

The Battersea Society

Chair's Report for 2005/06

2005/2006 has proved to be a very active year where we have progressed on all our basic fronts.

Last year we set a target of increasing membership by 25% and this has now been achieved, with a paid up individual membership of 294. One result of this is that our finances, as you can see from the accounts, are relatively healthy with an accumulated surplus of £4,043 at the end of 2005. For this we have to thank the officers who achieved these results mainly by the dint of hard work in contacting people to join. However we are not resting on our laurels. Firstly we are actively exploring setting up an interactive web site for the Society - many civic societies have one already - which will improve our profile. Its implementation will need careful thought and professional input. We also have established a marketing committee under the chairmanship of new member Rachel Davies. The committee has again set us a further 25% increase in individual membership in the coming year with these new initiatives in mind.

Back in February 2006, our treasurer, John Garvan, suffered a stroke. We are pleased to report that he has made remarkable progress and we are pleased to see him back with us today although not yet naturally firing on all cylinders. The best of luck to you John and we are delighted that you are to remain as our treasurer.

Our Planning Committee under the chairmanship of David Lewis and our Open Spaces Committee under the chairmanship of Anita Jackson have each had an active year. We have been vigilant, as you would expect, on developments along the riverside and with others objected to the present form of developments at Battersea Reach (formerly Gargoyle Wharf), 1 Battersea Square, and the proposals to knock down and rebuild the Battersea Power Station's Chimneys. On the latter we would have much preferred that the 20th Century Society's report had been adopted by the Council. Since the decision was taken, we have had a meeting with WBC's Chair of Planning (March 2006) and have entered into further correspondence with him. We are still concerned as to whether the necessary arrangements have been made to rebuild the chimneys. We also joined forces with Ethelburga Estate residents to successfully object to the Ralph West Hall proposals and I aim to represent the Society at the consequent 13 June Public Enquiry, where we hope we will be successful again.

As reported last year Harvey Heath had represented the Society at the Lots Road public enquiry. Unfortunately, the Secretary of State saw fit to reject the inspector's finding and has given permission for the development to proceed. An appeal has been lodged in the courts by our former patron, Lady

Dido Berkeley on rather limited grounds and we have donated £100 towards the funds to support this appeal.

During the year we became members of HACAN - the night flights pressure group

Our Open Spaces committee have met regularly, and the chair Anita Jackson had an article in the Wandsworth Borough News outlining our views on maintaining metropolitan open spaces and to resist encroaching commercialisation. We have had meetings with Jennifer Ullman concerning various issues to do with the park and we are delighted that Jennifer is able to accept our invitation and come and talk to us today. We objected to the retention of the liquor licensing at the British Genius Site in Battersea Park and Harvey Heath represented these views at the Licensing Hearing. We are now in the process of appealing to the courts against the decision.

We entered substantial evidence to each of the Wandsworth Borough Council's consultation exercises for the Local Development Framework (LDF), and the Transport Consultation exercise. We have been active members of the Wandsworth Environment Forum, the Clapham Junction Town Centre Partnership, the Power Station Forum, and WBC's Planning and Environments Forums.

Our Events Committee has had a successful year. During the year we have held lunches, our usual Summer party (this year it will be Thursday 6 July,) visits (Royal Opera House backstage, Crosby Hall, Tate Britain Private Visit, and to come on 29 June, Lambeth Palace.) We have also had public meetings with talks (Monet, Turner Whistler by Nicola Moorby of the Tate, Huguenots by Michael Gandy, and the Environmental Impact of Buildings by Sam Heath.) We now look forward to our meeting on Friday 14 July 2006 on 'What can be done about Clapham Junction Station?.'

All our sub-committees are open to members though perhaps not always effectively advertised. If you have any concerns or just want to become part of the action do get in touch. We have issued three Newsletters and a fourth's publication is imminent.

We do consider that there is a real need for more active members to participate in and help direct our activities.

8th June 2006

Tony Tuck: Chair