

Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society AUTUMN 2013



Food first aid for the hungry

Jenny Sheridan visits the Wandsworth Foodbank

After Sunday service, well-dressed couples gather outside St Mark's Church in Battersea Rise, their 4x4s parked round the corner. It's an unlikely setting for one of Britain's growing number of food banks, but every Tuesday and Friday it welcomes people who, in a crisis, cannot afford to feed themselves and their families.

St Mark's, which opened in May, is the hub of the Wandsworth Foodbank, which also has centres on the Doddington estate on Battersea Park Road and in Roehampton, Putney and Tooting. All are in churches or church-owned premises. It is an independent charity, operating as a franchise under the aegis of the Trussell Trust. Currently the trust is opening three food banks each week across the UK.

Crisis

Dan Frith, the 30-something manager, explains the system. 'We work in partnership with almost 100 local organisations that refer people to us, using a voucher system. We issue vouchers to the organisation, which could be a GP, a community centre, the CAB, the job centre – anyone who works with people who may be in need. They may tip over into crisis because of a change in benefits, a sudden illness or an administrative delay in receiving benefits.'

'The person who is given the voucher comes along to one of our centres. They have a cup of tea and a chat with one of our volunteers, who completes a 'shopping list' of items they need. The voucher tells us the nature of the crisis and the number of people in the household. We then put together shopping bags full of enough food for the family or individual for at least three days. People can bring up to three vouchers



Volunteers at Wandsworth Foodbank, St Mark's Church, near Clapham Junction, prepare for the foodbank guests.

in any one period. We're here to help people in a sudden emergency, we're absolutely not aiming to replace the welfare state. We work within a system of support and we know that our partners are working to help with any underlying issues.'

Welcoming

When I walked into the Friday morning session at St Mark's church hall I found a large light-filled room, with the exposed brick wall of the handsome Victorian church on one side, doors opening onto grass and a weeping willow on another. Strewn toys and comfortable sofas make the place feel informal and welcoming but there is also a purposeful air.

Volunteers

Cheerful volunteers offer tea and toast to the guests: an elderly couple, followed by two men, one recently bereaved. One of the volunteers has her toddler with her, much cooed over by a tattooed guest.

Volunteers, who are all members of the congregation, may offer to pray with people and this offer

is often accepted. Volunteers, Dan says, make their offer in a way that is very easy to refuse.

As well as handing over food, volunteers can give the guest information about other useful services, including a debt counselling service based at St Marks and a youth employment project. There is a huge number of community services in the borough, but little co-ordinated information about them, and few of the food bank clients have access to the internet.

Dan Frith is learning fast about the logistics of running a food bank. The church itself acts as a warehouse: the tins and packets are discreetly hidden behind a curtain but are partly visible to the congregation. When a 'shopping list' is handed in, volunteers put together the bags of food depending on family size. The foods come from a list compiled

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Don't forget to visit our website: batterseasociety.org.uk for regular updates on Battersea Society news, events and planning matters

From the editor



It's a strange mixture, isn't it, Battersea? In this issue you will find a picture of a dog winning a

handsomest in show competition (could be Piddle Trenthide or even Ambridge) as well as the story of families forced to rely on charity to eat (could be the early 20th century). As I write, a young man has been shot dead not 20 minutes walk from my home. But a map drawn up by estate agents Savills shows Battersea as one of the most

gentrified areas of London.

These paradoxes are perhaps what living in a great city is all about. We live in a mix of rich and poor, rough and smooth, ugly and beautiful, powerful and powerless. We have always lived side by side, hugger-mugger, and that's one of the things that has always made London unique. I just hope that current policies don't end in us becoming like another great city, Paris, which is a doughnut of rich jam in the centre ringed with a sullen dough of poverty in the suburbs. Dough that sometimes bubbles over and erupts.

On the bright side there is much

to be cheerful about. After a chilly spring and early summer we have had two glorious months of sunshine and warmth. Our gardens have prospered, our parks and commons have been packed with sunbathers and cricketers. The Man on the Bus dares to mention Christmas – I propose we put that off and look forward to a sunny autumn.

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Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden brings you up to date on the local news

I suppose technically it's graffiti, but I rather like the work of the guerrilla artist who's been improving some of the street signs in Vicarage Crescent and Battersea Church Road, especially the changing of the left hand bend sign into a man picking a flower. The spirit of the summer of love is in there somewhere. Of course the summer has now drifted away, the autumnal evenings are returning and bat-watchers on Clapham Common have spotted pipistrelles whizzing round in the gloaming. Bring the bats to Battersea Park, I say. We normal mortals can't hear their high-pitched squeaking, which is more than you can say for the noise of those screeching harpies, the parakeets.

Posh

News has reached me that Victoria Beckham now owns the former Spar convenience store on Parkgate Road. I conjured up visions of Posh Spice in a glamorous overall dispensing newspapers and milk to a queue of customers while a well-muscled tattooed figure bustles in the background stacking shelves. Life's always a let-down – apparently she's just acquiring extra space for her expanding fashion empire.

But perhaps our events committee could persuade her (and perhaps Ms Westwood) to organise a fashion show in aid of the Battersea Society. Lacking the prestige of London fashion week perhaps, but what a front row this illustrious organisation could assemble. And with Gordon Ramsay providing the canapés from his new restaurant in Battersea Square, we'd all be fighting off the paparazzi.

finger?

I see that the Battersea Power Station company is finally about to remove and rebuild one of the chimneys leaving the building looking rather like an upturned milking stool. Following the agreed plan they'll put it back before taking down and rebuilding the rest. So for a while there will be one stone finger pointing to the sky which I can't help feeling might be the developers giving a rude riposte to their critics.

We were walking on the roof of Hampton Court palace a few days ago. Don't try it without an invitation or you'll be detained by one of the red-coated warders. Apart from some stunning views of the grounds below, we were surrounded by some



other famous chimney stacks from the Tudor era onwards. Or rather – as we learned – we were in the midst of a forest of Victorian and Edwardian replicas of those chimneys. Perhaps it's a little sad that so little of the original fabric remains, but it still looks and feels like Hampton Court.

In one of her crime novels PD James writes about 'one of those perfect English autumnal days which occur more frequently in memory than in life.' Today as we walked by the river there was a subdued quality to the light, and a stillness in the air which brought back those first days back at school after the holidays, nights drawing in earlier, leaves disappearing from the trees, the promise of Bonfire Night and then Christmas – a little distant yet, but inexorably approaching.

Try and get out and enjoy it yourself. And mind how you go.

by the Trussell Trust's nutritionist. While the food is healthy, it is not fresh as there is no refrigeration.

Amazed

Food is donated by faith groups or individuals, sometimes at a supermarket collection. At a recent collection at the Balham Sainsbury's, Dan was 'amazed at people's generosity. Altogether 1,800 kg of food was donated. Volunteers handed out leaflets with a list of items we particularly needed, such as toiletries, fruit juice and UHT milk. We now have a good stockpile.' Sixty five volunteers were involved on the day.

Rajiv, an IT consultant and one of the volunteers, tells me he finds working here a privilege. 'It's very fulfilling. Lots of the clients are very intelligent. They may be refugees or have mental health problems so they can't work, or they are on the minimum wage and then something happens. We can fill a gap so that they don't tip over into abject poverty.'

Since it opened in May the Wandsworth Foodbank has supported over 600 people, 40% of them children. Dan Frith expects the situation to get worse in the winter, with the added pressure of energy costs and the



Rajiv in the church. The food is organised by sell-by date.

change of benefits to Universal Credit.

Country-wide, the Trussell Trust provided food for around 346,000 people in 2012 – an enormous increase from 128,690 the previous year. In 2005, the number was just 3,000. Like Dan, the Trust expects food poverty to rise still more, with more people in crisis and less funding available to support them.

To donate food or money, and to find out about opening times for all the centres, go to www.wandsworthfoodbank.org.uk

CASE STUDY

Helen, 40, is a local mother of three who was recently referred to Wandsworth Foodbank by her youngest son's school. Helen is parenting alone, having come out of a violent relationship. She struggles with depression and anxiety which means she is currently unable to work.

Helen has been trying to pay off debts that built up while she has been unwell, but this has left her with very little money to buy food for her family. To save on gas, the family only have hot water for one hour a day and they do not put on the heating at all.

'Wandsworth Foodbank has helped me and my son out tremendously,' says Helen. 'I think it's a saviour to tell you the truth. It's so good to have food in the house, and being able to sit and chat with the volunteers has done me the world of good. For me, the people are brilliant and it's not even just the food they're helping me with – they're helping me find help for my other problems too.'

Battersea Park Conservation Area Appraisal public consultation

Battersea Park Conservation Area was designated as an area of special architectural or historic interest in 1988. Conservation areas are designated by the Council who then have a duty to seek to conserve or enhance their character through the planning system.

Battersea Park is a Victorian park laid out in 1855-7 and was one of the first to be created specifically for public enjoyment. The impressive mansion blocks fronting the park were not built until the late nineteenth century and the Crown Commissioner's aspiration to build villas in large gardens was never realised. Today the conservation area contains many houses, terraces and other building types besides the



mansion flats and their conservation is key to the continued enjoyment and appearance of the conservation area.

Wandsworth Council's conservation and design team have expanded the appraisal and management strategy for this conservation area and added townscape maps to show

the buildings and spaces that make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Meeting

If you would like to find out more, please come to our public meeting on Wednesday 6th November from 6.00 - 8.00pm in Battersea Park. The meeting will be held at the park's Conference Room in the Staff Yard which is accessed through the Albert Gate at the North of Albert Bridge Road.

Download the draft document from www.wandsworth.gov.uk/BatterseaParkCA, and email your comments to consurbdesign@wandsworth.gov.uk until 12 November 2013. Or call 020 8871 7571

Planning Matters: The big issues

Monica Tross recounts the Society's efforts to preserve our built heritage

PRINCE OF WALES PUBLIC HOUSE

Yet another owner of a public house sees the opportunity to make money through developing the site. See the plans for this latest one on the Council website 2013/2870. The Society has objected to the planning aspects of this. The proposed building is too big and the design is wholly unsuitable for its prominent corner site within the Battersea Park Conservation Area. The proposal includes a retail element (a small supermarket?) which is not needed, would harm the residential character of the immediate area and would be to the detriment of the many small shopkeepers nearby.

Many local people have rightly objected to the proposed building but set these alongside concerns about the loss of the pub itself. The danger of conflating the two aspects is that, as with the Castle, the developer merely puts in a small public house area but continues to press for an undesirable building. Let's hope that in this case the Council supports the campaign to save the public house but also turns down a wholly unsuitable overdevelopment of the site. Older Battersea residents remember this as the Rising Sun, rebuilt in 1887 by the architect Harry Isaac Newton. A fuller description is in the *Survey of London*.

PRINCES HEAD, FALCON ROAD

There has been less concern about the demolition of this pub. However we think the planned building is too bulky and tall for the site and we are not sure how viable the quite large retail area will be. See the details on 2013/1825.

NORTHCOTE MEWS

Plans were agreed for a development on this small site despite considerable concerns as to the impact on neighbours. Building has started on the approved scheme but surprisingly the developers are now applying to increase the height of the building in order to improve the accommodation and office space they offer (2013/3334).



The Prince of Wales, Battersea Bridge Road

We have objected, as have Northcote Ward councillors.

COTSWOLD MEWS, REDUNDANT CHIMNEY STACK.

We have also objected to second thoughts by the developer of this site. The agreed plans, 2012/3275, did not ask for the demolition of the old chimney stack, an attractive part of Battersea's industrial heritage and not, as far as we can see, standing in the way of the development. One of our members drew our attention to this fresh application. Go to 'find a planning application' on the WBC home page and type in 2013/2910 to call up the application. Then click on View Associated Application Documents to reach all the 'paperwork' on this application. Check it out and you can see the massive amount of research he has done into the background to the chimney (the member's objection is dated 22 July).

RECENT COUNCIL DECISIONS

A revision of the agreed sequence for rebuilding Battersea Power Station chimneys was agreed in July. There are considerable safeguards to be agreed before work starts – full details in the committee report, 2013/3076. See also www.batterseapowerstation.co.uk/power-station-restoration.

Refurbishment and associated building for St Paul's Church, St John's Hill, has been agreed. We think it a welcome upgrade for this neglected building, 2013/2619.

A CHALLENGE AND A SMALL TRIUMPH

The challenge came from the owner of 53 and 55 Albert Bridge Road who put in seven separate applications for differing amounts of change to these two houses, including a new one on us, excavating a basement below the existing basement! We have sent in objections to six of the applications.

The triumph came with the reopening of the Beechmore Road bus stop at the end of August. We first contacted TfL about the closure in October last year. After many more emails and conflicting responses we tried contacting Richard Tracey at GLA in May. It took nearly four months (and several more emails from the Battersea Society) for TfL and the developers to agree to pay to have seven letters and some yellow lines painted on the road way.

Please don't forget, it is very helpful to know what our members think about applications affecting them.

Get in touch via planning@batterseasociety.org.uk. We like to hear from you.

Bringing village life to Londoners

Chris Morgan-Locke helps people meet each other

For some years, as well as living in Battersea I had a house in a small village in Hampshire. Everyone there knew each other and the pub and the church were the social centres.

Here in London a few years ago I was surprised how many local people told me that despite living in Battersea for some years they hardly knew any local folk. Some did not even know their immediate neighbours, other than to nod when they crossed paths.

Wanting to bring a bit of village life to London, I set up a non-profit-making social networking club which members named Battersea Social. Using Streetlife, the free local community website, the club soon recruited over 100 members; new members join every week.

Friendly

Initially most members were working and in the 30 to 50 age group so I organised mid-week meetings in local bars in the early evening. The idea was that members could call in on the way home from work and have a glass of wine and a chat with other locals.

The club was open to any 'interesting and friendly local people who do not take themselves too seriously and who like socialising, dining out, going to the theatre/cinema, arts events and other local activities'. About 70% were single and 30% married or in relationships but all were welcome.

This group gets between 10 and 20 members to our evening meetings and at the moment we hold them at the Battersea Mess and Music Hall, Lavender Gardens (roughly opposite the Lavender Hill Court and Police Station). This used to be the original Jongleurs Comedy Club and now is a trendy bar, restaurant and theatre. They offer our members a 25% discount off their wine prices and all draught real ale at £2.50 a pint.



A lively discussion over coffee in the Café D'Élite. Social Plus meets here once a month.

Trips

As the club grew it also attracted older members, those in the 50 to 65 age group, many of whom were soon to retire, retired or who worked from home. I decided to form a separate group for this older group which would have daytime meetings. This section, named Battersea Social Plus, has monthly coffee mornings in a café and members arrange meals at local restaurants, trips to the theatre and other informal outings. Typically between eight and 12 members turn up to each meeting.

Battersea Social Plus currently meets at Cafe D'Elite (formally Coffee 1st) which is now owned by a lovely Italian couple and is located on Battersea Rise between Northcote Road and Tesco Local.

Battersea Social Plus member Suzie Dixon says she very much enjoys meeting other local people: 'There is a good energy and humour in the group and I find it always interesting to get reviews of plays, exhibitions, local restaurants from other local people.'

Another member, Pamela Price, says, 'It is a great idea which is working well and such interesting

local folk tip up and chat, eat, drink and sometimes go togo out together.'

As the clubs grew I decided to back up the Streetlife forum with a section on the MeetUp website. The club is free to join and after you have been to a couple of meetings or events we charge a nominal administration fee of £10 which lasts for about 18 months and is used to pay for the Meetup.com fees and other admin costs.

If you are interested in joining either club, email me on batterseasocial@btinternet.com or go to www.meetup.com and register with meetup.com (free) then search for the Battersea Social forum and click to join the group.

You can then use the RSVP button to say if you are coming to an event and you can see brief details of other members of both groups.

Chris Morgan-Locke is a member of the Battersea Society and chair of the Battersea Arts Centre's development council.



Great Bus Journeys of the World No 8

Mike Roden takes the 44 from Victoria to Tooting



It is raining as the bus heads down Buckingham Palace Road. There's a thirties feel along here. The art deco façade of the nicely restored Coach Station sits opposite the National Audit Office building which opened in 1939 as the 'Empire Terminal' of Imperial Airways. The sculpture which seems to hover above the entrance is Eric Broadbent's 'Speed Wings over the world'. Along Ebury Bridge Road we pass the site of the demolished Chelsea Barracks which still awaits a decision about its future by its Qatari owners. On Chelsea Bridge Road the bus stops outside the Lister Hospital, privatised in 1985, but once named the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine in honour of the medical pioneer.

Fears of collapse

The original Chelsea Bridge, opened by Queen Victoria in 1858, aimed to provide easy access for north Londoners to the delights of the new Battersea Park. Once a toll bridge it was originally called Victoria Bridge, but the weight of twentieth century traffic caused fears of collapse and it underwent a name change in 1926, to avoid any royal association with a potential tragedy. In 1934 demolition began, and the current structure opened in 1937.

The marble and glass curiosity called Marco Polo house was named after the satellite used by its first tenant the broadcaster BSB, though it's better known to most people as the QVC building. Last year the shopping channel moved to West London. The building's days are now numbered, and it has the uncared-for look of a property awaiting demolition.

Traffic is light and the bus hurries along Battersea Park Road. Above the Glass Shop at number 214 is the blue plaque unveiled in December 2010 commemorating John Archer, who in 1913 was elected the first black mayor of a London council, and became a key figure in the history of the Labour and Trades Union Movements in Battersea.

Flower Station

We cross the Latchmere Junction, and I start looking for changes on this familiar section of the route. I don't think I know the Sushi Café, a Japanese restaurant, though I have visited the Battersea flower Station which has imaginatively colonised a hitherto wasted narrow stretch of land alongside the railway line. The Price's candle building is now the first London store of Barker and Stonehouse. It's worth a visit to see their clever use of the space, and to marvel at the (rather pricey) furniture and furnishings on offer. There is a café there as well – and they still sell candles.

We turn down Old York Road past Wandsworth Town Station which has recently been given a swanky glass frontage, but I don't think there's a lift there yet. The Alma (commemorating the Crimean war battle) was built in 1866 and still retains its shiny green Victorian tiles. This short stretch of road has a quaint, almost country feel to it, but is starting to lose its independent shops and cafés and Pizza Express and Sainsburys have already taken up residence. On the Fairfield Street corner is Zodiac Records which claims to be open on Saturdays, but has probably been

closed for more than ten years.

Passing the town hall, the bus crosses the junction with Wandsworth High Street and there is Wandsworth Library, once the Court house, and the home of Wandsworth Museum from 1996 to 2007. We'll be on Garratt Lane for some time as it's four kilometres long (just over two and a half miles in old money). Once a country lane following the course of the Wandle, it became a major highway with the growth of industry along the river. At the Southside centre the bus fills up, and a young man who sits next to me asks why I'm scribbling. By the time I've sheepishly explained, we've reached the Old Sergeant pub, a popular local which last year was named the best community pub in Britain. It's been there since around 1785, and has sold Young's beer since 1857.

For much of this long road, there is little to catch the eye. There are a fair number of pubs, a few larger stores, and a lot of small shops, hairdressers, takeaways and every so often a launderette, and slightly less frequently a betting shop. But they're serving their small communities and since there are few boarded up shops along this stretch, I suppose they're doing a good job.

Earlsfield

At the junction of Penwith Road and Earlsfield Road, the Wandle Inn (until recently the Puzzle Inn) is a reminder of the nearness of the river, which has been cleaned up in recent years, allowing fish including the brown trout to return. There's a Carluccio's next to Earlsfield station, a sure sign that area is a magnet for young



professionals. This suburb has a very short history. The station was built in 1884 on the site of a Victorian villa called Earlsfield, its former owners stipulated as a condition of sale that the name be retained, and so it has.

Edward Thomas

A bit further on and we're in the area known as Summerstown. Writer and poet Edward Thomas cycled through here just before the first world war and describes an area of damp meadow (it often flooded round here), with a file and tool factory, and a chamois-leather mill. "On the far side a neat, white, oldish house was retiring amid blossoming fruit trees ... a mixture of the sordid and the delicate in the whole was unmistakable." It's improved quite a lot.

The Leather Bottle pub has stood here since at least 1745 and was the centre for the mock elections for the 'Mayor of Garratt' which took place at the same time as Parliamentary elections. The generally eccentric candidates took comic names and made witty speeches and most people got very drunk. But it was a chance for the unenfranchised ordinary people to air their (often radical) political views.

After Wimbledon Road we stop outside Streatham Cemetery which opened for burials in 1894. There's a reminder of Battersea here, amongst the graves is that of Jane Rose Roberts the African American wife of the first President of the independent republic in Liberia, who died in 1913 while she was staying with mayor John Archer and his wife.

Next stop is Fairlight Road – 'alight here for St George's Hospital'.

Many of my fellow passengers duly do so and set out on their walk to the hospital (ten minutes, I'm told). Founded in 1716 the hospital was situated near Hyde Park for around 250 years, until it began transferring services to Tooting in 1954, a move not completed until 1980. The Lanesborough hotel now stands on its Hyde Park site.

Totinges Broadway

Tooting appears in the Domesday book as Totinges. Like most South London suburbs it expanded hugely during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Perhaps its most famous fictional resident is Citizen Smith, leader of the Tooting Popular Front, brought to television life in the late seventies by Robert Lindsay.

We have reached the end of Garratt Lane and sit for ever waiting to cross Tooting High Street. Opposite is the grade II listed Tooting Broadway tube station which opened in 1926 and is the work of Charles Holden who set the design standard for the London Underground.

Down Mitcham Road we go until the bus stops at Amen Corner, which is definitely not named after the Welsh sixties band. I can find no satisfying answer as to why this short stretch of Southcroft Road is so called. Three minutes later I reach my destination.

It's still pouring with rain, and I trudge up the hill to Tooting Station which stands just inside the borough of Merton.

It's taken me over an hour to get here, but via Wimbledon and Clapham Junction I'm home in under half an hour.

Sights to see: Eric Broadbent's *Speed Wings Over the World*, Victoria; the Marco Polo Building, near Chelsea Bridge; John Archer's blue plaque, Battersea Park Road, Battersea Flower Station; The Alma, Wandsworth Town; 'To London' sign at Tooting Broadway

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Battersea – from past to present, from north to south

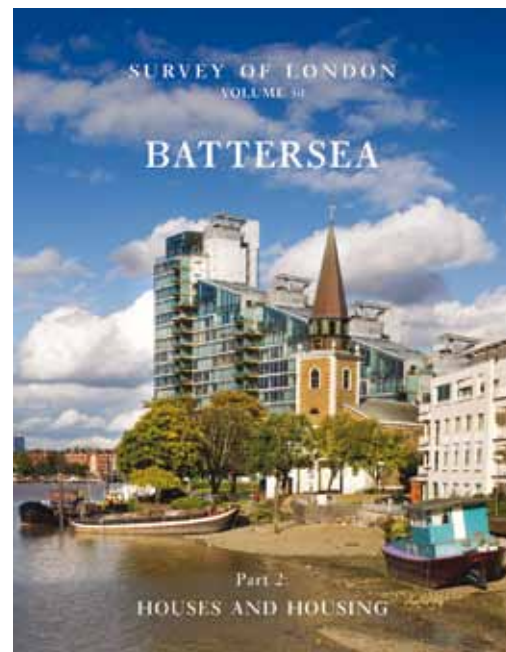
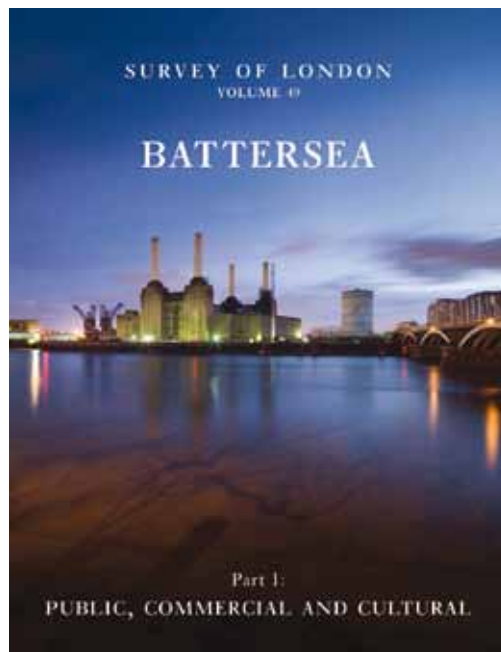
Dr Andrew Saint introduces the long-anticipated *Survey of London* on our area

November sees the publication of the *Survey of London's* long-planned two volumes on the history of Battersea. This means that Battersea will now have an up-to-date and in-depth history of its buildings, institutions and growth since the middle ages – something that few other districts of London can boast. The event is a landmark for the *Survey of London* too. The series has been running for over a century, and these volumes are the 49th and 50th in its august and ever-evolving parish series.

The idea of tackling Battersea goes back to 2007, when the *Survey* was deciding where to go next after Clerkenwell, and we realized to our dismay that no area of South London had been covered by the series for over fifty years. Where to choose? A Thames-side parish seemed the best bet. After much discussion we decided to embark on two districts both in the throes of change: Woolwich, published just a year ago; and the bigger challenge of Battersea. Bigger, because Battersea by the *Survey's* standards is large. Not only does it occupy a long river frontage running most of the way from Vauxhall Bridge to Wandsworth Bridge, but it penetrates southwards almost as far as Balham.

Diverse

Many people do not realize, for instance that half of both Clapham and Wandsworth Commons belonged to the old parish of Battersea. There was a great deal to cover, not only territory but also separate types of building and activity, for Battersea is nothing if not diverse. There is a world of difference between, say, the industrial wastelands of Nine Elms, now being radically redeveloped for the second time, and the area round Clapham Junction, or again the prosperous neighbourhoods off Northcote Road and Nightingale Lane.



To draw out the different strands in Battersea's history, we have taken the bold decision of dividing the two books in a way that is new for the *Survey*. Volume 49 looks in turn at a series of local activities and their manifestations: Battersea's public buildings, its industries, its churches, schools and colleges, its open spaces, its railways (very important to its development), its places of entertainment, and so on.

Street by street

Then in Volume 50 the traditional topographical approach takes over and we cover the housing, street by street, so that people can find about the area where they, or perhaps their ancestors, lived, ranging from the former villas round the commons to the endless acreage of Victorian terraces. In the best tradition of the *Survey*, both volumes are very fully illustrated in colour and include a series of specially made architectural drawings, all interspersed throughout the text.

The result is naturally not cheap, but we hope that a fair number of members of the Battersea Society will take advantage of the special offer from the publishers, Yale

University Press, of the two volumes for £110, or a single volume for £60. The cost is, after all, not much more than the price of a single slap-up meal for two somewhere along the Northcote Road. And you can go on feeding off the *Survey's* Battersea volumes day after day!

In conclusion, we should like to thank the people of Battersea for their warm support over the lifetime of the project. Battersea may not be London's best-known district, but it has always had a band of loyalists, enthusiasts and local historians. We have come to respect them deeply and we owe them a great deal. Many sections of the new books depend on the knowledge and dedication of members of the Battersea Society, the Clapham Society and the Wandsworth Historical Society, as well as particular individuals, who have also supplied us with images.

Of course we have gathered much too from the excellent collections of the Wandsworth Heritage Service at Lavender Hill and the Wandsworth Museum. To them and the whole of the local community, we at the *Survey* would like to say, as we go on with our endless task of chronicling London – thank you, and farewell.

Keeping a bookshop on the Northcote Road

As the Village Bookshop on Bellevue closes, Carol Rahn updates us on a community initiative

A good bookshop, like a good library, offers a welcome place for browsing and adds character, culture and comfort to a neighbourhood. A group of local residents has come together to open a new bookshop – inside the Northcote library, which will also have a cafe – after the Bolingbroke Bookshop sadly had to close its doors after 31 years.

Northcote Books will be a not-for-profit community bookshop. It will also be a creative hub, promoting reading and learning, particularly

amongst children, through good books, writing and community activities. It will be run professionally and everyone in the neighbourhood will be invited to buy shares in it in order to raise the money and to make it a reality by springtime 2014.

Grant

Endorsed by local councillor Peter Dawson and GLL, the organisation now managing libraries in Wandsworth, Northcote Books has already received a start-up grant of

£4,200 from Wandsworth Council.

A recent survey showed strong support for an independent bookshop in the neighbourhood, and the band of supporters endorsing the initiative has grown from 70 to nearly 400. By Christmas the shares will have been issued and everyone will have the chance to be part-owner of their bookshop.

To learn more, visit the website at www.northcotebooks.com

Street en fête



Crowds at the Northcote Road fête on 7 July basked in the sunshine and Andy Murray's Wimbledon win (seen here are spectators in Bennerley Road, watching the big screen). Northcote Road was closed to traffic and 100 stalls sold everything from Pimms to ponchos. The Battersea Society's stall was well attended and we welcomed ten new members.

Free ping-pong tables and a giant slide added to the fun.

The Northcote Business Network aims to organise a similar fete in 2014, hoping the weather will live up to this year.

Arts Roundup

The autumn is full of mellow and not-so-mellow artistic fruitfulness. Among the delights on offer are:

OPEN STUDIOS

The annual opportunity to see artists' work in their own house or studio and find out how their work is made. Putney and Tooting look to be the most artistic areas of the borough, but Battersea is not far behind, with 19 studios open. Among others, don't miss **Julia Matcham's Italian landscapes** (124 Chatham Road), **Edition Unique jewellery** (25 Bennerley Road) and **Jayson Singh's oil paintings** of India and Malaysia (6 Parkgate Road).

Weekends 5 – 6 October and 12 – 13 October, 11am – 6pm.

PUMP HOUSE GALLERY, BATTERSEA PARK

Everyday Objects

Jason Taylor transforms beer cans, pencils and razors into amusing and unexpected works.

21 September – 10 November.

Pump House Open

Showcase for local artists' work.

28 November – 22 December.

Diwali mobiles

Learn how to make colourful mobiles.
Sunday 3 November



Julia Matcham's print, *House on Lake Como*

WANDSWORTH MUSEUM

Keep it Clean!

A grubby history of Wandsworth and London. Personal hygiene from the Roman era to the 20th century, stinks and smogs of the past and an insight into the borough's rubbish collection.
21 September – 25 January 2014.

DE MORGAN COLLECTION

Inspired

Contemporary glass.

11 September – 9 November.

Wandsworth Museum and De Morgan are running free family art workshops. Try your hand at drawing, painting, clay modelling and printing.
29 and 30 October, 1 – 4pm.

Fred Wells Gardens

The Garden's Friends add colour and community, says Lucinda Curtis

Fred Wells Gardens is a small park situated between Lombard Road and Vicarage Crescent. It is named after a Labour Councillor who worked tirelessly in the Latchmere Ward during the 60s and 70s. Before the formation of the Gardens it was a light industrial site, prior to that a greyhound track and it even had a small railway station alongside the lines! The Orville Street end of the parks had terraced Victorian housing which was bombed in the war

Always full

The Gardens are well used by the local community – dog-walkers are plentiful, there are two well-used playgrounds for children and an equally well-used tennis court. Although they are always full of people enjoying the great outdoors, the gardens retained an uncared-for air. So in 2011 a group of local



residents set up the Friends of Fred Wells Gardens. We met with Wandsworth's Parks Department to discuss ways of improving the area and adding value for the local community.

The Friends' first activity was to conduct a survey of people using the gardens. Out of this arose two important issues: users felt that the park was dominated by dogs (and their poo), and they would welcome both lighting at night and a focus on wildlife.

The park largely consists of shrubs and trees, so it is green but there is little other colour. The group was keen to tackle this with some community planting and to make it more colourful. With financial support from Wandsworth Council, we planted 7,000 daffodil, crocus and anemone bulbs, which flowered this spring.

Grant

In 2012 we were awarded a Capital Spring Clean grant which enabled us to buy tools and plants for community flowerbeds between the tennis courts and Vicarage Crescent. Two flowerbeds have been created in an area that was previously tatty scrub. These flowerbeds have been successful, with many residents guerilla gardening and adding to the initial planting!

Part of this original grant included buying tools for children



at the Katherine Low Settlement on Battersea High Street, in order to help the Love to Learn Group to get their hands dirty. We garden with them every fortnight during term time; watering, sowing seeds and hunting bugs in the Gardens.

The group have now been awarded another grant from the Wandsworth Eco Fund to renovate a bed by the Orville Street entrance, with biodiversity and sustainability in mind. We propose a bed full of bee-friendly plants, as well as creating habitats for bugs. We are investing in a wormery so the children can get to grips with the principles of recycling and composting.

We are hoping to involve more of the community in our plans and any help would be gratefully received. You can contact the group at tfofwg@gmail.com



Local dog makes good: Milo, an 11-year-old Kerry Blue terrier from Clapham Junction, won the Handsomest Dog prize at the Battersea Dogs' and Cats' Home annual reunion on 9 September. Milo walks regularly in Battersea Park with his owner, Lauren Beadle.

CELEBRATING BATTEREA'S ANCIENT BIBLE

St Mary's Church has restored its rare 1611 King James Bible, which will be on display in the church for all to see.

**Thursday 7 November 2013, 7 for 7.30
St Mary's Church, Battersea Church Road**

***Begat:* The world-famous linguist Professor David Crystal will speak on the sound and language of the 1611 Bible.**

An anthem by Simon Bainbridge has been specially commissioned and will be sung by St Mary's choir.

David Crystal is renowned for bringing seventeenth century English to life.

Tickets £8 (includes a glass of wine) from boxoffice@batterseasociety.org.uk

Elizabeth Braund 17.6.21 – 20.5.13

Robert Musgrave remembers the founder of Providence House youth club, who also provided 'a lung for the city'.

Elizabeth Braund was equally at home with the well-connected as with the disconnected. Her impact spread from the streets of old Battersea and the concrete communities of Clapham Junction to the green hills of Dartmoor.

Elizabeth led two lives. On the one hand, as managing editor of the *Evangelical Magazine* she corresponded with learned clerics and thinkers worldwide. On the other she worked among the boys and girls of old Battersea, who until then had only empty houses, bomb sites and terraced streets to play in. Providence House, the youth club she founded in an old chapel in Speke Street in 1961, was affectionately known as 'Prawnies' or 'Miss Prune's Club' by young people who found it difficult to pronounce her name.

New times

By the late sixties Battersea was changing, the old houses and streets were being demolished and replaced by flats and housing estates. The old Providence chapel stood alone in a sea of rubble. Soon that too had gone and, as was the pattern throughout Elizabeth's life, something new emerged. The new Providence House was built and opened in 1970 on busy Falcon Road. These were new times, with new estates, new communities, the melting pot and ferment of different cultures and ethnic groups thrown together.

Elizabeth was never one for standing still; there was always a restless creativity about her. She and her colleague Rosemary Bird observed that despite all the new facilities of the modern housing, a sense of community and identity had been lost. She did not want to turn back the clock, but she did want to help restore the connections. She felt that there was something intrinsically negative about an entirely man-made concrete environment, divorced from the natural world that God had made. She felt that inner London was gasping for something, a lung for the city.

She became convinced that she



had to find a permanent place where she could take young people. She wanted it to be as different from London as possible, somewhere with a bit of wildness and challenge about it, somewhere with a sense of community, a working farm where children could learn and participate in nature. And so in 1975, she came to Dartmoor, and through the help of local people, she set up her project first at Bag Park Manor, Widecombe, and in the following year, East Shallowford Farm on Dartmoor was purchased.

Milking

Although she was regarded as a bit of a curiosity, the farming community came to her aid and taught her the ropes of animal husbandry. During her first decade at the farm, Elizabeth would be out at 8am every morning with her milking stool and bucket to milk her four or six cows.

first it was the schools from Battersea who came to the farm, then the social services and probation services sent young people with varied difficulties. Later there were family weekends, when Shallowford would be filled in every corner with Battersea families. For many of them it established a deep love of the countryside. As the years

went by, more and more people of different ages from Providence House and south London visited the farm. A few years ago in recognition of their work with young people Elizabeth and Rosemary Bird were both awarded the MBE.

Rosemary's illness and subsequent death and Elizabeth's own decreasing ability to actively work the farm, and to write up her many projects, did not diminish her passion for what she believed in. In many ways she was ahead of her time. She discarded traditional Sunday School methods in the old Providence chapel and with the young people turned the pulpit into Mount Sinai; in the 1960s she engaged with teenagers who found it hard to access more organised youth facilities; in the early 70s in the new Providence she gave space for Afro-Caribbean young people to express their culture and music when that was quite new.

Richer

There are many black men and women indebted to what Providence opened up for them. In her lung for the city project, she acted on her beliefs about the concrete jungle before it became fashionable. Three generations of urban families have been travelling west to a little valley on Dartmoor, and have returned the richer for the experience.

In her last years she kept alive a vision that Shallowford, and indeed Providence House should be an inclusive place where people were not kept out because they were old or different or on the margins. This was something she worried about, worried lest after she had gone the farm be turned into something else. Her repeated plea was 'Don't let them turn it into a golf course!'

It is the end of an era now, but it is the beginning of new one, and that is how Elizabeth would have wished it. The work continues at Providence House and East Shallowford Farm and we who are involved in the work are part of her legacy. *Robert Musgrave is a trustee of Providence House.*

Restoration men

Battersea MP Jane Ellison reports on labours of love at Grade II listed Battersea Park station

MPs get asked to quite a few openings and unveilings but the invitation to view Battersea Park station in late July provided one of this summer's most unexpected highlights.

Amongst the Southern and Network Rail officials assembled was Rob Bastow, the Southern manager who planned and supervised the work. Rob's enthusiasm for the project was uplifting as was his dedication to restoring many original features of Charles Henry Driver's Victorian design. As we toured the station Driver was surely with us in spirit.

Ornamental

Battersea Park station was opened by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (LBSCR) in 1867 as York Road (Battersea); it was given its present name in 1885. The station was designed by Driver who was one of the most important figures in Victorian architecture and engineering. He specialised in ornamental iron work and Battersea Park station boasted elegantly moulded iron balustrades and handrails. Other examples of his railway work include Peckham Rye station and Denmark Hill station, although much of the distinctive cast-iron work has been lost from them.

Driver's work can be found as far away as Brazil, where he designed São Paulo's Station of Light. His relative obscurity today is perhaps explained by the fact that some of his most important contributions were collaborations with more high profile contemporaries. Joseph Paxton consulted him on the construction of the Crystal Palace, for which Driver designed the Orangery and Aquarium. Driver also worked with Joseph Bazalgette on the London sewerage system, completing the architectural design for the Thames



team. Period balustrades, handrails and staircase style have been recreated; to get the balustrades right Rob took moulds from discarded Driver originals he located at Peckham Rye station. The handrail is an old piece removed from Buxted station many years ago together with some matching timber to comply with modern standards.

Cycle parking

It is not just the inside of the station that has received architectural TLC – windows, guttering and downpipes have been overhauled as have the brick and stonework to the building's front and side. I always think we miss so much of interest above our heads – glance upwards as you enter the station and your eyes will alight on Driver's distinctive (and now distinguishable) architectural motifs. In the new cycle parking area at the side of the station, in a further acknowledgment to Driver, his motif also appears on each elegant new cycle stand. The keyless-entry gate has been replaced to mimic exactly the style of the original as has the fencing.

Further external timber repairs and decorative work will be completed this autumn; practical enhancements include refurbished passenger toilets and a waiting room being created on Platform 2/3 by converting a very old gents' toilet.

It seemed churlish to ask for more but as yet another pushchair was carried down the steep steps behind us I had to ask Rob about the practicalities of putting a lift into a Listed station. It is possible to install a lift to Platforms 2/3 with more funding; something I will be working with Rob on (added to my Parliamentary 'To Do' list).

Last year 2.4 million passenger journeys were made to and from Battersea Park station. All of us who use the station can thank Mr Driver and Mr Bastow for a more elegant and comfortable journey – two men divided by a century and a half but dedicated to detail.



Embankment and Abbey Mills and Crossness pumping houses.

Grandeur

Before decorative work could begin at Battersea Park station less glamorous work had to be carried out, largely by Network Rail. Rob described the building as 'resembling a sieve' before it was 'tanked' to stop water coming in and re-seal all high level roofs and platforms. Only then could the grandeur of the original booking hall be restored. The timbers of the ceiling were repaired and the glazed skylight overhauled, with the booking hall being repainted in original heritage colours. The decorative plaster coving and frieze have been reinstated as have the marble skirting and decorative architraves.

Southern Railway have remodelled the staircase to increase the area around the gateline, the works being completed in close cooperation with the Railway Heritage Trust