



# THE PROBLEMS WITH PLOUGH LANE



Image copyright Sheppard Robson

*An artist's impression of the proposed AFC Wimbledon stadium on Plough Lane*

**As we go to press, there is still no date set for a decision on the controversial redevelopment of the Greyhound Stadium in Plough Lane. However latest indications from the Council suggest July or August.**

TOWARDS THE END of last year, AFC Wimbledon submitted formal plans with Galliard Homes to build a football stadium, to ultimately accommodate 20,000 fans, together with a 602-home development on the site of the current greyhound stadium.

Since then, several thousand submissions have been lodged with Merton Borough Council. They include a 15,000-signature petition from animal rights charity PETA which says it supports the AFCW proposal, provided it means the end of greyhound racing in Wimbledon.

Several thousand emails have also been received from AFCW supporters from as far afield as Hawaii, Russia, Australia and South Africa – as well as local supporters, following a campaign by the club to rally backing from

its own fans and the football community generally.

Hundreds of residents from Wimbledon and Earlsfield have registered their objections to the plans as they currently stand, citing worries about the size of the development, its traffic and transport implications, flooding issues and lack of infrastructure planning.

Importantly, a number of local resident groups have registered their concerns. They include, of course, the local Wimbledon Park Residents' Association but also the Raynes Park and West Barnes Residents' Association (RPWBRA) and Wimbledon East Hillside Residents' Association (WEHRA) – as well as, of course, our own Wimbledon Society.

There is no question that on large planning applications, cross constituency support is extremely helpful.

Many Statutory bodies have responded to the application: **Greater London Authority:** The Mayor of London's Office says the AFCW/Galliard Homes scheme for Plough Lane contravenes the London Plan on numerous grounds including lack of **(Continued on p3)**

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## AGM report 2015

THE SOCIETY held its 111th Annual General Meeting at Christ Church Hall on 16 May 2015. President Norman Plastow opened the proceedings, which were attended by some 70 members, with MP Stephen Hammond, Mayor David Chung and Mayoress Irina Chung among the guests.

Introducing his report for the year, Chairman Asif Malik welcomed guests and members. He thanked all volunteers, particularly those stepping down, including Cyril Maidment, a former Chairman of the Museum Committee.

The Chairman was sad to report the deaths of several key members, including Alan Elliot, who made an enormous contribution to the Museum, Martyn Harman, a former Society Chairman and Planning Committee Chair, Dr Elspeth Veale and Simon Boome, both keen supporters of the Museum.

Honorary Treasurer Corinna Edge presented the 2014 Accountants and Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, reporting the healthy state of Society finances, underpinned by successful sales of the 'Then and Now' book.

Norman Plastow was re-elected President and Pat Keith, Charles Toase and Tony Michael as Vice-Presidents. The Chairman – Asif Malik, Hon Treasurer – Corinna Edge and Hon Secretary – Sue Lang were also re-elected. Elected to the Executive Committee were Marsha Beresford, Linda Defriez, Monica Ellison, Janet Koss, John Mays, Jennifer Newman, Andrew Simon, Iain Simpson and Cassandra Taylor.

A proposal from the Executive Committee to incorporate the Society as a company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity, was approved without dissent by members present, and that the Resolution to approve the incorporation was adopted. Members authorised the Executive Committee to proceed with completion of this process by the end of 2015.

Members commented on the Society's work before the address by the guest speaker Philip Brook, Chairman of the All England Lawn Tennis Club. Mr Brook spoke about developments at the Club, past and present, and the role of the Club's charity, Wimbledon Foundation within the local community.

*SUE LANG, Honorary Secretary*

## Morley Park update

COMPLETION OF a new public park within the former Atkinson Morley's Hospital open land is now in sight with handover to Merton Council scheduled for June 2016. Work has started on a new sports pavilion and a cottage, both close to the Cottenham Park Road entrance. There will be another entrance gate from Copse Hill. The pavilion building will provide changing rooms, a multi-purpose hall and teaching room with catering facilities. The cottage, which replaces the former groundsman's

cottage, provides a rental income stream to fund the maintenance of the park.

Also, during May, new land drains will be laid, while grading and seeding of the now derelict sports fields will take place to provide four new grass sports pitches. The pavilion is expected to be completed by September 2016.

The pavilion and sports pitches are to be used during term time by students of the Ursuline High School and will be available to the community at other times.

The park will occupy the open land between Copse Hill and Cottenham

Park Road and stretch from the Oberon Playing Fields in the west up to and including the long-established footpath beside the former hospital building. In addition to the benefit of sports fields, to the south of the Wolfson Hospital site, a wildflower meadow with an attenuation pond will replace the old soccer pitch. The existing well-established woodland area will remain with a new pedestrian route through the trees. This combination of habitats already attracts a wide variety of wildlife and it is expected to provide a useful area for study and leisure.

## The Problems with Plough Lane (continued from p1)

provision of play space for children, over-dense housing, accessibility problems, its 'isolated' position amid commercial developments, and poor transport provision.

**The Environment Agency:** objects to the application, saying that it fails to: demonstrate that surface water can be managed; prove that it won't increase flood risk in the surrounding area; show that it helps reduce flood risk on the site (most of which is a highest risk category flood plain); indicate that sufficient flood storage compensation is provided in the development.

**Transport for London:** points out that public transport services to the site are limited, cycle parking provision is insufficient, taxi drop-off points are missing, there is no coach management plan for drop-off/pick-up of away fans, travel data for match-day impact is inadequate and public transport assessment is incomplete.

**NHS England:** rejects the application for failing to consult with local healthcare bodies over the demands of an increased population in the area, claiming to have carried out consultations

with an organisation that doesn't actually exist, and using inaccurate GP ratio/population assumptions.

**Sport England:** objects to the application because it fails to provide sufficient sporting facilities for residents of the proposed high-density housing development or the wider local community.

Neighbouring Wandsworth Borough Council has also officially objected to the application because in its current form it fails to properly address and resolve detrimental effects on local infrastructure, as well as the issues raised by statutory bodies listed above.

Our Conservative MP Stephen Hammond says "I think that the impact on the local community and on the social infrastructure must be resolved before any application can be passed. Like many people I am keen to see AFCW back in the borough, but not at the expense of local residents."

Tooting's Labour MP is of similar mind. He has written to Wandsworth Council, local residents in Earlsfield and Tooting that "issues including local infrastructure, traffic, parking and impact on local infrastructure all need to be resolved".

All these issues will have to be considered by Merton's Planning Applications Committee. We hope that they will give due weight to the key points put forward by the Society (See article on page 9 of the March newsletter) such as:

- the unsuitability of such a flood-prone site for housing, especially at the excessive density proposed;
- the applicants' failure to address the infrastructure and local environmental implications of a football stadium attracting up to 20,000 spectators – poor access to public transport, lack of car-parking space, and local access arrangements that would not be adequate to deal with the planned number of spectators.

It is clear from the public statements made by Cllr Judge, the Cabinet Member whose portfolio includes planning, that the Council's main interest is bringing the football club back to the borough. This undoubtedly will be an added pressure when the Planning Applications Committee has to make its decision.

*If you want to read more and well informed comment on the plans for the greyhound stadium go to [www.ploughlanestadium.wordpress.com](http://www.ploughlanestadium.wordpress.com)*



# Community assets

TO QUALIFY AS A Community Asset, a site has to be something that furthers the community's social well being. It could be cultural, sporting, recreational, libraries, community centres, pools, village shops, pubs, and could it seems be either publicly or privately owned. Applications to have a particular facility registered as a Community Asset can be made by community organisations (not individuals) and the decision to designate is made by the Council.

It has designated one site in Merton to date, with another eight proposed sites rejected. The effect of a designation is that when an

owner wants to sell the site, there will be a moratorium of up to six months during which time a community body can put forward a bid to buy the site.

The Society needs to consider whether it should put forward any local sites for possible designation. Would the riding stables in the High Street and/or the Ridgway qualify? What about the Wimbledon Library, the Theatre, the Polka? The Hartfield Road car park site as a future concert and community hall? The Whatley Avenue Adult Education centre?

Society members' views and suggestions would be welcomed.



"As local residents have objected to all development this year, there are no CIL payments for you..... but here is a consolation sapling"

## Telecoms upgrade means taller masts

THE FOURTH GENERATION (4G) of telecommunications masts are being "rolled out" nationally, and will allow far more extensive communications and information systems to be available.

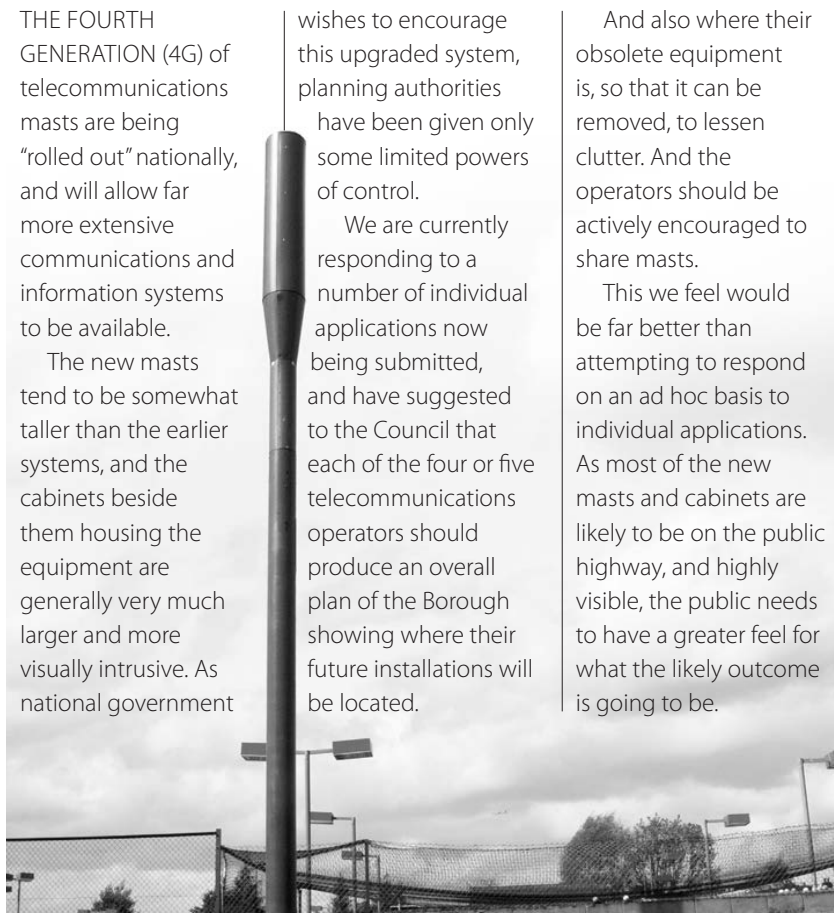
The new masts tend to be somewhat taller than the earlier systems, and the cabinets beside them housing the equipment are generally very much larger and more visually intrusive. As national government

wishes to encourage this upgraded system, planning authorities have been given only some limited powers of control.

We are currently responding to a number of individual applications now being submitted, and have suggested to the Council that each of the four or five telecommunications operators should produce an overall plan of the Borough showing where their future installations will be located.

And also where their obsolete equipment is, so that it can be removed, to lessen clutter. And the operators should be actively encouraged to share masts.

This we feel would be far better than attempting to respond on an ad hoc basis to individual applications. As most of the new masts and cabinets are likely to be on the public highway, and highly visible, the public needs to have a greater feel for what the likely outcome is going to be.



## Heritage funding

THE GOVERNMENT'S Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy on some kinds of development. The aim is to ensure that new developments contribute financially to the local community in which they are built, providing facilities that local people will need. The Government's list of allowable strategic projects to be funded seemingly does not allow councils to include proposals for Heritage or Conservation. Merton's "strategic" list of facilities includes education, libraries, open spaces, transport etc. However, the Council has asked the public to suggest projects that could also be funded by the very much smaller "local" CIL Levy.

The Planning Committee has therefore suggested introducing grants for conservation and for heritage repairs as a priority, plus tree planting, the Wimbledon Way walking route, and cycle parking.

The Council has yet to decide on which local schemes will be selected as priorities.

# Fire station splendour rekindled

ONE OF WIMBLEDON'S most cherished buildings is the Old Fire Station in the High Street, opposite the Dog and Fox. Built in 1890, it had a bell tower and a clock and housed a fire pump called the May Queen. In 1900, there was a serious fire at Cannizaro House, across the Common. Unfortunately, the hoses used by the Fire Brigade were too short to use water from the nearby Rushmere Pond. This resulted in the decision to build a new Fire Station in Queen's Road, opened in 1904. The Station has now moved on from this location too, which is now the shop 'Lakeland'. The carved stone signage denoting 'Wimbledon Fire Brigade' has been retained, and can be seen from Queen's Road.

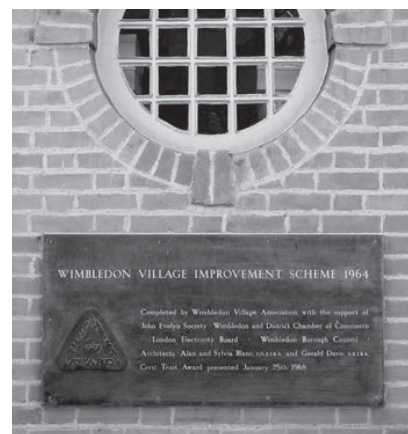
The Old Fire Station was used as shops and gained a listing. It received a facelift as part of the Wimbledon Village Improvement Scheme 1964, which was supported by the Wimbledon Society, then called the John Evelyn Society. Alan and Sylvia Blanc, a husband and wife team, were the architects for the Improvement Scheme and for works to the Fire Station. Their



*The fire station circa 1890 (above) and the bronze plaque back in place (right)*

designs included the restoration of the missing bell tower. The Scheme was awarded a Civic Trust Award in 1968, commemorated by a bronze plaque on the main facade of the building, a feature which became a familiar part of the streetscape of the Village.

The building has now undergone a further refurbishment, with Holden Harper acting as the architect. The work entails cleaning and restoration of the facades, and refurbishment of the first floor flat. Whilst the restoration work was in progress, we were concerned to note that the Civic Trust Award bronze plaque had disappeared. Discreet enquiry revealed that it had been placed in safe keeping



whilst the work to the facades was carried out. Following a meeting we held with the building owner, the plaque has been cleaned and reinstated in its original position.

It is good to see this fine building restored to a splendid condition befitting its significant place in the fabric of Wimbledon life.

## 'Carved in Stone' project looks for stories from WWI

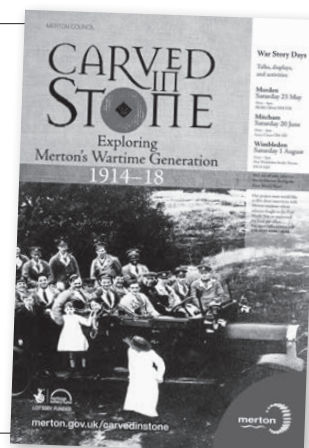
'CARVED IN STONE' is a Heritage Lottery funded initiative about Merton in the First World War.

The main aim of these events is to film

short interviews with descendants of war combatants or war workers and to record general family stories.

There are three War Story Days: May 23, 10am-4pm at Morden Library and Merton Civic Centre, London

Road, Morden; June 20, 10am-4pm, Acacia Centre, Grove Road, Mitcham; and August 1, 11am-5pm at Wimbledon Studio Theatre. More information is available via the Merton Memories website ([www.merton.gov.uk/memories](http://www.merton.gov.uk/memories)).





# WHEN FIVE BECAME TWO

**CHARLES TOASE charts the decline of high street banks in Wimbledon**

AT ONE TIME there were five banks in the High Street; now there will be only two. From the late 1930s to the 1960s there was Barclays at 75 and the Westminster at the other end of the row at 98, with two smaller ones in the middle: Lloyds at 86 and Martins at 92. Opposite, at 4 High Street, there was the National Provincial; interestingly, no. 4 was the temporary premises of the London & County Bank (NatWest) while the large building was being erected opposite in 1896.

Martins was bought by Barclays in 1969, and the branch closed in 1972. The branch of Lloyds opened in 1925 and is still there (although there is a planning application to demolish it). And the National Provincial merged with the Westminster in 1970 to form the National Westminster, or NatWest, and the imposing building on the corner of Belvedere Grove was extended next door to take in what had been the shop of Radio Electric.

The first bank in Wimbledon was down the Hill, the London & South Western in the Broadway (then called Merton Road) opposite the Town Hall. It became Barclays in 1918.

The first bank in the village was in The Ridgway. When I researched the history of all the banks in Wimbledon, I talked to the archivists of the various banking groups. Barclays' archivist did not know of the Ridgway branch, until I told him the name of the manager, Edward Beatie. He then found it through the staff records. It opened in 1890 at what

is now 14 The Ridgway (currently Oddbins), and was presumably a temporary affair while the High Street one was being built. Incidentally, Beatie moved to the new building, and went on to be manager at Addiscombe before blotting his copy book by making an unauthorised payment and being sacked in 1902.

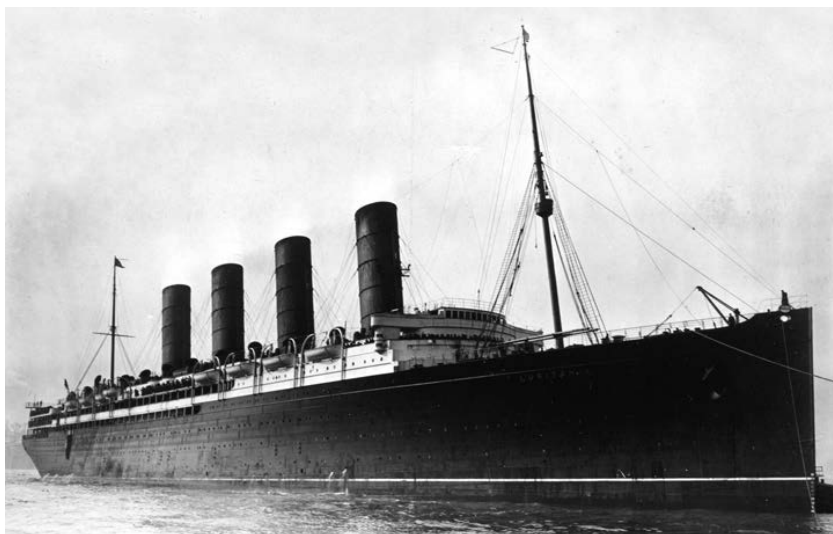
The imposing Barclays building in the High Street was built on land bought from the Belvedere estate in 1891 for £1,125. The architect was Edward Gabriel. The shop on the right was occupied first by Hawes, and then by a chemist called Kirkman who moved there

from 30 High Street, and the shop on the left was Madame Knight, dressmaker and milliner. To distinguish it from the bank down in the town, it was at first called the 'Wimbledon Hill branch' while in the Ridgway. When it moved to the new building in 1892, it was called 'Wimbledon Common'. In 1993 Barclays followed the estate agents' fashion by renaming it the 'Wimbledon Village' branch. It closed recently, leaving us with only two of the larger banks in the High Street, although the Danish Handelsbanken opened a branch in 2010 – they are now next door to Eagle House.



*The 'Wimbledon Common' branch of London and South Western Bank on the High Street in 1896 (above), and present day (right)*





## Lusitania's local connection

AMONG THE centenaries this year is that of the sinking of the *Lusitania* by the Germans in May 1915, generally thought to have contributed to America's decision to enter the war. Among the first-class passengers was Alexander Campbell, General Manager of Dewars, the whisky distillers. He had been

in New York on business when the German ambassador there placed an advertisement in American newspapers warning that ships flying the British flag were liable to attack. As he went aboard, Campbell was asked by reporters what he thought of the warning. "I think it's a lot of tommyrot," he

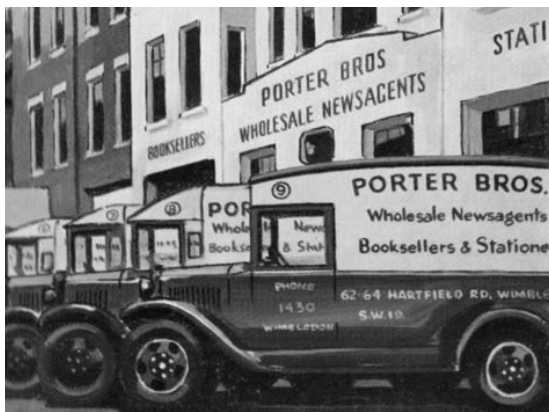
replied, adding that the *Lusitania* was faster than any German submarine, and the Admiralty would protect the ship. In fact, the Admiralty tried to do so, but failed to contact it to find its whereabouts. Campbell, who lived at Hollywood in Crescent Road, was one of those who lost their lives on May 7, 1915.

## Wimbledon's wholesale newsagents

ONE HUNDRED and ten years ago William Porter started Wimbledon's first

wholesale newsagents in Dundonald Road, later expanding it (as

Porter Bros.) at 62 and 64 Hartfield Road, where the car park is now. It became one of the largest in the south of England. The Museum was recently given a diary published by Porters, with illustrations of the business; it shows the hart used as a logo, taken from the address of the firm. WH Smith bought the Porters firm and closed it; the building was demolished in 1986.



## Last duel not the last

IT HAS BEEN generally thought that the last duel on the Common was fought by Lord Cardigan and Captain Tuckett in 1840. There was an intended one in 1872 that was frustrated by the police before the contestants actually reached Wimbledon. However, research by a member of the Group has discovered a duel in July 1856, a full 16 years after Cardigan and Tuckett. It was fought by Henry Verrall and an unnamed ex-military officer. It was an "affair of honour", fought over what one Victorian journalist called "one of Eve's lovely descendants". So once again we have to rewrite the history books.

## Wimbledon on the box

WHILE WATCHING recent television series, you will probably have recognised Thomas Cromwell in *Wolf Hall* as Baron Cromwell of Wimbledon, son of Walter Cromwell of the Crooked Billet. But did you realise that, in *Mr Selfridge*, Selfridge's daughter Rosalie married Prince Serge Vincent de Bolotoff, Prince Wiasemsky in 1918? They lived at Wimbledon Park House from 1923 to 1948. Wiasemsky had a collection of Rolls Royce cars there. He let the house get into a ruinous state (along with the cars), and it had to be pulled down as a result. Raymond Briggs' book *The Strange House*, (1961) was based on Briggs' boyhood exploration of the grounds and the tunnels there. Wiasemsky offered his services to the Home Guard, but they were refused.

CHARLES TOASE

## Three decades of devotion, friendship and football

CYRIL MAIDMENT, who has retired as the Museum's Curator of Maps after nearly 20 years, first got involved with the Society when he joined the Local History Group in 1985; he is still contributing to the Group, particularly on his favourite subjects – Merton Priory and Wimbledon Football Club, and occasionally takes the chair in the absence of the regular chairman. Cyril is also a regular contributor to the Merton Historical Society's local history workshops.

It was Richard Milward who suggested to Cyril that he become a Duty Officer in the Museum. When Cyril took over the chairmanship of the Museum Committee, he introduced Sunday opening, and himself did duty every Sunday.

Several of the Milward books benefit from maps drawn by Cyril, and Richard himself benefited from what he called his 'lift' – Cyril chauffeuring him to meetings.

Among his other contributions to the Society, he has for many



years conducted walks round Wimbledon's historic houses and also the Nelson and William Morris areas, and a lesser-known but major contribution to the Museum was his digitisation of some 4,000 pictures (photographs, watercolours, prints and drawings) which can all be seen on our website. The Society has a great deal to thank him for, and we are fortunate that he will continue to contribute to the Local History Group.

**CHARLES TOASE**

**CASSANDRA TAYLOR writes**

ONE OF THE things that most impressed me about Cyril, apart from his benevolent friendliness towards everyone, was his passion for football – a subject about which I knew nothing but on which he could discourse, with dreamy passion, at length.

In 1990, he insisted that the Committee acquire the shirt of Eddie Reynolds. The price was one thousand dollars but Cyril's arguments were persuasive: "Eddie Reynolds was the greatest Wimbledon player. In the FA Amateur Cup Final, he scored four goals, all with his head in the days when the balls used became very heavy when wet."

The shirt has pride of place in the sports section of the Museum and was, on one special occasion, loaned to AFC Wimbledon, under the watchful supervision (as all loan exhibits must be) of a triumphant Cyril.

He once told me he never missed an AFC Wimbledon game, no matter how far away. We hope, in his retirement, he will continue to enjoy many more matches.

## Tony Matthews: an appreciation

AFTER SIX YEARS as editor of the *Wimbledon Society Newsletter* Tony Matthews has had to stand down, in order to prioritise care for his wife.

A member since 1993 and a journalist for some 20 years before that, he took over the *Newsletter* in 2009. It evolved from an information sheet to a mini magazine with pictures as well as articles on a wide range of subjects. Recently, colour illustrations were introduced on both covers.

In addition, Tony created an archive of all existing Newsletters



dating back over 50 years. These are now on the Society's web site at [www.wimbledonsociety.org.uk](http://www.wimbledonsociety.org.uk).

For the Museum web site at [www.wimbledonmuseum.org.uk](http://www.wimbledonmuseum.org.uk), assisted by Jo Bund, he created an entirely new oral history archive. This now offers visitors a

wide choice of sound and text interviews with the voices of those recalling personal memories of a now vanished Wimbledon.

From 2011–14, on behalf of the Society, he supplied a regular Heritage series of articles

to the online *Wimbledon Guardian*, now preserved in archive at [www.wimbledonguardian.co.uk/heritage](http://www.wimbledonguardian.co.uk/heritage) and also accessible via the Museum web site.

Finally, with the assistance of Local History Group Chairman, Charles Toase and others, he produced several books for the Society and gave talks on them at Wimbledon Bookfest and elsewhere. He was the author of *Cannizaro Beyond the Gates*, *Heritage Tales – 52 Stories of Wimbledon* and *Chester House*. He also brought Elspeth Veale's scholarly work *Wimbledon's Belvedere Estate* to publication.

**NORMAN PLASTOW**



# Alan Elliot: our man for all seasons

ALAN ELLIOT, who died on 28 February this year, spent more than a quarter of a century devoting his services to the Museum of Wimbledon.

He was born in 1932 and educated at Malvern College and Trinity Hall, Cambridge where he initially studied history but then switched to psychology.

He then spent the next two to three years travelling in Malaya, New Zealand and Australia, doing different jobs to make enough money to keep him going.

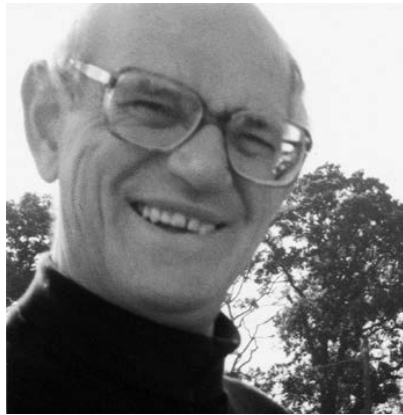
On his return he did an MA at Birkbeck College, University of London and then joined J Lyons' Research Department.

He then moved to the engineering firm, W S Atkins, where he spent the rest of his career in Human Resources, concentrating on training and development.

Alan took early retirement because his increasing deafness made it difficult for him to continue in his work and that is when the Museum was lucky enough to acquire his services.

His early years in the Museum are described by Lady Hartopp (see right), and when I joined the Museum in 1997 as a Duty Officer Alan was well established as the 'can do' man to whom everyone turned for every conceivable problem.

His grasp of computers was considerable but his special talent, gained from his HR experience, was in spotting the possibilities in new volunteers. He recruited people he'd met, people he'd heard about from other sources but mainly from visitors to the Museum who expressed an interest in its work. Then he pounced, found a role for them and took the trouble to train them in it.



His understanding of management and business helped considerably in getting the Museum through three accreditations and he also had an excellent grasp of budgetary control – much to the relief of many of the curators.

He was in the Museum almost every Saturday afternoon, supporting the Duty Officers and on the look-out for new talent. He also took special trouble with children who came in wanting help with school projects and would sometimes spend a couple of hours with them in order to help them think around the project, rather than just doing it.

He was an enormous support to me when I started my term as Chairman even though he was attempting to retire and spend more time with his family.

The Museum has lost a unique volunteer and we are grateful for the enormous amount of effort he put into every aspect of its work over so many years.

A service of thanks for and remembrance of his life will be held on Friday 12 June at 2.30 pm in St Mary's Church, Wimbledon Village with refreshments afterward in the Garden Hall. His widow, Pat, has said that everyone is welcome to attend.

**CASSANDRA TAYLOR**

**PRU HARTOPP, Museum Committee Chairman from 1987 to 1996, writes**

I CAN REMEMBER, as chairman, welcoming Alan to the Museum Committee in March 1991. We had only met briefly when he answered an appeal in the Newsletter for a curator of the Ephemera Collection, but soon became a wonderfully supportive colleague and friend. At our next meeting, some six weeks later, he was able to give a report on the Ephemera Collection, which then consisted of 63 boxes with an estimated 3,000 items, not apparently based on any particular collection policy. He also suggested ways to rectify this.

A year later he was also involved in helping to acquire a suitable computer and appropriate software and after duly managing to get both donated, set them up and began putting in information.

To get full accreditation from organisations, such as the Area Museum Service and others required a certain amount of bureaucracy such as revision to our acquisition and disposal policy, collections and management policy and parts of our business plan and mission statement. Alan always offered to take these on and did them far better than I could ever have done.

After attending a disaster workshop Alan drew up a report and volunteered to become the Museums Emergency Officer for the first year. On this being agreed, he asked all curators for an up-to-date valuation of their collections with a view to checking if the Museum's insurance policy was adequate. During this time he continued to add information to the computer and also helped the Duty Officers on most Saturday afternoons when the Museum was open to the public, as well as continuing to care for and add to the ephemera collection.

I appreciated his help enormously and could not have had a more supportive and likeable colleague.

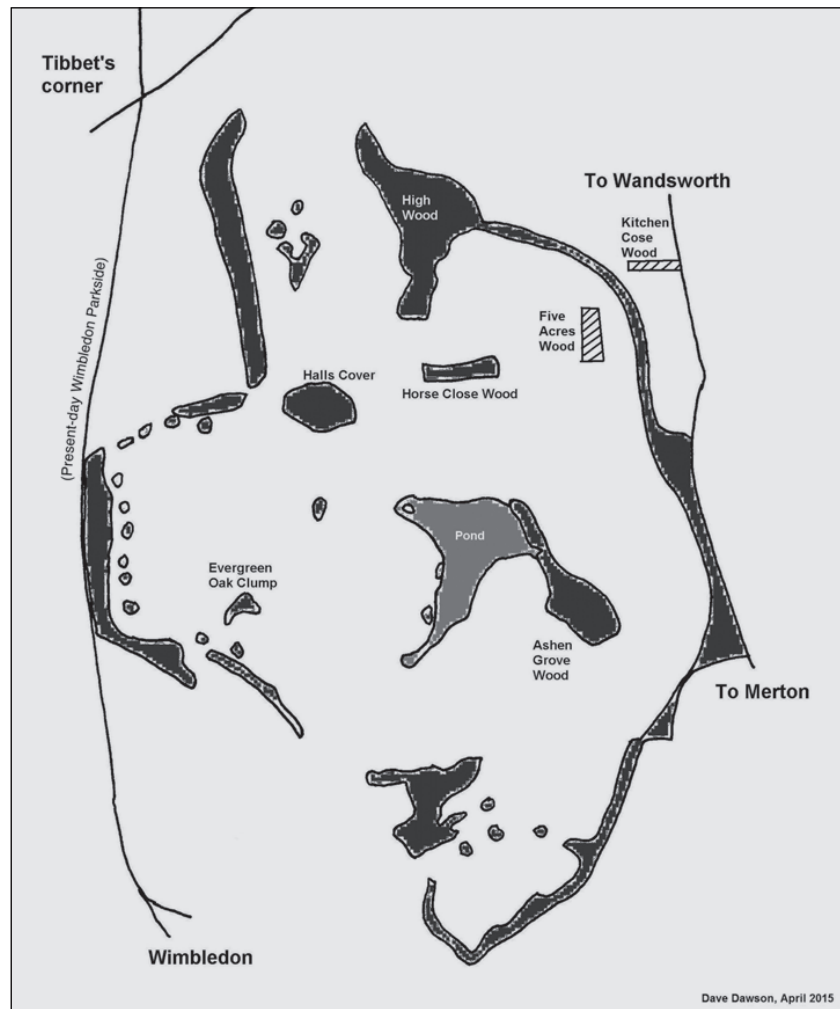
# What remains of Capability Brown's woods

DAVE DAWSON sheds light on the lost woodlands of the renowned landscape architect in Wimbledon Park

IN THE 1740s, Earl Spencer's Wimbledon Park had only two woodlands, both on the hillside north of Wimbledon Park House and indicated on John Roque's 1746 Map of Wimbledon. Then, in the 1750s, the Earl doubled the size of his park, acquiring a further four woods in the process.

Local historian, Rita Ensing, found out about these four woods through her research on an estate map of 1740. Just west of the present day Southfields Station was High Wood, the largest and probably ancient. Three other, smaller, rectangular woods were at the edges of enclosed fields: Five Acres Wood, Kitchen Close Wood and Horse Close Wood. North of these were common arable fields (the South Fields of Wandsworth), which survived into the nineteenth century. These three woods were probably established when this part of a previously larger common field was enclosed. They would have been less than a hundred years old in 1740. Typically, the woods would have been managed as coppice with a few standard trees of Pedunculate Oak and English Elm, and primarily for fuel wood rather than timber for construction.

Shortly afterwards, the Earl commissioned Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to re-landscape the park. Much new woodland was planted, mainly in a peripheral belt, providing a woodland backdrop to long views across the park, but also in clumps



*The woodlands of Wimbledon Park in the late 18th century. The two woods that had recently been lost are cross-hatched. The road to the west corresponds to the present-day Wimbledon Parkside and that to the east to Merton and Durnsford Roads*

and coverts. Two maps of the Spencer estate, dating from 1770 and 1787 show this. Brown found 'capability' in just three of the older woods: High Wood, Horse Close Wood and Ashen Grove Wood. The latter was probably the eastern-most wood shown on the Roque map. The western of the two on the Roque map, Five Acres and Kitchen Close were eliminated.

With the coming of the railways, suburbia expanded rapidly. Wimbledon Park was acquired for development by JA Beaumont in 1846 and the District Railway cut off the park's north-eastern flank in 1889. Capability Brown's plantings were progressively lost to housing,

but development came slowly in the centre of the park and all three older woods survived into the early 20th century. Housing had reached the northern edge of Horse Close Wood by 1917. Then the Wimbledon Corporation saved the remnant park by buying it. Both High Wood and Ashen Grove Wood were still intact, but not purchased. High Wood has now quite gone and Ashen Grove remains as a tiny neglected and under-valued remnant spanning the boundary between Wimbledon Park Golf Club and the children's play area of the public park. Horse Close Wood alone remains as a remarkable survivor from the early 18th century.

## What price heritage conservation?

**RUTH and DAVE DAWSON relate the sad recent history of the butcher's shop in Arthur Road, Wimbledon Park**

IT HAS BEEN a butcher's shop ever since it opened in 1906, and Michael and Bridget Rooke were the last tenants. Last year, the owner made planning applications to change half of the shop into residential use and to modernise its frontage.

The Rookes' tenancy was up for renewal, and against their wishes, the owner terminated it. Michael and Bridget had to remove all the fittings added to the shop during their 40-year tenancy, but they refused to remove the original heritage fittings. Both planning applications were refused, so we were left with an empty shop with remarkable heritage butcher's fittings.

The shop frontage had some protection through planning policies, but the interior had none. Worried that the heritage fittings were at risk, we applied to English Heritage to investigate listing. As this takes time, we also asked the Council to consider local listing, which Cllr Judge agreed. Sadly,



*The remarkable butcher's shop with its heritage tiling and scrolled wrought ironwork*

this was not done, as the Council risked having to compensate the owner should national listing not eventuate.

English Heritage proposed listing the shop and consulted on this. Meanwhile, the owner boarded up the shop to work on the flat above. As part of that work, he demolished one wall of the shop, destroying the heritage tiling there and he removed the wooden ceiling and the heritage wrought ironwork. We did not know that

this had happened until weeks later, because the shop was boarded up.

The shop was given Grade II listing in November last year. It was judged a rare survivor of a traditional, characteristic, good quality and attractive design, including the tiling, geometric paving and scrolled wrought-iron brackets. Listing doesn't become effective until formalised, so the damage to the interior of the shop, legally, was "permitted development".

Isn't it silly that the procedure for listing, with an assessment visit and consultation, warns an owner of the possible protection, so providing an obvious loophole for features to be damaged?

The glimmer of good news is that the shop is now listed. This has enabled a requirement to restore tiling on a new wall to the shop and we await a requirement to restore the ceiling features, including the wrought-iron work.

Clearly, the optimum use would be as a butcher's shop, but it's up to the owner to market it. In a prime site, near to a busy tube station, the shop was profitable and viable as a butcher's and could be so again.

### Capability Brown's 300th anniversary celebrations

THE TRICENTENARY of Capability Brown's birth in 2016 will be celebrated locally after an agreement between the Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP) and the three owners of what remains of Brown's Wimbledon Park landscape,

the London Borough of Merton, the All England Club and the Wimbledon Club.

Late last year FOWP set up a 'Capability Brown 300 Anniversary Group' to co-ordinate local celebrations which will form part of the nationwide festival that will also take place next year.

The aims of the festival, beyond celebrating Brown's life and work,

include encouraging an increased number of people and a more diverse audience to visit, learn about and enjoy his landscapes.

Possible local activities include local history talks and workshops for children about landscape and ecology.

For more information visit [www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk](http://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk) and [www.capabilitybrown.org](http://www.capabilitybrown.org).





## Martyn Harman

As we go print, we have been told the sad news of the death of Martyn Harman on Sunday 3rd May and our sympathy goes to his wife Liz, her family and friends at this difficult time.

Martyn was Chairman of the Planning Committee for ten years after which he became Chairman of the Executive, a post he held with distinction for nine years steering us through our celebratory centenary year in 2003 and other notable occasions.

A full tribute and appreciation of Martyn Harman's life and his work for the Society will appear in our September issue.

## THE SOCIETY NEEDS YOUR HELP

### ■ The Planning Committee urgently needs a secretary.

The Planning Committee meets monthly, on Monday evenings at 7.15pm, at the Museum. The duties include booking the room for the meetings, preparing agendas, taking and circulating minutes and preparing a report for the Executive Committee about six times a year. The required time commitment amounts to roughly one day per month. If you are interested please contact **John Mays** at [john@themayses.co.uk](mailto:john@themayses.co.uk) or on **07850 697723**.



### ■ The Museum needs two new Duty Officers

to join the existing team. Duties involve greeting visitors, helping them see round the Museum, dealing with any queries and selling Museum publications. Opening hours are 2.30 – 5pm on Saturdays and Sundays and we ask you to do one duty a month. Computer literacy is essential for accessing the catalogue.

Full training is given and you will always work as a pair, at first with someone experienced. No knowledge of local history is required initially and any queries which cannot be dealt with on the spot can be referred to the relevant curator.

Contact **Cassandra Taylor** at [casskent@talktalk.net](mailto:casskent@talktalk.net) or on **020 8946 1544**.



### ■ The Museum also needs a Publications Officer

to oversee the website sales of publications, deal with the weekly sales taken during opening hours and manage the stock. More details of the post are available from Liz Courtney at [courtney28@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:courtney28@blueyonder.co.uk) or **020 8946 7960**.

## Simon Boome

The Museum was sorry to learn of the death of Simon Boome who was, for many years, a stalwart supporter.

From 1996-98 he was Curator of Artefacts and from 1996 to 2000 Emergency officer and also Safety Officer.

He then became more of a 'backroom boy' coming in on Mondays to bank the cash taken over the weekend, record visitor numbers and note the temperature and humidity readings on the thermo hydrograph.

These tasks are essential to the smooth running of the Museum and we are grateful to Simon for undertaking them.

**CASSANDRA TAYLOR**

## Your new editorial team

This is the first edition of the Newsletter produced by a new editorial team. The editor, **John Stern** (below left), recently moved to Wimbledon from Hertfordshire and has been a journalist and editor for more than 20 years, specialising in cricket. And the newsletter is designed by **Nigel Davies** (below right), a Raynes Park resident for 22 years, and former colleague of John's at *The Cricketer* magazine where Nigel was art director. John can be contacted on [johnstern@msn.com](mailto:johnstern@msn.com) or **07768 891416**.



Photos courtesy of Graham Morris and Tom Shaw

**The Wimbledon Society** was founded in 1903 and has had its present name since 1982. (Originally the John Evelyn Club, it was known as the John Evelyn Society from 1949-82.) A Registered Charity (No 269478), its main objectives are to preserve Wimbledon's amenities and natural beauty, study its history, and ascertain that urban development is sympathetic and orderly. **Annual subscriptions** are at the following rates: Individuals £10; Families £15; Organisations: Non-commercial £25, commercial £50. Please send membership applications to the Membership Secretary.

**The Museum and Bookshop** (020 8296 9914), 22 Ridgway, near Lingfield Road, are open from 2.30 to 5.00pm Saturday and Sunday. Admission free.