

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association e-Bulletin

We are grateful to Julia Fiehn for editing the Bulletin from 2015-2021. The new editor is Andrew Miller, Vice Chair of SHRA, and Sam Kamleh is our designer. We understand that many residents will be sorry not to have a hard copy drop through their letter-boxes three times a year, but the Committee took the decision to 'go online'. The main reasons were rising print and design costs, problems with distribution, the pandemic, the limitations on page numbers and the desire to reduce the amount of paper being used. The e-Bulletin is being distributed through our database of residents, through more local residents' bodies at Fieldend, Fortescue Park and Mallard Place, through our social media and website. Residents who would prefer a hard copy can still receive the three annual bulletins by sending us £3 a year plus the annual recommended subscription (email contact@shra.org.uk or phone Andrew at 07866 801299 – do not contact us if you have already subscribed). A copy will continue to be posted on the SHRA Noticeboard at Strawberry Hill station.



Photo: Strawberry Hill House

To aid the reader we have divided the content into five sections. Unlike other local magazines our focus is upon Strawberry Hill. 'Local issues' is a catch-all covering anything controversial happening locally which can include crime, planning, parking, Council policies or recycling bins. 'The Association' provides an update on SHRA Committee members and in the way SHRA is operating, as well as contact details and the subscription form. The 'Green Pages' describe the various ways in which SHRA is delivering on its new environment strategy. The 'Business' section features articles about our Strawberry Hill businesses in 'the Village' and beyond. The 'Heritage & History' section covers our two most important heritage assets, Strawberry Hill House and Pope's Grotto, as well as local history.

Andrew Miller, Vice-Chair, SHRA

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Editor's Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Local Issues | 2 |
| 3. The Association | 5 |
| 4. The Green Pages | 8 |
| 5. History & Heritage | 10 |
| 6. Business Pages | 13 |

In this issue:

Local Issues – **Katie Mansfield**, Councillor for South Twickenham, provides an update on developments locally and **June Collins**, SHRA Treasurer, gives an overview of crime, in what remains one of the safest areas in the country. We are also seeking the views of residents on emerging issues – [CLICK HERE](#)

The Association – **Andrew Miller** explains the latest proposed changes to the SHRA Constitution and new Committee members introduce themselves – [CLICK HERE](#)

Green Pages – Our new Environment Coordinators, **Sharon Willoughby** and **Louisa Carradine**, explore the new SHRA environment strategy and how residents can get involved – [CLICK HERE](#)

Heritage & History - **Derek Purnell**, the new Director of Strawberry Hill House, explains his thinking and plans for the future. **Robert Youngs** updates us on exciting developments at Pope's Grotto Preservation Trust. **Andrew Miller** tells the story of Pope's Avenue resident who was on the Graf Spee during the Battle of the River Plate – [CLICK HERE](#)

Business – We focus on the cafés of Strawberry Hill with a profile of the Strawberry Hill Café in the Village by **Julia Fiehn**. The newly opened Antipodea café in Radnor Gardens is reviewed by our own Australian, **Sharon Willoughby** – [CLICK HERE](#) - Antipodea Review [CLICK HERE](#)

Local Issues

To ensure that residents are informed about developments at the Council, we have invited Katie Mansfield, one of our councillors for South Twickenham Ward, to provide an update on issues that will affect Strawberry Hill. SHRA is an apolitical organisation and any opinions expressed are the councillor's own.

Photo: Courtesy of Richmond.gov website



Councillor's Update

The Council has been busy as we come out of lockdown! We are trying to use this period to support the local area.

Cycle corridor

As part of our drive to encourage active travel and improve air quality, the council has been looking at a new cycle corridor along Strawberry Vale. Council Engineers have taken care to design space that feels safer for the average cyclist while maintaining enough space for pedestrians and other forms of transport. The consultation closed on 2 July and we are now analysing the feedback.

Twickenham Riverside

The scheme at Twickenham Riverside is now moving forward. The transport plan (agreement on parking arrangements) has been passed by the Transport and Air Quality Committee. The submission for planning permission was lodged on 3 July.



Photo: Courtesy of Richmond.gov website - Hopkins Architects



Photo: Wild Green Area by the Station

Biodiversity

Strawberry Hill Resident's Association have suggested that we consider a small, untended area near the station as a space that we could use to improve biodiversity. We think this is a great idea and are looking at the space and whether the Council could support this with the introduction of wild flowers and natural, biodiverse spaces.

Through traffic

Earlier this year we held an online community conversation to address residents' concerns with school and cut through traffic on the residential streets. Since then, councillors have met with officers to address immediate concerns – parent parking at the junctions near St Catherine's and Radnor House schools, dangerous driving and road and pavement surfaces on Cross Deep Gardens and Tennyson Ave. We have also spoken to the schools and asked them to address the issues directly with parents. We expect traffic (including cut through traffic) to reach some level of normalisation in the Autumn, so have requested that road use surveys be carried out to understand and address the concerns in the area as a whole. Once these surveys are complete, we will consult the community again about any proposed actions we plan to take.



Photo: Strawberry Vale



Surgeries

As we anticipate reduced lockdown restrictions, Cllr Butlin, Cllr Bennett and me, Cllr Mansfield are hoping to resume our **in-person surgeries** in York House at **7pm on the first Monday of every month**. In the meantime, please do feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Councillor Katie Mansfield

Local Issues

Photo : Courtesy of Twitter



Crime in Strawberry Hill

June Collins, SHRA's Treasurer, attends the meeting of the PLG (Police Liaison Group) as she is the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Tower Road. During lockdown meetings have been taking place via Zoom and the last meeting was on 3rd June. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday **9th September at 7.30** and it is hoped it will be in person. If you are a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and wish to take part in the meetings, information can be obtained from Pam McMillen - pam-plg-mcmillen@hotmail.com

The table below shows the crime figures for South Twickenham Ward (including Strawberry Hill) as reported for the period March – May 2021 with a comparison for the corresponding period in 2020.

It was concluded that domestic crimes had increased partly due to lockdown and the majority of these offences are in the home.

At the last meeting Cllr. Katie Mansfield said there is a perception and concern that young people are suffering from attacks on the street, judging by feedback from parents. Problem areas are Twickenham Green, Radnor Gardens and the small park on Wellesley Road.

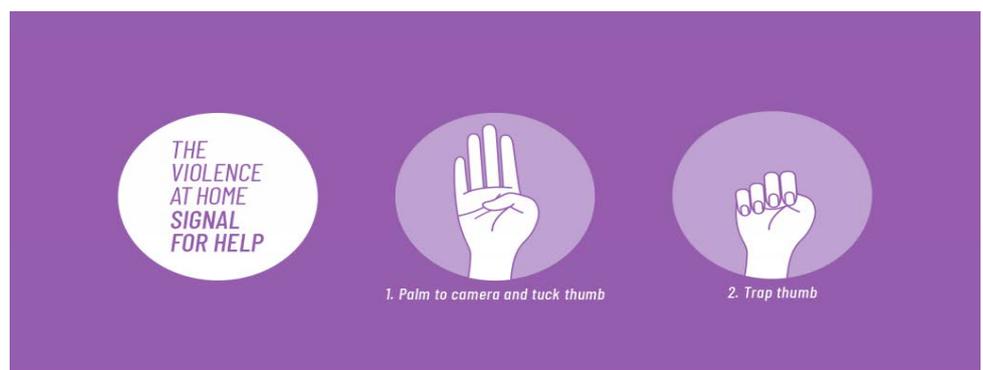
| Offence | Mar-May 2020 | Mar-May 2021 | Difference |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Burglary | 14 | 7 | -7 |
| Criminal Damage | 8 | 7 | -1 |
| Robbery | 0 | 1 | +1 |
| Theft from M/V | 8 | 6 | -2 |
| Theft of M/V | 6 | 8 | +2 |
| Theft of pedal cycle | 3 | 6 | +3 |
| Non Domestic | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Domestic | 8 | 16 | +8 |
| Youth Violence | 0 | 2 | +2 |

This is where incidents can happen. The police need specific reports of incidents, including times and dates. The Safer Neighbourhood Team can then proactively target these areas. People can report anonymously by calling **Crimestoppers (0800 555 111)** or call 999. There was a suggestion that a further CCTV camera be put up on the Green pointing to the cricket pavilion where there have been incidents. There are four cameras in Radnor Gardens but the camera on the café is now obscured by trees so there was discussion about this being re-positioned.

There have been a worrying number of car thefts and attempted thefts in Spencer Road. One stolen car was even used in a drive-by shooting in London and then burnt out. There have been lots of sightings of men trying car doors and people seen idling in cars with laptops - possibly trying to unlock cars. People are not reporting it, as they think there is no point. However, Safer Neighbourhood Team's advice is to ring 999 if people are seen trying door handles, as the police will come out and make an arrest. There is a recent example of a resident in Wandsworth ringing 999 to report suspicious activity and a person was arrested, and it led to convictions for other offences.

June Collins, Treasurer, SHRA

National Domestic Abuse Helpline:
0808 2000 247
or
<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>



Local Issues

Emerging Issues

One of the important functions of SHRA is to listen to issues raised by resident members of the Association. In this column we highlight issues that have been sent to us by residents. The idea is to give the issue an airing to see if other affected residents feel strongly about the issue.



Photo: Strawberry Hill Level Crossing

Issue 1 – The Alarm Signal on the Level Crossing at Strawberry Hill Station

Several residents living near to the Station have complained about the 'new' barrier alarm signal which heralds the imminent closure of the gates. The volume would seem to be considerably louder than the previous signal. It is pitched at an intrusive level that is particularly disturbing in the early morning. Clearly, the alarm signal is necessary for obvious health and safety reasons, however, the necessary volume required to achieve its goal is what is at issue. What do other local residents living in proximity to the level crossing think? Should the SHRA Committee take this up with Network Rail?

Issue 2 – Advertising Banners on the St Mary's University Railings in Waldegrave Road

It has been pointed out to SHRA that the series of advertising banners on the railings facing Waldegrave Road are obscuring the magnificent wild flower meadow that is now approaching its full glory. The resident who raised the issue observes that the meadow with the biodiversity it is encouraging is a better advertisement for SMU, demonstrating the care it takes of its campus. The marketing banners, if necessary, would be better placed close to the main entrance. What do other residents think? Should the SHRA Committee take this up with SMU?

If you would like to contact SHRA about either of these issues, then please email us at contact@shra.org.uk.



Photo: St Mary's University advertising banners on Waldegrave Road



Photo: University wild flower meadow

The Association The New SHRA Constitution

The Association

During the pandemic the SHRA Committee has taken the opportunity to update the Constitution and operating procedures. This involved looking at good practice in other residents' associations and in the voluntary sector more widely. Any changes to the SHRA Constitution have to be agreed by the AGM. Regrettably it has been necessary to postpone our AGM on several occasions and the new date is 29 September 2021. The latest revisions to the Constitution were in 2016 and, since then, there have been new developments, in particular, the rise of social media and the need to provide more clarity over the roles of Committee members. At the same time there were some obvious gaps in our policies and procedures, for example, there was no equal opportunities policy or code of conduct for Committee members to follow.

The purpose of SHRA

The core objectives of SHRA are set out in the Constitution.

- a. *'To communicate with and involve adult, private residents in helping to look after, and, where possible, enhance, the amenities of the Strawberry Hill area.'*
- b. *To promote community spirit within Strawberry Hill.*
- c. *To keep watch on major proposals for local development and planning applications and, in connection with these, to take such action as possible, or necessary, to protect the amenities, the interests of residents, and the heritage of the area, including buildings of special interest.*
- d. *To associate with other Societies, as necessary, to further these objects.'*

The principal change here is objective b. which reflects the Committee's wish to do more activities and events which bring residents together. The current 2016 Constitution defines the members of the Association as 'all residents' and we have redefined this as all 'adult, private residents'. This means that under-18s and business owners who are non-residents are not members.

The Committee

Currently clauses 4 and 5 of the Constitution refer to the management of SHRA by a Committee comprising four officers and seven members. We propose increasing the size of the Committee from 11 to 15 which will help with taking on new tasks and with bringing 'new blood' to ensure continuity. We have undertaken a recruitment drive on social media and through Richmond Voluntary Service and this has resulted in (at least) four new members of the Committee. The aim has been to recruit members to fulfil particular roles. We have successfully recruited two Environment Coordinators but are still seeking Events Coordinators (2 roles); Business Liaison (1 role) and Communications Support (1 role especially help with the website). We wish to move away from the past situation where Committee members volunteered to serve on the Committee but did not sign up to a particular role, and its accompanying responsibilities. The main reason for this is because an imbalance had developed whereby a few members had too heavy a workload.

Code of conduct

It was clear from our research that the vast majority of voluntary organisations, charities and residents' associations, such as SHRA, require their Committee members to follow a code of conduct. All members of the current Committee have signed up to follow our code of conduct and this is recognised in the new Constitution. We have also developed SHRA's first equal-opportunities policy statement.

Social media

The final changes to the Constitution are to acknowledge the increasing importance of social media as a means of communicating with residents. The SHRA website, Twitter account, Facebook page and Instagram are all being used to send out messages to residents about the AGM and other news. Another change reflects the regrettable need to replace face-to-face meetings with Zoom meetings in these trying times.

We hope that you will attend the AGM and give your support to these necessary changes.

Andrew Miller, Vice Chair

The Association

Dr Sharon Willoughby, Environment Officer SHRA.



My husband Rick and I moved to Strawberry Hill from Melbourne, Australia in 2017, my second crack at living and working in the UK. Rick and I met in Cornwall while I was back-packing, we went on to run a Youth Hostel together in Devon, before returning to Melbourne in 1999. I have worked in botanic gardens for more than 20 years as a storyteller specialising in community inclusion, placemaking and interpretation. My background is in ecological science and the history of gardens, science and the environment. It feels fitting to be living so close to Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill House, his *History of the Modern Taste in Gardening* (first published c.1780) is still considered hugely influential by garden historians. I like to walk around the grounds of Strawberry Hill House whenever I get stuck in my own writing hoping that Horace's architecture, garden design or indeed Horace himself (when I get really stuck) will lend inspiration. It will not surprise you to know that Rick and I are both keen gardeners, very interested in finding ways to support biodiversity in our new home. I have got to know Strawberry Hill over the course of the pandemic, working from home and walking around our neighbourhood every day. I have enjoyed watching the seasons unfold from magnolias, cherries, roses to autumn leaves, Strawberry Hill is always changing. I especially love watching the river from Radnor Gardens and the parade of river birds. I can only apologise if any of you can hear my ukulele playing out in the garden on sunny afternoons - if you feel inspired to join in - don't resist.

Louisa Carradine, Environment Coordinator

We moved to Strawberry Hill in 2019 having lived round the corner for 7 years. After meeting my husband at Warwick University, I initially worked in television at the BBC and several independent production companies. I production-managed on programmes ranging from science, current affairs, arts and documentaries. After having children, I wanted to balance a young family, whilst also exploring new interests. In lockdown, I started a plastic-free, wholefood delivery service to help reduce plastic waste in our community. The support from local residents has been fantastic. There is a lot of support and good will for small businesses in our area. I am loving the experience of launching a start-up business, which encourages a plastic-free lifestyle and awareness of environmental issues. We are often in one of the local play parks and love the woods at Strawberry Hill House, we still consider it a hidden gem! We recently bought a paddleboard to make the most of living by the river and I look forward to being able to explore along the riverbanks. Joining SHRA has been a great way to meet more of our neighbours, as well as local organisations working to protect nature around us. I have become more observant of flowerbeds, planters and grass verges in Strawberry Hill and often spend time in our garden wondering how we can attract more biodiversity.



The Committee – Contact Information

Officers

David Cornwell,

Chair, 020 8941 6513

Andrew Miller,

Vice Chair & Bulletin Editor,
07866801299, activelearning@
blueyonder.co.uk

June Collins,

Hon. Treasurer, 020 8891 0448, June.
collins@hotmail.co.uk

Pamela Crisp, Hon. Secretary, 020
8898 1878, contact@SHRA.org.uk

Members

Mike Allsop, Planning Monitor, 020 8891
1614

Peter Lamb, Local Historian, lamb-
pc0950@hotmail.com

Sharon Willoughby, Environment Coor-
dinator, swilloster@gmail.com

Louisa Carradine, Environment Coordi-
nator, 07813 95436, louisa@strawberryfill-
station.com

Other Committee members

Sam Kamleh, Bulletin Designer

Richard Hudspith

Zoe Prindiville, Communication Support

SHRA on social media

Please join/visit the following for
more regular posts about Strawberry
Hill.

Website – www.shra.org.uk

Twitter - @SHResidents

Instagram – Strawberry Hill RA

Facebook – Strawberry Hill Resi-
dents' Association

The Association

Zoe Prindiville



I have lived in Strawberry Hill on and off for almost 40 years, having moved back into the house that I grew up in at the beginning of lockdown. I feel that I know the area pretty well, but there have been many changes over the years! I am currently Head of Languages at St Richard Reynolds Catholic College, and run my own successful tutoring business, as well as looking after my two sons.

My favourite spots in Strawberry Hill are sitting by the river in Radnor Gardens, walking through the woods at Strawberry Hill House and our self-named nature walk on Bonsor Rd! I think our area of South West London is by far the best place to live with its sense of community, thriving small businesses and green spaces, and I'm looking forward to getting involved in SHRA to become a part of that community.

Sharon Willoughby Reviews Antipodea, Radnor Gardens - Local Business

G'Day, it would be difficult to overstate how much I have been looking forward to the opening of Antipodea in Radnor Gardens. It is important to make my bias clear. I grew up in Melbourne and as any true Melburnian will tell you – we love our brunches.

At 7:30am on Thursday 8 July, Antipodea began taking orders from a small but expectant crowd. The work that has been completed on the café shelter itself offers a fresh new perspective and the display of cakes, croissants and biscuits looked very inviting on the counter. The menu is very much what we have come to expect from Antipodea, featuring the all-day brunch classics from their menus at Kew and Richmond. I opted for Eggs Benedict, an old favourite, and a latté. The service was friendly, relaxed, and efficient and the eggs and coffee were fab.

The café was quickly humming with joggers, Mums with prams, commuters on their way to work and dog walkers stopping for coffee, slices of banana bread 'to go' or stopping for a more substantial bite. It was lovely to feel Radnor Gardens energised by people and the buzz of conversation. I was able to purchase a packet of my favourite biscuits from home – Arnott's Mint Slice and I look forward to BBQ Shapes being in stock [an absolute must try]. It is still uncertain when we will be allowed to return to Melbourne to catch up with family and friends – brunch at Antipodea with fellow Strawberry Hill folk is a great substitute.



Photo: Antipodea on opening morning. Photo: SW

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION : Your contribution is gratefully received and helps maintain the planters near the station, assists in publication costs and allows us to run and manage the AGM's as well as funds for possible local legal and planning requirements. All committee members are volunteers. Suggested subscription fee is **£5-£10 annually per household.**

Cheques to Strawberry Hill Resident's Association

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ **POSTCODE:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ **TELEPHONE:** _____

Please drop in to either A: June Collins, 23b Tower Road, TW1 4PD or
B : Post Office, 50 Tower Road, TW1 4PE
C : Standing order forms are available from the treasurer
e-mail : subscriptions@shra.org.uk

Green Pages: Exploring the Nature of the Hill...

New Environment Coordinators

In this section of the Bulletin our new Environment Coordinators, Louisa Carradine and Sharon Willoughby, will provide an update on the work SHRA has been doing to preserve and enhance the environment of Strawberry Hill. On joining the SHRA Committee, their first task was to develop an environmental strategy and here they report on the early stages of implementation and how residents can get involved.

Strawberry Hill Environment Strategy (740/750)

To do our small bit to combat climate change, it is important that we 'think global' and 'act local'. As our urban habitats are constantly under pressure, protecting local biodiversity is vital. Hence, the need for SHRA to develop an environmental strategy to provide a focus to our work in the local community. In the past SHRA has taken a range of initiatives designed to improve the environment of Strawberry Hill. This has often depended on the individual enthusiasms of members of the Committee. We now seek to embed the environmental strategy at the heart of SHRA's work through the activities of two new Environmental Coordinators on the SHRA Committee.

The SHRA Environmental Strategy has the following four goals to:

- 1. Protect and nurture** the biodiversity (biological diversity) of Strawberry Hill.
 - a. Supporting residents to create bee friendly gardens – what can we grow in Strawberry Hill to protect local pollinators?
 - b. Support Richmond's maintenance of 'wild pockets' such as verges through plug planting for greater biodiversity.
 - c. Supporting residents to nurture the bird fauna of the Thames and garden landscapes – what birds are resident in our village?
- 2. Foster an exploration**, understanding and appreciations of the nature of Strawberry Hill.
 - a. Promoting seasonal environmental highlights in the Bulletin, Facebook and Village Notice Board.
- 3. Supporting resident enjoyment** of gardening and gardens.
 - a. Holding an early spring (2022) 'Village Seed, Cutting and Plant Swap'.
 - b. Supporting local food growing through information sharing.
 - c. Investigating the need for a local 'Garden Share' programme.
 - d. Weeding, planting and watering the SHRA garden beds.
- 4. Supporting residents to reduce their Carbon Footprint.**
 - a. Promoting: reusing, recycling, refilling, reducing and repairing through SHRA communication channels.
 - b. Reporting fly tipping – letting residents know how to do this.

If any of these ideas appeal to you or you can think of any other actions towards supporting biodiversity and sustainability in Strawberry Hill please get in touch with Louisa or Sharon or reach out through the Strawberry Hill Resident's Association Facebook page.

Sharon: swilloster@gmail.com

Louisa: louisa@strawberryfillstation.com

On the Verge...

Richmond Council is now using one of three cutting strategies to manage our verges the: conservation, rural and urban cut. For more details see [here](#). This new approach is aimed at increasing biodiversity, improving habitat for native plants and animals as well as reducing the Borough's carbon footprint and improving local air quality.



Early morning light on Tower Road. Photo: SW.

This [link](#) will allow you to see which strategy is being used on the verges near you. Most of the larger verges in Strawberry Hill are being managed with either the rural (Tower Road, Abbottsmede Close) or conservation highway cuts (Popes Ave, Cnr Wellesley and Hampton Roads).

A [new UK study](#) has shown that cumulatively the land that verges cover accounts for 1,000 sq miles within the UK and that they have enormous potential to create habitat for wildlife and therefore enhance biodiversity, especially important in urban areas. This report is discussed in more detail in this [Guardian article](#).

SHRA is exploring how we can work with Richmond Council and the community charity Habitats & Heritage to see if we can enhance this work. We are exploring the research to see if community propagating and plug planting of wildflowers could further boost the growth of native plants in our verges. Stay tuned for more information.

Pick of the Litter...

We are sure that we have all noticed the amount of fly tipping that is consistently occurring at a few locations around the Hill. SHRA is working with Richmond Council to try to resolve this issue.

If you do come across fly tipped litter on public land then this link on Richmond's website is where you can report it.

A strategy that many of us are following is taking a rubbish bag and litter picking stick with us on family walks. SHRA would love to organise some litter picking teams – but the insurance issues are complex. If you are interested in this idea or have a solution to the insurance issue – please get in touch!
Contact@shra.org.uk

Green Pages: Exploring the Nature of the Hill...

Environment Coordinators:

Louisa Carradine and Sharon Willoughby

Birds on the Hill...

Have you been watching birds from your balcony or garden? Have you seen all the birds on the Thames? Did you hear that owl calling early in the morning last winter? Please, let us know what you have seen and where on our Strawberry Hill Resident's Facebook page.

This list on [Avibase](#) gives an indication of the types of birds we are likely to see in our next of the woods and links through to images which helps with identification.

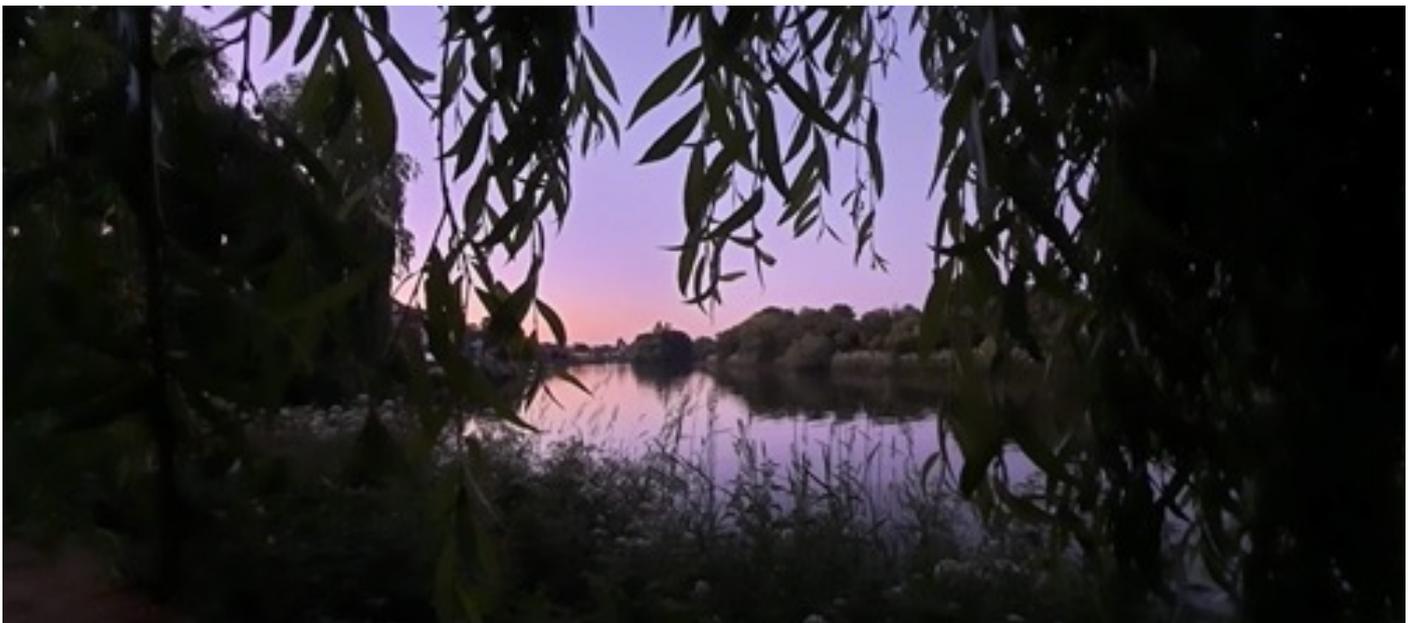
The list so far:

On the Thames

- Little Grebe
- Shelduck
- Mute Swan
- Canada Goose
- Egyptian Goose
- Mallard
- Mandarin Duck
- Common Coot
- Grey Heron
- Black-headed Gull
- Herring Gull

On the Hill

- Common Swift
- Tawny Owl
- Great Spotted Woodpecker
- Parakeet
- Eurasian Jay
- Common Raven
- Yellow Wagtail
- Common Chaffinch
- Coal Tit
- Blue Tit
- European Robin



Radnor Gardens at dusk, a great location for spotting tiny [pipistrelle](#) bats this summer. Photo: SW.

What's the buzz...

If you are looking to boost planting for pollinators in your garden then this University of Sussex [website](#) is a great resource, offering names and photographs of plants, as well as some growing information. Has anyone else noticed fewer honeybees so far this year?

Book review

A Wonder in the Garden: The World of Nature Just Outside Our Doors by Dr Tony Kendle, published by United Writers Cornwall.

A Wonder in the Garden, a new book by the founding Science and Horticultural Head of the Eden Project in Cornwall, is a great book for summer afternoons in the garden. Kendle's book is a joy to read, offering profound insights into the natural world, often overlooked, just beyond our doorsteps. An exploration of nature in all its complex and messy glory, this book will challenge the way you think about your garden, our local verges, parks, pockets of green and the species with which we share the Hill. Can you spot the photographs that were taken locally?

Heritage & History



Interview with Derek Purnell, the New Director of Strawberry Hill House

The Residents' Association has, as central aims, protecting the heritage and looking after the amenities of the local area. We interviewed, Derek Purnell, the new Director of Strawberry Hill House, to hear about his vision for the future of our most important heritage asset.

Derek has a background in the performing arts and, as Chief Executive of Birmingham Royal Ballet, he oversaw the move from Sadler's Wells to Birmingham. He then spent time as a freelance arts consultant, specialising in the performing arts, before becoming Director of Public Engagement at the Wallace Collection. He was acting Director, prior to taking on the role of Chief Operating Officer. He took on the role of Director of Strawberry Hill House in the most challenging of circumstances in the summer of 2020.



Derek Purnell

COVID and the House

It was difficult to start the new role with regular staff working from home or on furlough. The key challenge was that all major income streams were no longer possible. The principal task was 'survival' leading to 'revival'. Help came in the form of two grants from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Arts Council both aimed at supporting organisations during the COVID crisis. At the same time there was internal cost-cutting and the loss of posts. During lockdown the grounds have been a vital haven of peace for local residents taking their daily exercise. The outdoor space has also allowed the kind of social distancing that is not available to

many other houses and museums in London. Since emergence from lockdown, visitor numbers have held up pretty well, as the House has been seen as a safe place to visit.

Walpole's contribution

It is important to recognise that Horace Walpole's creativity and imagination is at the core of what Strawberry Hill House became. His writings and diaries document his role in the development of culture in the eighteenth century. Speculation around his sexuality neither adds or subtracts from his achievements. The House has existed for over 250 years and the other residents, notably Lady Waldegrave and the Stern family, made essential contributions, while respecting the Walpole heritage.

A favourite cat

The 'Lost Treasures Exhibition' demonstrated some of the precious objects from the Walpole collection that have been spread across the globe. The challenge is to keep visitors returning to the House because they do not perceive it as a 'shell' with a few artefacts. The return of the Catherine de Medici portrait is a major coup in establishing the national importance of the House. A series of mini-displays with 'objects in focus' are planned. These will feature objects from the house with supporting displays. The first was an LGBTQ-focused installation and the next will feature the 'ceramic goldfish tub' in which Walpole's cat was drowned. This event was immortalised by the poet, Thomas Gray, in his Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes. It was also the subject of illustrations by Bentley and William Blake.



The ceramic goldfish tub

The House as a venue

The House does not have that many ways to generate income and so weddings and other 'live events' will remain important to its survival. Until recently weddings were banned, so this has not been an issue. Derek acknowledges that weddings can add to wear and tear on the House and that it is not a hotel or conference centre. So it is important that a balance is struck and that the House continues to be viewed as a major asset by local residents. It is also vital that there are strong links between the House and the University. In fact, Derek and the new Vice Chancellor, Anthony McClaran, both joined their respective institutions at the same time and have formed a good collaborative relationship. Similarly, SHRA proposes a close working relationship with Derek and Strawberry Hill House to ensure that it remains the jewel in the crown of our area.

Derek Purnell was interviewed by Andrew Miller

The National Lottery Heritage Fund & Pope's Grotto

Alexander Pope's Grotto is the last remaining part of the poet's once-famous villa and gardens, which he built in 1720 on the banks of the Thames at Twickenham. A mine of minerals gathered from all parts of the world, it is also considered of national importance for its literary connections. It lies partly under Radnor House School and Cross Deep. Three years ago, we had hoped that the conservation of the grotto would be complete by September 2019, but the project was delayed by a change of ownership of the grotto and by the pandemic. Meanwhile, the Trust has continued to raise funds and plan the conservation.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has now awarded £247,200 towards the £384,000 project, with other donations coming from a range of charitable trusts and foundations. The project will comprise cleaning, conservation and re-illumination of the mineral-encrusted grotto (photo by Damian Griffiths). We have appointed Victoria Northwood to be our project manager. Victoria brings a wealth of experience in similar projects. John Donegan has been appointed Outreach and Volunteers Officer and was most recently employed in the same role at Handel & Hendrix in Mayfair. He is currently recruiting volunteers to help at our open days. Conservation work, to be carried out in the summer of 2022, will include the North chamber and entrance, plus the entire central chamber, after which the grotto will be open to the public for at least 30 days a year.

Sign up to our email list or follow us on social media to be kept informed.

popesgrotto.org.uk



Pope's Grotto, Strawberry Hill.

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION : Your contribution is gratefully received and helps maintain the planters near the station, assists in publication costs and allows us to run and manage the AGM's as well as funds for possible local legal and planning requirements. All committee members are volunteers. Suggested subscription fee is **£5-£10 annually per household.**

Cheques to Strawberry Hill Resident's Association

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ **POSTCODE:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ **TELEPHONE:** _____

Please drop in to either A: June Collins, 23b Tower Road, TW1 4PD or
B : Post Office, 50 Tower Road, TW1 4PE
C : Standing order forms are available from the treasurer
e-mail : subscriptions@shra.org.uk

Strawberry Hill & the Battle of the River Plate

SHRA is often approached for help with ancestry-related queries from relatives of former residents of Strawberry Hill. Earlier this year we were contacted by the McCorry family for help in tracing their ancestor, James Henry McCorry (1855-1922) and his wife, Louisa Andrews (1856-1947), who lived at 2 Pope's Grove (now no. 54) between 1891 and 1922. James was an Irish-born leather merchant with a business, J M C Tanning, in the City of London. They had eight children, three daughters and five sons, who were all brought up in Strawberry Hill. We managed to track down the dilapidated family plot in Twickenham Cemetery which the descendants aim to have refurbished. After James' death his widow moved to Worthing. The second youngest son was Bernard Clive McCorry (1900-1974). He is seated on the far left in the photograph taken in about 1909.



The McCorry family at 54 Pope's Grove c. 1907

In 1939, Bernard ('Bunny' to his mates) was a 38-year-old the radio operator on board the Liverpool steamship, SS Huntsman, when he was captured in the South Atlantic. The German 'prize crew' came aboard for a week – 'they were a decent lot of fellows and we played with darts with them. We played Hitler v. Chamberlain. It made for some fun'. They were then transferred to a German tanker for six weeks, before spending two weeks on the heavy cruiser, Graf Spee. The ship was then involved in the first naval battle of the Second World War, the Battle of the River Plate, when three British cruisers, HMS Ajax, HMS Exeter and HMS Achilles attacked the Graf Spee.



Graf Spee after the battle'

When the Battle of the River Plate started the prisoners were crowded into a room that was seven feet high, immediately below a gun turret. One shell landed nearby killing nine members of the crew but remarkably no prisoners were killed during the bombardment. The men sang and cheered during the 18-hour battle. They were released in Montevideo, Uruguay, which was a neutral country, when the badly damaged Graf Spee put into port. The scene was immortalised in the 1956 Powell & Pressburger film, *The Battle of the River Plate* (the screen grab shows the moment when the German officer delivered the good news to the leader of the Brits, Bernard Lee, and fellow prisoners). A young Antony Newley played the part of a radio operator in the film.



Still from the 1956 film *The Battle of the River Plate*

Back in Hastings, Bernard's mother received the bad news that he was lost during the Battle. However, she then received a letter saying: 'I am looking forward to some games of dominoes with you mother'. Bernard brought back some shrapnel from the Graf Spee which he presented to Lady Howard, the wife of Sir Henry Howard, who had led the assault on the German battleship.

Andrew Miller, Vice-Chair, SHRA

Business Pages

Strawberry Hill Café

Tony Panayis has been running the Café near Strawberry Hill Station since October 2018. He took over after running a web development company for several years. He moved house soon after taking it over and is very happy in Strawberry Hill, finding it a very lovely place to live and relieved that he no longer has to catch a train back to Hampstead every evening.

The café is open Monday – Saturday 9.00am – 3.30pm and on Sunday from 10.00am – 2.00pm. It serves cooked breakfasts, toasted sandwiches, salads, baked potatoes, cakes, pastries, muffins and donuts, with hot and cold drinks.

Tony says he has a wide range of customers including Mums, lecturers, local business people, builders and dog-walkers, all of whom talk to each other as well as to him.

He believes that the café has helped to build community cohesion, since people help each other out and suggest solutions to problems. He said that the café continued to fulfil this function during the pandemic, since nothing else was open and people continued to buy take-aways and chat informally to Tony – someone to talk to when needed. He has improved the café with a new sign, finally getting rid of the 'Peggy's' tag; he has plans to obtain a new awning, to re-decorate, to sign up with Uber-Eats, and to maybe run social evenings at which people could bring their own wine for local get-togethers with pasta and a chat.

Keep up to date with his Instagram page here for new developments.

@Strawberryhill_cafe

We wish him well in helping to support the local community and to provide much appreciated services.



Tony Panayis outside his café

Antipodea – the new restaurant in Radnor Gardens



SHRA was delighted to hear that the Council was successful in appointing a new company to run what was the Radnor Gardens Café. Antipodea is an Australian-themed all-day brunch/ coffee restaurant with other branches in Richmond and Kew. The new café will have around 15 tables with full table service, plus takeaway and delivery. There will be a mix of experienced and new staff with two in the kitchen and five front of house. This is a very different offer to what has gone before.

For many months, the closed-down café has been a sad reflection of failed business models and lack of footfall. In the last bulletin SHRA set out five points that they would like to see in a new community café. These reflected failings of previous businesses and it seems that most of these points have been addressed.

1. To publish daily opening times – better communications as customers often had wasted journeys to find the café closed.
2. To ensure that the café is open when the usage of the playground is at its peak.

Antipodea's opening times are Tuesday-Saturday 7.30am-5pm; Sunday 7.30am-4pm; Friday night summer BBQs until 9pm.

3. To make sure that the toilet is accessible to the community. Antipodea will ensure that the toilet is kept open and accessible to the community.
4. To make use of the all-weather extension installed at public cost of £20k but hardly ever used. Antipodea plans on the restaurant being all fresco but using the awnings to ensure that it becomes an all-year round venue. A lot of money has been invested in improving the kitchen and the new decked outside area, not to mention vertical green beds on the roof and the sides of the building.
5. To reach out to SHRA in trying to build up the café as a genuine 'community hub'.

Operations Director, Luke Jenkins, in an interview with Twickenham Nub news said 'we want to give something back to the community by being part of it'. This is a good start and SHRA hopes to build a good relationship with Antipodea which may lead to some joint events in the future.

(acknowledgements to Jessica Broadbent from Twickenham Nub News for some of the information in this article Up Close With on Facebook)

On Antipodea's opening day we asked our own SHRA Committee member - and Australian from Melbourne, Sharon Willoughby, - to become a restaurant critic for the day. Please See [Page 7 for Sharon's Review of Antipodea](#)