

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

No. 142 March 2010

New pedestrian crossing opens on Waldegrave Road (finally)

In December 2008, we reported an initiative by two local mums, Ellen Purton and Emily Cotton who were pressing for a pedestrian crossing on Waldegrave Road, near the mini-roundabout at Cross Deep. Ellen and Emily were concerned about the safety of children (and their parents) in the South East of our area who have to cross Waldegrave Road on their way to their schools. They raised a petition with more than 150 signatures and presented it to the Council's Traffic and Highways department.



Emily Cotton, Ellen Purton and children try out the new crossing

SHRA and our local councillors, particularly Cllr Clare Head, have supported them throughout their campaign. The Council conducted a traffic survey early last year and consulted residents in September. Finally, in

February, work commenced in the new crossing and it is now in operation.

We're very pleased that the Council has eventually taken note of residents' concerns, but we're mystified as to why it has taken 15 months to complete the necessary work.

Carol donations help Kinnear House

Residents' generous donations at the Annual SHRA Christmas carol event in December meant that we were able to give £350 to Roy Kinnear House, the home for severely disabled youngsters in Waldegrave Road.

The carol singing, opened by Dr Arthur Naylor, principal of St Mary's College, attracted a record attendance of children and parents. SHRA raised approximately £350 on the night. Richmond Council contributed £285 towards our costs.

Parking poles spark anger

A rash of 18 grey metal poles on Pope's Grove has upset residents who say they are spoiling the streetscene. They bring the total number of steel poles in the half-mile long street, to 36. The poles display information about new parking bays resulting from the South Twickenham CPZ review.

Residents complain that the road is already inflicted with yellow lines, speed bumps, kerb build outs and a chicane under the railway bridge. They add that while they were consulted about the CPZ, there was no consultation about the parking display poles.



Some of the crop of new poles in Popes Grove

Special Issue: Shopping in Strawberry Hill

In this extended edition of the Bulletin, we focus on the shops in and around the centre of Strawberry Hill Village.

Three new shops have opened, phoenix-like, from older businesses in the last four months so we've interviewed the new retailers and some of the longer-standing ones, giving them an opportunity to explain their reasons for choosing Strawberry Hill for their businesses and to tell you what they offer. We have also commissioned a short history of the shops specially for this issue. We know you like bargains, so there are two "readers offers" in this issue.

Our shops, together with the station, are at the centre of our community and we are extremely lucky to have such a good selection of businesses on our doorstep.

However, in these uncertain economic times, we need to support them in any way we can. The publicity in this Bulletin is one of the ways that the Association can help them to prosper, but in the end, their survival will depend on all of us supporting them.

We've said it before, repeatedly, "use them or lose them!"



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 pm on Monday April 19th 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 chat to other residents and the Committee.

You will also be able to buy the new edition of "Strawberry Hill - a History of the Neighbourhood" at the meeting at a special introductory price of £5.99 - a reduction of £1. See page 4 for further information about the book.



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Strawberry Hill Post Office



Jay and Aparna Patel outside the Post Office, 105 years old this year

The future of the Post Office is more secure than it has been for a long time, but Post Mistress Aparna Patel, urges residents to keep up their custom. "If we don't use it, we might lose it" says Aparna.

The range of services provided by the Post Office and the shop is expanding. The shop, which has been a Post Office for 105 years, is the only one in Strawberry Hill providing Oyster cards and top-ups. Foreign currency conversion continues to be a draw because the Post Office does not charge commission. Meanwhile, the dry cleaning service is popular with daily commuters.



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Cheers! To Premier Wine's great offer

Not only has Feng Chen saved Strawberry Hill's Off-Licence following the demise of Wine Rack, he is also offering residents a great offer. Present this copy of the Bulletin and his manager Rory Thorpe will give you a 10% discount on any bottle of wine or 15% off six bottles.



Rory Thorpe and assistant Linda Dormer will offer you a 10% discount with this Bulletin

Mr Chen was also franchisee of the Wine Rack in Stanley Road and immediately saw the potential of wine sales in the Tower Road shop.

The aim, says Rory, is to create a relaxed atmosphere where the personal touch will replace the formality normally associated

with buying wine. "The original team at the shop has been kept on", says Rory, "because we firmly believe that their customer knowledge is a vital part of the business".

Flexibility of service is key. Rory and his team will supply any wine you want, from a single bottle upwards. They will be holding wine tastings are weekends, starting on Friday evenings, highlighting popular wines or wine of a country or region.

Premier Wines' range is 2 to 1 New World to Old World. There is also a choice of beers and chocolates, while glass hire and free delivery are offered with payment on delivery.

Better and better Everyday

Fresh flowers will soon be blooming outside Everyday's. Since taking over the former Cost Cutters and transforming it into Everyday's, owner Kuri Nadarajah has extended the shop, introduced a wider range of goods, more attractive display, photocopying and a sound system.

The latest innovation, along with flowers, is a free ATM machine. Shop manager Kumar Nadarajah, who is Sri Lankan,

explains that the cash withdrawal fee has been scrapped so as to encourage custom.



Kumar Nadarajah: no charge for ATM withdrawals

"It is used a lot," says Kumar who has been working at Everyday's for four months. "We have also just introduced a big range of telephone cards. Business is good. We seem to get a lot of students from St Mary's College." The bigger shop - it was extended at the back into a former storeroom - has encouraged trade, he says. The shop is open from 6 am to 10 pm every day (as you might expect).

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A short history of shopping in Strawberry Hill

The building of the station at Strawberry Hill in 1873, ten years after the railway line, triggered development in the roads around the station and by 1900 houses had been built in Strawberry Hill Road, Waldegrave Gardens, Waldegrave Park, Walpole Gardens, Popes Grove and Popes Avenue. The first shop in Strawberry Hill was the Post Office which opened in 1905. The first Post Master was Henry James Barry (he handed the running of his business to his wife in the following year) and the same building has remained a Post Office to this day. In the 1920s and 1930s, it was run by Charles Severn and the counter was described as being at the back of the living room of the house. There were no other shops until a bootmaker, Richard Madge, opened in a lean-to next to the Post Office in 1927.

Until the 1920s there was a limited need for shops as much fresh produce came from local market gardens and a dairy farm in Waldegrave Road, delivered as required. However the rapid development of housing between 1900 and 1930 created a need for more local businesses. In 1930, the bootmaker was joined by a confectioner, a ladies costumier (or draper), and shortly after, by a coal merchant (where the off-licence, McDowells and the dentist's surgery, respectively, are now). The following year the opposite side of Tower Road was developed and a fruiterer, a baker, a car-hire business, Strawberry Hill Cars, opened on the site of the present Lexington Court. A grocer and a Barclays Bank



The Stores in the 1930s. Most of the advertisements seem to be for alcohol

opened next to the railway. The grocer, roughly where Kyzan now stands, was called The Stores and was also known as Boatswain's and later, in 1934, as Yardley's. A butcher opened in the following year between the grocer and the bank.

When the three shops on the north side next to the station opened in 1935, the boot repairer moved into one of them on the site of the present shoe repairer, Harji, and the confectioner moved to the River Trading site. An auctioneer moved in between them at the same time, whilst yet another auctioneer occupied the vacant confectioners shop. The following year, Strawberry Hill's first hairdresser, Miss Geraldine Watson, moved into the vacated boot repairer's shop. Further east, at 15 Tower Road, a "naturopath and nature cure specialist", Madame Varne, was operating from 1933 to 1938, presumably in a private house.

Wellesley Parade was built in 1934 and the first shop was a newsagent at number 1. The other five shops were occupied over the next two years by a confectioner, a chemist (which remains a chemist to this day), a ladies outfitter, a "provisions merchant" and another fruiterer.

All these shops remained mainly unchanged (except for one or two new proprietors) until the Second World War. At about midnight on 29th November 1940, during the most intense air raid that Twickenham saw in the war, the Bank was hit by a high explosive bomb and all the shops on the south side of Tower Road were destroyed, though there seem to have been no casualties. More than 70 people died in the Borough that night.

Records for the war and the years following are sparse, but it is known that Rochester House was built on the bomb-damaged site in 1953 and a butcher (Framptons, then Lorie Meats, closed in 1989) opened where the Hill Dry Cleaners now stands, followed shortly next door by a greengrocer, Quality Corner, in the shop now occupied by Kyzan, the



The Post Office in the early 20th century. The two boys with the bicycle are telegraph boys

and now Premier Wines.

Closer to the station, the bootmaker, now Harji's, has survived for 80 years. Next door, Peggy's Pantry was until last year an estate agent; Bells from 1990, then Rawlinson & Webber. This shop was either an auctioneer or an estate agent continuously from 1935 to 2009. The River Trading site next to the level crossing was occupied by a dress shop (Strawberry Flair, later Jules) and then, from 2002, a sandwich shop, Fill Yer Boots.

In 1960, on the present site of Lexington Court at the corner of Strawberry Hill Road, there was an estate agent and a car hire business. The estate agent had disappeared by 1964 and was replaced by an enlarged car hire business, named Wallis Car Hire, later Smiths Car and Van Hire and traded until Lexington Court was built in 2003.

The businesses in Wellesley Parade were the same in the late 1950s as before the war. However, an ironmongery, Penningtons, replaced the greengrocer on the corner, in 1958. In 1960, the newsagent was L M Barratt, the confectioner was called Bon Bon (which also hired out books), the chemist was H G M Osborne and there was grocer, Burfords, next to the ironmongery (both Messrs Osborne and Burford were, in 1965, founder members of SHRA). In that year, Penningtons was replaced by Butlers hardware store, which many residents remember. By 1972, Butlers had expanded to take over the 2 adjacent shops - a configuration which remains to this day. This, Strawberry Hill's largest and most prominent retail site, has since been a locksmith and a succession of three restaurants; first, The Melting Pot, which became a Thai restaurant and now Sopa.

Number 1 Wellesley Parade, the original Strawberry Hill newsagent, has developed in way that typifies many small shops in Britain - from newsagent, confectioner and tobacconist (under the management, amongst others, of Anne and Jim Stevens), to small supermarket, Costcutters then Everydays, offering a far greater range of goods.

Changes in lifestyles over the years have been reflected in the types of shops. For example, the coal merchant, the bank, the specialist confectioners and ladies costumier have long since disappeared, but we now have an off-licence, a cafe and a restaurant. Businesses have come and gone with worrying regularity in recent years but it is interesting that there has been a Post Office, a shoe repairer, a newsagent, a chemist, a hairdresser and an estate agent (or auctioneer) in Strawberry Hill almost continuously for the last eighty years. Even in these financially uncertain

continued overleaf ...



Tower Road in the 1960s, with the estate agent on the corner and the car hire's petrol pump behind

Cooking up some lasting ties

Romance and a business opportunity blossomed for Phil and Sopa Rochford when they met in a chance encounter on platform 13 at Victoria station. Sopa means beautiful in Thai and it was certainly true for Phil.

Thirty-three years later, they are the very successful proprietors of Sopa, the Thai restaurant in Wellesley Parade. Married with two sons (aged 22 and 33, an opera singer) they have been ensconced in Strawberry Hill for five years, but live in Surrey.

The restaurant alternates between a popular breakfast stop - the Full English is a favourite - a sandwich lunch break rendezvous during the day, and a Thai eatery at night. "Most of our customers are regulars," says



Sopa and Phil, assistants Nun, Kris and Pat and customers enjoying the lunchtime sunshine

Phil. "They get off the train and pop in for dinner. We frequently see families. The English have really taken to Thai cooking". Phil appreciates the relationship which has developed.

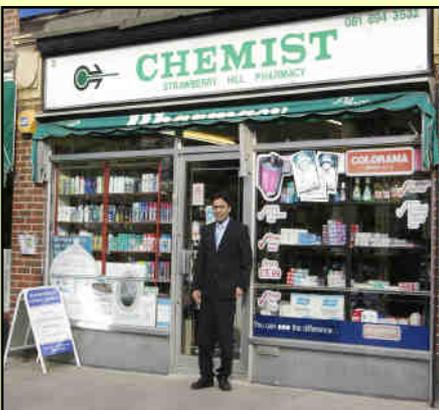
Most popular dish? "It's Prik Pao which means chilli paste," Phil explains.

Unlicensed, Phil likes the BYO formula for drinks which makes life simpler, and less expensive all round; and they don't have to keep alcohol on the premises. Many customers buy their wine or beer from Everyday's so there is a close relationship between the two businesses.

You can see Sopa's menu on their web site: www.sopa-thai.co.uk

Bharat's healthy business

Bharat Patel has been the manager and pharmacist at Strawberry Hill Pharmacy for 16 happy years. "It is the nicest place I have ever worked in," he says. "The people are very pleasant and that makes it a pleasure to drive here every day from my home in Wembley."



Bharat Patel: "the people are very pleasant"

Bharat has a privileged view of Strawberry Hill society. The majority of his trade is dispensing prescriptions. "I have seen mothers bring in their babies who have now grown into teenagers, so I feel I have a special link".

He is married with two daughters aged 15 and 6. They occasionally help in the pharmacy, especially when Bharat broke his wrist during a charity bike ride. "I fell off while trying to do some good. But my daughters came in and helped me open jars and boxes".

Bharat says business has slowed over the years because of competition from supermarkets. "It is important to support local shops otherwise they will disappear". He is discussing the possibility of upgrading the shop with the owner.

Famous for fresh bread

Kugan and Sasileka Kugathasan have steadily built up McDowell's grocers shop since taking it over five years ago. Kugan has lived in Strawberry Hill for 14 years. Kugan worked for the previous owner.

Life is busy for Kugan and Sasileka who have two children, a girl, Santhiya, 4, and a boy, Santosh, 2. The day starts with the bread delivery from Belmont Bakery at 6.30 am.



Sasileka and Kugan Kugathasan with Santosh

"People really like the fresh bread," says Kugan. "That's why a lot of them come here. And the fresh vegetables, too."

The day continues to 8 pm except on Sundays when they open at 8 am and shut at 5 pm. Each evening when the trains unload commuters from London is the shop's busy period. Staples like milk, eggs, bread, bacon, fly off the shelves.

In an echo of their homeland, Sri Lanka, the tray of samosas and other spicy nibbles such as onion bhajis on the counter, is a daily draw.

... from page 3

times, only one of the 14 retail premises round the station is unoccupied at the time of writing (Waterlily closed in early March).

If you have any memories or facts about our shops, please contact Robert Youngs (details on the last page of this Bulletin). An expanded and updated version of this article, with many more pictures and your comments, will be published on the SHRA web site in the "History Book" section soon.

Information for this article has been taken from "Strawberry Hill - a History of the Neighbourhood" (ordering information elsewhere in this Bulletin), interviews with residents and from directories in Richmond Local Studies Collection. All images are courtesy of Richmond Local Studies Collection.



Wellesley Parade in 1972. Butlers hardware store (now Sopa) is on the corner, with H G M Osborne's chemist next door (now Strawberry Hill Pharmacy)

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St Mary's College

College rethinks waste site

St Mary's College has withdrawn the planning application for the controversial relocation of its waste and recycling compound following strong objections from residents and SHRA.

The College planned to relocate the compound to a site behind a house in Waldegrave Park, used as student accommodation. Architects for the College have been asked to come up with new proposals. The resiting arises from the building of the new sports hall. Work on the hall begins in April.

Green travel and antennae

Issues raised at a recent liaison meeting between SHRA and the College focused on the College's green travel policy and complaints, and how they are handled.

In the meantime, antennae have been removed from the roof of the College. Residents concerned about student parking were told that a second, smaller Streetcar would be restored to the campus shortly.

Drama Students Celebrate 400 years at Ham House

Drama students from St Mary's University College are teaming up with the National Trust at Ham House to create a unique community event celebrating the properties 400th birthday later this Spring and are looking for recruits to take part.

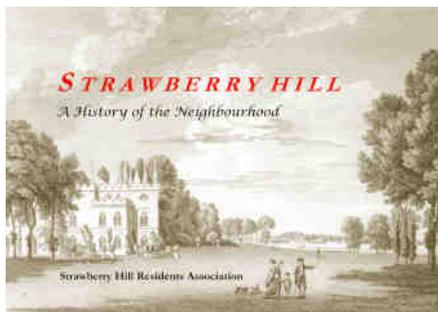
Since September 2009 Students have been working at the house as a resident theatre company, planning a range of education and performance based events encouraging a new generation of visitors to explore and enjoy the house and grounds.

The work will culminate in a grand birthday party, taking place on Sunday 31st May with community groups, families and local residents gathering on Ham Common before parading in procession to join an audience 3,000 strong for a mass community sing-along event wishing the house Happy Birthday.

Strawberry Hill's thrilling history

This history of our neighbourhood, which has been a consistent seller since it was first published by SHRA 19 years ago, has been updated.

Author, local historian and past chairman of SHRA, Anthony Beckles Willson has revised the text and illustrations and the first copies of a new A5-sized edition are on sale in now. This, the third edition and the first major revision, comprises 84 pages (up from 64) on high-quality cream paper, contains 38 illustrations (previously 23) and 16 maps. Apart from revisions to the text, there is a



wealth of recently discovered new information.

Popular as Christmas presents, demand for the new edition is expected to be high as a result of the publicity generated by the Strawberry Hill House exhibition at the V&A.

The book is available now for £6.99 from the

Secretary (see back page for contact information) and will shortly be on sale at Langton's in Church Street and the Twickenham Museum. It will be on sale at Strawberry Hill House when it reopens in September.

Strawberry Hill House

Financial serendipity boosts coffers

It has been a good February for the finances of Strawberry Hill House, writes Judith Lovelace, Chair of the Friends of Strawberry Hill. The Trust was able to announce that it had achieved the total of £9 million for phase one of the Restoration of Horace Walpole's historic house. The money was raised from a mix of heritage lottery grants with matching funds from donors. Individuals, companies, Trusts, Foundations and the Friends in the USA and the UK.

But more cash is still needed for phase 2, which covers the restoration of the rooms. The Trust thanks SHRA for its help and looks forward to seeing its members taking part in special tours of the house before the formal opening on September 24.

For more information contact

Claire Leighton:

claire.leighton@blueyonder.co.uk

Hot News

The reopening of Strawberry Hill House and the start of the Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert museum has spurred numerous articles in the media. Recently, the *Evening Standard* has run large feature stories about the exhibition as well as a two-page article in its property section about the attractions of the Strawberry Hill area. The exhibition continues until 4th July.

So far bands, choirs, religious groups, schools, the police, local pubs and businesses have all pledged support and will bring colour and life in what it's hoped will be a huge celebration of the diversity and spirit of our local community.

If you'd like to be involved or just kept up to date with what's happening please drop SMUC an email on smucdic@hotmail.co.uk or go to www.smuc.ac.uk/yourstmarys. They'd love to hear from you!

Community forum launched online

A dedicated Strawberry Hill web forum has been set up by the Richmond United Group (RUG) part of a network of forums covering the Borough's villages. Topics covered include Environment, Library Events, Sport and Local Politics. New forums can be added on request. See the RUG website at:

www.richmondunitedgroup.com

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Tea, cakes and masses of sympathy

Sisters Peggy and Stacy, helped by Luca, created an instant hit when they opened Peggy's Pantry in Tower Road nearly three months ago. Business is brisk as mums gather for coffee after the school run, while on Mondays an older lunch group gathers for a natter over bowls of Stacy's excellent home-made soup.

Peggy lives in Teddington and worked in the café at Langton's bookshop before taking over the former estate agents. Stacy, mother of two, has lived in Strawberry Hill for six years. The shop has been transformed with reclaimed furniture from old churches and crockery from a former Wesleyan Chapel. The result is a charming, relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The tables are stripped oak and pine while some of the chairs still have boxes for hymn books on the back.

"We wanted to create a happy community focus and bring people together," says Stacy who works part-time. They are also helped part-time by Luca from the Czech



Stacy and Peggy outside Peggy's Pantry: creating a community focus

Republic who lives nearby.

But it is the food as much as the friendliness which attracts. Cakes are made by local mum Jenny Hunt and a new Spring menu based on salads is in preparation.

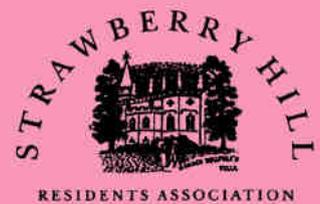
Open each weekday from 7.30 am to 4.30 pm, Peggy's opens later on Saturdays (9.30 am to 4 pm) and from 10 am to 3 pm on Sundays when locals gather for breakfast over the Sunday papers.

Distributors needed for Milton Court and Roymount Court

SHRA is looking for one or two volunteers to distribute the Bulletin in Milton Court and Roymount Court in Wellesley Road. The commitment is about half an hour, 3 times per year.

If you can help, please contact: Clare Phelps or email:

Bulletin@shra.org.uk.



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