

Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society WINTER 2012



Let it glow, let it glow, let it glow!

Suzanne Perkins goes walkabout as Northcote Road lights up for the season



Emma, Amy and Zoe munch popcorn

Taking their cue from the sign? Steve, Chris and Tim from Lavender Hill Police Station



Ollie 'drives' a fire engine from Battersea Fire Station



Scott, of The Northcote pub, offers mulled wine in an apron. 'I look like Santa's bit on the side!'



Annabel, Philippa and Tiffany enjoying hot chocolate on a cold night



Santa, on the Crime Prevention stall, looks as if he's stumped, this time...



Daphne of All Good Gifts gives out gingerbread men



Snapping away: photos by Suzanne Perkins



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

From the editor



The Man on the Bus, as he says below, tends to expect the worst. With Christmas coming up

and a year of joyous festivities almost behind us I, however, am determined to be a little ray of sunshine.

In this issue we realise that, despite its reputation, London remains a remarkably friendly place (page 7). A year after the Clapham Junction riots people are working together, having fun and being creative, as STORM (p 6) and the Battersea Arts Centre (p 15) show.

My sunny disposition clouds over I must admit at the vision of the

future riverside portrayed on page 3, and at the thought that the Power Station will be all but invisible from our side of the river – we will have to take trips across to Chelsea to see it as the developers do. But on a smaller scale some good things have been happening. The changes to the road crossings at Lavender Hill/ St John's Hill and at Battersea Rise/ Northcote Road have made them both more attractive and safer.

Inspired by Nick Atkins (p 8) I went for a brisker than normal walk on Wandsworth Common in November. It seemed a shame to walk fast with all the distractions of Kerrygold-yellow birch trees, squabbling moorhens and a heron taking off from the path in front of me. But now that chilly December is here I will

be steaming round the common, trying to make pre-emptive inroads on my figure before the season of Christmas pud and mince pies.

The welfare state has been much in the news (and in the cuts) recently. I'd like to quote our MP, Jane Ellison, who said in the House of Commons on 25 October, 'I believe in the welfare state. It is an enormously important, civilising aspect of our modern society ... it is vital to everything we are as a country.'

I agree, as I am sure we all do in the Battersea Society.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a fulfilled new year.

Jenny Sheridan

newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk
020 7350 2749

The man on the Battersea bus

Mike Roden does his best to get into the Christmas spirit.

The news that Denis Compton's grandson is playing for England (that's cricket for those of you who are looking baffled) brought back memories of an advert showing an elegant batsman with glossy, slicked down hair. Naturally it was promoting the benefits of Brylcreem. Like most males of my generation I used it myself, in an attempt to look as suave and sophisticated as David Niven. That was a tall order for a ten year old in short trousers, though growing the matching moustache was a bigger problem. Then the Liverpool mop-tops arrived, I grew my hair long and abandoned hair-cream. I imagined it had gone the way of the threepenny bit and crisps with packets of salt inside. But to my amazement the brand is as still as strong as ever – now marketing itself to the 16–30 age group.

Pointless

When Howard Carter took his first look into Tutankhamen's tomb he was asked what he saw. 'Wonderful things...' he breathed. Perhaps store managers across the land hope

that when we see their glittering Yuletide displays we will be similarly overcome, and promptly set about emptying our wallets into their tills. It occurs to me that if the three kings had just decided that travelling all that way from the east was enough proof of their respect for the new-born king and left the gold, frankincense and myrrh at home, then perhaps people wouldn't feel a need to buy pointless things for their family and friends to show how much they care for them.

Windfall

That does mean charities have a windfall every January as those unwanted gifts swell the goods on offer in their shops. Many families have started a tradition of buying their Christmas presents in charity shops. Obviously that is the way forward. Those gifts can be taken back to the shop, then resold and we're in a wonderfully virtuous circle of recycling.

We have recently been to California – to celebrate (hollow laugh) my reaching the age when the state starts to give back the money I've been

paying in since I was eighteen. At the start of our holiday we took a five-day road trip with a couple we met five years ago on a walking tour in New York. We'd gone for a quick drink with them afterwards, got on very well and then we went our separate ways. This long-distance acquaintance was kept alive through sporadic emails and by occasional conversations via Skype (which is a wonder of the age!) and we finally arranged this trip.

San Francisco

It could have been disastrous. We knew next to nothing about each other and we would be spending a lot of time together. They started worrying that we might be smokers. We got off the plane at San Francisco and wondered if we'd done the right thing. Of course it was fine. We had a great holiday and they're planning to visit us in Battersea before too long.

The Man on the Bus (that's me) has a tendency to expect the worst about any approaching event. But I'm always happy to be proved wrong as I was in this case. And I'm sure Christmas this year will be even better than usual, the roast potatoes crisper, and the turkey more succulent. And I wish the same for you, dear reader.

Mind how you go.

Planning Matters

The Society has been busy responding to many consultations, says Monica Tross

Consultation is the main theme this month with the government just beginning to consult on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill. This is designed to 'produce economic growth by reducing red tape and the regulatory burden' with proposals to allow developers to apply for planning permission direct to the Secretary of State. Or in the words of Griff Rhys-Jones, chairman of Civic Voice 'giving more power to central government' at the expense of local decision making.

This appears to go against the current Secretary of State's own policies as he recently decided against 'calling in' the One Nine Elms scheme for review on the grounds that it had been approved by Wandsworth Council and it was their decision to make. Unlike an earlier Secretary of State who called in and agreed the Vauxhall Tower, now being built. It had been refused planning permission by Lambeth Council.

WANDSWORTH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Wandsworth themselves plan more consultation on the Local Plan (the new name for the Local Development Framework). They have already consulted on draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) covering Planning Obligations, Refuse and Recyclables and Housing. Our response to these is shown in the Council's report of their consultation and several of our points led to changes in the SPDs.

GASHOLDERS TO GO

National Grid consulted on their proposal to demolish the gasholders in Prince of Wales Drive and have now submitted a planning application, 2012/5193. There does not appear to be any barrier to these being demolished. Our input to the planning application will focus on the need to mitigate the effects of the work on neighbours and on traffic. The work is estimated to last 65 weeks starting next spring, and will result in considerable quantities of material leaving the site by lorry.



A glorious future for East Battersea's riverfront?

SAFER ROUTE FOR CYCLISTS, AND BIKES FOR HIRE

TfL have consulted on new plans to provide a safer route for cyclists at the junction of Battersea Park Road and Prince of Wales Drive near Havelock Terrace.

These seem sensible but it is difficult to assess the effect of these plans given gasholder demolition and much other construction which will affect all traffic in the area.

The Council have agreed the allocation of funds to support bike hire coming to Wandsworth and TfL are assessing the feasibility of sites for the docking station (having already consulted on these).

NINE ELMS AND VAUXHALL

New London Architecture ran a seminar on the VNEB area which led to a number of articles including those in the *Evening Standard*, the *Financial Times* and the *Observer Review* on 11 November. This last is particularly lively and well worth reading. Go to the *Observer*, *New Review* and look for the heading 'Utopia on Thames?' It is by the *Observer's* architecture critic Rowan Moore.

PLANNING UPDATES

We objected to an inadequate Travel Plan put forward by Bolingbroke School. This has been accepted but conditional on a further plan being put forward in December 2013, this to include details of the survey they plan once the school is open.

The Gardener's Arms (Chatham Road) application to vary the operating hours of the nursery was refused but the developers have again applied for an extension of the operating hours (2012/4861). We have objected.

There have been a number of applications for the replacement of wooden windows with UPVC. We have objected to that in Bolingbroke Grove on the grounds that it is within the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area (2012/4724).

There is much disquiet about the signage on the Cash Generator building at 317 Battersea Park Road, with the hoardings apparently put up without planning permission.

New plans have been put in for The Castle site in Battersea High Street following the refusal of earlier applications (2012/4647 and 4751).

GARDEN CENTRE

Note for those with gardens who live near Winders Road: there is permission to change a builders' yard to a small garden centre (2012/3986). Their application promises delivery by electric car.

Don't forget – do let us know your views and your concerns. We may not always be able to help but we can try.

Contact:
planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Close to the edge

She says she is not adventurous – but Anna Wallace abseiled down Battersea Power Station

‘Just step back over the edge’ were the last words I heard before I leant back and felt the rope and harness go taut. At that moment I must say I questioned why I was trussed up and hanging over the edge of Battersea Power Station. I hate heights!

Forwarded an email from The Stroke Association a few months ago, I hadn’t been able to resist. They were seeking ‘adventurous types’ for a weekend event to abseil down Battersea Power Station and raise much needed funds for the charity. I’m not adventurous – but perhaps a little nutty!

Londoners love it

Battersea Power Station has been a part of my skyline since moving to London in the mid-80s. I’ve always loved it. Its industrial history. The silhouette of the building and its white towers. The love that so many Londoners have for it, wanting it to remain and be protected. For me, no matter what has been built around or beside it, it still remains a focus as I traverse back and forth across the

**Perhaps
a little
nutty!**

Thames. It holds a special place in my heart.

So I was delighted to get an opportunity to abseil down such an iconic building and to have a peek into its belly before it is finally re-developed and new life is breathed into it.

Walking up to it before the abseil, the Power Station seemed different. A glance at it reminded me that I had committed to abseil 100ft down the side of a building that all the reports were indicating is crumbling!

At 10am on Saturday 3 November, together with seven others, I started climbing the internal stairway to the top. My emotions as we ascended were mixed: fear; excitement; sadness and pride.

I felt sick

We approached the scaffold area where our harnesses were checked for the third time. Before long it was my turn to go. I stepped up onto the scaffolding, my instructor asked my name, clipped on the karabiner and told me it would be all right. Certainly not what I was thinking at that moment! He then described how I would ‘step back over the edge and walk down the wall’. Whilst he was calm, I certainly wasn’t. I felt sick. My mouth was dry. At that instant, I thoroughly regretted volunteering for this abseil.

As my feet were balanced on the edge, he reminded me not to look down, and I remember saying ‘I can’t do this’. For a split second I thought about not doing it and then I remembered how privileged I was to be able to abseil down such an iconic building... my Battersea Power Station. And I stepped off the edge.

<http://annawallis.co.uk/tag/abseil>
www.justgiving.com/annagoanna



Adventure playgrounds: staffed or not?

Jenny Sheridan listens to the arguments

The borough's adventure playgrounds are in the news again. Last year a vigorous campaign ended in the Council rowing back on its proposal to charge for children to use the much-loved playground in Battersea Park. But its alternative appears to be equally unwelcome.

There are three Council-administered adventure playgrounds in the borough: Battersea Park, York Gardens and Kimber Road. The first two are in Battersea. Wandsworth Council, which has to save £70 million over four years, is closing the playgrounds over the winter in order to refurbish them with new equipment, at the cost of losing the playleaders and other staff.

Councillor Kathy Tracey is the cabinet member for children's services. She says, '£500,000 will be invested in new equipment at a time when many other local authorities are closing their adventure playgrounds or reducing access dramatically. Battersea Park's playground will have a £200,000 refurbishment with new wooden and adventurous equipment. It will remain open for longer hours. All the playgrounds will re-open in spring 2013.'

Demolition

The demolition of York Gardens playground was carried out in October. A petition and a demonstration by parents and children failed to stop the bulldozers. Asked what they liked about the staff,



children said, 'They take care of us', 'On the tyre swing they push you really hard', and 'They stop trouble.'

Teenagers using the York Gardens playground are convinced that without staff it will become a no-go area taken over by gangs of older youths or drug dealers. The surrounding estates have high levels of crime and deprivation and there is little for young people to do.

Vital

Opponents of the changes argue that retaining the staff is vital. Trained play workers can prevent bullying, solve disputes and stop older children or teenagers hogging the use of the equipment. They encourage adventurous play. A comment on the Council's website makes the point that as many play workers are male they act as positive rôle models for kids who may not have a father at

home. In her deputation to the Council a 14-year-old said 'The staff are there to protect us, they are our family and our friends.' She pointed out that the presence of the staff puts off gang members and drug dealers and as a result there is very little violence or vandalism.

Councillor Tracey commented, 'The changes to new equipment that does not need staff supervision will save around £300,000 a year across the three playgrounds. The adventure playground in Battersea Park will be open the same hours as the park, unlike before, and it will remain free of charge.'

Free

'We have been in discussion with Kids Company, an organisation which does excellent work targeted at vulnerable children and young people, but they have no experience of running a large outdoor playground and we felt that their targeted approach would be at odds with the universal approach we offer in Battersea Park. We are still talking to them about other venues in the borough.'

'We are in discussions with various organisations about finding a complementary user for the buildings in the playground, for example doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme or some outward bound activity – something a bit more aspirational than just using the playground.'

A few ideas for light and easy Christmas starters or party food



Mash feta cheese with a couple of cloves of garlic, some chopped olives, a little yogurt, lemon juice and dried or fresh mint. Serve on oatcakes or Little Gem lettuce leaves.



Buy various bits of antipasti from the deli counter, or use jars eg sunblush tomatoes, artichoke hearts, roast peppers, big olives. Put them on a pretty plate or if you have time thread them on skewers.



Ready-rolled puff pastry: spread with tapenade or other olive paste. Roll it up like a Swill roll, refrigerate for an hour then slice onto a baking tray. Bake at 200c/gas 6 for 15 minutes.



Top oatcakes, crackers or thinly sliced toast with pieces of blue cheese, and a walnut. Add a dollop of chutney, or drizzle with honey.



Everybody, but everybody, loves cocktail sausages, served hot on cocktail sticks. You can either leave them plain or roll them in honey and mustard. Make more than you think you'll need.

'Everyone here has been through difficult times'

After years of domestic violence and homelessness, Marie Hanson started a charity to help other women. Jenny Sheridan meets the founder of STORM

A few years ago Marie Hanson had to sleep in her car for three nights with her five children. She was homeless, cold, frightened and pregnant. After years of violence and abuse from her partner she had gathered the courage to flee.

Now she runs STORM (Support Trust Opportunity Rebuilding Motivation), the Battersea charity she founded in 2004. Initially its aim was solely to help women who, like Marie, were victims of domestic violence. More recently it has stretched out into the community to work with young people and the unemployed, with a particular focus on people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

STORM started with just four clients, now it has 1,000. 'We don't turn anyone away,' says Marie. 'If we can't help, then we will welcome them with friendship and signpost them to another organisation.'

Mentors

Based in the Doddington and Rollo Estate, STORM was aware of the impact of gangs and of gun and knife crime, all the more so after Marie's son was stabbed. One of Marie's responses was to take two young gang leaders to South Africa, to take part in an effective anti-gang project. The trip had such an impact on these previously violent young people that they have now become STORM mentors and work to give their peers alternatives to a gang lifestyle.

Another response is the Off the Streets (OTS) youth club, run one evening a week for 35 people over 16. 'It closes at 11 and by then the young people are so tired they just want to go home to bed,' says Marie. 'It is run by young female youth workers, and the young people respect them as they wouldn't with older people, who may just give them the same grief they get at home. We give them a hot meal, there's table tennis, workshops on sexual health, media workshops – getting to see there's an alternative to anti-social behaviour. We ran a business workshop which was very popular.

'If OTS members commit to coming to the youth club and trying to get into employment or training, we reward them by offering free training for the theory part of their driving test and paying for a provisional licence. Last year they organised our annual peace concert, where as well as music we have ex-gang members and mums of kids who have been killed on the streets telling their story. That is very powerful and makes them think.'

Free crèche

A job shop is run once a week, with access to a free crèche, and the local job centre refers clients for help with writing CVs and work-readiness. STORM has been instrumental in forming partnerships with local employers. Last year 58 job shop members found paid work and 65 found workplace training opportunities. Some of these are the kind of women that Marie originally set out to help – those who have lost confidence and belief in themselves.

Marie attributes the organisation's success with people who are often described as 'hard to reach' to several factors: 'We are not patronising, we offer kindness and warmth, we believe in people, we celebrate anything positive. And everyone who works here has been through difficult times, whether it's domestic abuse, panic attacks, anxiety or lack of confidence. We know it's possible to come through those things.'

'When a woman comes to us wanting to get back into work after many years without a job, when we help her write her CV we point out all the skills involved in being a home-maker and mother on a very limited budget. People can turn their lives around.'

'A woman came to us so broken by domestic violence that she couldn't stop shaking. Now she is working in schools on anti-bullying projects.'

A recent STORM project has



STORM's jobshop helps with CVs and work-readiness

been a combination of art therapy and creative writing workshop, addressing women's experiences of emotional as well as physical violence. Marie would like to repeat this if she can find the funding.

Recently Marie invited council leader Ravi Govindia to visit STORM to hear at first hand the problems facing STORM's clients on the Doddington and Patmore estates, ranging from broken doors to dangerous dogs. Marie reports that the women were happy to get their feelings across to someone in real authority and that it helped to break down the 'us and them' perspective.

Lunch club plans

Soon STORM will be moving from its small and cramped premises to a larger building, the former Base D youth club. Marie plans to open a community café, where young people will learn to cook cheap nutritious meals, with a weekly lunch club for older people, hopefully breaking down some of the fears between the generations.

www.stormempowerment.com

London's so friendly!

Beside a shopfront in Northcote Road a sign proclaims, improbably, that Battersea is twinned with Copenhagen. After 16 years in Denmark, Viv Taylor-Gee celebrates similarities and differences

I had just arrived from Denmark. I was waiting for my luggage at Gatwick when a uniformed man leaned over his counter and beckoned me over. In most countries this would spell trouble. Perhaps my jars of herring had been detected by sniffer dogs and I was about to be charged with trafficking pickled species? Maybe my suitcase had gone to Tblisi by mistake? But no. 'Where have you come from today, madam?' he asked. 'Copenhagen', I said. 'Really? So what's the weather like there today?' That was it. He was just making conversation. After 16 years in Copenhagen, I was not used to this. Strangers do not talk to each other there. If you start chatting to someone at a bus stop they avoid making eye contact and quickly check for escape routes.

Nobody believes me that London is friendly, but you really notice it after 16 years away. Train announcers make jokes, people offer to help you if you look lost, passers-by swap views about the state of the pavements. Battersea seems to be a hub of busy, involved, friendly people.

Anarchic

Wonderfully, there are more buses in London now and magically, we can often see when the next is due, in an electronic overhead message. The bus queues, however, are anarchic. The Brits are good at both complaining, and enduring stoically. We exchange furious looks about queue jumping but we don't make a fuss. The Danes know they can't be relied upon to queue in an orderly fashion, so in many shops and banks there are numbered tickets. It works well, as you can relax until your number comes up.

Battersea Power Station is up for sale yet again, the buses are still ripping wing mirrors off the cars in our street, there is still a lively campaign in our road to address the traffic vibration, and Clapham Junction is still a seething mass of people moving determinedly along

that nasty tunnel. But there are now some lifts! And good coffee! Thanks to the daytimers – the freelancers, mothers, unemployed, rich, idle, or retired - there is now a plethora of coffee shops in our area. It is possible to get organic salads drizzled with balsamic, shredded ginger, and Moroccan unicorn dust. It costs a small fortune but since there are always some customers who are deep in conversation about the current lack of liquidity in the Euro Sovereign credit default swap market, they can probably afford it.

Daytimers

What is happening to our shops? Miraculously, and thanks no doubt to intensive work and campaigning, Northcote Road has still got two butchers, a great fish stall, a cheese shop, a honey shop, a sports shop, a book shop, lots of pharmacies and a health food shop. Northcote is rich in daytimers, rich daytimers moreover, so it has escaped the worst of the high street shrivel. However it used to be even better. I miss the grocers, the Italian deli, the printers, the launderette, the post office. All gone.

Some have argued that as well as rapacious supermarket development, the demise of the high street could be caused by women's greater rôle in the workplace, with less time to shop during the day. But all Danish women work. However nearly everyone, male and female, has shorter working hours, so they can easily shop locally and daily. Danish high streets are not dying, their supermarkets are small and their very well equipped libraries are open every day for long hours. Londoners, with their long commutes and working hours, rely on online shopping and huge supermarkets. Little vegetable stalls perish, as they mostly have in Northcote Road market. However, the road is vibrant and busy and if we can hang on to the

independent shops, all will be well.

One of the joys of coming home was returning to the commons, with their newly wild and shaggy look, very different from Copenhagen's formal paths and statues. And bicycles are now allowed on the commons and parks!

Cycle lanes

Bicycles are slowly becoming almost normal, although cycling takes far more courage here. In Copenhagen cycle lanes are two metres wide, have kerbs separating bikes from traffic, and bikes have right of way: almost everyone cycles. It is free, healthy, easy and safe. In Copenhagen, a city of over a million with suburbs of about 2 million, 36% of commuters commute by bike. I admit that Denmark is very flat and London is not, but I wish a town planner would have the daring and resources to create a cycling borough, giving the bike as much thought as the car.

Widespread traffic calming is helping to reduce the danger that traffic presents, but proper bike lanes would reduce the traffic itself.

Buzz

I have only just come back. I can't yet compare the buzz of international London, its art, theatres, restaurants and creative chaos, to Copenhagen, where everything is just a 20 minute cycle ride away, and rarely crowded. Denmark is peaceful, traditional, civilised and cool but it is very homogenous.

Danes understand that private (and privatised) wealth does not make for a fair society. Their very high taxes, which are surprisingly accepted, deliver high class and comprehensive public services. But it is good to be back in this city where there is little likelihood that your friend is going to be turned away from a club because he is black. Denmark is not always as liberal and open as you might think.

And Battersea has its own special attractions which we are just beginning to rediscover.



Health meeting applauds public role of NHS

Jenny Sheridan takes the temperature at a Battersea Society meeting on health

'Yes, we do want the NHS to remain firmly in the public sector' was the clear message from the loud applause that greeted an audience comment about privatisation in the health service. On 31 October the Battersea Society organised a meeting in the Ethelburga community centre to discuss the local NHS and the forthcoming changes.

Integration

Dr Josephine Ruwende outlined the role of the public health service, which is moving from being part of the NHS to come under local authority control. Public health looks after health at a population rather than individual level. Dr Ruwende pointed out that many of the roles of local government – housing, public open spaces, transport and roads, social services – play an important role in the physical and mental health of the population. She felt that being placed within the local authority would enable her team to bring a health perspective to these areas and would lead to closer integration of health and social care.

After being gently reproved by chair Sue Marshall for his use of initials and acronyms – COPD, CRG, PCT (see below for a translation), Dr Rod Ewen described the role of the Wandsworth CCG, or Clinical Commissioning Group. This is the grouping that allowed the government to describe the changes as doctor-led. It includes six GPs, some managers, a nurse and a patient representative. For its first year, starting in April 2013, the CCG has set six priorities for Battersea (there are three other localities):

- **Alcohol, focusing both on street drinking and on hospital admissions and long-term conditions**
- **Mental health, especially improving access to counselling**
- **Sexual health, with a new clinic due to open on the Doddington Estate**
- **Cancer screening, with a focus on bowel and cervical cancer**
- **Smoking**
- **Childhood obesity**

(For the WCCG's three-year priorities, see Jeremy Ambache's article in *Battersea Matters Summer 2012*)

To that question about privatisation, Dr Ewen replied firmly, 'It's not about privatising', though a little later he said 'I don't care whether they are private or not as long as they're providing a good service.'

Dr Siân Job is the clinical lead for patient and public involvement (PPI) in the Wandsworth CCG. During 31 years as a Battersea GP she has, she said, seen more than her fair share of health service changes come and go. But the current changes she greets with enthusiasm.

Dr Ewen had mentioned clinical reference groups for particular conditions, such as diabetes or sickle cell anaemia. Dr Job's role is to make sure that patients with such conditions feed into these groups and that their views are listened to. As an example of listening to patients, she had been to a meeting with deaf

users of British Sign Language, who had told her of their largely negative experience of GP consultations. When she next had a deaf patient in her surgery, she was about to print out the results when she spotted a BSL button on her computer and was able to give a much more appropriate feedback to her patient. 'I wouldn't have done that before I spoke to that group,' she said.

Questions ranged far and wide on clinical and managerial topics, but we were left wanting more answers. How would the WCCG cope with budget cuts? What is the role of voluntary organisations? What does the WCCG really think about private providers?

Threat

As an after-note, the day after the meeting, Dr Clare Gerada, chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners, warned that proposed changes to the GP contract will pose a serious threat to patient care. The government's plans will include clauses making it easier for practices to go bust if their income drops. At present the NHS protects continuity of care. According to Dr Gerada, small or single-handed practices are most at risk. She fears that the changes are being made to give easier access for private providers of GP services to step into the gap.

GLOSSARY: COPD: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease eg bronchitis
CRG: clinical reference group
PCT: Primary care trust (currently commissioners of services, the role being taken on by the clinical commissioning group or CCG)

It's a walk in the park

Walking more and faster is easy, healthy and enjoyable, says Wandsworth Council physical activity officer Nick Atkins

Walking is an excellent natural exercise that can help you stay healthy, live longer and keep happy. In many ways it is the perfect activity: You can do it anywhere and at any time, going to the shops or to work, it's free and you don't need special

equipment, and you can start slowly and build up gently. It's something you can do with friends and family or if you walk in a group you may even make new friends. It has no harmful effects on the environment and it's good for your mental health.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING

Walking regularly will:

- **Help your heart and lungs work better**
- **Lower your blood pressure**
- **Control your weight**



- **Improve your mood**
- **Keep your joints, muscles and bones strong**
- **Increase ‘good’ cholesterol**
- **Reduce the risk of some illnesses eg heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression, osteoporosis and certain cancers.**
- **Help you manage or recover from diseases and long term conditions including some cancers.**

HOW MUCH EXERCISE DO WE NEED?

We’ve all heard the ‘5 a-day’ message about how much fruit and vegetables we need to eat but the message around how much physical activity we need is not as clear or catchy. The Chief Medical Officer recently released new physical activity guidelines which outline how much activity we need to be taking to stay healthy. The guidelines state:

- **All adults aged over 19 need to be active on most days**
- **All adults should aim to be active for 150mins (2.5 hours) per week in bouts of 10mins or longer. This should be moderate intensity activity.**
- **Comparable benefits can be achieved through 75mins of high intensity activity.**
- **All adults should also**

undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.

- **All adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.**
- **Adults aged over 64 should also incorporate activity that improves balance and coordination two times a week.**

Walking can help people achieve their 150minutes of activity providing it is done at a moderate intensity. Exercise at a moderate intensity is much better for health than at low intensity and we can increase our intensity simply by speeding up our walking pace.

A moderate intensity is where you are slightly short of breath but still able to hold a conversation, your heart rate is raised, and you’re slightly warm and starting to sweat. The point that you achieve this intensity is completely individual and depends on your current fitness levels.

Build up

It may also be helpful to use a pedometer to count the number of steps you take. This clips onto your waist band and counts each step you take during the day – the aim is to achieve 10,000 steps every day. If you are unused to walking, it may take you weeks or months before you can walk 10,000 steps each day but by starting with short distances you can gradually build up to reach this target.

In Wandsworth we are blessed with lots of great places to walk, including Battersea Park and Wandsworth Common, and the borough is bordered by Clapham Common, and Richmond Park. There are some longer trails that can be walked as part of a walk or over a period of days for keener walkers. These include the Wandle Trail, the Capital Ring, the Jubilee Walkway, the Green Chain path, the London LOOP, the Jubilee Greenway, the Lea Valley Walk, and the Thames Path – details of these trails can be found on the Walk London website.

Walk4Life

If you need some more motivation or prefer to walk in a group there are several options available to you. Wandsworth Council organises weekly free, short (30–60min), group walks through a programme called Walk4Life. These take place in lots of local parks and commons including Battersea Park and Clapham Common. If you are interested do contact me to get the details. I am also looking for volunteers to help lead new walks.

There are other opportunities and groups to join including the Hammersmith, Fulham and Wandsworth Ramblers who go on longer walks that often take place in the country.
Nick Atkins 020 8871 6373
NAtkins@wandsworth.gov.uk

www.walklondon.org.uk
www.hfwrblers.org.uk

Great Bus Journeys of the World No 5

Mike Roden takes a circuitous ride from Chelsea to Peckham on the 345



This bus actually begins its journey on Cromwell Road near the Natural History museum but as we arrived at South Kensington a 345 was approaching the stop on Harrington Road so you must imagine the early part of this route. We settle in our seats and the bus passes the statue of Béla Bartók – the Hungarian composer who lived in London briefly during 1922.

There is the usual tedious wait at the lights to turn onto Fulham Road but at last we get going, and enter medical territory. First there's the Royal Marsden Hospital, flanked by the Royal Brompton. Next to that is the Institute of Cancer Research, the Marsden's research arm, which owns the building on the corner. This was originally the Chelsea Women's Hospital and was opened in 1880 by the Princess of Wales.

Quentin Crisp

It's very Chelsea here, with upmarket antique and interior design boutiques and a cluster of fashion emporia. Then the bus turns left onto Beaufort Street. Quentin Crisp (the 'Naked Civil Servant') lived in a first floor flat at number 129 from 1940 until he moved to America in the early 1980s. English Heritage decided in 2010 not to approve a blue plaque for Quentin because he wasn't 'significant enough'. I'm sure his time will come.

As the bus crosses Battersea Bridge, to the right we can see Lots Road power station which ceased operation in 2002. Closer to us is Chelsea Wharf where the General Omnibus Company used to store food for its horses. The company

began using motor buses in 1902, and bus route numbers were introduced in 1906. Before that omnibus passengers had to make sure they read the destinations painted on the sides to ensure catching the right bus. It wasn't long before the practice of numbering London buses became universal. The 345 is a relative newcomer, having only been introduced in 1995.

While I've been telling you that, we've travelled down Battersea Bridge Road, round the one way system along Prince of Wales Drive and Albert Bridge Road, back onto Battersea Park Road and down Falcon Road. This part of the journey has been well covered in other episodes of this series. Passing the new Travelodge the bus arrives at Lavender Hill and turns left into territory so far uncharted by *Battersea Matters*.

A prominent landmark as we come up the hill is Battersea Library which opened in 1890. Further along on the left is Battersea Arts Centre, formerly the Town Hall (which opened for business in 1893).

Glimpses

The route takes us through a good mix of shops – the usual takeaways, restaurants and convenience stores – leavened by some interesting independent stores.

Through gaps in the buildings there are tantalising glimpses of London landmarks – the Eye, Westminster Cathedral, and Big Ben.

Turning onto Cedars Road brings us into Lambeth. The collection of buildings on the left used to be

stables, which hired out horses for special occasions like weddings, and then became the home of the Cedars Motor Engineering Company. When upmarket mews flats were built on the stable site, the developers decided not to demolish the original frontage, and there it still is, proudly proclaiming the place's history.

This very straight road leads to Clapham Common. This was once common land for the parishes of Battersea and Clapham, but an Act of Parliament saw it converted to parkland in 1878.

No poor relation

Clapham is the home of three tube stations on the Northern line. Of course you know that Clapham Junction is not in SW4 but there are still too many stores who can't get to grips with that simple fact! Samuel Pepys lived here for two years until his death in 1703, and other past and present famous residents include (a random selection) Kingsley Amis, Jeremy Brett, Vivienne Westwood and Heather Mills. It's still an attractive, bustling place, but Battersea need no longer feel like a poor relation. According to one estate agent, average property prices in our neighbourhood are £150,000 more than in Clapham.

Shortly after leaving Clapham we reach Stockwell, home to one of the UK's largest Portuguese communities, a fact reflected by many of the local cafés and delicatessens. We stop outside the tube station and remember 22 July 2005 when armed police in search of the previous day's London bombers



pursued Jean Carlos de Menezes, an innocent Brazilian electrician, onto a waiting train and shot him seven times. In January 2010 a permanent memorial, created by a local artist, was unveiled at the station.

Rock venue

The bus rattles on along Stockwell Road through unremarkable residential streets and small shopping arcades, past the striking art deco frontage of the world-famous Brixton Academy. This began life in 1929 as the Astoria cinema and theatre. It closed in 1972, and the building was empty for ten years. After major restoration it re-opened as a rock music venue, and in 1983 it became the Academy.

We leave Brixton behind, and head down Coldharbour Lane towards Camberwell. That rare butterfly, the Camberwell Beauty was so named after two specimens were found somewhere around here in 1748. They'd probably arrived on ships delivering timber from Scandinavia to the Surrey Docks a couple of miles away. It's a very long time since one has been spotted round here but it has become an unofficial emblem for Camberwell, appearing for instance on the gates of Burgess Park.

On Peckham Road now, we approach journey's end. Across the road from Camberwell College of Art is the Vanguard Studios, once the home of a factory which built vehicle bodies for the first London motor buses, and latterly the works of Vanguard Luggage whose attaché cases were standard issue to British forces in the Second World War.

Nearby is the South London Gallery, founded in 1891, a publicly-funded gallery of contemporary art.

We see another gallery as we near the bus station. Peckham Space is a defiantly futuristic building, which opened in 2010 and is dedicated to commissioning 'location-specific artworks.' Behind it is a striking copper-clad building whose upper section is supported on stilt-like pillars. Peckham library, which won the Stirling Prize for Architecture in 2000, was designed by Alsop and Stormer.

Blake's vision

This was once a quiet rural village surrounded by fields; the last stopping point for drovers taking their cattle to market in London. In 1765 while staying in Peckham an eight year old William Blake saw his first vision: 'A tree filled with angels'.

Rural no longer, Peckham has had a troubled recent history, with high unemployment and a lack of economic opportunities leading to serious social problems, with a high crime rate on the surrounding estates. Things reached a tragic climax in November 2000 when 10-year-old Damilola Taylor was stabbed to death. I'm told things have improved somewhat since then. Let's hope so.

Apparently this is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the UK, and the High Street reflects the vibrant mixture of nationalities. The colour, noise and bustle of the place together with the huge variety

Sights to see:

statue of Béla Bartók, South Kensington independent shops, Lavender Hill old stable frontage in Cedars Road, The Brixton Academy, The South London Gallery, Camberwell and Peckham Library

of shops remind us our recent visit to the Asian part of Istanbul.

Sea bass

We go into a noisy shop brimming with a bewildering variety of fish and meat. Fighting back the impulse to buy a kilo of goat leg, we settle for three sea bass which are on special offer. The shopkeeper cheerfully scales and guts them for us, and we head off to catch the train home. The fish accompany us all the way to Battersea Park station where we change trains for Clapham Junction. Unfortunately the fish carry on to Victoria, and have not been seen since. I hope they went to a good home.



A cleaner river? There's still a way to go

Amy Prior of the Thames Estuary Partnership describes a project to engage river-loving people

To meet European objectives, the Thames needs to be healthier for fish and other wildlife and also to contribute to the health and happiness of people, such as Battersea residents, who live near the river.

Your Tidal Thames is a joint pilot project between the Thames Estuary Partnership (TEP), and environmental charity Thames21. It marks a step towards compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive. This states that all rivers and other bodies of water across the European Union should achieve 'good' ecological status by 2027. The tidal Thames is classed as a Heavily Modified Water Body and as such can only achieve 'good ecological potential'. At present it has been classified as 'moderate'.

Opportunities

One of our aims in the pilot was to foster a sense of ownership amongst people with an interest in the river. The intention is not only to improve the health of the river for wildlife, but also to enhance economic opportunities and enjoyment for people in a sustainable yet equitable way.

Reaching as many people as possible within the tidal Thames catchment has been very difficult. With such a complex area, and the wide range and large number of people with a legitimate interest in the river, the project team had to devise ways of collecting a good cross-section of ideas and opinions.

The Tidal Thames is the area from Teddington Lock to the the estuary. The true Thames catchment area stretches all the way from source to sea and encompasses all the rivers that eventually drain into the estuary, including the Wandle and London's lost rivers such as the Fleet. Each of these tributaries will need its own management plan, and where there is a pilot already we worked with those project teams to keep up to date on issues within their areas.

To start the engagement process, we introduced the project by asking four simple questions designed to



Consultation has been complex

be answered by anyone, regardless of their expertise or technical knowledge. This questionnaire was emailed to 5,000 members of the extensive TEP and Thames21 databases. Responses were collated into themes. Each month these were published on both charities' websites, and sent to anyone who had registered for project updates.

Cleaning up

We then set about meeting as many people as possible. Thames21 hold events throughout the year bringing communities to the river to take part in cleaning up their local stretch. Holding 'pop-up workshops' alongside provided an ideal opportunity to talk about the pilot and hear views on how the river could be improved.

We also held one-to-one meetings with local authorities, NGOs, community groups and industry, so as to learn in greater detail about issues facing the Thames from regulatory, conservation and commercial points of view.

In parallel we set up a strategy group made up of key tidal Thames stakeholders including representatives of regulatory bodies, recreational groups, NGOs and other Thames groups. A full list can be found on our websites.

Different strategies

This group first met in June 2012 and voiced concerns about the size of task and level of consultation needed. They also highlighted the wealth of information that already exists following more than 15 years of consultation for a multitude of different management strategies and plans.

The group recommended that the project use this information and not 're-invent the wheel'. We have followed this advice and have completed an exhaustive review of all past management strategies and city-wide and borough policies to identify where policies have been implemented successfully, and to highlight the gaps.

The Final Report and Working Catchment Plan will be submitted to Defra on 21 December 2012, and will bring together themes that arose from the public engagement exercise and the literature review. The report also includes ideas for practical projects to extend beyond the pilot. We are working in collaboration with other Thames organisations to raise funds for their development and implementation.

Network

One of the most important aspects to emerge from the pilot is that a network of organisations with strong links into their communities, and forward-thinking ideas, already exists along the tidal Thames. Thames Landscape Strategies Hampton to Kew and Kew to Chelsea, The Cross River Partnership, TEP and Thames21 are prime examples of this. Consultation is undertaken on a regular basis through these organisations and they should be the starting point for any large scale engagement needed on the river.

Real improvements at landscape scale can be achieved, backed by local communities through these types of organisation, with co-ordinated action and financial support.

Thamesweb.com
www.thames21.org.uk

Restaurant review: Entrée

Jenny Sheridan is underwhelmed,

When it opened two years ago, Entrée garnered enthusiastic reviews from the likes of restaurant critic Jay Rayner. I assume the chef has changed since then as when I ate there with my friend Carol neither of us was hugely impressed.

To start with some positive aspects: we chose the £20 two course set menu, which was good value as similar dishes *à la carte* would have set us back at least £27. We were offered a pleasant *amuse bouche* of a glass of carrot soup with a rosemary roll. The starters were disappointing. Carol's French onion soup was good, but not at

all traditionally French (no cheese or toasted bread). My pork *rillettes*, recommended by the waitress, had entirely the wrong texture and were tasteless and served too cold. Main dishes were much better. Carol enjoyed her hake on a bed of crushed new potatoes with *crème fraîche* and little pools of parsley puree. My chicken *ballotine* was a generous portion of nicely stuffed chicken breast with a fine gravy and a scattering of lentils.

The meal's highlight however turned out to be the chips (£3.50



extra, and worth it). Sadly for my figure, I am a chip fanatic, and these triple-cooked ones were excellent.

No pud on our menu, and anyway we were full, so we missed out on bread and butter pudding with madeira-soaked cherries, caramel sauce and vanilla ice cream (£6).

The restaurant was quite full on a Thursday night, with a buzzy atmosphere. Service was pleasant, there were good wines by the glass and maybe the desserts were divine. They do a BYOB offer on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with £5 corkage.

It may be worth another try.
*Entrée, 2 Battersea Rise, SW11.
020 7223 5147*

Hoovering up the canapés at the Dyson Building

Mike Roden was there to quaff champagne, people-watch and marvel at entrepreneurial enthusiasm.

The Royal College of Art's £21 million Dyson building had its official opening in September. The Departments of Photography and Printmaking together with those of Sculpture are now united on one site.

I had already been inside the building during the end of year shows, but I never turn down an invitation to a prestigious reception like this. There



Sir James Dyson cranks out a Peter Blake print

is the opportunity to wander round looking important while holding a glass of champagne and seeking the delicious, but somewhat elusive canapés. And of course one keeps an eye open for the great and good. I'd been told that the guest list would include well-known figures from the art and design world and Orla Kiely, Vicki Conran and Priscilla Carluccio were among those present. I'd love to report that I snatched a brief interview for *Battersea Matters* with one of these luminaries, but unfortunately I don't know what any of them looks like.

Anyway, down to business: the building is very impressive, with its comfortable 220-seat lecture theatre and main printmaking hall which had a display of work by former RCA students.

Inventors

The large public exhibition gallery on Battersea Bridge Road showcased some of the most successful ventures of InnovationRCA, the college's business incubator, which now has a purpose-built home at the Dyson building. It was heartening to visit the displays and listen to the young inventors and entrepreneurs talking enthusiastically about their projects.

Loowatt is a revolutionary waterless toilet that converts human waste into natural gas and fertilizer, and has the potential to deliver sanitation to millions of people deprived of this basic human need. KwikScreen provides a temporary partition for hospital wards which is easily moved around, and can be rolled up when not required. A device called Orbel offers a clever solution to the problems of hospital hygiene. It clips onto the belt or pocket of the healthcare worker and using a system of roller balls can be used in a swift single-handed movement to dispense

sufficient alcohol gel for both hands.

It was then time to return to the Printmaking Hall for the opening ceremony. Rector Paul Thomson told us: 'Finally after 175 years we have a campus that mirrors the way artists practise, moving between media and materials.'

Engineer, philanthropist and RCA alumnus Sir James Dyson, whose foundation provided £5million towards the cost of developing the building, cited the strategic importance of art and design as his reason for supporting the project he felt successive governments had failed to understand: 'RCA graduates can really transform Britain's share of world trade with their creative minds. They already are doing that.'

He then officially inaugurated the building by laboriously turning the wheel of the College's 1829 printing press on a rare Sir Peter Blake etching (*pictured*).

The Dyson development marks a significant milestone in the RCA's history. When the next phase of its £61 million masterplan is completed in 2015, more than half of the college's 1,500 students will be housed in Battersea. Let's hope that it helps to reinvigorate this part of North Battersea.

Greening the borough

Volunteer tree wardens help protect our street trees.
Co-ordinator Andrew Wills describes the scheme

Trees make an incredible difference to London's streetscape; without them the city would be a completely different place.

A University of California study found that urban spaces which had been planted had a 90% chance of remaining free of graffiti, while spaces of plain concrete had only around 10% chance of not being vandalised.

Because of my love of trees I got involved with the Wandsworth Tree Warden Network ('WTWN'). This has been established for over 20 years and is an affiliated member of the Tree Council's national Tree Warden Scheme. There are approximately 60 different warden networks located throughout the UK.

Treescape

The WTWN is a voluntary organisation consisting of Wandsworth residents. Our aim is to promote public awareness of the many benefits of trees in city environments and to help improve and protect the borough's treescape through the planting, care, nurture and promotion of trees.

There are currently approximately 70 wardens on the register, with ages ranging from about 30 to 75 and with a wide range of backgrounds. Most have no formal training or in-depth experience of tree matters before becoming wardens.

While we are independent of Wandsworth Council, the Council is very supportive and helps us in

a number of ways. These include funding our annual Tree Council membership fees, allowing our quarterly meetings to take place in the Town Hall and recently awarding us project funding of £550 from the Council's Eco Fund. This was spent on collapsible water containers, ID badges for wardens and printing costs.

Eyes and ears

Patrick Langley, the Council's arboriculture manager, is always generous with his time and advice. The relationship with the Council is enhanced by the fact that although there is no formal job description of the role of tree warden, one of our key functions is to act as the eyes and ears of the Council out on the streets. So although the wardens have no special powers, they do report details of any damaged or diseased trees to the Council so that the Council can take appropriate and timely action.

The wardens have recently undertaken various projects including watering street trees during the summer months, lobbying against the potential loss of mature trees at Southside Shopping Centre due to proposed development, and tree planting projects, often in conjunction with various Tree Council initiatives (eg planting trees in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee and fruit trees in local schools).



Tree, inverted bromide print.
Nathan Jones

Our membership of the Tree Council's national scheme gives the wardens the opportunity to attend various Tree Council training sessions, free of charge. These cover a variety of topics ranging from tree identification and diseases to full day sessions held at Kew Gardens. From time to time we also receive invitations to various tree celebration events and indeed some of our wardens attended a luncheon in the House of Lords in November held to celebrate the national Tree Warden Scheme.

In general, the WTWN provides a focal point for people to meet, discuss and develop any tree-related ideas and projects that they may have. It enables them to draw on each other's wealth of knowledge and experience in relation to trees in Wandsworth.

All welcome

Note for those concerned about ash die-back: Councillor Sarah McDermott and Patrick Langley have established that ash trees constitute about 5% of the borough's tree stock and that they are mainly in parks, commons or private land. So far there have been no outbreaks in London but Mr Langley and his staff are keeping their eyes peeled.

The wardens meet every three months, with the next meeting scheduled for Thursday 13 December in Wandsworth Town Hall at 7pm. All are welcome – just go through the archway and head to the main reception area where you will be directed to the meeting room.

For further information please contact me on wandtreeward@aol.com



Bramford community garden's Miranda Simmons and Jenny Sheridan accept a Level 3 Developing Garden award from the RHS and London in Bloom. The garden is in a small park at the entrance to Old York Road.

Battersea Arts Centre is a Good Neighbour

Celine Gagnon outlines BAC's activities with young people since the riots

As the riots were unravelling around Clapham Junction in 2011, BAC was about to stage *Brave*, a performance devised by a company of 19 local young people using spoken word, dance and beatboxing to express what it meant for them to be brave. Following the success of the project, both with the performers and local audiences, and as our response to last year's unrest, we have been investing more of our resources and creative energies in our local community.

Brave was one of the special projects for local young people that we deliver in the course of a year through our Homegrown programme.

Imagination

Homegrown brings together professional artists and local young people – who are often experiencing disadvantage through poverty, disengagement with formal education or unemployment – to devise theatre shows around ideas that are generated by the young people themselves. Special projects are led by accomplished artists because we believe that great art happens when artists work with audiences and because we truly value young people's creativity and imagination.

Brave gave its young participants a platform to share their own experiences and life choices. By chance rather than design, it acted as a counterpoint to the violence of the riots, showing that young people can have a positive impact on their community. Feedback from the



top: *The Good Neighbour's* cast on Debenhams roof
above: *Brave*, devised by local young people

300-strong audience highlighted that, though saddened by the unrest around Clapham Junction, they were uplifted up by the production.

Girls' project

Since the riots, we have focused on reaching more young people at risk of offending or of social isolation, filling some of the gap left by cuts to youth services in Wandsworth. We have strengthened our links with the Wandsworth Early Intervention Team and hosted a theatre project engaging

vulnerable girls from the Winstanley Estate.

One year on from the riots, we ran First Things First, another special project which took as its starting point the riots and their aftermath. We have also increased our theatre offering for younger audiences; in September we premiered *Brand New Ancients* by spoken-word and hip hop artist Kate Tempest. The show was a sell-out success, received many 4 star reviews in national publications and included a young poets project led by Kate for a small group of local young artists.

Local stories

This year we have developed and presented *The Good Neighbour*, a show for local families which took place across the Town Hall and spilled out into the streets of Battersea. *The Good Neighbour* was inspired by the story of George

Neighbour, a local worker who died in a fire in 1909 at Arding & Hobbs department store (now Debenhams) trying to save the lives of two young women. The show also retold a number of local stories, giving a voice to residents who had experienced the riots first hand.

The Good Neighbour has now become more than a show, resulting in stronger relationships with the traders and punters up and down Lavender Hill. It is informing our plans for the future, as we look to do more to engage local young people, children and families. Watch this space...

Celine Gagnon is senior development manager at Battersea Arts Centre.

Could you be a Spirited Body?

Modelling for artists is liberating, says Lucy Saunders

'Wonderful! I felt very at ease.'
'Nerves disappeared instantly once I'd started.' 'Very glad I have done it. There is an enormous difference in the way I feel about my body between last Sunday's workshop and today. Sunday I accepted my body. Today I like it with all its imperfections.'

These three people all went naked for art at the Spirited Bodies event on 20 October at Battersea Arts Centre, hosted by London Drawing. Organised by Esther Bunting and myself, Spirited Bodies invites everybody to come and pose for artists, challenge their taboos and find out more about what we do and why we do it when we are posing for artists. Since November 2010 we have organised eight events and we are now putting together Spirited Bodies 9 in Mortlake on 15 December.

Confidence

Many people find that modelling naked for artists helps them deal with issues of body confidence and confidence more generally. There is something about bringing together the three elements: the models, the artists and the artworks that creates a space where people can change their minds about themselves.

People come for all sorts of reasons, it could be weight gain or loss, a crisis of age, menopause, scarring, arthritis, depression, sports injuries, accidents, anything where someone's trust in their body has been rocked. Some come because they need to perform in their work, whether that is giving presentations to fellow accountants or dancing in the Edinburgh Fringe.

For the artists, it is a rare opportunity to work from multiple models at once, offering unique challenges to composition and technique. The models range in age from 19 to 73, the artists from 17 to incredibly ancient. The artists may have started life drawing last week or been doing life art for 50 years. The artworks can be the simplest pencil drawing, vibrant chalks and pastels or, when we are with London Drawing, amazing collages.



Wandering round the impromptu exhibition at the end of the day on 20 October, I heard one model say to another: 'That's me – and that's you,' as they looked at the art. It is very liberating to see yourself how others see you, and to realise that you have little control over this. You can let go that judgement in your head telling you that you aren't perfect, that you must try harder, that you must be better. You can just be yourself, whatever your age, size and level of fitness, and just being yourself can benefit artists, tickle their imagination, challenge their skills

We run workshops in the run up to an event, where would-be models can find out more, participate in drawing and posing (which can be clothed, it's a personal choice), and some people come only to the workshops, not to the events.

It doesn't matter if you can't draw – I defy anyone to draw quite as badly as me – what matters is understanding that the peace and concentration of the artists as they work means that they aren't leering, they are looking. Posing for artists gives people a rare chance to be still, to be completely peaceful, to open up a possibility for a quiet meeting with the self, while at the same time helping others.

Tableaux

We work with the models to come up with ideas for poses. They may be separate or together, connected but without physical contact – think of two people standing back to back with their arms folded. It's clear that they are angry with each other. We want to create evolving tableaux rather than static scenes.

On a practical level, we are very concerned that both artists and

models are comfortable. Warmth is obviously important and if necessary we take our own heaters to the space. Models are unpaid and the artists pay a fee which depends largely on the costs of the venue and the organisations involved. At BAC the charge was £45 for the day, sometimes it is less, sometimes more.

When I tell people I work as an artist's model, the reaction is always shock, the quick question 'and is that naked?' followed rapidly by 'you're so brave' which, as we all know, is actually cover for saying 'you are completely mad'. Even my GP reacted all 'nudge nudge wink wink say no more' when I told him what I was doing, and you would have thought that naked bodies were all in a day's work to him.

Transformation

When we are naked we are all Shakespeare's 'bare forked animals'; removing clothes removes signifiers of status, age and situation. Art takes the earthy to the spiritual, shows us to ourselves and each other, allowing transformation.

Two more participants' comments: 'Within minutes, everyone was really comfortable and enjoying themselves, and frankly the nudity just didn't seem to matter. The artists were all clothed, but were far too focused on what they were doing to gawk or giggle.' 'If you want a real confidence-building challenge to push yourself beyond your comfort zone, forget that triathlon, EST workshop, or fad exercise class, check out Spirited Bodies. You won't regret it.'

www.spiritedbodies.com
Facebook: Spirited Bodies – has lots of images of work done at events
www.londondrawing.com

Adding lustre to Wandsworth

Miranda Willis outlines the treasures of the De Morgan collection

The De Morgan Centre displays the work of two nineteenth century artists, the married couple William and Evelyn De Morgan. William was part of the Arts and Crafts Movement, specialising in the traditionally female area of ceramics whilst Evelyn can be regarded as a second generation pre-Raphaelite artist, a field dominated by male painters. The Centre explores the relationship between the work of the two artists, placing William's ceramics in cabinets alongside Evelyn's paintings which are often hung three high on the rich blue walls.

Turquoise

William De Morgan (1839-1917) began his career working closely with William Morris, taking over the tile production side of Morris' business before opening his own studio in Chelsea. The influence of Middle Eastern pottery can be seen in William De Morgan's work, especially in his use of bright turquoise and Persian patterns. This interest led to him being commissioned to create tile decorations for P&O ferries to the Middle East. Three are on display at the Centre, depicting imagined oriental cities and coastlines. However, William was not afraid to juxtapose Islamic elements with British motifs. This is clearly visible in his beautiful large pot depicting English wildlife. Stylised green leaves with turquoise stems wind their way up the piece whilst purple blackbirds of varying shapes nestle in between.

William De Morgan also experimented with glazes, rediscovering the lost art of polychrome lustre. Initially he used lustre over one tone, red. Many of these pieces depict fantastical animals and creatures, such as dragons and griffins, which often have humorous aspects to them. In the later production of his series entitled *Moonlight Suite*, William's skill was such that he was able to produce a lustre effect on several different colours within the same piece. Amongst the most successful are two large bowls depicting galleons at sea in tones of silver and

copper red on a navy background.

Evelyn De Morgan (1855-1919) was among the first women to be trained at the Slade School of Art. To round off her artistic education, she often visited her uncle, the artist Roddam Spencer Stanhope in Florence. The influence of the Italian Renaissance can be seen in her work *Flora* (1880) which was inspired by Botticelli's *Primavera* (1482) in terms of colour palette, dress design and foliage. Like her uncle, Evelyn shared an interest in biblical, mythical and allegorical subject matter. However Evelyn's moral messages on the transitory nature of life were also based upon her passion for spiritualism, which William shared. Like many Victorians participating in this craze, William and Evelyn

Fish Punch Bowl, 1890–1904,
William De Morgan
Decorated by Fred Passenger

Night and Sleep, Evelyn De Morgan, Oil on Canvas, 1878
both © De Morgan Foundation



believed that the dead were able to communicate with the living, through séances, which they both attended.

Robust

The couple were also of their time in their strong views on women's suffrage. In 1889 Evelyn signed the 'Declaration in Favour of Women's Suffrage'. Her opinions on women are reflected in her paintings. They contrast with male Pre-Raphaelite artists like Edward Burne-Jones whose women are ephemeral compared with Evelyn's strong, robust females based on the models Jane Morris, wife of William Morris and her sister's nursemaid Jane Hales.

Leave about two hours to visit the De Morgan Centre. Buses 37, 337 and 170 stop outside the building and parking nearby is easy, although charges apply. The entrance fee to the gallery is £4 and includes access to the temporary exhibition space, which often displays contemporary Arts and Crafts. The Centre is in the same building as the Wandsworth Museum and its family friendly café.

The Centre's lease lasts until May 2015. A permanent home for the collection is currently being sought.

Miranda Willis, former volunteer.

De Morgan Centre
38 West Hill, London SW18

Opening hours:

1–5pm Monday–Friday

11am–5pm Saturdays.

There will be a Battersea Society visit to the De Morgan Centre on 6 February, 2013 (see page 19).

Bug-hunting, permaculture and plant sales

Susan Stuart describes joys to come on Wandsworth Common

The Nature Study Centre near the bowling green on Wandsworth Common has stood empty since 2008. In February this year the Council approved the proposals put forward by



Naturescope, an exciting partnership between Thrive, All Star Tennis and Groundwork London. We aim

to bring the Wandsworth Common Nature Study Centre back to life as a dynamic and accessible resource for the local community. Once a lease can be finalised, the building, which has been empty for years, will be buzzing with activity.

Naturescope will provide year-round activities for all ages and abilities during the week and at weekends.

In both term time and holidays, Groundwork will run ecology and nature sessions including bug hunting and pond dipping; for adults there will be workshops on permaculture, organic gardening, grow your own food and local natural history. Thrive will extend its therapeutic gardening and vocational training for disabled people to the Common, with weekend plant sales, family volunteer days and family fun open days.

Sports

All Star will offer a range of health and well-being classes, including healthy living, yoga, pilates, fitness and movement, coordination development

for kids as well as using the centre to support the bowling and sports activities.

The centre will also be available for hire to local schools, societies, clubs and for children's parties and other social events.

The three partner organisations are all well known and established in Wandsworth. All Star Tennis has been providing opportunities for tennis and bowls on Wandsworth Common for over 12 years and offers a variety of activities for people of all ages and abilities. Thrive has offered horticultural therapy services in Battersea Park for 25 years and reaches over 300 disabled people each year while Groundwork's wide range of environmental education opportunities have been enjoyed by communities across London for nearly 20 years and in Wandsworth for the past 4 years. *Susan Stuart is manager of Thrive in Battersea Park.*

Book Review: The Development of Building Estates in Battersea 1780–1914, by Keith Bailey

Why does Battersea look the way it does? Suzanne Perkins finds answers in a new study

We have all heard the vague stories of how Battersea 'was all market gardens' and tales of the notorious marshes close to the river and the cottage industries. How on earth was this transformed into a densely-populated suburb, which became famous as 'The Municipal Mecca' within such a short time during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

Keith Bailey's paper for Wandsworth Historical Society answers the questions I have always pondered. Why are Battersea's streets so inconvenient to walk through? Why are most back gardens so tiny? Why do the houses, even in one street form little clumps of one design, then another? All the facts and figures are here, meticulously researched and laid out.

He explains the fragmented nature of land ownership in what was an outlying rural area, hardly changed

since the medieval strip field system, and the speculative scramble as houses were deemed a better crop than vegetables.

Erratic

He clearly tabulates the complex facts behind how the building work was financed, the large number of owners, builders and speculators, the different forms of tenure and the erratic and often protracted progress they made. Dreams of a profitable Belgravia south of the river were scuppered as the railways stormed through, chopping up the land and spewing dirt and noise.

Politics and ethics were represented by the Artizans', Labourers' & General Dwellings Company (which built the Shaftesbury Estate in 5 years) and The Conservative Land Society,



LONDON going out of Town - or - The March of Bricks & Mortar, 1829

London going out of Town - or - The March of Bricks and Mortar, George Cruikshank, 1829

which aimed to increase the electorate by selling freehold plots, mostly south of Clapham Junction, when only freeholders could vote.

There are copious illustrations showing maps of various stages of the area's development, building designs, advertisements for land sales and portraits and caricatures of many of the key players.

Cruikshank's wonderful cartoon on the cover says it all. It was a 100 years' war as bricks marched relentlessly over the fields of Battersea. *Available from the Wandsworth Historical Society, £6.00 email ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk*

The Battersea Society

Chair Tony Tuck
tony@tonytuck.eu

Secretary Harvey Heath
secretary@batterseasociety.org.uk

Membership Sec Maureen Larkin
membership@batterseasociety.org.uk

Committee Chairs

Community Harvey Heath
community@batterseasociety.org.uk

Planning David Lewis and Liz Walton
planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Open Spaces
openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk

Events Wendy Deakins
events@batterseasociety.org.uk

General enquiries
information@batterseasociety.org.uk

Website
batterseasociety.org.uk

Registered charity no.1103560

Fund-raising event at the RCA

Councillor John Hallmark issues an invitation



The Rotary Club of Battersea Park is organising a fundraising event at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in Battersea. The event is on Friday 22 February 2013 (7pm – 9pm) in the new Dyson Building on Battersea Bridge Road and, as well as drinks and canapés, the RCA will have an exhibition on display for guests to view.

This is an excellent opportunity to view the building, thank the RCA for investing in Battersea and welcome RCA students and staff to SW11.

The Dyson Building makes up the largest part of the RCA's new campus. With an internal floor space of almost 5,000 m², it houses the printmaking and photography departments.

Money raised on 22 February will go towards the Christmas Day Lunch and Tea for elderly people that the Rotary Club of Battersea Park organises each year – this year is the 49th time the Club has said 'Happy Christmas' to elderly people in Battersea.

As well as having a superb lunch on 25 December, guests enjoy an afternoon's entertainment, a visit from the Mayor of Wandsworth and a 'goody bag' which they take home with them.

Fresh from a busy night, Father Christmas himself comes along to say 'hello'. Around 400 people attend the lunch each year and the fact that many people come back year after year speaks volumes for what an enjoyable day it is. All this is completely free – guests do not pay a penny.

Tickets for the RCA reception are £10 each and people can buy tickets by emailing me:

*jhallmark@wandsworth.gov.uk
or by calling 07798 684698*

Forthcoming events

Thursday 20 December

from 5.30 – 8pm
Informal festive gathering – a chance to meet old friends and perhaps make some new ones. Woodman Pub, Battersea High Street, SW11 3HX
If possible, let Mike Roden know you're coming. website@batterseasociety.org.uk

Thursday 8 January 2013

Twelfth Night supper and quiz. Galapagos Restaurant Battersea High Street. *Time and price to be confirmed.*

Thursday 22 January

11am: visit to Handel House Museum. £14 including recital&refreshments.

Wednesday 6 February

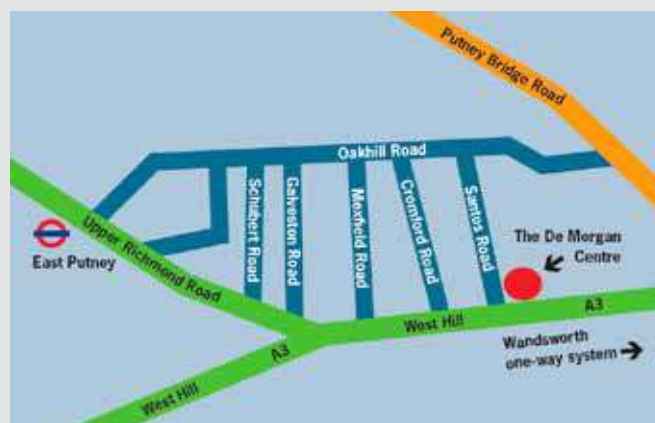
10.30am
Visit to the De Morgan Centre, Wandsworth.
£10 including talk and refreshments.
See map below:

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Growing success

Children triumph at RHS show

Year 6 pupils pose proudly with the fruits of their school garden. Christchurch was one of just three schools across the country picked to have a stall at the Royal Horticultural Society's Harvest Festival show.

The children love their garden, where this summer they grew peppers, tomatoes, strawberries, potatoes and giant pumpkins.

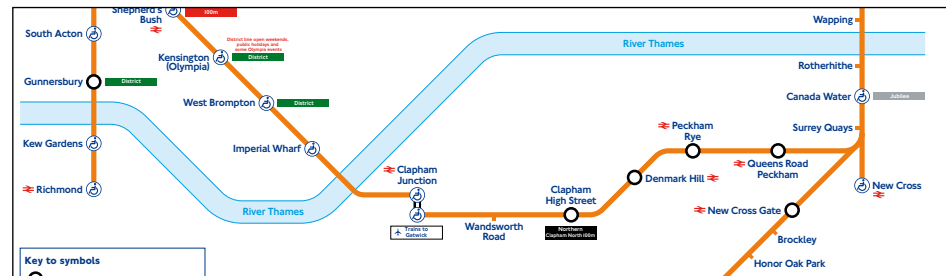
They pick, cook and eat the produce and are saving seeds to plant for next year's crops. They prefer their home-grown vegetables to the ones they get from the supermarket. They say, the garden is 'so fun,

there's always something to do.'

Headteacher Mrs Colette Morris says few of the children have gardens at home. The school garden was created two years ago with help from local volunteers and she is pleased with the children's enthusiasm and what they can learn from it.

Joined up at the Junction!

The London Overground orbit is finally complete, says former MP Martin Linton



Stop press: map of the latest leg of the Overground

The opening of the London Overground line from Clapham Junction to Surrey Quays is the culmination of a campaign in which Battersea played an important part. Starting in 1998, we pressed for a London Orbital route which would join all the parts of South and East London which had never benefited from the Underground, from Battersea to Hackney. Well over 100 meetings must have been held with London Underground, Network Rail, the Strategic Rail Authority, Department of Transport ministers, the East London Line Group, and later of course TfL before the line finally got the go-ahead in 2009. There were debates in the Commons; there were

petitions and street stalls; leaflets and posters; there was a London Orbital Map created by Suzanne Perkins. There were many setbacks, but in the end we prevailed, and the impetus always came from the East London Line Group in the East and Battersea in the West. Now, finally, we have it.

Campaign

The next campaign is to persuade TfL to add a station between Clapham Junction and Wandsworth Road – a distance of 1.8 miles compared with the usual distance of 0.6 miles between underground stations. I hope that doesn't take us another 14 years!



Generations of Londoners have bought their Airfix kits and model railway components here, but now Russ has closed. After 46 years running their shop on Battersea Rise, Mr and Mrs Russ have finally retired.