

Editor's Introduction

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



This e-Bulletin is for all residents of the Strawberry Hill area of Twickenham comprising approximately 2,400 households. Strawberry Hill Residents' Association (SHRA) has had, since it began, an inclusive policy towards membership. This means that all residents are automatically members of the Association, unlike other residents' associations which regards only paid subscribers as members. As reported in the last e-Bulletin the paper copy was distributed to 2,400 households by our team of resident volunteers, but now distribution is

through our database of emails. Currently, the database only has emails for a fraction of SHRA members. Please recommend the e-Bulletin to neighbours who can receive a link to future bulletins by emailing contact@shra.org.uk.

To aid the reader we have divided the content into seven sections. Unlike other local e-magazines our focus is exclusively 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 the work of the SHRA Committee in managing and running the Association. It also contains the contact details for Committee members and the subscription form. The 'Green Pages' describe the various ways in which SHRA is delivering on its environmental strategy and on local, related topics. The 'Planning' section is to inform residents about SHRA's important role in monitoring and challenging inappropriate developments. The 'Heritage & History' section covers our important heritage assets, such as Strawberry Hill House and Pope's Grotto, and local history. Finally, the 'Business' pages provide profiles of Strawberry Hill businesses.

Andrew Miller, Vice-Chair, SHRA

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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. – [CLICK HERE](#)

The Association – **Zoe Prindiville** reports from SHRA's much delayed Annual General Meeting and you can see the revised SHRA Constitution which was passed at the AGM. – [CLICK HERE](#)

Green Pages – SHRA's environmental team, **Sharon Willoughby** and **Louisa Carradine**, focus their attention on Strawberry Hill's trees and the celebrated zoologist, Maurice Burton, who lived in Pope's Grove. – [CLICK HERE](#)

Planning – SHRA's long-serving planning monitor, **Mike Allsop**, provides an overview of planning battles over the years. – [CLICK HERE](#)

Heritage & History - **Peter Lamb** describes murky goings on in Waldegrave Road and Andrew Miller looks at the long history of the Remembrance Day service at Radnor Gardens. – [CLICK HERE](#)

Business – In this issue, **Zoe Prindiville** gives an overview of Swan island and its businesses and **Andrew Miller** interviews the new owner of **Brightlife**, Strawberry Hill's pharmacy. – [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: Antipodea - Andrew Miller

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.

Antipodea – café in Radnor Gardens

The new cafe in Radnor Gardens that we talked about in the last edition is proving a popular addition to the local area and I can see that I am not the only person to enjoy their lattes! The team there have put forward some interesting thoughts and ideas on how to continue their success and we are liaising with them to make sure they are community-led.

Townmead Depot

We are pleased to report that we have increased the availability of slots at Townmead. We needed to reduce the number of slots following the major fire during the summer in order to carry out electrical works at the site - this was finished in late October so you should see the difference now!



Photo: Courtesy of Townmead Depot Twitter



Photo: Courtesy of Richmond.gov.uk

Strawberry Vale changes

Thank you to everyone who responded to the consultation for the proposed improvements to cycle and pedestrian infrastructure on Strawberry Vale, including a full carriageway resurfacing. Following your feedback, we have made some design changes and have agreed to proceed with the overall scheme. Work will commence in mid-November, with the full carriageway resurface scheduled for March next year. Please don't hesitate to get in contact with Cllr Bennett, Cllr Butlin and me, Cllr Mansfield if you have any concerns regarding council services or the local area. We will also have our **in-person surgeries at 7pm York House on the first Monday of each month from January.**

South Western Railways

South Western Railways has been running a consultation on a new timetable for their services from December 2022. If implemented, these proposals would mean that the two additional trains scheduled from Strawberry Hill Station (via Kingston) during the morning peak would not be reinstated as we come out of the COVID timetable. Cllr Butlin, Cllr Bennett and I think that it is too early to assume that passenger numbers have stabilised (many people are still working from home), therefore to go ahead with a permanent reduction in services would be detrimental to the ward. We are fighting the proposals, both in responses to the consultation and at meetings with SWR. In addition, LBRuT has put in an official representation and our MP, Munira Wilson, secured a debate in parliament on their plans. **SWR will be making a formal proposal to the Department for Transport in January.**



Photo: courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Cut-through traffic

In the last SHRA bulletin, I mentioned that we will be doing a survey of cut through traffic between Cross Deep and Heath Road, as soon as local traffic returned to more 'normal' levels. We think this is now the case and have this scheduled for November.

Councillor Katie Mansfield

Local Issues



Photo : Courtesy of Cycling Industry News

Crime in Strawberry Hill

The last meeting of the PLG (Police Liaison Group) was held on 28th September and the next one is planned for 29th November. If you 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 July – September 2021 with a comparison for the corresponding period in 2020.

Cllr Katie Mansfield

An area of concern is Carpenter's Court just off Hampton Road at the Strawberry Hill end. There have been reports of anti-social behaviour and youths smoking drugs behind the Carpenter's Court flats. A request has been made to councillors for curved mirrors to be placed in the alleyway to allow people to see around the corners, especially as it is such a secluded area. Also, the lighting of the alleyway needs to be monitored.

Offence	July – Sept 2020	July – Sept 2021	Change
Burglary	13	1	-12
Criminal Damage	5	6	+1
Robbery	2	2	0
Theft from M/V	16	8	-8
Theft of M/V	6	5	-1
Theft of pedal cycle	15	12	-3
Non Domestic	5	4	-1
Domestic	16	4	-12
Youth Violence	1	0	-1

Please report any incidents to the **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), ring 101 or 999**, or report online and cases can be built up this way. There is various information about policing in our area and the opportunity to report any issues via the link on the South Twickenham Safer Neighbourhood website.

Link is: <https://www.met.police.uk/a/your-area/met/richmond-upon-thames/south-twickenham/>

The toilets on Twickenham Green have now been removed and the SNT say the problem of public urination seems to have died down

General issues regarding bikes and cars

Councillors have been asked to report back on the Council's plans to increase the number of secure bike parking areas. Police have been marking bikes at Freshers' Week at St. Mary's University and speaking to students about safeguarding their bikes. Details of your bike frame, photo etc can be uploaded onto 'Bike Register' and if your bike gets stolen you can report it. Link is: www.bikeregister.com. Electric scooters- the illegal ones are being targeted with police operations and some have been seized. Catalytic convertor thefts are continuing, especially in Tudor Gardens and Clifden Road. Several residents have installed doorbell cameras which are picking up a lot of night time activity of people trying car doors etc. SNT have said if people are seen trying door handles then ring 999.

There is a Faraday protector which is an anti-theft device for car, see link:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Faraday-Blocking-Keyless-Antitheft-Protector/dp/B077XTMHZW>

The recent environmental protests have impacted on our local police resources. In June and August police were redeployed to central London so there was a big effect on our officer numbers, leaving us without an SNT for a couple of weeks.

Useful contacts: Twitter address for South Twickenham SNT @MPSSTwickenham
South Twickenham SNT email address: southtwickenham.snt@met.police.uk

June Collins, Treasurer, SHRA

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 focus on those issues.



Photo: Strawberry Hill Level Crossing

positively to requests to reduce the nuisance.

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

In e-Bulletin 174 we reported on the level of noise from the 'new' barrier alarm signal at the station. The volume had been set at a much higher level than previously and this was proving intrusive to residents in the area. Following the notice in the e-Bulletin several more residents got in touch with us to complain about the noise.

Residents living adjacent to the crossing mentioned SHRA in their communications with Network Rail. David Hearn reported that 'nothing happened until I included SHRA in the emails'. David Cornwell, the Chair of SHRA, wrote to Network Rail to complain on behalf of the residents. Network Rail has now turned down the volume. It is satisfying that such a large business responded



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

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

Some residents had raised with the SHRA the issue of the series of advertising banners which obscured the views of the wild flower meadow. David Cornwell and Peter Lamb, SHRA Committee member responsible for liaison with SMU raised this issue with senior university representatives at one of their regular meetings. The university said that they would refer the complaint to the team responsible for marketing. The proliferation of plastic advertising banners on external facing railings is now being seen at Strawberry Hill House, St Catherine's School and Radnor Gardens. We note that two of the SMU advertising banners on Waldegrave Road have recently been removed.

If you would like to contact SHRA about any issues in Strawberry Hill, then please email us at contact@shra.org.uk.

The Association **The New SHRA Constitution**

The Annual General Meeting

The SHRA Annual General Meeting was held on 29th September at the Strawberry Hill Golf Club in front of a disappointingly small audience. The last such meeting was in April 2019 while the pandemic prevented the AGM going ahead in 2020 and earlier this year. The Covid effect was evidenced by the request for people to wear face masks and for the audience to be seated around tables, rather than in rows, as was the custom.

Chair's report

The meeting opened with the Chair's report. David Cornwell thanked those Committee members who have retired: Julia Fiehn who served for six years as Bulletin Editor; Cathy Bird who for several years was the Treasurer; and Committee members, Teresa Read and Jeremy Thomas. He also welcomed the new members to the Committee: Richard Hudspith; Zoe Prindiville who is supporting the Communications team; Sharon Willoughby and Louisa Carradine who have taken on the new roles of Environment coordinators.

David said that given the current global issues, and the upcoming COP 26 event in Glasgow, it is important to remember that all global impacts start with local efforts. Hence, the development of SHRA's environmental strategy. Also linked into the environment around the village, was the issue of the recycling centre at the corner of Pope's Avenue. Despite conversations with the Council, the problems around the area remain - it is used by people from a wider area than Strawberry Hill, and not emptied often enough. The Environment team are working with Councillors to improve the current situation.

A major development from the last AGM is the digitisation of the Bulletin. The first on-line issue, no.174, was a success, thanks to the editing of Andrew Miller and the design skills of Sam Kamleh. This ties in perfectly with the Association's strategy to reduce its carbon footprint, as well as relieving the onerous task of door-to-door deliveries. David thanked those residents that had supported SHRA in the past by helping to distribute the Bulletin.

A welcome new addition to the area is the new cafe at Radnor Gardens - Antipodea has had a successful launch and offers a wide range of food and drinks, as well as an Aussie BBQ on a Friday evening. The Chair said that SHRA preferred a 'community café' but we were content that after such a long hiatus this public amenity was proving popular.

The Chairman was pleased to announce the resolution of increased noise from the level crossing at Strawberry Hill. Many complaints from residents have been forthcoming over the past few months, but it was confirmed that the warning sound at the level crossing has been reduced so that it is now hardly noticeable by comparison. This follows letters of complaint from SHRA in support of local residents that were fed up with the level of noise.

Both the Chair and Vice Chair have recently met with the new Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, Anthony McClaran. Relations over the past few years have been strained due to planning issues and noise, however this meeting marks a new beginning in the relationship, and will continue termly.

Another recent success has to be the refusal of the planning application for the new 5G mast at Radnor Gardens, in which SHRA was involved. Mike Allsop, SHRA's Planning Monitor, drafted a strong submission expressing our concern about the wholly inappropriate location of the proposed mast.

The Association

Treasurer's report

The next major item on the agenda was the Treasurer's Report, which was delivered by the Vice-Chairman Andrew Miller, in June Collins's absence. It was inevitable that the pandemic, which has affected all areas of our lives, would affect SHRA's income. With the decision to move the Bulletin online, came the loss of both advertising revenue and subscriptions. Our challenge is to maintain and increase both elements which bring crucial income.

June Collins, Treasurer, SHRA

SHRA Constitution 2021

The final area for discussion was the new SHRA Constitution, which includes changes to make the Association fit for purpose in the 21st Century. The main changes discussed reflect the desire of the Committee to be more active within the village, to involve local residents more with better two-way communication and to look after the heritage of the area, including buildings of special interest. Members of the Committee have also signed up to follow the new code of conduct.

Vacancies on the Committee

By refining the roles and responsibilities of Committee members, hopefully this will help us to recruit a more representative committee which can then support an increase in local activities - which have been sadly lacking over the last 18 months because of the pandemic. SHRA is seeking to recruit two Event Coordinators to take on the annual carol-singing event plus another summer event for residents. They will also be tasked with organising one or more events targeting families and children. Another vacancy on the Committee is for someone to take responsibility for liaison with local business. Finally, SHRA would like a someone with the IT skills to help manage and develop our website.

The meeting closed with an excellent Q&A session with Derek Purnell, the new Director of Strawberry Hill House.

Zoe Prindiville, SHRA Committee Member

Strawberry Hill Annual Carol Singing Event

After a year out due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the annual carol singing event will be back again this Christmas. It will be held on Friday 10th December, starting at 6.00pm.

We will gather in Wellesley Parade in front of Sopa and the Brightlife Pharmacy near the Christmas tree. It is an annual custom that children decorate the tree with baubles. There will be mulled wine and mince pies for adults; soft drinks and treats for children. We do encourage donations in return for these refreshments. After a missed year of Christmas celebrations last year, we do hope you will bring the family, warm coats and a strong singing voice to join us there.

The Committee – Contact Information

Officers

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07866801299, activelearning@
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June Collins,

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Members

Mike Allsop, Planning Monitor, 020 8891
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Peter Lamb, Local Historian, lamb-
pc0950@hotmail.com

Sharon Willoughby, Environment Coor-
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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

Strawberry Hill Residents' Association – Constitution 2021

1. The Association shall be called the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association (SHRA).
2. The objects of the Association shall be:
 - a. To communicate with and involve local 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.
3. Membership of the Association shall consist of all the adult, private residents living within the boundaries of Strawberry Hill as defined by the Association.
4. The Association shall be managed by a Committee consisting of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary (Officers) and up to eleven other members. The work of the Association will be funded through an annual, voluntary subscription which shall be recommended by the Committee subject to ratification at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Committee shall be responsible for the funds of the Association, which shall be applied for the objects set out above.
5. The Committee and Officers shall be drawn from Members of the Association and shall be elected by the members attending the AGM according to agreed procedures. Members of the SHRA Committee will agree to follow a code of conduct. The Committee shall have powers to co-opt members in order to fill vacancies occurring between AGMs.
6. The Committee shall have powers to form sub-committees and to co-opt members to such sub-committees and to appoint experts to advise the Committee or sub-committees as required. Co-opted members and experts shall not have a vote.
7. The Association is a non-political organisation and it will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.
8. Any personal data on residents held by the Association will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
9. The Financial Year shall run from January 1st to December 31st and independently examined accounts shall be presented at the following AGM.
10. The AGM shall be held as soon as convenient following the end of the Financial Year. 28 days' notice shall be given to members who may nominate members for the Committee and submit items for discussion by notification to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the date of the meeting.
11. A Special General Meeting (SGM) may be called when necessary by the Committee or on the written application of 15 members. Normally 21 days' notice shall be given but in cases of special urgency less notice may be given at the discretion of the Committee.
12. Notice in the SHRA Bulletin and/or SHRA social media (SHRA website, Facebook, Twitter) and on the SHRA notice board at Wellesley Parade shall be sufficient for the purposes of sections 10 and 11.
13. If it is impossible to hold normal face-to-face meetings, then online meetings can be organised for SHRA Committee meetings, the AGM and SGM
14. Amendments to the Constitution shall require a two thirds majority by members attending the AGM or at a SGM called for the purpose. All other motions shall be carried by a simple majority.
15. A proposal to wind up the Association shall require a two thirds majority of members attending an AGM or SGM called for the purpose. On winding up, the Committee shall transfer the balance of funds of the Association to a society or societies having similar objects to SHRA or an appropriate local charity.

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...

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.

Treescape

As we write these Green Pages, trees across Strawberry Hill are starting to put on their annual show of changing leaf colour, one of the loveliest times of the year.

Trees such as the horse chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) are dropping their glossy chestnut-coloured seeds or 'conkers'. The American sweetgums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) are beginning to turn red, yellow, and amber along Wellesley Road. My favourite street for autumn colour in Strawberry Hill is Waldegrave Gardens – where is yours? Please let us know on Facebook and share any snaps of autumn colour that you see on your walks around our village

www.facebook.com/groups/StrawberryHillResidents

Spring Seed and Cutting Swap

We are working towards setting up a Spring Seed and Cutting Swap for April 2022. If you would like to help with this activity or have any thoughts on how this could run – please get in contact via our Facebook page.

What is the name of your street tree?

If you are interested in finding out more about our local street trees visit www.treetalk.co.uk where you will find an interactive map that labels most street trees in London.

This website also lets you know how common each type of tree is in the London landscape – do we have any rarities in Strawberry Hill?



Mark Otto Smith and family are currently resident in 55 Pope's Grove. Mark was kind enough to meet me for a coffee at the Alexander Pope and share his research into the life and work of Maurice Burton.

Pictured on the table in front of Mark are some of Burton's books that Mark has had for many years including an **Observer's Book of Wild Animals** a treasured possession since childhood. Mark, a keen observer of nature shares Burton's passion for animals especially amphibians and reptiles.

Mark learnt about Burton's time at 55 Pope's Grove from the people that he purchased the house from in 2013. He is slowly putting together a picture of Burton's life – including a curious connection to the naturalist and spymaster Maxwell Knight...



Sharon: swilloster@gmail.com

Louisa: louisa@strawberryfillstation.com

Green Pages: Maurice Burton

Maurice Burton (1898 – 1992): Nature Writer, Zoologist & Former Resident

As you walk down Pope's Grove in Strawberry Hill you are tracing the footsteps of Maurice Burton a former resident, scientist, and important British nature writer of the mid 20th century. He lived at 55 Pope's Grove from 1938 to 1951 and prior to that he also resided at 25 Wellesley Road between 1931 and 1936. In 1939, he served as ARP Warden for the area.



If you have ever collected books on the natural history of the UK, field guides, Observer Books, Encyclopaedias, or children's books about animals it is very likely that you have a book or two by Maurice Burton sitting on your shelves. He was a prodigious author of popular science books but what is even more surprising is that behind this slew of publications he was also working as a serious taxonomist at the Natural History Museum, London, first as Curator of Sponges 1927 – 58 and then as the Deputy Keeper of Zoology 1949 – 58. Overlapping with his curatorial work and publishing he was also the Science Editor of the Illustrated London News 1946 – 64 and Nature Correspondent for the Daily Telegraph 1949 – 90 producing a regular column originally called Nature Notes. Across his career it is estimated that he wrote some 70 books and 60 scientific papers – though the total figure is likely to be much higher.

A newspaper clipping that was given to Mark when he took over number 55, possibly an obituary from the Daily Telegraph, relates the story of how Burton became interested in zoology: 'after a chance study of the ant in the trenches. The scurrying activities of this insect, so like that of human beings, were forced on his attention one warm May afternoon in 1918 during a lull in the fighting. Burton watched the ants for several hours as they rushed about on the parapet of his trench, and, thus inspired, begged his mother to send him books on nature'. This spark of curiosity led Burton to a degree and then doctorate at London University where he specialised in sponges. Mark doesn't know the exact dates of Burton's time at Strawberry Hill. Robert Burton shared with Mark that his father had travelled from Strawberry Hill to the Natural History Museum via the number 27 bus and then train from Richmond Station. The number 27 bus ran from Teddington to Highgate from 1934 and it is reported in the Daily Telegraph obituary that he moved to a 'large house and garden at Albury, near Guildford' after the Second World War.

Burton is perhaps most well-known for two aspects of his work beyond sponges. Firstly, for his 1961 book, *The Elusive Monster: An analysis of the evidence from Loch Ness*. Burton was highly sceptical about the idea that the loch contained a large and elusive *Elasmosaurus*, or *Plesiosaur* as proposed by the then Chief Scientist at the Natural History Museum in 1959, Denys Tucker. What is less well known is the heated stoush that erupted between Burton, Tucker, and other pro-Nessie scientists in the pages of the journal *New Scientist* in 1960. From our current vantage point it is amazing to remember that there was a time when Nessie was taken very seriously by biologists (as a child I was thrilled by the idea that the loch could be hiding a lost dinosaur but the evidence is overwhelming that it does not – such a shame). Secondly, for his observations of hedgehog behaviour that he published in *New Scientist* in 1958. Burton coined the term 'self-anointing' for the practice in which hedgehogs cover their spines in saliva, a behaviour that is still not comprehensively understood.

Burton's obituary in the *Independent*, written by Denys Tucker in September 1992 describes Burton as a keen and amusing observer of animal behaviour and a generous teacher able and willing to fan the flames of curiosity in students seeking to learn more about zoology. There are few photographs of Burton online but there is a lovely image that shows him discussing a museum specimen, a taxidermised dog, with a group of wrapped and smiling students, he was clearly a born teacher and communicator. Maurice and Margaret Burton married in 1929 and raised, two sons and a daughter. Robert Burton became a zoologist and writer and Jane Burton a writer, photographer and illustrator of nature books. Burton is better known for his association with Albury in Surrey where he lived for much of his life and where he died in 1992 aged 94. Burton's work and publishing unfolded before the advent of the television and the blockbuster nature documentary. His date of birth places him in the generation before Gerald Durrell, Jacques Cousteau, and Sir David Attenborough – nevertheless his writing has inspired many aspiring naturalists and zoologists who continue to walk in his footsteps today.

Planning

Under the SHRA Constitution a key objective is *'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'*. Mike Allsop has the vital role on the SHRA Committee of monitoring planning applications and recommending courses of action. In this article Mike describes what has been, arguably, the most important role for SHRA over the years.

Introduction

Nothing brings a community together more than a threat to its integrity or the quiet enjoyment of its peaceful surroundings. And so, it has proved over the last 55 years for the residents of Strawberry Hill. On three occasions our community has joined together to object when assailed by the forces firstly of central government, then of local government and finally by our very own University. On each occasion our community has emerged victorious after a struggle in which the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association (SHRA) has played a key role. In fact, the very first struggle, and the most existential of the three, was what inspired the creation of our Residents' Association back in the dim and distant days of 1965.

1965 – Arterial Road Campaign

The plan then being proposed was to create an arterial road through the heart of Strawberry Hill linking the main A316 to Broad Street in Teddington. The road would have run down through Grove Avenue in Twickenham, crossing Heath Road and entering Strawberry Hill at Radnor Road. Radnor Road was to be widened and extended to join Waldegrave Road near its junction with Waldegrave Gardens and the link continue along Waldegrave Road into Teddington. Widening Radnor Road would have led to the demolition of many houses and with the extension between Tower Road and Waldegrave Road would have cleaved Strawberry Hill apart. Whilst our local council opposed the plans the residents of Strawberry Hill were not prepared to take any chances and formed a residents' group to oppose the plans. This inaugural meeting of SHRA was attended by 450 people and held in St James Hall, one of the many buildings that would have fallen to the bulldozers had the plans come to fruition. More of the other two struggles later.

Planning applications

Since 1965 planning issues have continued to remain an important part of SHRA's work. There are typically around three or four planning applications each week across the near 2,400 homes in Strawberry Hill. Most are relatively minor, such as small extensions or loft conversions, which are generally uncontentious and have no impact on the community. But, in most years, there are one or two that give rise to concern because they pose a threat to one of our green spaces, or appear to adversely affect the street scene, or threaten the character, or harmony, of one of our more important buildings or views, or risk creating unacceptable noise or light levels. Where this is the case and there is clear concern among residents, SHRA will lend our weight in support and lodge our concerns and, where appropriate, our opposition to the application.

5G mast at Radnor Gardens

Most recently we supported a lot of local concern and objected strongly to the application for a 16 metre 5G telecommunication mast to be sited on the pavement on Cross Deep right alongside Radnor Gardens (pictured). We are pleased that the Council agreed that this was a wholly inappropriate site and refused the application. Earlier threats of the spreading practice of demolishing family houses and replacing them with small blocks of flats seem to have receded in recent years, as also have 'back garden' developments brought about by changes in local policy. We continue our liaison with the Council to try and bring improvements to the layout of the centre of the village around the station. On the odd occasion we also support applications where they bring clear benefits to the street scene, such as the design of the garage 'shop' by the station which replaced the cobbler's 'cabin', but which had run into difficulties with the planning department.



The Strawberry Hill boundary & SMU expansion

On to the other two struggles, in 2013 our own local council in defining the boundaries of the fourteen 'villages' comprising the Borough for the purpose of developing separate village plans, proposed to 'exile' to Twickenham 'village' the residents of around 800 homes in Strawberry Hill. But SHRA and our residents were having none of it! Following a SHRA AGM where the Councillor responsible was left in no doubt as to the strength of feeling, our boundaries were restored. And then in 2016, St Mary's University proposed a major expansion of student numbers with additional teaching facilities and residential accommodation all over its precious campus playing fields. Yet again our residents were aghast at what was proposed, and mercifully a combination of concerted local opposition, changing fortunes within the University sector, and the arrival of a more realistic vice-chancellor has seen off these plans.

Future issues

And what of the future? Well, the government's proposals to relax the planning rules to hit higher housing targets by zoning areas for development and reducing the opportunity for residents to object have run up against significant opposition both within the Conservative parliamentary party and in the wider country. With the recent Cabinet reshuffle, it looks as if the proposals for reform are being reviewed and hopefully there will be a more considered outcome. Whatever the outcome you can rely on SHRA remaining vigilant in protecting our local environment from inappropriate development.

Accident or murder? A strange occurrence in Waldegrave Road

While working on the various sources that I use for the local history of Strawberry Hill, I am always delighted when I come across something in my immediate residential area. I experienced a special frisson when I discovered something that happened in the actual house where I live.

A tragic incident at 247 Waldegrave Road was reported in the Middlesex Chronicle of 26th December 1942. On the 14th December 1942 shortly before 6pm, a lodger at the house, Alfred James Bate, was found lying on the front path of the house with serious head injuries.

His landlady, Mrs Beryl Harrington, gave a report to the coroner of the incident. Her niece, Ann Harrington, who was leaving the house, had said goodbye when she noticed Bate lying on his back inside the gate. She stated that she saw two men standing over Bate and one of them said he would go for the police. She left the other one with Bate while she went back to her aunt, who, with her daughter brought Bate into the house. He was moaning "My head! My head! What have those men done to me!" The two men left and no trace of them was found subsequently. Bate was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead as a result of a fractured skull and haemorrhage around the brain.

An examination of the incident was carried out by the police who found no evidence of a struggle and concluded that Bate had skidded on the wet pavement that was partly covered with leaves and hit his head on the gatepost. The coroner returned a verdict of accidental death.

There is a sinister aspect to this case in that the previous month, on 11th November, Alfred Bate had been attacked by two men at his office in London and a quantity of money stolen. Were the same two men responsible for what happened later outside 247 Waldegrave Road, and if so, for what reason? Did the semi-conscious words he uttered to Beryl Harrington refer to the assault that took place the month before as he had not fully recovered from it? Or had he indeed been attacked again, this time fatally, outside his residence? The conclusion of the police detective appears to have been drawn in a perfunctory manner. Was this in fact an accidental death and the violent robbery of the previous month totally unconnected? Or was there more to it? Murder?

Peter Lamb, SHRA's Local Historian

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History & Heritage



Twickenham Remembrance Sunday at Radnor Gardens

The tradition of remembering the dead of the First World War began in 1919 when George V held a banquet followed by an Armistice Day ceremony in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. Remembrance Day is the 11 November when the Armistice was signed, and Remembrance Sunday is always held on the nearest Sunday to that day. During the Second World War many Commonwealth countries adopted the name Remembrance Day to replace Armistice Day. This year's Remembrance Day parade and service was held on Sunday 14 November.

After the First World War every town in the country had its own memorials created to honour the local war dead. The Radnor Gardens memorial was created by the sculptor, Mortimer Brown, and unveiled by Field Marshall Sir William Robertson on 2 November 1921 (pictured below). So, this year marks a hundred years' anniversary of the memorial. It is unusual in that it both depicts a joyful soldier returning home and also celebrates the role of the women's voluntary services.

The Twickenham branch of the Royal British Legion is located in Strawberry Hill at 95 Pope's Grove. Although the responsibility for the Remembrance Day rests with the Mayor, the task of organising the event falls to the local Legion which also manages the annual poppy appeal to raise funds for the support of ex-Service personnel. While the Mayor represents the Crown, Parliament is represented in the form of the local Member of Parliament, Munira Wilson. Councillor Michael Butlin who is the Chair of the Twickenham branch of the Legion, supported by a committee, has the principal responsibility for managing the event.



The morning begins with a parade from the Embankment at Twickenham at 10.15am walking down Cross Deep to Radnor Gardens. The front rows of the parade comprise veterans with the Navy in the lead (as the 'senior service'), followed the Army and then the Royal Air Force. This is followed by other groups such as the emergency services and the Scouts, but anyone is able to join the parade. Councillor Butlin, who served in the Reserve Forces of the Queen's Regiment encourages people to wear medals to the event. Although this practice is associated with ex-Service personnel wearing medals on the left of their chest, it is little known that you can wear medals earned by your parents or grandparents provided that they are displayed on the right side of your chest. In the past parades were accompanied by a military band often from Kneller Hall, but nowadays the Richmond Brass Band have stepped into the role.



'At 10.40 there was the procession of dignitaries and guests to the memorial and the service began at 10.50. Those on the dais included the three Councillors for South ward, Munira Wilson MP and Cllr Suzette Nicholson, Deputy Mayor. This year, for the first time, the Vicar of St Mary's Church in Twickenham, Reverend Jeffrey Hopkins-Williams, led the service. The service followed a similar format to previous years bookended by the Last Post and the Reveille, with appropriate hymns. Richmond Brass Band gave a fine version of Elgar's Nimrod. The large crowd of around 2,000 people was much larger than in recent years. The service was followed by the wreath laying which followed a common order beginning with the Mayor, the Chair of the Legion and the local MP. After the main formal wreaths were laid, family groups remembered their own members. In addition to wreaths people had also bought wooden crosses from the Legion which were placed in the container by the memorial.

Wreaths were later attached to the memorial via a metal wire that runs around the base. This is to prevent them being washed away at high tide as happened last year.

Business Pages

Brightlife Chemist, Wellesley Parade



The new pharmacy in Strawberry Hill village, the Brightlife Chemist, opened on 1 July 2021. The business is the first pharmacy owned by Clydespharma, a health-sector business involved in importing, manufacturing and distributing pharmaceuticals. We interviewed the **Managing Director, Dr Soumik Sikdar** (pictured), to learn more about his aspirations for the business. Soumik described his vision for a more community-based business which is well-integrated in the locality. They have identified gaps in the service and have ramped up the home-delivery service and are offering flu jabs. **The main pharmacist is Bao Dang** and he is supported by several part-time staff. The aim is to be able to make recommendations and to have a high quality of service. New or planned services include blood-pressure testing, health checks and a travel clinic.

The business is listening to customers in extending opening times on Wednesday – people may not know that the NHS contract does restrict opening hours – but the knock-on effect is a slightly earlier closing time on Saturday afternoons. Some residents had commented on the need for shutters on the front of the shop. Soumik explained how the shutters were usually used at the weekends to ensure that if the alarm system stopped working, then the premises would be secure.

In order to grow the business, staff have attended the open day at St Mary's University to market the pharmacy to students living in the area. Soumik has already observed that word-of-mouth recommendations are very important in our area, so the aim is to offer a high level of service to attract new customers. We wish him well in helping to support the local community and to provide much appreciated services. **Andrew Miller**

Swan Island – Newmans Shipyard & Business Park



Hidden away on the river next to Radnor Gardens, Swan Island is a private mooring island with a commercial boatyard on site. It is connected to the Twickenham bank by a small bridge, for vehicles as well as foot traffic. The island itself was originally an osier bed – where historically willows were planted and coppiced (cut down to ground level) to make baskets and fish traps among other things – while a little-known fact is that Radnor Gardens was also previously an island. In the 1890s, Harry Milham, a local builder, built Milham's Ait entirely out of clay excavated during construction of London Underground in the 1890s. Amongst the reeds and boats, there are a dozen or so small businesses, as well as around 40 families living on a variety of craft from houseboats to barges surrounding.

The businesses are wide-ranging and all have a story to tell about how they came to be located in this quietly-buzzing community – there is LJ Motorcycles, run by Les Kibble; Seafood & Eat It who distribute fresh Cornish fish and seafood to high-end supermarkets and fishmongers across London; Sunshine Shoeshine, founded by ex-homeless Drew Goodall to give people with mental and physical disabilities the opportunity to help themselves; and the newest addition, Jawbone Brewery run by Ben Hughes and his partner Emma Sheppard. The company that owns the island is the boatyard, Newman Shipyards, nowadays run by Fiona Gunnion, the daughter of Francis 'Frank' Newman, who established the business in the mid-1950s and ended up purchasing the island in 1962. Originally a cooper, a builder of wooden casks, Frank used those skills to transfer to boatbuilding.

The island became inhabited from the mid-1980s, and ten years later, Frank and Fiona re-developed it to protect from flooding at high tide while renting out workshops to other local businesses. Today, the boatyard is still at the heart of the island, carrying out boat repairs and general maintenance. Boats from the local community are spruced up alongside the London-based pleasure boats and the two Thames Fire Patrol boats are serviced here too. Next time you're in Radnor Gardens, take a peek over the inlet just past the Bowling Club to see this island in full working order!

Zoe Prindiville, SHRA Committee Member