

# Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society SPRING 2015



## Formula E races: park's summer peace threatened?

Liz Walton, chair of the Battersea Society's planning committee, reports on the Society's concerns

**A**s trailed in the last issue of *Battersea Matters*, FE is now definitely coming to Battersea this summer. The Wandsworth Planning Applications Committee (PAC) granted planning permission on 18 February for the event to go ahead in Battersea Park with races on Saturday and Sunday 27 and 28 June. Events in future years will require further planning permission. There has been extensive press coverage, Boris has declared it 'a superb addition to London's sporting calendar' and preparatory works will start in the Park at the beginning of March.

The proposal has certainly given rise to opposing views locally. Is it good or bad for Battersea? A common reaction when people first heard was 'What a wonderful idea – just what we want'. Having studied the details of the event both the Society's Planning and Open Spaces committees considered the balance lay strongly against. Our concerns were not met at the public meeting set up last November by the Council and the event's promoters. Following this, members of both committees were active in setting out objections to the

proposals, as were the Friends of Battersea Park (FoBP).

On 3 December the Society presented our views in person in the form of a deputation to the meeting of the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CSOSC) as did the FoBP and representatives from the mansion blocks on Prince of Wales Drive. The committee was considering whether to go ahead with the proposed event which, if the first one is successful, would be repeated each summer for the next 5 years. We expressed concerns about the inappropriate use for a listed grade 2\* heritage park; the impact on trees, planting etc; the works required for the event; noise, traffic and other nuisance to residents; and financial and contractual implications.

### Lengthy

In spite of our objections, and a considered and lengthy discussion, the committee voted unanimously to proceed with negotiations with the promoters. They did concede that it would be worthwhile to establish a Community Forum within which local issues could be put forward and discussed with the borough and the

promoters. The Society has a seat on this group which had its first meeting on 9 February. The committee also conceded that the Park must provide an area for dog walkers throughout the event weekend.

A particular concern throughout has been that the borough has supported the event because of the extensive financial benefit to Wandsworth as a whole, with possibly up to £1m of this sum for the Park over five years. But there has been no transparency or public statement on what the actual financial benefit would be. In addition the Council's Director of Finance at the CSOSC meeting pointed out that it was not possible to ring-fence monies specifically for the Park, although it was the intention that the Park should benefit if the borough's financial position made this possible.

This lack of transparency was a theme picked up at the PAC. Labour members felt it was ridiculous to be asked to support the application without knowing the financial benefits. We had submitted a detailed objection to the application citing, as well as the concerns

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**Don't forget to visit our website: [batterseasociety.org.uk](http://batterseasociety.org.uk) for regular updates on Battersea Society news, events and planning matters**

## From the editor



There's always such a lot going on in Battersea! Buildings coming down, new ones (invariably bigger and rarely more

beautiful) going up.

And often it seems that we are helpless to influence positive change. Fortunately we have our wonderful planning committee, which argues constantly for the council and developers to take into account the impact of their schemes on people, communities and the environment.

Although it often seems that the bigger battles are lost, small but still important points are gained. An example is the Community Forum for the Formula E races, in which the Society will play a vital role in trying to mitigate any problems the races may cause.

On page 4, in a well-researched and thoughtful article, Carol Rahn analyses the current housing crisis, its effects on the borough's diversity and what the council is doing about it. The lack of affordable housing is a London-wide issue, and boroughs deal with it in differing ways. And affordability is such a fluid concept. In Bethnal Green, a new housing development – called, for some reason, *Mettle and Poise* – is claimed to be part of Boris Johnson's affordable housing initiative. Prices range from £699,000 to £999,950. Affordable to whom?

One of my worries is that a combination of the new expensive housing and the inevitable cuts to public spending will limit the diversity of our cultural life. Artists can only exist, thrive and experiment if they can afford to live and work locally, and they need cheap small or medium-sized places for their studios or theatres. In the annual Artists Open Studio weekends there are noticeably

**The Battersea Society and Katherine Low Settlement are hosting a Battersea Question Time on Tuesday 14 April 7 – 9pm, in York Gardens Community Centre. All the candidates standing for election have been invited.**

more artists in Tooting and Putney than in Battersea. Yet the arts are managing to thrive. Lightbox Theatre (p7) and Wandsworth Radio (p14) are new start-ups and Wandsworth Museum's new director and move to Battersea Arts Centre (p15) offer interesting new vistas.

As you may have noticed, there is an election coming up (opposite). I hope that many of you will come to the hustings on 14 April (see above). For the first time the Society is partnering with the Katherine Low Settlement to bring local people together to question the candidates. [batterseasociety.org.uk](http://batterseasociety.org.uk)  
020 7350 2749

## Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden looks at racing cars, tall towers and elections and a local hero

When I was about 10 years old there was a playtime craze at my primary school for sending competing Dinky racing cars down a convenient slope. We readied our cars, waited for the signal, then let go allowing gravity to take its course. The cars ran silently down the few feet of slope, and a winner was declared. What could be a simpler, more peaceful pursuit?

After a fortnight the game was banned. The noise level from a bunch of little boys squabbling and shouting must have been intolerable. Heated disputes over whether someone had given his car an illegal push, or whether the wrong winner had been declared, ended up in the luckless teacher on playground duty having to break up more than one fight. The competition's fate was sealed when someone picked up a rival's car and threw it away, whereupon it went through a classroom window. There's a moral there somewhere about broken dreams, but I can't quite put my finger on it...

Elsewhere you'll find my account



of a bus trip taken into the City, the home of the Towers of Babel. Let's face it, these towers are here to stay; in fact are spreading across London like a rash. The odd compulsion to give them nicknames is presumably driven by the hope that characterising them as domestic objects like cheese-graters will increase their appeal. Will this thinking lead to a new 400ft building being dubbed the Fish Finger, studded as it will be by brown pebbledash looking uncannily like breadcrumbs?

### Free beer

Elections are bland affairs these days – unless you're one of those excitable political journalists or activists who bounce up and down like children waiting for Christmas. The rest of us generally remain unmoved by the deluge of promises which rain upon us from all sides. Once upon a time we'd be offered free beer for our vote, and could join the surging crowd at the local hustings where we could pelt politicians with dead cats and rotten vegetables. The good old days. I gather these

days such events are decorously dull, chaired in the name of fairness and balance. Health and safety gone mad, I say...

As spring approaches the number of riverside walkers is increasing. Newcomers always gaze in awe at St Mary's Church and a little later encounter the family group statue near Battersea Bridge called In Town which is less awesome and seems to have little local relevance, unlike the statue of Whistler at the Chelsea end of the bridge.

It occurs to me that Marc Brunel (father of Isambard) deserves his own statue here. It's very close to the site of his veneer cutting sawmills, decorative tin-foil works, and the factory which produced boots for Wellington's 'scum of the earth' army which won at Waterloo. He also built the magnificent Thames Tunnel which (bizarrely) now carries Overground trains between Rotherhithe and Wapping. The house he shared with his son is across the river, so why not show the great man looking homeward? Surely such an idea, recording Battersea's fine industrial heritage, is something about which the Society could campaign?

Anyway, that's it for now. See you next time, and mind how you go...



# The candidates state their priorities

We asked candidates of the main parties for three issues for the constituency

## JANE ELLISON, CONSERVATIVE

Having had the honour of serving this constituency as MP since 2010, I know there is a great range of issues that matter to local people, but at this election I am focusing on three areas that affect the quality and nature of life here for everyone.



Jane Ellison

**Public transport** is vital in our area, so continually improving it is a priority for me. I welcome the huge investment we've seen in

extending the Northern line into Nine Elms and building a new pier, for example. I am pressing for more bus and train capacity, for lifts at local stations like Battersea Park, and to get the 'Diamond Jubilee' foot and cycle bridge in north Battersea built.

I want **every local child** to have the best possible start in life. Having campaigned for a new school on the historic Bolingbroke site, I see the positive impact it is having in our community so I want more great local schools. Children brought up in workless households often have poorer outcomes in life; unemployment in Battersea has nearly halved since 2010, but keeping the momentum up benefits the least advantaged children. And a healthy start is vital; for many little girls in our area that means protecting them from Female Genital Mutilation, something I've made a personal priority as an MP.

As President of the Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce, boosting local **business** is another priority area for me. Expanding businesses create jobs, apprenticeships and opportunity for local people and more vibrant local high streets enhance the character of our area.

Alongside my political priorities, I believe the way you do the job matters too. In 2010, I promised to be an approachable and accountable MP, offering practical and positive support to all who asked for it and I renew the same pledge at this General Election. [www.janeellison.net](http://www.janeellison.net)

## LUKE TAYLOR, LIBERAL DEMOCRAT

The most critical issue for residents of Battersea, and the country as a whole, is **education**. I believe in equality of opportunity, giving people the chance to achieve the same outcome regardless of their starting



Luke Taylor

point, whether in a wealthy home with access to books and resources, or a poorer home without those advantages. The key to this is providing

top quality education for all children, no matter what their background.

I am horrified to see the Conservative pledge to cut education spending in real terms. This simply cannot be allowed to happen. Every Conservative vote cast on 7 May brings this closer. Liberal Democrats in government will continue to protect education spending, and extend our pupil premium that has delivered essential targeted spending for those most in need.

Protecting funding for **the NHS** is critical to maintaining its quality and range of services. The Tories have forced unnecessary reorganisation, and Labour will put the NHS at risk by not guaranteeing the funding it needs. It was Liberal Democrats who stopped Conservative privatisation plans. We will ensure £8bn of additional NHS funding per year by 2020 and focus on mental health to ensure that early support is available

Our current MP has done nothing to ensure that the council meets its own targets for social and affordable **housing**. Instead she has watched the council build luxury apartments for foreign buyers, fuelling the crisis of housing supply in London, and said nothing. I will hold the council to account to ensure that all housing sold under right-to-buy is replaced, that housing benefit and right-to-buy fraud is prosecuted, and that empty housing is brought back into use as quickly as possible. [LukeTaylor.org.uk](http://LukeTaylor.org.uk) Twitter @luketaylor104

## WILL MARTINDALE, LABOUR

My father grew up here. When he was young, he and my grandfather built and launched a motorboat at St Mary's Church that they built in their back garden. When he visits me, my father is astonished by the pace of change, which seems to accelerate each year. These pressures are starting to hollow out our community:

**Housing:** In Battersea, rents are up almost a third in a year and spiralling



Will Martindale

house prices have put buying a home out of reach for young families. Yet as I write, a 28-storey apartment development is currently under consideration for a small plot on Lombard

Road. Just one in ten of the flats are affordable homes, below the council's own policy target.

As your MP, I'll seek to regain control from runaway developers, working with the council to ensure a thriving retail and cultural scene, long-term tenancies, and more starter homes for Battersea's first-time buyers.

**Community:** Battersea is more than just a place to live; it's a community. In recent years, cuts to meals-on-wheels and the borough's One O'Clock clubs, as well as the introduction of the highest bedroom tax in the country, have disproportionately affected our community's most vulnerable people.

We need to protect Battersea's much-loved community facilities, like Battersea Sports Centre, so all Battersea's residents can fulfil their potential.

**Childcare:** My daughter Aurelie spends three days a week at Battersea Day Nursery. Childcare costs, up almost a third in two years, are among the highest in the country. Labour will bring in 10 extra hours free childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds.

*Will Martindale is running the London Marathon for Trinity Hospice, and is hosting a fundraising concert for the hospice at St Mary's Church on Saturday 21st March.*

[www.willtwin.org.uk](http://www.willtwin.org.uk)

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# The ever-growing housing gap in Wandsworth

Carol Rahn analyses the housing crisis and the Council's response

In January, Wandsworth Council acknowledged the housing crisis that is increasingly apparent in the borough. In response, they have put forward a more vigorous housing strategy, dubbed the Wandsworth Housing Offer. Even homeowners cheered by rising house prices are dismayed to see their own children priced out of the neighbourhood and many don't like to see the area lose its diversity. Less visible to most of us is the growing number of the homeless in our neighbourhood and with that, a shift in the character of social housing.

## Challenge

The Wandsworth Housing Offer, announced in January by Council leader Ravi Govindia, aims to address housing supply, affordability and quality. The headline target is 18,000 new homes in Wandsworth over the next ten years, a significant increase from the old target and current level of about 1,100 net additions each year. With Nine Elms alone set to deliver roughly 12,000 new homes over the next 20 years, this is clearly an achievable ambition. The real challenge is to deliver the mix of housing choices and costs that will meet the needs of those on low and middle incomes.

Nine Elms is a good illustration that London's surging house prices aren't caused only by limited supply. That massive redevelopment will significantly increase the number of homes – and at the same time significantly raise housing costs there.

The average price for a home in Wandsworth is now more than £500,000 and even homes in the lower quartile command £325,000. For one of those lower quartile homes, an income of £86,000 and a 10% deposit is reckoned to be needed – double the median household income in Wandsworth, which is around £43,000. Private rents continue to rise and today an average one bedroom flat in Wandsworth is affordable only for those with incomes of £44,000 or more.



Flats on the Winstanley Estate

Across London, 25% of households are in private rented accommodation, but in Wandsworth this sector is much larger, at 32%. One knock-on effect of rising evictions and non-renewals from private rented accommodation is a rise in homelessness. In the middle of 2014, Wandsworth was looking after 790 homeless tenants. By the end of last year, this had risen to 977 and is forecast to be more than 1,100 by the end of this year. These figures spell misery for those trying to live as a family in a cramped B&B bedroom, much higher costs for the council, and even fewer social housing units available to those on waiting lists.

In the Wandsworth Housing Offer, the Council proposes to augment the current £4.5m spent to house the homeless with a £20m investment in temporary housing. Temporary arrangements, of course, may well be for a few years rather than a few months. For larger families, especially, this housing may be in areas outside the borough offering better value.

## Homelessness

Simon Hogg, Labour councillor for Latchmere and opposition spokesperson for housing, argues that other boroughs are much more pro-active in working with landlords and tenants to prevent homelessness. Councillor Paul Ellis, Conservative cabinet member for housing, points to the borough's ongoing efforts to encourage responsible letting and more flexible options than the standard six-month term. The Council is also looking at ways to incentivise larger scale, professional development of rental property which

**Left: The Winstanley Estate**  
**Facing page: Artist's impression of the Ram Brewery development**

would deliver a mix of low-cost and market-rate rental homes.

## Private rental

Today there are some 28,000 homes available for social rent in Wandsworth, of which approximately 17,000 are Council-owned and 11,000 provided by housing associations. With programmes such as Right to Buy, homes are removed from low cost rental every year. Many of these homes do not remain owner-occupied, but instead become private rental properties for which the council pays out considerably higher housing benefits. However, Councillor Ellis is confident that every council home bought by its tenant is replaced by a new council home within the three years allowed after the sale.

Still, there are more than 2,500 households on the Wandsworth waiting list, even after Wandsworth, like councils across the country, slashed their queues by making radical changes to their eligibility criteria. As the Council strategy itself describes it, this scarcity means social housing is no longer aspirational accommodation; it is instead available only to the most vulnerable.

One aim of the Wandsworth Housing Offer is to encourage mobility out of social housing and out of homes that are either too large or too small in order to free up units for new tenants. Cash incentives are offered to move to smaller accommodation, or out of council housing altogether. The Council will pilot a small team dedicated to helping tenants who have expressed an interest in moving but who may be struggling with the logistics of the task.

There are grants available to help make the first step on to the property ladder and even programmes to tempt pensioners to the seaside. The Council's modest aim of freeing up 250 additional units a year may

still prove elusive without more tempting offers. Although 1,000 households are impacted by the spare bedroom subsidy/bedroom tax, for example, only 13% are in the queue for smaller accommodation. The rest are paying the price to stay where they are.

**Earmarked**

Another piece of the Wandsworth Housing Offer worth noting is the commitment to increasing the supply of specialised housing for the elderly, for vulnerable young people in critical transitions, for disabled people and for those suffering mental health problems. Aiming to reinforce the desirability of social housing, the council has in addition earmarked several hundred thousand pounds annually to improve the quality of existing council homes, and the common areas and safety of estates.

A sample of data from the Government’s New Homes Bonus programme shows the relative effort Wandsworth has made to deliver new housing over the past five years, and the rather low percentage of affordable housing built. The Council’s new target is



**Artist’s impression of the Ram Brewery development**

33% affordable housing.

Commenting on the Council’s performance, Councillor Hogg notes Wandsworth is a major landlord, with billions in assets and a Housing Revenue Account surplus of £235m. In his view, the Council should be leveraging that position far more

aggressively to build housing itself as well as demanding a bigger contribution to affordable housing from developers. The Council is considering forming its own housing company, but this is still at an exploratory phase.

**Hidden Homes**

Wandsworth’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies a gross shortfall of nearly 1,600 affordable homes each year. ‘Affordable’ is the comforting term that applies to properties that are still unaffordable to many. In Wandsworth, ‘affordable’ typically means about 65% of market value; more broadly the term is often applied to properties that are 80% of market rate.

The ‘Hidden Homes’ programme is one example where the Council is creatively turning overlooked corners of land it owns into new homes. It is but one of several schemes pursued by the Council, but the number of new homes that result is outstripped by demand.

Wandsworth Housing Offer is an effort to address the range of housing that is needed across the borough, but even with this more ambitious approach, the affordability crunch in Wandsworth is only likely to get worse.

	<i>Net additions to housing stock<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Percent affordable</i>
Tower Hamlets	14,547	31%
Islington	7,636	23%
Southwark	7,095	37%
Newham	6,984	43%
Wandsworth	4,850	22%
Camden	4,297	27%
Hammersmith & Fulham	3,201	17%
Westminster	3,126	32%
Kensington & Chelsea	1,083	33%

<sup>1</sup>Units recognised for new homes bonus by DCLG, 2011/12 – 2015/16

**Formula E**

*continued from page 1*

above, arguments that the event fell outside adopted planning policies for the Park. The full submission is on the Society’s Planning Index website page. There were in total 37 objections and two letters of support (one from a Glaswegian who wants to attend the event).

At the PAC the Assistant Director of Planning and Development argued that the proposal was acceptable in planning policy terms, that financial benefits were not a planning consideration and the committee should disregard them. Unlike some boroughs, Wandsworth does not permit deputations to the PAC so we and the FoBP had to sit in silence through the borough’s justification for support – very frustrating! At least some acknowledgement was

given to the well-argued submissions from community groups and the PAC expressed the hope that their concerns were reflected in the conditions attached to the approval. In spite of some heated discussion between Conservative and Labour members, approval was agreed unanimously.

**Trees**

So where does this leave us? Now that the races have the go-ahead, our role is to look to ways to minimise the effect on the Park and surrounding area. First we need to study the planning conditions imposed and ensure they are properly enforced, including especially those relating to protection of trees, traffic controls and reinstatement after the event. The Community Forum is the vehicle by which this is best achieved. We

and the FoBP have established good relations with the promoters, who seem to want to listen and not leave the Park in a mess. We will do our best and keep you posted!

**A G M**

**The Battersea Society’s AGM will be held on Tuesday 24 March at St Mary’s Church, Church Road, Battersea SW11 3NA 7 for 7.30pm. Papers are not being posted out but are available on the website and Mike Roden’s email newsletter. Hard copy will be available at the AGM.**





## Burrowing under the borough

David Lewis explains how Crossrail 2 will affect us

Once upon a time there was a project for a tube line from Chelsea to Hackney, which were then both rather different to today. The project fell into a long and deep sleep. But eventually it was reawakened, transformed, and taken up with great enthusiasm by the Mayor of London and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is now called Crossrail 2. They want to see a formal application for the necessary powers in 2017, the start of tunnelling in 2020, and trains running in 2029/30.

Why so enthusiastic? The population of London is projected to increase by more than a third by 2050; the number of people travelling into central London by tube and rail is projected to increase by 70%. London's current transport system, even with the completion of Crossrail 1, will not be able to cope. The severest problem will be the services into Waterloo, which are already overloaded and congested.

### Link

In the present proposals Crossrail 2 will run through a tunnel from Wimbledon to Tottenham Hale and link up with existing suburban lines in south-west London (from Kingston, Hampton Court, Chessington and Epsom) and the line from Cheshunt north of London. Diverting some suburban trains into the Crossrail 2 tunnel will overcome the limits on the number of surface trains that can be accommodated at Waterloo, although some suburban trains will still run to Waterloo. The effect on Battersea is that the Crossrail 2 tunnel will run from Tooting Broadway through a station at Clapham Junction to a station in the King's Road (on the site of the Chelsea Fire Station at the top of Oakley Street) and then to Victoria.

The Government, in the form of the Department for Transport (DfT), is safeguarding the route of the planned

tunnel (a corridor about 100m wide) and the land likely to be required on the surface for station entrances, ventilation and emergency access.

Wandsworth Council will have to consult Transport for London (TfL), as they will construct and operate Crossrail 2 about any planning application that might affect the underground tunnel and any planning application for the land that may be required on the surface; if necessary TfL can ask DfT to direct Wandsworth to refuse a planning application or impose conditions on a planning permission.

In broad terms the route will run south to north across Wandsworth Common (clipping the east side of Baskerville Road on the Toast Rack) and cross the grounds of Emanuel School to Vardens Road, Strathblane Road and Clapham Junction Station. North of Clapham Junction it will pass under the Falcons, cross Falcon Road and curve round to Christchurch garden in Battersea Park Road. It will then cross the Three Sisters Conservation Area and the Surrey Lane and Somerset Estates to Morgans Walk, where it will pass under the Thames to Chelsea.

### Detail

If you would like more detail on the route the draft safeguarding maps are on the internet ([www.gov.uk/government/consultations/crossrail-2-safeguarding-directions](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/crossrail-2-safeguarding-directions)) and the final maps will be available there within the next couple of months.

The tunnelling is not expected to cause damage or disturbance to buildings on the surface. The Safeguarding Direction will appear on the Land Charges Register. Anyone who is not able to sell a house because of safeguarding may be able to serve a statutory blight or purchase notice on TfL. The Royal Institution

of Chartered Surveyors offers a free consultation service at [www.RICS.org](http://www.RICS.org)

The Planning Committee of the Battersea Society will be paying particular attention to the surface areas which have been identified and are being safeguarded: an area south of the Refreshment House and Lodge on Wandsworth Common, Clapham Junction Station and Station Approach, the area known as Bramlands at the Falcon Road end of Grant Road, and the open space next to Whitgift House at the bend in Westbridge Road. We are finding out what uses are proposed for these areas, what disruption those uses would cause and for how long, and whether there are any alternatives that would be less damaging. We shall keep members informed through the Society's website and future issues of *Battersea Matters*.

The future of Clapham Junction Station and the surrounding area raises bigger issues, with which public authorities are only now beginning to grapple. A forthcoming report by Network Rail reveals that 'a masterplan is being developed to address medium and long-term requirements' for future track and platform capacity at Clapham Junction. The Battersea Society has welcomed the intention to produce a masterplan. We have told Network Rail that it must include provision for Crossrail 2, should include a bus station, and must be produced from the earliest stages in conjunction with Wandsworth Council and in consultation with the local community.

*David Lewis is a member of the Battersea Society's planning committee.*

### STOP PRESS:

Following thousands of protests, the *Wandsworth Guardian* reports that the Crossrail 2 team are seeking alternatives to the site identified on Wandsworth Common and another one in Trinity Fields off Burntwood Lane.

## Battersea's stories, verbatim

Clare Annamalai introduces a new local theatre company

When theatre director Emma Faulkner moved to Battersea's Winstanley Estate several years ago she was immediately struck by the diversity and warmth of the people, and by the rich history of this area. So in 2013 when she set up her own theatre company, Lightbox Theatre, one of the first things she did was to kick off an ambitious project called *Battersea Stories*. 'As a young theatre company, our first priority was to mount some 'conventional' productions, which we did successfully at the Finborough Theatre in 2013 and 2014. But *Battersea Stories* was a passion project for me, and it carried on in the background throughout those two years.'

The *Battersea Stories* project is about gathering a wide range of accounts from people who have lived and worked in Battersea over the last century, and transforming these stories into theatre performances. To date, Emma has spoken to over 120 people, and amassed a wealth of fascinating material. Her strong links with community organisations such as Katherine Low Settlement, Wandsworth Older People's Forum and Big Local SW11 mean she has spoken to a really diverse group of people, including some who are often hard to reach. 'It was so important to hear a variety of voices. I interviewed very elderly people in residential care, teenagers, young mums, newcomers to Battersea, each of their different perspectives contribute to the picture of this place we call home.'

### Sharing

As well as interviewing individual residents, Emma used workshops to encourage people in sharing their stories. 'We brought together people of different ages, and had actors read out to them some of the accounts that we had already heard. We wanted to get young people responding to older people's stories, lifelong residents responding to the stories of newcomers – and vice versa. It's a great way to get people talking!'

So what next? Emma says that 2015 is the year when *Battersea*



*The Air Around Us*; a recent production from Lightbox Theatre

*Stories* will come to life on stage. All the performances will use a 'verbatim' style, which means that actors speak the exact words used by the real person. There will, of course, be an editing process, to shape the original material into a compelling script, and to interweave different people's stories, but the words themselves will be unchanged. 'In creating a performance out of these stories we have a dual responsibility; we must of course give our audiences an entertaining and stimulating experience, but at the same time we must be faithful to the stories that our contributors shared with us, and the style in which they shared them.'

Two shows are already in the pipeline. *Battersea Odyssey* will take place in May, as part of the Wandsworth Arts Festival, and will take audiences on a journey around Katherine Low Settlement, to hear stories played out by actors in different parts of the building. Then in the summer, Theatre 503 will host *The Air Around Us*, which brings to life the recent history of Battersea through the words of just one man who has seen it, lived it and breathed it. There may be a final show in October, if Lightbox can secure the funding for it.

'We have managed to achieve a huge amount of outreach with the support of Big Local SW11 and Wandsworth Big Society Fund, and are very grateful for help from Wandsworth Council and Theatre 503 to bring the first two shows to fruition. We have so much material that deserves to have a wide audience, and we really hope that Battersea Society members will be among those who come and enjoy these unique events.'

*Battersea Odyssey* takes place from 15 – 17 May 2015 at Katherine Low Settlement. Tickets can be bought on the door, or via the Theatre 503 website, closer to the time.

For more information about Lightbox Theatre, or details of their forthcoming shows, visit [www.lightboxtheatre.co.uk](http://www.lightboxtheatre.co.uk) or follow them on Twitter @LightboxTheatre  
Clare Annamalai is general manager of Lightbox Theatre.

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## Great Bus Journeys of the World No 13

Mike Roden goes from Clapham Junction to Shoreditch the long way round



It's two minutes past ten as I board the 35 bus on St John's Road on a drizzly, grey February morning and we're off up Battersea Rise, which quickly merges into Clapham Common Northside. The church of St Barnabas has a medieval look to it, though it was actually opened in 1898. A blue plaque on the wall of 47 Northside records that composer Edvard Grieg often stayed here between 1888 and 1906 as the guest of his publisher who would sometimes fly the Norwegian flag when the great man was in residence.

Into Clapham and past Clapham Common underground station, opened in 1900. Apart from a small domed entrance building the station is entirely underground. The 31ft Clock Tower next to the station entrance was unveiled in July 1906. Almost immediately we turn right down Clapham Park Road, an uninspiring mixture of small shops, hairdressers and takeaways.

### Ritzy

At the junction with Brixton Road there's a good view of the Ritzy Picturehouse. Opened in 1911 it was one of England's earliest purpose-built cinemas, which finally closed in 1976. Its revival was supported by Lambeth council and the London Cinema Collective, but the cinema's somewhat 'alternative' agenda, didn't always sell tickets. A desperate manager once advertised in the local paper to reassure locals that not every film screened was 'left-wing or gay'. Those headily independent days are gone and today the cinema (owned by Picturehouse Cinemas) is a multi-screen complex.

After a long wait the bus joins the bustle of Brixton. At the stop opposite the underground station the bus fills up, but there are also large numbers of commuters heading for the Victoria Line. The station – with very high usage for an inner suburban station – was opened on 23 July 1971.

### Bookie

We're soon turning into Coldharbour Lane. A 'cold harbour' was an uninhabited shelter, with a roof, door and possibly a simple hearth. In 1955, when John Major was 12, his family moved to a dingy tworoom rented flat on this road. Thus a future British prime minister is on record earning pocket money by delivering bets to an unlicensed bookie operating under the arches at nearby Loughborough Junction railway station.

We pass Camberwell Green, a sliver of ancient common land bought by the local parish in the late 19th century to protect it from development. Burgess Park named after Jessie Burgess, Camberwell's first woman mayor, opened in 1971. Unusually for a London park it was created out of a brownfield site which had been occupied by industry and housing.

Newington Library and the associated Cuming Museum – both opened in 1906 – have remained closed for two years since a disastrous fire. On the other side of the road is the former Labour Party HQ renamed John Smith House, in memory of the party's leader who died suddenly in 1994 after only two years at the helm. It's now a council hostel.

The bus heads on inexorably

towards the giant roundabout known as Elephant and Castle. Major redevelopment plans for this area don't all meet with approval, and a local group is campaigning for 'a regeneration that benefits local people'. Nonetheless the tall buildings are arriving. The 485ft Strata SE1 tower with its non-functioning wind turbines was completed in 2010, and those waiting on the starting line include One the Elephant, 360 Tower and Eileen House all well over 400ft high. More usefully for local people 2015 should see the opening of a new leisure centre, to replace the old Castle centre.

### Atmospheric

We turn up Newington Causeway which becomes Borough High Street, once the main road from the south. The only one remaining of its numerous galleried coaching inns is the George Inn, now in the shadow of the Shard. Mentioned by Dickens in *Little Dorrit* it is currently owned and leased by the National Trust. Such inns may have been the inspiration for the original theatres, with players acting on a stage in the courtyard surrounded by the standing audience with the more expensive 'posh seats' up in the galleries. The George is certainly still very atmospheric, and well worth a visit.

As is of course Borough Market. From the eleventh century, London Bridge held stalls selling grain, fish, vegetables and livestock. In the thirteenth century traders were relocated to Borough High Street and a market has existed there ever since. To our left is Southwark Cathedral, or more correctly The Cathedral



**Sights to see: The Ritzy cinema (photo:Oxfordian Kissuth); John Smith House, Southwark; The George Inn, London Bridge; the 'Walkie-Talkie Building'; punk band Superheaven at the Old Blue Last; Shoreditch Town Hall**



and Collegiate Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie. There's been a church here since 606AD, and probably a Roman temple before that. The present building retains much of its medieval fabric though the nave is a late 19th-century reconstruction. It became a cathedral in 1905 when the Diocese of Southwark was created.

The current London Bridge opened in 1973, replacing a Victorian stone-arched bridge, which in turn superseded a 600-year-old medieval structure. There's evidence of timber bridges here since Roman times. Ahead of us is the much changed, sometimes maligned city skyline, with the Cheesegrater, the Walkie-Talkie and the Gherkin all seeming to nestle close together for company.

Along King William IV Street I catch sight of the Monument commemorating the Great Fire, then we pass Leadenhall Market whose origins date from the fourteenth century. The bus stops at Threadneedle Street, home to the Bank of England. The street's name may refer to the threads and needles used by the members of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, whose hall has been located here since 1347.

### **Bomb**

Outside 99 Bishopsgate there's a little huddle of damply dejected smokers. The building was extensively damaged in 1993 by a Provisional IRA bomb which also damaged Tower 42 behind it. Opposite at 110 Bishopsgate is the Heron Tower, at 755ft the third tallest building in London. A move by the owners Heron International, to rename it

the Salesforce Tower, after major tenant Salesforce.com, was recently quashed by the City of London Corporation which voted in favour of calling the property 110 Bishopsgate.

We stop briefly at Liverpool Street station. There are few passengers left on the bus now. A little further on Folgate Street is the site of Dennis Severs' House. It's named after the American owner who from 1979 until his death in 1999 transformed it into an atmospheric time capsule recreating domestic life in the eighteenth century. Well worth going to see on a candlelit winter's evening.

### **Shakespeare**

On Great Eastern Street, there's a pub called the Old Blue Last. In 1576 it was the site of James Burbage's playhouse The Theatre. Shakespeare was almost certainly a member of the company. After a few years Burbage pulled it down, went south and built the Globe. A pub called 'The Last' – as in shoemaker – is first recorded here in the eighteenth century. Over the next couple of centuries, the pub's fortunes wavered, until – by now renamed The Old Blue Last – by the 1980s it was notorious for hosting a brothel on its upper floor. Shoreditch, and the pub have cleaned up their act since then, and it's now very popular with the area's young people, famous for its live music and lively crowd.

The bus takes various detours caused by building work and road works, and eventually ends up at the Grade II listed Shoreditch Town Hall built in 1865. It's now an independent arts and events venue, and is apparently very successful which is good to know. Time for me

to return to Liverpool Street Station and make my way home via Victoria and the trusty 170 bus. The whole journey took almost an hour and a half, which is why TfL's thoughtful Journey Planner refused to give me details of this journey, but insisted I took the Overground from Clapham Junction which would have only taken 45 minutes. The choice is yours.

### **The Battersea Society**

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Registered charity no.1103560

## Secret Agent Bloom, Battersea's francophile hero

Paul McCue explores the short, brave life of Marcus Bloom, shot by the Gestapo in 1944

He escaped the Nazis by jumping through a window in southern France, only to be shot in an Austrian quarry. What brought a rather overweight English Jewish cinema director to these extremes?

Born in the East End of London in 1907, Marcus Bloom grew up to manage his father's cinema, the Super Shows in York Road, Battersea. He also helped run a family business in France, where he met and married a Frenchwoman, Germaine.

Germaine found it hard to settle in London and frequently returned to her native land. She was stranded in Normandy when France capitulated to Germany in 1940. Back in Battersea, Bloom was eager to use his fluent French in serving his country. When he signed up at the drill hall on St John's Hill (now the TA barracks) he told the recruiting sergeant of his language skills but was ignored.

### Dangerous

He trained as a gunnery officer but persisted in applying for special duties and in March 1942 was taken on by the French section of SOE (Special Operations Executive), the British secret army. Agents sent to France knew that they were taking on a difficult and very dangerous job that could end in torture and death.

In paramilitary training Bloom did well and was described as 'possessed of a keen sense of humour, he has been the life and soul of the party... seems very English' (this possibly as a correction of earlier reports which had carried anti-Semitic overtones).

After training, Bloom was allocated to a group established by an English officer operating around Toulouse in south-west France, in the role of a wireless/telegraph operator. In October 1942 he, along with other secret agents including the celebrated Odette Sansom, landed via a felucca near Cassis on France's Mediterranean coast. Bloom was disguised in French clothes, with false papers and a new name, Michel Boileau, code name Urbain.

Bloom started work by making



contacts among potential resistants in Toulouse and helping to reconnoitre potential targets for sabotage, such as Toulouse's huge ammunition factory. He is also credited with destroying an enemy train. He sent more than 50 wireless messages to and from London, dangerous work as he had to keep on the move to avoid German detection vans. One trick secret agents used was to sit on a river bank, apparently fishing, using their wireless aerial as a 'rod'. Bloom also organised the landing and reception of four drops of weapons for the local Resistance group.

### Escape

It could not last. In April 1943, Bloom and his Resistance colleagues were arrested. He was handcuffed to one of them but despite this they managed to jump out of a window and escape into the night-time cover of the countryside. Crossing a river seven times to avoid detection by tracker dogs, they at last reached a police station where they expected to meet a pro-Resistance captain. However they were betrayed to the Gestapo, who re-arrested them.

Having captured Bloom's radio, the Germans immediately tried to continue transmitting to London. But SOE became suspicious and the attempt failed when the Germans were unable to answer a question about a London pub.

Bloom was transferred to the feared Fresnes Prison south of Paris. He was taken for questioning at least twice to the Gestapo headquarters on

Avenue Foch, where he was severely beaten. His wife Germaine managed to smuggle food parcels to him in prison. In August 1944 he was moved with others, mostly Dutch prisoners, to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. After just a few days, in a gruesome exercise, each man had a number painted on his chest to indicate the order in which they were to be shot the next day.

### Hero

Marcus Bloom was executed in the stone quarry at the camp on 6 September, along with 46 others including five other British agents.

Battersea's hero cinema manager is commemorated at the Broomwood Memorial near Woking and on the roll of honour at St Johns Wood Synagogue.

*Paul McCue has written several books of military history. [www.paulmccuebooks.com](http://www.paulmccuebooks.com)*

*His talk on Marcus Bloom is at Battersea Library 3 June at 7pm as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival*

## De Morgan moves to Surrey

**The De Morgan Centre, which contained and showed fine works by the 19th century potter William de Morgan and his painter wife Evelyn, closed its gallery on West Hill in February.**

**The De Morgan Foundation has moved to an office at the Watts Gallery in Compton, near Guildford. The majority of its artworks are in secure specialist storage, with some being loaned to other collections.**

**The Foundation is consulting with its stakeholders and other organisations to establish plans for the future of the collection. [www.demorgan.org.uk](http://www.demorgan.org.uk)**



William De Morgan ginger jar c.1885

## Music and social change

Andrea Brown, new director of the Festival Chorus, talks to Jenny Sheridan

The Festival Chorus, our popular local choir, has a new musical director. Andrea Brown takes over from David Fawcett, who has retired after 27 years. I met Andrea in a practice room at Morley College, where she is director of music and drama.

### Can't Sing Choir

The music department is a large one, with 68 part-time tutors teaching 600 courses a year. Courses range from opera and samba percussion to music technology or the history of film music. There's a lot of vocal music (including a Can't Sing Choir). 'Morley College is a wonderful place,' says Andrea. 'Many professional artists and musicians have come here to teach and inspire local residents. Gustav Holst and Michael Tippett were both directors of music here.'

Andrea conducts the Morley chamber choir and also leads on various choral projects at the Southbank Centre. She is looking forward to working with the Festival Chorus. 'We had our first rehearsal in January, for our performance of Handel's Israel in Egypt, which will take place in March. It is good to be

conducting a large group of voices again – I have previously conducted the 200-strong London Gay Men's Chorus. The Festival Chorus is about 120 at present, though they were larger for David's last concert, Verdi's Requiem. They are very responsive, with a good choral sound. It's a no-audition choir, and it isn't essential to read music, though many do. They're very willing to work, and they are not afraid of a challenging repertoire.

'Next year is our 40th anniversary, so we have great plans. We will do Monteverdi's Vespers and

I also want to focus on women composers – there were quite a lot in the 18th century as well as well-known ones later such as Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn. I'd like us to commission new work too.'

With a background in early music and a love of more modern music, she names three early/baroque composers and one 20th century one as her favourites: Claudio Monteverdi, Henry Purcell,

Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Benjamin Britten. Given the Desert Island Discs choice of saving just one work from the waves, she would dive in to rescue the Monteverdi Vespers.

### Creativity

Last year, Andrea started a ground-breaking course at Morley for young women conductors, and a recent Arts Council grant has enabled this to be rolled out for young women across the country. 'It's for girls as young as 16 up to 25. It's not only about music but artistic creativity, confidence and leadership. Morley is a vehicle for social change,' she says.

Choir member Dave Rathbone comments 'I am very impressed with the rehearsals so far. Andrea is cheerful and energetic, keeps things moving, is helpful and encouraging, and clearly expects a high standard. It should be a good concert.'

*Handel's Israel in Egypt will be performed by the Festival Chorus on Saturday 21 March 2015 in St Luke's Church, Thurlough Road, SW12. Tickets from [www.slms.org.uk](http://www.slms.org.uk) or the Northcote Music Shop.*



## Were you a student at Battersea Poly?

The University of Surrey is looking for former students to help with a heritage project to trace its roots. Now in Guildford, the university was formerly a polytechnic, founded in 1891 and based in Battersea Park Road. Later it became Battersea College of Advanced Technology before moving to Guildford in 1966 as a university.

A Surrey University spokesman says, 'This heritage project will create a comprehensive and lasting record of life as a student at Battersea.'

*Any former student who has a story to tell should get in touch with Kate Redrup by phone on 01483 689264 or email [k.redrup@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:k.redrup@surrey.ac.uk)*

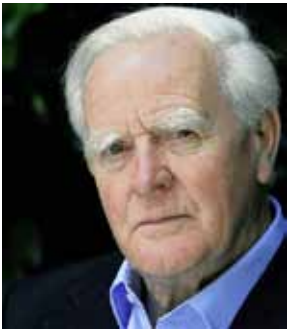
**Right: Students in a Battersea Polytechnic laundry class. Reproduced courtesy of University of Surrey Archive (JV3152)**





# John le Carré in Battersea

Janice Morphet sleuths out the spies' background



John le Carré's London locations for his Smiley stories are well known – the Circus, Bywater Street...

What has been less remarked upon is his use of Battersea as a setting in three of his novels – *Call for the Dead* (1961), *The Looking Glass War* (1965) and *The Mission Song* (2006). Le Carré even claims that he chose his pseudonym whilst sitting on a bus on Battersea Bridge, although he is notoriously unreliable retelling his own life history.

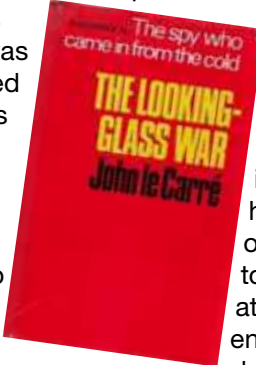
As David Cornwell, John le Carré lived in Prince of Wales Drive with his first wife and children between 1960 – 1962. During this time he had rejoined the security services after a period employed teaching languages at Eton. Cornwell's home was in Overstrand Mansions (also home to Francis Bacon's studio at the time).

## Pivotal

In Le Carré's first novel, *Call for the Dead*, Battersea is the location for the operation of a used car dealer, Adam Scarr, and is pivotal in the plot. 'They turned into Battersea Bridge Road and drew up beside a constable standing in the pavement... 'Scarr's garage? Well it isn't hardly a garage, sir, just a yard...you want to go down Prince of Wales Drive till you come to the hospital. It's tucked in there between a couple of prefabs. Bomb site it is really. Old Adam straightened it out with some cinders and no one ever moved him'.

Prince of Wales Drive also features in *The Mission Song* (2006). In this *Salvo*, an African translator, lives in Norfolk Mansions but this location is used more in its absence than its presence in the plot. The novel starts here and then quickly moves to Canary Wharf. Later that evening, *Salvo* is driven across Battersea Bridge on the way to the heliport and his secret mission interpreting

for a deal between African leaders, reflecting on its role as home rather than central Africa where he was brought up.

Finally, in the *Looking Glass War* (1965), Prince of Wales Drive opens the novel. It is the home of Avery, a junior officer in the security services who is summoned to the office during the night following the death of a field agent. As Avery leaves his home he reflects that 'it was terribly cold. The wind seemed to come from the river, across the park. He looked up and down the road. It was empty. He should have telephoned the rank at Clapham... he walked a hundred yards or so towards the Power Station changed his mind and turned back... there was a cab that hung around Albert Bridge at all hours, that was the best bet. So he passed the entrance to his part of the mansions...'.  


Le Carré uses real locations to enhance his plots. Although he did not live in Battersea for long it was at an important point in his life: when he started publishing his novels. He says, 'When I began writing. I was what was politely called 'a foreign servant'. I went to my employers and said that I'd written my first novel. They read it and said they had no objections, but even if it were about

butterflies, they said, I would have to choose a pseudonym. So then I went to my publisher, Victor Gollancz, who was Polish by origin, and he said, 'My advice to you, old fellow, is choose a good Anglo-Saxon couple of syllables. Monosyllables. He suggested something like Chunk-Smith. So as is my courteous way, I promised to be Chunk-Smith. After

that, memory eludes me and the lie takes over. I was asked so many times why I chose this ridiculous name, then the writer's imagination came to my help. I saw myself riding over Battersea Bridge, on top of a bus, looking down at a tailor's shop. Funnily enough, it was a tailor's shop, because I had a terrible obsession about buying clothes in order to become a diplomat in Bonn. And it was called something of this sort — le Carré. That satisfied everybody for years. But lies don't last with age. I find a frightful compulsion towards truth these days. And the truth is, I don't know'.

And nor do we... looking at the Kelly's Directory in the Local History Library produces no tailors in Battersea Bridge Road or Battersea Park Road and no shops by the name of le Carré...



Battersea has a new listed building. Whittington Lodge, part of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, has been awarded Grade 2 listing. Designed by Clough Williams-Ellis, architect of Portmeirion, the whimsical Italian village in north Wales, the Arts and Crafts lodge was used to house cats in the early 20th century and may have been the UK's first cattery.

# Planning Matters: York and Lombard Roads cause concern

Overdevelopment and the impact on transport: Monica Tross reports the Society's concerns

The council have approved plans for a 14-storey building in Gwynne Road (2014/5357). This will tower over its neighbours and may set a precedent for further applications towards Lombard Road. The developers seem confident that the 27 storey building at 12-14 Lombard Road will go ahead (2014/6909 and 2014/6957) despite concerns by many that the building is an overdevelopment of a small site alongside the railway line and listed Cremorne Bridge. It is also contrary to Council policy.



**A new 27-storey building, proposed for Lombard Road**

citing the many transport links – shared with approved or proposed developments along Plough, York and Lombard Roads. The enlarged Salesian School will increase pressure on roads and on the 170 bus, already fully stretched at peak hours.

## LOCAL PLAN

Following consultation these documents are going forward for approval in March and to the Planning Inspector shortly afterwards. We were

not wholly satisfied with the Council's response to our letter querying how far these policies inform planning decisions and have asked to meet officers to discuss this further.

## TAKE CARE AT TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Traffic is not always stopped at a red light on both sides of the road. At the Battersea Bridge Road/Battersea Park Road junction traffic travelling west may be halted while east-bound traffic still has a green light. We already need to watch for cars and cyclists shooting the lights, this is a new hazard. TfL tell me that this is because 'In managing London's very sophisticated traffic systems, we seek to balance the needs of everyone within a heavily over-subscribed road network to ensure safety of all road users while keeping London moving. So – wait for the Green Man and 'Mind how you go' (with apologies to the man on the Clapham Omnibus).

## NEW BRIDGE AT NINE ELMS?

Wandsworth is sponsoring an international competition for the design of a bridge between Pimlico and Nine Elms. Some may feel we do not need yet another bridge. Reach your own conclusion by looking at the Nine Elms Pimlico bridge website: <http://www.nepbridgecompetition.co.uk/> or see the feature from the *Wandsworth Guardian* on the news

section of the Society's website for a view of some of the bizarre competition designs. Members of the Planning Committee have been asked to sit on a Residents' Panel helping to judge the designs.

## LATEST NEWS

A development proposed for Cabul Road will retain the façade of the Milton Congregational Hall (2014/7206) while another building, of about the same age, in Stormont Road (2015/0140) is due to be demolished if the application is approved. In both cases we welcome the development but have expressed concerns about aspects of the plans. We have objected to the scale of the development replacing Embassy Press at 341 Battersea Park Road. The design would sit unhappily beside the Lost Angel and is not in keeping with the surrounding streetscape. (2014/7294) The application for the Gasholders site development is on the WBC website (2015/0591).

Finally, we continue to have modest success on applications in Conservation areas where a number have been modified to meet our concerns before approval. *Are there applications we should know about? If so, please alert us via [planning@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@batterseasociety.org.uk) Or do you take a different view on an application? Tell us please, we like feedback.*

The application for 98 York Road (2014/7103) is, if anything, more brutal in its impact on neighbouring buildings and open space.

Unfortunately the developers think that the fact that this part of Battersea is 'characterised by a mix of uses, heights and architectural styles' rather than something to be cherished is to be deplored because it 'creates confusion and a lack of legibility in the townscape'. I am not sure what 'legibility' means in this context – other than as a justification for very large buildings which will overshadow their surroundings.

Comments on these and other larger scale applications can be seen on the Society's website, follow the Planning link.

## TRANSPORT OVERLOAD

The dramatic effect on the streetscape of this part of Battersea is just one concern. The effect on traffic and public transport is a major worry. We have repeatedly called for the cumulative impact of proposed and approved new building to be assessed. Nine Elms building work is already having an impact further west on both road and public transport.

You may have seen the advertisements for Ram Brewery

**HELP! WE NEED SOMEBODY!**  
**Do you have some time available on Sunday afternoons? Many Battersea Society members will know the parish church of Battersea, St Mary, the Georgian Grade 1 Listed building on the Thames, often the venue for our illustrated talks and the AGM. St Mary's is looking for people interested in its history and the arts to volunteer to help keep it open on Sunday afternoons this summer.**  
**For more information contact: Cynthia Newman 07941 186 132**

## Tune in!

Wandsworth now has its own radio station. Founder and director Jason Rosam describes how it came about

The first meeting to discuss launching a community radio service for Wandsworth was in May 2013, at Battersea Arts Centre. Sixty people from across the borough turned up – I was amazed at the turnout.

I started out in community radio at the age of 14 in Dorset and am now a presenter for BBC Radio London. I wanted to create a local station for Wandsworth made by local people.

Community radio was a marvellous training ground for my future career in radio and a hell of a lot of fun. This is an incredible part of London with a rich culture and heritage. Its amazingly talented, artistic and eccentric people deserve their own radio station.

### Volunteers

After recruiting volunteers, the next step was to find a home for the station and try to access funding to buy studio equipment. This proved difficult after being turned down for a grant from Wandsworth Council's Big Society Fund and problems with finding appropriate, cost-effective accommodation.

While waiting to re-apply for the Big Society Fund, volunteers who were interested in journalism began a weekly podcast of local news. This lasted for a year right up to the launch of the station at the beginning of this year. During that time over 4,000 people listened to the podcasts.

At the end of 2013 Wandsworth Council decided to award the station £5,000 of funding for studio equipment. As the full cost to launch the station would be double that figure, we set up a crowd funding page. I was thrilled that volunteers and local people donated over £4,000 to the station.

During this time local estate agent and Wandsworth Radio presenter Philip Bulman was on the hunt for a space within the borough to house the studio. He remembered Gill Perkins



**Mayor Stuart Thom launches Wandsworth Radio together with Jane Ellison MP and Jason Rosam**

from Wandsworth Oasis had rooms above one of the charity shops on Battersea Park Road and set up a meeting.

I went along with a studio engineer and found a perfect little room for the studio. It's on the third floor with a nice view of Battersea's roof tops from a small square window and a glorious painting of the Queen Mother hanging on the wall.

### Website

We started work to set up the studio and purchase all the equipment and by the end of last year all the volunteers had received full training in using the studio. We decided on the shows and the schedule, created a website and everyone worked around the clock to get the station to air. We had hoped to launch before Christmas but needed a little more time get it ready for broadcast and sounding professional.

On 12 January 2015 the station was launched by Stuart Thom, mayor of Wandsworth, and Battersea MP Jane Ellison. The first song we played was a track by the American soft rock singer Jimi Jamison called *Battersea*.

Andy Bungay, one of the presenters, had been looking for an appropriate song for weeks and found the track by the singer, who was more famous for singing the theme tune to the TV show *Baywatch*.

We are now a month into broadcasting and the station is going from strength to strength, with a recorded monthly audience of nearly 3,000 people tuning in.

The most ambitious part of the station is providing a local news service. Each day volunteers read local news stories every hour and a special fifteen minute local news programme called Wandsworth Tonight is broadcast at 6.30pm. This includes interviews with local councillors, MPs and other important local people and offers reports by

volunteer journalists working out and about across the borough.

One of the most popular music shows is Classical Wandsworth at 8pm on Tuesday evenings when local retired journalist Julia Bright plays an hour of classical music ranging over five centuries.

Another popular show is Spotlight which discusses all the local amateur dramatic and theatre groups in the area and plays songs from the musical theatre. That is also on Tuesdays, at 7pm.

### Nostalgic

The Spring Show is becoming a nostalgic lunch time favourite on a Tuesday afternoon from 1pm. Jim Spring and Judith Esterson look back at life in the area in years gone by and play some cracking music from the 1940s and 50s.

If you'd like to listen to Wandsworth Radio you can visit the website [wandsworthradio.com](http://wandsworthradio.com) and click on the LISTEN button or on the mobile phone and tablet application TuneIn, just search for Wandsworth Radio.

If you are lucky enough to have a brand new internet, wi-fi radio system you'll find us on there too.



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## Wandsworth Museum unites with Battersea Arts Centre

The museum's new director tells Jenny Sheridan about an exciting partnership

Wandsworth Museum is on the move again – and this time it's to Battersea. The museum has entered a partnership with Battersea Arts Centre and will be based there from this spring. Many readers will remember the unsuccessful battle in 2007 to retain the museum in the Old Court House on Garratt Lane, and its subsequent move away from the town centre to near-isolation on West Hill. (Gallingly, the Council which insisted that the Old Court House was needed for a library is now closing that same library.)

### New audiences

Both BAC and the museum are excited about the new partnership. The Friends of Wandsworth Museum (FoWM) say it will 'create a synergy of mutual benefit and give the community a greater sense of place and heritage.' Sue Walker, the museum's new director, says it will be 'a real adventure for everyone. We will be able to work with mixed age groups as well as continuing our brilliant education work with schools and there will be some lovely opportunities for new audiences to meet each other.'

As an example of intergenerational work, Sue cites Jesse Rust's bee mosaics in the foyer of BAC. FoWM will be fund-raising for their conservation, with opportunities for their (mainly older) members to discover more about them. There will be talks about Roman mosaics and bee-related events for children and adults. Hopefully, there will be hives on the roof that will produce honey. So links will be forged between local people and archaeology, nature, industry and the arts.

'At BAC,' says Sue, 'Wandsworth Museum will be able to increase access to the collection, both physically and intellectually. There will be rolling displays and we will have trails round the building. BAC is putting on a politically-themed series of shows called Taking a Stand, and we will be able to get involved with this work.'

'It would have been easy to take a



Sue Walker, director of Wandsworth Museum

"cabinet of curiosity" approach but together we can take a more playful, perhaps teasing way of looking at objects.' The collection itself, which is largely the property of Wandsworth Council, will remain in secure storage in the basement of the West Hill building, where researchers and others will be able to access it on request.

Sue Walker comes to Wandsworth from the Dickens Museum in Doughty Street, where she set up the education department and worked on a successful Heritage Lottery

**All over the country local museums are closing**

Fund application. Her specialism is looking at literature through objects and vice versa. 'I am particularly keen to join literacy, story-telling, poetry and drama to interpret our collection,' she says. 'I'm fascinated by the human stories behind objects and I see narrative as a vital way of interrogating the past and bringing objects to life.'

Sue is a south Londoner: she went to school in Brixton and lived

in Balham for seven years (she now lives in west London). She sees Wandsworth's river access as important to people's sense of place and notes the widening inequality between rich and poor areas of the borough. 'The new partnership will encourage everybody to discover more about Wandsworth,' she says. 'We want to be an essential part of the community here.' Her plans include walks around the borough as well as involvement in the Huguenots in Spitalfields summer festival. There will be hat-making activities for children in Battersea Arts Centre, in honour of the French refugees' local industry.

Although the collection will remain on West Hill, the office, staff and FoWM volunteers are moving – a logistical challenge for Sue and her team. 'I love the practical side – running round the building with keys, packing up. But I'm really looking forward to the creative part. The first year will be about exploring and testing our ideas and we will start operating as one from spring 2016. Until then, we are working in transition to build a strong and resilient framework for our partnership.'

### Partnerships

'All over the country local museums are closing,' Sue warns. 'Local authorities don't have the money to fund them and they certainly won't in the future either. What we are doing here is spearheading a new way not just of surviving but thriving. There is a great need for new ways of funding and of bringing communities into museums. Partnerships with other local organisations are the way forward, though not everyone is as fortunate as we are in having such an inspiring partner as Battersea Arts Centre.'

The new partnership has been welcomed by Wandsworth Council and by the Arts Council.

[www.bac.org.uk](http://www.bac.org.uk)

[www.wandsworthmuseum.co.uk](http://www.wandsworthmuseum.co.uk)

## How to be enterprising

Would-be Apprentices appreciated Wandsworth's Enterprise Week, says Jenni Asiana

Around 700 businesses, aspiring entrepreneurs and business students attended Wandsworth Enterprise Week (2 – 7 February). The week comprised more than 20 free events – workshops, panel discussions and talks. The Council's aim was to offer help and support to people considering setting up a business, as well as supporting existing businesses and start-ups to flourish.

Among the events on offer was the Start up and Grow Business Show which featured workshops, talks and exhibition stands. Two enterprise days were specifically targeted at women and young people.

In Women's Enterprise day, female entrepreneurs were inspired by the likes of Shaa Wasmund, CEO of business advice firm Smarta.com, Nancy Cruickshank of myshowcase.com (online cosmetics) and Susan Hanage, founder of NappyValleyNet. At the Business Forum the *Evening*

*Standard's* food writer Victoria Stewart gave tips to local food businesses on how to get into the press, while business leaders shared their insights on creativity and the future of businesses. At the Youth Enterprise Day young people received advice from and pitched their business ideas to Tim Campbell, winner of the first series of *The Apprentice* and former *Apprentice* judge Margaret Mountford.

### Clocks

The week closed with the Young Enterprise Trade Fair, which saw student companies from the Young Enterprise charity programme selling their products, including vinyl record clocks and engraved leather bracelets, to members of the public at Southside Shopping Centre.

The programme gives 15 – 19 year olds the opportunity to set up and



A young entrepreneur shares her story

run their own business with local companies for one year. The student companies competed to persuade judges that their product and sales pitch were the best. The award for best product went to Ignite Innovation from Emanuel School for 1tap, a clever device to prevent cashless cards clashing.

Wandsworth's business spokesman Cllr Guy Senior said: 'It was fantastic to see so many local businesses at Wandsworth Enterprise Week. We know how important it is to have a healthy and vibrant business sector full of successful SMEs and independent shops.'

*Jenni Asiana works in WBC's economic and development office.*

## Restaurant review: Augustine Kitchen

Jenny Sheridan and Suzanne Perkins enjoyed their lunch

Battersea Matters Tower was deserted as its editor and designer treated themselves to lunch at Augustine Kitchen in Battersea Bridge Road.

We entered the bare but comfortable room – 'appropriate for a neighbourhood bistro' (Suzanne), 'nondescript' (Jenny) – to find it empty of customers, as it remained throughout our meal. This would have been a boon if we had been carrying on a discreet liaison, but might have felt a little disconcerting to a solo luncher. There was a background of lugubrious Scandi-noir type music.

The set lunch is £9.95 for two courses, £13.95 for three. There are three choices for starter and main course, including a vegetarian option. The food was mostly really delicious. I started with smoked salmon salad prettily arranged on



Power lunching on your behalf

a glass plate, with capers, blobs of green avocado cream and sprays of airy, aniseedy chervil. The flavours and textures melded and contrasted well. Suzanne's ham hock terrine was chunky and robust and came with a line of mustard-spiked celeriac remoulade.

Bread was a small baguette to share, so good we ordered a second.

My supreme of chicken (breast with the bone in, retaining more flavour) was fantastically good. Bathed in a stickily reduced winy sauce, garnished with pearl onions, small pancetta chunks and mushrooms, it lolled on a bed of perfectly cooked spinach. A surprise ingredient was the

bright purple potatoes, which tasted just as good as they looked.

Suzanne's *moules marinierès* were the meal's only disappointment. The mussels were plump and good but the sauce was under-powered. The accompanying chips were late, delivered with a charming apology by the Savoyard French chef-owner, but copious and full of rustle and taste.

### Snails

With a cup of good coffee and attentive service, the lunch came to £13.60 each. The set dinner in the evening is £19.50 for two courses and offers such French specialities as cassalette of snails and sea trout with watercress *velouté*. The very drinkable house wine is £19. I have eaten there on a Saturday evening and the place was busy.

This stretch of Battersea Bridge Road has seen several restaurants come and go. Augustine's Kitchen deserves to stay.  
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