



———— The Bedside Edition 2019 ————
Wandsworth
Society



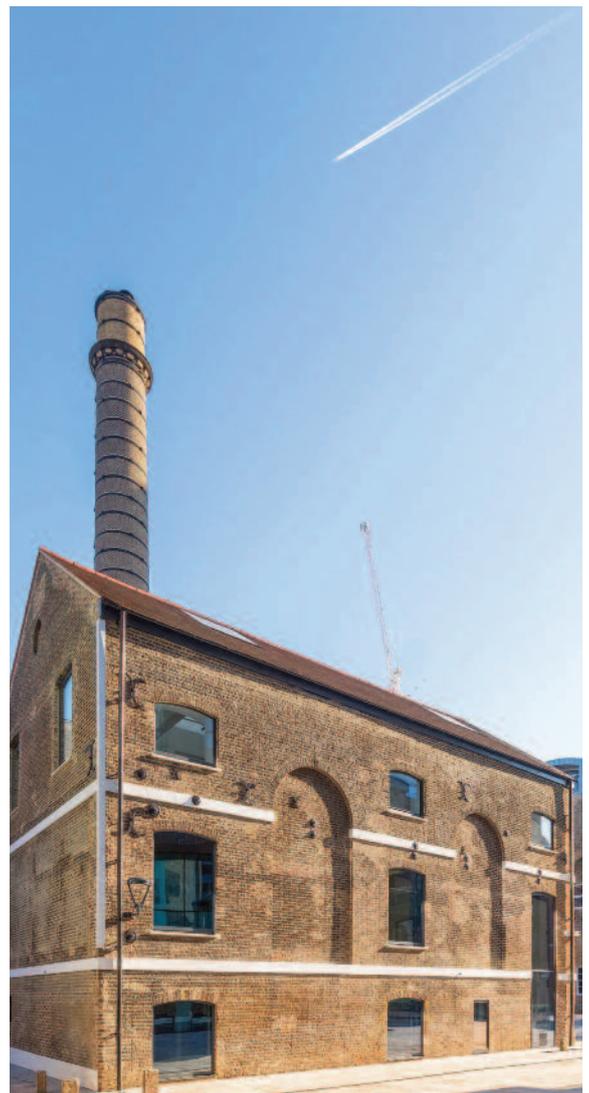
Duncan Sambrook founded Sambrook's Brewery in 2008 when there were just five breweries operating in London. With his vision of bringing brewing back into the heart of London, Duncan pulled ex-brewer David Welsh out of retirement and back into his dungarees and wellies. Together, they converted an old photography studio in Battersea into the brewhouse, and in November 2008 the very first cask of Wandle Ale rolled out the doors.

Things have changed a lot in the London beer scene since those early days, but we still produce a host of award-winning beers all from the very same site. Looking forward, it's with absolute joy that Sambrook's will be joining John Hatch at the Ram Brewery from April, brewing in the heart of Wandsworth. Thanks to the efforts of John, who has operated a nano-brewery there since the departure of Young's, the Ram brewery remains the longest continuous brewing site in the UK! The first brew was believed to be in 1533.

This move is very much a homecoming to us at Sambrook's, between Wandsworth's rich brewing heritage and our location just metres away from the Wandle - after which our flagship beer takes its name. We hope you are nearly as excited for the opening of our brewery, beer museum and taproom as we are! We brew to bring people together. This enormous jump will help us to do this more than ever. If you fancy a taste of award-winning, local brews or a thoughtful Christmas gift before we move, we'd love to see you at our brewery taproom and shop over in Battersea!



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The Society's website is

www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk

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Thursday 9 January 7.45 for 8pm

West Side Church, corner of Melody Road and Allfarthing Lane, SW18 2QQ
Guerilla Gardening

Presentation by Nina Kowalski of Southfield's Green the Grid initiative. It began in Spring 2018 with the aim of encouraging local residents to make their streets visually greener and more friendly to wildlife, and to improve air quality and help prevent flooding. In other words to help Southfields become London's first 'Front Garden Friendly Neighbourhood'...



Thursday 13 February

7.45 for 8pm at West Side Church

The Huguenots and Wandsworth

The talk will cover who the Huguenots were and why they came here, their persecution, emigration, immigration and assimilation. You will hear about the Huguenots who lived in Wandsworth, the skills they brought with them, and the way Wandsworth's heavily industrialised past is reflected in today's town.



Thursday 12 March

7 pm start at West Side Church

Annual General Meeting

Details of the AGM and subsequent talk / presentation to be announced.

Seasons Greetings from the Chair

Welcome to the 2019 edition of Bedside. Another year has passed speedily by and by now many of us are looking forward to some joyful Christmas celebration.

Of course, 2019 was a year dominated by Brexit, but it was also a year when green issues came into increasing prominence in the news agenda. Close to home, our own borough of Wandsworth in July set a target to be the cleanest and greenest inner London Borough and to be carbon neutral by 2030. London was launched as a national park city and initiatives, such as clean air day and community tree planting in national tree week, routinely receive more publicity each year.

During the year, the Society organized a talk on cleaner air for Wandsworth by Leonie Cooper, the London Assembly member for Merton and Wandsworth, as well as visits to the Waste and Recycling Centre. We also strongly supported our Council's stance on Heathrow expansion.

On a personal note, I took heart from a visit this year to my home city of Sheffield. I grew up in a leafy area called Nether Edge and for some time I had been dreading a return visit for fear that the tree massacre that had made national headlines had changed the character of my local area for ever. Instead I saw the avenues of trees intact with many specimens sporting yellow ribbons and bird boxes marking that they had been listed for felling and needed protection. Although overall almost a third of the target 17,000 trees had been lost in the city, in the end the campaign succeeded in halting the destruction. I met with some

of the campaigners and found their dedication an inspiration and a reminder of what can be achieved, when so often it can feel very hard to make a difference.

The Society has been as active as ever in 2019, although perhaps it has been a quieter year in terms of major new planning submissions in our area. At the time of writing we await determination of the application for a controversial development at Jaggard Way. We have objected, as have over 400 others, and we hope the Council takes heed of local opinion. By the time you are reading this, we will probably know the outcome. We also continue to wait for more news of the potential road widening at the Trinity Rd / Burntwood La crossroads, where we have been promised a consultation.

We hope you have enjoyed the Society's programme of events this year. We have run a very varied series of talks, walks, outings and soirées and I express my thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Events team.

As ever, we want to reach out to invite new members to join the Society, so please tell your friends and feel free to invite them to one of our events, where they can find out more about the Society's activities. We are also hoping that more of you will volunteer to help with the Society's work. There are various options for anyone who has some time to give so please get in touch – a suitable new year's resolution may be?

I end by sending my warmest greetings for a Happy Christmas and hopefully a joyful and peaceful New Year.

Margaret Romanski

St Luke's Music Society

Bringing Music to the Battersea and South West London Community

2019/20 Season

Firmly established as one of London's leading music societies, with a beautiful venue in which to hear world class artists, **St Luke's Music Society** is once again proud to present an outstanding series of international artists. Please visit our website at www.slms.org.uk for full details.



Saturday 11 January 2020 at 7.30pm
Miloš Karadaglić: *From Bach to the Beatles*

"The hottest guitarist in the world – the king of Aranjuez" - says *The Sunday Times*. St Luke's first guitar recital for over 10 years

features Miloš Karadaglić, the first classical guitarist to perform solo in the Royal Albert Hall, with a programme including music by Granados and Albéniz from Spain - the home of the guitar. Miloš appeared at the 2018 BBC Proms.



Saturday 22 February 2020 at 7.30pm
Budapest Café Orchestra

By popular demand the Budapest Café Orchestra, described as "the

finest purveyors of Balkan music this side of a Lada scrap heap", is returning to St Luke's, with gypsy, klezmer and folk music from Hungary, the Balkans and eastern Europe, all blended with great humour for an evening of great entertainment with a truly ethnic mix of music. Prepare yourself for an evening of anarchy!



Saturday 14 March 2020 at 7.30pm
Steven Osborne: Late Beethoven piano sonatas
Op 109, Op 110 and Op 111.

Carrying on the tradition of St Luke's hosting some of the world's greatest pianist we look forward to Steven Osborn's return to mark the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth with his majestic three final sonatas. This evening is a must for all lovers of great music and great musicianship.



Coming later

Saturday 28 March

Festival Chorus Beethoven *Egmont Overture*, Dvorak *Mass in D*, Louise Drewett New commission

Saturday 25 April

Fretwork with Elin Manahan Thomas *A Feast of Henry Purcell*

Saturday 16 May

Tallis Scholars directed by Peter Phillips *Metamorphosis*

Box Office www.slms.org.uk or 07951 791619

Tickets £18 ♦ £14 concessions

5% discount for Society members ♦ see website for details

Postal bookings

Please enclose cheque payable to St Luke's Music Society

St Luke's Concert Series
St Luke's Community Hall
194 Ramsden Road
London SW12 8RQ

The Children of a Demon-Queen

The Veddahs are considered to be the last aboriginal inhabitants of Sri Lanka, and have been hunting its forests for over 17,000 years. Today, there are only around 500 left, and, here, **John Gimlette** pays them a visit.

It was a long and dreamlike journey through the eastern foothills. All morning, my bus howled its way downhill but then the highlands re-appeared off to our left, in a gorgeous backdrop of purple and clouds. The forest now felt hot again, and we were back amongst villages made out of branches. In one, a dog rushed out to challenge us, before disappearing heroically beneath our wheels. Another time, we were passed by an excavator, with three Chinamen asleep in its bucket. The road was always trying to buck us off. Sometimes it would plunge through huge drifts of drying rice, and then, at other times, it would vanish altogether and we'd find ourselves gushing through sand, or jolting down a riverbed. Eventually, however, the road found its rhythm. As the howling died away, I pulled out my notes, and began to read.

For almost two-and-a-half thousand years, the Veddahs have been considered half-castes: royalty but with the blood of demons and snakes. It's an insult they've never truly shrugged off, and yet it wasn't always like this. In the preceding fifteen thousand years they'd probably had the island all to themselves, and their waruges, or tribes, had prospered. They may even have benefitted from the arrival of the Tamils and Sinhalese, soaking up survivors when their great cities collapsed. But the new arrivals also brought with them a dangerous idea. The Veddahs, they said, were descended from the island's original demon-queen, the product of her



Veddahs gathering honey

nights with Vijaya, the Sinhalese prince. This immediately made the Veddahs both awesome and vile, a royal vermin.

Little had changed in the next two thousand years. The Veddahs would inhabit the margins of Sinhalese society, picking up the language but none of its habits. By 1681, an English visitor reported that they were living as honoured outlaws, robbing travellers and fighting their own tiny wars. At night, they'd leave meat with the blacksmith and if, by the morning, he hadn't left them arrow-heads, they'd kill him. But the Veddahs were also trusted. In times of invasion, they'd take care of the Kandyan queens and the royal treasure. They could also be found at all the great battles, pouring their arrows onto European heads. But none of this changed them. In 1821, another English visitor, Dr Davy, described them as 'solitary animals ... resembling more beasts of prey, in their habit, than men.' The same thing might have been written at any time in the previous two millennia.

During the British era, the Veddahs

were considered endlessly exotic. Here were people who had no idea how old they were, who had no sense of time, and who'd yet to learn how to laugh and smile. They wore clothes made of bark, and carried a slice of human liver to make themselves more fierce. To the Victorians, it seemed that at last they'd linked up with Neolithic man. One writer described the Veddahs' existence as an 'interlude', adding that they were 'due for extinction.' This idea, that the Veddahs were somehow an accident from another age, was still popular, even today. In Colombo, at least one travel agent was offering 'Stone Age' tours.

They were lucky, perhaps, to have anything left to tour. The twentieth century had been particularly cruel. In 1911, there were 5,342 Veddahs, and yet, a hundred years later, there were barely 500. Some had perished in the Spanish flu, but many others had simply lost their lands and vanished in the mix. In almost no time at all, the *veddarata*, or Veddah's range – which had once extended to the coast – had shrunk to nothing. The worst year was 1983, when huge tracts of land were

swallowed up in a hydro-electric project. At about the same time, the civil war began, and the Veddahs were deprived of their guns. After more than 17,000 years of hunting, the Veddahs now had nothing to do, and nowhere to go. Many of them had drifted off to Bintenne, or – as the Sinhalese call it – Mahiyangana, the town now appearing on the plains ahead.

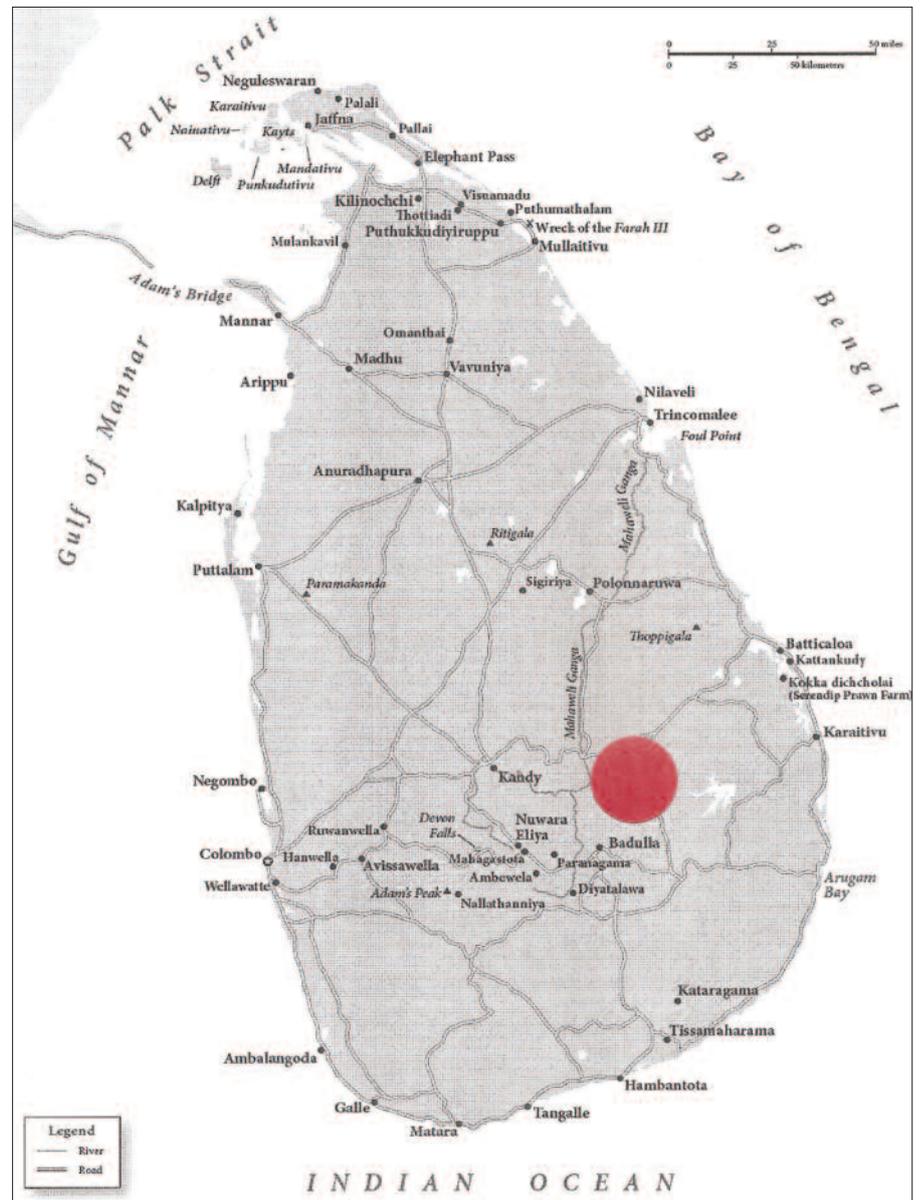
The next few days felt like a play in which all the actors had become somehow trapped. It was as if a storyline had entered their lives and possessed them, and now all they could do was keep the show going. A Sri Lankan friend had warned me about this. 'I'm going to take you to Dambana,' said Anurudha, 'A few miles from Mahiyangana, and home to about 350 families. We pay them some money, and they show us their lives. If they don't want to take part, they stay out of the way. OK, I know, it's not perfect but it's a livelihood. The Veddahs can't hunt anymore, and have no tradition of farming. It's all they have left, putting on a show.'

In this play, the sequence of events didn't seem to matter, and so we began with a curtain call. That night, a cast of Veddahs turned up at our campsite, as if to say goodbye. There were six of them, looking just like the figures the Victorians had photographed: bearded, barefoot men, wearing only loincloths, and each with an axe. Lining up on the rocks, they bowed and danced, and made me a gift of leaves. Then something odd happened – perhaps it was all the lantern smoke – and I was copiously sick. There was nothing in their script about the audience vomiting and running off into the jungle, and so the Veddahs just carried on bowing and dancing, and presenting their leaves. By the time I got back, they'd crept off, vanishing into the dark.

'They looked tough,' I remarked to Anurudha.

'Even tougher once. They could separate fighting bears.'

The next morning, three of the Veddahs reappeared, out of the grass. They carried their axes hooked over



Map showing the Veddah area

their shoulders, and moved noiselessly, like cats. The oldest was about seventy, and the youngest had his hair tied up in a bun. But the third one was the most powerfully-built, his beard so wild and silvery-black that, for a moment, I thought he was entirely covered in hair. He was also the only one to have a bow and arrow, a knife and a name: Soodoo Bando-Letto. It was once thought the Veddahs had little use for names, and that people just were who they were – The Fat One, perhaps, Oldie or The Boy.

At first, they hardly seemed to notice me, and merely assumed their roles. Soodoo loosed off his arrows, and the others fanned out into the trees, pursuing an imaginary pig,

which they then killed in a frenzy of shrieks and gurgles. Later, an interpreter appeared – rat-faced and malevolent with drink – and we all set off, deeper into the forest. After a mile or so, the Veddahs suddenly stopped and listened. I couldn't hear anything but they all padded off through the leaf-mould until they came to an old bambara tree. There, the boy listened again, and then with his axe, he reached up and severed a huge lobe of honeycomb. With their beards now full of bees, they offered me a dollop and were surprised that I liked it. Did I like the other things they ate, like iguanas and monkeys? They told me hornbills had been popular, and the little swiftlets that went chee-chee-

chee when you put them on the fire.

'And what about porcupines?' I tried.

The Veddahs all looked at each in horror.

Yeugh, they said. They're for the dogs.

Things changed after the honey, and our day began all over again. Everyone presented their knuckles in welcome, and we clasped each other's forearms. Soodoo even re-introduced himself, with a cluster of stories that never quite finished. He said he made charms out of elephants' teeth, and that many of the women had gone



away to be housemaids, and that it was now dangerous to hunt, and that some of his friends had been shot, and that chewing betel had given him cancer, and that – beneath the beard – half his jaw had gone. Perhaps, he suggested, I'd like a monkey-skin drum? Or maybe he could make a bow and some arrows?

I tried to explain that Veddah bows were too big for the plane.

OK, he said. And now it's time to see the king.

It was a grim thought, a king. Who would I find at the heart of this performance? A figure of fun, a Pearly King? Or perhaps some half-crazy

Asian Lear, busily presiding over his own demise?

But Uruwarige Wanniyaletto was neither of these things. He lived in a small, thatched house, where he made baskets and bottled honey. He was a 'king' in the sense that he was the son of the greatest Veddah, Tissahamy. Like his father, he'd also become a champion of aboriginal rights, and across the wall there were photographs of him, shaking important hands and meeting the generals. These pictures were the only furnishings he had, apart from a mat and a chopping block. Nor was he apparelled in flummery and ermine. Although his beard was tidier and his eyes were rimmed with fatigue, he was dressed just like the hunters.

I was offered a seat, on a low mud wall.

'I understand you've been to New York,' I said.

This was translated first into Sinhalese and then *Veddi baa sha*, and the king nodded. I was away for a month, he said, and spoke at the United Nations. They'd never heard of the Wanniyala-Aetto (or 'Forest People') before, but things got better after that. My father had said that, if we were moved into communities, we'd become beggars, but we're still here. Some changes are good, and some not. We're not sure about the schools, but we don't like the shirts and the shorts.

'And what about the tourists?' I asked.

They're alright, as long as they don't try and change us.

We'd been talking an hour, and the king now looked even more exhausted.

I got up to go. 'Just one thing. How did you like New York?'

I know how lucky I am, he said, not to have that noise.

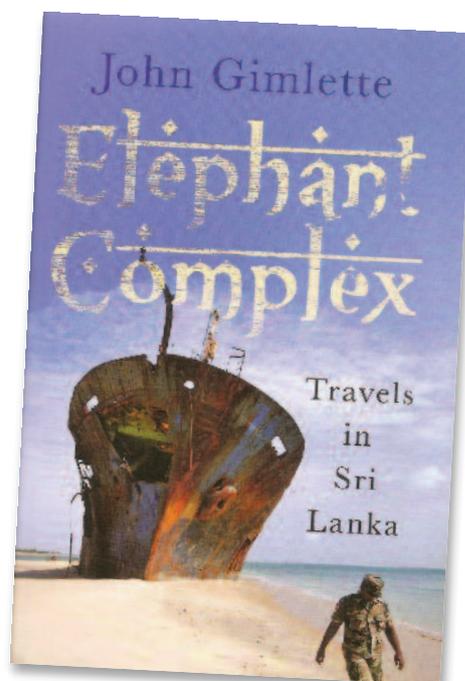
On my last day, we had several visitors to our camp.

The first were two snakes, who came slithering in amongst the tables. One was a rat-snake and the other a krait. Soodoo had already given me something to ward off serpents: a *cacuna* seed, shaped like a python's

head. Despite its magic, I still jumped. But Anurudha smiled, and carried on writing. 'One who fears snakes, sees them,' he said.

The next visitor was more welcome, Mr Gunawardene the teacher. He was half-Sinhalese, wore a shirt and carried an umbrella. Under his arm, he had with him some books he'd written. These were probably the first stories ever published in *Veddi baa sha*, and when Mr Gunawardene read one to me, it sounded like the forest coming to life. He said it was a beautiful language but that it lacked the words to describe our times. Shoes – always hated objects – were merely 'containers', and aeroplanes had become *uda thanen mangachchana dhandu kachcha* or 'above-going machines'. But the improvisations could be endearing too. A motorbike was a *hootu hootu*, and the English language was referred to as 'birds shouting' because that's how it sounds.

The last visitor was Soodoo himself. I found him a short distance from the camp, crouched in the grass. As I approached, he held something up for me. It was a bow he'd made, just the right size to go in a plane. ■



John Gimlette is the author of '*Elephant Complex; Travels in Sri Lanka*' (Riverrun £9.99)

I was born on 23 July 1896, only a few years before the end of Queen Victoria's reign, and for my first few years I lived in The Tonsleys. In 1903 my parents decided that we needed larger accommodation, and so we moved to Southfields, an area on the outskirts of Wandsworth in the early stages of development. It seemed almost like living in the country. At the corner of our road ran a little brook, narrow enough for all but the youngest children to jump across, and beyond that, what

Brookwood Road supplied our basic requirements. There was a butcher, baker, grocer, draper, greengrocer, and a small sub-post office. As there were no roads to cross, I was allowed to fetch some of my mother's shopping. At the butcher's shop one could buy stewing beef for as little as 6d (2½p) a pound, while the cuts at 10d a pound were almost as good as rump steak. Eggs were a penny each; oranges were two for a penny. In contrast, there was a confectioner's shop where the very

was officially named the 'Wandsworth County Secondary School for Girls' though everyone continued to call it 'Mayfield'. We were very sedate in those days, and bad behaviour was virtually unknown. Our gym-slips had to be exactly the same length, and woe betide any girl who was seen outside school not wearing gloves. None of the staff could have been much more than 30 years of age, but I have a photograph of them correctly dressed in gowns and mortar boards,

Growing up in Edwardian Southfields

Neil Robson

Forty years ago Alice Day set down these touching reflections on her life as a young girl in Southfields prior to the First World War

was known as the 'rhubarb field'. As nobody knew who owned it, we used to help ourselves.

My parents were members of East Hill Baptist Church, and for a while this was our nearest Baptist Church. However, before long a small group of Baptists began to meet in Southfields, first as a house group and then in a small hall. From this modest beginning the project quickly grew until it was possible to build a church which my parents joined and where my brother and I went to Sunday School.

The few small shops in nearby

best sweets cost a penny an ounce. This was indeed luxury.

My days at primary school passed uneventfully, until my time came at the age of 10 to enter what was then known as the 'Scholarship' exam. As a reward for passing it, my parents presented me with a brand-new Raleigh bicycle, green in colour and costing the substantial sum of £7. The bike was of course extremely useful, as I needed it for travelling to and from my new school, which was originally housed in a large, rambling Victorian house called Mayfield on West Hill, Wandsworth. It was like being in a large family at first, as

there were only about seventy girls and six staff. Because I knew a little French, I was placed in a higher form than the majority of the new pupils, so I had to work hard to keep up my reputation.

After a time a large building was erected nearby, and it

and looking really middle-aged. At first we had no playing-field, so we had to walk to Wandsworth Park for hockey, wearing ridiculous little red caps secured with elastic under our chins. Founder's Day was 8 October when, after assembling in the Hall, we all walked in solemn procession in a circle, singing a song in Latin which began: 'Gaudeamus igitur / Juvenes dum sumus' ('So let us rejoice while we are young'). The authorities must have been rather fond of Latin, for the school's motto was 'Posside sapientiam' ('Take hold of wisdom').

In my time at Southfields Baptist Church I became a Sunday School teacher and pianist, and my brother and I were both enthusiastic members of the Church choir. One highlight of the year was the Sunday School Anniversary held in May, when a special platform was erected for the large choir of young people, the girls dressed in white with sprays of lily-of-the-valley, a flower that



A Southfields milk float in about 1906

always reminds me of those special days.

As well as the usual services and Church meetings, there were several social activities. We had a cycling club, of which my father was captain, and every Saturday we set out to explore many of the beauty spots in Surrey, and with so few cars on the road we were always able to ride two abreast. During the winter months we had a Youth Club on Saturday evenings, where we played table-tennis and various games, all of them somewhat tame by today's standards. As a great concession we were allowed to have sedate country dancing, notably the 'Sir Roger de Coverley'. On one memorable evening I, more daring than the majority of the members, suggested that we might try a waltz. The idea was received with great enthusiasm. Everyone took their partners, and I began to play some familiar waltzes such as The Blue Danube. All went well for a time, until – horror of horrors – a door at the back of the

hall opened, and standing there were two stern elderly deacons! I stopped playing and the dancers stood as if turned to statues. We were reprimanded for our crime, and that was indeed 'The Last Waltz'!

Many evenings at home were spent singing around the piano in company with my own friends and those of my brother. Looking back on those far-off days, how sad it is to reflect on how many of those young men lost their lives in France only a year or two later! Most of them were no more than 18 or 19 years of age at the time. ■

Editor's notes:

These reminiscences are based on a typed manuscript produced in the 1970s by Alice K Day (*née* Matthews), a great-aunt of Peter Boreham who lives in Kent. In her final years Alice moved to Teignmouth where she died.



Coronation Gardens in Southfields, close to the LCC school where Alice Day was educated, shortly after they were opened to the public in 1903

The illustrations for this article are drawn from the Patrick Loobey Collection.

A longer version of this article first appeared in 2018 in the *Wandsworth Historian*, the journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society. It is reprinted with permission. Visit the WHS website at www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk for more information about the Society's activities.



Brookwood Road, Southfields on a sunny afternoon in about 1910

Xtinction

Mark Haworth-Booth

As some readers may recall, my wife Rosie and I left Wandsworth – after 30 years of married life in the borough – in autumn 2009. It is good to keep in touch with our old friends via the Bedside Edition.

It is a year since we first became aware of Extinction Rebellion (XR). George Monbiot wrote enthusiastically about this new movement in a Guardian column and urged readers to take part in XR's first mass event – a 'swarming' of five London bridges, followed by a ceremony in Parliament Square. I realized I would be in London on the day of these actions – I was speaking at a V&A conference on photography on the November Saturday in question. After giving my paper, I headed to Westminster. I met our daughters Emily and Alice as they walked towards Parliament Square from swarming one of the bridges – swarming means holding up traffic for around five minutes at a time by forming a human chain across a road with banners. (Emergency services are always let through). We went on to the meeting together and sat down with hundreds of others. The grassy square was pretty full of people. I was impressed to find that almost all the speeches were given by young women of different faiths. One of them asked us all to place a hand on the shoulder of the person sitting in front of us. Touching and being touched by strangers was heart-warming and unexpected. At the end



Soggy crusties enjoying their day out

I saw Monbiot heading off for the tube station – he had taken part in the event as one of the crowd, like us, not as a leader. The campaign against dilatory action on climate change and biodiversity destruction had found new organizers – and vast numbers of new supporters. Soon it would become a global movement.

It was not long before two bold and capable women, both with young children, came forward to found an XR group in North Devon. Rosie and I took on roles as local coordinators and with 'M&M' – media and messaging. Rosie writes press releases, liaises with local journalists and hand-prints flags, while I 'curate' the *xrnorthdevon* Instagram account. We have made new friends from lots of different backgrounds for example, a stone mason, a ceramic artist, an IT expert, a

gardener, teachers, retailers, doctors and other healthcare workers, as well as retirees like ourselves with a variety of skills in areas such as PR, law, plumbing and local government, plus a former nuclear engineer. We organized local events in Barnstaple and in Exeter and found the local press were interested and supportive. Our numbers grew.

In April this year a good contingent of us travelled to London to take part in the first 'International Rebellion'. Rebels from the South West were tasked with occupying Waterloo Bridge. It seems a long time ago now but the bridge was indeed occupied, filled with saplings, plants and

a sound stage and held for a week. Rosie and I were arrested, with a lawyer friend from Appledore, on the second day – for obstructing the police when they attempted to remove us from the site. We were taken to Brixton Police Station, held for about eight hours, fingerprinted and photographed, and released ('Under Investigation') at around 10.30pm. Two young people from XR were waiting outside to see if we needed help – one ordered a Uber cab for us. A few months later we appeared at the City of London Magistrate's Court, were charged, pleaded guilty, read our statements about why we had chosen to offend, ordered to pay £85 court costs and £20 victim surcharge, and conditionally discharged: if we do not offend again in the next six months the offence will be wiped

from the record. If we do offend, we will have to return to court and pay a fine (probably around £600 each) for the April offence and a further fine plus legal costs for any new one.

We joined the second International Rebellion, which began on Monday 7 October. We took part in occupying Lambeth Bridge but withdrew when police started making arrests. However, an XR sound stage was set up on the north side of the bridge and we heard marvellous speakers, including Jonathan Bartley (Lambeth councillor and Green Party co-leader) and Caroline Lucas MP. The remarkable week we spent with XR was a mixture of a music festival (euphoria, lovely looking young people, music, rap, tents and improvised kitchens – but no alcohol or drugs), the Second World War (orders, counter-orders, marches, people looking for their units, people taking responsibility, acts of daring and gallantry – people gluing

themselves to roads, locking-on to vehicles, scaling the walls of the BBC – setting up sites, evacuating sites, improvised kitchens and communications glitches) and Carnival (masks, stilts, flags, witty placards and banners – many plays on the phrase 'Uncooperative Crusties' – costumes, dancers, improvisation, performance). Best of all was the warm camaraderie, fulfilling XR's core rule that no shaming or blaming goes on and that 'we are all crew': a week with disparate people who came together – with much eye contact and many smiles exchanged by complete strangers – for an inspiring and essential common purpose.

At times the atmosphere recalled the 'Summer of love' of 1966, at times it seemed almost like a revolution – which made me fear for the young people whose hopes could turn sour if we achieve nothing. But then I have to remind myself that what XR

is asking for is not revolutionary at all. Of XR's three demands, the third is key: for the government to set up a Citizens' Assembly (chosen by sortition) whose task would be to set out the best way for our society to address the climate emergency. The Irish successfully used this to address the complex subject of abortion. Such an assembly seems to us the best way for a democracy to find solutions that the majority would buy into and act upon. Is that really so hard for our government to understand and accept? ■

The Editor notes that, although there is worldwide concern about climate, Jeremy Corbyn's big brother Piers Corbyn describes climate change as a "false narrative" and commands respect from armies of sceptics. What do our readers think?



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Stay Well This Winter



Dr Nicola Jones MBE is a Wandsworth GP and also Chair and Clinical Lead for Wandsworth CCG

This has been a busy year for the NHS in Wandsworth.

We held an event at the end of 2018 which was attended by 160 interested residents, voluntary sector representatives and community organisations. We had a fantastic day, talking about the health and care issues that people in Wandsworth think are important. We talked about the kind of things that no single organisation can achieve alone and how we can work better together. I heard some inspiring stories and gained valuable insight into the views and needs of our people and communities. We put together a graphic which illustrates the breadth of the conversations, and the main themes that emerged. As a result of that event we have come together with Wandsworth Council, local NHS organisations and the voluntary sector to develop a joint health and care plan to support people living in the borough to be well.

We've used the themes of "Start well, Live well and Age well" to help us describe how we want to support everyone in Wandsworth to remain as well as they can for as long as they can. By focussing on prevention and joining up care, we hope we can make a difference this winter.

One of the areas the plan addresses is our older residents and aging well. Four in five people over 65 in Wandsworth live with at least one long-term illness. Working closely with the council and voluntary sector, we plan to improve support to the frail older people, including residents in care homes.

Social Prescribing

A new life-changing advice service is now available to patients in Wandsworth – it's called social prescribing. This is where GP practices signpost patients to non-medical services in the community, for example walking or community groups where they can meet new friends, or employment, benefits and housing advice.

Research shows that one in five GP visits are due to social rather than medical problems, and this new service will offer patients an appointment with a navigator to offer tailored advice. Pilot studies have shown the service improved wellbeing in 77% of patients.

Keep Warm and Well

When temperatures drop, you need to take extra care with your health as some people with long term conditions are at risk of respiratory infections, heart attacks and strokes.

It is best to make sure you are prepared for winter by checking the weather forecasts, ensuring you have any essential medication, a well-stocked medical cabinet and have enough food in case it is difficult to get to the shops in icy conditions.

Keeping your home warm is vital and it is important to remember that if you're not very mobile, are 65 or over, or have a health condition such as heart or lung disease, you should heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F). At night, it is wise to also keep your bedroom at 18°C if possible and to keep windows closed.

If possible, try to keep active and get up and stretch your legs and exercise often during the day. It is also important to have at least one hot meal a day as eating regularly and plenty of hot drinks keeps you warm too.

This advice can seem like common sense, but you'd be surprised by how many people neglect to take care of themselves in these ways, for a variety of reasons, and fall ill as a result.

If you have neighbours who live alone or are vulnerable, please do keep in touch with them to check they are well and offer any support where needed.

Pharmacy Advice

We have over 60 pharmacies in Wandsworth where you can seek immediate expert advice on many minor conditions. At the first sign of a winter illness, even if it's just a cough or a cold, get advice from your pharmacist before it gets more serious.

Pharmacists train for five years in the use of medicines, and in providing health and wellbeing advice. Many are open late and at weekends, and most have a private consultation room where you can discuss issues with staff without being overheard.

Flu can be serious

Flu can be far more serious than people think, killing an average of 8,000 people a year. The flu vaccine is the

best defence against the virus so please make sure that you are vaccinated if you are in an eligible group.

The free flu jab is offered to those who are at increased risk from the flu. This includes people aged 65 and over, those with underlying health conditions, pregnant women and children aged two to nine. If you are the main carer of an older or disabled person you may also be eligible.

If you are eligible but haven't had the free flu jab yet – please get it now. Contact your GP, or pharmacist.

We are concerned that not everyone who needs the flu vaccine in Wandsworth is taking up the chance to protect themselves, so please do talk to your surgery or pharmacist if you have any questions.

Don't forget, if you're aged 65 over, you are also eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine, which will help protect you from as pneumonia. Speak to your GP to get this.

GP appointments available evenings and weekends

In Wandsworth it is now easier to see a GP in the evenings and at weekends.

We have 3 locations known as GP Hubs that offer GP appointments Monday to Friday between 6.30pm and 8pm. They are also open every Saturday between 8am and 8pm. The Clapham Junction hub is open between 8am and 8pm on Sunday.

You can book an urgent or routine appointment through your local GP practice or by calling 111. The GP you see will have access to your medical records.

The hubs are open every bank holiday and public

holiday – including Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Seek help if you are feeling low or anxious

One in four of us will experience mental health problems in our lifetime and the holiday season can be a stressful time.

We are working to improve mental health support for people from our Black and Minority Ethnic Communities with a Pastors and Faith Network, and awareness training for Muslim women's groups.

Anyone who is stressed, worried or feeling low can get help in Wandsworth from talking therapies services Talk Wandsworth and Big White Wall. You can speak to someone in person or online, at a time that works for you.

Wandsworth also has a recovery café in Tooting for anyone aged 18 and over who is struggling with their mental health. The café provides a safe and supportive space and offers group activities, one-to-one support, a chill out space and hot meals and drinks.

For more information, visit the Wandsworth CCG website

At this time of year it's important to remember all our NHS colleagues who will be working throughout the festive season to keep Wandsworth well. I am sure you will join me in thanking them for their commitment and dedication working round the clock 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Wishing you a healthy happy festive season and a wonderful New Year. ■

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Sue Anelog is dead. She had a real name but nobody knew it. Like everyone else in our part of the world, she was named after her house. Only Anelog isn't just a house, it's got two cottages and a mountain; one of a couple of giants standing side by side, looking across to the holy island of Bardsay. It plunges straight down into a sea which crashes white with fury into the rocks far below. Between is the

lurched as they tramped her up through the gorse and heather to see to her sheep. When she fell, which she did once, she was stuck, struggling like a beetle. But, because she was a working farmer, they had to do.

She had a passion for her animals. 'They understand me' she said. Not that she was sentimental. 'Tyd y mawr' she'd yell at her sheepdog. 'Come here you brute.'

lover, Guto – the name's a common one in the Lleyn – who owned the farm just below hers. He was years older than her and had a wife and family, but nobody, least of all the wife, appeared to mind. 'We didn't say much' Sue told me. 'We didn't have to. We understood one another.' Like her animals they communicated without words.

When Guto's wife died he didn't move in; but they were seldom

The Good Woman of the Lleyn

Veronica Cecil

Bardsay Sound; a turmoil of swirling water coming from different directions and fighting itself as it ebbs and flows. Sue Anelog is dead. She had a real name but nobody knew it. Like everyone else in our part of the world, she was named after her house. Only Anelog isn't just a house, it's got two cottages and a mountain; one of a couple of giants standing side by side, looking across to the holy island of Bardsay. It plunges straight down into a sea which crashes white with fury into the rocks far below. Between is the Bardsay Sound; a turmoil of swirling water coming from different directions and fighting itself as it ebbs and flows.

The thing that is, was Sue, the thing that defined her, was that at the age of eight she caught polio. She must have been one of the last victims. It left her with only half a working arm with no muscle at the top – the other hung wizened and useless by her side. Because of this she wore a leather strap round her forearm so that she could pull it up with her teeth. Her legs were distorted too with misshapen feet and toes that turned inwards. She

And the dog, anxious to do her bidding would come eager for more. He was the outside dog and he knew his place. But she also kept an indoor mutt. He or she was always a Jack Russell; her darling. He was allowed liberties; leaping up onto the sofa and nestling down beside her. He'd follow her up to bed at night too; his hard body pressing against hers to keep her warm.

She first came to Anelog when she was in her late teens. Her father, who'd been the Chief Archaeologist in India, bought the farm to retire to. According to her he loved his distorted daughter better than her older brother or younger sister. And, because of her passion for animals, he kept horses and donkeys and rare cattle along with the chickens and ducks and geese; and, of course, the mountain sheep. Her mother, who was hard hearted, refused to concede to Sue's disability in any way. She was plonked on a pony and, when she fell off, there was no sympathy.

When she first came to the farm Sue taught herself Welsh from familiar nursery rhymes and children's books. She had a Welsh

apart. She had a car especially adapted and she did the driving. He went everywhere with her. When she went to stay with her posh aunt in the Home Counties he'd go too. And he sat in the car waiting for her outside the court house in Caernarfon when a particularly miserly Tory government disputed her disability allowance. He didn't have to wait long on that occasion. The judge watched her trying to open the book to swear her testimony and dismissed the case.

When Guto eventually died, something in Sue died too. 'I'd wait to see the light in his house come on' she told me 'and then I'd get up because I knew he'd be over to let the chickens out and collect the eggs.'

The other man in her life was Twm. As a boy he came bicycling round to the farm after school to do the heavy work; hauling huge bales of silage off the heap to feed to the cattle in winter, and driving the sheep into the dip, man-handling any that tried to escape, while she stood by shouting at the dog. Twm was, still is exceptionally good looking and as a young lad, he'd

drive the tractor round the farm as if he was King of the Mountain. Sue insisted on paying him though he'd have done it for nothing. Later he'd shown up in his own car. But, when he got married and had children, his visits became less and less frequent and he was replaced by Hefyn. Despite the name – Hefyn is pronounced heaven – he wasn't the same. As Twm's children grew older, however, and his wife less stressed, he came back.

I got to know Sue really well when I lived in the LLeyn but, when I moved back to London, we only saw each other infrequently. 'Hello stranger' she'd say if we bumped into one another in the Farmers' Co-op. And, knowing the subtext, I'd feel obliged to ask her to dinner. She appreciated a good meal and had a gargantuan appetite. 'They just dirtied the plates' she sniffed after being taken to the local three

star restaurant by one of her 'trippers' – she let her two cottages to summer visitors. 'When I got home I had to have a plate of cornflakes.'

What Sue appreciated more than anything else was 'a good chinwag.' She was forthright, and because I was English and came from a similar background, she felt able to talk. Our dinners went on and on, stretching well into the night. She needed to tell someone how angry she was with the lot fate had landed her with. 'It isn't fair' she'd say 'What would my life have been like if I hadn't got this bloody disease?' She hated her able-bodied siblings and dismissed any suggestion of reconciliation. She was a right wing Tory who loathed the EU because of its rules. Things had to be done her way and she made enemies, including the vicar.

Sue died as she'd lived. Uncompromising. She despised doctors and didn't believe in medicines – the cure for all ailments, she claimed, was cider vinegar. But her disability grew worse and worse as she grew older. When one of the neighbours came round to find her running a temperature she called an ambulance. To Sue's fury, she was taken into hospital. Once there she refused to take any medicine, telling the nurses to 'get the bloody hell off.' So she died of pneumonia just as she, and nature, intended leaving her animals bereft.

'You know who she left the farm to?' my friend Medwyn, the fisherman said over a cup to tea.

'Twm' I answered, guessing.

'Yes. It's gone back to the Welsh. She was a good woman.' ■



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David Hart: a man for all seasons

By Tony Jones, with a little help from David Hart

Multi-award-winning documentary filmmaker and investigative journalist David Hart (OE1953-60) started his career in feature film production. Here, he recounts some of his early experiences, including working with Stanley Kubrick, on his way to BAFTA recognition.

I was keen on sport at Emanuel and represented the school in athletics, particularly sprinting. I was a member of Lyons house and also got involved in house cricket and rugby. I really didn't enjoy boxing, however, and managed to get out of it by becoming the official timekeeper for all bouts. The ability to avoid pursuits that I didn't enjoy was a mainstay of my time at Emanuel. I didn't like the Combined Cadet Force, but I joined the Air Squadron (RAF section) which involved less marching and parading. Later, when the school opted to do the Duke of Edinburgh Award, I was quick to sign up as it was held at the same time as the CCF. I successfully played both sides against each other and told them both that I was at the other. To avoid being caught, I would sometimes just pop home.

I was an enthusiastic mathematician, geographer and historian at Emanuel. I made some wonderful friendships and was influenced by some inspiring teachers including English master, Jack Cuddon. The Head of French, Tom Graham, helped to set up some work for me as a language assistant after Emanuel and I got the opportunity to work on a film in Les Mans. As soon as I saw the film being made, I was hooked.

I was one of the less celebrated students of the London School of Film Technique. I saw myself as a filmmaker of great dramatic works. Hence, whenever there was a school break (of which there seemed to be many), having managed to wheedle a union ticket, I would try to get a job as a very junior assistant director on whatever production would have me.

Even I realised how green I was on the opening day of my



David Hart with BAFTA

first production, *The Saint*. I was given the job of helping to organise the communication for a scene where a helicopter flew down towards a quarry and picked somebody up. When I asked the First Assistant Director how I should do this, he told me there were a set of walkie talkies in the boot of his car. I collected them and took them to the sound department. "Yes, we certainly know how they work but the electricians claim it is their job so you'd better take the walkie talkies to them." So off I went to seek out the electricians, who said it was indeed their job "but we have no idea how these things work." So I put the walkie talkies back in the boot of the car and we used flags.

During the second production I worked on in my holidays, *The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery*, I learnt that the relationship between the assistant directors and actors could be either very good - or very bad. My first day was dramatic, if only because I was roundly turned on by one of the cast, Dora Bryan, who let out a string of obscenities at me even though I had never met her before. When, in a state of shock, I asked the Second Assistant Director what her problem was, he let out a series of obscenities that matched hers. They obviously hated each other.

My next two productions were of altogether different quality and demands. *A Man for All Seasons*, directed by Fred Zinneman, and *2001 - A Space Odyssey*, directed by Stanley Kubrick, were wonderful to work on and are considered film masterpieces today. We had our production party for *A Man for All Seasons* on the day England played Portugal in the 1966 World Cup on 26th July. We had a TV playing so that we could follow the match during our festivities. When England scored, Susannah York grabbed me and gave me a great big hug and kiss on the cheek. She was very beautiful - a couple of years older than me - and I didn't wash my cheek for a week!

Zinneman and Kubrick were very different types of people and nowhere could this be seen more clearly than in their



relationship with their male lead actors. Zinneman loved watching Paul Schofield act. He would often let the scene continue two or three minutes past the point he wanted to end at, just because he gloried at what a wonderful actor Paul Schofield was. He would stand in rapture after he called "cut", just soaking in Schofield's genius.

Kubrick, on the other hand, only seemed to be interested in himself. He directed Keir Dullea as if he were a puppet, telling him exactly how to move his head or where to look at a particular moment. He was given no scope to develop the part himself. Kubrick had the reputation of being a control freak and nothing I saw in the two months or so of filming convinced me of anything different.

I was fortunate to work on several outstanding parts of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. My favourite was the section towards the end when Keir Dullea's character looks over his shoulders a number of times and each time sees himself 20 years older. The make-up for him at 80 and 100 took nearly 12 hours to complete. We would call him in to start doing make up at about 2am and he would not be ready to shoot until the afternoon. As the filming would go on to quite late into the evening and Keir Dullea had to be back for 2am again the next day for make-up, I'm sure he was exhausted by the end of filming the sequence. But it was not a consideration in Kubrick's mind.

After all this wonderful exposure to feature filmmaking, I was at the end of my college career and ready to embark on feature film production myself. But things in life often choose their own path. I was also interested in politics and a series of events hooked me like a giant magnet. I was fortunate to make a film with John Schlesinger, Harry Saltzman and Wolf Mankowitz about the Arab Israeli War in 1967. This was followed in April 1968 by being asked to cover the death and funeral of Martin Luther King in Atlanta for the BBC's Panorama. I also went to Nigeria and Biafra in 1968 and, despite the

horrors, I was firmly smitten by investigative journalism and documentary filmmaking.

I spent ten years on *World in Action* and then took on projects like the *Spanish Civil War*; *Mersey Blues*, a series about Liverpool detectives; *The Traitor King* about Edward VIII and *The Trust*, a series about the National Health Service in a hospital in Nottingham for which we won a BAFTA for Best Documentary Series, to name but a few.

I made two or three dramas and even feature films including *Gas Attack*, which won several prizes including the top award at the Edinburgh Film Festival, but they were the exceptions. I spent most of my 40-year career in current affairs and documentary filmmaking.

Am I sad that I didn't spend much more of my time in creating stories? I think not - if for no other reason that by and large documentary filmmakers and investigative journalists, in searching for truth, are rarely involved in the petty infighting that seemed to consume parts of the feature industry.

My advice to anyone wanting to get involved in filmmaking is to keep your options open. The world continues to change at a rapid pace and new jobs are being created all the time. You must never give up; there will be setbacks but these can create new opportunities. ■

Collectors' item
Red Kickers (circa 1972?)

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS OF THE CELEBRITY KIND

a quiz from Wendy Cater

Quirks of Fate can throw up delights or disasters, tragedies or triumphs – and sometimes, by chance congruence of persons, places and time, utterly random meetings of those whose lives have nothing whatsoever in common. Several such have happened to me, and maybe to you too; I am not thinking of encounters arising from one's regular professional or social circumstances – for instance sitting cheek by jowl, or rather cheek by cheek, on a red plush banquette in a London restaurant (as I once did with Joan Sutherland and with Lucian Freud, in Chelsea and Soho respectively). Nor am I counting the thrills of my teenage music-obsessed autograph-hunting years, meeting Messrs Britten and Poulenc etc – but totally unexpected, almost surreal encounters never to be forgotten. Who comes to mind?

1. Paris – a winter Sunday morning in the early 1960s, a quiet, empty space near the Place de la Bastille, no traffic, no hoi polloi. John and I were walking from our haunt on the Ile St. Louis to find somewhere for lunch. By a doorway stood an elderly man leaning on a stick; his elderly female companion, grey-haired and behatted, was struggling to place large items of ironware from a pile on the ground onto the roof of a small car. We offered to help, and launched in. He, in warm navy blue cloak and big wide beret to match, stood grimly silent throughout. She explained their situation (American accent): "We've been at the Marché de la Ferraille... oh! you don't know the Marché de la Ferraille?... You must go to the Marché de la Ferraille!" We didn't, we went to lunch. But I had recognized the neat silver beard and sharp features of one of the twentieth century's most influential literary giants, one who had come in for some political flack, too. I verified my recognition years later from a TV documentary about him, which also featured the ironwork enthusiast; her name was Dorothy, and she was the companion of his final years. Who he?
2. New York – December 1974. I am sauntering down East 61st Street, doing the touristy thing while John works on Broadway, and as I'm admiring one of those long arched awnings that lead across the sidewalks from important doorway to kerbside and are, in my opinion, one of the chief graces of the Big Apple, I narrowly avoid being knocked over by a tall handsome trench-coated guy striding through from The Pierre (most aristocratic of NY's swanky hotels) to waiting limousine. Crikey! the best-looking man never quite to become President.
3. Nottingham – a fresh sunny Autumn morning in the 1980s. I am walking down to my temporary place of work when a car pulls up on my right and there leans out a strikingly pretty blonde woman, asking do I know the way to the Theatre Royal. Of course I do! Not only is that where I saw my first panto, Puss in Boots, at the age of four (the ogre's long green fingernails threaten in my dreams to this day) but I have worked there myself. So who is working there this week? Later I spot a poster detailing the show. Of course – the chief scandal of the sixties... and her riposte in court that has entered common parlance. Mm, she's still looking good!
4. Sheen Common, by Richmond Park – a summer afternoon in July 1993. I need some refreshment between my morning's employment and a late afternoon wedding down in Surrey. So I stop with my snap bag (as we say in the Midlands) in this idyllic deserted bit of rus in urbe. Suddenly a tall figure is approaching me purposefully through the glade – help! – but merely, courteously, asks a direction. Which I can supply, phew! But don't I know that face? Has it not kept me au fait with the world's affairs many a time and oft? And very recently, as éminence grise, enlightened us with his wisdom? I am ashamed of my moment of panic.
5. London, the Royal Festival Hall – a summer's evening in 2014. I stand at the foot of a long staircase, looking up. Behind me, a voice: "Are you going up?" Me: "No, I'm waiting for my friends to come down." I take a step aside, and a fashionably – or maybe unavoidably – bald-pated figure proceeds up to, I'm sure, a post-concert jolly above. He will be here boning up on his new role, I conclude, as well he might. Not that he needed to bother too much with all that culture, as he was soon translated to higher spheres.
6. The Piccadilly Line, a crowded compartment – sometime in Spring 2019. A tall rangy blonde manages to find a seat beside me and immediately busies herself with that energy that betokens urgency. She shuffles a wad of A4 that I immediately recognize as a script. She is marking the script; what can it be? My sidelong eye spies at the top of the page: The Archers. So who can she be? She is marking it for – Kate! At Green Park we both stand. She sweeps commandingly away towards the Jubilee Line; I exit. Later I find her name in the Radio Times, then google her, including photo. It was her all right!

Answers on page 40

GUERRILLA GARDENING

By Nina Kowalska



This year saw Wandsworth declare a Climate Emergency and London become a National Park City. However, despite this, Wandsworth has only 39% of green cover from its parks, trees and front gardens. In London, half of all front gardens are paved over and five times as many have no plants compared to ten years ago. This results in London losing a green space the size of two and a half Hyde Parks every

year, from people swapping planting for paving in their gardens.

Seeing green turning to grey in SW18 inspired a group of residents to make the Southfields Grid London's first *Front Garden Friendly Neighbourhood*. They set out to Green the Grid by encouraging street and front garden planting in a bid to stop paving and bring environmental benefits including improving air quality, increasing wildlife and improve wellbeing.

Hundreds of residents in the area have taken part in community planting days; greening their front gardens, creating a herb garden and planting around 300 tree bases. Most recently, at the first Big Green Weekend, free gardening advice was available and neighbours visited award winning front gardens for inspiration.

It is hoped others will be inspired to create *Front Garden Friendly Neighbourhoods* to help combat climate change and make our borough a greener place to live.

Keep up to date on twitter.com/greenthegrid, at frontgardenfriendly.uk and get in touch at greenthegridsw18@hotmail.com ■

Nina Kowalska is a co-founder of the project, a resident of Southfields and in her professional life has been involved in human rights and environmental projects.



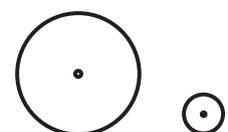
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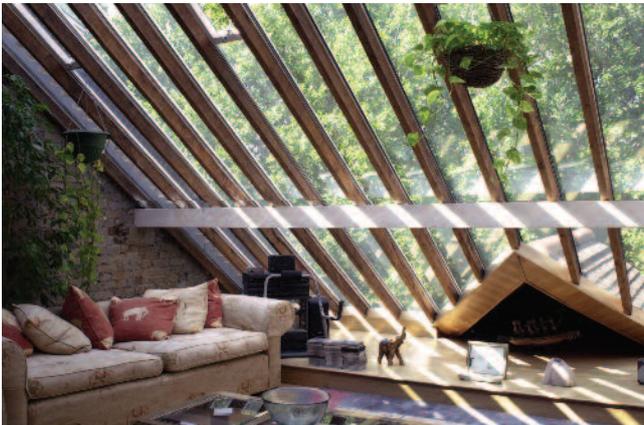
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Fulham Palace — a local gem

Just across the Thames from Putney lies one of London's most important historic sites, Fulham Palace and its grounds. 2019 has been a pivotal year for the Palace with completion of the restoration of the Tudor courtyard and visitor galleries in May and the ongoing work on the gardens. The newly restored Palace is the result of a £3.8 million project, including £1.9m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, to revitalise the Palace and help more people discover its long and varied history.

The Palace was the principal residence of the Bishop of London from AD 704 until 1973. The site was formerly an eyot of the Thames and is geologically a gravel river terrace close to an ancient ford. It has been settled since Neolithic times with a Saxon moat and evidence of Roman settlement.

The site was originally surrounded by a one-mile moat, one of the longest in England (unfortunately filled in with rubble although a small stretch is visible by the main entrance). During the mid-13th century the original manor house was abandoned and the foundations of the current house date from then. Subsequently the house has evolved into today's palace as

different Bishops carried out building works, from remodelling the great hall to demolishing the Tudor state wing. This has created an interesting mixture of architectural styles which reflect changing fashions and needs of the Bishops.



The gardens were developed by Bishop Compton in the late 17th century; he was a great gardener and botanist (perhaps to the detriment of maintenance of the Place or indeed his Bishopric) but he leaves a legacy of the foreign plants that he amassed and is a significant figure in garden history. The restoration has brought a

transformation of the walled garden and the grounds.

Among the interesting talks to the Society in 2019 Alexis Haslam, the Community Archaeologist at Fulham Palace, gave a fascinating presentation. His role includes extensive excavation of the entire site involving a wide range of the local community, offering a rare opportunity for both adults and

children to undertake archaeological investigation with training and under professional supervision. Findings include medieval pottery, coins, decorative items and animal bones which indicate the width of the diet – including the earliest turkey evidence in London (although whether they were eaten or were simply decorative is not known).

The importance of the grounds as an archaeological site is underlined by the very strict rules on planting in the restored gardens; it is a conflict between replication of old plantings and the underlying remains. Outside the walled garden no beds can be dug more than 10cm while within the walled area the gardener has 30cm planting depth – quite a challenge.

A visit to this local attraction is a must! ■

The Place, gardens and café are open every day, except for a week around Christmas, and entry is free.

Caroline Pook



Three Countries Challenge

Cycling the Pyrenees with Wounded, Injured or Sick veterans and those still serving

By Jonathan Thomson

Day 0:

We're a Team of 19 cyclists, with four in support.

Today we flew to Toulouse, bussed down to the Pyrenees and got ready for six challenging days on bikes in the big hills.

We're in Luchon, deep in the Pyrenees surrounded by high peaks and some intimidating cols, one of which we will go up tomorrow on our way into Spain. Luchon has a faded elegance, harking back to the days of the Emperor Napoleon III. Indeed, what is thought to be his villa is here to this day, steadily disintegrating like a forgotten fairy palace as its ownership continues to be disputed. Nearby the Casino tells of days

when Luchon attracted high-flyers. Today we, and those who ski and cycle the big slopes, are the high-flyers as we contemplate pedalling our little machines up to where eagles soar.

Day 1:

Our eyeballs misted up as we punched into the clouds clinging to the Luchon mountains. Our target, the Col du Portillon was cold and wet so we didn't spend too much time there but sped down through the forest to a welcome and warming coffee.

For the record: the day saw us cycle 110km and climb 7,844ft. The route up to the high point of the day, the Port de Benague, which stands at 6,829ft and was covered by a cold and soggy mist,

was long and hard; the run down was fast and a challenge itself. We have been well tested.

Tomorrow Andorra, and more of the same.

Day 2:

Yesterday we started in France and finished in Spain. Today we journeyed on into Andorra, hence the 3 Countries Challenge. Andorra sits astride the Pyrenees so if you want to find some big hills this would be a pretty good place to start, and so it proved.

Our day started with a 19km and near two hour climb that wasn't at all easy but rewarded us with an exhilarating run down the mountain during which we were assailed by pelotons of motorbikes that came roaring past, their many horsepower making us feel a bit puny. Soon however we were in amongst the mayhem that is Andorran traffic, but off to the left lay the Coll de la Gallina which has a very special reputation amongst the cycling fraternity and was our final effort. We all had a very big day.

Tomorrow we start in Andorra, pop into France and finish in the Spanish enclave of Llivia. Three Countries in a day !

Day 3:

Day Three of an Ultra is when things start to bite as the body cries-out for sustenance but the energy that was abundant on Day 1 may no longer be there. So we set off from a cold Andorra down through steep streets not quite knowing how the day would unfold. It was in fact to be a day of climbing, first up a lovely road to a col that sits just below the 2,000m mark and then on down a terrific descent during which we were again buzzed by motorbikes flying in tandem like Typhoon jets on a mission. But that was just the opener for the main event, a 27km climb up onto the Port D'Envalira which, at 2,408m (or 7,900ft) is the highest road in the Pyrenees and a big challenge for us all. From there we had a rapid descent into France and on to Llivia which was left as part of Spain by the Treaty of the Pyrenees of 1659 and is completely surrounded by France.

Today we saw some stunning country as the mountains of Andorra unfolded. We arrived in Llivia in fine weather and in



good order. Tomorrow we have a long day, with two big climbs.

Day 4:

It was cold as we set off across the Llivia plain early this morning. Our early ride was enlivened by the sharp retort of a front tyre exploding, and then by the Norwegian national cross-country ski team as they came down the road on their improbable training skis, built on tiny rollers. We felt safer on our big wheels.

The stand-out challenge of the day was the ascent of the Port de Pailhères which stands at 6,564ft and contributed to overall stats for the day of 120km and 7,719ft of climb, but that was just part of the story. As we laboured on the winding road that took us up the Pailhères, each at our own speed, we passed through lovely beech forests, home to many wild creatures none more fearsome than the wild boar. Those big beasts would have sensed our presence as they sniffed the air with their sensitive snouts and decided we were unworthy prey. This would have been a sensible decision given the skinny and unappetising nature of most cyclists. We passed through their domain untroubled.

Tomorrow a shorter day as we turn towards our start point in Luchon. We end the day near St Giron, the start point of one of the escape routes in WW2.

Day 5:

There was a very loud bang this morning as again one of our tyres exploded just as we were preparing to move out on the ride, but the delay was minimal. As we steered towards the hills the mist came in, turning to a light rain that soaked us pretty thoroughly so when we made it to the first Col we were wet and cold even though we were



only at 4,097ft, but the area was open and looked and felt like Dartmoor on a bad day. A fast descent only made us colder and we would have been a bit hypothermic by the time we hit the minimal flat bit at the foot of the climb. Unusually we looked for the next ascent to warm up on and that came quickly as we addressed the 18km route up to the Col d'Agnes, which at 5,150ft was wreathed in clouds through which we then descended, but the weather was improving and we arrived at our hotel in sunshine. It had nevertheless been a challenging day.

Riding these long ascents gives ample time for thought and introspection. When the pain is at its most intense, asking why we are there is a fruitless exercise but is nevertheless a question often asked. The country is stunning, which helps, and today was no exception. Spectators are few, and are always outnumbered by the cattle who



and on the second a solitary eagle kept his eye on us. Both magnificent birds are very important to the local eco-system.

It's too early to have a full understanding of the effects an Endeavour such as this will have on the



look at us in dumb incomprehension as they move on and off the road, completely oblivious of the titanic efforts we are making just to be with them. Their cares are few.

A very good Day, with one more day of challenge to go,

Day 6:

We finished the 3 Countries Challenge at 3.00pm, and for the record over the six days covered 586kms and climbed 42,385ft. Every member of the squad felt challenged at one time or another. Today in fact took us over two pretty demanding climbs. On the first we were closely followed by a cloud of vultures

participants. Friendships will have been made, forged under conditions of shared hardship and so will endure. Each cyclist has been exposed to the unusual conditions of the high Pyrenees with their sheer mountains and quiet forests. It's possible therefore that we may have touched the souls of those who came with us, and in so doing may have achieved a small measure of Rehabilitation through Adventure, which was our aim.

Day 7:

The Team departs on the 07.00 flight to Gatwick. I feel lonely as they leave me behind. ■

Gray's Eulogy

Andrew Catto Architects: Now bigger and even better thanks to a merger with ALS Architects with our own John Dawson designing a 2IC Wandsworth.

Aquatint: The Bedside edition of our newsletter is proof positive of the very high quality of Aquatint's digital printing.

Archetype Productions: Computers pose problems from time to time for everyone from the novice to the expert. When problems occur call the expert's expert – Archetype!

Cockburn & York: With lines like "Who owesya baby?" and those red boots, difficult debts suddenly seem collectable.

Designers Guild: This famous business will remind many readers of when the King's Road was the centre of the world. Well, this shop still is.

Edward Potter Associates: Yes, Ed Potter's back. He's never really been away, just very very busy designing houses and lots more.

Glug: Nestled snugly next to the famous Ma Goa restaurant, fine wines, craft beers and Indian street food. Nature at its best.

Le Gothique: The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building is such a romantic name and the building itself so wonderful that a visit to its very own restaurant for lunch, dinner, a beer and cider festival or perhaps a wedding reception – and I've done all four! – is a must for all our readers.

John Thorogood: Buying or selling, if it's a house or a flat, you want an estate agent that's thorough and good. Tick both boxes.

London Door Co: Door-to-door salesmen are one thing but a business that sells such beautiful doors – I've been to the workshop – makes every entrance and exit a pleasure.

Ma Goa: Indian food is now Britain's favourite. If Ma Goa isn't your favourite Indian restaurant you obviously haven't been there... yet!

MWR Motörs: You know you know where the tréma comes from but you just can't think. Yes, it's Citroën. Of course! A special car? You bet. Your car needs special care.

Oranges & Lemons: All the latest in sounds from the tiniest and subtlest to the loudest, pounding bass and, if like me you don't have the state of the art, they'll apply all the necessary care and attention.

Richard Cullinan Joinery: It's great to see Richard's name gracing our pages again and a timely reminder to think about fitted furniture. Definitely on my shopping list.

St Luke's Music Society: This music society has gone from strength to strength. The latest concert (by the home-grown Festival Chorus) won loud and prolonged applause from a large audience. Were you there?

Sambrook's Brewery: Next spring will see this brewery become part of future history by moving to the site where brewing began in the 16th century.

Stratton Cycles: Still peddling their wares after all these years (and we're still pedalling them!) I wonder if the 'perfect' saddle publicised recently has gone into production yet.

Wimbledon Village Stables: My riding habits go back a long way – to a 4-year old in the Chiltern Hills – but the 29 years at SW19 have really taught me. Surely the best-run stables in the land.

Young & Co's Brewery: Still getting a quart into a pint pot and these days many Young's pubs are ideal places to eat a really good meal too.

Iain K S Gray

The Wedding of the Wild Flowers

Oh what a day it has been
We lay exhausted after games
In the shadow of the forest green
Hush now listen hard for sounds to name
There's Bluebells tinkling in the breeze
Like Church bells on the morning air
Is Silverweed to Marigold?
In Meadowsweet so I've been told
Guests all in their Sunday best
On Toadstools in a ring they rest
Lords and Ladies Ragged Robin
Milkmaid Broom they still keep coming
The Primrose with a little frown
Said Wood Anemone please sit down
Then Golden Rod banged on the floor
Old Dandelion let out a roar
Was on his Foot ...Oh what a Lark
Enough to make the Dog rose bark
Shepherd's Purse for the collection
Daisy leads to the reception
Foxgloves off to drink the wine
Watch how nicely Celandines
Milkwort fills the Buttercups
Mushrooms now are all full up
Violet blushing Scarlet Pimpernel
Make a speech to wish them well
To be in Clover all their lives
And may their families always thrive
in God's great garden nature's way
Now then All... a Holly Day

Will Holland

'Lord Battersea', aka Mark Justin, at sixty

Mark Justin recently celebrated his 60th birthday and 32nd year at the helm of London's longest-running bar and restaurant with the same owner, Le Gothique, this year.

I opened Le Gothique on April 1st 1987, 32 years ago. And, at the time, little did I realise that this would not only become the next chapter of my life. But also, the last chapter! With 3 real ales and an upmarket French-inspired menu we unwittingly became London's first Gastro pub, years before the term came into common usage. You have to remember that back in 1987, pubs closed (by law) between 3pm and 5.30pm – a throwback to licensing laws passed in 1914 to prevent munitions workers from blowing themselves up.

Anomalies within these draconian 'permitted hours' existed, whereby some pubs opened until 10.30pm while others kept serving until 11pm. For example, The County Arms closed at 10.30pm while pubs considered to be in Inner London went on until 11pm. As a teenager I remember running from the Greyhound on Streatham Common down to the Pied Bull to grab that extra half hour of drinking time.

By designating the newly-opened Le Gothique as a restaurant back in 1987 I was able to circumvent those licensing laws by serving beer 'ancillary' to the service of food. A legal and technical point that allowed us to serve beer with food up until 11pm or 12 midnight at the weekends.

Business was brisk from day one. We had the Evening Standard food critic, Fay Maschler, dine during our opening month who described the affluent clientele



arriving in their 'spanking new BMWs' to Wandsworth's newest bar and eatery. Wandsworth was still very much up and coming back in 1987. My father, newly retired to Bexhill on Sea, warned me that Wandsworth was "well dodgy" and I should look after myself. Mind you, he also warned me of an even more undesirable location as he informed me... "Just as well you haven't opened a bar in Fulham, full of criminals!" Oh how times have changed. He would be spinning in his grave if he knew that today houses in nearby Spencer Park change hands for £6 million.

The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building was still a hard-hat-wearing area when Le Gothique opened. Entrepreneur and virgin property developer, Paul Tutton (who only paid £1 for the entire

freehold), struggled to complete the conversion of the upper floors. Early residents took a financial gamble on the new 'loft living' apartments. These early residents included three different 1980s chart acts. Drinkers at the bar in Le Gothique back in the 1980s would have rubbed shoulders with either Duran Duran's Andy Taylor, The Thompson Twins, or heartthrob Mark Shaw from Then Jerico. They were hedonistic times indeed as the parties at the bar often carried on long into the night up in the private apartments located in the spires of the upper reaches of the building. It's a wonder our resident ghost, Charlotte Jane Bennett, ever got a night's sleep.

After three months in residence one of our rock 'n' roller residents was very appreciative of the breakfasts (served at 2pm when he got up) and the late-night drinking opportunities. He was not quite so appreciative of the 'piss poor' laundry service. He complained to me personally that he had left clothing outside his door every night for dry cleaning only for it to be left untouched. I had to inform him that The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building was in fact, a residential/commercial building, NOT, a hotel as he had assumed. Ah, those were the days!

It was quite common for me to be asked by residents to disable burglar alarms installed in their apartments, as I was told "we don't want the Police coming 'round, do we?"

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Le Gothique

BAR, RESTAURANT
& GARDEN

Speak to Andrew behind the bar or email us at marklegothique@aol.com

It soon became apparent that the wonderful garden setting was a big draw for locals looking for an ideal wedding venue. To date we have had 1,550 wedding receptions here at Le Gothique. All personally administered by me and more recently by my son Andrew who took up the reins as Manager 4 years ago. Since 1996 we have married couples here in the garden which is unique amongst licensed wedding venues as offering genuine *al fresco*, outdoor ceremonies and receptions.

In March 2008 Le Gothique hosted its first beer festival. Timing is everything in business. And I just happened to stumble across this golden period for real ale and craft beer. The first Halloween festival followed almost immediately in October of 2008. To date, 25 beer festivals have taken place in the garden.



As to the future, who knows? But recent recruits Bruno Barbosa and Sara Fiore have certainly shaken up the kitchen since their arrival. Bruno was 18 years as sous chef to

the late great Antonio Carluccio at his flagship Dean Street eaterie before moving to le Gothique in November 2018.

Now more modern European with a distinct Italian influence the cuisine has changed and the prices dropped to make Le Gothique more inclusive with its Nappy Valley clientele while still having the 'specials' that our older couples yearn for. Certainly the £6 pasta main courses at lunchtime and early evening have proved a massive hit with the Students of the adjacent Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA).

But one thing is for sure, there will always be great beer and food plus a warm welcome to everyone who visits us here at the Party Palace that is Le Gothique, in the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building. ■

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Wandsworth Common

Implementation of the new 10-year Management and Maintenance Plan

Valerie Selby

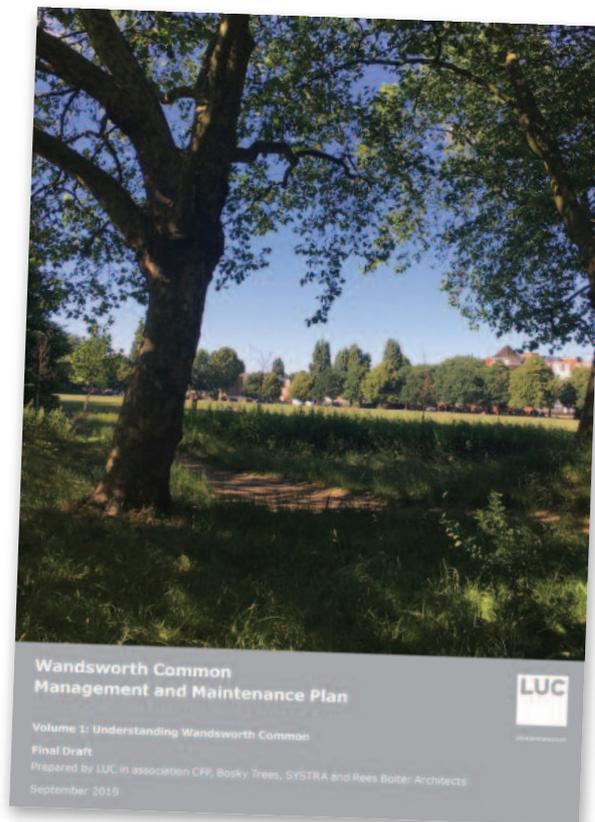
Last year I wrote about the evolution of the 10-year Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) for Wandsworth Common which has now been published [insert image of publication cover]. The plan itself is the culmination of 2 years' work to understand what people value about the Common, what they enjoy being able to do there and how they would like to see it cared for into the future. It encapsulates the following vision for the Common:

For Wandsworth Common to be a place which provides visitors and the local community with the opportunity to engage with nature, quiet recreation and to exercise. For the Common to be protected from the pressures of development and usage, with space for wildlife to flourish

This vision will be met through delivering work around 7 key aims:

1. To positively welcome people into the Common, in terms of both physical and social access whilst balancing the need to provide a sanctuary for wildlife in their natural habitats
2. To ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for Common users.
3. To improve the environmental quality and sustainability of management practices carried out in the Common
4. To maintain and increase the diverse mosaic of habitats within the Common
5. To maintain and restore the built assets and landscape features of the Common to ensure public appreciation and understanding of the Common's character and heritage
6. To provide opportunities to increase community use and involvement, particularly through events, education, interpretation and building partnerships.
7. To ensure all those involved in the management and maintenance of Wandsworth Common (including the local community) effectively use the Management and Maintenance Plan as a working document.

Obviously for me as the Biodiversity Manager aim 4 is key and it was reassuring to hear both the Management Advisory Committee and the Friends of Wandsworth Common advocate strongly for biodiversity to be a priority, particularly during the latter stages of consultation.



What will this mean in practice? It will mean a focus on looking at how we can make biodiversity habitats across the common "bigger, better, more and joined up" ('Making space for nature' Prof Sir John Lawton 2010¹). The action plan within the MMP states "Habitats should be maintained or increased where possible through sustainable management strategies". To use woodlands as an example, there are several pockets of semi-natural broadleaved woodland across the common: on The Scope, on the east side of Trinity Rd, Westside, Northside, to the north of the tennis courts, alongside the railway line on both sides and alongside Bolingbroke Grove. Whilst they are all currently managed for biodiversity they are scattered around the wider Common. The management plan challenges us to consider how we can improve habitat connectivity between these parcels to better allow wildlife populations to survive and be able to adapt to climate change and other pressures.

Furthermore, ecologists who contributed to the MMP have highlighted that certainly on The Scope our woodland has a dense canopy and would benefit from the creation of glades to allow more light to the woodland floor and to create new microclimates. We are also tasked with being increasingly proactive at removing invasive non-native species. All these management tasks are probably best pulled together into a long-term (25 year) woodland

1 *Making space for nature*, Prof Sir John Lawton 2010: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today>

management plan for the Common to ensure that our woodland management is sustainable on a longer timescale which better reflects the speed of change of woodland habitats. We will be seeking funding to enable us to commission this plan in late 2020 early 2021 which fits the prescribed timetable of this as a "short-medium term" action within the MMP.

Another key area where the plan shows we need to renew our focus is on ongoing monitoring of species – particularly to "develop a programme of ecological monitoring to inform ongoing management and ensure targeted and useful biodiversity data is recorded." It is recommended that we "record indicator species that are sensitive to environmental change such as butterflies or bats to improve understanding of how species use the site and how management should be adapted to support these species." We are extremely fortunate that we have several individuals who have recorded key species for many decades on the Common, so we have a good starting point. Ian Cunningham has been undertaking butterfly recording transects for well over 20 years. His data and more crucially his personal knowledge and links to other butterfly recorders, already allows us to understand a little better whether the presence or absence of species can be linked to our own specific habitat maintenance or whether it is part of a wider population trend. Peter White has recorded birds almost daily for a similar length of time giving us an excellent baseline for seasonal trends and for breeding success (most crucially with birds at the "top" of the food chain which can indicate to us the health of the smaller bird and small mammal populations).

We also have access to wider data sets where other volunteer recorders share their data – as I mentioned in a previous article the volunteers who contributed to the Bees of Surrey (Surrey Wildlife Trust 2008) have helped us to understand the value of the Common for 88 different species of aculeate Hymenoptera² including 5 red data book species and 7 nationally scarce species – there are 56 species of bee alone! We intend to continue our work with Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL³) the capital's environmental records centre, so that we can share our own biological records and continue to have access to those records made by others that can inform our management and maintenance actions. Crucially we want to explore how we can train and support more volunteers to record species of interest to them and this will form another strand of our work across the coming year. If you already record wildlife on Wandsworth Common or if you are keen to get started do please get in touch via biodiversity@enablelc.org ■

1 Aculeate Hymenoptera is the collective name for the family of bees, wasps and ants

2 www.gigl.org.uk



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The St John Family of Battersea in the seventeenth century – a family divided

Sally Sellers

Few issues have divided this country as starkly as the current crisis over Brexit. Those with deeply held convictions on both sides try to rally support and bitter arguments have even caused rifts within families. However, this situation is not without a violent precedent. Intense allegiances and family divisions were very evident during the English Civil Wars of the seventeenth century and can be seen clearly in the experience of the St. John family of Battersea.

By the 1640s, Parliament's challenge to what they saw as the 'absolutist' tendencies of the King, Charles I, had led to bloody civil war. Few families in the land were untouched by the fighting and the need to declare support for either King or Parliament. For the St John family this decision revealed divisions both between and within its two main branches. These branches had developed separately following the division of the estates owned by one Oliver St John and his wife Margaret Beauchamp in the late fifteenth century. On his death his eldest son inherited the wealthier manor of Bletso in Bedfordshire whilst the younger received Lydiard Tregoze in Wiltshire. It was from this latter side that Oliver St John, the first Lord of the Manor of Battersea, descended.

This Oliver St John, born in 1559, had risen in status suppressing Tyrone's rebellion in Ireland for Elizabeth I. He remained very much in favour at the court of King James I being made Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1616 and Viscount Grandison of Limerick in 1623. Then, elevated to the English peerage, with royal consent he purchased the 'manor of Batrichsey with Wandsworth' in 1627. The family had long made much of its royal connections, dating back to Margaret Beauchamp who through her second marriage was grandmother to King Henry VII. Together with the benefits accrued from royal favour, this makes it unsurprising that by the time civil war broke out in 1642 the then Lord of the Manor of Battersea, John St John, was a committed royalist. Too old to fight

himself, three of his sons died in battle fighting for the King; William, with Prince Rupert at Cirencester, Edward at the Battle of Newbury and John in the North of England.

Meanwhile the Bedfordshire St Johns had followed a very different path. Their Oliver St John, born in 1598, was raised to the peerage in 1624 choosing the title the Earl of Bolingbroke. He developed a distinguished legal career and played a leading role in the key legal challenges to the power of Charles I in the years preceding the outbreak of war. Both through political allegiance and family connections he was close to Oliver Cromwell, and indeed was a far more prominent figure in the parliamentary opposition in the early 1640s than Cromwell. Oliver St John raised a Bedfordshire regiment which his son and heir, also Oliver, commanded for the Parliamentary side at the first major Battle of Edgehill in 1642. He too suffered the misery of losing a son in the fighting but this time for Parliament. Oliver was mortally wounded, taken prisoner and died, leaving his father with two daughters, one of whom was to play a significant role in the family story.

In 1649 Walter St John, the eldest surviving son of that diehard royalist John St John of Battersea, married Johanna St John eldest of the two daughters of the parliamentarian Oliver St John of Bedfordshire.

Johanna had been brought up with the strong puritan influences common to many of those on the Parliamentarian side. This could be expected to cause problems in a royalist, high Anglican household. However it seems that Walter did not share the fervent views of his father and brothers. A hostile witness later reported that his marriage turned him into "a rogue, a rebel, an Anabaptist and a Quaker."

Walter St John did now commit to 'the other side' from the rest of his Battersea family. In the conflict that continued after the execution of Charles I, he was commissioned as an officer in the Surrey regiment of Oliver



Cromwell's forces. He led a troop at the 1651 Battle of Worcester where the invading army of Charles II was roundly defeated. Poignantly members of the royalist side of the St John family fought for Charles at Worcester, although there is no evidence that they directly faced each other on the battlefield. In the ensuing years Walter served as an MP in the Protectorate Parliaments of the Republican regimes.

Maybe Walter was at heart a realist since by the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 it looked very much like he had changed his allegiance. Walter had inherited the Manor of Battersea in 1656, and he chiefly resided there whilst also holding the family estates in Wiltshire. Bearing gifts from there he is reported to have hastened quickly to London to greet Charles II as he made his triumphant return to the city. So pleased was the King with this generosity that in May 1661 he dined with Walter and his wife at Battersea Manor House. It is hard to find concrete evidence of this visit but there is some substantiation of Walter's influence in royal circles. From 1658-62, Simon



Patrick was domestic chaplain to Walter and Johanna St John in Battersea from where he was chosen as royal chaplain to Charles II before his appointment as Bishop of Chichester.

Maybe scarred by the divisions of brutal civil war and with the influence of his pious wife, for the rest of his life Walter played a low key role in national politics whilst taking a philanthropic interest in parish business in Battersea.

In the 1660s he founded the school in Battersea High Street which he endowed in 1700, the origin of the Walter St John educational charity for which his name is still known. ■

Reprinted from Battersea Matters, the Battersea Society newsletter.

Acknowledgements: Stephen Bransgrove. The St John Family of Battersea. Journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society, December 1984 No.43

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THE ART OF REAL ESTATE

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Time to Talk Food

with Prue Raper

With Christmas approaching, it's inevitable that most people's thoughts turn to food. After eight years working for a major supermarket company, I tend to avoid thinking about food more than I absolutely have to, and the other day I decided it was time I had a purge of the bookshelf that holds all the cookery books I have ever possessed, going back to my first year in London – the time I was forced to cook in order to live – no fast foods or ready meals in those days of yore.

My mother was given a “baby book” when I was born: “The Little One’s Log” covered every aspect of my development, including my appetite and digestion. What did she say about me? – “Baby’s digestion: good. Baby’s digestion excellent. Baby will eat anything.” I was not a fussy eater.

In fact if I cast my mind back to the days of rationing, and my early childhood in the country, I remember that most of our diet then came from our own garden, or the local hedgerows, the chicken run or the sea. We had plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, blackberries and mushrooms; and once a week the fish man called out his wares from the village green. You went out with a plate and came back with a few mackerel or some sprats,

Even so, there were times when I felt like something a bit fancier. My mother had a remedy for that. She would produce her own mother’s bound copy of Mrs Beeton’s Household Management. This was not for me to read the recipes – I don’t think I was yet able to read – but to look at the mouth-watering pictures, in full colour, of jellies and trifles, mousses and ice-cream sundaes. By the time I’d pondered those for a bit, my eyes had given me a completely full stomach.

This in turn inspired me to create my own culinary treats, preserved in manuscript (capital letters only, and an original slant on anglo-saxon

MUDDPIS RESIPES

TAK A THIN PYS OF MUD AND PUT A GREEN LEAF ON TOP OF IT. AND WEN YOU HAVE PUT IT ON TOP PUT A NUTHER LAYER OF MUD ON TOP OF THAT.

SPUNG SAMWIJ

TAK A ROUND PES OF MUD AND SPRED SOME SAND ON IT AND PUT A NUTHER LAYER OF MUD ON TOP OF THAT AND STIK SUM PESIS OF STROR IN IT.

SUMMER MUD PIS BIRTHDAY CAKE RESIPES

TAK A FAIRLY FAT PYS OF MUD AND PUT SOME SAND IN BETWEEN. PUT A NUTHER LAYER OF MUD ON TOP AND STIK ON SUM DASY PETYLS.

(Other variations available on receipt of s.a.e.)

spelling) by my mother as an example of my budding journalism. It also demonstrates my other early hobby of gardening.

With cookery of the more edible kind, I was a dismal failure. My mother was a great fruit bottler in those lovely Kilner jars, and I thought I could emulate her. I put some raspberries into a

little glass fish paste jar, topped it up with water and put it into my little dolls' larder cupboard (made by my brother in woodwork at school). Checking on it a week or so later, I was upset to find it had grown a thick coat of blue fur.

I never tried that again, but my interest in food did not diminish. A nearby village began a wartime trade in pies – a kind of Cornish pasty of three types: meat, cheese and jam in tooth-breakingly hard pastry. Since our village hall was requisitioned, the big room at the end of our house served as a meeting place, and the Women's Institute began selling the pies once a week through the garden window to anyone who fancied them. I, being omnivorous, thought they were delicious. It was a short-lived enterprise though: whichever ingredient was the culprit, a few people got food poisoning, and the pies were rapidly withdrawn from sale.

But back to the purge of my bookshelf. My grandmother's Mrs Beeton was supplemented by a hard-back black leather volume, gold-blocked on the cover: "Mrs W. T. Hartcup – Cookery Recipes" (wonderful marbled endpapers within). This must have been a gift from my grandfather – maybe an anniversary present. The label inside proclaims that it was specially ordered from Jarrold & Sons, Manufacturing Stationers, London and Norwich. The index at the front directs the reader to such delicacies as Amber Pudding, American "Chowder", Baking Powder, Claret Cup (Barwell's recipe) and Currie (Uplands recipe), all in my grandmother's meticulous handwriting.

My mother's later additions include "To clean Ivory", and Christmas Plum Pudding (Mrs Hallett's recipe). The latter I do remember very well, as the making and stirring of it was a family enterprise. The exciting bit was when the Guinness went in. I had never smelt anything so exotic. Mrs Hallett kept the village pub, and rather than being designed for Christmas the pudding was made for the Audit Dinners when the tenant farmers came to pay their rent. All very feudal.

The more cosmopolitan collection of books, bought by me or given to me, includes "Cooking the Maltese Way". The recipe for Tripe Soup requires 2 lbs of tripe and various vegetables and serves 4.

In the Swiss Cookery Book, the exciting instructions for "Broth" contain the advice: "The

proportion of flour to butter should be such that the flour forms lumps, large and small."

I think one of my favourites is from "A Bunch of Greek Dishes". The opening recipe is for Easter Soup. The list of ingredients begins with "The heart, liver, lungs and intestines of a lamb" and opens with the instructions: "Turn the intestines inside out with a pencil under a tap of running cold water".

I'm not sure if, after all these discoveries, I can bear to part with this treasury of gastronomic delight. I feel they really deserve their own site on the internet.

There is actually one of the Mrs Beeton recipes which I vowed to make when I was grown up. That was a Venetian Villa. It comes under the section for "Ornamental Confectionary" and takes up five pages, including the architectural drawings, with the completed edifice consisting of a three storey building draped in vines and decorated with sea shells. I'd probably better pass that one on to one of the TV shows which I can never bring myself to watch.

And I think I'll stick to a nice slice of Spung Samwij. ■

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John McAteer

John McAteer was born in Bury, Lancashire in October 1955 and emigrated to Australia with his family in 1962 at the age of 7. In 1987, aged 31, he was involved in a drunken brawl that ended in a fatality, following which he was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. He served 16 years in prison in Boggo Road Gaol, Brisbane, where he graduated in English literature through Griffith University, Queensland. In 2003 he was released and deported to England.

In 2017 he was admitted to St Charles' Psychiatric Hospital, London after suffering the trauma of losing his family in a single day, his wife having died of cancer on the same day his two children died

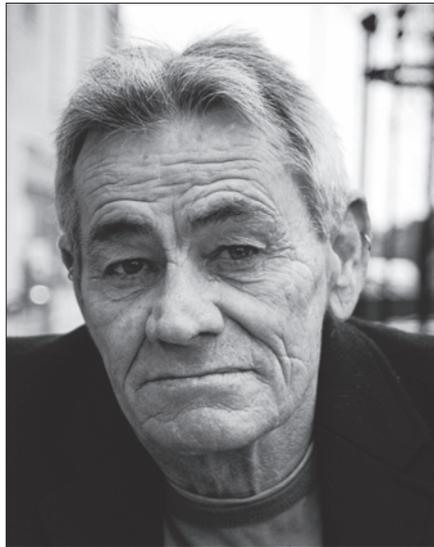


photo by Caitlin Foster

in a car accident on their way to see her in hospital.

In 2017 he was found guilty of assault and sentenced to prison and, following his release in 2018, received a further custodial sentence for breaching a restraining

order. After spending much of 2018-18 in HMP's Wormwood Scrubs and Wandsworth, he was released in April 2019 and now lives in North London.

Throughout this time he has been a prolific poet, writing hundreds of poems on a wide range of themes, all in lower case with no punctuation. He is currently seeking a publisher for a cycle of verses called "Still Life with Ashtray." The first of the two poems below, "Silence", was written after an inmate on the same Wing in Wormwood Scrubs committed suicide in 2018. The second, "Allowing the Weather", is included here simply because, having been written on 12th June 2019, at time of compiling this bio, it's his most recent.

Geoffrey Smith

Silence

saddened by the world and the workings of men
wounded and weary and fragile
seething with rebellion

pretty things he noticed though only in the abstract
like special silences shouting indecipherable
not unintelligent just struggling
with the anguish of abandonment

and the nights began to tumble
as he stumbled through the cries in his head
through the wretched corridors and landings crammed
with broken souls with criminals and the collective burden
of spent love and dead words

with no kindness even beneath moonlight
he absented himself

braver than most they discovered him
savagely still
silent

a ragged strip of soiled cloth tethered to the bunk
secure around his throat
gone deep into the jigsaw puzzle of prowling ghosts created
by this place

barbaric
quiet for now

Allowing the Weather

I believe I would make
a very good
tree

bending and swaying
with all of it

not breaking
simply enduring

I believe I would make
a very good
stone

allowing the weather to be
and I think I would make
a splendid fire

consuming all that
we don't need

I believe I would make
a different world

one
nicer
if I could
ends/ends

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

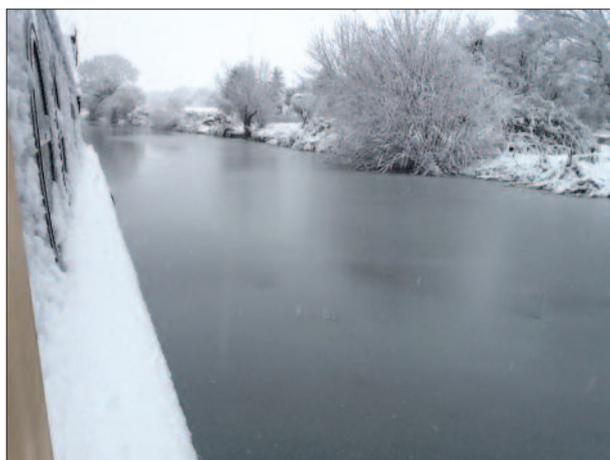
Mark Trent

Last year I wrote about all the good things with living on Eyeballs in the Sky. Excuse the pun but life is not “all plain sailing”. This is the bits that made me scream, pull my hair out or just plain “smash someone in the teeth” (which I didn’t do).

Eyeballs was launched on 15th September 2016, at about 11.15. She was filled with water and moved a couple of hundred yards (youngsters, look it up) and moored outside Braunston for the first night, to be then hit by another boat who wasn’t looking where the old fool was going, Eyeballs had her first bit of damage. By 3pm it was realised there was a problem with the charging system (solar, generator, engine alternator). The generator was putting power in, the other two parts were sucking it out. That took a week before the builder agreed with me, but in that week three “experts” came, looked, scratched their heads, agreed to the problem, but couldn’t sort it. After 3 days, all the hot water pipes blew off the water heater (calorifier) flooding the bilge in the engine bay with 75 litres of hot water. I re-fitted all the pipes, and it did it again the following day. “That’s never happened before” said the boat builder, but he had a fix straight away, funny that!. Eyeballs still suffers from very high water pressure, hot water in the shower never lasts more than 5 minutes, but the pipes have held, so far.

Back to the electrics, someone came out to the boat almost every day since launch, so after about 3

weeks the boat builder sent out the man that completes the boat safety certificates to fix any problems (still not really believing me). He did lots of checking, played about with some wires and around 3 hours later declared “you will be fine now, I’ll report back to the builder”. With what I know now, I won’t let him anywhere near Eyeballs ever again.



Being new to living on a boat, I had a feeling the electrics wasn’t quite right, but I didn’t know enough to put a finger on it, it just felt wrong. Anyways, by November, I had sailed her the 60 miles or so, through two tunnels, each over a mile long, and 12 foot 6 inches wide, I lost a bit of paint through those. Milton Keynes came and went, Leighton Buzzard, I blinked and nearly missed it, and I was down by Cassiobury park in Watford, the ice was covering the canal, and the central heating boiler WENT BANG. It took a week for an engineer to get out to me. Dave put it back together, checked it, billed me £268, and left. Not the boat builders fault, of course, so I paid that one. January 2017, by now I had got to Rickmansworth, Stokers lock, the ice was solid across the canal again, Bang, boiler again. It turns out, the complaining I had

been doing about low voltage was not just me being a pain, Dave was at the boat for 6 hours trying to find out where the power was going, he couldn’t but he did rebuild the boiler again, and the bill this time, went to the builder. The following day Adrian, from the boat builders turned up, after another 6 hours, he found the power drain, a faulty fuse, the boiler has been fine ever since. The dogs and I curled up on the floor wrapped in the duvet on double thick dog beds, ice was on the walls and windows, -5c is not comfortable.

Let’s get back to the electrics, during the summer of ‘17 I came home and the 240volt system had shut itself down, but the builder said it was nothing to worry about. More on that later. But with all the solar panels on the roof, it did seem odd that I had to run the generator so much and I kept being told, that’s just the way it is, until September 2017, the batteries stopped holding charge. All the system told me everything was full but very little power. Gary, the boat builder, told me to run the engine and the generator together, “that will charge the batteries fully” he said. This is another, wish I knew better, moments. I did as I was told. The voltage gauge went haywire, something went pop/bang in the engine bay, I turned the generator off and have never asked for Gary’s advice since.

I struggled through to Christmas, running the generator when I needed power until I could raise enough for a new set of batteries as

this wasn't in the budget. This is when I found the cracked casing, I think that was the pop/bang in September, The old ones were dead, but to my surprise, and shock, the new ones didn't fix the problem. Enter electrical expert number 3. He tells me, 1, the new batteries are knackered, 2, the black wires from the solar panels are positive and the red wires are negative, 3, the fuses are at the wrong end of the circuit. Remember that boat safety certificate guy fiddling with some wires?

At the end of May I went to the Crick inland waterways show, there I met Clive and Tony from Multicell, a battery company. Experts numbers 4 & 5. They tell me the second set of batteries are knackered too, sell me set number 3 and travel 100 miles to fit them and "have a look to see what's wrong". They scratch their heads lots, bounce ideas, get me to try things and, in January 2019, they then put me in touch with Simon (solar panel God in my



eyes now). Simon (runbythesun.com) sorted the wiring, fitted fuses of the right size and in the right place and fitted solar charge controllers capable of doing the job. It turns out the panels and the controllers were not compatible so fried the batteries but while telling me they were undercharging. Now, nearly 3 years down the line, the charging system works as I had always hoped. I have learnt so much and Gary, who's company is called Colecraft, is going to get a bill. I wonder what his reaction will be? Watch this space.

Another problem, but less of an issue, a water leak from the central heating system which is proving elusive to find.

The generator has been fitted so all the service items, filters, oil filler, dip stick are all at the back so you need to be Twizzle to get to them and have torches on the ends of your fingers to see what you are doing.

The one major casualty of my electrical fiasco, my wonderful incinerator loo, clean and easy to use and no mess or smells, it packed up at the end of 2017. The only option I had was a composting loo, yuck. Don't believe the sales blurb, they stink, they are messy (shit is), and you have to keep buckets of it for about a year before its useable, it separates the liquid off into a tank, that leaks when you try and empty it, more mess, more stinks, more yuck. YUCK. I want my incinerator back. Anyone got



a spare £4500 for a new one that they won't miss? No? Thought so.

The latest problem, October '18, I had the outside repainted and while I was there had the water tank repainted too, I used a boat yard recommended to me by another boater. It took 10 days instead of a week and was told the paint needed time to cure so don't fill the tank for 12-14 days. Two weeks later I filled with water, it came out of the tap purple, fizzy, and stinky. Turns out the new paint was not compatible with the old. It was scraped off with a wall paper scraper. Today (13/5/19) it is being done properly with a plastic paint with a 10 year guarantee but told it should last 25. Another, watch this space. Update on the electrics, after sending a letter to the boat builder, Gary has offered something as compensation. We are in "negotiations". ■

To discuss barges and bicycles visit Mark at Stratton Cycles in East Hill.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS –

Answers to Celebrity Quiz on page 20

1. Ezra Pound
2. Nelson Rockefeller. He was then Vice-President
3. Mandy Rice-Davies

4. Trevor McDonald
5. Sajid Javid – then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
6. Perdita Avery, aka Kate Aldridge Madikane

Who can you come up with for Bedside 2020?

Battersea Ironsides

Our home of the oval ball

Stuart Thom

Like many Wandsworth residents I have seen the large sign on Burntwood Road, promoting "Battersea Ironsides". I had not thought much about this, till the Ironsides suddenly hit the news headlines due to the Rugby World Cup. But let us start at the beginning, and though there's a wide range of sporting activities played out on their grounds, such as football, cricket, tennis and bowls, it is the rugby tradition I want to explore.



Battersea Ironsides was founded in 1943, by the then Commanding Officer of the 42nd Tank Battalion stationed in Wandsworth, Colonel EH St Maur Toope. The Army likes to associate their rugby clubs with the actual regimental activity, so the rugby club was designated "Ironsides". Incidentally, the 42nd Tank Battalion became the Clapham Tank Regiment and had a distinguished Second World War, fighting in North Africa, and elsewhere. The 42nd have since been awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Wandsworth, under their new name of the Royal Tank Regiment. Happily the Army maintains its links, and sends up a team from the RTR to play each year for the ceremonial "podstick" that hangs above the clubhouse bar.

The rugby club boasts five Senior teams, two Ladies sides and a thriving Minis, as well as a Vets and under 21s. The Minis are shortly to enter the Guinness Book of Records as the largest group of players and coaches on a rugby tour, some 306 going to

Minehead earlier this year. Battersea Ironsides is in London South West 2 Division which includes fixtures against Old Emanuel, Eastleigh, Farnham and Old Tunbridgians.

Why the excitement in October? I mentioned the Rugby World Cup. "The Times" of October 25th had a headline "Watch rugby? That's for the posh boys say the lads from Sinckler estate." A similar theme was followed by other newspapers.

Kyle Sinckler, the England prop forward, is an old boy of the Ironsides. Educated at Graveney School, Tooting, he played with the Ironsides between the ages of 8 to 14 before moving on through London Scottish and on to Harlequins. Kyle was quite a character but having persuaded his teacher, Stacia Long, to set up a rugby team at Graveney, he never looked back and with his start assured playing for England Under-16s, he went on to a scholarship at Epsom College. Kyle had a very good World Cup, scoring a rugged try against Australia in the quarter finals, but sadly being

concussed in the second minute of the Final.

The Club is very family focussed and has had enormous support from parents and its older members, particularly Nigel Taylor-Walker, who has done much to mentor the younger players. President Richard Smith, who helped found the Minis and Juniors, said "it is a joy to watch the Minis and the Colts coming through. They learn the value of team work and get great

enjoyment from the game".

Talking of the Colts, I would add one further comment. Through the good offices of the Tag Rugby Trust the Colts travel to Zambia each year to visit the townships. The boys help the locals with community projects such as painting schools or funding water pump maintenance, that can be continued after the Colts return. It also gives an awareness of a different world, and develops confidence building from helping the disadvantaged communities. The Colts raise the funds themselves from car-washing, cake sales and selling raffle tickets. I am sure if other donations are forthcoming they would be warmly welcomed!

Battersea Ironsides is a fine club, more than that, a fine institution that brings great credit to the borough. It has a great community spirit and I wish it well for the future. ■

Recollections of the Royal Victoria Patriotic School

My sister and I were orphaned in the 1930s by the loss of our father, Corporal J W Singleton of the K.S.L.I. He had served 21 years with the Army, but my mother was left without a home (we had lived in married quarters) and could not get accommodation for herself and us. She received only 18/- per week from the Army, 10/- for herself, 5/- for me and 3/- for my sister. The Royal British Legion made arrangements for my sister and me to be taken to the Royal Victoria Patriotic School. My mother took us there. We were very frightened by the large building and were reluctant to stay - we wanted to return to Derby to live with our mother.

In many ways our existence at the R.V.P. School was quite 'Dickensian' - austere, cold, cruel really in many ways. After all, we were only little girls. I was about 10 years old, my sister 9. As our fathers were all in the Army and in different regiments, we had to wear our fathers' regimental badges on our lapel. We were treated as soldiers and marched everywhere. On every military occasion, such as Royal Tournaments, we had to attend and wore our fathers' badges with pride. Only a few girls had been orphaned by the loss of a mother.

Our uniform was navy blue and red, and we wore boys' shoes and socks, navy tunics, navy short jackets, Eton collars and navy 'pork-pie' pull-on hats. We were to be seen regularly in 'crocodile' around Wandsworth Common, the parks and Clapham Junction, etc. We all referred to the R.V.P. School as 'Wandsworth Prison'.

The School was divided into four 'houses' named after Army generals, Earls, etc. There was 'Haig House', to which my sister and I belonged, Jellicoe, Ravelock and another. We slept in our 'House' dormitories, complete with a mistress. There were about 30 girls or so in each. Each 'House' was called to attention and had to march into a large dining hall, prayers/grace were said and we all sat on large forms at long tables. If we had a very straight back marching, we were given a red/navy striped sash to wear round our waist, If we did anything wrong, e.g. talked, we 'lost' our pudding - sometimes for a week! The food was very plain, and only one small helping and two rounds of bread. All the domestic work in the building was done by us girls. We were all between 7 and 12 years old. Some of us cleaned the dining hall (it was a huge room) and we did all the polishing on our hands and knees. Some worked in the kitchen and some in the laundry. It was really hard labour for us. I hated my turn on the 'wash lavatory'. Each dormitory had one with wash basins etc to clean. We had to tooth-comb everyone's hair in the House - for lice. If one was 'dirty' it was noted in a book, reported, and a linen square was soaked in carbolic and placed on the girl's head, covered with a rubber bathing hat.

In the mornings we rose early, washed, made our beds, were given two biscuits each, cleaned and polished the day-room lockers, dormitory etc. Then at about 7.45 we marched down to the Quadrangle, stood at ease, then the House Mistress would shout 'Haig House 'Shun!' and into the dining-hall we would march, arms swinging, into breakfast. We all hated Saturdays when we all queued up in a line, for a strong dose of Senna pods. All day we were doubled-up with stomach ache, trying to do endless polishing and cleaning, having to rush away every now and then to try to get to the 'loo' in time.

Our schooling was given inside the School but the teachers or tutors came from outside. I remember Mrs Neal and Mrs Kirk; they brought a breath of fresh air to us all, kindness and warmth. I used to envy them being able to go home, 'outside'. We had a Miss Bullen who taught us hockey and swimming. We had our own pool inside the grounds and meadows for 'rounders' etc. We had our own Chapel and church was compulsory three times a day on Sundays. On Sundays too, we were not allowed to knit or sew, only to write letters home.

I believe the building was haunted, as I personally had an 'experience' once myself when I was so frightened I screamed the 'dorm' down. Once for a very small 'wrong' I was sent to the Matron who put me in a very small room, alone all day without food, etc and made to learn a Collect out of the book of Common Prayer. At about 9 in the evening, she came to me and I had to recite it to her. All of us welcomed being ill or sick, to get inside the Sanatorium (inside the grounds, near the gate) and have some warmth, and 'special' treatment by the Sister there.

We had a School song at the Royal Vic:

'Attention, you worthy Citizens, and hold Your Head up High,
For the children of the Forces three, are now passing by...'

As the School was so near Clapham Junction Station and the trains ran just a few yards in front of the School we were all pleased to be able to watch the trains and people going by, and on one occasion when the then King, George VI, and Queen Elizabeth were going on a tour of Canada, they passed by in the Royal train, and the two Princesses, Elizabeth and Margaret were with them.

In the war years, no-one seemed to know what was going to happen to us all. Some of us went to 'foster parents' for a few weeks and my sister and I went to a game-keeper and his wife who were childless and lived in a small thatched cottage in the middle of a thick wood at Coddendam in Suffolk. They were the happiest days of our young lives, with a 'Mum and Dad'. They let us play the piano, bake cakes, etc and we were allowed to go and feed the pheasants and collect hens' eggs - it was a lovely time for us. For many years after, until they died, I kept in touch with this couple, Mr and Mrs Balaam.

When war was declared, some of us went to a large country house in a village, St Florence, near Tenby, Pembrokeshire. The other half of the School occupied Haen Castle, Saundersfoot, South Wales.

Thank goodness today's children are treated differently and in smaller numbers. I feel that we all suffered greatly from our treatment at the Patriotic School. The hard discipline forced on us, with no warmth and affection after the pain of losing our father and being away from home. We were treated as soldiers or men, not little girls.

Mrs Doreen Pearce
née Singleton
No 13 Haig House
Royal Victoria Patriotic School

'South of the Beechcroft Road the vast buildings of the Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum erected in 1840 at a cost of £36,000 ... stand out boldly in the beautiful open fields that stretch south to Garratt Lane ... Burntwood Lane is still a pretty rural way downhill to Garratt Lane with fields on both sides. On the west side of the Lane stand 'The Lodge' and 'Grange' in beautiful grounds, but the land is all in the market, so they will soon be hemmed in by rows of villas and disappear'.

W. Besant, *'London south of the Thames'* (1912)



The Ice House at Burntwood School

by Cath Brookes Deputy Principal Emeritus

When I joined Burntwood School back in 1992 as a History teacher, there was a patch of the school grounds that fascinated me. Out on the sports field, a spikey iron fence surrounded a patch of densely overgrown brambles rather resembling the exterior of Sleeping Beauty's castle after a hundred years of growth. This fortress stood there, untouched, come rain come shine but when I discovered that under the blackberries lay a Georgian Ice House I would take my class to see it on our 'History at Burntwood' lesson each year. They couldn't see much but they still pressed their faces up against the railings and had to imagine what lay under the leaves as I told them what Ice Houses were and why this one was located in our grounds, which back in the 18th century were part of a large farm. Education budgets being what they are, and the Burntwood site being what it had become back in the 1990s, there seemed little hope for the amount of money that would be required for any kind of restoration, so after taking advice the then Principal Brigid Beattie wisely took the decision to leave it as it was, protected by the earth and brambles, until such a time as funds could be found for a proper restoration which I am very happy to say has just happened. Funded by Section 106 money secured by Principal Helen Dorfman, for whom it was a long-held wish to restore and preserve the Ice House as an important local historical building, the work was designed

and supervised by John Eger of Eger Architects, Compass Historical Archaeology and the actual restoration building works done by Darren Brown and his team. Alongside this restoration work, my year 7 class (aged 11 and 12) studied the history of the Ice House and what was found inside it, and they now have become quite expert at showing visitors round it. If while reading

buildings, stables, a coachman's house, and what are labelled 'Pleasure Grounds' on a map from 1839. The mansion and surrounding grounds were auctioned in 1838 and became part of the lands on which the Surrey County Pauper Lunatic Asylum was established. The main building of this institution has survived as the Springfield Hospital. It is not unlikely that the



The Ice House visible on the ordinance Survey map from 1868

the article you have information that would add to ours, or indeed show ours to be incorrect I would be very grateful if you would let me know.

As far as we can ascertain, the first major building near the site of our school was Springfield Farm, which dates from at least the late 18th century. Owned by a Wandsworth distiller, Richard Bush, it was sold to Henry Perkins of Southwark in 1815. Perkins incorporated the farm into a larger estate named Springfield Park, named after a natural spring that ran through the area. The mansion was set in 97 acres of grounds which contained farm

farm may even have been used as a venue for work-based therapy for some of the patients throughout its time as a hospital.

If the Springfield Park estate had pleasure grounds it is reasonable to assume that the householder would have used the house for entertainment and parties, which would require a domestic ice house in which to store ice, fashionably used for cooling drinks and making cold confections such as sorbets, rather than to serve as a food storage area. Ice would be sourced from frozen ponds and water sources in the winter and packed into the Ice House which



The earliest photo we have of the Ice House 1952

rather like an iceberg has most of its storage capacity underground, with a domed brick roof to keep the interior cold enough to keep the ice frozen. Later on, ice could be bought from Ice Wharf in Kings Cross where it had been imported from Norway via sea, unloaded at the wharf and put onto carts, covered with sawdust and delivered to ice houses to top up their supplies. Ice was not put directly into the drink, but rather used to chill the bottle from outside, as the pond water would not be clean enough to consume. Likewise ice cream and sorbets would be made in the Ice House with the ice chilling the container. From what the restorers have uncovered from inside the house we can also assume that the cold area inside was used to facilitate making butter. An intact glass bottle was found with 'Silver Churn Butter Colouring' moulded into the glass. The class found an advert for this product on the internet, and discovered that butter colouring which was often used in urban areas to give butter made from less than fresh milk an appealing golden colour.



Icehouse during restoration

There are an estimated 2500 Ice Houses in England but most are in a very dilapidated state and beyond repair. As ours was protected against the elements by the layers of earth and brambles, the brick dome was intact and only the exterior portico had crumbled, and so the work done was indeed restoration rather than rebuilding. The Ice House has a circular footprint with a square entrance and flanged walls, with a drain in the bottom to soak away any melted ice.

Burntwood's Ice House was listed as a Grade II building in 1983 and so all works done to restore it had to be approved by the local authority and by Heritage England in order to ensure that the historical integrity of the building be maintained and

appropriate techniques and materials were used where possible. The door would have been made from oak, but the original was too destroyed to be restored and so a new one was commissioned. One modern feature we have added is a solar panel to power a light inside the Ice House to illuminate the vertical ladder by which visitors can now descend into the Ice House and experience it from inside. The site was excavated, the walls restored using old bricks (each one sixty times more expensive than new ones – a fact the students couldn't quite grasp!), and the exterior soil replaced as it would have been at the time, to provide an extra layer of insulation to keep the interior cold.

It's not just the Ice House that has proved to be a historical



Hidden depths



Icehouse roof exposed

treasure at Burntwood. Various pieces of glass, pottery and even whole bottles were dug out of the inside of it during restoration. We have worked to identify some of the pieces, for example, a fragment from a sauce bottle was uncovered, which we have identified as 'Favourite' sauce which later became 'Daddies Favourite' sauce, so this dates the find as after 1904 when the company began production using this particular bottle. We also found pottery fragments, dating probably from the late 19th and early 20th century, and a variety of other bottles and jars, some of which may well be old ink wells from the original Garratt Green School, based on our site until 1986.

The restoration work done on it has won a Mayor's design award



The Ice House today

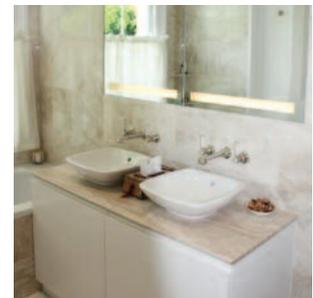
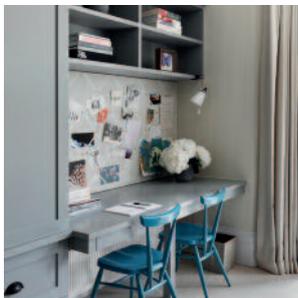
and my students also won a Heritage Prize for their work documenting the restoration and researching into the history of it. I am happy to facilitate a group

visit to the Ice House for readers of this magazine. Please contact info@burntwoodschool.com to be part of this visit. ■

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I'm looking at my copy of "Just William" by Richmal Crompton, a present from my grandparents on my 9th birthday. "Just William", a collection of short stories, was first published in 1922. The illustrations are by Thomas Henry. There were 39 "William" books - the last, "William the Lawless", was published in 1970. Richmal Crompton (1890-1969) studied Classics at Royal Holloway College, and worked as a teacher. In 1923 she contracted polio, lost the use of her right leg, gave up teaching and concentrated on writing. As well as the "William" stories, Richmal Crompton published fiction for adults. Richmal Crompton was a pen name - her real name was Richmal Crompton Lamburn. Crompton was her mother's maiden name. Richmal, a combination of Richard and Mary, was the name of her mother's sister, and had been used in the family since the early 1700s. Richmal Mangnall (1769-1820), also a schoolmistress with Lancashire roots, may have been related - she was the author of the very popular "Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young People", first published in 1798.

The first "William" story ("Rice Mould Pudding") was published in "Home" Magazine in 1919. So this month we will look at some of the words used in the "William" stories.

The words below are from "Just William", and are given as examples of usage in the OED:

Assified: William was talking to his cousin Dorita about a forthcoming wedding at which both William and Dorita were to be dressed in white satin. "Dorita's language delighted and fascinated William."

Dorita: "wouldn't touch her with the butt-end of a bargepole. She's an *assified* cow, she is. Humph!" *Assified* was in use by 1818. *Wouldn't touch with a bargepole* was in use by the 1890s.

Betcher: A colloquial pronunciation of *bet you*. Dorita's words *you betcher life* is the earliest example of *betcher* in the OED.

Crumbs: 'Crumbs!' said William, 'Talk about bad luck!' *Crumbs* (described in the OED as a "disguised oath" and "An

exclamation of consternation, dismay, etc.) was one of William's favourite words. The earlier spelling was *crum*.

Deuce and dickens: William had told Mr. Morgan (without his sister's knowledge) that his sister Ethel wished to see Mr. Morgan at about 7p.m. That evening the housemaid announced that Mr. Morgan had arrived to see Ethel, and had been shown into the library. William's father, Mr. Brown, wasn't pleased. "What the deuce - why the dickens is the young idiot coming at this time of day? Seven o'clock! What time does he think we have dinner? What does he mean by coming round paying calls on people at dinner time."

Both *deuce* and *dickens* were euphemisms for "devil".

The expression "What the deuce" was used by Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) in "The reprisal: or, The tars of old England. A comedy" in 1757. *Deuce* may be from a Germanic word based on the Latin *duos* (two), a word shouted out by gamblers when they scored the low score of two.

What the dickens was in use by the late 16th century; *dickens* is from the surname *Dickens*.

Funny: William was speaking in a husky voice to the little girl next door, who asked him "What are you speaking so funny for?" William replied "I'm not talking funny."

One of the meanings of *funny* is "In an odd or peculiar manner, strangely" (regional and colloquial).

Garn: William and his friends (known as "The Outlaws") were playing with a pram, which was taken by some other boys who rode downhill in it. "That's my pram!" said William to the cargo, as it emerged, joyfully, from the ditch. "Garn" S'ours! We found it." "Well, I left it there." "Garn is a regional or Cockney pronunciation of *go on*, used as an expression of disbelief.

Marquee: The day of the wedding arrived, and William and Dorita were dressed in white satin. As you may have guessed, the satin did not remain white for long!

"the domestics of the Brown household were busy arranging refreshments in a

marquee in the garden."

Marquee is probably from the French *marquise* (marchioness) and was borrowed into English by the late 17th century when an advert in the London Gazette mentioned "A good Marquee, two French tents." Early spellings include *marquée*, *marki* and *markee*. The link between a marchioness and a large tent isn't clear - a voluminous dress perhaps!

Martyr: It was a rainy day and William was bored. William's sister Ethel was talking to a friend and "broke off with the sigh of a patient *martyr* as William came in." *Martyr* is from the Greek *martur* (witness). Early *martyrs* died as witnesses to their faith, that is they chose to die rather than renounce their beliefs.

Nincompoop: William's father, Mr. Brown said "Is dinner to be kept waiting for that youth all night?... Is my digestion to be ruined simply because this young *nincompoop* chooses to pay his social calls at seven o'clock at night?"

Nincompoop means a simpleton or foolish person. The origin is uncertain. An earlier spelling (in use by about 1668) was *nickumpoop*.

Paid for: William acquired a dog called Jumble. "they taught him to sit up and almost taught him "Paid for" ". *Paid for* is an expression said to a pet dog who has earned a reward, and means "eat it".

One of the "William" books (which I must confess I haven't yet read!) has a very topical title - "William and the Moon Rocket" (1954). But the moon rocket was a fairground ride!

In Richmal Crompton's stories William was always 11 years old. What was William like when he grew up? Like Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965), perhaps. His entry in the DNB includes "Like Richmal Crompton's fictional hero William, whom in many ways he resembled, the schoolboy Winston was a courageous individualist who flouted the rules and got into scrapes."

Now it's time to read some more "William" stories!

This article first appeared in Mensa magazine.

Rosebay Willowherb

London's 'county flower'

In 2002 when the charity Plantlife asked people to select a county flower for each of the British counties rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) was chosen for the Greater London Area.

The history of this plant in Britain raises a number of questions. In the eighteenth century it was considered a rarity. If a London botanist wanted to see the plant's flamboyant purple-pink flowers he would need to get on his horse and ride out to 'Maize Hill, beyond Greenwich', or travel to near Alton, in Hampshire, where it grew in 'a wild unfrequented wood'.

But by the mid nineteenth century, the Worcester botanist Edwin Lees recorded: "*Rosebay willowherb has become numerous in several parts of the Vale of Severn, and promises to spread, incited to take possession of new-made roads and embankments.*"

No one seems certain why this rapid expansion took place. The most usual explanation is that it spread along the developing railway network, the bare embankments which were frequently burnt providing hospitable habitat, and the air movement generated by trains assisting the dispersal of its fluffy seeds. Alternatively, perhaps a more vigorous and adaptable form of the plant was somehow introduced from overseas.

It seems that the rapid expansion of rosebay willowherb led to it accumulating a large number of local names.

"Rampant in Northumberland on areas of rough ground... it is a moot point whether it is called fireweed because it spreads so rapidly and its flowers are purplish pink, or because in the days of steam engines it was often ignited by flying sparks from the engines."

Being able to rapidly colonise burnt ground rosebay willowherb became conspicuously abundant in London during the Blitz, acquiring such names as bombweed, bomb-site weed, London pride and London's ruin. It was even rumoured that willowherb seeds were intentionally put inside German bombs. Outside London:

"Clydebank was bombed during the last war and one of the casualties was the Singer Sewing Machine factory. On the bombsite a profusion of rosebay willowherb sprang up, which locals of that vintage now [1998] call Singer Weed."

In Sheffield in the 1950s the name Westwood lily was used, a local name which referred to a district in suburb



of High Green where the plant was abundant.

The leaves of rosebay willowherb somewhat resemble those of some narrow-leaved willows. Some years ago I came across a North American specimen of it filed in the Natural History Museum's herbarium as an unidentified *Salix*, willow. This similarity has given rise to such names as blooming sally in Cumbria and Ireland, blooming willie in Co. Tyrone, and Frenchaloo or French willow in Warwickshire.

Other names include; blood-vine in Hampshire, dog's parasol in mid Wales, red buffer in Shropshire and romping molly in Yorkshire.

There are occasional records of rosebay willowherb being associated with misfortune. In Shropshire it was sometimes known as mother-die, a name more usually given to cow parsley, and it was never picked. In the Macclesfield area in the 1940s:

"Rosebay willowherb should never be picked, otherwise a thunderstorm would ensue, or, more horrifically, your mother will die."

Although rosebay willowherb is made into tea in north Russia and elsewhere, and books on foraging mention it, there seems to be no tradition of it being used food in Britain. According to Roger Phillips' *Wild Food* (1983): 'it is far too bitter to enjoy as any kind of vegetable'.

Adapted from Vickery's *Folk Flora*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2019.

The Ghost of Charlotte Bennett

I work in an important historic building – gothic with a hint of baronial – in south-west London. These days it has a variety of occupants such as residents, businesses, a theatre school and a restaurant. Outside the restaurant there are ten plaques on the wall telling visitors the building's fascinating history. These are their headings to give you a flavour of that history.

There are many stories to tell about the building, its use and its occupants but the story I'm writing about concerns a ghost and this is what one of the plaques has to say about her.

In Charlotte's day it was called the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum and had been built for girls orphaned by the Crimean War but these days it's called the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building. A great

Life in the Orphanage

Ghost

The Royal Connection

World War I

Ruin & Restoration

Architect & Builder

Founding Ceremony

The Decision to Build

The Patriotic Fund

The "Unnecessary" War

The Ghost of Charlotte Bennett

Charlotte Jane Bennett and her sister, Maria Elizabeth, entered the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum in November 1861. Their father, John Cullen Bennett, a Paymaster Sergeant with the 38th Staffordshire Regiment, was mortally wounded during the ill-fated Assault on the Redan at Sebastopol on 18 June 1855.

Too old at 17 for school, Charlotte was employed as a domestic servant. On 6 January 1862 she was locked in the Lady Superintendent's bathroom for two days for insubordination. On the afternoon of the second day she was given her midday meal and some Lucifer matches to light the gas lamp. At 6pm some of the girls heard screams from the bathroom above, but were too scared of the staff to report them. It was only at 8.30pm, when she was due to be released, was her burnt body found. The linen window blind had caught fire, together with the chair and Charlotte's clothing.

A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned at the subsequent inquest but since then there have been repeated sightings of a teenage girl in Victorian dress haunting the corridors of the building.

deal has happened here in the past 150 years and this is just one of many stories I could tell about it.

I've worked in the building since the year 2000 and, although I've never seen the ghost, I've had three decidedly odd experiences none of which I can explain.

The first occurred in the late evening when I'd had to return to my office for something I needed first thing the next day. It was about 11pm when I walked through the building and along the cloisters (as the corridors are often called) which go round a courtyard. I glanced through the windows into the courtyard and was astonished to see a vertical shaft of bright light travel from right to left and disappear.

The next strange event also occurred in the late evening and in similar circumstances. This time I was walking through the courtyard, instead of round it, when I was aware of a shadow cast across the paving as I was about to go through the door to the cloister. A moment later it had vanished. There was nothing visible which could have cast the shadow.

The third and most recent experience was the most unsettling. What happened was this. I had come out of my office, intending to leave the building by a side door, and had to unlock a door into the lobby. I had put my key in the lock when I heard the sound of a child's footsteps running towards me along the cloister. For some reason this made the hair on the back of my neck stand up and I slowly turned my head to see who it was. The footsteps immediately stopped and there was no-one there.

Iain K S Gray

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