STRAWBERRY HILL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

www.shra.org.uk

the bulletin

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

No. 148 Spring 2012

Arthur's ON THE GREEN

Brightened by the spirit of the Olympics

The Olympic spirit is glowing bright in the heart of Strawberry Hill, with St Mary's University College (SMUC) busy helping to train athletes for Team GB, as well as preparing to host Olympic athletes from around the world.

As one of the sites offering a pre-games training camp, SMUC will provide accommodation and training facilities. Olympians from the Chinese, Japanese, South African and Irish teams will stay there in July in the run-up to, and during, the Games. Whilst track athletics and the marathon will be the main sports supported, the Irish team will include their sprinters, canoers, triathletes, cyclists and badminton team.

In all, it is expected SMUC will be host to around 50 to 60 athletes from these overseas teams, plus a similar number of their coaches, managers and other support staff. You may well spot them out and about as they take some well-earned relaxation in the area, or doing training runs in Bushy Park.

See page 2: SMUC's Leading Role

St Mary's athletics alumnus Andrew Osagie, seen here competing in Doha, is a graduate of the University College's Endurance Performance Centre (Photo by Mike Shearman)

In this issue…

… we start a three-part series on the businesses in that hidden corner of Strawberry Hill - Swan Island. Most of us have never set foot on the island, but our intrepid roving reporter has been finding out what goes on down that road off Strawberry Vale. We bring you the first of his findings on page 4.

It's going to be a busy summer for the staff at St Mary's University College. Not only will they be providing facilities for athletes from three continents, but they'll be playing a part in the Cultural Olympics. You can read about this, and more, on this page and overleaf.

Not many residents are aware that we have an experienced playwright living in Pope's Grove. By the time you read this, Dianne Cutlack's play, 'The Sign of the Strawberry', will have been performed in Horace Walpole's "little Gothick castle". We profile Dianne and her work on the back page. We hope that Dianne can be persuaded to write more local dramas - perhaps something set in Pope's Grotto to raise funds for its restoration.

Finally, we urge all residents to come to our AGM on 23rd April. This is your opportunity to tell the Committee of your concerns and to suggest activities for the Association for the following year. If that isn't enough to tempt you, there's a free drink at the end of the (short) meeting!

Meet your neighbours and have a glass of wine at the AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association will be held at 7:00 for 7:30 p.m. on Monday, 23rd April at Strawberry Hill Golf Club, Wellesley Road. All residents are welcome.

After the meeting, you are invited to have a complimentary glass of wine and to chat to other residents and the Committee.

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Contact: Jonathan Whines or Jacqui Hughes.

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Pedlars alert

Twickenham Safer Neighbourhood Team has recently moved on door-to-door pedlars after complaints of aggressive approaches.

The police say the pedlars often work in teams of two and there is the suspicion that they are in the area to commit crime.

Often they will produce a form of identification, but this is usually home-made. The police say anyone selling door-to-door must have a valid pedlar's certificate which can only be issued by the Metropolitan Police and must also have their photograph on it.

Residents concerned about these approaches can call 020 8721 2910.

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SMUC's Leading Role

Cradle of Olympic Success

St Mary's University College is a cradle for home-grown sporting talent. Some of Britain's leading athletes who have represented this country in international events have been trained in the College's Endurance, Performance and Coaching Centre.

Established in 2002, the Centre demonstrated its success in the 2008 Beijing Olympics where it contributed 11 competitors to Team GB, with a gold medal going to Rebecca Romero in the cycling pursuit and a bronze to Matthew Wells in rowing.

While most of this year's Team GB has yet to be announced, two marathon runners who train at the centre have already been selected.

They are Scott Overall and Mara Yamauchi. Professor Richard Fisher, Head of St Mary's 2012 Preparations and Sports Strategy, is confident that St Mary's 2012 Olympic representation will be at a similar level to 2008.

Cultural Olympics

In addition to the sporting side, SMUC, in conjunction with the Borough of Richmond upon Thames and other local bodies, is contributing to the 'Cultural Olympics'. This is an Olympic-themed arts project with local schools and hosting an Olympic concert for young people.

Lectures focus on Olympics issues

Lectures by high profile speakers addressing key issues of the Olympic Games will be held at St Mary's College in April and May. Local residents are invited to apply for tickets. The lectures will take place in the Waldegrave Drawing Room, followed by drinks in the Senior Common Room.

More Peace through More Sport is the title of the lecture by Mgr. Vladimir Felzmann on 22nd April. He will examine the concept of living life to the full through sport. Time: 5.30 p.m. for 6 p.m. Apply for tickets by email to:

Nicola.condoncusden@smuc.ac.uk

The Austerity Olympics: When the Games Came to London in 1948 is the title of the lecture by Janie Hampton on 15th May. She will contrast the 1948 Games with the £9 billion 2012 Games. Time: 5.30 p.m. for 6 p.m. Apply for tickets by e-mail to:

Jessica.jeske@smuc.ac.uk

Lin sheathes Spring brides in silk

Just in time for the flowering of Spring brides, Lin Chan has opened her bridal wear shop in Tower Road, opposite the station. Lin knows Strawberry Hill well, having lived in Waldegrave Road some years ago.

Twenty-five years a dressmaker, Lin says: "I had fond memories of Strawberry Hill and I thought this was just the right place."

And so it has proved. Open for just one month, the shop has already attracted commissions from prospective brides and their mothers and mothers-in-law, too.

A single mother, Lin says she always wanted to work for herself. The hours are long and demand a lot of skill, but she gets enormous satisfaction from a successful dress.

Kate Middleton's dress is the model many brides-to-be have in mind. "It's beautiful but very expensive. It looks simple, but there are about 50 metres of material in the train alone."

By contrast, Lin will create a dress of the bride's choice for as little as £700, though not on the scale of that Royal Wedding dress. She can, however, make one of her dresses in as little as five or six days if the deadline is tight.

Tight-fitting bodices are in fashion. Champagne and ivory silk are always popular, with pink and rose running close second.

"I love to discuss brides' ideas and adapt them to the radiant look they all want."

Lin Chan Bridal, 45 Tower Road, Strawberry Hill
www.linchanbridal.co.uk

Lin Chan: fond memories brought her back to Strawberry Hill

Beating stress and obesity

Stress levels are going off the Richter Scale among many employees because of the recession, says Jonathan Whines.

With his partner Jacqui Hughes, Jonathan runs the Dialogue Consultancy from his home in Strawberry Hill. Their goal is to help companies and large organisations from Health Care Trusts to universities manage the issue, which can impair individual and corporate performance.

Jonathan Whines

They work with bodies such as West Middlesex Hospital and Kingston University. Recently they started counselling journalists returning from abroad. Jonathan set up his business 15 years ago as a development for his career as an acupuncturist.

His interest in psychology led him into personal counselling and career coaching. He is consulted on a wide range of career issues from managers anxious about having to make presentations to those suffering from personal problems at home or issues like addiction.

Obesity is a burgeoning problem, he says. As a result of seeing so many cases, Jonathan published a book last year entitled 'Love Myself Slim' (available from Amazon).

"It's essentially a self-help book," says Jonathan. "Obesity is a really serious problem, the recession has not helped, as people are anxious about their jobs and eat to comfort themselves."

A second book about mediation is on the stocks.

'Memories of Twickenham Riverside' Project

If you would like to take part in this exciting Heritage Lottery Funded-project (Richmond House, the pool site, Charlie Shore's Regatta, Queen's Hall and Twickenham Rowing Club) please contact:
info@memoriesoftwickenhamriverside.com

Plant thieves raid flower boxes

In two separate incidents, over £100-worth of plants have been stolen from SHRA planters in Tower Road and Wellesley Parade.

On Christmas Eve, thieves removed a large marguerite bush, grasses and flax plants from the planters at the entrance to MKG 3000. At some time in the second week of January, four evergreen trees were removed from the planter outside Sopa.

One of the denuded planters at the entrance to MKG 3000

The missing plants had been purchased using SHRA funds or were donated by several local residents. They are managed by volunteers on behalf of SHRA. Local police have been informed. We ask residents to report any similar incidents.

If you would like to help to maintain our planters, please contact a committee member or email:

Bulletin@shra.org.uk

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Trains lobby seeks new members

Faced with at least four issues which could impact on travellers from Strawberry Hill station, the Windsor Line Passenger Association (WLPA) is seeking new members.

The WLPA is very active and aims to improve rail journeys on the line. It includes Strawberry Hill. Cost of membership is £4 a year. Among the changes pending are:

- the introduction of 10-coach trains
- the rebuilding of Twickenham station
- the use of the platforms at Waterloo International
- a revised Airtrack service from Heathrow.

The WLPA says all of these will impact on local train services and it is important that as many people as possible support its efforts to maintain and improve services.

You can join by sending an email to:

membership@wlpa.co.uk

Their website is at:

www.wlpa.co.uk

Race roads

Two of Strawberry Hill's main roads will be used for Olympic cycling events. This will mean significant road closures and disruption.

The dates when these races take place are 28th, 29th and 31st July, and 1st August. A map of the routes for the events is available on the Council's website.

We are expecting full details of the road closures and times to be formally advised to all residents closer to the date, but recommend that you put these dates in your diary and aim to plan around them.

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Pope's Grotto Opening

The Grotto, in Radnor House School, is always open to the public on a Saturday during the Twickenham Festival.

This year, for the first time, it will be open on two Saturdays: 2nd and 9th of June at 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. on both days.

Admission will be by pre-paid ticket only. Booking information will be available on the Twickenham Alive web site at:

www.twickenhamalive.com or at:

www.ttba.org.uk

We are grateful to Radnor House School for granting permission to open the Grotto and also to the Twickenham Museum and the Popes's Grotto Preservation Trust, who provide the volunteers for these events.

And another grotto!

Did you know that Strawberry Hill has a second "grotto"?

When Sir William Stanhope acquired Pope's Villa in 1747, he took a lease on Pope's garden, which ran from what we now know as Cross Deep to Radnor Road. He also bought a property diagonally across Radnor Road (now Radnor Lodge) and then constructed a tunnel connecting the two gardens. This was known as "Stanhope's Cave" and was described by one visitor as containing "*three beautiful busts of Sir W Stanhope, his daughter and Lord Chesterfield, cut in Italian marble; opposite each a Roman urn of exquisite workmanship placed in a niche formed in the wall; around are scattered huge masses of stone in imitation of rocks.*"

Today the walled-up entrance to the cave is visible from Pope's garden, now owned by Radnor House School, but pedestrians and motorists in Radnor Road may notice a pronounced hump over the tunnel across the junction with Grotto Road and Upper Grotto Road - a visible reminder of Strawberry Hill's other "grotto".

For more information see the Twickenham Museum's website:

www.twickenham-museum.org.uk

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Spotlight on Swan Island

An oasis on the banks of the Thames, Swan Island hosts a curious collection of businesses run by rugged individualists. We shall profile them and life on the island over the next three issues.

Bikers' pit stop

Les Kibble's motor bike maintenance shop is a pit stop for racers and enthusiasts from all over south-west London.

Les set up L J Motorcycle Repairs five years ago, after Blays of Twickenham closed. He had worked there 30 years, but opened his business on the island one week later in response to requests from customers.

Les Kibble (far right) with enthusiasts
Brian Nicholson (left) Dean Stone and Martin Norfolk

"It's great to be here and business is good. The atmosphere on the island is very friendly and we have a great landlord who really understands the needs of small businesses."

Les, for his part, understands the needs of bikers. They frequently pop in for a cup of tea and a chat. While The Bulletin was interviewing Les, former ex-racer Brian Nicholson dropped in with aspiring racer Dean Stone, whose career he is helping. Dean has his sights set on a junior championship title.

Les says bikers call in to ask his advice, for tips on repairing bikes or where they can buy bikes. Les's interests don't stop with motorbikes - he races off-road. He is also a keen scuba diver.

Affinity with the stars

From glamorous concerts featuring world-famous stars to heavyweight business conferences, David Jackson's Affinity Crew are always present in the background.

Without them, the sparkling sets would not be built. It is an unusual business, but growth has been swift and he now employs up to 120 full- and part-time set erectors, as well as running a removals business.

Sites are spread all over the UK from the O2 arena and famous hotels such as Grosvenor House in Park Lane, to the nearby Lensbury Club. David's team - he is the MD - have built sets in venues ranging from Buckingham Palace to St Paul's Cathedral.

David Jackson (right) with Quentin Strachan, one of his ingenious crew

The crew has just fnished London Fashion Week and now looks forward to a 'frantically busy summer' during the Olympics.

His crew will take on any task, however bizarre: such as sorting tens of thousands of M&Ms into single coloured coded jars for a private party. It took hours. "We never want to see another M&M."

Because they take down the sets when the events are over, hours can be long. "We're a 24-hour, seven-day a week business," says David.

This year is the company's 10th anniversary. Dave moved to Swan Island in 2006 looking for more space. "It's a really nice community here", he says. "It's friendly, calm and safe."

Tree felling in Wellesley Road

Richmond upon Thames Council has started a programme to fell and replace diseased horse chestnut trees in Wellesley Road. They will be replaced with plane trees.

Recently a horse chestnut on Twickenham Green was blown down. All horse chestnuts are being tested for disease.

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Strawberry Hill House Report

Valerie Beard, newly-appointed Functions and Marketing Manager, writes:

Spruced for the spring opening

The grand re-opening of the House on 31st March spurred a flurry of floor polishing, painting and much coming and going of workmen. Among the work, the central staircase is due to be hung with hand-painted 18th century wallpaper. We very much hope this will be done by the end of March, or early April.

Eagerly looked forward to is the return of one of Horace Walpole's iconic objects. This is a reproduction of the solid bronze saint which stood in the Oratory. The reproduction has been made by Liverpool University, using new technology to scan the original in 3D. The reproduction is made out of resin. It looks like bronze, but will weather better than the original.

We have been talking to lots of other people who own pictures that used to be in the house and looking to see if we can have them on loan for the season or longer!

The Education and Outreach Department is continuing to be busy hosting a range of tours. Last week we had our first British Sign Language tour of the house which was a great success. We are also getting involved in an exhibition at Orleans House Gallery of Royal Connections, which will start at the end of April.

Lots of plans are also underway for the Queen's Jubilee Tuesday 5th June, which will promise to be a fun event for all the family.

Weddings and dinners

Enquiries have been coming through thick and fast about use of the House for weddings. Some have been booked already.

Private dining is also proving to be popular and quite a few bookings have come through for this as well. Smart new banqueting chairs have been purchased for all functions and events. We are all set to go.

Gardens and Guides

The gardeners have been busy, planting a hedge at the front and planting up the theatrical border which is mixture of evergreen and flowering shrubs. A rose bed and raised vegetable bed have also been created. A site for a beehive has been arranged; the bees should be arriving by the end of March!

Guided tours started on 1st February. It is wonderful to welcome them back again and they are, like last year, fully booked until the end of the season. As for general public tickets, we will be opening again from 31st March and our website is already taking bookings up until November. If you are planning on visiting the house and garden, we would recommend you visit the website to avoid disappointment.

www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

New committee members needed

New SHRA Committee members are always welcome. It's hardly an onerous job - we have about 6 meetings a year, on Monday evenings. Most members assist at our 2 annual events - the Strawberry Hill Music and Fun Day and the Christmas Carol singing.

If you are interested in joining, please contact any member of the Committee, or email:

bulletin@shra.org.uk

RFU Music and Fun Day

This year's RFU Music and Fun Day will take place on Sunday 22nd July from 12:30 p.m., in the grounds of Strawberry Hill House.

This popular event, with live bands, stalls and fun for kids is not to be missed. SHRA hopes to have its usual strawberry-themed food stall at the event.

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Events and tours

A full calendar of events features Twilight Tours, classes and a promenade play especially written for the House entitled Sign of the Strawberry from 20th to 28th March (see page 6).

Another interesting event is the return of our popular Papier Mâché Masterclass running on 2nd April from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. by artist Magie Hollingworth which gives you a rare insight into the techniques of the this art form. See some of her work below. Book now to avoid disappointment.

Some papier maché spoons by Magie Hollingworth

The Jazz Festival is also running again this year and the marquee has been ordered. Tickets can be obtained on-line from our website along with all other events listed on our website.

Friends of Strawberry Hill and members of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association are invited to a Private View & Tea Party on Friday 27th April from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the exhibition room. A collection of 18th century watercolours will be on display, comprising views of Strawberry Hill House and the local area, loaned by the Borough Art Collection and private lenders. The painting by Thomas Rowlandson, which will also be on display, was purchased by the Friends of Strawberry Hill. You will also be invited to see the restoration of fictive† decoration in the Hallway. Spaces are limited, so if you would like to attend please reply to:

Valerie.Beard@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

by Friday 13th April.

Volunteers welcome

As always we are always keen to welcome to recruit new volunteers and would be keen to hear from anyone interested in getting involved. Details of all the roles are available to view at :

www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/volunteers

† fictive: of, relating to, or having the characteristics of fiction

Profile: Dianne Cutlack, playwright

Gothic fun and mystery of walkabout play

Culminating in a Ghosts' Ball, a promenade play by local author Dianne Cutlack took audiences on a journey through Strawberry Hill House when her new play opened in March.

Called 'The Sign of the Strawberry', the play was an amusing romp through the life and flamboyant times of Horace Walpole. Explaining the play, Dianne says; "It's a very theatrical house and the house is the set, as the actors walk from room to room."

Based on the life and letters of Horace Walpole and his contemporaries, parodies of Gothic genres abounded.

"It's a send-up of the Gothic," says Dianne. "The audience followed us through the rooms as the story unfolded - there was laughter and plenty of surprises, too."

Dianne, who is also a volunteer at the House, says she was looking for venues for plays in London. "Nick Smith, the property manager, bought the idea to use the house."

"Now we are hoping that other houses will be available for plays like this."

Dianne has written six plays. Her first, 'The All-Seeing Eye', was performed at the Orange Tree Theatre in 2007.

A cast of professional actors was directed by Christina Artemis.

The music to the Ghosts' Ball was composed by Nick Pratelli and the dance was choreographed by Ijy de Luca, who worked on Strictly Come Dancing.

Dianne Cutlack (behind chair, centre) with director Christina Artemis and the cast during rehearsal

STRAWBERRY HILL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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