehearsals start Monday 12 April) or want more information check out their website at www.festivalchorus.co.uk or email fhordon@aol.com

THE SECRET GARDEN AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN IS A SECRET PLACE IN THE MIND OF EVERY PERSON
WHERE A FRESHNESS UNFOLDS INTO BLOSSOM OF VIGOUR AND YOUTH
A PATHWAY OPENS ONTO A MAZE OF SCENTED FRAGRANCE AND COLOUR
AN OAK TREE SPREADS ITS BRANCHES UPON A VELVET GREEN LAWN
A SUNDIAL REFLECTS AN IMAGE OF AN AGE FORGOTTEN TIME MACHINE
THE SUMMERHOUSE BLENDS A SCULPTURE OF MARBLE GRANDEUR AND BEAUTY

TWO STATUESQUE BRONZE CRANES CONSIDER A POSSIBLE LAKESIDE NESTING SITE
THE MAGNOLIA TREES BLOSSOM BY THE LAKE OF GENTLE CASCADING WATERS
THE FLAMINGOS STAND AND STARE BENEATH THE WATER'S GLARE
THE CAMELLIAS LIKE A SUNNY SPOT AND BOW THEIR HEADS BEFORE THEY DROP
THE RHODODENDRONS DECLINE TO SEE THE WATER'S EDGE AND TRANQUILLITY
THE PAVILION ONCE A NOBLE PLACE NOW CONDEMNED BUT NOT DISGRACED
A TREE IS BUT A FALLEN LEAF THAT LAYS BENEATH A VICTORIAN SEAT

THE TERRACE NASH IN ALL SUPREME GOD BLESS OUR GRACIOUS QUEEN

A POEM A SCROLL (A ROYAL SCROLL)
BY MR HENRY JAMES BEARD - TOOTING

This and that

There may have been a hiatus at a national level, but there is no interregnum in the Society, even though there was a bit of shuffling of the committee at our AGM. We are extremely pleased to welcome Valerie as our new Chairman, thanks to John for his enthusiasm and hard work over the last six years. He has stood down as Chairman, but volunteered to be Secretary, it is more than possible his voice will remain heard in the passageways of power.

And post the AGM Peter has decided he has had enough of being Treasurer, all correspondence c/o PO Box 100, Cayman Islands.

We were very sorry that Diana is unable to continue on the committee, she was a very welcome new member. We wish her all the best with her book. With luck exclusive extracts will appear in the newsletter !

Situation vacant

The current treasurer wishes to relinquish the post, he has been treasuring the Society for some twenty years, and feels it is time someone else had a go. The position is not onerous, our financial affairs are fairly simple. Ideally you will have been a member of the Society for a decent while and be an accountant or failing that be able to add, and subtract.

If you think this is something you would like to do please contact either Valerie or John, details on page three.

The interweb

The Society would like to gather its members email addresses. We would like to be able to send you information, reminders of meetings and events, our flyers and newsletters by email.

So please send an email to pf@wandsworthsociety.org.uk to let us know you are willing to receive information by email. Please include your name so that we can check with our membership list. When we issue information by email we will only do so blind copying, so your email address will not be revealed to others.

Thank you



Diaghilew and Friends

A very interesting and entertaining evening at West Hill Church last Thursday, a talk by Joy Melville, Diaghilew and Friends, and herewith a picture of his memorial, with a pair of ballet shoes, together with other tributes, offerings or possibly a supplication.

Wandsworth in Bloom

If you have a front garden to be proud of or an abundance of colour growing in your hanging baskets then enter the Wandsworth in Bloom competition. A chance to improve your local environment to benefit the whole community and get recognition and reward if you enter and win.

Entry forms, which have further information and rules on the competition, are available from any Wandsworth library or town hall reception point and various other outlets. Or, download the entry form from the Council's web site, enter Wandsworth in Bloom in Google or on the Council's website and be whisked to the page.

The closing date for entries is 18 June.

The categories are:

- Best Front garden
- Best Window boxes, hanging baskets or tubs
- Best Community Area
- Best Flower Picture (for children)
- Best garden in a seed tray (for children)

Planning matters

Ram Brewery

We have just heard that the decision on the Inquiry is postponed following the dissolution of Parliament for the general election. We have been advised that the Minister's decision should be available before the end of June. Wait and see!!

Skydeck

We have written to the Planning Inspectorate following the enforcement decision to complain that we did not believe that all necessary considerations had been taken into account by the Inspector. We have also written to the Wandsworth planners, to ask why the enforcement action did not require the roof of the tall building to be lowered to the originally approved height. We await replies.

Thames Tideway Tunnel

We are monitoring the progress of consultations in respect of the possible new tunnel which will go from upstream of Wandsworth to the major works at Beckton in East London. The work will require a number of bases close to the river, some of which will be of considerable size. Thames Water have not yet identified any sites publicly but it seems almost certain that one or more of these will be in the Borough.

National Grid Tunnel

The proposed new National Grid tunnel (for new cabling) which will run from Wimbledon to Willesden is likely to start in the autumn after the main contract is awarded in the summer. One of the main access points and shafts will be on the Aussie Man and Van site on Armoury Way beside Hunts Trucks, both of whom will have to vacate their land. It is likely that this contract will run for five years or so, with all spoil being transported by road from the site. UGH!

Other matters

The planning group has considered many other applications to the Council during the last three months and we have made comment where we felt appropriate. If members would like to discuss details of any other applications please contact Philip Whyte, who leads this group.

and, a planning postscript

Have you got a keen eye? We need your help!! ... to uncover possible buildings for Local Listing, if you have a favourite building, or any ideas of buildings that you consider of merit, please contact - Philip Whyte - 020 8874 4745 or email philip@thewhytehouse.demon.co.uk

Wandsworth Mind

gardening project

Based in the Pat Benian Centre on Allfarthing Lane, Wandsworth Mind is running a gardening project led by a Capel Manor-trained gardener. For more information about the project, which aims to provide low-cost gardening help to elderly residents with mental health problems, contact Julie at 020 8875 9156.

Wandsworth Mind is also keen to involve local people in supporting its work in our community

in other ways, and has a range of opportunities for anyone with an interest improving the quality of life of people suffering from mental distress. More information on becoming a trustee, or helping this charity in other practical ways, can be found at:

<http://www.wandsworthmind.org.uk/how-you-can-help.asp>

The Biograph on Garratt Lane

a brief description of the Green Plaque ceremony on the evening of 27 May 2007

Last night's opening of the Festival, and the launch of the second Green Plaque at the former cinema building owned by Young's at the top of Garratt Lane went very well. After the formal part of the launch, we went inside the Young's building, which has been converted into a training facility for chefs and cooks by the company. They have ambitious ideas beyond just training young people to work in Young's pubs and restaurants. We then went into the new Library at the former Court House building. There is an excellent history display about Wandsworth Town in the entrance. Whatever we think about the closure of the original Museum, the library is exactly what it should be – a temple for books. Apart from refreshments we

were treated to an impromptu talk about the early days of cinema, the reasons for legislation being passed which led to the building of purpose built cinemas (by the Government of which Battersea's John Burns was a member), and the vision of builders of such cinemas as Tooting Granada.

Sean Creighton

Note to self, to what was the first Green Plaque affixed? - Ed : Memo from young Stephen in Archives - It was the Putney home of Britain's post-war Prime Minister Clement Attlee : Thank you Stephen - Ed

Coffee in the morning



Many thanks to Aviva and Charles Walton, who kindly hosted a coffee morning to welcome new members on a Saturday morning a week or so ago, on what we hope we will remember as the beginning of summer, rather than - summer, it has turned chilly of late. A very congenial morning and so pleasing to see some new faces!

The coffee was excellent, and that cake ... hmm

Welcome to our new members

Jocelyn Berger	Sandgate Lane SW18	Ifor Smout	Fitzhugh Grove SW18
Nigel Muris	Wandsworth Common West Side	Mary Hoseason	Balham High Road SW17
Andrew Leitch	All Saints Passage SW18	Mr Lawford	Wandle Road SW17
Vicky Kostura	Leckford Road SW18	Mr and Mrs Martin	Worfield Street SW11
Adrienne Mead	Cathles Road SW12	Mr Waddingham	Magdalen Road SW18
John Boud	Burntwood Grange Road SW18	Mrs Cox	Santos Road SW18
Miss Whiteley	Trinity Road SW18	François Jossierand	Spencer Park SW18
Deon Styne	WisetonRoad SW17	Alison Blair	Loxley Road SW18
Robert Cox	Surrey Lane SW11	Robert Molteno	Barnard Road SW11
William Gallagher	Wimbledon Park Road SW18		

Send them to the country

We may be only 9 years into the first century of the third millennium, but simple subtraction of 1939 from 2009 serves to remind all that 70 years have passed since the start of the Second World War.

In March 2009, Mr. S. Neale, the present Headmaster of Beatrix Potter Junior School, Magdalene Road in the Borough of Wandsworth made contact with me, proposing a re-enactment of the evacuation which had taken place on 1st September 1939. As a Parish Councillor and Chairman of our village History Society, I agreed to involve our community in this project and to co-ordinate activities at the Shamley Green end.

In September 1939 the then Headmaster of the all-ages Magdalene Road School, Mr. Crosskey, had been evacuated with his staff and pupils from Earlsfield Station to Farncombe Station. From there they were to be taken by coach, and relocated amongst the good folk of neighbouring villages. Mr. Crosskey, several of his staff and some thirty of his pupils were delivered by coach to Shamley Green, where the local vicar and W.V.S. ladies allocated the evacuees to available billets. From that moment until they left Shamley Green in July 1943, his school functioned in rural surroundings, quite unlike their London home environment. He kept a detailed log of all that went on, which has proved to be an invaluable source of information.

In April 2009 representatives from Wandsworth Museum accompanied Mr. Neale, the present Headmaster, on a preliminary site visit to Shamley Green, and we discussed what they would aim to achieve with the re-enactment of the war-time evacuation here. They had already secured the necessary financial backup to cover the bulk of the costs and in particular the hiring of a steam train to add to the authenticity of the experience for the pupils. Initially we had to plan for a day in September, but it was not easy to specify exactly which date, because of the difficulties of fitting a steam train into a busy S.E. England commuter line's timetable on a weekday. Because of the village hall's availability, our preference was for a Tuesday. By luck, the appropriately-named Battle of Britain class Tangmere steam engine was available and lines between Wandsworth Junction Station and Shalford Station were clear on the morning of Tuesday 29th September to give the pupils and the staff accompanying them the experience of

travelling on a steam-hauled train. The day dawned bright and clear and was one of the best days possible for such a venture.

In preparation for their visit the pupils made gas mask boxes to hold their packed lunches, labels with their name and address on, etc. like Paddington Bear. Contact was made with Cobham Veteran Vehicle Museum and a Wandsworth Coach Company to transport the Beatrix Potter School children from Shalford to Shamley Green in a convoy of nine vehicles, led by two original red London Routemaster buses.

Accompanying the children were school staff, museum staff and friends, and most significantly five of the original evacuees who had been billeted in Shamley Green some 70 years ago.

On our village green, I had been able to encourage the assembly of a number of wartime vehicles and a group of people belonging to the organisation 'On Parade', who dress in authentic period uniforms and are able to explain details of the role for which they dressed as A.R.P., Warden, Spiv, Landgirls, W.V.S. lady, NAAFI girl etc.. Many of our residents were also in wartime dress and veterans wore their medals.

Wandsworth Museum staff set up a touch item collection of museum artefacts in a large marquee. Another large authentic wartime tent housed a realistic wartime experience with sirens, air-raid blitz sound effects, smoke, Vera Lynn songs and Winston Churchill BBC radio broadcasts. Someone commented that our Green looked like a set for an episode of 'Foyle's War'.

While visiting pupils sat on the Green eating their packed lunches, the staff and visiting adults and residents had the opportunity to enjoy a feast provided by the present-day 'Ladies of the Village' all dressed as land girls. Stalls were set up to dispense free drinks of squash, tea or coffee and an ice lolly to all who produced their ration books.

I had involved our local middle school to welcome the steam train at Shalford, and classes from three local schools were on our village green to participate in the activities available, including experiencing an air raid in the atmospheric tent, climb over military vehicles, go on guided walks to

A local builder

One of our local landmarks, the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, was built by George Myers, as devoted readers of the newsletter will know (The Bedside Edition of 2005, thanks again to the Wandsworth Historical Society for delving into their archives). Those of you with a thirst for knowledge may be interested in -

George Myers : Pugin's Builder

by Patricia Spencer-Silver

George Myers (1803-1875) was one of the mid-nineteenth century's great masterbuilders. From his workshops, first in his native Hull and later in London, he directed a nationwide contracting business executing many large and important contracts. These included the original army camp at Aldershot, military hospitals, asylums, workhouses, banks and commercial premises, country houses and restorations - among the last was the Norman Chapel of St John in the Tower of London.

But it was as the favourite builder of the prolific Gothic-revival church architect, designer and polemicist, A.W.N.Pugin, that Myers became well known, to the extent of earning himself the soubriquet 'Pugin's builder'. Described by Pugin as 'a rough diamond, but a real diamond', Myers

executed most of Pugin's English commissions, among them no fewer than four Catholic cathedrals - Birmingham, Southwark, Newcastle and Nottingham - all built within the space of a single decade.

published by Gracewing Publishing.

The architect, you may care to be reminded, for the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building was - Major Rohde (or Rhode) Hawkins (1821-84) was never an officer as 'Major' was a name. His often-misspelled second name was his mother's maiden name. He was a pupil of Thomas Cubitt and worked in the office of E Blore, before travelling in the Middle East, studying antiquities - his father was Keeper of Antiquities at the British Museum. On return he started in practice, designing schools and churches, which were mostly small and utilitarian, though gothic in style. For 30 years from 1854 his main position was as architect to the Education Department of the Privy Council, though he continued in private practice.

from the website of Sussex Parish Churches, a font of knowledge

Send them to the country - continues

see where the evacuees were billeted such as Reel Hall, the church, the war memorial and our school.

Back on the Green the pupils enjoyed wheelbarrow and egg-and-spoon races before taking part in a sing-song of wartime favourites such as 'Run Rabbit Run' before boarding coaches for their return journey back to Wandsworth on the A3.

This event was a good example of inter-borough co-operation between Wandsworth and Waverley Councils to create a never-to-be-forgotten experience. We received many thank-you letters from the pupils giving their impressions of what their day in the country as an evacuee meant to them. Both the Beatrix Potter School and the Village members made a video/dvd of the event. Local TV (BBC South East) and YouTube reported

on this, and on the 'Surrey Advertiser' website there is a video which is still accessible on www.getsurrey.co.uk

Those of us who retired some time ago no longer know how we found time to work. There are always vacancies for volunteers willing to take on community projects such as this. It can be very rewarding knowing that past experience such as this wartime re-enactment can create such an interest in the young and older alike, and the day had clearly been thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended this historic event, both as guests and helpers.

Michael Harding – 5th March 2010

A tribute to Jinnie Moore

23 August 1944 – 13 March 2010

Foreword

The Rev'd Cathy Wiles has suggested that, in keeping with Jinnie's character, passages of her Memorial Service might be improvised. Prompted by this comment, digressing momentarily, can I just say that Jinnie would have approved of the way in which our organist, Martin Everett, put us through our paces with the introductory hymn, 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise...'

I well remember my wife, Bridget, and I bowling through the French countryside with Jinnie, in her little Peugeot, singing along to a tape of English hymns. Jinnie liked her hymns, like life, played and sung with gusto!

Each of us – friends and family – will have our own memories of Jinnie.

Mine date from 1976, when Jinnie and Alannah moved to Wandsworth, and when Jinnie and Roger Lascelles opened The Lucky Parrot, purveyors of Antiques and Things. As well as his clocks, Roger dealt in tasteful antiques, always a specialist market; while Jinnie's 'Things', objets d'art, trinkets and gifts almost created the market for such shops.

Roger tells the story of the build-up to the opening of the shop, of its 'dressing' being carried out behind masked windows that Jinnie had deliberately pierced to encourage the curiosity of passers-by, and of Jinnie's flair for eye-catching presentation, including two hallmark features of The Lucky Parrot.

First, the inside-out, back-to-front notices written all over the inside of the windows facing over Wandsworth Common - Jinnie's idiosyncratic 'messageboard' plotting the calendar of Wandsworth life, and especially the lives of local children, with birthday messages and other exhortations as the exam season loomed.

Second, the maze-like sales cards and posters, defying the canons of good copywriting (pithy) and calligraphy (legible), Jinnie's inimitable, loopy handwriting emblazoned in gold or silver on a rich coloured ground. Of course, members of the Wandsworth Society will remember how for many years the Lucky Parrot's handwritten advertisements occupied the whole of the back cover of The Bedside Wandsworth.

Like almost everyone living within walking distance



of Wandsworth Common, my curiosity got the better of me. I remember the essentials of my first encounter with Jinnie, if not all the details. I remember it was a Saturday afternoon, that I had had a good lunch and that a drink or two had been taken, and that, without the usual agonies of indecision, I found myself signing a large cheque for an enormous patchwork quilt, a typical Northern Irish piece with bold red and white bands staggering asymmetrically (drunkenly even!), from side to side.

And I remember that, in the time it took Jinnie to fold and wrap my quilt - and to take my money off me! - we had established our shared Irish roots. Almost from that moment, Bridget and I and Jinnie became friends, over time increasingly close friends and, as we were to discover, part of an extraordinary network of friends.

Many of you will recognise our journey and will have your own stories about how you came into Jinnie's orbit. Our experience was that Jinnie took a genuine interest in us, in our children and in their friends, and indeed the rest of our family including Bridget's venerable mother - now aged ninety six! - who Jinnie would regularly 'scoop up', to use her phrase, for tea at Althorpe Road or for lunch at Mini Mundus - and, as one Bellevue Road retailer, Jinnie was always concerned to encourage other good, independent and local retailers.

Jinnie somehow stored information about everyone and was always ready with the bon mot not to mention the bonne bouche, to celebrate anniversaries - sweet or sad - or achievements, or simply to make contact. Jinnie fed off her friendships and enriched the lives of those she befriended.

Roger tells another story about the children of the man who for many years serviced Jinnie's cars. Typically, but none the less remarkably, Jinnie had remembered the dates of his children's birthdays and would always leave a little gift hidden somewhere in their front garden. The gifts would always be adorned with a single feather, and their unseen donor was simply known as Mrs Feather!

For feathers, read flowers. Jinnie's gifts, however small the token might be, were always beautifully presented.

Quite how Jinnie managed to remember all her friends and, gifts apart, to play such an active part in their lives will forever remain a mystery. She played an important rôle in the lives of literally hundreds of people.

For example, she changed the lives of many of those she employed in The Lucky Parrot, offering casual work for some - often the children of her friends - and occasionally providing life-saving and frequently career-changing opportunities for others.

She played an important part in the local community, too. She enjoyed her neighbours and was always sensitive to the vulnerabilities of age or infirmity. And, over the last twenty years, she developed another network of friends, close friends, in France after she bought her farmhouse at Le Barsac in the Auvergne.

Some of you will, I am sure, have pondered what drove Jinnie to form these friendships. In recent years she often mentioned that in 1974 she was told that as a result of a rare liver condition she had perhaps fifteen years to live. And perhaps in some way she was anxious not to miss the opportunity her friendships offered. Interestingly, and remarkably, I am not aware of her falling out with any of her friends.

Thank goodness that we were the beneficiaries of not fifteen but thirty-six years of Jinnie's friendship.

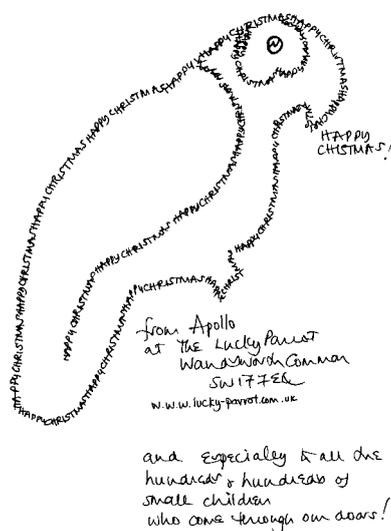
Friends apart, Jinnie's family were also a central part of her life: Alannah, of course, but her brothers and her sister, too, and their children, and that rambling network of Irish cousins. Jinnie always spoke with great pride and affection about her tribe.

One of the many delights that Bridget and I shared with Jinnie over the last thirty years or so was music, ideally Baroque music played in beautiful buildings. And of all the performers that Jinnie enjoyed, one stood head and shoulders above the rest. Here, after my faltering Tribute to a wonderful friend, is James Bowman singing Henry Purcell's An Evening Hymn.

Postscript

Almost everyone who shopped at The Lucky Parrot will have heard James Bowman's sublime counter-tenor voice. About ten years ago Bridget, Jinnie and I went to two recitals by Bowman at La Chaise Dieu in the Auvergne. An over-excited Jinnie - and those of you who knew her will know that Jinnie excelled at 'over-excitement' - tried to lure him back to Le Barsac with the promise of a simple omlette and salad. Alas, James was performing in Berlin the following day and had to leave at the end of the recital. Imagine her delight at the thought of being serenaded by the legendary James Bowman

Nick Boulting



Wandling free

The Wandle is alive in spite of a scarcity of funding for interesting projects. A recent conference convened by the Wandle Forum and attended by all interested parties (including a WBC consultant) demonstrated a wide and beneficial range of ideas relating to our river. This covers much of the river's course between the Thames and Croydon. There are renewable energy projects to power renovated historic buildings in Modern Hall Park, the possible removal of the half tide weir in Wandsworth at the river Delta and of course a huge project which combines the Wandle corridor with Mitcham Common to form the Wandle Valley Regional Park stretching right to the Wandle Delta. How this enhances the river environs in Wandsworth remains to be seen.

In the meantime the council has opened the riverside footpath from the footbridge on the Spit round the west side of the river mouth to link with the Riverside Quarter promenade. The path (closed overnight) gives good views of the new tiered bank which was part of the 106 agreement with the developer. Unfortunately one of the blocks still to be built will be positioned immediately alongside the path. (– the idea is to make the main riverside walk on the far side of this block a wildlife tranquillity zone undisturbed by hordes of nature lovers and joggers!)

A curved nine-floor building is not the ideal perimeter to a wildlife area but something is better than nothing! Still we should be vigilant that the path is opened as promised and no further encroachment made.

The half-tide weir which is currently broken, may be removed by the council, leaving the mud flats visible when the tidal Thames is at its lowest.

The effect on the Wandle and indeed a large swathe of Wandsworth's riverside may be threatened by works for the proposed Sewage Overflow Relief Tunnel planned by Thames Water. Already a compulsory purchase order is proposed for the Panorama Antennas site off Dormay Street near the Crane Pub. This is one of 3 'small sites'

needed in the Frogmore / Jews Road area. It nevertheless covers roughly the area of what we call Causeway Island.

The Tideway Tunnels could lay waste to many acres of Wandsworth for an estimated 5 to 6 years. We should all watch this project through its consultation phase as the CPOs cannot be appealed. It would be such a shame to lose one of the remaining manufacturing companies in the town centre and the jobs it provides!

The Society's Open Spaces observer will be watching but your help and vigilance could be important.

The Wandle Festival is already upon us (if not passed) 5/6th June so enjoy the river side this summer and the new views.

Bruce St Julian-Bown

PS Since this was written we have had word that Wandsworth have definite plans to remove the half-tide weir. The Environment Agency is keen to have it removed, and its removal will remove a barrier, and a potential hazard to any boats seeking to enter the Wandle.

The official Thames Path will lie behind (that is to the west) of the new building. Closing the Wandle path at night has the, stated, intention of providing a wildlife tranquillity zone during this period. The Society opposed these locked-off hours as we believe the real intention was to preserve the tranquillity of the residents. Much greater use of the path would be made during the day rather than at night, and we don't like the private ownership of public places. There is also the possibility that closing the path in the evening may be to facilitate corporate entertaining from the commercial building during the evening.

Daytime access is fortunately covered by legal agreement.

Post script

This is the Newsletter of The Wandsworth Society, a registered charity no 263737. The Society is concerned with the quality of life and the environment in Wandsworth town centre, Wandsworth Common and adjacent areas. If you are not already a member and would like to join please contact the Membership Secretary Gill Gray, details on page three.

Please address Letters to the Editor, any comments, or, even better, contributions to -

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