

BATTERSEA MATTERS

THE BATTERSEA SOCIETY NEWSLETTER WINTER 2021/2022



RIP THE BATTERSEA MURALIST

Tony Belton remembers Brian Barnes 1944 –2021

The title of the Western *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* so appealed to Brian Barnes that he used it for his first and largest mural, which he painted on an insignificant but very long wall facing onto Battersea Bridge Road. The mural was 276 feet long and 18 feet high. It was Brian's signature mural and it was the only mural, as I



remember it, that hit the front pages of *The Sunday Times* and *The Observer* and maybe even *The Sunday Telegraph*, when both wall and mural were demolished in 1977.

I was Wandsworth's Chair of Planning at the time and appeared as a bit part, along with the Planning Director and several notorious local Tories, in what Brian considered to be the *Ugly*, and less effective part of the mural – the modern, chaotic present. The *Bad* was the magnificent depiction of the old, noxious, nineteenth-century industries being swept away by a massive broom. The *Good* is inevitably the new rosy future for Battersea, as he saw it: smiling mothers and children playing in a colourful park, adorned with daffodils.

Bold, bright colours

Brian later called his art 'realistic' and 'naturalistic'; he claimed to be influenced by Renaissance painters. Certainly, this great mural had similarities to Hieronymus Bosch's interpretation of Heaven and Hell (*The Garden of Earthly Delights*) painted around 1490. Yet, whilst I have the impression that Bosch enjoyed painting hell and found heaven boring, Brian revelled in the bold, bright, colours and shapes of a rather simple



Battersea in Perspective by Brian Barnes & Neil Torbett in Dagnall Street, Battersea

historical and highly referenced, visual tour of Battersea.

The nine portraits at the bottom of the picture are important Battersea MPs: John Burns, Shapurji Saklatvala, Caroline Ganley, Douglas Jay and Alf Dubs; other significant Battersea politicians John Archer and Charlotte Despard; plus aeronautical pioneers: Hilda Hewlett and A V Roe. Battersea Park and the Peace Pagoda make a bold focal point, bordered by Albert and Chelsea

heaven/future. He was what I might call a Naïve Futurist.

The day the wall was demolished, the demolition crews started their work at 3am, so that when Brian arrived there was not much left. But he climbed on top of the remnants, where he screamed and hollered his protest, like a mother defending her child – it had, after all, been his baby for over a year of work. Traffic was held up for 13 hours that day.

Historical

Thankfully, there are other Barnes murals to be seen and admired. My favourite, *Battersea in Perspective*, is in Dagnall Street on the wall of what used to be the Haberdashers' Arms. A prime example of Brian's vision of public murals, it is a very large and bold, colourful and political,

Bridges. The Power Station and the Carey Gardens estate, where Brian lived, also appear.

Early planes

We can also see one of the early planes, built in some of Battersea's railway arches, and a hot air balloon, as well as the motif from an Iron Age shield, found in the Thames off Battersea Bridge in 1857 and now to be seen in the British Museum.

There are other major Barnes murals in south London: all of them notable for their sheer size, colour, boldness, political content and community involvement. Some of the most notable are *Brixton's Nuclear Dawn* on Coldharbour Lane; Stockwell tube station's *War Memorial*; and Battersea's ▶



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FROM THE EDITOR



When I last wrote here, in the autumn issue, it seemed that Covid and the restrictions it imposed on us was over. The Society's trustees had met

in person at last, the photographic competition judges had viewed the photographs together and people had freely visited and enjoyed the excellent exhibition at the RCA.

But now Omicron has arrived and we are having to take a step back again, with added testing but with a degree of optimism thanks to the vaccination programme. I hope you passed a happy

and healthy Christmas period and that your festive plans were not too badly disrupted.

I was lucky enough to go to Ireland on holiday in October. At that stage Ireland was taking the restrictions much more seriously than we were here. Vaccination certificates were checked at the door of every theatre, café and pub, and outdoor dining was encouraged. I was struck by the fact that very few shops and cafés seemed to have closed as a result of the pandemic. I was also impressed with the prevalence of independent shops, both in Dublin and in small towns in the south-west. Chain stores and restaurants were rare and every high street had several small butchers, delis, newsagents and cafes – often a bookshop too. Money stayed local and they all seemed to be

thriving. Perhaps there's a link with their resilience here.

As we all know, shops, restaurants and pubs have been having a tough time, and are continuing to do so. I shop locally and I hope you do too, if you can. It's good for the local community and it's good for the environment.

We were disappointed to have to cancel our usual Battersea Society Christmas social, but I hope we will be able to re-create it in the not-too-distant future. I do look forward to seeing you all.

In the meantime, I wish all our readers a very happy new year.

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MAN ON THE BATTERSEA BUS

Mike Roden on resolutions, Christmas treats and celebrity spotting in Chelsea and Spain

Good resolutions are useless attempts to interfere with scientific laws. Their origin is pure vanity. Their result is absolutely nil...

If you're one of those rare people who make New Year's Resolutions and stick to them, doubtless you won't agree with Oscar Wilde. Our friend who tried every new year to give up smoking is probably more typical. On the first couple of days in January he made everyone's life a misery by stamping around the house and shouting at the kids. Then he decided he'd have 'just one' to calm his nerves. The spell and the resolution were broken and everyone round him breathed a smoked filled sigh of relief. Back then in the early seventies around 45 per cent of adults in Britain were smokers. Nowadays that figure is around 14 per cent. It now seems such a bizarre habit and it's probable that it will have died out in twenty years.

Have you got any Christmas 'treats' left over? My mum used to 'get in' dates (usually labelled 'Eat Me') which nobody really

liked and were usually gathering dust weeks later. Turkish Delight might have been full of eastern promise as the seductive tv advert told us but its gooey sweetness meant I rarely ate more than one piece. It wasn't until I tasted the genuine article in Istanbul that I saw its real attraction.

One downside is that the icing sugar coating each piece gets everywhere. Scattered accidentally over my black windcheater as I took a complimentary piece on my way out of a Turkish restaurant it made me look like a clumsy drug dealer. Well, that's what my teenage grandchildren told me when they stopped laughing. Peter Wimsey used the sugar's resemblance to another white powder – arsenic – to force a confession out of a murderer who loved Turkish Delight.

Celebrity spotting

When I first came to London nearly twenty years ago I took great pleasure in celebrity spotting on the Kings Road. Once I almost collided with a hurrying Felicity Kendal, another time I saw the usually immaculate actress Cherie Lunghi – slightly dishevelled, without makeup – clearly having just got up, on her way into Waitrose.

Bob Geldof was something of a fixture – hunched broodingly over a coffee and a cigarette outside the long-gone Picasso café. Checking my memory of the café's

name I found this quote from a *Standard* article in 2011: 'That place used to be my office. I'd sit outside nursing a coffee with all the other dreadful Chelsea roués, complaining about house prices and lusting after the girls coming out of the Storm model agency.'

But we encountered our biggest celebrity in Spain. About twelve years ago we were staying in the Alhambra Parador hotel in Granada (we were booked for one night into the cheapest room!). Sitting having a drink in the evening sun I noticed two waiting staff talking to a distinguished grey-haired gentleman sitting nearby. The young woman pointed to her male colleague, and I realised she was asking if it was OK for him to take a picture of her with the gentleman. Omar Sharif – for it was he – smiled graciously and nodded.

Impulsively I stood up and walked over, offering to do the honours. She handed me her camera and I took a picture of the two young people with the great actor. I probably said something inane like 'smile please'.

Geldof's Picasso café and its near neighbour Pucci Pizza have long gone. Nowadays wherever I see someone famous it seems a bit commonplace. Familiarity breeds contempt perhaps. But you'll be pleased to know Angela did get a surreptitious photo of Omar Sharif while apparently photographing the scenery.

That's enough ambling down memory lane from me. I wish you a belated happy new year and let's all hope for better times to come.





Brian at work on now demolished mural, A Day at the Seaside in 1978
Photo: Sarah Wyld

◀ *A Brief History of Time* in Carey Gardens (*Battersea Matters* Summer 2018).

Brian Barnes constantly involved school kids, local people and local personalities in the design and execution of his murals. He lived for his art and I remember that he told me once of his plan to go to Bahia Blanca, a city in Argentina, to an international mural festival. The plan was that this otherwise undistinguished city would invite 50 international artists to decorate the city, with a wall allocated to each. Brian would have loved it and it would have expanded his artistic experience and range. But, as so often, the problem was money. Neither Brian nor Bahia were rich and the artists had to be self-funded!

Activist

Another side to Brian was his life as a political activist. In 1983 he became the inspiration behind the Battersea Power Station Action Group (BPAG). BPAG, he told me some 10 years ago, met weekly for over 30 years with Brian

creating the agenda, writing the minutes and basically running the show – all that takes some doing. He was also a long-term executive member of the Doddington and Rollo Community Association (DRCA) and an active participant in many local campaigns and issues. He would frequently talk with great enthusiasm about his very particular viewpoint. However, as the chair of several DRCA sessions, I'd have to say that Brian was not always very concerned with achieving consensus. The vehemence of his passion did not make for practical success in everyday politics, nor on occasions for civilised debate. But it made great street art.

RIP Brian Barnes, committed community activist and great muralist.

Tony Belton is Labour councillor for Latchmere ward.

SWEET MEMORIES

Christine Eccles shares the ups and downs of nostalgia sites

Facebook is awash with nostalgia sites. You know the kind of thing – Memories of Old Battersea, Growing Up in SW11, Battersea Remembered. These sites proliferate because feuds erupt, people get slung out and then start their own site. In May 2015 that happened to me and Steve (whom I've never met). We were thrown out for taking issue with someone who was flooding Battersea Pictures with untitled pictures. The BP Admin took sides with the culprit, not us, so out we went and created Battersea Memories.

It's quite powerful being Admin. It's also quite tough. Your rules might ban racism, sexism etc but a fair few of your members are racist and sexist and troll the posts to scatter their sneaky dog-whistling Ukipperry. I lasted six months and then handed it over to Steve.

Battersea Smell

Most of Battersea Memories' members left Battersea in the 1950s/60s and the average age is 70 plus. Wearing their rose tinted spectacles, they reminisce

fondly about pie'n'mash, the Battersea Smell, Bog Island, Deadman's Alley, Christmas at Arding's, Saturday down Northcote Market... Only a few tell the grimmer reality; outdoor lavatories, bugs, vicious canings at school, pollution, bomb damage, damp – all the reasons they fled Battersea for a cleaner and more prosperous life.

But then someone posts about an ancient relative who was a leading light in the 1926 General Strike and hoisted the red flag over the Town Hall. Allegedly. Sometimes they post amazing photographs or are witness to an important piece of history, like the V2 bombings of Christ Church.

Old friends

Most often they post praise of Maggie Brown's pie shop. Many have found old friends and forgotten relatives on the site. All of them hate the Battersea of today. They hate the modern glass and steel high rises, they hate the posh yuppies who've pushed up property prices, they hate the gated communities when back in the day nobody even locked the front door.

I've grown quite fond of them, all 9,200 of them, cantankerous, semi-literate and unlovely as so many of them are. They are the voice of a



Tram tracks and perambulators outside Arding & Hobbs. One of the vintage photos posted on Battersea Memories

vanished Battersea. Because what they are bringing to life is not just popular history but the bittersweet memories of youth, 'those blue remembered hills'. Who needs the Malvern Hills when you have Battersea Park?

SAVED BY THE VOTERS: DOUGLAS JAY MP AND THE MOTORWAY THAT NEVER WAS

How Battersea was nearly carved up for ringways. Sue Demont tells the story

‘A recklessly destructive and extravagant project’. No, not Crossrail 2 or the expansion of Heathrow, but the seriously-considered London Ringways proposal under the 1969 Greater London Development Plan. Its impact on Battersea and many other districts of inner London would have been destructive indeed. The quote above comes from Douglas Jay, Labour MP for Battersea North (1946 – 1983), whose interest in the Ringways proposal was piqued when, on querying why a much-needed local housing project was being blocked, he was told that the former London County Council (replaced in 1965 by the GLC) had a proposal to build ‘some road’ on that particular site.

Jay, a formidable intellectual, delved into the detail behind this cryptic remark and duly found it to be ‘the tip of a mysterious much larger iceberg’. In-principle outlines of a series of concentric motorways, or Ringways, had been in the public domain for some years, but there was little publicity about their likely impact on particular neighbourhoods, streets or homes. Indeed, it was often difficult even for local authorities to establish exactly which routes were being proposed and

which buildings they would destroy, a matter of ongoing debate among urban historians to this day.

Impact on Battersea

This map shows that Ringway 1 would have crossed the Thames beside Cremorne Bridge, then extended across north Battersea onto a flyover above Clapham Junction, along Eversleigh Road on the Shaftesbury Estate to an interchange at Queenstown Road (the only way onto the Ringway for Battersea residents). This eight-lane highway would have continued across Stewart’s Lane railway depot before curving south-east towards Clapham. Streets scheduled for demolition included Abercrombie Street and Home Road, with further destruction of Battersea neighbourhoods required to accommodate a section of Ringway 2 between Clapham Junction and Wandsworth.

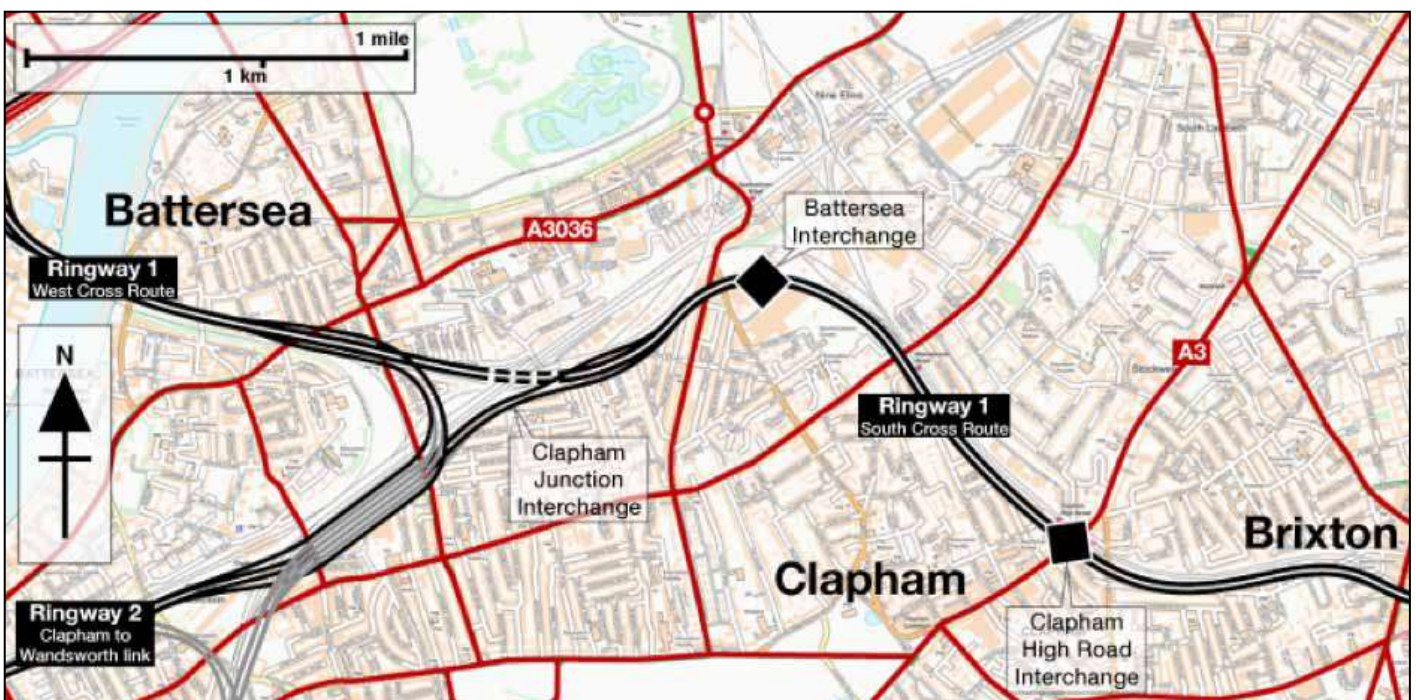
In total the boroughs of Battersea and Wandsworth would have lost around 2,800 houses (containing many more actual households), 300 flats and 3% of their geographical area to the Ringways scheme. Despite this, in 1967 Wandsworth Council (comprising both former boroughs) initially supported

Ringway 2, though councillors recommended an alternative river crossing further west (not accepted by the GLC) to save an estimated 1,750 homes in Battersea.

Institutions were also affected. For example, a 1966 survey of Battersea’s parish churches makes interesting reading. The Greater London Development Plan had still to be published, yet the authors began their report by noting that:

(Battersea) is dominated by the railways, which often determine the neighbourhood patterns. The proposed motorway will tend to underline these divisions if the present route is adhered to...

Although the exact routes were not known, the survey attempts to assess their potential impact on Battersea’s churches. Christ Church (Cabul Road) would find itself next to a motorway on its northern side, whilst the southern end of St Stephen’s parish would be cut off from its church in Battersea Bridge Road. The now Grade II listed St Mark’s, Battersea Rise would have been severed from its own vicarage by another stretch of highway and the parish of St Paul’s



on St John's Hill would be carved into three separate sections by an eight-lane overhead motorway. Though still on the drawing board, the Ringway scheme was already affecting planning and decision making at a local level.

Cometh the man

By 1968, Douglas Jay had got to work. Having ascertained that large parts of his constituency would have been 'laid waste by intersecting overhead motorway viaducts' he undertook to organise a London-wide cross-party campaign whereby affected boroughs would join forces to challenge the very principle of Ringways 1 and 2. This he felt was far more powerful than haggling over routes within individual boroughs. The movement's first public meeting was held in Battersea in February 1968, and a month later Jay became chairman of LMAG (London Motorways Action Group) with the Conservative MP Duncan Sandys as his deputy. There was widespread support from the inner London boroughs (from 1971 including Wandsworth) with apparently one exception; the spokesmen for Chelsea 'tended to argue that all traffic should be pushed into Battersea!'

Jay likened the Ringway proposals to the architect- and developer-led plans for high rise estates; in both instances he felt that vested interests were driving policy rather than the needs and wants of residents. He saw the campaign as 'a classic case of a struggle between the common people and the technocrats, in which the common people were right.' He was proud of the prominent role played by Battersea residents in the fight, and readers might like to note that the Battersea Society was one of the amenity groups attending LMAG's inaugural meeting. The campaign achieved its first major objective when the Government set up the Layfield Inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan, which opened in



Ringway Westway under construction

1970. More than 22,000 objections to the Plan were received, overwhelmingly focused on its road transport proposals.

Objection

Battersea organisations were also active in the London Amenity and Transport Association (LATA) chaired by Michael Thomson, whose authoritative book 'Motorways in London' set out to demonstrate that quite apart from the impact upon people's homes and neighbourhoods, the scheme would not fulfil its intended purpose of alleviating traffic congestion. Battersea Labour Party lodged their own objections to Ringways 1 and 2 and gave evidence at the separate Inquiry into the 'particularly mortal threat to Battersea' posed by the West Cross Extension route (see map).

This scheme was happily overturned, but when Layfield reported in 1973, its shock recommendation (given the level of objections) was to proceed with Ringway 1. Jay and his allies refused to give up, encouraged by the London Labour Party's now outright opposition to the scheme which generated a vigorous campaign in the 1973 GLC elections under the simple slogan 'Stop Ringway 1'. At the same

time Jay took the fight into Parliament, attracting considerable support for his motion attacking excessive road expenditure and deploring the London motorways proposals. Labour celebrated their victory in the GLC elections by announcing the immediate abandonment of Ringways 1 and 2.

In Douglas Jay's words, Battersea and indeed much of London had been 'saved by the voters!' As he put it

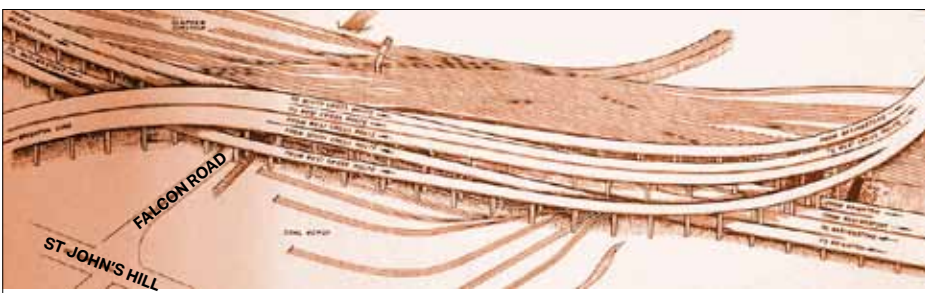
(if) Ringway 1 had actually gone ahead, an almost unprecedented fiasco would have resulted. Just when petrol prices were nearly trebled in 1974, and when all government expenditure had to be pruned, London would have been left... with half-finished concrete monstrosities, costing hundreds of millions to complete, in the midst of dismembered and derelict residential areas.

Much as we might lament some of the changes that have been wrought in Battersea over the past half century, the Ringways saga reminds us that it could have been a whole lot worse.

Sources

Nigel Black The curious tale of Wandsworth's motorways (*Wandsworth Historian no.106 Autumn 2018*).
Douglas Jay Change and Fortune (1980)
The Battersea Deanery Survey of 1966 (with thanks to Mark Cornwall-Jones)

www.roads.org.uk/ringways
Sue Demont is the chair of the Battersea Society's heritage committee



WALKING BATTERSEA'S HIDDEN PARKS

The Battersea Society's first Open House walks proved popular. Clare Graham reports

London Open House is an annual festival celebrating the architecture and urban landscape of London; it's organised every September by the charity Open City, which aims to make London a more accessible, equitable and open city. Open House began in 1992 and soon became a well-established and popular event in the London calendar, with many fine but normally inaccessible buildings opening up to offer free public tours. An architectural historian myself, I'd taken advantage of many of these over the years. In 2020, with the challenges of Covid, Open House offered virtual tours of buildings and self-guided walks to download. As a trustee of the Battersea Society, I'd long wondered if we could consider participating ourselves; I thought it would be both a fun thing to do, and a useful profile-raiser for the Society.

Pride

The Open House team starts planning the festival each spring which once more posed a challenge in 2021, with lockdowns and social distancing regulations still to the fore. Even if group tours inside buildings were permissible again by September, how many big institutions would be prepared to host them? Sensibly therefore, Open House 2021 took as two of its main themes Local London (exploring community buildings, libraries, local arts, pubs and public realm, to give Londoners the opportunity to show their pride in their areas and institutions) and Architecture and Wellbeing (promoting mental health and wellbeing through visits to mindful architecture, and quiet tours

exploring areas off the beaten track). Happily my fellow trustees agreed that these themes gave us a great way to try participating ourselves for the first time, drawing on our recently-published walking guide, *Discovering Battersea's Open Spaces*. As its author and chair of the Open Spaces committee, I would offer a guided walking tour, exploring some of our smaller, less well known local parks.

Our first step was to get this event, and the Battersea Society, registered and approved by Open City. That proved quite a bureaucratic and demanding process first time round, though it would be easier another year. Open House is after all a big festival, with a high reputation to maintain. Each building, tour or other event receives its own listing, published in full on the Open City website, and more briefly within a printed guide. For this, participants need to provide a good selection of photographs, a detailed historical factsheet (with paper copies available to hand out on the day) and all the other practical information visitors might want walk length and duration, nearby public transport links, etc.

But the effort is well worthwhile, considering how many people you can expect to reach via Open City's excellent publicity machine. I was also very grateful for its new in-house booking system, which made it easy for us to restrict group numbers to a manageable 25, with meeting point details only

disclosed to successful applicants.

On our listing I called our walk Battersea's Hidden Parks – both because 'hidden' always sells, and because many of the open spaces we would be visiting really are tucked away, and hard to find. Taking 90 minutes, and



following traffic-free routes wherever possible, it started and ended outside the Lighthouse pub in Battersea Park Road—where the staff proved both interested and accommodating, welcoming in anybody wanting to use the pub's facilities before the tour. From there we set off for nearby Latchmere Recreation Ground, and then took in Falcon Park, Shillington Park, Falcon

Glade, York Gardens, Harroway Gardens, Vicarage Gardens, Fred Wells Gardens and Christchurch Gardens. We offered two afternoon tours initially, on consecutive Saturdays; in another innovation, Open House 2021 ran over two weekends. Those walks filled up as soon as they were released in early August. So then we offered two more on the Sundays, and those too booked out straight away.

Worthwhile

Various Society trustees and Open Spaces committee members kindly helped me out as stewards, and we all felt that the tours went very well. While not everyone who had booked turned up on the day – this is apparently a common issue, since all events are free, encouraging people to overestimate how many they can get to – those who did were a lovely bunch: enthusiastic, interested and appreciative. They were also notably more diverse than our regular audience, coming from all over London and far beyond, with representatives from all age groups and many different ethnicities. Some bought copies of our walking guide, and we also received some nice thank you emails. All in all it felt like a very worthwhile venture, and something that I hope we can build on in 2022 – perhaps by offering another walking tour, taking in some local heritage buildings.



CAN BATTERSEA GET TO NET ZERO? PART 2: TRANSPORT

We need to drive less, says Michael Jubb

We face many challenges if we want to meet the Government's target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 60% on current levels by 2035, and the legal requirement to reach net zero by 2050. Reductions on this scale will require changes that affect each of us, since we as individuals are on average responsible for more than a third of all carbon emissions. In my last article, in the autumn issue of *Battersea Matters*, I focused on the first of two important sources of our direct emissions: the energy we use in our homes. In this article I focus on the second major source: the transport we use to move about.

Across the UK, private transport – even excluding air transport – accounts for around 16% of all emissions. In inner London, car ownership is lower, and the use of public transport (and cycling), higher than elsewhere. In the early stages of the pandemic, travel of all kinds – especially commuting via tube, train and bus – fell drastically. The number of railway passengers in 2020/21 fell to levels not seen since 1872. There have been two significant recent developments.

Bail-outs

First, while public transport use has increased, it is far from pre-pandemic levels. Bus journeys in London, for example, are at roughly 70% and tube journeys at 60% of 2019 levels. This has put the finances of public transport at risk. The franchise system for train operating companies has collapsed, and they have received more than £10bn to keep reduced services running. TfL has needed repeated temporary bail-outs, and it faces a funding shortfall of £1.5bn a year.

Second, road traffic volumes have increased above pre-pandemic levels, by up to a third in Wandsworth. Congestion has got worse, due to some people's reluctance to use public transport, and to the steep rise in home delivery services. Emissions have increased, and measures to reverse these trends, or to mitigate their effects, have so far had little impact.

For us as individuals, the Government's recent *Decarbonising Transport*

strategy is built around two key shifts in our behaviour: more of us using public transport, or walking and cycling (known as 'active travel'), especially for short trips; and for longer trips, or where public transport is not feasible, using zero-emission vehicles, including motorbikes and scooters. It's clearly important that each of us thinks hard about using our cars less, even as we face increases in bus, tube and rail fares.

The balance of costs has shifted in favour of cars in recent years - the freezing of the level of fuel duty since 2011 has led to 5% more road traffic and millions fewer bus and rail journeys.

The recent increases in petrol prices may provide a disincentive for some of us to use our cars, though there is little sign of that yet.

More funding is promised to improve the infrastructure for walking and cycling; and the GLA and Wandsworth Council have worked together to set targets to increase the proportion of local trips taken on foot or by bike; and the proportion of residents walking or cycling each day. The benefits to our health and well-being from 'active travel' should be clear to us all; but cycling, while increasing fast, still accounts for only 4% of trips in Wandsworth. The Council is currently consulting on a local strategy to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including more school streets; but it does not include plans to introduce more low-traffic neighbourhoods.

A shift to zero-emission cars also poses challenges. Last year the Government brought forward its proposed ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030. Sales of electric cars rose fast in the latter part of 2021, rising to 15% of all car sales, but they still represent only 330,000 of the 31.5 million cars registered in the UK.

Many people are waiting for a greater range of electric cars to become available, especially at the cheaper end of the market. A concern for many

Inset: An electric car looks happy getting charged through its 'nose'!

of us, particularly in Battersea where many people rely on on-street parking, is the lack of an effective charging infrastructure. Wandsworth Council is proud that it has some 800 public charging points, more than most authorities in the UK. But that is far from the number that will be required, given that there are more than 80,000 cars, 6,000 motorbikes and 5,000 vans registered in the borough.

It will be long beyond 2030 before all cars on the road are electric. The Government estimates that 46% of cars will be zero emission by 2035, and people may keep the petrol and diesel cars

they have already bought for long after then. It will be particularly important that drivers of SUVs (aka Chelsea tractors) are persuaded to change to electric as speedily as possible. The popularity of petrol and diesel SUVs has more than cancelled out any reductions in emissions achieved through the take-up of hybrid and electric cars.

Incentives

We will require much stronger incentives either to abandon our cars, or to use them less frequently. Road pricing may be one answer. It is notable that both the rise in charges for the congestion zone and the introduction of the ULEZ appear to have been accepted with little opposition. But further suggestions, such as a charge for cars crossing the Greater London boundary from outside, or a widespread pay-per-mile road user charge, seem likely to face formidable opposition. The *Decarbonising Transport* strategy says nothing about road pricing. But pressure to introduce some method of making us pay according to how much, and where, we use our cars – electric or not - won't go away, especially as the Government grapples with how to recoup the loss of £billions in fuel duties that will result from the move to electric.

Michael Jubb is a trustee of the Battersea Society.



GREAT BUS JOURNEYS OF THE WORLD NO 31

Nine years after his first trip Mike Roden catches the 344 from Clapham Junction to Liverpool Street



Since I took this journey in Summer 2012 unsurprisingly there have been quite a few changes along the route so it seemed time to take another trip. The 344 is a relative newcomer to the TfL system, having only been introduced in 1991. Many of you will recall how congested and uncomfortable a journey could be 20 years ago when the route used single-deckers. Following a campaign led by the late Samantha Heath, a GLA councillor, the then Mayor Ken Livingstone undertook to replace them with a fleet of double-deckers.

Falcon

So off we go from Clapham Junction station on a chilly winter's morning in 2021. We turn left past the long established Falcon pub, definitely here since 1733, but there was almost certainly an inn of that name long before that. The long corner site across the road - once home to a furniture dealers and in recent years the Revolution cocktail bar - was taken over by JD Wetherspoons in 2020 and is now home to The London and South Western (named after the railway).

Falcon Road hasn't changed much since 2012. No doubt some shops and take-aways have closed, but others have taken their place. The Prince's Head pub has gone, losing its licence in 2015 after popular but undeniably illegal after-hour sales of alcohol. It has been replaced by the Energie Fitness Gym on the ground floor of a five storey block of flats.

We turn right past the Asparagus – another Wetherspoons pub – whose name recalls the crop Battersea's market gardens were famous for producing during the 19th century. We're on Battersea Park Road, which

has only had that name since 1871: before that it had been Battersea Road, and then Lower Wandsworth Road.

Newcomers here since 2012 include the Battersea Flower Station which took over a strip of disused land by the railway line a few months after my first 344 trip. There's also been an upsurge in the arrival of small coffee and bakery shops. We've also gained two barbers and two sushi take-aways as well as many other changes of name and ownership. I don't see too many shuttered premises which is good, indicating that many local shops and business have survived if not prospered during lockdown.

The Latchmere (home of the award winning Theatre 503) stands on the corner of Latchmere Road, which in the Middle Ages was known as Pig Hill Lane because of the large number of piggeries here. The road formed part of Latchmoor Common, an area of common land belonging to the parish.

The bus stops outside Dovedale Cottages. These almshouses were founded in 1841 by Mrs Ann Maria Lightfoot and her daughter for 'persons in reduced circumstances professing godliness'. Improved and expanded over time this is now classified as social housing, catering for people aged from 55 to 75 years, preferably evangelical Anglicans.

Royal laundry

Harris Academy was once a failing school but its fortunes have now turned around and in 2018 it was judged by Ofsted as 'outstanding'. The nearby St Saviour's Church was consecrated by the bishop of Winchester in October 1871. In Victorian times the Imperial Laundry across the road had a contract with Buckingham Palace. The palace

where once royal smalls were scrubbed is now home to interior design, media and creative companies.

New tube station

After the junction with Queenstown Road we pass Battersea Park station, opposite the grade II listed Masons Arms where pianist George Shearing began his career. The bus stops near the Dogs and Cats Home (rebranded Battersea) serving the needs of the capital's abandoned animals since 1871. Back in 2012 I commented that the future of its neighbour the Power Station 'was as uncertain as ever'. The development may have its detractors (especially over the lack of affordable housing) but where once a crumbling building stood in the middle of a wasteland, Circus West has become a popular destination, and more of the riverside has been opened to everyone. What's more, there's a new tube station and a regular riverboat service.

Over the road New Covent Garden Market is also under development with promises to turn the area into an exciting new Food Quarter, alongside the new fruit, veg and flower market, with new homes, shops and commercial space, and more green space.

We speed on past the expensively exclusive Riverlight Quay development and then the exclusively expensive Embassy Gardens with its own busy shops and bars and of course the notorious Skypool: a 'unique swimming experience' available only to those with enough money to afford an apartment here. The nearby US embassy was already well established when it planned an official opening in 2018 during President Trump's visit to London. He refused to come south of the river to such an 'off' location. His loss not ours.

We pass through Vauxhall Bus Station then head quickly along the Albert Embankment. This opened in 1869 with the twin aims of protecting low-lying areas of Lambeth from flooding and providing a new road to bypass local congested streets. Like all river frontages this one is now home to large developments of luxury (or unaffordable) flats. The Norman Foster designed tower named the Corniche promises panoramic views over the Houses of Parliament and 'is perfectly placed to capture the unique beauty and personality of the London metropolis'.

There are unsurprisingly few older buildings here now but the Rose pub on the corner of Tinworth Street since 1891 survives. A glance at the menu provides no surprises – it's a traditional gastropub with predictably high prices. Ambitious plans to redevelop the London Fire Brigade HQ to include housing, a modern fire station and a new Fire Brigade museum faltered in June 2021 when the government rejected the application despite Lambeth council's approval.

Garden museum

Before reaching Lambeth Bridge and Lambeth Palace the bus turns onto Lambeth Road past the Church of St Mary-in-Lambeth. There's been a church here since 1062, but the building is now home to the excellent Garden Museum, and to its associated café. Both worth a visit.

It's not long before the distinctive cupola of the Imperial War Museum appears. Founded in 1917, the museum now looks at all conflicts in which British or Commonwealth forces have been involved since 1914. It moved to the current site in 1930. This building was originally home to Southwark's Bethlem Hospital and while known as Bedlam was notorious for charging to view 'the freaks of Bethlehem'.

On St Georges Road we pass the massive RC Cathedral. Designed by Augustus Pugin, it opened in 1848. The cathedral was badly bombed during World War 2 and was reopened in 1958 after extensive changes to the interior inside Pugin's original structure.

Marshy

We're heading towards Elephant and Castle now. The obelisk in St George's Circus records the distances from Palace Yard, London Bridge and Fleet

Street. (A mile or so in each case). I catch a quick glimpse of the Michael Faraday Memorial in the middle of Elephant and Castle's 'peninsula' before the bus turns onto Newington Causeway. For centuries this was the only way across the marshy land in this part of Kennington.

Hospital

On Southwark Bridge Road the bus enters a mostly residential area. A few Victorian terraced houses survive along here, but most apartment blocks are of more recent date. Mint Street Park sits on the site of the Evelina Children's Hospital, which from 1869 to 1976 tackled the high rate of childhood diseases prevalent in the crowded streets of Bankside.

Dickensian references abound. Quilp Street which crosses the park clearly refers to the central villain in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Marshalsea Road reminds us that this was the site of the Marshalsea Debtors' prison where Charles Dickens's father was imprisoned for debt. The prison is the setting for *Little Dorrit*. And I spot Copperfield Street over to our left.

Back to modern times, the Shard is a looming presence up ahead as we turn right onto Southwark Street and pass the Menier Chocolate Factory – built in 1870 by a French company as its first outpost in Britain. The building was derelict by the 1980s, but after an expensive renovation project opened in 2004 as an arts complex incorporating an art gallery, restaurant, and the award-winning theatre.

London Bridge approaches and Borough Market is not far away. Trading on the bridge itself ended in the thirteenth century when stalls selling grain, fish, vegetables and livestock were moved to Borough High Street and there's been a market here ever since. A shiny new glass fronted market hall arrived here in 2013 and proclaims itself the gateway to the market.

Nearby Southwark Cathedral (more correctly The Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie) sits on a site occupied by a church since 606AD, (and probably a Roman temple before that) and was designated a cathedral in 1905.

The current London Bridge opened in 1973, replacing a Victorian

Left to right: Dovedale Cottages, Battersea; Nine Elms Tube Station; the Menier Chocolate Factory theatre, Southwark

stone-arched bridge, which in turn superseded the medieval structure. It often features in films, showing crowds of commuters heading towards their City offices. TS Eliot refers to the sight in *The Wasteland*: 'Under the brown fog of a winter dawn, A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many, I had not thought death had undone so many.' Among other things he is drawing parallels with men marching in their thousands towards death in the trenches of WW1.

The bridge has seen its share of death in recent times. In 2017 Islamist terrorists drove into pedestrians on the bridge killing three, and five more died during their subsequent rampage through Borough Market. In 2019 a knife attack by Usman Khan at nearby Fishmongers' Hall resulted in two deaths, with the killer's escape thwarted by several people fighting back on the bridge. All the perpetrators were shot dead by the police.

Literary

As we head off the bridge there's an excellent view of two newish London landmark buildings dubbed the Cheese-grater and the Walkie Talkie (home to the stunning Sky Garden) with a cluster of other tall buildings behind them. After Monument Station we turn up Gracechurch Street. As usual with London streets it's easy to come up with literary references. In *Pride and Prejudice* it's home to Lizzie Bennet's aunt Mrs Gardiner and in *Great Expectations* Pip has a meeting with Estella in the Swan and Two Necks.

Along Bishopsgate we're travelling through a shadowy canyon, surrounded by tall anonymous buildings either side. We pass Threadneedle Street, home to the Bank of England. Its name may derive from the threads and needles used by the Merchant Taylors whose hall has been on this street (originally part of Broad Street) since 1347.

The bus turns up Wormwood Street and then onto Broad Street. And suddenly we are stopping outside Liverpool Street Station. I head inside in search of a quicker route home than the 344 bus.

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

CHILDREN'S GRAVES AND CHERRY BLOSSOM

Cathy Rowntree explores St Mary's cemetery

St. Mary's cemetery opened in 1860, when rapid house building 'twixt the commons', was not anticipated. It soon became full, necessitating larger facilities in Morden in 1891. Nowadays, as well as being a cemetery, it is a refuge for wildlife – squirrels, foxes, birds such as woodpeckers – and a place where you can enjoy wild flowers and take delight in cherry blossom in the springtime, while exploring its history.

Entering through the original wrought iron gates on Bolingbroke Grove, you will find tucked round to the left a grave remembering 'The Hero'. Arthur William Hardwick, born 1900, was the wireless operator of the EX Egypt who gave his life trying to get help for others, and supposedly drowned in May 1922.

John Burns

Probably the most important grave is on the corner of the path to the right, that of John Burns, MP for Battersea from 1892 to 1918 and a key figure in the history of trade unionism, who coined the phrase, 'The Thames is liquid history'. His grave from 1943 was re-dedicated in 2002 with an address by Tony Benn.

Directly ahead are the disused mortuary chapels, Church of England on the left and non-conformist on the right. Try to imagine the horse-drawn hearses arriving here escorted by black-clad Victorian mourners. To the right are two of the fifteen WW1 soldiers' graves, carefully tended by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, one tragically dated the day before the armistice.

Continuing on the right where the path divides is one of the most poignant graves, that of May Newman, aged 10 months and her sister, Marie, 2 years and 4 months, who died within four days of each other in March 1891. 'Sweet rosebuds from earth now taken ... borne by the angels to bright happy mansions above.' About halfway down on the right on the path, your attention is drawn by a hooded figure on the Montford family



Fascinating stories are to be found on a walk round St Mary's cemetery

grave where a gifted young scholar is mourned. Stepping down at the end, backing onto Shelgate Road, are three imposing monuments to the Evans family. One lists five siblings who died between 1868 and 1888, aged between 5 months and 2 years old. What heartbreak for these and many other parents, making us thankful for modern immunization programmes.

In the 1890s, life expectancy was only about 32 years. While some lived much longer, child mortality brought the figures down. In Battersea's 'Statistics for Mortality', in the year 1893/4, of the 2,437 who died, 1,264 were under five years old. The main causes were respiratory, such as pneumonia, as well as problems at birth, but many were due to infectious diseases, such as measles, diphtheria and whooping cough.

The most expensive plots were reserved for the rich and famous and to the left of the chapels are sited the largest memorials. The dominating edifice honours John Humphery, Alderman of London and MP for Southwark, who died in 1863. Next is that of Sir William Rose, Colonel of the Royal London Military, MP for Southampton, who died in 1881. He was also Lord Mayor of London in 1862.

Next is the family vault of Henry Wheeler, 1873, who lived in Bolingbroke House, one of the five large houses in what is now Bolingbroke Grove. He bought it in 1858 and, controversially, the remaining land adjoining Battersea Rise was purchased by the Battersea Burial Board.

Grand monuments

Unusually there are a number of monuments that give the addresses of those interred, perhaps for reasons of prestige. Behind these grand monuments, but no less important, almost hidden in the grass is the grave of John Breese, 'Late Sergeant Major of HM Bodyguard. Formerly of the 11th



Hussars and one of the Balaclava 600,' recalling the famous Charge of the Light Brigade.

As you proceed towards Battersea Rise, there is a striking monument, clearly visible because of its stone ball of flame. It is in loving memory of a Parsee student, and member of the Middle Temple Inn, fire being a primary symbol of the Zoroastrian religion. It is rare because followers would not normally be buried. In front is the grave of Eliza Jarman, for sixty years a pupil and then the beloved matron of the Royal Masonic Institution opposite, on the present Peabody Estate site. Sadly a victim of vandalism, it is now partly buried in the unmown field.

Carriages entered through the double gates at the north-west corner on Battersea Rise and processed along the main drive towards the chapels. The drive is lined with smaller graves; one interesting headstone is illustrated with a steam engine. Unfortunately, the stone has crumbled so that the name has completely eroded, but you can just make out the words, 'was kill his duty' so perhaps he was the hero of a serious accident on the nearby railway. There is a date of 1906 on the back but it may concern someone else. Other railway-related graves include that of a worker, killed in a shunting accident in 1950.

There is much more that you can explore, but don't expect a brisk walk, as there are so many fascinating graves that your attention will constantly be drawn to a new story.



PLANNING MATTERS: WALKING AND CYCLING STRATEGY

The Council's consultation paper is promising, says Monica Tross

We have welcomed the Council's launch of a Walking and Cycling Strategy and responded in full. There is a lot to like in the draft – and not much with which we would disagree. We have made quite a few comments and suggestions prompted by the action points and have aimed to be constructive. See our website for the full response – and let us know if there are concerns you have which we need to be alert to as the dialogue continues.

There is a problem overall in that targets are neither firm enough nor tied to any individual department. Targets for numbers of people walking and cycling set out on page 12 of the draft are clear but those for other actions are set out in very general terms using words such as 'improving', 'prioritising', 'transforming' and so on combined with phrases such as 'as much (or as many) as possible'. In terms of who will be responsible the strategy states that: 'Responsibility for delivery of this strategy will be shared principally between the Council's Transport Strategy, Highways and Air Quality teams'. Given the inevitable restrictions on staff and financial resources it would have been helpful to have had a summary of priorities, timing and the name of the responsible department. But I want to end on a positive note. It is great that the Council has drawn up a strategy and that they are consulting on it. This is a draft and we look forward to some of our concerns being met in the final text.

MEANWHILE PROJECTS

Some of you may have noticed the 'meanwhile' project in Ebury Bridge Road in front of Westminster Council's redevelopment of their housing blocks in that area, opposite the former Chelsea Barracks site. These comprise temporary pop up businesses, a café and a community hall in rather jolly buildings. We talked about these with the Covent Garden Market team developing the Apex site to the east of the new market building. The walkway from Nine Elms underground through to Nine Elms Lane is one form of meanwhile use on the market site and we know the team are keen to see what can be done to



Battersea Power Station in 2013, before the start of redevelopment

enliven other areas before building starts. Plans for a new primary school on the former South London Mail site have been approved (2020/1119). Currently the school – and the associated community facilities – is due to open sometime in 2025/26 with work on the site starting a year or two before. We have asked if meanwhile uses can be considered here too, rather than the site being blocked off behind hoardings for several years. The team at Nine Elms were receptive to the idea and we will let you know when we hear more.

A NEW VIEW

Some of you will have visited the Shard or the London Eye and looked out over Battersea from the east. In a year or so we will be able to wave back from the top of the north western wash tower at Battersea Power Station. I was pleased to see that the 'Chimney Lift Experience' will not just be a chance to look across London but will also give information on the history of the Power Station. The application is 2021/5233 although there is not much in the way of pictures. Perhaps we can have a group outing for those not subject to vertigo.

UPDATES

We have just heard that new developers, Watkin Jones, (<https://www.watkinjonesplc.com>) are working on plans for the Bookers site in Battersea Park Road and will be consulting in the New Year. The original plans were approved back in 2019 (2015/6813),

and we are told the overall height will be similar but that there will be more affordable housing plus student accommodation rather than the private housing originally planned.

Dominvs have put in slightly different plans for their site next to the US Embassy (2021/4900). We will maintain our objection to this un-neighbourly over-development of the site.

Plans for 3 Culvert Road, 2021/5013 (adjacent to Harris Academy) are in and, as forecast, are for co-living units. We were concerned about plans for the area in front of 1 Prince of Wales Drive (2021/4044) and are pleased they have been withdrawn. At the other end of the Drive, at 124, we learn that this unsightly blue building (across from the Dog's Home) may be developed some time but that they will use it for short lets till then (2021/0809). Given that early discussions of the owner's intention to redevelop the site took place back in 2018 we are not holding our breath. Finally there remains no news of the outcome of the application to maintain the advertising sign at Wm Henry Walk (2021/3125) but bizarrely there is another application in for the same site, but without any details yet (2021/4175).

Feedback appreciated

We always like to hear from our members so get in touch at planning@batterseasociety.org.uk with your concerns, queries – or even criticisms. We like to know what you think.

READ ALL ABOUT IT: RIOTS IN LATCHMERE REC!

Book review: Clare Graham enjoys *Little Brown Dog*

It was a great pleasure to read, and now to recommend, this exciting new novel set in Edwardian Battersea. It's based on the intriguing and controversial real-life story of the Brown Dog affair. Many of you will already be familiar with that, as Ian Mursell gave the Society a lively lecture about it at St Mary's, back before lockdown. If not, I'll refer you to Wikipedia for a full account, and just say that in 1907 hitherto-peaceful Latchmere Recreation Ground, the centrepiece of Battersea's new showpiece municipal housing estate, became a national news story, as the focal point of prolonged and vicious rioting. Medical students were seeking to destroy, and anti-vivisectionists and locals to protect, a recently-installed memorial with this provocative inscription:

In Memory of the Brown Terrier Dog Done to Death in the Laboratories of University College in February 1903 after having endured Vivisection extending over more than Two Months and having been handed over from one Vivisector to Another Till Death came to his Release.

Also in Memory of the 232 dogs Vivisected at the same place during the year 1902. Men and Women of England how long shall these Things be?

That monument is no longer there – it vanished in 1910, after Battersea council switched from Labour to Conservative – but you will find the same inscription on its modern successor, which is situated in a quiet corner of Battersea Park.

Fearless

In real life, as in this novel, the story behind the memorial is a stirring one, an underdog tale featuring, as author Paula Owen puts it, 'One nameless stray. Two fearless young women. The wrath



Left: The original Brown Dog memorial by Joseph Whitehead, installed in Latchmere Rec in 1906, and removed in 1910. Inset: Kari Brownlie's book cover

account of the battle between Shell and Greenpeace over the final resting place of an abandoned North Sea oil storage platform. In this novel her scientific training and interest in protest evidently informed some of the most strongly written sections, for instance her descriptions of the riots, and of a villainous medic's experimental laboratory.

Some characters and other elements

have been fictionalised: most notably, the two Swedish feminists and activists behind the real-life memorial here become two young Englishwomen living in Battersea. One is a refugee from high society, the other works in our main library on Lavender Hill; this lets Paula make convincing use of some evidently detailed research into Edwardian London in general, and Battersea in particular.

Romance

It also introduces an element of romance, as a handsome young medical student gets drawn in as an informer... Read it for yourself, if you want to know more! And take a little time too to enjoy Kari Brownlie's clever, striking cover: a puzzle picture in the suffragette colours of white, violet and green, featuring a dog, a dress, two female profiles and some of the London landmarks that feature in the book.

Paula S Owen, Little Brown Dog, 2021, Honno Press, ISBN 978-1-912905-43-0 Available in paperback (£8.99) or as an ebook from Honno, Amazon and other online book retailers



of a ruthless medical establishment. A heroic fight for justice.' Two Battersea Society members can take the credit for inspiring her: in the acknowledgments, Paula records first hearing the tale of Brown Dog quite by chance, when she dropped into Battersea Arts Centre while a storytelling session was in progress. Her imagination was promptly gripped by Ian Mursell talking about Brown Dog, and Jeanne Rathbone about Battersea's strong suffragette links. Ian and Jeanne went on to advise Paula on early drafts of this, her first novel.

Paula is however no novice author; an environmental scientist with a particular interest in energy and sustainability issues, she has already written widely. Probably her best-known work remains *Decommissioning the Brent Spar*, (1999, Routledge), a non-fiction

CITIZENS NEED ADVICE MORE THAN EVER

Housing, debt and mental health issues have all increased, says Mary-Ann Foxwell

Citizens Advice Wandsworth (CAW) is an independent local charity [and part of the Citizens Advice network]. We help about 13,000 residents a year with a range of social welfare issues - most commonly benefits, housing, debt, employment, immigration, and family matters. We also spot patterns in the problems clients bring us, and work to address them.

All our work is underpinned by our core funding which is generously provided by Wandsworth Council, and we are really fortunate to receive funding from a range of other sources. CAW have two offices in the borough; one in Roehampton, and our head office in Battersea Library.

Online referral

We know we can't meet local demand for advice, so we also focus on preventative work; local advocacy, collaboration, capacity-building and partnership development. We host an online referral platform which partners use to refer clients directly to us, as well as to each other; in this way we try to prevent vulnerable residents falling between the gaps in services.

We also develop projects and services which are targeted at people most in need of advice. For example, we work closely with Wandsworth Foodbank and currently have four advisers providing advice to foodbank guests.

At the moment we have 42 paid members of staff and 65 active volunteers. Our committed, skilled and kind team is central to our ability to make a difference to the lives of our clients, and we are utterly dependent on the generosity of our volunteer workforce.

'I'm sure I speak for many volunteers when I say that CAW has played a big part in helping me to get through this time in a positive spirit by giving me something so worthwhile to be part of.' We endeavour to provide our volunteers with a stimulating experience within a supportive environment; our expectations are high – but so are the rewards! Our volunteer advisers undertake extensive training, reflecting the responsibility of their role. We offer a range of other volunteer roles including administration, IT, research and communications.

Before the pandemic clients accessed us in three main ways: by calling our telephone advice line, by dropping into one of our centres or by contacting us online. Our team assesses the client's needs and the urgency of their issue and we then provide an appropriate level of support; which might be providing a simple piece of information, or could involve multiple interactions and months of complicated casework.

New processes

As the country went into lockdown the entire CAW staff and most of the volunteers moved to home-working. We bought phones and laptops for everyone who needed them, and implemented new processes to support the delivery of remote services and to ensure we remained connected with each other.

Our relationships with community, voluntary, faith and statutory partners, established before the pandemic, equipped us well for lock-down delivery. These partners utilised the referral routes into our services - enabling us to reach people in need

of support, despite our offices being closed.

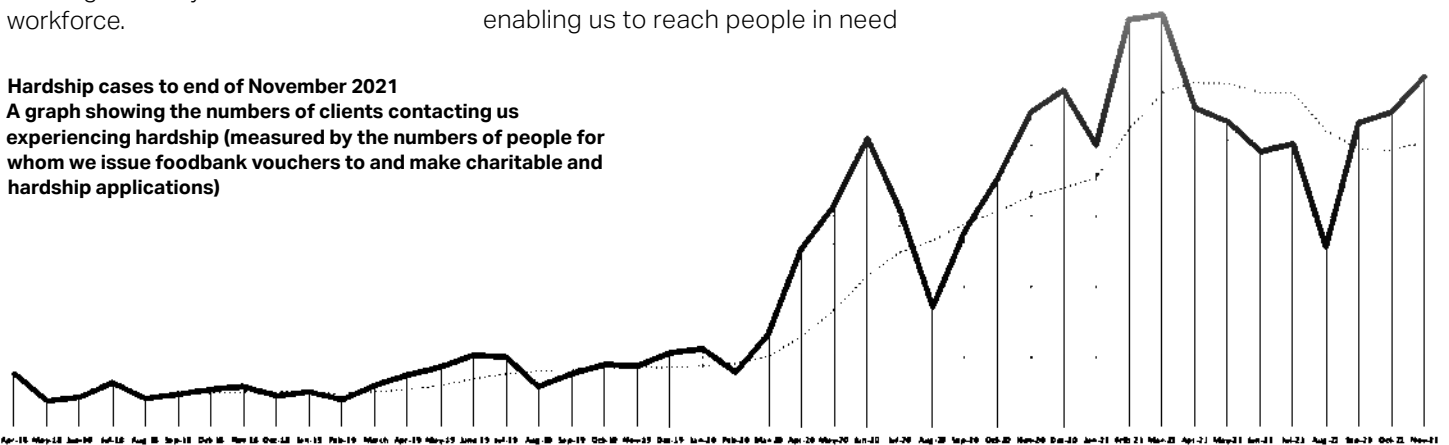
Liability

Initially, our client demographics totally changed as we were contacted by people who hadn't needed our assistance before. Notably, younger people, who needed advice on employment, claiming benefit and housing issues (we heard from many young people who had been living in shared accommodation, and were worried about rent liability when their house-mates returned to family homes outside London). Demand from our existing client groups was suppressed as Government concessions meant that benefits weren't reassessed, and court and bailiff action was halted.

However, as restrictions began to lift our client demographics have normalised. We continue to work mainly from home and have made adaptations which keep our service accessible; we provide face to face help (including home visits) to clients with the greatest needs, and our centres are open for those who can't access us in any other way. Our Adviceline service is free, and we provide interpreting services to all clients who need it.

'The advice I received was great. My mental health was very poor but after speaking to the lady who helped me I feel so much better, on the road to recovery, slowly but I'm getting there. Without this help I don't know what I'd have done.' ▶

Hardship cases to end of November 2021
A graph showing the numbers of clients contacting us experiencing hardship (measured by the numbers of people for whom we issue foodbank vouchers to and make charitable and hardship applications)



◀ We are concerned with the increasing numbers of clients who are coming to us with mental health issues, and with advice issues that relate to domestic violence.

Within the first few weeks of the lockdown period beginning we began to experience a rise in the numbers of people coming to us needing emergency help because of the hardship they were experiencing. We saw a 350% increase in the number of foodbank referrals we made.

Holly's rent is well above the local housing allowance rate. When she lost her job she was shocked to find out that she had only £3 left of Universal Credit to live off after paying rent. With no money left over for food, Holly came to us for food vouchers and support.

After a period of recovery earlier this year, levels of hardship amongst our clients are rising again, as the impact of the cut in Universal Credit and the increase in energy prices is felt.

Homelessness

During the pandemic period we've also seen an increase in the numbers of clients with housing and homelessness issues, debt and employment problems. Additionally, this period has overlapped with the introduction of the European Settlement Scheme [EUSS]; over the past 12 months we've supported hundreds of EU nationals in Wandsworth to retain their rights to live and work here.

You can find several reports into the experiences of our clients during the pandemic period on our website:

cawandsworth.org/about-us/reports And you can see films of our clients talking about the support we provided: cawandsworth.org/about-us/client-stories Finally, I want to say that the pandemic has also brought benefits. Our team is closer and more engaged than ever, we have a more responsive relationship with our Council colleagues and relationships with our community and voluntary sector partners have got stronger. We don't know what the future holds, but feel confident that we'll face it together.

Mary-Ann Foxwell is CEO of Citizens Advice Wandsworth

HOW NOT TO FALL

Falls can be dangerous. Physiotherapist Juliet Slade outlines how to prevent them.

Falls are one of the most common mechanisms of injury. Around one in three people over the age of 65 will have at least one fall a year, according to the NHS. Most falls happen within people's homes where one feels relaxed and may miss simple risk factors. A fall may not only cause an injury but may decrease a person's confidence, affecting their quality of life. If they then avoid some day-to-day activities due to fear, that can even potentially cause repeated tumbles.

There are many ways to minimise the risk of falling. It's important to assess your home environment. This could include taking away rugs that you could trip on and keeping rooms generally clear of trip hazards. It's also important to consider footwear. Backless shoes are harder to keep on your feet and big clumpy footwear makes it more difficult to clear the floor when walking. And high heels can bring unwanted drama!

Rails

The weather is another key environmental component to assess. Icy and wet surfaces are best avoided, but if that is impossible, try to hold rails or other surfaces for support.

As we get older our balance and vision can become impaired. This of course raises the risk of falling. In

addition our bones reduce in density and muscles can become weaker, which can make for more serious injuries such as fractures on the impact of the fall. Osteoporosis (a weakening of bone) is very common particularly in women over the age of 50, due to the loss of oestrogen post menopause. One in three women over 50 are likely to have osteoporosis compared to one in five men. This is another reason why fracture rates following falls are massively higher in older generations.

Wobble board

General conditioning of the body is key to maintaining muscle strength - this could be exercise classes, weight lifting, cycling etc. Whether we exercise with external weights or body weight, it keeps our bones loaded to encourage bone forming cells and strengthens our muscles. This kind of exercise should be undertaken around three times a week for at least 30 minutes to maintain and progress strength.

Your exercise should include balance training to improve stability. This could be as simple as standing on one leg while you brush your teeth, up to balancing on a BOSU - an unstable platform or wobble board. Balance training will also target your core which is a vital component to keeping

well balanced. Core is like a corset around your spine, so the tighter your corset the more stability it offers your body.

Another way of targeting core muscles is to do Pilates which aims to train your body to move with control from your centre.

A physiotherapist can provide you with a falls assessment to identify areas of weakness. This will include a gait assessment to highlight any corrections needed for safer and more efficient steps. The physio can also provide you with an exercise programme to target weak muscles and problems with balance.

Bones are kept strong by weight bearing, so even something as simple as walking will keep your legs strong to a degree. However if you add load such as resistance on a bike or carrying weights, your strength will progress much more effectively.

Juliet Slade is a chartered physiotherapist and clinical Pilates instructor.



COME AND JOIN KLS!

Kathryn Ede describes some volunteering opportunities

Kathryn Ede has been a volunteer with Katherine Low Settlement (KLS) for four years, initially with Early Years and English classes. Now she has a new role. How did she get there?

'I have lived in London for over 20 years and used to work in the City for Japanese trading firms, Mitsui and Sumitomo, in petrochemicals and then the food industry. I took time off to raise our two boys and quickly realised that I didn't want to return to that career. I had some experience teaching English to French children while at university and wanted to volunteer with a charity, which is how I found KLS. I've really enjoyed working with the fantastic, friendly team here and love helping the students to learn and progress. I'm now helping KLS to recruit volunteers for three new projects starting in the New Year'.



Probably most people in Battersea know of KLS, but in case you don't, let me explain. It is a well-loved charity that has been serving Battersea and the wider Wandsworth community since 1924. We have a small staff team and cannot operate without the support of

our dedicated volunteers. We run a range of projects to support older people, refugee communities and children, young people and families. We hold free ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from all over the world. 94% of our students are women, mainly from Somalia, Afghanistan and Syria.

Project 1: Discover London

This project is ably described below by Carol Rahn, who took the first Discover London bus trip, which she and the ESOL student clearly enjoyed. The plan is that volunteers will gain experience of teaching English in an informal setting and the chance to work with people from different cultures and background. We're looking for women volunteers who would be interested in this role. The idea is that they would meet once or twice a week to go to different places (ideally the volunteer will commit to six 2-hour sessions in the academic year).

Project 2: ESOL and Creativity

We are looking for volunteers to lead arts and crafts sessions on Wednesday afternoons (12:30-14:30, in blocks of 4-6 weeks). We would like to offer classes in knitting and crochet, machine and hand sewing, visual art (painting,

drawing, collage, photography, film making on a smartphone).

Many of our students say they have never had the time or opportunity to learn creative skills and such classes would also offer an opportunity to practice their English.

We also need volunteers to help with the running of these craft sessions.

Project 3: ESOL and Exercise

We are also looking for female volunteers to lead exercise sessions for our students. This could be fitness, yoga, walking or jogging sessions. Volunteers need to be sensitive to cultural differences and personal boundaries and be able to commit to 4-6 consecutive 1-hour sessions during term time (Wednesdays 11:30-12:30 or Fridays 11-12).

All of the above roles would suit someone looking for a fulfilling commitment, who would like to gain a different type of work experience whilst giving back to the community. Our volunteers need to have the patience to work with second language English speakers and be able to demonstrate new skills to students of all abilities.

We hope you'll join us. If you do, I hope you will find it as satisfying as I have.

How to volunteer with KLS:

Please email Kathryn@klsettlement.org.uk with a brief description of your background/experience, stating which project(s) you are interested in joining.

DISCOVER LONDON WITH KLS

Carol Rahn and Adassa take an exploratory bus ride

In the last edition of *Battersea Matters*, Fran Juckes, head of the ESOL programme at (KLS) introduced Discover London. This project aims to help the students, most of whom are adult women, discover more of the city by pairing up with a volunteer.

On a sunny, chilly day in late November, ESOL student Adassa and I set off on the very first of these outings. Armed with an Oyster card provided by KLS, a copy of the relevant Great Bus Journeys (with thanks to Mike Roden) and a London map, we took the number 19 bus from beginning to end, perched in our front row upstairs seats, taking in the scene as the buildings became

grandier and older and then transitioned again to more familiar patterns. Fortified by a coffee and a chat with a stranger in a coffee shop opposite Finsbury Park station ('Somalis always say hello to each other in London,' Adassa explained), we made our way home via the Victoria Line to Vauxhall and mainline train to Clapham Junction.

For Adassa, this was the first bus trip she could remember where she could just look and notice what was there, without having to worry about kids or whatever task had put her on the bus. Heading home, she cautioned that she usually avoided the trains and Tube because of all the stairs, but now she

knows that the wheelchair symbol on the TFL maps and the announcement 'This station has step free access' mean that there are escalators or lifts – although some required a bit of hunting to find.

The expedition was a pleasure for both of us, it took us into new territory and we are planning another. Our next target will be the National Gallery.

All of us tend to stick to well-known paths. Becoming a volunteer with Discover London is a great way to refresh our own experience of London and share it with someone else.

If you'd like to become a volunteer, contact Kathryn Ede at Kathryn@klsettlement.org.uk. Carol Rahn is a trustee of the Battersea Society

A PARTNERSHIP BEARING FRUIT

Dan Taylor describes how a garden brings people together on the Ethelburga estate

In a corner of our 1960s housing estate lies a hidden gem. A community garden has sprung up between the concrete blocks. We grow everything here, from pumpkins to artichokes to figs.

Since it was started by local resident Peter Lanigan-O'Keeffe a decade ago the garden has grown food, but its real magic is growing friends. During lockdown and months of isolation it has provided a valuable meeting place. We are proud of how diverse our estate is and the garden's What's App group, which we use to co-ordinate sessions, includes students from the Royal College of Art next door as well as local residents.

Our partnership with the RCA has

recently borne the best fruit yet. A colourful mural was opened in October, designed by South Korean student Seabomna Choe.

Mural

Sometimes council estates can appear intimidating. This mural, and the new planters, funded by the council, which have extended into the estate, are our contribution to softening the estate, bringing people together and tackling the climate emergency.

Special thanks are owed to our faithful head gardener Tim Graham, Auberon Bayley from Cultivate



London for training our volunteers and to Hannah Lambert from the RCA for making the mural happen.

If you would like to join the Ethelburga community garden team, please contact ethelburgacommunitygarden@gmail.com

Dan Taylor is chair of the Ethelburga Residents' Association

BATTERSEA WENT ALL OUT FOR CHRISTMAS!



Clockwise from to left: Spencer Park, Halston Close, Kelmscott Road, Cabul Road. Centre: Bolingbroke Grove Photos: Suzanne Perkins and Jenny Sheridan