

# Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society WINTER 2013



**Father Christmas is spoilt for choice this year at a party shop in Battersea.**

Photo: Suzanne Perkins

## Pollution: call for citizen scientists

Harvey Heath introduces the Battersea Society's air quality survey

**A**ir pollution is bad for our health and for the environment. An estimated 4,000 Londoners die prematurely each year from causes related to air pollution. It contributes to myriad health problems including asthma, heart disease and lung diseases including cancer. In Wandsworth, 113 deaths per year are attributable to diseases related to air quality.

How poor is our air quality in Battersea? If it is a real issue what can be done about it? Our colleagues in the Putney Society have mounted an impressive campaign on the appalling quality of air in Putney High Street, receiving good coverage in the local press and gaining the attention of Wandsworth Council. So how does the air quality here compare?

We in the Battersea Society are now trying to find out. Together with the London Sustainability Exchange we have measured air quality in Clapham Junction and Nine Elms Lane/ Battersea Park Road with diffusion tubes and the mysteriously named ghost wipes to find out about nitrogen dioxide and particles. At the time of going to press we await the results of our survey.

### **Best walking routes**

Depending on these, in January we plan to set up a working party together with other civic societies and health professionals to consider a plan of action. We aim to use the information gathered to influence planning decisions and the work of health professionals and to advise

on the best walking routes to avoid areas of high pollution. Once we have developed this strategy we will hold a public meeting to disseminate and debate the results.

One method of surveying levels of air pollution uses the prevalence and types of lichens on trees. From our early investigations into this area it seems pretty clear that in some parts of Battersea air quality is poor. We want to encourage as many Society members as possible to help us assess lichens to map air quality across the whole of Battersea.

Please contact me if you would like to help with the lichen survey or are interested in taking part in our deliberations.

*Harvey Heath 020 7585 3788*



**Don't forget to visit our website: [batterseasociety.org.uk](http://batterseasociety.org.uk) for regular updates on Battersea Society news, events and planning matters**

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## From the editor



Affordability is on all our minds at present. How much is that present, the gas bill, the rent? For some that

may be less of a problem. At the power station (see page 3 for recent developments) for a mere £30 million you can treat yourself to a penthouse. Nice for someone, probably in the far east, but how much social housing would that buy? According to the South London Press, only one in eight homes for sale in south London is affordable for people earning an average Londoner's salary.

And talking of affordability, my early and rather extravagant Christmas present to myself of the two Battersea volumes of the Survey of London is magnificent. They will be reviewed in the next issue of *Battersea Matters* by Professor Penelope Corfield. You'll need to order them before the end of January to get them at the discount price of £110 instead of the full £150. And of course before Christmas in time to present them to your beloved (meaning, perhaps, yourself).

On page 10 Susie Gray describes a future exhibition of the soon-to-be-demolished gasworks. Some of us may feel that the structures themselves would be preferable to a memento, however fine. In Kings

Cross the famous gasholders have been painstakingly recycled to form flats (yes, of course, luxury flats) and play and event spaces.

How do you live – or expect to live – in retirement? At the 'retirement community' being built on Albert Bridge Road, 'all the facilities you might expect' include a bar, chef-led restaurant (as opposed to waiter-led?), pool and spa. All the attractions of Kensington and Chelsea are just a short drive away, it helpfully adds.

I wish all our members a happy and fulfilling 2014.

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## Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden looks at life from the bus lane.

Still no word of when Gordon Ramsay's Battersea Square restaurant will open. Once an All Bar One, this was of course most recently known as Bennett's. In an ideal world the new place should be called Gordon Bennett – presumably the horrified shriek from customers at the prices on the menu. It's not certain which Mr B first inspired that exclamation – though one possible candidate distinguished himself at his own engagement party by drinking a few glasses too many and relieving himself in the fireplace. The very rich father of his fiancée was among the audience for this spectacle, and the nuptials never took place. I like to think this was an occasion on which the name was bellowed with some vigour. Disappointingly the new Battersea eaterie will be called London House.

The recent exhibition at Battersea Power station had a lot of interesting new pictures and plans, including the inspired (or crazy) idea of installing a lift in one of the chimneys to take people up to enjoy the view. The idea of putting a one-table restaurant up there seems to have been abandoned. It was fascinating to learn that the small works which provided

most of the original bricks for the building is still producing bricks from the same clay seam using traditional coal-fired kilns, and will supply any replacement bricks required. It's a very small thing in the face of such a large scale and often controversial development, but I found it cheering.

### Stirring stuff

I expect you've all been watching *Strictly Come Baking on Ice* and will be eagerly thinking about preparations for the approaching festivities. As I write we're just a week away from Stir-up Sunday – traditionally the day when the whole family goes to Sainsburys to buy the Christmas pudding. Sorry, I mean the day the Yuletide puddings and cakes were always made, in response to the prayer specified for the last Sunday before Advent which starts off 'Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord...' So, if you haven't started stirring yet, you'd better get on with it.

Staying on the festive food theme, I see that the 'Countdown to Christmas Dinner' has begun in earnest, with newspapers and websites filled with handy hints about how to make the Big Day run smoothly. Never mind stirring your pudding, you should



be ordering your turkey, or goose, or ostrich or whatever. And start thinking about those unusual side dishes – Nigel Slater is suggesting deep fried sprouts in a wasabi tempura batter, or sausage rolls 'with a difference', which intriguingly contain salmon and beetroot rather than sausage. The cover of one magazine I spotted showed a plate of 'Santa's Hats': very large strawberries topped with whipped cream. 'Gordon Bennett' I cried (or words to that effect). Strawberries in December? Mr Shakespeare got it right in *Love's Labours Lost*:

*'At Christmas I no more desire a rose*

*Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;*

*But like of each thing that in season grows.'*

In other words, this is not California. Perhaps one day we'll be picking strawberries in winter, but till then, stick with the sprouts I say. Seasonal greetings to you all. See you next year.

And please, mind how you go.

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## Planning Matters: Remaining vigilant

Monica Tross reports some successes in the Society's efforts to preserve our built heritage

### **BATTERSEA POWER STATION: THE NEXT PHASE**

The recent exhibition gave a very full account of the revised proposals and, most importantly, of plans for the restoration and additions to the Power Station itself. The lead architects for this are Purcell who had brought together an impressive compendium of large and small details of the fabric of the Power Station as part of their preparation for the project. One of the more contentious aspects is likely to be the 'viewing chamber' popping up from within one of the chimneys.

This is a 'pre-application' consultation with a formal planning application to follow. Do let us know what you think – if you weren't able to visit, the visuals from the exhibition are slightly hidden away on the Battersea Power Station website via the Community link. Or better still, visit [www.batterseasociety.org.uk/planninglist.php](http://www.batterseasociety.org.uk/planninglist.php) and follow the link through to the Power Station site. We use the planning section of the Society's website to post our comments on major planning applications and news of other public exhibitions for the Power Station and other local developments we think you might like to know about.

### **BATTERSEA PARK CONSERVATION AREA CONSULTATION**

As you saw from the last *Battersea Matters* there has been a consultation on this much improved Appraisal and Management Strategy. David Lewis and Liz Walton had provided input to this new draft at an earlier stage and we have responded further to the final draft. We are generally pleased with the new document but at the consultation meeting we and others stressed that, however good the policies for protecting our conservation areas may be, these count for nothing if the assessment of planning applications fails to respect them and if breaches are left unchallenged.

### **CLAPHAM JUNCTION TOWN CENTRE**

A very detailed report was published



**The Cotswold Mews chimney:  
heritage saved**

in September and further meetings are taking place to discuss the report and possible branding for the town centre. More on this in 2014. If you want to read the report, go to Wandsworth Town Centres on the Council's website and click on Clapham Junction.

### **ADVERTISING SIGNS**

We and others have objected strongly to proposals to put up large illuminated signs throughout the borough. I fear this is to be justified on the basis of income provided for the Council but at what cost to the environment? The applications don't give a clear view of the impact of the signs but given that they are to be 6m high x 3m wide and within an overall structure 8.4m x 3.4m x 30cm deep they are sure as anything going to stand out in the streetscape. Please tell your local councillor (and us) if you agree that these would be a disastrous blot on the townscape. You can see our comments on 2013/4032, 4034, 4036 and 4604.

### **HAPPIER NEWS**

The chimney in Cotswold Mews has been saved. The report refusing the application states that 'the proposed demolition would lead to the loss of a significant prominent landmark' and that its demolition would be contrary to Council policies. English Heritage also objected. The committee report on the application is worth reading and is at 2013/2910.

The owner of 53 and 55 Albert

Bridge Road has been granted permission for basement works but has withdrawn the application to make changes to the front of buildings within this interesting small terrace in the Battersea Park

Conservation Area.

The owners of the Prince of Wales pub have withdrawn their application for a development which was widely criticised. This is probably only a temporary pause and we will keep you in touch – as I am sure will others of you who worked so hard to gather objections to the proposals.

The police station building in Battersea Bridge Road is up for sale but we have no further news on this. If anyone hears anything, do let us know.

### **PLANNING UPDATES**

Just to prove we don't always object, we wrote in support of the continued trading of the Battersea Flower Station at 16 Winders Road (2013/5054). Sadly this is an exception and we have objected to the building proposed for 575c Battersea Park Road (2013/5064). We are likely to object to proposals for 4 – 8 Hafer Road (2013/4946) which appear to be an unneighbourly overdevelopment of the site.

As expected, plans for the development of the Princes Head site in Falcon Road were approved (2013/1825). The developers of St. Paul's Church in St John's Hill have put in an application with further details of the landscaping and other external features (2013/5118).

We were alerted to the importance of the Cotswold Mews Chimney by a member so don't forget to let us know when there is something which concerns you.

*We like to hear from you.*

*[planning@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@batterseasociety.org.uk)*

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## All change north of the Junction

Councillor Tony Belton outlines the complex issues around the Winstanley, York Road Estate regeneration

In early summer next year Wandsworth Council will be making decisions about the future of some of the biggest Council estates in Battersea. The area under consideration is north of the railway line and south of York Road and between Plough Road in the west and Falcon Road in the east. Within maybe 10 years the whole area could be transformed by the £60 million the Council is prepared to spend.

Why is this happening, you may ask? The answer is not unassociated with the riots in August 2011. Whatever the denials, the announcement that the Council was prepared to spend £100 million split between here and Roehampton, within weeks of the riots, was not just a coincidence. However, another major contributory factor was the Government's 'devolution' of council house funding to local authorities. In Wandsworth's case this is likely to turn into a massive boost to the Borough, precisely because of the high values attributed to property in inner south west London.

### Implications

Currently the Council is estimating that the borough's housing account will be in credit to the extent of £2billion (billion, not million!) within 30 years. With prospects like that and 20,000 or so properties in the Borough as collateral, raising money for capital works should be no problem! Don't by the way ask me what I think this is going to do for hard-pressed cities in the north – I don't want to depress myself about the regional implications.

The Council has employed consultants, Levitt Bernstein, to consider the possibilities and come forward with three options for development (or four or if you include minimal change with some refurbishment). Note that on the first consultation 14% went for this no change option, though even this version includes the creation of a new station square and the demolition and clearance of the boring red brick blocks between the station's Grant

Road exit and Falcon Road.

The station square and the re-planning of the bus terminus are common to all the other options.

### The options

**Option 1:** Not very imaginatively called 'moderate change' this calls for extensive modernisation and re-furbishment of many properties but also the demolition of the three unloveliest buildings in Battersea, the so-called slab blocks of Holcroft, Pennethorne and Scholey Houses. (If anyone wants a short tour of a designer – surely not an architect – disaster then I am happy to take you into one of them!).

These 360 Council flats would be replaced with modern, high density four story flats. In addition Grant Road would have new housing, where there are now under-used car parks. 10% of those consulted went for this option.

**Option 2:** 'More change' includes all of Option 1 plus the demolition of a further 200 or so Council properties, the extension of York Gardens into the heart of the estate and the construction of new homes along York Road creating a barrier between York Road and the gardens. This received the support of a further 16%.

**Option 3:** 'Greatest change' includes all of 1 and 2 plus the demolition of yet a further 100-odd Council properties, a greater extension of York Gardens and the construction of a new library and leisure centre along with more homes along York Road extending the barrier along Plough Road as well as York Road. This received the support of a further 49%. This option appears to be the favourite but I would express caution on that – see below.

### Problems and solutions

The Council has a public set of long term objectives, with which I think few would disagree. But regeneration on this scale creates problems as well as solving them. First of all there is the massive management issue of scheduling and rehousing. Council tenants will need to be rehoused and will no doubt be

promised new properties in the new blocks. Leaseholders will need to be compensated but probably will balk at being compensated at the discounted rates they were able to buy at under the Right-to-Buy (RTB) scheme. Who after all could buy a 3-bed flat in Battersea for £100 grand now?

Indeed in breaking up the simple 100% ownership pattern of Council estates into freeholders, leaseholders, private landlords and private tenants, the RTB scheme has added complexity upon complexity to the issues. So, for example, 40% of the estates are now leasehold properties and of these as many as 30% have been bought by large scale private landlords, with of course private tenants.

In one block of two storey houses and flats, Ganley Court, a considerable proportion of residents are now owner occupiers.

So to list a few of the problems:

- How can the Council justify the purchase of Ganley Court 'merely' to achieve housing gain? That argument could be used in a hundred posh neighbourhoods in the borough but never would be and hasn't been since the 60s and 70s dash for housing gain. The many householders in Ganley Court would have a strong case to oppose a compulsory purchase order.
- The several hundred private tenants of private landlords would have no statutory right to re-housing and perhaps no moral right either, but there would certainly be an issue.
- Leaseholders are clearly going to be promised compensation above the legal minimum though how far the Council can go on that must be a legal question in itself. Will it be enough to satisfy leaseholders?
- And what about those leaseholders who are private landlords? I am not sure that I for one would be very happy about giving enhanced compensation to landlords who have been profiting from RTB.
- And as for the majority, the Council tenants, they will need to be



**Winstanley Estate: Complex problems lie in the way of redevelopment**

rehoused and that to say the least is a scheduling issue.

Whatever happens there will be a massive change in the area. Much needed refurbishment will take place on all the flats that are not 'threatened' by demolition in any of the options. If you doubt the need for improvements, then go up to the 20th floor of Sporle Court one windy day and feel the wind whistling round the single glazed windows.

The slab blocks will go, thank goodness, but the problems of ownership and free- and leaseholders will mean that despite its apparent popularity Option 3 will not happen – so my guess is that the end result will look a lot like Option 2.

Despite the promises, not many of the current residents will move back into the new properties. I have seen it happen before. Tenants move out, send their kids to schools in new areas, find new jobs and neighbours and discover three or more years later that they don't want to move back.

**More expensive**

Although the Council intends to replace the current social housing

with the same number of new ones, nevertheless the community will change because there will be more housing after this change than before and the new housing will be more expensive and private. Hence the general density of social housing will be lower as a percentage. Some will say that is a good thing and perhaps I would agree whole-heartedly, if it weren't for the fact that across the rest of Battersea the absolute as well as percentage of social housing is falling dramatically year on year.

**Targeted**

Concentration on the major construction planning should not detract from the Council's parallel programme at a social level. Under the title 'The Aspirations Programme' the Council is also tackling youth crime and 'problem families', particularly in Latchmere and Roehampton, and working to avert gang culture and unemployment. In line with the current Government's policies these are strictly targeted on known individuals and families. This is a clear change from previous policies aimed at general issues like, say, poverty or unemployment. Some of us (including myself) may have doubts about how this will work in practice;

but one shouldn't ignore the intention and so I wish it success.

*Tony Belton is a councillor for Latchmere ward.*

*Editor's note: work has started on installing new energy-efficient windows in Sporle Court.*

**WOMEN'S REFUGE HISTORY PROJECT SEEKS HELP**

**Hestia Housing and Support is writing a history of its service to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the organisation's foundation. Hestia, which runs a domestic violence service in Wandsworth, was featured in *Battersea Matters* autumn 2012.**

**To write its history, Hestia is looking for anyone who has been involved in either Hestia or Wandsworth Women's Aid, either as a client, the child of a client or a worker or volunteer. If any of our readers has memories of the organisation and would like to help (in confidence), get in touch with [Emily.gillatt@hestia.org](mailto:Emily.gillatt@hestia.org)**

## Trees bow to the storm

Geraldine Kelly, of Wandsworth's parks development team, reports on the effects of October's high winds

The 27 October storm duly appeared, as promised by the weather forecasters, and we woke on the following day to – well, a mix of things really. Not as devastating as the 1987 storm but fierce anyway. The Council's arboricultural team were kept busy.

Across Wandsworth, 215 incidents of tree related damage were reported. An incident can mean anything from a broken branch left hanging to the complete uprooting of an ancient specimen. Across the borough around 160 trees were uprooted and lost – some quite dramatically. The photo shows a large poplar that stood at the mouth of the Beverley Brook. In Battersea a few acacias in Kambala estate were lost and in York Gardens estate a tree fell on a car. Fortunately nobody was injured.

### Funnel

A real mix of trees came down, from new and spindly saplings up to large mature trees, but otherwise much of the damage was snapped limbs and branches. Battersea Park got off quite lightly, losing only a few trees. Many fallen trees occurred on housing estates where the tall buildings serve to funnel the wind, increasing its strength and power. Quite a few street trees suffered for the same reason.

To put the losses in perspective, there are estimated to be over 75,000 trees in the streets and parks of Wandsworth (about 5,000 of them in Battersea's streets alone). We are fortunate in the way trees are managed here as otherwise things could have been much worse.

Trees that are already suffering from internal fungal decay are easy pickings for a storm of the magnitude of October's. If you look closely at the exposed wood of some of the fallen trunks you can see discoloration or old bark damage that has allowed the fungus in.

Our tree officers constantly survey the council's trees, to see how much



**Dramatic scenes as large trees are upended in Bolingbroke Cemetery, Battersea, and Beverley Brook, Putney Heath.**

pruning is needed and to identify any problems in advance.

### Survey

All the trees in our streets are surveyed once every two years on highways and every three years in parks. Where a survey finds fungal decay the tree will be removed in the course of the tree contractors' work. This pre-empts the storm picking out the weak ones, as far as it is possible to identify them in advance.

In Wandsworth, trees are surveyed more frequently than in many other boroughs, where it may be done on a three or four year rolling basis, or simply by reacting when problems arise. In those places tree wardens can provide more regular and local surveying and notifying the council of potential damage.

In our borough tree officers are called to the site of a tree incident when one is reported. They assess the damage and what work is needed to make it safe. On their recommendation, the tree contractors arrive. Their job is to make safe any snagged, overhanging, and dropped limbs, to keep the roads clear of major tree trunks or debris, and to clear any cars or buildings where fallen trees are resting. Work to clear away the



storm damaged wood continued for several weeks.

Lost trees will be replaced in as many vacant tree pits on the highways as is possible, and as resources permit. There are only so many places in our streets where it is possible to plant a tree due to underground cabling, pipes and amenities. Nearly one thousand street trees will be replanted across the whole borough with Battersea getting a good share of them.

*For more information about trees in Wandsworth or to join the tree wardens scheme email [wandtreeward@aol.com](mailto:wandtreeward@aol.com) [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)*

## Microbrewery takes on multinational

The founder of Belleville Brewing Company tells Jenny Sheridan of his tussle with the big boys of beer

When beer fanatic and brewer Adrian Thomas named his new micro-brewery after the Battersea primary school his sons attended, he didn't expect to be threatened with a lawsuit. But AB INBev, a global company which makes (among others) Budweiser and Stella Artois, decided that the name Belleville could be confused with Belle-Vue, one of their Belgian beer companies. They demanded that the tiny Wandsworth brewery change its name or face legal action which would have bankrupted them.

### Different

Once adverse publicity appeared in the national press the multinational backed down and negotiated. Now, so long as their beer labels are kept distinct, Belleville Brewery is safe to continue producing its thirty casks a week. 'Our beer is entirely different from theirs anyway,' says Adrian. 'They make sour fruit beers whereas ours are inspired by American ales. I have had some amazing beers in the States, where there is a great flowering of individual breweries. In Portland, Maine, a town the size of Worthing, there are 65 breweries! Their style is influenced by Belgian and German beers as well as English, and they have an adventurous spirit.'

Adrian started by home brewing, trying to reproduce in his Battersea kitchen the tastes he had found in the States. He took some of his beers to a festival at Belleville School, parents liked them and, supported by a few of the other fathers, he took the plunge and set up the company. Their first brew was in January 2013.

Based in an industrial estate behind Wandsworth Common Station, Belleville cannot compete in history or charm with the defunct Young's Ram Brewery, but it follows a long tradition of brewing in the borough. 'Rents are very high in Wandsworth,' Adrian notes, 'And that's no doubt why most of the new microbreweries are in East London. Here there's just us and Duncan Sambrook (*Battersea Matters* Spring 2009).



Adrian gets going on a morning's brewing

### Elderflowers

'I didn't want to get in the way of Duncan; my beers are different and more hop-centric. We use American hops and English malts from Somerset. We produce four basic beers with names like Battersea Brownstone and Commonsides Pale Ale, and then some fun seasonal ones. In May my kids and I collected six bags full of elderflowers and I infused them in the beer, which is

delicious. For our Halloween beer Trick or Treat I roasted ten pumpkins and added them to the brew with spices. Our winter ale is Chestnut Porter, which is dark with a warm, toasty flavour.'

Belleville started by producing beer in casks but Adrian says that few pubs have the skills to keep it well. He singles out Dave Law and Simon Clarke of the Eagle Alehouse as excellent cellarmen. Other pubs have been known to return casks laden with fly larvae.

Belleville bottled beer can be found in a few local pubs and restaurants but Adrian most enjoys selling to individuals: 'Dads like me, who want a really good bottle of beer while watching the sport or having supper at home.'

Formerly a musician who played with Mike Oldfield and wrote music for films including *Groundhog Day* and *The Crucible*, Adrian enjoys the hands-on, physical nature of his new role. 'Brew days are fun. We use very few ingredients and Mother Nature helps. It's very gratifying.'

*Belleville Brewing Company  
36 Jaggard Way, SW12 8SG  
The brewery is open to the public on Saturdays. [www.bellevillebrewing.co.uk](http://www.bellevillebrewing.co.uk)  
[www.bellevillebrewing.co.uk](http://www.bellevillebrewing.co.uk)*

### AFFORDABLE?

**In the smart showroom at Battersea Power Station, there is a large and marvellous interactive scale model of the power station, its surrounding future development and the area around it – all of Battersea, some of Wandsworth and part of Chelsea. Press a button marked 'Transport' and every tube station and bus stop is illuminated. For 'Green spaces' Battersea Park, Falcon Park, the commons and numerous other small green spaces light up. But what is curious is what happens when you press 'Accommodation'. I was expecting housing – wouldn't you?**



**But what came up on the screen beside the model was... the Ritz Hotel, the Savoy Hotel, Claridges.**

**Jenny Sheridan**

**See sample accommodation that pops up on the model, above!**

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# Great Bus Journeys of the World No 9

Mike Roden rides the C3 from Clapham Junction to Earls Court



Clapham Junction is always at its loveliest at ten o'clock on a grey, drizzly November morning but thankfully I don't have to wait long for the C3 bus which will take me to Earls Court. Great Bus Journeys has headed up St John's Hill many times before, and I'm not expecting anything new but I see with a shock that the Windsor Castle pub has become The Junction. The enthusiastic landlord sees his biggest challenge as turning a 'dated' pub into a 'laid back, cosmopolitan space and a great place for everyone to meet.' What a novel idea!

## Grade II listed

Down Plough Road we go, and then onto York Road past the new developments on Battersea Reach which seem to be never-ending. Close to Wandsworth Bridge is the grade II listed Wandsworth Bus Garage, built in 1906-8 as a tramway depot, and now the home of the 'Original Tour' buses.

Jews Row (near the bus stop) leads down to The Ship Inn which first opened its doors in 1768. It's a Young's pub now, a magnet for young people at the weekends. Nearby is Brady's Fish restaurant, which used to be on Old York Road.

Over the bridge, and the bus turns right down Townmead Road, once an area of peaceful fields and marshy water meadows (the 'Town Meads'). The tenants of the Manor of Fulham could pasture their cattle here and forage for firewood. The rural peace disappeared by the late nineteenth century with the establishment of wharves and related industries. The cement works survives, but the area

is being refashioned into 'Fulham Riverside', with a new Sainsburys superstore and luxury flats costing over £800,000 for a two bedroom box.

## Fishing village

Past the derelict former home of the Fulham Electricity Generating Board, 1980s apartment blocks are already boarded up, awaiting demolition. The bus stops near Imperial Wharf station - the newest addition to the Overground system - before turning past Jurys Inn hotel, which is allegedly 'affordable'. I suppose that £90 for a double room bed and breakfast could be so described.

We're on a private road now, heading through the Chelsea Harbour complex. The upmarket marina in the centre of the development used to be the harbour for barges carrying coal for the Lots Road power station. It had access from the river via a lock approach and once had 15 lines of railway sidings. In the 1960s Lots Road was converted to use oil and traffic dwindled. Gulls and waders appreciated the mud and shingle exposed at low tide but by the 1980s the area was strewn with abandoned cars and old washing machines and poisoned by toxic waste, fit only for location shooting of the TV series *The Sweeney*.

Architect Ray Moxley (who still lives in Chelsea Harbour) saw its potential. His aim was to mirror an old town square, or fishing village, where the houses, flats, hotels, pubs and restaurants crowd round it and 'generate a sense of place'. From the bus you can't see how far he achieved this ambition, as the road circles

around the edge of the development. As you reach the exit you pass the Chelsea Design centre under its three glass domes. I gather it's regarded as the essence of cool, an interior designers' paradise with outlets for suppliers of everything they need. It has a bookshop and a designer café too. If you get a chance have a walk round and wonder.

## Designer outlets

Back to reality the bus leaves the harbour behind and heads up a traffic-clogged Lots Road to Kings Road. The development of the power station site has started in earnest, and in a few years there will be two more enormous towers adding to the Chelsea skyline - it's been dubbed 'new Battersea'! Lots Road itself has plenty of designer outlets, alongside a gaggle of auction rooms. A minute or two more and we're on the A3220 which has various names along its meandering way; this stretch is called Gunter Grove. The bus trundles slowly towards Earls Court along a mainly residential road of large Edwardian villas, whose whitewashed surfaces are often grubby and neglected looking, especially on a wet day like today.

Past Fulham Road we're on Finborough Road. This is the northerly route of the one way system which takes traffic out towards the M4, and is almost entirely residential. Over to the left is Brompton Cemetery. We pass no 13 Finborough Road where in 1922 Ronald True robbed and murdered Olive Young. He was tried for murder, the jury was unconvinced by the defence of insanity and he was sentenced to death. His reprieve





caused a storm, as some thought he was being leniently treated because of his influential family, in contrast to eighteen year old Henry Jacoby, a pantry boy who had murdered a 65 year old titled lady and was hanged. True spent the rest of his life in Broadmoor Hospital, dying there in January 1951.

At the junction with Ifield Road is the award winning Finborough Theatre which presents a mix of contemporary plays and musicals, as well as revivals of neglected works from the 19th and 20th centuries. Technically a theatre above a bar, the latter has a habit of going bankrupt and closing down, and the Finborough Wine Café closed last year.

### Liaison

No 121 is just across the road. In 1992 it was the home of Antonia de Sancha whose liaisons there with government minister David Mellor resulted in his resignation from office,

After Old Brompton Road the road becomes Warwick Way, still firmly residential. A couple of hundred yards to the right Earls Court road is seething with people, and full of bars, restaurants, shops, banks, and of course the C3 bus will return that way. My mistake was in starting at Clapham Junction...

For now let's reflect on Earls Court which probably takes its name from the court held here by Lords of the Manor the Earls of Oxford. It was a rural backwater until the building of the Metropolitan District Railway in the late 1860s sparked off a wave of intense development. However, much of the area near the station remained

a waste ground for many years. In the late 19th century the site was home to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

### Crosshead

In 1935 the land was sold and the new owners decided to outdo the nearby Olympia exhibition hall. The Earls Court Exhibition Centre – its striking Art Deco facade facing Warwick Road – opened in September 1937 with a Chocolate and Confectionery show. The second exhibition hall, facing West Brompton station, opened in 1991. Recently plans were approved to demolish the centre to make way for a new residential and retail estate. This scheme is hotly contested by many who see it as a threat to local businesses which rely on the trade brought in by the centre.

During the late 1960s a large transient population of Australian and New Zealand travellers began to use Earls Court as a UK hub. Today, while there are still significant numbers of students or others on temporary visas, many of the antipodean visitors have moved on to now-cheaper areas further north and west.

After a long wait at the junction we cross Cromwell Road and the bus disgorges its four remaining passengers outside the massive Tesco superstore. It has taken me 45 long minutes to get here. The rain is unremitting, and I make for the café inside. The coffee and the Danish pastry are excellent, though it's a long way to come for a good cup of coffee. I have a long, miserably damp trudge back to the tube station, from where I'm whisked off to Victoria, and thence onto the trusty 170 which takes me home.

**Sights to see:** The Junction pub, formerly the Windsor Castle, (and unofficially for railwaymen, Platform 18); The Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour; a herring gull on Wandsworth Bridge; Lots Road Power Station when it had four chimneys; the Finborough Theatre, Earls Court Exhibition Centre

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## Battersea's gasholders: the art of heritage

The Nine Elms redevelopment enables us to learn more about our industrial heritage, says Susie Gray

The gasholders on Prince of Wales Drive, so long a part of Battersea's skyline, were decommissioned in 2012 and are soon to be demolished. The loss of the structures will not however mean losing the history they represent.

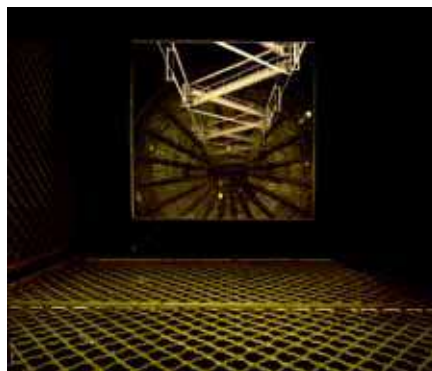
As part of Wandsworth Council's Arts Team, I have a new role as cultural development coordinator for the Nine Elms Vauxhall Partnership. It is leading to a wealth of interesting conversations and discoveries. One of these has been working with one of the Council's planning officers, Ros Claxton, and with National Grid's Heritage consultancy Montagu Evans who are drawing together a cultural strategy for the site to cover the demolition period.

### Nationalised

In 1871, the Battersea Gas Holders site was bought by the London Gas Light Company (LGLC) for additional storage for their Nine Elms gas works and the boundary wall was constructed. The boundaries of the site were formed by 1874 – 5 with railway lines to the north, east and west and Prince of Wales Drive at the south. By 1883, the site was looked after by the LGLC and the Gas Light and Coke Company (GLCC) until the gas industry was nationalised in 1949, when the site went under the control of the North Thames Gas Board.

The four gasholders were constructed here between 1872 and 1932 and the Engineers House in 1881 – 2. The first three gas holders and the house were designed by the company engineer Robert Morton, the latter as a home for the company's assistant engineer John Methven.

In order to make the most of the site's heritage interest and to share in the growing cultural work across



**Left and below left:** Gasholders have long been a majestic part of the industrial landscape. **Bottom left:** Access hatch into Gasholder No. 7 taken from the uppermost access walkway. Image courtesy of National Grid. © Ben Murphy 2013

the wider regeneration area, the Historic Building Recording and the Cultural Strategy were linked. Through dialogue it has been agreed that National Grid will salvage 30 of the plaques that are present on two of the gasholder structures. The plaques vary in design but are in the form of the shield of St George's Cross (the company's logo) and include such details as construction

date and name of the company engineer. We are continuing to discuss with National Grid about the possibility of retaining further features from the gasholder structures so that potentially they can be integrated into future developments on the site. In parallel to Historic Building Recording, a professional fine art photographer, Ben Murphy, has been commissioned. His photographs will convey the character and atmosphere of the structures, showing them within the context of their surroundings as well as focusing on the

details of their design both externally and internally. An exhibition of high quality images will be hosted locally, potentially at the Engineer's House on Prince of Wales Drive.

Ben was the first artist to be given comprehensive access to the United Nations Building in New York and the resulting book was published by Thames and Hudson in 2005. He has also recently completed the historic building record for the Commonwealth Institute, High Street Kensington London (2012).

The photographs of the gasholders will be taken using medium and large format film resulting in prints that are very rich in detail. Every element – walkways in and through the gasholders, breathing apparatus, plaques – can become significant using this method. It will be exciting to see what he has created in Battersea.

In addition to the Historic Building Recording, National Grid has committed to create time-lapse photography of the site as the gasholders are painstakingly deconstructed. Images will be available to view on the project website ([www.batterseagasholders.com](http://www.batterseagasholders.com)) as well as information about the heritage significance of the site and practical information about the demolition works.

### Schools

National Grid will be approaching local schools and inviting them to learn more about the site, its history and the important role energy plays in making everyday life possible. Classes will be invited to visit the

Engineer's House to see how works are progressing first hand.

The regeneration of the whole Nine Elms Vauxhall area, together with the recent publication of the Survey of London Battersea volumes, is creating a focus to learn and discover more about the area's rich wealth of industrial and social history.

*Susie Gray*

*Arts Partnership Manager,  
Wandsworth Arts Team & Cultural  
Development Coordinator, Nine Elms  
on the South bank.*

*For more information about cultural  
work in the area or other parts of  
Wandsworth, please contact [arts@  
wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:arts@wandsworth.gov.uk)  
[1www.nineelmslondon.com](http://www.nineelmslondon.com)*

*Note from the editor:*

Demolition work started on the site in late November. Demolition of the gasholders themselves will last from this December to December 2014. According to Wandsworth Council, 'National Grid is currently in the process of selecting a development partner to help them realise their ambitions for the site.' Council leader Ravi Govindia said, 'The land has clear potential to provide new homes and jobs as well as valuable links to the new Nine Elms'.

## A style of its own

Mike Roden and friends sample the Afghan cuisine at Mantoos

'One of our principal amusements is to watch... the rise or fall—of particular shops...' So wrote the Charles Dickens in *Sketches by Boz*, recording the decline of a south London shop. The grand opening promises much, but a month or so later the key is handed back to the landlord, the place becomes deserted and the downward spiral begins. Such has been the fate of many eating places on the corner of Parkgate Road and Battersea Bridge Road.

### Loyal

An excellent tapas restaurant gave way to an Italian bistro, ambitious and expensive. Then the premises stood empty for a long time, till one day Mantoos arrived – at first sight just another curry house but in fact offering very different food. A year or so has gone by and this unassuming Afghan restaurant has survived, and is gradually winning a loyal audience.

Our party of four arrived at seven o'clock on a Saturday evening. We were the first to arrive, though very soon two large parties of young people joined us, evidently bent on celebration. We'd Brought Our Own Bottles (there's currently no corkage charge). They don't have a licence as they believe their food needs no alcoholic boost. Glasses and a corkscrew are provided, and it

certainly keeps the bill down.

Don't expect a fine dining experience. It's paper napkins rather than carefully folded linen. During the week the place is often very quiet, but the unobtrusive staff don't hover over you which is the worst part of eating in a relatively empty restaurant.

### Delicious

We shared two starters between us, grilled aubergines with garlic, walnut and thick yoghurt, and grilled halloumi cheese with olive oil and oregano. You'll pay extra for the accompanying naan bread, but it's worth it. It's actually a rather delicious flatbread, very different to the soggy flannel called naan elsewhere.

You'll find the flavours subtly different from Indian or Bengali cooking. There are no fiery vindaloo curries on offer here. Qabili Pilaw is an aromatic mixture of lamb with rice, carrots and raisins. Lamb Dansak, served with flatbread and a good fresh salad, has a fragrant blend of unfamiliar tastes. One of our party ordered lamb with spinach, and added a side order of spicy kidney bean curry. We all noticed how tender the lamb was.

The portions are very generous and prices are low, £3 – 4 for starters with most mains well under £10.



*Qabili Pilaw*

One interesting item on the menu is a whole lamb for £220 – though a day's notice is needed. Perhaps the Battersea Society should arrange an Afghan banquet?

We all gave our food full marks, but this was not a night to tarry with the noise level increasing by the minute. As we paid the bill, which with tip worked out at about £13 a head, the waiter told us that it was now getting busy at the weekend. Perhaps the curse of this corner has at last been killed. Those hoping for a quiet, relaxed meal should choose a day during the week.

And if you've forgotten to bring a bottle, just pop up the road to the Co-op and they'll fix you up.

### Mantoos

*59 Battersea Bridge Road, London  
SW11 3AU Tel: 0207 738 1616  
[www.mantoosrestaurant.com](http://www.mantoosrestaurant.com)  
Open: Sun – Thu 12pm – 11pm  
Fri – Sat 3pm – 11pm*

## Born to be chair

Harvey Heath pays tribute to Tony Tuck, who has resigned as the Society's chair



Tony Tuck has resigned as chair and trustee of the Battersea Society, owing chiefly to his failing eyesight. Fortunately for us, he plans to remain

on the planning and open spaces committees. He has been our chair for the last 14 years, and for me, and perhaps other members, it is unthinkable to have the Battersea Society without Tony as chair.

Tony was born to be a chairman and he is or has been chair of many local organisations. At the present time he is chair of the Wandsworth Older People's Forum, Sir Walter St. John's Education Charity Trust, and the Wand Youth club. He is pondering at the moment how many of these he can keep up with. He

was chair of Chesterton School's board of governors for 25 years, and at one time or another he chaired the Battersea Arts Centre, the Audit Committee of South Thames College and, the finance committee of Battersea Churches Housing Trust. He remains a trustee of Age UK (Wandsworth), and secretary of the Community Empowerment Network.

With all his local connections and his eight years serving as a councillor for Latchmere and St John's wards, Tony has added great stature to our work. He is committed to the Battersea Society's purpose of preserving the best of the past and encouraging the best in the new.

The big man with the big heart is reducing his commitments. He aims to spend even more time in Lyme Regis where he has a boat and devote even more time to serving as his partner Judy's 'chief bag carrier and bottlewasher' (his phrase)

I look forward to his further contributions to our Open Spaces and Planning work and we wish him well and thank him.

Sara Milne will be the interim chair until the Society's AGM in April 2014, when members will elect a new chair.

## LUNCH INSIDE

Ladies (and gents) who lunch will soon be able to have the unusual experience of eating in a jail. The Clink, a charity that provides prisoners with training and preparation for work in the catering industry, will open a restaurant in Brixton Prison.

The restaurant will be based in the 19th century Governor's House in the prison grounds and will be staffed by prisoners and ex-prisoners. The Brixton venture follows on from the Clink's work in High Down and Cardiff prisons.

The menu at High Down certainly isn't just porridge: it includes such delights as home-made ravioli with truffle foam and grilled fillets of megrim sole with shrimp butter.

As well as diners, the charity aims to attract businesses; there will be five meeting rooms for companies, all agreeably free from interruption as mobile phones are not allowed in prison.

The Brixton restaurant will open in early 2014.

[www.theclinkcharity.com](http://www.theclinkcharity.com)

## Swann song



When next you are walking or driving along Albert Bridge Road, look up at number 13. It was the home of musician and composer Donald Swann and the Battersea Society has celebrated his life by installing our first commemorative plaque on the house.

Donald Swann is best known for

his partnership of writing and performing comic songs with Michael Flanders. The Flanders and Swann double act created and performed songs and light operas during the 1950s and 1960s. Swann wrote the music and Flanders the words. After his partnership with Flanders ended, Swann continued to give solo concerts and to write for other singers.

Swann wrote or set to music nearly 2,000 songs during his career, including well-loved

classics such as *Hippopotamus* and *The Gas-man Cometh*.

The Society's plaque was unveiled on 12 October 2013 and a small reception, hosted by Swann's widow Alison, was attended by the Mayor of Wandsworth and Jane Ellison MP. *Sara Milne*



John Burns as a young man in 1887

## SONS OF BATTERSEA

The autumn edition of the *Wandsworth Historian* is full of interest. Penelope Corfield's illustrated article on Wandsworth's meritocrats includes Battersea's John Burns and William Wilberforce as people who rose from relatively humble beginnings to achieve great things on the strength of their personality.

And there is an account of a 1930s adolescence and young manhood that includes swimming naked in the pond on Clapham Common and delivering fruit and vegetables to houses along Northcote Road by horse and cart.

*Neil Robson ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk*  
020 8874 6341

## Communications

Mike Roden tells a mobile story

These days, communicating with someone else is easy isn't it? We've all got email, and the mobile phone is ubiquitous. It certainly was in the Latchmere on that chilly December night. There was some kind of comedy night upstairs in Theatre 503, and the young people were flocking in. Mostly big groups, a few couples. And mobile phones everywhere.

Leo had something else on his mind. 'It's as though I'm being haunted by this chap in the woolly hat and anorak. Five times I've seen him now. It's very sinister.'

'It's all his imagination,' said his wife Harriet. The four of us had met up here for a drink before going on to eat at L'AntiPasto

I eyed him curiously. 'You think this is a premonition of some sort?'

'Whatever it is, I definitely saw him in Asda,' said Leo. 'And up near Battersea Bridge. And the other day he was walking toward me along the river.'

'How can he be following you if he's walking towards you?' said my wife logically.

'Does he just vanish?' I inquired, not entirely seriously.

'I just get out of the way first,' said Leo.

### Laughter

There was a sudden burst of very loud laughter from a group over by the bar. Harriet winced. 'They go about in gangs these days. It was enough for us to go out as a couple.'

'And we did talk to each other,' said Leo, 'Not gossip all the time into our phones.'

'Not that you can gossip into your phone,' Harriet looked wearily at us.

'He's lost it again.'

'It'll turn up,' said my wife, 'Where was it the last time?'

'In the fridge,' said Harriet. 'He always forgets to charge it anyway.'

My attention was caught by a couple at a table by the window.

Neither of them was on the phone. But neither of them looked very happy, either. The young man stared restlessly out of the window at the traffic while his girlfriend leaned forward across the table talking earnestly. I supposed there'd been an argument, and she was trying to make peace, trying to communicate. She was very pretty, long dark hair yet he seemed to be refusing to look at her.

'He was coming down the escalator in Asda,' Leo had returned to his stalker. 'And his eyes suddenly fixed on me. As if – as if he was after me.'

'Coming to drag you down to the infernal regions like in Don Giovanni?' my wife suggested.

Something made me look again towards the couple by the window. She'd stopped talking now, and was just gazing at him in a defeated way while he continued to ignore her. Then, predictably she reached in her handbag and pulled out her phone. So she'd given up trying to get through to him. Then without warning she turned sharply, and looked straight at me. I tried to look away, embarrassed, but I sensed she wanted to speak to me.

### Spell

My wife's voice broke the spell. 'Time to go.'

'Sorry, I was miles away.' I looked toward the window again, and saw that he was alone, still gazing at nothing; his companion had gone.

Harriet was getting irritated with Leo. 'Get your coat on, Leo. What are you staring at?'

'It's him!' he hissed, pointing towards the pub door.

The young man who'd just come in was certainly wearing a woolly hat, and a dark anorak, but there was nothing sinister or malevolent in the smile he bestowed on Leo.

'I was beginning to wonder... Every time I saw you – well, you disappeared. Started thinking I was seeing things.'

Leo waited uneasily, 'What do you want?'

'I think this is yours.' The young man handed over an ancient looking mobile phone. 'You left it on the 49 bus. I would have called one of your contacts but the phone was dead, and nobody I knew had a charger to

fit it.' He hesitated. 'It's quite an old model.'

'It's an antique!' said Harriet. 'I keep telling him he ought to – upgrade, is that the word?'

'Anyway, I've often seen you on the bus so I knew you lived round here somewhere. Just could never quite catch you.'

He noticed that people were starting to move upstairs to the theatre. 'But glad I found you. Must be off. I'm going to the show.'

As he hurried away my own phone rang. I eventually fished it out of an inner pocket of my coat. 'Hello,' I said cautiously.

'Can you tell Tim that I'll be there in half an hour.' She sounded very faint, 'The train got delayed. I know he's sitting there worrying.'

'I don't know anyone called Tim. You must have a wrong number,' I was very conscious of being watched by my wife and friends.

'It's Caroline.' Her voice was even fainter now. 'I've been trying to contact him. But he's not answering his phone. I'll be there soon.'

'Look, Caroline, I'm sorry I can't help.'

But she'd gone. And then there was someone standing at my elbow. 'Excuse me. But my name's Tim. Couldn't help overhearing....'

It was the young man who'd been sitting by the window. Rather uncertainly, I said, 'Your girlfriend's called Caroline?'

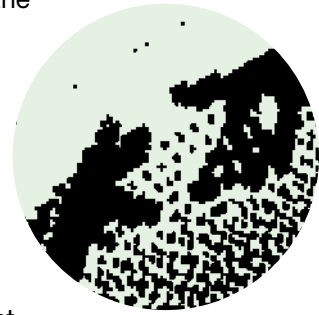
'Yes. I've been waiting for her. But my phone's been nicked. I was getting a bit worried ...'

Very conscious now of my wife listening, I said, 'Caroline's very pretty, with long dark hair?'

'Oh so you know her?' he said eagerly. 'And that was her on the phone?'

'She'll be about half an hour,' I said. 'She has been trying – very hard – to get in touch.'

He was suddenly a different person from the restless, agitated young man of a few minutes before. After offering to buy all of us a drink, he went off to the bar and we made our way out of the pub.



Harriet had been thinking. 'Why didn't he borrow someone's phone and call her himself?'

'Just think about it,' I said, 'People don't need to memorise numbers now. They're in the phone.'

'Caroline knew your number,' said

my wife thoughtfully.

'Well I've never met her,' I said.

'Well, not exactly.'

Leo was unconvinced, 'What does that mean? You know what she looks like!'

All I could do was shake my head.

'Let's go and have some pasta,' I said. 'And if I think of an answer to those questions you'll be the first to know!'

© Mike Roden 2013

## Wandsworth GPs step out into the community

Doctors gain valuable insights from local groups, says Dr Sian Job

Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCG) has a simple mission statement: 'Better care and a healthier future for Wandsworth'

WCCG is charged with the duty of commissioning health care for the population of Wandsworth. It is accountable to NHS England and the Department of Health for managing the allocated budget. The CCG is led by Wandsworth GPs and supported by a committed team of managers

### Connections

The CCG took over the role of commissioning services for Wandsworth residents on 1 April this year and is spending the first year streamlining the work, putting in systems to ensure that the quality and accessibility for care is the best possible for everyone who needs it.

The clinical leaders of WCCG are determined to increase their understanding of the needs of the population and are doing this in several ways. One such initiative is to increase the connections between clinicians and the many community organisations that are helping people live their lives, many of whom are in difficult circumstances and unable to access health services as they should.

The CCG has enabled all Wandsworth GP practices to release a GP from their surgery to spend a session visiting a community organisation to familiarise themselves with the purpose of their activities and meet people who benefit from them. The cycle of visits for 2012-13 started in autumn last year and during a period of six months the majority of the 43 Wandsworth practices engaged in the scheme. The GPs each organised their own individual visits to neighbouring community organisations, the main

purpose being not to spend time talking about the WCCG but to learn about the work of the group they were visiting and how it helps the people of Wandsworth.

The groups visited included specific issue groups such as cancer or mental health, minority groups eg Asian Women's Group and activity groups including Thrive Garden Project.

Each participating GP was asked to feed back to the CCG by noting their experiences on a template, which I received as the project facilitator. As the reports filtered through it became very obvious to me that these visits not only led to factual learning about the organisations, but also affected and influenced the visiting GPs in a revealing and enthusing way.

GPs are very busy working in their own environment. Having some protected time to step outside to meet and reflect on what is happening in the community has led to new insights on what is available for their patients outside the NHS. This is exemplified by some quotes from the reports submitted from the visits

### Question: What did you learn from your visit?

'That this organisation existed and was doing such a wide varied and fantastic work for the community.'

'The existence of the Battersea Gardening project – I think I vaguely knew about it but had no idea what it was.'

'To never undervalue 3rd sector support in ongoing care for patients'

Not only did GPs learn about the facts and figures, they also reflected on personal experiences resulting from the visits

'Access to health care and inequality at the point of provision is a significant issue.'

'I am more aware that my communication skills with adults with learning disabilities is poor compared with the volunteers I met and I will endeavour to improve these skills.'

The learning from these visits sits with each GP who participated, is shared with their own practice, fed back to their local GP colleagues and reported back to the CCG on the templates.

Primarily this is personal development for each participating individual GP to understand and learn more about the community in which they work. This will enrich their ability to help people when they visit their surgery as patients. As GPs are also members of the WCCG, their personal messages and the structured feedback feeds into the decision making process of the CCG when discharging their duties as commissioners of health care. This has only been possible because of the commitment of the WCCG to prioritise its relationship with its community by backing this project.

We are now embarking on 2013 – 4 round of visits and look forward to learning more about the community in which we work and for whom we provide care. All of this works towards 'Better care and a healthier future for Wandsworth'.

*Dr Sian Job, Clinical Lead for Patient and Public Involvement, Wandsworth CCG*

*Note from the editor:*

A definition of commissioning from the Royal College of General Practitioners  
Effective commissioning is based on continual analysis of a community's needs and designing, specifying and procuring services to meet these needs, within the resources available.



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# Katherine Low Settlement is becoming 'Community Wise'

Aaron Barbour, director of KLS, outlines the results of recent research

'Look, to be honest it's difficult. I don't get out, except to the shops. I sit around too much just watching TV. My wife died recently and it's hard.' This is what John (names have been changed) told me earlier in the year, as we at the Katherine Low Settlement went out into the community to understand what is going on locally, so that we can target our services at those who need them most.

Katherine Low Settlement is a multi-purpose charity dedicated to fighting poverty and isolation. We have been serving the communities of Battersea since 1924 by providing our own services for children and families, older and vulnerable people and newly arrived communities. We also open our community centre for other charities and community groups to provide their own activities and/or their back office, so together we can meet the diverse needs of the communities of Wandsworth.

## Questions

When I came into post earlier in the year I wanted to develop four areas: a comprehensive picture of Battersea; strengthen our relationships with local people and organisations; develop a pool of local ideas for change; and assess what services Katherine Low Settlement could deliver over the next three years. To achieve this we conducted research over the spring to become 'community wise'. First we undertook desk research to get a statistical understanding of Battersea (mainly SW11 and SW8 including St. Mary's, Queenstown and Latchmere wards). We then recruited and trained 25 local people (including some Battersea Society members – thank you) who in turn went out and interviewed 436 local people and organisations. They were asked three open questions about their dreams for the future, the barriers and problems they currently face and their ideas for change.

There was a common thread running throughout the interviews as people aspire to the universals in life: wanting a safe environment for their



Making fruit salad in the KLS kitchen

children to grow up in, good schools, a better house to live in, to get on with their neighbours and feel a stronger sense of community, live a healthy life, and to work and prosper.

## Cost of living

The overwhelming response from the interviews was that local people want to work (part and full time jobs, return to work, increased hours, work experience, apprenticeships, volunteering as a route back to work, secure and permanent jobs) or set up their own businesses. They see this as the primary route for themselves and their families to improve their financial and living situation, combat the rising cost of living and get out of poverty. 'I want to be able to work and earn a living' and 'I want to be able to work part time, to take the pressure off my partner bill wise' because for many people it was a case of 'I simply don't have enough money'.

To do this people recognise they need to develop their skills and increase their confidence, gained through learning and training. People wanted to study a variety of things, for example, ESOL, dress making and sewing, IT, book keeping, all of which will help them get into work.

Local residents also told us they need somewhere safe, affordable and flexible for their children to go while they are training and working, 'Could you offer a crèche while I'm doing a course or working?'

People also want a stronger sense of community – to belong, to be

involved, for people to know and care about each other. Residents want opportunities to build relationships and networks with all people from the community – rich and poor, old and young. 'Help us to know our neighbours', 'build community cohesion in the area', 'I just want to meet other people here'. As John (above) said people, particularly older people and those in newly arrived communities, want

support to tackle social isolation. 'I would like help to make new friends and feel more positive'. Residents came up with a (large) number of imaginative and practical ways for the Settlement to run positive activities including: swimming lessons, a dad's group, keep-fit with crèche, intergenerational events, cookery and music groups, and opportunities to volunteer.

## Dancing

We spoke to many different people of all ages and backgrounds. A number of elderly people, for example, told us about the joys and challenges of growing older. Some had health issues that they were dealing with 'I want to get more mobile after my serious fall', and aspired 'to be independent as I've had three strokes'. They had some great ideas about 'improving my mobility to do more exercises e.g. armchair exercises', whilst 'socialising with a cup of tea and a chair', 'dancing, coffee groups with games and talks, days out but not too far to walk'; so that they could 'keep healthy and enjoy a productive retirement'.

Our 'Community Wise' research has given us a fascinating insight into local people's lives – their dreams for the future, some of the problems they face and their solutions for change. This evidence will play an important role in shaping our thinking as we develop our new three-year strategy and plan, which we will launch in 2014 as part of our 90th birthday celebrations. All of which will enable us to support more people like John.

# Christmas: pounds off your wallet, pounds on your waist?

Nutritionist Drew Price encourages us to enjoy ourselves and concentrate on long-term healthy eating

Ah, Christmas time: Logs on the fire, piles of presents under the tree... and pounds of extra flab round the waist.

Working in the nutrition industry you see how worried people are about that Christmas weight gain and how hard they try to get back into shape in January. Given that we nutritionists are (most of us) people too, how do we relax and enjoy the festivities while sidestepping the flab that would be bad for business? For us, like you, it is about being realistic and doing a little planning ahead.

## Step 1: Relax!

It's just a few days: Nutrition is about the big picture. Whereas most people think in terms of daily calories, a good nutritionist will gauge intake in terms of days but also weekly blocks. Daily fluctuations in food intake happen but it's the bigger picture of increased intake over days and weeks that counts.

You cannot get fat in a few days or a week. Your stomach may be full and you may hold extra water under the skin, but you will not be holding noticeable extra fat. A few days of overeating here and there are not going to result in added fat if you get the big picture right. So concentrate on the big picture: the rest of December and January.

## Step 2: Make sure it IS only a few days

The biggest problems I find people have before Christmas is that the frequency of parties and events means they flip-flop between attitudes, saying 'Ah, it's Christmas, I'll do what I want' then feeling guilty for days after. Constantly trying to get back into one's normal, more healthy eating pattern leaves your self-control fatigued.

- Make sure the main pinch points, like the period between Christmas and New Year, or the family or social get-together near the big day don't merge into one big splurge.

- Plan ahead with some tasty favourites that are more like your normal, healthier eating pattern. If possible prepare the meals ahead.

With January come the New Year's resolutions, the health kicks, the gym membership and so on. These rarely last, but there are ways to tip the odds in your favour:

## Step 3: Start small

Sometimes I'll see someone in clinic and when, after an hour or more, I hand them only one or two things to work on they look at me as if to say 'That's it?'. Of course, I could have given them a list of twenty things to work on, but how much of that would get done in the long term? Answer: none of it.

Many people make the mistake of trying to change everything at once. The total diet overhaul, the gym every morning, and so on. These huge changes don't stick long term and it is the long term that matters. It's better just to pick what you're doing wrong and work on that.

## Step 4: Keep it simple, and think long term

Simple plans get done. In my book, I discuss food coaching and intermittent fasting (IF). A huge amount of cash is being pumped into research into IF because it's easy. For a diet to work long term it has to be simple, healthy and effective.

- Make it easy, don't use extreme plans; think in terms of less work but over longer time spans.

- The internet gives you lots of choice. Avoid 'analysis paralysis', pick a plan or a credible source of information and put it into action, and don't bounce between different diets.

## Step 5: Build new, good habits Habits are the foundations of getting things done well long term.

We teach healthy habits to our kids, but forget to develop them ourselves. Cooking a double portion of a healthy dinner and freezing it or having it for lunch the next day instead of a ready-made snack can make a huge difference.

- Focus on one or two changes and work on them every day. Repetition builds the habits.

- Work on it for a few weeks or a month and, once it has stuck, then try to build another habit.

There's a list of habits you could work on, on my site [www.the-dodo-diet.com/habits](http://www.the-dodo-diet.com/habits), but here are some tips as well.

I am not a fan of most Christmas diet tips, but there are a few things that do work:

- Don't try and lose weight over the holidays. In fact don't weigh yourself until you have got back to a normal healthy diet. Relax and enjoy just a few days of eating differently, and save your effort for afterwards.

- Alternate alcoholic drinks and water. Fizzy water with a slice of lemon or lime will keep you hydrated.

- Get outside, go for walks with the family, revel in the time and space the holidays give you. This will make you feel better and keep you away from the snacks at home.

- Talk at the table. Eating more slowly will help your body's satiety mechanisms catch up and mean that you get full before you have a chance to eat too much.

Christmas and New

Year are just a few days out of many. Relax and enjoy them, safe in the

knowledge that if you are being smart about the bigger picture, and building good

nutritional habits, you have nothing to worry about.

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*His book The DODO Diet is released through Random House in December. [www.the-dodo-diet.com](http://www.the-dodo-diet.com) [twitter.com/drewtrition](https://twitter.com/drewtrition)*



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