



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

No. 137 July 2008

Sun shines on Strawberry Hill Music and Fun Day

After a week of nearly continuous rain, the clouds disappeared and the sun came out for the Strawberry Hill Music and Fun Day on Sunday 13th July.

SHRA's strawberry-themed stall was well positioned in the food area, next to a German sausage stall. A large team of volunteers manned the stall, slicing 40 lbs of strawberries and inserting them into sponge cakes, layering them on shortbread, tartlets, pavlovas, millefeuille, cheesecake, and fairy cakes. Pints of cream



Joint-chairman Robert Youngs, Committee members Pam Crisp and Teresa Read man the stall while John Armstrong looks on

were whipped and liberally applied to the home-made produce, together with Chairman Bruce Duff's now-legendary chocolate sauce.

By 6 o'clock everything had been sold and the Association was richer by £674. Secretary Clare Phelps organised the helpers and the strawberry treats were all made by residents.

The Committee would like to thank local estate agents Milestone and Collis for their generous sponsorship of our stall.

Royalty and Romance of St James's Parish

A charming and very readable history of St James's Church, Popes Grove, and the growth of the Parish, has just been written by local resident Tom Devitt.

Tracing the origins of the church from its founding in 1885 to the present day, the book reveals the close links and encouragement which the church received from exiled royalty living nearby such as King Manoel of Portugal, Louis Philippe of France and the Countess of Paris.

Their gifts to the church can still be seen. A large section of the book details the art and stained glass. The church itself was the result of a generous donation by a wealthy Catholic convert.

You can obtain copies of "The Parish of St James, Twickenham, 1855-2008", from the church porch, price £4.50 or £20 for five copies, or by e-mail to:

st-james@tiscali.co.uk

A portion of the history can be seen on the church website:

www.st-james-twickenham.org.uk

SHRA Calls for Review of Planning Hearings

SHRA is responding to concerns following a number of planning decisions, notably surrounding objections to developments in Waldegrave Road, Gifford House and St James's Church.

Residents have complained that the procedure is biased against objectors and leaves too much decision making authority to council officers. Concerns have also been voiced about inadequate minute keeping of committee planning meetings.

Under the current procedure, a number of objectors, usually about three, are per-



mitted to speak for three minutes each. Proposers and their supporters also speak for three minutes, followed by a summing up the planning officer.

Planning Committee members may ask questions of both proposers and objectors, but neither may challenge statements made by the planning officer.

John Armstrong, SHRA Committee member, says: "scrutinising and representing local parties over planning and development is a key function of our organization. We believe the planning hearings and the appeals system, are flawed.

This threatens our ability to protect our neighbourhood."

Whereas an applicant can appeal against rejection to the Planning Inspectorate, objectors can only appeal by application to the High Court, at great cost.

(See "Third planning request" on page 2)

Committee Changes

Jose Relton, Committee member with responsibility for planning matters, has resigned. The Chairmen and Committee would like to thank Jose for her hard work and service to the area over many years.

Transport

Clare Head shadows Traffic and Parking

Cllr Clare Head, who frequently attends SHRA Committee meetings, has been appointed shadow cabinet member for traffic, parking and transport on Richmond Council.

Her brief covers the whole of the Borough. Clare says that she is particularly conscious of the CPZ problem in Waldegrave Gardens, and will be fighting for residents seriously inconvenienced by non-residents taking their parking spaces.

Her colleague, Cllr Marlow is pressing council officers to expedite a new design for the parking outside the station.

Station Painting Stalled

The refurbishment of the pedestrian bridge which began in January has now stalled and SWT has not supplied a date for further work. SWT engineers concluded the bridge needed structural repairs before painting and replacement of rotten weatherboards could continue. The present unsightly chipboard is now likely to remain in place for several months.

Waiting room watch

Residents report that the waiting room on the Richmond-bound platform is now open all the time when the booking office is open.

SHRA has raised the problem of waiting room closures with SWT which has asked residents to monitor the situation.

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Planning

Gifford house land up for sale soon

Residents living near to the Gifford House site have been told that the house and part of the land will be put up for sale shortly.

The Contact Centre on the site will be relocated to Mortlake during August. A new Contact Centre will re-open on the Gifford House site, possibly next year. In the meantime, the site will be gated and services disconnected.

A seven-week project to remove asbestos from the former Council-run Day Nursery should be completed in time for demolition of Gifford House to start in October. However, the site has yet to undergo other scrutiny for contamination and for an archeological investiga-

tion because the site is the location of historic Gifford Lodge. Work is currently taking place on a party wall agreement because the Council plans to build within 2.4 metres of the former Willow Grange estate about, ten metres from existing houses.

The sale of Gifford House was featured in a recent issue of Private Eye's "Rotten Boroughs" section.

Third planning request for Waldegrave Road

SHRA and local Cllr Clare Head have spoken out against a third development in Waldegrave Road opposite St Mary's College.

SHRA committee member John Armstrong and Cllr Head are particularly concerned by the style of the 'brutal modern developments.' They say: "In principle we are not against certain houses being knocked down and used more intensively for housing. What is upsetting is outsiders imposing their ideas on the community which has spoken out against brutal modern developments. Developers, architects and the planning committee should listen to local people and not impose their opinions."

It is feared that light spillage from huge glass windows will drive away wildlife from nearby gardens.

AGM held at Golf Club

The 2008 Annual General Meeting of the SHRA was held on Monday 14th April at Strawberry Hill Golf Club. Judith Lovelace, Chair of the Friends of Strawberry Hill, told the meeting about the current state of the restoration of Horace Walpole's "little Gothic Castle".

Tricia Mckeown, Services Manager at Roy Kinnear House, was presented with a cheque for £300, the proceeds of the collection at the Christmas Carol Singing together with a contribution from the Association's funds.

Twickenham MP Vincent Cable, Cllr Clare Head and prospective Conservative candidate Deborah Thomas were among the guests. Major items under discussion were planning and traffic.

One resident raised concerns about St Mary's College hosting an Olympic team in 2012 with attendant security issues and increased police presence. Dr Cable has offered help with the issue.

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Hundreds earnestly applaud an enchanting picnic play

The first picnic theatre production to be staged on the lawns of Strawberry Hill House, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, attracted more than 300 playgoers on June 29.

Nearly £2,000 was raised towards the restoration fund. Enthusiastic bons vivants picnicked lavishly, even bringing chairs and tables. The gothic backdrop created the ideal setting.

So successful was the evening that it will now become an annual event. The Richmond Shakespeare Theatre is hoping to celebrate their 75th anniversary at the House next year with a



Members of the cast take a bow

performance of *As You Like It*. A comedy by Teddington-born playwright Noel Coward is also a possibility.

Shell seat inspired by Botticelli

The remarkable 6 feet high shell seat which dominated the garden of Walpole's Strawberry Hill House in the 18th century has been recreated and replaced in the garden. Designed by Walpole's friend Richard Bentley, the oak shell seat was inspired by Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus*.

The shell seat was unveiled at Chelsea Flower Show where the three Cholmondeley sisters recalled a letter from Walpole in which he said the Duchesses of Hamilton and Richmond and Lady Ailesbury dined with him. "There never was so pretty a sight as to



The Ladies Cholmondeley try out the shell seat at the Chelsea Flower Show

see all three of them sitting in the Shell!"

A limited edition of 101 numbered shell seats have been made by Architectural Heritage to help raise funds for restoration.

Ian Davis

Ian Davis, past Chairman of SHRA, died on 29th June at Exeter Hospital, aged 82. He was chairman from 1991 to 1993, succeeding Tony Beckles Willson.

Friends of Radnor Gardens

Café could open in the autumn

The café in Radnor Gardens could re-open by September if building quotes are received in time.

FoRG Chairperson Clare Head says "the small cost of making the café safe will be made by Richmond Council. When quotes are approved it should only take a couple of weeks to get ready – fingers crossed," said Cllr Head.

In the meantime, FoRG is researching the history of the brick hut which is reputed to be a former WW2 air raid shelter or machine gun post. It is strategically placed to command river traffic. Concrete internal blast walls would seem to support this view.

FoRG is keen to hear from anyone who has information about the history of the brick hut.

They should write contact Clare Head by e-mail at: cllr.chead@richmond.gov.uk

St James' Boys log garden flora

Eight boys from St James's School have undertaken a project to research and record all the species of trees, shrubs and flowers in the gardens.

When completed the report will be presented to FoRG to form the basis of a heritage board for visitors.

St James's school recently became the first corporate member of FoRG.

FoRG polls flooding

Friends of Radnor Gardens Committee members have distributed Thames Water Flooding questionnaires to households in Cross Deep close to the gardens which are affected by flooding.

Friends of Strawberry Hill House

An appeal has been launched to restore the beautiful and historic Renaissance painted glass of Strawberry Hill House. Over the years much of the glass has been damaged as a result of being wrongly re-hung during the 1960s or before that bomb damage.

The rectangular glass panels were rescued from ancient houses in Flanders and show biblical, classical or domestic scenes.

The cost of repairing and re-hanging will cost in excess of £250,000. The Strawberry Hill Trust also seeks donations for repair of the 'roundels' – in fact they are rectangular – ranging from £500 to a large roundel to £100 for a smaller one.

Further details can be found on the website:

www.friendsofstrawberryhill.org



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Boys from St James's School recording the flora in Radnor Gardens

FoRG has consistently raised the question of flooding, especially sewage overflow from drains which runs into the gardens.

"We are now attending regular joint Council and Thames Water meetings and hope to get some action to prevent flooding," says FoRG Chairperson Clare Head.

World InfoZone

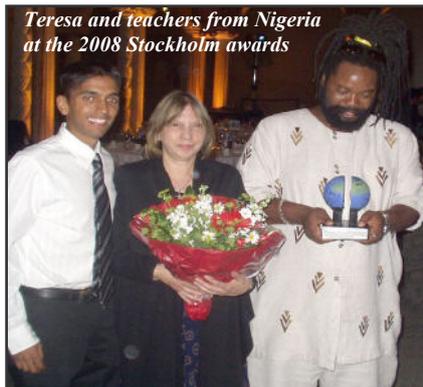
Educating the world from Strawberry Hill

An educational website founded in 1997 by former teacher Teresa Read, has been honoured by an international organisation based in Sweden.

Called World InfoZone (WIZ), the website contains photographs and information used by schoolchildren in education projects all over the world. Between 2002 and 2004, WIZ took part in an international project involving schools in more than 40 countries.

In that time WIZ and Teresa have been nominated on many occasions for awards, notably the Stockholm Challenge which recognises information schemes that build a global knowledge society.

Teresa, who has lived in Strawberry Hill for 25 years, runs the site on a voluntary basis. She says: "The site aims to provide a



comprehensive view of the world and the history of its people and it is used by educational organisations globally".

Last month Teresa was invited to Stockholm in recognition of her work.



Your Association Needs You!

The Bulletin is delivered to every one of the 2,500 homes in Strawberry Hill thanks to our team of volunteer distributors.

A new distributor is sought for Waldegrave Park to deliver to approximately 45 houses on the odd number side.

Wanted: green-fingered volunteer!

The colourful planters sited by Threshers and Harjii's as well as the oak tubs near the Sopa restaurant are maintained by SHRA. They are replanted twice a year, funded by your subscriptions, and occasionally watered and weeded. SHRA is looking for a keen gardener to take on this role.

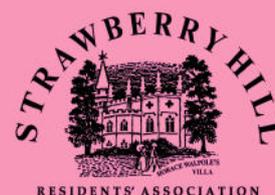
If you can help with either of these tasks, please contact Clare Phelps on 8892 5863

May SHRA help you with planning issues?

If you and/or your neighbours are concerned about projected building plans in your area, we are here to give advice and support. Together with local councillors, SHRA is able to help by giving advice on:

- 1 Coordinating objections
- 2 Pin-pointing acceptable grounds for objections
- 3 Explaining the workings of the Council's Planning Department

Contact any member of the Committee.



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Payment may also be made by Standing Order. Forms are available from John or from the SHRA website (www.shra.org.uk)

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