

An extraordinary summer makes headlines for Strawberry Hill

A host of events will focus local and national attention on our riverside community over the next three months.

They range from the long-awaited reopening of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill House after its £9 million refurbishment, to the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to St Mary's College. Both events take place in September.

Pope Benedict arrives at St Mary's University College on 17th September during a State Visit to Britain. He begins the day praying with representatives of religious congregations. He will then meet about 3,000 young people - schoolchildren and students - to celebrate Catholic education. From there he will then meet religious leaders and people of religious faith. He will discuss with them religion and belief in contemporary society.



Pope Benedict XVI

Strawberry Hill House reopens formally on 24th September. But all residents who receive the SHRA Bulletin will be able to attend an exclusive conducted preview of the House (see right).

The café in Radnor Gardens was reopened this month, run by residents Alan Dillon and Sara Lennon.

And finally, on 25th July St James's Church will celebrate its 125th anniversary.



Joshua Reynolds' portrait of Horace Walpole

In this issue

In the last Bulletin, we focused on the shops in and around the centre of Strawberry Hill Village with a special six-page edition. Your feedback was very positive and has encouraged us to maintain the bigger newsletter. We also continue our shopping theme with an article on the Strawberry Hill Dental Clinic. We have increased the number of adverts which enables us partly to finance the extra pages. We are, as always, very grateful to our advertisers for their continuing support.

The next three months will see a huge interest in our area with the Pope's visit to St Mary's College and the re-opening of Strawberry Hill House, both events in September. We expect the demand to visit Horace Walpole's "little Gothic castle" to be higher than ever, but you can apply to attend a special residents' preview on 25th September - see page 4 for details. This is a unique opportunity for you to be amongst the first people to see the house and its garden looking more like it was during Walpole's occupation than at any time since.

The Strawberry Hill Trust depends on room stewards and others to make visitors' tours truly memorable and they are seeking 50 local volunteers to look after the shop and reception, as well as tour guides, education volunteers and office assistants. You can find out how to volunteer on page 4.

St Mary's University College continues to grow and will be a Pre-Games Training Camp for the 2012 Olympic Games. Dr Arthur Naylor, a local resident, has been Principal since 1992, during that time the number of students has grown from 1800 to about 4000. A special valedictory interview with Dr Naylor can be found on the back page.

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Paul and Sue are the Starrs in our midst

The Qatari Royal Family – they have just bought Harrods – regularly put Strawberry Hill on their visiting list. The reason? They visit the Strawberry Hill Dental Clinic where dentist Paul Starrs has a glamorous clientele.

When Paul and his wife Sue moved from the West End, many of their famous patients – celebrities of stage and screen – followed them. The Starrs set up their dental clinic in 2002, though they have lived here for 15 years.

While Paul is the principal dentist Sue undertakes facial aesthetics and treatments such as Botox fillers. “Very popular,” says Paul, “We have about 150 people seeking Botox treatment.” Paul has considerable expertise in dental implants and other dentists frequently refer patients to the clinic.



Sue and Paul Starrs, with practice manager Susan Campbell

How did it happen that the Starrs have such distinguished patients? “We got to know them all while practising in the West End,” says Paul. “But the daily commute into London was becoming too tiring and I wanted to see the children growing up.”

Sue and Paul, who live in Shaftsbury Way, have three children. “So we decided to open in Strawberry Hill. We love living and working here.” The practice is also referred patients from the Cornhill Clinic near the Bank of England where Paul practises for two days a week.

The practice is flourishing with around 3,700 patients, the core of which live nearby. Now Paul plans to open a second surgery in the Tower Road premises. It should be ready this summer.

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St Mary's College has a new principal

Professor Philip Esler has been named as the new Principal of St Mary's University College, and will take over from Dr Arthur Naylor in October 2010.

Professor Esler is currently Professor of Biblical Studies at the University of St Andrews, and earlier in his career was a litigation solicitor and barrister in Sydney, Australia.

School sale prompts Grotto Trust

Alexander Pope's Grotto is undergoing a change of ownership as St James Independent School moves to Ashford, Middlesex, writes Anthony Beckles Willson. Meanwhile, a Trust has been formed with a view to obtaining finance for its conservation. An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund is being put together. The Grotto is listed 2* and so is protected. The Trust hopes to work with the new owners so that, for the future, access can be maintained and eventually improved.

The high level of interest in the future of the Grotto was apparent when it was open during the Twickenham Festival. More than 90 visitors, a record, from all over the world were shown round.

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Golf Club holds successful open day

Free golf and beginners coaching was offered to more than 80 visitors to Strawberry Hill Golf Club during its Open Day over the May Bank Holiday. A lavish barbecue helped to create the habitually friendly atmosphere.



In the afternoon, the Mayor and Mayoress of Richmond Cllr David and Jane Marlow joined the fun. The photo shows them with the Captain Ron Stephens, the Lady Captain Mary Reginiano and Carol Green (far left) who was the main organiser on the day. Information on lessons and/or membership can be found at www.shgc.net or obtained from the secretary Paul Astbury 020 8894 0165.

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Police news

Our busy local Safer Neighbourhood Team, led by Sgt Clare Hughes-Smith, holds regular liaison meetings and drop-in surgeries at which residents are invited to raise and discuss issues.

The Police Liaison Group meetings are held approximately every 3 months and the next will be at 7 to 9 pm on Wednesday 22nd September in St James' Hall, Radnor Road, followed by another on 2nd December at the Salvation Army Hall, May Road, Twickenham (north of the Green).

The next drop-in surgery will be on Thursday 22nd July from 10 to 12 am at the Salvation Army Hall, May Road, Twickenham (north of the Green). Further surgeries will be held on 19th August at the Salvation Army Hall, 24th August at the Cricket Pavilion on the Green, 16th September at the Salvation Army Hall and the 22nd September at the Cricket Pavilion.

They will also be running a crime prevention stall outside the station in the evenings of 12th August and 9th September.

If you would like your bike marked, please contact an officer at one of the drop-in surgeries or at a crime prevention stall.

The South Twickenham Safer Neighbourhood Team can be contacted on 020 8721 2910 or email:

SouthTwickenham.snt@met.police.uk

SHRA 2010 AGM

The 2010 Annual General Meeting was held on the 19th April at Strawberry Hill Golf Club. The Joint-Chairman, Bruce Duff, highlighted the Association's achievements throughout 2009 in his speech, the audited accounts were approved and the Committee was re-elected for another year. Questions were asked by residents about the opening times of the station ticket office, the railway arches in Popes's Grove and parking by students on the pavement in Welleseley Road. The minutes of the meeting can be found on our web site.

In a break with our usual format, drinks were provide for residents after the meeting. We were delighted to see residents making new acquaintances and chatting to old friends. Some were still there late in the evening. The event was so successful that we will probably repeat it next year.



A resident leaves the Golf Club after the party

Gifford House future uncertain again

In March 2007, we reported that a planning application had been submitted for the redevelopment of the Gifford House site "for 27 flats, a family contact and assessment centre and car parking". After more than 3 years of false starts, the Council has issued the following statement:

"Gifford House was re-marketed in February this year after the sale contract with the previous bidder was terminated. A two-stage bidding process has been conducted, with second round bids received in April 2010. The Council is currently considering an offer from a preferred bidder. The details of this remain confidential at the present time due to commercial sensitivity."

The Council has confirmed that it has asked bidders to conform to the the Planning Brief, prepared by an SHRA Committee member and residents in 2007, which was included as part of the documentation sent to them during the re-marketing. Bidders were encouraged to make

reference to this before submitting a proposal. The Planning Brief can be found in the "Links" section of our web site.

Once again, the future of this prominent site on the edge of our area remains uncertain. Who knows, perhaps it will become an old people's home again?

Contact Centre

Construction of the new Specialist Childrens' Services Building behind Gifford House on Popes Avenue is now complete. The building is purpose-built and is able to offer support to families and children throughout the borough.

The new centre is managed by Anisha Reed, and she and her team are committed to providing a service that focuses on enabling children to enjoy contact with their families in a secure and safe environment. In response to neighbour concerns the Council is reviewing the need for any additional security measures at the entrance to the site.

Work starts on St Mary's new Sports Hall

Work began on the new sports hall at St Mary's University College towards the end of May. So far, this has involved excavating and laying the foundations, installing pre-fabricated walls for the changing rooms and installing the ground source heat pump network in the land immediately adjacent to the new hall.

The main contractor, Morgan Ashurst, is signed up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme and has distributed an initial newsletter to all houses in the immediate vicinity of the site in early June. Further newsletters are planned for every two months during the year long building phase.

History book flies off the shelves

In the last edition, we announced the availability of a completely revised edition of our book - "Strawberry Hill - a History of the Neighbourhood" by local historian and past chairman of SHRA, Anthony Beckles Willson. Since then, there has been an unprecedented demand for the book.

It is available at £6.99 from the Secretary (see back page or our web site for contact information), Langton's and Par-ici in Church Street, and the Twickenham Museum (see www.twickenham-museum.org.uk for opening hours). It will be on sale at Strawberry Hill House when it reopens in September.

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Friends of Strawberry Hill

Unveiling the big change

By Judith Lovelace, Chair of FoSH

As I write this in the last week of June, the building site which has been Strawberry Hill for the last 18 months still looks like a building site – security gates, Portacabins and building materials, but if you look up you can see a big change on the way. The scaffolding and plastic sheeting are coming down to reveal completely white round tower (this is the effect of the lime wash painted onto the exterior). And you can just see the roof of the main part of the building, complete with chimneys and pinnacles.

It is a very exciting sight. The Property Manager and his team, who are closer to the work that I am, also report progress on reinstalling some of the stained glass.

During July, even more will be visible to passers-by and to all who come to the RFU Music and Family Fun Day on 18th July. Then we shall be awaiting a Grand Opening on 24th September! Public opening days and times will be announced shortly.

It is with great regret that I shall be stepping down from the Chair of FOSH at its next AGM in January 2011 and we have plans to advertise the vacancy in the Autumn. The Friends will continue with regular events like the Quiz, the Fashion Show and Music and Fun Day.

The Strawberry Hill Trust will have access to some marvellous spaces for refreshments, education, exhibitions, and a shop. There will be other events which will be organised by Nick Smith and his team.



Robert Adam's scagliola fireplace in the Round Drawing Room. Photograph by Kilian O'Sullivan



The Beauclerc Tower, now repainted in brilliant white. Photograph by Richard Spires

Countdown to the great day

By Jenny Eynon, Assistant Property Manager

The team at Strawberry Hill has been growing over the last few months, and we now have four members of staff working onsite in the office.

Nick Smith, Property Manager, and I have been working to prepare for opening later this year. One of the biggest jobs we have is to recruit volunteers to help us run the house and garden once open. We estimate we will need around 100 volunteers across the property from Reception, the Shop and Education Unit to the Office, Garden and Room Stewards and Tour Guides to help in the house.

Whatever your interest, be it history, architecture, interiors or even a bit of retail therapy, we have something for everyone at Strawberry Hill and would be happy to send out more information if you think you would like to get involved in this exciting project.

If you are interested in hearing more, please do get in touch via email:

volunteering@strawberryhillhouse.org.uk.

In the few months we have been here, we've been thrilled to see some really significant milestones reached. Many of you will have glimpsed our beautiful white castle emerging from the scaffolding, and some of the pictures here will show you the detailing from our most impressive rooms – just a taster of how spectacular it will look when all the interior decoration is finished!

We are planning a great party on 24th September, Horace Walpole's birthday, for dignitaries and major donors to give a preview

to those who have given us a tremendous amount of support throughout the restoration project.

Once open, Strawberry Hill will be a fantastic resource for all parts of the local community. Our education rooms will be versatile enough to provide space for both arts and crafts activities, as well as lectures and conferences both for local schools and adult education institutions.

The tea room, shop and garden will be open to the public free of charge and we hope that you will all utilise this beautiful space right in the heart of Strawberry Hill for your relaxation and enjoyment.

Further information for visitors can be found on the new Strawberry Hill House web site at:

www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

Special preview for residents

We would like to invite residents who receive The Bulletin to a special preview Open Day on 25th September 2010. This will be an opportunity for you to have a look around the house, shop, garden and tea room. Please feel free to come down any time between 10am-12noon or 2pm-4pm. If you are interested in attending, please email jenny.eynon@strawberryhillhouse.org letting us know how many people and roughly what time you intend to come along.

Whether you decide to volunteer with us, or to visit us later in the year, we look forward to welcoming you all and hope that you enjoy this fascinating house and garden as much as we do.



The Long Gallery, Photograph by Kilian O'Sullivan

Friends of Radnor Gardens

John Armstrong, FoRG committee, member writes:

Green Flag status bid sparks burst of activity

A significant number of developments has taken place in the gardens in the last six months as Richmond Council seeks to obtain Green Flag status for Radnor Gardens, which recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the country. The council has created a Management Plan - required for a site to be entered into the award scheme.

The Council has also responded to FoRG's request to replace the 16 Cupressus covering the warehouse wall which had become vastly overgrown and prevented the Bowls Club from flying their flag on the flagstaff. The stumps were left in the ground to be ground out later.

Alas, the flagstaff, taken down during the tree removal, was stolen. The Council has promised to replace it.



The cupressus stumps with the flagstaff base, unoccupied

Riverbank

FoRG is also concerned that Richmond Council has not accepted full responsibility for the river bank revetment. The committee is pressing the Council to resolve the matter.

The bank is becoming overgrown by trees and Himalayan Balsam.

The prospect of siting a pontoon to serve passing passenger boats and visitors to Strawberry Hill House has been raised with the Thames Landscape Strategy.

Hammerton's ferry has also been approached with a view to setting up a new crossing for the gardens to Ham lands.

Treewatch

The lovely old spreading cedar inside the south gate needed immediate surgery following a break in a branch near the top of the canopy. It will be monitored closely by the Council.



The cedar, looking the worse for wear, with the cafe on the right

Two young willows planted last year near the water's edge were attacked by vandals. One may be saved.

Buildings

The grade 2 listed summer house and the gazebo, the oldest structures in the gardens, are in poor condition and demand work urgently. FoRG is pressing the Council for action.



Damage to the Bath House (gazebo)

FoRG needs YOU

New members are sought to help FoRG become more active in Preserving and maintaining the fabric and character of the gardens.

Prospective new members should contact Esmé Sawyer, membership Secretary, on 020 8892 4710, email:

E.Sawyer@blueyonder.co.uk

or Pat Page on 020 8891 0100, email:

patriciapage@gmail.com.

Cafe reopens

By the time this Bulletin is distributed, the café will have reopened. It is being run by local couple Alan Dillon and Sara Lennon, who live in Poulett Gardens. The couple has been running a café in Walpole Park, Ealing, for more than a year and will be offering freshly squeezed juices and smoothies amongst other delights. Their coffee is both Fairtrade and organic.

Alan is also a singer and may be known to some of you by his professional name - Harry Dolan. He has performed at the Lensbury Club and the Fox in Church Street as well as other local venues. We urge you to visit the café and help Alan and Sara make a success of their new venture. If you're lucky, you might get a song with your cappuccino!

Sadly, the Council declined to consult with FoRG over the appointment regardless of the Committee members' time and FoRG funds spent on bringing the café to a reasonable standard. FoRG has pledged its support to the new tenants while at the same time lodging a formal complaint with Richmond Council over its exclusion from the decision-making process.

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How Arthur Naylor oversaw change at St Mary's

When Dr Arthur Naylor retires as Principal of St Mary's University College in October 2010 he will have overseen a period of fundamental change which has affected the life of the College and the community around it. In the run-up to his retirement, SHRA talked to Dr Naylor and asked him about the changes in St Mary's, and the highlights of his time there.

Dr Naylor's appointment in 1992 was significant. He was the first lay head of St Mary's since its formation as the first Catholic teacher training college in England in 1850. Unlike his predecessors, who lived in Strawberry Hill House as part of a small religious community, Dr Naylor has lived in the wider Strawberry Hill community.

Dr Naylor explained that when he took over in 1992, St Mary's had already diversified away from being solely a teacher training college towards a broader academic base. The 1800 students were divided almost equally between the three areas of teacher training, humanities and human sciences, the latter with a strong bias towards sports sciences.

The students were then almost exclusively full-time undergraduates studying on the local campus. He contrasts this with now, when, although the split across the three disciplines remains broadly similar, the number of students has grown to around 5,000 with a staff of 600.

But as Dr Naylor points out, the full time equivalent number is rather less, at just under 4,000, which reflects the key changes of the much wider mix of courses and programmes being offered, and the much more diverse body of students.

For example, there is now a significant number of post-graduate students engaged in research and pursuing Masters degrees and



Dr Arthur Naylor

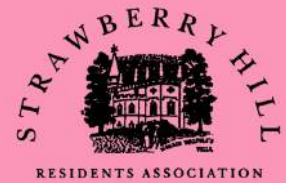
PhDs. There are many part-time and distance learning courses and off-campus courses. Links with other universities, both in the UK and overseas, mean that students can undertake courses under the aegis of St Mary's without setting foot on the local campus.

Other major changes Dr Naylor has overseen have been significant improvements in the buildings and facilities on the campus, as well as the acquisition of the playing field complex at Teddington Lock, culminating in the development of a new state-of-the-art sports hall.

As for the highlights, Dr Naylor is in no doubt that St Mary's gaining the power to award its own degrees in 2006 ranks at the top, as also will the graduation ceremonies to be held at Westminster Cathedral later this month when the St Mary's degrees will be awarded to the first full set of graduates.

Looking back, Dr Naylor also picks out the success of St Mary's in the research rankings for both Theology and English, and the individual sporting successes of St Mary's students at major events. And the visit by the Pope to St Mary's in September (see article on page 1) will undoubtedly provide a final highlight.

As for Strawberry Hill, where he has lived throughout his time at St Mary's, Dr Naylor has found it an ideal place for a family home, an 'oasis of green and calm' with a good community atmosphere.



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The Bulletin is published by the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association, 40 Popes Grove, Twickenham, TW1 4JY and is distributed free, 3 times a year, to approximately 2300 homes in the area. All text, images and design © Copyright 2010 Strawberry Hill Residents' Association, except where noted.. Email: Bulletin@shra.org.uk

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