

Representing the views of all who live in the historic Thames-side village of Strawberry Hill

No. 158 Summer 2015

Here's to another 50 years years!

Fifty years of service to Strawberry Hill was something to celebrate.

So we did, with SHRA's Golden Jubilee Picnic in Radnor Gardens on Sunday 17 May in the presence of the Mayor, Councillor Jane Boulton.

Over 200 picnickers took advantage of a beautiful spring day, enjoying music by the popular Fulham Brass Band. The children were not forgotten, as they took advantage of the free Shetland pony rides; there was a continuous queue the whole afternoon. The Strawberry Hill Bowling Club also pitched in with free trials for the visitors, many of whom had a go. We were particularly glad to welcome June Turner, one of the founders of the Strawberry Hill Residents Association. In her interesting speech, June turned the clock back to 1965, telling us how it all began as a battle against a proposed new road that would have cut through the area from Heath Road to Waldegrave Road. She talked about SHRA's other achievements in the succeeding five decades and expressed the hope that residents would continue to protect our lovely part of the borough.

June unveiled a memorial sundial, but sadly there was some damage to the delivered article, which is being sorted out – see the next Bulletin for an update.



June Turner at the microphone backed up by chairman Bruce Duff

In this issue...

So here we are in our 51st year and still popular today. We thought you might like a look at what else was going on in our area 50 years ago, so we have included a piece on the Strawbs, originally the Strawberry Hill Boys, who formed locally in the 60's and are also still going strong.

We're not the only ones with an anniversary – the First World War commemorations continue, and our next instalment in the Hunt for Heroes continues on the back page. More information on relatives, neighbours and friends who took part is always welcome.

We give you an insight into the dedicated work being done by a team led by Eileen Reay, to replicate the original furnishings in Strawberry Hill House.

We have produced a slightly smaller Bulletin this time because of changes to our editorial team, but we'll be back up to six pages in the Autumn.

Celebrating Songs of the Rugby World Cup Nations

The nations taking part in the Rugby World Cup 2015 will be celebrated through song in a programme of singing workshops set up and co-run by Helen Astrid of the Helen Astrid Singing Academy, in October 2015. Helen admits that the real challenge will be to identify from each country one song that captures its culture. Workshops will take place on 1, 8, 15 October 4.45pm – 6.15pm, at the new theatre at Richmond Adult Community College, Music and Drama Festival in Richmond upon Parkshot, Richmond upon Thames TW9 2RE.

The workshops will be part of a three-week Thames. They are open to Richmond residents and visitors, including spectators of rugby games.

Helen, a resident of Strawberry Hill, came up with the idea of running singing workshops for Children over the age of 12 are welcome, in adults and accompanied children over the age of 12, learning a folk or popular song from every family groups or accompanied by an adult. Attendance at each workshop will cost £2 per one of the 20 nations participating in the Rugby person.

World Cup 2015. She says, "It's a community event, bringing people together and uniting them through an uplifting and unique experience in which they learn about the folk and popular music of other countries. In today's uncertain climate of cultural and religious differences, the sessions will help to show people how each country has its own voice, equal to others." You don't need to be able to read music and there will be no obligation to sing alone. To apply to take part, visit http://www.richmond.gov.uk/music_and-drama_festival.

Funded by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' Civic Pride Fund and the RFU, the workshops will be co-run by Helen Astrid and maestro Nicholas Cleobury, Artistic Director of Mid-Wales Opera and Principal Conductor of the Oxford Bach Choir.



Would you like to join the SHRA committee? We would love to welcome you. Please contact Bruce Duff. (See back page for contact details).

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Furnishing Strawberry Hill House

Eileen Reay is leading the team working on the replica furnishing for Strawberry Hill House. She has previously worked for the National Trust, Historic Royal Palaces and English Heritage.

I first worked at Strawberry Hill in 2010 as part of the initial phase of restoration of the house. I made festoon curtains for the Great North Bedchamber and cushions and case covers for the sofas in the Great Parlour. Festoon curtains were the height of fashion in the 18th century, as they allowed the whole window to be exposed when they were drawn up. In the case of Strawberry Hill, where the windows contain some wonderful glass, this is particularly appropriate. The curtain design has been copied from an engraving of the room. Making accurate copies of historic furnishings is very different from modern work. Often the textile will be copied if the original is available or documented in an inventory, or perhaps, shown in an engraving. There are several specialist weavers in this country and abroad who are able to carry out this work. They will create the point paper (the weavers' blueprint), source the correct yarns and produce colour trial samples for approval. All this before the weaving can proceed! In one of my projects the creation of the point paper took 3 months; such was the complexity of the design.

Inevitably all such projects involve hand sewing as the sewing machine was not invented until the 19th century. The fabrics are much narrower than our modern ones; the same width as wallpaper. This is because they were hand woven, and 21 inches or thereabouts is the maximum distance that a hand thrown shuttle can travel. Consequently, the curtains in the Great North Bedchamber each have 7 widths. The fabric is a wool and silk damask lined with wool tammy also dyed to shade.

The edges are bound with a silk braid and the lower edge finished with a silk fringe. These too have to be specially made, and the colour must match. To draw up the curtains, cords (again dyed to match), run through brass rings sewn to linen tape. The boards to which they are attached are constructed with internal brass pulley wheels, over which the cords are drawn. Tassels, also commissioned, finish the ends of the cords. The only concession to modernity is that the curtains are fixed to the boards with Velcro. This is now quite common practice in historic houses as it enables their speedy removal in the case of fire.

The Great Parlour sofas were made by students at the London College of Furniture. My job was to make horsehair-stuffed cushions, plus case covers for the sofas and cushions. In the event, I also did some work on the upholstery of the sofas. Horsehair cushions are rigid and very heavy! Their shape, and also the design of the covering material and covers, came from an engraving which can be seen in the room.

Case covers are much misunderstood. It is tempting to call them loose covers, but unlike their modern counterparts, which usually have a calico covered chair or sofa underneath, the historic case cover was

used over silk or other precious upholstery covering. Only when royalty or other important guests were being entertained would the case covers be removed. As they were the normal furnishing of the room, they would often be supplied by the furniture manufacturer as part of the contract. They would quite commonly be made from linen, often checked. There are numerous pictures showing them in use. For Strawberry Hill, the linen was specially woven, as was the braid which was used to detail the seams. Piping was not used at this time.



My current project is to lead the members of the Strawberry Hill Sewing Bee in the production of a set of bed hangings. A bed frame has been made by the same London College as for the sofas, to a design which closely copies that of a bed that was in the house. The bed originally belonged to Robert Walpole, Horace's father, and stood in the Red Bedchamber. It was the bed in which Robert Walpole died so

has considerable significance. So far, the 'bees' have made mattresses and are at present working on a quilt. This is made from cotton, fashionable at the time, to the design of a quilt dating from around 1700 that is in the V&A collection. It is being hand quilted and visitors to the house can often see the ladies at work. The beautiful blue silk fringe, which will edge the curtains and valances, is being hand-knotted by the ladies of the Bee.

Pope's Grotto

David Cornwell, member of Pope's Grotto Preservation Trust and SHRA committee, provides an update

Three hundred visitors attended the open days at the Grotto during the Twickenham Festival. People enjoyed the opportunity to see the task ahead in our plans for the restoration and also to enjoy Radnor House School's hospitality, the coffee bar and the view of the river from a different vantage point!

We shall be open again for London Open House weekend on Saturday 19 September 2015 from 10.00am with last admissions at 12.30pm. Please come and see the Grotto if you haven't already – many visitors tell us that they have lived locally for years but have never managed to see it before!

Fundraising for the restoration continues apace with bids being written to organisations requesting support for the project. Meanwhile, work is ongoing to produce the plans and drawings to enable the necessary consents to be granted.

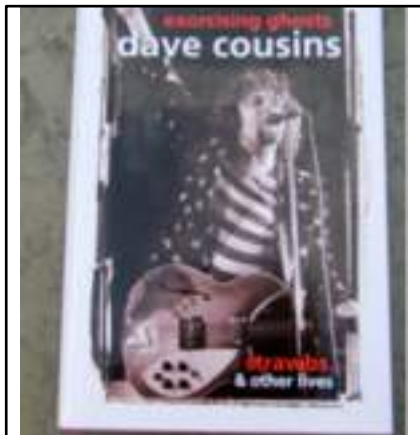
On 26 September, the Trust and Radnor House School will be hosting a symposium at which a number of Pope experts will help us to launch the restoration project and the fundraising that will begin in earnest.

Please get in touch if you would like an invitation.



50 Years Ago in Strawberry Hill: The birth of the Strawbs

Twickenham is renowned as the home of the Sixties' rhythm-and-blues scene. The legacy lives on in the Eel Pie Club at the Cabbage Patch. The band called the Strawbs are still best known for their hits 'Part of the union' (played in the background of any documentary about trade unions) and 'Lay down', a Radio 2 staple. We always thought that the band must have come from Strawberry Hill. There are rumours that band members met at Strawberry Hill College. The mystery has been cleared up in the autobiography, "Exorcising Ghosts" by Dave Cousins, lead singer and songwriter.



"Exorcising Ghosts" by Dave Cousins

Strawberry Hill that a 'lightbulb flashed' – they became the Strawberry Hill Boys. In 1967 the Boys became the Strawbs – as they walked into the Troubadour folk venue in Earl's Court someone shouted out "The Strawbs are here" and they kept the name.

By the time of their first album release in 1969 they had dumped bluegrass. They went on a musical 'journey' through the Seventies including a prog-rock phase. Dave Cousins 'discovered' the singer Sandy Denny, and Rick

Wakeman, who eventually left to found Yes. They went from playing small folk clubs to performing at the Royal Albert Hall and touring all over the world. They still have many loyal fans that follow their acoustic and electric tours. Find out more at www.strawbsweb.co.uk

Dave Cousins went to Thames Valley Grammar School in Fifth Cross Road – now Waldegrave School for Girls – where he met fellow Strawb, Tony Hooper. Together they formed a 'skiffle group'. As their music evolved they started to play American bluegrass music in folk clubs. The US bands had names such as the Foggy Mountain Boys and it was while rehearsing at a friend's flat in

SHRA 2015 Annual General Meeting

Strawberry Hill Residents' Association held its 50th AGM on 22 April at Strawberry Hill Golf Club. At the start of the meeting, Chairman Bruce Duff presented a cheque for £300 to Kevin Cook, representing the Strawberry Hill Overseas and Community Concern (SHOCC). The donation was raised from a collection at the SHRA Christmas event. Kevin thanked the association and announced that the funds would be donated to Kinneer House.

In his report, Bruce listed the achievements of SHRA during the past year, including the success of the carol-singing and tree-decorating event, the support SHRA is giving to the application for funding to clean and restore Pope's Grotto, and the ever-watchful eye we keep on proposed developments in the area.

Special thanks were given to Robert Youngs who stood down from the committee at the AGM. Robert, who had in the past been a co-chair of the committee, had also been responsible for the SHRA website, the layout of the ever-popular Bulletin over numerous years, and for the editing of the Bulletin during 2014-15. He will be greatly missed from the committee, but retains his interest in other local organisations, particularly Twickenham Museum and the Pope's Grotto Trust.

Bruce also reminded the meeting that new committee members would be very much welcomed. Anyone interested can get in touch via the website: www.shra.org.uk or Twitter: @SHResidents.

Do we want this at the heart of our village?

Pam Crisp SHRA Secretary says "It's so disappointing that, after all my lobbying of SWT, Network Rail and our MP to get the dead pigeon issue sorted out and the roof replaced, this is what we are left with".

SHRA is keen to work with the Network Rail to smarten this area up. How could it be better used in the future? What do you think?

Email the Bulletin editor with your thoughts: juliafiehn@blueyonder.co.uk



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Hunt for Heroes

Committee vice-chair Peter Lamb continues his investigation into Strawberry Hill in the First World War

In our commemoration of the centenary of the Great War, we look back 100 years to the summer of 1915. The war that was to be over by Christmas had dragged on for nearly a year and had turned into a bloody stalemate on the Western Front devouring young men in their tens of thousands. The residents of Strawberry Hill were not spared this dreadful rate of attrition.

We think of the grief of those who lost loved ones in the conflict, and one such is Emma Godfrey who lived at 14 Bonsor Road. She was a widow by the time the war started and had two sons and a daughter. The family had lived in Isleworth, but Emma moved to Strawberry Hill some time after 1911. Her younger son Henry, born in 1884, attended the Blue Coat Junior School and from 1896 spent the last three years of his education at Tiffin School. By 1911 he was working for the Civil Service in the Accountant General's office. In 1916 he served in the 10th battalion of the Queen's Regiment (Royal West Surrey Regiment) and attained the rank of lance corporal. He was killed on 12th June 1917 during the Battle of Messines and, as he was one of the many whose bodies was not recovered, his name is to be found on the Menin Gate in Ypres. He is also commemorated on the War Memorial in St Mary's Church Twickenham. In his will he left £501 13s. 4d to his elder brother Frederick. I would like to acknowledge gratefully the information provided on the Tiffin Friends' website.

It is possible that some older residents may know something of Osmond Boyes who lived

to a great age at 30 Orford Gardens until 1973. He was born in 1878 in Camberwell and married Dorothy Kingston from Wimbledon in 1905. The 1911 census shows them residing at 1 Bonsor Road with three daughters aged 4, 3 and 1. His employment is listed as foreign merchant's clerk to a firm of match importers and exporters. A record dated 15th February 1917 in the National Archives gives his address as 40 Bonsor Road (perhaps there were changes in the numbering) and shows that a decision was made not to call him up for service for 4 weeks. A later record shows that he served in the 16th County of London Battalion of the Queen's Westminster Rifles. His service was of short duration, lasting from 15th August 1917 until 6th December 1917, but in that time he is likely to have seen action in the Third Battle of Ypres and the Cambrai operations.



Osmond and Dorothy Boyes

(by kind permission of his descendants)

until 6th December 1917, but in that time he is likely to have seen action in the Third Battle of Ypres and the Cambrai operations.

If any of our residents have any information that they can contribute to this on-going feature in the bulletin, I would be delighted to hear from them.

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