



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

No. 145 March 2011

Another planning application for Gifford House site

At long last, a new planning application has been submitted for the Gifford House site, the former residential home which fronts onto Twickenham Green at the corner with Pope's Avenue.

The application, on behalf of Churchill Retirement Living, is for a sheltered housing development of 29 apartments with associated communal facilities. The application involves the demolition of Gifford House, which has been empty and unused for several years, and its replacement by a new three storey building in a more traditional design. An artist's impression of the proposed building is shown on the right.

For anyone interested, full details of the plans can be viewed in the planning section of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames website under application reference 10/3719. The deadline for public comments on the application was the 18th of March, though comments sent after that date and before the relevant Planning Committee meeting may be taken into account.



Proposed elevation showing brick facing

Although substantially larger than the building it may replace, the finish is more sympathetic to the surrounding buildings. For example, the roof angle and tiles are similar to the adjoining Victorian villas. The original application showed a brick finish to the walls. After an approach by SHRA, the developer has agreed to consider an off-white rendered finish to match the adjacent properties.

In this issue

In recent Bulletins, we told you about some of our less well-known local businesses. We continue that theme on page 3 with articles on TÉ London and the Foundation for Harmonious Living - both in Wellesley Parade offering relaxing beauty treatments and complementary medicine. After you've enjoyed their offerings, you may be ready for singing lessons - local lady Helen Astrid can help you improve your vocal talents.

Visitors from all over the world are attracted to the two 18th century monuments in our area. Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill House was restored to its former glory last year. Now it may be Alexander Pope's turn - we report on an initiative to restore his grotto on page 5.

Time for a rant?

Is there a local issue or cause for concern you would like to share with residents? Can you express it in 300 words or fewer? Would you like it to appear in our new column called Rant!?

If so, please contact Eugene Bacot:

ebacot@tiscali.co.uk

The best rants will be published in forthcoming Bulletins, but please observe the rules of defamation.

Calls for 20 mph limit at roundabout

An accident at the Cross Deep-Strawberry Vale roundabout, and several recent near misses, have led to calls for a 20 mph limit at that point. Kevin Kelly, visiting friend Kate Johnson in Riverview Gardens, was involved in an incident with a lorry approaching the roundabout, fell off his bike and broke his arm.

Kevin says: "The road narrows at the spot forcing vehicles either over the mid-road line or into the cycle lane. Cyclists get squeezed against the kerb. Vehicles should reduce speed to take account of that". Kate adds: "I have witnessed cars braking hard as they approach the roundabout. There are precedents for a 20 mph limit in Teddington by Bushy Park and in Petersham."

A complaint has been lodged with Richmond Council.



Kevin Kelly, bike and broken arm

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 the 11th 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 chat to other residents and the Committee.



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Carols raised £250 for charity

Snow and ice did not deter children and parents from enjoying the carols, mince pies and mulled wine - for parents and soft drinks for children - at the SHRA Christmas Carol concert. Alas, this was the last appearance of the choir. SHRA plans to approach local schools to provide carolers for the next concert.

Over £250 was raised at the event, donated to Kinnear House. The lights and tree were funded with help from Richmond Council.



Children in the snow in front of the tree

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Bowling along to the Radnor greens

The bowling seasons fast approaches. Now your local bowls club offers first class facilities following substantial investment by Richmond Council.

Strawberry Hill Bowling Club, located in the delightful setting of Radnor Gardens, was founded in 1920.

It currently has 66 members (34 women and 32 men) whose ages range from 16 to 80+. Activities include a Thursday evening Club Night, internal competitions, friendly matches against other local clubs and social events such as Quiz Nights and an Annual Dinner.

Bowling season

The outdoor bowling season runs from April to September. The Club annual subscription for adults is currently £75 with a reduction of 50% for new members in their first season and further reductions for those still in full-time education. Fees entitle members to use the green at anytime and take part in all Club activities.

Alan Hewett, Club Secretary, says: "in the last 2 years Richmond Council has spent a considerable sum replacing green surrounds and refurbishing/improving clubhouse facilities.



A tranquil day and the click of woods in the gardens

The Club is now in a position to offer first class facilities, good bowling, a wonderful location and a friendly and welcoming existing membership."

Try your hand

The Bowls Club is organising an Open Day at Radnor Gardens on Sunday, 15th of May from 11 am to 4 pm. Members of the public are warmly invited to come along at anytime during these hours to try their hand at bowls, with guidance from members and EBCS qualified coaches. Use of equipment is free all: you need to bring along is a pair of flat-soled shoes.

If you enjoy bowling, or if you are unable to attend the Open Day, the Club is running a 4-week Beginners Course every Sunday starting on the 22nd of May and ending on the 12th of June from 10.30 am to 12 noon. A small charge of £5 will be made to attend this course but this will be refunded if you join the Club. Our qualified coaches will run the course and equipment will be available for use free of charge.

Château Strawberry Hill is drinking well

Climate change might be having a very fruitful effect in the Strawberry Hill vineyard of John and Ros Armstrong - actually their back garden in Pope's Grove. In September their vine yielded 270 bunches of red grapes with a sugar equivalent of 8.6% alcohol.

Bottled early this year, the young wine is fresh to the palate, reminiscent of a Loire gamay.

Vinous challenge

Says John: "I shouldn't be surprised to discover that there are many more vines in people's gardens in Strawberry Hill. I know of at least one other. Wouldn't this be a wonderful opportunity to hold a Strawberry Hill Wine Festival? I throw out the challenge."

Vignerons can contact John at: 020 8894 5218 or email: John@Armstrong.efnmail.com



Two down, six to go, as John Armstrong samples the results of the 2010 vendange in the Strawberry Hill vineyard



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The diva of Strawberry Hill

Singing her heart out from opera to bebop, from Bach to Berg

Soprano Helen Astrid, an accomplished opera singer, has ways of making us all sing a new tune, whether catchy jazz numbers of much loved musicals.

In a career which has placed her on stage at English National Opera and the Aldeburgh Festival, Helen has sung roles ranging from La Bohème to Phantom of the Opera and in famous international music festivals.

Now Helen, who lives in Upper Grotto Road, has set up the Helen Astrid Singing Academy, with a second studio in Edgware. A graduate of the Royal College of Music, Helen says: "I have sung all my life



Helen Astrid

and have taught for 15 years".

She is also a songwriter and the author of "Singing tips at your fingertips". Helen has lived in Strawberry Hill since 2009 - she married one of her pupils, dear reader - and now also gives lessons at the Alexander Pope.

Her current classes are full, but new classes start in May. "We get people from all walks of life," says Helen, "some are skilled, some not, but they have in a

love of singing - and talent."

For more information about Helen and her singing see:

www.harmonyworks.co.uk

The secret of TÉ

Treatment with a smile from Louise, Katie, Alison and Vivienne

TÉ is an oriental word which occurs in many eastern countries. "It can mean 'you' or 'active' or refer to the elements," explains Alison Dervis who opened the TÉ boutique in Wellesley Parade six weeks ago.

The reference to elements is carried through in the calm, soothing treatment rooms, named Earth, Fire, Air, Water and Spirit. Soft music plays; it is warm and relaxing. So much so that clients frequently fall asleep says Alison.

Her team of four - Louise, Katie, Sally and Giovanni - provide wellness technique and treatments ranging from facials to body message, nail and eye treatments and waxing.

"We use Elemis products, very high quality made by a British company" say Alison. "That makes a clear statement to our clients about the style of the boutique. And it is not just quality treatment we promise. We also promise a friendly and smiling welcome."



Alison and the staff at TÉ London

Women predominate among the 100 plus customers who have signed up, but men are present too. "Back waxing is popular with men" says Alison, "so are the gift vouchers for treatments and Elemis products - especially with the approach of Mothers Day."

Vivienne Pearl, who lives Rutland Court, likes it so much she came back as part-time receptionist.

For Alison, who set up the boutique with her husband Cengiz, the treatment boutique is a departure from her career as a management and career consultant. "But I think it makes me better able to understand what clients want and adapt the business to their needs."

Ian Wood's pursuit of harmony

For over 30 years, Ian Wood has specialised in a complementary medicine from physiotherapy to yoga, traditional Chinese acupuncture and Ayurveda the Indian art of living harmoniously within the laws of nature. It is appropriate that his practice in Wellesley Parade (above the pharmacy) should be called The Foundation for Harmonious Living.



"May all be happy". Ian in his studio in Wellesley Parade

His interest in complementary medicine grew out of his treatment of sports injuries. Today his clients range from local people - "lots of work stress" - to running meditation classes at St James's Boys School and at St Mary's University College.

Ian, who has lived in Strawberry Hill for four years, says he seeks to treat the whole person both physical and mental. "My clients range from children to people in their 80s. Modern lifestyle is very stressful and can often be soothed by meditation as much as by herbal remedies, massage or physiotherapy".

A full explanation of the philosophy and application of ayurvedic principles can be found on:

www.foundation-for-harmonious-living.com

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St Mary's college embarks on a strategic review

Prof Philip Esler, the new Principal of St Mary's University College, outlines the challenges facing the College and links with the local community

The mission of St Mary's University College, of which I have been Principal since 1st of October 2010, is to prepare our students for successful careers and flourishing lives by assisting them to develop intellectually, physically and spiritually, as symbolised by the propinquity on our campus of library, running-track and chapel.



Professor Philip Esler
(image @ copyright St Mary's University College)

available. We receive through UCAS five to six applications per place and do not go into Clearing. This year our UCAS applications are up about 9% compared with a national rise of 3%. We have very high levels of graduate employability and student satisfaction. We are also completing a new £8 million Sports building and St Mary's is the leading UK centre for middle- and long-distance athletics.

Funding

We now stand at an exciting moment in our history that stretches back to our foundation in 1850. We face the gradual removal of funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England for our humanities and social science courses from 2012 onwards and dramatic changes to the way initial teacher training will be funded. Like other universities and colleges we will be able to charge increased fees to make up for the resulting loss of income. Our response is positive and confident. We have never had a deficit and last year we achieved a 4% surplus over income against a budgeted surplus of 2.5%.

Teaching standards

We have just passed the five-yearly audit of our teaching and learning by the Quality Assurance Agency, receiving the top grade

University status

Yet we are not complacent and we are determined to meet challenges by improving our offer. This year we are having a major Strategic Review involving the whole institution. Part of this review involves improving our teaching and learning, refreshing our curricula, increasing the number of students on work placements that form part of accredited modules, investing much more in teaching and learning resources (such as e-journals) and encouraging a far greater production of new knowledge through cutting-edge research. We are developing extensive international links. Finally, we are now very close to university status.

No doubt the future will be exciting but we are looking forward to it.

Security and good relations

Professor Esler has also outlined how he believes the College should to relate to the local community:

“Here at St Mary's we consider it vital to have good relations with our neighbours. We are delighted that many people from the local community use our facilities and we hope such usage expands, for example when our new Sports Building is finished in June 2011.

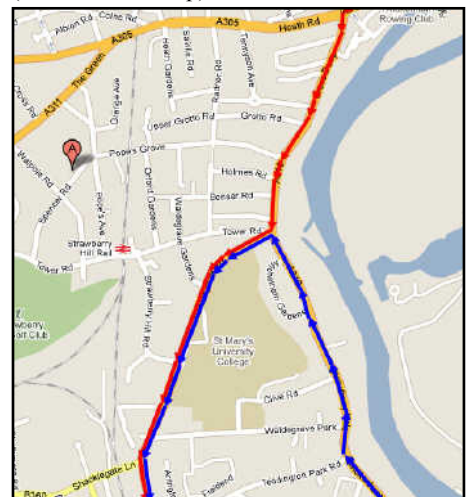
We have a very active programme to remind our students of the need to be considerate to our neighbours. This semester we have begun employing clearly identified security personnel on certain nights during the week to patrol the streets outside the University College, especially between here and Strawberry Hill Station.

I am also enthusiastic to have the occasional street party here on the campus with our neighbours and I have already raised that idea with representatives of the local community at my first meeting with them.”

Olympic cyclists to come to Strawberry Hill

The London Olympics Organising Committee has announced the route of the Cycling Road Races for the 2012 Olympics. The outer route, to Box Hill, will pass through Twickenham, then along Cross Deep and Waldegrave Road to Teddington and Bushy Park (shown in red on the map below).

The men's race will be held on Saturday 28th of July and the women's on Sunday 29th of July. There are likely to be 185 men riders and 92 women. Furthermore, on the following Wednesday, 1st of August, the men's Cycling Time Trial will pass up Strawberry Vale and down Waldegrave Road to finish in Bushy Park (in blue on the map).



Skye's cakes help children in need

Last November, Skye Wyler, 14, with her friends Bella, Grace, Flore, raised £190 for Children in Need with the help of Jay and Aparna Patel at the Post Office. When Skye set up a cake stand outside the Post Office, she was besieged by local cake buyers.

“I really want to thank Jay and Aparna as well as all the local people who helped” says Skye, who is at Waldegrave Girls' School with Bella and Grace. Skye's neighbour, Macey, also provided some cakes.



Pudsey Bear among Skye's cakes

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A brighter future for Pope's Grotto

Those residents who have visited Pope's Grotto in the last few years will know that this world-famous site, access to which is limited to a very few days per year, is in need of some care and attention. We are delighted to learn that steps are being taken to restore this last-remaining part of Alexander Pope's original riverside residence.

Pope's Villa, occupied for 14 years by St James' School, passed to Radnor House School, a wholly new enterprise, in September last year. The school is enthusiastic about the history of the property and Alexander Pope's Grotto in particular and would like to see restoration take place.

Work to this end had been started by St James' School, reaching an advanced stage of development before their departure. A grant from English Heritage financed the preparation of detailed and costed options for conservation and restoration. These options defined a considerable body of work which, given funds, could form the basis of selective restoration, over a period of time.

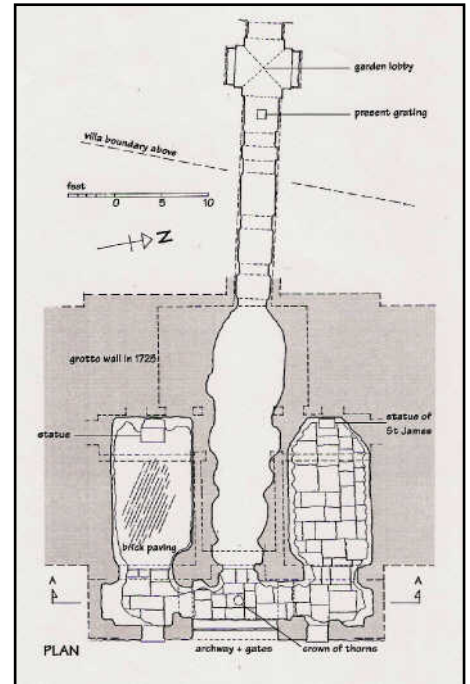
The vehicle for managing the project is a charitable trust (the Pope's Grotto Preservation

Trust) which was formed by St James' School. The founding trustees have been directly connected with St James' but, with the departure of the school their interest in the grotto is diminished, so new trustees will be appointed in order to keep the charity in being. The Trust will probably lease the Grotto from Radnor House School so that it can apply for funding.

Radnor House School will be represented on the Trust, but, as a new venture, is unable to take full part in progressing the restoration. Therefore support and help will be needed with this project from the local community and amenity societies. A working group will be created required to seek donations from grant-giving organisations and plan for work to be carried out, probably in relatively modest stages.

The Grotto (seen right in plan) fits English Heritage's current criteria for a 70% grant, but matching funding will be required. Restoration will probably start with a careful clean-up to reveal the extent of the remaining geological examples.

Alexander Pope's Grotto is a remaining icon of one of this area's most celebrated residents. It enjoys a magnetic attraction because of his enduring reputation as a poet. This relic of his life in Twickenham also acts as a reminder of English culture, literature and garden design in the 17th century. In its time, the Grotto was an object both of admiration and envy, inspiring imitation throughout England.



1785 plan of the Grotto by Samuel Lewis

Even today, in its shabby condition, it draws students and enthusiasts from all over the world.

SHRA fully supports this initiative. To this end, an SHRA Committee member will be a trustee. We will be assisting the Trust to raise funds and to help in any way that we possibly can. We will keep you informed of progress in future Bulletins.



The interior of the Grotto today

Radnor House adds a prep school for 3-6 year olds

Over 120 pupils are poised to join when Radnor House opens for its first term in September, following open days and entrance tests which have been running throughout February and March. Plans for a prep school for children aged 3-6 are also underway.

Rosie Gill, Head of Prep, says: "the curriculum and teaching approach will not be governed by entrance exams to senior school as each child's place is guaranteed to age 13. The prep will be able to concentrate on giving the children a broad and exciting education which will encourage a lifelong love of learning."

Here is the news... circa 1938

During refurbishment of Radnor House School, a small piece of history was disclosed as old linoleum was removed. Dozens of yellowing pages from the Daily Mail of 1938 reveals the preoccupations of 73 years ago. As you might expect, tensions in Europe figure



Headmaster Robert Cook invites parents to a latte in the School's new Riverside Terrace café during an open day

largely, not least, a description of the King of Belgium as a dictator.

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Strawberry Hill House bustles with Spring Preparation

Jenny Eynon, Assistant Director, looks forward to re-opening in April*

Poised for its first summer season, the House is bustling with activity.

The education and outreach department got off to a great start preparing to host local groups of all ages and abilities. They range from adults learning English as a second language to local primary schools, Brownies and drama groups, as well as students from St Mary's College.



The restored house in the autumn sunshine

Visitors are welcome to wander through the gardens, browse the gifts in the shop or take lunch or tea in the café without any entrance charge.

We are keen to recruit volunteers and eager to hear from anyone interested in helping at the House. Please see our website for the roles offered.

** This article has been set in Caslon: an 18th century typeface used by Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill Press.*

Popular tours

The popularity of guided tours for private groups exceeded expectations and every date is booked until the end of the year. Tickets for visits by the public are selling fast with website bookings filling up until November.

www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

Garden groves

The restoration of the garden is getting underway. A grove of lime trees has been replanted on the south lawn – just as Horace Walpole would have seen it in the 18th century.

Distributors needed for Pope's Avenue and Alexander Close

We are looking for two volunteers to distribute the Bulletin in Pope's Avenue and Alexander Close. The commitment is about half an hour, 3 times per year.

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

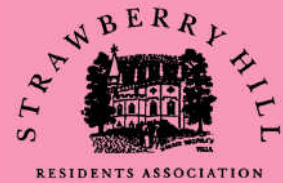
Bulletin@shra.org.uk

An invitation to SHRA members

All members of SHRA are invited to apply for tickets to garden tours to learn about the plans for its restoration to the 18th century design.

The tours will be conducted by Patrick Green, the Gardener in Charge. There will be three tours on Friday 20th of May at 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Numbers on each are limited to 20 people. Please book your places by e-mail on a first come, first served basis:

jenny.eynon@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk



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