



Wanted: a station fit for the twenty-first century

Battersea Society calls for “new approach” as Twin Towers scheme withdrawn

A campaign which had united political opponents, brought together a whole community, and seen Wandsworth Council receive an almost unprecedented number of objections on its planning website came to a halt on 18 May.

Relief mixed with uncertainty was the general reaction to the end of the ‘Twin Towers’ saga. Just days before the council’s planning applications committee was to discuss Metro Shopping Fund’s proposals for Clapham Junction, the developers withdrew the application, “disappointed” that the council’s chief planning officer was recommending rejection. In his view the scheme did not meet the requirement for affordable housing, nor did it adequately address the task of improving local transport infrastructure.

Challenge

Cyril Richert of the Clapham Junction Action Group felt frustrated that the committee had not been given the chance to discuss the height and bulk of the much criticized 42 storey towers, and predicted that the developers would return with a similar scheme which included very tall buildings.

From the start, the Battersea Society had expressed strong opposition to the scheme on various grounds, not least the quality of the design and the lack of ambition for the site. Society chair Tony Tuck saw this breathing space as an opportunity to explore other ways in which the council’s own

aim to create “a new station fit for the twenty-first century” might be realized. “This is a tough challenge for any architect – but we must not forget that some of the finest are actually based locally.”

Early contacts with Foster and Partners, whose head office is in Battersea, looked promising. Their impressive award winning design for Dresden Station in Germany represented the kind of vision that had been lacking in MSF’s scheme and offered the quality of urban space that local people should expect for Clapham Junction. The Society then wrote to the architects asking whether they would be willing to make some outline proposals for Clapham Junction station. Unfortunately, the firm felt that current commitments on other paid work made it impossible at present to take up this invitation.

Hopeful signs

Tony Tuck is not downhearted, promising that the search for an alternative solution will continue: “The level of protest against this disastrous plan shows that local people do care about the place they live. They deserve a great station that reflects its importance as a transport interchange and which will revitalize this part of Battersea’s town centre.”

There are some hopeful signs that the tide is turning against tall buildings. Campaigners against the development of a 16 storey hotel on Falcon Road, were cheered when the council turned down the



Compare and contrast:
top: Clapham Junction
above: Dresden station

application. Planning Applications chair Leslie McDonnell felt that the scheme was “out of scale” with neighbouring houses, and any such proposal “must respect its immediate surroundings and the properties around it.”

Mike Roden

More on Clapham Junction in this issue of *Battersea Matters*

8: Interview with Cyril Richert of the Clapham Junction Action group

9: Susie Morrow of *Living Streets* sets out her blueprint for a 21st century Clapham Junction

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

From the Editor

Our chair, Tony Tuck, (back page) is right: London is both a collection of villages and a glorious and diverse city. In June we saw ample evidence of both. Citywide, there was the marvellous Story of London weekend, with its offshoots of local Wandsworth history walks and lectures. As well as the normal extravaganza of theatres, concerts and exhibitions that we Londoners are fortunate to take almost for granted, summer brings performances in parks and the pleasure of watching tourists and residents enjoying our green spaces.

In our neighbourhood, there was the Wandle Valley Festival, the Lavender Hill Street Party and the first (but assuredly not last) Northcote Road Carnival – as well of course as the superb events

organized by the Battersea Society. Gardening is often seen as a rural or village activity but as I write, I look out at rosy hollyhocks and the first flowers on the tomato plants while planes thunder overhead – a true city garden. On page 11 we profile an extreme London garden, sited at roof level but harbouring ducklings and (alas) snails.

I have enjoyed visiting some fine national garden scheme gardens this June. In the London section of the famous Yellow Book, two gardens are listed in SW12, two in SW18, one in SW15. But where are the SW11 gardens? Perhaps next year we may see some brave gardener opening their personal oasis to the public for good causes.

July sees the London Literature Festival on the South Bank. The A-Z of participants runs from astronaut Buzz Aldrin to poet Benjamin Zephaniah. Looking further ahead,



London Open House, when many public and private buildings are open to all, shares the weekend of 19-20 September with St Mary's Fair, at which the Society traditionally has a stall. So we can combine the village and urban aspects of our lives over two packed days. Put it in your diaries!

Jenny Sheridan

newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk

020 7350 2749

There were moments in the tv series M*A*S*H when the comedy abruptly ended and Hawkeye, Radar, Hotlips etc were galvanised into action by urgent cries of "incoming wounded!" as a flock of helicopters dropped from the skies. It's a bit like that round here at the moment as visitors for Royal Ascot, Henley and Wimbledon show a woeful disregard for the peace of those down below by flying into the heliport before being whisked off in their Bentleys to be entertained to smoked salmon, strawberries and cream, caviar and champagne.

Old Battersea House – the London riverside home of the wealthy American Forbes family - is a near neighbour to the heliport, and most of their famous visitors doubtless arrive by air. Elizabeth Taylor spent one of her many honeymoons there, and Presidents Reagan and Clinton also came calling. But what of the current incumbent of the White House?

It was suggested at a recent Trustees' meeting that the

projected move of the US Embassy to Nine Elms could give the new

president a good reason to come to Battersea. How fitting for the first black president to visit a borough which in 1913 elected the first black mayor in Britain. But historical research can be very cruel! The very next day I learn that Thetford in Norfolk now holds that accolade, as it is now known that Bahamas born Allan Glaisyer Minns became its mayor in 1904. Still, as it's unlikely that Thetford will ever host the American embassy, we may yet have a chance to invite Mr Obama (and the lovely first lady) to one of our fabled summer parties.



The Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden reports on life in the bus lane

I would urge new members to do their best to come to the summer party, as it is the ideal place to make new friends. My charming fellow passenger and I have got to know a number of neighbours this way, and were delighted to attend the wedding of two of them recently. Circumstances conspired to make Easter Saturday the ideal date, and the only time available was 9.15am at Chelsea registry office but who could resist the chance to emerge onto the King's Road down the same steps trodden by so many past celebrities? I must of course report that the bride was ravishing, the groom was debonair, and I thoroughly recommend drinking champagne at 10.30 in the morning. And of course I travelled to this real wedding breakfast on a 170 bus rather than by helicopter.

See you next time
Mike Roden

The Battersea Society in the Dock...

Maureen Larkin on a recent visit to the Central Criminal Court



In May we enjoyed an interesting visit to the Central Criminal Court - better known as the Old Bailey. It stands on the site of the old Newgate Prison, on Old Bailey, a road which follows the line of the City's fortified wall, or bailey.

Our guide, the under-sheriff, began the tour in Court 1, where all major trials are held. Past trials include those of Dr Crippen and the Kray Brothers. The Old Bailey was originally built in 1585, destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, re-built in 1674 and re-built again in 1774. The present building dates from 1902 and was designed by EW

Mountford, the architect of Battersea Town Hall (now the BAC).

Underground

During the Blitz the building was severely damaged but most of it was restored in the early 1950s. We also saw the Great Hall (under the dome) which is decorated with paintings commemorating the Blitz.

We continued our tour to see the underground cells where prisoners are held awaiting trial or verdict. They were small and windowless, with a bench, a central electric light and a wash basin. The tour ended

in Court 13, one of the modern courts, which -with its TV screens and other modern technology - made an interesting contrast to Court 1.

It was a privilege to see parts of this famous building normally not seen by the general public.

Dates for your Diary

Annual Summer Party 6.30-9.00pm Thursday 9 July



If the sun shines we'll be outside in the lovely grounds of St Mary's Church. If it rains we retreat to the crypt. Either way, it will be a great, sociable occasion, with a band and a raffle.

Tickets can be bought at the door, but it would be helpful if you could let the organisers know you're coming to give an idea of the numbers for catering. Please email: party@batterseasociety.org.uk



Cost (per person):
£8.00 (includes first glass of wine and canapés)

St Mary's Church
Battersea Church Road SW11

Public Meeting Healthcare in Battersea

with Steve Barnes,
from Wandsworth PCT

6-7.30pm
Monday 13 July 2009
All Saints Church
Prince of Wales Drive
SW11 4BD

All welcome

See page 14 For more details

Visit to Southside House

2.00pm

Thursday 24 September

An extended special guided tour of this 'charmingly eccentric' house and its garden
£14.00 per person
(includes coffee/tea & biscuits)

Only a few tickets left

Southside House
3-4 Woodhayes Road,
Wimbledon Common, SW19

Riverside Walk

Starting 10am
Tuesday 28 July 2009
at the *Prince Albert*
Albert Bridge Road

Join members of the Open Spaces Committee as we walk along the riverside in Battersea to draw up a report for Wandsworth Council on river path accessibility for walkers and cyclists, and people with prams or wheelchairs. There will be two groups: one walking to Vauxhall Bridge and the other to Wandsworth Bridge. If you would like to come along, please contact Harvey Heath before 17 July on:

020 7585 3788 or at
harvey.heath@virgin.net

Help Required

We need someone to help organise and co-ordinate the collection and sale of bric-a-brac and jewellery at the Battersea Society stall at St Mary's Church Fair on Saturday 19 July. For more information please email

events@batterseasociety.org.uk

All Change for Battersea Bridge Road?

Monica Tross reports on controversial plans to change bus routes

Transport for London (TfL) is consulting on plans for extensive changes to bus stops, bus stands, pedestrian crossings and parking at the Battersea Park Road end of Battersea Bridge Road. The change would see south-bound buses running against the traffic in the current one-way section of the road between Prince of Wales Drive and Cambridge Road.

Time-saving?

The 'Travis Perkins' bus stop would be re-located to Battersea Bridge Road, north of Cambridge Road and the northbound stop moved up north of Banbury Street, outside Bridge Lane Health Centre.

TfL claims this will save between 85 and 187 seconds on the journey, depending on the time of day. They held a drop-in consultation at Bridge Lane and delivered leaflets around the area.

Sceptical

It is fair to say that views at the consultation seemed sceptical at best. Several people mentioned the real problem in this area, the bottle-neck for northbound traffic waiting to cross Battersea Bridge. Another resident was concerned about having bus stands in Cambridge Road and the effect on the traffic flow into Battersea Bridge Road, which is often very heavy at the evening peak.

There are also often traffic jams along Battersea Park Road going westward and buses turning right against the flow in a relatively narrow road seem unlikely to be better than the current right turn out of the Albert Bridge Road T-junction - and possibly much worse. Residents living in the Latchmere Road and Culvert Road areas would have a longer walk to and from the bus, as would others along

Battersea Park Road. One resident summed it up – "it works as it is, why change it?"

Concerns

When the Society's Planning Committee first discussed this we shared residents' worries about the effect on traffic flow. We were also concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety arising from a contra-flow. For those who haven't been sent a leaflet, details are at tinyurl.com/buschange. The deadline for comment is 10 July 2009.

The Battersea Society will object to these proposals and take the opportunity to ask TfL to look at more pressing problems for bus and traffic flow in the area: the bottle neck at Battersea Bridge and the planned closure of Albert Bridge for repairs. We will also seek reassurance that the 19 bus will continue to run south of the river once the current Hester Road bus garage is developed

Trade Tower, Plantation Wharf

For once, some good news. We objected to the proposed glass 'top hat' from the start, like many other Battersea residents. The Council has now refused the application. You can see a picture of the proposal at tinyurl.com/mfvvlz

Beechmore Road former job centre

New proposals were exhibited at the Duke of Cambridge in June. At first sight they look somewhat better than the plans to which we (and many others) objected. We will comment in detail on the plans when the developers apply for planning permission.

New US Embassy

The design competition has been narrowed down to four practices, all US based (a requirement for US embassies). The contenders are: Kieran Timberlake, Morphosis

Architects, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners and Richard Meier & Partners. A final run off is expected early next year. Two planning applications have been submitted showing outline plans similar to those shown at the recent US government's consultation. Responses to this were generally in favour. You can see details of the consultation and the latest news at newusembassy-london.co.uk

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy

The planning inspector appointed by the GLA is now assessing the Council's Core Strategy. Her initial comments include points the Society has made in the past, such as the need for a tall buildings strategy based on a townscape study and the pressing need for affordable housing. The Council is to be commended for posting much

Planning Matters

Monica Tross has the latest news

of the detail of their correspondence with the Inspector on their planning website so we can make our own minds up on these issues. The Society is fully engaged with the process and will continue to report back to members.

St Peter with St Paul Church and Vicarage, Plough Road

A new application has just been made for this site (2009/0699). The Society objected to details of earlier plans (see newsletter Autumn 2008) and will be sustaining these objections where no change has been made.

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

Battersea Power Station after the ecodome

David Lewis, chair of the Battersea Society's planning sub-committee wonders if this scheme is one the Society can support

On 4 June Treasury Holdings unveiled the latest scheme for Battersea Power Station. Opinions were divided about their previous scheme. Some Society members supported the idea of an 'ecodome' capped by a 300 metre tower. So did two-thirds of the public (and a somewhat higher proportion of Wandsworth residents) who attended a public exhibition last

Station will be largely surrounded by water. It will be tied into Battersea Park Road in a way that was notably lacking in the original design.

One route, with a central strip of water, gives a prospect of one corner of the Power Station. Another route, leading from the planned new Battersea Underground station, is artfully



summer.

Other Society members thought the height of the tower totally excessive, and were suspicious about the environmental claims made for it. The scheme foundered, however, not because of its impact on Battersea, but because the tower would have intruded into views of the Houses of Parliament along the Thames.

Open Space

The design of the new scheme is radically different. No ecodome. No tower. In their place a number of long curved blocks, tall but no higher than the base of the Power Station chimneys. As before there will be a large open space on the riverside, and now the Power

Station will be largely surrounded by water. It will be tied into Battersea Park Road in a way that was notably lacking in the original design.

Vast Scale

The scale of the development remains vast: 8 million square feet of floor space, with a claimed 15,000 or more 'jobs and training opportunities' and 3,700 new homes.

As before, Treasury Holdings has made no commitment that any of the homes will be affordable. Retail space has been reduced from 800,000 to 500,000 square feet, but this would still be a very large retail development that could sound the death knell of Battersea's town centre.

The Society's major preoccupation

remains the Power Station itself. Despite the millions the developer claims to be spending on conserving it, there are rumours that bits have been falling off it recently.

Pragmatic

The new scheme takes a pragmatic view about its future use, echoing ideas the Society put forward in our own Planning Framework for Nine Elms. The core of the Power Station will become offices above a 2000-seat conference centre, with further floors for creative industries below that.

The turbine halls on either side will be public spaces with shops and restaurants. It is claimed the Power Station (though not the rest of the development) will be a 'zero carbon building'.

Questionably, however, penthouse apartments would be built along the roof. And it is still in the balance whether the four chimneys will be conserved or replaced by replicas.

Warning

A planning application is expected at the end of July. Conversion of the Power Station could be completed by 2014, though other parts of the development would take much longer. The Society's planning sub-committee will be producing a considered reaction to this latest scheme.

Treasury Holdings have warned that if, after 26 years, this scheme founders, the Power Station is doomed. We tend to discount such warnings, but might that be unwise on this occasion?

Visit the Power Station website at battersea-powerstation.com

“My home, my castle and my sanctuary”

Jenny Sheridan visits an exhibition that transports Battersea to Shoreditch

How brave do you have to be to offer your private space to the gaze of both a professional photographer and the general public? Forty six residents of Battersea’s Ethelburga Tower allowed Mark Cowper to take pictures of their living rooms – just as he found them, untidied, uncleaned, full of the clutter of everyday life.

It may have helped that Cowper is a neighbour. He has lived in the block for over 20 years and last year decided to investigate the ways in which the rooms, their decoration and their use might change in response to different light levels. The resulting photographs are displayed in the Geffrye Museum in Shoreditch in the exhibition *Ethelburga Tower: at home in a high-rise*. They offer fascinating insights to the student of design and modern living, as well as to the plain nosy.

Identical but different

While each room is architecturally identical, the furniture, decoration and quality of light of course vary. Some are littered with carrier bags, boxes and papers, some are minimalist, others are elegantly open plan, a few are old-fashioned, with rucked curtains and china ornaments. Some seem to have little personality at all – just a laptop, TV, ironing board and settee. A television, often large and flatscreen, features in almost all. In one photograph a young man sits on a sofa, cuddling his dachshund, like the starting point for a sad novel.

The Geffrye Museum added to the interest of the exhibition by sending a questionnaire to participants, some of whose comments feature in the guide.

One enthusiast says, “It is my home, my castle and my sanctuary. It reflects my personality, my ethnicity, lifestyle, taste and quality of life.” Several comment on the view, especially those who overlook Battersea Park.

Changes

Mark Cowper has seen many changes since he moved to the estate in about 1987, when the Thatcher government introduced the right to buy council properties. Now it is largely privately rented, often by professionals or postgraduate students, or owner-occupied. Couples tend to move out once children arrive.

The photographer found a strong sense of community, with a floor of the block corresponding to a traditional street (there are ten flats on each floor). People know their neighbours, help those with disabilities and do odd jobs for each other. How did his idea about light affecting décor pan out? “There is a definite difference in feeling in the

higher floors,” he comments. “There is clean light and big skies and the rooms are light and often have no curtains. On the lower floors people tend to have net curtains, as they feel overlooked.”

Urban living

This is a thought-provoking exhibition - lots of little glimpses into urban living – and all the more fascinating for us in Battersea as it shows us our neighbours. To visit the Geffrye Museum, take the train from Clapham Junction to Waterloo, then hop on a 243 bus for an equally thrilling urban trip past Wren churches, the Law Courts, Clerkenwell, dreary Old Street, to stop outside the pretty façade of the museum. Lunch? Go English in the museum’s airy café or Vietnamese anywhere in Kingsland Road.

‘Ethelburga Tower: At home in a high-rise’:
 Geffrye Museum
 136 Kingsland Road E2 8EA
 Until 30 August 2009
 Open Tuesday-Saturday
 10am-5pm, Sunday 12-5pm.
 Closed Monday.
Free admission



How New York's loss became Battersea's gain

Thomas Ardill, assistant cataloguer at Tate Britain describes the background to Henry Moore's *Three Standing Figures*

Casual visitors to Battersea Park may have missed the monumental ladies (pictured right) who stand back from the path at one end of the lake. Even a regular visitor can be surprised when emerging from the shade of trees on either side. Described as 'monstrous' and an 'insult to the human form' when they were first unveiled, they are now just one of the park's quirks, along with the peace pagoda, the remnants of the Festival of Britain, and the elaborate toilet block.

Significance

The history of the sculptures points to a significance that is hidden from today's visitor. *Three Standing Figures* was commissioned for the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. It was only because it had taken so long to carve that when Moore was asked for something for the 1948 Open Air Sculpture Exhibition in Battersea Park he had nothing else prepared. The Contemporary Art Society saw the group and decided to buy it. After some persuading, the LCC accepted them, and MOMA agreed to take another work.

Joseph Lee's *Evening News* cartoon of 14 May 1948 (lower right) mocks the dismayed visitors as much as it does Moore's figures. The sculpture was the focus of public and press derision, but art critics picked it as the exhibition's highlight. Perhaps the most telling comment was from the park attendant who pointed out to a journalist that the grass was more worn around it than around any other work.

The sculpture appears to be a group of three slightly strange, but harmless and innocent women. The one on the left bends her knees slightly and holds her dress as if to



avoid stepping on it, while the other two look over their shoulders as if waiting for a bus. However, there are two sources for these figures that place them far away from these everyday concerns.

Drawings

The first is a series of drawings that Moore produced as an Official War Artist during the Second World War. These show similar figures, wrapped in blankets, lying in rows in underground spaces.: Londoners sheltering from the Blitz in Tube tunnels . After the war *Three Standing Figures* was described as having 'the characteristic war-time street-corner pose of women who listen for bombers.'

Henry Moore explained: "The pervading theme of the shelter drawings was a group sense of communion in apprehension. But I only wanted a hint of that mood to remain in the three figures ... to overlay it with a sense of release, and create figures conscious of being in the open air; they have a lifted gaze, for scanning distances."

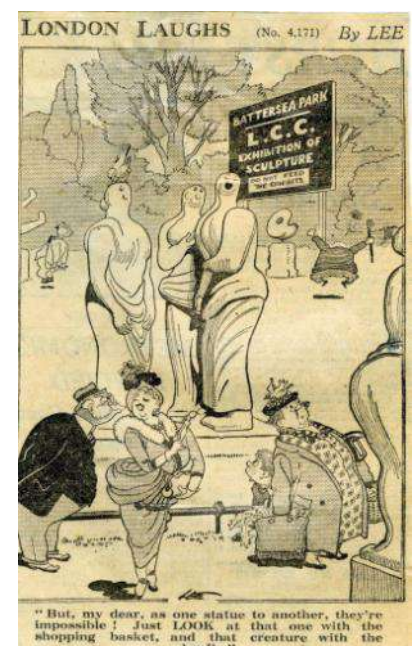
Another source for the figures was a drawing that Moore made in 1943 called *Three Fates*. Here three

women stand in a group like the Battersea ladies, but here two spin a thread which the third is ready to cut with a pair of shears. These mythical women determine the fate of gods and men by spinning (and cutting) the thread of life.

Survivors

In these two sources we have a thesis and antithesis: the survivors of an air raid, and the symbols of death. This could be seen as a deliberate synthesis of opposing experiences and emotions that was very pertinent to the visitors to Battersea's Open Air Sculpture exhibition many of whom had experienced the London Blitz. Like the three Battersea ladies they had emerged safely from the shelters, but into a world with new threats such as the nuclear bomb and new uncertainties in a world divided by an 'Iron Curtain'.

It is this background that determines the meaning of the figures. The sculpture could be described as an anti-war memorial; instead of mourning the dead it remembers the survivors, paying tribute to their past struggles and embodying their new fears.



Portrait of an activist

Jenny Sheridan meets Cyril Richert

Charming, determined and persuasive, Cyril Richert became the face of the campaign against the recently withdrawn “Twin Towers” redevelopment scheme for Clapham Junction. Why did it take a 36-year-old Frenchman to galvanise local people? “I don’t want to sound presumptuous,” he says, “but I find it natural. I’m at ease with management and organizing and getting people to work together. At university in Paris I was the chair of an organization of masters degree students. I led a national study and had articles published in *Le Monde*. I’m quite proud that I have been quoted in the French National Assembly and in the British Houses of Parliament, when Martin Linton mentioned the Clapham Junction Action Group in a debate in May.” Creating leaflets and websites, and contacting the media are second nature to Cyril.

Cosmopolitan

Until work brought him to London ten years ago, Cyril’s home was in Paris. He found Clapham Junction ideal for commuting both within London and to Europe, where he often worked. Nowadays he works largely from home, developing web services.

Cyril finds London more cosmopolitan than the French capital and has Italian, French, Polish and Indian as well as English friends. He likes the area’s villagey, community feeling, comparing it to his 17th arrondissement area of north-west Paris. He particularly appreciates our mix of small independent shops and chain stores such as Homebase and B&Q. “There’s no need to drive – you

can find anything near here. And there is a mixture of classes as well as nationalities, unlike say Chelsea. Through the campaign I have met people who have lived in the area for 30 years or more, who have very stable lives here.”

Consultation

The Clapham Junction campaign snowballed from small beginnings. “Last October my neighbour rang my doorbell and showed me the Council’s consultation leaflet. I thought a letter might not be very effective so I drafted a leaflet and my neighbour and I photocopied it. People offered to deliver it. And more people got involved, many of them from the Battersea Society – Harvey Heath, Tony Belton, Wendy and Peter Deakins, and Kate Williams, a lawyer specializing in rail transport.

“We printed 3000 copies of the next leaflet, 12,000 of the most recent one in May. And in January there was the well-attended public meeting, organized with the Battersea Society.”

Business

Cyril is naturally delighted that the developers withdrew their scheme and appreciates the hard work of so many Battersea residents: “A great example of local democracy.” He feels the whole plan needs to be reconsidered, probably with a different developer, and that redevelopment should concentrate on business rather than housing. More people working near the station would increase custom to existing and new shops and cafes. “Maybe in 20 years there will be a fast train link to Heathrow as well as Gatwick, and the tube to Canary Wharf. Clapham Junction will be an ideal area for attracting businesses and the current plans miss that opportunity.”



Campaign goes on

“But there is still a great risk that multi-storey buildings could be allowed, totally out of sympathy with the Victorian and Edwardian streets and with the Arding and Hobbs building, which is the focal point of the area.”

Cyril feels local residents must be canvassed again about the type of development they want to see. He is concerned that there should be a debate about what level of high rise is acceptable.

“To many people, 16 stories will be too high. To others, this may be acceptable provided it is not exceeded in other buildings proposed in the vicinity. “ Without such a plan, Cyril fears that a 16 storey building could be followed by a 20 storey building, making it harder to reject 42 storey buildings being proposed in future. “Before we know it, the character of Clapham Junction will have changed for ever, and the ‘regeneration’ which few of us thought was necessary in the first place, will have taken place by stealth.”

Cyril’s website is at
<http://towersci.wordpress.com/>

Protecting the future...



Susie Morrow, a Trustee of Living Streets, designs Clapham Junction for the 21st century

Now that the Clapham Junction redevelopment plans have been scrapped, at least temporarily, perhaps it is time to reflect on a town centre fit for the 21st century. From a Living Streets perspective, the desired endpoint would be 'safe, attractive and enjoyable streets for all'. People's needs would be prioritised over traffic, and walking would be the natural choice for short journeys. Urban designers talk about our streets in terms of 'link' and 'place'.

Community

As a major transport hub, Clapham Junction is, of course, a key 'link'. It also is a 'place' - somewhere people meet to do business, shop, relax, and live; somewhere with a distinct community, history and 'feel'.

A well designed 21st century interchange would promote active travel modes – walking and cycling. In practical terms this would bring excellent accessibility for all within the station; people-friendly vehicle speeds (why not a 20mph speed limit covering the whole area?); and easy of access for pedestrians

and cyclists. For walkers and cyclists, there is great value in a street pattern with a network of alleyways and narrow streets, with cut-throughs and exemptions from one-way working. This removes lengthy detours for cyclists and opens up a greater choice of routes for both cycling and walking.

Shared space

Lower traffic speeds allow planners to be bolder in creating shared space on busy pedestrian routes. Shared space works well on the South Bank; why not Clapham Junction?

As a 'place', an ideal Clapham Junction would look and feel pleasant, and be accessible for all. Local air quality would improve constantly as people are encouraged to walk or cycle.

Though always busy and buzzy – part of its appeal – our ears would not be assaulted by traffic noise when we emerge from the station, since almost everyone would arrive by public (and semi-public) transport, walking and cycling. Sufficient parking spaces for

disabled people, would be complemented by ample well designed cycle parking for residents and visitors, with spaces for car clubs generously distributed around both station and the surrounding area. The urban realm would be both beautiful and functional. Aside from a top-quality transport interchange, we might expect to see features such as a working public clock, attractive seating, trees, fountains, easily accessible public toilets, kiosks, pocket parks and other play facilities, references to the Falcon Brook, and a cycle repair, storage and hire station. The local community would be diverse and resilient, well connected to the area and with a thriving local economy. These are some characteristics I would associate with a truly successful urban realm in Clapham Junction town centre. Now, how to achieve it?

Visit the Living Streets website
www.livingstreets.com

The Bolingbroke Hospital has been granted Grade 2 listing by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The listing statement mentions the “remarkable” set of tiles, the war memorial and the “unusually lavish” marble hall (see *Battersea Matters* Winter 2008 and Spring 2009). Built in the 1930s, this was one of the first hospitals catering for the middle classes. The

wealthy employed private medical and nursing personnel while most people had to make do with the local dispensary or the poor law infirmary. The Friends of the Bolingbroke, who campaigned for this listing, are delighted.

Thames bridges

Cremorne Bridge (below) - also known as Battersea Railway Bridge



...protecting the past

Local landmarks achieve listed status

– has had its listing upgraded to 2*. Built to link northbound and southbound railway lines, it is one of the earliest to survive in its original form. It was opened in 1863.

Chelsea Bridge, opened in 1937, has been given a Grade 2 listing. The then culture secretary, Andy Burnham, said that the bridges across the Thames “show British engineering at its best.”

Jenny Sheridan

From offal butchers to trendy bars

Jenny Sheridan tracks the changes in Northcote Road

Northcote Road, according to a Council report, is an undeniable success story. The heart of 'Nappy Valley' buzzes with bars in the evening and with parents and buggies during the day. It is a popular shopping street, especially with relatively young and well-off people. But Battersea has changed hugely over the years and the shops and the ways in which we use them have changed too.

Eating & drinking

Earlier this year, I discovered in Battersea Library's local history section a Kelly's Directory from 1936 listing the names and types of shops in Northcote Road.

Comparing 1936 and 2009 gives an insight into some of the social changes that have affected our high streets. The most obvious difference is the increase in eating and drinking places. Seventy three years ago, just seven cafes and

restaurants served the population. In our more affluent times, there are 31, six of which operate mainly as bars, attracting a youthful clientele from far and wide. The reverse pattern is shown in the decline in food shops: from 30 down to six, again demonstrating the modern popularity of eating out. The street market does not feature in Kelly's Directory, but it would have been more extensive in those days

Perhaps surprisingly, the number of clothes shops and hairdressers remains unchanged. However, in keeping with the Nappy Valley image, clothes shops and hairdressers for children have risen from two to nine.

Affluence

Another clear sign of changing priorities (or affluence, or affordability of new goods, or shocking wastefulness, depending on your

point of view) is that in 1936 there were 18 shops in the road specializing in repairs – of clothes, shoes, watches. Now there is just one, plus a charity shop. It is cheaper and easier to buy new. Hence our huge and growing landfill sites, as well as the loss of many useful skills and crafts.

Some types of shop have disappeared altogether. Credit drapers were inexpensive clothes shops where, presumably, one could buy dresses or suits on tick. There was a specialist offal butcher, a corset-maker and a hosier.

A few sites in the road have kept the same type of business – a pawnbroker at number 9, chemist at 27, newsagent at 95, baker at 64. And at number 104 Miss Mary Harris, baby linen, has transmogrified just a bit, to *Pretty Pregnant* - a word probably little used in polite society 70 years ago. The only shop still under the same ownership is Dove the butcher. Bob Dove is the grandson of the original owner.

This salad is fresh-tasting and healthy, and has a mildly exotic taste.

1 fat fennel bulb
1 bunch watercress
3 spring onions
Ginger

For the dressing

Natural yogurt
Salt, pepper sugar, mustard
Juice of half a lime
1 clove garlic, crushed

Slice the fennel and spring onion as finely as possible. Chop a piece of peeled ginger and mash or grate it till you have a small teaspoonful. Add it to the onion and fennel.

Summer Recipe

Fennel & Watercress Salad

Chop the watercress quite roughly, so the pieces are large. Put the cress on a shallow dish or plate, with the fennel mix on top.

Make the dressing by combining the ingredients, tasting to get the balance right. You may not need all the lime.

Pour the dressing over the salad. If you have a zester (a surprisingly useful little implement), it looks pretty if you scatter a few curls of lime zest on top.

Jenny Sheridan

Advertisement

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Honeysuckle, conkers and ducks in the sky

Angela Roden visits a remarkable rooftop cottage garden.



“Well really it’s a cheapskate garden – we’ve never been near a garden centre”. That’s how Elizabeth Jordan briskly sums up her approach to the Battersea rooftop garden she has tended for the last 30 years.

“Everything here has been grown from roots, transplants and cuttings. It’s not a garden for plantswomen either – there are no rare plants here. But it definitely is an *English* garden.”

Bluebells and meadowsweet

Standing in her terrace garden on a beautiful spring evening with the Thames racing by forty feet below it was fascinating to spot what was there. Ivy intertwined with honeysuckle cascading over walls, iris and periwinkle fronting trailing clematis, pale green and yellow euphorbia pushing through yellow and white dead nettle, bluebells, ferns and meadowsweet preparing the way for dark blue late flowering delphiniums. Amazingly all of these woodland and meadow plants are growing in pots and containers.

Silver birch

Pride of place goes to the horse chestnut, grown from a conker

collected on Ealing common in the late 1970s. Bonsai-style treatment keeps it below 15 feet, with its roots carefully clipped to expose them to the air and restrict regrowth. Just behind, a weeping silver birch shades the patio table, its trailing branches almost reaching the ground. Elizabeth admits that creating a garden here has not been easy. The north-facing balcony has views stretching to Wembley in the west and Canary Wharf in the east and is exposed to winds in a wide arc.

Covenants on the building restrict the erection of additional fencing, so the plants have gradually grown their own cover. Keeping things going needs careful management, using a general liquid feed once a week in summer and a plant tonic to add iron once a year. Peter Jordan has used his engineering skills to construct an ingenious and economical timed watering system using parts from an old washing machine. Slugs and snails are kept under control with lavish offerings of beer, hidden in the undergrowth in small plastic pots.

Ducklings

The wildlife in this remarkable garden is not restricted to insects and passing birds, however. A duck has been nesting there, regular as clockwork, twice a year, for the last fourteen years.

“We have no way of knowing whether it’s the same duck or just one with a family memory of the penthouse where it was hatched,” Elizabeth tells me.

It was too late to see her on the nest hollowed out under the ivy, as seven ducklings had just flown the nest. Each year when the time is right, one of the duck’s two or three drake admirers turns up, the

proud mother flies down to the river and calls to her babies. The helpful drake (who may or may not be the proud father) then pushes them off the edge of the balcony one by one – hopefully to watch them open their wings and glide down safely to the river. Of course, Elizabeth says ruefully, there have been casualties over the years.

But how can you rear a brood of ducklings that far from water? The final stunning feature of this lovely garden is the pond, ringed by a grassy margin full of buttercups and other meadow flowers, tucked under the fire-escape stairs, and doubled in size by a carefully sited mirror. This is where the youngsters practice their breast stroke before their leap to freedom in the Thames.

Very special

This really is a very special garden that Elizabeth and Peter Jordan have created, with its long stems of Solomon’s seal, tangle of lamb’s tongue fern and cuckoo pint, and foxgloves pushing up their heads. So it is not at all surprising to learn that last year it was named Urban Runner-Up in a Sunday Times competition to find the best garden created using only pots.

The sun was setting over Lots Road Power Station and it was time to go. But I do hope that Elizabeth will give me a call when the next brood of ducklings is ready to sky-dive to the river so I can go along and provide paramedic back-up down at ground level.



Battersea in fiction

Mike Roden looks for novels and stories with a local setting

Clearly many narratives with a south London setting will have elements from Battersea but this article is only considering stories definitely set here.

London Snow (1979) a children's story by Paul Theroux is set firmly on Battersea High Street, but has a dream-like quality to it. The story takes place after an unusually heavy snowfall, and the descriptive passages came to life in February this year: "Saint Mary's seemed a country church, banked by snow, at the edge of a snowy meadow where lambs nestled. But the meadow was the frozen river on which the snow had settled, and some icy wavelets had produced the illusion of lambs."

Evocative

Graham Greene's *Ministry of Fear* (1943) takes place at the height of the Blitz. Especially evocative is this description of the view from a block of flats on Albert Bridge road: "The stairs were at the back of the flats looking towards Chelsea, and as you climbed above the second floor and your view lifted, the war came back into sight. Most of the church spires seemed to have been snapped off two-thirds up like sugar-sticks, and there was an appearance of slum clearance where there hadn't really been any slums."

Up the Junction (1963) is evocative in a very different way. The author, Nell Dunn worked in a Battersea sweet factory and her experiences formed the basis of these stories. Its frank colloquial dialogue, portrayal of petty thieving, sexual encounters, and back-street abortion shocked many at the time. Here a group of children go down

through St Mary's churchyard: "On they go past the torn buildings and mud swamp scattered with bricks and floating newspapers ... Down through the tangle of grass on the churchyard graves to beach and to the mud stretching out to the water... Johnny throws a stick at a swan."

Offshore

The Thames is at the centre of Penelope Fitzgerald's Booker Prize winning novel *Offshore* (1979). Based on her experience, of living on a leaky houseboat which sank twice, the story is set on a flotilla of Battersea houseboats.

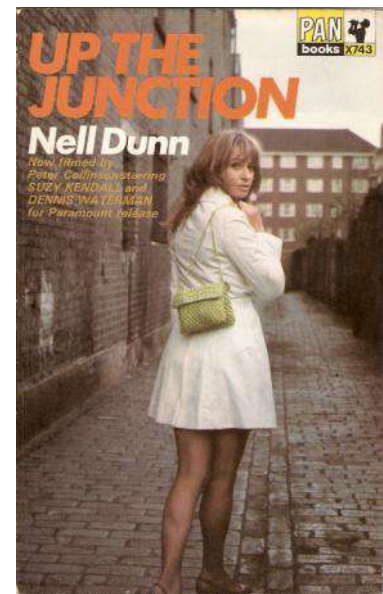
She describes an uneasy committee meeting of the barge

"Saint Mary's seemed a country church, banked by snow..."

owners as the tide comes in: "...at Battersea the flood lasts five and a half hours, and the ebb six and a half - they would be living not on land, but on water... On every barge on the Reach a very faint ominous tap, no louder than the door of a cupboard shutting, would be followed by louder ones from every strake, timber and weather-board, a fusillade of thunderous creaking, and even groans that seemed human. The crazy old vessels, riding high in the water without cargo, awaited their owners' return."

Aspirational

John O'Farrell knows the area very well. *Things Can Only Get Better*, his memoir of life as a political activist in 1980s Battersea is a classic, and he has written a number of very funny novels. *May Contain Nuts* is set very clearly in and around Battersea, taking a wry look at



aspirational parents:

"A four-wheel drive is vital in this sort of terrain. When you are transporting children across a remote mountain region such as Clapham and Battersea, the extra purchase you get with a four-wheel drive is absolutely essential.

Ordinary vehicles would have to be abandoned at Base Camp at the bottom of Lavender Hill, while only hardy Sherpas with mules and four-wheel drives could cope with the sort of incline you face as you pull away from the KFC towards the Wandsworth one-way system...."

Bookstore

There must be many other books, or collections of stories, with a Battersea setting, which I have missed, and I look forward to hearing from anyone who can point me in the right direction. All the books mentioned can be purchased from our online bookstore.

batterseasociety.org.uk/bookstore.

If you can't grow your own

Jenny Sheridan enthuses about farmers' markets

Farmers' markets may be old-fashioned, but they are bang up to the minute too. Local, sustainable, seasonal, they supply food that is everything we are urged to eat. Short on food miles, the produce is long on flavour and authenticity.

Everything in a true London farmers' market is grown, raised or caught within 100 miles of the capital, sometimes within the M25.

South of the river is less well served than north or east London and sadly Battersea has no farmers' market. Brave attempts in Old York Road and Battersea High Street have withered away. However there are several markets just a bus ride away. Grab a shopping basket and your oyster card or freedom pass and head for foodie heaven.

Pimlico

Take the 170 bus to Orange Square, at the corner of Pimlico Road and Ebury Street and you'll find one of London's larger farmers' markets. Every Saturday morning the well-heeled inhabitants of Belgravia fill their bags with partridges and venison (in season) and the earliest strawberries. One Battersea Society trustee is a frequent visitor. "My special favourites are Saffrey Farm vegetables, Beatbush Farm organic meat and Flour Power City bread," she says.

Clapham market, in Bonneville school playground just off Abbeville Road, opens at 10 on Sundays. Although inclined to be expensive, its fruit and vegetables are excellent, with many apple and pear varieties in autumn. The same stall sells fruit juices too – apple and beetroot is surprisingly good. Sometimes there are delicious

fresh goat cheeses, excellent when lightly grilled in a warm salad. On other Sundays the cheeses are from buffaloes. On a recent visit I bought a medal-winning wild rabbit and leek pie.

South Kensington

Bute Street, South Kensington, is closed to traffic on Saturday mornings. This is a new market, only opened in 2008 and has yet to fully establish itself. In early June there were only six stalls, but these included organic salads, sorrel and gooseberries. I bought a bunch of tiny turnips, scarcely big enough to be torn from Mother Earth. Another stall sold the freshest fish from the Dorset coast. Parsons Nose's bacon is deliciously fatty. Worth a trip on the 49 bus.

Although not a farmers' market, the stalls on Duke of York's Square, Kings Road, are an eye-popping delight. Many of London's diverse food communities are represented here, from Moroccan tagines and Brazilian cakes through Jamaican

patties to French walnuts. Unlike the other markets, the main focus is on prepared hot or cold food to take away or eat on one of the benches in the square.

Oyster stall

There are sparkingly colourful and exotic salads from Rainforest Foods, delicious pates from Patchwork and an oyster stall (£1 each and an excellent pick-me-up). Tiger Spring Teas with their wide selection seem to have disappeared, but I love Spice Mountain for its herbs and spices, mixed with a knowledgeable hand and nose. The stalls change from time to time. Last time I visited there was a man selling bottles of expensive but intriguing pure Swedish blueberry juice, as full of tannin as a young red wine.

And after your delicious street food lunch, if your basket is not too heavy, you can troll down the Kings Road for some retail therapy or else nip into the Saatchi Gallery to refresh your artistic tastebuds, before catching the faithful 319 back south of the river.



Mrs Jennings's seafood stall at Pimlico Farmers' Market

Waste not want not

Mike Roden gets the message about recycling

Both speakers at a Society meeting in March gave an attentive audience the same message: the current economic climate has not made recycling a waste of time, and is more important than ever both to save money and to save resources.

Michael Singham, senior policy officer at Wandsworth's Waste Management Department first reassured his listeners that there were no plans for fortnightly refuse collections, and residents



would not be asked to sort recyclable materials before collection. The current system using orange bags or communal recycling bins produced quality, saleable material, with little contamination. Wandsworth was striving to improve recycling rates, but a target much above 30 per cent was not seen as realistic, and waste minimisation, as stressed in the Love Food Hate Waste and other campaigns, and re-use was more practical and cost effective.

The council was encouraging composting by ending free garden waste collection and making realistic charges for the collection of bulky items, so as to encourage alternative sources of disposal, such as eBay or Freecycle.

Hannah Kowszun from the London Community Recycling Network (LCRN) felt that this

approach was very important. The LCRN supported and promoted local management of resources that could be used, re-used, recycled and recovered. The network now had more than 150 members including allotment associations, city farms, charity shops and development trusts. Participation in a local programme of waste prevention, recycling and composting had numerous benefits, both in saving money, and improving the skills of those involved. It was also an excellent way to bring a community together.



Wandsworth Primary Care Trust wants to update the Society on developments following the public consultation in 2007. This meeting will give us an opportunity to hear about the implementation of the plans from Steve Barnes, the PCT's Battersea programme director.

At the time we broadly approved of the plans, as we reported in our newsletter and website.

- ◆ A new health care centre on Grant Road
- ◆ Refurbishing Bridge Lane Health Centre.
- ◆ Redevelopment of the Dod-dington Health Centre and the Battersea Fields Practice.

All welcome at public meeting on Healthcare

- ◆ Working with St George's NHS Trust to provide health care services on the Bolingbroke Hospital site.

Development

A surprising new development, not mentioned in the 2007 consultation is a GP-led health centre in Grant Road. Following a tendering process, the chosen provider is an independent firm, Care UK, working with AT Medics. The PCT's [website](#) (pictured right) states that the centre will not jeopardize the health care centre included in the consultation and that it will be opened by March 2010.



All members and their friends are welcome to attend the meeting

6-7.30pm
Monday 13 July 2009
All Saints Church
Prince of Wales Drive
SW11 4BD

Where have all the growers gone?

Geraldine Kelly, Wandsworth's allotment officer, explains why there are no longer any allotments in SW11

Battersea has always enjoyed the benefits of its location just up-river from the great metropolis. It was within easy reach by water to take the horse droppings swept daily from the city streets, for spreading over the fields. The well-manured land was cultivated as market gardens and the resultant verdant crops were sold back to a ready market in London.

Today there are no allotments in Battersea. The last site closed in around 1980, near the former Shillington Street. Sacred Heart School in Battersea High Street needed to extend. Rather than demolish houses and homes and as the allotments field was already clear, this land was chosen. Plot holders were offered allotments in an unused corner of the New Battersea Cemetery in Motspur Park. Some of them are still making the journey today.

Housing

This was not the first time that the need for more housing had meant the loss of an allotments site in Battersea. In 1903 the Latchmere Estate was built on the site of the old Battersea village allotments. As early as 1885, Battersea Vestry had started grumbling about 'getting £20 a year in rent for land worth £2,000 for development'. Part had already been sold to the Clapham Union and another part to the School Board for London. Some of the Vestry wanted to see private houses developed and some did not. By the time the debate was settled, the Vestry had given way to Battersea Council, which decided to develop public housing on the site.

Enclosures

At these periods allotments must have been much less popular than the huge demand we see today. London was expanding, Battersea was on its edge and there were important uses for the land. It was only during the Second World War that the value of growing food locally was recognised. Battersea Park was dug up for allotments and a pig club (although the essential



cricket pitches remained intact). The modern allotment tradition is rooted in the parliamentary enclosures and Napoleonic Wars of the late 18th century. The hardships of war were compounded for poor people by their lack of access to newly-enclosed common land; for many families this led to destitution. Various well-meaning folk persuaded farmers to let these families cultivate the waste lands. A 'cow allotment' gave people something worth working for, kept them from spending their time and hard earned money in the pub, and provided them with a better diet.

In 1800 Thomas Milne identified Latchmere's low-lying boggy area as 'common agricultural field'. At some unknown point the Vestry took this land for the village allotments and set about allocating it amongst the poor people.

Benefits

In 1989, when I got my allotment at Magdalen Road, we had to attend an evening class in the school next door. Some of our fellow plotters had come from the Battersea Institute but their class had folded. On delving into this I found that the site had been created by the LCC in connection with local vocational evening classes based at 'The Lavender'. This was the realisation of a particular vision of education. The London County Council recognised both the benefits of learning and practising real-life skills and the lack of academic inclination or experience amongst working class families.

The LCC identified four places of deprivation across London to provide practical, vocational classes after work hours. One of these was at Lavender Hill School, and experimental plots were provided in a field adjacent to the Magdalen Road 'tin' school (so called because it was situated in a corrugated iron hut). But that takes us into another story.

Lord Mayor in Battersea

Members in the southern part of Battersea may have looked with envy at an elegant Georgian building 'The Shrubbery' in Lavender Gardens/ Clapham Common Southside. Currently converted into 16 flats, this "princely residence" (as it was described in 1886) previously housed a Lord Mayor, a Greek consul cum wine merchant and an air raid post.

Its history and its owners are described in the spring issue of the *Wandsworth Historian*, the journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society which also includes a brief tribute to the suffragette Charlotte Despard.

Copies are available from the editor Neil Robson, ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk

“All that life can afford”

Tony Tuck, chair of the Battersea Society reflects on village life

Over 250 years ago Samuel Johnson quipped: "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life - for there is in London all that life can afford." To those of us living in London this is even truer today, for our city's richness and diversity has widened over the centuries.

Boundaries

London is not a single entity. It is a cluster of villages, often overlapping, sometimes merging seamlessly with a neighbouring village, sometimes with clear boundaries, such as the Thames, or with uneasy borders echoing old disputes rather than geographical logic. In the twenty first century as we citizens of London move around our city we learn the 'signposts' of localities, the architectural nuances that define places for us. We learn to name a place by its significant

features.

So how do we, the 'villagers of Battersea' see ourselves and how are we defined by those beyond our borders? Is it by the derelict and decaying Power Station that strangers think of Battersea, or are we 'South Chelsea'? Or perhaps the place where you find Battersea Dogs Home?

Vibrant

Are we the home of Battersea Arts Centre or just the hinterland of Clapham Junction, a scrubland of railways and tracks that you must pass through from the West to access London? As Peter Sellers described it - "Balham – gateway to the South".

I hope that the Battersea Society and its members can sidestep such stereotypes and celebrate the spirit of Dr Johnson, reflecting the

essence of a living vibrant 'village' that comprises London's body politic. We are a part of the "All that life can afford". It for this reason that our strap line is "Preserving the best of the old and encouraging the best of the new."

Benefit

Elsewhere you can read of alien invaders seeking to exploit our village for their gain with monster towers that are a monument to greed and indifference to place. But others seek to work with the grain to develop the village of Battersea for the benefit of all (as well as their private profit, of course).

I trust that in the coming year the Battersea Society will continue to celebrate the liveliness of our society through our expanding and diverse events program and continue to put the case forcefully for what is sound and right for the people who live and work in our Battersea village.

The Battersea Society

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Registered charity no.1103560

Carnival time on Northcote Road!



Northcote Road was closed for the first time since the Coronation on Friday 19 June for the first Northcote Road Carnival. Bouncy castles, fairground attractions, stalls, a band, an Italian market, and a parade of over 1,000 excited children from Belleville, Honeywell and Dolphin Schools in fancy dress made for a great community day out.