

# **The Battersea Society**

Registered charity Number No: 1103560

## **Chair's Report**

**for**

**2011/2012**

**Near - Final draft: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

**1<sup>st</sup> May 2012**

**Tony Tuck  
Chair: The Battersea Society**

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## Chair's Report for 2011/2012

The past twelve months have posed problems and challenges for the Battersea Society as well as for society as a whole. The economic and financial backdrop in which we operate has changed and will continue to change dramatically. Britain is not insulated from global pressures and, as with all European nations to greater and lesser extent, the stresses on societies and their institutions are threatening diverse and various changes, some of them unplanned and unpredictable.

In our own area of influence and activity these pressure and developments have changed the context in which we seek to deliver our mission and carry out our objectives. Suffice to say here, in this general introduction, your committee and our trustees are alert to the likely impact of changes and are seeking to adapt and develop as constructively and positively as we can.

Thus, while over the past year the Battersea Society has continued to work hard to represent the main issues facing the communities of Battersea, we have at the same time sought to provide a service to members by informing you of these issues and also to both entertain and enlighten you with a diverse series of events.

### Looking Ahead

The simple costs of operating the Society have changed to reflect to reflect both the wider inflationary pressures and the increased cost of producing quality material, such as our quarterly newsletter "Battersea Matters". In earlier years the Newsletter was put together by amateur volunteers and simply photocopied. Now, while the editorial team are retired professionals, the cost of printing, production and distribution have multiplied. The recently announced increase in large second class postage rates of 19% from £0.58 to £0.69 would have a huge impact if our operation remained unchanged.

Over the past year the Society very consciously worked to a deficit budget, knowing that we held the reserves to finance a deficit. But this is not a status quo that we either could, or would, wish to maintain. We must either increase our income by way of an increase in the annual membership fee; or increase the number of members; or increase our charges for Event admissions; or reduce our expenditure by downgrading our printed material; or find cheaper ways of distributing material; or move toward electronic delivery across the board – or all, or a combination of these.

The Executive Committee have made some deliberate decisions about our operation over the coming year, of which the key ones are:-

Firstly, we have decided to hold the membership subscription unchanged for the year 2012/2013 at £10.00 for either a single person or family.

Second, we have set up a small officers' working party to examine all aspects of operating expenditure and income generation. This group will not only bring forward proposals over the year for improvement, but will make recommendations in time for the 2013 AGM on how the Society can best operate on a balanced budget.

Third, a reformed Marketing committee under the chairmanship of Sara Milne will focus on ways and means of increasing membership and generating more income.

Fourth, we are very fortunate to have recruited from our membership a very experienced Treasurer in Chris Savory. He will be reviewing all aspects of our financial operation and aiding and supporting the other groups.

Fifth, we have made a conscious decision to seek to maintain a very high quality quarterly edition of 'Battersea Matters'. It is our flagship 'recruiting sergeant' and our most obvious way of communication, both with our members and with local Battersea decision makers. The editor, Jenny Sheridan, has been given a budget to produce a quarterly quality newsletter for the next 12 months.

Sixth, Mike Roden has developed our web site and the monthly Enewsletter into a highly attractively presented and efficient means of communicating with our members. He has been given a budget to continue to develop both streams of communication and we shall be considering whether, and if so to what extent, the high cost of paper material and delivery can be developed into the comparatively much cheaper means of electronic material.

Seventh, one of the most significant challenges facing not just Battersea dwellers and workers, but the wellbeing of everyone everywhere, are global and local environmental issues that are typically bundled together in the public consciousness as 'Green Issues', global warming, the Kyoto Treaty, etc. It is no exaggeration to state that if the human race is to survive as a species for a few more millennia then we simply must find significant ways of adapting our behaviour. We denizens of Battersea cannot bring about the necessary global changes, but we can support those bodies and organisation that are seeking such global change and we can publicise what personal, family or localised action can be taken to aid and abet constructive progress and to diminish destructive tendencies.

To this end we are seeking to revitalise our committee covering "Communities, Health and the Environment and are actively seeking to recruit from our members all those who would like to play an active part. These issues are of major concern to very many people, especially young people (who have the most to lose if collectively we fail to adapt and change our ways in time) and we hope to work in partnership with other local groups to strengthen the public voice of progressive vision on green issues and emphasise and promulgate best practice for a positive future.

As the chair of the Battersea Society for the past thirteen years, I have to say that I can't recall a more exciting prospect looking ahead to the next twelve months – and beyond. It may well be a bumpy ride at times as external forces and pressures throw up unexpected challenges, but I am wholly confident that the experienced and very professional team now

managing the Battersea Society are more than able to develop ways of having a first rate service for members, and also to Battersea residents and workers, within a balanced break even budget. Dare I say, perhaps even become profitable, so that we can build up our reserves for the rainy days that may come?

## **Looking back over the past twelve months**

Our various committees have devolved budgets and manage their issues independently. The management committee, which is made up of officers, trustees and other members, meets bi-monthly to provide an overall framework for the Society's work and programme. The Annual General Meeting is the opportunity for all members to hold these people and committees to account and to suggest areas for fruitful future development.

Although this Review necessarily largely looks back over the past year we are always seeking new members both for the management committee and to participate in our range of other committees. If you have only a smidgen of interest in joining in our activities then do please get in touch with either myself or the contact person for the committee whose activities arouse your active interest.

The Chairs of the various committees report on their activities over the past year below.

### **1. Battersea Matters, Communications & Website Report**

Over the last year visitor numbers have continued to increase steadily. 12 months ago the site was getting around 10,000 visitors a month. In December 2011 that number rose to nearly 16,000.

Via the website the Society continues to receive a large number of emails asking for information about some aspect of local history, or asking for help in tracing their family history, as well as several requests from TV or film companies for information or assistance. Plans for redesigning the site are on hold at the moment, but by this time next year that should have been done.

The monthly email newsletter is now sent to around 240 members, and this figure will continue to increase as more members join, and existing members let us know they have email addresses. The number of Society members without internet access is now very small, and must inevitably continue to shrink. There are plans to run an online survey to discover what kind of demand there might be for email-only communication.

The 'Other Events' page, listing events in Battersea, excluding those organised by the Society, received more visits than any other page on the website, which indicates that the site is now seen as a good source of local information.

There were a large number of visitors to the various photo galleries – Battersea in Bloom, Local Pubs, and the London Horse Harness, and a Parade in Battersea Park. A recent new gallery has pictures of Battersea Boundary Posts. Suggestions for new galleries are always welcome, as are any ideas about additions or improvements to the website.

**Communications Officer: Mike Roden**  
**Editor: Jenny Sheridan**

**Contact: [website@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:website@batterseasociety.org.uk)**  
**Contact: [newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk)**

## 2. The Planning Committee Report

Plans for the development of the **Vauxhall, Nine Elms and Battersea area (VNEB)** continue to be a major part of the work undertaken by the Society's Planning Committee. In May we held a public meeting to enable members and others to hear from Cllr Govindia and his team about the extent of new building planned for the Nine Elms area and its impact on Battersea. Around 100 people attended the meeting and we were pleased to welcome representatives from neighbouring societies in Chelsea, Vauxhall and Wandsworth. We continue to maintain good working links with the Council as development in VNEB begins to take shape on the ground.

This year has seen an increase in awareness by developers that it makes sense to approach The Battersea Society at an early stage in their planning. This is to their benefit, and to ours. They benefit from a local point of view before plans are finalised and we are able to influence thinking at an early stage. These contacts heighten awareness of the Society and, vitally, allow us to keep our members informed.

Equally important has been the increasing number of members and residents in Battersea who tell us of planning applications or transport matters on which they wish us to take a view and to raise concerns where necessary. Much of the Committee's work relates to relatively small local applications but some can have a malign influence on the streetscape, especially in conservation areas. We scan the applications list each week but local knowledge can be vital in alerting us to applications we need to examine.

We were successful in our objections to two smaller applications; in Battersea Square and at 575C Battersea Park Road. Both were for buildings significantly out of keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding areas. The owners of 31-32 Battersea Square have since submitted plans more sensitive to their context and these have been approved. As yet there has been no further application for 575C Battersea Park Road.

Members of the committee have maintained the Society's involvement with the **Battersea Power Station site**, now in receivership. The building itself is on the English Heritage Register of Buildings at Risk and the future of both the building and the site appears yet again in doubt. We have engaged with plans from the past owners and with speculative proposals for the building and will continue to do this in the coming year.

We have contributed to the debate about the National Planning Policy Framework (**NPPF**) and submitted a lengthy, and critical, comment on the draft. We participated in the Examination in Public of Wandsworth Council's Development Management Policies Document (**DMPD**) and Site Specific Allocations Document (**SSAD**). All three have now been published. We see the introduction of the **NPPF** as a major concern for the coming year – one newspaper headlined it as 'a lawyer's delight' – a danger we and Wandsworth Council highlighted in our comments on the draft.

We continue in our aim to be a critical friend to Wandsworth Council although sometimes their decisions leave us feeling less friendly than we would wish. We are active on the **Conservation Areas Advisory Committee** and were part of the panel assessing applications for the **Wandsworth Design Awards**. In 2010 Society members contributed to a survey on the Clapham Junction Area and these views informed our input to changes to the streetscape in the area and to other transport planning set out in the Council's Local Implementation Plan. Not least we continue to engage with the Council on plans for Nine Elms as plans unfold.

**Joint Chairs of Planning Committee:  
David Lewis and Liz Walton**

**Contact:** [planning@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@batterseasociety.org.uk)

### **3. The Events Committee Report**

The Annual Events Programme for 2011 was of wide and varied interest; with the object being to attempt to include talks and visits associated with the Battersea/Wandsworth area, whilst, additionally tapping into Greater London's abundant historic heritage. The result of this approach has often been that many of the events were an immediate sell-out at, for example, the visit to the mediaeval Priory of the Knights of St John and at the other extreme, to the ultra-modern Lloyd's building.

Many of our talks were very well received and we are fortunate in being able to call upon speakers of a high calibre who have a special knowledge of their subject. Of particular interest were two illustrated talks, one on a History of the London Bridges and the other, The Pre-Raphaelites.

The varied Social Events throughout the year proved very popular, and in particular the Summer Party, where more than 60 members and guests met together to enjoy wine and canapés which were enhanced by music provided by 'Sound Minds', a local mental health charity group.

The Events Team is composed of, Maureen Larkin, Sally Orman, Cynthia Newman, Sara Milne and myself, with Brian Newman assisting with publicity, whilst Mike Roden administers the Society's WEB Events Pages on our behalf.

**Wendy Deakins**

**Contact:** [events@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:events@batterseasociety.org.uk)

### **4. Membership Report**

On 1st April 2012 our membership numbered 289 which include single and family members, several business organisations and residents' associations, meaning that the total number of people belonging to the Society was nearer approximately 600. However, due to several deaths and members moving away from the area, but mainly due to non-renewal of subscriptions, numbers were reduced to 266 members.

We continue to promote the Society to endeavour to increase our membership by canvassing at Battersea Square Fete, St. Mary's Church Summer Fete, Open Meetings etc. Suggestions/ideas from Members as to how we could attract new members would be welcomed. How about Members trying to introduce one or two members through their neighbours by dropping our Newsletter and application form through their door (supplied on application to me)?

Our Events continue to be popular - visits mostly fully subscribed and talks/open meetings well attended. Do let me know if you have a special place you would like to visit or a topic for a talk and a reminder that volunteers are always needed to assist at our events (talks, summer party etc.) or to sit on any of our Committees in which you have an interest.

Maureen Larkin

Contact: [membership@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@batterseasociety.org.uk)

## 5. Marketing Report

The Marketing Committee disbanded in 2011, however, we still managed to pro-actively promote the Society and carried on with membership recruitment by having a presence at key local events such as the Battersea Square Fair and St Mary's Summer Fete. In addition, our Christmas cards for members to send to friends and family were well received and will continue for this year.

We know that marketing of the Society and membership recruitment are closely linked and therefore have taken the decision to resurrect the Marketing committee as soon as possible. We are urgently looking for members that would like to be part of the Marketing team – it doesn't need a big time commitment just enthusiasm, a couple of ideas on how to increase our membership and a willingness to 'lend a hand'. If anyone is interested please contact Sara Milne.

Sara Milne

Contact: [marketing@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:marketing@batterseasociety.org.uk)

## 6. Open Spaces Committee Report

The Battersea Society Open Spaces Committee meets 4 to 6 times a year, depending on matters under consideration. Tony Tuck and Anita Jackson report on Battersea Park; Anita Jackson also reports on Falcon Park, Shillington Street Open Space and Fred Wells Gardens; David Evans reports on Battersea Square and St Mary Church area; David Rathbone reports on Clapham Common and the River Walk; Harvey Heath on Wandsworth Common. If members are unable to attend a meeting, they are asked to email their update in order that progress is made.

**Battersea Park:** We worked hard together with the Friends of Battersea Park to argue the case for the retention of the 'Parks Police', but to no avail. They were disbanded on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and all but five 'events officers' were made redundant. Uniformed Met police officers now patrol the Park and, so far, they have been visible during the daylight hours. Fountains now have the contract for opening and closing all Parks and, at Battersea Park, their operation has been applauded by late night dog walkers, for they have never closed the gates before 11.00 pm and have a sweeper in the park to make sure no one is trapped. We applaud the efforts of the Friends of Battersea Park who, with Jennifer Ullman the former WBC |Parks Officer, have funded and created a delightful Winter Garden in the southwest corner by Sun Gate.

One persisting nuisance has been the increase in the number of cyclists using the 'no go' areas of the park. Many ignore the signage and cycle at speed to the discomfort of other Park users. Unless the Met officers take a strong line on this we envisage that this will only deteriorate.

We welcome the eventual decision not to charge for entry to the Adventure Playground, after the huge outcry and press campaign, in which the Society played its part.

**Falcon Park:** Network Rail have finished their repair work which took several months and there are no plans now to develop the football changing rooms area which had been suggested by Wandsworth Council, but this has now been withdrawn.

There is much improvement in a reduction of the anti-social behaviour with regard to drug use, soliciting, attack dogs and hooligan behaviour, but there are concerns that, without Parks Police, the anti-social behaviour will now return,

The Bedhead Football coaching continues and park users are pleased that this holds off any council plans for development.

**Shillington Street Open Space:** An outdoor gym has been installed with equipment placed around the area. This was without consultation and was supposed to be installed on the Old Changing Room site; no one was advised of the change.

**St Mary's Church Driveway:** Plans to tidy up the river frontage were due to start last November and we are concerned about the delay. Barges which are seemingly abandoned are to be cleared, the walkway improved and there is also a plan to prevent cyclists driving through this area. We have no information as to when these works will now take place, but David Evans is monitoring the situation.

**The Riverside Walk:** The Society continues to press for the opening of the whole of the Battersea river frontage walkway and Robert Molteno is an active agitator on behalf of us all to try to secure this, but he seems to be fighting the dead hand of unimaginative officials.

**Fred Wells Garden:** The area is looking much better with shrubs tidied and a little new planting was done in the Autumn of last year by a volunteer group with plants provided by the Council. However, there has been no work since and the fencing remains unrepaired. AJ will follow up.

**Clapham Common:** The new bandstand has a newly planted grassy slope and granite steps in place. There has been new planting on the common and the boardwalk around the Long Pond has been improved. No real concerns and the events programme for this year is to be looked into by David Rathbone

**Wandsworth Common:** The new Bolingbroke Academy School, which is due to open its doors for the first year eleven intake this September, would appear to be using the Common for its playground. This is an issue which we will be pursuing as its use over the years is likely to be substantial as 800 pupils will be the eventual size of the School.

**Anita Jackson.**

**Contact:** [openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk)

## **7. Communities, Health and the Environment Report**

There has been a huge amount of change activity on health issues in the Battersea area - but little hard evidence has emerged as the legislation has trundled through Parliament. Members have involvement on various bodies in the aspects of health in the Battersea/Wandsworth area and the next 12 months should see more clarity emerging. Likewise on environmental and 'green' issues, there is much to be done. We need more members to join us in our work on these issues so, if you are interested and want to join in then do please contact us.

**Contact:** Tony Tuck

**email:** [chair@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:chair@batterseasociety.org.uk)

**8. The Treasurer's Report** is published as a separate document.

## **9. And finally**

If, dear reader, you have read thus far about our activities over the past 12 months and our hopes for the next twelve, then why not take an active part in any of our committees or join the management committee. As a voluntary organisation and a charity we can only do what we have volunteers with time and experience enables us to do. Moreover, we are most of us of an age where we are only prepared to do what we enjoy. This is an open invitation to YOU if you have any special interest in the fabric and social life of Battersea.

1st May 2012

Tony Tuck

Chair: The Battersea Society

# Contacts

We are of course delighted that so many members come to our events, but we would welcome more members coming forward to help at all events or partake in our deliberations in the various committees.

## Contact details are:

Planning:	David Lewis & Liz Walton	planning@batterseasociety.org.uk
Events:	Wendy Deakins	events@batterseasociety.org.uk
Marketing:	Sara Milne	marketing@batterseasociety.org.uk
Newsletter:	Jenny Sheridan	newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk
Communications & Website:	Mike Roden	website@batterseasociety.org.uk
Open Spaces:	Anita Jackson	openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk
Communities Health & Environment:	Tony Tuck	chair@batterseasociety.org.uk

## Officers

Chair:	Tony Tuck	7622- 0485	tony@tonytuck.eu
Vice Chair:	Sue Marshall		vice-chair@batterseasociety.org.uk
Secretary:	Harvey Heath		secretary@batterseasociety.org.uk
Membership Secretary:	Maureen Larkin		membership@batterseasociety.org.uk
Treasurer:	Chris Savory		treasurer@batterseasociety.org.uk

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