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Society
The Bedside 2024

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Events

Wednesday 22 January

Fred Ponsonby will speak about his first-hand experience of the work of the House of Lords.

Wednesday 26 February

To be announced

Wednesday 26 March

Geoff Simmons will speak Travellers and the Travellers Community by the River Wandle at the end of Trewint Street



Gray's Eulogy

Andrew Catto Architects: Now settling well into new offices the practice (merged with John Dawson's ALS Architects) is still designing 21C 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.

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.

Harrison Allen: Most of us need help to get through exams. HA's team of tutors provide that help.

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.

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.

St Luke's Music Society: This music society has gone from strength to strength. The latest concert (by the witty and versatile A4 Brass Quartet) won loud and prolonged applause from a large audience. Were you there?

Sambrook's Brewery: Having settled in at Wandsworth's centuries-old brewing centre their bottled beer is even available in Venice and the Greek islands.

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

A very Happy Christmas!

Ho Ho Ho, Father Christmas has gone on thinking of finishing his Christmas delivery list but his list seems to be growing and never ending. What he has done is to divide his list of jobs into “joblets”, these are most important, as the closer Christmas comes, the joblets list becomes longer.

Joblets are the most important part of Father Christmas’s preparations and he suspects are of many of the readers of this little piece, in that procrastination is what may cause the greatest anxiety in many households, particularly at this festive time of year. The words “have you done this or that” may ring from many houses in Wandsworth, only to be greeted by “not yet dear but I will get on with it very soon!!!”

The most requested Christmas gift which Father Christmas has received from children and grownups alike this year is for a drone. No, not to help with the various conflicts around the world but merely to keep track of the dog, the children, which roads are completely impassable (thanks to Thames Water particularly) and where to enjoy the wonderful parks and commons so easily accessible in Wandsworth.

This leads to an acknowledgement to Tideway for the virtual completion of works at King George’s Park. Testing of the plant continues however the landscaping now looks very attractively finished.

Flying the “testing” of the drone over Springfield Park reveals that the next phase of landscaping is now complete, this extends the park towards the new buildings under construction and provides a most successful provision of open space to be enjoyed by all.

Another location to be observed is Armoury Way. Have you taken advantage of the Padel Courts for “short tennis” which, when Father Christmas visited in disguise in the summer was being enjoyed by a host of those playing. Alas, this will not last for ever, as F C understands that there may be lots and lots of students coming to the location in the not-too-distant future. This may not be all bad as there will be lots more Christmas presents to drop off on the “on time sleigh”.

Close by and very close to the Wandle, a mere ducks waddle away, another “sky scraper” is proposed which may cause Rudolph and the rest of the team a bit of consternation as they dodge between the new “Wandsworth Fields” (can you see any grass?!) close to the station and the Dump (aka the recycling depot). The worst part is that there is very little space in “The Fields” to set the sleigh down while F C takes the parcels to the Concierge, as there are no chimneys.

Father Christmas and all his helpers wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and hopefully a stress free and healthy New Year.

Philip Whyte, Chairman

The Historical Residents of a Modern University

Gilly King

The University of Roehampton campus stretches 53 acres and has thirteen Grade I or Grade II listed buildings and structures, four of which are Georgian Villas, an unusual collection for a modern University!

But it is the historic residents of this modern University campus that fascinates me:

Richard Weston, 1st Earl of Portland, KG, was Chancellor of the Exchequer and later Lord Treasurer of England under James I and Charles I, being one of the most influential figures in the early years of Charles I's personal rule and the architect of many of the policies that enabled him to rule without raising taxes through Parliament. He lived in Roehampton Great House from 1625 until his death in 1635. Roehampton Great House stood on the grounds where Grove House is and some of the cellars of the Great House can be seen within the cellars of Grove House.

Dr William Harvey was personal physician to King Charles I and famous for his theory of the circulation of the blood, spent the last 11 years of his life at his brother's house in Roehampton (a Jacobean Mansion that once stood on the grounds of Digby Stuart College). Saddened by the defeat of his beloved master Charles I, shattered by the King's execution in 1649 and debarred by the Parliamentarians from exercising his functions at St Bartholomew's Hospital, he accepted the hospitality of his brother Eliab and devoted himself to research work. Dr Harvey died in Roehampton 1657 and was escorted to his burial place at Hemel Hempstead by the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, an organisation of which he had been the most famous President.

Benjamin Goldsmid built Elm Grove which stood in the grounds of what is now Digby Stuart College. He lived at Elm Grove from 1786 until his death in 1808. The records of Benjamin's time at Roehampton are interesting and abundant. His great wealth and open-handed generosity earned him the title of "The Benevolent Jew" and his influence in the financial world brought him

visitors from every rank of life. Pitt, the Prime Minister, who lived in Roehampton village, was often at Elm Grove, and Lord Nelson, a close friend, spent a night at Elm Grove before leaving for his last fatal mission. Benjamin Goldsmid was subject to fits of melancholia and in 1808, during an acute attack, he took his own life. He was mourned by all, and King George III himself "rendered to his memory a marked respect and grief".

Henrietta Ponsonby, Countess of Bessborough (Harriet) – an infamous resident of Parkstead (now Whitelands College) was the wife of the 3rd Earl of Bessborough – Harriet Ponsonby – a Whig hostess, gambler and notorious lover. Her liaison with the Earl of Granville produced two illegitimate children. Her legitimate daughter was Lady Caroline Lamb, who spent much of her childhood at Roehampton. Princess Diana was a direct descendant of Harriet, whose maiden name was Spencer.

Lady Jane Digby was 'The Beauty of Her Age'. In 1824, when very young and very naïve, she married Lord Ellenborough and lived at Elm Grove (formerly the residence of Benjamin Goldsmith). The marriage was never happy, and in 1830, after Jane was involved in a scandalous affair, it ended in a notorious divorce. 'For weeks [after the divorce] the name of Lady Ellenborough was in every newspaper and Jane's misdemeanours became the breakfast-table tittle-tattle of the entire country, causing her name to become a byword for scandalous behaviour for generations.'¹ She fled to Europe and after two more marriages and many affairs she finally settled in Syria where she married a Bedouin Sheik 20 years her junior. She died of fever and dysentery in Damascus on 11 August 1881 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery there.

Yolande Duvernay. In 1851 the Grove House estate passed to Stephens Lyne Stephens, on the death of his father Charles, he came to live at Grove House with his wife Yolande Duvernay, a

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Parisian ballet dancer – she too was ‘The Beauty of Her Age’. At this time the family were referred to as England’s richest commoners but were socially ostracized as, prior to her marriage to Stephens, Yolande had been the mistress of the Marquis de La Vallette – amongst others. Stephens had, at first, purchased his concubine and then married her – which was not ‘the done thing’ in polite Victorian Society!

Gerard Manley Hopkins. Perhaps the most eminent Jesuit who spent time at Manresa House (now Whitelands College) was the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. He was a novitiate from Sept 1868 until Sept 1870. He moved north to Stonyhurst, Lancashire but returned to Roehampton for a year’s teaching in August 1873. Hopkins was ordained a priest in 1877 and moved around the country both teaching and being a parish priest. He undertook a year’s tertianship at Manresa from August 1881, taking his final vows at St. Joseph’s Church, Roehampton, in August 1882.

John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites:
Whitelands College is one of the oldest higher

education institutions in England, predating every university except Oxford, Cambridge, London and Durham. The College was founded in 1841 as a teacher training college for women by the Church of England’s National Society. In 1874, the Revd John Pincher Faunthorpe was appointed Principal of Whitelands College and enlisted the interest of John Ruskin, the great Victorian art critic and political economist, who gave numerous gifts of books and pictures to the College. He also introduced to the College William Morris, leader of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the eminent Pre-Raphaelite artist. Together they designed artefacts for the newly erected College Chapel the most notable being the Burne-Jones’ stained-glass windows and William Morris’ reredos which can still be viewed in Whitelands College, Roehampton as these artefacts have moved with the College.

European Princesses and the Kennedy sisters:
By 1939 the Society of the Sacred Heart school at Roehampton (now the Digby Stuart Campus) was one of the foremost girls’ Catholic boarding schools, whose pupils at the time included nine European princesses and Eunice, Pat and Jean Kennedy, the three daughters of the American Ambassador to Britain, Joe Kennedy Sr. John F Kennedy’s sisters.

Charles Hatchett (1765 – 1847) was born in Long Acre, London the son of John Hatchett, a coachbuilder. In 1800 he founded a chemical works at Chiswick in London. In 1801 while working for the British Museum in London, Hatchett analysed a piece of columbite in the museum’s collection. Columbite turned out to be a very complex mineral, and Hatchett discovered that it contained a “new earth” which implied the existence of a new element. Hatchett called this new element columbium (Cb) in honour of Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of America. On 26 November of that year he announced his discovery before the Royal Society. The element was later rediscovered and renamed niobium (its current name). Later in life, Hatchett quit his job as a chemist to work full-time in his family’s coach fabrication business. He lived at Mount Clare, Roehampton from 1807 to 1819. (see the notes on the Mount Clare File, from Imperial College). ■

1. Mary Lovell, *A Scandalous Life: the Biography of Jane Digby* (Richard Cohen Books, 1995)



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Lima Shakedown

John Spencer-Silver

“What brings you to Lima?” He was American, mid-thirties, tie. There were three of us at breakfast, each at his own table and forming a triangle consisting of him, me, and a man with his back to us. I told the American I had walked the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu with a friend I had joined in Peru and who had flown home. I was going home the next day, via Miami because I couldn’t get a direct flight. The American said he was on business and staying at the hotel, which seemed odd because the hotel was the kind where they iron but don’t always wash the sheets. I thought the hotel was more the cup of tea of the man with his back to us, now part of the conversation. He

had hair to his shoulders, like a hippy in recovery, so it was another surprise when it turned out he was a German policeman.

This was my last day in Lima and Lima was waiting for me. As I left, the American said that he too was flying out the next day and why not share a taxi to the airport?

Lima is a World Heritage Site, with catacombs, museums and a Cathedral, none of which I had seen. But I found myself outside a cinema showing “Jaws”, with Spanish subtitles, which also I had not seen. “See it before you go swimming”, the posters told me. I wasn’t even going swimming but, to my shame, I went inside. Later, I realised that the dark of a cinema would have been an ideal place for someone to hand over contraband. In this case, though, great white shark was the order of the day and, once Jaws had been dispatched, there was still time for sights.

The next morning the American and I headed for the airport where I checked in, handed over my backpack and set off with my new friend for coffee. But someone called from the check-in and gestured me to come back, climb over the luggage scales and go through a door behind him. The room I entered contained about eight men watching CCTV monitors and none looked up. I was sent through another door into an office, empty of anyone save for a soldier in crumpled fatigues. On a table, in front of him, was my backpack.

Like a conjurer with rabbits, the soldier took the contents from my pack one by one and examined them. First, though, he asked me to remove my shoes which he held up to the window and studied as he bent them. He unravelled my toothpaste tube, prised open the sealed bottom and peered in. He turned my aerosol can of shaving foam 180 degrees very slowly.

Then he pulled out my foil sheet of chlorine tablets, used for purifying water.

The tablets were flakey white and about the size of a 50p coin. The soldier looked as if he was in no hurry and I had a plane to catch, so I took one of the tablets, broke it in half and put one half into my mouth and gave the other half to him. He followed suit. I wanted him to see that the tablets were not drugs. The taste and effect were immediate and terrible. It felt as if my mouth was going to disintegrate and my head explode. I could see that the soldier, who was a few seconds behind me, was affected in the same way. Neither of us had swallowed but, fearing that he might think it was a prank, I grabbed some boiled sweets and put one in my mouth and gave the other to him. Recklessly this time, he followed suit.

The sweets did indeed assuage the foul taste, but it had not been a good idea to pass round the chlorine tablets. Until then, the soldier had been calm and things were non-controversial. The chlorine incident was badly timed too. I knew it was coming but here it was: in the lingua franca of tricky situations, the soldier was telling me to drop my trousers. I was wearing a canvas money belt under my trousers and I could sense his heart miss a beat when he saw it. But all it contained was some money and telephone numbers. He said I could put my trousers back on.

After more searching, the soldier made a call saying, presumably, “The Gringo’s clean”, after which another soldier appeared, better dressed this time and armed with a collar and tie, and told me I could go.

A couple of months earlier, a friend told me she had been searched, flying out of New York. Afterwards, they gave her a note saying that she had been searched, and the date. I decided I would like one too, just in case anyone asked “What’s with the toothpaste?” So, I asked the man at the check-in to let me have a note confirming “the simple fact” that I had been searched. But he said “No. We are permitted”; as simple as that.

I climbed back over the luggage scales, hoping I had not missed my flight, and there he was. The American. Standing about five paces from me. I had not yet joined up his particular dot, so I said that I was glad to see him, because he could have told someone if I had not re-emerged. He laughed and said that he would not have done that, but would have made himself scarce. This was strange, because it was exactly the opposite of what he had, in fact, done.

My flight was called and I went through the gate at passport control, with the American in my slipstream. I turned to wait for him, but he was still on the other side of the barrier. “I forgot my passport”, he said. ■

Helping you stay winter well

Dr Nicola Jones MBE, Chair and Clinical Lead for Wandsworth CCG



It's that time of year again, but before the frantic holiday rush takes over, here are a few tips for staying well at Christmas and beyond – however you plan to celebrate.

It's true that the winter weather always brings challenges for our health services, as seasonal viruses and falling temperatures mean increased demand for hospitals and GP practices alike.

But remember, if you need medical help at any time, you can visit NHS 111 online or call 111. The call handler will listen to your symptoms and direct you to the right help for you.

Getting the most from your GP practice

A recent survey of patients across England found that people in south west London rate their GP highly. The survey saw scores for Wandsworth above the national average – and top in London – for many measures including patient experience and ease of contact, reflecting the work that has been happening in local practices to improve phone systems and get you the right care.

Our practices' teams are much wider these days than doctors and nurses. If you contact your GP, you will be asked about the issue you're having, so you can be offered an appointment with the best healthcare professional for you.

This might be a GP or advanced nurse practitioner, but it could also be a physiotherapist, a paramedic or a clinical pharmacist – the experts when it comes to medication reviews and advice.

Many practices also have counsellors, wellbeing coaches and social prescribing link workers to address the non-medical issues that are often at the root of health problems. They can connect you to local services – from walking groups and coffee mornings to debt, legal or housing advice as well as talking therapies.

In Wandsworth GP appointments are available from 8am to 8pm, by contacting your practice reception team, NHS 111 or via the NHS app.

Think pharmacy first

Community pharmacies are available for expert health advice about a wide range of minor illnesses and conditions. This is particularly true over the holiday period when their extended hours mean some are open on bank holidays – plus, you can just walk in.

Since the start of the year, a new scheme called Pharmacy First means they can now offer advice and treatment for seven common conditions – without you needing to see a GP.

The conditions are earache in children aged one to 17, impetigo, infected insect bites, shingles, sinusitis, uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women and – always an issue at this time of year – sore throats.

You can also go to your pharmacy for many other issues from contraception to blood pressure checks.

Pharmacists have a wealth of knowledge about medicines. If you wish to talk in private, most have a consultation room. Many will also deliver medicines to people who can't get out of the house.

And if your pharmacist can't help, or thinks you need to be seen elsewhere, they will let you know if you need to contact your GP or go to A&E.

Are your vaccinations up to date?

Getting your winter flu and Covid-19 vaccinations, if you're in an eligible group, is one of the most important things you can do to stay strong over winter. It also helps the NHS enormously by preventing ill health and admission to hospital.

The Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccination is also available for the first time this winter. RSV is a leading cause of infant mortality around the world. It can also be the cause of the coughs and colds that

lead to infections like pneumonia and bronchiolitis, which are dangerous for older people and young children. The vaccine is available to pregnant women and people aged 75 to 79.

Get the most from the NHS App

The NHS App is an amazing way to access health services. Install it on your smartphone and you can use it to request repeat prescriptions, view your medical records, contact your GP and much more.

If you care for someone – an elderly parent for example – who can't use the app, you can request proxy access to manage their healthcare for them.

We know that not everyone is confident enough around technology to make the most of the app, so we have digital care coordinators in Wandsworth, and across south west London, to help you install and use it.

Please consider installing the app if you can. It helps us free up phone lines for people who can't, including our most vulnerable residents.

If you are struggling

While lots of people can't wait for the festive season and spending time with friends and family, for others it can be a difficult and isolating time.

People with urgent mental health concerns can get 24/7 specialist NHS advice and support from south London's NHS 111 mental health helpline. The service is available for adults and children and means people can get the right support, advice and help quickly.

Talk Wandsworth is the borough's free, confidential talking therapies service. You can refer yourself for problems such as stress and low mood or access it via your GP. Appointments are available by phone, online or face-to-face. Find out more at talkwandsworth.nhs.uk.

For some people the cost-of-living means added stress, as chilly weather pushes up heating costs alongside the usual Christmas expense. If you're concerned about your finances or those of a friend, visit Wandsworth Council's cost of living hub for details about the help and support currently available to residents at wandsworth.gov.uk/cost-of-living-hub.

Helping people stay warm and well

Freezing weather can have a big impact on the health of older people and those with long-term conditions. The cold can put people at higher risk of respiratory infections, heart attacks and strokes.

If you have neighbours who live alone, or are elderly and vulnerable, please check they are staying warm and well, especially if falling temperatures make it difficult to get out.

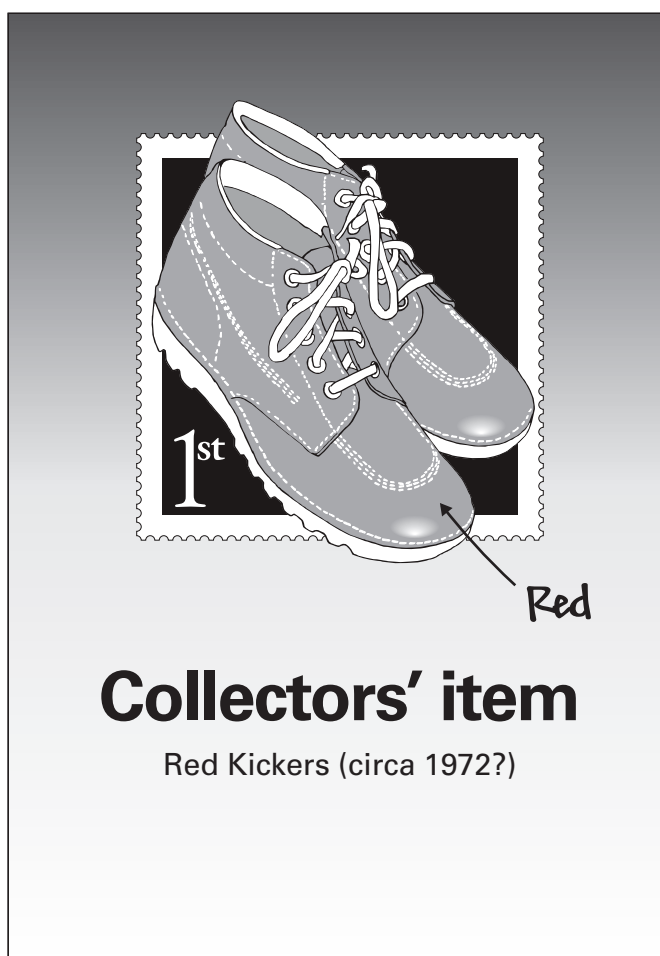
We recommend people keep the rooms they occupy at a constant 18°C, including at night and have at least one hot meal a day – maybe a bowl of soup – along with plenty of warm drinks.

Is your medicine cabinet well stocked?

Finally, if you take regular medication, make sure you order any repeat prescriptions in plenty of time before the holidays as your GP and pharmacist may need longer to fulfil your request.

It's also worth checking you have enough paracetamol and any other over-the-counter medicines that you use regularly to tide you over.

All the very best for Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year! ■



Hecklers

Susan Morrison

Dundee's hecklers – a type of jute worker – gained such a reputation as highly vocal political radicals that the term came to mean interrupting public speakers.

In the National Museum of Scotland's digital display of banknotes and coins, there is a tiny copper token. It's dated 1797, and was issued by a hemp importer. It's stamped with the image of a worker and above his head it says "Flax-Heckling".

It's concrete proof that hecklers and heckling are another globally famous product of the once-mighty jute mills of Dundee, and its radical workforce. Heckle is a very old word, much older than the jute mills. In the 13th century, it was 'hechele', the dressing of flax, the final step before weaving. The flax would be pulled through heckle combs to smooth and clean the fibres

It's simply an early industrial process, like weaving, threshing or grinding. So how did heckling take on a life of its own, and become the nemesis of politicians and comedians? Perhaps the answer lies partly in the job, where it was done, and the city of Dundee itself.

Dundee was already a centre for flax working when, in 1824, a linen-manufacturer called Anderson, got a hold of a few bales of jute. At first, he was flummoxed, but persevered, until they created a yarn of pure jute, and started to churn out the military uniforms, shipping sacks and cheap, tough cloth demanded by an expanding empire. Within a decade, the price of jute had rocketed and fortunes were being made. Well, by the mill owners, at least.

Soon the jute boom was attracting workers from all over Scotland and Ireland. They lived in appalling conditions. The working conditions were no better. Dirty, dangerous and loud. The women who worked in those mills lost their hearing young. They became known for lip-reading, and talking loudly with exaggerated facial expressions, like the mill girls of Yorkshire and Lancashire, lovingly caricatured by 20th-century comedians like Les Dawson.

The lipreading was handy. A woman could be working two looms simultaneously, putting her some

distance from her nearest co-worker. Mind you, she had little time to chat. She needed eagle eyes on that shuttle. Threads broke frequently, requiring nimble fingers for fast fixes.

All of this made the chances for nuanced workplace conversations about developments in political theory difficult. Things didn't really improve outside the gates. Most of the workers were female, and despite Dundee's reputation as a 'woman's city', housework still needed to be done. Mill girls may very well have wanted to start a revolution, but they had to get the tea on first. Then finish the laundry.

'Great deal of important discussion'

Heckling, at the start of the process, was originally done separately from the looms, mainly by men, working slightly away from the factory floor. In some places, this would be known as the 'heckle house' or shop. These men worked physically closer together, giving greater opportunity to explore radical and dangerous ideas of liberty, equality and solidarity.

And the hecklers had a secret weapon, as detailed in Perthshire Courier of 1834: "Some heckling shops in Dundee contain from 50 workmen. Their occupation not noisy, a great deal of important discussion takes place in heckling shops, where a great variety of newspapers are often received, and read aloud."

Those newspapers could include the radical rags of the age, carrying thoughts and ideas of fair pay and egalitarianism. Dangerous stuff in a combustible environment, which the city of Dundee certainly was. Unrest was never far away. In 1792, inspired by the French Revolution, the city rioted. In an unusual display of fraternity, Dundonians seized and planted an ash tree at the town cross.

They festooned it with ribbons and decorations as the 'Tree of Liberty', and cheered when Lord Provost Riddoch danced around it three times, possibly under duress. He got his own back. He had the militia dig up the 'Tree of Liberty' and threw it in jail. In Dundee, even the trees could be radicals.

Throughout the 19th century, strikes became common, and hecklers became organised. Mills were

closed by workers demanding higher pay. Newspapers observed that these strikes could last for weeks, bolstered by financial aid coming from other workers from as far afield as Glasgow and Paisley. They had begun to create trades unions, a development that rattled the mill owners.

Hecklers in charge

By 1833, the Perthshire Courier notes that mill-spinners were “completely under the control of their hecklers. A delegate is from time to time sent from each spinning-mill to inform the union what stock of dressed flax is on hand... it is then computed what length strike might be necessary to throw the whole establishment out of employment – so that they

may determine what... wages may be demanded.”

The next year, the newspapers triumphantly wrote that some mills were introducing steam-heckling machines. They also managed to blame the radical elements in the hecklers for forcing benevolent owners to invest in this new technology. The power of the heckler would be broken, they declared.

It wasn't. Hand heckling remained a vital part of the process, and the hecklers, tough, organised and opinionated, began to make their presence known in places that excluded women, even Dundee's formidable Amazons. There are reports of hecklers shouting down pub owners and mill

representatives and joining Chartist rallies.

By the middle of the century, politicians started to fear them, and the people who emulated them. The Glasgow Herald of Monday, October 16, 1848, carried the headline “HECKLING' AN MP” above the story of how Mr Archibald Hastie, “the respected representative of Paisley, was subjected to a ‘heckling’ by his Constituents, in the Exchange Rooms, Moss Street, in that town”.

Heckling had arrived, and went on to conquer the world. Dundee is justly famous for its jam, jute and journalism. Perhaps we should also add to that list the powerful voice of the heckler. ■

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There is no red line

and, more importantly, there has never been one

Rosemary Haworth-Booth

When I first moved to Wandsworth – in 1971 – I was shocked at what I then considered to be the ghastliness of it all. I had to find some seductive facts about the borough to entertain anyone who might show an interest in where I was living. Well, fact no.1. Voltaire stayed in Wandsworth on visits to England (is this true...?) fact no.2. It was where Pitt the Younger (or was Pitt the Elder...?) went to school (no doubt Emanuel). After that I gave up, but both sufficed until I realised I no longer had to ameliorate the terms of my existence in Wandsworth. After the birth of our first daughter neighbours, hitherto hidden and unknown, suddenly appeared on our doorstep with flowers and small toys. They became

good friends and we realised how blessed we were to be where we were. But all the same, it would have been fun to have a few more fun facts at my fingertips, and for that very reason, a few back copies of The Bedside Edition (which in the early 1970s did not, I believe, exist) to hand.

All this is by way of saying I recognise the dominant threads of local history and community in The Bedside;



Mark and I are now much removed but perhaps that gives us an excuse for another, overarching, perspective of things that can affect us as much in Wandsworth as in North Devon. This year, what could be more moving and significant to all of us than the desperate situation in the Middle East. I am writing in early October – so things will change between now and publication, but I feel so passionately that I am going to write about it anyway. Every week, from November 2023, The North Devon chapter of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign has held a vigil in Barnstaple, first in the public Square, later moving to the High Street for the greater footfall. We have kept in touch with our friends in Gaza and

the West Bank who, heart-wrenchingly, welcome our messages of love and support.

We staged a die-in – a bunch of us lying in the High Street wrapped in white bed sheets, observing minutes of silence; listening to readings of poetry and horrifying statistics of deprivation and death. We invited Dr Nadia Naser-Najjab, from the Centre for Palestinian Studies at Exeter University, to speak to us. Among many other



things she pointed out how the pandemic was effectively weaponised to ensure tighter surveillance and control, while at the same time essential access to water, sanitation and hygiene was being cut — just the latest in a long line of national catastrophes in a context where settler colonialism prevails. We held a kite-making workshop where people made kites decorated with the most moving Palestinian poetry. There is a long tradition of kite-making in the Middle East, where kites are both playthings and bearers of important messages. We attended a lecture in Exeter by Ilan Pappé — outstanding Jewish professor who set up the Centre mentioned above, in 2009, and has long recognised the depravity of the Israeli Zionist colonial project. We listened to Avi Shlaim, another remarkable Jewish professor, talking of his belated discovery that the bombing raids that drove his Jewish family from their happy, peaceful home in mid-century Iraq to the perceived safety of Israel was nothing less than a trap set by underground Zionist militia: deliberate driving of Jews out of Iraq to Israel to foment hatred of Iraq and faith in Israel. Pappé and Shlaim are still allowed into the country as they both have Israeli citizenship, but are now definitively persona non grata at Israeli Universities.



We have gathered with placards and banners outside our local Barclays and even been allowed in, to read out statements about their deeply unethical stance in supporting Israel. We made it clear that we were not criticizing the local staff, but rather the directors. We have marched in London and Exeter; written to local MPs, David Lammy, the BBC. We hope that each tiny act will scratch at the conscience of those who have power. We know that there are thousands of Jewish people here, and across the world, who are as devastated by what the Israelis have done and continue to do as we are. Our daughter joined a Palestinian Solidarity March from Southwark to Wandsworth that was led by a Jewish woman.

We remember the early 20th century, with Balfour, declaring in 1917, despite opposition from some Jewish leaders* *“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”* Nothing about preserving the legal and political rights of that non-Jewish population in Palestine. The British,

whose own interests were key to their actions, were yet again exercising imperial power with a deeply pernicious mandate. Weasel words followed two years later with the far more blatant *“In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country...the four great powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land. In my opinion that is right.”*

Hamas emerged in 1987, after decades of thuggery, injustice and theft. One man’s terrorist is another’s resistance/freedom fighter.

Please read Rashid Khalidi’s *The Hundred Years War on Palestine* and John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt’s *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*. ■

* Bernard Regan *The Balfour Declaration* pp58-61

Will the butterfly still flutter by?

What are we doing about the demise of the butterfly? Is it only in London that we have a lack of these beautiful works of art. Have they all left us like the sparrows? Do they all know something that we don't? These examples were taken in Norfolk, mainly because I thought it unusual to see two different varieties sharing the same flower. Of course this may be quite a normal occurrence but as I'm not an expert on the subject of these beautiful creatures I have no idea. This photo was taken in Norfolk about ten years ago, and I'm not due to go there again until next year, so until then I will not know if anything has changed, and maybe find out what has happened to the Londoners.

Will Holland



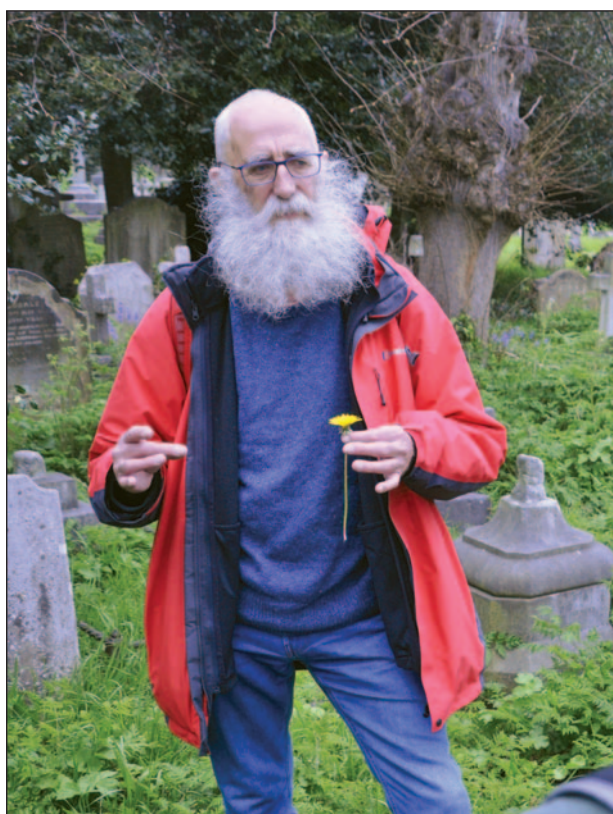
Thoughts on Walks

by Roy Vickery

As I first led a plant walk, on Tooting Common, when I was in my mid-thirties and have continued to lead walks into my mid seventies, I thought it might be interesting to record what I've learnt over the last 40 years.

Plant walks are comparatively easy to organise as there's a great deal of flexibility, unlike history walks where there are certain buildings and places that require a stop and a chat, often competing with pedestrians on pavements and traffic noise. When examining plants we are usually away from busy pavements – though 'pavement prowls', discussing the origins of plants growing in gutters and on pavements along back streets are popular. Also usually there is no set route, the walk can be adapted to suit the physical abilities of those who turn up, as long as there are some usual plants – elder, groundsel and stinging nettles are favourites – it's not difficult to find things to say. However, a problem with urban plant walks is that areas can be mown and tidied up; it's better not to plan much in advance, what was looking good at lunchtime may have been removed by 6.30.

I prefer not to take 'registers' at the start of walks, instead spend five minutes or so introducing myself and explaining what we intend to do. Sometimes I ask if people expect anything in particular from the walk. Since



I've introduced myself to groups hundreds of times, this bit is easy, I don't need to concentrate on what I'm saying, and use the time to assess the participants, seeing who looks unable to walk far, who is wearing unsuitable footwear, and who leans forward suggesting that they have hearing difficulties or are shortsighted. Who can scramble amongst gravestones and up

muddy paths, and who can comfortably deal only with smooth, level paths. And there is usually at least one person on every walk, wants to continually display their own, frequently incorrect, knowledge. It's good to identify any such people early on so that can be firmly but, I hope, with some tact, managed.

As most of the plants I discuss are common-or-garden ones, I usually pick a bit of the one I'm talking about and hold it up for people to see. If I point at it invariably some people will focus on a plant a few centimetres away and wonder why I'm talking about blue flowers when they're seeing white.

Most of my more usual walks can be accessible to wheelchair-users, and I'm happy when they come along. However, although such people don't cause problems, other people can create difficulties. It's amazing how often participants don't take the needs of wheelchair-users into consideration, and will stand at the front so that the user cannot easily see what's being discussed. This can mean that the leader constantly has to tell

people to consider the user's needs, sometimes to the extent that it seems as if he is continually drawing attention to the user's disability.

I discourage dogs – even well-behaved ones (and how many dog-owners describe their dogs as being otherwise?) – the pets themselves and their owners are rarely a problem, but other participants seem to think it necessary to entertain the animals and thus cause distraction. I once had a pet rabbit attend a walk; he (or was it she?) actually contributed to the proceedings by taking an active interest in many of the plants.

The most amusing challenge I ever had is when a young and fearless squirrel decided to join us for a while; it's not easy to retain people's interest when a playful, fluffy animal offers alternative entertainment.

I prefer not to lead walks on nature reserves and other places where rarities abound. Often I can't identify the rarities, and when I can I usually have little of interest to say about them. By concentrating on common plants I hope that whenever someone sees that plant in the future they will at least half remember what I've told them. I hope that people will come to realise that there are fascinating plants growing literally on their doorsteps. There's no need to fly off to Madagascar or tropical rainforests.

The presence of children can be a challenge, but there are

various games with plants, and smutty plant-names, which help keep them involved, and it's important to remember that age isn't necessarily an indication of knowledge; some young people have an astounding knowledge of some groups of plants, whereas some older people appear to have spent decades wandering around with their eyes (and, as far as plants go, their minds) closed. I'm not particularly concerned about reaching out to younger people; I'm happy to (hopefully) entertain people of all ages.

I think it's good to explain to people that they can feel free to leave whenever they think they've had enough. Perhaps I'm not offering what they expected, that's fair enough. I remember once feeling trapped on a walk in Brompton Cemetery, when the leader's enthusiasm was soldiers who'd fought long-forgotten campaigns on the Indian Subcontinent, a subject of little, or no, interest to me. However, I do find it strange, or at least impolite, when people who have dominated discussion suddenly leave without offering thanks or explanation. Have I in some way offended them, or am I regarded as an almost inanimate form of entertainment which can be switched off when they've had enough? Often such people appear to be rather aristocratic, possibly from families which might employ servants. Once the jester has provided sufficient entertainment he can be ignored.

So why lead walks? As mentioned earlier, there's always a desire to encourage people to increase their appreciation what we have locally, and I believe that if we more fully connect with nature on our doorsteps we will understand our environment more thoroughly and take greater steps to care for the environment, both locally and globally. When I started leading walks I usually had one or two elderly women come along who I suspect were not particularly interested in what I had to say, but liked walking around commons and through woodlands, where they felt unsafe alone, in a group. That's no problem, anything that gets people out and active is good. In recent years I've had more younger people, often couples, come along; people who haven't thought much about 'nature' in the past, but want to start exploring it. But, despite all the talk about Covid making people more appreciative of nature, I can't say that I've noticed this.

I avoid making any income from walks, I simply enjoy the stimulation of sharing my enthusiasm with others, meeting interesting people, and visiting places of which I otherwise might not have heard. I hope participants – note the use of the use of 'participants', rather than 'audience' – find this stimulation is mutual. ■

Details of Roy's future walks can be found at www.plant-lore.com/upcoming-events/

Susanna Powell:

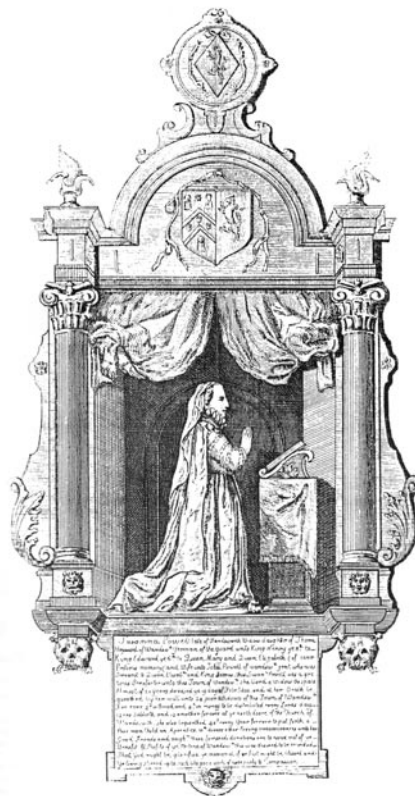
a Wandsworth widow in Jacobean times

Susanna Powell is a name still remembered in Wandsworth because of a charity she bequeathed when she died in 1631, and because of the large wall monument showing her kneeling in prayer in the chancel of All Saints' Church in the High Street. Her father was Thomas Hayward, a Yeoman of the Guard across four Tudor reigns, quite a feat for the time. A sizeable landowner in Wandsworth, Hayward had by 1575 retired from court service and his daughter had married, for in that year he had licence from Elizabeth I to transfer his pension of twelve pence a day to his son-in-law, John Powell.

Powell was a Welshman, and at that time aged 48. Like his father-in-law he was one of a small colony of royal servants in Wandsworth where there was easy transport on the Thames to and from the royal palaces. He invested in land in the vicinity, and by 1591 had bought a modest property in the manor of Dunsford, a house and garden with the adjacent half acre that belonged to it, and he and his wife appear to have made this their home since it was there that Susanna died in 1631. Its exact location is not certain, though it was probably south of the High Street, for the half-acre was next to the mill pond of what was then called the Middle Mill.

By the end of the sixteenth century John Powell was one of the leading residents of Wandsworth, though he was still in the service of James I when he died aged 74 on 26 June 1611.

There is no mention of any children in his will; land he owned elsewhere went to a Welsh cousin, and all his goods and chattels to his wife, who was also his executrix. She was to live on as a widow in Wandsworth for almost twenty years until her death in March 1631.

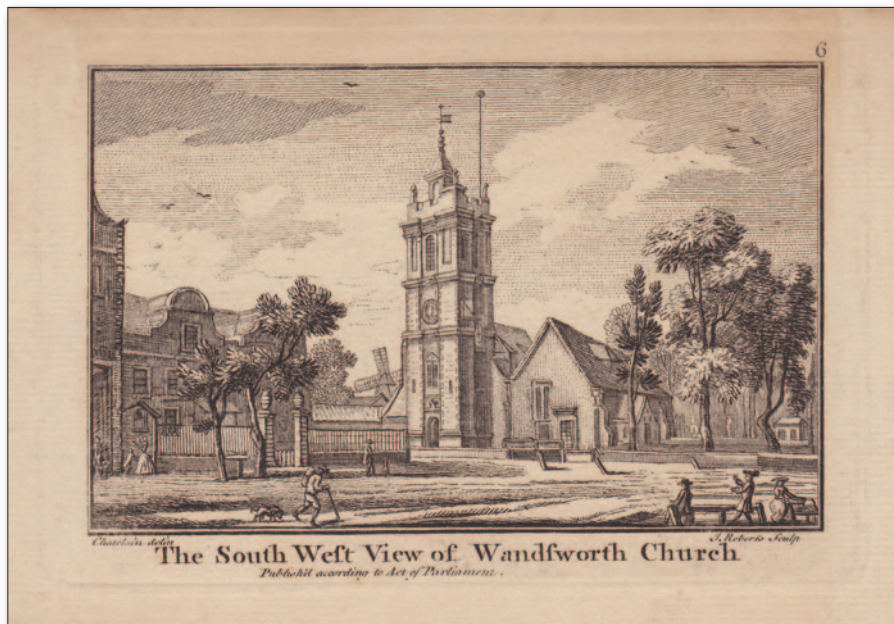


An engraving of Susanna Powell's monument in Wandsworth Parish Church. (Source not identified)

Her first independent act was to buy the rectory and advowson of Wandsworth for the considerable sum in 1612 of £1,350. What did her possession of the rectory mean? In material terms she was now the owner of the old parsonage house and barns on the south side of the High Street

opposite the junction of what is now Putney Bridge Road. More important, she owned the great tithes, i.e. a tenth of all hay and corn grown in the whole parish of Wandsworth each year. The advowson gave her the right to present the vicar to the living when there was a vacancy, though in fact she never did because the existing incumbent Robert Allen outlived her by three months. This buying-up of rectories and advowsons was becoming a common practice of Puritans, its aim being to improve badly paid livings, and to install suitable ministers who considered preaching more important than ritual.

She was certainly regarded as one of the wealthier local inhabitants because, when her house was burgled in 1621, she lost thirty pieces of pewterware, a silver-gilt spout-pot and £1 8s 4d in money. The exact day of her death is not known, but she was buried on 1 March 1631. She had made her will three years earlier in December 1627, and from this come some clues about her life. Firstly, her two main charities are spelled out in great detail. The larger bequest of £20 16s a year was to provide twenty-four poor widows of Wandsworth each with a fourpenny loaf and fourpence in money every other Sunday, i.e. to twelve of them each Sunday after the service. The other was of £2 a year to bind a poor child apprentice. These bequests, now merged in Wandsworth Combined Charity, have survived because they were left in perpetuity to be



All Saints' Church, Wandsworth sketched in about 1750 by the French artist Jean Baptiste Claude Chatelain showing the tower added in about 1629 whilst Susanna Powell was still alive. (WHS research ephemera collection)

paid out of the income of 'the parsonage', that is to say the rectory estate and the great tithes.

There were also many bequests to neighbours who came from a class which included tradesmen and yeoman farmers, all active in parish affairs but definitely not gentry. These she called her best friends, one such being Philip Buck, a waterman often employed by the church in transporting building materials. His younger daughter, Susanna, was Powell's servant and only 14 years old when the will was made. She was left £40, to be paid at the rate of £2 a year until she was 18 years old or married. However, contrary to the common practice with bequests to minors, she was given power, if she died before then, to leave the money to whom she liked. In the event, her fellow servant Arthur Blinco snapped up the girl and her dowry shortly after their mistress's death and just before her eighteenth birthday.

Susanna Powell's funeral must have been impressive because she left the large sum of £100 to provide black gowns or cloaks for

no fewer than twenty-four of her kinsfolk and best friends, with another £5 for white gloves to be

worn at the event. Ten poor widows were to carry her to the church. Her monument, for which she left the sizable sum of £25, describes in great detail her charitable bequests, for there was no false modesty about such philanthropy. It was considered praiseworthy to make it widely known so that others would follow the example.

Finally, she left £20 to the church for two silver-gilt flagons for communion wine. With silver then at 5s an ounce, this was a generous gift. The flagons were not specially made for the bequest because they are not a matching pair, though they are engraved with the Powell arms and her name, and – at the time then this article was written – were still brought out at communion service in the church where she was buried. ■

This is a significantly shortened version of an article which first appeared in 1993 in the *Wandsworth Historian*, the journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society. It is re-published as a tribute to the widely acclaimed local historian **Rita Ensing** who died last year at the age of 100. Visit the WHS website at www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk for more information about its activities.

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Help save All Saints'

Just over a year ago major problems were discovered in the roof of Wandsworth Parish Church. As a result a Building Fund has been established to ensure that All Saints' remains open for the Wandsworth community for many years to come. Go to <https://allsaintswandsworth.org/save-all-saints/> for more information about the project and how to donate towards its successful completion.

Neil Robson

Life and Death on the Magic River

In January 2024, JOHN GIMLETTE set off for The Gambia, on the trail of his great, great grandfather, discovering a country of both beauty and mystique.

Roughly the size of East Anglia, The Gambia sprawls inland along the banks of a gigantic West African river up to six miles wide and is one of Britain's first and last colonies (1664-1965), famous for peanuts, chimpanzees and magnificent beaches.

As it happens, I have some family history here. My great, great grandfather, Dr Hart Gimlette, sailed up the Gambia River in 1861. He was a surgeon with the navy's Preventative Squadron, and they were here to suppress slavery, to capture slave ships and to liberate the enslaved. He

History aside, there are several good reasons to visit. During our winter, the temperature's gorgeous and the sea warm. There are direct flights, no time differences, and plenty of beachside hotels. But, make no mistake, this is not St Lucia. The Gambia may be cheery and welcoming ('The Smiling Coast') but it's also poor. Local cures and magic are an essential part of everyday life. I soon found myself in a world of hurricane lamps and dirt roads. For most Gambians, even a bicycle's a luxury.

I began on the river, deep in the mangrove. Everything here swims or paddles. The reserve I visited, Makasutu ('Mecca in the forest'), is considered charmed and people leave it alone. As a result, the wildlife runs riot. With over 600 bird species, it's

also a carnival of feathers and colour. I stayed in a river lodge with boardwalks, thatched spires and a bar like a giant straw hat. Kingfishers came to the swimming pool and, every now and then, a troupe of 200 baboons called by, in the vague hope of scraps.

There are no nasty creatures. It was different in Hart's day, when his crew were decimated by malaria. Now, in the dry season, it's too salty for mosquitoes and the crocodiles are docile. It's no place for snakes either. The baboons kill them by stretching them until everything snaps. They can't digest the meat but they come back later for a feast of maggots.

Twice I crossed the Gambia River on an ancient car ferry. It was about ten miles near the mouth. On my first trip, I went to an old English fort, built midstream in the 17th century, and used during the slave trade. Until abolition in 1807, the river was a major artery for slavers. I also stopped at Juffreh, the village made famous by Alex Haley in his book 'Roots'. The villagers even produced a lady said to be a distant relative of Kunta Kinte. For 100 Dalasi (or £1.17) I could take her picture.



Saba. The remains of the stockade

fought in two vicious Gambian battles, and wrote home about the crocodiles, monkeys and awesome Mandinka warriors.

So what's it like now, this tiny riverside state? Democratic, largely Muslim and multilingual. There are 8 main tribes. 'We have no natural borders,' said my driver, 'so everyone's here. But we all rub along.'



Kunta Kinte Island

My second crossing was to visit Hart's battlefields, about thirty miles inland. The navy had been sent upriver to a large fortified village called Saba. There, a group of around 2,000 Mandinka warriors were resisting Britain's attempts to suppress slavery. The battles were short but brutal. As the surgeon, Hart was expected to keep up with the marines, and would have to march inland through thorn and swamps. Saba was exactly as he'd described it; dusty, prickly and overgrown. With the local Imam's help, I did however find a few stumps of mahogany, all that was left of the Mandinkas' stockade.



Ngala Lodge beach at day

Seventeen of Hart's comrades were killed around Saba, and many more injured. But the expedition wasn't in vain. Slavery was never the same again in The Gambia. But Hart didn't stay around to enjoy this lovely river state. His ship had work to do, patrolling 3,000 miles of coastline between here and Angola. This they'd do for three years (1859-62).

I, on the other hand, had time to explore. First, I moved out to the beaches. Here, on the well-tousled Atlantic, Gambia can look fleetingly glitzy. Whilst horsemen, fruit-pedlars and fishermen still work the sands, there's also plenty of plate glass and decking. It's not all luxury; I remember one hotel with a shipping container parked out front.

In the evening, I'd walk to 'The Strip', a street of restaurants. It was brash and fun, and the African food was particularly good (like 'Domoda', chicken in peanut sauce). This was the place to watch the drama unfold, and everyone was here: politicians, shoe-shiners, the beautiful and the donkeys. 'Life here,' they say, 'is lived in the open'.

I made several excursions, some on foot. Once, I went out to Cape Point and 'The Calypso Bar', at the mouth of the great river. It's an unforgettable restaurant, with its own crocodiles and a giant tree house.

Another time, I ventured into Banjul. Hart had visited it only briefly, to deliver a group of captured warriors. It was established in the aftermath of Abolition, and the streets are named after the heroes of Waterloo. It's still Africa's smallest capital, and, with everything cracked and crumbling, it gets smaller every day. One of the suburbs is called 'Half Die' which says it all. I did however find the cathedral, and a plaque to 'LIEUTENANT HAMILTON', one of Hart's comrades, 'SLAIN AT SABA, AGED 18'.

Even better was the National Museum. Despite time and insects, it's still a treasure trove of indigenous artefacts and colonial junk. Amongst the cannonballs and swords, I came across manacles, fertility dolls, terrifying masks, and some coloured paper, once printed in Manchester and exchanged for slaves. I even found a few artefacts from the battles around Saba: amulets, leather shirts, and old flintlocks. It had not been an elegant encounter.

Hart had been relieved to get away from the coast and the malaria. Apart from a few local allies, the only Gambians he'd encountered were trying to kill him. But it was different for me. Meeting Gambians had been a thoughtful experience. Given their history, their charm and trust was

mystifying, and it's hard to imagine a more genial people. ■

John Gimlette is the author of *The Gardens of Mars. Madagascar, an Island Story* (Head of Zeus, £10.99)

If you like the sound of The Gambia, contact The Gambia Experience (gambia.co.uk; 01489 866999.) They offer 7-night B&B holiday packages from £659 pp, including direct flights and transfers.



Juffreh. Kunta Kinte's descendant



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From South London to Wembley:

The Empire Exhibitions of 1911, 1924 and 1925

Andrew Neill



A flyer for the 1911 Festival of Empire

A century ago, during the summers of 1924 and 1925, a substantial proportion of the British population descended on Wembley to view, celebrate and above all enjoy the British Empire Exhibition. Fifteen years earlier hundreds of thousands of visitors toured the Festival of Empire held on the site below the Crystal Palace during the summer of 1911. Three quarter size replicas of the parliament buildings of countries in the Empire were constructed of timber and plaster. Before entering, visitors could observe the buildings on foot or from a miniature railway which, en route, passed a diamond mine, a logging camp and a tea plantation.

Organised by 'the man who staged the Empire': Frank Lascelles (1875-1934) who had made his name in 1907 when managing a pageant in Oxfordshire which led to an invitation to stage larger events in Canada and South Africa and thence to Crystal Place. Lascelles, something of a parvenu, having no connection to the Lascelles family,

had changed his name when working as a jobbing actor. The 'Festival of Empire' ran from May to October 1911 and incorporated, amongst its many entertainments, The Pageant of London. Late that year Lascelles also master-minded the Durbar held outside Delhi, when King George and Queen Mary were crowned Emperor and

Empress of India. Alas the popularity of the 1911 Festival was insufficient to prevent the Crystal Palace Company filing for bankruptcy and the Palace eventually becoming the property of the Nation.

Although the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley was repeated in 1925, like the 1911 Exhibition it made a substantial loss but was widely popular attracting millions of visitors. In

many ways the Exhibition was something of a last attempt to remind the British and the world that Britain was still an imperial power, a view supported by the first Labour Government elected in 1924. However, what seems to have led many of the millions of visitors to Wembley was the chance of having fun. 'I mean to say, millions of people, no doubt, are so constituted that they scream with joy and excitement at the spectacle of a stuffed porcupine fish or a glass jar of seeds from Western Australia – but not Bertram... By the time we had tottered out of the Gold Coast village and were working towards the Palace of Machinery, everything pointed to my shortly executing a quiet sneak in the direction of that rather jolly Planters' Bar in the West Indies section...' ¹



The 1911 Festival of Empire: a view of the Crystal Palace site, with the north tower dominant.

In a way the Exhibition was a swansong for the Empire: 'Once the almost orgiastic splendour of its climax had been achieved, the zest went out of it, it became rather a sad phenomenon. Its beauty had lain in its certainty and momentum, its arrogance perhaps. In its declining years it lost its dignity of command and became rather an exhibition of ineffectual good intentions. Its memory was terrific, it had done much good in its time; it had behaved with courtesy as with brutality, rapaciously and generously, rightly and in error; good and bad had been allied in this, one of the most truly astonishing of human enterprises. Now its contribution was over, the world had moved on, and it died'.²

In August 1889 Sir Edward William Watkin (1819-1901), the great railway pioneer, registered the Metropolitan Tower Construction Company with the purpose of constructing a tower that would be over 150 feet higher than that built in the French Capital. He purchased the 289-acre Wembley Park Estate, on which his tower could be constructed, writing to a friend, that 'although the atmosphere of London may not be so favourable to extensive views of Paris, the view would be incomparably superior'.³ To ensure ease of access, Watkin built nearby Wembley Park railway station and by 1894 the newly landscaped park with its river, lake and artificial waterfall was open for business.

The tower reached 150 feet before being cancelled owing to the lack of local amenities, poor foundations and the bankruptcy of the company financing its construction. However, what remained was the park with its

space and water features which came into its own in 1920 when chosen for the site for the British Empire Exhibition. The foundations of the tower were then buried beneath what became Wembley Stadium's turf.

King George V agreed to be the Exhibition's patron, and a former civil servant, Ulick Fitzgerald Wintour (1877-1947) was appointed to head an Executive Council of 120 members to plan the event. A much larger site than Crystal Palace, Wembley Park was purchased for £100,000. Wintour envisaged a vast imperial city in which every country of the Empire would be represented. In addition, there would be gardens, lakes, restaurants, dance halls and a huge amusement park as well as a working mine and a full reconstruction of the tomb of Tutankhamun, discovered by Howard Carter just eighteen months earlier. By January 1922 the £1 million needed to fund the Exhibition had been raised but it was clear that the proposed opening date of April 1923 would not be met. The Empire Stadium itself, however, was completed in time for the 1923 FA Cup Final⁴.

Work progressed throughout the summer, including the construction of the Indian Pavilion, the pagodas and teak temples of the Burma section and the world's largest concrete building, the 'Palace of Engineering'. Although much was still unfinished, the Exhibition was opened by the King on St George's Day 1924.

At the heart of the Exhibition was the recurring pageant. Undeterred by four years of war, historical pageants were soon re-established



A commemorative postcard from 1924, showing the newly built Wembley Stadium and its famous twin towers.

in Britain. Lascelles making use of the new technology of spotlighting and amplification. This was a busy for him as he was not only appointed Master of the Harrow Pageant in 1923 but also the Bristol Pageant in 1924. The first day of the Wembley Pageant included tableaux representing *Henry VII and Cabot* and *A Pageant of Canada*; the second day: *The Days of Queen Elizabeth*, *A Pageant of South Africa* and *The Early Days of India* and the third and final day *George III and the departures of Captain Cook*, *a Pageant of New Zealand* and *a Pageant of Heroes*. Lascelles employed some 15,000 amateur actors with 300 horses, 500 donkeys, 1,000 doves, 72 monkeys, 730 camels, 3 bears and a macaw. An Admiral was selected to play the role of Sir Francis Drake, while the key female role of Elizabeth the First was shared by Mrs Asquith and Lady Irene Curzon⁵. The pageant ran throughout August and was followed by a military tattoo which was even more popular. Every night it attracted a larger audience than that of all the West End theatres put together.

For the Pageant's music the publicity stressed that 'the greatest care has been taken in selecting the music, and British composers only are represented'. This conveniently ignored the country



St George's Day 1924: The opening ceremony of the Exhibition

of origin of the Australians George Clutsam, W G James and Alfred Hill, and the Indian, Uday Shankar. Elgar was included and composed his Empire March and music for some of the tableaux. When The Times published the list of composers it included one Percy A Siaingu. It turns out that this was Percy Grainger whom, it seems, had very poor handwriting!

A second World War, the dismantling of Empire and the

creation of the welfare state all contributed to the general amnesia for this extraordinary 'show'. If the Exhibition has a legacy, it is in the Wembley arena. However, with its twin towers now gone and replaced by an anonymous arch it no longer evokes such a memory. No buildings of note were preserved, and no great art or music emerged to sustain a recollection of a special occasion. As James Morris showed, our Empire created much that was good and, undoubtedly, there was something worthy about the aims of the 1924 Exhibition as P G Wodehouse emphasised: 'And there exists at this very moment, not twenty minutes by cab from Hyde Park Corner the most supremely absorbing and educational collection of objects, both animate and inanimate,

gathered from the four corners of the Empire, that has ever been assembled in England's history'⁶. ■

- 1 From *The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy* 1925, Published by Penguin Books in the anthology *Carry on Jeeves*, 1986.
- 2 James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets an Imperial Retreat* (The Folio Society, London 1992), 469
- 3 Geoff Scargill, *Victoria's Railway King* (Barnsley, Frontline Books, 2021), 89.
- 4 The famous White Horse Final between Bolton Wanderers and West Ham United attended by an estimated quarter of a million fans.
- 5 Mrs Margot Asquith (1864-1945) wife of the former Prime Minister, H H Asquith and Mary Irene Curzon, 2nd Baroness Ravensdale, Baroness Ravensdale of Kedleston (1896-1966).
- 6 From *The Rummy Affair of Old Biffy*, 133. This comment was made by Sir Roderick Glossop, a potential father-in-law of Bertie Wooster.



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Le Gothique:

an independent Free House

When you walk past a traditional British pub, you often see the words “Free House” proudly displayed outside. But what does that really mean? For many, the term might evoke a sense of autonomy or independence, but it’s a bit more nuanced than that. Le Gothique, an independent pub in Wandsworth, is proudly a **Free House**, and its story sheds light on the history, significance, and sometimes hidden complexities of this iconic term.

What exactly is a “Free House”?

In the most basic sense, a **Free House** is a pub that isn’t tied to a specific brewery. Unlike traditional “**tied pubs**”, where the landlord is required to sell a particular brewery’s beers (think of the ubiquitous pints of lager or bitter you might find at many chain pubs), a Free House has the freedom to choose from a variety of suppliers. But is it truly free?

While the term “Free House”



Mark Justin

suggests complete independence, the reality is often more complicated. Many pubs that call themselves Free Houses still have agreements with breweries to supply a proportion of their drinks, meaning they may not be entirely free from corporate influence. Nonetheless, the essence of a Free House remains that it offers the freedom to choose, which is something that Le Gothique embraces wholeheartedly.

A Brief History of the Pub

To understand the significance of a Free House, we need to take a step back and explore the origins of the British pub and the terminology surrounding it. The word “**pub**” evolved in the 19th century from the older term “**public house**”, which was a broad category encompassing different types of drinking establishments, from **ale houses** to **coaching inns** and **taverns**.

In the Victorian era, after changes to licensing laws in 1830, smaller and simpler establishments known as **beer houses** began to spring up across Britain. These pubs were designed to sell beer, often without the grandeur of earlier establishments like the **gin palaces** that were all the rage in London at the time.

Before the 18th century, many pubs brewed their own beer. However, as legislation changed and larger breweries began to dominate the market, publicans increasingly began to lease their properties to breweries. The result? The rise of the “**tied pub**”, where landlords were bound to serve only the beer from a specific brewery. This model was a key part of the industry until the rise of the **Free House**, which, in theory, offered an escape from this monopoly.

Le Gothique: a true Free House

At Le Gothique, we embrace the spirit of independence that comes with being a Free House. Located in the heart of Wandsworth, surrounded by 18 Young’s pubs



(now part of the Ram Pub Co), we've always made it a point to distinguish ourselves by offering something different. When I passed on the day-to-day running of the pub to my son, Andrew, we didn't need a formal discussion about ethos or branding – the very act of transferring the business from father to son was symbolic of our commitment to maintaining an independent, community-oriented pub.

Andrew, now at the helm, carefully selects a rotating range of lagers and ales from local breweries and beyond, ensuring that our customers have access to a constantly evolving selection of beers. Every year, we host two major beer festivals – the **Wandsworth Common Beer & Cider Festivals** – where we showcase over 150 beers and ciders. These festivals have become a highlight for beer enthusiasts across London and beyond, offering an exciting opportunity to sample new brews and support independent breweries.

A true beer-lover's paradise

It's safe to say that I am a bit of a beer and pub obsessive. Over the years, I've visited over 2,500 pubs, cataloguing my experiences and ticking off the beers I've tried. For me, every new beer is a discovery, a search for the "next great pint". The Wandsworth Common Beer & Cider Festivals were born out of this passion – a chance to bring the world of craft beer to our local community, without me having to travel far from Le Gothique itself.

The festivals have grown significantly since their humble beginnings in 2008, and today



they are among the premier independent beer events in London. It's a true testament to the power of the Free House model, which allows for flexibility, creativity, and diversity in the beers on offer. We are proud to be a space that supports the incredible microbrewers who are challenging the dominance of the big brewing corporations.

Supporting independent brewers

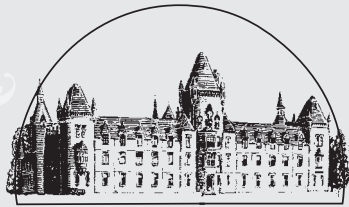
So, next time you walk into a pub and see the words "Free House" outside, take a moment to consider the significance. It's a reminder that some pubs – like Le Gothique – are dedicated to supporting independent brewers and providing a diverse and ever-changing selection of craft beers. Instead of reaching for the usual mass-produced lager or a pint of Guinness, why not try something new? By choosing a lesser-known ale or cider, you're supporting the growing wave of microbreweries that are challenging the dominance of the big players in the UK's brewing industry.

Join us at the Wandsworth Common Beer & Cider Festivals

If you're looking to dive deeper into the world of craft beer, the **Wandsworth Common Beer & Cider Festival** is the place to be. Held twice a year, in March (Spring Festival) and October (Halloween Festival), the event showcases an impressive array of beers and ciders from around the world. The festival takes place at Le Gothique, in the bar, restaurant, garden, and Great Hall of the **Royal Victoria Patriotic Building**.

Tickets for the festivals sell out quickly, so be sure to grab yours on **Eventbrite** as soon as they're available – typically one month before each festival. It's a chance to discover new flavours, meet fellow beer lovers, and experience the best that the independent beer world has to offer. ■

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Sunday 12 noon to 4pm



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Burials in Putney 1620-1686

Philip Evison

I have long been fascinated by cemeteries as repositories of social history, have written articles on Putney's burial grounds, and produced spreadsheets of burials in Mount Nod and Putney Old Burial Ground. Dates of Putney's burial grounds are: St Mary's to 1763, POBG to 1855, Putney Lower Common to 1891 and Putney Vale to present, though burials continued long after the nominal closure dates. I recently made a spreadsheet of burials in Putney from 1620 (the earliest surviving) to 1686, from Amy Hare's 1913-16 transcriptions of the Putney parish registers, which cover baptisms, marriages and burials from 1620 to part of the 19th century. 1620-86 includes Putney's two outbreaks of plague and offers a snapshot of life in a tranquil village, away

from the crowded, polluted capital.

Amy Charlotte Hare (1858-1942)

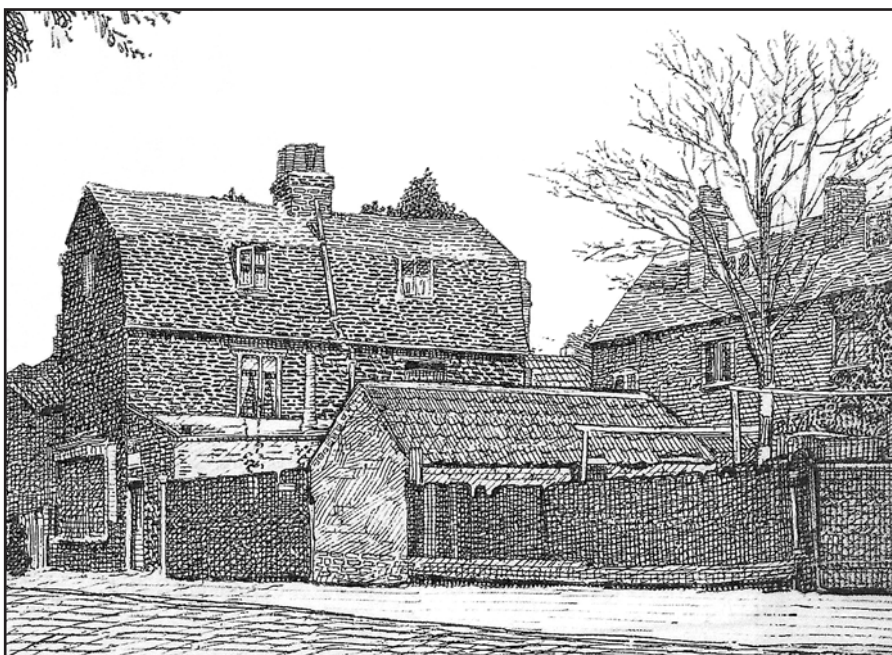
She was born in St John's Road (now Avenue), Putney, to Charlotte and Evan (1826-1918) – a senior partner at Hare & Co., solicitors, who for many years were the London agents of the Treasury Solicitor. She lived most of her life with her father, who, widowed, moved c.1900 to the newly built Briar House on Woodborough Road. She stayed on after Evan's death, moved to Campion Road in 1923, then in 1940, for health reasons, to Crowthorne, Berks., where she died in late 1942. Evan was a friend of local solicitor-turned-developer Henry Scarth (1802-1870) and it is to his anecdotes, recounted in his daughter's 'Notes', that we owe

some of our scarce knowledge of that enigmatic figure.

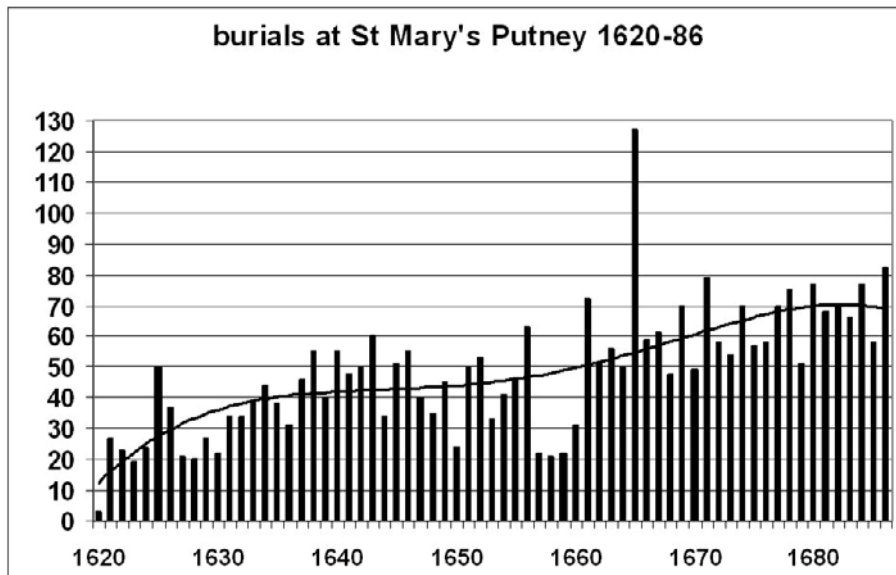
Early last century, she laboriously transcribed by hand the (incomplete) parish registers, covering baptisms and burials from 1620 to 1812 and marriages from 1620 to 1870 (1686-1700 burials are missing). They were published in three volumes between 1913 and 1916, plus a very useful fourth volume of 'Notes' published in 1917, and are available in Battersea Heritage Library. The spreadsheet was produced by copying/pasting from a PDF of Vol. 1 of the transcriptions, downloaded (free) from the 'Hathi Trust' website. It was a laborious process (each of the 3,226 entries needed editing), though it is only a fragment of the total records, and emphasised what an extraordinary achievement Amy's manual transcriptions represented.

Plague

In *The Environs of London* (1792), Rev. Daniel Lysons (1762-1834), deputy curate of Putney 1791-98, gave average annual figures for burials in Putney in two decades of the 17th century, 1620-29 and 1677-86, which are very close to Hare's figures (26/25. 67/69), suggesting that Lysons used the same source. The 1620-86 total of 3,226 averages 48 burials a year. What stand out in a bar-chart are the two spikes in 1625 and 1665,



A Pest House



marking Putney's plague outbreaks. Of the 50 deaths in 1625, 24 were from plague, whilst in 1665, the figures were 127 and 64 – i.e. in each case, half the deaths were from plague. In a small flare-up in 1645-47, 12 of 146 deaths were from plague. As a percentage, deaths in Putney were markedly lower than for London generally.

In 1625, John Elderfeild and five of his children succumbed, whilst Francis Fisher lost his wife and three of his children, he himself dying in 1628, not of plague. In 1665, the Howell and Young households each lost six members. Watermen, of whom Thomas Howell was one, were the worst affected, being both exposed and numerous (app. 40% of the working population). Of the 87 plague deaths in 1665-67, 37 were watermen and/or members of their families.

In both periods, 'pest houses' were built on what were then the western outskirts of Putney (now Comondale) to isolate the afflicted. The later ones were built "... by Edward King on the edge of the Lower Common, as far as possible from any

dwelling, for £19-5s-od ..." (Dorian Gerhold: *Putney and Roehampton in 1665*). Unlike the earlier ones, they were retained after the plague and let out as cottages, remaining until c.1862, when they were demolished to build the so-called 'Nelson cottages' (now nos. 24-29), which bear a commemorative plaque.

Other deaths

Nineteen people drowned between 1622 and 1678, including six servants, five children, two watermen, and a minister who 'drowned himself'. Robert Tring was 'kild wth a pistoll' (1625); Francis Kemble was 'slayne on the heath' (1627); Richard Michael & John Smith were 'slaine at Roehampton with the fall of the Lord Treasurers wall' (1630); and soldier Alline Wright was 'stob with a knife by his fellow drummer' (1673).

A touch of class

In the 17th century, Putney and Roehampton were quiet country villages with clean air, away from the crowded, noisy and polluted city, but with good connections by road and river to Westminster and to the

mercantile and banking centres of the City. One resident remarked on "the salubrity of the air", far from "the smoke and noise of the metropolis" and on villas "inhabited by families of fashion and distinction."

People of wealth and influence, including aristocrats, bankers, bishops, mayors, merchants and politicians, were attracted to Putney, where they built or leased primary or secondary homes. 17th century residents included the Countesses of Exeter and Devonshire (the latter in Roehampton), the Earl of Nottingham, and over twenty knights, including three Lord Mayors of London. Sir Peter Proby (1622/23) and Sir Richard Ford (1670/71) in Grove House on the high street and Sir John Lawrence (1664/65), praised for his handling of the 'Great Plague', in nearby Coalecroft, aka Lime Grove, birthplace of historian Edward Gibbon.

Lord Treasurer to Charles I Sir Richard Weston and 'Collector of Customs' Sir Abraham Dawes, who built the alms-houses on Putney Bridge Road in 1627/8, were former owners of the original Putney Park House. Other knights included Sir William Becher, Clerk to Charles I's Privy Council; Sir Dawes Wymondsold, Putney's biggest landowner; and Sir William Throckmorton, Marshall of the Household to Charles II. I cannot discover if or how he was related to Francis, executed for his part in the abortive plot against Elizabeth I, and/or Elizabeth ('Bess'), one of her courtiers, whom Raleigh secretly married, to the Queen's great disapproval. ■

Springfield Park, Stage 2

John Dawson



The second stage of the new parkland in the old hospital grounds opened quite informally one week at the end of summer, by the removal of temporary contractor's fencing, giving access through an understated new opening in the hedgerow on the south side of Burntwood Lane just below the boundary by the Nightingale School farm entrance.

The opening into the park is at the foot of a hill constructed from residue spoil from the landscaping works across the

parkland. A footpath spirals to the top from which there is a commanding view across the park with the new crescent housing emerging to the south, Burntwood School on the far west boundary and, at its foot, a new 'community' building surrounded by sensory garden planting, a toddlers playground, lawns, and young shrubs and trees.

However, there is much more fun – if you are small and young (although it appeals to others too!) – on the hillside approach

from the opening to the park, where a splendid climbing apparatus climbs the hill made of timber posts, ropes, rails and wires. Clearly, a superior feature for fun and exercise designed by landscape architects with spirit, and experience of children's likes too.

A visit is strongly recommended to the expanded park from the new opening, onto the earlier stage now settling down with dozens of semi-mature trees, extensive shrub planting and the pair of lakes.

The third stage has been contoured and landscaped but remains fenced from access at present. Beyond is the very recently GLA-approved additional housing site for 450



The view from the hilltop – note the 'leftover' concrete sewer pipe as added fun



The sensory garden with the hill behind, housing site fence to the south and the pipe



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Saturday 11 January 2025

Paul Lewis
Piano recital

2025 sees Wandsworth recognised as London's Borough of Culture. St Luke's Music Society is delighted to join the celebrations by presenting a programme of late Schubert piano sonatas performed by **Paul Lewis**, one of the finest British pianists of our time who has strong local connections. His concerts always sell out fast so get your tickets early!



Saturday 25 January 2025

Schubert: *Die Schöne Müllerin*
James Newby (baritone) with Joseph Middleton (piano)

After the *Winterreise* song cycle five seasons ago we are now delighted to present Schubert's earlier and similarly intense cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin* with rising star baritone **James Newby** accompanied by St Luke's favourite **Joseph Middleton**.



"A performance that sets the tone announcing Newby as an impressive artist" (*The Gramophone*)

Saturday 22 February 2025

Tudor music – with spice!
Iestyn Davies (countertenor) joins Fretwork with Richard Boothby

Iestyn Davies' return to St Luke's is sure to bring a large audience... and the spice to glorious music by Orlando Gibbons is provided by Sting, Elvis Costello and Nico Muhly, promising a real treat to cheer us up in late February.



Fretwork's planned debut in St Luke's was frustrated by the covid lockdown. As one of our leading early music ensembles we can now look forward to their first appearance with relish.

Saturday 8 March 2025

Sean Shibe (guitar)
with Aidan O'Rourke (Scottish fiddler)

Rising star and Royal Philharmonic Society Award winner **Sean Shibe** is joined by leading Scottish Contemporary folk fiddler and member of the popular folk group Lau, **Aidan O'Rourke**, for a programme as varied as you can imagine with a strong leaning towards Scottish folk music. After last season's Scottish programme presented by the Maxwell Quartet this concert promises to be another delight.



Tickets £20 ♦ £15 concessions
except 11 January (£25 / £20)

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View north to Wandsworth from the bridge by the lakeside

flats applied for by Barratt London on behalf of the Hospital Trust. Turned down by Wandsworth Council, the application was called in by the Mayor of London and granted

approval by its planning committee in October, clearly cognisant of the government's new strategic housing agenda. The density of the new housing development for Springfield has

now risen back to c.1200 homes, having been reduced on appeal in 2012 by the government of the time due to pressure from the local community. The flats are to be built in the woodland to the far south of the park where older housing and a young offender's institution are to be demolished to make way for the new development. Our Society had strongly objected to this application as the 837 approved homes planned for the hospital's redevelopment were already reaching completion and the woods could have remained, been cleared, and added to the parkland as an extension of the protected Metropolitan Open Land designation of the park. One mitigating factor is that the existing, heavy screen of trees on the boundary of the wood will help screen the additional flats from the park. ■

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What's in a Name?

It was my great privilege to be invited to speak to the Wandsworth Society earlier in the summer. I'm really not accustomed to delivering talks but I thoroughly enjoyed the evening exploring and sharing ideas with the members of how I go about putting together a production and what some of my inspiration has been.

I'm not an academic. I've been a jobbing actress for over thirty years and been lucky enough to work at the National Theatre and in the West End quite a bit. In 2019 I played Titania/Hippolyta in Shakespeare In The Squares' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Playing that particular play outdoors had its own special magic, and as an actor, I've rarely been treated so well by a company. As the current director was stepping down, I plucked up the courage to fulfil a long held ambition to direct and I threw my hat into the ring. I've now been lucky enough to direct three summer shows for Shakespeare In The Squares: *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. As I write this, I'm just about to start rehearsals again, directing *Macbeth* for their inaugural Winter Season. I hope some of you got to see that one in St Anne's as well!

There are as many ways into a play as there are directors. When I direct a play, I have two main goals: 1) Tell the story clearly and 2) Let the audience enjoy themselves as much as possible.

In books about playwrighting, they always cite the maxim, 'Character is plot and plot is character'. Essentially, a story is a situation that characters find themselves in. The plot is the actions these characters take, driven by the choices they make. The choice a character ends up making is the only possible choice that character would make in those circumstances. For example, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, the character, Parolles, is a coward and a braggart. He brags to the company that he will recover a lost drum. He has no intention of doing it because he is too much of a coward. Because he cannot act to recover the drum, his action is to hide for a time and pretend that he tried. His character dictates his behaviour and decisions. His

companions know him so well, they can even plan an ambush to catch him out. Shakespeare named this character Parolles, – French for 'words' – a wonderfully apt name for a character who is all talk and no trousers, and it is more forgiving and full of personality than to name the character 'Coward' or 'Braggart'.

Therefore, one of the first things I look at, to clarify the story, is the characters. As a director, I need to

understand, what is their function in the engine of the piece? As an actor, I want to know who the playwright intended them to be. As an actor or director, one of the first clues about a character is their name. Shakespeare was a bit obsessed with names:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other word would smell as sweet.

– Romeo & Juliet

Good alone is good without a name: vileness is so, The property by what it is should go, Not by the title.

– All's Well That Ends Well

I'm convinced that Shakespeare uses names as vessels to hold ideas about characters. I imagine

it helped him as he was writing to fix in his mind how each of his characters would function and behave. Some are comedically obvious shortcuts: think of the wonderful charactonyms he uses throughout his plays, so suggestive of distinctive traits, for example: Pistol, Mistress Overdone, Mistress Quickly, Slender, Shallow, Dull, Fang, Simple, Sir Toby Belch, Ariel and many others. The name paints the character instantly.

But some of the names are less transparent, or perhaps meanings that were apparent in the 1600's are no longer accessible to audiences in 2024. When I played Mariana at the NT in Marianne Elliott's production of *All's Well That Ends Well*, the character opened up for me when I discovered that the name was derived by combining St Mary (which could mean bitter) & St Ann (with grace) and had associations of protecting the virtue of young women, which is Mariana's function in the play – to protect Diana.

We made some lovely discoveries in *The Tempest*. Prospero, (one who prospers – even though cast away).



Toby Gordon as Parolles (@James Millar)

Miranda is believed to be an invention by Shakespeare but etymologically signals ‘to be wondered at’ – “*Admired Miranda*”. The name, Trinculo, hints at ‘cut in little pieces’ – as a ‘motley’ jester might wear. Sycorax, with all those sharp consonants is an onomatopoeically violent and harmful witch. Caliban was also an invention and thought to be inspired by tales of cannibals encountered on voyages to distant islands.

Twelfth Night seems to be all about name (or word) play: Duke Orsino (little bear) loves Countess Olivia (peace), until she falls in love with Viola disguised as Cesario (head of hair). (Viola or Violet – symbolic of grief and innocence). Meanwhile, Malvolio, (ill-willed) is baited with the letters of his own name that chime so closely with the girls’ names. Fabian is often depicted quite vaguely as a character, but once you realise it means ‘one who grows beans’, the character of a gardener is added to the mix at the house of the Countess. Feste, the fool, is somewhat ironically named, given that he normally ends the piece with *The Rain it Raineth Every Day*. Sir Toby Belch is evident enough, but his companion is more open to interpretation. ‘Ague’ means ache or pain and I have seen Andrew Aguecheek played with toothache, (it didn’t make any sense to me in relation to the rest of the plot) but Shakespeare never shied away from vulgarity and I think perhaps he meant us to understand that everyone found Sir Andrew Aguecheek to be a ‘pain in the butt’.

All’s Well That Ends Well has some nice allusions too. The heroine is Helena, (which translates as shining or spiritual light). Bertram (bright raven) is the counterpart to Helen’s light (ravens symbolise insight, rebirth and change – which is Bertram’s arc in the play). He pursues Diana, (goddess of the moon, also a light, but a secondary one to Helena’s in the play). He almost has to marry Maudlin (sad and sentimental). Parolles has his words and is tested by Lafew (the fire). There’s a clown called Lavatch – (or La Vache! A French expression which loosely translates as ‘Holy cow’!) and Reynaldo, who advises the Countess (and whose name translates from Latin as ‘ruler’s advisor’).

So what does it all amount to? This investigation and investment in the names of characters may not seem to be of much significance, but there is joy to be found in the detail. The understanding that it gives an actor, the pointers that lead to discovering something playable, the layers of texture that they add to a performance are valuable. They are the kind of clues that help give performances that resonate originally and truthfully, and performances that can do that help me achieve my second goal: To let the audience enjoy themselves as much as possible. ■

Sioned Jones

Common Memories

An oral history film made on behalf of The Friends of Wandsworth Common

Following the very successful publication of our book *The Wandsworth Common Story* in May 2021 (now due its 3rd reprint!) the Friends of Wandsworth Common Heritage group agreed to produce an Oral History in which local residents, past and present, would tell their own recollections of life on and around the Common.

Through the Friends network a team of five member volunteers came together early in 2022 to make this long-held ambition become reality. My dining room became the control centre where most of the meetings and decision making took place, involving large consumption of tea and coffee!

Our first task was to identify enough volunteers who would be willing to share their local memories on camera. This turned out to be surprisingly easy thanks to the extensive Friends network and word of mouth.

Many of these twenty men and women had lived around the Common for all or most of their lives but we were also able to trace some others who, as children, had lived in the pre-fabs built on various parts of the Common as emergency post-war housing. Despite now living all around the UK to their great credit and our gratitude, they all agreed to return here to be interviewed.

By April with all our Interviewees confirmed we established that our focus would be on the years between 1930 – 1980. Next we needed to decide which topics should be included so, after some brainstorming sessions, the following broad subject areas were agreed:

- Appearance and use of the Common
- Housing/ Neighbourhood
- Leisure/Play
- Shopping
- Schools/Hospitals
- World war 2/Post war
- Changes to the Common and Neighbourhoods

We split the Interviewees between us and drew up a preliminary conversation document to gather all relevant

information from every participant. These conversations took place in person or remotely for those no longer local. A Recording Agreement to be read and signed by each participant was required as well as their approval for their entire interview to be transcribed and become part of the archive collection at Wandsworth Heritage Library in Battersea, as a public reference source.

Collating the huge amount of information and amusing anecdotes gathered from these conversations was rather daunting but somehow we put together a spreadsheet which would act as the blue print for the live interviews, scheduled to take place during Autumn 2022.

Again, the Friends network came to our aid by introducing us to John Crossland, who had already filmed and recorded many talks by the Friends and nobly offered to do the same for all our interviews. To ensure everyone felt as relaxed and comfortable as possible, recordings would take place in the interviewees' own homes or in John's living room for those living further afield. A list of the questions we were proposing to ask was sent to everyone well ahead of their interview so they, and us, could prepare! Keeping in touch regularly kept us all up to date as well as helping to establish a strong rapport between all parties.

If the interviewees felt nervous then so did we! We had no formal interview training [the budget didn't allow for such luxuries!] but a filmed practice session with John enabling us to rehearse with each other and give feedback gave us enough confidence to go ahead with the live interviews. By October we were ready to go live!

We set a deadline of December to complete all the interviews, with each team member interviewing four or five participants individually for approximately 45-60 minutes. Any nerves quickly disappeared as all their memories came flooding back so clearly and colourfully. Once these were completed we had amassed an enormous amount of fascinating and entertaining memories, covering everything we had hoped for and more. We were determined that everyone interviewed would be included as would all the agreed topics.

But how to turn all this into a film of just under 60 minutes?

Our luck held once again with the arrival of Rosa Navas, a young local film-maker, also known to the Friends. She agreed to take on the challenge which probably turned out to be rather more than she had envisaged! The film was due to be launched in June 2023 as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival so now we had a deadline. Sifting through so much material and extracting what should be included took up a great deal of time and debate before we could brief Rosa, we were totally spoiled for choice. Some hard decisions were needed when we

needed to cut so much. At the same time we were researching any pictures owned by the interviewees and outside agencies to illustrate the narrative and make the film visually interesting and attractive. Many brilliant and evocative stills and action shots came to light, not least Beatrix Potter school's re-enactment of their actual 1939 evacuation, an event which was still remembered by one of those interviewed. Contemporary images of the Common, neighbourhoods, shops, housing and family really helped to bring these stories to life.

Inevitably we had to cut such a lot of wonderful material but after many weeks of discussions, viewings and inspired editing by Rosa we were finally able to sign off the final version.

We had arranged a special pre-launch viewing for all the participants, to which almost everyone was able to attend. Their reaction was overwhelmingly positive to our great relief and we all spent a very happy afternoon reminiscing and bonding over tea and sandwiches.

The official 'premiere' took place in June, courtesy of Emmanuel School to an audience of over 100 guests. The enthusiastic acclaim with which the film was received was all the reward we needed for the time and effort everyone had put into its making.

I would like to think we created something quite special and unique for our local area – past and present residents relating their own specific memories of life on and around Wandsworth Common over a 50-year period. It was such a pleasure and privilege to record their stories and we do hope the film will continue to be enjoyed by current and future generations. It shows just how much life and the area have changed but the Common itself is at the heart of the film. This much-loved local green oasis, providing sanctuary for nature and for us over the years, remains the central piece and reason behind our story.

I take this opportunity to thank all those dedicated and hard-working people who were a pleasure to work with and who made this project happen on time and in budget, it was a fine example of collaborative teamwork. Also to the Friends of Wandsworth Common, for their unstinting support and backing. And of course, to all those wonderful people we interviewed and generously shared their special memories. The film is now available on YouTube or on the Friends of Wandsworth Common website. DVDs can be purchased for £5 from their website: www.wandsworthcommon.org

The Wandsworth Common Story is available from Neals Nurseries and Skylark Café on Wandsworth Common for £12.50 or Friends website above. ■

Ros Page, Heritage Group, FOWC

A Common good for common misconceptions

Julia Bott FCSP

How do we stave off both the negative effects on mind and body of advancing years, and the doldrums of the Winter months? Well, there is no better way to maintain or improve your general physical and mental well-being, than to do some sort of activity in the open air. What better time than the New Year to make a start? There are lots of choices available on Wandsworth Common, to suit all tastes and abilities.



Walking is of course the cornerstone of staying active and keeping fit as we age. Why not a brisk walk – maybe treat yourself to something after? If you prefer company, arrange to come with, or meet, a friend. For those who like the discipline of a fixture, there's an easy, weekly, volunteer-led walk. This and a similar one in Battersea Park are run by Enable (managers of Wandsworth's green spaces). Contact Activelifestyles@enablelc.org. If you prefer walking with a focus, try our Tree or Heritage Trail leaflets (£3 at Skylark Café); there's also a leaflet on the birds of Wandsworth Common and, for later in the year, our butterflies and wildflowers.

Countering the first of two common misconceptions, though, for a walk (or e.g., a swim) to have a measurable fitness impact, in this case to improve aerobic capacity (the ability to effectively use oxygen), it needs to be at a speed sufficient to make you breathe somewhat harder, heart pump a little faster and make you warmer. Nothing wrong with a stroll while chatting (indeed extremely good for mental and emotional health!) but pre, post, or as a part of it, some brisk walking will do your fitness wonders. Government guidelines advise 150 minutes a week of aerobic activity is sufficient to make an important difference (about 20 minutes a day). Although daily is optimal for the older age group, if it suits you better, 30 minutes on 5 days, or 50 minutes on 3 days weekly is fine

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults/>.

Interestingly, women of all ages walk more than men, both in distance and number of trips, except in the 70+ age bracket.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2022/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-demographic-differences-in-walking-and-cycling#chart-1>.

Life expectancy is still higher for women than men, though with a decreasing gap, and the above almost certainly has a bearing on that!

Countering the second common misconception, the Government guidance further advises that aerobic exercise is insufficient alone. It is also vital to do some strengthening (resistance) and balance exercises twice weekly. Muscles decline increasingly each decade unless we take positive steps to mitigate that. Then the key issue for gracefully (or disgracefully!) ageing individuals becomes the high risk of falling if we don't face this reality head on (rather than ending up head down!). Those 65 or older fall at least once a year on average, with men more likely to fall than women, but with fall-related fractures twice as likely in women.

Tripping and slipping is part of everyday life – hazards are all around – but the ability to right yourself when your centre of gravity moves outside your 'base' fades very rapidly if we don't keep muscle strength. Key muscle groups are: legs, arms, and the 'core'-shoulders, backs, buttocks (glutes) & tums. So, improving our 'balance' muscles is essential to maintaining both health and independence into older age, and avoiding the (outstretched hand to save you) fractured wrists and the dreaded hip fractures (when you go down with a whump). Not to mention the nasty black eyes from the face-plant! A trap many 'fall' into is to take life more carefully for fear of falling, which leads



people to become less active which, in turn, inevitably leads to reducing fitness and strength, thus further increasing risk of falls. Women are three times more likely to be fearful of falling than men.

Options to help reduce the risk of falling are many. Simply walking on rough ground (in appropriate footwear!) is helpful for maintaining strength in key muscles because they are being constantly challenged. Helpfully too, after 4 years trying to persuade a licensed personal trainer to run a fitness class for the over 60s, aptly named Open Air Fit runs a very enjoyable, thrice weekly class for all abilities, as I'm sure Wandsworth Society's Museum Champion, Sheila Allen, will testify! There's no obligation to come to the same session, or to any particular number. Classes are led by the delightful Mel Capelton, sunniest and most popular man on Wandsworth Common! Mel's class is very close to an 'all in one' as it covers flexibility, strength, aerobic fitness and balance. <https://openairfit.com/over-60s-fitness-sessions/>

Nordic walking is great for the aging population too. When done correctly, it uses more energy than a normal walk as, not only will you walk faster, since the poles thrust you forward, but also the technique uses many core muscles. (Don't use hiking poles though which are a different design, for a different purpose and used very differently!). The action forces you more upright, helping counter the 'dowager's hump', which many are prone to, especially if you have osteopenia or osteoporosis. Indeed, Nordic walking is known to be so good for mitigating this that your GP can refer you to St John's Therapy Centre for a free lesson, after which you join a regular volunteer-led guided walk. For (sadly, women only) Lindsay Burrows <https://www.mespot.me/> also offers Nordic walking classes on Wandsworth Common.

A weekly 'walk-with-a-purpose', with some stretching, bending, lifting and carrying (flexibility and strengthening), is litter picking. Battersea Matters

editor, Jenny Sheridan, recently penned an article on the joys of litter picking. We hold weekly Monday 10-11am litter picks year-round, led by our wonderful 'Litterati' leads, with occasional longer weekend picks during the winter months, to delve into bushes and woodlands when there isn't breeding wildlife to disturb, and we can actually see and get to the litter! To join our 'Litterati' e-mail

litterati@wandsworthcommon.org.

If you'd like a concentrated blast to get you going on the right path, or regularly if that's your preference, several licensed fitness professionals offer 1:1 personal training. Both Mel and Lindsay are skilled at exercising the older age group.

Although slightly outside the scope of this article (until a class returns to the Naturescope building), Pilates is the best exercise for the core; I can only urge everyone to find a good class. Simple mat Pilates is all that's needed, though some are fans of 'Reformer' and equipment work.

Last, but by no means least, are the enjoyable twice weekly (April-September) lawn bowls social sessions (finishing with tea and biscuits, or wine and nibbles!) at the Bowling Green. Bowling is becoming fashionable again and is a sociable way to get some gentle, relaxing exercise as the bowling action is good for flexibility and strength of legs and arms. A keen advocate, and one of the social session tutors (who will explain all when you first try it), is your Treasurer, Richard Pook. Contact Richard or us.

To learn the evidence behind all this and the impact on our health, including reduced risk of illnesses such as diabetes, dementia and most cancers, as well as the positive impact on emotional health and well-being, it's covered in my recent talk 'The Myths and Magic of Movement and Mobility Part 1'. Click on <https://www.wandsworthcommon.org/videos> and scroll down to find it. Part 2 is due soon, when I will explain specifically how, and how many, to do of the different types of exercise, along with tips on managing breathing and breathlessness. Remember, the evidence is that, in fact, the benefits of exercise and activity increase with age! ■

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Connectivity and Green Infrastructure

Valerie Selby

For many years, the Wandsworth Society has played a key role in influencing planning policy and promoting a better-connected local area for people and wildlife. National and Regional policies have now aligned with this approach, fostering collaboration to enhance connectivity through green infrastructure initiatives.

Green Infrastructure (GI) is the name for the network of multi-functional green space and other green features that provide a range of environmental, social and economic benefits for communities. It is more than just an alternative term for conventional open space. While it includes parks, gardens, commons, open spaces, playing fields and woodlands, it also encompasses street trees, allotments, private



Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme (SUDs) in Kings Cross

gardens, green roofs and walls, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), soils, rivers, streams, and other water bodies, often referred to as 'blue infrastructure'. In addition to making it more pleasant for us all to move around, Green Infrastructure can:

- promote healthier living by providing spaces for physical activity and relaxation;
- cool the city and absorb stormwater, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change;
- filter pollutants to improve air and water quality;
- make streets cleaner, more comfortable and attractive, encouraging walking and cycling;
- store carbon in soils and woodlands; and
- create better quality and better-connected habitats to improve biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Some of you may remember that an earlier approach to this concept through the All-London Green Grid (ALGG) Area Frameworks, was included in the Green Infrastructure and Open Environments Supplementary Planning Guidance, which supports the London Plan. The London Plan already requires all new major developments to include urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design. An Urban Greening Factor (UGF) calculator helps both developers and planners evaluate the quality and quantity of urban greening provided by development proposals. The Greater London Authority (GLA) are building on this approach and developing the London

Green Infrastructure Framework (LGIF). This framework will replace the ALGG frameworks and provide a new spatial framework that prioritises green and blue infrastructure across London. The aim is to ensure nature and green space flourish and are more accessible to all Londoners. The LGIF will guide developers and others responsible for changes to our built and natural environments, making it clearer where the enhancement and provision of new GI should be prioritised.

At the local level, the Wandsworth Local Plan, adopted in 2023, outlines the importance of maintaining and enhancing existing GI across Wandsworth. This principle is embedded in the placemaking strategies that inform the area development plans. Planning Policy LP53 focuses on the protection and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure, while LP15 recognises the value of GI to neighbourhoods and encourages improvements to provide residents with better access to green and blue infrastructure.

Recent work on a Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategy for Wandsworth (due to be published in early 2025) has begun to identify priority GI projects across the borough. This will be informed by climate risk mapping which will ensure projects are delivered in locations which can provide the greatest benefit to people and wildlife. These projects will provide multifunctional benefits for both people and wildlife, significantly reducing the impacts of extreme events such as extreme heat/heatwaves, droughts, flooding and wildfires. Natural urban cooling,

effective flood water storage, and providing assistance with natural flood management strategies are key benefits of GI.

For example, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) not only help relieve localised surface water flooding but also create habitats, improving biodiversity and connectivity for wildlife. SUDS can also support larger plant species that help provide local cooling during extreme heat events.

Hand in hand with the regional working on GI is the collaborative work to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for London. This strategy is being prepared and published by the GLA, with local boroughs having a key role as supporting bodies, tasked with much of the delivery. A London-wide map will be published in 2025 identifying the locations of priority and protected habitats. This map will be accompanied by a written statement of regional priorities to recover or enhance biodiversity. We will then translate this to the borough level to ensure the benefits for biodiversity are delivered on your doorstep. This is one of several new approaches arising from the Environment Act 2021 which are aimed at reversing biodiversity decline and prioritising actions to recover nature. The requirement to work at the regional level and to ensure that regional documents in turn reflect and meet each other, recognises that habitats need to connect beyond administrative boundaries to be successful.

One example of work to improve biodiversity connectivity that has been consistently delivered in Wandsworth over the last decade, but may have gone unnoticed by many residents, is the creation of biodiverse roofs. These are a matrix of habitats created on flat roofs (typically on new buildings, although they can be retrofitted) that include undulating substrates, stone and dead wood piles, bare sandy areas and dew ponds. Their location on roofs

means they are protected from disturbance and trampling, whilst their exposure to unrestricted sunlight makes them ideal habitats for a range of invertebrates which in turn provide forage for bats and birds. Some of the earliest of these (which can clearly be seen on Google Maps), were installed on the properties at Riverside Quarter initially to replicate the open mosaic habitats that were being lost to development at the ground level. Increasingly these roofs are being

100m² of green cover. Conversely, the research identified that bats still prefer greater vegetation at lower levels. This highlights that connectivity for wildlife is complex with different species having different requirements.

Examples of improved habitat connectivity that are easier to visit in person include the recent enhancements on Wandsworth Common where areas of scrub and gorse have been created to provide better connectivity on the boundaries



One of the recently created habitat connectivity parcels on Wandsworth Common Oct 2024

proposed by developers because not only do they benefit biodiversity, but they also provide a range of benefits for residents too as they have been shown to significantly reduce the need for air conditioning in the summer and can provide additional insulation in the winter. They also reduce surface water run off volumes and assist with sound insulation. Recent research by Imperial College London used acoustics to monitor bats and birds on green roofs, conventional roofs and urban gardens within the City of London. Black redstarts (which are a bird of Amber concern with unfavourable conservation status) were found to be significantly more active on roofs than in gardens with activity rising by 15% with every

whilst at the same time screening the traffic noise and pollution from Trinity Road and the railway. These habitat parcels mimic natural woodland regeneration and expansion in areas where amenity grass had begun to dominate but had no useful role in supporting amenity or recreation. In time, they will also provide additional shading and cooling for both people and wildlife alike.

Hopefully with a greater emphasis on green infrastructure, local nature recovery strategies and habitat connectivity, we can reverse the decline in biodiversity and achieve the "30 by 30" target of nationally restoring 30% degraded ecosystems by 2030. ■

The Mountain Lion

There's a poem by DH Lawrence called 'The Mountain Lion'. It starts off:

*Climbing through the January snow, into the Lobo canyon
Dark grow the spruce-trees, blue is the balsam, water
sounds still unfrozen, and the trail is still evident.
On his way up that canyon, Lawrence meets two Mexican
Indians.
Men!
Two men!
Men! The only animal in the world to fear!
They hesitate.
We hesitate.
They have a gun.
We have no gun.
Then we all advance, to meet.*

The men are carrying the corpse of a mountain lion.

I love this poem, not only for its sensitivity but its drama. It's fraught with internal conflict – the hypocrisy of all of us when we pay lip service to one thing but do another. So, when I went to stay with a friend in Santa Fe in New Mexico, I wanted to discover the Lobo Canyon with the mountains of Picoris beyond, walk in Lawrence's footsteps, experience what he had, and perhaps even see a mountain lion.

I managed to persuade my friend to drive me up Taos, which was where Lawrence and his wife Frieda lived for a time and planned start an artistic community of like-minded sensitive souls. It was here that he came across a Mexican Indian carrying the corpse of a mountain lion he'd just shot. Lawrence, who lived in an age when sensibilities were all, mourns that animal. 'Beautiful dead ears' he says of it.

What would he have said of modern Santa Fe, I wonder. The town feels to me a kind of toy town. It's full of rich Americans who claim to be socialists, while sentimentalising the natives, and paying lip service to their Indian culture. Most of the Americans live in adobes or, at any rate houses that look like adobes – the native Mexican Indians live in buildings built of bricks in 'reserves', not in the town.

New Mexico is a high-altitude desert. Apart from the self-appointed socialists, it's a hide-away for film stars who have second homes secreted away in the countryside. It also has a modern opera house in the desert with the operas in such high demand, you not only have to pay a fortune but book months in advance.

In search of DH Lawrence's mountain lion, I persuaded my friend to take me up to Taos, which was where the poet and his wife Frieda were living at the time he wrote his poem. I knew that he had lured the painter Dora Carrington up there and that he'd wanted to start a community of similar minded artists who believed, like him, that sensibility was all.

There was a woman called Mabel Dodge living in Taos when Lawrence arrived. She, like Lady Ottaline Morell in Nottinghamshire, was a patron of the arts, held salons and lured artists into her drawing room. My theory is that after the war, there was a shortage of men both in America as well as Europe, and middle-aged women like her went up to New Mexico to find themselves lovers. Although most of the Indians have fallen victim to paunchiness nowadays, in those days I imagine they were slim and virile. Mabel started off with an American husband but swapped him for an Indian. Her new husband got so fed up with her salon and all her pretentious friends that he insisted she build him a separate adobe in the grounds so that he could escape.

We not only discovered Mabel's house, a glorified two-story adobe with a sun-deck and the house where DH Lawrence had lived, we found the Lobo Canyon with no difficulty. It was winter so, although, we drove rather than climbed up through the January snows. The mountain felt exactly like the poem. The spruce trees were dark green and giant braids of ice, hung from springs coming out of the mountainside. Discarding my sceptical self, I was back in the age of innocence.

Unsurprisingly, we didn't come across a mountain lion. Getting to the top, instead of his lair, we were greeted by a ski resort. There was a wooden platform with noisy people clattering around in noisy boots and skis and lifts carrying skiers in puffy jackets up to the top of the mountain. In spite of the fact that I love skiing in Austria and Switzerland, here, heir to Lawrence's sensibility, I am unhappily reminded of the last line of his poem in which he says:

*And I think in the world beyond, how easily we might
spare a million or two of humans
And never miss them.
Yet what a gap in the world, the missing white frost face
of that slim yellow mountain lion!*

But then simply writing about his mountain lion in New Mexico Lawrence was an agent of its modern vulgarisation. That era of undiscovered innocence is long dead. If it ever existed. ■

Veronica Cecil

Emanuel School reaches the 430-year milestone (Part 2)

By Tony Jones

Reaching 430 years is an incredible feat for any institution to function successfully and this second part of the story (see last year's Bedside for Part 1) celebrates some of the most significant events in our school history following the end of the Second World War.

1951: The first Royal Visit

On November 7th, the then Queen, later known as the Queen Mother, visited the school as part of the 350th anniversary celebrations of the granting of the Royal Charter in 1601.

1966: The 1st VIII triumph at Henley

Emanuel's greatest sporting triumph was without doubt its magnificent victory in the Princess Elizabeth Cup at Henley. This triumph was backed up by another first place in the Schools' Head, sixth place in the Open Head and six other senior eights events. The strength and depth of the Emanuel School Boat Club was astonishing, with coach Derek Drury guiding Emanuel into the history books, building a reputation which has only shone brighter as time has passed on this magnificent crew. Many powerful crews followed the boys of 1966, but none scooped the Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup.

one of the last London schools to follow the ILEA guidelines. Until that moment marches, television appearances, radio spots, lobbying MPs, celebrity actor parents, petitions to Parliament, school sleep-ins and a huge swell of local support, had helped keep the clash in the newspapers.

1976: Has any rugby team got more impressive statistics than this?

Simon Haslett (OE1972-77) captained arguably Emanuel's greatest ever rugby team and has the statistics to prove it. When they finished Fourth Year (Year 10) Mr Michael Stewart, who coached them wrote in the May 1976 Portcullis: "After four years, the record shows: Played 75, Won 70, Lost 3, Drawn 2, Points For 3114, Points against 207. There were 60 consecutive unbeaten matches since the last defeat on 10th December 1973." This year group was also responsible for Emanuel's only triumph at Rosslyn Park Sevens, when they



Independence – Fight to Remain Grammar School 1976

1976: Emanuel goes Independent

The long-running struggle, which was widely covered in the media, to remain a grammar school ended in September 1976 when Emanuel became an independent fee-paying school after refusing to turn comprehensive. There were even discussions to amalgamate Emanuel with neighbouring Spencer Park School, creating a huge comprehensive of nearly 3000 pupils. The dispute with the ILEA lasted several years, dominating the headship of Mr Charles Kuper, with Emanuel

were U13. They were terrifying and featured Francis Emeruwa (OE1972-79) who played for Wasps and England 'B', one of our finest ever players.

1985: The Hill Form (Year 6) arrive

Named after legendary geography teacher and long-serving CCF leader Lt. Col. Charles Hill, primary school aged pupils returned to Emanuel with the new Year 6 class, which was later expanded to two in the noughties.



Tim Berners Lee 2016 visit

1989: An OE is responsible for one of the greatest inventions of the 20th Century

In 1989 Tim Berners-Lee (OE1968-73), a British scientist, invents the World Wide Web (WWW) while working at CERN. A decade later the world was forever changed.

1994: Queen Elizabeth II visits

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of Emanuel School on March 17th, 1994, we hosted the visit of the late Queen Elizabeth II. This was undoubtedly one of the proudest moments in Emanuel's long history with the Queen chatting to pupils, meeting the CCF guard, enjoying a tour and viewing the magnolia tree her mother planted in 1951.



Girls – 1995 first crew on the river

1995: Girls arrive at Emanuel

For the first time since 1882 Emanuel admitted girls. Mital Desai, Sarah Denny, Yasman Ghomshei and Janine Nolan were the first four to enter Year 12 in September 1995, with a small number of Year 7 girls joining in 1996. It took a long time and incredible challenging work behind the scenes to lose its reputation as a boy's school but before long, the four girls were entering their first rowing events, bravely paving the way for the co-educational school of today.

2003: The end of the Assisted Places Scheme

The Conservative Government initiated the Assisted Place Scheme in the early 'eighties with it lasting until Tony Blair's Labour Government abolished it in 1997. It was normal for around 30% of the Emanuel School roll to be on this scheme, coming from poorer backgrounds but having their fees paid by the Local Authority. It has long been debated how effective

the scheme truly was, but when it ended, the school was forced to look closely at its recruitment techniques to attract the right pupils in a highly competitive independent school marketplace.

2016: Girls' rowing Quad triumphs on the national stage

Although girls had excelled on the national sporting stage by reaching the final of the U13 Independent Schools' Netball competition in 2013 and others had represented their country in rowing, winning the Jim Mason Plate for Girls' Coxed Four at the National Schools' Regatta was their finest achievement thus far. Around this time, after many years of positive recruitment Emanuel was now split evenly between boys and girls. It was a very long road reaching this milestone.

2016: Girls begin to play cricket competitively in a significant sporting overhaul

Cricket began with two training sessions per week for girls in Year 6-10, for U13 (Years 6-8) team and U15 (Years 9-10). Hockey was also reintroduced a few years earlier and football several years later in a massive shakeup of the sport programme, especially for girls.

2017: The 'New' Dacre Building opens

Headmaster Mark Hanley-Brown's thirteen-year era ended in 2017. This was a period in which the school site was developed extensively to accommodate a pupil roll surpassing 1000 for the first time in its history. 2007 saw the greatly expanded library relocate with the original location redeveloped into a theatre. Both the Memorial Bridge and the three floor New Dacre building were completed in his final years.

2022: Rowers return to the international stage

Undoubtedly inspired by Lauren McAuliffe winning double gold for England in the 2019 Home Countries Regatta when she was only in Year 11, both Maddie Kitchen and Isaac Thurman also grabbed golds for England in the same competition in 2022. Isaac returned the following year as Junior Boys' Captain to win gold with his Emanuel schoolmate Sam Williams, repeating their triumph in the Nick Bevan Cup for Championship Coxless Pairs at the National Schools' Regatta. Historically, Emanuel pupils racing for England was normal and it is fantastic to see today's generation of rowers meeting that challenge.

2023: One of our best ever sets of exam results

Nine pupils took up places at Oxbridge with over half of all results graded A*/A. 85% of pupils were awarded their choice of university place, with 76% of these at Russell Group institutions.

2024: Building work begins

The new block will house Mathematics, Science and new Dining Hall. The project is expected to take between 30-36 months.

Who knows what will feature in the next set of 'headlines' as the school sails towards the significant 450th and 500th anniversaries. I hope to be around for the former but not the latter! ■

Panorama of the Thames project

John Inglis and Jill Sanders

The Panorama of the Thames project was, initially, a photographic record of the banks of the river Thames through London, from the GLA boundary to Tower Bridge. The intention, at first, was to show landscape and architecture of the Thames from midstream and the opposite bank, to better inform riverside planning and development. John and Jill embarked on some very long, slow walks along the Thames – both on the towpaths and on the foreshore. Light had to be right, a low tide was preferable to show river features, and it had to be winter for a clear view behind embankments, without foliage. It was a protracted mission! The images then had to be prepared as a continuous linear panorama of the riverbank, very much as you see it by eye.

The project began in Richmond but quickly spread, as other riparian communities appreciated its value. A historian in Isleworth remarked that the record was ‘very much like the

Leigh Panorama of London’, published in 1829. Intrigued, we found a black and white copy of the etching and agreed it could add fascinating historical context to the contemporary views.

John set up a portable rostrum with camera and lighting and we went out to various museums and reference libraries where they had original hand-coloured copies from 1829. These were rare to find and in various states of disrepair and decay, so we finally tracked down and bought a complete work in the US. It included the stunning view of the industrial Southbank, with the mayor’s annual procession. This was a separate print and sold in a folder with the panorama, as a package, which meant it was often missing. The 44-page panorama itself was glued and folded concertina-style into a binding and opened out to 60 ft.

After photographing and combining all the best bits of the many copies, John found conservators



City and Southbank – comparison 1829 and 2014



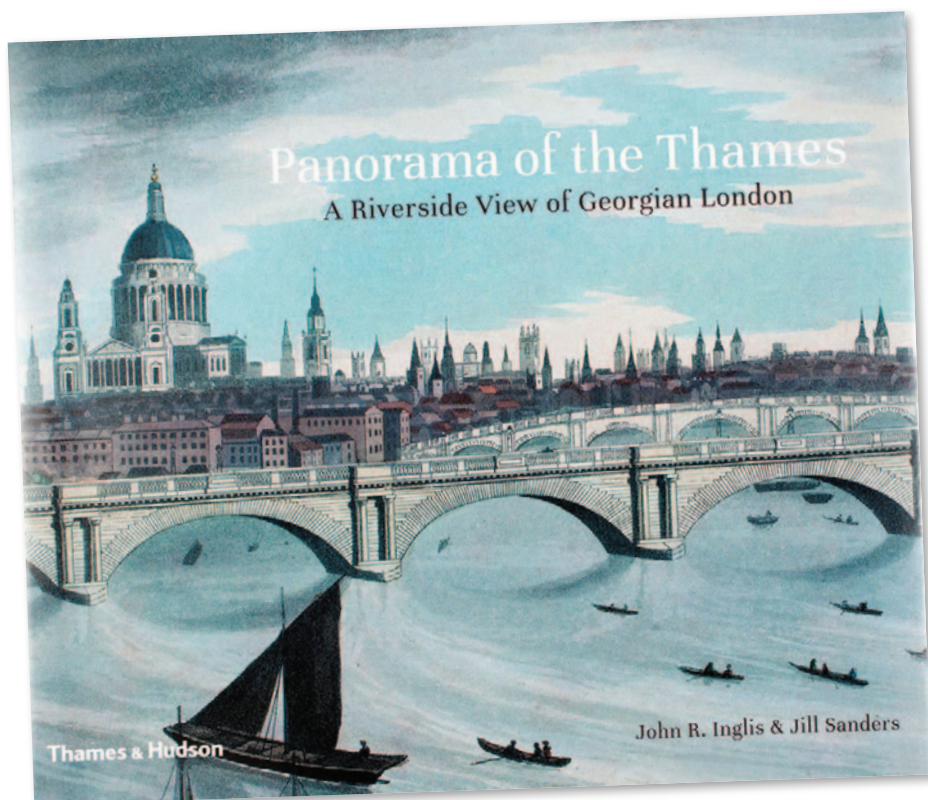
and restorers to advise on digital restoration. Thus, he recreated a continuous digital image of the work, preserving its integrity and restored to look as good as when it was first printed.

We now had two fine digital panoramas of the London Thames: one from our benchmark year of 2014 – post millennium; one from 1829 – the close of the Georgian era.

We were approached by Thames and Hudson to print the 1829 panorama as a modern book. There is no doubt that it is fascinating to take this image and information and “walk” with it along the reaches of today’s London Thames. Some riverside settlements are remarkably recognisable: Strand on the Green, Isleworth, Barnes & Mortlake, Hammersmith & Chiswick, Chelsea; others utterly changed with nothing more – if you are lucky – than churches and pubs to give you a sense of place from the past.

More than anything, these two panoramas, some 200 years apart, are a record of huge social change – fascinating to be able to see it so clearly. 1829 was before railways, the London embankments and with far fewer bridges. The Thames was a major industrial highway and travel by water was essential to the success of manufacture and shipping in London. The 1829 panorama shows all the different working vessels – fishing boats, passenger wherries, Guild and ceremonial boats, Thames barges and lighters – with text on history and characters of the time.

The project, first conceived at the millennium, took years to achieve. Despite seeking funding, in the event we did it ourselves with communities upstream and down as valued partners, not only with financial contributions but also with a depth and breadth of historical information. Local historians were generous with their knowledge.



As with the Wandsworth Society, we went out on the road with films about the project. A filmmaker himself, John works to a professional standard and our movies combined images, music, factual scripts – the evening presentations were highly popular. This enabled us to sell the book, too.

We have now called a halt to the project. The book stands as a testament to the work done on the 1829 panorama. The original had scant text, and Samuel Leigh, publisher, of 18 The Strand (now beneath Charing Cross station), even got even some of it wrong! The work is now back in print, high quality images and with a huge amount of local information about what was there along the riverbanks of the time.

The photographic panorama, along with some rare images relating to the historic Thames landscape, are on the Panorama of the Thames website – again, with a mass of information from our benchmark year. The Thames here is seen at its best, as a beautiful river in lovely light through the capital city. It is in itself – ten years on – becoming an historical document. The Thames is changing fast, and we hear that communities do still use this panorama as first intended – to inform planning. ■

For more information please visit:
www.panoramaofthethames.com

Big Birthay Bonus

Mark Haworth-Booth

What is your view, dear reader, on big birthdays? To celebrate them or not? To celebrate expansively or minimally? To exult in the ripening years or cringe? To stand up to senescence or take it lying down? I was faced with this dilemma in the summer, when my 80th birthday arrived. Many scenarios flitted through my ageing brain. In the end I kept things pretty much as usual for my actual birthday in August – a lunch party with the usual little group of old friends living nearish us in North Devon, plus our daughters and their chaps. However, I was inspired by a friend whose 80th was in June to take the celebrations a bit further in September. My friend took his birthday month off to visit family, friends and places he hankered to see – such as the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight. So I decided to do something similar – a mini-bucket list including visits to friends I do not see enough. I went away on the 13th of September and was home again on the evening of the 26th.

I took a train to Milton Keynes, picked up a hire car, and stayed with an architect friend from my Cambridge days who spent most of his working life creating simpatico housing in the area. We've been friends for 60 years. Next morning I drove to

Stapleford Granary, an arts centre near Cambridge, to take part in an on-stage conversation about Philip Larkin and photography. Another of my oldest friends, known since 1966 – who lives nearby – came to the talk, and we had lunch afterwards. Then I drove to Norwich. The friends I had hoped to see there were required to attend to a dangerously ill relative, so I visited the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and had a quiet evening on my own. I stayed in all manner of places during this trip – the Norwich b&b was all organized online and I saw no one during



Mural at Barter Books, Alnwick, featuring John, Keats, Wilfrid Owen, Ted Hughes, Alan Bennett and friends

my stay. It was actually b(ed) minus b(reakfast) so I was soon driving off to the Cathedral. I arrived at 7.30 am and the stupendous building was almost

empty. Modern stained-glass windows are usually an embarrassment in our cathedrals but the Trinity Windows (2014) by the painter John McLean are a triumph. (They can be seen on the cathedral's website). Exhilarated, I had a slap-up Sunday morning breakfast, then set off for north Norfolk to visit another old friend.

Liz is one of my comrades from the world of photography and the fight, won long ago, for its acceptance as a creative medium. How wonderful it was to arrive at her cottage near Holt and to chatter for hours – about

photography, writing, politics, living in remote rural places, our childhoods and our many mutual friends. Liz invited two other local pals over for supper – one known to me, one new – and another series of conversations ignited. Next morning I was on my way to Holkham Hall, which I'd wanted to visit for a long time – partly because of its Old Master collection, partly because of its pioneering move into regenerative farming. The building itself and its park are beyond grand and the kitchen garden vast and spectacular. I drove on to Blakeney and stopped there for lunch. I picked up the

morning's emails. One was from the PA of Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, one of the five directors under whom I served at the V&A. I learned that

Elizabeth had died peacefully at home that morning. I had hoped to see her on this trip as she lived near Norwich. An obituary published a day or two later in the *Guardian* mentioned that one of the McLean windows I had admired in Norwich Cathedral is dedicated to her.

I drove on to Cromer, which – for no known reason – I had always wanted to visit. I walked on the pier, ate fish and chips, slept well and headed early next morning to Horsey Gap Beach to see the Grey Seals. One can watch them from close by and, even better, hear their communal humming or singing. I paid my respects to the wonderful paintings gallery at the Castle Museum, Norwich, then set off for Lincolnshire. I stayed with David, my first assistant when I became curator of photos at the V&A in 1977,

and his wife Alice. They had both worked for Dame Elizabeth and were saddened by the news. They told me how she had proactively helped them find their career paths – a side of her not referred to in the *Guardian* obit. We talked all evening and then again as we walked next day in the Wolds near Tennyson's Somersby. We saw Red Kites. I spent that night in Grimsby, another first, and drove round the vast former fishing port before heading for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. It is as marvellous as everyone says, the perfect setting for Henry Moore but also for contemporaries such as Alfredo Jaar. The Hepworth in Wakefield was yet another first – a top-class gallery, beautifully and imaginatively curated. I stayed that night near Durham, visited the great cathedral in the

morning, then drove on to Newcastle to see the Baltic Art Centre and the Laing Art Gallery. I made sure to see the Angel of the North close up, visited the magical Barter Books in Alnwick, walked with my poet friend Katrina Porteous on the beaches from Beadnell to Dunstanburgh Castle, hiked round Holy Island, made my first visit to Hadrian's Wall at Housesteads, and wound up my tour at Manchester Art Gallery, where I started my career in 1969. I had supper with Sandra, my colleague there – a 55-year friendship – and took the train back to Devon the next morning. I saw lots of great art and spectacular places but what was really special was the renewal of friendships through hours – days even – of conversations. I recommend it. ■

Household Management

Prudence Raper

My house is full of books. In an effort to reduce the numbers, I have resolved to begin a purge: but where to start?

I decided to start with the collection of cookery books, which include everything from my grandmother's "Mrs Beeton" to Elizabeth David. The earliest of these (The Beeton) is the 1868 edition and has my grandfather's name engraved on the front, although I can't believe he ever entered the kitchen. The Elizabeth David books are all paperbacks and well used, thanks to a foodie boyfriend I had when I was in my twenties. Between these are sandwiched



offerings from Mexico to China – some more or less unopened.

The early copy of Mrs Beeton's *Book of Household Management* is an enormous tome which I had to have re-bound, as it was literally falling to pieces. Unfortunately a binder was obliged to bind it very tightly, which now makes it difficult to read. As its title suggest, it is more than just a recipe book, the contents list reads everything from table decorations to recipes for use of domestic servants, and Legal Memoranda.

The book is illustrated throughout with full page

depictions in colour of tables laden with banquets. When I was little and complained to my mother that I was hungry (untrue) she would simply hand me the book and once I had worked my way through the pictures, I felt quite full.

My favourite picture of all, however, is of the “Venetian Villa” which comes in the section *Recipes for making ices and confectionary*. I was determined I would make this when I grew up: Unlikely if not impossible.

Returning to the recipe section of this enormous book, we find how to serve caviar:

Mode: fry croutons, or toast the bread, and let them get cold. Spread them thinly with butter. Spread over this the caviar. Season with epper, and run over this, in a pattern, a little plain or Montpellier butter

Average Cost, 1d. (1 penny) each.

Moving on from Mrs Beeton, I found the first and only cookery book that I believe my mother must have bought when she started to learn to cook a bit herself. This one, is entitled *Tried favourite’s cookery book with household hints and useful information* by Mrs E. W. Kirk. It cost three shillings and six pence. Incidentally it is advertised on Amazon and various other websites ranging from £6 to £100.

One of the most interesting recipes I have tried from this book is rather a strange one. A visit to my home in Somerset coincided with a heavy snowfall and I

luckily remembered this was a great opportunity to try a recipe for “Snow Pancakes” This was not as exciting as it seemed to be but did make a great deal of batter which took several days to consume. There were no ill effects. Recipe:

Make in same way as normal pancakes but using 3 tablespoonful’s of snow and only 1 egg

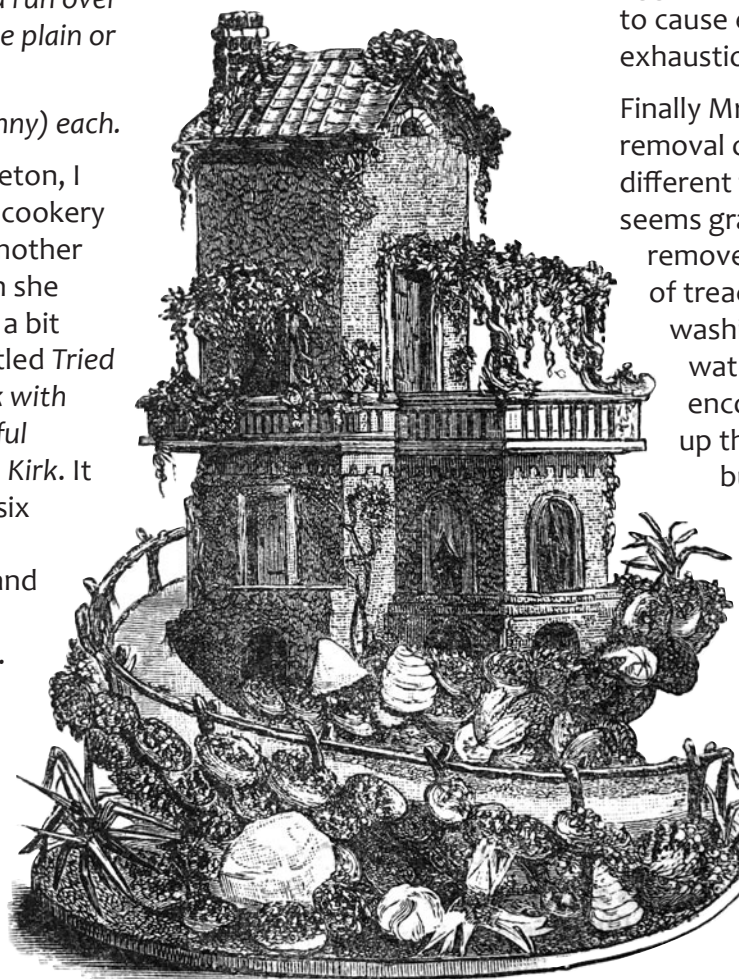
The chapters at the end of the book devoted to invalid cookery are daunting if only by their names. I’m not sure how much better I would feel after consuming artificial Asses’ milk although apparently it is excellent in wasting diseases. I can’t see any great benefit in “Breadberry or Toastwater”:

1 slice of bread, a large cup of boiling water. Toast the bread on both sides till quite dry and a nice brown, but not burnt. Break it, and put it in a jug. Pour the boiling water over it, and cover. Let it stand till cool, and strain

The recipe for cabbage, “Cabbage ladies”, raises a question mark as the ingredients involve melted butter, pepper, salt, a very little milk, fine bread and crumbs. And the cooking method is complicated. Evidently, ladies have finer palates than their men folk.

With a recipe for Onion Porridge forming the last of many hundreds of recipes, we deserve a “remedy for exhaustion” The ingredients consists mainly of eggs. The instructions are likely to cause even greater exhaustion.

Finally Mrs Kirk moves onto the removal of stains and marks from different fabrics. Unlikely as it seems grass stains can be removed by rubbing in plenty of treacle and afterwards washing the garment in tepid water. I hope this will encourage others to take up the internet’s offer of buying a copy of this invaluable book. ■



1954 – a Great Year

From *Pier Head Gold* by Eddie Forde

1954 was a great year in England and Ireland and a great one for me. It was the year when things began to fall into place. I was fourteen. Everest had been conquered which I loved to watch on the Newsreels. Fuchs had got to the Pole. Bannister had become the first man to run the four-minute mile. There was an air of hope and optimism about. The film *On the Waterfront* had been released and I had won my first major race.

During the track season which ran from May to the middle of September we used Crawford's grounds where our running club had the use of the playing fields. Once a year the Crawford's employees were taken out to the playing fields for their annual sports day by the coachload. I suppose it was all to do with a healthy and happy workforce. Sefton Harriers, the running club that I belonged to, had somehow got the use of changing rooms in the basement. In the winter we'd do a run on the roads from the clubhouse of a Wednesday evening. In the summer we'd have use of the grounds where a grass track was laid out for the Crawford's employees. After training we'd have a cup of tea from the canteen and biscuits by the wagonload. You could get as many as eight water biscuits but alas no cheese, or four Rich Tea biscuits for a penny. Opposite the canteen was the television room. This was the second television set I'd ever seen. The first one was at Mrs Wood's where I watched the Coronation.

Here I saw Christopher Chataway beat the Russian, Vladimir Kuts in 1954 at the White City in a new world record for the three miles. The race was on live and the room was packed as at the time very few people had television in their homes.

I can still hear the older men shouting "Come on Chris come on boy" as if Chataway had been their own brother. The red-haired Briton raced over the last twelve laps stride for stride against the barrel-chested Russian up the long White City straight.

At this time there was tremendous anti-Russian feeling in the country because the Cold War was at its height. The media got all the political change out of Chataway's victory that it could. I suppose it was better to be fighting each other on the running track than throwing atomic bombs at each other but still it amazed me to see such patriotic fervour. Most of the men in the running club had been in the services during the war or had done

National Service. I realised that I was the product of a far different culture. I had never had any contact with military institutions.

After the race was over, I went out with the pack into the night air feeling elated and ran and ran myself into the ground, imagining that I was Chataway passing Kuts. I identified with him easily because I was a redhead too.

When I came back from my run I quickly changed. I did not have a shower as I knew the race on the box had made me late and Dad would be anxiously waiting for me at home. I said goodbye to the blokes who were casually changing, still talking about the race they had seen, and without being under the constant pressure that I seemed to be.

I jog-trotted from the club up the lane towards the main road, turning left at the top towards Hall Green, feeling like a hunted animal, my heart in my mouth, because I had never been this late before.

At Hall Green, I waited ages for the bus, getting myself into a terrible anxious state. It made it seem worse to see people roaming around the place without a care in the world, not knowing what I was going through.

Eventually the bus came along but by then I had resigned myself to getting a hiding.

As I went through the back garage to the Summer House, I began to take in deep breaths. Inside the side door to the garden, I could hear and see people going happily about their business.

There was a light in the kitchen which meant that he was in. I resigned myself to having to face the music. As I entered the corridor, Dad shouted from the kitchen "Did you hear about the race?" "That's why I'm late, I watched it on television".

"Oh don't worry about that. I heard it on the radio. Isn't it great to think that one day you could be running on that same track. That would be something to tell them back in Ireland."

The next day on the top of the bus on the way to school, Chataway's picture was all over the front page of the *Daily Express*. I felt one with Chataway as I went to train on my own that lunchtime. At last an athlete and athletics was more popular than soccer or any other sport. My dream was that perhaps one day I would take Chataway's place. ■

To most people a visit to Dundee when in Scotland would not merit a stop-off on the way to the Highlands. Yet when Elizabeth and I found ourselves in Dundee it turned out to be well worthwhile. Yes, it is on first acquaintance a very dour industrial city. In fact, in the 1970s when it was impossible to film in the then USSR the film makers on the story of Kim Philby, the British spy, found the tenements of Dundee the nearest to the grim Soviet flats of that era.

However, Dundee was firmly put on the map with the arrival of the striking V&A building on the Tay that became a focal point of the Scottish textile industry. In addition, next door is the “Discovery” the ship that Captain Scott used for his expeditions to the Antarctic and it includes a fine exhibition of the history of Antarctic exploration. Dundee is of course famous for its threesome “jam, jute and journalism”. We can leave its jam making to one side though that continues. The journalism tradition remains through DC Thomson with the “Beano” and “Dandy” still going strong as staples of one’s youth. It is to jute I want to turn.

The jute industry lasted 100 years making Dundee one of the wealthiest cities in the British Empire at one point. It begins with the whaling industry where Dundee was the main centre of the

processing of the whales, including whale oil. It was found that the oil could soften the flax originally grown locally, though subsequently imported from the Indian sub-continent to the extent it could be made into textiles. Initially jute was used in sacking, but very quickly it became hugely significant in proving the sailcloth for the ships of the Royal Navy. Jute became a major export as it was the cloth of the covered wagons as they headed west with the Scots and Irish settlers, for

much cheaper. So, lock stock and barrel the Dundonian managers and engineers took their equipment and expertise off to Calcutta and Bengal to set up a thriving jute industry. They became rich once again and were known as the “jute wallahs”. The First World War kept Dundee going strong but after the Second World War the writing was on the wall. India was now an independent country with the jute industry fully localized, with at one point 100 factories processing jute, and Dundee doing only specialist work.

The remaining jute factory called “Verdant” in Dundee is now a museum where one can capture the history of the industry. One point is that the industry was essentially dominated by women as they did all the work.

Indeed their husbands were “house-husbands” as they looked after the children and did much of the household chores. One amusing footnote is when Winston Churchill, who had been the MP for Dundee from 1908 stood in the 1924 election he opposed votes for women. As a result, the Dundonian women voted against him and returned in his stead, Edward Scrymgeor, the only prohibitionist ever to be elected to Parliament!

Dundee remains a city of great character and well worth that stop off on the way north. ■

DUNDEE

Let Wagons Roll

Stuart Thom

them to make their way across the Appalachians. During the American Civil War with cotton embargoed, jute was the basis of much of the military tents for the two sides. This created great wealth for what became the “jute barons” who built magnificent houses in the neighbouring village of Broughty Ferry, and can still be seen to this day.

The jute barons were shrewd businessmen and realized that as the main supplies of the flax came from the sub-continent, why not set up their textile factories there where labour was so

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