

Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society SUMMER 2018



Suffragist Charlotte Despard celebrated

The centenary of some women being given the vote was celebrated in Battersea by a series of local events.



On 15 June a group of local women met to honour the memory of suffragist, pacifist and poverty campaigner Charlotte Despard, who died in 1939. Despard lived and worked in Nine Elms, near the site of the new US embassy.

The group held an event near the embassy. Philippa Egerton's Charlotte cake was displayed (above), poet Hilaire read a poem and there were speeches describing her achievements.



Charlotte Despard's head as a cake, made by local artist Philippa Egerton. Now on view at BAC, it will tour the borough at arts events and libraries.



On 23 June a celebratory EqualTeas Party was held at the Venue on the Doddington and Rollo Estates, hosted by Wandsworth Radio. The elders' dance class at Katherine Low Settlement performed and Sound Minds choir sang *Nana was a Suffragette*. Women dressed in suffragette

clothes gathered round life-sized figures of Charlotte Gaspard and Battersea's 1945 MP Caroline Ganley, made by Battersea Men in Sheds. MP Marsha de Cordova spoke about women's many achievements and the challenges they still face.



Battersea women carried a banner in the central London procession to celebrate women's suffrage (see page 13).



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

From the editor



What a summer we are having! As I write, it has cooled down but we have had over two weeks of 30

degree temperatures and sunshine. Londoners walk around in sundresses and shorts; tourists ask where the famous London fogs have gone and cats loll around like 1940s screen goddesses. The grass in Wandsworth and Clapham Commons and Battersea Park is parched and brown, decorated at weekends with the bodies of sunbathers and picnickers.

The pots and tubs in my garden demand nightly watering; tending an allotment must be exhausting.

A rather fanciful article in *The Guardian* riffs on the possibility of using London's hidden rivers as an energy source – could the Tyburn heat Buckingham Palace? Perhaps the Falcon brook could supply energy to Wandsworth Town Hall which, Robert Molteno suggests on page 6, could do with a boost.

By the time you read this, we will know whether football really is coming home. The World Cup has been thrilling even for a non sports fan such as me. And it has meant great business for pubs, which need support – the number of pubs across the country has fallen by a quarter over the last 15 years. Several pubs in Battersea have closed, including The Alchemist, infamously knocked down without planning permission in 2015 and now nearing completion following a council-ordered rebuild. The popular Flanagan's on

Battersea Park Road will soon go, to be replaced (of course) by 'luxury apartments'.

Pubs, like cafes, hairdressers and dog grooming parlours, cannot be duplicated online. It's largely due to the increase in online shopping that high streets are losing so many shops. Its environmental downside is the huge number of delivery vans and motor bikes adding to London's air pollution and traffic congestion.

On a more cheerful note, Wandsworth has recently enjoyed two excellent festivals – arts and heritage. Not to mention the Falcon Road Festival (a lovely community event) and the Northcote Road fete. And on our back page we celebrate the latest work from Battersea's own muralist, Brian Barnes MBE.

Jenny Sheridan
newsletter@batterseasociety.org.uk
020 7350 2749

Man on the Battersea Bus

A nostalgic edition in which Mike Roden talks about his salad days, other culinary matters, and his childhood romance.

A conversation with our friends in California turned (I forget why) to discussing our least favourite foods. Silence fell as I announced that one of the few things I just couldn't eat was sprouts which had been boiled too long. When I was young that was the way in many English households.

They asked in astonishment why anyone in their right mind would boil sprouts. Realisation dawned that they were thinking of beansprouts rather than the Brussels variety. Laughter all round. Glasses were refilled and we toasted the differences between our two great nations, swapping courgette for zucchini, aubergine for eggplant and coriander for cilantro. The recollection gets a bit hazy after we embarked into the great divide between our biscuits and theirs.

So where do you stand on Salad Cream? There was uproar on the internet when Heinz announced its proposal to rename this venerable product (first produced in 1914) as Sandwich Cream. It was claimed that few people now add this to salads, preferring to use it on sandwiches.

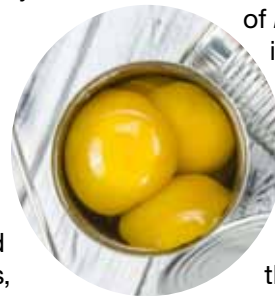
Salads aren't what they were, in any case. Restaurants complicate them these days with stuff like quinoa, black rice,

mung beans and pomegranate seeds – even bean sprouts, possibly – to pick a few at random. The leaves are always mixed. When I was young the only sure thing about salads (which were almost exclusively eaten for Sunday tea) was that the lettuce would be green and floppy, the hardboiled eggs, the cucumber and tomato thinly sliced.

Haslet

There'd be tinned salmon or ham – in our house usually luncheon meat, sometimes haslet (look it up). More exotically there was tinned potato salad. You can still buy this, I gather. No dressing as we know it today. Most people had never heard of mayonnaise for one thing, and olive oil was only sold in very small bottles from the chemist. So we used salad cream. This feast was invariably followed by tinned peaches and 'evap'. You can still find this on supermarket shelves despite most people having fridges, and cream being cheaply available.

Once you start giving into nostalgia



it's difficult to stop. Just after Christmas there was a tv adaptation of *Little Women*. I didn't watch it, being content with the memory of my discovery of finding this book and its companion, *Good Wives* in a cupboard at my grandmother's house when I was about ten or eleven. In the absence of anything else to read, I turned my attention to Louisa M Alcott's saga. I was hooked! And I fell in love with Jo, who seemed the ideal partner to accompany me through life. Trouble was she made the mistake of marrying a dull German professor. She should have waited for me. But I had to accept it was a love that could never be, I was still in short trousers, and not a fictional character.

No girl could ever measure up to my memory of Jo. But one day out of the blue she turned up. Since this was university there was a real danger a German professor might suddenly appear. So I followed the example of another fictional character and – Reader, I married her.

That's all for now. See you next time, and in the meantime, mind how you go.

The Royal College of Art expands

Elizabeth Bell explores the range of the college's projects

Students at the Royal College of Art have just concluded their annual graduate show, the 'shop window' of their two year postgraduate studies. A wide variety of work, from the traditional craft-based arts such as ceramics and glass, jewellery and metal through to painting, photography and print, was exhibited in Battersea.

This annual exhibition provides a fantastic opportunity to see inside the RCA, to explore the innovative thinking behind some of the world's most extraordinary talent and perhaps discover the next Tracey Emin, David Hockney, James Dyson or Sir Ridley Scott. If you missed this year's show, make a 'save-the-date' for June 2019.

Global

It's a time of growth and development for the RCA. With the continued decrease in government funding, and to continue to be competitive in a global market and retain its position as the number one university in the world for art and design, the College is having to make significant change. Part of that change is to expand the student numbers and to take the lead in the STEAM agenda, integrating the arts and creativity into science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

To do this, the College is expanding its Battersea campus with the new state-of-the-art Herzog & de Meuron (architects of Tate Modern) building which will sit alongside the RCA's existing Dyson, Woo and Sackler building, and Clore Innovation Centre.

The increased studio space will be home to the traditional handcrafts as well as fashion and robotics, and sculpture will return to Battersea. There will also be a specialist Research Building hosting an increased number of knowledge exchange research centres working in advanced manufacturing and intelligent mobility. Here, staff and students will work in partnership with some of the world's most famous organisations such as Burberry,



The RCA building on Battersea Bridge Road

Hyundai Kia and the NHS.

InnovationRCA, the business incubator programme which supports graduates creating pioneering start-up businesses, will also double in size. Over the last ten years, the start-up businesses have created 600 UK jobs and contributed £58 million to the economy. They range from innovators creating recyclable products to reduce electronic waste, to clothes that grow with children; from digital learning tools and teaching assistants to demi-fine jewellery.

Having received planning permission in January, the RCA currently has proposals in with Wandsworth Council to make some amends to the exterior of the Research Building on the upper floors. The project team has continued to look at how the façade responds to the internal functions of the building and has developed ideas to allow the internal space to be subdivided in different ways into the future to accommodate changing needs within innovation and research.

The new proposal is that the materials on the upper levels would change with the removal of bricks in favour of a varying pattern of glazing and solid areas of metal façade with aluminium fins, enabling flexibility internally and better light quality. Low levels of lighting in the building will ensure neighbours are not impacted by light spill at night.

The Research building remains

exactly the same height and mass as the approved scheme and key features of the scheme will still be provided, including public internal routes through the site, public space, café and art materials shop and additional cycle parking. Following a newsletter dedicated to outlining the proposed changes, the College invited local residents to a

drop-in session at the end of May to hear more about the changes. The response was largely positive, with most people understanding why the changes were being proposed and believing the revised design to be an improvement on the consented scheme. (See illustrations on page 5)

Engaging with the local community is important for the RCA and, as part of this commitment, Hannah Lambert has started as our first public engagement manager with a special focus on Battersea.

Thriving

Hannah has set up a monthly email to send news about events and engagement opportunities to local residents, and invited different groups to the Easter Fair and to tours of the graduate show. In partnership with other arts organisations, she has co-commissioned a borough-wide culture map to shine a light on the thriving arts and cultural community that exists and to encourage more people to explore their neighbourhoods.

Through Enable Culture & Leisure, the RCA is offering five bursaries to young artists and makers aged 16 – 25 to enable them to take part in Wandsworth Artists' Open House in October. The chosen recipients will receive a mentoring session with a staff member or student from the RCA, and help in finding a venue to show their work. Other projects include working with a group of young people from Carney's ▶

Community, a local charity (see page 14) on an artwork for part of the hoardings on Parkgate Road which will be installed in early September.

Rut Blees Luxemburg – our artist-in-residence for Battersea South – is working with students to produce

work documenting the progression on the building and those involved so that future generations of RCA alumni, staff, students and historians have a clear view of the College's future. There will be an opportunity to view some of this work at an exhibition in the Dyson Gallery as part of our

participation in the Open House London weekend in September.

For further information on the RCA please visit www.rca.ac.uk and to find out more about events in Battersea, sign up for our newsletter by emailing hannah.lambert@rca.ac.uk

Martial arts, gardening and helping neighbours

Active involvement in their estates led to these three citizens being recognised as Housing Community Champions

Earlier this year, three Battersea residents were honoured by the Mayor of Wandsworth with the title Housing Community Champions. This recognises people who are involved in community activities and who make a difference through volunteering. They receive funding and support for their projects throughout the year.

Andrew Beech lives on the Winstanley Estate, where he undertakes voluntary work; he offers martial arts training to local children and adults. He also has set up a sports programme



Andy Beech



Hilaire McLiesh



Janet Montgomery

for residents and encourages people to join exercise groups.

Hilaire McLiesh is a long-term resident of the Doddington estate. She helped set up a gardening group in the community roof garden and is now the chair of its committee. The garden is flourishing and Hilaire volunteers there most Saturdays. She helped set up a therapeutic gardening group and also promotes the garden at community events.

Janet Montgomery has lived in Battersea for over 20 years. She regularly helps disabled neighbours

with shopping and other tasks. She also does the gardening for Althorpe Mews and Dimson Lodge, where she is an active member of Battersea Men in Sheds.

BATTERSEA SOCIETY EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER
The Saving of Battersea Village
Talk by architect Nicholas Wood
6.30 for 7pm at St Mary's Church, Battersea Park Road.

SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER –
Summer in the Square Fête
Come and support the Battersea Society stall
11am to 4pm in Battersea Square and Battersea High Street

THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER
Industrial Battersea
Talk by Wandsworth Historical Society Chair, Dorian Gerhold. This talk is being held in memory of Battersea Society trustee David Lewis
6.30 for 7pm at The Village Hall

Battersea Power Station, Arches Lane

WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER
Visit to Dulwich College library and its historical archives
11am at Dulwich College, London SE21

THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER
The Life of Caroline Ganley
Talk by local historian Sue Demont
6.30 for 7pm at St Mary's Church

SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER
Unveiling of the Caroline Ganley Commemorative Plaque
11am at 5 Thirsk Road, London SW11 5SU

For all events enquiries please call 07467 947855

The Battersea Society

Chair Jenny Sheridan
chair@batterseasociety.org.uk

Secretary Sue Demont
secretary@batterseasociety.org.uk

Committee Chairs

Planning Liz Walton
planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Open Spaces Harvey Heath
openspaces@batterseasociety.org.uk

Heritage Sue Demont
heritage@batterseasociety.org.uk

Events Sara Milne
events@batterseasociety.org.uk

General enquiries
information@batterseasociety.org.uk

Website
batterseasociety.org.uk

Registered charity no.1103560

Planning Matters: A watchful eye on building proposals

Monica Tross describes how the planning committee spends its time

A popular prejudice seems to be that we spend our time scanning the list of applications looking for things to object to. Like all such prejudices there is an element of truth in it. I'd like to put forward an alternative view – which is that we check out major developments and applications in Battersea's twelve conservation areas to find the ones which are not in any way objectionable. Those where the proposals are sensitive to the location and to the neighbours and accompanied by a thoughtful Design and Access statement so we can easily see what is proposed. We like nothing better than to decide there is no need to object – which is, happily, in the majority of cases.

Quite often the change we want is easily achieved, such as a reduction in the number of front rooflights to protect the streetscene or wooden window frames to match the existing frames rather than upvc. More often than not these changes are made and the application is, rightly, then approved.

Assessment of planning applications is, to a great extent, the end product of the whole legal process of developing planning policy for Wandsworth. Over the years we have had input both formally and informally to the development of the planning policy documentation for Battersea as shown in the core strategy, the Development Management Policies Document (or DMPD to its friends) and various other documents and supplementary guidelines. We strongly support much of this approved policy and our aim in objecting to applications is to ensure approvals meet the policy guidelines.

We get away from our computers regularly to visit exhibitions of proposed developments and talk to architects and the developers about these. We attend meetings of the Wandsworth Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (WCAAC), the Wandsworth Planning Forum and other ad hoc meetings with the council and its officers, and with



Above: the original proposed RCA building, Parkgate Road view looking east
Below: The revised proposal



others. Recently these have included a working session on the Nine Elms cycle and footbridge proposals and updates from the team at Battersea Power Station.

Our least favourite task is responding to draft proposals such as those for amendments to the government's National Planning Policy Framework. Our response (posted on our website) starts by noting that the first chapter, like much of the document, 'is at times obscure and convoluted ... While some sections are more directive and clear, many are vague,[and] hedged with qualifications'. From what we read, our views are shared by many and we hope that the Government will withdraw this draft and let the current document stand.

WINSTANLEY ESTATE AND ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

These are two examples where we made significant comments on the applications but did not object, in fact we are supportive of the developments, both subsequently approved.

Plans for the first stage of the Winstanley regeneration, 2017/6864, have been approved and there have

been two recent exhibitions of plans for the whole of the area. Those shown this month seem little changed from those we commented on in February.

We commented in detail on the plans for the RCA buildings, 2017/6064 and for the construction management plan, 2018/1677 but support the development overall. Sadly we are not happy with the revised proposals for the RCA's Parkgate Road building, 2018/2641 and have objected to the change from brick to white panels (see left) Further details on the application's website within the Design and Access Addendum – part 2 in particular.

NEWS AND UPDATES

The Big Yellow site in York Road is to be developed. There was an exhibition of the proposals in June and our comments will be on our website in due course.

Three Illuminated River applications are in, Albert Bridge, 2018/2362, Chelsea Bridge, 2018/2453 and Grosvenor Bridge, 2018/2365.

Good news, two Inlink applications in Battersea Bridge Road were refused (2018/0456 and 0506). Bad news, the developers of plans for a floating house north of Falcon Wharf (2017/1374) are appealing against the refusal decision, as are the owners of the Stag in Westbridge Road, (2017/6397). We strongly opposed the Falcon Wharf development but while we commented on the proposals for the Stag we did not object. It seems that applicants in general are becoming more litigious. This is a concern if it makes the Council less willing to refuse for fear of the time and money that appeals cost them.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We always like to hear from our members so do let us have any comments, on this article, on exhibitions, or on planning in general.

Find us at:
planning@batterseasociety.org.uk

Council election: hope for a brighter borough?

Will younger councillors bring change, wonders Robert Molteno

Perhaps there's some sense in the old anarchist saying: 'Don't bother to vote; the government always gets in!' After the 3 May council elections the Conservatives in Wandsworth are again in power after 40 continuous years in office. But there are reasons to think Wandsworth Council may make some major changes.

Councillor Ravi Govindia is still leader, and he has kept most of his team of cabinet members in place. But the council is now much more evenly divided between Conservatives (33 seats out of 60) and Labour (26) plus Malcolm Grimston, an Independent, who was re-elected in West Hill with a uniquely large number (over 4,000) of residents supporting him. Four wards are now marginal electorally, including two in Battersea – St Mary's Park and Shaftesbury. So the Conservatives know that over the coming four years they will have to up their game.

Refreshing

The new Council also includes a refreshingly large number of new councillors – 12 Labour and 9 Conservatives. Most of them are younger people. Wandsworth is an exceptionally young borough overall. I suspect that many of these new councillors, regardless of party, are more likely to acknowledge that younger Londoners have different concerns including issues such as air quality, healthy living and renting. If the council listens to these concerns, policies could result that would make a real difference.

The Wandsworth Conservatives' manifesto contained an interesting idea of appointing 'champions'. They promised a Tenants' Champion, a Healthy Streets Champion, and a handful of others. Of course, there is a danger that such Champions will just be PR gimmicks and have little or no influence over Council policies. But to take the example of housing,

more and more local residents, even if quite well off, are having to rent. Wandsworth Conservatives need to take seriously the abuses private landlords can engage in. A Tenants Champion, with an ear for listening and the powers to act, could make a real improvement in the lives of families across the whole rental sector.

Councillors would also be wise to recognise that many people really expect the Council to reduce the burden that cars and vans place on residential streets, especially those vehicles just making short cuts. An approach called Low Traffic, Liveable Neighbourhoods achieves this and is likely to become popular. Much better air quality is another big priority, especially for families with young children. An influential Healthy Streets Champion could help transform the borough.

Feedback

Ravi Govindia has already made potentially significant changes. He has created a new executive portfolio and appointed a young councillor, John Locker, as cabinet member for communications. His role is described officially as: 'to take charge of the way the Council communicates with local residents, ensuring not only that the Council's aims and ambitions are transparent and open to scrutiny by local people, but to also ensure that their concerns and aspirations are heard and addressed by senior council officers and cabinet members and that feedback provided by local people is acted upon.'

We all know the frustrations of trying to get through to the Council on the phone. As Cllr Malcolm Grimston writes: 'the depersonalised switchboard is very user-unfriendly unless one happens to have a query which fits neatly into the menu which is offered. Many residents give up after finding it impossible to talk to a real person. It saves the council money, both in staffing and in reducing the

number of complaints that have to be dealt with, but sometimes people do need to get through.'

The council website is another example of poor communication. It is difficult to find out what are the council's policies on, let alone vision for, particular services it runs. Try Public Health or Transport as cases in point. And when a policy is adopted – like 20mph as the new default speed limit – the website gives us no relevant information about why it is being introduced or how things are supposed to improve as a result.

Petition

But the worst is thing how the council consults with residents. Council officers won't even investigate a problem and come up with proposals unless residents can get 50% of all households on a street or a whole area to back their petition. This is impossibly time-consuming, so most of the time genuine problems are simply buried in a sea of inaction. Equally seriously, the Council almost totally ignores the huge reservoir of local knowledge and subject expertise that exists in the Wandsworth community.

So officers produce, and put before the council, policies that have not been formulated with or even run past local organisations. These organisations (including the Battersea Society) could play a constructive and practical role in creating effective new policies and schemes.

Clearly, the new cabinet member for communications has a mountain to climb. The council needs to be able to convince residents that it is prepared to attend to problems promptly and to take their worries or suggestions seriously. Will it involve stakeholders such as the Battersea Society in developing solutions that work?

So many opportunities exist for the council to play a much more active part in improving life in the borough. On our side, we must not wait for things to just happen. Instead, we must engage actively with our ward councillors. We must insist on seeing the relevant cabinet member when a problem arises. We must expect officers to meet and discuss with us. And we must go beyond making complaints and instead try to offer workable solutions.



The bombs that destroyed a neighbourhood

Sue Demont describes the impact of the V2 rockets

We heard a massive explosion ... There was a lady called Mrs Rolt who had two sons, she was a neighbour, she said 'I'm going to see if Mrs. Simmons is alright' and she went in and saw that she was. And when she came out part of the roof fell on her and killed her. (Stan Maslin, born 1935)

Mrs. Rolt was one of 17 victims of the last Second World War air raid in Battersea to cause loss of life when a V2 rocket landed on Usk Road. And Stan Maslin is one of over 20 Battersea residents to have shared his memories with members of the War Comes Home team, who have recorded for posterity people's eyewitness accounts of life under the bombing. This article includes some short excerpts from the new booklet *The Bombing of Battersea*, of which more below.

Devastating

V2 rocket attacks on London began in September 1944. The V2 was more destructive than any previous weapon, illustrated by the fact that it took just four rockets to damage 2000 houses in Croydon. Effectively a missile, it travelled so fast that it could not be heard until it exploded, giving people no opportunity to get to a shelter. Fortunately, although the V2 was a devastating weapon it was also an imprecise one, and fewer than half those launched actually reached London. But two landed in Battersea, where they caused at least 22 deaths and the destruction of some major local landmarks, including two churches, the fire station in Simpson Street, and Auburn & Heaviside's sweet factory, together with most of the Usk Road neighbourhood.

Many of our interviewees had vivid memories of the V2's distinctive features. Maureen Larkin, who witnessed the full arsenal of aerial weaponry used over Battersea, observed ... *once they got to the stage of the rockets and that, that was even more frightening, because you didn't know ... there was just a huge explosion, there was no warning.*

The first of the two V2 attacks on Battersea came on the evening of 21



Christ Church after bombing

November 1944 at Simpson Street, opposite Christ Church Gardens. Five people died and the rocket created a huge crater, causing extensive damage to surrounding shops and homes. The Air Raid Warden's report includes a contemporary newspaper story about the incident.

By the light of hand torches a rescue worker climbed to the first floor of a house, the front of which was destroyed by a bomb which fell in the yard of a church ... to rescue an old woman trapped in a back room. Smashing his way through wreckage and woodwork, he reached the woman and carried her on his shoulders across the dangerous debris and down a ladder, guided by shouts from the ground. The bomb destroyed half the vicarage... The vicar's mother in another part of the house was killed.

Poignantly, amongst the casualties was a six month old baby, whose body had to be kept in an office overnight as the local mortuary was found to be unattended.

Two months later, on 27 January 1945, a second V2 landed between Usk Road and John Street (now Petergate). Stan Maslin never forgot that day.

We were living in Ballantyne Street and my friend's mother took us to the cinema in the afternoon. We heard a massive explosion and somebody came in the side door of the cinema and said it's happened in John Street ... And I was terrified because I knew my grandmother lived there... The outcome was, she'd been lame for

years and they moved her that day, because it was draughty or something, and if she'd stayed where she was she would have been buried.

Seventeen residents of Usk Road and John Street lost their lives that day. This run-down area was severely damaged and the bombing ensured that it became a prime location for post-war clearance and rebuilding. Today there is no trace of the factory, St John's church or the 19th century housing which once characterised this neighbourhood. Even the name John Street has

disappeared – an example of how one V2 rocket could literally destroy the fabric of a community.

Memorial

Thankfully this was the last weapon to cause loss of life in Battersea, but the consequences of death and destruction were all too evident in the years to come. At Christ Church Gardens the remains of the bombed-out church were demolished and 15 years later, the smaller present-day church was built on the site. The people who perished however could never be replaced, and with this in mind, Battersea Borough Council in 1952 took the unusual step of creating the Citizens of Battersea War Memorial to honour the 500 local civilians who died in the bombing.

This memorial still stands and has recently been restored by Wandsworth Council. It is now Grade II listed in recognition of its architectural qualities, its historic interest and its unique location on a rare V2 bomb site. In November 2017, bringing the story right up to date, the children of Christ Church Primary School planted hundreds of daffodil bulbs in the Gardens in memory of the borough's lost residents.

Plans are now in place for the establishment of a Friends of Christ Church Gardens to make sure this iconic open space is preserved and enhanced for the generations to come.

To find out more about the Friends, or to order a copy of The Bombing of Battersea (£5 including p&p), email warcomeshome@mailwise.co.uk

Great Bus Journeys of the World No 21

Mike Roden travels from Putney to Warren Street on the no 14 bus



The bus starts at the excellent Green Man pub which has stood on the edge of Putney Heath since around 1700. This area was notorious for the activity of highwaymen who preyed on those staggering home from the pub, and a rather improbable legend recalls that Dick Turpin stored his guns upstairs.

There was apparently a local saying “pistols for two and breakfast for one”, recalling the duels fought on the Heath. In May 1798, the then Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger fought a duel with William Tierney, the MP for Southwark. Each fired twice but all the shots missed. Sounds more exciting than a Commons debate!

Copperfield

The bus makes short work of the trip down the hill, arriving at the station which has been serving Putney since 1846. The railway began a housing boom in what had been a quiet riverside community and city gents and their families flocked there.

Parts of St Mary's Church near Putney Bridge date from the fifteenth century. The church was substantially rebuilt in 1836 with more extensive work finally completed in 1982 following a 1973 arson attack that gutted the building. In 1647 it hosted the Putney Debates on the English constitution, and much later Dickens set the ill-advised wedding between David Copperfield and Dora Spenlow here.

Until 1729 the ferry was the only way to cross the river. The nearest bridges then were at Kingston and London Bridge. It's said that in 1720 Sir Robert Walpole's plan to go to Fulham was frustrated by the



ferryman's refusal to budge from the pub on the far side and fetch him. Furious, he began the campaign which resulted in the bridge being built.

Apparently Putney Bridge is the only bridge in Britain to have an ancient church at both ends. Apart from the fifteenth century tower dominating the church of All Saints Fulham, most of the present building was rebuilt in 1880 – 1 by Sir Arthur Blomfield.

The 1976 horror movie *The Omen* starring Gregory Peck begins in nearby Bishop's Park, and ends with a bizarre accident where a priest is impaled by a lightning conductor on the church tower that is dislodged when it is hit by lightning.

The bus heads up Fulham High Street, passing a pub with the unlikely name of the Temperance. This grade II listed building was built in 1910 for a company called Temperance Billiard Halls Ltd. They had several such halls in London. Hard to think now of billiards being associated with non-alcoholic beverages.

The bus turns onto Fulham Road, dominated here by residential property ranging from Victorian villas to modern apartment blocks.

Fulham Library was built in 1908 by Yorkshire born architect Henry Hare who included an etching or carving of a hare in all his buildings. Couldn't spot it, I fear, as we whisked past on our way to Chelsea.

We pass the Fulham Broadway shopping complex which includes the underground station which until 1952 was called Walham Green.

And now we get a good view of Stamford Bridge the home of Chelsea FC since the club was founded in



1905. The ground opened in 1877 and for a quarter of a century was used for athletics rather than football.

A couple of minutes more and we stop outside Chelsea and Westminster Hospital which recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of its move to this site. Until 1989 the site was home to St Stephens Hospital.

At the junction with Beaufort Street is the Cineworld cinema which opened in December 1930 as the short-lived Forum theatre. Closing as a theatre it became an ABC cinema. Over the years it has increased the number of screens and gone through several changes of ownership

Medicine

The far end of Fulham Road is dominated by medicine. The Royal Brompton Hospital started life in the 1840 as the Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest and is still the UK's the largest specialist heart and lung medical centre. Its next-door neighbour is the Royal Marsden founded in 1851 by Dr William Marsden as the Free Cancer Hospital, which was the world's first hospital dedicated to the study and treatment of cancer.

This part of London was dubbed Albertopolis after Prince Albert encouraged the Royal Commission for the Great Exhibition in 1851 to use the exhibition proceeds to buy land to create a cultural and scientific area. Turning up Cromwell Place the Natural History Museum is ahead of us, and a right turn takes us past the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The site across the road from the museum was once owned by the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee. Plans to build the

Left to right: William Pitt the Younger; Bishop's Park, Fulham; the Royal Brompton Hospital; the Ismaili Centre, Kensington; Denmark Street



Note: All of the Great Bus Journeys have been cleverly extracted from *Battersea Matters* and can be downloaded from www.batterseabus.co.uk



long-awaited National Theatre there were dropped because the site was felt to be too small.

Instead we have the Ismaili Centre – a religious, cultural and social space specifically designed for the Ismaili Muslim community in Europe. This elegant building is often open to the public during Open House weekend and is worth a visit – especially the wonderful roof garden.

On Brompton Road we pass the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (aka Brompton Oratory) which dates from the mid-1870s. We move from God to Mammon as we pass Harrods, currently owned by the state of Qatar. The store's motto is *Omnia Omnibus Ubique* (all things for all people, everywhere). It should probably continue *Si Potes Praestare* (if you can afford it).

At the end of Park Lane we stop at Hyde Park Corner station. The nearby Wellington Arch is worth a visit. Go up to the top and gaze across at Apsley House, the home of the Iron Duke for many years. This once had the address No 1 London. These days you should write to 149 Piccadilly W1J 7NT, though it's rumoured that letters to the original address will still be delivered. Give it a try and let me know how you get on.

The bus safely negotiates the traffic hell that is Hyde Park Corner and we arrive at the Hard Rock Café. This international business which includes cafes, hotels, and casinos started here back in 1971, the brainchild of two young Americans. In 1979, the cafe began covering its walls with rock and roll memorabilia, a tradition which expanded to others in the chain. In 2007 Hard Rock was sold to the Seminole Indian Tribe of

Florida and the company HQ is now in Orlando. Strange but true!

Sometimes the traffic along Piccadilly makes it quicker to walk, but the bus moves fairly swiftly alongside Green Park – said to have originally been swampy burial ground for lepers from the nearby hospital at St James's – past the Athenaeum Hotel with its gorgeous planted green wall and the Japanese Embassy.

The Ritz, that emblem of luxury or decadence (depending on your point of view) opened in 1906. It became popular at the end of the first world war, and was the place to stay for politicians, socialites, writers and actors. Noël Coward was a notable fan.

Livelier

The Royal Academy is celebrating 250 years since its foundation and its anniversary summer exhibition has been curated by Grayson Perry. As you might expect it's a little livelier than usual. The Times called it 'an enthusiastically democratic spectacle that breathes a gust of new life into longstanding tradition'.

Nearing Piccadilly Circus now, we see St James Piccadilly. Designed by Christopher Wren this was consecrated in July 1684. The church was severely damaged in the Blitz. Luckily many of the precious interior fittings had been protected prior to the raid and survived, including the marble font where both William Blake and William Pitt the Elder (father of the duellist we met on Putney Heath) were baptised.

Piccadilly Circus was created in 1819. It was not until 1893 that the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain was erected in honour of Lord Shaftesbury.

Originally in the centre of the circus, in the 1980s it was moved to the southwestern corner. Commonly referred to as Eros the famous statue is in fact his brother Anteros, who apparently symbolises Shaftesbury's selfless love and concern for the poor.

We're now on the last leg of our journey heading up Shaftesbury Avenue. The road was built between 1877 and 1886 by the architect George Vulliamy and the engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette to provide a north-south traffic artery through the crowded districts of St. Giles and Soho.

This of course is the heart of theatreland, with the Lyric, Apollo, Gielgud and Queen's theatres clustered together on the west side of the road before we reach Charing Cross Road where we find the Palace Theatre, noted for its long-running shows. And true to form the award-winning *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is still showing.

J K Rowling is also responsible for a surge of interest in Denmark Street further along. Her Robert Galbraith novels star Cormoran Strike, the private eye with a prosthetic leg who lives and works in an office above one of the shops there. Fans of the books and now the recent TV serialisation regard it as a place of pilgrimage!

I realise that I've have been here on your behalf quite recently. I'm now retracing part of the journey I took on the 24 to Hampstead. (For a detailed account see *Battersea Matters* Summer 2017 which you'll find at the newsletters section on our website).

Thanks to years of building work, the road taking us past Tottenham Court Road station is not in great condition, and the bus bumps and lurches along. We cross the notoriously polluted Oxford Street, which Westminster Council has decreed will never be pedestrianised. (Never say never!)

A few more minutes and we arrive at Warren Street station – journey's end. I make my way down to the Victoria Line and am home in just over half an hour.

For anyone planning to try this trip I'd recommend starting here, finishing at the Green Man for a well-deserved drink. I assure you nobody's seen a highwayman for ages...

A film to treasure

Matthew Rosenberg and schoolchildren created a history of the Winstanley

The Winstanley and York Road estates are going to be re-developed, a vast regeneration project that will transform the area. Emma Anthony at Wandsworth Archives wanted to have local people's history recorded. She talked to us about it and in autumn 2017 we ran an oral history project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, exploring the history of the estates.

We worked with Year 6 children (aged 9 –10) at Falconbrook Primary School and also with Wandsworth Archives, youth and community groups, sheltered housing schemes and local people. The first stage of the project was to introduce the children to the history of the two estates, where many of them live. Emma Anthony came to the school and gave a workshop on Battersea's history, from the time of asparagus and lavender to the industrial period and World War Two's bomb damage and slum clearances that led to the construction of the new estates.

Archive

Local councillor and history enthusiast Tony Belton took the children on a walking tour of the area to bring this history to life, pointing out the old housing, points of interest such as the artwork of William Mitchell, commenting on the ideas of the architects of the estates, and telling stories as he went. The children then visited the Wandsworth Local Studies Centre to learn about what an archive is and also to develop their research skills.

The Winstanley Estate is adorned with some lovely 1960s artwork by artist William Mitchell. We met with him, now in his 90s, but unfortunately ill health prevented him visiting the school. Instead the artist and academic Dawn Pereira come in to lead workshops in making artwork inspired by his work and the children produced some lovely pieces.

The next stage of the project was for the children to learn about this history direct from the older generation. We invited local elders into the school to meet the children informally. This was a lively session with the children divided into small groups with two older people to allow for easier discussion.

Interviews

Next we taught the children oral history skills, discussing the importance, strengths and pitfalls of this type of history. After this session we spent two intensive days teaching them film-making skills, including interview techniques. The children then worked with us to generate interview questions after which they were ready to take control of the project, letting their own knowledge and curiosity lead the way.

Meanwhile we had contacted local people through community projects, the school and sheltered housing schemes and put up posters. Twenty two people came forward saying they would be happy to be interviewed by the children. They came in to the school over two days for interviews which lasted about 45 minutes each. The children, now working in teams of four, ran every aspect of these interviews, running the cameras and the audio, as well as doing all of the interviewing using the questions generated in their workshops.

The next step was to edit the interviews to make the film.

We did a rough edit which we took back to the school for discussion with the children. From their comments we did a second edit and the film was ready.

The final film is a wonderful new documentary about the area, starring local people. There are

Blitz

The final film is a wonderful new documentary about the area, starring local people. There are



Above: Winstanley estate during construction. Below: a young interviewer at work



stories of Battersea before the war, the industry and old housing, the terror of the blitz, and then the slum clearances when the new estates were built. Initially these housed old Battersea families but increasingly became home to people from across London and the world. There are also lovely memories of growing up in Battersea, from playing on the streets and old bombsites, to the adventure playground and the youth and community centres which formed such a large part of many people's childhoods. The interviewees did not avoid some of the more difficult history – the racism faced by some of the first non-white residents to move onto the estate in the 1970s and 80s as well as the upsetting recent knife crime. There was also discussion of the area's planned regeneration and what this will mean for people currently living there.

The film was premiered at Battersea Arts Centre on Wednesday 25 April 2018 to a packed audience. The children presented the film and project, the film was shown on the silver screen, followed by a Q&A. This was a lovely event, three generations of Battersea residents all together and there was a huge feeling of warmth and support in the old council chamber. There was also anger at the cuts in services and neglect which the children had discovered which mean that the youth and community services from which many in the audience had benefitted are just not available to residents today.

The film has since been shown on television, at various local

events and is generating lots of interesting discussion about the past, present and future of the area. The full interviews have been given to Wandsworth Local Studies.

Watch the film hear the interviews at www.winstanleystories.org.uk

You can see more of our projects and films at www.digital-works.co.uk

As an educational charity, our aim at digital:works is to help people develop skills to explore areas of history of interest to them. We work with museums, archives, schools, universi-

ties and community groups teaching research, oral history interviewing and film making skills.

Note from the editor: We hope that the Battersea Society will arrange a showing in 2019.

A mystery solved

Mike Roden tells the story of how a veteran architect was honoured by residents of the estate he helped design

In Autumn 2011 *Battersea Matters* included an article called 'Watchers on the Walls'. It was written by Richard Denning, at the time a resident of the Althorpe Grove Estate, between Battersea Church Road and Westbridge Road. It told the story of the concrete bas relief plaques on many of the walls.

Long term residents of the estate built by the GLC and opened in 1982 could identify many of the faces shown – ranging from Vanessa Redgrave to Sara Bernhardt, Catherine of Aragon to Lord Nelson, and Lord Denning. It was also known that some of them represented

people who had worked on the site.

Richard speculated that the GLC's chief architect was responsible for the installation of the faces and made educated guesses as to why

certain personalities had been included.

Riverside

Move forward to 2017 and a different candidate and a different story emerged. Architect Nicholas Wood, now aged 80, contacted Angela Roden, a director of the estate's freehold company. He provided newspaper cuttings and photographs showing beyond doubt that as a member of the GLC design team he was the brains behind the idea and had made the brightly painted plaques himself. Inspired by wall plaques he'd seen while walking to work through Chelsea, he drew on the historic associations of the

riverside neighbourhood.

Many of the plaques are reminders of local history, with Lord of the Manor Lord Bolingbroke looking across at St Mary's Church, and William Blake's 'Face of God' on another wall, recalling the poet's marriage at the church.

The low-rise estate around a central shared garden with two ponds and a fountain was a riposte to those who believed that high-density housing could only be achieved by building up into the sky. The flats and maisonettes were originally planned as family homes, but as the work neared completion, the GLC was already under threat of dissolution so the estate was handed over to Wandsworth Council who put it up for sale to private buyers.

Nicholas Wood, who had done so much to shape the estate, was the victim of severe cuts in the GLC's architects' department and lost his job close to the end of the project. He did not work again for two years, and with four children life was very difficult.

After he had contacted Angela Roden she arranged for him to come and meet some residents and look round some of the homes he had helped to design. Nicholas brought a wealth of interesting material with him, including drawings for the planned estate.

Contribution

Earlier this year the estate's freehold company took up an idea suggested by director Lulu Sinclair. Company chair Tim Morris explained: 'We felt Nicholas's contribution should be properly recognised, and there was an obvious way of doing so.'



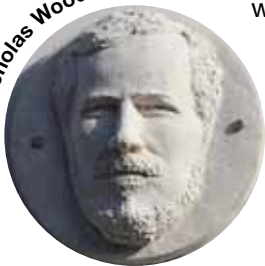
Tommy Boyd and Nicholas Wood in 1981

Sculptor Christine Fremantle, herself a resident, was tasked with creating a bas-relief plaque of Nicholas Wood. She got her inspiration from a 1980 newspaper picture. His face now looks down from a wall on Westbridge Road, right in the centre of the estate.

Nicholas's plaque was unveiled in June when the garden was opened as part of Open Squares and Gardens Weekend. One special visitor to the celebration party arranged for Nicholas and his family, was Tommy Boyd. His face also sits high on a wall on Sunbury Lane and is usually hidden by creeper. At the time Tommy Boyd was a presenter of the children's TV programme *Magpie*. He had been sent to film a piece about the plaques which had been featured in an *Evening Standard* article and Nicholas took the opportunity of immortalising him in concrete! The two met again for the first time in almost forty years.

There will be a Battersea Society event at Dimson Lodge on Wednesday 12 September. You will be able to learn more about Nicholas, the plaques and the building of the estate and how it fitted into the plans to improve this part of North Battersea after the area had been saved from destruction by the scrapping of the planned London inner ring road motorway.

Nicholas Wood's plaque



David Lewis 1940 – 2018

Harvey Heath pays tribute to an influential member of the Battersea Society

David Lewis died on 16 April 2018, aged 77. It was a great shock to us all. Barely a month before this, he had proposed the thanks to our departing chair Sara Milne at the Battersea Society AGM.

In losing David, the Society has lost a stalwart member, indefatigable in the pursuit of issues and on whom so many of our initiatives relied. Tony Tuck, our chair for over 15 years or more, sums it up thus:

‘His inputs were usually cerebral, he also carried his convictions into practice and donning his wellington boots would mastermind regular clean ups of the Thames Foreshore.

‘His influence was pervasive, for his diffident manner concealed a significant intelligence, backed up by experience and knowledge that was infectious to those around him. His measured verbal inputs at meetings were usually significant, while his wicked sense of humour helped him secure numerous arguments. He was a wise mentor whose influence will be sadly missed.’

Campaigning

David’s activities and contributions to the Battersea Society are just part of over 50 years as a community activist. Up to 1995 his voluntary activities were mostly engaged with education, being chair of governors of both Chesterton Primary School and Ernest Bevin Comprehensive School. These were very busy times with the 1988 Education Act and Wandsworth taking over education responsibilities from the ILEA. He then played a significant backroom role in the Albert Bridge group in the 1990s. This group then merged with the Battersea Society giving the latter a new lease of life. David retired as Secretary of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in 2002 and was then able to take more prominent positions in campaigning.

When I joined the Society in 2004, David was chair of a planning



group of the society and it is no exaggeration to say that he single-handedly kept the group together. During that time David thought that he and his family would move to Wales – a deep concern for us as we relied so much on him for planning matters. He was continually recruiting members to the group and over time he recruited Monica Tross and then Liz Walton who today are main supports of the planning committee. Just this year, David realised the committee was now functioning well and he transferred to our new heritage committee, where he became its chair. He was forever restless for new challenges.

Impressive

I have just printed off some of David’s papers written from 2008 to 2014 and their range is impressive: Battersea Park Conservation Area, (2006), Battersea Park Station (2009), Consultation on Northcote Ward (2007) and a significant paper on the future of Nine Elms (2008). In the latter he proposes that Nine Elms ‘must not, especially along the river front, be a forest of tall buildings.’ He calls for a ‘proper share of affordable housing and family housing’ and emphasises that developments should have ‘a sense of history’. If

only these ideas had been allowed to have a greater impact!

Master plan

I think it was in 2010 that David produced a similar paper on the proposed Clapham Junction Development when the council were considering a skyscraper tower for the station. He called for an overall master plan and vision for the station approach. The council’s proposals were withdrawn, I am glad to say.

David represented the society on many major planning groups. He was very active in the West

London River Group for many years; when I attended their last meeting in his place the praises of David’s contributions rang around the table. I told him of this and as usual he seemed completely surprised that he should be so regarded.

David played a major role also in the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies (where he was vice-president), the Battersea Power Station community forum and the Wandsworth Conservation Areas Advisory Committee.

Active interest

Truly, David took a lifelong and active interest in his surroundings. Active is the key word for he was always a participant. From his Welsh cottage in Llanbedr, David became first a member of the Snowdon Society and then its chairman.

We are not likely to see the likes of David again in this Society: such an extraordinary life. He is greatly missed.

Our thoughts are with his wife Christine and their family: Alun, Gwilym, Larissa, Huw, Susanne, Isabella and Caitlin.

The Battersea Society: its early days

Note by Christine and David Lewis

The Battersea Society was founded in 1965 following a reorganisation of London government which, among other things, saw the demise of Battersea Metropolitan Borough Council and the inclusion of Battersea in the London Borough of Wandsworth. A group of former mayors and councillors wanted to keep alive the identity of Battersea as a separate community with its own historic traditions.

The Society soon became involved in local issues including preservation of the former Battersea Town Hall (now the home of Battersea Arts Centre), which Wandsworth Council wanted to demolish in order to redevelop the site

In 1970 some residents in north Battersea (including Peter and Wendy Deakins, Brian and Cynthia Newman, and Christine Lewis) set up the Albert Bridge Group to oppose a scheme by the Greater London Council. This involved building a central pier to enable Albert Bridge to continue to carry traffic. Instead the Group proposed the bridge should be reserved for pedestrians.

In 1971 the Group forced a public inquiry into the scheme but it was nevertheless authorised (and the central pier was built). The campaign continued for a while, with support from people in Chelsea, during the period when the bridge

was closed temporarily to traffic because of construction work.

The Albert Bridge Group was absorbed into the Battersea Society, which thereby gained fresh impetus. The Society campaigned to ensure a lively future for Clapham Junction, the heart of modern Battersea, and produced a detailed report, *New Life for the Junction*.

Sympathetic

It was also instrumental in preventing the destruction of Battersea Square (a name which the Society revived) and ensuring that adjoining streets were redeveloped in a sympathetic way.

The Battersea Society was dormant for a while in the late 70s and 80s but was revived in the 1990s by some of the original officers, together with a number of enthusiastic new members.

Charlotte Despard for ever!

Rosie Hermon celebrates the suffrage centenary

On Sunday 10 June women and girls from across the UK took part in simultaneous processions in London, Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff to commemorate 100 years since women were first allowed to vote, and to create a national portrait of women in the 21st century.

The organisation Nine Elms on the South Bank took part in the national PROCESSIONS project, working with artist Ruth Ewan and a group of women to produce a banner commemorating local suffragist Charlotte Despard.

Invitation

Local women were invited to design a banner with Ruth Ewan, who has an ongoing interest in histories of activism and in drawing attention to lesser-known figures. The invitation was then extended to any woman who was interested in getting involved in the project.

The team of women researched Charlotte Despard's life and work and also the banner designs of Mary Lowndes who made many of the original suffragette banners. This research took place over a period



The Charlotte Despard banner displayed in front of the statue of Millicent Fawcett in Parliament Square

of six weekly workshops, in which they were also encouraged to think about other women who had inspired them. They worked with embroiderer and designer Laura Lees, who introduced them to freehand machine embroidery, and developed the design of the final banner.

The final design, which was

fabricated by Laura Lees and Maritza Schepp, drew much of its inspiration from the banners of Mary Lowndes, incorporating a rising sun, similar to that used in Lowndes' 'Radium' banner commemorating Marie Curie.

Positive force

The design was paired with Charlotte Despard's quote 'Believe in Discontent' – taking the idea of discontent as a positive force and reflecting Despard's ceaseless work to improve the conditions of those around her in Nine Elms. While living in the area she set up free healthcare services, worked as a Poor Law Guardian and provided a range of other social services to residents who were living and working in one of the most deprived areas of London in the 19th century.

We are very excited that following its premier at the London procession, the Nine Elms banner will now form part of Artichoke's touring exhibition of PROCESSIONS banners around the UK. We are delighted that this will continue to raise the profile of Charlotte Despard. It was an honour to work on this tribute to an incredible woman and important local figure.

Rosie Hermon is arts and events manager for Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership.

Thinking outside the boxing ring

Jenny Sheridan meets Carney Community's CEO

Halfway through my interview with George Turner, CEO of Carney's Community, there was a soft knock at the door. A young man apologised for disturbing us, politely told George that there was a bike downstairs and asked if he could borrow it. After George closed the door, he said, 'He used to be high 24/7, off his head on weed, and all over the place. We got him into boxing and he really excelled and he now runs sessions in the music studio. Now he is asking permission rather than just taking something. He's a great role model.'

Many of the young people (mostly young men) who come to Carney's Community's free boxing sessions have been excluded not just from school but from Wandsworth's other youth clubs. They may be in trouble with the police, have violent or addictive behaviours, be dealing drugs or involved with gangs. Boxing is one of the main tools George and the team at Carney's Community use to help these troubled young people turn their lives around. Why boxing, I ask? 'It's the ideal sport', says George. 'You develop transferable skills – controlling aggression, discipline, structure, consistency. We use all this to assess when a member is ready to work towards work.' And why do the members want to box? 'It's about getting fit, the idea of being tough and expressing their masculinity in a positive way that also gives them credibility with their mates. And for the young ladies, it's fitness and self-defence. For everyone, it's self-esteem.'

Hip-hop

Carney's Community has been based in Battersea for four years. It's in Petworth Street, near Battersea Park. Walking along the road on a sunny June morning, you notice first the loud hip-hop music coming out of the open garage doors. Peering into the gym, you see people exercising. Inside the reception area, there is a comfortable feeling of slightly knackered sofas and freshly painted breeze block walls covered with slogans, notice boards and award

certificates.

Initially the neighbours had severe doubts about the new enterprise. George countered this by literally opening the door so that locals could see the work that was going on. It took time, but now most are friendly and one local woman even solicits donations of food from shops such as Bayley & Sage and cooks it to take to 'Carney's café', which ensures that members eat healthily at least once a week. Another achievement has been diminishing some of the barriers between the members and the residents of streets like Prince of Wales Drive, who may have had very different life experiences.

A third of the boxing sessions are open to what George refers to as 'the mainstream'. One of the biggest customers of their social enterprise, Carney's Coaches, is an organisation for young professionals called Power of Boxing. This both brings in much-needed income and enables some mixing between the two groups.

George Turner has a strong background in youth work, having worked for charities and for Wandsworth Council. He found that although one-to-one work could be very successful, the short timescales of both the council and charity funders meant that real long-term change was rarely achieved. 'I moved into management and was concerned I was becoming what I hated – interested in quick-win results, stats and numbers rather than the people who most needed help.'

During this period George was voluntarily taking clients to a gym run by Mick Carney. Carney was a huge influence on both George and his colleague Mark Reigate, an ex-offender who was one of Mick Carney's boxing coaches. In 2011 two traumatic events resulted in George and Mark deciding to leave their jobs and start their own charity: the murder of one of their clients and the untimely death of Mick Carney.



Long-term, intensive, unconditional support with empathy is at the heart of the Carney system. This can only start when the individual actively wants to change. He has been coming to boxing sessions and has been exposed to positive role models – most of the boxing coaches have been through the system themselves. The 'teachable moment' may come when he has a baby, or if a friend is murdered, or when he faces a prison sentence. At this point a Carney keyworker can start work – work which may need to go on for years rather than months. 'They may have been doing this anti-social behaviour all their lives, perhaps following on from their parents. It's unrealistic to think a few months will turn them around. It's why we're called a community – we want to create a family to belong to. It replaces the gang that has given them the support and structure they couldn't get from their own family.'

Giving back

'A prime example is two young men I've worked with, one for five years, the other for 17. They had a massive crime history; there were a lot of relapses while we worked with them. But now they have set up a painting and decorating firm together. For every house they decorate, they will offer to paint the bedroom of a child living in poverty for free. That's their way of giving back what Carney gave them.'

George believes that many of the violent and destructive behaviours seen in young people arise from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). 'Domestic violence is a common denominator in almost all the young

offenders I've seen. Either as a victim or a witness, it has a massive impact. If you see your mum, who may be your biggest source of support, being savagely beaten, to a child that's as traumatic as a soldier seeing his friend blown up.'

Another major cause of behaviours such as carrying knives is, George believes, a result of the high exclusion policies of many primary and secondary schools. 'They get excluded, go to a Pupil Referral Unit, get a few hours of education a week and are mixing only with other kids who've been excluded, the rest of the time they're out on the streets. Schools should have internal exclusions, a way of working with them inside school.' At Carney's, violence is immediately broken up and is followed by an array of punishments, ranging from a four

session boxing ban ('exercise only, none of the fun stuff') to cleaning the toilets for a month.

Local fundraising

Sixty five per cent of Carney's members come from Battersea, many of the rest from other parts of Wandsworth. It is known that most crime is carried out by a small number of offenders. Empowering these people to change to a less anti-social lifestyle has an important effect on local communities. George recognises that the long-term work required to achieve this is time-consuming and expensive and therefore difficult to fund. Carney's Community receives grants from a number of foundations but much of its income comes from local fundraising events involving members. People love to be given responsibility,

whether that is asking shops for donations for raffle prizes, running in a sponsored race or training as a boxing coach.

What of the future? George doesn't want to expand, but would like to increase the intensity of what Carney's Community does. They have also formed a consortium with Katherine Low Settlement, Caius House, Providence House and St Peter's church to carry out joint work. There's a plan for an inter-generational day, as part of which some of Carney's young people would teach armchair boxing to residents of an old people's home, another way of breaking down barriers and giving responsibility to youngsters.

www.carneyscommunity.org

www.goodguysdecorating.com

Wandsworth Common welcomes its Friends

Co-chair Richard Fox describes the group's aims

Despite it being a grey, rainy Saturday evening, 12 May 2018 saw over 125 people packed into the Skylark Cafe to launch the Friends of Wandsworth Common.

They heard co-chairs Julia Bott and Richard Fox, residents of the Common for 30 years and members of the Wandsworth Common management advisory committee (MAC) since 2015, present their vision for the Friends and other ideas that had been discussed in the lead-up to the launch. Most green spaces in London now have a Friends group; those that do tend to be better protected from the pressures of over-use and under-funding.

Knowledge

Special guests included Emma Passmore, whose mother, Shirley Passmore (who sadly died a year ago), is remembered affectionately for her knowledge and dedication to the conservation and enhancement of the Common over many years. Other groups represented included the parks police, Enable, who manage the Common for the council, the



Battersea and Wandsworth Societies, the council, the swan sanctuary and Naturescope.

Julia and Richard were formally voted in, as was George Meakin (MAC chairman) as the Friends' treasurer. There is space for eight more committee members and Julia and Richard strongly encourage people to come forward to share in the running of the organisation at an exciting time for the Common. Enthusiastic individuals with a love of the Common and skills in admin, communication, IT, fund raising, project and event planning, are especially needed. Those, however, who might simply wish to help bag up swan and duck food, or be co-opted for a specific task, are also very welcome.

Activities that the Friends are considering include: regular litter picks, themed walks, greater use of the bowling green, social events and picnics in July and September. Projects under consideration include: nature and history interpretation boards and leaflets, an oral history of the Common, restoration of the drinking fountain and many others. These will be discussed with Enable in conjunction with the Management and Maintenance Plan currently being formulated.

To get involved, email us at: friends@wandsworthcommon.org and tell us how you would like to help. To join the Friends, go to www.wandsworthcommon.org



Pigs, sheep, calves and a tractor – not the usual inhabitants of Falcon Road. But in early June Shallowford Farm brought the countryside to the Junction. Over the years hundreds of children from Providence House youth club have enjoyed trips to the working Dartmoor farm. Now it was the turn of the local community to get up close and personal with geese and chickens as well as Gloucester Old Spot piglets.

Shallowford Farm is currently planning to extend its residential space to accommodate more London children.

www.providence-house.org
www.shallowfordfarm.co.uk



Rich pictorial heritage in Carey Gardens

Brian Barnes's newly-revealed mural is full of Battersea's history



Brian Barnes and Morgan Paton

Brian Barnes's latest mural was unveiled on 7 July. Started in August 2017, its progress was interrupted by the autumn's cold weather and by storms this spring. 'With thunder, lightning and rain I had to suspend being on metal scaffolding for a couple of days', says Brian.

Called *A Brief History of Time*, the mural contains many local references. It shows an hour glass, lavender fields, shells from the projectile factory, a

Sopwith Camel plane, the Pink Floyd pig, Keith Moon of The Who as a crossing warden getting Thessaly Road closed after four children died, along with a portrait of Professor Stephen Hawking. Also featured is Nicholas Wood, architect of Carey Gardens as well as Althorpe Grove (*page 11*).

Almost 13 metres high and seven metres wide, the brilliantly coloured mural is on the Carey Gardens estate. Access is on Stewarts Road, through an archway next to Griffin School.

The mural was funded by Wandsworth Council and commissioned by Carey Gardens Co-Operative Housing Association.

Brian was assisted by local people including schoolchildren and by the artists Morgan Paton and Alex Grasso.