



From chaos to compassion in Clapham Junction

Jenny Sheridan charts the events which began on the night of 8-9 August

Clapham Junction was burnt, sacked and pillaged on the night of 8-9 August. Crowds rampaged through the shops and along the streets of St John's Road and St John's Hill. Lavender Hill was the worst affected. Almost every shop and restaurant between Debenhams and the Post Office was attacked, their plate glass windows and safety grilles smashed, any goods that had not been looted broken and strewn on the ground.

Devastation

The scene the next day was one of devastation. The Party Shop on Lavender Hill, the shops next to it and the flats above were burnt out (above). Residents had lost all their possessions and had been lucky to escape with their lives. On St John's Road 16 shops had been broken into and looted.

Local people were deeply shocked. This is not an area with a high crime rate. Groups gathered on street corners and in pubs to talk about it and to commiserate with those whose shops had been



destroyed. Battersea's underlying strength of community spirit emerged. The rioting was spread via Twitter, Facebook and Blackberry and looted goods were sold on Gumtree and Ebay. But it was similar social networking that brought together scores of people with brooms and rubber gloves to help the Council clean up the area once the police had finished (below).

When London Mayor Boris Johnson arrived he was heckled and told to get a broom and help. He was duly photographed holding one.

Police tactics

There was criticism of the lack of a strong police presence. The trouble started soon after 8pm but the street belonged to the looters until after midnight. MP Jane Ellison said in a speech in the House of Commons, "Some of the tactics need to be reviewed. Parts of my constituency were a free-for-all for hours Many people were appalled to see open criminality being tolerated on the streets."

By 25 August 98 suspects had been arrested in Wandsworth for offences including burglary, handling stolen goods and violent disorder. Across London there have been almost 2000 arrests.



continued on back page

From the Editor

So much has been written about the riots in Clapham Junction that if we still used ink it would all have run dry. So I will limit myself to personal experience. I live, alone, ten minutes walk from Clapham Junction. A week after the troubles, I had a drink with a friend (female).

No simple solution

We discussed the problems, acknowledging how complex they were and how the rioters and looters were hugely disparate and did not present one simple problem and no one solution. On my way home I met a neighbour (male) who had been away for two weeks. "It makes you feel quite violent, doesn't it?" he said, "with your home being at risk". I said no, not at all, that's absolutely not what I

feel. Violence is very rarely a solution and certainly not here.

Inspiring

This is another bumper issue of *Battersea Matters*. There is much to think about, even apart from the riots. On page 4 there is the continuing story of York Gardens Library, much of which is inspiring. But where is the justice in the poorest area of the borough having to stump up £70,000 a year while Northcote library, in a wealthy district, is supported by the council tax payer?

Cuts overview

On the page opposite, Robert Molteno suggests we demand from the Council a broad-brush overview of its proposed cuts and the rationale behind them and an opportunity to express our views.



The 'Big Society' is based on the value of volunteering, and for those with some time available it can be highly enjoyable and fulfilling. In this issue there are ideas for volunteering on page 11 (our planning committee), 3 and 4 (York Gardens and lollipop people) and 14 (Thrive).

There is a wealth of things to do in the next few months. A look at page 18 will whet your appetite.

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There is always some light relief from even the direst situation and I enjoyed some of the hyperbolic headlines relating to the recent mayhem. But my favourite was from the Telegraph which (following some minor disturbances in Gloucester) announced grimly "Mobs on rampage in Cotswolds."

Nervous twitch

Did members of the Chipping Norton set nervously twitch their curtains and look for signs of urban intruders? Much in the same way perhaps as those SW4 residents who woke up to hear John Humphries telling them that their High Street had been devastated the previous night, only to discover not a sign of damage. Even I was misled for a moment by "riots in Clapham", until I heard that the trouble had centred round Lavender Hill.

Of course we've been here before, ASDA took a bit of persuading to acknowledge (for the second time) that it was located in Clapham Junction, and there are still plenty of other SW11 stores who insist that they are somewhere other than Battersea. There is an ongoing discussion on the excellent

Streetlife website about this topic. And how good to find Debenhams knows its place and thanks the folk of Battersea for their support (see back page).

A clean sweep?

As a final note on this topic, it was gratifying to see the sweeping brush become a symbol of the clean-up campaign. Those of you with very long memories might recall my piece a year ago in which I called for a Big Brush Society "making brushes, brooms and dustpans available at colourful docking stations throughout Battersea". As the picture shows, we have a new supporter, so perhaps it will soon become a reality?



The Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden is in nostalgic mood

Nostalgia

On one of the few balmy summer nights this year we packed a picnic and with some friends took the Overground to Hampstead for an open air performance at Keats House dramatising the poetry, prose and letters of the Romantic poets. Sitting close to the tree under which the poet penned "Ode to a Nightingale" we nibbled on Shippams fishpaste sandwiches, which had as much recollective power for the four of us in bringing back childhood as the madeleine did for Proust.

Now, as Keats observed in another ode we're heading into that "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", the days shorten, and there is that smoky, autumnal quality to the air, which always presaged the end of the holidays, and the long trudge towards Christmas, with only Bonfire Night to relieve the monotony.

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be. Mind how you go.

Lollipop funding to cease – what's next?

Robert Molteno calls on the Council to open up its proposals on funding cuts

8.30 am on a Friday morning in July. The drizzle filtered down. Scores of children at Fircroft Primary School were standing on the street corner with Lucille, their 'Lollipop lady'. Each carried a homemade yellow-and-black-striped pole with a 'Stop the Cuts' disc at the top. A *Wandsworth Guardian* photographer teetered on a ladder getting pictures. What was going on?

The answer is money. Councillor Russell King, cabinet member for transport, explained the situation to Wandsworth Living Streets when we met him on 28 July. The Council is under severe financial pressure. It has to reduce spending by 30% over the coming 4 years, assuming little or no Council tax increases. £30 million savings must be found in 2012-13 alone. Since Freedom Passes which give free travel to all of us over 60, whether we are still in a job or retired, take up a large part of the transport department's budget, there are limited options as to where it can find its share of savings.

Final decision

So what is going to happen? The Council has written to all our schools telling them it can no longer pay the cost of its 37 designated School Crossing Patrols. Instead each school affected must pay the cost themselves (over £7,000 a year in the case of Fircroft), or organise parents and others as volunteer patrollers, or perhaps find business sponsorship. In any case, the Council's executive expects to make a final decision to end funding this October (saving a little over £200,000), the decision taking immediate effect the following month.

'Lollipops' have been a familiar part of our street life for over half a century. They have shepherded generations of children across busy roads. They are essential to the

safety of the 4 million kids who walk or cycle to school each day. They are the friendly faces each morning and afternoon who help increase security on our streets. Their imminent disappearance where schools cannot find a solution will mean a small, but significant, diminution in the quality of life of many people in the borough.

Locally provided

But our School Crossing Patrol services falling victim to financial cuts is only one example of a much bigger question. Ending some familiar locally provided public services, charging fees, farming out key activities to private sector providers are all likely to happen. And these changes are going to upset many of us residents in the next few years. The question for all of us is: what will this mean for the quality of life for different sections of our community? The Council's approach so far has been piecemeal. We have already seen its withdrawal of free swimming for children and pensioners; its proposal to close York Gardens Library situated in a particularly deprived estate; the 30% cut in library opening hours; and the intention to charge children £2.50 at the Battersea Park Adventure Playground. The difficulty with this bit by bit way of deciding how to close the funding gap is that none of us has a chance to look at the choices as a whole.

Democratic right

We are being given no opportunity to indicate to the Council what priorities it should have, and what balance should be struck between withdrawal of some services, charging for others, and raising the council tax. Yet this is our democratic right as residents and council tax payers. It is our money being spent, and the services which



enhance the quality of our lives that are under threat.

I suggest we demand of the Council that it present a broad-brush, four-year perspective on how it proposes to close the funding gap. The Council should then devise a way for us to express our preferences across these proposals.

Robert Molteno is secretary of Wandsworth Living Streets

Interested in Trees?



The Wandsworth Tree Warden Scheme is looking for new volunteers to join. The Wandsworth scheme has been running for approximately 20 years and is now looking for additional members who are interested in local tree matters including practical planting and maintenance projects.

Anyone interested should contact the scheme co-ordinator, Andrew Wills, as soon as possible on telephone 020 7223 6000 or email wandtreeward@aol.com

Further details about Tree Warden Schemes generally can be found at treecouncil.org.uk/tree-wardens

The Big Society in action?

Jenny Sheridan reports on the local groups staking their claim in York Gardens Library

Community action saved York Gardens Library from the closure proposed by the Council. (see *Battersea Matters* Spring 2011). As a condition for keeping it open, the Council devised a 'Big Society' solution, in which community stakeholders and the Council work in partnership to run and fund the centre.

The stakeholders group consists of representatives of groups that campaigned in support of the library, including the York Gardens Library Users Group, Women of Wandsworth (WOW), the Katherine Low Settlement and the Lavender Bridge Club, based at the centre. There are also representatives of the Council's library management and local councillors from both parties. Local educational establishments such as Thames Christian College and Thomas's Preparatory School are also involved.

Motivating volunteers

The library will be staffed by a full-time manager and two library assistants, supported by volunteers. The stakeholders group will be responsible for the recruitment, training and management of the volunteers. Crucially, there will be a part-time volunteer co-ordinator, funded in part by a contribution from the Council's Big Society Fund. "We will have to raise funds for the rest of the post," says Sonia Francis-Mills, chair of the stakeholders group. "It's essential in training and motivating volunteers and creating a team who can work creatively together.

"Altogether we have to find £70,000 a year to keep the library and community centre open. It's a very challenging target. We aim to do this by hiring out the spaces and through activities. WOW and Thomas's School have come up with lots of good ideas for projects that the

community is prepared to support. A slimming club is interested in hiring space and a couple of arts organizations may be too."

Community resource

The Council's original plan was to use the large hall for a resource centre for the educational department. The community is pleased that it will now continue to be available for hire for large social events such as weddings and meetings of the bridge club. There are also smaller spaces to hire.

Sandra Munoz from WOW made a moving video in March that helped to persuade Wandsworth Council not to close the library. She has been involved in children's projects that will help raise funds as well as provide healthy and fun activity.

"We ran a Taekwondo class, funded by Thomas's School, which was hugely successful," she says. "WOW mums are interested in volunteering and we have also made contact with the local job centre, as volunteering can be a good way into work."

Skills and experience

According to children's services library manager Hilary Manning, volunteering opportunities will include customer care, enquiry support,

organizing and running community activities and promoting the community spaces to generate income. The centre will be closed for the month of October for building works and refurbishment.

When it re-opens in November it will house a children's library of much the same size as previously, though with fewer professional staff. There will be a homework club and reading help and other activities for children. There will be eight computers and a small collection of books for adults.

"I am hopeful for the future," says Ms Francis-Mills. "Of course we would have preferred to keep the library open as it was, rather than having to put a huge amount of time in as volunteers. My anxiety is whether we can keep the service going at a high level, with good computer tutors for example. But we are impressed with the skills and experience of the volunteers we have interviewed so far."

Sarah Rackham of the Katherine Low Settlement comments, "We know it won't be easy, but there is a huge amount of enthusiasm and good will. Everyone wants it to succeed."

Any readers interested in volunteering or hiring space at York Gardens should contact Hilary Manning on 020 8871 8848



Is there a future for the Pump House?

Mike Roden reflects on the current exhibition in the Battersea Park gallery

The Pump House is integral to Battersea Park's history. Built in 1861 soon after the park's opening it housed a coal-fired steam engine and pump to circulate water in the lake and drive the cascades on the north bank. By end of the thirties it was no longer in use. The rest of the park enjoyed its post-war Festival of Britain success, but for two decades the reputedly "haunted" Pump House remained overgrown and neglected.

Broader programme

The heritage boom of the eighties and nineties saw its restoration and in 1999 it became a permanent gallery and by 2010 was presenting up to five exhibitions a year. In July of that year, as part of its cuts programme Wandsworth Council devised the curious plan of handing the building over to its arts and events teams so that it could be "opened up more to local people and have a broader programme of arts activities". Clearly this implied less money would somehow make it more responsive to local needs.

The current exhibition *A Future Pump House: Ideas, Thoughts and Plans* which runs until 25 September, (in the words of curator Nick Aikens) "proposes a need to continually question what role these spaces play... to address and interrogate the differing interests, histories and agendas of those involved". I think he means they'd



like to know what local people want.

Exhibits and installations

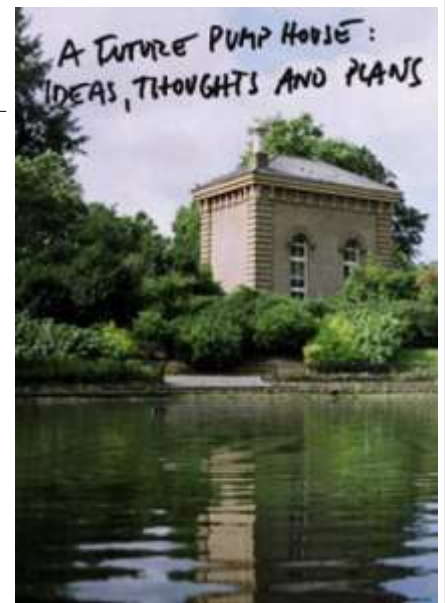
Containing an uneasy mixture of new work and written comments by artists who have previously exhibited at the gallery and from students from the Royal College of Art, with additional contributions from local residents, it offers a range of ideas about where the Pump House should go from here.

The physical exhibits and installations are - as always - difficult to describe. *Tea Party* by Julia Hayes (see picture) is explained thus: "using broken teapots and cracked cups she will interpret spillages with the help of tea-leaf reading symbols, embroidered on the tablecloth." She will use these findings to offer a prediction of the gallery's fate. Bik van der Pol's video shows Susie Shaw carrying out a 'clearing' on the building "ridding it of stagnant energies and lingering histories"., enabling the site to function effectively as a home for contemporary art. Perhaps these are visionary ideas, perhaps not. The choice is yours.

Imaginative or eccentric?

Simon Faithfull's *A Modest Proposal* sees the Pump House becoming an ICA (Institute for Canine Arts) serving the cultural needs of the park's most loyal users. I have a nagging feeling that, should these various plans be put to a public vote, this one stands an outside chance of being selected!

Most of the written comments displayed round the walls believe that the building should retain its exhibition function. Frank Steggall sees it as a showcase for innovative ideas from local schools and colleges where engineering and art come together. Marian Cowler



likes the idea of providing low cost workspace for young artists. Kirsty Chapman (an artist herself) envisages the Pump House hosting a local Society of Art with featured artwork constantly changing. The most imaginative (though probably impractical) notion amongst the comments on display was an anonymous plan to build "three miniature squash courts".

Performance space

My own personal view is that the Pump House should become more integrated with the life of the park which surrounds it. The new exhibition space on the ground floor could house a permanent display about the park's history, with the upper floors showing a regularly changing variety of work from local artists and photographers. There is no reason why the paved area in front of the gallery should not also be used as a performance space for musicians and dancers.

That's just one idea to add to a long list. The Pump House would be delighted to hear yours...

The exhibition is open until 25 September (Wed, Thu, Sat 11am-5pm; Fri, Sun 11am-4pm).

Julia Hayes (see above) will be holding a Tea party on Saturday 10 & 17 September, and Friday 23 September from 4-4.30pm.

Not for me, not for you, but for us

Tim Burley tells the story of Battersea Arts Centre's past, present and future

The Old Town Hall was built in 1893 to house the Vestry and Council of Battersea. It was designed by Edward William Mountford, architect of the Old Bailey. The stunning bee mosaic on the ground floor, the same species of bee that adorns the title head of this newsletter, is said to symbolise the democracy and industry of the hive, the double B's of Battersea Borough and possibly the early history of the area as lavender fields. Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) today maintains the original motto 'Non Mihi, Non Tibi, Sed Nobis' or 'Not for Me, Not for You, But for Us'.

BAC recently branded its work under three headings:

Cook Up: representing our role as a 'development house' where artists test out new ideas. We recently installed six bedrooms, a kitchen and bathroom in the building. This provides space, time and resources for visiting artists and enables us to offer a year-round programme where artists and actors present 'scratch' (work-in-progress) performances on Thursday to Saturday evenings. The living spaces also makes it viable for artists and companies from across the UK and overseas to develop and present work here without having to factor in the considerable costs of accommodation.

Tuck In: each year we aim to present three seasons of high-profile productions, running throughout the week for a yearly total of 18 weeks.

Take Out: recognising a growing role as an exporter of productions for tours in the UK and beyond.

The Good Neighbour will be our next major production, from February to March 2012, subject to

reaching our fund-raising targets. We are working with a network of established writers and theatre makers to create an interactive storytelling experience based on the true story of George Neighbour. A local community hero, he died in 1909 whilst helping others escape a fire in Arding & Hobbs and is commemorated by a plaque at BAC.

The show will be a building-wide 'promenade' (where the audience walk around a series of spaces) aimed at children aged six to twelve and their families. It incorporates a series of 10-minute experiences that have been developed in local schools by professional artists commissioned by BAC. We anticipate audience numbers of 6,000 – 8,000. After the recent riots the show has a profound message, encouraging children to explore what it means to belong to a local community and our moral responsibility to our neighbours.



Walk-in workshops

BAC's *Homegrown* programme for young people (aged 12 -25) was recently developed to include inexpensive walk-in workshops rather than just offering term based projects as we have in the past. This has resulted in a more ethnically and socially diverse pool of young people taking part. Thursday nights at BAC can be very lively now with up to 100 young people engaged in a variety of creative activities. A participant of our Beatboxing Academy, Nahum (pictured), recently

appeared on ITV's *Born to Shine* programme training Joe Swash (from Eastenders) in the art of beatboxing (vocal percussion). And our young people presented a show *BRAVE* during the second week of August in the Council Chamber which was an energetic and timely production exploring what it means to be brave for a young person today. The production was a huge success and we hope it will return for another short run in September.

Since securing a 125 year lease in 2008 we have invested £1.75million in the building, refurbishing the Grand Hall, removing partitioning to re-create the original footprint of the first floor and refurbishing those spaces, and beginning the restoration of the Council Chamber.

Refurbish and restore

Over the next four to five years we want to complete a full refurbishment and restoration of the building, ensuring it's in a fit state for the next generation of artists, audiences and visitors. The plans include repairing leaking roofs across the building, installing new technical infrastructure and more sustainable energy systems, better public spaces with the original light well restored, a resource centre housing an archive and research facilities, residential facilities for 12 artists and a 'greening' project on Town Hall Road.

The Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England have pledged £2.5m each to the next

stage of works, as long as BAC can raise a further £1m. This means that for every £1 donated BAC will receive £5 of HLF/ACE funding. Our deadline for securing these funds is May 2012. Anyone who can help should contact me on 0207 326 8235. We are always delighted to show interested parties around the building and to explain our plans for the future.

Tim Burley is head of development at BAC

House for sale; royal underwear a bonus

Jenny Sheridan reports on Battersea's oldest house

Old Battersea House is up for sale. If any member has £12million or so to spare, they should pop along to Savills and make an offer.

This lovely house has a fascinating history. It was probably built in the late 17th century for Sir Walter St John, lord of the manor of Battersea and founder of the educational charity that still bears his name. Surrounded by lavender fields and lapped by the Thames, it must have made an idyllic country manor house.

Demolition

In the nineteenth century the house was occupied by the principal of St John's Training



College for Schoolmasters, which in the 1920s amalgamated with St Mark's College and moved to Chelsea. Old Battersea House was then threatened with demolition by Battersea Borough Council for the development of the Somerset Estate. It was only saved by a local outcry led by Colonel Charles Stirling and his wife, who leased the house. Mrs Stirling lived there until her death aged 99 in 1965. She brought with her paintings by her talented sister, Evelyn de Morgan and ceramics by her husband William de Morgan.

In 1954 the house was listed Grade11*. It was in a poor state of repair when the lease was bought in 1970 by Malcolm Forbes, the late publishing millionaire. His son Christopher said recently that "Battersea was not the most desirable neighbourhood when my father bought it." (Perhaps this is still the case: Savills is marketing it as "ideally situated just over the

river from Chelsea"). Forbes employed the distinguished architect Sir Frederick Gibberd to restore it to its former glory. The Forbes family lived in the house whenever they visited London and entertained royalty, politicians and film stars there.

Art collection

Although some of the Forbes family's collection of Victorian art was sold at auction in 2009 for over £25million, much remains, including works by Millais and Gainsborough. Prospective homebuyers will be pleased to hear that the collection is available for purchase, along with a pair of Queen Victoria's knickers. The house itself offers ten double bedrooms (six with river views) and some of the original baroque panelling.

Those wishing to enquire online about buying the house should be sure not to confuse it with Old Battersea House Wedding Chapel – 'the perfect place to say "I do" in historic downtown Stuart, Florida.'

See estate agents details at <http://tinyurl.com/43ecv3x>

Suzanne Perkins' Basement Blues

Woke up one mornin', saw a basement van

Wasn't too long, saw a basement man,
Knew my summer was over, long before it began.

I like to see, the evenin' sun go down
Oh, I like to see, that evenin' sun go down
Hound dogs, birds and children, they're the only sound.

Woke up many a mornin', heard a ten-ton truck
Metal scrapin' tarmac, yells of %@* and £\$%^!
Any thought of sleepin', I was outta luck.

I like to see, the evenin' sun go down
Oh, I like to see, that evenin' sun go down
Music, talk and laughter, they're the only sound.

Woke up many a mornin', to a compressor's roar
Deep, low and heavy, poundin' on my door
Any kinda thinkin', made my whole head sore.

I like to see, the evenin' sun go down
Oh, I like to see, that evenin' sun go down
Bitta conversation, it's the only sound.



Woke up many a mornin', truck two stories high
Cement pumpin' loudly, I was fit to die
Only consolation, that the end was nigh

I like to see, the evenin' sun go down
Oh, I like to see, that evenin' sun go down
Tinnitus in my earholes, it's the only sound

Folks, let me tell you the news,
I've got those low-down, deep-set, ear-splittin',
teeth-grindin', heart-thumpin' nerve-wrackin' Basement Blues.

You dig?

PS The Council's Noiseline is 020 8871 7869, and officers might, if you are lucky, negotiate you a half-hour break during the day, when you can eat without getting indigestion.

Winning the battle by inches?

Labour's new leader on Wandsworth Council talks to Jenny Sheridan.

"Nearly all the great battles through history have been won not by miles but by inches – the Saxons nearly won the Battle of Hastings! Important to remember in history - and a useful lesson in life." The speaker is keen historian Councillor Rex Osborn, the new Labour leader in Wandsworth Council. The borough has not only a new leader in Ravi Govindia (see *Battersea Matters* summer 2011), but a new opposition leader, following on from Cllr Tony Belton.



Modernisation

"I am keen to protect and celebrate our heritage," says Cllr Osborn, who is also chair of the Tooting Local History Group. "But it is also essential for the council to modernise and in particular to make better use of the internet and social media. Our website should be easier to navigate. Technology is not a substitute for face to face contact, and I recognise that not everyone has easy access to it, but if it can give us an extra edge we should use it.

"Labour's priorities are modernisation, compassion and providing an opposing view to the ruling party. Residents have a right to expect an opposition to offer an alternative view. But we have always tried to be a constructive opposition; we would never undermine good government in Wandsworth.

Council tax

"We see our role as taking the sharp edge off what the Conservatives do. In housing, for example, the council is too quick to send tenants a letter outlining the tough consequences of their actions. If we sent round a housing officer to find out the exact circumstances of the family we could probably come up with a better solution for both the tenant and the council."

Wandsworth prides itself on having the lowest council tax in the

country. What are the opposition's views? "It's what local people want, we live in a democracy so we have to respect that and live with that culture. If Labour were to win in the local elections in 2014 I would keep the low council tax. We could still achieve a lot. We do think salaries and bonuses at the top are too high and we always oppose rises.

"But if we wanted to do something and it would mean increasing council tax, we wouldn't do it. There's an important rider: we wouldn't be so obsessed with it and we would aim to be less penny-pinching especially in cases of hardship."

Community involvement

What does Cllr Osborn think of the Big Society? "There's always been a strong case for community involvement and Labour has a good record on this. Giving it a fancy new name just hides the fact that it cloaks a lot of cuts. The Big Society actually means that lots of things have had to get smaller. But it's vital to look on the positive side and work with what we've got."

Is the York Gardens Library a good example of the Big Society? Cllr Osborn is definite: "There should never have been a proposal to close that library – that one, of all the libraries in the borough. I see the

new arrangements as a victory for the campaign against closure. It's good to use people's energy and enthusiasm but I have one big worry. It could all be squandered because the Town Hall isn't giving it enough back-up in terms of professional support. And it's impossible to predict how it will be affected by the potential hiving off of all the libraries next year."

Fair distribution

There are, according to Cllr Osborn, three frontline areas that the council must look at: education, health and policing. "There are many different kinds of school – local authority, faith, academies and soon there will be one or more free schools. The jury's out on free schools but we are uneasy. We are concerned about the resources put into the Bolingbroke free school compared to other schools. What's important is that the local authority has a strategic overview and can distribute resources fairly between schools. We don't think the free school policy has been properly thought through but in principle I'm not saying they're always a bad thing.

"The need for more police was clearly shown in the riots last week. I have spoken to several police officers. Many were extremely brave, they are exhausted, they've been working long shifts. But we must recognise that Clapham Junction burnt because there were gaps in policing. There must be a moratorium on cuts in the police force.

Public enquiry

"It's essential to have a public enquiry into the reasons for the riots. Clearly there was criminal involvement. People waiting for looters in transit vans had a pretty good idea of what to do with stolen goods. We have to recognise that advertisements and fashion put huge pressure on young people. It doesn't justify it but it makes it less

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Interview with Cllr Rex Osborn
cont'd from previous page

surprising. It was only a small minority of young people but even a small number can do a lot of damage. I don't agree with Cameron that single parents and a broken society are to blame, that's not an adequate explanation."

What does the Labour group think of the proposed eviction of a family from a council flat after the 18-year-old son was charged with rioting? "It's wrong and it's not properly thought out either. The mother and her small daughter should not be evicted. In any case, if they are made homeless the council would have to find them bed and breakfast, which would be much more expensive. And at the moment we don't even know if the individual is guilty. Cllr Tony Belton is leading on

this and we feel very strongly about it. However in general, eviction is an important tool and can make life easier for neighbours. We would use it in other circumstances."

Mr Osborn, who has been a councillor for five years, lives in Graveney, Tooting, the ward he represents. He is also a qualified Blue Badge guide, specializing in the south London suburbs. "I might lead a subterranean London tour in the morning and a Harry Potter one in the afternoon. I love it, but I've scaled back a bit to spend more time on my council work."

Bring back the lavender

Cllr Osborn passionately wants people to come to Wandsworth, to spend their money in the local economy and to enjoy themselves. He thinks the council does not do enough promotion of the borough's

attractions, other than Battersea Park. "What about St Mary's Church in Putney, with its exhibition on the Civil War debates? And Tooting's art deco Gala Bingo Hall?"

"And an idea for Battersea: how about bringing back the lavender to Lavender Hill? It would need to be dramatic, with great swathes of purple outside shops, in window boxes, on street corners and in hanging baskets, smelling wonderful. It would bring people from all over London and beyond, and the local economy would benefit as tourists spent money in local shops and cafes (and bought hay fever sprays in chemists!). There could be rooftop apiaries and shops could sell Battersea honey. It would need a small amount of funding and a lot of encouragement."

Open House Weekend 17-18 September

Mike Roden picks a few morsels from this year's programme

Once again hundreds of buildings of all types and periods are opening up their doors to all, without charge. The list of properties open in Wandsworth is available on our website, but to whet your appetites I've chosen just a few local highlights (in Battersea or nearby).

A newcomer to our area this year is **Clapham House** (23 Mallinson Road SW11 1BW) You will need to book in advance with Open House (openhouse.org.uk) to join one of the architect-led tours on Saturday afternoon (only five people per tour). What you will see is a "sculptural transformation of a Victorian family home, interweaving house and garden".

Another transformed Victorian house is **Skinner-Trevino House** (67 Santos Road SW18 1NT). The original interior has been almost completely gutted, filled with light by a glass extension on the ground floor, and a glass box roof extension accessed by a glass staircase. It's open on Saturday and Sunday between 10am-5pm (closed 1-2



pm). You'll need to queue, but (unless you suffer from vertigo) if you're interested in modern domestic architecture it's worth the wait.

Just across Battersea Bridge, you have a rare chance to see beyond the elegant 17th century frontage of **Lindsey House** (100 Cheyne Walk SW10 0DQ). It's only open on Saturday between 2-4pm and the queues are usually very long. Not far away is the new **Chelsea Academy** (Lots Road SW10) which is open from 10.30-3.30 on Saturday. You'll need to join one of the hourly tours to see inside and visit the garden (maximum 12 per tour).

Most Open House properties are only open during the day, but we

have a local exception in the **Battersea Arts Centre** (Lavender Hill SW11 5TN) which is offering regular tours on Saturday 6pm-10pm. You can see artists exploring BAC's ongoing development of the Old Town Hall.

On Sunday if you venture over the river again, close to South Ken station you'll find the oasis of calm that is **The Ismaili Centre** (1-7 Cromwell Gardens SW7 2SL). Opened in 1985, the Centre is the first religious and cultural centre to be built for the Ismaili community in the West. From the serenity of the entrance fountain to the remarkable roof garden it draws upon Islamic traditions in architecture and design. There are regular tours on Sunday from 10am-4pm.

But that is just the tip of a very large iceberg. You can find details of all open properties on the Open House website (openhouse.org.uk).

For those planning to travel further afield, you should be warned that there are partial closures on the Circle, District, Hammersmith & City and Metropolitan lines, and there is no service on the Victoria Line.

How not to encourage cycling

Barclay's advertising banners are offensive, says Tony Tuck

In these austere times some may find it irksome that Barclays Bank has this year 1) paid its chief executive Bob Diamond a bonus of £6.5m; 2) ensured that the average pay for its 23,000 staff in Barclays Capital's was about £196,000; 3) in total paid bonuses to its staff of more than £2bn and 4) that its highest-paid executives below board level received £38.3m, plus £10.8m in long-term incentive awards, while the top earner received £10.9m, plus a long-term incentive award of £3.3m.

Given the culpability of the banking system for the 2008 global financial collapse and the continuing western European and American recession, some might think this largesse is excessive.

Grotesque

And what is singularly grotesque is the sudden besmirching of our environment with large blue banners affixed to lamp posts signalling, not only that this road is now a Barclays Cycle Highway, but also that it

has some silly number and announces that it goes from X to Y (check out Battersea Park Road, for example).

In addition to the garish blue cycle lane paint, (often apparently oblivious to the geography of the actual road) this latest piece of advertising for the unpleasant bank flaunts itself halfway between the pavement and the sky in never-ending vulgar blueness. It would be hard to imagine a more obvious piece of gratuitous advertising and self-promotion.

Ostentatious and irrelevant

A visit to almost any Nordic city will demonstrate how cyclists can be segregated on roads and given safe priority without ostentatious and irrelevant display. In London we have a prime example of how not to encourage cycling, and to do so with the utmost vulgarity and lack of safety. (Hire a heavy cycle in a high density traffic urban centre without a helmet? Plain irresponsible.)



Monstrous

After campaigning over the years against street clutter in Battersea and supporting responsible encouragement of safe cycling, we are deeply disappointed by this outbreak of offensiveness. If you agree, then do write or email Transport for London, the London Mayor, and Wandsworth Borough Council asking that these monstrous advertising banners be removed.

Comment from Susie Morrow of the Wandsworth Cycling Campaign

The advertising banners may be temporary, and the blue paint may disappear before too long; it is unlikely to be a high priority for maintenance.

In northern European countries where there are high levels of cycling, this is mainly due not to segregation but to a low speed limit (about 30 kph ie 18 mph).

Statistics

Tony's assertion about the irresponsibility of hiring a bicycle without a helmet is not borne out by the statistics. In Melbourne, helmet-wearing is compulsory and has killed their cycle hire scheme stone dead. Why would anyone carry a

Helmet law hurting shared bike scheme
 Clay Lucas
 November 29, 2010
 Comments (30)

MELBOURNE'S shared bicycles are languishing on city streets, six months after the scheme's launch.

VicRoads figures show an average of 183 trips a day are being made on the 450 blue bikes, which are costing taxpayers \$5.5 million over four years.

The bike scheme has been crippled by Melbourne's compulsory helmet laws. In Melbourne last month, in a bid to encourage use of the bikes, the state government started subsidising the sale

Melburnians have failed to embrace the bicycle scheme, which has been successful overseas. Photo: Alai Favalough

Story from the *Melbourne Age* website



cycle helmet around all day on the chance that they might decide to hire a bike? A recent paper in the *British Medical Journal* showed that the health benefits of a citybike hire scheme far outweigh the effects of injury.

Inexplicable

My main gripe about Battersea Park Road is that TfL has inexplicably erected a guard rail in the middle of the road. This makes crossing more difficult for pedestrians and encourages motorists to drive faster, making the road less safe for all its users.

Let *Battersea Matters* know what you think about the Barclays Bike scheme. Join the debate by emailing newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk

Planning Matters

Nine Elms or Battersea City? Monica Tross reports on buildings great and small

A colleague in the Chelsea Society recently referred to “the new Battersea city” – or Nine Elms as Wandsworth Council call it. Work continues in the area with new developments being designed and consultants briefed to come up with branding proposals for the VNEB (Vauxhall, Nine Elms and Battersea Opportunity Area - - not a name that trips off the tongue). We will let you know when we hear more.

Over the summer we have commented on the Marco Polo application (2011/2089 and 2090) objecting to the height (see artists’ impression right) ; and the Ballymore scheme (2011/1815) where we registered concern about vehicle and pedestrian access and the need for interconnections between the sites along Nine Elms. We have posted news of the latest exhibition of the American Embassy plans on our website (see also page 18). I hope some of you will visit this and let us know your views.

Royal Mail site

Several of the planning committee spent an interesting couple of hours at the offices of Allies & Morrison, master planners for the new development on the Royal Mail site. The architect took us through the scheme and you can see our comments on the Council’s planning application website, reference 2011/2462. There is a lot to like in the way the scheme is being approached, in particular the liaison between the architects, their colleagues on neighbouring sites, and the landscape architects (Camlins) working on plans for the linear park. This might lead to a strategic approach to interconnections – we certainly hope so. However assuming the master plan is approved, this is just the start of the process. Others will take on the actual de-

velopment of the site and all concerned (not least Wandsworth Council) will need to take great care to ensure that the design and build quality meets the standards set out



in this master plan. We are told there is likely to be a public exhibition of the plans and we will post news of this on our website.

Long way to go

One thing is clear; building at Nine Elms is going to continue way into the 2020’s. While all members of the planning committee hope to be around for a while yet, I certainly won’t want to be monitoring design development into 2021. I know we keep saying this, but do get in touch if you care about Battersea’s built environment and have some time to give to planning issues.

We are not only focussed on Nine Elms. We are sent the full list of planning applications and decisions each week and we check out those which seem of concern.

Tall and oppressive

We have objected to plans for an excessively tall block at Battersea Reach (formerly Gargoyle Wharf) as did the Wandsworth Society, but sadly to no avail. We are hoping for better things in relation to an application for a tall and oppressive development next door to Candlemakers (the former Price’s Candle Factory) at 100 York Road (2011/2950).

We don’t necessarily object to every application even if we don’t like the proposals. When a neighbour or neighbours have sent in excellent and well informed objections and made a compelling case (to us at any rate) against the application we may decide we have nothing useful to add. In the case of an application to demolish 46 Anhalt Road and replace it with a new building we are likely to object even though there are good letters on the application website (2011/2440).

We decided we were neutral in relation to plans to replace Longhedge in Battersea Park Road (2011/1330). The new building seems pleasant enough compared with the existing one and should provide better facilities for the residents.

Olympic restrictions

With the Olympic Road Network, it seems that Battersea will get off relatively lightly. The changes to routes, signal phasing and bus stops will only be in place from just before the tennis at Wimbledon (28 July 2012) and should be dismantled swiftly after this closes (5 or 6 August). In Battersea these changes will affect York Road, Battersea Park Road and Nine Elms although routes in Central London may affect us.

Fuller details, updates and feedback forms can be found at www.tfl.gov.uk/orn We will update you whenever we hear more. One piece of good news is that there will be an embargo on all but emergency highway works during the Olympics

Let us have your views on any planning or transport matter. Please contact us at planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Watchers on the walls

Richard Dening unveils the history and mystery behind the sculpted faces in north Battersea

You may have noticed the faces built into the walls of the Althorpe Grove Estate, the area between Battersea Church Road and West-bridge Road. Some of the faces are now covered by climbing plants, but they call out to be noticed and admired.

The site was developed in 1981 by the Greater London Council. However it was only when the obituaries of the architect, Sir Roger Walters, appeared last November that we could begin to understand the creative drive that inspired the appearance of the faces. He was a man who aimed at low-key architecture, subtle and human, which the occupants would really enjoy.

Winning entry

Walters' ability to combine a serious message with humour is shown by his winning entry for the *Sunday Times* competition in the 1970s, to compose the headline for its 10,000th edition in 2017. His prediction: "Government computer resigns". He wrote pamphlets on Keats, John Nash and the Prince Regent. His 'diary of ideas', surfacing only after his death, reveals his love of friendship and of life in all its aspects. He lived his belief in the need to be compassionate and non-judgmental.



Enigmatic presence

It is no surprise that, when faced with developing a site filled with interesting history, he should honour the soil that he was disturbing. Hence the enigmatic presence of the faces. Sadly, the passage of time does not allow us to know why some appear. Nelson? No idea. Sarah Bernhardt, Vanessa Redgrave, Lord Denning? Perhaps to reflect the theatrical past of occupants of previous buildings and the part played by the House of Lords and the law?

Demeter (above), the Greek Goddess of grain and bountiful harvests reminds us that excavation in the 1970s revealed the remains of a farm from the 12th and 13th centuries. Later, the northern part of the site formed part of the kitchen gardens of the Battersea Manor.

Brilliant orator

Pride of place is given to Henry St John, the first Viscount Bolingbroke. His stone portrait, surrounded by bricks saved from the floor of his stables, is built into the wall on No 1 Sunbury Lane, facing St Mary's Church. Born in 1678, he was appointed viscount in 1712, after a successful political career ending as Queen Anne's first minister. He died here of cancer in 1751. He was ambitious, ruthless and a brilliant orator and in his youth was seen as one of the greatest men of his age. He was both christened and buried in St Mary's Church.

Changes in the law

On his death, his nephew Frederick inherited the manor and the title. In 1757, he married the popular and theatrical Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of 3rd Duke of Marlborough. 'Bully', as he was known, ran up huge debts through his extravagant lifestyle, string of mistresses, gambling and breeding racehorses. To relieve his tight finances, he pushed changes in the law through the House of Lords that allowed inheritors to sell family properties. He then sold his inheritance to Lady Diana's cousin, John Spencer, Viscount Althorpe and Earl Spencer. The Spencer, St John and Bolingbroke names live on in many Battersea streets.

Rare acclaim from Pevsner

Mike Roden notes a Battersea Society connection with the Althorpe Grove estate

This site, along with much else in this part of north Battersea would have disappeared had the proposed inner London ring road been built in the 1970s.

Once development began, the Battersea Society played an important role in ensuring that the original street line was retained down Battersea Church Road and into Battersea Square, meeting

with unusual approval from Nikolaus Pevsner in 1983 in *The Buildings of England London 2: South* (Penguin books):

"Battersea Church Road starts with the Raven Inn, an original little structure of the mid 17th C with top heavy curved Dutch gables and quoins, then continues with a low, irregular curving terrace of

cottages....This has been incorporated in the GLC's Althorpe Grove redevelopment of 1976 - 1980.

"Round headed arches appear as a recurrent motif. What is important is that the scale and line of the old frontages are respected with a sensitivity seldom found in earlier housing developments."

This part of the Althorpe Grove estate is included in the Battersea Square conservation area

Great bus journeys of the world

Jenny Sheridan plans to explore all the bus routes that pass through Battersea. She starts with the 19.

An intrepid prospect: a diagonal voyage across London from the river up to the distant heights of Finsbury Park. At Battersea Bridge I board the 19 and find my favourite seat – top deck, front row, left hand side. It's low tide and the afternoon sun is shimmering on the grey-brown mud and wrinkled water. To my right Albert Bridge is still shrouded in plastic.

Chelsea

The Chelsea leg of the journey starts with a reminder of hard commercial times: the development in the Kings Road stands empty, many months after completion. But the glamorous and rich fill the tables outside the Bluebird Café (once an ambulance station). The bus passes several garden squares – Paultons, with its voluminous plane tree, narrow Carlyle, flower-filled Markham. Just past Glebe Place is a small terrace of early 18th century houses where Ellen Terry the actor and Carol Reed, director of *The Third Man*, lived.

The bus stops opposite Chelsea Old Town Hall. A bride emerges, in scarlet with a rather brave bouquet of orange flowers. A group of teenage girls in leggings and vest tops blow kisses to each other at the stop, shrieking "Ciao guys, love you." The Methodist Church shows a different face of Chelsea; it runs a drop-in centre and night shelter for homeless people.

Much of the relatively new building we pass has a welcome quirkiness, rather than the bland St George-isms we see on our side of the river. And at Sloane Square there are two superb modern interpretations of distinguished buildings at the Saatchi Gallery (formerly the TA barracks) and Peter Jones.

Round the corner the bus tiptoes into the even more rarefied air of Sloane Street. I love this part: it makes me laugh. From the top of

the bus you can see into the palaces of luxury shopping – Armani, Dior, Prada. They are invariably empty, peopled only by slim black-clad staff with nothing to do. Presumably they are forbidden from reading, or dancing the polka or playing ping pong with rubies, so they stand about, seeking forlornly for customers.



Hyde Park corner

The billionaires' ghetto at One Hyde Park lies ahead after the usual bottleneck at the top of Sloane Street. The Ukrainian oligarch who paid £136 million for a flat – sorry, "residence" – apparently pays only £1,375 in council tax.

Hyde Park Corner, and we enter tourist London. No horse guards trotting through Decimus Burton's arch today, but I nod to Battersea sculptor Charles Sargeant Jagger's sombre war memorial. I wonder if the tourists queuing outside the Hard Rock Café have noticed the Athenaeum Hotel's exuberant planted wall, now sporting pink fuchsias and yellow daisies among the green vertical jungle.

Green Park's on our right, Lord Palmerston's sadly deserted mansion on the left, then there's the Royal Academy with its splendid courtyard, St James's Church and the Ritz. More tourists on the steps



around Eros at Piccadilly Circus, then on, between Soho and Chinatown, into theatreland. The crowds thronging the pavements – tourists, workers, locals – look more diverse here.

Bloomsbury

Up Charing Cross Road there's an enormous Crossrail hole where once stood the Astoria. We enter another of central London's villages, Bloomsbury, stopping outside Hawksmoor's fine St George's Church (left) before glimpsing the British Museum and refreshing ourselves with the green of Bloomsbury Square. James Smith and Sons advertises not only its famous umbrellas but "life preservers, daggers and swordsticks", a reminder of the dangers of 19th century London.

A homeless young man sits with a bottle of wine in a doorway in faceless Theobald's Road. There's a quotation from Nietzsche on Conway Hall: "Is Man one of God's blunders or is God one of Man's?" There's more green at Gray's Inn, where lawyers' quills have scratched for 700 years. Now it's uphill into Clerkenwell. Rosebery Avenue is a viaduct, giving exciting side-views into streets below. The Old China Hand pub offers ping pong, Sadlers Wells offers *Fela!*

Islington

Islington was once a fashionable Georgian village, rather similar to Clapham. I can still see its elegant side-streets and squares, as well as Upper Street's chain stores, vintage clothes shops and trendy restaurants and the 1920s town hall, stiff with civic pride. So far, so familiar,

continued on next page

Great bus journeys of the world continued from previous page

but at Highbury Corner I enter unknown territory. In St Paul's Road there's scruffy paintwork, an organic restaurant, tomatoes in window boxes, then a 'lifestyle boutique' called Pixie Moon. We cross a railway bridge, the Overground from homely Clapham Junction.

Many cultures

The bus swings north-east and even further uphill. The far north feels different from down south. The roads are wider, the houses bigger, there's an airier, more spacious, top-of-the-world feel. We reach the top of the big dipper and start to trundle downhill. Ah, I know where I must be, though I can't see the

stadium.... There's the Arsenal Fish Bar, the Gunners Tavern and Arsenal barber, the Emirates Grill. An area of small independent shops and restaurants it reflects many cultures: Vietnamese, Arab, Turkish, Italian. There are several Middle Eastern cake shops, dripping with delicious calories. I'm glad I'm on the bus, far above temptation. I spot a tiny corner shop with a clay oven, specializing in naan bread.



Street names

It's a literate area too; there are at least two charity bookshops. And what interesting street names. I

wonder what the background is for Melody Lane, not to mention Vivian Comma Close. (I learn later via Google that Vivian Comma was a calypso singer and kite flyer, originally from Trinidad).

Past the well-known mosque, we reach at last the 19's terminus, Finsbury Park Station. It has been a fascinating afternoon, but it did take over an hour and a half, so perhaps I'll get the tube home.

One of the great bus journeys of the world? Well, maybe it's not up there with the Karakorum Highway or Saigon to Bangkok. But it starts from home, it has history, green spaces and the wonders of London and best of all, for those of us lucky enough to have a Freedom Pass, it's FREE.

Thrive is thriving

Susan Stuart, manager of the project in Battersea Park, describes its current work

Thrive uses gardening to change the lives of people with disabilities. In October 2010, HRH Princess Alexandra visited us to celebrate completion of the first phase of the Battersea Garden Project's redevelopment. She was joined by over 30 of Thrive's clients and volunteers to open the Herb Garden facilities, a renovated workshop and training room, a purpose-built glasshouse and redesigned gardens.

Second phase

Thrive has now raised £320,000 of the £510,000 needed for the second and major phase of the project, the creation of purpose-built facilities at the Main Garden. With those funds in place we're ready to start but delays in agreeing the leases to provide security of tenure mean that the building is unlikely to commence before late autumn.

In the meantime, we're still busy fund raising. Having raised the majority of funds so far from charitable trusts and legacies, we're hoping the local community will step forward! Please help by coming to

one of our fund raising events or you can find out how to donate by contacting us directly. Our wonderful plants – just as good as the garden centre but better value – are popular at local events. This year we took part in the Open Squares weekend, Summer in the Square and Newton Prep's summer fair. This autumn we're holding a Halloween Fest for children on 29 October and a Christmas coffee morning and fair on 24 November.

Rapid growth

Despite the disruption from the ongoing works, the project has grown rapidly. In 2010, 288 disabled people took part in our gardening programmes, that's up from 118 in 2009. Thrive gardeners are justifiably proud of what they achieve. Our work to renovate and restore Battersea Park's Old English Garden is really showing some results now and groups of Thrive gardeners are also taking part in the restoration of the gardens at Fulham Palace. Our work skills programme *Working it Out* has been

running for just over 18 months and many people are now well on their way to getting a job or securing a college place. Earlier this month over 50 clients came along to an event at Fulham Palace. They heard a talk from industry specialist Jonathan Pettit about the huge range of career opportunities, met with careers advisers, found out about courses and were able to network with employers.

Life-changing

Rob, pictured below, started gardening when he met Battersea horticultural therapist Woody at the Springfield Hospital. Since joining Working it Out, Rob has got a job in a garden centre and says "meeting Woody from Thrive has changed my life". Find out more about Rob on our website (thrive.org.uk)



The modest impresario

Antony Lewis-Crosby of the St Luke's Music Society talks to Jenny Sheridan

World-famous bass Willard White, Johnny Dankworth and Cleo Laine (below), Humphrey Lyttleton – these are just some of the musical stars who have appeared at St Luke's Church in Thurleigh Road, Balham. This is thanks to St Luke's Music Society and especially to Antony Lewis-Crosby (right), the musical impresario who entices them from Ronnie Scotts or the Royal Opera House to our corner of south-west London.

Antony, a modest man, emphasises that he is just one of a "marvellous committee. Everyone has immense skills and knows just what to do. We meet about four times a year and otherwise communicate by email. I take on the role of finding and booking the artists because that's been my job over the years.

Greenwich festival

"I've had an incredibly fortunate career. I started off as part of the team at the London Borough of Greenwich helping to run the festival there. Then I was planning manager at the Barbican for 15 years since before its opening up to the mid 90s. It developed from a white elephant into one of the world's major arts venues and it was very



The inimitable Cleo Laine

exciting to be part of building that up. I made close links to the London Symphony Orchestra during that time."

Antony and his wife have lived in and around Battersea for over 40 years (they now live in Balham). After a period in Liverpool in the 90s running the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra he returned to London, freelanced for a while then became managing director of the London Mozart Players. He retired in 2009.

The St Luke's Music Society's first concert was in 2003. The committee set out to create an annual series of eight concerts, including two by the local Festival Chorus, which often sell out. The series is based on classical music but always includes jazz and other arts such as poetry - Benjamin Zephaniah was a big hit with local families. "We realise that big names pull in a larger audience, but we also encourage young artists. We have a policy of letting the artists choose what they want to do; sometimes they want to try out a programme before taking it on tour."

Community scene

The SLMS has a mailing list of around 650, about half of whom are Battersea-based. There is also a Friends group (benefits include a splendid summer party) of 90.

All the concerts are held in St Luke's Church, a fine Victorian brick basilica with a gorgeous mosaic apse. "It's a lovely building and the centre of the local community – it's been part of our lives since 1974. I believe passionately in the community scene."

Music is Antony's great passion but he has many other interests. St Luke's, like St Mark's on Batter-



sea Rise and St Barnabas on Clapham Common Northside, was built under the auspices of John Erskine Clarke, founder of Bolingbroke Hospital. Antony is planning a lecture series on social issues named after this social entrepreneur. "What he was doing, really, was establishing a community in a housing estate – most of the housing in this area was new and raw when Clarke was vicar of St Mary's."

Horse racing

Another of Antony's interest is horse racing. He has raised £21,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Society at racecourses throughout the UK and Ireland which, eccentrically, he is visiting in alphabetical order. Exeter is next in England and he is up to the letter P in Ireland. As another aspect of his "portfolio retirement" he acts as an arts Council assessor, visiting funded concerts and festivals throughout the country.

The SLMS concert season for 2011/12 starts on 14 October with a recital by Lucy Crowe, a rising young soprano who has sung with English National Opera and Scottish Opera. Other highlights include jazz singer Stacey Kent and pianist John Lill. More details on the St Luke's website : slms.org.uk

To shred or not to shred...

Mike Roden visits a local recycling plant for local people

The opening of the Western Riverside Waste Authority's new recycling plant at Smugglers Way was not as widely heralded as perhaps it should have been. It is the first of its kind in England and in a very compact space, built over three tiers, can sort out three types of paper, three types of plastic, cans, tins, and glass.

Saving fuel

Most importantly, once the facility is operating at full capacity, recycling material from Wandsworth, Lambeth, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham will no longer have to be transported by around 15 articulated lorries daily down to Crayford in Kent*.

In June a few local residents took up an internet offer from Wandsworth Council to don hard hat, goggles and high-vis jackets and enjoy a conducted tour of the new plant. Your intrepid *Battersea Matters* reporter can be seen above (second from left.)

There is an initial hand sorting process, removing plastic sacks and



bags - which can get caught in machinery- and other non-recyclable items, such as cables, and clothing.

Contamination

The materials swiftly move down through the system of moving conveyor belts and platforms, falling away, as they are sorted electronically into cardboard, loose mixed paper, plastics, bottles and cans.

And finally the smallest pieces – mainly crushed glass - falls through the smallest holes. Unfortunately this is inextricably mixed with shredded paper, rendering the

crushed glass unsuitable for recycling as bottles or jars. This is usually sold on to be processed as grit for spreading on icy roads.

Short fibres

Shredded paper is also unsuitable for turning into new paper or card, as most paper mills cannot process the short fibres produced by the shredding action. So the advice is now to **put shredded paper into the normal rubbish**. The same advice is also given about bottle tops, which tend to fall through with the crushed glass.

However, on the plus side, the new technology employed in this facility means that means that plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays (no matter how flimsy), and food and drinks cartons (Tetrapaks), suitably rinsed if necessary can now go in orange sacks and orange-lidded recycling bins. Which must be some sort of progress.

*You can read Angela Roden's detailed account of a Battersea Society trip to the Crayford plant on page 13 of [Battersea Matters Autumn 2009](#)

Battersea Park, Australia

Former Battersea councillor finds a bit of London in New South Wales

Mike Todd, a Queenstown ward councillor until 2010 now lives in Canada Bay, a suburb of Sydney over ten thousand miles from Battersea. He was a little surprised to find a little bit of his former hometown on his doorstep.

Battersea Street

He writes: "After a visit to the local rowing club for a spot of lunch, I came across a street, called of all things Battersea Street." The picture shows what he discovered at the end of this road. This version of Battersea Park is a small public reserve on Hen and Chicken Bay, along the Parramatta River. The area where the park is situated was once named Battersea Point,

and since several place names along this river replicate names along the Thames (Henley, Chiswick, Putney, Mortlake) it seems likely that they have been named as reminders of south London.

Shorter walk

Battersea Park is predominantly a grassed area bounded by a stone seawall to the river and a terraced sandstone cliff with concrete stair on the other.

Mike comments: "Whilst my once usual walk around Battersea park will not now be as long. It will be, never the less, a great reminder of London and its fantastic parks - and of course my spiritual home of Queenstown".



Many thanks to the **SW11tch Back to Battersea** campaign for permission to use this story and picture.

Visit their website at lovebattersea.org.uk

Park Keeper or Parks Policemen: What's in a name?

We must keep our park police, says Society chair Tony Tuck

In 1985 Wandsworth Council established the Parks Police Service to manage the Open Spaces of Wandsworth. In Battersea, this is primarily Battersea Park, but it also includes all the other smaller parks and spaces across the borough. For a quarter of a century this service has been a quiet but resounding success. Quiet because those residents and visitors who do not use the parks and commons have probably never heard of the service. Resounding because those who do, hold the service and its individual officers in high regard for the work they do in keeping our open spaces safe and tranquil.



A Parks police dog-handler on duty

Twin attack

But this service is now under a real threat. Faced with swingeing manpower cuts in the Metropolitan Police, Boris Johnson has offered local councils a "Buy one, Get one free" offer, in which for the price of one police officer a second would be provided. The offer is for three years only with no guarantee that the pricing would continue beyond then. The council is using this singularly odd offer to decide whether or not to abolish the local Parks Police.

In the proposal put to the Council (Paper 11 - 583: June 2011), apart from a series of partial and spurious costings there is a detailed 35 item job description. Close analysis of the tasks presently carried out by the Parks Police reveals that these are primarily the tasks of stewards, managers, messengers, trainers, back office providers of information and services, by-law enforcers, inci-

dent responders, key holders, spokespeople for borough services, and advisers on areas of competence. In other words, most certainly not functions compatible with officers of the Metropolitan Police whose prime function is law enforcement.

Stewardship

In short, our local service is being tarred by its own name. We have a highly effective form of 'park keepers', who have small added local powers of by-law enforcement. Had we kept the name "Park Keeper Service" then the daft idea of the London Mayor would never have been given a second thought. It would be bizarre indeed to punish local people who use the parks and commons (and particularly our local park keepers/police themselves, who stand to lose their jobs) for a sleight of hand name change!

There is a world of difference between the stewardship of criminal

actions and intentions and the management of civil actions. It is to be hoped that our local elected councillors can see this and thus decide to reject the implausible suggestion of the London Mayor.

"Extremely concerned"

Certainly the officers of the Council can see and understand this, hence the admirable statement of fact in the job description in the Paper cited above. All the local amenity organisations can see this, while the organisation with probably the closest dealings with the service, the Friends of Battersea Park, is on record as being "extremely concerned" about the proposal. Our own Battersea Society concerns, and our letter to the Council, can be read in full on the news section of [our web site](#).

In essence initially we considered that the proposals were so impractical and undesirable that they would be disposed of summarily. We were alarmed in June to see that they are still being considered apparently seriously.

Vital local service

All councillors are urged to consider the value of the local Parks Police Service to the residents and users of our open spaces. We call on them to reject the siren voices of the London Mayor and the bean counters who care nothing for the human value of a key local service. All Society members are urged to use any contacts they have with local councillors to get across the message that we genuinely value our local Parks Police Service and do not want it abolished.

The Battersea Society

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Registered charity no.1103560

Restaurant review: l'Antipasto

Elaine Smith Dunlap revisits a Battersea favourite

Clearly there's much more to Antipasto & Pasta than the half-price nights on Sunday, Monday, Thursday and Saturday. The place is always packed with loyal Battersea locals turning up for the dependably consistent good food. With a bright new awning at the front sporting only the Antipasto part of the name, the restaurant, at 511 Battersea Park Road a block on from the Latchmere and Theatre 503, is actually entered from the side on Atherton Street. Two rooms: a bright, glass-roofed garden room fine for large parties, as well as the small and more intimate front, street-facing room with windows that open onto a welcome breeze in warm weather.

The bar and service area between them are manned by a combination of the four full time wait-staff and

several part-timers with five cooks below. Despite the bustle, the service may not always be fast, especially if it's busy, but it is always friendly.

House specialities

And, of course, the food is Italian. A chalked board in each of the rooms carries the day's specials and the regular menu offers a full range of eponymous starters: the grilled sardines, carpaccio and calimari are house specialties, as is the delicious Parmigiana Di Melanzane – aubergine in cheesy tomato sauce. Pastas are also an excellent specialty and encompass a wide variety. Chicken, meat, especially veal dishes, and fresh fish comprise the mains. On the most recent night I was there my calves' liver was tender and moist and my companion's special penne with

prosciutto, zucchini and tomato sauce was wonderfully flavourful. If it's not too busy, and it often is, ask the chef to make you his specially-whipped-up Zabaglione, an egg, sugar and Marsala wine delicacy that borders on divine! There were four of us and, with starters, desserts and two bottles of house red, the tab with tip was £21, each!



Get there early, otherwise you'll have to wait, or better still re-serve a table at **0207 223 9765**.

Public exhibition on plans for US embassy

Wednesday 14 September & Thursday 15 September 8.00am-8.00pm

A consultant team will be available at both drop in sessions to answer your questions

Unit 1-5 Ponton Road (off Nine Elms Road)

St Mary's Church Fete Saturday 17 September 11am onwards

Bric-a-brac, books, plants, tombola, food, children's entertainment etc. And a chance to look round the church

If you can help with the Battersea Society stall please contact Maureen Larkin 0207 228 4873

Dates for your Diary

The Bridges of London

Thursday 13 October 7 for 7-30pm St Mary's Church

Illustrated talk by Peter Matthew from the Museum of London (organised by the Battersea Society)

The Pre-Raphaelites

Thursday 29 September 7 for 7-30pm St Mary's Church

Illustrated talk by Alison Smith, Tate Britain Curator (organised by the Battersea Society)

Urban Ancient Trees Friends of Battersea Park Lunchtime Lecture

Monday 19 September 12.30-1.30pm

Talk by John Fleetwood of the Woodland Trust.

Tickets £5. More details on the Friends of Battersea Park [website](http://batterseapark.org/events) (batterseapark.org/events)

Prince Albert corner of Parkgate Road/Albert Bridge Road SW11

The History of Chocolate Friday, 25 November 2011 6.00 to 8.00 pm The Studio, 88a Thurleigh Road

Talk by Sara Jayne Staynes OBE, director of the Academy of Culinary Arts and food writer. Includes a chocolate tasting and a glass of wine as well as sample chocolates to take away. (Organised by The Thurleigh Road GP practice, with the Battersea Society)

Tickets £10 (includes raffle)

Please contact Maureen Larkin if you plan to attend (020 7228 4873) membership@batterseasociety.org.uk

Wandsworth Open Studios 8-9 October and 15-16 October Twenty local venues

Full information will be published on our website when it is available

Supported by the Battersea Society

Clapham Junction—the aftermath

The damage and the clean-up operation in pictures



The devastated Party Shop and flats



Waiting to get started



Jane Ellison MP lets the crowds know that the clean-up can begin



Store staff sort through the wreckage



The Battersea broom brigade in action



Boris Johnson goes walkabout in Clapham Junction

Pictures from Cllr Tony Belton, Lovebattersea.org.uk, Wandsworth Council, and [@Miss_Lucifer](https://twitter.com/Miss_Lucifer)

