



## Luggage labels and gas masks Local schoolchildren re-enact 1939 evacuation



Dressed in 1940s clothing and carrying gas mask boxes, almost 200 excited children from Beatrix Potter School arrived at Wandsworth Common Station on 29 September

They were taking part in a re-enactment of the wartime evacuation of the Earlsfield school (then called Magdalen Road School) exactly 70 years ago in 1939.

Many teachers and parents

also dressed the part and some even sported appropriate hairstyles.

### Steam train

A Battle of Britain class steam train arrived to transport the children to Shamley Green in Surrey, where they visited the houses in which their predecessors were billeted and were given ration cards to use in the village shop.

The initiative was planned by **Beatrix Potter's headmaster, Steph Neale**, in conjunction with Wandsworth Museum, and took over a year to organize.

**"The children will learn about**



and feel some of the emotions that their own grandparents **went through,"** said Mr Neale.

### Resonance

**"It was a massive event in British history and has resonance with the loss and bereavement that is still going on in wars today."**

Despite their excitement, the children were aware of the significance of the historical event and tried hard to look sad for the photographers.

Jenny Sheridan

### Wanted: More Members

Most of us have a neighbour or friend who is always meaning to join the society and never quite gets round to it. With this newsletter you will have received two Christmas cards, with a view of Battersea Park after the February snow. As well as seasonal greetings, each card contains



information about joining the Society. All we ask is that the card is sent or given to someone living in Battersea. If you think you can use extra cards then please send an email to [information@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:information@batterseasociety.org.uk) With more members the Society will have an even stronger voice in helping change Battersea for the better

**Don't forget to visit our website: [batterseasociety.org.uk](http://batterseasociety.org.uk)**

for regular updates on Battersea Society news, events & planning matters

## From the Editor

What gives an area its sense of place? In a village it may be the church, the green, the rooks cawing. In London it is the parks and commons, pubs, architecture, the scents of Indian or Greek cooking – the people of course – but also the shops. High streets now look the same whether you are in Nether Wallop or Neasden.

**Individual shops forge a place's** unique essence, setting it apart from other places that may have similar buildings and streetscapes.

When I started to research local individual shops I was pleasantly surprised. Battersea has a fair number of them, ranging from the purely practical, such as the Hoover shop, to the romantic rose boudoir – **and they're in the same street.**

**Wandsworth's town centre, with** its magnificent town hall, bursting with civic pride (or self-importance, depending on your view) has suffered a sea-change recently. Due

to the council's strongly-opposed cuts in funding, we lost the Wandsworth Museum and two libraries. A new library has taken **the museum's building and the** museum now appears to be moving into one of the purpose-built libraries. In the process the borough has lost a local library (Alvering) and a collection (de Morgan) of national and even international significance. See pages 3 and 16 for more information.

Tall buildings are controversial. In New York they are impressive, even beautiful. But in London? In Battersea? Can they contribute in any way to creating a sense of place? In this issue Shirley Passmore argues passionately against them and the Society calls for the council to issue clear guidelines for developers and architects, a call echoed recently by CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.



On page 12 local GP Dr Chris Peach outlines the transfer of some community health services to a private company. There has been, to my knowledge, no public consultation about this move, part of a trend across England that will fundamentally change the NHS.

I hope all members will send the cards enclosed with this bumper 20-page edition. New members will be warmly welcomed and will **strengthen the Society's ability to** represent all the people of Battersea.

Jenny Sheridan  
[newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk)  
 020 7350 2794

**Elsewhere in this edition you'll find** a warning about the imminent closure of Albert Bridge, for strengthening repairs to take place. Since it will be closed to motor vehicles for around eighteen months, we can no doubt look forward to some heroic queues snaking back from Battersea to Cornwall. But access across the bridge will still be permitted to **walkers and to 'dismounted'** cyclists. I shall watch with interest how this order is to be enforced.

**The notice 'Cyclists Dismount at this point' seems generally to have** about as much effect as Gordon Brown telling the banks to be a little more frugal with their bonus payments.

Once in this nation of shop-keepers, individual customer service was universal; then the supermarket conquered the high street and we filled our baskets and **trolleys with things we didn't need,**

and joined a long queue to pay for them. Now the shops seem to be planning to cut out the middle-man and leave us to the mercies of those self-scan machines which bark at you in **irritation if you don't pack your** shopping quickly enough. Rather like being reprimanded by a speak-your-weight machine.

By the time you read this, the clocks will have gone back, the



## The Man on the Battersea bus

Mike Roden looks at the view from the top deck

**ghastly Hallowe'en paraphernalia** will have vanished from super-market shelves, and the fireworks in Battersea Park will be but a distant memory and a patch of scorched grass. In other words, winter will be setting in, and despite the best efforts of global warming, it will start to feel colder. To those of us who recall balaclava helmets, chilblains and bedroom windows icing up on the inside, **winters ain't what they used to be. But let's celebrate our changing** seasons while we still can, and look forward with relish to frost, snow and bitter east winds. Because, as Shelley observed: *If winter comes can spring be far behind?*

See you next time  
 Mike Roden

Run for the trees!  
Battersea Park event aims to raise £100k

Battersea Park vibrated under the trainers of 1,300 runners in **Trees for Cities' fifth annual Tree-Athlon** on 19 September. All the money raised from the five kilometre run round the park will go towards tree planting projects in London and other cities.

Money raised in previous years went towards creating outdoor classrooms in London primary schools, a community orchard in

Manchester and conservation of trees in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Comedian Shazia Mirza (right) helped to kick-start the Tree-Athlon, which has a fund-raising target of £100,000.

The Trees for Cities charity points out that city trees can help asthma in children, reduce water run-off and lessen CO2 emissions as well as beautifying the urban environment.



Wandsworth Historian

Did you know that the bus garage in Jew's Row was previously a tram depot and, before that, housed 1,200 horses used to pull horse buses?

Find out more from a piece on **London's last trams in the** autumn edition of the *Wandsworth Historian*.

There is also an article about a war memorial discovered in a Battersea back garden, a picture of suffragette Charlotte Despard in old age addressing a crowd and a short piece about the Raven Inn (below) in Battersea Square.



For a copy of the *Wandsworth Historian*, contact Neil Robson on 020 8874 6341

Wandsworth Museum to move to West Hill?

Jenny Sheridan looks forward to seeing the collection in its new home

**It's all change at West Hill Library** in Putney. The library, which was closed by the Council in 2007, has housed the De Morgan Collection since 2002. They have now had to move out (see page 16). Over the last year the library has been the temporary home of Putney School of Art while its base in Oxford Road is extended. Now it is to become another interim home, this time for Wandsworth Museum

According to the Friends of **Wandsworth Museum, "arrangements are at a fairly advanced stage but negotiations with the Council for favourable terms and conditions still have to take place."**

Andrew Leitch, director of the new museum, writes in the FOWM newsletter that the decision has been made to locate the museum in West Hill Library for the next five years, opening in 2010. It is hoped that after 2015 the museum will move into the Ram Brewery site in Wandsworth town centre.

The museum has always had a good reputation for its educational and outreach work in schools. This work continues with sessions in

local primary schools, including John Burns in Battersea, to **encourage children's historical interests** and investigative skills.

The museum is still receiving important local donations, including the foundation stone of the public baths, demolished in the 1960s. The director would be interested in acquiring other items of local significance.

In June the museum took part in the Wandle Festival, presenting exhibits on Roman Wandsworth and experiences of the Second World War. Over 600 visitors took the opportunity to grind grain in a stone Roman mill or crawl inside an air raid shelter.

Together with Beatrix Potter School, the museum has organized a re-enactment of the wartime evacuation of schoolchildren from Wandsworth to Surrey. The event took place on 29 September (see page 1).

*Adapted from the FOWM Newsletter September 2009)*

Planning Matters

Monica Tross celebrates no change to bus routes

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy

The examination process was to have started in October but has been delayed to next year to allow for consultation on the Council's changes to the core strategy. These relate to tall buildings and to the provision of affordable housing. For details of the changes, go to <http://tinyurl.com/strategy2009>

There is good news about the 19 bus too. TfL has reassured us that the route will continue to run south of the river once the Hester Road bus garage is developed. They have considered continuing the route through to Clapham Junction but have decided against, given that there are four other routes and the bus stand at Clapham Junction is already congested.

"the layout, form and design of new buildings and the spaces around them should contribute positively to the local environment". (UDP policies on Townscape and the Built Environment, adopted August 2003).

Battersea Park Station Ticket barriers may be inevitable but a recent application for these to be installed led to us calling for barriers to be sited more sensitively than first planned, and for there to be repair and conservation of this neglected listed building. A site meeting took place in June between representatives of the Railway Heritage Trust (which has pledged a grant towards restoration work), English Heritage, Wandsworth Council and a specialist sub-contractor to Network Rail. We understand that a conservation statement has now been drawn up, that Network Rail will soon be tackling maintenance at the station, notably the damp, and that work will be undertaken as funds permit.

Planning Framework for Nine Elms

The GLA have been promising this for some time past, and it seems that something is about to be published. New London Architecture is hosting a conference on the Nine Elms Corridor on October 27 at which Cllr. Edward Lister, Sir Simon Milton and Jeremy Castle of Treasury Holdings will speak. Look on our website for an update. More too in the next 'Planning Matters'.

Beechmore Road, former Job Centre

Some aspects of the new application are an improvement on the earlier plan. However the developers still propose to demolish the job centre and to replace it on the Battersea Park Road frontage with an excessively high building. The Society has again objected to the loss of a graceful building, a significant part of the setting of Battersea Park.

We believe the scheme continues to be at variance with the Council's policies which are to: "protect, conserve and enhance the existing varied character and heritage of the Borough" and to ensure that

Bus Contraflow in Battersea Bridge Road

Great news! Transport for London (TfL) have decided not to go ahead with these proposals. Their report on the consultation is at [www.tfl.gov.uk/batterseabridgeroad](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/batterseabridgeroad)

**The Battersea Society's team surpassed itself at the SW11 Literary Festival annual quiz on 28 September. Bob, Elaine, Monica, Steph, Viv and Jenny (aka the Lavender Hill Mob) stormed to third place in a strong field of eleven teams, beating the previous year's fourth place.**

Institution

The quiz is the final salvo of the Literary Festival, masterminded by Clapham Junction town centre manager Lorinda Freint.

**"The quiz is one of the high points," says Lorinda. "It is wonderful to have so many people back from previous years; it has become quite an institution." Other high-**

Lavender Hill literati score quiz success as SW11 Literary Festival goes from strength to strength

lights were the Poetic Frenzy, led by performance poet Steve Tasane (pictured) with audience participation, and a talk by comedian Alan Davies, both taking place at the BAC.

Storytelling

Several events took place in Northcote Road for the first time, including local writer Bobbie Darbyshire on the writing process and getting published at the Bolingbroke Bookshop and storytelling for families at Crumpet café.

Almost 2000 people attended the festival this year.



## Shared streets or streets for no-one?

*Battersea Matters* has published articles from Living Streets in favour of ‘shared space’ streets. Here the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association gives an alternative view

High streets and town centres are important spaces and their design and layout is key to how people use them. If they are filled with unnecessary street furniture, uneven paving and poor lighting, then they are unused. In well-planned streets, on the other hand, motorists know what is expected of them in terms of their speed, direction of travel, and where pedestrians will be. Pedestrians know where they can walk and cross the road safely.

### Information

Around 75% of the information people need to use the road safely is gathered through vision. Clearly, blind and visually impaired people need other navigation clues, such as kerbs, tactile paving and controlled crossings. These cues

regularly positioned dropped kerbs, and controlled crossings also helps create a space meeting the needs of wheelchair users and people with restricted mobility.

### Uncertainty

However, once the kerb is removed, vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians all share the same surface. The design is intended to introduce uncertainty into drivers so that they become more cautious. But the needs of vulnerable pedestrians have often not been carefully considered.

Road users are expected to make eye contact to decide who moves first, which is obviously impossible for blind and partially sighted people. From an early age young children are taught to stop, look,

as they fear for their safety when using these streets. Their freedom and independence are taken away. We have heard comments such as “There is no cycle lane to tell you where to go. Buses are everywhere. It is confusing and there is no kerb to tell you where to stop.” (Hearing-impaired cyclist). “I had to be pulled back because I was standing in the road, thinking it was part of the kerb” (Guide dog owner).

### Discrimination

Guide Dogs – along with 28 other disability organisations – believes that adopting a shared surface street design discriminates against blind and partially sighted people, disabled and elderly people, and young children. A street which cannot be used by some members of a community is not a success.

Our research with blind and partially sighted people, and people with other disabilities in the UK and

*A street which cannot be used by some members of a community is not a success*

help everyone to understand how to use the street and, importantly, how other road users will behave. This is critical for the safe and independent travel of everyone but in particular for blind and partially sighted people, disabled and elderly people, and young children.

### Challenge

Recently a new concept has been developed, known as ‘shared space’. It challenges traditional street design, which clearly separates road and pavement. In part, this concept is to be welcomed. The removal of unnecessary street furniture puts the emphasis on pedestrians as the most important street users. Having no obstructive street furniture,

and listen at the kerb to know where they can safely cross the road. If the kerb is no longer there, children will not know where to stop and remain safe. Disabled and elderly people are forced to share the same space as noisy and intimidating vehicles and bicycles. Many disabled people have now lost the confidence to visit their town centre or use their high street

Netherlands - often cited as somewhere that shared surface streets ‘work’ - found that these streets affect their safety and independence.

Guide Dogs has also tested alternatives to full height kerbs and currently cannot recommend a safe or effective alternative to a kerb, with the other navigation cues cited above for wheelchair users and people with walking difficulties.

The Department for Transport is currently researching how to make shared space work for all road users, including disabled people. Until the results of the research are known, Guide Dogs is calling for a halt to the construction of all shared surface streets.



## Time for clear guidelines on tall buildings in London

David Lewis calls for coherence in council policy

How can we stop this mania for very tall buildings? Wandsworth Council was willing to accept two 42-storey towers at Clapham Junction, until the developer withdrew following a successful local campaign. The Council also approved 42 and 32 storey towers on the Ram Brewery site in Wandsworth (frustrated for the moment by **the Secretary of State's decision** to call in the scheme and hold a public enquiry).

### Cause for concern

Early next year there will be an Examination in Public of the **Council's Core Strategy, which** will form the basis of a new Borough Development Plan. The **Council's tall buildings policy is** a major cause for concern, along with affordable housing. The borough, especially to the south, is mostly Victorian and Edwardian in scale and tall buildings would be inappropriate. In any case, how tall is "tall"? **The Council is silent, if not misleading, on this point.**

Following probing by the Government Inspector who will be conducting the Examination in Public the Council has now proposed that detailed criteria and consideration of the appropriateness of tall buildings will be contained in other parts of the new Development Plan which are not yet in the public domain. They also propose to **add "effect on the existing historic environment" as a factor** in deciding whether a tall building is justified. But their **map showing "where tall**

**buildings may be appropriate"** includes Clapham Junction as well as the Power Station and **Nine Elms. Ransome's Dock is shown as a "focal point" – which sounds suspiciously like another way of saying "a suitable location for tall buildings"!**

### Joint statement

This summer, the Battersea Society joined forces with the Putney and Wandsworth Societies and the Clapham Junction Action Group to send a joint statement to the Inspector. This statement lays out what we think the policy on tall buildings ought to be and **why the Council's approach is** unsound and should be rejected.

For example, the Council confuses the height of buildings with high density, whereas high density can be achieved without tall buildings. And there should be masterplans produced by the Council for town centres such as Clapham Junction (as the Battersea Society has long argued) in order to guide property developers.

The Societies want to see a policy that insists any tall buildings should not only do no harm to their surroundings but

should also make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood and the wider areas they will affect. Buildings **described as 'landmark' or 'iconic' should not be encouraged** for their own sake.

### Consultations

Designs for tall buildings should be tested to make sure that they will not produce high winds at street level. Publicity material should include accurate images showing the appearance, height and mass of the proposed development in relation to nearby **buildings. All the Council's** dealings with developers should be open and transparent.

The public inquiry about the Ram Brewery site will begin on 3 November. The Examination in **Public of the Council's Core Strategy** is scheduled to start in early February 2010 and we are hopeful that the Inspector will invite us to participate in that. We believe there is an urgent need for clear guidelines on tall buildings in London, and in Wandsworth in particular.

*To read the societies' statement in full, go to:*  
<http://tinyurl.com/tallbuildings>



The shape of things to come in Battersea?

## The relentless march of the tall building Shirley Passmore of the Wandsworth Society has strong views about 'iconic towers'

Tall buildings are marching out from the city to find new places in the suburbs, welcomed by some architects, planners, and politicians. This is the modern way to build, **they say, making 'regeneration' of run-down areas possible, to say nothing of the perks gained by local councils by way of Section 106 Agreements.**

Progress?

**Iconic towers (or "the inevitability of iconic towers" according to one Wandsworth councillor) is the buzz expression. Look up 'iconic' and you find it means nothing more than either something with the characteristic of an icon (which is merely an image), or something executed according to a convention or tradition (of art). Hardly an apt description for an extra-tall building. Planning usage though suggests it means a building that stands out from the rest.**

Building high is not a new idea. It used to be reasoned that in crowded cities, building high released land below for public open space. The concept has vanished in the name of progress. Building high is now done to release space below for more high building. A tower used to stand out but today it is wrapped around by great slabs of other buildings, themselves often 8 or 9 storeys high.

Pandemic

The arrival of an extra-tall 'iconic' building is a bit like the arrival of the swine-flu virus. No sooner has an outbreak occurred than a pandemic is on its way, uncontrollable by the authorities. The original building is then no longer iconic but merely ordinary. To become distinct the new icons have to be built even taller. The

cities of Singapore, Shanghai and Hong Kong perfectly demonstrate this phenomenon, so indeed does **Wandsworth's river frontage.**

It is a traditional ploy to denigrate opposition. For the high-rise developer and supporters it is useful to call those that oppose their schemes NIMBYs. Associate **with this 'old-fashioned', 'anti-progress' and 'selfish' and the job is done.** This is a clever tactic but a great shame because Nimby opinion is often sane, level-headed and rational. Without Nimbys, the watchdogs of small localities, very few unloved developments would be opposed.

Flawed logic

A strong argument for building tall in urban areas is that it uses **existing 'brownfield' sites and prevents development on virgin 'greenfield' sites in the countryside.** The reverse is probably true. By not providing low-rise, inexpensive family homes in the inner city the pressure on the countryside increases. The green fields are **relatively cheap and the 'little boxes' with their gardens, so derided by the song-writer, are what families want and can afford.**

The logic for building high is flawed. Vast buildings covering a once derelict site are not going to regenerate an area any more than modest buildings would do. The driving force is financial.

Developers, particularly in Wandsworth, expect to cram enough building onto a site to allow them considerable financial reward for their outlay and enough to give local authorities money to alleviate some of the problems largely brought about by their developments. (Section 106 agreements).

**It's a vicious circle.** The more building that is allowed, the more that can be asked for the site, the more the site costs the more has to be built on it to make a profit. But if the amount that could be built was restricted, the sites would be cheaper for developers to buy and therefore less building would be needed to return a profit. This would speed up the planning process and reduce costs for developers. It might also produce more sustainable development.

Dysfunctional

**Of course it's not unnatural to want to use the latest technology to build into the sky, any more than it is unnatural for wasps to build elaborate cone-like structures in our roof spaces. Unlike wasps, however, we are aware of the consequences of our actions.**

The consequences of not providing homes for families, of producing dysfunctioning neighbourhoods of transient flat-dwellers, of creating windy and sunless areas around towers, of blocking views and stealing the sky, are not compensated by the occasional piece of paved public space or the kudos of having some notable architect stamp his wonders on our local areas.

**As English Heritage puts it ".....by virtue of their size and prominence such [tall] buildings can harm the quality that people value about a place".**

***What is a Church?" ---"Our honest sexton tells, 'tis a tall building with a tower and bells"***

Thomas Crabbe. 'The Borough' 1810.

The sexton would probably need a better definition in 2009.

## A river runs through it

Harvey Heath takes a thoughtful walk along Battersea's river path



Narrow pathway obstructed by flower beds and low brick walls

Wandsworth has over five miles of riverfront, the longest stretch of any inner London borough, mostly in Battersea. If you do not know our river walk, then do try it; you will be pleasantly surprised. Gone are the days when our river front was home to the industrial activity of **Price's Candles, Garton's Glucose, Morgan Crucibles and Ranks' flour mill.** All provided employment but they also prevented public access to the river. In contrast the new residential developments have provided, through Section 106 **agreements (at the developers' expense),** public access to some seventy-five per cent of the riverside.

### Splendid views

On one fine July day, your open spaces committee covered half of the Battersea river walk, from Albert Bridge to Wandsworth Bridge. My favourite moments were taking the steps down to stand under Battersea Bridge at low tide and enjoying the calm of **the barges by St Mary's churchyard.** Then there were the splendid views of Lots Road power station and Chelsea Harbour across the glorious sweep of the bend in the river. The continual activity of the

heliport is followed by two small creeks, one of which contains tidal plantings.

As well as enjoying ourselves, we pondered areas for improvement. We arranged a meeting with council officials to raise several issues. An important issue is that while we support the **council's aim to provide** a river walk for cyclists and walkers alike, many

commuter cyclists go at high speed, especially between the church and Battersea Bridge. Our committee has commented on this and the council is considering enforcing limits on speeding cyclists.

*There is now public access to some 75% of Battersea's riverside*

### Danger

Speeding cyclists pose a danger too to the children of the kindergarten **housed in St Mary's crypt as well as** damaging the grass in the churchyard. We are pleased that following our input the church has made it clear to the Council that it wishes to prohibit cyclists in the churchyard. The Battersea Society has now lent its support to a ban.

**The Council's current** policy is to have a six metre wide river path, which all the newest building developments provide. However the older developments do not, and in places the walk is no more than three metres wide. The most constricted part of our walk was 1-17 Riverside, just north of Battersea Bridge. Here the narrow pathway also has

obstructions of flower beds and low brick walls. The council are aware of the issues and will inform us of any proposals once new designs have been finalised.

### Improvement

The most important issue is how to increase the amount of riverfront available to the public. We asked if the river walk could be extended under Wandsworth Bridge and also Wandsworth Railway Bridge. It seems that negotiations with the developer are proceeding in the matter of the former, so hopefully this significant improvement is likely to happen. The railway bridge is also under consideration but this will probably take a considerable amount of time.

The Council has also agreed that signage along the walk should indicate past uses, such as

### **Morgan's Crucible Company etc.**

If you have views of how the river walk can be improved, or on adding more facilities for walkers and cyclists (especially along Plantation Wharf) please contact me. We are preparing our replies to the Council and we welcome your views.

You can see our correspondence with the Council at [batterseasociety.org.uk](http://batterseasociety.org.uk)

Contact Harvey Heath at: [openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk)



Damage to grass in St Mary's churchyard

## Colonising the shoreline at Battersea Reach

Valerie Selby describes a scheme to bring plants and wildlife to a new development

What is going on at Battersea Reach? On the riverfront between the new apartment blocks and the River Thames is a planted area which is a focus of interest for both local residents and people using the riverside walk. **These 'intertidal river terraces' were created in 2005** by the developer, in response to discussions with the Environment Agency and Wandsworth Council. The intention was to replicate a more natural river edge which could be inundated by the tide, allowing natural vegetation to establish and providing habitats for a range of wildlife.

### Wetland vegetation

The upper half of the terrace near the footpath has established well; coir pallets were pre-planted with a range of wetland vegetation and secured to the gabions (rock-filled wire cages) forming the structure of the terrace. This upper terrace is intended to withstand occasional inundation by the river and supports species including great willow-herb, purple loosestrife and gipsywort – the latter is particularly fond of having damp roots. These are all important providers of nectar and support a range of invertebrates, such as hoverflies.

Lower down the slope, closer to the Thames, the terrace faces more frequent inundation from tides. Here are found less obvious species including sea club-rush and grey club-rush. Both, while lacking showy flowers, are interesting as they

have adapted to withstand growing in areas of brackish water.

### Invertebrates

Brackish water is saltier than fresh water but less salty than seawater. Here it arises from the Thames meeting the water that flows in from the North Sea on each tide. Sea club-rush actually needs a high level of sodium salts in order to function properly whilst both species have a hard shiny waxy coating to retain moisture within the plant. Other features include stomata (pores) that close when the plant is submerged and buoyant, salt-resistant seeds which float with the tides to enable colonisation of new places.

These plants provide important refuges for a range of aquatic invertebrates which in turn provide food for waterfowl and waders, such as herons, which we hope will make use of this habitat for foraging.

### Newcomers

This ability of some plant species to colonise new places was maximised when the area was planted. A deliberately low number of plants per square metre was planted to enable other species to freely colonise, if they could withstand the harsh environment. It will be intriguing to spot which newcomers have appeared each spring.

Other sites have followed the **example of 'putting back' a true river edge**; tidal river terraces have now been created elsewhere in the Borough. Different terraces can be seen at the Wandsworth Riverside Quarter development and there are smaller samples on the River Wandle at The Spit at the junction of The Causeway and Smugglers Way, and at the junction of Mapleton Road with Garratt Lane. You can find more details of these and other projects by going to: <http://tinyurl.com/yjg9tdh>

*Valerie Selby is Principal Parks Officer (Biodiversity) with Wandsworth Council.*



## Small is beautiful

Jenny Sheridan celebrates Battersea's quirky specialist shops

If you long to buy a £5000 guitar, foam to upholster the seats in your ocean-going yacht or a skein of shocking pink darning wool, where should you go? Battersea, of course!

Although the chains have spread their tentacles along our high streets - and they are undeniably both useful and (sometimes) inexpensive - we can also boast many individual shops. And the most individual of these are the specialist shops that cater either to minority interests or sell goods that we do not buy everyday. As well as locals they pull in shoppers from other areas of London and beyond. And most are owned and run by highly knowledgeable enthusiasts.

### Comet Miniatures

We have at least two model shops.

If you want a plastic figure of Leatherface from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (complete with chainsaw, armadillo and desert base), or a limited edition kit of Gandalf from the *Lord of the Rings*, rush to Comet Miniatures on Lavender Hill. Their website has clear travel instructions, including **parking information "for those rich enough to travel by car."**

*Comet Miniatures*  
44-48 Lavender Hill  
020 7228 3702  
[comet-miniatures.com](http://comet-miniatures.com)  
Closed Sun

### Russ

It is probably true to say that Comet has a more modern style than Russ. Ted Russ has owned his lovely model and hobby shop at 101 Battersea Rise for 45 years, following his father, who set up a similar shop two doors down the road in 1936. The shop, calm, and a little fusty, overflows with stock. It is a mecca for model-makers and railway enthusiasts all over London. Mr Russ specialises in scale models of planes, ships and cars and above all model railways, complete with stationmasters, track and buildings. For £145 you can buy Eurostar, or

the Royal Scot for £160. Ships include the Titanic and HMS Bounty. Children are not forgotten: prices start at £5.

*Russ*  
101 Battersea Rise  
020 7228 6319  
Closed Wed & Sun

### Luciano Cycles

Next door to Russ is Luciano Cycles, selling bicycles and accessories and offering a repair service. Sadly, they no longer lend pumps to pump up tyres, as cyclists disappeared with them.

*Luciano Cycles*  
99 Battersea Rise  
020 7228 4279  
[lucianocycles.co.uk](http://lucianocycles.co.uk)

### Southern Foam

Across Battersea Rise is Southern Foam., one of a tiny handful of such shops in south London and in existence for almost 60 years. It is crammed with foam of all types which the shop can cut to shape for settees, boats, caravans or garden furniture. Johnny Haynes, a Balham-based upholsterer in his 70s, works out of the shop too.

*Southern Foam*  
76 Battersea Rise  
020 7228 0805

### Honor Parry

Run by Mrs Morag Jones, this is an old-fashioned wool shop, a source of knitting yarns, patterns, haberdashery and knitting needles – the essential repair items that are now so difficult to find. Mrs Jones is also a source of advice on everything connected with knitting and sewing. I wonder if the current enthusiasm for recycling, mending and making-do will lead a new, **'green' and younger customer base** to shops like Honor Parry.

*Honor Parry,*  
206 Battersea Park Road  
Mon-Wed am only,  
Thu-Sat 10-1 & 2-4pm.

### Mick Coulston

A few doors away, Mick Coulston buys and sells scrap metal of all kinds except iron. He is the man to go to if you want either to get rid of or to buy copper piping, aluminium saucepans or old brass taps.

*Mick Coulston*  
26 Battersea Park Rd  
020 7622 4389

### The Sewing Centre

Perhaps residents of Battersea Park Road are keen sewers—if that is the correct term. In any case, The Sewing Centre at number 266 is run by Chris Scales, son of the original owner. With its stock of sewing machines and a good range of haberdashery, nobody need cross the river to Peter Jones or mourn again the passing of Arding and Hobbs.

*The Sewing Centre*  
266 Battersea Park Rd  
020 7228 3022  
[thesewingcentre.co.uk](http://thesewingcentre.co.uk)

## Costa's Barbers Casualwear

Quite a different kind of shop opened this August in Battersea High Street. Despite the name this is neither a barber nor a clothes shop. The women who own it, Valeria and Serwah (pictured), both live in Battersea; indeed Serwah **was born here**. They sell 'an eclectic array of modern and antique furniture and homeware' such as handsome zinc planters made out of old French boilers and standard lamps made out of wallpaper print rollers. I lusted after a decorative wooden bench painted electric blue, and also took a fancy to the shop mascot, Freddy the stuffed fox. Much quieter than the live variety.



*Costas Barbers Casualwear  
165 Battersea High St  
020 7223 5277  
Closed Sun am & Mon  
[costasbarbers.co.uk](http://costasbarbers.co.uk)*

## Northcote Music

Battersea boasts several music shops. Northcote Music is owned by Andy Staples, a principal viola player at the Royal Opera House and passionate about music, especially classical. Andy sells every kind of musical instruments for both adults and children as well as both pop and classical sheet music and CDs. He also offers a repair service and rents out instruments. Best sellers are keyboards and guitars, especially affordable instruments for beginners. This year there has been a massive boom in ukeleles – you can give a uke to a three-year-old, Andy points out. Pianos also sell well and Andy is opening a new shop in Webbs Road, exclusively for pianos.

*Northcote Music  
155C Northcote Road  
020 7228 0074  
Closed Sun*

## Guitar Classics

Also in Webbs Road is Guitar Classics, where Graham specializes in "high-end vintage and new second-hand acoustic and electric guitars, mostly selling for between **£500 and £5,000.**" (Though I noticed one for over £10,000 on their website). Customers are both professional and amateur musicians – Graham notes that several professional players live in the neighbourhood. The shop only stocks rock and pop guitars.

*Guitar Classics  
39 Webbs Road  
020 7738 2974  
Closed Sun & Mon  
[guitar-classics.co.uk](http://guitar-classics.co.uk)*

Other Webbs Road shops Webbs Road has quite a plethora of specialist shops. Next door to Guitar Classics, Diving Leisure stocks everything connected with diving and organizes courses. At number 53, SW Services sells and repairs vacuum cleaners, chandeliers and lamps. They also repair the expensive Dualit toaster, which is apparently popular around here. Rather more romantic is La Maison des Roses, a bower of roses of all colours from snowy white through bronzy apricot to blowsy crimson. They sell no other

flowers and even the shop's wallpaper is rosy. They say that their flowers last longer than most because they buy from reliable suppliers – in England in summer, otherwise in Holland.

*Diving Leisure  
36 Webbs Rd  
020 7924 4106  
Closed Sun & Mon  
[divingleisurelondon.co.uk](http://divingleisurelondon.co.uk)*

*SW Services  
53 Webbs Rd  
020 7228 0160  
Closed Sun & Mon*

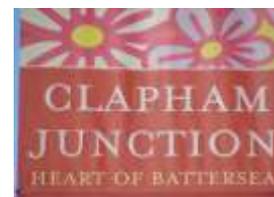
*La Maison des Roses  
48 Webbs Rd  
020 7228 5700.  
Closed Sun & Mon  
[maison-des-roses.com](http://maison-des-roses.com)*

## Party Shop

Close to Clapham Junction is what **must be one of London's biggest** party shops. A mass of jokes, wizard wheezes and animal masks, they also stock paper plates and napkins for every event as well as balloons (both helium and ordinary) and creepy-crawly earrings. Downstairs you can hire elaborate costumes, whether you want to be a caveman, Cleopatra or **Carmen Miranda**. **It's fun just to** wander around this shop.

*Party Shop  
268 Lavender Hill  
020 7924 3210  
[partysuperstores.co.uk](http://partysuperstores.co.uk)*

Grim though it may be to contemplate, Christmas is approaching. Whether you spend £10,000 (guitar) or £2.50 (single rose), do support your local shops.



Local GPs lose out in bid to run Grant Road health centre  
Dr Chris Peach of the Battersea Healthcare Federation looks at why the contract went to a commercial company

The contract to run the GP-led health centre in Grant Road, Clapham Junction, has been won by Care UK plc, who teamed up with a Mitcham-based commercial group of doctors, AT Medics Ltd, who provide the clinical input for the contract. A local grouping, Battersea Healthcare Federation (BHF), which I currently chair, was formed to tender for this contract, in partnership with the service provider arm of the Primary Care Trust (previously the community services). All but one of the 12 NHS GP practices in Battersea are members of the BHF, representing approximately 100,000 local patients.

Tendering  
Feedback from the Primary Care Trust's commissioners (responsible for awarding the contract) as to why we did not go through to the final stage in the tendering process was given to the BHF after the contract had been awarded. Essentially the PCT saw our proposal as a partnership between the GP centre and the nurse-led walk-in centre, whereas the intention was more for a GP-led service (as the name implies). Secondly, our bid was seen as

somewhat 'protectionist' of local practices.

Finally, our bid contained a major accounting error. Ironically the final figures were checked and submitted on behalf of the BHF by the PCT's accountants. Our management consultants should have spotted this error so we were forced to accept that we had no grounds for contesting the decision.

We believed that the PCT would interpret the GP-led centre bid in such a way as to take account of the actual health needs of the area. This view was clearly incorrect.

Quality

The area is known to be over provided with doctors but seriously lacking in walk-in facilities and in access to healthcare for people who are not registered with a GP. We feel that local practices have always demonstrated commitment to quality healthcare for their patients and for the most part reach good standards with good outcomes.

We therefore felt that the evaluators would not seek to over-emphasise elements of the bid which introduced competition with established GPs. This view too was

incorrect.

Clearly this was a centrally driven agenda with a strong directive from London Strategic Health Authority and little scope for local variation.

Competition

The intention was to achieve 'contestability' (competition, in other words) at a local level and to tackle any suggestion of complacency among local GPs. Care UK's contract may well bring contestability but will it bring value for money and will it be equitable for patients? Time will tell. On the positive side, this bid brought all Battersea's GPs together to form a federated group. Larger organisations can achieve more through economies of scale and by avoiding the need to re-invent the wheel in each practice (by sharing policies and procedures and specialist resources such as IT). BHF will achieve this as an organisation owned by all the practices but without sacrificing the personal aspects of traditional NHS general practice and with the patient remaining our focus.

Regardless of any scepticism we may have about this new future for the incorporated NHS we will look forward to working co-operatively with the new group when they start providing services.

Jennings Chemist, at 262 Battersea Park Road, is my local chemist. In a survey carried out this summer they scored 100% on several satisfaction measures, and were named as 'the best chemist in Battersea'.

Friendly  
I am not surprised. They treat everyone equally while being sharp to recognise genuine priorities. No-one is kept waiting for their

prescriptions, there is a calm and friendly atmosphere and Mr Patel is always open to suggestions.

Thrilled

He provides seating for elderly or infirm people and I have also seen him get a baby chuckling despite its teething problems. Mr Patel was thrilled when he received

The best chemist in Battersea

Margaret Coke sings the praises of her favourite pharmacist

notification of the award. With a broad smile he said, "Now I feel I have done something for Battersea!"

Note: The survey was carried out by *Informacist* on behalf of the NHS. There are approximately 20 chemists' shops in Battersea.

## Where there's muck...

Angela Roden follows the orange bags to their destination

It was like a works day out as we set off from the Town Hall one sunny September morning: five Battersea Society members and five of the Wandsworth waste management team all eager to expand our knowledge of what happens to our orange recycling bags. Our destination was **Crayford, at London's outer limits. This is where our 'MuRF'** as we were later knowledgeably to refer to the Materials Recycling Facility, is based.

### £40million profit

The site is run by Viridor, part of the Pennon Group, which started life as South West Water back when utility companies were publicly run. Its annual profits last year ran to more than £40million, 16% of which was from recycling. Proof of the adage that where **there's muck there's brass.**

We knew we were in for a more hands-on experience than usual when they asked in advance for our shoe size. On arrival our hard hats, high-visibility jackets, goggles and polished Doc Martens were neatly lined up in the entrance hall. But before getting out on to the site, it was time for coffee and an introduction to what goes on **at a MuRF from the site's commercial director.**

We learned our orange bags are sorted first at Smugglers Way by Western Riverside

Waste Authority (WRWA), which is still a public body run jointly by Wandsworth and three other councils. Only when they feel confident that the right sort of recyclable waste is left does the **remaining 'co-mingled waste' (another great phrase)** end up in containers being trucked over to Crayford.

### Mechanical

**Out in the site's huge yard we** watched a container tipping out its sprawling load. JCBs swooped on the pile and shovelled it into one of the sheds at the start of the processing line. Around us we saw the mountainous stacks of end product. A veritable grey Dickensian dust heap turned out to be made of crushed glass



used by the aggregate industry. Huge bales of squashed tin cans, waste paper and plastic bottles.

How did they manage to get all these items separated out? The answer is with teams of skilled hand pickers, massive mechanical screens, and the latest high-tech optical auto-sort equipment, installed at a cost of £1.3m. As we clomped warily

onto the observation gantries the noise was deafening and the smell of dust over-powering. Bottles were whisked this way, cans whooshed that way and stray plastic bags (not recyclable) were whipped off the conveyor belt by the pickers.

You can see all this happening yourself without the noise and dust by checking out the very informative video at [www.viridor.co.uk/mrfs](http://www.viridor.co.uk/mrfs). We asked where the pickers came from. Contract workers, mostly temporary, do it for a few months and then (hardly surprisingly) they move on.

### Recession

Then it was back inside for a sandwich lunch, and a chance to ask those vital questions which had brought some of us here. Namely to find out which bits of our rubbish were acceptable for recycling. Yoghurt pots? No. Lids on plastic bottles? Yes, if you leave them on the bottle. Beer bottle caps or metal lids on wine bottles? No. Shredded paper? Only if mixed with other stuff. Textiles and garden rubbish? No, no, no!

And has the recession hit them? Well, paper recycling is down – perhaps because fewer of us are buying newspapers. But with landfill sites filling up and the landfill tax increasing, it is now £40 a tonne cheaper to recycle than to send rubbish to landfill. As Henry Mayhew noted in his 1851-2 *Of the dustmen of London*, **"dust-contractors are generally men of considerable wealth"**.

## Hire may be better than purchase

Leslie Mitchell outlines advances in the car club concept



There have been several local and international developments in the world of car clubs since this topic was last covered in *Battersea Matters* (Spring 2008).

The principal local car club is run by Streetcar ([streetcar.co.uk](http://streetcar.co.uk)) which offers vans as well as cars. The plywood lined vans are particularly useful for trips to the rubbish tip, moving home and collecting or delivering larger items. The need to pay only for the hours you use the van can make it much more cost effective than the day rate charged by traditional hire companies.

### Economy

I have used a van as a day hire vehicle and the fuel economy was impressive. Streetcar also offers automatic cars which are spread out all over London, although you have to telephone to book these (you can book manual cars online or by phone).

There are age limits to using a car club; this is a topic that comes up across all car clubs. One of the issues is the cost of the insurance. Streetcar has age restrictions at both extremes. A member must be at least 19 and not over 75 years of age. If under 21 they need to have held a licence for at least two years (over 21 at least 1 year). If the member is over 65 they must have at least two years driving experience in the last five years with no accidents or claims in that time. Some car clubs stipulate that you must be a member before the age of 70 to qualify for the 75 age limit.

There are now over 95,000 car club members in the UK of which 6,400 are in Wandsworth with 20 on-street car club parking bays and overall provision for 104 cars in the borough. The council's website ([wandsworth.gov.uk/carclub](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/carclub)) has details of their moves to promote car clubs locally. Paper no. 09-751 gives a report by the Director of **Technical Services on the Council's** contract for car club services plus a reference to a previous report (Paper No. 09-363).

### Scrappage

The car scrappage scheme may delay the move towards car clubs in

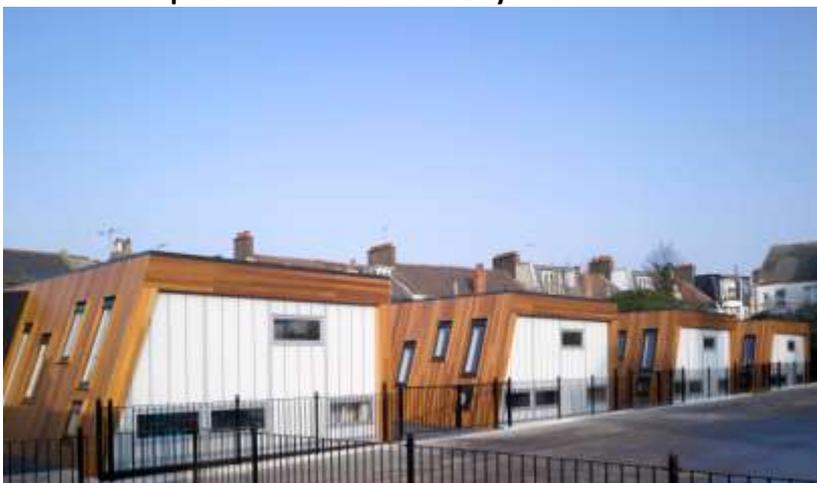
inner city areas, but local car club membership still increased by 4,000 members in an eighteen month period. Any car owner over 60 who has a Freedom Pass should consider their annual mileage and whether joining a car club could be a solution to reducing overheads, as the savings are significant.

### International

On the international front, it is interesting to note that the large car hire companies are becoming **interested in the 'club' concept**. Earlier this year I spoke to a representative of one company that has started a version of a car hire club. One of the issues at present is insurance and they are working out how you can join one **of their 'clubs' in one country and book a car in another country** (as a club member) and have the necessary insurance coverage and meet any compliance implications across international borders.

Personally, I welcome this. Being able to get on the Eurostar to a European city, use public transport for the majority of the trip but use a car hire club car for part of a day would be a plus, particularly when there is no return journey on public transport to be had on a Saturday evening (e.g. Paris-Deauville-Paris).

## Open House at Thomas's Day School



The photo shows the new reception/early years classroom block for **Thomas's School in Broomwood Road**. The project features outdoor teaching spaces and child-level windows. Highly insulated and energy-efficient, it is based on a kit system and took just six days to install, according to designer Marcus Claridge of Claridge Architects. The block was one of 12 buildings in Wandsworth on 19-20 September as part of Open House London. Others included The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, St Mary's Church and Foster and Partners' offices.

# Strange Meeting

A short story by Mike Roden

It was unnaturally quiet in Battersea Park. The usual grumbling roar of traffic on the Embankment was missing, no planes droned overhead and the parakeets were unusually silent. Perhaps the world was relaxing into this glorious early summer day. I was not relaxing, however: I was late. I was due at the park cafe by midday to join my wife and a couple of friends, and now I had to hurry.

As I started past the lake, my mobile phone rang. It was a new phone, and one of the reasons that I was late was that I had been playing around with different **ring tones and I'd ended up with a full blooded orchestral version of the Ride of the Valkyries, set ear splittingly loud.** It took me a little while to find the phone. Seeing the number I resigned myself to a long conversation.

**"Hello there."** I sat down on a bench facing the lake. For several minutes I had a wide-ranging, occasionally heated discussion about the vagaries of the health service, local political issues and the iniquities of the world in general.

As the conversation continued, I became aware that I was being watched. The woman was standing very still, a few yards to my left in the dapple of shade and light under the canopy of leaves: a tall, slim silhouette in a dark dress sweeping the

ground. Her wide-brimmed hat cast a shadow over her face.

**"Are you there?"** said the voice at the other end.

**"Yes, I'm here,"** I said, suddenly not entirely sure where I was.

I had seen an old postcard recently, a moment frozen in time – a woman in a long dark dress, with a wide brimmed hat, turned slightly away from the camera staring out across the park lake. The legend on the bottom of the picture said *Battersea Park, 1908.*

*I became aware that I was being watched*

The woman moved slightly, and for a moment I thought she was going to come over and speak to me. But she started to turn away.

**My caller distracted me. "Are you all right?"**

**"Yes,"** I said testily, and then I blinked. The woman was no longer there. The path was quite empty in both directions.

I suddenly recalled the famous story about two women visiting the Palace of Versailles, and finding themselves briefly back in the time of Marie Antoinette.

Most people didn't believe them, and I knew what I'd just seen, but I wasn't sure I believed it myself.

**"Sorry, have to go,"** I said, and as if a spell had been broken, there was noise around me again, aircraft overhead, a helicopter in the distance, the sound of children in the playground, the clamour of a pair of parakeets squabbling.

And round the next corner came two figures, a gentleman resplendent in top hat and tails, and a lady in a glamorous outfit of green silk, the skirt grazing the top of her polished boots.

Suddenly I felt very stupid. The others would be only too delighted to poke fun at me for forgetting that today there was a celebration of 150 years of Battersea Park. The place was filled with people in Victorian and Edwardian dress, and there were even cyclists riding ancient machines and clad in character. My wife was suitably amused by **my 'supernatural' experience.**

Our friends arrived as I was having a well earned beer and enjoying the smell of burgers **cooking over at the cafe's** barbecue. Harriet glanced at a couple of the Edwardian impersonators going past. **"Oh that reminds me,"** she said, **"We were doing some clearing out, the other day and I found this."** She handed me a small leather bound volume.

(Continued on next page)



Strange Meeting

(continued from previous page)

“I thought you might be able to sell it on eBay.”

“Recollections of a Battersea Lady?” I said. There was no date, or any author’s name. “Probably privately printed – pre-first world war.”

My wife took it off me. “No pictures,” she said, flicking it through it, and then - “I don’t believe it...” She thrust the open book towards me. “Look at that!”

This is what that anonymous Edwardian lady, circa 1908, had

written:

*“I was taking my usual morning stroll in the Park, walking by the lake, before luncheon, when I had the strangest encounter.*

*The peace of the day was suddenly shattered by what sounded like a discordant musical box playing what I took to be a short extract from one of Herr Wagner’s operas. I then observed a grey haired hatless gentleman of middle years take a seat on one of the benches. His left hand was pressed to his cheek and I thought he might be unwell. However, he then proceeded to conduct a spirited*

*conversation with himself, occasionally jabbing the air to emphasise some point or other. I was amused rather than alarmed, but felt I should take myself safely away from him, as he appeared to be watching me with some interest, while continuing his conversation. I smiled politely, and began to turn away, when suddenly he was no longer there. He had quite vanished. I can only suppose he must have been a ghost.”*

© Mike Roden 2009

The De Morgan Foundation has had a long association with Battersea and later the Borough of Wandsworth. The Foundation was formed in 1967 following the death of Battersea resident Mrs Stirling (of Old Battersea House). It is responsible for her collection of works by Evelyn and William De Morgan, her sister and brother-in-law. De Morgan was the Arts and Crafts Movement’s foremost potter and Evelyn, an exciting and innovative painter, was one of the first women artists of the Victorian period to turn professional.

Acclaimed

In 2002 the Foundation took on the lease of premises in the West Hill Library Building, and created a critically acclaimed museum which both welcomed the local community and brought national and international visitors to the borough.

Sadly our time there is coming to a close due to Wandsworth Council’s cuts in funding, which resulted in the closure of their own local history museum and two library buildings – including West Hill Library, which was purpose-built.

De Morgan collection on the move

Claire Longworth, curator of the De Morgan Centre, reminds us of the collection’s past and outlines its present and future.

Japan

We closed to the public at the end of July to prepare for our imminent move. Meanwhile, we are excitedly packing up part of the collection which will tour to Japan, starting this November in Tokyo. We also plan a UK tour so our collection can be seen by a wider range of audiences while we are closed to the public. For further information on these tours and the venues where the collection can be seen, please keep an eye on our website, [www.demorgan.org.uk](http://www.demorgan.org.uk).

Education

We are currently searching for new premises and hope to find somewhere to display not only our own works, but several other at-risk collections of Arts and Crafts objects. We also intend to expand our education work to include a more permanent association with craftspeople - championing at risk crafts and providing premises, training and job opportunities within these fields. Unfortunately no suitable buildings have been

identified within the Borough. It is with great sadness that we face moving from the community which has been home to the collection and the charity for more than 40 years. We thank you all for your support during this time and of course would greatly welcome suggestions of suitable venues.



Flora (1894) by Evelyn De Morgan  
©De Morgan Centre

## Keeping in contact

Jenny Sheridan meets a community stalwart

Older people, especially those with disabilities, can find it difficult to get about and may become quite isolated. To counteract this, the Contact Club was started 17 years ago and is still going strong. Every fortnight (Tuesdays 12.30 – 3pm) a group of about 20 people meet at the Katherine Low Settlement in Battersea High Street. They enjoy lunch and activities such as jewellery making, bingo and drama.

**Above all, they enjoy each others' company and having a good time.**

### Outings

Daisy Campbell has been a member since the club's early days. "We go on three outings a year, usually to the seaside. Once we went to Parliament and we had tea with Martin Linton and Alf Dubs. That was a real high spot. But we always enjoy getting together. It's a

pleasure to meet people and keep in touch."

While all decisions are made by the club members, Settlement worker Sarah Rackham helps to implement them. Daisy acts as membership secretary. She makes sure that if a member is in hospital someone will visit and there will be a card or flowers.

### Birthdays

Birthdays and festivals are honoured, indeed club members celebrate anything that can be celebrated. "This spring we had an Easter Bonnet project," says Sarah. "Club members worked on their hats for two Tuesdays and then Martin Linton came in to judge them."

Many of the club members, like Daisy herself, have mobility problems; some use the Dial-a-Ride



scheme to attend the club meetings. Daisy came to the UK from Jamaica in 1960, trained as a nurse and worked at Queen Mary's Hospital Roehampton and St John's Hospital. "I love Battersea," she says. "All my friends are here and St Mary's church is wonderful –it's my home. I can't imagine living anywhere else."

## Traffic warning

Society members wishing or needing to leave Battersea to travel west or north will need to build in extra time. Heading westwards, the Upper Richmond Road is partially closed until 11 December due to the replacement of a gas main. Traffic is being re-routed up West Hill and down to Putney High Street with lengthy delays as far back as the Wandsworth one-way system.

### Albert Bridge

Next year, much disruption is likely when Albert Bridge is closed to traffic from January until summer 2011. The 1873 bridge, which is owned and maintained by Kensington and Chelsea Council, needs to be strengthened. It will remain open to pedestrians and to dismounted cyclists.

## Friends of Battersea Park winning sculpture unveiled

Battersea Park has a new sculpture created by a student at the Royal College of Art on Hester Road, Battersea.

Ed Payne will have his work displayed for a year after winning the annual sculpture competition organised by the Friends of Battersea Park.

His sculpture, Table-Shelter Stack, is made of painted and patinated steel and can be seen outside the Millennium Arena Pavilion.

It was unveiled on Monday, September 7, by Professor Richard Wentworth, the internationally acclaimed British sculptor



*Ed Payne with Professor Wentworth in front of the sculpture at the opening ceremony.*

## Potatoes, peas and partnership

Sarah Jackson from Age Concern explains how the charity's garden-sharing scheme benefits both older people and would-be allotmenters

Looking after the garden as you get older can be an increasing struggle. What once gave pride and pleasure can become a source of stress. At the same time, there are many flat and bedsit-dwellers who long for a garden, where they can grow vegetables, flowers and fruit.

### Volunteers

**Interest in 'grow-your-own'** has increased in recent years, with demand for growing space soaring. In Wandsworth there is an average three- or four-year wait for an allotment, while elsewhere in London the wait can be as long as 40 years.

To meet these needs, Age Concern Wandsworth recently started a unique new garden-share scheme called Garden Partners. This links people aged 60-plus who would like help to manage their garden with volunteers who tend the garden regularly in return for their own growing space.

### Health Benefits

Garden owners and volunteers are matched according to location and interests. They decide jointly on how the garden develops and what should be grown, making a written agreement about sharing produce, costs and equipment. The scheme, which operates in Battersea and other parts of Wandsworth, is funded by NHS Wandsworth for its health benefits. Garden owners

are at less risk of falls and accidents through trying to carry out tasks on their own, while the volunteer gardeners can improve their fitness. Both



Ruth (left) and Dianne in their shared garden

partners can eat more healthily through sharing any fresh vegetables and fruit they grow. The scheme also provides regular company for older people and helps prevent them from becoming isolated.

Volunteer Susan tends the garden of Battersea resident Vivienne, who is visually impaired. **'It's made a real difference and it's nice to have the company. I can't see the garden but I can tell that I'm getting more light,'** said Vivienne.

Susan visits the garden each week in winter and twice weekly in summer. **'I've planted** potatoes, beans, tomatoes,

herbs and spinach and we share what we grow. **I've got a tiny garden where I am and it's nice to be able to turn the soil over here.'**

### Pleasure

Another Battersea resident, Ruth, who recently finished studying horticulture, has become partners with garden owner Dianne. The two live just around the corner from one another, and have got a great deal of pleasure as well as practical benefit out of **sharing Dianne's garden.**

**'I live in a flat and don't have a garden. Having been at college for the past two years, I've been dying to put all I've learnt into practice,'** said Ruth.

Dianne enjoys gardening alongside Ruth and learning more about planting and design. In their first season, the pair have planted new flower borders and grown tomatoes, lettuce, beans and carrots.

**'I love my garden, but find it hard to manage some of the more physical tasks. I tend to go to the garden centre and buy lots of plants, and the garden ends up a hotch-potch. Having Ruth is great because she knows so much more than I do, and her experience is helping to make the garden look really beautiful,'** said Dianne.

More information from [www.ageconcernwandsworth.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernwandsworth.org.uk).

Contact the Garden Partners coordinator on 020 8877 8946 or at [sarahj@acwandsworth.org.uk](mailto:sarahj@acwandsworth.org.uk)

Eating out....

Joan Brittain recommends a Northcote Road favourite

Número Uno is a small, excellent Italian restaurant at the southern end of Northcote Road (voted one of London's most attractive shopping streets).

The welcome is always warm in a typically Italian style and the restaurant has a lively atmosphere. The attractive tables are always beautifully laid with flowers, pristine white napery and glistening glassware and cutlery.

It is always busy, so it is advisable to book to dine before or after the peak time of 8-8.15 in the evening. Pasta dishes are good, and other dishes include grilled scallops with lemon, spring onion and balsamic vinegar and a risotto with monkfish and prawns (both at £10.50).

I have been going to Número Uno for over ten years because of the very good food and wine, the warmth of the welcome and the

**good service. It's somewhere to** take friends and family for a special meal.

Average cost: £30 per person

139 Northcote Road, SW11 6PX.  
020 7978 5837



Reception at the Royal College of Arts  
7-9pm  
Friday 20 November 2009  
Organised by the Battersea Park Rotary Club to raise funds for the Christmas Day party in Battersea Park for elderly people.

Guests will be able to view an exhibition of work by previous students in the newly-opened Sackler building.

Tickets £10  
Please contact Joan Brittain on  
020 7924 1122  
or email  
[jhallmark@btconnect.com](mailto:jhallmark@btconnect.com)

...Eating in

Jenny Sheridan cooks up a real winter warmer

With Halloween coming up and evenings getting chillier, this vegetarian dish is warming and colourful. Adapted from *Jane Grigson's Vegetable Book*

Pumpkin Gratin

*Ingredients*

- Piece of pumpkin, about 750g
- Flour, seasoned with salt, pepper and cinnamon
- 3 onions, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- Tin of tomatoes
- 1 tbs pesto
- 75 g feta cheese, roughly chopped

Peel the pumpkin and remove the seeds. Cut the pumpkin into thinnish slices and toss them in the flour. Saute in olive oil until golden.

Soften the onions in oil, add the tomatoes and garlic and cook for five minutes over medium heat. Season energetically.

In a lightly oiled oven-proof dish, layer the pumpkin and the onion mix, ending with pumpkin. Scatter the top with feta and blobs of pesto. You may want a bit more than a tablespoonful. Cook in a medium oven (gas 5) for about 30 minutes till it is brown and bubbling.

Delicious served with green or brown lentils dressed with olive

oil and plenty of lemon juice and parsley. Or just a green salad.



If you have a favourite recipe you'd like to share please send it to [recipes@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:recipes@batterseasociety.org.uk)

### Making a difference

Battersea Society chair Tony Tuck applauds teachers, especially recently retired headteacher Harry Cowd.

Had the gods been there, and had they been awake, there would have been thunder and lightning last July, when Harry Cowd, head-teacher of Chesterton Primary School in north Battersea retired, after three decades of headship at the school. His local presence is a legend. Some of his early pupils now have grandchildren at the school.

We tend to take the schools in our midst for granted. Those with children will become intimately involved for a while. Those without are aware of the nuisance of travelling on buses in the late afternoon. Those working a full day may never see the children at all.

But our schools are the engines of social change. Not to put too fine a point on it, their successful products will in due course pay for our pensions and support us in nursing homes!

Inner city schools are often described as 'difficult'. Staff turnover can be high. Stress levels can become corrosive. So for Harry Cowd to stay as head for over thirty years is an extraordinary feat. Perhaps as extraordinary is that in 2009 Chesterton, described by Ofsted as 'outstanding', was in the top ten most improved schools nationally.

Not many people retire at the very zenith of a successful career, but Harry Cowd has and he has made a difference to our society.

In his farewell speech Harry made

the point graphically about what our schools and their teachers should be doing:



*"There was a saying, 'Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach'.*

*A pompous chief executive challenged a teacher at the dinner table, "What do you make?" The teacher paused and replied:*

*"Well, I make children work harder than they ever thought they could. I make a C+ feel like a Medal of Honour. I make pupils sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parents can't make them sit for 5 without an iPod, Game Boy or movie rental. You want to know what I make?" She paused again and looked at each and every person at the table. "I make children wonder. I make them apologise and mean it. I make them have respect and take responsibility for*

*their actions. I teach them to write and then I make them write... keyboarding isn't everything. I make them read, read, read. I make them show all their work in maths. They use their God-given brain, not the man-made calculator. I make my students from other countries learn everything they need to know in English while preserving their unique cultural identity. I make my classroom as a place where all my students feel safe. Finally, I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life. Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, with me knowing money isn't everything, I can hold my head up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant... You want to know what I make? I MAKE A DIFFERENCE. What do you make Mr CEO?" His jaw dropped, he went silent."*

We live in a world that knows the cost of everything and the value of no one. G K Chesterton said, "Value is an intrinsic and indestructible thing."

It is a rewarding thought that, throughout Battersea, there are schools and other educational bodies working with our young people to make this kind of difference. If you yourself are not familiar with your local school, then I hope you will be encouraged to become so. If you have the time and the energy, the school will always welcome volunteers to hear reading and assist in other ways.

### The Battersea Society

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