

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association e-Bulletin

As Ukrainians fight to keep their democracy, we are all reminded of the importance of exercising our hard-won democratic rights. This means turning out to vote in the upcoming **local elections on 5th May** and having our say in who our Councillors in South Twickenham Ward should be. This is residents' principal opportunity to exert some influence, so please take it. You can also show your support by turning up and voting for your residents' association Committee members at the **Annual General Meeting at Strawberry Hill Golf Club at 7.30pm on Wednesday 27 April.**

The wider issue of climate change affects everybody, as Strawberry Hill witnessed when **Storm Eunice** visited us in February, damaging several of our lovely trees in Radnor Gardens and beyond (pictured).



To inform us about your email address and to receive 'The Bulletin' please email us at Bulletin@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 how SHRA is enacting its environmental strategy. 'The 'Planning' section is to inform residents about SHRA's important role in monitoring future plans for the area. The 'Heritage & History' section covers our important heritage assets, such as Strawberry Hill House and Pope's Grotto, and the history of our people, buildings and streets. 'St Mary's University' focuses on Strawberry Hill's largest institution. Finally, the 'Business Pages' offer profiles of Strawberry Hill businesses.

Andrew Miller, Vice-Chair, SHRA

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In this issue:

Local Issues : local election purdah means that the usual Councillor's Update is suspended for this issue. Instead we highlight some issues that are relevant to Strawberry Hill. **June Collins**, SHRA Treasurer, provides an overview of the latest crime statistics, in what remains one of the safest places in the country. [CLICK HERE](#)

The Association : this section focuses on SHRA and its activities including 'the Village' carol-singing event in the lead up to Christmas and the next AGM. Three Committee members, **Richard Hudspith**, **June Collins** and **Andrew Miller** are profiled. [CLICK HERE](#)

Green Pages : SHRA's environmental team, **Sharon Willoughby** and **Louisa Carradine**, invite residents to join SHRA's first plant swap [CLICK HERE](#)

St Mary's University : **Peter Lamb**, who liaises with St Mary's University on behalf of SHRA and residents, discusses the past, present and future of the main institution and employer in Strawberry Hill. [CLICK HERE](#)

Planning : – **Mike Allsop**, SHRA's long-serving planning monitor, describes the implications for Strawberry Hill of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames's 15-year Local Plan. [CLICK HERE](#)

Heritage & History : **Andrew Miller**, as part of the Streetwise series, focuses on some of the interesting characters that have lived in Pope's Avenue. **Robert Youngs** gives us an update on developments in the restoration of Pope's Grotto. [CLICK HERE](#)

Business : **Zoe Prindiville** interviews **Ben Hughes**, owner of Strawberry Hill's **Jawbone Brewing** on Swan Island. [CLICK HERE](#)

Local Issues

This page aims to inform residents of developments at the Council which affect the area. Usually this column is written by one of the councillors for South Twickenham Ward, however, in view of May's upcoming elections, the editor has penned this section. SHRA is an apolitical organisation.

Biannual Parks Survey

Many of you will have found that a walk in the park has been an essential part of the routine during the pandemic. The results of the Council's Park Satisfaction Survey 2021 have recently been released. On SHRA's Facebook page we urged people to respond to the survey focusing on our own park, Radnor Gardens. Overall 94% of respondents felt happy with parks services while 91% thought the parks were safe spaces. 95% of respondents also thought that the playground facilities were good.



Photo: Andrew Miller

Graffiti

Graffiti remains a scourge of modern life and it is a criminal offence. If you have graffiti in your vicinity or on your property, then the Council will remove it free of charge – the same applies to graffiti on small businesses. Graffiti must be accessible (not higher than three metres) and it will be removed within five working days of being reported (one working day if it is offensive or racist). To report graffiti put 'Graffiti removal' into the search box on the Council's website.



Photo: Andrew Miller

Platinum Jubilee

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will be marked by a four-day bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June 2022. The Council has waived the usual street-closure fees to allow residents to close their (residential) streets to through traffic to allow for street parties. SHRA has asked Strawberry Hill residents to let us know if they are planning a party in their street. For Harry and Meghan's wedding parties (the ones we know about) were held in Upper Grotto Road, Radnor Road, Southfield Gardens and Waldegrave Gardens – on this occasion there could be a lot more. Applications for a street party will close on 30 April 2022.



Photo: Andrew Miller

Local Issues

Crime in Strawberry Hill

The last PLG (Police Liaison Group) meeting was held via Zoom on 7th February. If you wish to take part in the meetings, information can be obtained from Pam McMillen – pam-plg-mcmillen@hotmail.com.

The increase in crime since the same time last year is thought to be due to life returning to normal following the relaxation of Covid restrictions.

Burglary

All burglary victims will now receive a visit from Police Officers with leafleting being carried out to inform others of the burglary in their road.

Theft of Motor Vehicle

All three of these thefts have been of catalytic convertors.

Theft of Pedal Cycles

There is a lot of pedal theft around Heath Road so the team aim to roll out an operation targeting this area.

Domestic Violence

All Police Officers have received enhanced one-day training on domestic violence.

A plan is in place which, if approved, will set up a One Stop Shop in South Twickenham for victims of domestic violence, abuse and exploitation.

Police staffing levels

Current staffing levels for South Twickenham are 1 Sergeant, 1 Police Officer and 1 PCSO. The table below shows the crime figures for South Twickenham Ward (including Strawberry Hill) as reported for the period December 2021-January 2022, with a comparison for the corresponding period in 2020/2021.

Offence	Dec 20- Jan 2021	Dec 21- Jan2022	Change
Burglary	3	4	+1
Criminal Damage	2	5	+3
Robbery	0	1	+1
Theft from M/V	6	3	-3
Theft of M/V	3	3	0
Theft of pedal cycle	2	8	+6
Non Domestic	4	8	+4
Domestic	8	11	+3
Youth Violence	0	1	+1

Local Issues

There is currently one long-term investigation into drug dealing awaiting lab results and a charge. Carpenters Court (pictured) is still a serious ongoing concern with anti-social behaviour problems with local youths entering the blocks and smoking drugs. Residents have repeatedly contacted Richmond Housing Partnership to fix problems with the communal doors to prevent this, but to no avail. Cllr Richard Bennett and Cllr Katie Mansfield and our MP, Munira Wilson, all attended the meeting on 7th February and undertook to aid in the resolution of these issues. The Design Out Crime Officers are going to look at Carpenters Court Alleyway to see if anything can be done to help alleviate the problems. The area will be subject to an ongoing ASB patrol and monitoring of the situation.



A longstanding police request remains with the council for the placement of a CCTV camera on Twickenham Green. Cllr. Bennett and Cllr. Mansfield said they would look into the expedition of this.

Local off licenses are selling alcohol to underage children in the area so licencing will be running an operation on these premises, supported by the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Friday night ASB, which has increased recently, will be monitored and covered, where possible, by the Late Turn Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Team who are rostered on duty that weekend.

The website for our ward is below and you can view the crime figures for your area.

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

Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Board offer a free crime prevention visit to residential addresses.

Email: crimepreventionadvice@yahoo.com

Twitter address for South Twickenham SNT @MPSSTwickenham

South Twickenham SNT email address: southtwickenham.snt@met.police.uk

June Collins, Treasurer, SHRA

The Association

SHRA AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association for 2022 will take place at the Strawberry Hill Golf Club on **27 April at 7.30 pm**. We are hoping that as many of you bulletin-reading residents as possible will join us for the session. Everyone will be offered a complimentary drink of beer, wine or non-alcoholic beverage. You will also have the opportunity to view a slide show on 'Old Strawberry Hill through Photographs'.

New Banking Arrangements

SHRA has changed its banking arrangements. June Collins, our Treasurer, is contacting everyone she has contact details for, about the change, and will be sending them a new STO form. If you are a resident member who pays their SHRA annual subscription this way, please be aware of the change. If you wish to donate to SHRA to support its voluntary activities, then you will be able to do this via the new account, but please drop an email to our Treasurer to tell us who you are and what you have contributed. If anyone wants a STO form or to donate, please email June at: june.collins@hotmail.co.uk.

SHRA's new bank details are:

NatWest

Account Name: **Strawberry Hill Residents' Association**

Account Number: 71550410

Sort code: 55-50-39

Join the SHRA Committee

We currently have four vacancies on the SHRA Committee and we are looking for some new faces to join us. We particularly wish to recruit two volunteers to work together in upping the number of SHRA events for families in Strawberry Hill. Also, someone with an interest in helping with maintaining the SHRA website would be useful. However, if you want to join the Committee and make other contributions to the work of SHRA that is also welcome.

Carol Singing at Wellesley Parade

Last year's SHRA annual carol-singing event took place on 11 December from 17.30 at Wellesley Parade, the heart of Strawberry Hill village. The night was cold but dry and the turnout was a lot higher than in recent years, in particular, there were a lot more younger families with children. Altogether, some 100 residents participated including some

25 children who helped to decorate the Christmas tree. The Christmas tree is funded by SHRA residents' subscriptions, with the support of the Council, and it adds a festive look – with its white lights and large baubles – to the parade of shops.

Members of the SHRA Committee staffed the refreshments table and dispensed hot mulled wine and mince. From six o'clock, the six members of the Richmond Brass Band, who had kindly volunteered to support the event free of charge, went through the repertoire of familiar carols from God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen to Silent Night. The crowd joined in enthusiastically

following the words on the hymn sheets provided. One resident attending posted the following message on our Facebook page 'Lovely to kick off Christmas in such a special way, thank you SHRA'.

SHRA would like to give special thanks to Richmond Brass Band for providing the music, to June Collins, our Treasurer, for organising the road closure and other tasks, and to Sopa and BrightLife Chemists for allowing us to set up shop on the pavement outside their premises.



The Association

SHRA House History Service

SHRA local historians are ready to respond to requests from residents for house histories. Demand has been stimulated by David Olusoga's BBC programmes 'A House through Time'. Most of Strawberry Hill's houses have much shorter histories than those in the TV programmes and the stories of the majority of former residents are unremarkable or lost in time. However, sometimes interesting characters are discovered, enabling us to add to the local history of the area. For example, house history research for residents at 53 Pope's Avenue uncovered the story of its forming part of Popes Avenue School.



Our most recent 'house history' was for an ex-resident of Roymount Court, the 1959 block in Wellesley Road by the Golf course entrance. This apartment block was built on the site of an 1880s Victorian five-storey pile initially called 'Montrose'. The resident in the house, from about 1914 until her death in 1950, was Alice Gertrude Montrion, an Indian-born daughter of a British Raj army officer. In 1875, after his death on active service, Alice moved to 'Roymount', 3 Innocents Road, Hornsey, with her mother. After her mother's death she moved to 'Montrose' in Strawberry Hill but soon changed the name to 'Roymount'. It was converted into apartments after the second world war before demolition during 1957 but the name lives on in 'Roymount Court'.

If you would like to talk about commissioning a house history, then please contact Andrew Miller at activelearning@blueyonder.co.uk. There is no fee as such but, if residents are pleased with the house history report, then we ask for a £25 donation to SHRA funds.

Profile of SHRA Committee members

We are gradually publishing profiles of current members of the SHRA Committee.



Richard Hudspith, Committee member

I was born and brought up in a south London suburb and moved to Strawberry Hill in 1990 with my Yugoslav-born wife and young son who, after a successful period at Oxford (search my surname), is now bringing up his own family in the USA. I'm something of a polymath having interests across the arts, sciences and humanities and have worked in the oil industry, in book publishing and for the last part of my career in Dementia Research at King's College London. I keep fit playing walking football with Age UK Richmond and sing tenor in various choruses – currently treasurer of Teddington Choral Society. My passion is music and the moving image arts and my main concerns are with the mess we're making of our planet and our complacency regarding climate change.



June Collins, Treasurer

My husband Peter and I have lived in Strawberry Hill for 38 years and have two daughters. For the first 23 years of my working life, I was at the BBC working both in radio and TV. I worked on various science documentaries such as Horizon before moving to drama as an assistant producer working, for many years, on Doctor Who. I eventually took voluntary redundancy so my hugely enjoyable career at the BBC came to an end. I went on to become a School Bursar/Business Manager at a junior school in Kingston and then at Teddington School and Tiffin Boys School. After about ten years in this role I moved to Kingston Council as Schools' Financial Support Officer for the borough, until I retired.

I became a local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and joined the SHRA committee, becoming Treasurer in September 2020. For a period of three years I volunteered at Spear (charity for the homeless) in Twickenham, working as administrator one day a week in their hub. I have recently taken up my love of art and enrolled in mixed media art classes at the adult college throughout 2020/2021. These were held on Zoom and it was great to meet with others during Covid times and share a common interest. I love living in Strawberry Hill and feel very lucky to live in such a beautiful area, near the river and so near to the city. What more could one want?

The Association



Andrew Miller, Vice Chair

We moved to Upper Grotto Road in Strawberry Hill in 2004, having previously lived in central Richmond. My career was spent in education, initially as a teacher of Economics and humanities in Ealing and Brent, before moving into a national curriculum development project. I spent several years at the University of Warwick promoting and researching links between education and industry. During the Major and Blair years I was an education adviser to the Department for Education on work experience and on enterprise education during Gordon Brown's premiership. I ended my career as Professor of Mentoring at Middlesex University and running a consultancy business. After several years volunteering as a tour guide at Twickenham Stadium, I joined the SHRA Committee with an interest in exploring local history. I try to keep a photo-record of Strawberry Hill, past and present, maintain our Facebook page and edit the e-bulletin. My interests include genealogy, grandparenting seven children and photography.

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 email:

june.collins@hotmail.co.uk.

To donate, please email the Treasure when making a payment via BACS. Details are:

NatWest Account Name: Strawberry Hill Residents' Association

Account Number: 71550410

Sort code: 55-50-39

The Committee Contact Information

Officers

David Cornwell,
Chair, 020 8941 6513
Andrew Miller,
Vice Chair & Bulletin Editor,
07866801299,
activelearning@blueyonder.co.uk
June Collins,
Hon. Treasurer, 020 8891 0448,
June.collins@hotmail.co.uk
Pamela Crisp,
Hon. Secretary,
020 8898 1878, contact@SHRA.org.uk

Members

Mike Allsop, Planning Monitor,
020 8891 1614
Peter Lamb, Local Historian,
lambpc0950@hotmail.com
Sharon Willoughby, Environment Coordinator,
swilloster@gmail.com
Louisa Carradine, Environment Coordinator,
07813 95436,
louisa@strawberryfillstation.com
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 Residents' Association

Green Pages

Exploring nature in Strawberry Hill

Strawberry Hill Plant, Cuttings and Seed Swap

Date: Saturday 23 April 2022

Time: 11am to 1pm

Place: Wellesley Parade, Opposite the Strawberry Hill Shops (permission pending)

Do you have any spare plants, rooted cuttings or seeds?

Would you like to swap them with your neighbours in Strawberry Hill?

How it works

If you have plants, cuttings or seeds to swap, please bring them along, separated out and simply labelled with:

- Plant name – i.e., marigold
- Plant type – i.e., small annual
- Flower colour – i.e., orange
- Growing conditions – i.e., full sun.



Big packets of surplus seeds split into smaller recycled envelopes would be ideal.

All items are offered free of charge, however if you feel inclined to donate to the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association this money will contribute to the upkeep of our village planters. Ideally everyone will have something to swap, but if you don't you are still welcome to come and select seeds and plants for your garden, balcony pots or allotment.

Unclaimed plants

Any plants and seeds left at the end of the day will be redistributed as best as possible, saved for future swapping, planted in the village planters or composted, if not reclaimed.

Fly tipping continues to mar 'Village' centre

As many of you will have observed 'fly tipping' is a major problem at the recycling bins on the corner of Pope's Avenue and Wellesley Parade. SHRA continues to lobby Richmond Council for support in solving this issue. SHRA has recommended changes such as: the repair of the broken bin that is being filled with unsorted domestic waste; repair of the pavement; and clearer signage about the CCTV camera and recycling.

We would like to turn this space into a useful and attractive meeting point in our 'Village', adequate to our recycling commitment but not a source of litter through our streets.

If you see fly tipping here or at any other location in Strawberry Hill, take a quick snap on your phone



and report the matter via the Richmond Borough website at:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/report_fly_tipping

Environment Coordinators:

Louisa Carradine and Sharon Willoughby

St Mary's University

St Mary's University: Past, Present and Future

The past

The expansive campus of St Mary's University, formerly St Mary's College, sits at the heart of our community. Visitors are drawn to Strawberry Hill House with its unique character and attached gardens, but there is no boundary between this and the university itself. The whole forms a wonderful mixture of attractive architecture and open space, an area which local residents treasure and proudly wish to protect. If you would like to find out more about the history of the university, then you can order *Simmaries: The History of St Mary's University Twickenham* by Joanna Bogle from their online bookstore.

(email queries to historyofstmarys@stmarys.ac.uk).



The college was now in a position to expand its numbers – by 1959 capacity was 500 places increasing to 1,000 by 1966 (the first year in which women were admitted). It was already a significant sporting institution, and with the on-site sports fields and special facilities, St Mary's became an important establishment for training PE teachers, as well as winning trophies in competitive events. This tradition continues to this day. Alongside sport, the college gained success as a centre for teacher training imbued with the Catholic ethos and the curriculum expanded over the years. There are six halls of residence on the campus and two off campus in Strawberry Hill – nine Victorian houses on Waldegrave Park and the Benedict XVI House in Waldegrave Gardens.



Originally founded in 1850 as a small Catholic College in Brook Green Hammersmith, it sought to expand after the First World War. The college magazine, *The Simmarian* (name for student alumni), began life in the 1900s and it is still published today. When the Strawberry Hill House estate came up for sale, there was an excellent opportunity for building new premises with sufficient open land to provide adjacent sporting facilities which were deemed an important part of college life. With the building works complete, the college made its official move to Strawberry Hill in 1925 with accommodation for about 190 students. The Chapel was built during 1962-63.

In 2006, St Mary's became a University College with the power to award its own degrees. The University comprises: the Faculty of Sport, Allied Health and Performance Sciences; the Institute of Business, Law and Society; the Institute of Education; and the Institute of Theology and Liberal Arts. In the last two decades the number of students has increased considerably with a range of 90 academic courses for undergraduate and postgraduates. The £8.5mn sports centre was opened by Lord Coe in October 2011. In 2014 St Mary's became a full university in its own right. The campus has the full range of facilities one would expect of a fully-fledged university; sports halls, theatre, refectory, lecture theatre and conference rooms. These are combined with delightful green spaces and mature trees. Residents and passers-by are delighted by the wild flower meadow created in the area in front of the sports halls.

St Mary's University

St Mary's University: Past, Present and Future

The present

During the 2020-21 academic year there were 4,693 full-time students at St Mary's. The last two years have been difficult for all universities. As a direct neighbour of St Mary's, I was saddened to see the long periods of inactivity across the road during the lockdowns. In the 38 years I have lived here, I have been accustomed to being close to the vitality of university life; students coming and going, action on the sports fields, special academic and cultural events. Admittedly, there have been the odd occasions of students carousing in the early hours, but this comes with proximity to a large student body, and as long as it doesn't get out of hand deserves a measure of tolerance.

The future

The current Vice-Chancellor is Anthony McClaran who took up the post in 2020. The university has recently published its vision for the future which can be downloaded from the university website. 'Our Vision 2030: the future of St Mary's' comprises of five key areas of improvement and development, the fifth of which is of particular interest to local residents.

'Enhancing our sense of place We treasure our historic campus and will continue to develop it as a safe space and to guard it for future generations. We will open up our work to the public and strive to have a positive impact in our local community. We will play a dynamic role in the educational, cultural, sporting and economic life of south west London.'



Photo: Courtesy of Rivington Street Studio -Architects

This supersedes the controversial outline of future development that was put forward several years ago. This proposed a building plan which would have had a significant impact on the appearance of the campus. This created great concern in the local community and we can feel relief that this has now been effectively abandoned. In the new vision development is centred on improving existing facilities and accommodation without compromising the attractive aspect of metropolitan open land.



Photo: Courtesy of St Mary's University

Committee members of SHRA have termly meetings with leading staff at SMU where we can discuss issues arising from the relationship between the university and the local residents. In the coming years we wish to act on the university's assurance that they wish to embrace the community more fully in their activities. We would urge our residents to look at the university website (www.stmarys.ac.uk) regularly for events and other news, and thereby share in the positive aspects of having a university in our midst. The site has an interesting virtual tour of all the buildings including Lady Waldegrave's drawing room giving a 360-degree perspective.

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.

Another New Local Plan!

Surely not, we are only 4 years into Richmond Borough's current Plan which was due to run for 15 years to 2033. So, what has brought this on? Three main things have changed since the current Plan was approved, all of which have an impact on the policies and guidelines for development of the Borough — changes to the Government set National Planning Policy Framework, with which all Councils need to comply, the climate emergency declared by the Borough in 2019 and changes in the requirements set by the Greater London Assembly's overarching London Plan.

So, the council staff have been working on a new Plan which was issued as a draft for consultation late last year. Like the current Plan it is looking to preserve all that is best in the Borough, whilst at the same time allowing for growth in the population and the necessary development that goes with it. The policies and guidelines for development set out in the draft are considerably expanded on those in the current Plan, with much more emphasis on issues related to climate change and sustainability, particularly as regards carbon reduction, energy efficiency, 'green travel' and conservation.

20-minute neighbourhood & Spatial Strategy

The draft includes a number of 'Strategic Policies' which set out how this vision of the Borough's future and its growth should be accommodated, two of which are particularly key to the overall impact of the Plan. The first is the '20-minute neighbourhood' which envisages that all daily needs for each community in the Borough should be within a 20-minute walk, and also be provided with safe cycling and local public transport options. The second is the 'Spatial Strategy' which directs higher density development, including homes and services/infrastructure to town centres and 'incremental growth', primarily homes, to areas outside the town centres that are well connected to public transport.

1,100-1,200 new homes

Under the London Plan, Richmond Borough is expected to provide 4,110 new homes in the 10 years between 2020 and 2029, although the draft indicates the Borough expects the need for new homes to be higher than this. Of the 4,110, some 1,100 to 1,200 are expected to be provided across the combined Twickenham, St Margaret's and Strawberry Hill area, with the town centre of Twickenham providing potential for intensification. Most of the rest of Twickenham, and all of St Margaret's and Strawberry Hill, given their good connections to public transport, are seen as providing potential for incremental growth.

Implications for Strawberry Hill



Aerial view of St Mary's University campus showing area of Metropolitan open land (courtesy of SMU)

So, what does this mean for Strawberry Hill? The draft states 'the vision for Strawberry Hill is that it will continue to be a safe and attractive family-focused residential area', with its valued open spaces protected, and that 'the local centre and railway station will be enhanced to create a real 'heart' to the area'. The reference to improving the centre of our 'Village' is particularly pleasing as SHRA has been working to further this with the

Council for several years. And whilst the draft plan carries forward a reference to further development of the campus of St Mary's University, the Vice-Chancellor has reconfirmed to SHRA that there is no intention to revive the previous Vice-Chancellor's proposals for building on currently open land which attracted so much local opposition. To quote the words in his reassuring response to us, the University is now looking 'to develop and upgrade its existing residential footprint to improve quality and capacity, to make better use of its academic buildings and generally improve the setting of the University'.

Future issues

This new Plan has several stages to go through, and as noted in the article on planning in the last Bulletin, the Government has still not finalised its approach to how to achieve its housing targets, all of which may well lead to changes to the proposed new Plan before its expected final adoption in 2024.

Mike Allsop, SHRA Planning Monitor

History & Heritage

Streetwise – Pope's Avenue

Streetwise is the history of the roads of Strawberry Hill. The local history team at SHRA are gradually working through the Census and other records to find out about the people who lived here in the past. This article is drawn from a longer piece of research which can shortly be found on the SHRA website.

In 1846, a walk from the top of Strawberry Hill Road (now Pope's Avenue) from Twickenham Green would have taken you past the grounds of three large houses on your left – Gifford Lodge, Willow Grange and The Grange – and on your right the newly-built Holy Trinity Church (1841) and the Archdeacon Cambridge Schools. Beyond that there was a track with fields either side of the path.



By 1864, the railway line had been built, although the station was not opened until 1873. This stimulated further building, so continuing our walk past the Grange, on the right we would see 1 and 2 Abbotsford Villas, the houses with the unfeasibly large chimney stacks. Walking over the end of Pope's Grove we encounter several houses built between 1846 and 1866. Batcombe Lodge and Longleat were built in 1862 by local builder Abraham Slade. He also built Carnarvon Villas in 1866. By 1871, the road had 68 inhabitants living in 14 properties including 16 servants.

In 1907, this stretch of Strawberry Hill Road was renamed Pope's Avenue and all the houses were renumbered. The rest of this article profiles some of the more notable characters to live in the street since Victorian times.

37 Pope's Avenue or Willow Grange

Anne Kerr (1925-1973) was dubbed 'Labour's forgotten firebrand' by the tabloids after her death by misadventure in 1973. She began life as an actress and TV interviewer named Anne Doran before becoming Labour MP for Rochester and Chatham from 1964-1970. She was a founder member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and was in the pressure group, Women Against the Common Market. She was strongly opposed to the Vietnam War and in 1968 she went to Chicago for the Democratic Party Convention. She was caught up in the police violence and she was gassed and arrested, being thrown into a 'paddy wagon'. Her husband, Russell Kerr MP, described to the inquest that she never got over this trauma which contributed to her alcoholism. Her drinks bills at the Labour Party Conference were said to be 'legendary'. She died at her home in Pope's Avenue shortly after the death of her good friend, the housekeeper. (Source: Wikipedia and British Newspaper Archive – Daily Mirror, Thursday 9 August, 1973)



Photo: 44 Pope's Avenue, Courtesy of Twickenham Museum

44 Pope's Avenue, formerly Abbotsford Villas

Francis Cotterell Hodgson (1837-1919) lived here from about 1865 until his death. He won many scholarly prizes at Eton and then at King's College, Cambridge, before joining the civil service and then the Education Office where he was Assistant Secretary. He wrote *Thameside in the Past* (1913) covering local history and a two-volume history of Venice. There is a memorial to him in Holy Trinity Church on Twickenham Green where he had been churchwarden. (Source: Twickenham Museum)

44 Pope's Avenue, formerly Abbotsford Villas

Gustav Robert Speaker (1875-1942) was President of the Rock & Fell Climbing Club and one of the world's best-known climbers. He was an experienced Alpine climber and was expert on the Dolomites. He was the author of many books on climbing and many climbs were named after him. In an attempt, without ropes, on the West Chimney of the Eagle's Nest on the Great Gable (2,949 feet) in the Lake District he perished after falling backwards 30 feet and landing on his head. (Source: Nottingham Journal, Tuesday 22 September 1942, p.1)



Photo: Robert Gustav

History & Heritage

Streetwise – Pope's Avenue

53 Pope's Avenue, formerly 1 Gloucester Villas

George Ginger (1838-1925) was a self-employed 'drapery traveller' who let out rooms in Gloucester Villas before and after the Great War. He had an interest in business and politics developing what was called the 'Ginger Scheme' (Middlesex Independent, 18 October 1893) which he put in a proposal to the Brentford Board of Guardians (responsible for the Poor Law for Twickenham). It was a form of 'welfare to work'. He argued that this was a way of reducing the burden on ratepayers and giving the unemployed useful work – 'a self-supporting scheme by which all persons out of work might be employed without pauperizing them' (Acton Gazette, 2 September 1893). He offered to use land that would need to be purchased by the local council for the refuse. His scheme was criticised by trade unions for undercutting union rates but it was widely reported in local newspapers. Nothing came of the idea which was ultimately shelved by the Board of Guardians. They may have suspected his motives being more about profit than altruism. (Source: SHRA house history)



In 1929, no.55 was occupied by Mrs B Townsend who ran Popes Avenue School, a fee-paying, private institution. From 1936 the school also had space in number 53 next door. Former pupil, Jaki Piper went to the school aged four during World War 2, indicating that the school kept going, at least during some of the War. Another former pupil, Micky Harding, attended the school from 1949 when the uniform was red and he remembers the school comprising a classroom and a dining room – there must also have been a kitchen as they were served hot lunches. In 1949, the headmistress was Miss Groom ('formidable'), and Miss Roberts and her sister, 'Miss Molly', were also teachers. The curriculum included 'basic maths, reading and composition and even a little bit of French'. There were weekly dancing/ballet lessons from a Miss Behenna. According to a former pupil, Ellen Agar, during 1956-1959 the headmistress was Mrs Bradshaw, however, the school was owned by a couple who lived in Wellesley Road. The school closed around 1962. (Source: Facebook Twickenham & Teddington History)

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57 Pope's Avenue, formerly Batcombe Lodge

Griffith Brewer (1868-1948) lived in this house with his parents in 1891. He was always interested in aeronautics and he became a hot air balloon pioneer. He won the first international balloon race from Hurlingham in 1908 against 30 other competitors. In October 1908, he travelled to Le Mans to witness Wilbur Wright's flights in the Kitty Hawk biplane and was invited to fly on a trial flight, becoming the first Briton to fly in a plane. Griffith met Wilbur and they liked each other immediately, sharing the same sense of humour. He became a close friend of the Wright Brothers and visited them in America (Dayton, Ohio & Lambert Island, Ontario) on 30 occasions – on one occasion in the airship, Hindenburg. (Source: SHRA Bulletin 171)

61/63 Pope's Avenue, formerly Bromley Villas

Edward Charles Boscher (1867-1935) and George Hugo Tabor (1857-1920) were the principals of Strawberry Hill Art School. Edward Charles Boscher's family had lived next door at Longleat (59 Pope's Avenue) where he was born. He was an artist when he moved in to Bromley Villas in 1893 to set up the Art School. However, by the 1901 Census he was working as a railway company draughtsman living in Watford, so we must assume that the Art School was not a success. Charles Tabor, George's father, was a retired fishmonger when he moved into Bromley Villas in 1879. From the 1880s George was employed by the Doulton Factory in Lambeth to decorate ceramics and his work is now sought after. George married for the second time in 1894 to Helen Georgina Leipner, an artist who had attended Bristol School of Art. She presumably assisted with the short-lived Art School. (Source: research by David Cornwell)



Photo: Doulton Lambeth Bowl by George Hugo Tabor sold by Bonhams in 2005 - photo courtesy of Bonhams.com

History & Heritage

Pope's Grotto Preservation Trust – A virtual Arcadia

This is an exciting year for Pope's Grotto Preservation Trust. After 10 years of fund-raising, a partial conservation in 2017 and Covid-enforced delays, conservation of the remaining parts of the grotto, largely neglected for 270 years, will start in Radnor House School's summer holiday. Funding is in place - mainly in the form of a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund but also from other charities, private donations and money from our own fund-raising events. We have appointed a project manager, architects and conservation consultants. We intend to complete the project by the start of the autumn term but, inevitably, some work may have to be held over until a later date.

After completion, we plan to open the grotto to the public about 30 times per year. Until then we're running a reduced number of Open Days. Our March Open Day has already sold out but we're planning "Grotto and Gardens" tours with our partners at English Heritage/Marble Hill in June. These will be listed on our website but you can be among the first to hear about them by signing up to our email list via our website.

Since 2017, we have been working on our other project: 'A Virtual Arcadia', funded by the National Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. This is a meticulously-researched interactive reconstruction of Pope's villa and garden which allows the audience to gain some understanding of Twickenham in 1740. It will feature in our Lottery-funded activities, including volunteer training for young people, events with partners, local charities, and open days. Our first public showing at The Exchange in February, to an audience of about 150, was critically acclaimed. Whilst there may be other public showings later, we realise that many people are unable to come to in-person events so we are now making some of the reconstruction available to a wider public via video recordings. The first of these - the river journey from Twickenham to Pope's villa - is available now. The remainder, including Pope's Garden, will be released later. Full details can be found in the Virtual Arcadia page on our website: www.popesgrotto.org.uk.



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Business Pages

Zoe Prindiville interviews Ben Hughes, creator and owner of Strawberry Hill's own micro-brewery on Swan Island

Sandwiched between the main road and a community of houseboats on Swan Island, is Twickenham's local brewery, created and owned by Ben Hughes.



Although the first beer was produced in December 2020, the brewery has been a long time in the making. Ben is very much a one-man show, having built and fitted out the 30 hectolitre (3,000 litre) brewery from scratch, including installing the tanks, fitting the valves and building a BeerDock taproom at the rear. Jawbone produces a range of beers – currently Bone Idle, Highs and Lows, and Weekend Millionaires – the latter inspired by the nickname given to the lightermen who ferried passengers along the River Thames.

The Covid pandemic has been a small spanner in the works, but Ben takes the positives out of it in that his business is very much local and community-based. Jawbone has done no paid-for advertising of note, and indeed hasn't needed to, as Ben explained, word of mouth is the most powerful form of promotion. During the pandemic, there were queues of people waiting to buy cans of Bone Idle, Highs and Lows and Bardot, named after the houseboat Lawrence Dallaglio moored at the neighbouring shipyard.

Ben explained how, in the past, a brewery was a business in itself, now customers want more. So the web shop and taproom are essential parts of his offering. And especially with Covid restrictions ending, he is hoping for an increase in on-site sales. The taproom is a seamless extension to the brewery floor itself, with German beer benches, industrial-style lights and a bar made out of a crate found in the site when Ben moved in. Every detail has been considered, right down to matching the blue paint on the steel beams and using it on the Jawbone logo – a hook – on the glasses used in the taproom.

Each beer takes three weeks from grain to glass, through the various processes, and is quality-tested at every step of the way. Ben is passionate about the beer coming first, and speaking for itself – and so he hasn't had to go out and 'sell' it to the on-trade. Instead he has built good partnerships with other local small businesses, and is the guest beer in local bars and pubs.

In his own words, Ben has drifted through various careers from building (he renovated his own flat) to advertising and banking, before settling into brewing. Although this may seem a very diverse range of careers, it has actually set Ben up very well – in that every element is relevant in his business. The building skills helped him renovate the site, knowing how to run a spreadsheet has helped him keep a tight rein on the finances and, of course, advertising and marketing are essential tools of a successful business.



Ben has local roots and a firm affiliation with and affection for the river. He grew up in Barnes, cycled to school in Hammersmith and lives in Hampton, so when the site on Swan Island came up, he says, 'It just felt right when I saw it.'

With a strong business model and local links, Ben is positive that he is not only in the right place physically, but also in terms of his product. The BeerDock taproom is open Thursdays and Fridays (5-9pm) and Saturdays (12-9pm) but the webshop is always open! Pop down and experience this taste of Strawberry Hill for yourself!