

Wandsworth Society



Newsletter Spring 2024

HMP Wandsworth

FAIL

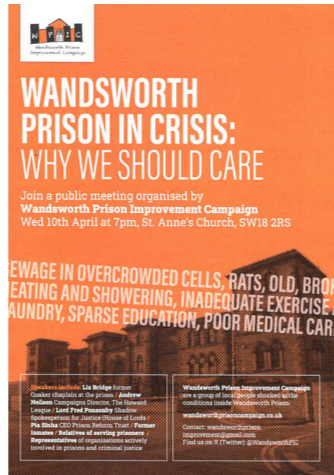
St Anne's church was packed for a meeting on 10 May arranged by the Wandsworth Prison Improvement Campaign (WPIC), whose mission is **To put pressure on those in position of power or influence to make safety and decency their priority at HMP Wandsworth.**

We heard from former prisoners who spoke passionately about their experiences of 22 - hour lock-downs, the ready availability of recreational drugs, but the lack of necessary regular medication, and from mothers of prisoners about the poor mental health of their sons.

We also heard from Liz Bridge, a former chaplain at the prison, Pia Sinha from the Prison Reform Trust, Fred Ponsonby the Opposition Spokesperson for Justice and Home Affairs in the House of Lords, Ruth Cadbury, the Shadow Minister for Prisons, Parole and Probation, Andrew Neilson from The Howard League for Prison Reform – who all spoke with knowledge and eloquence of the problems with the national prison service and their experience of the conditions in Wandsworth prison.

A damning indictment of conditions in the prison service nationally and in particular at Wandsworth from both inmates and experts. And on 8 May the resignation of the prison governor Katie Price was announced as Charlie Taylor, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, issued an 'urgent notification' about conditions in HMP Wandsworth.

To find out more about the meeting, the campaign, and find guidance on the best way to write to your MP go to - www.wandsworthprisoncampaign.co.uk



Wandsworth Society

Newsletter
Spring 2024

Our Executive Committee

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Greetings

We are pleased to welcome Libby Spurrier, and Julie Harrison as new members, and, after a lengthy sabbatical, the return of Peter Farrow to the executive committee - and a warm welcome to all new members who have recently joined us.

Congratulations

... to all those who worked hard to achieve Wandsworth's selection as the London Borough of Culture 2025, we look forward to a year of even more culture, see page 10.



Your society needs your email address



Do we have your email address?

You will know we do if you are getting our emailed updates on meetings, and you need not do anything.

But - to the one-third of members who have not yet supplied an email address please send your email address to membership@wandsworthsociety.org to receive regular updates - and save us postage

We fully comply with the legal requirements of GDPR and will never share your address with any other party

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

The path well-travelled

The cover photograph is of a path leading to Westside, the open space of Wandsworth Common to the west of Trinity Road. It is a 'desire line', a path, a beaten track created as it were by popular demand : unofficial, unpaved, and presently not much of a problem. There are a fair few of these across the common, and some are more problematic. It rains, the path becomes muddy, you step to one side to avoid the muddy patches and puddles, another path develops alongside, there are now two paths. What to do? There is a reluctance to hard pave these paths, and that could be expensive, but if left they can become an issue, practically the route, for which there is an evident need, becomes impassable, and they, well they expand, they don't look nice, and become a blot on the landscape.

Enable, who manage the common on behalf of the council, are to carry out an audit of these 'desire lines' to develop a strategy, as to how best to manage these issues : there will no doubt be more on this later.



TBM Charlotte lifted out of King George's Park



Charlotte's tunnel

Thames Tideway - an update

Some 8 to 10 years ago in a talk to the Wandsworth Society we heard about the scope and plans for the new Thames Tideway project; there was a follow up about four years ago when they were getting on well and the full scope of the plans was revealed – and we are now nearly at the end of this mammoth engineering project.

In January, Dan Webster, Environment Manager for the West area and Scott Hughes, Section Manager at Carnwath Road, both working for contractors for the Tideway project, came to update us. First, they recapped about its background and aims. The main reason is to reduce discharges into the Thames by 95% and to build on Joseph Bazalgette's 82 miles of brick sewers across London plus 1100 miles of drains and street sewers built at a time when the population of London was 2m, to make the whole wastewater system fit for the next 100 years (though it is estimated it should have a longer lifespan than that). London's population is likely to grow from approximately 9m now to around 16m by 2130.

The new super sewer, the Tideway Tunnel, is 25 km long, of which 7km are in our local patch. It will take London's waste water from Acton in the west down to Abbey Mills in the east for processing. It is a gravity fed system sited under all the other existing

tunnels that goes from 31 metres deep in the west to 66 metres deep at Abbey Mills.

Sites of works in the Wandsworth area are at Barn Elms, Putney Embankment, Dormay Street and King George's Park and there are two sites further up the Thames at Acton and Hammersmith; these six combined sewage flows are intercepted at Carnwath Road Riverside and sent down into the new Tideway Tunnel. There are a number of further works further downstream that most of us have seen, including those at Chelsea Embankment, Albert Embankment and by Blackfriars Bridge.

The system is mostly standard at the works areas – the Bazalgette sewers are usually incorporated into these new works with huge new shafts leading down into the new tunnel. At a few sites, such as King George's Park, new connection tunnels below the Thames will take waste along to the main sewer tunnel. The design means the tunnels should be self-cleaning, with vortices included in the down shafts and any increased rainfall from storm events (two per month?) leading to self-cleaning along the main tunnel.

But that makes it sound easy. The works' surface areas have in some sites been 'postage stamp' size with logistics such as deliveries and machinery and extraction work and fitting the new pipes and concrete supplies and concrete being mixed and used, all organised from a small area, sometimes 300m or more from the Super Sewer.

These sites have now mostly been given back to the landowners after landscaping. There will be some buildings left – vent stacks and maintenance access points for example, but otherwise the areas will

be accessible to all. The aim is to have completed the landscaping by this summer. This involves site testing for all three contractors in our area, final tidying up at Putney Embankment and King George's Park, and snagging and testing flows throughout the length of the tunnel. The system should be fully operational by May 2025.

On the environmental side, apart from landscaping, care has been taken to use the Thames where possible for delivery of equipment such as concrete, gravel and sand which was then mixed on site. At Putney for example, the river has also been used for barges to remove extracted material from the tunnel excavations which has gone to improve Rainham Marshes: this has saved some 46,000 lorry movements. All vent buildings have brown roofs to encourage plants to flourish. At Carnwath Road (the HQ of the West area), an acoustic shed was built in order to keep noise down meaning work could continue 24/7. Here too, all the excavated material as well as delivery of pre-cast concrete rings was done by barge not by lorry.

At Barn Elms where the Sports Centre had to be demolished and rebuilt, the new works only take up a very small part of the sports field. There is a 'bug hotel' made of stone and timber (locally sourced), which also incorporates space for hedgehogs, on the outside of the ventilation tower which is tucked away in a corner near to the Beverley Brook.

To finish, I was glad to see that the starting line for the Boat Race is clearly marked on the new extension to the embankment beside Putney Bridge!

Jenny Massey



Wandsworth Historian

The Journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society



A Ford delivery van belonging to the Cathkin Laundry at Marble Arch in about 1926. (Mike Bull Collection)

Wandsworth Historian no. 117 Spring 2024

In the latest issue of the *Wandsworth Historian* we re-visit the treatment of enemy aliens in First World War Wandsworth, recall how two local laundries operated between the wars, and uncover the story of a nineteenth-century master baker in Wandsworth High Street.

We also reveal that the King Edward VII statue on Tooting Broadway was cast not by a British but an Italian firm of bronze founders, and look back at women's hair styling in the 1970s.

All this and more can be found in the Spring 2024 issue of the *Wandsworth Historian* (ISSN 1751-9225), the magazine that brings you the latest research into Wandsworth's past.

The *Wandsworth Historian* is published by the Wandsworth Historical Society, and copies are available price £3.00 plus £2.00 for postage and packing from WHS, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or by emailing 020neil119@gmail.com. Cheques payable to 'Wandsworth Historical Society', please, though on-line payment is preferred.

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

Planning news Spring 2024

So what's new.

Thankfully, Spring has finally arrived with the trees now pretty well in full leaf, the grass has risen (mowing ahoj) and I am sure those, with BBQs will have given thought to the wonderful upcoming summer, we hope!! Most water reservoirs should be full to busting/overflowing but you never know, we might have drought conditions come August!!!

All members will be aware that there has been much made of various stances in respect of the future policies of all political parties but the writer's only real wish is that there would be some consistency and longevity in approach.

Now to matters closer to home:

Springfield NHS Trust and Barratt Developments Planning Application No 2022/5288

This application had been with the Council for many months. We had chased the Leader of the Applications committee twice without success, to understand what was happening, however at the 19th March meeting the application was on the Agenda with a recommendation for approval from the officers.

The Committee report extended to more than 140 pages(!). After a clear resume given by the officers, questions from the Members started and the debate/questions lasted nearly three hours. In the end a vote was taken and the application was refused by 6 votes to 4. Inevitably there is likely to be a pause while both the Council, the Trust and the applicant consider their positions. The grounds for refusal were a) encroachment onto Metropolitan Open Space and b) availability and access to public transport. The outcome surprised the Planning Group and I am sure many other objectors to the proposals.

All England Lawn Tennis Club Application No Wandsworth 2021/3609

Following the refusal by the Wandsworth PAC in November and as Merton had previously approved the application, the next step was a referral to the Mayor of London. The Mayor had not called in the scheme proposals for his consideration but as a result of the conflicting results of the two planning authorities, this was the next stage required. As the Mayor had previously shown some personal interest and made public comments with his views, the Mayor deputed the case to his deputy Mr Pipe. The Society has co-operated with both the Wimbledon Society and other local groups in forming the objections which will have to be considered by the Mayor's office. The timescale for future action by all concerned is uncertain.

The former Gas Works Swandon Way/ Armoury Way Application No 2022/3954

We have not been advised that any progress has been made in the consideration to bring this application forward for a decision by the PAC

This is not a planning application. No 2 Armoury Way.

The Society has been asked to attend a private briefing by the consultants for the developers, Downing of the site on the north corner of Armoury Way, probably known to some as Mr Clutch's home! This frontage site does not form part of the gas works site and has been in abeyance until the road improvement lines for the Armoury Way/Swandon Way realignment are agreed. We must assume that this is now the case. We are told that the proposals will include light industrial uses on the ground floor of part of the scheme with residential above, with further dedicated industrial uses behind. The proposals will be out for public exhibitions on the 4th and 7th May at the Brewers Inn, East Hill.

Glassmill, 1 Battersea Bridge Road THIS IS NOT A PLANNING APPLICATION No 2024/0764

Members may recall that last autumn an application for a 38 storey building was published on the Council web site but only after an intervention by a member of the planning group, the attribution for the application was changed to add the words "THIS IS NOT A PLANNING APPLICATION". The new



We could not find any drawings of the 34-storey building the subject of the current Environmental Impact Statement submission for a development on the Glassmills site - this is an image of a 38-storey development by the same applicant

application is very clearly an Environmental Impact Assessment and does not provide any information about the proposed scheme except the narrative on the Council web site which states "142 new homes with a building height of up to ground and 33 storeys (34 storeys total) public realm etc". We await more detail of the proposals but will inevitably be objecting as the site does not fall within an agreed tall building zone allocation approved last year in the Local Plan.

Out of area, The Stag Brewery, Mortlake SW14 London Borough of Richmond Appeal case references APP/L5810/W/24/3339060 and 3339062

Members may be interested to learn of the Appeals which are currently underway in respect of the former Stag Brewery site in Mortlake. The site has been unused for brewing for many years and Richmond BC have granted consent to a previous scheme but this became undevelopable due to changed legislation for fire escape from tall buildings requiring two means of escape.

Revised applications were submitted with changes which were required but the scheme provides a very small content of affordable housing 7% which is well below that required by the Mayor's new London Plan. Before the Mayor called the proposals in for his adjudication, the appellants made an applica-

tion to the Secretary of State for non-determination. As co-chair of the West London River Group, the writer has been asked to participate in the Appeal proceedings.

Other matters

We have received a number of requests to help in the formulation of comments, mostly objections to applications received during the past few months. At least one of the applications were refused, with the Society submitting an objection.

The Society has recently co-operated with the Battersea and Putney Societies in the preparation and submission of a paper to the Leader of the Applications Committee which has been acknowledged very recently. We hope to have helpful dialogue with both the officers and members to clarify matters of concern. A copy of the Society's letter is on the web site.

Please let any one of the planning group know if we can help in any matter which may concern you or if you wish clarification on a matter of planning policy.

Philip Whyte

TOWN CENTRE CULTURE CLUSTER NOT A BUDGET BUSTER! IS THIS THE WAY TO BRING BACK OUR LOST MUSEUM?

With the Society fully supporting the reinstatement of the Wandsworth Museum I joined the MAG (Museum Action Group), ably chaired by Sheila Allen.

Some months ago, prompted by the need for better education on pressing Climate Change issues, the need for local gallery space and a Museum visit in Malta with the charming slogan at its gate - "A future for our past", I came up with a proposal to create a "Culture Cluster". The concept's underlying aim - to help re-instate our lost museum by using the more readily fundable and needed, 'environmental education centre' and other cultural amenities like an art gallery / library / seminar room / café-restaurant etc whose overheads might possibly be rationalised.

An original idea I thought until I saw exactly that in Brent's, Willesden High St main "Library+Plus" block. Clearly I was not the originator and my deflation only abated when Rex Osborn, our Council 'Museum Champion', expressed an interest at a MAG meeting later announcing he was leading a council delegation to Brent to learn the economics of their achievement. So at the time of writing (early May) we are all awaiting his findings.

Whilst that pot was simmering I came up with a new thought. Being rather overwhelmed by the 'cute', but small, library 'extension' in Northcote Rd I was rather more impressed by our recently opened Wandsworth town centre Library.

On my second visit and seeing its 4 Museum Collection cabinets my thinking in relation to Culture Cluster's took a big stride, not forward but sideways. A cunning plan that avoids the main obstacle - funding. An outline of this second eureka vision has been sent to the Councillor our Heritage Champion and is outlined below.

I'm not a fan of shipping Museum show-cases to schools in the absence of a museum proper, even if its helpful, but the new Library is much more substantial than I'd expected to the extent its spaciousness has potential beyond the library function especially if a little ingenuity and vision are applied! It seems perfectly conceivable that the Library might provide some of the Culture/Cluster concept benefits, albeit in reduced form but providing the essential critical mass but at far less cost.

I'm a tad embarrassed by the thought that the opportunity to expand the current 4 cabinet 'Mini Museum' (as officers have termed it), seems so obvious that one has to ask whether it was the plan from the outset to accommodate a "Modest" rather than "Mini" Museum within it, at a more 'politically opportune' date - perish the thought!! Of course, it might already have been thought of and rejected on practical terms but, in case it hasn't, I offer these nuggets:

1. When asking a staff member whether there were going to be more books delivered and the response was a clear - "No the library is already fully stocked." So, the floor plan might be regarded as more or less as intended.

2. It is the floor plan's spaciousness that cries out for regrouping the bookshelves into a tighter but still spacious layout that would free up enough space to accommodate, at least three to four times the current Museum Collection cabinets with a similar spatial density.
3. This might credibly enable the collection to be called a "modest Museum" rather than a "Mini" one.
4. First impressions suggest the potential surplus space might be similar to that offered by Richmond town centre museum (in their main Library) and Brent Museum in Willesden. A few low cost internal modification could further expand useable display cabinet space.
5. The headline benefit is that it could at a fraction of the cost of a major building adaptation install what would justifiably be perceived as the 'Museum' with just a few modest modifications, especially if the curatorial function was shared with Richmond.
6. The star potential of this new concept in gaining the prized LOBOC award was substantial to put it mildly, but unnecessary as it turned out.
7. The possible availability of part of the Court House for storage etc might allow further flexibility but would not be critical.
8. A location for the key "Environmental Interpretation" space might also be accommodated with a little ingenuity in the Library entrance area. This may not be quite the space the Society Green Group would like but, thinking on the hoof, it could be the whole Library entrance theme with relevant bookcases close by.
9. Potential objections might include separating the quiet reading / browsing zone from museum visitor groups. But judicious partitioning and layout should overcome this.
10. Self-interest declared here. May we suggest one of the meeting rooms generously included in this community asset be also used for art exhibitions even if a modest charge is necessary.

Is this scenario just daydreaming or actually a potential and affordable win-win-win scenario, for all parties (councillors, community, constituents, schools)? It might at least make it worth adding a task for the newly appointed Library consultant Antia Donato (or a panel of council staff+voluntary sector specialists) to do a small-scale survey on floor space. Indeed, specialists from either the Museum Action Group or Wandsworth Society might be happy to do a 'pre-scoping' assessment as to the scale of potentially available space and the opportunity it provides.

IF this is a way to cut say, 80%, from the previous cost estimates to re-establish the Museum, is it not worth at least the same effort as reporting the need for a not insignificant uplift in councillor remuneration?

Bruce St Julian-Bown

EXHIBITIONS
THEATRE
MUSEUM
GALLERY
LIBRARY

There's a lot going on in Wandsworth this May and June



WANDSWORTH HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2024

Programme of Events:
18th May – 9th June 2024

runs from 18 May to 9 June - this link will take you to the fascinating programme of events - <https://tinyurl.com/whf2024pdf> - or simply search for Wandsworth Heritage Festival 2024 in your browser - ... St Anne's Church will celebrate its bicentenary with open days ... find folklore in the borough's flora and fauna, ... tutored beer tastings in Ram Street ... the untold histories of local hospitals ... and much more, including our talk 22 May, see back cover

WANDSWORTH ARTS FRINGE

LEAP INTO THE UNDISCOVERED
7-23 JUNE

runs from 7 - 23 June - this link will take you to the home page - <https://www.wandsworthfringe.com> - or simply search for Wandsworth Fringe 2024 in your browser

There is a feast of entertainment - comedy, theatre, exhibitions, dance, music, film, workshops ... almost too much, don't be overwhelmed!

Just exactly how many bizarre things are there in King George's Park ?

Keen readers, or possibly even you, may recall in the spring issue of 2021 we asked if anyone knew the story of the seat in the formal garden in King George's Park, hard by the entrance to the park off Mapleton Road.



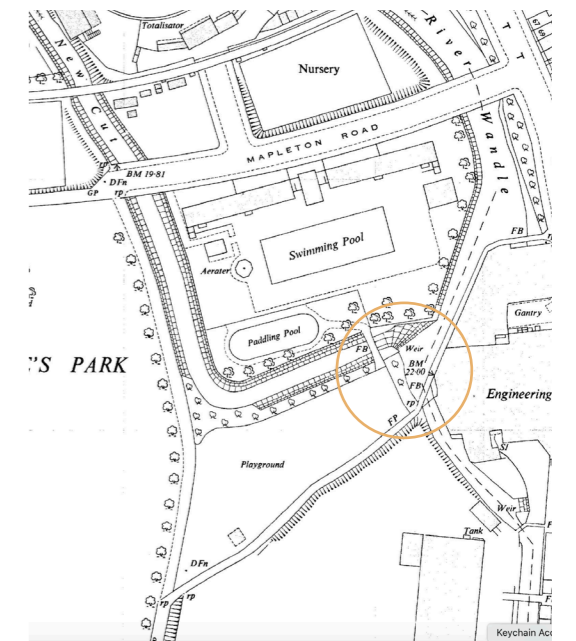
We tentatively offered two suggestions, the prosaic - artificial stone circa fairly recent, and the romantic - an incredibly valuable artefact, carved from a single block of limestone, discovered during the excavation of a royal tomb in the deserts of Arabia, then presented to the city fathers of Wandsworth by an anonymous benefactor ...

Sadly, but not unexpectedly, we were less than inundated with sensible suggestions, or even an answer.

And then a few days ago in the grounds (?) of the Wandle Recreation Centre we became aware of the bridge that crosses, well - nothing. On Google maps there's a pin labelled Paddling Pool Bridge, that when clicked reveals the 1920s photograph below, described in the Heritage Service catalogue as *King George's Park – group of bare-foot children by river* - happy days. They are standing on the weir leading from the Wandle to the New Cut. Most strange to have kept the bridge when the New Cut was infilled, but most pleasing to have discovered a folly in our midst.



And the answer, see above, is therefore two, to date. If you are aware of any other bizarre things in King George's Park, or know either the story of that seat, or why the bridge was retained - don't hesitate to get in touch.



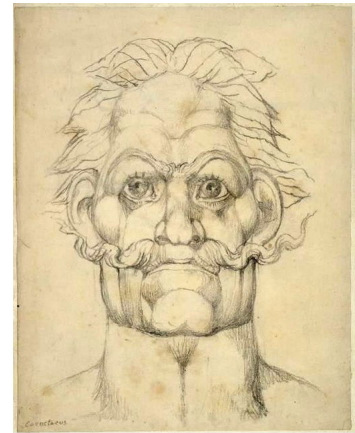
The Society walks and talks ...

Our meetings are held at West Side Church, at the corner of Melody Road and Alfarthing Lane and Heathfield Road SW18 2QQ unless indicated otherwise

Wednesday 22 May 8:00 pm

Caractacus - The first British Hero

As part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival, local resident Andrew Neill will explore the way this little-known figure in our history has been portrayed and celebrated.



Caractacus - William Blake

Thursday 20 June 11:30am

Tour of Sandycombe Lodge, Turner's House

The Society has arranged a private tour of J M W Turner's House in St Margarets Twickenham. The house is close to St Margarets station and after the tour those who want to can visit the nearby Marble Hill House and the Orleans Gallery Café, with the option of returning home after a walk along the Thames to Richmond.

Places are limited so please book on events@wandsworthsociety.org. The cost will be £10.00 per person. Full details of this small but interesting house are on <https://turnershouse.org/>. Entry to Marble Hill House is free.



Turner : self portrait

Wednesday 26 June 8:00 pm

What's in a name?

Sioned Jones will speak about her work as a director of the Shakespeare in the Squares Company. The title of her talk reflects her fascination with the names Shakespeare chooses with particular reference to the three shows she has directed for Shakespeare in the Squares: The Tempest, Twelfth Night and All's Well That Ends Well, and on ...

Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 July

All's Well That Ends Well

Shakespeare in the Squares

in the garden of St Anne's Church, sponsored by the Wandsworth Society : for tickets search for Shakespeare in the Squares in your browser

Friday 12 July

A Summer's Evening Garden Party

Enquiries to events@wandsworthsociety.org



Shakespeare : John Taylor

and on a Friday in December 8:00 pm

Our Christmas party, same time (Christmas) same place, St Anne's Church Hall, delicious food and drink, wonderful entertainment.