



Calls for new secondary school on Bolingbroke site Support from local councillors, but campaign has its critics



'Nappy Valley' parents and their children come together outside the Bolingbroke hospital which they see as an ideal site for a much needed school. The campaigners point out that there is no state-funded, non-selective, secular

secondary school in a part of Wandsworth which has the area's two largest, most popular primary schools. They have support from council leader Edward Lister, local councillors and Battersea MP Martin Linton.

However, critics of the proposal have expressed concerns about the impact of a large secondary school on the area, and believe the financial costs will be too high.

Full story on page 3

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

From the Editor

This issue (a bumper 20-pager again!) illustrates once more the diversity of our part of this great multi-cultural city. We live in an area where youths sell vicious dogs in pubs and use them to intimidate others. This is just a few hundred metres from a shop that sells foie gras and exotic cheeses. Although no-one wants to live in an area of gang culture, we do feel that it is an essential part of Battersea that it remains a broadly mixed community, as Monica Tross argues on page 18.

Diversity

Although I sing the praises of France on page 10, the mixed and closely-knit texture of London is far healthier than the urban split of Paris, with its ring of poor and largely black or North African high-rise suburbs surrounding a middle class or affluent centre.

Our cover story could result in a school that helps to maintain the diversity of the neighbourhood. While south Battersea is a relatively moneyed area, this is by no means totally the case. Whether the campaign is successful or not must depend largely on the availability of the Bolingbroke Hospital site. **St George's NHS Trust, its owners, will put it on the market this year.** The Friends of the Bolingbroke, who fought to save the hospital, believe that using the site as a school with part set aside for healthcare would be a good compromise. The idea of a parent-led school is one that both major political parties endorse, but it throws up some interesting educational and political issues.

Politics

Speaking of politics, you may have noticed that an election is looming. **I'm sure that, being good citizens,** all Society members will be using their vote. Those living close to the



river may suffer more than most from pre-election hubbub – there will no doubt be more helicopter take-offs and landings than usual (see page 7).

US Embassy

I wonder if the heliport played a **part in the US embassy's decision** to move to Nine Elms. The winning design has now been published and you can see pictures and read more on our website. We will cover this in our next issue.

Jenny Sheridan

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Many of you will recall the I-Spy booklets published by the *News Chronicle* encouraging children to look at the world around them—whether dogs, flowers, trains, or as in the one I found on eBay, the *Sights of London*. **The 'must-see' places are little changed, although from London Bridge you won't see ships unloading their cargo, or witness the 'great bustle of flowers fruit and vegetables' at Covent Garden.**

The booklet was published around the same time as the picture on the right. Usually the 34 tram crossed the river but Battersea Bridge had just been seriously damaged by a barge (sound familiar?) so it could travel no further.

Still harking back to earlier days, like Harold MacMillan I sometimes relax with a little Trollope. In the early 80s the BBC produced *The Barchester Chronicles* with (among other stars) Nigel Hawthorne and

Donald Pleasance and thanks to the wonders of DVD I have been

watching it again. It is impeccably written and acted and best of all there is no background music blasting out in every scene. These days (sometimes even on the radio) music crashes around behind the words like a noisy neighbour testing his new stereo system.

Presumably young producers are so used to being plugged into their **iPods that they don't even notice**



Tram near Battersea Bridge 1950

The Man on the Battersea tram
Mike Roden reflects on past, present and future

the noise. But my bellowing about **it won't make it go away, so I shall** keep soberly quiet as befits one of the freedom pass generation.

Early pictures of the proposed design for Battersea Power **Station's new neighbour have just** appeared. As far as I can see it **resembles a vast rubik's cube** encased in bubble wrap and will be visible from outer space, which is where it probably came from. But what do I know? Perhaps one day the Nine Elms Embassy will be as **revered as St Paul's Cathedral,** and appear in an updated *Sights of London* I-Spy book ...

Is that the sound of porcine wings I hear flapping above me?

See you next time
Mike Roden

Let the Boly live again—as a school

Jenny Sheridan hears the arguments for and against

Local ‘Nappy Valley’ parents have launched a campaign for a new secondary school and have **pinpointed the ‘Boly’ as the ideal site.**

The campaigners stress the need for “a new state-funded, non-selective, secular secondary school in this part of **Wandsworth**”. **There is no secondary school in the seven square miles of south Battersea which has the area’s two largest and most popular primary schools, Belleville and Honeywell, as well as Alderbrook and High View primary schools.** The area has one of the highest birthrates in the country.

Long distances

Parents complain of difficulties getting their children into high-performing schools, which tend to be in Putney or Tooting. Some single-sex, some selective, all have very small catchment areas.

South Battersea children often have to travel long distances and are separated from their local friends. Many affluent middle class parents choose private education, at considerable cost, or move to areas with a greater choice of schooling. Less wealthy families are

deprived of this choice. In the early 1990s Wandsworth closed and sold off two secondary schools in the area, John Archer and Walsingham. The result is the gap in provision shown in the map below.



The campaign is supported by **Battersea’s MP, Martin Linton, who says, “There has been an explosion in the local primary school population and in due course there will be a big rise in those reaching secondary age. Fifty three per cent of children in Wandsworth do not get into their first choice of school when the offers are sent out in March, the highest proportion of any London borough. I have long been complaining to the council about the plight of Battersea Year**

six parents and pressing the case for a secondary school in south **Battersea.”**

Council leader Edward Lister and the Northcote ward councillors have also expressed strong support for the campaign. Councillor Philip **Beddows says, “I am strongly of the opinion that it (Bolingbroke Hospital) should become a school.”**

Opposition

Although there is much support for the idea of a new school, there is also opposition. One blogger on nappyvalleynet.com wrote “Is it just that you want a nice, white, middle-class ‘**Between the Commons Academy**’ because you don’t want to fork out for Emanuel?” Several commentators believe the money and energy should support existing schools rather than a new one.

A local resident who teaches in another borough comments, “**There could be problems. Even if people like the idea of a school, how will they feel about 750 teenagers streaming onto the streets at four o’clock? There are also demographic issues: the campaigners need to demonstrate that there is a shortage of places. Are there really 150 kids a year who can’t get into secondary schools?**”

Community hub

Jon de Maria, one of the **campaign’s leaders, stresses that the local nature of the school is key to the group’s aims. “We are very keen to be socially inclusive and that’s why the school will not be selective in any way. We want to educate kids from all social backgrounds. We’d also like the school to be a community hub, open at weekends and evenings for residents’ activities.”**



Architect’s vision of the Bolingbroke School of the future

(continued overleaf)

Let the Boly live again—as a school
(continued from previous page)

In this economic climate, there are clearly question marks over the funding for building and maintaining a new school. "It is likely to have mixed funding - local government, central government and an educational provider, on the lines of an academy," says Mr de Maria. "We see it as being like the Swedish free schools, which are independently run but funded by the state". Some Swedish free schools are run on a profit-making basis.

Major obstacle
"We have two big hurdles," says Mr de Maria, "site acquisition and funding. Everything depends on the Bolingbroke site being available and affordable." St George's NHS Trust, which owns the Grade 2 listed building, is likely to put it on the market later this year. The site and buildings had a net book value of just under £8m in 2008.

If the campaign is successful and the school is built, what will it be like? The target is five form entry, 150 pupils in each year group, with an eventual roll of 750, plus the possibility of a sixth form. The target opening date is an optimistic 2013 or 2014.

Future provision
Conscious of the accusation that this could be a 'Chelsea on the Wandle' academy, Mr de Maria, a quantity surveyor, points out that not all the parents involved have children at Honeywell or Belleville (local code for 'middle class'). He describes himself as "the ultimate pushy parent!" – his son is still a toddler. In ten years time, when young Josh reaches secondary age, will there be a Bolingbroke School for him to attend?

For more information on the Neighbourhood School Campaign, visit thensc.net.

New members wanted...

We are always delighted to greet new members, as it will give the Society an even stronger voice in helping change Battersea for the better.

There are many benefits to joining. Members receive this newsletter, our monthly email news update, and can buy tickets for a wide range of private events and visits. Our spring lunch and summer party are two annual highlights.

If you have a neighbour or friend who is always meaning to join the society but never quite gets round to it just let them know that we've now made it even easier. Our new secure online payment system means they can now join instantly using any debit or credit card.

Join the Society online at
batterseasociety.org.uk/join

Battersea in the 19th century: prisons, railways and mansion flats Jenny Sheridan previews a fascinating collection of essays

The Wandsworth Historical Society has a new publication which will surely be of interest to many Society members. *Aspects of Battersea History 1770–1910* is a collection of six well-illustrated and thoroughly researched studies which will stand as a major addition to the published research on Battersea's past.

Densely populated working-class housing, the building of mansion flats for the middle classes, and a proposal to construct a massive penitentiary on a site near present-day Clapham Junction. These are only some of the aspects of the extraordinary evolution of Battersea during the nineteenth century.

Dr Keith Bailey is an award-winning writer on local history and a former editor of the *Wandsworth Historian*.

He is a retired senior railway manager who has been researching the history of Victorian Wandsworth and Battersea for over thirty years. He is also active in the study of place- and field-names, and the history of the area during the Anglo-Saxon period

Copies of *Aspects of Battersea History 1770–1910* are available price £9.00 plus £1.50 for post and packaging from Neil Robson, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or send an email to ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk.

You can find out more about the Wandsworth Historical Society by visiting their website
wandsworthhistory.org.uk

Discovering West London's History

West London Local History Conference
Saturday 27 March 2010
10am-4pm
The Musical Museum,
399 High Street, Brentford
Tickets £8

Many speakers including the former curator of Wandsworth Museum, Pat Astley-Cooper, on Battersea and Wandsworth as seen by various artists, and Neil Robson, chairman Wandsworth Historical Society on a war memorial apparently abandoned in Battersea.

Further details from Neil Robson on
ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk
020 8874 6341

Preventing falls, keeping safe

Sarah Jackson and Norma Spence outline Age Concern's Handyperson Service

As people get older, it becomes harder to carry out small jobs around the home, such as changing a fuse or ceiling lightbulbs. Age Concern Wandsworth runs the Handyperson Service (HPS) helping older people with minor repairs and DIY-style tasks around the home and in the garden.



The service aims to ensure that older people stay safe and secure in their homes and is open to anyone aged 60 or over living in Wandsworth, whether they are a homeowner, a private or public tenant.

Friendly faces

Pawel and Yvonne (pictured) are the two handypeople, whose friendly faces are well known to their customers. They are fully insured for the work they do. Last year, between them, they made some 1,300 visits, completing more than 2,000 tasks. Helping prevent falls is a particular priority. People have a greater risk of falling as they grow older, and the physical and emotional consequences can be severe, resulting in lengthy hospital stays and loss of confidence.

The HPS tackles some potential hazards around the home, such as

tacking down worn carpeting or tidying trailing flexes, as well as tasks that involve climbing on a chair or ladder: hanging curtains or changing a light bulb. They also make adaptations to the home, fitting grab-rails and banisters, so that older people can be discharged safely from hospital. The service assists around 150 people each year in this way.

Smoke detectors

Home security is another key area of work. In partnership with the London Fire Service, the HPS offers a free home fire-safety assessment, and fits smoke detectors where necessary. The service also fits key safes, door chains, spy holes and window locks.

Kathleen and Frederick are two Battersea residents who make regular use of the HPS. Kathleen,

82, has osteoarthritis, while 85 year old Frederick, suffers from polymyalgia. Both conditions make it difficult for them to get around and to take care of heavier domestic tasks.

The couple have had smoke alarms installed and grab-rails fitted, and the HPS also helped to adjust their stair lift. The service that they make **most use of is the 'garden tidy'**, which includes mowing the lawn, weeding and sweeping hard surfaces.

Smaller jobs

Kathleen says that she finds the **HPS extremely helpful: 'It is not easy to get people in to do the smaller jobs,' she says. 'The handypeople work well and they are very nice.'**

Other jobs that the HPS does include: changing fuses and plugs, putting up shelves, fitting draught excluders, unblocking sinks, changing tap washers, replacing toilet seats, renewing bath and shower sealant, and cleaning windows.

If you are over 60, you are welcome to call the HPS to ask about these and other tasks that they may be able to help you with. Contact Norma Spence, HPS manager, on 020 8877 8949 or 020 8877 8940, (normas@acwandsworth.org.uk). You can also call into the Age Concern Wandsworth office at 549 Old York Road, SW18 1TQ, open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Dangerous dogs are being bred illegally in London flats and sold to strangers in pubs for about £250, no questions asked. Battersea's MP, Martin Linton, raised his concerns in the House of Commons on 4 February. Many of the



dogs are Staffordshire bull terriers and pitbull crosses and are used as weapons in gang fights, he said. Last April a man was stabbed to death by two Battersea men who used dogs as weapons to bring down their victim.

Regulation

The MP called for tighter regulation of dog ownership and breeding, including compulsory microchipping and a minimum age for dog ownership. Wandsworth Council was the first to intro-

Dogs become weapons in gang fights
Jenny Sheridan reports on a disturbing new trend

duce a compulsory scheme for chipping dogs owned by council tenants. Almost half of the dogs taken in by Battersea Dogs and Cats Home are Staffies or similar breeds that can be bred and trained to be aggressive. Often it is difficult to find new homes for them and they have to be put down. The Home would like to see a minimum age of 21 for anyone owning a bull breed or guard dog.

Michael Marchant: 1949 – 2009

Tony Tuck pays tribute to a good friend of the Battersea Society

The Battersea Society lost a very good friend last November when Mike Marchant died of cancer in Eastbourne. Although only 60 years old, he crammed more lives into those brief years than many of us could catch up with.

Special

For the Battersea Society he was **ostensibly a ‘backroom boy’**. He first came to attention in 2005 when he offered to help with graphics and the Newsletter. Even at our first meeting I knew he was special. Not only did the two of us resonate in an indefinable way, but ideas and possibilities showered from him as from a Catherine Wheel. Swiftly he designed the **Society’s letterhead, revamped the Newsletter layout and indulged in journalism with his ‘Battersea Ranter’ column. Suddenly putting a newsletter together with Mike became a fun thing to do. Perhaps he never came to a formal meeting, but his spirit ran through the Society’s public face.**

Love of music

Mike’s Facebook entry says merely for his activities, “I manage bands and am a record producer.” (It also has his favourite quotation as being **“If you want to make God laugh - tell Him your plans”**). Being with him you never quite knew where conversation would lead. I recall visits for editorial meetings only to be sat down while he played back the latest work of the group that he managed, or share the pleasure of listening to variations in instrumental backings as a new work was designed.

Mike’s talents went much further in Battersea’s various comm-unities . For example, he designed

and produced one of the annual **reviews for the Sir Walter St John’s Educational Charity**. Undoubtedly his master work was to produce the DVD *Red Battersea*, illustrating the first hundred years of Battersea Labour Party. I remember the fun we had tracking down fragments of film to include. His special pleasure at finding a film of Caroline Ganley, MP for Battersea in 1945-61; the joy in playing back early recordings by local actors, including Tim West, Prunella Scales and Su Elliott.

Perfectionist

I recall the first showing of the early chapters in Portcullis House of the House of Commons before a room full of parliamentarians and people from Battersea. A perfectionist, Mike had made six different copies of the DVD as he was unhappy with the initial sound qualities as they **played in the room’s acoustics**. The December 2008 showing of the complete film at the Clapham Picture House, and the master class afterwards, will long be remembered by all who were there.

Professor Penelope Corfield, who wrote the DVD script, collaborating with Mike in its production at every stage, said of Mike in an essay on the making of the DVD:

“He was a brilliant, creative, funny, passionate, caring man, with a real commitment to community politics. He had many interests in his life, from music-making to graphic design. All these interests came together in the making of the DVD, which would have been completely impossible without his creativity, dedication, technical wizardry, meticulous application, and total gusto.”

Private

Although prepared to expostulate on anything within the range of thought or language, Mike was a quietly private man on personal matters. While he rarely spoke about this, he was immensely proud of his wife Margaret and her work as a teacher. He also saw her as the central core that enabled him to be so creative over such a wide canvas. That is why, while *Red Battersea* was probably his last artistic triumph, his last personal and deeply significant achievement was to move house from Battersea to Eastbourne.

Welcoming, warm, generous As his brother-in-law, Tim McClure, said at his funeral:

“And finally he made it to Eastbourne: by a series of minor miracles he was able to fulfill his dream of moving with Margaret to the coast; it is sad that his failing physical strength meant that he could not enjoy the experience for long. However, alongside the diminishing of his body in the last days before he died, there emerged a distillation of the essential Mike: a person entirely without bitterness or resentment, entirely gracious, welcoming, warm, generous, interested, loving.

Thank God for a man whose fullness of life brought life and joy to many others and left many the **richer for having known him.”**

The full text of Tim McClure’s Valediction, together with the poems read at the funeral, can be found on the Battersea Society’s website batterseasociety.org.uk

The Blue Plaques of Battersea

Mike Roden finds famous and forgotten names on Battersea buildings



Music hall star remembered

London's blue plaques have become so familiar that we hardly notice them. The scheme was founded in 1867 by the Royal Society of Arts, and the London County Council took over its management in 1901. At that time the colour was changed from brown to blue and in 1939 the current design was adopted. Administration of the scheme passed to the GLC and on its abolition in 1965 English Heritage took over, and since then has erected over 300 plaques, bringing the total to more than 800. Nine of those plaques are to be found here in Battersea.

Forgotten

One of the lesser known of those commemorated will be Fred Knee (1868-1914), who lived at 24 Sugden Road. Yet this political radical and reformer was very important for the lives of working people in the early twentieth century. A vocal advocate of cheap housing for workers, he was elected in 1900 to the newly formed Metropolitan Borough of Battersea. As chair of the Housing Committee he was responsible for the building of Britain's first council houses.

Largely forgotten now, but a big music hall star in his heyday was Gus Elen (1862-1940), who lived at 3 Thurleigh Avenue. His stock in trade was cockney songs and costermonger sketches reflecting his own humble background. Probably

his best known song was *If it wasn't for the 'ouses in between*. He retired in 1914, although he was called back in 1935 for a Royal Command performance. He is buried in Streatham Park Cemetery

Writers and journalists

A figure whose legacy survives is John Walter (1739-1812) who lived at 113 Clapham Common North Side. Years of prosperity as a coal merchant ended with the failure of a venture into underwriting. He turned his hand to printing, from an



John Walter

office in Blackfriars, and on January 1st 1785 started a paper called *The Daily Universal Register*, which three years later became the *The Times*. Walter ran into trouble with a story which libelled the Duke of York. He was eventually sentenced to two years in Newgate prison, but after the intervention of the Prince of Wales he was freed and pardoned. In 1795 he handed over the newspaper to his son and retired to Teddington.

Four of the plaques commemorate writers. Better known than most is **Sean O'Casey** (1880-1964) whose plaque can be seen on Prince of Wales Drive at 49 Overstrand Mansions. The author of *Shadow of a Gunman* and *Juno and the Paycock* left Dublin after a series of heated disagreements with

the board of the Abbey Theatre. He never returned to Ireland, and lived initially in London where his talent and his often irascible foibles were appreciated, even celebrated, including his refusal to wear a dinner jacket, preferring a turtle-neck sweater. Eventually he moved to Torquay, where he continued to write until his death.

Norman Douglas (1868-1952) is commemorated at 63 Albany Mansions, Albert Bridge Road. His career was plagued by scandal which took him in and out of exile in Capri for much of his adult life. His best known novel *South Wind* is set in a thinly fictionalized Capri. He lived in London in the 1940s, but eventually returned to Capri where his acquaintances included Graham Greene and Elizabeth David. His death in 1952 was the result of an apparently deliberate drugs overdose after a long illness.

A very different author G.A. Henty (1832-1902) lived at 33 Lavender Gardens. In 1870, while working as a war correspondent he published his first children's book, *Out on the Pampas*. Most of his 122 books were for children, and his young heroes (occasionally heroines) are always the epitome of British resource, honesty, courage and above all modesty. His books are very collectable, but probably little read today.



One of G A Henty's heroic yarns

(continued on next page)

The Blue Plaques of Battersea (continued from previous page)



Wartime

Remembered chiefly for his poem *Adlestrop*, and his death in the Great War, Edward Thomas (1878-1917) lived at 61 Shelgate Road. Educated at Battersea Grammar School, St Paul's School and Lincoln College, Oxford he worked as a literary critic, before turning to poetry in 1914. Despite his age, he enlisted in 1915 and soon after arriving in France was killed in action at Arras on 9 April 1917. Few of his published poems relate directly to his war experience.

By contrast the sculptor Charles Sargeant Jagger (1885–1934) made full use of his war experience, during which he was wounded three times, and won the Military Cross. His plaque is high up on the wall of 67 Albert Bridge Road. His grim

bronze relief *No Man's Land* (in the Tate collection) shows a lone look-out taking cover behind corpses strewn across barbed wire. His most famous work is the Royal Artillery Memorial which stands at Hyde Park Corner, with its huge stone howitzer and life-size bronze statues of an officer, a driver, a shell-carrier, and—controversially—a dead soldier.

Heroism

True courage is commemorated at 42 Vicarage Crescent. While studying medicine at St George's Hospital Medical School (then located near Hyde Park) Edward Wilson (1872-1912) undertook mission work in the slums of Battersea. As physician and naturalist he joined Captain Scott on the 1901 Antarctic expedition and the men became close friends. On the later *Terra Nova* expedition Wilson was in the five-man party which reached the pole to find that Amundsen had been there a month before. Their desperate return journey ended when Scott, Bowers and Wilson, too weak to continue, were trapped in their tent by a ferocious

blizzard. When their bodies were found months later in November 1912, there was huge national mourning.

Wandsworth Borough council recently unveiled its first green plaque commemorating post-war prime minister Clement Attlee. And looking to the future the Battersea Society is currently considering erecting plaques of its own, and would welcome suggestions for locations where such plaques could commemorate people or events with specific Battersea connections. You can write to 42 Bolingbroke Grove SW11 6EH, or email us at secretary@batterseasociety.org.uk



Edward Thomas

Spring is coming – time for a stroll!

You will be able to spot most of the the plaques mentioned in the above article by following the walks featured in this soon-to-be-published booklet.

The maps cover a number of heritage walks across Battersea, giving both residents and visitors the chance to discover more about the area. Hopefully they will also discover new favourite spots, cafes and corners.

The walks were put together by the Clapham Junction town centre manager, Lorinda Freint, in consultation with local historians and amenity societies. By no means a



definitive history of Battersea's heritage, it is meant to be a starting point for new discoveries.

The booklets will be available from local libraries from the end of March.

Thursday 10 June 2010

7pm

St Mary's Church
Battersea Church Road

Battersea's global reach **A talk on Price's Candle Factory**

Jon Newman, Price's archivist and Lambeth archives manager, on the **company's innovative use of industrial** technology in the nineteenth century.

Admission free
Enquiries 020 7223 5999.

Organised by the Battersea Society as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival (30 May – 13 June).

Transition Town Wandsworth – finding common ground
 Dan O’Neill on how the Transition Town concept works in Wandsworth

Residents and community groups in the Wandsworth area are combining their local knowledge and neighbourhood spirit to address the issues of peak oil and climate change. They are volunteering their time for projects, workshops and skills swaps through involvement in Transition Town Wandsworth. This project, spurred by the burgeoning nationwide transition town movement, is a way for local people to take a direct hand in planning resilience for tomorrow by getting involved in sustainable projects today.

Community gardens
 Current projects include one of **Wandsworth’s first community gardens** (the proposed location is in Wandsworth Town), skills share workshops and music and culture events (such as last years Low Carbon Carnival at the Battersea Arts Centre). The group is committed to finding ways to engage everyone from the area, to strengthen the community and educate people on the issues. Peak oil is the theory that most of the cheap and easier to extract oil **has already ‘peaked’ in terms of** discovery and extraction. The theory has slowly gained ground over the last few years; tellingly the October 2008 report of the **government’s Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil & Energy Security**

plainly sets out its expectations for **a supply ‘crunch’ around 2011 – 2013**. These realities, coupled with the challenges of climate change, have resulted in a decisive shift in recent years towards clean technologies and sustainable, local commerce.

Unsustainable consumption
 Increasingly, people recognise the need for action to tackle this and other issues that directly affect their everyday lives - dependency on cheap imports, increasing instability in fuel markets and unsustainable levels of consumption. So Transition Town Wandsworth has decided to turn to the community for solutions to these problems, believing that some of the answers to the **borough’s most pressing concerns** are likely to be found at the local level.

We work with existing initiatives such as the Wandsworth Environment Forum and Food Up Front to create community gardens, growing projects, green transport solutions and skills share projects. We also recognise the need for close cooperation with the local authority. Transition Town Wandsworth wants as many volunteers from the community as possible to come forward, join in and make Wandsworth a model of co-operation and sharing. For

example, many members of the **borough’s older generation** may hold skills such as clothes repair, beer brewing and kitchen **gardening that are lost on today’s generation – now’s the time to pass them along!**

Diverse community
 The initiative is committed to involving every member of our diverse community in its plan to provide local resilience against climatic or oil shocks for Wandsworth in the coming years.

If you have an idea of what might make Wandsworth a greener and more sustainable borough, would like to take part in TT Wandsworth events or projects, or simply want to find out more, check out tinyurl.com/ye6jl8g , or contact **Dan O’Neill 07931 106 949** ttwandsworth@hotmail.co.uk



Have your ears been blasted by helicopter noise recently? Perhaps on 28 February? Being a major sporting day (the Carling cup final), that was one of the dates when Battersea Heliport was particularly busy.

Daily Limit
 Usually, the daily limit of take-offs and landings is 80, but this can be doubled to 160 on five days a year. Three of these days are coming up in the next few months. So put on your ear muffs -

You have been warned....!
 Heliport alert on forthcoming busy (and noisy) days

or leave town:

- 16-19 March (Cheltenham Festival)
- 4-5 June (Epsom Derby)
- 15-19 June (Royal Ascot)

A day at the races...
 You might, of course, choose to go to the races yourself and have a flutter. Who knows—you could win enough to

buy your very own helicopter.
Jenny Sheridan

You can learn more about heliport operations at their website:
tinyurl.com/y8k7tpr

Battersea-sur-Thames: food hub or food desert?

Jenny Sheridan goes in search of food shops

One of the reasons many of us love France is the quantity and quality of individually-owned food shops, staffed by artisans who truly know their craft. I spent Christmas in Cancale, a small town in Brittany with a population of a little over 5,000. As well as its large Sunday market and a couple of supermarkets, Cancale has two excellent butchers and four patisseries, all good, one superb. A specialist dairy shop is about to open.

How does Battersea, with 75,000 residents, compare? The good news is that we have not lost all our prized shops to the giants of Tesco, Asda et al. We certainly do not have the 28 butchers and 56 bakers we would need to compete with Cancale but let us celebrate the wealth we do have access to. Many of the food shops are centred in Northcote Road. Those of us lucky enough to live nearby had fond hopes of it becoming a food hub, a bijou version of Borough Market. Sadly, sky-high rents and limited support from the council put paid to that, but there is much to enjoy.

Hamish Johnston is one of the finest cheesemongers in London. They stock around 120 different cheeses, specialising in France and the British Isles, with a few from Spain and Italy as well. On my last visit, I spotted more than 30 goat cheeses, including the chalky white and very delicious Ticklemore **from Totnes and Northumberland's softer, delicate Brinkburn. Ten sheep's milk cheeses accompany cows' cheeses** including Stinking Bishop, unpasteurised Brie and several Cheddars. The friendly staff are happy to offer tastes.

The shop also stocks exotic delicatessen items such as peat-smoked scallops, Gascon foie gras, chutneys and relishes and named-variety apple juice. Not everything is a luxury: I buy good Greek olive oil from them in a three-litre tin for £20: excellent value. Recycling the tin as a plant container is a bonus.

Hamish Johnston, 48 Northcote Road.
Tel 020 7738 0741. Open every day.

Dove's butchers must be the best-known shop in Northcote Road. Started by **Bob Dove's grandfather Henry** in 1889, it proudly describes itself as **being 'purveyors of fine Scotch and English meat for 120 years'**. Bob sells a wide variety of game in season and hangs beef for up to three weeks. The shop has branched out into home-made pies – a wide variety includes steak and claret, and rabbit, bacon and cider. There are also casseroles, curries, soups and ice creams. Come summer, I mean to try their dreamy-sounding Spanish saffron and orange blossom ice.

Dove's, 71 Northcote Road.
Tel 020 7223 5191. Open Mon– Sat.

Hennessy's may not be as well established as Doves, but fourth-generation butcher Gary Hennessy really knows his meat. His rare breed beef is hung for four to five weeks. I can vouch for the excellence of his lamb, some of which comes from the Pevensy salt marshes. He also sells organic and free-range eggs and chickens. The friendly and knowledgeable staff will advise on cuts of meat and cooking times. If they do not have a cut in stock they will get it in for customers.

Hennessy's, 80 Northcote Road.
Tel 020 7228 0894. Open Tue – Sat, closed Wed afternoon.

Northcote Road can also boast two delis, although we lament the passing of the exceptional I Sapori a few years ago. At Salumeria Napoli Salvatore hums along to Italian hits from the 70s as he carves Parma ham and a range of eight salamis. Several fresh sauces are sold to accompany either fresh pasta and gnocchi or his vast range of dried pasta. There is a wide stock of jars of vegetables and antipasti as well as good olives and, in summer, Italian baby tomatoes and basil plants.

Salumeria Napoli, 69 Northcote Road.
Tel 020 7228 2445. Open every day.

At the southern end of Northcote road, Vito has opened a deli next to his restaurant. There is a relatively limited

array of salami and hams and sometimes take-away food cooked by the restaurant's chef.

Vito's, 177 Northcote Road. Open every day.

One of the most unusual shops in the whole of the UK, the Hive Honey Shop, is owned by third-generation bee-keeper James Hammill and his wife. Behind a glass wall you see thousands of their bees surrounding their queen and flying out to gather pollen from neighbouring gardens. This local honey may be effective against hay fever and other allergies. As well as their own honey the Hammills sell dozens of honeys from all over the world - a tasting table allows customers to



sample them. There is honey mustard too, and their own apple chutney, pollinated by their own bees in their own orchard. Hard to get a product more natural and more traceable than that! For a few weeks in the autumn they sell apples and home-made apple juice from the same orchard.

The Hive Honey Shop
93 Northcote Rd Tel 020 7924 6233. Open Mon – Sat, closed for lunch -

Dandelion is primarily a health shop, stuffed with pills and potions and dispensing earnest nutritional advice. But it is well stocked with largely organic foods as well, including fruit and vegetables as well as yogurts and stone-ground bread. Lunchtime salads and hot vegetarian take-aways are popular.

Dandelion, 120 Northcote Road.
Open Mon – Sat.

(continued from previous page)

Lola Rojo has take-away morsels for sale outside their tapas restaurant on Saturdays (market day). Mostly these are deep fried fritters of cod, ham or cheese. There are also delicious little pots of garlic mayonnaise and romesco sauce and, in season, glorious baskets of wild mushrooms or padron peppers. You fry these in olive oil then sprinkle them with crunchy salt. The fun is finding the occasional hot one.

Lola Rojo, 78 Northcote Road. Take-away food Saturday.

Gail's has taken on the corner premises once occupied by the much-loved **Rachel and Liz's Lighthouse Bakery**. **Gail's is a baker's too, but is part of a small chain – currently three shops in London. They are an artisan bakery but, unlike the Lighthouse, the bread is not made on the premises (and can be found in Waitrose). The shop also serves as a café, with several pavement tables. Inexplicably, it appears on the Love Clapham website.**

Gail's, 64 Northcote Road

Northcote Road also of course has its street market, mainly operational on Friday and Saturday, offering fruit and vegetables, olives, a large bread stall (open every day) and some extras including sprightly cupcakes, a specialist dessert deli and Portuguese and Italian stalls, and a fish stall (open Tuesday to Saturday).

Although Northcote Road has the greatest concentration of food shops, it is by no means the only focus for foodies. Near Battersea Bridge is **Butcher and Grill**. Mainly a restaurant, it also serves as a butcher and small deli/grocer. I was impressed by the French cuts of lamb and beef, by the rosy veal and the osso buco. They import spicy merguez sausages from France but make most sausages themselves. Beef is hung for 28 days. On the grocery side, I was taken with the prune and armagnac ice cream and the Chegworth Valley juices.



Butcher and Grill, 39-41 Parkgate Road. Open every day (till 8pm on weekdays)

Battersea High Street has its share of food shops too. The friendly **Ebony Center** has an array of African and West Indian fruit and vegetables. Their tinned goods look interesting and they offer a selection of Caribbean cooked food such as jerk chicken and fried fish.

Their publicity states "No more trips to

Ebony Center, 157 Battersea High St. Tel 07940 025665. Open Mon-Sat

Brixton or Tooting".

Greengrocers used to be a common sight on all our high streets. Most have disappeared under the onslaught of supermarkets and to some extent their place has been taken by markets and **farmers' markets. But I was pleased to discover a proper old-fashioned greengrocer, Raynsford's, selling prawn-pink rhubarb, sprout tops – and Seville oranges at 69 pence a pound, half the price of Northcote Road. The greengrocer asked me when I wanted to eat my avocado (only 50p) and found one of the exact degree of**

Raynsford's, 153 Battersea High St.
Open Fri – Sun

ripeness.

Returning to dreams of France, Battersea-sur-Thames can boast its own French patissier. Among the monolithic blocks fronting the river is **Cake Boy**, a café run by Eric Lanlard, formerly cake-maker to Madonna. Glamorous cakes and buttery croissants and *pains au chocolat* adorn the counter and there are French jams

Cake Boy, Kingfisher House, Battersea Reach. Open Mon-Sat

and interesting chocolates for sale.

So how do we compare to a French town? Well, in quantity we lag far behind, but in quality we can hold our heads up, especially for butchers. As well-butchered British meat is, in my view, better than French, we can take

Two pieces of pork fillet
Fennel seeds (about half a teaspoon)
1 medium onion
1 red pepper
Garlic
1 thick slice bacon or pancetta (optional)
5 or 6 small mushrooms
Chunk of ginger
1 stick rhubarb
Ginger wine or sherry (optional)

Chop the onion and pepper fairly small. Cut the bacon into matchsticks. Chop the garlic finely.

Saute the pork in a frying pan till brown, reduce the heat a bit and sea-

son with salt, pepper, a little lemon juice and fennel seeds. Add the garlic. Continue cooking until the meat is almost done – about 5-10 minutes. Tip the pan into a heated dish in a low oven, covered with foil.

Add a little more oil to the pan and gently fry the onion and the pepper, and the bacon if using. Pour a small glass of ginger wine, sherry or water into the pan, plus any juice that has come out of the pork. Swirl it around the pan and pour it over the meat.

Slice the mushrooms and the peeled ginger. Put a small lump of butter in the frying pan and add the mushrooms

Battersea Kitchen

Pork with rhubarb and ginger
Jenny Sheridan shares a favourite supper dish

and the ginger. When they have softened, add the rhubarb, cut into one-inch lengths. Cook for a few minutes till done, adding more butter, wine or water if necessary. Pour over the pork and serve.

Instead of the fresh ginger you can use preserved ginger in syrup. If so, use water rather than ginger wine.

Why not send us your favourite recipe?
recipes@batterseasociety.org.uk

New Wandsworth Museum set to open in May

Jenny Sheridan looks forward to a much anticipated event

At long last the new Wandsworth Museum is going to open its doors to the public. The confirmed date is Monday 31 May and the site is the West Hill Library, closed by the Council in 2007. Following negotiations described by Andrew Leitch, the museum's director, as "vigorous", the Council has agreed to a 20 year lease of the building, waiving the rental charges for the first five years, a saving worth £200,000. Renovation work has already started.

Financial support

The museum has received a handsome donation of Young's Brewery's entire archive. This will form the basis for a new archive of industrial heritage which will be housed in the museum. Young's have also offered financial support for an archivist to catalogue their collection. The V&A has donated

some valuable display cases.

The intention is to create a dynamic museum, with three or possibly four changes of temporary exhibition each year filling two thirds of the gallery space (one third will be permanent display). Thus over a five year period 60-70% of the collection will be on view. There will be a staff of six, plus volunteers.

Ambitiously, the target visitor figure is 30-40,000 people per year, plus educational outreach work with 6,000 schoolchildren. Schools will be required to pay for this work, as happened with the old museum.

Membership scheme

Unfortunately, the new museum will find it necessary to charge individuals for entry, probably through a membership scheme. Visitors who are not members will

need to buy membership, currently reckoned to be in the region of £8 per person. Andrew Leitch recognizes that this will preclude some families but points out that there is no other revenue to meet **the museum's costs. He expresses** the hope that the museum will find ways of reaching everyone who wants to access it.

Medal for museum saviours
Congratulations to local philanthropists Michael and Dorothy Hintze. They were two of just five individuals awarded the newly-founded Prince of Wales medal for arts philanthropy in 2009.

Their donation of £2 million saved the Wandsworth Museum from closure in 2007. They have also donated generously to the V&A, whose sculpture gallery is named after them, and to the restoration of the Old Vic Theatre.

Is Battersea the new Hoxton?

As your bus whizzes or putters down Battersea Bridge Road you are greeted by the splendid new home for the painting department of the Royal College of Art joining its now well-established sculpture department in Battersea. Haworth Tompkins Architects have converted a single-storey factory building into a series of newly-roofed large studio spaces with an independent steel structure inside the existing brick shell, creating a mezzanine level and increasing the height.

The studios are beautifully lit and generously scaled - a cause of great envy for those accustomed to the normal cramped spaces in the various London art colleges. The mezzanine runs the full length of the building looking over the ground floor studios which will create a lively interaction throughout the building. Passers-by will be able to glimpse this hotbed of creativity at work. No 'closed' community - this new campus will be engaging with local schools and the

News Jottings

community through a wide range of programmed events. The RCA is one of the most concentrated communities of artists and designers to be found anywhere in the world, and where artists come others follow.

Philippa Tunstill

Battersea's off the map!

Have you wondered why so many Battersea businesses and shops insist on referring to themselves as being in Clapham? The *SW11tch Back to Battersea* (lovebattersea.org.uk) campaign has found a possible answer. Google maps locate Clapham near Clapham Junction (pictured), with no mention of Battersea at all.

Incensed by this error, *SW11tch Back to Battersea* chairs, Councillors Tony Belton and Philip Beddows, have written to Google's president, Larry Page, in California. They point out that many businesses' store locator

software uses Google maps, so that they are unable to indicate that their shop is in Battersea. Customers are misled and our local identity is damaged.

The campaign calls on Mr Page to "correct the geographic mistake that has wiped half of Battersea off Google Maps and taken Clapham out of Lambeth and into Wandsworth. Filling in the un-named are of the map which is South Battersea would also be very helpful."

After assistance by London MEP Syed Kamall, the campaign hopes to hear soon of changes in Google's geography. *Jenny Sheridan*



Gargoyles and oysters – signs of the past

Harvey Heath seeks for help from Society members

Where was the Falcon River estuary? What did it look like? Strolling along the river walk, do you wonder (or do you know) where the names Oyster Wharf and Gargoyle Wharf come from? Is Plantation Wharf a made-up name or is there a history –slave-cut sugar in the West Indies or a prosaic grove of trees – behind it?

Ancient riverside

We hope Society members may have information or memories that could help us . What did the riverside look like in the good old industrial days? What do you remember of Morgan Crucible **Company, Rank's Flour Mills, Glaxo's glucose factory and Price's candles?** And further back, what do you know about our more ancient riverside working and community heritage?

In the [last edition](#) of *Battersea Matters* I reported on the open **spaces committee's walk along the river** and our proposal to improve the signage to reflect local history. We hope to ask local schools to help devise artwork and local riparian developers and businesses to sponsor the manufacture and installation.

Walking and cycling

We are working on this with Mary Ann Tarver, a walking and cycling enthusiast and a volunteer for Sustrans (sustrans.org.uk) a sustainable transport charity which supports ways to encourage active travel (walking and cycling). Sustrans has been very helpful with ideas about generating a plan for the project. We also hope to excite the interest of Wandsworth Council and to access some finance and



Morgan Crucible in the 1850s

obtain planning permission from them.

So now we are looking at old maps and asking questions to which we do not know the answers. Where do the names for the new developments come from? What was there before them? Why does Gargoyle Wharf become Battersea Reach? We need your help, your memories. And do you have any similar questions to which you would appreciate an answer?

Please email your comments, memories, stories and queries to secretary@batterseasociety.org.uk

Two elderly men at the bus stop in Northcote Road were looking **worried. "I couldn't manage without it. You'd lose half your pension on the buses without it"**, said one. No prizes for guessing what they were talking about: the Freedom Pass is an older **Londoner's prized possession**, allowing free travel on buses, tubes and trains within the capital.

Scare story

Recently rumours have spread that the Freedom Pass is under threat. **London Councils' online petition** to 10 Downing Street demanding its retention garnered over 20,000 signatures. Now it seems that this was all a scare story, possibly due to pre-election jostling. The Freedom Pass was introduced by the GLA under Ken Livingstone in 1999. In 2008 the government brought in free bus travel across England and local authorities were obliged to pay for non-residents to

Freedom pass not under threat

Jenny Sheridan listens to the rumours and hears the truth

use their buses. The government gave a special grant to all councils to cover this. As it has turned out, fewer non-Londoners have used the concession than expected, so many boroughs have done well



The new-look Freedom pass which will be valid for 5 years

from the deal, accepting a welcome windfall of government money. In 2009 the concession cost London just under £7 million. In the next financial year the special grant for London will be reduced to £30 million – still a surplus.

Misleading

Sadiq Khan, transport minister and Tooting MP, points out that reducing the special grant is completely separate from the funding of the Freedom Pass and **has no impact on it. He adds, "I am committed to maintaining the Freedom Pass in London and would oppose any attempts to see them removed. I'd like to assure you that the Freedom Pass is not under threat. Anyone who says otherwise is being deliberately misleading. I am afraid reckless electioneering has already begun and many vulnerable residents are being scared as a consequence."**

And perhaps most convincingly, the Freedom Pass is currently being renewed for five years – until after the election after next.

Come back Ratty!

Claire Shahbazian - Water for Wildlife project officer for the London Wildlife Trust- on a scheme to return the water vole to the Wandle

In *The Wind in the Willows*, Mole sees “a little brown face, with whiskers.... Small neat ears and thick silky hair.” Although known as Ratty, the animal was a water vole, and its “bijou riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust” could have been the Wandle.

River improvements

Admiral Lord Nelson once famously fished for brown trout in the River Wandle, and a rich variety of wildlife, including water vole, enjoyed its cool, clear waters. However, its fortunes changed during the Industrial Revolution when it was divided up by weirs and sluices to provide hydroelectric power to around 90 mills, as well as becoming the primary source for drinking water and effluent removal for south London’s rapidly expanding population. By the 1960s the river was so heavily polluted that it was officially declared a sewer; water voles disappeared. Today, following much effort by London Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and other organisations, the river is much improved and is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

Wetland plants

Water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*, formerly *A. terrestris*) are Britain’s biggest vole. They are entirely herbivorous and prefer watercourses which are slow-flowing, shallow and hold water all year round. Plenty of sunlight is also important. They need steep, natural riverbanks to burrow into and plenty of wetland plants for food and refuge from predators, which include grey heron, pike, fox and stoat.

The water vole is Britain’s fastest declining mammal with only one present for every twenty that were alive 100 years ago (a 95% loss). Consequently, it is a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and is protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act. A major cause for water vole decline has been the long-term loss of habitat through intensive river engineering, pollution, built development and insensitive land management practices. The other main impact is predation by American mink. Thankfully, mink are not established on the River Wandle and efforts are being made to maintain this.

Conservation action

London Wildlife Trust (LWT) leads on conservation action for water voles in London and a key aim is to reintroduce water voles to the River Wandle. The target date is 2012 but this depends on the suitability of the river habitat and LWT has worked closely with local people and other organisations over several years to ensure this can be achieved. Thanks to generous funding from the Veolia Environmental Trust and Carillion Natural Habitats Fund, LWT is working to link up the many green spaces along the Wandle so that any reintroduced water vole population has enough territory to establish homes and find food safely. Coir rolls will be installed to increase marginal vegetation, trees will be pruned to increase light levels and deflectors installed in the river itself to create stretches of slower-flowing water that can provide refuge and spawning areas for all kinds of wildlife.

Brown rat or vole?

Brown rats are often mistaken for water voles. The checklist below will help you tell the difference:



Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Tail – water voles have a short, furry tail; rats’ tails are long, bald and scaly.

Ears – water voles have small, round ears tucked into their fur. Rats have larger, prominent ears which are bald and pinkish.

Face – water voles have round, blunt nosed faces; rats have a more pointed snout.

Fur – water voles have thick fur that is usually a dark reddish-brown colour; rats are lighter and greyish.



Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*)

To find out more about the endangered water vole or for information on how to become a supporter of London Wildlife Trust visit the website wildlondon.org.uk

Photographs © London Wildlife Trust

Time to clear away the clutter

Ian Harvey, co-ordinator of the Civic Society Initiative, calls us to action to improve our streetscape

Civic societies across the country are taking action to create better streets for people. In 2010, the Civic Society Initiative will be running a 'street pride' campaign to help rid streets of unnecessary clutter and create streets that local communities can be proud of. (The Civic Society Initiative was formed in June 2009 following the closure of the Civic Trust).

The national campaign builds on excellent local campaigns already undertaken by civic societies in Stamford, Oxford, Bath, Wakefield and elsewhere.

Negative impact

It is official government **policy that "the excessive or insensitive use of traffic signs and other street furniture has a negative impact on the success of the street as a place"** (*Manual for Streets*, Department for Transport, 2007). Despite this, street clutter is proliferating locally.

Streets make up nearly 80% of the public space in our urban areas. Yet all too often they become cluttered with all kinds of objects that are unnecessary, badly designed or poorly located and which lack any co-ordination. The result is streets that look degraded and uncared for due to these physical and visual obstructions. We deserve better.

There are already many local campaigns. Oxford, Stamford, Salisbury and Wakefield are making strides and bringing improvements to streetscapes. In London, the Camden Society has shown its mettle in persuading the council to

force the British Museum to rethink plans for the redevelopment of its northwest extension. In Stamford, Lincolnshire, campaigners have highlighted the deteriorating condition of pavements.

Streets for people

Activists in Tonbridge, Kent, are determined to restart the high street clock to re-assert its importance as a landmark in the town. Local people in St Albans are



opposing a warehouse development on Green Belt land **that is bigger than Heathrow's Terminal Five extension.** In Wakefield, West Yorkshire, residents are anxious to improve the rundown Kirkgate area, while in Oxford the society is pushing for a **'Streets for People' campaign that, like the nationwide Street Pride campaign, calls for citizens to reclaim their streets and take greater responsibility for their impact on local communities.**

Our campaign outcomes will include a toolkit for civic societies to involve their members and

others in identifying and urging action against unnecessary street clutter. There will also be a number of workshops around the country.

Local street surveys

The focus will be on poor pavements and unnecessary signs, posts, bollards and guardrails. The results will feed into a national database and support a high profile campaign for national action. Street Pride can make a difference nationally as well as locally. The results of your local street surveys are vital to this. We are compiling a database of all the results which we will be able to use later in 2010 to draw attention to the nationwide problem of street clutter and demand action is taken.

We want to see a change to the law to make local authorities and private owners responsible for keeping places clear of street clutter in the same way that they have to clear up litter now. It is also important that those responsible for street furniture are required to have the skills and qualifications to understand its impact on the quality of place.

To get involved, help in arranging a campaign awareness workshop or simply keep in touch then contact info@streetpride.org.uk More information is available at streetpride.org.uk

Editor's note:

In our [Winter 2008](#) issue we published a polemic by Suzanne Perkins against the "signage slum" on Wandsworth Common and elsewhere. Which street clutter would you like to see removed or improved?

New trees for neighbourhoods

Stephen Gray of Trees for Cities sings the praises of urban trees

I work for Trees for Cities, a charity that undertakes projects nationwide to improve green urban spaces. We have been campaigning for and planting trees in cities since our launch in 1993, promoting the benefits trees can have in so many areas of **city-dwellers' lives**.

The benefits of a more attractive city are not only aesthetic. International studies have repeatedly found that closeness to urban green spaces makes people more inclined to exercise, improving both mood and fitness.

Urban green spaces also provide crucial filtering of the air, reducing the incidence of asthma in children. The shade of trees also obscures harmful ultraviolet rays.

Safer communities

Tree-lined streets can contribute to a reduction in crime and the fear of crime. Because they are more likely to be well used, there is a greater incidence of natural surveillance from passers-by.

Annamaria Mignano is a resident in Tower Hamlets. **"When Trees for Cities planted trees along my street, they really gave the street back to the community," she said. "By making the roads look more pleasant, and less threatening, pedestrians started to use them more. And with people using my street more, my neighbours and I feel much safer out there."**

In winter, houses inevitably lose heat to their surroundings and, in exposed areas, this heat is whipped away by fast-moving winds, drastically reducing the efficiency of the **house's insulation. The problem is most acutely felt in buildings which have no windbreaks outside, mainly in rural locations. In towns and cit-**

ies, streets act as wind tunnels, channelling cold wind as it takes with it the warmth from the houses it passes. But trees can act as windbreaks, effectively insulating streets by allowing their heat to linger.

Energy saving

In summer, trees temper heat waves by giving shade and through the process of transpiration, which releases cooling water vapour. Overall, correctly positioned trees can save buildings 10% of their energy costs.

Trees for Cities is expert in the selection of trees for these purposes. Cities require a special mix to take full advantage of the benefits they can offer: the branches should spread enough to break up fast-moving winds, but not to block out light. The trees should be large enough to absorb moisture from



New planting on Clapham Common

the air during the summer months, but should not threaten nearby buildings with their roots.

Research consistently shows that experience of the natural world is highly beneficial to children. The charity is committed to providing children with green spaces, and runs a programme of youth education and involvement in all its planting activities. We aim to ensure that urban trees play their part **in children's development, as part of healthy lives led in clean, safe cities.**

Community asset

Trees for Cities' current projects include the planting of 300 saplings and 25 six-foot tall standard trees on Clapham Common, which has lost around ten per cent of its trees to age, disease and storm damage and needs new, young growth. The new trees (funded by trusts and by donations from local residents) will be sited along North Side, by the bandstand and in other suitable sites.

Sharon Johnson, Chief Executive, said: **"Over recent years we have seen a real difference in the attitude to trees in UK cities. They're becoming much more valued as an asset to the community, and provide a wealth of financial and cultural benefits.**

"As a charity, we're committed to increasing awareness of these benefits: our streets are community spaces, and so many are an untapped resource for the people who live on them. We've been proud to be planting trees across the country, through individual donations and tree planting schemes, so that residents can enjoy their benefits for hundreds of years to come."

For more information about the projects the charity undertakes, or to donate a tree to a city project, visit treesforcities.org, or call 020 7820 4415.

Clapham Junction Town Centre – a people-friendly environment? Plans could be very much better, says Mary Ann Tarver



Wandsworth Council has produced a plan for the streetscape of Clapham Junction which, as an 'exemplar', they presumably intend to be a showcase. It seems important that we look carefully at what is proposed. The plan's stated aims are:

- to make the area safer and more attractive and convenient for pedestrians
- to enhance journey times for general traffic, buses and cyclists

How far have these aims been met? It will certainly be easier to cross the road at the crossroads outside Debenham's. The traffic lights will all have the green man phase simultaneously. Railings and 'sheep pens' will be removed, making the area more open and attractive, and also safer for cycling. Extra public space will be created by removing the left-filter lane from Falcon Road to Lavender Hill. There will be a right turn off Lavender Hill into Falcon Lane to enable northbound drivers to reduce journey time by bypassing the traffic lights, thus lessening congestion at the crossroads.

Journey time
Journey time is not an issue for cyclists. One of the main attractions of cycling is that you are not held up by congestion. For cyclists, and perhaps even more for those who

would like to cycle, the crucial aspect of any traffic scheme is how effectively it reduces road danger. Safety is a major issue, and fear of 'the traffic' the main reason why people choose not to cycle. The planned cycle lanes on Lavender Hill are poorly conceived and of dubious benefit to cyclists. Yet the Council has ignored key advice from Wandsworth Cycling Campaign and has paid little attention to design guidance from authoritative sources (Department for Transport and London Cycle Design Standards)

20mph limit
Crucially for all users of the area there is no plan for a 20mph speed limit despite the large body of evidence that this dramatically reduces both the number and severity of injuries. According to a study in the *British Medical Journal* it results in 42% fewer deaths and injuries for all road users – drivers



as well as cyclists and pedestrians. The latest DfT guidance will make it easier for councils to make their streets safer in this way, recognising the wider benefits of slower speeds, including reduction

of CO2 and noise pollution (tinyurl.com/yax6965). Bus speeds are limited in any case by the closeness of bus stops as well as traffic lights etc.

A 20mph limit on all Local Authority roads has proved popular with drivers because it reduces both stress and fuel costs while not affecting journey time. Experience elsewhere has shown this is achievable without the need for traffic calming measures beyond routine enforcement. Portsmouth, which has a 20 mph limit on all its roads, found that driver journeys take no longer than they used to. With a pleasanter environment for pedestrians and greater safety for cyclists, the result could be a fitter, more active population, less obesity and more attractive streets and town centres.

Pedestrians

In my view this 'exemplar' plan should be much better. From the brow of both Lavender and St John's Hills it should be made clear to drivers that they are entering a busy town centre with a large transport interchange and that careful driving is strictly enforced. The Council itself declares that the majority users of the town centre are pedestrians. Surely much greater priority should be given to their convenience and safety.

For a summary of the Council's plan see: tinyurl.com/ydmx6m5

Wandsworth Cycling Campaign's response to the plan is at: tinyurl.com/ya9ryz3

More on 20mph at: 20splentyforus.org.uk/

A 20mph speed limit dramatically reduces the number and severity of injuries

Planning Matters

Monica Tross with all the latest planning news

This has been a particularly busy time for the Planning Committee with Battersea apparently the chief focus for activity by the Greater London Authority, the US government, major landholders and a Government Inspector. We have learnt a new acronym – VNEB. Or to give it its full title, the Vauxhall, Nine Elms, Battersea Opportunity Area Planning Framework. Some of us have spent more time at Wandsworth Town Hall than we might have chosen. Yet given the history of some developments and the current economic situation, we do sometimes wonder if we will live to see the results, for good or ill, of the various long term plans now being proposed.

Battersea Power Station

The chief of these must be the Power Station site and it is particularly sad that on consideration we could not support the outline planning application. The Society's meeting on earlier plans (September 2008) showed clearly that although individual views might differ, we are united in wanting restoration of the Power Station and development of the surrounding land to go ahead. Yet when it came to it, an application isolating the Power Station from Battersea and Nine Elms and surrounding it with densely packed high rise development cannot be the best solution for Battersea. The idea of a Northern Line extension from Kennington to Nine Elms is attractive. Yet we have to query its necessity if the costs result in assertions that the whole scheme could be unviable with the inclusion of any affordable housing. Despite much change, Battersea remains a broadly mixed community and this is something to be cherished.

Among the reams of application material one of the most useful is the Planning Statement. Summarising the application in a readable and succinct manner, it includes the sad history of the site since the Power Station closure in 1983, partial demolition in 1987,

purchase by Parkview in 1993 and the many planning applications submitted and agreed before the sale of the site to REO at the start of 2006. You can read this on WBC's planning site – application 2009/3575. This has the whole of our objection, also found on our website: batterseasociety.org.uk

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy

The Society took part in the Inspector's Examination in Public (another acronym, IEP) of this, speaking on tall buildings and on the targets for affordable housing. As part of the process the Council has published further consultation documents, notably on Development Management Policies and on Tall Buildings. These, together with reports on the whole process, are on the Council's planning website.

The Inspector's report is due in April with the Council publishing supplementary documentation before then.

Battersea in Perspective

Some of you will know the splendid mural by Brian Barnes on the Dagnall Street side of the Haberdashers Arms in Culvert Street (below). The artist



developed this in 1988 in collaboration with the pupils and staff of Battersea Park School. It's worth a visit (despite the sad addition of some graffiti).

Following a planning application we alerted the Council to the need for any planning approval to be conditional on the mural's preservation. This application was withdrawn but we are confident that the Council will do this if any further application comes forward.

49 and 345 Bus Stops at South Kensington

TfL are consulting on the final siting of these and other stops following extensive changes to the road layout. The deadline for comment is 8 March 2010. For a leaflet call 0845 300 7000 or email stengagement@tfl.gov.uk. Please let us know your views at planning@batterseasociety.org.uk.

Trade Tower

As we go to press a third application is being considered for a 'top hat' extension to this York Road landmark. Yet again we have objected to this.

Look out for ...

- Consultation leaflet on VNEB. Following representations from the Battersea Society, the Greater London Authority promised wider consultation and a lay version of the heavyweight document produced for a professional audience. We are still waiting for this despite the deadline for consultation likely to be some time in March.
- Announcement of the winning architect for the new US Embassy.
- New proposals for development on part of the New Covent Garden Market Site
- More discussion of Thames Water's plans for new sewage tunnels under the Thames.

We will do all we can to let you know about ways in which you can comment on all these before any deadline.

If you have comments or queries on any planning or transport matter, let us know at planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Japan through India to Euroland via Battersea

A gastronomic test for four hungry Society members

The challenge was to find three restaurants in Battersea where four friends could meet on a Friday for a meal, without booking ahead and without breaking the bank. The only other stipulation was that we would only knowingly choose local, independent restaurants.

Note: Ratings are out of four stars

We began close to home in the north and ventured into Battersea Spice which proudly announces it serves 'organic Indian cuisine'.

After a couple of poppadoms and **two shared starters we didn't have** to wait long for our exotic tiger prawn casserole with vegetables, spicy lamb tamarind, lamb with spinach and Goan green curry. All were well presented and tasty, satisfying meals, thankfully not grease laden. As we finished off by sharing two portions of sweet kulfi, the place was filling up nicely, and there was a steady flow of visitors taking advantage of the take-away service at the rear.



Worth mentioning: a good choice of mains at under £7.00 and a very acceptable house red at just £8.25.

Food ★★★ Service ★★★★★
Toilets ★★★ Overall experience ★★★

Battersea Spice: 344 Battersea Park Rd
SW11 3BY 020 7223 2169
batterseaspice.co.uk

A week later we moved south and after a brisk stroll down Lavender Hill, decided to test the Japanese

cuisine on offer in the very stylish Miyajima, with its long black canteen-style tables. On a bitterly cold evening we went for something heartier than sushi, with starters of char-grilled vegetable skewers and grilled vegetable-stuffed dumplings, served with sweet and spicy sauces. The main courses were all generous in size: pan fried thick noodles with seafood, white noodles with 'chicken, prawns, fish cake', and ramen – noodles served in a bowl of steaming broth topped with



spinach, bamboo shoots and seaweed. Wooden mini-ladles and wooden chopsticks added to the authenticity of the experience. (Forks provided on request). Later on the noise of the younger crowd enjoying their Friday night began to reduce chances of conversation, so our advice to the more mature would be to go early.

Highlights: welcoming and helpful staff, and swift service. Again a wide range of mains under £7.00 with take-away prices the same as the restaurant. Well worth a visit.

Food ★★★★★ Service ★★★★★
Toilets ★★★★★ Overall experience ★★★★★

Miyajima: 196 Lavender Hill
SW11 1JA 020 7223 1151

Week three saw us moving on to **Battersea Rise and here our 'cheap and cheerful' locomotive hit the buffers**, with most non-chain eateries unable to offer a main course for much less than £15. By

now we were hungry and it was (again) very cold, so when someone spoke up for Scoffers on the corner of Lavender Sweep, we swept inside. As early diners we were able to choose a table under the monster ficus tree growing from a hole in the floor in the middle of the room. Our main courses could **best be described as 'euro fusion'**,



including bangers and mash, cod risotto, mushroom pasta, and calves liver and mash. All very acceptable apart from the liver which had been fried for too long. We finished with a single-portion cheese platter, ample for the four of us. **The bill didn't exactly break the bank**, although with 12.5% service charge (irritatingly added automatically) it did creep into three figures. But we had a pleasant evening, and we could have paid much more in other nearby restaurants. As we left there were diners at most tables, so clearly Scoffers is very popular in South Battersea.

Good points: A decent house red was moderately priced. And it does have a very superior suite of toilets!

Food ★★★ Service ★★★
Toilets ★★★★★ Overall experience ★★★

Scoffers: 6 Battersea Rise,
SW11 1ED 020 7978 5542
scoffersrestaurant.co.uk

The quartet of intrepid diners were Heather and David Evans and Angela and Mike Roden. Any ideas for their next three-pronged eating challenge?

Charity begins at home

Encouraging local charities is part of our remit, explains chair Tony Tuck

As a civic amenity society and a charity we have among our aims and objectives:

“To improve the quality of life in Battersea and strengthen its identity and sense of community”.

To this end we arrange a series of events throughout the year to promote Battersea and its geography, history and communities. Our Community Committee meets regularly to consider current issues facing community life for people who live or work in Battersea. Harvey Heath chair of the committee would welcome additional members: see below for contact details. Over the years the success of our events programme has built up a small reserve fund and our trustees have decided that some of this should be used from time to time

for making donations to Battersea charitable organisations.

We believe we should encourage local grass roots groups which contribute so much to the quality of community life.

Meeting need

We decided this year to make two donations of £500 each. One to the Katherine Low Settlement (charity no 1081248) and the second to the Association of Somali Women and Children (charity no 1132955). The former is a long-standing local charity that has been meeting the needs of a range of different groups and individuals for many years, while the latter is a newly registered charity working with a specific group of parents and children. Readers wishing to know a little more about their activities can find their entries at the Charity

Commission’s website charity-commission.gov.uk under their respective charity numbers. Later this year *Battersea Matters* will report back on the charities and how they used our donation. Such donations will probably not be made regularly, but only from time to time.

Participation

I would like to thank all the members of our events team whose endeavours over the years have enabled the Society to make these charitable donations. We hope as this year progresses to use more of our resources to launch a Battersea Society Green Plaque Scheme to give a lasting memorial to people and places of **significance in Battersea’s rich history**. We are also seeking ways of increasing our membership so that more people and organisations can participate in our varied activities.

The Battersea Society

Chair Tony Tuck

tony@tonytuck.eu

Secretary Harvey Heath

secretary@batterseasociety.org.uk

Treasurer Jill Newey

finance@batterseasociety.org.uk

Membership Maureen Larkin

membership@batterseasociety.org.uk

Committee Chairs

Community Harvey Heath

community@batterseasociety.org.uk

Planning David Lewis

planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Marketing Sara Milne

marketing@batterseasociety.org.uk

Events Wendy Deakins

events@batterseasociety.org.uk

General enquiries

information@batterseasociety.org.uk

Website

batterseasociety.org.uk

Registered charity no.1103560

All the Daughters of Music

Fulham Camerata celebrate 900 years of music by female composers including Clara Schumann, Judith Weir, Judith Bingham and Amy Beech and Fanny Mendelssohn.

Proceeds to Ovarian Cancer Action and the Friends of St Mary’s

Saturday 24 April 2010

7.30pm at St Mary’s Church

Tickets £12 & £8 on door or from fulhamcamerata@gmail.com or 0207 736 2761/ 020 7720 7772

Annual Spring Lunch

Sunday 25th April

12.30 for 1pm

At Thai on the River,
2 Lombard Road, SW11

Tickets £15 (excludes drinks)

To reserve tickets contact
Maureen Larkin
020 7228 4873

membership@batterseasociety.org.uk

Some dates for your Diary

Thursday 13 May 2010
7 for 7.30pm

St Mary’s Church
Battersea Church Road

Turner and his contemporaries

Philippa Simpson, assistant curator, Tate Britain on the mutual influence between Turner and artists including Constable and de Louthenberg

Admission £5 (on the door)
Enquiries 020 7223 5999.

Organised by the Battersea Society as part of the Wandsworth Arts Festival (1 May – 23 May)

Find details of more Battersea Society events at
batterseasociety.org.uk/events