

Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society SUMMER 2017



Election turnaround stuns pundits

Jenny Sheridan reports on the results

Battersea was one of the first big surprises on the night of 8 June 2017. Labour overturned an 8,000 Conservative majority to win by 2,416 votes. The Conservatives had held the seat since 2010, when Jane Ellison took it from Labour's Martin Linton.

BATTERSEA ELECTION RESULTS

Labour	25,292	45.9%	+9.1%
Conservative	22,876	41.5%	-10.8%
Liberal Democrat	4,401	8.0%	+3.6%
Independent	1,234	2.2%	

Both the Green Party and UKIP decreased their share of the vote and came behind the independent candidate, Chris Coughlan, who campaigned on an anti-Brexit programme. Wandsworth voted 75% Remain in the referendum in June 2016.

The turnout was 71% of the electorate, higher than in 2015 (67%).

Battersea is a relatively young and well educated constituency, with a

high proportion of people with degrees. Almost 90% of people in work are in the private sector, compared with 81% average nationally.

The new MP is Marsha de Cordova, a 41-year-old Lambeth councillor who, until 9 July, worked for the Thomas Pocklington charity for people with visual impairments. Ms de Cordova describes herself as being strongly pro-Europe.

Housing

Her main areas of interest in Parliament will, she says, be housing, including the private rented sector, community safety and youth services. As a person with a visual impairment, she says, 'Disability issues are very important to me. I want to improve access, such as step-free access at Clapham Junction and other local stations. That's important for older



Marsha de Cordova asks a question in the House of Commons

people and parents with buggies as well as people with disabilities.'

We hope to interview Battersea's new MP in a future issue.



Photo: Oliver Purvis

Remembering Battersea's civilian casualties

Carol Rahn reports on the War Comes Home tea party

On 18 June, a gathering of nearly 90 people, under the welcome shade of the Norway maple in Christchurch Garden, kicked off a year-long project called 'War Comes Home' to discover and celebrate life in Battersea during World War II and the lives of the

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

From the editor



After the terrible Grenfell fire, it's good to hear that Wandsworth Council has made sure its tenants

are safe. Two blocks in the borough, one of them Castlemaine on Battersea Park Road, were found to have unsafe cladding. However a detailed inspection by the Fire Brigade determined that there was no immediate risk to residents. The council will remove the cladding as soon as possible, and will install sprinklers in all of their 100 blocks over ten storeys.

The power station has been in the news recently, with its deferral of the building of 'affordable' flats. See page 5 for our planning committee's view on this. And see page 14 for something to celebrate: the much

loved chimneys rise again!

A map of all London's mulberry trees – what a delightfully esoteric pursuit. You can read about it on page 13. I love mulberries, both the trees with their twisted limbs and crimson and black fruits and the berries themselves, uniquely delicious. When I worked at Atkinson Morley's Hospital in Wimbledon, there was a mulberry tree in the grounds. Mulberries are very juicy, and stain everything they touch, so my colleagues and I would borrow plastic gloves and aprons. Did the patients tremble as we emerged from the tree, red liquid round our mouths and dripping down our bodies? Living in Chelsea as a child, I used to watch fully robed nuns clambering in the tree beyond our garden wall. Their wimples must have needed a wash.

Rhinoceroses

The borough has had two festivals recently, on the arts and heritage. I hope Society members enjoyed the events. My highlight of the Arts

Fringe was a charge of rhinoceroses in Heathbrook Park (cardboard was involved). In the Heritage Festival's celebration of our industrial history, the Society's Sue Demont unravelled the railway tangle; I also enjoyed an exhibition about twilight in south London, at the Morley Gallery.

One of the pleasures of these festivals is discovering new places; I'd never been to Heathbrook Park. It's a green haven behind noisy, traffic-fumed Wandsworth Road.

The Northcote Road Fete won't happen this year as the main sponsor has dropped out. There are hopes for a smaller, less commercial festival on Chatham Road in September.

I am searching for unpaid child labour. I plan to report on nearby city farms and also the playgrounds in Battersea Park. If any of you have children or grandchildren aged between five and fifteen who would enjoy doing a bit of research, please get in touch.

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Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden looks at life from the really slow lane

The weather will probably be back to normal by the time you read this, but at the moment it's a bit too warm to take a brisk walk anywhere. To be honest, I don't really do brisk and serendipitously, just as I wrote that sentence, I heard on the radio that all over the world people were marking World Sauntering Day, aimed at encouraging people to take things more slowly.

I've long been a convert to that philosophy. A neighbour once told me that I walked more slowly than any man she'd ever met. Not an insult in my book: I see myself as a close relation of the Parisian flâneur – sauntering unconcernedly through the world observing life going on around me. All I lack is a straw boater and an ivory tipped cane. Oh, all right – and a certain slim elegance. I'm certainly not of the same mindset as the sturdily booted groups of walkers who at this time of the year appear striding purposefully along the riverside firmly fixed on reaching their

goal before teatime.

Perhaps that's an unfair caricature, but a couple of rambles I met the other day were amused and shocked at the same time at my admission that I rather like to take a breather, to pause my journey after half an hour or so, and contemplate the world around me.

Sauntering

It takes all sorts and I have no problem with those who wish to join the Ramblers' Association. But if you're like me, and can easily while away golden minutes studying a plaque on a wall, or contemplating a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis with bedraggled wings why not consider joining my own newly-formed association, the Amblers Society. Our annual conference will of course take place on 19 June, World Sauntering Day. It's probably best if



Below: A hat and a cane: flâneur Maurice Chevalier

you take a bus to make sure you get there on time.

I write this at the end of a very troubled few weeks, which saw an election ending in stalemate, a number of terrorist atrocities, and the dreadful fire in Grenfell Tower. Of course I have no idea what else is going to happen before you read this, but I'd like to end on a hopeful note.

I expect – as one of the organisers – my esteemed editor will make a mention of the recent wartime tea party in Christchurch Gardens. Like community events around the country it was dedicated to the memory of Jo Cox who believed in the power of people coming together to overcome division and hatred, and this was a happy, friendly positive event with people from many different parts of the Battersea family turning up.

It gave me hope that the future needn't be as grim as some pundits are predicting. And with that positive thought I shall be on my way (slowly, of course).

Mind how you go. See you next time.

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civilian men, women and children who perished in the bombing. The date, 18 June, was chosen to coincide with the Great Get-Together in honour of murdered MP Jo Cox and the event was very much in the spirit of communities coming together.

Bunting

Although the subject matter is ultimately sombre, the tea party was anything but. Volunteers spruced up the park and festooned it with bunting, organised old time games and a quiz on WWII rationing, and served up cakes and pastries from wartime recipes. The lively and sociable atmosphere was made even more so by 40s-attired singers and keyboard player and a DJ, also all volunteers. A visit from newly elected MP Marsha De Cordova added to the sense of a special occasion, one that was made possible by support from the Battersea Society, Katherine Low Settlement and Christ Church and St. Stephen.

The focus of the project now turns to interviewing people who were themselves here during the war, or who can recount the stories passed



The map of where the bombs fell and artefacts lent by the Moving Museum at BAC proved popular. Photo: Oliver Purvis

down to them about those times. The goal is capture how it felt to be in Battersea in the war, and learn as much as possible about those children, women and men whose lives were cut short. This history will be shared with the community through at least one talk and exhibition, a permanent written record and perhaps a theatrical performance in 2018.

The tea party has also raised awareness of the Grade II listed memorial to Battersea's civilian casualties that is housed in

Christchurch Garden. We are hoping that 500 daffodil bulbs will be made available this autumn and a local school will be invited to plant them, making Christchurch Garden a much more appealing space for the neighbourhood.

If you have a story to tell, or know someone who does; if you'd like to contribute to the project in some other way or would just like to learn more, please contact the War Comes Home committee at warcomeshome@mailwise.co.uk or 020 7350 2749



Jeanne Rathbone at the Battersea Society's stall at Falcon Road Festival on 1 July. Photos: Suzanne Perkins



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Plenty in common

Amanda Higton has started a Wandsworth Common branch of the Womens' Institute

Wandsworth Common WI was set up in October 2016, by me, Amanda Higton, and became an official branch of the Women's Institute on Thursday 9 February 2017.

I started the branch as I used to be a member of Wandsworth WI (located in Balham) but stopped attending for a while. When I wanted to re-join, I was told that Wandsworth WI (now known as Balham WI) had reached full capacity for their venue. There was a clear need for other branches to be founded in the area.

A friend who attended a WI a little further afield suggested setting one up closer to home. This was gratefully received when I contacted the Surrey Federation of WIs. After a meeting with one of the trustees to gather information about what would be involved in setting up a successful WI, I mentioned it to other friends. They were very supportive if not a little shocked that I had taken the leap to set up a new branch locally.

Promote

Our grand opening was in February 2017. We had a great turnout of 22 ladies, and a starting committee was appointed. It was a great honour for me that our initial members proposed that I became the inaugural president of Wandsworth Common WI. Over the next year I will do my utmost to promote the Women's Institute and to serve as branch president. Our committee consists of myself, plus Anthea Masters, vice-president, Alison Blair, secretary and Sarah Henry, treasurer. Fifteen of the 22 ladies who came along to our opening meeting decided to join that very night.

Our membership is open to ladies of all ages and backgrounds from across the Borough of Wandsworth, with our current 19 members ranging in age from 31 to 83. There is a misconception that the WI's function is solely based around crafting and jam making. This might have been the original concept, when founded in 1915 to produce more food for the home front during WW1, but since then it has expanded to become



Meetings on the second Thursday of each month are varied and interesting

the largest women's voluntary organisation in the UK. It aims to provide women from all walks of life with a chance to build new skills, take part in a wide range of activities and campaign on matters of local interest within their community. All members are welcome to attend Denman College near Oxford, where a range of courses is available.

The two national resolutions passed in 2017 were 'Alleviating Loneliness' and 'Plastic Soup' (helping reduce plastic waste ending up in oceans and seas). After their first year of running every WI aims to support and raise the profile of a local charity.

Tasting

Since our inaugural meeting, themes have included a talk on beekeeping from the beekeeper at Morden Hall Park and a talk on guerrilla gardening by Richard Reynolds, who founded guerrillagardening.org (as seen on TV and the press). We also held a recipe tasting where members shared their favourite recipes with the rest of the group, and a poetry and reading share where members brought excerpts from their favourite books or poems.

Upcoming events include a wine tasting in July and an informal social in August where members can bring their partners. September sees a talk

on Westminster Abbey. In October we will have a talk on the Wandsworth Community Chaplaincy Trust by Morgan Christophers, the trust's project manager. The Trust provides a befriending service which supports prisoners inside HMP Wandsworth, meets them at the gate on their release, and continues to work with them in the community. November is Wandsworth Common Women's Institute's AGM and Beetle Drive (if you have never played, you have not lived). December's theme / event is yet to be confirmed.

We welcome ladies to visit a group meeting to try us out before deciding whether they want to join. Our regular members come back each month for a chance to socialise with new friends and enjoy a spot of wine and cake. We have a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

We meet on the second Thursday of the month from 7pm till 9pm, just off Wandsworth Common, at The Vestry Hall, 10a Wiseton Rd, SW17 7EE. We are a 5-minute walk from Wandsworth Common Station, and easy access from several bus routes stopping on Bellevue Road and Trinity Road (including G1, 219, and 319). Feel free to come to one of our monthly meetings.

For more information please contact Mandie: wandsworth.common.wi@gmail.com

Planning Matters: 'Tis the season for consultation

Changes to bus routes, affordable housing and phone boxes: the Battersea Society is on the case, says Monica Tross

Consultations are ongoing relating to a new campus at the Royal College of Art in Battersea, highway changes along Nine Elms and part of Battersea Park Road, and the Nine Elms/Pimlico Bridge. If you missed the exhibitions you can find information at: www.rca.ac.uk/Battersea; tfl.gov.uk/nine-elms-lane and www.nineelmspimlicobridge.co.uk. Our comments will be on the planning section of the Society's website in due course.

BUS ROUTES

There are changes to Central London bus routes. The ones likely to affect us are 22 and 137. The 22 will no longer go to Piccadilly Circus but travel to Oxford Circus via Berkeley Square, Conduit Street and Regent Street. The 137 will stop at Marble Arch. It is not clear when the changes start but check out TfL.gov.uk/PermBusChanges for the latest information. TfL are consulting on the P5 route, closing 20 August. tfl.gov.uk/p5-extension

PEABODY, ST JOHN'S HILL

Mixed news about this development. The first stage has won a 2017 RIBA London award for architectural excellence and now qualifies for the RIBA national award. Less happily, work is temporarily on hold with new plans being developed. There will be an exhibition later this summer with a planning application to follow later in the year. As always, we will alert you to the exhibition dates as soon as we know them.

BATTERSEA POWER STATION

Approval has been given to the deferral of 103 affordable housing units and agreement to an 'up and down' end of scheme financial viability review of the 250 units due on the main site. (2017/1864). In all the adverse (perhaps politically motivated) comment, the good news got lost: 386 affordable units, together with a new health centre and work incubator units, are being brought forward with completion due in 2020. Also lost was the developer's continued commitment

to a target of at least 15% affordable units (636) so as to ensure that the development includes a genuine mix of housing. We are often critical of developers' lack of ambition in relation to affordable housing and to the secretive viability reviews which we think are not fit for purpose. (See comments on 2017/0745 as just the latest example.) In this case we are sympathetic – we will keep you informed.

PLANNING NEWS

We were pleased that, against the advice of officers, the Planning Applications Committee (PAC) unanimously voted against approval of the Smugglers Way application, 2016/7356. They supported the flower stall at Clapham Junction, again against officer recommendations, 2017/0146. Sadly they agreed the very poor scheme for 1 – 5 Gowrie Road, 2017/0631.

Lidl has put in a planning application, 2017/2972 following a massive leaflet drop, outline details on the website and a yes/no referendum. We did not like this tactic, not least because there was no chance for residents to see and discuss details of the scheme with Lidl and their planning people and, presumably, no thought of Lidl changing their plans as a result of such discussions. The material on their website was scanty.

We had reservations about the plans put forward for 113 St John's Hill, 2017/1517 and are pleased that the application has been refused. Demolition and facadism are worryingly on the increase with approval given to demolition behind a retained façade at 33 – 35 Ursula Street, 2016/3061, and a recent application for demolition of all but the façade at 11 Brynmaer Road, 2017/2852 – awaiting a decision. 1 Prince of Wales Drive was one of the first of these in Battersea and we are pleased to see the scaffolding down at last.

Tesco are active again in relation to the Prince of Wales pub and the garden. A fresh application has

just been made for the retail store, 2017/3434. There is another application for a house on the garden. We have objected – 2017/1319. Lambeth Council has put in a blanket application for 'the temporary use of Clapham Common for a range of small, medium, large and major events in 2017', 110 in all, with no further information. We and Wandsworth Council have objected, 2017/2631.

DO WE NEED MORE PHONE BOXES?

It seems bizarre but two companies have recently put in a total of 42 applications for new boxes in Wandsworth – several of them in Battersea. Apparently under 'permitted development rights' these cannot be refused and, when they are, the planning inspector can allow an individual appeal, as happened in Richmond recently.

Under the Ofcom code, providers of infrastructure, whether needed or not, are permitted an element of advertising. Not only would these boxes add physical clutter, they would add massively to the visual clutter on our streets. (See photo above).

We are in dialogue with Wandsworth Council and delighted that they have raised this with the Secretary of State for Local Government to ask his help in countering this menace. We will continue to object to individual applications. Details of a typical application can be found at 2017/2566 and of a display at 2017/2943.

FLANAGANS

This pub, on part of the proposed Palmerston Court site opposite the Dogs and Cats Home, has been declared an Asset of Community Value. We will watch carefully how this new status affects the proposals for that site, to which we have already objected (2016/5422).

Let us know your views on the consultations or other matters planning@batterseasociety.org.uk



Advice at the heart of our community

Citizens Advice Wandsworth's chief executive Phil Jew explains what the service does

Citizens Advice Wandsworth is a charity that exists for the wellbeing of us all. Due to the hard work and foresight of its current team of local trustees, volunteers and staff and the support of funders including the council, our services are now easier to access and we are dealing with more and more enquiries.

In the past few years there has been a transformation in your local Citizens Advice service. I stress that word local because Citizens Advice Wandsworth (CAW) is part of a national network but it is an independent local charity.

It depends on over 100 volunteers who give us an amazing 650 hours each week. If we had to pay staff to do what they do it would cost £575,000 a year. They provide everything from back-office support to front-line advice.

Accessible

In January 2016 CAW moved to Battersea Library on Lavender Hill. The organisation's Battersea service (CAW is also available in Roehampton and Tooting library) had been running for several years from cramped offices at the Methodist Mission House on York Road. The move enabled us to double our opening hours and to run the service in an accessible and welcoming environment.

In October 2016 CAW launched a new Adviceline phone service, open Monday – Friday from 10am to 4pm. It can be reached on 0300 330 1169.

CAW has also developed a range of innovative special projects.

A lot of our work is around health

and well-being. The NHS now funds a CAW service allowing GPs to refer patients for advice. Often a person's visit to a doctor will be driven by underlying benefit, housing, debt or other worries. We work with Macmillan to support cancer patients to access welfare benefits and we

provide 'advice first aid'.

In October 2016 the CAW team was joined by the Disability and Social Care Advice team (DASCAS). The DASCAS team provides specialist benefits advice for disabled people.

Local people can also get generic financial advice and Pensions Wise advice at the Battersea centre.

The net result is that CAW was able to help 12,500 local people in 2016/17 – up from 9,000 the previous year.

Thousands of people contact us every year. Some are in crisis; destitute, homeless, in debt while others need help finding a way forward with benefits, housing, money, consumer or employment and many other problems. Our service is available for all Wandsworth residents but of course we can't help



CAW's airy and welcoming offices at Battersea Library

have advisers on the major trauma wards at St George's Hospital to provide bedside advice to patients.

We also have arrangements with L&Q and Wandle housing associations to provide debt advice for their tenants. Funding from trusts enables us to help Wandsworth Foodbank visitors to tackle the underlying cause of their need for emergency food – often benefit delays or sanctions.

First aid

Last year we started a new project for people in hardship crisis, funded by the Big Lottery Fund. This project works with community, social and faith networks, delivers advice and trains people in the community to

everyone in depth. We encourage people to help themselves when they can by providing the right information. Where more support is needed we endeavour to provide it.

We are currently experiencing almost overwhelming demand for our service. Welfare reform and benefit caps are having a big impact on local people.

Welfare benefits enquiries rose to 38% of the total in 2016/17. That's driven primarily by the difficulty local people are having with the sickness and disability benefits, Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). As a percentage of all benefit enquiries dealt with by our team, ESA and PIP shot up from 33% in 2014/15

Case study

Scarlett has a slipped disc as a result of an accident in 2016. She contacted CAW's Disability and Social Care Advice Service for help with her benefit application and was successfully awarded Personal Independence Payment (PIP). However, she faced a number of

difficulties throughout the application process. She felt the process was not very user-friendly and when she called to request a form, she had to wait on the phone for 20 minutes. When the form arrived, Scarlett continued to experience difficulties.

Pain relief medication has resulted

in memory problems, which have a profound effect on her day-to-day life; they impeded her ability to complete the application form without our help.

Such events can happen to any one of us. That's why CAW is an essential service for the local community.

to 56% in 2016/17. The trends show no sign of abating.

Requests for help to challenge or appeal decisions are now the bulk of our ESA and PIP work. We believe the system has some fundamental flaws that the new Government must address.

If you are interested in finding out more about the problems with ESA and PIP, read my blog (www.cawandsworth.org/blog/).

The next big welfare reform

to hit us locally will be Universal Credit (UC). The new system will be fully rolled-out in Wandsworth in March 2018. The experience in Hammersmith & Fulham, where full UC was piloted, is that demand for advice about the new benefit is likely to be very high. The inclusion of housing costs within UC plus monthly

in-arrears payments and online claim arrangements will be difficult for many people to cope with. Evidence from other areas is that over 75% of social housing tenants on Universal Credit are in rent arrears, compared to less than 33% of tenants who have rent paid directly to the landlord.

To find out more about CAW and get involved, visit www.cawandsworth.org.

A chain of events

Jenny Sheridan meets Wendy Speck, ex-deputy mayor of Wandsworth and Battersea councillor

It's easy, perhaps, to imagine some of the fun of being deputy mayor of Wandsworth – the parties, the people – but we may not be aware of some of the downsides. 'I had to buy an awful lot of smart jackets. The deputy mayor's chain is very grand, and very heavy,' says Councillor Wendy Speck. 'It has to be pinned onto your shoulders and it does tend to ruin your jackets. The deputy's chain of office used to be the mayor's chain when Battersea was a separate borough. Some of the mayors I met from other boroughs were quite envious – mine was grander than theirs!'

Wendy Speck's year in office as deputy mayor came to an end in May. A longstanding Labour councillor for Battersea's Latchmere ward, Wendy enjoyed the experience, though it could be tiring, with up to three events in a single day. This was on top of her normal quota of council business, whereas the mayor himself is excused from council committees and their associated paperwork and meetings.

Festival

What were some of the highlights of Wendy's year? 'There are so many. I loved the Falcon Road festival. I opened it, which was lovely, as it's in my ward and I know so many people. It was the first one, so there was some anxiety about how well it would go, but it was a real success, even though there was a that massive downpour in the middle. It brought people together, including those who don't often come to events.



Battle of the bling: Cllr Wendy Speck with Maasai warriors at Chesterton School

Another highlight, very different and much more formal, was laying the wreath representing the borough at St Mary's on Remembrance Day. Also in November, Wendy was impressed by the Ahmaddiyya Muslim Women Association, which held an event at York Gardens Library to raise money for the Poppy Appeal and raised over £1500.

And then there was the London Youth Games (see *BM* spring 2017), where she stayed all day because the girl cricket players were doing so well. 'You get to do things you don't normally do'.

Last summer, Wendy handed out awards at a fun day in Tooting for looked-after children (those in council care). 'Six months later, at a Christmas party, a little eight-year-old girl said she had had the photo of her and me on her wall ever since. I was really touched.'

Wendy says being deputy mayor has taught her a lot about the diversity of the borough, and how each area – Battersea, Putney,

Roehampton, Wandsworth, Tooting – differs. She has also learnt how welcoming people are everywhere.

'Tooting is a lot like Bradford, where I'm from,' says Wendy. She moved to London from Yorkshire 16 years ago and has lived in Battersea, on the Carey Gardens estate, ever since. Originally a head teacher, she has always been involved in local community organisations. In Battersea, that includes The Big Local SW11 and as vice-chair of trustees of local charity The St Walter St John Educational Trust.

The new mayor is Councillor Jim Madden, with Ian Lewer as his deputy. Wendy explains that the ruling group on the council picks the mayor, who then chooses his or her deputy. She points out that it is unusual, but not unknown, to choose a deputy from a different party.

Moving

Wendy is not going to stand again as a councillor at the council elections in 2018. 'I'll miss it', she says, 'but there are other things I want to do. One of my daughters is in Ireland and the other in the States. She's a professor of astrophysics and I'm going to go over there to watch the total eclipse with her. I've got three grandsons, none of whom are in the UK. And I want to learn Spanish, and go to the opera and the theatre, and I'm going to move house – I won't be able to afford to buy in Battersea, sadly. And my sister and I are planning a trip on the Orient Express – extravagant, but we have some money from our Mum, so we'll do it in her memory.'

Great Bus Journeys of the World No 19

Mike Roden travels from Pimlico to Hampstead on the 24



The 24 bus has the oldest unchanged route in London. It began in 1912 and cost a penny (around 45p today) to ride from Pimlico to Hampstead Heath. The bus starts at the Grosvenor Road stop opposite the Battersea Power Station development across the river. To get here I've walked through the park and over Chelsea Bridge.

The bus sets off, turning into the heart of Pimlico, with Dolphin Square over to our right. This posh housing estate was built in the thirties and has been home over the years to many famous, sometimes notorious politicians. Joining Lupus Street the bus turns past Pimlico Academy. Protests by the 20th Century Society could not prevent the original school buildings, often seen as 'sixties brutalist', being demolished in 2010.

Shelter

Not brutalist at all is the green cabmen's shelter in St George's Square. Originally there were 61 of them across London. That number is down to 13, and a few (like this one) are still fully functioning cafés where (I'm told) you can get a coffee for a pound. But, only those with The Knowledge can go inside and sit down.

From Warwick Way we turn up Wilton Road, now heading for Victoria Station.

The next stage takes us along Victoria Street, past Parliament and along Whitehall. I've covered this stretch a few times now, most notably in the previous *Battersea Matters*, so let's go to the far side of Trafalgar Square. Opposite the National Portrait Gallery is the statue of Nurse

Edith Cavell executed by German firing squad in Brussels in 1915 for 'assisting the enemy'.

Now we embark on the crawl along Charing Cross Road, created as part of a slum clearance project and opening in 1887. Leicester Square Station dates from 1906. The square itself was originally a residential area, with tenants including artists William Hogarth and Joshua Reynolds.

Most of the bookshops which once proliferated here have long gone, but I do notice a few: Henry Pordes books, the Quinto Bookshop and Koenig Books at no 80 specialising in German art books.

As you cross Shaftesbury Avenue you may find yourself looking for 84 Charing Cross Road, once the location of Marks and Co booksellers. The book with that title tells the story of the American writer Helene Hanff's 20-year correspondence with Frank Doel who worked in the store. The building is still there, but sadly it's now a branch of McDonald's.

Dominating the west side of Cambridge Circus is the Palace Theatre which opened in 1891 as the Royal English Opera House. By the 1920s it became known for musicals, a pattern which continued until very recently, with *Les Misérables* running there for nineteen years. However, the latest sell out production is a non-musical play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

Doomed

Foyles bookshop arrived on Charing Cross Road in 1906 and in 2014 it moved south into the former home of St Martin's school of art. There were determined but doomed attempts to

halt demolition of the historic original store. Regrettably, newly elected Mayor Khan could not be persuaded to oppose the proposals to build a new office block in its place.

On the left is Manette Street, which runs down to Greek Street. It was formerly Rose Street, home in the nineteenth century to several socialist, radical and anarchist groups. In 1895 it was renamed after Doctor Manette in *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Music

Denmark Street on the right was once part of a hospital for lepers founded in the early 12th century by Queen Matilda, first wife of Henry I. In the 20th century it found fame as Britain's 'Tin Pan Alley' housing numerous music publishers' offices.

The 34 story Centrepont building is being converted into luxury flats, and work is ongoing, but the shiny new Tottenham Court Road Station was opened to the public in February this year, and gradually the area is taking on an appearance of normality.

In the 1950s Tottenham Court Road was a mecca for those seeking cheap radio parts or other electronic goods. Eventually computer equipment came to dominate that market. The growth of online trading in this equipment means that many of the stores have disappeared.

Just after Goodge Street station is the American International Church, established after the war for US citizens living here.

Across the road Habitat and Heals sit companionably next to each other. Conran's store is the newcomer, arriving in 1966, while Heals had been there since 1840. War was

Left to right: Dolphin Square, Pimlico; statue of Edith Cavell, St Martin's Place; Goodge Street station façade; Black Cat building, Mornington Crescent; punk t-shirts, Camden Lock; The Royal Free Hospital



never declared and the two stores even share a doorway.

Crossing University Street, I'm reminded we're in UCL territory. The college was founded in 1826 ambitiously calling itself 'London University'. It took its current name ten years later when it received a Royal Charter permitting it to award degrees from the newly incorporated University of London.

Just after Warren Street Station we cross Euston Road and join Hampstead Road. This is Camden, where all railway lines and most roads lead to Euston Station. In the 1830s when the station was built, this was an area of small farms on the edge of an expanding city.

One of Camden's architectural gems comes into view as we pass the southern end of Mornington Crescent. This art deco building dates from 1928 when it opened as the factory of Carreras Tobacco who made Black Cat cigarettes. It was a striking example of early twentieth century Egyptian Revival architecture.

Art deco

Much of its decorative detail was lost during its 1990's conversion into an office block. Thankfully the whole frontage with its stylish Art Deco lettering, and colourful Egyptian capitals was restored for the millennium, and the two arresting eight-foot-high black statues of the Egyptian cat god Bastet once more guarded the front door.

We're now on Camden High Street. To begin with there is little to differentiate it from most shopping streets. But when we reach the north end around Camden Lock on the

Regent's Canal we arrive in an area dominated by Camden Market. This was originally set up in 1974 in a dilapidated canal-side timber yard and originally had just 16 traders, selling antiques, jewellery and arts and crafts.

Now it has at least six different sections, stretching up to Chalk Farm Road and selling anything from cheap t-shirts and trinkets to overpriced vintage clothing and everything in between, along with plenty of street food stalls. Viewed from the top of the bus it's busy enough midweek, but apparently at the weekend it's hell on earth, with tourists and locals vying for imagined bargains in a melee reminiscent of a middle eastern bazaar.

Market

Passing the Stables Market, we turn right and head down Ferdinand Street into a suddenly quiet, leafy residential area. A couple of minutes later in Queens Crescent another bustling market turns up. This is one of London's oldest street markets, mainly aimed at local shoppers. Camden Council handed over the running to a community association in 2013, but the costs of rubbish removal, cleaning and repairs overwhelmed the group and the market was handed back to the council in 2015. Its future seemed uncertain then, but today it's still going strong.

We're almost at journey's end now as we reach St Dominic's Priory. The church associated with this Dominican community was completed in 1883 and is now Grade II listed. It's one of the largest

Catholic churches in London. Our final stop is at the Royal Free Hospital, founded in 1828 by the surgeon William Marsden (who also founded the Royal Marsden). The story goes that Marsden found a young girl on the steps of a church dying from disease and hunger. No hospital would take her in and she died a couple of days later. He set up a small free dispensing clinic in Holborn. In 1837 this was granted a royal charter and eventually renamed the Royal Free with sites in Islington and Holborn. It moved here to Hampstead in 1974.

Splendour

Anyway, you can walk from here to the Heath, to 22 Willow Way or to Keats House. Gentlemen may also like to visit the most spectacular public convenience in the capital, lavishly restored to its Victorian splendour ten years or so ago. It was also a favourite haunt of Joe Orton, and the late George Michael was arrested here for possession of drugs.

Having nicely lowered the tone, I now walk briskly to Hampstead Heath station, where I buy a coffee and take the Overground back to Clapham Junction.

A work-out for the brain

Bridge attracts many followers locally, Jenny Sheridan discovers

People are passionate about bridge. To tennis star Martina Navratilova it is 'a cerebral sport that teaches reasoning, quick thinking and concentration'. Warren Buffett still plays at 84 – sometimes with younger fellow billionaire Bill Gates. Here in Battersea, a throng of around 80 keen players meet each week, eager for the intellectual challenge and social enjoyment the game affords.

The Lavender Bridge Club meets twice a week in York Gardens community centre. It has been run by Andrew and Anne Stimson for almost 20 years. 'It's the best card game you'll ever play,' says Andrew. 'It's so interesting; every hand is different and it is a very tactical game.' 'There's psychology involved too,' adds Anne, 'the way you choose to play a hand can be used to trick your opponents. And as you play with a partner it is also very social.' Some members come with a partner, others can be allocated one.

Time to chat

Most of the club members are retired and the average age is over 70, but there are also younger players who are self-employed or unemployed, who have some spare time during the week. About half the members live locally, others come from as far afield as Enfield and Croydon. Andrew points out that it is a good way to meet a wide variety of people. There is plenty of time to chat between games or in the break.

It is often believed that playing complex games such as bridge can stave off dementia, a claim currently



Pitting their wits: players enjoy an engrossing game. Photo: Suzanne Perkins

being researched by the University of Stirling. It does offer the combination of intellectual stimulation and social engagement that seems to keep people lively and sharp-witted for longer.

Drop in

Andrew says it takes at least two years to learn to play bridge really well, but people with varied levels of expertise can enjoy playing with each other. Over half the members attend twice a week, others come to one session. You can also just drop in for a game.

In 2011 Wandsworth Council was considering closing York Gardens

Library and community hall. The representations made by Andrew Stimson and Lavender Club members are thought to have been influential in saving the hall.

The Lavender Bridge Club meets at York Gardens on Friday and Wednesday afternoons. On Wednesdays the cost is £7, including lunch. On Fridays the charge is £5 and includes tea and cakes. York Gardens is on the 44, 170 and 295 bus routes.

Contact Andrew at andrewstimson@yahoo.com or 020 8767 3886

BATTERSEA JOINS THE BATTLE

The separate boroughs of Wandsworth and Battersea made considerable contributions to the republican side in the Spanish Civil War 1936 – 39. A fascinating article in the *Wandsworth Historian* spring 2017 shows that Battersea sent an ambulance while seventeen men and women, six of whom died, joined the International Brigade.

During the Second World War the sound of women belting out songs like *Roll Out the Barrel* could be heard in Thessaly Road. Workers in the Projectile

and Engineering Co sang to keep their spirits up while manufacturing shell cases for war work. This insight into the war also comes from the *Wandsworth Historian* spring 2017, which also includes a studio photograph by John Archer, later celebrated as London's first black mayor.

Copies can be obtained from Neil Robson ngrobson@ticali.co.uk

Lost angels of ruined paradises

David Shreeve tells the story of London's mulberries

London's mulberries are beautiful trees which bear witness to centuries of history. *Morus Londinium*, The Conservation Foundation's mulberry programme for London, is putting the spotlight on these survivors of distant periods in the capital's story, standing still while their surroundings have changed beyond recognition. The programme delves into the significance of the trees to our history, culture and economy. They are Edwardian poet Edward Thomas's 'lost angels of ruined paradises'.

Although some 600 mulberries of various ages have been recorded by the project, so far none has been recorded in Battersea. Can this really be so, when there are such fine examples growing nearby in Chelsea, Clapham and Stockwell? The nearest would appear to be on the north side of the bridge where Battersea Bridge Road meets Cheyne Walk. The Foundation would be pleased to put the record straight by including any Battersea mulberries on its online map at www.moruslondinium.org

Failed

It is thought mulberry trees were first brought here by the Romans for their delicious juicy fruits. Mulberries later became popular in monastery gardens and palaces over the years and whilst many of these buildings may no longer stand, their mulberry trees live on. King James I planted thousands to break free of the need to import silk from Europe but the venture failed, perhaps because of the damp climate and also he chose black mulberries which are less attractive to silk worms which prefer to feed on the white mulberry.

In 1608 an edict was passed urging all the Lord Lieutenants of the shires of England 'to persuade and require such as are of ability to buy and distribute in that County the number of ten thousand Mulberry plants at a cost of 3 farthings the plant or 6 shillings the hundred'.

It is possible that some of the London trees go back to those times. A mulberry at Charlton House in Greenwich may do, and there are

records for at least one of two Mulberries which still grow in the gardens of Syon House beside the Thames at Isleworth planted in 1548. A tree at Hogarth's House, Chiswick is also considered to be of great age. It survives despite much of it having suffered from bomb damage in WW2.

Just across the Thames from Battersea is Mulberry Walk and nearby mulberry trees date back to Chelsea Park, once part of Sir Thomas More's 40 acre estate. On the site of Sir Thomas's grand house was once the Mulberry Convent, now the Allen Hall Seminary where the mulberry fruit continues to grow in abundance each year. Unfortunately a mulberry tree in the nearby Physic Garden which was thought to have been of great age no longer exists, although trees propagated from it are growing elsewhere.

The arrival in Spitalfields and Soho of Huguenot weavers, refugees from religious persecution in France, led to a silk industry using imported materials. Only very few mulberries survive in either of these areas. Last year to commemorate the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes on 18 October 1685 and to celebrate Spitalfield's Huguenots and their extraordinary contribution to this country, The Conservation Foundation presented Christ Church Spitalfields with a mulberry tree for its new garden.

Species

There are 20 or so species of mulberry found around the world and our National Collection of mulberries involving over 30 named varieties is held in the gardens at Buckingham Palace, Kensington Palace, Marlborough House and the Royal Gardens at Windsor Castle.

The Conservation Foundation has been organising walks in the City where a number of old mulberries can



be found, including at Charterhouse and St Bartholomew's, and in some livery company gardens and in both the Inner and Middle Temples. The free walks have been led by Dr Peter Coles, an urban writer and photographer who readily admits to being a mulberry buff.

The Conservation Foundation has received much interest in the project. The trees are often ignored until their presence is pointed out. That can then lead to discovering the secrets they contain, and their links to fashion, medicines, jam making and preserves today, and to a history going back 400 years and beyond.

The Foundation has been working with the designers Stables and Lucraft to create art installations using mirrors at Charlton House, Greenwich and Forty Hall, Enfield to allow visitors to look deep into the gnarled and convoluted branches of these veteran trees. The black mulberry at Charlton House is thought to be 400 years old, while the recumbent tree at Forty Hall is around 120 years old. Rebecca Lucraft's delightfully distinctive and intricate pieces combine with Tom Stables' bold graphics to tell the fascinating story of the mulberry's relationship with London. Both installations will be on site until at least 23 July.

David Shreeve is the Executive Director of The Conservation Foundation.

*www.moruslondinium.org
Morus londinium is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund*

Helping our neighbours in crisis

Sarah Chapman reports on the work and research of the Wandsworth Foodbank



Volunteers Vicky and Anna sort food for Wandsworth Foodbank's five centres across the Borough.

benefits, housing, disability support and debt. We also partner with the excellent new charity Fuelbanks and Families, whose volunteers at our foodbank centres support local households with children with emergency grants for gas, electricity and other necessities.

Asha was one of the guests who generously agreed to tell her story for this year's research. She is a strong, resilient mum of three young children. Her partner worked as a delivery driver until last year when he became ill with a bad hip and severe depression. He received Employment Support Allowance until after a medical assessment he was found fit to work. ESA payments stopped. Asha was referred to the foodbank in the same week that her partner had attempted suicide.

Depression

'The job centre told him he needed to do his job in a wheelchair,' says Asha. 'His job? It doesn't make sense. But even to work, he needs to get out of depression first. The problem is when he starts to feel better, all this stuff is coming to us, and it makes him feel more down.'

Asha's Jobcentre advisor told her their appeal against the ESA decision would take a long time to be processed: 'So I thought if it will take a long time, how can I deal with life? It's so hard, especially with the baby. She said we can do nothing for you, but if you want I can give you the voucher to foodbank to have some food for 3 or 4 days.'

'It's like a nightmare,' Asha told me, between many tears. 'Every day it keeps repeating the same; when it will stop? You really have to be in the same situation, no changes, to be safe. Any small problem and you can lose everything.'

'There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in,' Bishop Desmond Tutu reportedly once said.

It's a belief close to our hearts at Wandsworth Foodbank, where our vision is to provide immediate crisis intervention - emergency food and support - but also to help people find resolution for the issues that cause crisis, and to speak out and call for change.

Research

That's why every year since we opened in 2013, we produce a research report looking at the causes and impacts of hunger and poverty across Wandsworth Borough. We use these to meet with local and national politicians to speak up about the issues that are driving foodbank use in our community.

Last year Wandsworth Foodbank provided 4,712 emergency food supplies for local people referred in crisis - one in three were for children. This was an increase of 16% compared to 2015 - 16, and was nearly three times higher than the annual increase reported by Trussell Trust nationally (6%).

1,171 separate local households used the foodbank in 2016 - 17 - each one identified by referral

agencies (schools, council teams, GPs and mental health services) as not having sufficient food or money to buy food in the week ahead. Problems with benefits remained the most common cause of crisis referral, accounting for 39% of all referrals. More people were referred because of low income than ever before (28% of all crisis referrals). Other reasons included debt (10%), sickness (6%), having No Recourse to Public Funds or homelessness (4% each), and domestic abuse (2%).

But behind the statistics are mums, dads, young, old, single people and married, people in low-paid or insecure employment or unable to take part in paid work because of caring responsibilities, ill-health or disability. Most find it hard to walk into the foodbank, and talk about fighting feelings of shame and embarrassment that life has become so hard that it's come to this.

Respectful

Our volunteers are compassionate, kind and respectful, and offer tea and snacks, and a listening ear for as long as guests want to stay to talk. We can refer guests to our brilliant Citizens Advice Foodbank Advisor, a partnership funded by City Bridge Trust, which has helped hundreds of guests resolve issues around

We were so pleased to help this family, and Asha spoke about the relief she felt of being heard, and given practical support:

'The Foodbank is great, because I came to take just food and I received a voucher for electricity so another stress will go, because we only had £6 left on our meter. You've given me an appointment to see the Foodbank advisor, to discuss my situation. Just talking to you I feel less stressed.'

Safety net

But even better would have been for Asha and her family not to have needed to come to us in the first place. Even better would be for the safety net we all pay into through our lives – including Asha and her partner – to have been robust enough to safeguard this family in their time of trouble and hardship.

We sometimes are told that foodbanks are unnecessary because poverty is not 'real' in the UK, or that foodbanks even contribute to crisis by covering up poverty and hunger like a sticking plaster over a gaping wound. But our referrers say something different. In our research we asked what would be the impact



on clients if Wandsworth Foodbank didn't exist, and every referrer spoke of severe negative impacts on physical and mental health of their clients, of increased debt and homelessness, of family breakdown caused by stress, of children going hungry:

'For some of our families [the foodbank] is a serious lifeline, financially, enabling the children to have basic food. We would see more children and adults going without proper food, and this directly impacts on physical health, emotional well-being, and the self-esteem of the whole family.'

'[Without the foodbank] there would be an increase in mental relapse and suicides.'

'I believe that we would see more people having to give up work and

Crisis can strike without warning, but help can be at hand

claim benefits (with all the problems that implies). I also believe that we would see more people taking their own lives. People are pushed to the extreme – you pull them back from the edge so if you're not there, there is nowhere for them to go except over the edge.'

It is clear that both referrers and guests (sadly) see the foodbank as now an essential part of our area's safety net. But we have hope that this can change, if we come together to speak out against poverty and injustice, and stand up for and with our neighbours in crisis. Writing to your MP to call for improvements in the benefits system, or to your councillor about improving access to the local assistance fund would be very helpful. Our report is on the website and may help in making relevant arguments.

We are also grateful if anyone would like to make a regular financial gift to support the Foodbank. *Sarah Chapman is a trustee and regular volunteer at the Wandsworth Foodbank.*
wandsworth.foodbank.org.uk

All About (Victorian) Battersea

Clare Graham introduces a new/old book

Members may like to know that I have made a free digital edition of Henry S Simmonds's *All About Battersea* (1882) available via Project Gutenberg.

It's a rambling, informative, often lively book. The author delves into local history, prehistory, buildings, institutions and geology. Here he is for instance at the London Gas Light Company's Works at Nine Elms:

Stokers

'Scene in a retort house on week-day. ... The stokers, after having been at work in the retort houses for half an hour, are 'off' for nearly an hour, during which they employ their time in various ways; some play at cards, some at draughts, some at dominoes, others read the newspapers, – eight men in a group will club together and

subscribe a penny each, this enables them to purchase six dailies and two weeklies, thus a group is furnished with newspaper intelligence for a week. ... At times some of the men may be seen mending their clothes, or washing a pair of trowsers in a bucket of water and using the wooden handle of a shovel as a substitute for a 'dolly.' ... The foreman's whistle, similar to that used by a railway guard when a train is ready to start, is the signal for the men to resume their work, and to their credit be it said, they go at it manly and rush to their shovels and scoops like British sailors fly to their guns when commanded to salute a Prince or fire at an enemy!'



Simmonds (1829 – 1892) was a lay worker for the London City Mission, and lived with his large family in modest circumstances in Palmerston Terrace, off Battersea Park Road. (*Survey of London: Battersea, I*, p.25.) His enthusiasm for his self-imposed task shines through the whole book.

All About Battersea first came out in 1879; this digital edition is based on the expanded second edition of 1882. I have tidied up Simmonds' spelling and punctuation a little, but otherwise it's complete and unaltered and of course free of charge, like all Project Gutenberg's texts.

You can read it online or download a file for your e-reader, including Kindles, at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/55045>



The chimneys rise again: Battersea's familiar landmark restored

The reassuring sight of all four of Battersea Power Station's famous chimneys can be seen again, rising above the trees of Battersea Park – and the glass walls of the new apartment blocks. The rebuilding finished in June and painting will continue through the summer to restore the original off-white colour.

The chimneys were rebuilt using the same methods as when they were originally

built in the 1930s and 50s. Concrete was lifted up the chimneys in a hoist, transferred to wheelbarrows and then tipped by the eight builders working high up on the chimneys into the structures.

And one day the chimneys will pour out steam once more. The north-east and south-west flues will vent steam from the gas-fired energy centre that will heat and cool the development.

Restaurant review: Bottomless Bubbles in Battersea

Suzanne Perkins was tempted by Valentina's midweek offer

Feeling a bit jaded after the winter, I noticed an ad from Valentina, the Clapham Junction branch of the Italian deli and restaurant chain for '3-course Dinner and Bottomless Bubbles for £24.95' on a Wednesday evening in March. The editorial and design departments of *Battersea Matters* together with a regular contributor, felt obliged to try it out.

The interior design is very calm and professional, and makes excellent use of the triangular site, convenient for BAC and Clapham Junction station. There is a pleasant, though rather traffic-beleaguered outside space.

Jenny's first course was *bruschetta*

with very tasty tomatoes for the time of year, and masses of good olive oil.

Generous

Carol's was a generous portion of cold Italian meats with olives and a thin, crisp Sardinian flatbread, sometimes nicknamed 'piano paper'.

I chose calamari, which was perfectly cooked with a light batter and aioli.

There was a longish wait for our main courses, but the bottomless bubbles helped, though we had to avoid becoming legless...

Carol and I ordered pizza. Carol's *margherita* was 'enormous', but 'very



above: A carnivorous feast: but plenty for vegetarians on offer

more-ish' with a good base, and seemed to vanish, as did mine.

Jenny's *fusillotti n'duja* (with fiery Italian sausage) had a real kick.

The dessert menu was limited, as is usual with set menus, but the *tiramisu* was delicious. I was a bit disappointed with the *pannacotta*. It was dense, cold and creamy, but came with a berry compôte that was over-sweetened.

The atmosphere was jolly; the restaurant filled up fairly fast after our early start, but it was not noisy, and we could enjoy our conversation.

This Wednesday offer seems to be ongoing this summer, and I would recommend giving it a try. The deli section is a boon for small presents and treats, too.

Valentina Fine Foods
281 Lavender Hill, SW11 1LP
0203 841 1610



Covent Garden Market blooms anew

Helen Evans introduces Jenny Sheridan to the UK's biggest food and flower market

The market at New Covent Garden has moved. Not far: it's just a couple of hundred metres closer to the heart of Battersea than it was before 3 April. In the 1970s, the market's move south of the river from Covent Garden was greeted by moans of 'It'll kill us' from some of the traders.

Helen Evans, business director of the market, points out that Nine Elms is now itself seen as part of central London. With the towers of the new residential district rising into the sky, the US embassy almost complete and the Nine Elms zone 1 tube station due to open in 2020, the area has changed massively from its days of light industry and warehouses.

Valuable

It became clear by 2006, says Helen, that the market buildings were no longer fit for purpose. The decision to re-develop was taken, funded by selling the eastern and most valuable part of the authority's land, near Vauxhall tube station and the river. So the market shuffled further down Nine Elms Lane/Wandsworth Road.

Forty per cent of the food that is eaten outside the home – in cafés, restaurants, schools, hospitals and hotels – is sourced from New Covent

Garden, and three quarters of London's florists buy their flowers there. The flower market is primarily wholesale and retail customers

are not actively encouraged, though some do come, usually for weddings.

Almost 90% of the flowers are imported, mainly from Holland. Helen Evans and her team aim to raise the profile of home-grown flowers. As with food, she says, customers need to re-adjust to seasonality; it is better to buy English tulips in May rather than peonies, flown in from Tasmania at huge financial and environmental cost. Brexit, she says, will push prices up, but she is optimistic about trade barriers; 'we are such an important export market for Holland that they will make it work.'

Planting

'We have worked with the local community', says Helen. 'They told us they hated the wall on Thessaly Road that divides the market from the estate. They said they wanted green spaces and somewhere to grow things. So the developer has been



above: Buying and selling in the small hours of the morning

working with a group called Edible Bus Stop who have transformed the wall and created space for community planting. And there is now a gardening club at the Rose community centre.'

When the Nine Elms tube station opens, a pedestrian and cycle road will be punched through one of the railway arches, so people will be able to walk from Wandsworth Road across the linear park to the river.

Journalism

Future plans include the Food Exchange, which will open next year at the Vauxhall end of the site as a trade-only hub for food journalism, start-ups, photography and teaching.

Over the next ten years there are plans for a retail food and flower market. Helen Evans' dream is of a lively food quarter connecting Londoners to the soil and to those who grow and produce our food.

From a lord of the manor to a stone-throwing clergyman

Caroline Swash describes St Mary's stained glass windows

This small church on a patch of land by the swiftly flowing Thames has some of the most beautiful stained glass windows in London. Indeed, for variety within a single building, St Mary's is exceptional.

The east window has a very unusual subject. While stained glass could be used for the emblazoned windows of the gentry, it had been forbidden in churches until 1603. Sir John St John who acquired the Lordship of the Manor of Battersea in 1627 was a stained glass enthusiast, having already had windows made for

his Wiltshire home, Lydiard Tregoze. Once established in Battersea, he commissioned a new east window for St Mary's Church.

Unusual

This is an astonishing work of art created very skilfully from small pieces of clear glass painted with enamel colours and 'stain', the substance (silver nitrate) that gives stained glass its name. The subject matter is quite unusual. Sir John St John has featured two grand if slightly dubious ancestors (Queen Elizabeth

and King Henry VII) and Margaret Beauchamp who really did marry Sir Oliver St John. Further references to Sir John's distinguished background take the form of heraldry.

A century later, in 1796, the Dove and Lamb were set into round windows flanking the altar. These were the work of the brilliant Irish artist, James Pearson. He and his wife Eglinton created a new market in small painted glass panels which they exhibited in their studio. The paying public could buy pieces for *continued overleaf*

continued from previous page display at home, either in a window or by candle light on a stand for winter viewing. In London, a window by Pearson has survived in St Botolph, Aldersgate, and a panel by Eglington is usually on display at Fulham Palace.

During the 19th century, the aisle windows were filled with stained glass, probably given by parishioners as memorials. This was approved of by the church since Bible stories could form the subject matter of the window. During World War Two, St Mary's vicar Stephan Hopkinson disliked their darkening of the church and used the opportunity of a particularly dramatic air raid to get rid of them. 'The church was unharmed' he wrote 'at least until I picked up a stone and smashed all the Victorian glass'.

Bombed

James Pearson's 'Dove' window, however, had been slightly damaged by a V1 rocket and was later mended by Joan Howson (1885 – 1964), one of several pioneering women stained glass artists who worked either at The Glass House in Fulham or in studios around Putney. She and her team also replaced bomb-damaged glass in Westminster Abbey, Strawberry Hill House and The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy.

Later, when restoration techniques had improved, John Hayward (1926 – 2007) was invited to upgrade Howson's work. It is likely that this led to Hayward's invitation in 1976 to create a memorial window to the American Revolutionary general Benedict Arnold, buried with his wife and daughter in St Mary's crypt. This is an amazing, tactful window full of information and as light as Stephan Hopkinson might have wished.

Such was its success that in 1978 Hayward was asked to commemorate Morgan Crucible's move from Battersea with a window featuring the great landscape artist JMW Turner whose early studies of light had been painted from St Mary's vestry window. Turner lived in a terraced house in Chelsea and his servant would have rowed him over the river to Battersea. Hayward's window contains an early self portrait of Turner set against a drawing of the west end of the



Clockwise from top left: Windows depicting Benedict Arnold, William Curtis, William Blake and JMW Turner

their drawings of each other above William's signature and Catherine's cross of consent, with her gold wedding ring cleverly set between them. Inspired by a portrait in the National Gallery, Hayward shows Blake looking out through the vaulted gateway of Westminster Abbey within a cosmic display of colour representing the transforming power of the poet's imagination. Some of Blake's drawings have been included, referencing his superb ability as an engraver. Under these, the Houses of Parliament suggest the work of William Hamling MP, in whose memory the window was given.

Moth

Hayward described the last (1980) of the windows for St Mary's as a 'floral celebration' of the life and work of the botanist William Curtis (1746 – 1799), some of whose specimens were obtained from the church graveyard. Flowers that surround the engraved portrait include several chosen from Curtis's book *Flora Londonensis*. He also included a small painting of a 'brown-tailed moth' whose numerous webs were feared by country people. Curtis's book, *A short history of the brown tailed moth* (1782) is still available today. Hayward also included a schematic map of the gardens (Bermondsey, Charlton, Lambeth and Brompton) established by Curtis around London, with the river linking them together.

church in colours suggested by Turner's pictures (red, orange and gold). Turner's academic splendour was acknowledged in the window by the inclusion of the Royal Coat of Arms and Royal Academy medals. Morgan Crucible's original factory can be seen at the base, along with the exotic plumbago plant, a reference to the company's original name.

In 1979, Hayward made a third window for St Mary's, inspired by records revealing that the marriage between William Blake and Catherine Butcher had been celebrated in the church in 1782. Hayward placed