

# STRAWBERRY HILL

## *A History of the Neighbourhood*

by

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1991

This short history is sponsored by the ***Strawberry Hill Residents Association***. It is primarily, though not exclusively, for the people who live in the area who wish to know more about their neighbourhood, their roads or even their houses. The history has a topographical bias which is deliberate: much has already been written about *Alexander Pope*, *Horace Walpole*, *Laetitia Hawkins*, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, *Frances Waldegrave* and their friends. This book is mainly about the place they lived in and where we live today.

When the Association was formed, on 11 February 1965, the neighbourhood area for membership was broadly defined as that part of Twickenham lying between the *River Thames*, *Heath Road* and *Hampton Road* as far as, and including, *Wellesley Road*. The southern boundary from *Wellesley Road* cuts across the Golf Course to the junction of *Shacklegate Lane* and *Waldegrave Road*, then down *Waldegrave Park* to rejoin the river at the end of *Strawberry Vale*.

This neighbourhood, mainly residential, has its own nucleus of shops on either side of Strawberry Hill Station, often referred to as "The Village".

For many people this gives a recognisable focus to the core of an area which is not a single entity, is diverse in character and which, towards its boundaries is affected by adjoining centres of gravity. Indeed these fringes, in particular *Heath Road* and *Hampton Road* can be considered as quite separate parts of Twickenham, with their own identity. Even the parish church for most of the neighbourhood, Holy Trinity, is on the boundary and so does not provide an identifiable focus to the area.

There are today approximately 2200 households in about 42 Roads and Closes, and the population is swelled by the students of St. Mary's College at the heart of the estate from which the area takes its name.

To write a history of the development of such a large area in any detail is a daunting task; much has to be left for those interested to pursue for themselves in relation to their own houses or roads. However, the various sources which are quoted throughout, and listed in the bibliography, may help individuals to dig deeper. Those who do will surely be able to make a valuable contribution to future editions.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION, 2010

The second edition in 1995 incorporated some amendments, but 19 years after the first edition appeared the opportunity has been taken for a comprehensive review of the text, the format and for the introduction of some new illustrations. No work of history is set in stone and much has been unearthed that was simply not known 20 years ago.

Some of this can be found in work published since 1991. Alexander Pope's life in Twickenham has been the subject of four detailed studies: the history of his life in Twickenham, his villa and the creation of his grotto revealed. Detailed studies of the history of Poulett Lodge and Cross Deep (the house) have been published.

Research into the origins of Radnor House, Twickenham House and Gifford Lodge has uncovered the history of these properties together with biographies of many of the occupiers.

These can be seen on the website of The Twickenham Museum ([www.twickenham-museum.org.uk](http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk)) where there are articles on Henry Fielding, Thomas Wildman, Paul Vaillant, Sir Frederick Augusta Barnard, Isaac Swainson, Thomas Hudson, Joseph Hickey and many others who were associated with the area.

Yet, not all is complete. George Whitefield, the renowned 18<sup>th</sup> century Methodist preacher associated with John Wesley and possibly Lady Frances Shirley, a Twickenham resident, is recorded using a chapel standing somewhere along the Waldegrave Road, in 1767. Tantalisingly, nothing is yet known about where the chapel actually stood, for how long or who built it.

Not all has yet been revealed; for the future there is yet more to explore.