

Wandsworth Society



Newsletter Autumn 2024

The logo for the West London River Group features a stylized blue wavy line above the text "West London River Group" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

West London River Group

The Society is a member of the West London River Group, with the writer representing the Society and is currently co-chair of the Group.

The writer was invited to represent the Society by the late Shirley Passmore who had represented the Society for many years.

The Group was established in 1996 on the initiative of the Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group and the Hammersmith Society.

Members are riparian amenity societies and community groups with interests in the River Thames either as users of the river or the land adjoining between Kew and Chelsea on both banks of the river.

The Group has been a key supporter of the Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea (TSKC) which was completed in 2002 and is now involved with the *Thames Strategies Surrey to the Sea*, a work supported and funded by the Environment Agency to assess the Thames with reference to flood risk, landscape strategies for the different sections of the river, encroachment and visions for the future.

Members may be aware of a major redevelopment proposed for the Stag Brewery site in Mortlake, which stopped production or bottling many years ago. Various schemes have been proposed since an application in 2017 was made for a major housing provision, a new secondary school and other uses. Earlier this year the developers appealed to the Minister for determination of the application before the Mayor called the application in for his determination. An appeal Inquiry will begin at the begin-

ing of November at which the group will be giving evidence as a Rule 6 objector. The principle reason for objection is over shadowing and encroachment of the wooded towpath at the start of the Arcadian Thames.

The Group has been successful in raising significant funds to provide improvements to the towpath, trees to replace those deemed either at risk or inappropriate where sited, benches and many other matters of community concern which could not be funded from Council budgets. An example is Chiswick Eyot which had experienced significant deterioration in the reed beds. Funds were procured to allow the necessary replacements, much of the work being undertaken by volunteers.

As all will be aware, flooding has become a most important consideration for the whole of the Thames catchment area. The TSKC which involves Councils locally Richmond, Hounslow, Hammersmith and Fulham and Wandsworth are providing strategies which will form part of the new overall plan for flood risk. The Group are part of the consultative and participating members.

If any member has an interest in receiving our (infrequent) newsletter and other information, please contact the writer.

Philip Whyte

For more information see <https://westlondonrivergroup.org>

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 2024



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Greetings

This year is the 200th anniversary of the consecration of St Anne's Church. The building was completed in 1822. However, its metamorphosis from being simply a building to becoming a church was delayed by a dispute between the diocese and the parish as to whether the churchyard should be enclosed by a fence or a wall: shades of Trollope, Anthony not Joanna. How we wish we had been there ... and with its Grade II* listing adding Historic England to the list of protagonists how much more protracted would debate about a choice of boundary treatment be today?

It seems unlikely that the wall won, as surely it would be there today, most likely the more expensive option and therefore the least likely. It is now surrounded by what look like relatively new railings. If you recollect a fence do please get in touch.

A meeting at the church was held to celebrate the anniversary, there were two talks, the first about Sir Robert Smirke the church's first architect, the second given by the current church architect, both excellent. After the meeting we reflected on how sometimes the relationship between numbers can seem to be strangely less or more than their numerical difference. In 2021 the Wandsworth Society celebrated its 50th anniversary. We are slightly less than a quarter the age of the church, and that seems very strange.

Front cover

Members of the cast of the Shakespeare in the Square's production of All's Well That Ends Well, and a member of the audience (see page 9) for further details, feature on photograph on the front cover, thank you Philip.

What's in a name?

Our June meeting was a talk given by Sioned Jones the director of Shakespeare in the Square's production of *All's Well that Ends Well* in St Anne's Church Garden on 2 and 3 of July

As a precursor to the performances we were treated to both an entertaining talk on how Shakespeare choose names for his characters, and an exploration of the text which originally inspired the plot for *The Tempest*.

As she said, 'each name he chooses is a wormhole down which to disappear'. She continued to explore this thesis with reference to *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, the three plays she has directed for Shakespeare in the Squares.

Sioned introduced the subject by encouraging audience members to consider their own names and what they mean. Some of these were:

Andrew - *strong manly*, Sarah - *princess*, Jason - *healer*, Phillip - *lover of horses*, Charlotte / Caroline / Charles - *petite / free man*, and William / Will - *resolute / protector*.

So when playwright William Shakespeare asked the question, 'What's in a name?' in the text of *Romeo and Juliet*, he was referring to the idea that names themselves are a convention to distinguish things or people, but themselves do not have any worth or meaning. Shakespeare was fond of 'characteronyms' or the name of a fictional character suggesting a distinctive trait of that character. Examples of characteronyms might be *Mistress Overdone*, *Slender*, *Pistol*, *Sir Toby Belch*, or *Ariel*, giving the audience a quick clue as to the personality of the character.

He could also choose a name for a character who might behave in a manner quite opposite to that described in their name, e.g. *Sebastian* - *venerable / reserved / a saint shot with arrows* in *Twelfth Night* turns out to be both aggressive and cowardly, easily persuaded to kill his own brother. Sebastian is

hardly what you would call venerable at all. *Adrian*, (Lord) which is ancient Latin for attractively dark but Greek for Rich! Or he might simply invent a name like *Miranda*, in *The Tempest*, from the Latin word, *mirandus* - to be wondered at, admired.

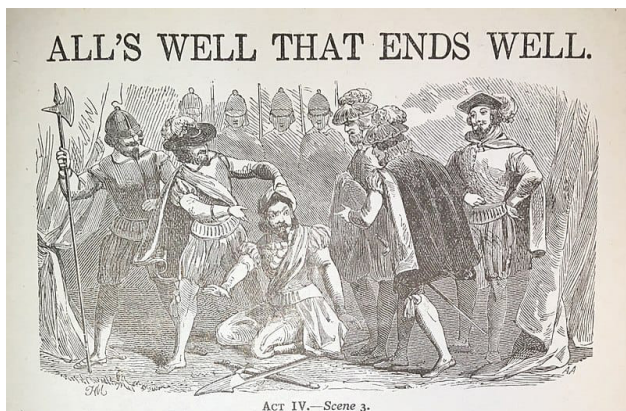


Research on the origin of the story of *The Tempest* took Sioned down another wormhole to the *Metamorphoseon Ovidianarum* of 1606. This text is very likely to have inspired the plot. The shipwreck of the *Sea Venture* off Bermuda described in Strachey's letter of 1610 certainly inspired Shakespeare's imagination and was also found in the storyline in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. We saw illustrations from the *Metamorphoseon* which depicted scenes that could have come straight out of *The Tempest*.

The next wormhole revealed more of the dramatic personae in *Twelfth Night*. *Valentine* was a gentleman attending on Duke Orsino, called after the saint who arranged marriages in secret for soldiers who had been banned by Emperor Claudius. Valentine was sent by the Duke to Lady Olivia's house to find out if she loved the Duke. We were amused to discover that *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, an irritating knight, was literally a *pain in the arse* – *ague*(illness or pain) and *cheek* (buttock).

Shakespeare's naming of other characters in *All's Well*

are either drawn from Greek legends, like Diana, goddess of the moon, hunting and underworld, or simply from the Latin – Widow Capilet (little hat) rather like Capulet in Romeo and Juliet.



In *All's Well That Ends Well* we have - *Helena* (shining or spiritual light, beautiful), the orphaned daughter of a physician, is persuaded to go to court to try to cure the King of France's illness. Where other's have failed, she succeeds. Her reward is marriage to

Bertram (bright raven), with whom she is secretly in love. However Bertram sees the alliance as beneath him and to get away from her he runs away to war with his frivolous friend,

Paroles (all talk and no trousers, a coward and braggart!) and

Lavatch named Lavache or Holy Cow! A jester, and servant to Countess Roussillon given to ruminating or chewing over his words and thoughts.

Shakespeare was inconsistent in name spellings and given to Latin instead of Greek forms for the gods and heroes. Adrian in *The Tempest* means Lord, which is ancient Latin for attractively dark but Greek for rich. Maudlin (corruption of Magdalene) was named because he was sad and sentimental, perhaps because of his drinking?

In *All's Well*, the name Mariana is of Latin origin, and is a combination of two names: Star of the Sea. 'Maria,' meaning 'bitter,' and 'Anna,' meaning 'gracious.' So, the name Mariana can be translated to mean 'bitter grace.' The Marians had a particular devotion to the virgin Mary. And Diana (Latin) after the Greek goddess (Artemis) is known as the triple goddess, of hunting, as the moon and of the underworld. Beauty,

intelligence and strong sense of morality Diana is the young, virginal daughter of the widow. In the play, Bertram tries to seduce her, but she ends up tricking him into sleeping with Helen.

After this intriguing dissemination of the naming of so many characters, Sioned ended her talk with a big thank you to the Wandsworth Society for sponsoring the Wandsworth performances of Shakespeare in the Squares production of *All's Well that End's Well* this season.

Julie Harrison

To find out more about Shakespeare in the Squares visit shakespeareinthesquares.co.uk

Wandsworth Historian

The Journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society

In the latest issue of the *Wandsworth Historian* we recall the many achievements of the Battersea-based sculptors Horace and Paul Raphael Montford, find out how to explore the records of the Wandsworth & Clapham Union Workhouse, and uncover even more details about Queen Mary's fateful car crash in Wimbledon Park Road in 1939.

We also take a glance at how a Balham builder advertised his wares in Edwardian times, and look back at the early days of the Roehampton-based Hare & Hounds Club of cross-country runners which still flourishes today.

All this and more in the Autumn 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 by emailing 020neil119@gmail.com.

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

Is now the time to close the gaps in the Wandle Trail?

The River Wandle gives Wandsworth its name and, together with the Thames, defines its shape. It provides a nine mile long natural corridor from its sources in Croydon and Carshalton to Feathers Wharf where it joins the Thames. For all this distance, the Wandle Trail provides a way-marked route following the course of the river. The trail enables people walking and cycling to follow the course of the river on paths and quiet streets for its entire length – with two exceptions - near the mouth of the river around Armoury Way and Wandsworth High Street, and through Earlsfield where the river passes under the railway with no path.

The trail near the Thames can be improved relatively easily, by improving the environment on the Causeway and the provision of crossings over Armoury Way and Wandsworth High Street. These measures can be built into the long-awaited re-think of the one-way system. A detour around the Southside shopping centre is required when continuing south, under which flows the Wandle in a long tunnel, to be rediscovered at Mapleton Road by King George's Park.

However, the "Earlsfield Missing Link", the subject of this article, requires people walking further south from the town centre to divert from King George's Park, away from the river onto Garratt Lane, passing under the railway at Earlsfield station before re-joining the trail at Summerley Street and to the bridge at Trewint Street. This diversion requires people to walk along on busy narrow (and uneven) pavements next to Garratt Lane traffic and requires cyclists to make two very difficult right turns in heavy



The dangerously pinched Penwith Road/Garratt Lane junction

traffic, one from Penwith Road into Garratt Lane (see photo) and then taking the left turn into Summerley Street. It represents a huge barrier for those with children or reduced mobility using the trail.

The reason for this diversion is because the river passes through a short tunnel under the high, main- line railway embankment, just to the west of Earlsfield Station. With streets near to both the north and south ends of the tunnel, and new housing developments built tight up to the railway embankment each side, there is scope to form a continuation of the Wandle Trail within the west side of the tunnel thus avoiding the Garratt Lane 'by-pass' route described.

Consequently, there is a potential solution. Almost exactly 21 years ago, in 2003, Wandsworth Cycling Campaign developed an engineering proposal to address this "Earlsfield Missing Link" – by continuing the trail with a cantilever bridge above the short section of

river under the railway. This was generally well received, and some work was undertaken by Wandsworth Council and Sustrans to explore the possibility. However, progress stalled for a number of reasons, including the number of stakeholders involved, which included Wandsworth and Merton Councils, Network Rail, the Environment Agency and several land-owners.



The north side of 'tunnel' with the brick archway; the proposed cantilevered walkway would be to the right hand side above the river

Although the gap in the trail remains 21 years after the WCC report, there has been some progress on the ground. When members of the Society's Roads & Transport group re-visited the site in June, we observed that land for the continuation of the Wandle Trail through Earlsfield has been reserved by the developers of the new housing developments on both sides of the railway embankment to enable linking the truncated trail in the future – see photos. This means that just a short, cantilevered bridge over the Wandle is needed for just the section under the railway, with significant reduction in cost. Similar bridges have now been built in a number of places such as the one linking Battersea Park and the Power Station site and under a rail bridge on the environmentally highly sensitive River Cherwell north of Oxford.

We feel that the time has come to finally close remaining gaps in the Wandle Trail to provide a truly continuous green link along the spine

of our Borough. Fixing the "Earlsfield Missing Link" would be transformational in improving everyone's ability to move sustainably and healthily between central Wandsworth and Earlsfield, and beyond.

We will broach this subject with the Council and let members know its response.



The south side with the steel girder bridge; the proposed cantilevered walkway would be to the left hand side above the river behind the shrub

Footnote: interestingly, and with reference to the photos of the north and south sides of the 'tunnel' beneath the railway embankment, it appears to be formed structurally of two halves. The north side structure is a wide brick arch spanning the full width of the Wandle river, whilst the south half is a heavily designed steel girder bridge spanning between brick abutments either side of the river, matching similar abutments on the north side. This suggests that the brick arch may have originally been continuous north to south to form a short tunnel, probably built complete with the abutments when the railway was constructed c1840, but, perhaps due to a part-failure of the arch, or because it was part-damaged by enemy action in the war, the south half was replaced? We will see if we can find why this situation has arisen, and report back.

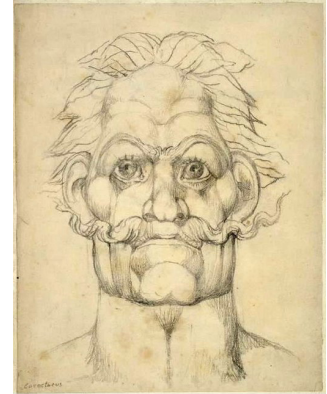
John Dawson

What we did this summer

In May a relevation ...

There were many in the audience of our May meeting who knew of **Caractacus, the subject of a talk given by Andrew Neill**, but we hope we were not alone in being less than well informed about this Ancient British Hero of the 1st century AD, or should you prefer CE.

Andrew carefully distinguished between fact and fiction to outline the place of Caractacus in legend and history. A tribal leader who resisted a Roman invasion for a good few years, his retreat from Colchester in the southeast ended in defeat in battle far to the west. The site of the battle is described in Roman histories, but its location is disputed. Andrew's considered view on the matter is that the battle was fought above the River Teme on the Hereford / Welsh Border near Knighton



Which may explain why Caractacus' reputation has endured in Welsh tradition, amply demonstrated by contributions from the Welsh (you know who you are) in the audience in discussion after the talk.

Andrew illustrated how the legend of Caractacus has featured in art, and in music with extracts from the opera *Carattaco* by Johann Christian Bach and the cantata *Caractacus* by Elgar.

Caractacus survived his last battle and was taken to Rome to be exhibited, and most likely executed. However, his speech to the senate so impressed that he was pardoned. His speech, and a description of that last battle, were recorded in the *Annals* of the Roman historian Tacitus, from which Wendy Cater read an extract, mercifully in translation, Latin not our strong suit.

A fascinating evening that both enlightened and entertained.

In June a trip to ...



Sandycombe Lodge, J M W Turner's House in St Margarets Twickenham where a small party of Society members enjoyed a guided tour of the house and garden.

The Turner's House Trust believe the house *was built to the designs of England's great landscape painter, J.M.W. Turner; working here as his own architect to create a quiet retreat for himself, away from the pressures of the London art world.* They credit the influence of his friend Sir John Soane on the design, but we suspect that Soane contributed more than influence. A gem of a building and a lovely garden : if you haven't been a visit is highly recommended.

For details of this small but interesting house see turnershouse.org

In July we went to see an interesting play ...

The Society was asked if we would consider sponsoring this year's Shakespeare in the Squares production. We were more than pleased to do so, as an appropriate way to widen the reach of the Society to members of the community who may not be aware of the range of interests which the Society pursues.



On the evenings of 2nd and 3rd July In the grounds of St Anne's Church, where previous productions by the company had been much enjoyed, we were presented with bravura performances of *All's Well That Ends Well*. Seats were arranged under the trees in front of the church, almost an amphitheatre. The cast of eight provided a colourful and

most amusing interpretation of the Bard's work. The first evening's performance was accompanied by some green parakeets, who were clearly enjoying the performance: and augmented by a debut performance from one of our members who was inveigled on to the grassy stage (he's the one staring glumly at you on the front cover!).

Our thanks to the cast who were amazingly adept and skilful both as actors and musicians..

And also in July we went to a marvellous party ...



On a lovely summer's evening we had a lovely **Summer's Evening Garden Party**. Some forty or so Society members assembled to enjoy good company, fine (?) wine, and some excellent canapés on a lovely summer's evening. We were splendidly entertained with music from Stephen Carpenter playing a vihuela, yes, me too ... it's a '15th-century fretted plucked Spanish string instrument, shaped like a guitar but tuned like a lute'. Stephen introduced and played music from renaissance Spain and Portugal, perfect accompaniment for a lovely summer's evening. (*Ed - yes we get the point, this has been mentioned before ... and suggest you delete that (?) it was quite drinkable*)

Planning news Autumn 2024

My last contribution started 'so what's new' the answer five months on- not a lot!

We have continued to monitor the new applications which the Council has registered but as we have reported previously the number and consequence of these applications is very limited. This may be as a result of the outcome of the political change of direction signaled by the new administration, together with the reconsideration of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF. The consultation of which is due to end towards the end of September, after which some time will be taken to consider such alterations and additions felt necessary to, hopefully, achieve the desired results. We will wait and see.

A survey undertaken by Civic Voice, of which the Society is a member, recently reviewed the NPPF questions running to over 140, which showed almost universal scepticism from responding members to the aims of achieving the desired results. As with many decisions which government has to take the inputting data is very often flawed, disregarding the unintended consequences.

A summary of recent applications or consultations:

Springfield NHS Trust and Barratt Developments.

No further information has been provided since the refusal and the planning group are to draft a letter to the Trust inquiring of the Trust's intentions.

All England Lawn Tennis Club.

The GLA to whom the application has been referred were required to enter a period of 'purdah' during the run up to the election, thus some time may have been lost. We understand.

Former gas works Swandon Way.

No news has been received on this proposal, however some revision from plans proposed previously may be required in connection with the adjoining site.

No 2 Armoury Way (adjoining the gas works).

The owner as applicant submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment which the Council confirmed did not require any further information. The proposals for the redevelopment are therefore clear to proceed. Scheme proposals, which we have been permitted to view, include two blocks of mostly student led residential accommodation, together with supporting Class E (workspace) at ground level. Service access to the site is proposed close to the bridge over the River Wandle which the writer views as most unsatisfactory. An application is expected in the foreseeable future.

Glassmill 1 Battersea Bridge Road.

At the last check, the number of objections had reached over 700!!! It has surprised the writer and others of the planning group that the applicants were not discouraged from continuing with the formulation of the application as the scheme proposed does not comply with the recently approved Local Plan. We will monitor the progress of the application. One significant objector is the Environment Agency who advised that the proposals do not comply with the current requirements in respect of flood risk.

The Stag Brewery Mortlake.

The rescheduled Public Inquiry will start 5 November for eight days and resume on 3 December with pre-inquiry proceedings continuing during the next two months. The West London River Group (the Society is a member) is a Rule 6 objector and will be giving evidence at the Inquiry.

The Fitzhugh Estate, Trinity Road.

A 'public consultation' was arranged for the 17 July to consider a 'revised' scheme for land adjoining Woodhall House (the most northerly block) on the estate. Members of the planning group attended the exhibition which was billed as a second round of consultation following the first over twelve



No 2 Armoury Way Looking north from Ram Street

months ago. What was displayed was a single image of a 14-storey tower block, on the right in the image below, with little other detail. We have written to the sponsors(the Council) via their website and consultants expressing our concern over the lack of consideration for the estate as a whole, the height and massing, together with lack of detail of supporting information. We are in touch with residents of the estate and the MAC(Wandsworth Common Management Advisory Committee).



Planning application No 2024/2572 Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) station and offices Riverside Quarter.

This application has been received by the Council to station the new base(currently at Chiswick Pier) for the upriver facility on the landward side of the pontoon used by the Uber river taxi at Riverside Quarter. The RNLI will also be taking administrative offices overlooking the pontoon as support facilities. The Society was advised of this possibility some months ago by the station commander following his talk to the Society earlier in the year. The Society has written to support this application.

Please let any of the planning group know if you need help with a planning issue. We may not know the answer but if not we ‘ may know someone who does’ !

Philip Whyte
Leader Planning Group

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 23 October 8:00 pm

A Trip to Ukraine

Jonathan Calloway will give an illustrated talk on his experiences and the work of the charity *Medical Life Lines Ukraine (MLLU)*

Jonathan is part of a team from the charity that has taken four renovated ambulances loaded with medical supplies from London to Ukraine..

Wednesday 27 November

8:00 pm

Food Banks

Xxx.

Enquiries to events@wandsworthsociety.org

King George's Park

And by the time you are reading this the works at the north end of King George's Park for the Thames Tideway Tunnel should be complete. The area will be once again part of the park: featuring artwork by Yemi Awosile, artist and designer called *Domestic Motif* and made of sand-cast bronze elements inspired by furnishing fabric and domestic space



And our friends Shakespeare in the Squares have announced their inaugural winter season, an all-new production of Macbeth infused with wicked music and devilishly good tunes

Saturday 9 November

3:00 pm and 7:00pm

at St Anne's Church

Directed by Sioned Jones, who has directed our last three summer shows – this is a short performance without an interval. Book tickets at shakespeareinthesquares.co.uk

and on a Friday 6 December

8:00 pm

Our Christmas party, same time (Christmas) same place, St Anne's Church Hall, delicious food and drink, wonderful entertainment from The Acoustic Blues Revue who play the music that kickstarted the most popular music of the 20th century. As their name suggests they focus on the blues, but they also play ragtime, skiffle and jazz.

Supper and first drink. £15 We shall soon be taking booking soon

