



Decision on Twin Towers development delayed and 'cautious optimism' as Hazel Blears calls in Ram Brewery plan

Campaigners against the proposed Clapham Junction development have expressed 'cautious optimism' over the latest developments in the saga of the 'Twin Towers'.

Hostility

Those attending the public meeting on January 28th, were left in no doubt about the strength of local hostility to the scheme: the 42 storey towers, lack of affordable housing, and the inadequate approach to solving local transport problems, both rail and bus.

The meeting drew an audience of around 200 people, who heard from Tony Tuck, chair of the Battersea Society, Cyril Richert and Kate Williams from the Clapham Junction Action Group (CJAG), and Martin Linton MP. Delancey, the developers, had turned down an invitation to attend.

Concerns

It was not known at the time that a few days earlier the developers had received a letter from Mark Hunter the Council's Planning Officer, raising many of the concerns about

the development which had been widely aired by opponents of the scheme. Kate Williams of the CJAG sees this as a 'demonstration of the impact of local democracy'.

The Planning Applications Committee had been set to make a decision on March 12th, but this has now been deferred until at least April.



Reason to smile? Cyril Richert and Tony Tuck at the public meeting on January 28th

Those at the public meeting had been urged make their views known to the council, by letter or email, and it is clear that this call did not go unheard.

Responding to those who have

since written to him Councillor Leslie McDonnell, Chairman of Planning Applications writes that while he has a duty of strict impartiality, 'I am nonetheless fully aware of the strength of feeling expressed at the recent open meeting and in the large number of letters and emails which I am currently receiving.'

National policies

Campaigners were further encouraged by the news that Hazel Blears has called for an inquiry into the development at Wandsworth's Ram Brewery site, which includes two residential towers of 42 and 36 storeys high.

The Communities' Secretary said "she considers the proposals may conflict with national policies on important matters". These include building heights, landscaping, and affordable housing.

However, Tony Tuck warns against complacency. "Nothing should be taken for granted, and if you haven't already done so, then make sure you write to the council letting them know how strongly you feel."

Clapham Junction on the Tube

Local MP Martin Linton, Mayor Johnson, and Wandsworth Council were united in delight at the recent announcement of a £64m package of government money to link Battersea to Docklands and the City. Planned to be completed by 2011, the scheme, which stretches from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction

via Peckham and Wandsworth, will form part of the much needed circular rail route around London. Run by London Overground this will be a regular tube-style service,



appearing on the tube map, and passengers will be able to use their oyster cards.

David Lewis, chair of the Battersea Society planning committee felt the announcement should be a spur to increase pressure "to get Clapham Junction improved to provide an efficient, safe and convenient interchange for all transport modes".

Don't forget to visit our website: batterseasociety.org.uk

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

From the Editor

February's snow gave us those unforgettable white urban landscapes, with every green space filled with young and old, building snowmen or giant snow-balls. People tobogganed or walked down the middle of side-roads – less slippery and safe with so little traffic. Walking where cars are normally king always gives me a subversive little thrill.

The furious opposition to the Clapham Junction towers proposal shows no sign of abating, although there is cautious grounds for some optimism (see page 1).

The government's short-sighted decision about the third runway was a major blow, the only silver lining being the shelving of the

proposed end of runway alternation, which would have meant all-day noise for Battersea.

In this issue we also look back at our area's past poverty in an interview with Maureen Larkin, and remind ourselves of the Clapham Junction rail disaster.

The NHS is one of our greatest institutions and most of us have reason to be grateful for the dedication of NHS staff and the sometimes surprising flexibility this great mammoth can show. Could all this change? Dr Mike Squires' article suggests that the private sector is sniffing hungrily around the service, enthusiastically encouraged by national and local politicians. We need to be aware of what is happening and be prepared to resist unwelcome changes.



You will have noticed our new name, *Battersea Matters*. We have a spiffing new design and a new designer, Mike Roden. I am very grateful to Mike; during a difficult time for me, he has done much of the editorial as well as the design work. We would both like to hear what you think of the new name and the new look.

Jenny Sheridan

newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk

I received an email the other day from Wells Fargo. Less romantic than it sounds – the days of Jim Hardy played by Dale Robertson (or was it the other way round?) and stagecoaches rattling over the prairie have long gone. Wells Fargo is a bank now, and as such is prone to 'phishing' – that attempt by internet fraudsters to persuade the gullible into giving their account numbers and password details, only to see their accounts emptied. (Rather along the lines of the British banks asking the Treasury to empty its coffers on their behalf).

As I don't live in America it was a less than successful exercise. Later that day, though, as a 49 bus bounced me through every pothole much like a stagecoach, my mind roamed back to those wild southwest eleven days and a noisy, bustling, friendly railroad town...

Trouble was brewing. The big-talking Delancey boys had arrived in town. 'There's gold in them there towers!' they boasted as they

pointed to the sky. The Mayor, he just stepped aside and let them pass. Seemed like there was

nobody to stop them tearing the town apart. Was it going to be like High Noon where the sheriff has to deal with bad guys all by himself? Not this time—the townsfolk got together and let those boys know this wasn't going to be so easy...

It was my bus stop, the dream had to come to an end. Just as well—something tells me that the



The Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden looks at life from the top deck

Gunfight in the Asda Car park would have been kinda messy...

Vogue magazine (I only read it for the sport) once designated the number 19 bus route, "one of the 14 most stylish locations in Britain", which is presumably why it's been chosen to demonstrate the new Routemaster bus you can see down there on the left.

Who doesn't miss the thrill the old Routemaster provided with that futile dash to throw oneself aboard as it crawled over Battersea bridge, pumping out those wonderfully noxious diesel fumes.

Of course the new model will now cater for people using wheelchairs and buggies, with a nifty sliding door amidships, but the chance to hurdle the bridge's railings will return to challenge old and young alike.

See you next time...

The seafarer who gave hope to abandoned children

Maureen Larkin visits the Foundling Museum with the Battersea Society

Our first visit in 2009 was on a cold but sunny morning to the Foundling Museum in Coram Fields, where we were shown round by an excellent guide. In the early 1720s, Thomas Coram, a retired ship's captain, was so horrified by the young children he saw abandoned on the streets of London – about 1,000 every year – that he resolved to do something about the situation.

He spent the next 17 years raising funds and support to establish the Foundling Hospital, which was given the Royal Charter in 1739. The first foundlings were admitted in 1741. When babies and children were admitted they were given new names, a uniform, regular meals and an education. The hospital did not close until 1954, by which time it had cared for over 27,000 children.

On the ground floor an exhibition tells the hospital's story, with

many items relating to the lives of the foundlings and mementoes left by their mothers – a small locket or even only a button. The children themselves never saw these touching keepsakes.

William Hogarth, an early governor, donated to the hospital one of his finest portraits, of Coram himself (pictured). This began the for-



mation of England's first public art gallery. There are many fine paintings here, including works by Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough, as well as sculptures. George Frederic Handel was a supporter and in 1750 he conducted the first of many performances of the *Messiah*, raising a substantial sum for the hospital. On his death he bequeathed a fair copy of the *Messiah* to them. The Gerald Coke Handel Collection is housed on the second floor of the museum and we viewed the largest private collection of Handel memorabilia, including his original will and the copy of the *Messiah*.

Today the charity Coram continues the Foundling Hospital's work through its innovative childcare services. These include adoption, a parents centre, education services and support for care leavers, families, children and young people at risk. The Museum is committed to bringing the arts and music to everyone, especially children.

Public Meeting

A Waste of Time & Energy?

Should we bother with recycling and waste minimisation in a time of recession? Come along and listen to the arguments then join in the debate.

7-9pm

Thursday 19th March

At Dimson Lodge
(opposite St Mary's Church)
Battersea Church Road
Speakers

Michael Singham: senior waste policy officer, Wandsworth
Matthew Thompson: London Community Recycling Network.

Admission free—all welcome.

Thursday 26th March
Talk on Wandsworth Prison

7.00 for 7.30pm

Given by a governor of the prison,
Rob Denman.

St Mary's Church Battersea
£5.00 (payable on the door)

Annual Spring Lunch

Sunday 26th April

12.30 for 1pm

At Thai on the River,

2 Lombard Road, SW11

Tickets £14.50 (excludes drinks)



Find details of all Battersea Society events at
batterseasociety.org.uk/events
for more information contact
membership@batterseasociety.org.uk

Dates for your diary

Thursday 4th June

Annual General Meeting

7.00 for 7.30pm

St Mary's Church
Battersea Church Road

'Love's Philosophy'

Fulham Camerata presents

English and German music for choir, soloists and ensembles on the theme of love lost and found

Saturday 13th June

8pm

St Mary's Church

Tickets £10 & £8 conc.

020 8870 3091/020 7720 7772

*Proceeds to the Friends of St Mary's
Battersea and Speakability*

Could Ralph West Hall live again as a hall of residence?

Keith Garner suggests a new role for a troubled building

There was much unhappiness among Battersea residents last July when the council approved Renaissance Lifecare's revised planning application to demolish Ralph West Hall and to build a new residential care home.

After further discussions between Renaissance and the Council concerning the "Section 106 agreement" - a monetary contribution from the developer for local improvements - planning permission was granted in December.

Ralph West Hall Site Protection Society, of which I am a director, is now preparing a legal challenge against the decision. The challenge will be made on the grounds of the irrationality of the Council's action in approving a scheme identical to one turned down in 2006.

There is now a hoarding around the site, and Renaissance intend to demolish the building in a few weeks. However there are doubts that their bankers Barclays Capital, will allow this with a legal challenge

in the offing.

As a way out of the current impasse, we recently wrote to Renaissance suggesting that the building be reopened as a hall of residence. This would not require planning permission and could be done quickly and at relatively moderate cost. With the Royal College of Art expanding at their Howie Street campus and other colleges in the vicinity, there is a ready local market for student accommodation. Ralph West Hall would be particularly suitable for the RCA. The dining hall block could become a café and gallery space. The landscaped grounds could serve for the display of sculpture and could be used for summer events.

This scheme could bring the building back into use quickly, allowing Renaissance to make an honest profit. We hope they will seriously consider the proposal. If not, they should make way for a developer who specialises in student accommodation.

Our letter to Renaissance can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/ah57u7>

Postscript: Mike Horsman

We were all very sad to hear of the death of Mike Horsman who designed Ralph West Hall in the late 1950s as a young architect in the LCC Architects Department. Mike's building proved popular with students over the years and was featured in *The Observer* magazine in 2000. Mike applied unsuccessfully to have the building listed in 2004 when it was sold to a developer.

Mike was a keen supporter of our campaign. As guest of honour at the party we held in the grounds of Ralph West Hall in June 2008 he told us that he planted the (now magnificent) London plane tree when the building was under construction in the early 1960s.

Mike was enthusiastic about our proposal to reopen the building as a hall of residence. I hope we can honour his memory by pursuing our campaign to a successful conclusion.

Beechmore Road former Job Centre

The Society objected to the new plans for this site, submitted late last year. In February the application was refused planning permission at the council's Planning Committee meeting.

US Embassy

The application process for this has started and outline proposals are expected soon. We know that the building will be approximately 25 storeys high and have a 30m wide exclusion zone round the perimeter. We hope to have more news for the next newsletter.

Oyster Wharf

We regret that approval has been given for 22 dwellings in 10 two-storey houseboats (reference 2008/4569) at Oyster Wharf in

Lombard Road. The Society submitted objections to two previous applications on similar lines. This case and Ralph West Hall (see article above) lend further weight to the idea that, however inappropriate a proposed development, the developer need only apply three times to get planning permission.

Feedback please

There are a number of buildings in Battersea Park Road where work seems to have ground to a halt. Have you noticed any sites near you where work has stopped and the building left scaffolded and incomplete? Let us know so we can ask the Council what they can do about stalled projects like these.

Buses

Some of us are delighted with the

Planning Update

Monica Tross has the latest news

merging of the **170/239** routes, other users of this route have experienced a poorer service. We have written to TfL to tell them this, but do let us know your own experience. TfL will review this route over the coming months so we would like to tell them what you think.

TfL will also be reviewing routes **131, 155, 220, 295 and 355** so any comments on these too please, by the end of March to buses@batterseasociety.org.uk

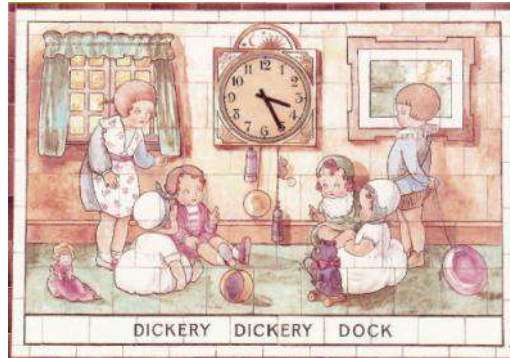
David Lewis, chair of our planning committee can be contacted at planning@batterseasociety.org.uk or phone him on 020 7622 8017

Bolingbroke Friends bid to save hospital's tile panels

Jenny Edwards of the Friends of Bolingbroke Hospital tells the story

Last year, with local support, the Friends of Bolingbroke Hospital applied to English Heritage to have the building listed, making particular reference to the William Shepherd wing – facing Wandsworth common – a landmark since it opened in 1927. It also houses some very important features: the war memorial, the wonderful nursery rhyme tiles and an impressive Swedish marble hall. The tiles, depicting many well known nursery rhymes, were made by Simpson & Carter and were installed around the new children's ward which opened in 1927. After the war closed there was talk of moving the tiles to St George's but the idea was dropped and the

Friends paid to have the tiles professionally cleaned. They



continued to be admired by all ages until the hospital closed last December.

In making the listing application to English Heritage we have had support from the Council's conservation department, all Northcote ward councillors and interest from the War Memorial

Trust and the Tile Society. The latter are still trying to gain access to the hospital to view the nursery rhyme tiles. They have said that "they are a very important installation and should be saved at all costs".

Unfortunately St George's have declined to give any specific assurances about the future of these important features. They are very much a part of Battersea's history and must be saved, preferably maintained and protected in situ. We must not let them be moved out of Battersea or even sold. We anticipate a response from English Heritage sometime later this month and understand that should our initial application fail we can ask for the case to be reviewed. We will certainly do so.

Jenny Edwards can be contacted on 020 8870 3857

Wandsworth has 45 conservation areas which cover the whole historical range, from Battersea Square with the Raven Inn (below) dating from the late 17th century; to the Alton Estate, built in the 1950s and also listed for its architectural importance.

These areas are designated by the council for their "special architectural or historic interest", but it is not simply buildings that we have a duty to conserve. An



Not just buildings—but the spaces in between

Justine Page, a senior planner with Wandsworth council explains how conservation areas work.

area's character is also defined by its green spaces, and gardens and even the width of the streets, pavements and the street pattern.

The council's Conservation and Design Group is now in the fifth and final year of its programme of updating conservation area appraisals and management strategies for each conservation area which all undergo public consultation before approval.

Over the next year we will review the Parktown Conservation Area in Battersea which was developed by Flower and Knowles between 1865-1895. They financed the southern stretch of Queenstown Road so that the new suburbs of Clapham, in particular the Cedars Estate

being built by Knowles' father, would be linked to the high quality development across the river in Pimlico. They set out the kite shaped street pattern centering around St Philip's Square with a variety of building styles coming from other builders who also bought into the scheme.

Battersea conservation area appraisals available on our website include Battersea Square, Battersea Park, Town Hall Road, Westbridge Road, Three Sisters, and the Shaftesbury and Latchmere Estates. The draft Parktown appraisal and management strategy will be available for public consultation in the autumn. Further details from www.wandsworth.gov.uk

The Royal College of Art lives the dream

The RCA – and Jenny Sheridan – look forward to an artistic future



Editing *Battersea Matters*, although immensely enjoyable, is rarely a glamorous role. For one evening in late January, though, it was my entrée to a world of high art, champagne flowing as one wishes it would always flow and speeches about Battersea’s future creative quarter – not to mention a mechanical dove.

Finest

The event was the Royal College of Art’s party celebrating the planned move to Battersea of its fine and applied art departments and the opening of its rebuilt sculpture department in Howie Street. In his welcoming speech, Professor Christopher Frayling, rector of the RCA, described the building as “one of the best – if not *the* finest – sculpture studios in the world.”

With its large column-free gallery, it enables students to exhibit their work in the space where they work. Thanking Wandsworth Council for welcoming the Royal College “with open arms,” the professor saw this part of Battersea developing into a creative hub. New designers, craftspeople and artists will join those already here, such as architects Foster and Partners and Will Alsop and fashion designer Vivienne Westwood.

The sculpture building was

opened by one of Britain’s foremost sculptors, Antony Gormley, creator of the Angel of the North and the Field for the British Isles. “It’s fantastic to be here, with so much space and light,” he said.

Then – the dramatic highlight of the evening: Mr Gormley pulled a switch and a dove swooped down from the roof, sprinkling golden sparkles and trailing a string of multi-coloured pennants. With perfect accuracy the bird unveiled a banner proclaiming “RCA Sculpture 2009. Live the dream.” Daisy Addison and Andy Humber, who designed the installation, are both RCA students.

Champagne

After this excitement we returned to the task at hand: nibbling exotic canapés, drinking Laurent Perrier champagne, and admiring the clothes. It was the kind of party where you could ask someone whether she had designed her beautifully cut symmetric dress and be told no, it was by a well-known Japanese designer.

The new gallery exhibited the work of the first-year sculpture students. Lucy May’s work caught my eye. Lucy is interested in baroque funerary statues. Her sculpture (pictured) shows a skull-like head with a ghostly arm emerging from a tangled mass of densely black polystyrene, wreathed in gaudy fake flowers. Lucy loves the new building, but is not yet familiar with the area, apart from the pub opposite and Theatre 503 at the Latchmere.

When complete, the new painting building (designed, like the rest of the campus, by architects Haworth

Tompkins) will have a saw-tooth glazed roof to give north light to the studios below. The department aims to move here in the autumn, to be followed by print-making and photography. In 2012 they will be joined by ceramics, glass, metal-work and jewellery.

Education

‘Incubator units’ will provide facilities for start-up businesses and studios at affordable rents. A lecture theatre will offer art-related education to audiences in the RCA, Battersea and beyond.

The total cost of the new project is estimated to be at least £35 million. The sale of the college’s Francis Bacon painting for £8 million gave it an initial boost. But the college is still looking for sponsors, so if any Society members would like to help, I am sure that they would love to hear from you. Might we see the Tony Tuck Lecture Theatre one day?



Laughter & the love of friends...

Tony Tuck joins the Friends of Battersea Park for a special ceremony

Those who recall the green and gold tins of Lyle's Golden Syrup will also doubtless remember the picture of the dead lion with bees swarming from its body. The logo round the picture reads "Out of the strong came forth sweetness". Abram Lyle, who founded the syrup company, held strong religious beliefs. The quotation is from the Old Testament (Judges 14:14).

This tells the tale of Samson who was travelling to the land of the Philistines in search of a wife. During the journey he killed a lion, and on his return past the same spot he saw that a swarm of bees had formed a comb of honey in the carcass. Samson later turned this into the riddle shown on the tin.

Commemoration

I was reminded of this in late January when the Friends of Battersea Park and others came together to commemorate the life of the late PC John Johnson by planting a tree and placing a bench

on a small hillock by Chelsea Bridge Gate in Battersea Park. For however wrenching the death of a man may be, especially a death that is out of and before time, the after ripples can be joyous and affirmative. Those who sit on that bench, in time shaded by a tree, can relish the vista and the bubble of life played out before them.

Celebration

This is an apt celebration of a joyful man who spent his life with and for people. It is most fitting that the bench has a small plaque bearing lines by Hilaire Belloc often quoted by John, namely: -

*From quiet homes and first beginning
Out to the undiscovered ends
There's nothing worth the wear of
winning
Save laughter and the love of friends.*

[Philip Wright, former chairman of the Friends, talked of John at the gathering and his words can be found in full on our website.]

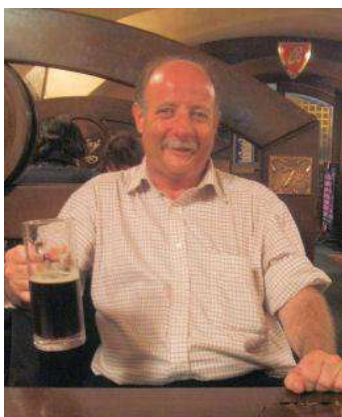
The tree planted was a *Quercus Palustris*, a pin oak native to North America.

I hope that when people walk by the hillock by Chelsea Gate, or sit on the bench astride the hillock, they will be able to take stock to celebrate in their own way their own sense of "laughter and the love of friends."



Local MP Martin Linton takes part in the tree-planting ceremony

John Johnson is to be remembered in other ways too. Some of his former colleagues on the Battersea Crime Prevention Panel are setting up the John Johnson Foundation. This will follow John's aims of making Battersea a better place to live,



work and play. This will include strengthening a sense of community and promoting good relations between community and police. Anthony Croker Poole, a member of the steering committee, sees one potential activity as working with the borough police commander to identify and inspire good community policemen and women. This would not be in competition with the Met's community police officer of the year award, which John won twice.

The steering committee includes a Fairfield councillor and the present

The John Johnson Foundation

Making Battersea a better place to live, work and play...

and past chairs of the Crime Prevention Panel. John's brother David, in South Africa, is being kept informed. Once the charity is established, it will be open to all to join. Mr Croker Poole is keen to emphasise that the aim is not to supplant the fund-raising or activities of other organisations, to so many of which John was devoted.

To find out more about the John Johnson Foundation, write to Mr Croker Poole at PO Box 37298, London SW11 4WF.

Stables at the end of the road

Maureen Larkin tells Jenny Sheridan about her Battersea childhood

Many Battersea Society members will know Maureen Larkin, our resourceful and efficient Battersea Society's membership secretary. She is one of those unusual Londoners who still live in the house where they were born. In her case, this is a small house in Knowsley Road, in the area known as the Triangle.

In Maureen's childhood, all the houses in the road were crowded; most contained two families – with one living upstairs and the other downstairs. "Next door there was a family with five children upstairs and exactly the same downstairs. Fourteen people altogether! Everyone shared the toilet in the yard, and there was no bathroom. Everyone had a tin bath that we filled with hot water from kettles once a week. It wasn't till the 1970s that bathrooms were put in."

Washday

Maureen's older sister remembers electricity being installed in the early 1930s; until then the house was lit by gas. Washday was a major chore. "My mother used to boil sheets in the copper. It was set in concrete and you had to light a fire under it."

With little luxury in her childhood, Maureen still remembers it fondly. "We had much more freedom than kids do now. There was less traffic, less crime - or certainly less fear of crime. I used to travel all over London by bus to go to museums from the age of seven. I always walked to school on my own. In the holidays Mum would give me some sandwiches and I'd go off with a friend and spend all day in the park. No parents would dream of letting

a small child do that now!"

The Blitz

During the Second World War, Maureen, like many London children, was evacuated. But after an uneventful six weeks in Eastbourne, her parents brought her home and she spent the rest of the war in Battersea. "My education (at Lavender Hill and Latchmere primary schools) was quite disrupted by the air raids. For a couple of months the school closed down altogether. I didn't mind that! When the Blitz started I remember at first sleeping in the cupboard under the stairs and then in the Anderson shelter in the garden.

"Bombs fell all round us - we lived by the railway line and they were trying to hit Clapham Junction. But we were lucky, we only lost a few panes of glass. Some houses in Sabine Road were hit. To this day I don't like sudden loud bangs, which I am sure stems from the raids."

The Triangle nowadays is a pretty and popular residential area. Few of the new residents would guess that until about 1960, the coalman



and greengrocer both lived at the end of the road, with their horses stabled at the back. "The man opposite had a small sawmill so the horses and carts used to line up. It was handy for the garden – Dad used to tell me to get out there with the bucket and spade."

Threat of demolition

In the early 1970s the area, which had become run down, was threatened with demolition. Enraged, the residents formed a defence committee, with Maureen playing a leading part. "We lobbied the council and protested to MPs. Douglas Jay, who was our MP, used to come to meetings in this house. Eventually the council caved in and named it as a regeneration area and agreed to modernise the houses. A different class of people came in and started buying the houses. Previously it had been very much a working class area. But everyone mixes very well. They all muck in, they're not aloof. I'm the co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch, we organize an annual street party and lots of new people get involved. But there are still people here who I used to play with as a child."

The street parties continue, but much has changed. Maureen (left) is positive about most of the changes, though she regrets the passing of the industry that employed so many Battersea men and women. "But there was the famous Battersea smell – it was disgusting! We thought it came from Garston's glucose factory in York Road." "The air is much cleaner now. Before the Clean Air Act was passed in 1956 we had these terrible fogs. I was on the way back from the cinema in Fulham once

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Stables at the end of the road
continued from previous page

and the bus driver had to stop because he couldn't see the road. One of the passengers had to get out and walk in front of the bus to guide him!"

Change

On the down side, Maureen regrets the replacement of many old, small-scale streets with large housing estates. But the biggest change is that Battersea is no longer a very poor area, with many people struggling to make ends meet – and not always succeeding. "My grandmother went to ask for more

money. They said to her, 'Have you got any furniture? When you've sold that, we'll give you some money'. That was real poverty."



Something Maureen does look back at fondly is local entertainment. "The Grand was a music hall and also a repertory

theatre. There were several local cinemas. There was the fleapit in Clapham Junction, the Granada on St John's Hill (left) – that was lovely inside, with a big Wurlitzer organ – and the Savoy in York Road and another little one as well. Now we have to go to Chelsea or Wandsworth or Clapham."

A Battersea woman born and bred, Maureen has always been involved in her local community,

from fighting the council to organising street parties – and now to being a key trustee of the Battersea Society

Battersea movers and shakers honoured

The New Year's Honours list included a number of people who live or work in Battersea. Dr Kathleen Costeloe has been awarded the CBE for services to medicine in London. Dr Costeloe, professor of paediatrics at the Homerton Hospital, specializes in premature babies and neonatal lung development. She lives in Battersea.

Pat Astley Cooper (below) was awarded the MBE for services to



heritage in south-west London. Former curator of the Wandsworth Museum, she is still involved in the new developments there.

Also awarded the MBE is Maria Kempinska, founder and creative director of the *Jongleurs* comedy club. Now a national chain, Ms Kempinska started the first club in Lavender Gardens in 1983. The club nurtured the talents of comedians such as Graham Norton, Jo Brand and Paul Merton.

Recognition

In a different kind of honour, Jennifer Ullman's skills have been recognised by Kew Gardens, which appointed her as a trustee last November.

Ms Ullman is Wandsworth's chief parks officer and oversaw the restoration of Battersea Park. Kew has appointed her for her detailed knowledge of horticulture, biodiversity, and landscape and heritage conservation.

People in West London History
Local History Conference

This year's conference, sponsored as usual by many local history societies, is on the theme of 'People in West London History'.

Two of the speakers are well known to the Battersea Society. Sean Creighton's subject will be *Progressive Battersea - radicalism and socialism 1880-1914*, and Dorian Gerhold, Vice President of the Wandsworth Historical Society talks about 17th century Putney and Roehampton.

The conference takes place on:

Saturday 21st March
from 9.30am-4.30pm
at the Montague Hall, Hounslow.

Tickets are £7.50. Send SAE and cheque payable to *West London Local History Conference* to J McNamara, 31B Brook Rd South, Brentford TW8 ONN.

Drawn to the river, drawing the river

Chris Orr RA tells Jenny Sheridan about his work and his affection for Battersea

The Peace Pagoda, Albert Bridge, courting couples and transvestites in the park: images of Battersea crop up frequently in Chris Orr’s paintings and prints. Until this year head of the print-making department at the Royal College of Art, Professor Orr is a distinguished artist who has exhibited prints and paintings internationally. His work is detailed, clearly of our time but influenced by artists such as Hogarth. It’s sometimes funny, always fascinating.

Continuity

Chris and his wife Kate live near Albert Bridge. He paints in a studio that once belonged to Charles Sargeant Jagger, the sculptor of the Royal Artillery monument at Hyde Park Corner. Jagger studied and taught at the RCA between the wars and Chris likes the sensation of continuity with previous generations of artists. He is interested in memory and the way history persists through change and development. His art often reflects the underlying features of a landscape that are not visible but which leave a trace, a ghost of what was there before. “You can’t erase history,”

he says. In his print ‘Ghosts of Chelsea Reach’ he depicts a location strongly influenced by past artists such as Turner, Blake and Whistler.

Chris Orr finds print-making a particularly satisfying way of incorporating different layers of reference and meaning. “You can invent and change and alter things. Here, for instance, I have put in an old photo of myself as a schoolboy in a print that has resonances with the present day, my childhood and my father. You can mention things that are true but not actually there at the time.”

Topographical

Once described as a social surrealist, his work has recently become more topographical. He focuses on cities and buildings rather than the more fantastic or satirical emphasis of a few years back. “Paintings are quite close to maps, there are traces of things that you can follow through if you really look at something” he says “You need to read pictures, not just look at them. My pictures contain a lot of literary allusions and visual puns.

“I draw on the spot when the weather’s good enough if I see something I want to draw,” he says, showing me a lovely watercolour sketch of the power station chimneys. “Then I develop and work it up and through the editing process gradually a print emerges.”



River

Chris enjoys the river and the park, and has drawn extensively in the area. “I like the changes and developments that are happening around here. There was the old bakery by the river, and the vitriol works, which is commemorated in the name of the Glassmill building by Battersea Bridge. And there’s a lot of potential for change, especially with the RCA move.

Creative

“Hopefully it will be a mix of residential and creative development. There could be galleries, studios, workshops, and that would spawn cafes and bars and specialist shops such as artists’ supplies. The Ransome’s Dock redevelopment is meant to include artists’ studios, I believe.”

Chris Orr exhibits regularly at the Jill George Gallery in Soho. As a Royal Academician, he is entitled to show up to six works in the Summer Exhibition. His work can also be bought from the studio.



Battersea Bridge

To see his work go to www.chrisorr-ra.com

One of London's best kept secrets

Architectural historian Andrew Saint describes the Survey of London's forthcoming books on Battersea

As you read this, a small team of English Heritage's writers, researchers and illustrators is toiling away unearthing everything they can about the history and urban fabric of Battersea. Their findings will be presented in a weighty pair of books due to be published in 2012, as Volumes 49 and 50 of the *Survey of London*. *The Survey* is one of the capital's best-kept secrets. Available on-line as well as in libraries, it acts as the definitive record for each district it tackles and is a precious local resource. It also provides a framework for planning. In such a complex city, the history of each area needs in-depth understanding before its future is decided.

Finest buildings

The series began over 100 years ago as a shoestring operation set up by the architect C R Ashbee to record London's finest buildings before they were demolished. After a century we have got less than half way. In the 1960s and 70s official listing took over the business of protecting historic buildings. The *Survey* became a fully researched and illustrated record of each district it took on (generally an ancient parish). Facts about property ownership, social history and famous residents fertilized the older mixture of architecture and measured drawings and photographs.

Kensington was the first area to get the full treatment (in four volumes!). Since then we have

covered Poplar, Docklands, Knightsbridge and in 2008 Clerkenwell.

Neglect

Now it is Battersea's turn, along with Woolwich. When I became editor of the *Survey* in 2006, I was conscious that we had neglected South London. The last volumes to look south of the river were on Lambeth in the 1950s. Battersea seemed a good choice. The *Survey*



has often chosen areas which are in the throes of change.

Time of change

Since we started work a year ago, the landscape of Nine Elms, for instance, looks potentially very different. The GLA has undertaken a study of the riverside from Waterloo to Chelsea Bridge, there is a fresh scheme for Battersea Power Station, the future of the Covent Garden Markets looks in doubt, and now the American Embassy is coming.

But the best reason for recording Battersea is its fascinating balance of features, architectural and social. At over 2,300 acres it is a formidably large area for us, stretching from Vauxhall almost to

Balham. If parts of the north still struggle, the centre and south 'between the commons' are comfortably middle-class. There are tough public housing estates, yuppie enclaves, three glorious open spaces, a tangle of railways converging on the busiest station in Britain, schools, churches and pubs. Battersea's impressive industrial history has largely now vanished.

Thematic approach

To get to grips with its extent and variety, the *Survey* for the first time is going thematic. Volume 49 will cover the public buildings, industry, shops etc, chapter by chapter.

Then in Volume 50 we'll revert to our traditional topographical arrangement, so people can easily find about the street and the house they or their ancestors lived in.

Much first-class research has been done on Battersea's past, especially by the Wandsworth

Historical Society.

Discoveries

But we've already made some exciting discoveries. The drawings made when St Mary's was finished in 1778 have come to light, and we have been able to reconstruct the mechanized sawmills built by Marc Isambard Brunel near Battersea Bridge. But we also rely on information coming to us, so if readers of this newsletter have old photos or deeds or other materials about Battersea, we'll be delighted to receive them. It is all grist to the *Survey of London* mill.

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Survivors remember Clapham Junction rail disaster

Jenny Sheridan on a commemoration of tragedy and heroism



Twenty years after one of Britain's worst train crashes, survivors and helpers gathered to commemorate the Clapham Junction rail disaster. Thirty five people were killed and over 130 injured in the morning rush hour on 12 December 1988.

Faulty signal

The accident happened in the cutting across Wandsworth Common when the Poole train smashed into the Basingstoke train which had been stopped by a faulty signal. Witnesses saw carriages hurtling into the air before crashing down. The tragedy worsened when a third, empty, train hit the wreckage, killing some survivors. Among the first to help the injured were teachers and students from

Emanuel School, which overlooks the railway tracks. Current staff and pupils took part in the memorial service at the stone memorial on Windmill Road (above: picture from *Wandsworth Guardian*).

Heroism

Teacher Simon Gregory recalls: "We spent most of the morning looking after the injured, who were dazed and confused. Our children showed incredible heroism. They didn't think about it, they just got on with it."

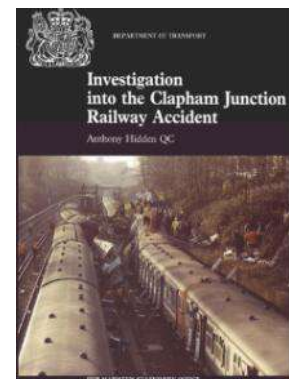
Medical staff from all over south-west London rushed to help. Some passengers needed emergency surgery on site while others were rushed to St George's Hospital. Survivors praised the work of the

rescue services who cut them free.

The official inquiry (below) found the cause of the disaster to be faulty wiring carried out by a signalman who had been working for 13 weeks with a single day off. The inquiry led to a review of rail safety measures.

Nightmares

The 20 year commemoration is a reminder that the effects of a major incident such as this can be long lasting. One of the survivors, Alison Clark, was unconscious for three weeks and has no memory of the crash. She had plastic surgery on her face. She told the *Bournemouth Echo*, "I hate the way I look and my face is still numb. And when I see a train I shake." Other survivors have spoken of their fear of travelling by train, especially in the front coaches, and of recurring nightmares.

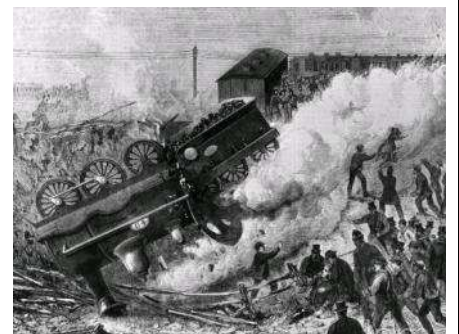


Thankfully tragic events such as those reported above are rare, with few historical reports of serious accidents close to Clapham Junction.

In February 1868 the *Illustrated London News* carried a dramatic picture (right) of rescue workers surrounding an overturned engine near Clapham Junction.

And in 1892 the same publication (left) had a front page picture of firefighters playing their hoses on a wrecked and burning train after a

Earlier accidents near Clapham Junction



'fatal accident' at the station on 20th August

Pounce on your tomatoes...

Jenny Sheridan and other Wandsworth gardeners solve some problems

The fledgling (or should that be seedling?) Wandsworth Gardening Society has met twice now. Due to people's commitments, winter illnesses and of course the snow, both meetings have been small, but very productive.

At the first meeting the group discussed what it wanted the society to be and do. We agreed that at least for the present it would be an informal group – more co-op than committee – with no membership structure or fees. Proposed activities were trouble-shooting, garden visits (to each other's or publicly opened gardens) and sharing seeds, compost and, for single-handed gardeners, perhaps garden work.

At the second meeting, in early February in the Alma, we described our gardens, which ranged from a small shady back garden through a part-paved 1930s-influenced plot

to an exposed narrow garden infested with honey fungus to a front garden that has lost its way since a large robinia tree was felled.

The theme of the meeting was trouble-shooting. Suzanne proffered both a problem – tomato blight - and its solution: "Pounce on a plant the moment you spot its leaves curling and spray it with Bordeaux mix." Celia wanted to know how to stop squirrels stealing bulbs from pots. Suzanne suggested using upturned wire waste-paper baskets from the pound shop.

Other questions covered deterring cats from using raised beds as toilets and how to dig an exhausted solanum from a tub. Laraine wondered how to hide a neighbour's tall ugly wall.

With at least some of our gardening problems solved and looking forward to a sunny and trouble-free spring, we walked out of the pub into the slushy snow.

If you are interested in hearing about the next meeting, contact gardensoc@mailwise.co.uk

Useful tip from Thelwell for March gardeners



GIVE SUPPORT TO ANYTHING DISTURBED BY THE WIND

From *Up the Garden Path* (Eyre Methuen 1967)

Slow Fried Potatoes with Thyme and Taleggio

- 1 pound waxy potatoes
- 1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 ounces butter
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
- a small palmful of thyme leaves
- 4 ounces semi soft taleggio cheese

Slice the potatoes into rounds the thickness of a coin. Fry the onion gently in the oil and butter in a shallow pan.

As it becomes soft and pale gold, add the potatoes, garlic, thyme, a little salt and ground pepper and toss gently to coat the potatoes in oil and herbs.



Can I help you? Mark Newman behind the counter

Turn the heat as low as possible and cover the pan so the potatoes cook slowly, stirring them from time to time. After 40 to 50 minutes, they will be soft and golden.

... and don't forget the cheese!

Thanks to Mark Newman of Hamish Johnston for this seasonal recipe

Slice the cheese thinly, lay on the potatoes and cover the pan again. It will have melted after a couple of minutes. Serves 2.

Hamish Johnston
is at
48 Northcote Road
Battersea,
London SW11 1PA

If you have a favourite recipe you'd like to share with the readers of *Battersea Matters* please send it to recipes@batterseasociety.org.uk

Young's is gone—Long Live Sambrook's!

Jenny Sheridan visits the small brewery with big ideas

Real ale is back in Wandsworth – and this time it's in Battersea! Sambrook's Brewery lacks Young's dray horses and its venerable history, but it has the same ambition: to brew traditional beer in the heart of London.

In 2006, shortly after Young's closed, Duncan Sambrook was at a real ale festival with friends. They realised that, among the hundreds of beers available, there were none

decided to build on local traditions and search for premises in Wandsworth. They found the perfect site: a former lighting studio in Yelverton Road. In early December 2008 they launched their first beer, Wandle Ale.

Traditional

With two fermentation tanks, Sambrook's can brew twice a week, a total of 40 barrels or around



Cheers—David (right) and Duncan sample their own product

brewed in London apart from Fullers at Chiswick. Duncan determined to give up his life as an accountant in the City and start a brewery in London.

Experienced brewer

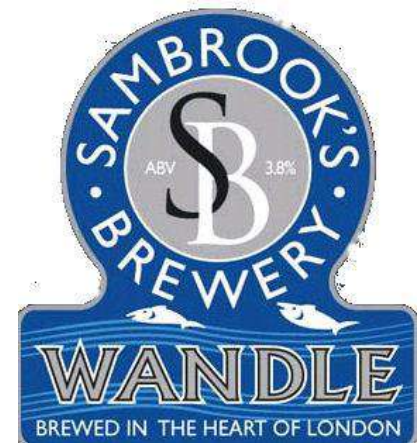
After a short course in brewing fundamentals and with his enthusiasm undimmed, he met David Welsh, an experienced brewer with a wealth of knowledge.

Both real ale fans and admirers of Young's brewing, Duncan and David

11,500 pints. They plan to add three more tanks, with a maximum capacity of 100 barrels. They use only English malt and hops and aim to use as many traditional craft processes as possible.

The choice of hop variety is one of the main influences on the character of the beer, Duncan explained. As far as possible, everything is recycled: after use, the spent hops are sold as fertilizer and the malt goes to a farmer near Guildford for cattle food.

At 3.8% Wandle Ale is a light beer



with a golden colour and a dry, hoppy finish. It is currently available in just a few local pubs, including the Round House on Battersea Rise and the Westbridge in Battersea Bridge Road. It can also be bought from the brewery in 17 pint kegs for parties.

Potential

They plan to bottle it in future, having found a potential bottling partner in Clapham. They also want to add a stronger, darker draught ale. David Welsh ran the award-winning Ringwood Brewery near Salisbury for 30 years, "but then I retired", he said with a wry laugh. David still lives in Wiltshire but also has a flat in Battersea.

Between them and Al, their part-time assistant, David and Duncan do everything from brewing to keeping the brewery spotless to being sales representatives and delivering the beer.

Duncan is based in Hammersmith and plays rugby for Barnes RFC. As well as his commercial background in accountancy, his chemistry degree helps to equip him for his present role and he has never been happier. "All kids want to run a pub," he says, "I've gone one better!"

Sambrook's website is at
www.sambrooksbrewery.co.uk

The NHS – public service or private enterprise?

Dr Mike Squires, (Secretary SW London Keep Our NHS Public) investigates local health services

During 2008 Wandsworth Primary Care Trust (PCT) conducted a survey of what local people wanted for health services in Battersea and North Wandsworth. The usual tick box exercise, it gave no real chance for patients to question the proposals or put forward their own. The outcome, predictably, was that the PCT could boast that after wide consultation there was complete agreement with its proposals.

The lynchpin of the PCT's plans for Battersea is a new polyclinic to be built, preferably near Clapham Junction. It is not known yet who has won the contract, but we do know that the new vice-president of the Patients Association, Sir Richard Branson, is keen for his company Virgin to move into health care. Might Battersea's taxpayers be the lucky recipients of his bid, or could it be the US based United Health-care, who have already scooped up GP surgeries in Camden?

Alarm bells

Despite requests under the Freedom of Information Act the PCT has refused to divulge the cost of the new project. What we do know, and here alarm bells should ring, is that the new polyclinic will be built under a Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) scheme. This entails a consortium of companies getting together to build new premises, then leasing it back to the NHS over the period of the contract, usually up to thirty years.

St John's Therapy Centre is an example of a LIFT contract. Built by a consortium called 'Building Better Health', it is being leased back to the NHS over a twenty five year

period. The Centre cost seven million pounds to build but the PCT is leasing it back at £945,000 a year (this is linked to the retail price index, which is currently 2.5% a year). With LIFT schemes, it is difficult to make final estimates of the cost; in the case of St John's Therapy Centre it is likely to be about £32million, almost five times more than it would have cost to build the premises itself.



Bolingbroke Hospital

Also, patients in the Battersea area must now visit St John's, rather than their dearly loved Bolingbroke Hospital, which the trust board of St George's has just declared surplus to requirements. I hope that Wandsworth PCT will intervene and make full use of this valuable NHS site.

Before abolition in 1964, Battersea Borough Council had as its motto 'not for you, not for me, but for us'. This principle is enshrined in the National Health Service.

Since the nineties, though, the drive to privatise our health care has been embedded in new legislation and policy. The dogma that private necessarily means better must surely be re-evaluated, now that taxpayers have spent billions bailing out the private sector. Hopefully, these lessons will not be lost on those in high places, or our local NHS bodies, and this creeping privatisation will stop.

Representation

Wandsworth Primary Care Trust may need some convincing of the errors of trying to privatise health care. The trust board running primary health care in the borough is a mixture of full time NHS directors, and paid non-executive directors and a chair, appointed by an appointments commission of the Department of Health.

Under this arrangement, soon to be abolished in other parts of the UK, neither patients, nor public, nor PCT staff have any representation. And until very recently there was no local authority voice on the board. Our taxes pay for the local health service, but we have no say in how it is administered and governed.

According to Wandsworth PCT's website, the trust chair has a background in sales and marketing. At least four of the other non-executive directors have backgrounds in business or venture capitalism. Non-executive directors should - among other things, be representative of the community - hardly the case in Wandsworth.

The NHS is at a crossroads. Will it remain under democratic ownership and control or will it be privatised and broken up? The omens are not good, either locally or nationally. The midnight hour for people in Battersea will come in March when they will know just who has gained the contract for the new Clapham Junction Health Centre.

Will it be a private company, or will it be a group of NHS doctors? Watch this space.

www.keepournhspublic.com

Mike Squires is the author of *Shapurji Saklatvala – a political biography*

Qui Custos ipse custodis: Who shall watch the watchers?

Tony Tuck, chair of the Battersea Society takes a long hard look at where we're going

Any advanced developed society requires laws and rules to enable relative harmony. Some are written down and are mandatory. Traffic lights exemplify this ensuring that traffic flows evenly, collisions are minimized, life preserved and folk can move around safely. It is useful to recall such simple human basics, especially when (in Will Hutton's words) "we are living through nothing less than the disintegration of the global financial system".

Corruption

The case of Bernard Madoff is only one of a catalogue of recent cynical corruption, following earlier failures like Enron, Arthur Anderson, Northern Rock, Lehman Bros, etc. How could they get away with it? Well, rather like Sir John Hunt explaining his need to climb Mount Everest, "Because it's there, and because I can".

Will the Fourth Estate, the Press, hold these people to account? Not by the way they reported the so-called "Apologies" by four bankers to a Select Committee. Did they say

"I am so sorry for my greed, my incompetence, for recklessness beyond the dreams of avarice"? Former HBOS chairman Lord Stevenson, was "profoundly and unreservedly sorry at the turn of events", while Sir Fred Godwin, of RBS, issued an "unqualified apology for all of the distress". Less an apology perhaps than regret at getting caught!

Reassurance

So, to restate the question, "Who shall watch the watchers?" It is government's job to keep an eye on the captains of industry. But we can affect local issues. For reassurance just recall the recent decision of the council's Planning Applications Committee about the former Job Centre in Beechmore Road.

In the face of local opposition the planning officer recommended that a monstrous carbuncle of a building replace the present rather quaint building. But the elected councillors listened to vox populi, and then voted by 9 – 0 against the scheme. So three rousing cheers for our

elected councillors.

This decision should give heart to those fighting the absurd twin tower project at Clapham Junction. The council tells us "there is no in principle objection to taller buildings on this site ...the site is a location in the borough that could take taller buildings" It is clear beyond reasonable doubt that such a development would be a community destroyer.

Custodians

It is further evidence of anti-social greed, indifference to the human scale of living and of the failure of council officers to understand that their role is not simply to observe planning rules. They are the custodians of our communities. They must recall that any development for human beings should fit with the human scale.

So vox populi, local elected councillors, the Battersea Society and other local groups must be the Tribunes of the People. If we shout loud enough, then the Walls of Jericho can be breached and our communities preserved. Silence in the face of barbarism is consent.

The Battersea Society

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Registered charity no.1103560

Wandsworth Common after the February snowfall



This picture was taken by Battersea Society member Michael Horsman who died on February 19th as a result of injuries received in a road accident a week before. Michael's partner Jenny Sheridan is the editor of *Battersea Matters* and had completed most of the work on the newsletter before his death. Our thoughts go out to her and to Michael's family at this difficult time.

Mike Roden, Acting Editor