

No. 159 Autumn 2015

What's the point of SHRA?

Strawberry Hill Residents' Association (SHRA) is a lively and busy organisation involved in many issues that affect the lives of local people. SHRA is non-political. Our association frequently meets councillors, council officers, the police and members of local groups to represent the views of residents. Our AGM is held every April at the Golf Club, to which all residents are invited. Everyone who lives in the Strawberry Hill area is a member of the Association.

The Association started in 1965 and over the years has campaigned on many subjects, from road safety to urging improvements to Strawberry Hill station. 50 years ago, SHRA was formed to fight a new road that would have cut through the area and spoiled the environment. It still tries to ensure that Strawberry Hill continues to be a pleasant riverside village - despite the roar of cars and aircraft. New issues constantly arise. Over-development, traffic and parking are some of the most recent concerns. We monitor planning applications across the village to identify and review major developments and any other proposals that could have a potentially adverse impact on our community. These include new builds on any currently undeveloped land, demolitions of existing properties, proposed changes

to any of the significant buildings within Strawberry Hill, as well as any proposals where a group of neighbours seek our support for their objections to an application affecting their street.

In cases where proposals will harm the character or tranquillity of our area, or adversely affect the facilities available to residents, we provide support to residents in their objections and lodge our own with the Council. Our aim is not to stand in the way of progress or to preserve Strawberry Hill 'in aspic', but to ensure that developments do not erode the essential nature of our village. We also liaise regularly with St Mary's University to discuss issues that affect us both. These include any proposed developments on the University campus, compliance with planning conditions, student behaviour in the community, major events on the campus, traffic and parking generated by the University, and any other issues where the University impinges on the life of local residents.

The Bulletin is delivered to every household within the Strawberry Hill area three times a year, and we are very grateful to the local companies that support the publication of the Bulletin through advertising. We recognise the importance of healthy businesses in thriving communities, and try to support these whenever necessary.

An Association such as ours can only continue to flourish if it has an active committee. The SHRA Committee meets on average six times a year. We are very keen to recruit some new committee members.

If you would like to get involved in the local community, and join a friendly welcoming group, please contact us, either using the contact details on the back page, or through the website: www.shra.org.uk.

In this issue...

Now that the hullabaloo of the **Rugby World Cup** is over, we feature in this issue some **reflections** from residents and businesses in Strawberry Hill on how it all went. So we can now all relax in the run-up to Christmas, and once again, we look forward to seeing you at the **annual carol-singing** and tree-unveiling event in Wellesley Parade (see article below).

Peter Lamb continues his **Hunt for Heroes** as part of our commemoration of the First World War. We've also provided you with a **quiz** - just to see how well you know the area and we bring news of one of our local treasures - the **restoration of Pope's Grotto**.

Charles Owens provides an update on **policing** in the borough and we summarise the **purpose of SHRA**, in an attempt to lure some of you to **join us** on the committee. You'd be really, really welcome!

It's beginning to look like the SHRA Christmas event

Once again, Helen Astrid, our local opera singer, will be leading the singing of popular carols at the annual tree unveiling event. In the presence of the Mayor, we will be decorating the tree at Wellesley



Parade on **Friday 11 December, from 6.00pm**. All local children are invited to help decorate the tree and we'll be singing our usual carols (this year following some rehearsals for volunteers, led by Helen). Mulled wine, soft drinks, mince pies and treats for the children will be available free of charge, although we will be collecting donations for a local charity. As ever, we are enormously grateful to Richmond upon Thames Council for their contribution to the funding of the tree and the event.



Get into golf

Strawberry Hill is offering four lessons for beginners and novices for just £7.50 each, led by our PGA professional, Peter Buchan

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Call Amanda Godwin on 020 8894 0165
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The future of Policing

Charles Owens is co-chair of the local Safer Neighbourhood Board. Here he examines the possible future of policing in the borough.

Borough-based Safer Neighbourhood Boards (SNBs) work with their local police Commander and provide structured local community and police engagement. Although a developing story, Richmond and most of the 31 other London boroughs continue to have community-recruited SNBs, supported by ward groups and public meetings.

The London Communities Policing Partnership (LCP2), which I attend as co-chair of our SNB, has been seeking ways of ensuring that the most effective and representative community voices from across London continue to be heard. I must thank Martin Davis and his team at LCP2 for the provision of the information from their September bulletin, which provides the basis of this article.

Over the past 4 years the Met has experienced £600 million worth of cuts and has normally operated below its establishment target of 32,000 police officers. Additionally, through the introduction of the slimmed-down policing services of the MPS Local Policing Model, there has been a 61 per cent reduction in PCSOs, who made up the bulk of our neighbourhood policing teams. The result is that the community's direct access to police and policing services has been cut significantly. There remains a threat that the total loss of PCSOs from Borough Policing could be on the cards, despite their popularity and effectiveness in our communities.

It would be hard to cut frontline services more deeply, so where else might the axe fall? The indications are that restructuring, moving further away from ward-based services, will be part of the answer and that at the heart of the revised Met will be regionalised services; with the basic command units consisting of 2, 3 or 4 boroughs brigaded together, reduced police management, and comprehensive outsourcing of support services.

The on-going cuts to the Policing Budget in the Met are of concern to our SNB executive and we have written to our MPs, Lord True and the Borough Chief Executive, Gillian Norton to express our worries, particularly to emphasise the importance of supporting Neighbourhood Policing to prevent crime levels rising in the future.

Pope's Grotto

Alexander Pope built his villa in 1720 on the banks of the Thames at Twickenham. Demolished in 1808, the villa was replaced and the property became the subject of much redevelopment over the following 200 years. The Grotto, which is the last remaining part of his villa, was, in its time, an object both of admiration and envy, inspiring imitation throughout England. Even today, in its shabby condition, it draws students and enthusiasts from all over the world.

In 1996, St James's Independent School for Boys acquired the estate, remaining for 14 years. In 2005 the school created a Charitable Trust to "preserve [the Grotto] for the benefit of the people of Twickenham and of the nation." Ownership of the building has since passed to Radnor House School, which strongly supports the work of The Pope's Grotto Preservation Trust.

The Trust is committed to the restoration of the Grotto. In order to qualify for a Heritage Lottery Fund "Our Heritage" grant, the Trust needed first to obtain a conservation report, scheme design, budget, and listed building consent. With funding from The Pilgrim Trust and Leche Trust in early spring 2015, these were prepared by Donald Insall Associates, who had previously worked on proposals for the Grotto in 2005. The application for listed building consent



has been lodged, and a bid has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. There is a match-funding requirement of £150,000.

The fund-raising was launched at a free symposium, introduced by Bamber Gascoigne, and held at Radnor House School on 26 September. Eminent speakers from around the country addressed a large audience during the course of the day, and experts led tours of the Grotto. The symposium increased awareness and interest in Pope's Grotto and illustrated where it sits in the 18th century development of gardens and landscapes.

To find out more about the restoration plans or to donate to the restoration fund, visit www.popesgrotto.org.uk.

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Strawberry Hill Ice Rink: Dedicated phone numbers for local residents

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Rink Staff:
07517435853
Organiser:
07784032635

How well do you know Strawberry Hill? Roofscapes

So you think you know Strawberry Hill? How often do you look up when out for a walk? Can you name the roads where you can find these rooftop features? Answers on back page.



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How well do you know Strawberry Hill? Architectural Features

Do you look out for interesting architectural features? Can you name the roads where you can find the following features?



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Strawberry Hill and the Rugby World Cup

Whether or not you are a rugby fan, you cannot have failed to notice the goings-on at Twickenham Stadium, the Richmond Fanzone and the Music and Arts festival in the borough, during RWC 2015. So how was it for us? We asked a few residents, organisations and businesses in Strawberry Hill for their reflections during the event:

A rugby fan

The Opening Ceremony and the first few matches ratcheted up the excitement and anticipation to a whole new level. The 8.00pm kick-offs meant that many fans sampled the Old Deer Park Fanzone, before heading out to the Stadium, with the gates opening at 4.30pm for more pre-match eating and drinking. The noise in the Stadium was the loudest ever, but Swing Low Sweet Chariot failed to inspire the team. Even after the Wales defeat, there was still optimism that we would front up to Australia. Following that defeat, many England fans were left hoping that the other Home Nations, or even France, would be able to beat the mighty Southern Hemisphere sides.

A volunteer member of the 'Pack'

I had been volunteering as a member of The Pack – the 6,000-strong army supporting Rugby World Cup 2015. We were proud wearers of the bright blue livery with the yellow caps (much coveted by Australians!). You may have seen members of the



Spectator Services Team on duty around Twickenham town centre on match days. As a member of Workforce Operations, I was working in a team in a large hut at Chase Bridge Primary school, checking in volunteers and providing them with lunch and somewhere to watch the games. Part of my job was making bunting out of the

national flags – yes including Wales and Australia – hard for an England fan. My best moment was holding the Italy flag as part of the 'guard of honour' when Jonny Wilkinson carried the Webb Ellis Cup into Twickenham. *Andrew Miller*

A member of the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB)

As co-chair of the SNB, I have received quite a bit of correspondence from concerned residents and feedback from several community groups. The traffic disruption that was a concern of many appears not to have been a major problem. The signage and bus enhancement systems seem to have worked. I met with the Police Superintendent for the Borough (policing arrangements for the event were the responsibility of Met Police HQ; as the event took place at several London locations it was centrally coordinated) and discussed various issues. The SNB will now be reviewing the impact of the event and will not hesitate to call organisations to account for any negative impacts on our community. *Charles Owens*

An estate agent

2015 seems to have flown by and as we approach our first birthday in Strawberry Hill, it's clear that we have been able to capitalise on The Rugby World Cup within this time. It has been busy for us since we opened last November, with some great referrals. But the boost of accommodation requirements for the rugby has really benefited us. We feel like it has cemented our place in the community as the 'go to' local agents. We have successfully housed members of staff associated with the RWC, players' families and visitors to the games alike. The atmosphere has been great and it's been fantastic to play a small part in it. *Rosella Short, Lettings Manager, Farish Short*

A Local Pub

Here at the Alexander Pope we've welcomed the Rugby World Cup with open arms, the sport rugby has always been special to us and the Young's family, so we have looked forward to having such massive games take place around the

corner from us. The feeling of community spirit and patriotic feel behind each game has been phenomenal and the sheer amount of positive feedback for the RWC has been brilliant. It's been a busy time for the pub and hotel with lots of guests from around the world and our own doorstep coming in to enjoy a pre-game meal, watch the games in our mini fan zone and stay in our recently refurbished rooms. We would love to say a big thank you to the local community for your continued support and custom, we look forward to seeing you over Christmas! *Chris Anderson*

A participant at a singing workshop

(part of the Richmond upon Thames Try It Festival)

I attended one of the 'Celebrating the Songs of the Nations' singing workshops in early October. About 20 people turned up to learn to sing songs from seven of the nations participating in the Rugby World cup 2015. Over the course of three workshops, songs from all 20 nations were taught and sung. At my workshop, we sang songs from Romania, Namibia, Tonga, Canada, Scotland, Italy and Australia. It was a really invigorating experience, finishing with a thoroughly enjoyable, if slightly disloyal, rendition of "Waltzing Matilda". The workshop was led by Helen Astrid, a Strawberry Hill Resident and singing coach, and maestro Nicholas Cleobury who is Artistic Director of Mid-Wales Opera and Principal Conductor of the Oxford Bach Choir. *Julia Fiehn*

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Hunt for Heroes

Committee vice-chair Peter Lamb continues his investigation into Strawberry Hill in the First World War

The Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Collection at the Old Town Hall is a rich source of information for research into our borough's involvement in the Great War. As I want to be sure that my feature focuses on residents from our area, my line of approach has been to go to the 1911 census for Strawberry Hill and look for the names of those who would have been eligible for military service 1914-18. I then search the National Archives to see whether any of the names appear in the war records. In the case of **Alan Francis Vertue, I found his name in a list of the fallen from our borough and was intrigued to find that his place of birth is given specifically as Strawberry Hill.** This set me on his trail using census returns, shared genealogical trees and the National Archives.

Alan served as a corporal in the 1st Battalion Honourable Artillery Company. His family had strong connections with Richmond and Twickenham. The 1901 census records Alan as having been born in Strawberry Hill in 1894, as were his brother Naunton George Vertue (1892) and sister Winifred Margaret (1899). The father, Alfred Vertue, was a stockbroker and it would appear that the address of the family home until around 1900 was "Thornville", Strawberry Vale. It appears that the family then moved within the borough. The Kelly Directory of 1907 gives Alfred Vertue's address as Suffolk House, Riverdale Gardens, and by the 1911 census they had moved to Cedar Grove, Old Palace Lane, Richmond. (Now, the Virginals, a Grade II listed building). It is possible that his parents had another residence or place of business in London, as in the notification of their son's death, their residence is given as 20 Bishopsgate, London. However other records indicate that the main residence was indeed Cedar Grove until the early 1920s. The 1911 census records Alan Francis Vertue, then aged 17, as school boarder in Rugby. Alas, as so many of those who appear in that census as "scholars", his life was soon

to be cut short. He enlisted early in the War, and in the Spring of 1915 his battalion was engaged in the prelude to the 2nd Battle of Ypres, where the Germans were preparing their first use of poisonous gas. On 22 April 1915 he died of wounds received in the opening stages of the battle. His grave is to be found in La Clytte Military Cemetery, Heuvelland, Belgium. Although he was not living in Strawberry Hill at the time of the Great War, he did spend his early years in our area and the family remained within the borough until after the conflict. I therefore think it quite right to include him in our Strawberry Hill Hunt for Heroes.

A hero of sorts who should not be omitted from this feature is Herbert Herman Stern (1851-1919)



the wealthy banker who owned Strawberry Hill House from 1884. He was created Baronet of Strawberry Hill in the Parish of Twickenham in 1905 and in the same year, raised to the peerage as Baron Michelham of Hellingley. He was too old to enter military service in

1914, but made a philanthropic contribution to the war effort by acquiring the Astoria Hotel in Paris for the purpose of turning it into a military hospital. It was initially used as a base hospital under the jurisdiction of the British Red Cross, before being transferred to the French authorities in February 1915. An article appeared in the January 1915 edition of the Navy and Army Illustrated Magazine under the title, "Tommy's Life as a Millionaire at the Hotel Astoria".



Answers to Quiz: Roofscapes: (1) Terracotta dragon in Waldegrave Gardens, **(2)** St James Tower in Cross Deep, **(3)** Mallard Place off Strawberry Vale, **(4)** Railway viaduct chimneys in Pope's Avenue, **(5)** Vale Close 1920s flat roofs in Strawberry Vale, **(6)** Chimneys on St Mary's University in Waldegrave Road. **Architectural Features: (1)** Fancy brickwork in Heath Gardens, **(2)** 'Portholes' at rear of Giant Bikes on Radnor Road, **(3)** Porthole window with ship on Swan Island, **(4)** 'Macintosh influenced' window features at the Alexander Pope Hotel in Cross Deep, **(5)** Victorian Moorish-influenced brickwork in the British Legion building in Pope's Grove, **(6)** Red, white and black features above door in Orford Gardens

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The photographs and text give an impression far removed from the grim reality faced by most casualties from the front.

If you are further interested in our local history with regard to the Great War, please go to the blog of the Village Stories 1914-18 Project, which is being co-ordinated by Daniella Hadley at the Orleans House Gallery. <https://www1richmond.wordpress.com/>