

No. 156 Winter 2014

Local opera singer to lead Christmas carol singing

The annual carol singing and tree unveiling event for Strawberry Hill will take place, as usual, in Wellesley Parade. The event will be held on Friday 12th December, and will begin at 6.00 p.m., when local children are invited to help decorate the tree. The Christmas tree lights will have been switched on a week before the event.

Carol singing will start at 6.30 p.m. and will be led by Helen Astrid of The Helen Astrid Singing Academy in Strawberry Hill. We'll sing favourite and well-known carols, enhanced by traditional descants from Helen's students and a solo for the first verse of Once in Royal David's City.



Helen Astrid

Mulled wine, soft drinks and mince pies will be available, with donations going to a local charity - the Strawberry Hill Overseas and Community Concern (SHOCC). The charity is administered by staff and students of St Mary's University and exists to relieve disadvantage in the UK and overseas.

We are grateful to Richmond-upon-Thames Council for their contribution to the funding of the tree and the event. This is always a really

atmospheric start to the Christmas season, and one hugely enjoyed by the children. Do come along and wrap up warm!

SHRA supports ice rink application with reservations

The planning application for an ice rink to be sited this year in the grounds of Strawberry Hill House was approved by the Planning Committee on 12th November. It had attracted large measures both of support and opposition from local residents and from further afield. Whilst many enjoyed last year's rink at York House and support the proposed seven-week winter rink at Strawberry Hill House as a more attractive backdrop for the event, many of those living close to the site have concerns. These centre mainly on noise disturbance from the equipment and the music that accompanies the skating, increased traffic and parking pressure.

The SHRA Committee took the view that the application should not be supported at the expense of any significant disturbance to local residents. The Committee (in the absence of one member who was involved in the private promotion of the rink), after reviewing all the concerns, met and questioned the applicants and the Director of Strawberry Hill House on all the key areas of concern. The Committee has also corresponded with the Council regarding noise levels, which must remain within existing background levels close to any residential property. Based on these discussions and assurances that the noise levels will be

monitored, the Committee concluded that there should be no undue disturbance to local residents and have lodged support for the application.

We hope that the rink will be successful, and that no one has any cause for complaint. In the event that they do, the organisers have provided a mobile phone number to call (075 0480 2707), and they assure us that any complaints will be promptly addressed.



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SHRA's Golden Jubilee

On 11th February next year, SHRA will celebrate its 50th birthday. Born out of a perceived threat from a new trunk road (see Bulletin 147), it remains dedicated to ensuring that our area continues to be a pleasant riverside village. There'll be a special Jubilee issue of the Bulletin next year and we're also planning something permanent to commemorate our 50 years. More details in Bulletin 157.

To sustain us for the next 50 years, we're looking for new Committee members. We hold 6 evening Committee meetings per year and help out at our events, such as our Christmas Carol singing. No special skills are required and our activities are by no means onerous.

If you're interested, please contact any Committee member or email: Bulletin@shra.org.uk.

Aircraft Noise

Complaints halt new departures trial

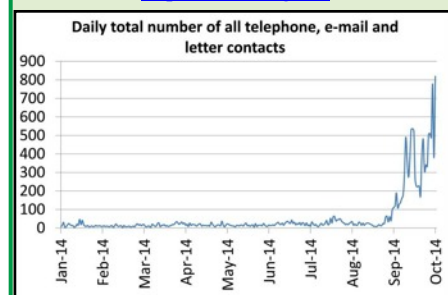
At the end of July, Heathrow Airport began a trial of new easterly departure routes (those that affect our area), to run until the end of January. You may have noticed a significant increase in aircraft noise for a couple of weeks in September. At that time, there was a big surge in complaints from residents in our area and from Teddington, which was most affected by the changes. See the graph below.

As a result, Heathrow terminated the trial on 12th November, more than two months earlier than scheduled. This shows that complaining does work, but whether it's enough to affect the proposal for third and fourth runways remains to be seen. You can make a complaint to Heathrow either by calling Freephone 0800 344844 or using the online form at:

tinyurl.com/HeathrowComplaint.

You might also like to consider joining Heathrow Airport Campaign against Noise (HACAN):

<http://hacan.org.uk/>



Courtesy of Teddington Town website

Strawberry Hill's Hollywood weekend

'Mad Men' star Jon Hamm makes a brief appearance

There was a flurry of cinematic activity round the station at the beginning of October when two film crews started working at the same time. Large vans full of technical equipment were parked in Tower Road and the neighbouring streets for four days.

In Waldegrave Gardens, a crew was filming for a full-length feature film: 'Urban Hymn', starring Shirley Henderson. We are told that it is "set against the backdrop of the 2011 UK summer riots and follows a young female offender who possesses a remarkable voice and a determined social worker who inspires her to use it". Obviously, any director's first choice for a film set in the 2011 riots would be Strawberry Hill!!¹ Expect to see the results in cinemas next year.

Meanwhile, in Strawberry Hill Road, a small team was filming a scene for Channel 4's 'Black Mirror', a "television anthology series that shows the dark side of life and technology", apparently. The word on the Street (well, Tower Road, actually) was that Jon 'Mad Man' Hamm would arrive that



Lights, camera, action! Filming 'Urban Hymn' in Waldegrave Gardens

weekend for a brief filming session. Although your correspondent did not actually spot the great man, it has since been confirmed that he did indeed visit Strawberry Hill and that the episode will be broadcast as a Christmas Special in December.

¹ However, see our article on the 2000 Strawberry Hill Riots in Bulletin 150.

Radnor Gardens pontoon

Cllr. Clare Head, Chair of the Friends of Radnor Gardens, writes:

The Friends of Radnor Gardens (FoRG) are investigating having a pontoon in Radnor Gardens near Radnor House School to accommodate a ferry to take you across the river to Ham and Richmond. Cyclists would not have to negotiate the pinch points of Twickenham and Richmond. Richmond and Ham residents could cycle to Strawberry Hill House. St. Mary's students could live in Ham and cycle to Uni. Strawberry Hill families could explore the beautiful unspoilt Ham lands. Tourists who swish past Radnor Gardens on their way to Hampton Court Palace could disembark at Radnor Gardens and visit Strawberry Hill House.

I have invited marine engineers to visit the site. They feel it would be feasible to put a pontoon near Radnor House School. There is a place where the bank is indented and the river is at its widest. FoRG are organising a Pontoon Subcommittee. Do you have the skills to help us further this plan? What do you think of the idea? Please let me know! Contact Clare Head at clareorelhead@hotmail.co.uk or ring me on 07734958988. Looking forward to hearing from you!

A visit to Lord Stanhope's Cave

Mosaics in Strawberry Hill's other Grotto revealed

In Bulletin 153, we carried an article about Stanhope's Cave: an 18th century tunnel running diagonally under Radnor Road between the end of Alexander Pope's Garden and Radnor Lodge, constructed by Lord Stanhope to connect his two properties. The tunnel betrays its presence by a distinct hump at the junction of Radnor Road and Upper Grotto Road. The tunnel is now walled up at its eastern end, which is owned by Radnor House School. The School restored their entrance and the original inscribed plaque last year.

Your correspondent was recently given an opportunity to visit the tunnel, accessed from the garden of Radnor Lodge. It is about

10 metres long and two metres wide, with three niches set into each side. The niches may have held three Roman urns and busts of Stanhope, his daughter and Lord Chesterfield. The walls seem to be lined with small rough pieces of granite and basalt, like the entrance arch at Radnor House School's end.

Most remarkably, just visible in the gloom, there are 3 'mosaics' made of lighter and darker rocks: two peacocks (or possibly sunrises) and a butterfly, each about one metre high. They must have been almost invisible to visitors without some form of lighting. Thanks to the marvels of modern photographic technology, we are able to bring you what may be the first published picture of one of the mosaics.



One of the peacocks (or possibly sunrises) in the Cave

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Strawberry Hill Bowling Club

Founded in 1920 and looking for information about its early history

Strawberry Hill Bowling Club is located in Radnor Gardens. It was founded in 1920 and currently has 68 members, aged from 13 to 65+. Activities include Thursday evening Club nights, internal competitions, friendly matches against other clubs and social events such as quiz nights and an annual dinner.

The outdoor bowling season runs from April to September and in the last three years Richmond Council has provided funding for refurbishment and improvements to the green, surrounds, and clubhouse facilities. The Club, using a member's legacy and its own fundraising, has recently provided a new men's changing room to accommodate its increased membership. The club also has a new website:

www.strawberryhillbowling.co.uk

In the run-up to the club's centenary, members are investigating the foundation

and early years of the club. They are very keen to hear from anyone connected with the club in the past, or whose friends or relatives were. Recent information from a local resident has revealed, for example, that during the Second World War, an ARP group set up its own bowling club, which amalgamated with Strawberry Hill Bowling Club after the war.

In May each year, the club hosts an open day, on which members of the public are invited to try their hands at bowls with guidance from qualified coaches. Use of equipment is free, and participants simply need a pair of flat shoes. A beginners' course is also offered from 10.30 a.m. until 12 noon on four Sundays in May for a small charge.

The club is particularly keen to recruit young members. It is currently promoting bowling in local schools to 13 year-olds. Younger members, their parents and grandparents, are warmly invited to join.



Cheers! Members outside the pavilion

Strawberry Hill is really buzzing

Sameer's bees are making honey here in the village

Anyone who loves honey is in for a treat. It's now being made here in Strawberry Hill by young entrepreneur Sameer Ghai. His first harvest, earlier this year, produced 400 lbs of raw honey under the name of The London Bee Company.

Sameer's new business is based on his experience of working as an NGO in Kenya, where he supervised the project Afrika Bees. Tribesmen engaged in the traditional activity of cutting valuable trees for charcoal were persuaded to switch to beekeeping. After establishing hives and learning how to cultivate the honey, they were soon successfully selling it on the open market.

When family issues brought Sameer back to England in 2013, he bought two full hives, which have 11 frames, and two nucleus hives, with five more frames. Things really took off during last year's fine summer, with the help of breeding queens from his original hives.

Locally-produced honey is always the purest and tastiest, says Sameer - and it has another surprise benefit: "This honey is ideal for hayfever sufferers, because its pollen builds up resistance."

We discussed the world-wide problem of decreasing numbers of bees, believed to be due a particular mite killing them by piggy-backing on worker bees entering the hive. Sameer explains: "I use a special organic product derived from thyme, which effectively destroys the varroa mite without harming the bee. The most dangerous time for the spread of the mite is in summer, so there has to be constant monitoring during this period."

The London Bee Company produces three flavours - Spring (light and floral); Summer (medium taste and fruity); Autumn (creamy with a stronger taste). They can be bought online, where further items such as polish and bee-friendly seeds can also be found.

You can order Sameer's Strawberry Hill honey from:

thelondonbeecompany.com



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News from the shops

There are celebrations at the Post Office, a new estate agent and changes at the chemist

Jay and Aparna celebrate 30 years

Jay and Aparna Patel were young newlyweds when they arrived - he a computer systems analyst, she an industrial pharmacist. "We were looking for a business that brought us more into contact with people," says Jay. "And despite the long hours involved - 4.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day of the week - it has been wonderful to become part of the community and to make friends with our customers. We've known many of them since they were young children. Now they bring their babies into the shop."



Aparna and Jay Patel - 30 years at the Post Office

Their own two children - daughter Dipali, 27, and 24-year-old son Dipesh - both went to Newland House School.

"We've known many of our customers since they were young children"

Shopping has changed enormously in three decades, and the Patels have always been quick to respond to incoming trends. Where once stamps and postal orders were the main purchases, the Post Office now offers everything from dry cleaning and photocopying to a wide range of food items. As well as the papers and magazines, sweets and greeting cards you'd expect to find, you can top up your Oyster card or grab something for supper on your way home from the station.

And Jay is quick to compliment his wife on her foresight in diversifying and increasing the selection on display. "She is the backbone of

the shop. It's largely thanks to her that we have been able to succeed in the difficult financial climate which has caused so many small independent shops to close down."

Congratulations to Aparna and Jay on their anniversary, and long may this friendly couple continue to serve the day-to-day needs of Strawberry Hill residents.

Editor's note: the Post Office, which opened in 1904, was Strawberry Hill's first shop. The first occupant was Henry James Barry who was there for a mere 22 years!

New estate agent moves into Peaches and Clean shop

Rosella Short is one of the founding partners of Farish Short, an independent estate agency, which has just opened in Strawberry Hill opposite the station. Rosella says that Farish Short, which sells and lets properties, has a passion for the business and is proud of a strong independent brand. The partners are very experienced agents, having worked previously in the estate agency business in the surrounding areas.



A consultation at Farish Short

Short lettings lasting between four weeks and six months is one of the agency's strengths and is not a service offered by all letting agents. Choosing a short let may be cheaper than a hotel and an option not only for visitors, but for local people between sales. Other services which may be of interest to residents in

"A short let may be cheaper than a hotel and an option not only for visitors, but for local people"

Strawberry Hill include property management, corporate services and interior design.

Justin Pollington-Woods, Rosella's partner, says that he and Rosella are excited to work in such a lovely community and look forward to becoming the local "go-to" agent.

If you feel like a chat about your property just call in. Farish Short is offering introductory reductions on instructions received before the end of January 2015 (0.5% for a sale or 5% for a property let).

Pharmacy gets a facelift

Strawberry Hill Pharmacy in Wellesley Parade has had a refit and new shop front. Bharat Patel, the pharmacist, said that the shop had been looking old and cluttered and needed brightening up. The work started in July and is now all but complete. Bharat obtained planning permission for the new frontage and changes to the internal space, in order to provide a private consulting room. Consultations are a new service for customers who would like to talk privately about their medications, their conditions or their aspirations, such as giving up smoking.

"Consultations are a new service"

The pharmacy continues to provide the usual services - there is always a qualified pharmacist available during open hours, and prescriptions are still collected from local doctors. Bharat has increased his range of cosmetics, however. He says that customers like the new look. They find it spacious, bright and welcoming, and he has seen an increase in trade.



Bharat and the smart new shop interior

New Vice-Chancellor appointed to St Mary's

Former Ambassador to the Holy See Francis Campbell writes about his new role

I took up my position as Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University in August; since then I have greatly enjoyed getting to know the locality. It has been a real privilege to discover the beauty of Strawberry Hill. Our Strawberry Hill campus in many respects is a village, but it also holds all the benefits of being on the doorstep of one of the world's greatest cities.

I am excited about the new opportunity at St Mary's as this is sort of new territory for me. My career to date has been in the Diplomatic Service, with stints in various embassies and in Number 10 as a Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. More recently, I had the honour of serving as Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See and then as Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan. I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor at St Mary's, Dr Arthur Naylor, for his wisdom and guidance, which were greatly appreciated in St Mary's, and were particularly valuable to me as I took up my new position. Arthur and his wife, Valerie, have also given me the best advice about restaurants, shops, theatre etc in the locality and have helped me to settle in.

Above all, I hope the Strawberry Hill Community feels welcomed at St Mary's University, and whether you would like to drop in for a coffee, attend a public lecture, take a



Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's Francis Campbell

course, or go to the theatre, that you will find a warm welcome and an open door.

St Mary's University is a Catholic institution and a centre of excellence. We are an inclusive community welcoming all people of faith and none. The award of full university

status in January was an important statement of our confidence and ambition, as was the appointment of Cardinal Nichols as our first-ever Chancellor. We now offer over 500 undergraduate degree courses which encompass not only excellence in education studies and sport sciences, but also great strengths in traditional academic disciplines, including English, Law and Applied Physics. I look forward to working with the students, staff, governors, alumni and local residents to improve our reputation further still.

It is more important than ever that we maintain our unique character and identity here in our locality. I am pleased to say that we have an exciting programme of events and speakers over the coming months and particularly next year, as we celebrate our 165th anniversary. I look forward to welcoming many of you to these events and hope to have the opportunity to meet in the coming months and years.

Strawberry Hill Business Association formed

Helping our local businesses

Strawberry Hill Business Association has been set up and will be formally launched in the New Year. The group has had its first meeting at which it adopted its constitution and voted in its committee: **Chairman - Jeevan Nadarajah (Everyday, Strawberry Hill); Treasurer - Phil Rochford (Sopa); Vice Chair/Secretary - Dawn Stoddard (TW Mag).**

According to Dawn Stoddard: "The Association is formed to help the businesses within Strawberry Hill area promote their ventures and form a cohesive business community to represent its members."

The Association welcomes any suggestions for initiatives to help put local businesses on the map, and is open to any business with an interest in Strawberry Hill, including those who work from home. Membership is free for the first year. Membership forms are available by emailing:

hello@shba.org.uk

The man who made Job's Dairy COWS

Concrete cows, now removed, were made by Radnor Gardens man

For nearly 40 years, motorists travelling east towards Twickenham along the A316 have passed the cows on the roof of the Dairy Crest bottling plant (originally Job's Dairy) in Hanworth. Called by some 'Twickenham's Angel of the North', they were removed in July, allegedly for Health and Safety reasons, and a campaign, including an on-line petition, was started to have them restored.

What is less well-known is that the model cows were originally made of concrete and were placed in a garden around the plant. They were replaced by glass fibre ones on the roof of the new building in 1977. The concrete cows were made by George Murton who lived at 15 Radnor Gardens.

His daughter, Elsie Taylor, was born in 1910 and lived all her life in Radnor Gardens. Her father was a self-employed landscape gardener, working at many of the big houses. Interviewed in the 1990s, she recalled that "he could turn his hand to a lot of things, and made the concrete cows which still stand on the roof of the Job's Dairy building in Hanworth. In summer he would start work at 4 a.m. but in winter work was often hard to come by and times could be hard".

This, and many other fascinating facts about our area, can be found in our book 'Strawberry Hill: A History of the Neighbourhood'. Ordering information is on our website.



The Murton children outside their home, 15 Radnor Gardens, from where their father ran his landscape gardening business. Elsie Murton was being born in the upstairs bedroom while the picture was being taken

Stop Press: Dairy Crest has agreed to restore the cows to the top of the building. Whether this was as a result of Hounslow Council threatening to enforce the original 1977 planning permission, which was granted on condition that the cows remained on the roof, is not known. However, it may be a pyrrhic victory as the entire plant is scheduled to close in 2016.

Hunt for Heroes

Committee vice-chair Peter Lamb investigates Strawberry Hill in the First World War

In my search for local people who fought in the Great War, I have found that Tower Road produced a small crop of servicemen. In 1911, the Varney family lived at number 1. The head of the household, Henry Varney, was retired at the time, having worked as a telegraphist in St. Pancras. His son Leonard was employed as a 'clerk at the motorworks'. He enlisted on 26th August 1914, when he was 27 years and 6 months old; therefore in the first weeks of the conflict. He served in the 23rd battalion of the County of London Regiment. I have not been able to track down his service record, but I discovered that he married Alice Phillips in Tottenham on 1st January 1917. His address was still number 1 Tower Road. One wonders whether he had been invalided from active service by this time, and was able to settle down to married life. A rather sketchy part of a public family tree on ancestry.com shows that he lived to a good age. His death is given as 1967 in Aylesbury.

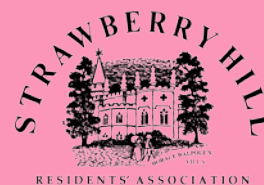
The neighbours of the Varneys were the Powell family, who were living at 2 Tower Road in 1911. The head of the household was Percy Charles Powell, a builder. In the same house lived his brother Louis, a cab driver, but it seems that between then and the Great War they moved away. When Percy enlisted in the Royal Engineers, he was living in Clapham. But younger brother Louis was still in the borough when he joined up, his address being 76 Winchester Road, St Margarets. He enlisted at the end of 1915 and served in the Inland

Water Transport Corps of the Royal Engineers. Both brothers survived the war. Louis was still living at Winchester Road in 1924 and appears in the electoral register for that year.

Another resident of Tower Road was not as fortunate as his neighbours. In 1911 Walter Henry Hamer lived at number 5 with his wife Ellen and a widowed great-aunt. Walter was born in Torquay in 1880 and was a teacher for London County Council. He served in the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers as a lance corporal. He was killed in action on the 22nd May 1917. Walter Hamer's battalion took part in the Arras offensive in the early Spring of 1917. By the time of his death, the initial success of the operation had been ground down to a stalemate, with the usual appalling losses. The grave of Lance Corporal Walter Hamer is to be found at the Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery near Arras. In his will he left all his effects to his wife. They amounted to the sum of £229 9s 8d.



The Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery near Arras, final resting place of Lance Corporal Walter Henry Hamer of 5 Tower Road, Strawberry Hill



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