

The Strawberry Hill Riots

In the first of a new series of articles, our archivist has been leafing through old copies of newspapers and the Bulletin and writes about the Strawberry Hill riots of 2000

Our village has one of the lowest crime rates in the Metropolitan Police Area but in 2000 there were a number of serious disturbances which have not, fortunately, been repeated since then.

On the 9th June 2000, the front page of the Richmond and Twickenham Times carried the headline “Crime wave hits Strawberry Hill.” The article described how “riot police were called to a residential road in Strawberry Hill after a man was stabbed near council-

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Strawberry Hill**

The headline in the Richmond and Twickenham Times

owned flats, fuelling fears of a growing crime wave The attack has reinforced fears of an escalating crime problem surrounding the block of one-bedroom council homes, though residents are not known to be involved.” It went on to report “swearing, shouting fighting and intimidating passers-by” as well as groceries and alcohol being stolen from the newsagents in Wellesley Parade.

Two weeks later, the paper reported that the Council had denied poor housing policy was to blame. No-one was arrested in connection with the disturbances, which centred around Shelley House and No 11 Strawberry Hill Road.

Bulletin 115, published in August 2000, carried the following article:

“Many of us were appalled by the very sudden spate of late night drinking, joy-riding in a stolen car, looting from the village shops and fisticuffs several nights running at the end of May.

“We were grateful to the Police for rapid reaction to the problems and to the Council Housing department for their actions in sorting their part of the problem. The Housing department staff have been transferred to The Richmond Housing Partnership.

“At the time of the greatest difficulties we were grateful for a sympathetic approach from police, housing staff, Ward Councillors and our MP.

“All parties were planning to meet in September to discuss the issues that emerged from the case and to ensure similar disturbances are prevented.”

In November, Bulletin 116 we reported: “SHRA met with the local Councillors, the Housing staff (recently moved from the Council to the Richmond Housing Partnership) and Inspector Mark Jones in September to make sure that everything which could be done to prevent a recurrence of trouble is being done. We were satisfied that all parties had done all that could be done for now.

“SHRA was ready to lend further support to residents and the shops should trouble recurs. SHRA thanked especially the Councillors and Dr Vince Cable who had devoted considerable time to the issue during the year.”

Fortunately, the actions taken by the Council and the Police seem to have worked and there were no further reports of similar incidents.

This article was first published in Bulletin no 150, the newsletter of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association (www.shra.org.uk).