

The Bulletin

Representing the views of all who live in the historic Thameside village of Strawberry Hill

November, 2003

Christmas tree, carols and mulled wine

The annual decoration and unveiling of the village Christmas tree will take place from 6pm on December 12 at Wellesley Parade. All are invited to share in the experience and to enjoy free mulled wine and mince pies at the Melting Pot afterwards.

Holy Trinity Church choir, with lanterns and gowns, will lead the carol singing which starts at 6.30pm.

The tree, the tallest yet unveiled, will be placed by the bench on the green island in front of the shops.

To ensure that the tree is firmly anchored Richmond Council, workmen will install a reinforced

anchorage point and will also arrange an electricity supply for the lights.

Our thanks are due to Mr Sutee Chutpinyacoub of the Melting Pot, Liz Howells and the Rev Michael Starkey of Holy Trinity Church and Richmond Council for their generous contributions to this event.

Crossrail threat to level crossing?

The Crossrail plan to run trains through Strawberry Hill to link with the Underground could have an unexpected impact on the life of the community.

While there will be considerable benefits for commuters, one spin off is that the railway planners may seek the permanent closure of the level crossing.

Besides splitting the heart of the village, closure will also have implications for traffic, which will be forced on to new routes through the area, and for local shops.

Increased noise and other railway activity associated with the existing sheds and sidings are likely. Concerns have also been expressed that new lines might be added and garden land compulsorily purchased.

Action sub committee

As a matter of urgency, SHRA has set up a sub committee chaired by Arthur Tarrant to investigate the Crossrail plans in detail and to prepare a submission by the deadline of December 12.

While this is a long term issue – the Crossrail link from central London to Kingston via



Arthur Tarrant chair of SARA Crossrail sub committee

Strawberry Hill is planned to open in 2013 - SHRA believes that action is required now to ensure that our views are expressed early in the discussion.

SHRA has raised the question of the level crossing with MP Vincent Cable and local councillor Claire Head to see whether closure is already part of the plan. An outline of the plan is contained in the brochure *Crossrail Vision*, distributed recently at Strawberry Hill station.

The Crossrail booklet makes no mention of the carriage depots,

workshops and stabling sidings, but Strawberry Hill is an obvious site for these facilities. The depot has been underused and is the only site where Network Rail has spare land on the western side of London since other siding space was sold off in the 1960s.

Elimination of level crossings appears to be London Underground policy. When the Central and Northern Lines were extended over the old LNER lines all level crossings were taken out. In some cases underpasses were built, but mostly the crossing was blocked off with a brick wall.

Bridging the credibility gap

The state of the railway bridge over Popes Grotto has raised many questions in recent months. Chief among them are the number of dead pigeons caught in the anti-

pigeon netting, the structural condition of the bridge and graffiti.

SHRA raised these issues with Network Rail and with Richmond Council. As the Council placed the netting, it is responsible for the removal of dead birds.

As a result of our enquiries the dead pigeons have been removed.

However, since the netting allows birds to fly in freely, more dead pigeons are likely to be found.

In the meantime, Network Rail says that

the bridge is on their list of structures to be fully pigeon proofed, but there is no allocation for that work in the present financial year, nor were we given any indication of when it is likely to happen.

Graffiti

The growing amount of graffiti on the bridge cannot be tackled for the moment, according to Network Rail. Graffiti can only be removed if it is obscene or racist.



Otherwise the bridge will have to wait its turn – timing not disclosed – in the maintenance programme. SHRA is to raise this matter with Richmond Council to see whether it can be tackled under the Council's anti-graffiti campaign.

Corrosion

The condition of the bridge, and what appears to be heavy corrosion, was also raised. Network Rail has advised its structures department that the bridge needs inspection. No date for the inspection was given.

SHRA will follow this enquiry to see

when the inspection is likely. The Crossrail plan will undoubtedly spur this work.

Station yard rubbish

The state of the rubbish-strewn station yard has been referred to a separate railway organisation called Spacia. This is the former British Rail property division. A reply is awaited.

Waiting time

Since the closure of the restaurant in the former platform 2 waiting room, Network Rail has been asked if the waiting from could be returned for the use of travellers.

Network Rail replies that it has no funds for what is describes as enhancement projects and that work would have to be funded by the Strategic Rail Authority. SHRA will pursue this matter with the SRA.

Legacy memorial

The late Miss C.Cowan of Thurnby Court has left £500 to SHRA to spend as it thinks fit. The

committee will decide in principal that it should be spent on a specific project which can also be associated with remembering Miss Cowan's legacy.

Street cleansing

A new street cleaning rota has been drawn up by the Council And be consulted on the Council website. Streets in the Strawberry Hill area should be swept twice a month and the rota will indicate the cleaning times in your road.

Willow memorial

The memorial will, planted to commemorate Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, has died but will be replaced by Richmond Council. As soon as the work is done, SHRA will place a plaque at the foot of the tree.

College accommodation block

Richmond Council has turned down the College's application

to build a new accommodation block on the campus backing on to the gardens of houses in Clive Road. SHRA responded to the Clive Road residents' appeal for support and discussed the plan with the College before speaking against the plan at the planning meeting.

Flower power



A small gardening group has replanted the rockery and the large square planter beside Threshers. A few of the overgreens originally put there by SHRA 18 months ago, had died, while winter flowering pansies and purple heathers have been put into the planter. Total cost of the planting, led by Mike O'Hagan, was £100.

Ownership of Wellesley Road playing fields

As a result of widespread concern by residents of Fortescue Park and Wellesley Road over the new fencing around the playing fields, light has been shed on the field's ownership.

While the field remains Metropolitan Open Land (see Open Spaces Strategy), ownership was

transferred to the RC diocese of Westminster under a PFI contract with Richmond Council in June last year. In exchange, the Council obtained Government funding for the expansion of St James's School. It also signed a 30-year contract with Jarvis for the estate management of seven schools in the Borough including the Wellesley field. No mention was made in

the planning application to expand the school – or the Planning Officer's report to the Development Control Office - of the Council's intention to pass the field to the diocese of Westminster.

The field would be returned to Richmond Council should the school cease to be a place of education. The Council points out that there is no right of public access to field but that the restriction had never

been enforced.

The field is shown on the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as a playing field with dual use. This means the field could be rented out for other uses apart from a playing field for St James's School. Normal planning and licensing procedures apply.

The issue was due to be raised at an Area Consultation Meeting on November 19.

New traffic focus

Results of the Council enquiry into views about a CPZ revealed that a majority of residents in the centre of Strawberry Hill are opposed to an extension of this parking restriction.

Residents in a total of 29 roads were consulted; majorities in eight were in favour and the remainder opposed.

The CPZ discussion is part of a wider consultation with local residents over parking and traffic. Four focus groups have been held locally with residents and businesses.

A fifth discussion group will be called before Christmas.

Under consideration are:

- 1). a speed reduction to 20mph in Waldegrave Road siting two new pedestrian crossings in Waldegrave Road: one opposite the College and the other at the junction with Waldegrave Park.
- 2). banning the right hand turn from Waldegrave Park
- 3). painting double yellow lines outside the college on the opposite side of the road to discourage illegal parking and along ten metres of roads leading into Waldegrave Road to improve site lines.
- 3). double yellow lines are under consideration for other roads in the area. A Council decision is expected in January.

Old pool site

SHRA is a member of the Twickenham Society Group which objected to some aspects of the proposed first stage scheme - now to be the

subject of a public inquiry. The inquiry was called for by the Terrace Garden Group which objected to destruction of the building.

Open spaces strategy

The Open Space Strategy (OSS) is part of 'a long term government' initiative to loosen controls on the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and pass the cost and responsibility for maintaining some open spaces from local authorities to other interests.

The first stage of public consultation closed on August 29 this year.

The OSS policy framework confirms that Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, riverscapes and wildlife habitats are protected by the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

Other government initiatives are the Local Development Framework – intended to replace the UDP – and a new Town & In so far as these proposals affect our Country Planning Act.

neighbourhood, SHRA has raised concerns with the Council's Policy and Research section The full OSS document with analyses and maps, is available for inspection at the Civic Centre.

River crane area

Local organisation Friends of River Crane Environment (FORCE) is fighting changes to MOL status over the green corridor that runs along the river Crane. Changes could lead property development on the green spaces and wildlife habitats. Details of the proposed changes and their implications can be found on the Richmond Council website www.richmond.gov.uk and the FORCE website www.twickenham-online.co.uk.

Our endangered heritage

Letter from The Friends of Strawberry Hill

Horace Walpole's famous villa, and its Victorian extension, has been part of St Mary's College since 1923. It is now a house in difficulty.

Since the Vincentian fathers left in the early 1990s, the house has been redundant. The condition of its fabric has reached a critical stage and its eighteenth-century interiors are deteriorating.

The large task of Strawberry Hill's continued preservation is beyond the resources and educational mission of St Mary's College. The College is looking at options for the future of the house, including discussions with the Strawberry Hill Trust, a building preservation trust.

The Trust has commissioned a feasibility study on the future of the house from the architect Peter Inskip, with the aim of conserving and restoring it and making it

accessible to the public.

The Trust is working with the Friends of Strawberry Hill and the World Monuments Fund in Britain on the great task of fundraising from private and public sources, including the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In September the house was put on the World Monuments Fund's Watch list of endangered sites for 2004-6. The list, renewed every two years, brings together the World's 100 most endangered sites, chosen for their significance, urgency and the viability of a solution.

Also on the list with Strawberry Hill are the Great Wall of China and the palaces of Nineveh and Nimrud. The Watch listing comes at just the right moment.

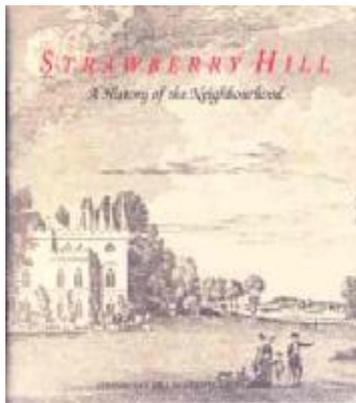
Strawberry Hill needs help now as never before.

**Michael Snodin Chairman,
The Friends of Strawberry Hill**

When history makes a timely gift

The popular history of Strawberry Hill by Anthony Beccles Willson – nearly 5,000 copies have been sold – is to be reprinted.

This gripping and colourful account of the origins architecture of the riverside village, as well as famous, and infamous, people associated with it, will be reprinted by Aquatint of Hampton. Price £5 per copy



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Renewal of subscription of £3.00 per person for year 2003

The subscription renewal may be made by cash, direct debit or cheque made payable to Strawberry Hill Residents' Association.

Hand to either:

- (a) Richard Spires, 70 Pope's Avenue, TW2 5TT
- (b) Costcutter by the station

Donations are always welcome!

Name(s)	
Address	
Date	
Amount	