

Wandsworth Society



Newsletter Autumn 2022

Burntwood Lane - cycling v open space



The Society grapevine tipped us off about a month ago that the Council's Highway Committee was being asked to consider outline proposals for improving cycling to the narrower, top length of Burntwood Lane, where it passes the Common to the north and the Trinity Fields playing fields to the south. The proposals briefly, are to consider the widening of Burntwood Lane for this section alone, to enable cycle lanes to be established to make cycling safer and friendlier than at present. This seems to be a current policy of the Mayor of London, through TfL. To do so would require, under the ideas submitted, for about c4metres of Trinity Fields land to be purchased for the extra road width needed, for we assume, either separate cycle lanes in both directions alongside each traffic lane, or a cycle super-highway with two cycle-lanes grouped as a pair on one side of the road.

The Council had issued a notice about their ideas being put to the Committee in a somewhat obscure notice in August, of which none of our Society's transport group was aware, of

the ideas being put to the Council committee on 19 September. Thanks to the Queen's state funeral arrangements the committee meeting was called off that day and it will resit in November, when it will be asked to decide to go to public consultation over these cycling issues. This will give us time to try and meet Cllr Fraser, the committee chair, to discuss the implications of the above ideas. In our view these as follows:

The land either side of Burntwood Lane, of the stretch described above, is protected Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), the Common has other legal protections too. The MOL protection is generally considered inviolate to protect the environment of urban London. Taking land from either side would cause the loss of a number of mature trees.

Whilst the writer, from long experience of this section of Burntwood Lane, would agree that cycling east to Trinity Road is not easy, cycling west with traffic having crossed from Bellevue Road and which should be travelling at 20mph is not hazardous. That the principal issue is improving cycling east.

We have seen no records of cycling accidents for this stretch of road, nor for Burntwood lane generally. Pedestrians are not ignored in this debate but the issue is primarily one of cycle safety.

We believe that there could be ways of tackling the perceived cycling issues raised without necessarily encroaching on MOL, and we shall try and discuss these with Cllr Fraser. We should be interested too to learn of the views on this important matter from our members from whom I would be pleased to hear by email, by phone, or indeed by post.

John Dawson

This is the Newsletter of **The Wandsworth Society**, a registered charity no 263737. The Society is concerned with the quality of life and the environment in Wandsworth town centre, Wandsworth Common and adjacent areas.

If you are not already a member and would like to join please contact the Membership Secretary Gill Gray, details opposite. Please address, any comments, or, even better, contributions to newsletter@wandsworthsociety.org

Wandsworth Society

Newsletter
Autumn 2022

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Greetings

Young's are back in town, that's Wandsworth town - of course, inasmuch as their pubs remained after the brewery closed in 2006, (can it be that long ago?) they never left. And now, in the new building featured on the front cover, we have Young's headquarters once more in the town centre. A shame they were unable to find room to stable a few black shire horses, they too would have been very welcome. This contemporary new building sits well between the old cinema to the left, originally built as the Assembly Room to The Spread Eagle, and Wandsworth Town library to the right, originally a court house.

Word on the street is that Wandsworth Town library will be moving in the new year, possibly sooner, to the foot of the 26-storey tower that graces the northern boundary of the Old Burial Ground. Word on the street is mute on the future of its present home, the Old Court House. A splendid building that would provide the perfect home for the Wandsworth museum collection. We know it would, as it once did, very successfully. And by the by, did you know that there are still cells in the basement to house the guilty 'sent down' from the courtrooms on the upper floors?

We await, with some trepidation, for word on what will happen at the north end of Church Row now that the Backyard Cinema has been relocated to its new site on Armoury Way. You may recall it is the site for a 36-storey residential tower that received planning permission in 2016. We think that this planning permission could still be effective, as if a start on development is made within the prescribed period permission seemingly lasts for perpetuity, and as is very evident a start on the Ram Brewery development has been made. If you know different please get in touch.

So, another tall tower in the town centre (see the back cover), something not to look forward to.

Cover

The new Young's headquarters building

Net zero buildings : What? Why?

our September talk given by Tom Spurrier

On Thursday 8 September Tom sent me a message at 6:59 pm saying 'The Queen has died! OMG ...' I had heard the news just before setting out to collect him. We arrived at West Side Church in time for him to liaise with John Crossland about his PowerPoint presentation, to find everyone there in the same state of shock. It seemed proper to begin the evening with a minute of silence, while we stood to remember our late Queen.

Tom has spent more than fifteen years working as an environmental engineer both here and abroad. He specialises in developing sustainable solutions in the built environment across a diverse range with clients in both the private and public sectors. His goal on projects is to help deliver healthy buildings, whilst continuing to minimise environmental impacts. In 2019 Tom was seconded by his firm Hoare Lea to be the project lead for the UK Green Building Council Net Zero Whole life Carbon Roadmap which was presented at COP26 last November in Glasgow.

He gave a very topical and clear presentation to the Society. The overwhelming message is how energy performance of buildings needs to change. Tom outlined the complexity of this

issue with some excellent slides. One of the most interesting things he asked us to consider was the impact of 'embedded carbon' an idea which in my ignorance I had not heard of – that is, the amount of carbon which is present in buildings because of the building process itself. This comes from the carbon emissions which have gone in to making the materials which form the building, long before the building itself begins emission. The process of making cement, for example, which is widely used in buildings, gives rise to huge greenhouse gas emissions. Tom said there were signs now that more and more planning applications were not being granted because of 'green' concerns. A prime example is the Tulip, a tower designed by Norman Foster as a viewing platform in the City of London – a

When? How?

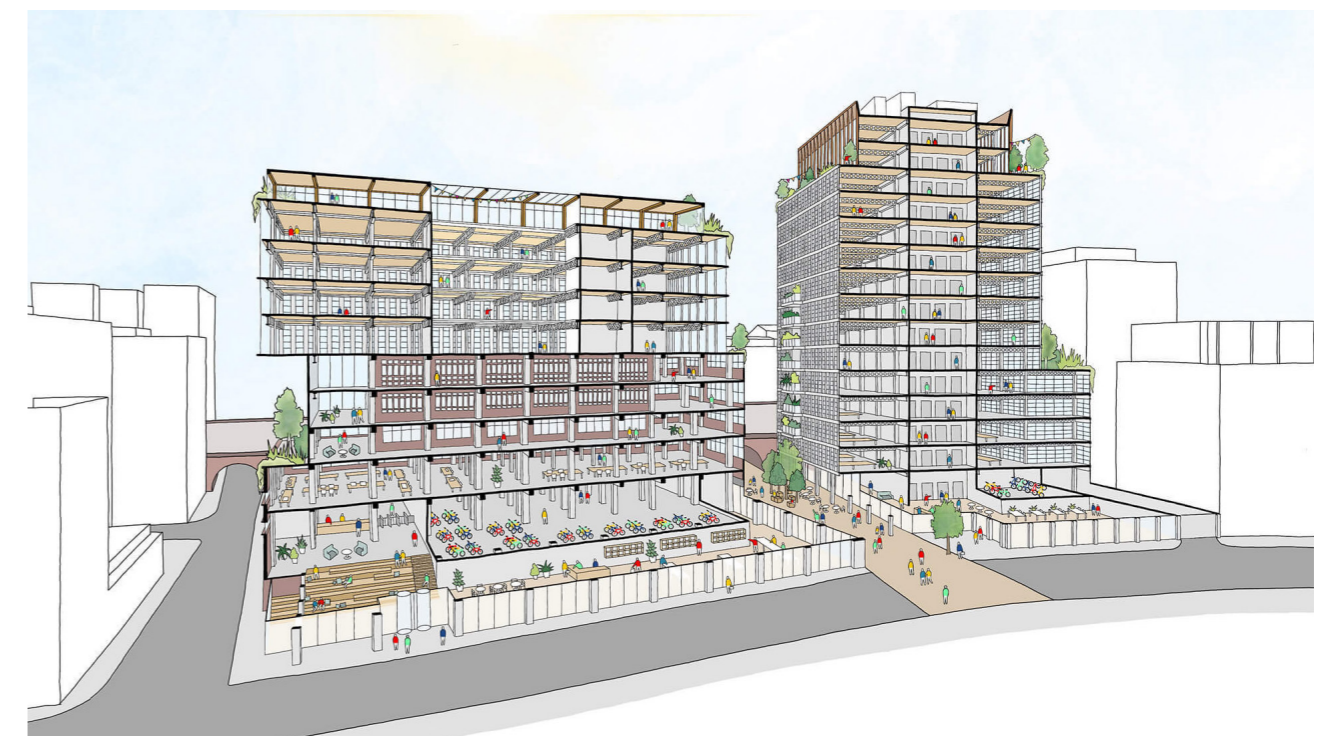
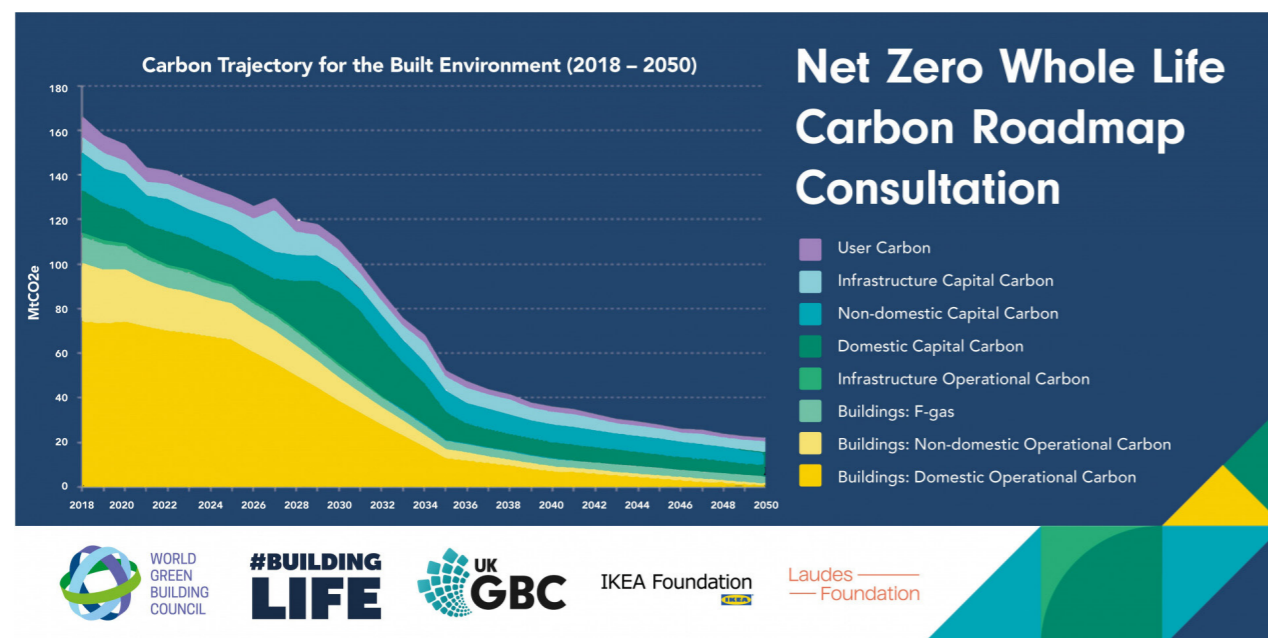
small enclosed glass space at the top of what would have been the tallest tower in London, made of concrete and cement. The application was rejected by Michael Gove and it was the first time 'environmental impact' was given as the reason for its rejection. Another example is the M&S building in Oxford Street, a 1930s building – developers want to pull it down and completely rebuild it, thereby using a great deal of carbon, whereas it would be possible to completely re-furbish the building, taking out gas boilers and putting in electric power, prolonging its life by another 100 years. He showed us a building in Norway, twenty stories high, made entirely of timber – although not entirely carbon zero, a much more sustainable building than one made of steel and concrete. Timber Square is a building in Southwark Tom is working on at the

moment, which is using the existing building adding an extension with a steel frame but using wood for everything else. The carbon costs of using timber are minimal as most of it comes by boat from places like Germany. There are hopeful signs. Investors are now very aware of investing in what might become 'stranded assets' – buildings using gas, for example, which might become worthless in 20-years time as renewable energy becomes more important. Now all NHS hospitals have 'green' targets and the aim is eventually that all energy in buildings should come from renewable or green energy. So there is hope for the future. Thank you Tom.

Libby Spurrier

(mother to the aforementioned Tom ...)

A drawing by the architects Bennetts Associates of Timber Square - a net zero carbon project that demonstrates how buildings can respond to the climate emergency and emerging net zero carbon targets.



Springfield Village

the progress of the redevelopment of the hospital site

Many of you will be aware that the redevelopment of the Springfield Hospital site is now well advanced. The masterplan, which received planning permission some ten years ago showed new hospital buildings surrounded by new housing. Some of the new housing is complete and occupied, some is under construction and the three remaining sites will be the subject of new planning applications.



We held two meetings in July with representatives of the hospital trust and the development team to discuss the proposals for sites F, G, P and Q, and X, Y and Z. Above is a map which shows where these sites are. The top of the map faces east.

However, firstly, in respect of the other housing development sites on the map we can report as follows:

- B1 and B2 : these 3-storey flats are built and close to being occupied
- C1 and C2 : these 4-storey flats are built and being fitted out for occupation soon
- D1 and D2 : also E1 and E2 - construction is underway on the 4-storey flats and some housing.
- M and L : these 4-storey flats are complete and fully occupied
- K4 : the gate lodge has been refurbished and its garden site established

- H : a new care home, to replace the existing Ronald Gibson House, is constructed and being fitted out
- S : the 1849 listed hospital building complex, is being converted into flats, with Phase 1 occupied and with Phase 2 well advanced. This will be followed by a Phase 3. The listed Elizabeth Newton Building, which can be seen immediately below plots L and M on the map, will be refurbished to form the administrative offices of the Springfield University Hospital Trust.

In respect of the very substantial, new, hospital buildings these are to be opened next month.

Back to sites F,G,P and Q - these are due to go to planning shortly. F will be similar to flat blocks E, L and M in scale and size.

G is proposed to be wholly new flats in a series of linked blocks. However, sites P and Q are proposed to be developed in semi-detached houses facing the new park, with flats otherwise. The road which services the houses will be driveway in scale with limited vehicular access and no on-road parking. We have made detailed observations to the development team and are awaiting revised proposals especially of the important junction between the nearest flat blocks to the listed north wing of the main, listed building frontage which we felt could be much more sympathetically treated. We are awaiting sight of any revisions to these plans.

Sites X,Y and Z are at the southern end of the site adjoining the parkland and are due for the first public consultation of the plans for redevelopment for housing early in October – there is currently some housing and a detention block on the sites which are due for demolition. The sites have been purchased by Barratt London who will be consulting upon proposals for blocks of flats on sites Y and Z. Site X is to be undeveloped and added back to the parkland. The boundary between the parkland and site Y is already formed by a deep strip of high, thick, mature trees, so that the impact of the flats will be reduced. The gain to the parkland will be quite significant in terms of additional area.

However, to accomplish this swap of landuse, will require a somewhat higher density and building heights for the remaining sites Y and Z than was previously envisaged as both of these sites were originally envisaged for houses. Consequently, now, it is proposed that 400+ flats will be constructed on the remaining sites Y and Z. This has come as quite a surprise to us as the original planning consent was for the new hospital, a park and development of its land for 839 homes, and apparently this total has already been reached without inclusion of sites Y and Z which were part of the original consent. The proposals are for a mix of flats of varying heights, possibly up to six floors but generally between 3 and 4 stories high, most of which

will have dual aspect and be 'car free'. It is expected that vehicle servicing for deliveries will be provided, but little or no resident parking. The buildings could provide an overlooking problem with adjacent existing housing recently built nearby to the east. It is hoped that a new bus route will be confirmed serving this end of the Springfield estate. It is expected that the non-open market housing will meet the Mayor's latest requirements for a 50% mix of social housing and housing association accommodation to be provided. Already an Environmental Impact Assessment study has been submitted to Wandsworth Council as the planning authority.

Therefore, in judging these new proposals for sites Y and Z, we have on the one hand the gain in parkland area, almost zero car ownership of a new development of flats, correct levels of affordable housing and the retention of many mature trees which under previous plans might have been lost. On the other hand, we are seeing additional development at Springfield of nearly 50% of the original 839 homes approved raising the total of new housing to over 1200 homes This is a significant move by the Hospital Trust which argues that the additional, substantial monies gained from the developer Barratt London for the purchase of the two sites, will enable it to complete its new hospital at Kingston, complete the redevelopment of outdated facilities at Tolworth Hospital, as well as completing the Springfield hospital buildings.

We will be interested to learn of the observations arising from the public consultation which is to held in the first week of October, probably after this newsletter reaches you. This type of intervention is not unusual with private developers in our experience, although rarely on this scale, but we were surprised that such a late move would be made by a public institution without earlier, prior consultation of its strategy.

John Dawson

We held our (regrettably, but understandably delayed) celebration of the **50th Anniversary of the Wandsworth Society** on Thursday 21 July



John Dawson, a member of the Society since its inception in 1971 (he was then but a slip of a lad) outlined our objectives, our history and our achievements in his address to those gathered at Le Gothique in the delightful courtyard of the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building

It was very appropriate to hold our 50th anniversary party at the RVPB as, in our very early days, we championed its listing, together with the fine Grade I Granada Cinema in Tooting, both of which were threatened at the time.

The Society was formed in the spring of 1971, at a time of societal and built environmental change. Work was underway on London's reparation and issues arising from that in planning and architecture helped the formation of the Civic Trust in 1959 from which sprung the amenity society movement, the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and 'conservation.' Our Society, formed by a small cross-section of Wandsworth councillors and local, interested community-minded citizens, was part of this movement.

Our first planning skirmish in July 1971 was to object strongly to the proposed move of Chelsea College to the Springfield Hospital farmland bordering Beechcroft Road which we took to appeal at the then GLC's County Hall. Since that dramatic start, we have dealt with countless planning issues. In 2008, you may recall, we successfully appealed against the original, gross, Ram Brewery development. Indeed, our involvement with planning issues has continued throughout our 50 years, and only yesterday – 20 July - Philip Whyte and I had an half-hour meeting with a developer, his architect and his PR support to discuss the principal housing sites which will be facing the new parkland at Springfield.

Planning, however, is only one of our Society's interests. We have kept Wandsworth Common, the rivers, King George's Park and many other local environmental landmarks in our sights and, over the years, we have pressed for their improvement and retention, successfully creating, for example, the scrutinising, community-based, Wandsworth Common MAC, widely imitated for other open spaces, and, primarily through the efforts of Bruce St Julian-Bown, the formation of the Wandle Valley Regional Park.

We have dealt with transport issues, including our campaign, since 1986 (and ongoing), for improvements to the town centre gyratory traffic system and, also in the late 1980s, the successful rebuttal of a proposed upgrading of the south circular which was to disgorge traffic from a tunnel beneath Clapham Common into Wandsworth town centre.

Over the past 50 years, we have retained contact with, and influenced the council, although in recent years this has been more difficult. We would like to pick up new common threads of interest and work with the new administration in protecting and developing our borough. There are positive signs already; an early evening meeting was held at the County Arms immediately prior to the party, to discuss transport strategies with cabinet member Councillor Clare Fraser.

50 years is a long period of time and the founder members of the Society - Mike and Brenda Khan of Rosehill Road, Richard Bone and Bob Brown of Routh Road, Francis and Mary Owens, dear Shirley Passmore, our past President and champion of Wandsworth and especially the Common, Anne Spain, Charles Walch, Sandy and Bobbie Brown, Wendy Cater, Liliias Gillies, Nik Boulting, and more - all highly motivated people, would, I believe, be proud that the Wandsworth Society has not only worked for the community and its environment for all this time but also continues to move forward through the efforts of its executive, currently chaired by Margaret Romanski, and by the several sub-committees – planning, transport, environment and green issues, open spaces, and events whose members were responsible for organising such a successful celebration.

Our Society, will not rest on its laurels. There will always be much to do; it must remain active and sprightly, monitoring our natural and built environment and contributing especially to the emerging green issues that are currently being addressed in London. Both Greater London and Wandsworth with their powerful councils need our active interest and they ours. We should lead with ideas, and stimulate discussion and debate about the future of our borough, its environment and sustainability, all grounded in an understanding of and empathy with its history, character and integrity, as a place in which to live and work and play.

Thank you all for supporting the Society; let's look forward to the next 50 years!

After John's address a toast to the future of the Society was proposed by Liliias Gillies, which was heartedly endorsed, for which many thanks.

Well, what's new? Yet another planning (sorry levelling up or possibly down!) Minister and a new minister of / for housing!

I am not going to bore you with numbers but needless to say I have almost run out of fingers and toes to count how many of each there have been during the last ten years.

There appears to have been very little progress in the proposed new legislation which took so much time and effort by many minds in central government during 2020-21, leaving local planning decisions very much as they were.

However during the last few days (from 1 October), an announcement has been made that further reforms to the planning system are proposed. We shall have to wait and see (eyes tight closed and fingers crossed!)

The new London Plan was approved by the then minister Robert Jenrick in his letter to the Mayor dated 29 January 2021, with the plan published (adopted) on the 2 March of that year. Much emphasis is placed on the requirements to comply with the effects of climate change by increasing the building regulations for thermal insulation and the provision of housing of varying types.

Local news.

The flow of planning applications to the Council have continued at a relatively low level over the last few months. The Society continues to monitor applications, and makes comments where appropriate.

We are attempting to contact St George, part of the Berkeley Group plc, who have taken over the remainder of the Ram site to establish what the company's proposals are for the balance of the approved development. The area to the north of the site around the Stables, the Studios and the land adjoining the River Wandle to the rear of the Church Plain frontages are all approved.

We have not had any further discussion of late with the promoters of the gas works site.

It is pleasing to note that the new Headquarters of Youngs Brewery is now re-sited in an attractive building at the northern end of Garratt Lane adjoining The Spread Eagle public house.

Springfield NHS Trust

John Dawson reports fully on the latest news of the site in a separate article. Members are encouraged to visit the site which is now accessible. The parkland area is taking shape and will form the first new urban park in London for many years, with the exception of the Olympic park.

Mobile phone masts

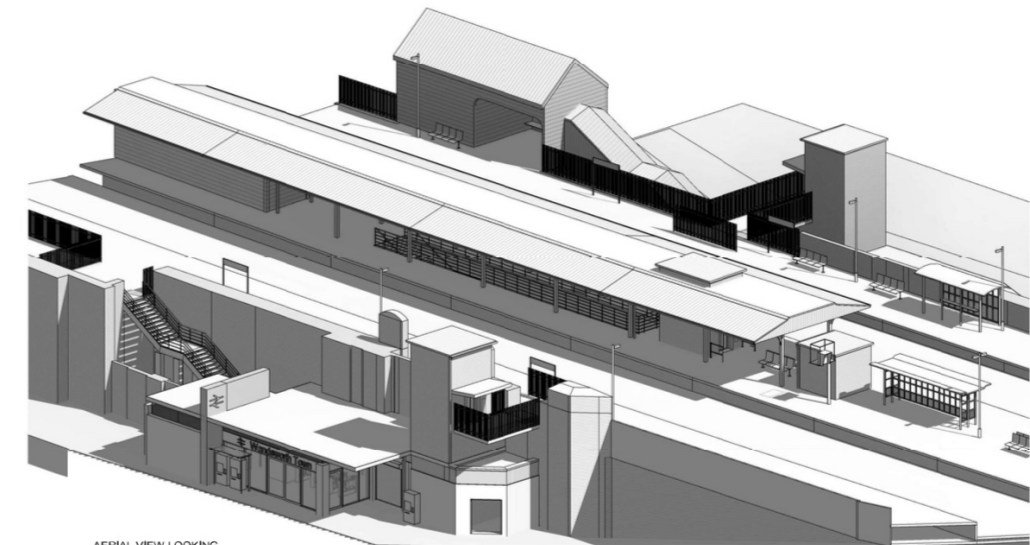
The Council continues to receive applications for 'Prior approval' for telecom poles for the 5G service. These can create clutter at ground level especially when proposed on footpaths and are poorly regarded in Conservation Areas.

Wandsworth Town Station Application no. 2022/2934.

This is a current application for the provision of lifts to provide access to the platform areas and to open up access from the north, the previous Homebase site. Provision was made in the planning approval for the redevelopment of this site to reopen the pedestrian access which had been closed for many years. I wonder if they will find any skeletons, or a wonderful cache of wine!

Lombard Road Application no. 2021/4936 57-59

This was an application for a 24-storey building to provide 547 shared living units



AERIAL VIEW LOOKING NORTH-WEST

Wandsworth Town station

of accommodation with ancillary associated accommodation. This application was refused as of the 15 September. This type of accommodation does not contribute to the housing stock as it is considered part hotel, part hostel as it does not comply with the Mayor's requirement for affordable housing. Readers may recall that a site to the rear of the St John's Therapy Centre was approved for a similar use following appeal to the Secretary of State.

Please get in touch with the writer if you have a concern about any proposal or application.

All views on planning matters are very welcome in 'Letters to the Editor' form or by email to philip.whyte@fraserwhyte.co.uk

Philip Whyte
Leader Planning Group.

Henry Beard

lived in Tooting and was a stalwart newsletter deliverer for many years. He used to come to meetings but found the journey too difficult in his latter years.

He had two main ambitions in life - the first to get a game about Buckingham Palace, which he had invented, patented and the second to win the lottery so he could give a large sum to Wandsworth Society.

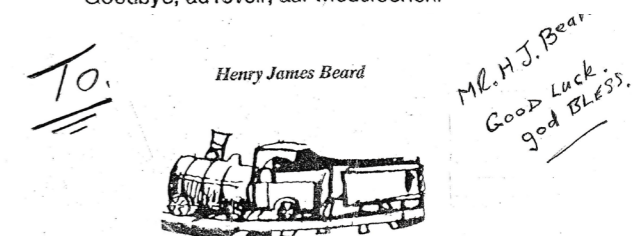
Sadly neither happened and he died earlier this year. He was a great character, and an occasional contributor to our newsletters over many years, and here one of his poems.

The Railway Station

The railway station is the place to be
When waiting for the two-o-three;
You stand and stare, and wonder where
The two-o-three could be: anywhere!

The Brighton Belle, she's right 'on time,
The Golden Arrow is down the line,
The Orient Express is on its way, (so they say)
I wonder if they've seen the two-o-three?

I think now I'll go home again
And come tomorrow in hopes to see
If they have found the two-o-three -
Goodbye, au revoir, auf wiedersehen!



And coming soon ...

Thursday 10 November, 8pm

Phil Evison, a local historian, will speak to us about 'Wandsworth Pubs - Past & Present'. Wandsworth has been associated with brewing for centuries but, despite the past dominance of Youngs, its pubs show great diversity, and reflect the fascinating history of the Borough.

Friday 9 December, 7:30pm

Our Society's Christmas Party will be held in St Anne's Church Hall. Music from Bahareque Latin American Rhythms Band, a five-piece ensemble who play traditional Latin music. Please book tickets in advance on events@wandsworthsociety.org or phone/text 07836 254065 and leave a message. Tickets are £15 per person, members and friends are welcome; payment details will be sent with confirmation. The ticket includes supper and your first drink..



Thursday 12 January, 8pm

David O'Hanlon from the Wandle Piscators will speak about the history of angling and the process of making the river attractive to fisherman today.

Thursday 9 February, 8pm

We are hoping for a presentation on independent bookshops and how they are beating off the competition from the likes of Amazon.

Thursday 9 March, 7:30pm

Our Society AGM

And here a CGI (computer generated image) of the tower mentioned on page 3 that we hope will **not** be built at the end of Church Row



We will have a review of our Green Group October meeting and survey in our next newsletter