

EEL PIE
BIANNUAL BULLETIN
OF THE
TWICKENHAM SOCIETY

Editor: Brian Parker
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AUTUMN 2001

Dear Member

You must have been wondering whether this edition of "Eel Pie" (called, until 1999, the 'Spring/Summer' edition!) would ever arrive. I am sorry to keep you waiting. But I can promise you that it will not happen again - because this must be my last Eel Pie as editor.

As many of you know I resigned the chairmanship of the Society in mid-June. My letter of resignation may be found on page three, together with a piece about my successor, Judith Lovelace. After seven years in the job, I felt the time was ripe for a change, particularly in view of my health. It was not an easy decision because I have found great satisfaction in the activities and friendships that have resulted from the role. However, I know you will be well served by Judith, who has the experience and attributes required of the job, including the ability to draw others into key roles, in greater measure than ever I had.

In June I also said I wished to relinquish the post of editor of "Eel Pie" but that I would produce one more. And this was after I had already lined up speakers and events for the latter half of the year. What I did not know in June was that the 'yet another month' in hospital of which I then wrote (the fourth month of the basic treatment) was not, after all, to be the last.

Ironically, on the very evening that the committee was considering my letter, a blood sample was being taken which would show that leukaemia, apparently cleared away during my first month of treatment in January, had returned. In view of this I opted to undergo another form of treatment during August and early September, but this has also proved ineffective. This underlines the need for me to step down.

But enough of personal matters. What of the wider world?

(Continued overleaf)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 17 October 7.30 p.m.

At St. Mary's Church Hall a Twickenham Talk by Professor Fred Bachrach CBE (Professor Emeritus of Leiden University and Vice-President of the Turner Society):
"Turner and the Sea – the Sea and Turner"
(An illustrated talk)

Saturday 27 October 2 to 4 p.m.

A visit to the Musical Museum,
368 High Street, Brentford
Price £3 per head (Please book)*

Friday 9 November 7.30 p.m.

Annual General Meeting
at St. Mary's Church Hall, Twickenham
Guest Speaker: Dr. Ian Horsbrugh
(Principal, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and President of the Association of European Conservatoires):
"What hope for young musicians and actors?"

Wednesday 12 December 7.30 p.m.

(Postponed from 5 April)
At St. Mary's Church Hall a Twickenham Talk by Bob Griffin (Branch Manager, Waitrose, Twickenham): *"The John Lewis organisation: Spedan's unique gift"*

Saturday 5 January 2002

A Twelfth Night Party at 17 The Green to be hosted by Brian Parker, health permitting.
*No charge but please book (both to provide an idea of numbers and to make it possible to warn you if cancellation proves necessary)**

Wednesday 24 January 2002 7.30 p.m.

At St. Mary's Church Hall a Twickenham Talk by Serge Lourie (Leader, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames):
"New Leader, New Lead"

*** Booking slips, a duplicate list of events and a List of Contents may be found at the end of the bulletin.**

The terrible ease with which terrorists destroyed the World Trade Centre and damaged the Pentagon on 11 September, and the huge loss of life involved, have led many people to re-appraise their security and priorities. Our lives are ever precarious; and preoccupations, such as making money and achieving 'fame', look distinctly less important when loved ones are lost and home environments threatened. At such times, good friends and unselfish neighbours are newly valued, the community takes on new meaning and, dare I say it, spiritual values are re-appraised.

Last April, when entertaining some friends after a Richmond Shakespeare Society production (of *Mill on the Floss*), I was sad that my duties as host made it impracticable to join in a lively debate between two of my guests as to whether life had ever been so good. The one felt that greater longevity, technical advances and widening choice with regard to such things as food and travel all indicated unprecedented quality of life. The other, mindful of wars, the widening gap between rich and poor, global warming and super-bugs, was not so sure! At the time I felt that, yes, materially, a great number of us have never been so well off and, certainly, there have always been many poor people but (like every generation that believes the world is going to the dogs!) I wondered about the future even for the well-off. Do not the BSE saga, foot-and-mouth, the potential impact of GM technology, the over-fishing of our oceans, and even the pollution due to traffic growth all reflect an over-reaching of man's efforts to better himself in the short term without regard to the wider implications.

Collectively, in the western world, we have never been so well off. We have the scientific and financial resources really to improve the human condition worldwide; and yet our society spends vast sums on frivolous things and politicians, viewing the short term, dare not put up taxes. Please let us place a greater emphasis on localities in which the individual counts and the emphasis is on human contact with friends, neighbours and those in authority. Perhaps the World Trade Centre disaster can help to develop and sustain the concern for community that those of us with a memory of WWII and the post-war years can recall with gratitude.

When, on the afternoon of 11 September, I first heard (and saw) the news from New York, my

reaction was, according to my younger son, "we have to learn to love our neighbours". Certainly that expression featured in an e-mail to close friends in Michigan that evening. I am more sure now, than ever, that we cannot win, at any level, by confrontation and force.

Which all may seem a long way from the Twickenham Society. But I do believe that, in a small way, an amenity society which brings people together in common cause and to learn something of the perspective of the leaders of the community (whether from political, commercial, administrative or other fields), can help to create cohesion. Certainly that was part of my aim in starting up the 'Twickenham Talks' shortly after I became chairman. I have recently listed them, together with our speakers at annual wine-and-cheese parties and AGMs, and have been surprised at the range of subjects covered. In case these are of interest, I have included the list at the end of the bulletin (page 27).

All of the talks and many of the speeches listed at annual events have been covered by *Eel Pie* bulletins since mid-1995. But by no means have they been the only or even the main content of the bulletins. I am very grateful to all those who have kindly contributed to the bulletin (and put up with my editing) while I have been editor. Peter Hill has been particularly generous in using his journalistic talents to the benefit of the Society.

In this edition I am very grateful for more contributions from Peter and for up-dates on the doings of the Twickenham Museum, the Environment Trust and the River Thames Boat Project. Bryan Woodruffe has contributed an interesting article about the former tram depot at Fulwell and Chris Read has reported on the (postponed) visits to the Wimbledon Train Care Depot. In a very different vein, Barrie Armstrong (a fellow-member of St. Stephen's Church), has contributed a thoughtful piece about Thamas Traherne; and Mick Lowe has kindly trumpeted his appreciation of the voluntary workers of Twickenham. Notable amongst such has been Jack Betteridge who has contributed to an update about Twickenham Riverside Development.

I hope I see you at forthcoming 'Talks', the AGM and, of course, my Twelfth Night Party! But, lastly, thanks for having me as editor and all the best to my successor, whoever he or she is!

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To the members of the Committee,
The Twickenham Society

Dear colleague

RESIGNATION FROM THE CHAIRMANSHIP AND PROPOSED SUCCESSION

I write to confirm that I intend to resign from the chairmanship of the Society at the forthcoming committee meeting on 19 June.

It is, in many ways, a hard decision. I have enjoyed the privilege of chairmanship for many years and found great satisfaction in the resulting comradeship and activities. Yet, even before the diagnosis of leukaemia in December, I had realised that, after seven years in the job, the time was getting close when, for both my sake and the Society's, a change should be made. My illness, and the uncertainty it presents for the future, makes it all the more clear to me that now is the time for a change.

This letter will arrive with the agenda rather closer to the date of the meeting than I had intended. It is normal, when an election is to be held, to give plenty of time for nominations. I trust that I have adequately checked, through 'phone conversations with each of you, that no aspirations will be frustrated if the election proceeds on 19 June. Given that I am about to be in hospital for yet another month, I feel that the appointment of an active chairman should no longer be delayed.

I am delighted that Judith Lovelace is willing to be put forward for the chairmanship. Following on her stints as chairman of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association and Rotary, to say nothing of her own professional experience, she is hardly lacking in the experience and qualifications required for the job. I feel it will be wholly to the good of the Society to have new leadership and potentially a new style and direction. I trust that you will support her election 'nem con' and subsequently give her the support she will need and deserve.

I offer resignation not only of the chairmanship but also of the editorship of 'Eel Pie' - but not quite yet. Unless the committee, and the new chairman, wish to decide otherwise, I am willing to prepare the 'Eel Pie' now due. To this end I have taken steps, in informal consultation with Judith, to define a programme of events and speakers taking us up to the beginning of the New Year. (Offers of articles and other material for the bulletin would, of course, be welcome.)

In view of the need to cancel the garden party, which had been proposed for 23 June, I wish to offer to hold a party at this address on Twelfth Night, 5 January 2001 at which all members of the Society (within reason!) will be welcome.

Finally, I apologise if the demands of the hospital mean that I cannot myself attend the meeting.

Yours sincerely

G. Brian Parker

YOUR NEW CHAIRMAN - JUDITH LOVELACE

At the Committee Meeting of 19 June, the resignation of Brian Parker was duly accepted by the committee and Judith Lovelace was unanimously elected as Chairman.

Many of you will know Judith from her years in the Society, for the last three of which she has served as a member of the Committee. Judith is also widely known because of her involvement in many other local societies and organizations. She has recently been President of the Twickenham Rotary Club and Chair of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association.



Judith is actively involved in St Mary's Parish Church and continues to support local Rotary projects. She was appointed a Governor of Richmond Adult and Community College in July and is the Events Secretary for the Friends of Strawberry Hill. When not supporting local community activities Judith is a Human Resources consultant giving personnel advice to the voluntary sector.

Inevitably a change in chairmanship will bring changes to the Society. Judith says that she wishes to build on the excellent work done by Brian Parker and colleagues in recent years.

As a first step Judith has asked current members of the Committee to reflect on the future of the Society and feed in their ideas. As a second step Judith intends to ask the wider membership for their thoughts at the AGM. In addition there is the opportunity for anyone, whether members or not, to offer their views at the Twickenham Society website (www.twicksoc.org.uk).

Two ideas have already been frequently repeated: to have a membership drive in order to broaden the age-range and number of members; and secondly to have more open, participative meetings. All ideas are welcome.

Judith wishes to assure members that there will be a continuing programme of Twickenham talks and visits.

THANK YOU

I wish to thank the many members of the Society who have sent me good wishes during my several bouts in hospital since the New Year. Your thoughts and prayers continue to be a great blessing.

I am now on "supportive care" which means periodic blood transfusions and the administration of antibiotics as necessary to combat infections (caused by a shortage of the protective white blood that cannot be transfused).

The official prognosis is "not more than a year" but I intend to prove that unduly pessimistic. There are too many beautiful days to enjoy and interesting things to do!

Brian Parker.

ANNUAL WINE AND CHEESE PARTY Gordon House, 18 May 2001

Some eighty members and guests, including the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Tony Mollett, foregathered in the beautiful Adam Room of Gordon House on 18 May. David King kindly organised excellent wine (through the Mary Wallace Theatre) and food (through a local catering contractor) and much friendly chat ensued. In due course this was interrupted by welcoming noises from the Chairman and a flurry of activity (by the chair-men!) to re-arrange the room for an address from guest speaker, Professor Peter Crane FRS. An account of his speech appears overleaf.

TWICKENHAM GREEN CHARITIES FAIR

According to our usual custom, we operated a stall at the H.A.N.D.S Charities Fair and raised some £150 for our coffers from the sale of plants and books. Many thanks to those who provided books and plants for sale and helped on the day.



The Mayor (and her driver John Brooker, left) being greeted to the Fair by organiser Maureen Payan, Adam Brand, Howard Greenwood & Ian Horsbrugh.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2001

As noted under forthcoming events the AGM will be held on 9 November in St. Mary's Church Hall with Dr. Ian Horsbrugh, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as our guest speaker. A formal notice of the meeting and the accounts for 2000 may be found at the end of the bulletin.

THE TWICKENHAM MUSEUM

Dr. Peter Payan, Chairman of the Trustees of the Museum has advised that restoration and refurbishment of the Museum premises, 25 The Embankment, nears completion and that opening exhibitions are within sight. The intention is to have a low-key initial exhibition in November and a grand opening in the Spring,

If you wish to help in any way, financial or otherwise, please contact the Museum's Honorary Secretary, Anne Sutton, at 36 Gothic Road, TW2 5EH (phone 8241-9011).

STRAWBERRY HILL

Do remember that Horace Walpole's 'Ginger-bread House' (as Anna Chalcroft called it when addressing us years ago) can be visited on Sunday afternoons, from 2 p.m. until about 3.30 p.m., between Easter and mid-October or at other times by private parties.

Some of us greatly appreciated being guided around it by Nicki Faircloth and Anna during a Twickenham Society visit last 9 November.

We were reminded that Walpole, with a passion for gothic, adopted an eclectic approach and did not set about to be a serious revivalist. Impressive gothic ceilings are made of papier-mache! Assisted by a 'Committee of Taste' he was concerned to create atmosphere. He also attempted to limit the number of visitors (by which he said he was 'tormented') to four at a time, but they came in droves! Notwithstanding the disastrous 31-day sale of 1842, carried out by George, Earl Waldegrave in a fit of pique, the magic of the house still weaves its spell and the guides conjure up the owner and his unique collection

But take no notice of my imperfect recollection. Visit the house for yourself!

The address is St. Mary's University College, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4SX.
(Tel: 8240-4000 and ask for the Conference Office)

YOUR NEW (ACTING) TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

is Richard Spire: 70 Pope's Avenue,
Twickenham TW2 5TT (8898-6355).
Any outstanding subscriptions to him please!

THE ENVIRONMENT TRUST FOR RICHMOND UPON THAMES

An update by Angela Kidner (Chairman)

(based on the Chairman's report 2001)

It was my good fortune to take on the chairmanship of the Environment Trust at a time when its first major project, the restoration of Grove Gardens Chapel, had (with the help of public funds) reached completion. The Chapel is now in regular use as a Steiner nursery school and its excellent acoustics and well-designed interior make it an attractive venue for concerts and events.

Trustees news

We were delighted to welcome a new trustee in February. Susan Ring, a Richmond resident, is an environmental lawyer and partner in Richard Buxton Environmental Law. She has been involved with several prominent riverside planning cases, including 77 Mortlake High Street, as well as with the Heathrow Airport Night Flights Appeal to the European Court. We are looking forward to the benefit of her expertise.

Administration

Like all local environmental organisations, the Trust runs on the efforts and time freely given by our many volunteers. However, as the projects have grown we have come to depend upon a well-run and efficient office base to co-ordinate activities. Our administrator and her assistant have performed miracles on a shoestring but, this year, as a result of generous grants from the Bridge House Estates Trust and the Richmond Parish Lands Charity, we are able to pay them salaries commensurate with local pay levels. This will relieve the pressure on our projects which, until now, have contributed 5% of their income to support the office.

In the long term, I should like to see the Trust, rather than levying contributions from future projects, being in a position to provide seed-corn funding for them, so as to help them attract support from grant-givers. This will best be achieved by a restoration project that will provide us with both an office base and income from letting.

Projects

A major new project is 8 King Street, Richmond. With the help of grants from the Architectural Heritage Fund and English Heritage, the Trust employed Eel Pie Island architect Jim Deasley to prepare a feasibility study for the restoration, by no means simple, of this key 17th century building (with 19th century shop-front), which was formerly Broads the Printers. It was brought to our attention by the council's Conservation Officer as a Grade 2 Listed Building 'at Risk'. Although in an advanced state of decay it has many interesting features including an early staircase. We are most grateful to John Cloake for his research, which revealed a much earlier construction date than had been previously assumed. It is a substantial project, the success of which will depend entirely on the generosity of grant-giving bodies, but one which is well worth the attempt.

The Egyptian-style Kilmorey Mausoleum, on St Margarets Road, is another building 'at Risk'. Housing the tombs of the Earl of Kilmorey, 'Black' Jack Needham and his young mistress, Henrietta. It was brought to our attention by the Council. With the help of English Heritage and the Monuments and Mausolea Trust, we are currently investigating the repairs necessary to protect the tombs inside the Mausoleum and to restore the garden surrounding it, as well as the works needed to improve accessibility by the public.

We continue to receive requests from members of the public for help in protecting significant buildings. One such is Langholm Lodge, which now houses the Council's Leisure Services Department but is on the market. Trust member Hugh Corner, formerly a director at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), prepared a persuasive case for listing, which the Trust submitted in July. The outcome is awaited. We are again indebted to John Cloake, and also to Dick Cashmore, for their research into various aspects of its history.

We are delighted to be associated with the Thames Landscape Strategy and its 'Arcadia in the City 2002' project organised by Jason Debney, TLS Co-ordinator. The Trust is represented on the Steering Group which has responsibility for devising local initiatives next year.

In July a new environmental project was brought to the Trust by a nucleus of members of the West London River Group, with the aim of establishing, protecting and maintaining the towpath from Kew to Beverley Brook (Putney border). This 'Tow Path Group' includes a number of well-organised and knowledgeable individuals who will help the Trust develop its understanding of parts of the borough in which it has not previously been involved; and, with the council, develop a strategy for the care of our uniquely rural riverside.

Celebrating the River and the pleasure of boating has become a particular pre-occupation of the Trust. Following on from the Teddington Regatta 2000, this year's Richmond Rag Regatta was organised in partnership with the Richmond Regatta team and Richmond Bridge Boathouses and with the patronage of 'Henry V11' (alias Ray Perrin)! We hope to build upon this success for a bigger and better event to celebrate Arcadia 2002 next year.

Land and property values in this borough make it an attractive prospect for home-buyers and therefore for development. With the under-capitalisation of river-related businesses and activities, the riverside is especially vulnerable. It is vitally important that the quality of all new buildings is comparable with those that we have inherited. The Trust continues to engage in the battles involved to achieve this. Many members give up time to comment on the planning briefs and planning applications and Derek Plummer, for example, represents the Trust (as well as the Twickenham Society) in deliberations about Twickenham Riverside.

With good wishes to the Twickenham Society

For inquiries about the Environment Trust please contact Ruth Darby or Jenny Willis at the Trust's office on 8891-5455.

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THE RIVER THAMES BOAT PROJECT

The latest from Miranda Jagers

The *Richmond Venturer*, which has been making the Thames accessible to disadvantaged Londoners for a number of years, is now available for use in winter.

Earlier this year, central heating was installed. The new system, generously funded by the London Marathon Charitable Trust, will allow the River Thames Boat Project, a registered charity which owns and runs the *Venturer*, to make the boat available for hire throughout the year, beyond the usual end of its season in October.

Donated to the River Thames Boat Project in 1988, the *Richmond Venturer* provides a unique service on the Thames. It offers day and residential voyages to groups of disabled and elderly people and life skills training to able-bodied and disabled young people from day centres, hospitals and community organisations. The *Venturer* also offers school children the chance to discover the wildlife of the river and environmental issues concerning the Thames through an innovative "School on the River" education pack written by the River Thames Boat Project.

The *Venturer* is run with the help of volunteer crew. They have assisted on voyages and specialist activities with both local groups, such as HANDS (Twickenham-based Help A Neighbour in Distress), and those from further afield. The latter have included the Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability in Putney, Capital Carers Young Carers Project (South London) and teachers from Surrey who learned about the educational opportunities available through the charity's "School on the River" programme.

The *Venturer* is available both for day and residential trips, as well as for meetings and commercial hire. Further information, for those wishing to book the *Venturer* this winter or to volunteer, is available from The River Thames Boat Project on 020-8940-3509 or email info@thamesboatproject.org.

Wine and Cheese Party 18 May 2001
(in the Adam Room of Gordon House)

Guest Speaker: Professor Peter Crane FRS
(Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew)

KEW GARDENS, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

In introducing the speaker, the Chairman referred to just some of Professor Crane's many qualifications and accomplishments. He directed the Field Museum in Chicago 1992-9 and holds academic appointments at Reading University and Royal Holloway College. He has been a visiting professor at the Universities of Zurich, Massachusetts and Vienna and has academic links with Harvard and the Smithsonian Institution. He has received many awards, served as President of the Paleontological Society 1998-2000 and is the author of more than 100 scientific publications, including several books on plant evolution. In addition to his administrative responsibilities Professor Crane continues his own research.

I am grateful to Dr. Eimear Nic Lughadha of the Herbarium, RBG Kew, in the absence of Professor Crane 'down under', for correcting my draft account of the talk. Ed.

Notwithstanding his title, Professor Crane rightly started by recapping the history of the Gardens. They date from 1759. Some of the oldest surviving trees in the gardens date from 1762. They were obtained by Lord Bate from the Whitton Estate of his uncle, the Duke of Argyll. Sir Joseph Banks and George III were instrumental, until they died in 1820, in developing the collection. Their aim was to create a world-class collection of plants.

A Royal Commission, set up in 1830, recommended that it should become the National Botanical Gardens. William Jackson Hooker took charge in 1841 and introduced the Palm and Temperate Houses. He was also responsible for the first purpose-built museum in the gardens. Nesfield developed the layout of the gardens. Museum No. 1 was officially opened in May 1857 and, today, this museum, recently restored, houses the Plants and People exhibition.

The Marianne North Gallery, another popular landmark in the gardens, was built during the directorship of Sir Joseph Hooker to house the 832 plant portraits painted by Marianne North during her worldwide travels.

Recently much thought has been given to the future of the Gardens. The assets include some

eighteen major collections of which the most well known are the living collections with over 30,000 plants under cultivation. The library houses the world's largest collection of botanical books, some 250,000 volumes. The herbarium contains seven million specimens; and there is a collection of some 100,000 microscope slides.

The organisation employs 600 staff. With students and volunteers, over 1000 people are involved. The Kew site covers 330 acres including some 'fantastic landscape' with 4 Grade 1 and 36 Grade 2 listed buildings. At Wakehurst Place in Sussex there are 500 acres. The Kew web-site has about 3 million hits per annum.



There are two sets of programmes: scientific and, secondly, public and visitor. The work is by no means confined to the Kew and Sussex sites. John Dransfield for example, a leading expert on palms, is currently working in Madagascar; and Aaron Davis, a world expert on snowdrops, is working on the coffee family (Rubiaceae) also in Madagascar. Much work goes on in the molecular and plant chemistry laboratories in the Jodrell Laboratory.

Conservation and sustainability are major concerns of the Garden. Work is going on in some 70 different countries. The subjects include the Dormouse and the Filmy Fern.

Kew is actively involved in the bio-diversity convention (as defined at the Rio Convention of 1992) and the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It is concerned with the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. At a lower level, Peter Crane stressed the importance of returning organic material to the soil through composting.

Particular concerns at Kew include, for example, conservation of the Lady Slipper Orchid (through growing it at Kew and returning it to the wild), conservation of Sarracenia pitcher plants in North America and of the wild relatives of tulips, hyacinths and irises in Turkey. Peter referred to the 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants. Some 30% of plant species are under threat. We were shown a slide of the last known palm tree

of a particular type growing in Mauritius. *Prunus Africanus*, for example, is threatened due to exploitation of its bark in the treatment of prostate cancer.

The diverse interests of Kew include training and capacity-building of wildlife managers in Kenya, reduction in the trade of endangered species (such as by stopping the illegal export of cacti at London Heathrow).

At Wakehurst Place there is a new 'Millennium' seed-bank building, intended to ensure conservation of the world's floral diversity. Seeds are stored at low temperatures and humidity. Viability of seeds is assured for at least 200 years (although some seeds are known to germinate after 1200 years). The vaults are large enough to accommodate half of the world's flora but the present aim is to protect 10 per cent of world's flora by 2010. Kew also encourages local seed-banking in, for example, Kenya.

In addition to seed-banking Kew's main aims are to ensure preservation of British plants and (given the over-exploitation of tropical rain forests) to focus on drylands which cover about one-third of the earth's land surface and support around one sixth of the world's population. It is in these drylands where there is the greatest need for careful stewardship of plant resources so that they can be used sustainably in the future. The survival of plant diversity is most greatly threatened in the tropical, arid and semi-arid regions of the world where vast areas are being lost to the combined effects of desertification and overuse. A better understanding of the plant diversity of dryland regions has great potential benefit in alleviating poverty, reversing land degradation and improving sustainable community development.

A Master Plan for visitor attractions is being developed for the Kew site. A Japan Festival was imminent. Six small Japanese gardens will be on show in addition to the Bamboo Garden in which a traditional Japanese house is being built. In the Autumn the emphasis will be on harvest and at Christmas 2001 "come and see the lights!" The Bluebell Festival is more popular than any other.

Prompted by questions, Peter advised us that his annual budget is £17million of which £2million is capital and £15million operating. Also approximately £2.2million is taken in admission

charges and £0.6million is generated by commercial operations (shop etc.).

Peter Crane was very enthusiastic about the Eden Project (in Cornwall). It presents important conservation and educational messages but is very different to Kew ("What you see is what you get!").

Notwithstanding increasing air traffic, the air quality at Kew is now generally better than in the past. Lichens are particularly sensitive to pollution and fared badly before the Clean Air Act took effect in the 1960s.

In moving a vote of thanks Roland Davies recalled entering Kew gardens for one penny and noted that Professor Crane followed many illustrious predecessors, generally scientists, who did not have to worry about raising money! He felt Peter Crane had an awesome responsibility but had demonstrated the star qualities required for the task of directing the Royal Botanic Gardens.

ARCADIA IN THE CITY

Do watch out for – or become involved in the organisation of – events to celebrate the 100th Anniversary, in 2002, of the Act that protects the remarkable view from Richmond Hill. Without it, Richmond – and Twickenham – would be very different places today. As The Thames

Landscape Strategy's first newsletter about Arcadia in the City puts it: "Much of the open space we all cherish would be concreted over and the historic green spaces enjoyed as a resource for all Londoners would be lost".

Further details are available from Jason Debney, Thames Landscape Strategy, Holly Lodge, Richmond Park, TW10 5HS (Tel: 8940-0654 & e-mail: tls@richmond.gov.uk)



The Thames at Twickenham

TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT

An update by Jack Betteridge and Brian Parker

Since the last Eel Pie Bulletin, the principal events relating to the proposed redevelopment of Twickenham Pool Site have been as follows:-

1. The Council mounted hurried public exhibitions in mid-December and late January/early February (concluding on 4 February following a public meeting in Clarendon Hall on 2 February). Meetings were held with various groups (including the Twickenham Society on 29 January as noted in the last bulletin).
2. On 9 February a report was issued by council officers for consideration at the Resources Committee on 12 February. At that meeting, the Resources Committee resolved to invite Dawney Day, property developers and owners of the King St Parade, to submit a planning proposal for a scheme that included a cinema rather than a publicly-owned Riverside Discovery Centre. At that stage the council expected a submission to be made in April 2001.
3. Representatives of the Society have since met several times with the architects, traffic consultants and officers of the Council to urge modifications to the scheme, in line with frequently expressed concerns and aspirations of the Society.
4. An alternative proposal for a riverside terrace garden (see below) received planning approval on 19 July.
5. A planning proposal was received by the council from Dawney Day on 27 September; and planning procedures have been initiated. In view of the time-scale, it is not possible to comment on the Dawney Day scheme but a few comments about the process are relevant:

"More haste less speed"

At the time of the last review, mid-December, the Council had just embarked on a frenetic Public Consultation exercise at which the architects presented their draft proposals to a series of meetings with local interest groups. In late January/early February (as indicated in item 1 above), they presented their schemes again, to the same groups, and at an open meeting with the public and via a public exhibition; and the officers' report of 9 February was submitted very soon after the 'consultation period'.

In the rush, it was not practicable for the, council, architects or traffic consultant to digest or respond to the considered opinions of the local interest groups

and the working parties. Also there was little time for scrutiny and discussion of the officers' report to the Resources Committee.

A significant revision of the brief went through on the nod and there was inadequate discussion of the costs and benefits. There was a refusal to provide details of public use of the Health & Fitness Centre and the Cinema, or to consider the implications of the likely commercial failure of the cinema. Furthermore the latest versions of the scheme fly in the face of many of the principal recommendations of the Riverside and Traffic & Access Working Parties.

Public Benefit

The principal benefit for the public is the receipt of a cash sum from the developer. This is now expected to be in the region of £750,000 as opposed to the £2m projected in Jan 2000. We will not know the final agreed sum until detailed proposals are made. A major factor, detracting from the benefit, is the cost of digging a hole in the ground so as to reduce the height of the cinema building to an acceptable level within the planning envelope.

Other benefits have been claimed orally by leaders of the Council, but they are vague and differ somewhat in the telling. We have to study the full proposal for clarification.

The alternative proposal

At many public meetings there has been a request for the site to be converted to public open space. The Council has repeatedly and firmly ruled out this option. A local group, led and inspired by the late Ken Hathaway, submitted a proposal for such a scheme and, as noted above, this has received planning approval. Ken, sadly, passed away just before his proposal gained approval, but his colleagues are taking the proposal forward.

In essence, their scheme is to lower the facade of the pool building, fill in the pool with the rubble and to use that as the basis of a sensitively landscaped terrace garden. Existing charities would remain in place.

The scheme is low risk, low cost and retains the site as a public asset that could be used for future redevelopment of the pool site, perhaps in conjunction with a redevelopment of King St Parade.

With luck, the public of Twickenham will soon have two very different schemes before them and will be able to participate in a real debate and consultation about the appropriate use of the pool site.

There follows the contribution made by Brian Parker to the Resources Committee on 12 February.

1. I speak as Chairman of the Twickenham Society and an individual long concerned for Twickenham. Derek Plummer, Vice-Chairman of both the Twickenham Society and the Environment Trust, wishes particularly to be associated with what I say.
2. I urge you, for the following reasons, to support the Centre option - Option B.
3. A cinema would be welcome in Twickenham but not on the riverside. The assurances from eager commercial operators about use by the community for drama/dance/etc. are hollow without firm legal assurances. 'Arts' cinemas is a misnomer. A sunken cinema block (essential in this location but not elsewhere) is less sustainable than a surface one and needlessly absorbs funds which should be expended upon a public asset on-site, as should the 'required £0.75 million' (para 3.9.1) intended (in a veiled way) for expenditure elsewhere.
4. The design of the scheme, as yet the product (albeit remarkable in the time) of a hideous race by the architects, has yet to be refined and developed if it is properly, at a later stage, to win planning permission and be proof against appeal.
5. We have good architects and wish to be assured that they will be retained until completion of the project. In refining the scheme, they must work within the T1 Brief, the 1991 Inspector's Report, the UDP, the adopted Conservation Area Study, the Thames Landscape Strategy and, indeed, the current brief.
6. A proper town square, considered 'paramount' in the brief, has yet to be incorporated. The 76% increase in housing compared with the brief should, together with the massing close to the embankment, be reduced. The river-related discovery and heritage centre should, at less expense and more sustainably, be above ground.
7. A 'Centre' building could (as I have observed in Ann Arbor, Michigan) serve as a 'honeypot' to visitors of all ages, throughout the day, to the benefit of local traders. It could complement Orleans House Gallery, the Twickenham Museum, the River Thames Boat Project and the Thames Explorer Trust, match the aims of the Thames Landscape Strategy and celebrate Twickenham's relationship to the River Thames in ways historical, scientific and educational. It would not be a 'Dome' with its grandiose gimmickry but a place (such as the Natural History Museum) moving with the technology of the times to delight and interest; and providing, by means of café and terrace overlooking the river, a superb meeting place.
8. We have come a long way with proposals for this important site. I beg you, each of you regardless of party, in order to ensure timely and measured progress and a good scheme, to approve Option B (the Centre option) and promote a programme which allows the architects and valuers to complete the derivation of a viable and well-designed scheme worthy of this special site.

Visits, 18-19 September 2001
THE WIMBLEDON TRAIN CARE CENTRE
Guide: Steve Wiskin (Facilities Manager,
SouthWest Trains, Wimbledon)

An account by Christopher Read

These visits took the place of the visit originally planned for 20 March. For safety reasons the numbers the numbers on each visit were restricted. Chris Read was on the first visit.

Steve Wiskin's responsibilities include the Wimbledon, Clapham Junction and Strawberry Hill Depots and we were interested to learn of future developments at the latter. Here, Siemens will shortly be carrying out alterations and installing equipment for commissioning their German-built 'Desiro' suburban/main line stock purchased by SouthWest Trains.

Our brief tour of the Wimbledon Depot gave at least an insight into repair, maintenance and cleaning operations. 150 class 455 sliding-door and class 453 'slam-door' trains plus 30 new class 458 trains are serviced here.

The repair shop houses a new 35T crane for lifting carriages clear of their bogies, though wheel profile cutting may be carried out from below with the bogies in place. A fully computerised lathe recuts the wheel tyres to any one of six different profiles according to the type of train usage. Throughout the rail network fifteen flanged profiles are in current use. We learnt also of the introduction of sand boxes on the class 458 to prevent wheel slip and the consequent wear and delays to passengers.

Cleaning schedules are monitored in four categories ranging upwards from a 30-minute sweep-and-clean every 25 hours. The Production Manager is responsible for keeping precise records of mileage, routes, maintenance and repairs to each carriage. The newer trains carry black boxes which retain this information. Of historic interest is the cleaning shed where cast iron columns and heavy composite girders from the old Waterloo Station carry a later roof structure.

Overall there prevailed a sense of order and cleanliness which reflected the strict adherence to safety procedures, essential where train movements are frequent and unheralded. We are very grateful to Steve and South West Trains for these evening visits and we shall look forward to hearing news of progress at Strawberry Hill.

FULWELL DEPOT 1902 – 2002 **by Bryan Woodriffe**

At the start of the 20th century street locomotion was in a transitional stage. It was broadly accepted that the novel mode of street transport – the electric tramcar – might be as out-of-date in thirty years time as horse-drawn transport was already becoming.

This was the age of innovation and already the speed of the new trams had begun to irritate other road users. Criticism rather than praise was levelled at every aspect of these beautifully decorated vehicles from the frequency with which they sounded their gongs to the smartness of the uniformed drivers and conductors. Nevertheless, in the local area covered by the new London United Electric Tramways, people crowded onto these cars in such numbers that over the Easter holiday of 1901 almost four hundred thousand passengers were carried.

Sir Clifton Robinson, managing director and chief engineer of LUET, who came to live for a while in Garrick's Villa in Hampton, understood the power of the press and promoted his schemes for It is said that one paper speculated that, by 1904, a race-goer might be able to travel to Epsom on Derby Day at no more than the statutory one halfpenny per mile. Unfortunately this dream was never realised.

However, Robinson's aspirations to provide relatively inexpensive reliable public transport in west London, that is in west Middlesex, began to materialise with the bringing of his tram-lines first to Twickenham from Busch Corner on August 13th 1902 and then to Hampton Court on April 2nd the following year.

The existing depots at Chiswick, Acton, Hanwell and Hounslow were insufficient to house the electric cars needed (at six cars per mile) to serve the ninety-six miles of track so realised. A large new depot site had to be found.

The depot at Fulwell was designed to hold tramcars for the new, authorised and proposed lines into Surrey, Middlesex and Berkshire and consequently was built with excess capacity. In 1902 the Trustees of the (Sir Charles) Freake Estate agreed to lease to the Tramway Company eleven acres of land at South Road, Fulwell, for 99 years. The building of the depot began at once. In due course the lease was bought outright.

The large five and a half acre garage site lay alongside the London & South Western Railway line cutting and needed to be levelled by the addition of tons of sand, in some places to a considerable depth. At that time planning permission for such a large construction, from the Teddington Urban District Council, hinged only on the adequacy of the drainage. It is fascinating to read the minutes of the Council and its

Tramways Committee for this period because Teddington, unlike the other local urban district councils in the immediate locality, welcomed the trams. By making few demands on the Company it showed that it was not as avaricious as other councils.

The steelwork for the structure of the new depot was supplied and erected by a contractor for whom the target date for completion was Easter 1903. The rest of the work was largely done by the Company's own staff. The track-work was laid while the depot was being put up.

The depot (by which is meant the building) measured 400 feet by 258 feet and was shaped like a squared boomerang, bounded by Wellington Road to the west and Stanley Road to the east with access and egress to and from both roads through the shed. There were eighteen tracks within the depot plus three shorter ones into the repair shop at the Wellington Road end. These tracks were reached by way of 'fans' (fan-shaped track layouts) at both ends of the building. The depot-fan at the Wellington Road end was replaced by concrete soon after trolley-bus operations (which had replaced the trams in 1931) were themselves replaced by Routemaster buses in May, 1962.

The depot-fan at the Stanley Road end survived virtually intact until early 2001 when Telling-Golden Miller, a private bus company, took over some of the bus routes which had been operated by London United Busways. LUB, formerly London – Cardinal District – Buses (and, many would argue, the natural successor of the old London United Garage users) had operated all services out of Fulwell since the break-up of London Transport on privatisation of the Capital's bus services. At enormous and some would say needless, expense the depot fan at the Stanley Road end, and its change-points as well as the everlasting cobblestones, were covered over with a thick layer of tarmac by T-GM. Ironically, T G-M states on its vehicles that its address is 'The Old Tram Depot, Stanley Road' despite having concealed or removed the very vestiges of the depot which gave it that name.

Fulwell Depot was, and is, one of the largest in the London area and deserves to be listed as one of London Transport's remaining fine industrial and archaeological monuments and buildings of which there used to be so many. At the Wellington Road end on the south-west corner there used to be, in a nearly square building, the electricity sub-station. That has now been removed but on the south-eastern corner of the Stanley Road approach there still stands the remarkable LUT Club and Institute which will be celebrating its centenary in 2003.

The London United Company always encouraged healthy recreational facilities for the staff. At Fulwell there used to be a large recreation ground between the depot and South Road where team games and sporting

activities could take place. But this has been sold and built on thus depriving the transport members and the public of vital open space. One of Fulwell's earliest photographs is of the tug-of-war team to which, along with cricket at Garrick's Villa, Clifton Robinson gave wholehearted support.

Currently, the LUT Club has been going through a difficult time, being physically cut off from its own garage. It had been threatened with closure but the retired members - drivers and conductors or conductresses and their partners - put up a stiff resistance and (so far) won the day. This means they will continue to have their regular Thursday afternoon reunions for, it is to be hoped, a long time to come. Fulwell had become the very last of the clubs for transport workers and retired members, so its reprieve is very welcome.

Fulwell Depot was built on the grand scale in a more decorative style than the plainer depots at Hounslow and Hanworth. "Its four large bays have a span roof with clerestories which are exceptionally lofty. Above the centre of each bay are three large windows, the centre ones being proportionately larger than the other two. The top of each gable has a brick and stone pediment with circular glazed openings and in one of these a clock was placed. The elevations and clocks were similar at both ends of the depot. The boundary walls that remain along Stanley Road are 10 feet tall with stone capped piers spaced at 18 feet intervals and the brickwork relieved by ornamental panels between the piers. The Stanley Road entrance retains its heavy ornamental wrought-iron gates which have recently been repaired and re-painted. On top of the brick piers for the gates are ornamental light fittings". All these features have virtually disappeared from the Wellington Road entrance except at the corner by Station Approach.

Fulwell Depot began life, on 2nd April 1903, as a provider of tram services to Hampton Court, from the Wellington Road end. It was three years later that the Stanley Road end sent out tramcars to Wimbledon via Kingston.

In 1929, the depot received a car-washing machine and, as there was ample room at the depot, other ancillary departments arrived on the perimeter of the Stanley Road site such as the bill-posting department.

In 1930 the latest modern tramcars, the Felthams, were brought as metal shells to Fulwell Depot to be fitted out and painted. They had been constructed by the nearby Union Construction and Finance Company at Feltham and brought by a low loader to the depot. There is an excellent film which was made at this time called 'Service'. It demonstrated the advanced features of this tramcar with its separate entrances and exits and the all-enclosed cabins for the drivers.

Sadly tram operation in London, and especially out of Fulwell, could not be saved by the introduction of these splendid vehicles even though, in design, they were ahead of their time and were to run in London and elsewhere for another twenty years or more.

In May 1931, London United decided that the area it covered was no longer suitable for tramcar operation. There were too many short sharp corners to negotiate, especially in Kingston. So Fulwell became the place from which trolley-bus services would be introduced throughout west London. They gradually replaced the tramcar services out of Fulwell so that by the middle of 1935 there were no trams left at the depot.

Fulwell Garage has had an interesting history over almost one hundred years and to celebrate its centenary I have asked the retired members to delve into their store of memories and find a story or two which they can relate to some photograph. If I can get about two hundred pictures with long or short captions, then the story of Fulwell might yet be re-told along personal and unofficial lines.

There is still a 'Diddler' LUT trolley-bus to be seen in the LT transport museum at Covent Garden; and, at Crich, among the National Tramway Museum's vehicles awaiting restoration, is an LUT tram. Recently, a double-decker bus, nicknamed 'the Belgrano' and painted in LUT tram/trolleybus livery, was frequently to be seen on the 267 route from Brentford to Hampton Court, following the old 67 tram route and the former 667 trolley-bus route via Fulwell Depot (Wellington Road). It was as though very little had changed in all these years of public service.

I would like to think that with the re-introduction into London - Croydon of the newest type of single deck streetcars, we may yet witness their environmentally-friendly return to Fulwell in the fullness of time. Fulwell was designed for tramway operation and, to me at least, is their natural home.

Bryan Woodriff, 2001

For some of the material, I have referred to and quoted from C.S. Smeaton's 'The London United Tramways - vols.1 and 2,' and from Geoffrey Wilson's 'London United Tramways', to both of which I have made a modest contribution. I have also used Volume XXI of 'The Tramway & Railway World', June 6th 1907. BW

Twickenham Talk, 15 March 2001

RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMAT

Willie Turner CMG CVO

After some 28 years as a member of the Home Civil Service, including 5 years as Labour Attache, British High Commission (BHC), New Delhi, Willie Turner served for fifteen years in H M Diplomatic Service, rising from First Secretary to High Commissioner (i.e. an ambassador in a Commonwealth country). Following retirement he served as Chief Executive of the Southern Africa Association (1981-87); and as a member of Council of the Royal Commonwealth Society. He is a member of the Southern Africa Study Group, the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

In view of my enforced absence from the meeting, the following account of the talk is based on a transcript kindly provided by the speaker. Ed.

Willie Turner was grateful that the title suggested by Brian Parker permitted him simply to reminisce about his twenty years in some colourful countries abroad. He hoped this might reveal what the modern diplomat does. Willie was at pains to emphasise that he was accompanied, throughout, by his wife June and that she shared (unpaid) in his diplomatic responsibilities.

Any talk on diplomacy must start, Willie said, with the famous comment by a British Ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton, in 1604: "An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country". This clever pun has tended to confirm the common belief that diplomats are, at least, disingenuous and, probably, traders in untruths. The fact is that any diplomat who tried to mislead others would inevitably be discredited and destroy his ability to do good for his country.

The Queen has opposed any move to discontinue the use of the term "High Commissioner" (which may suggest some executive influence in the host country) in order to emphasise that there is a special relationship between members of the Commonwealth. There is in fact no difference between high commissioners and ambassadors.

Since Sir Henry Wotton's day, a diplomat has, by "lying abroad", promoted the legitimate interests of his country by aiming for a relationship with his host which would avoid or reduce conflict. The number of wars since then indicates limited success but, in the end, diplomacy has been necessary to restore peace after any conflict.

Developments over the last century have enormously widened the function of the diplomat. Many newly independent countries of the Third World have emerged and International organisations have proliferated. Help to poor countries is now important;

and international commerce has become a major concern. And, as so many diplomats have learned, the world is a more dangerous place.

Northern Nigeria (First Secretary, Kaduna, 1966-69)

During the Biafran war many British citizens were at risk. Secret plans for evacuation were drawn up by the British government. Briefing of key British figures was necessary in the area between the front line and the Benue River in the Northern Nigerian Region for which Willie was responsible. An introduction from the military commander and distinctive diplomatic number plates should have granted free access but carried no weight with the soldiers manning the road block which he found, as expected, on the only link with the area, a bridge over the Benue at Makurdi.. Willie's refusal to open bags containing highly sensitive information about the evacuation plans, led Willie and his driver being driven and frog-marched at rifle-point to barracks on the other side of the bridge. A young man in immaculate tennis gear ordered their release but the soldiers refused and threatened the young officer who had to call for help. While dealing with the soldiers he advised Willie to get out "damn quick"!

The next day the commander apologised and promised to send messages to other road blocks but, at one, a fight started between soldiers and disciplined policeman. This gave a chance for Willie to escape but not without being fired on as they did so. His driver's subsequent attempts to avoid road blocks by taking a dirt road led, ultimately, to being stalled in deep sand. Willie imagined their whitened skeletons being discovered after some months. Amazingly a Mammy Wagon arrived and towed them into town. The slogan on the front of the wagon was "Beware of Foreign Affairs"! Willie supposed this really meant "Do not commit adultery" but the words seemed highly relevant to his situation.

During the civil war, Prince William of Gloucester was sent up from BHC in Lagos, where he was, in effect, getting work experience, to learn about the particular problems in Northern Nigeria. In the course of arranging for a visiting British Minister, amongst other things, to open a veterinary laboratory at the University of Zaria, Willie took William with him to discuss arrangements with the laboratory staff who were American aid workers seconded from the University of Texas. When Willie introduced his colleague as Prince William the Americans all said "Hi Prince", assuming that Prince was his Christian name. However, one British volunteer gave a deep bow and addressed him as Your Highness. It was with difficulty that Willie detached William from devastated bowing Americans keen to make the most of their contact with the British Royal Family!

Malaysia (First Secretary, Kuala Lumpur, 1969-1973)

After the danger and discomfort of Nigeria, the posting to Malaysia was, Willie said, a welcome break. However, for the first month or two, Kuala Lumpur was subject to a curfew 18 hours a day in response to riots which had occurred between Malays and Chinese over the results of a general election.

Willie's special job here was to spend £25million on projects in Malaysia. This was intended, after much argument, as compensation for the damage to the economy that the Malaysians claimed would follow from a decision to withdraw all British forces from SE Asia. The only departmental budget available at short notice was that of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) who were given additional funds by the Treasury. The Malaysians felt they should be free to spend the money as they wished but ODA insisted the money was used only for projects specifically helping the poor. The Department of Trade (DOT) wanted to achieve the maximum benefit for British commercial interests. Willie's diplomatic skills had to be exercised with British government departments rather than the Malaysians in order to find suitable projects and dispense the funds quickly enough to keep the Malaysians on-side.

In his determination to win a contract for locomotives for Malaysian railways that would lead to standardisation on British equipment, Willie took a chance and agreed to the provision of the first tranche of three locomotives without ODA's endorsement. He got ticked off by ODA but the FCO and DOT were delighted. In due course the High Commissioner drove the first of the English Electric locomotives out of Kuala Lumpur station. This use of Special Aid generated valuable orders for further locomotives and spares.

Willie's last project managed to satisfy everybody. This was for improved educational facilities for the Malays to offset the superior education of the Chinese, which enabled them to dominate the economy and so to ethnic conflict. With the advice of the British Council and in association with the Malaysian Ministry of Education, an imaginative programme was devised and started just before the end of Willie's tour. Because of the yellow pages upon which it was written, this became known as the yellow book programme. June invaluablely advised Malaysian students wishing to continue their education in Britain.

At a farewell party, June and Willie were invited to cut red tape once again: but this was to open a parcel which proved to contain a valuable copy of Beardsley's Yellow Book.

Ghana (Deputy High Commissioner and Acting HC Accra 1973-77)

Willie left Malaysia on promotion notwithstanding his frequent tussles with ODA. Reservations about returning to West Africa and a military (and massively corrupt if comparatively benign) government were soon overcome by the friendliness and good humour (and dislike of military government) of the Ghanaian people.

Unlike so many African countries the Ghanaians, probably because they are a self-confident people, had no trace of racial prejudice. This was exemplified by the experience of a new member of the UN staff at a cross roads where the traffic was controlled by a policeman standing on an oil drum. His view of the policeman obscured by a lorry the UN official drove past him. The policeman blew his whistle, angrily upbraided the official and, still holding up the traffic, demanded "what colour am I?" The embarrassed official replied "I suppose you are black" at which the policeman disgustedly said "There is no such colour as black. When I this" (still holding up the traffic) "I red. When I this" (waving on the traffic) "I green. Don't forget it!"

Possibly because of the cold war, Ghana attracted an impressive variety of diplomats from both sides of the Iron Curtain. In a small country with a large diplomatic corps it was inevitable that diplomats met each other frequently at government receptions and at the national day parties the embassies were obliged to give. And they shared many trials.

Willie recalled the pain of an International Cocoa Day organised by the government and chaired by the Head of State General Acheampong in a small town called Korofidua. A convoy of diplomatic cars left Accra at 7am. Lines of military deterred the diplomats from a roadside stop before the two-hour journey ended at a football field. There the diplomats were shepherded to chairs by the dais and found themselves penned in by thousands of locals. In any event the usual canvas privy for VIPs was nowhere to be seen. To make matters worse the speeches were interspersed with supplies of sickly Cadbury's Easter Eggs. At last, at twelve-thirty General Acheampong and his ministers departed. A rush to the lunch venue, a local school, ensued but, alas, requests to wash hands led only to the kitchen sinks! At this every diplomat threw dignity to the winds and headed for the nearest tree! Willie did not say whether there were ladies in the party and, if so, how they fared.

With two and a half hours to wait until lunch the diplomats gladly followed the popular obese and witty Romanian Ambassador to a bar in Korofidua which served cold beer. The Russian was the last at swapping stories. A Russian complained he could not sleep because of voices – in English. So the doctor advised going to bed with an interpreter. This

produced enormous laughter because the Bulgarian's English interpreter was outstandingly good-looking and (according to the Italian Ambassador) had been a well-known hooker in Sofia. For perhaps the first time in her life, the interpreter blushed while the Bulgarian Ambassador thumped the table demanding "Interpret! Interpret!"

The most colourful of their colleagues, Willie said, was the American Ambassador, Her Excellency Shirley Black, nee Temple. She and her husband Charles were popular and highly regarded. On only occasion did Willie see Shirley disturbed – when, at a flag raising ceremony at a trade fair (albeit following the Chinese Ambassador going berserk when the Chinese National Anthem was accompanied by the breaking of the Taiwanese Flag!), the Stars and Stripes broke upside down!

Botswana (High Commissioner, Gaborone, 1977-81)

Whereas Ghana is a wet hot country with an attractive coast line and deep forests, Botswana is larger, landlocked, with a small population and a few not very large towns. Unlike the corrupt in so many African countries the Botswana are serious and honest. It was, at that time, the only country in Africa with a genuine pluralistic democracy. Willie believed that this was due to the continuing legacy of the London Missionary Society and particularly of David Livingstone who had a mission there.

Because the President, Sir Seretse Khama, was the most liberal and influential of the leaders of the Front Line States (states bordering Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa) the political influence of Botswana was much higher than the small size of its population merited.

In comparative terms Botswana is the most successful political and economic country in Africa. On gaining independence Botswana was one of the world's poorest countries but under the leadership of Sir Seretse Khama the country managed to balance its budget by developing beef exports to Europe and avoiding wasting money on corruption and wasteful expenditure. In Willie's phrase, it deserved the good fortune of diamond discovery which happened not long before Willie and June's arrival. By wise relations with de Beers Botswana is now the world's biggest producer of diamonds. Their foreign exchange reserves per capita are amongst the highest in the world. They have continued a careful use of this fortune not least because diamond mines do not provide much employment and the ordinary people still depend upon cattle and efforts to grow crops in a desert environment.

The High Commission's responsibilities were spread over the whole range of diplomatic activity. With several thousand British citizens, the consular responsibility was quite heavy. Because of

Botswana's political importance Willie was frequently involved in discussions with the President and Foreign Minister. Unlike this activity in more highly developed countries this activity tended to be informal no matter the importance. Botswana officials and ministers admirably regarded the weekend as sacrosanct whereas the Foreign Office had a habit of sending him instructions on a Saturday morning to "speak at the highest level" on some subject or other. Knowing senior officials would then be shopping on Gaborone's shopping street, the Mall, or drinking on the verandah of the President Hotel, Willie, with June, would usually head into town with the instructions in his pocket.

A particularly important message one Saturday morning asked the Foreign Minister to send instructions to the Botswana mission in New York to support Britain at the UN. When Willie 'phoned the Minister, Archie Mogwe, at home he said he was about to leave for his farm. So Willie took the typed message to the Minister's house on his bicycle and arrived just in time to help him load his truck with barrels of diesel. Archie asked Willie to put Lord Carrington's message under the windscreen wiper. "We will deal with it later". After the help Willie had given him, Mogwe could hardly refuse Lord Carrington's request and the instructions were duly sent to New York.

On another occasion Willie had to deliver an urgent message to Seretse Khama personally but he was at his farm in the far north. The Head of Cabinet agreed to fly with Willie in the aircraft he had hired and said he would get the President's military guard to pick them up at the bush airstrip he thought he could find. They flew up and down the Limpopo several times before the Cabinet Secretary spotted the hill at which they had to turn. At the airstrip there was no military vehicle to meet them but, on the nearby dirt road, an ancient Massey Ferguson appeared. Willie and the Secretary travelled aboard the dirty trailer and found the President waiting for them on his verandah. Willie felt that Sir Henry Wotton would have been horrified at this form of exercise in diplomacy four hundred years on.

Willie was complimentary about the effectiveness of his commercial officer as a salesman for Britain, given that there were no commercial agents in Botswana. In this way Cable and Wireless got to run Botswana Telecommunications (including the building of a high satellite receiver) and a subsidiary of British Rail got the contract to run the railway line from (what was, until 1980) Rhodesia to Mafeking when Botswana decided to take it over.

Given that the hotel accommodation in Gaborone was poor, the High Commissioner's wife bore a heavy load in entertaining a heavy influx of senior official and commercial visitors.

On the death of Seretse Khama the British contingent to the funeral consisted of the Duke of Kent, representing the Queen, Sir Ian Gilmour, representing the government, and Peter Shore and David Steel representing their parties. At Sir Ian's request, Willie arranged for Mugabe to come to his house for a discussion after his arrival for the funeral. In the event he came with a large delegation including his great rival, Joshua Nkomo. Gilmour told his political colleagues to ensure that Nkomo and the others did not leave Willie's verandah whilst he took Mugabe down the garden. It took Shore and Steel all their political skill to keep the suspicious Nkomo on the verandah. When, in due course, the time came to move to the cars, it fell to Willie, diplomatically, to separate the obese Nkomo from his chair.

Willie's most important visitor was the Queen. The actual visit was surprisingly enjoyable, not least because, as Willie described it, the Queen is a professional guest who goes out of her way to make her hosts comfortable. However, the preparations for the visit were, even with the help of the Palace, nerve-racking.

Willie's worst moment, he said, was just before the Queen arrived. The original plan was for the Queen to fly to Malawi in a Boeing 707 and then on to Gaborone in the much smaller Viking, which was about the largest aircraft able to land there. But this would require the Viking to fly low over Rhodesia and be at risk from the guerrillas' surface to air missiles. So it was decided the Queen should fly in the 707 to Francistown in North Botswana. But Francistown did not have a ladder large enough for a 707. So delivery overland of a suitable ladder from British Airways, Johannesburg, was organised. But the ladder that arrived bore South African Airways symbols! The British Government would have been furious, and the Apartheid regime in South Africa delighted, that the Queen would be photographed descending such a ladder. With only a few hours to go before the Queen's arrival, Willie found a rather worn-looking selection of Union Jacks and sent his security officer with them to Francistown, to be draped over the South African symbols.

The planning of the garden party for the Queen to meet British people was one of the biggest worries. There were several thousand British people in Botswana but room for only 1200 in Willie and June's garden. Willie solved this problem by, first, giving priority to the few missionaries and VSOs who led a tough unrewarding life in the Bush and, then, apportioning places to different areas of the country on the basis of the number of registered British. He invited each community to decide how to allocate the places but suggested that priority be given to the longest-serving; and that senior members of larger concerns should not be listed because they would have invitations to the President's party. These

arrangements worked admirably and backbiting was avoided.

Willie was also concerned that it would not be easy for 1200 people to get close to the Queen on the day. So he planned a winding route through the garden and hung letters on trees to identify where guests should stand (by reference to letters on the invitation cards). He got the British members of service clubs, Rotary, Lions and Round table to act as stewards. It all worked well and no one was more than a few feet away when Willie took the Queen round, followed by June with the Duke of Edinburgh and Willie's Head of Chancery with Prince Andrew. The Queen stopped to talk to as many people as possible. She expressed delighted at having met (and had an animated discussion with) a bricklayer for the first time at such a party.

Willie admitted that the opportunity to look after the Queen was one of the most memorable events in his diplomatic career.

The only record available of the discussion period is the following note kindly provided by Geoffrey Morgan, himself a distinguished servant of government in the Treasury and (during Margaret Thatcher's premiership) the Cabinet Office. Ed

In the discussion following the talk, Geoffrey Morgan said that he had enjoyed the anecdotes but he noted that a diplomatic veil had been drawn over any policy issues. He wondered whether the speaker approved of a recent letter to The Times, from a former British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, which had been highly critical of current British policy in the Middle East. The speaker replied that, once retired, an Ambassador was free to comment on current affairs provided he did not betray any confidences. In that case Mr. Morgan asked what were his views on the so-called 'ethical' foreign policy pursued by the present government. Was this a contradiction in terms? Willie replied that an ambassador's credibility always depended on the honest intentions of his government's activities and doubted if this needed defining as a policy.



View northwards from Radnor Gardens

Twickenham Talk, 5 April 2001

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY POLICING

Inspector Mark Jones (Metropolitan Police: Pro-active Community Team, Richmond upon Thames)

After fifteen years police service in Inner London locations (Notting Hill, Wandsworth, Tooting Streatham and Brixton) Mark Jones took up his present appointment in March 2000.



Inspector Jones started by emphasising that he was pleased to be 'meeting the people'. To be working in an outer borough after fifteen years in the inner city was a new challenge. He wished to use the talk to say who the Pro-active

Community Team is and what they do; why the police has had to change and how it has changed; and how we, the public and the police, can help each other.

The origins of the pro-active community team

The government sets over-arching targets and priorities and the Metropolitan Police Authority sets Force priorities. Mark Jones assured us that the results of crime recording systems and community consultations contributed to the definition of targets and priorities.

In the past there were two community teams, covering the Richmond and Twickenham sides of the borough. One of these was very traditional and the other very pro-active. But the set targets were not being achieved. It was therefore decided to adopt a co-ordinated effort and direct the efforts of a single team towards crime reduction. Consequently, without, in Mark Jones's view, losing contact with the community, the role of the old style uniformed community officer as been drastically reduced.

Seeing a police officer in uniform has a positive impact on public perceptions, but research shows that it has little impact on crime reduction. Mark applied for, and was selected, to head the joint team. Its focus and structure was revised, new officers were selected and, in order to achieve targets, minimum standards were set for

individual officers to achieve. His team, covering the whole of the borough, is based in Teddington.

Responsibilities

Mark Jones said that his team has responsibility for community crime over the whole of the borough. To assist him are two sergeants and 12 constables. There used to be a second inspector and seven more constables. Apart from difficulties of staff recruitment and retention, there has been transfer of officers from the outer to the inner boroughs to counter a sharp increase there of some categories of crime.

"Community crime" covers such as graffiti, youth disorder, drug use, motor vehicle crime and offensive weapons. A problem-solving approach is adopted which means identifying a crime, considering options, devising a plan and putting that plan into operation.

His team's priorities are to reduce anti-social behaviour, reduce Class A drug supplies, reduce motor vehicle crime and the use of offensive weapons as well as deal with long-term community problems such as neighbour disputes, care-in-the-community problems and so forth. To achieve their targets, they set minimum standards that the officers have to achieve.

Intelligence is gathered from both within and outside the police force. Crime 'hotspots' and known criminals are targeted. Various techniques are used including both high-visibility uniform work and, mainly, covert, plain-clothes work, using video evidence, observation of vans and houses, etc.

Mark Jones was pleased with the results so far. The main areas of success had been:-

- graffiti operations (with ten arrests);
- the catching of a local drug dealer (sent down for seven years);
- successful operations at local rail stations using passive drug dogs (generally labradors, trained to sit down in front of people carrying drugs);
- a reduction in motor-vehicle crime last year (to April 2001) of 10 per cent;
- a reduction in anti-social behaviour on buses; and
- the establishment of youth disorder patrols

It was important to point out that, in addition to the pro-active community team, largely working in plain clothes, there are five 24-hour response teams, in uniform.

How we can help each other

Mark Jones stressed that “the most important is information – from you”. His unit relies, and acts, on the information received from the public. He asked people not to hesitate to use the new community intelligence hotline (8247-5863) upon which messages can be left anonymously if preferred.

It is sometimes helpful for the unit to ask to use private houses as observation points. Positive response is much appreciated, particularly as it may mean the unit has run out of other options.

If members of the public see a crime take place, it is very valuable to the police to be able to take witness statements. Without these arrest and prosecution may not be possible. Mark said he understood people’s fears about possible repercussions but without the help of the public the police may have to let guilty people go free.

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has one of the lowest levels of reported crime in Greater London in all categories except burglaries. However, criminals are getting wiser in, for example, using public transport to pop in and out of the borough. We must guard against complacency.

Mark felt that the police can help the public by taking what they tell them seriously, collating information and acting on it. He stressed that they take as much care as they can to deal with our, the public’s, problems.

Kicking off the discussion, Philip Morgan asked the speaker for a reaction to TV programmes such as “The Bill”. Mark made no specific comment about “The Bill”, but thought some crime films were badly thought out and some accurate. “Crime Watch” is, Mark said, great for the police.

Asked about the manning of police stations, Mark regretted that Teddington was part time; but Twickenham is open 24hrs a day. Policing in a modern society is very expensive. The number of policemen deployed in the Metropolitan Area is now 24,55 as against 28, 500 16 years ago.

Mark would like to have a uniformed team in addition to the pro-active one.

Given that there was a social problem, involving 12 to 18 year-olds, Mark appeared to be guardedly sympathetic to a proposal by David Harper for making parents liable for youngster’s behaviour, backed by, say, £1000 fines. The police do not, due to shortage of staff, go into schools and youth groups as much as they should. The ‘youth team’ had just one officer to serve the whole of the borough. There was a need for a team dedicated to visiting schools.

Joan Heath said that Hampton had had problems since the former community officer and neighbourhood newsletter were withdrawn. She also wondered what had happened to their ‘neighbourhood watch’. When Mark stated that reported crime had declined, Joan pointed out that reporting has become more difficult with even ‘999’ terribly slow. Derek Plummer was concerned about in-built inefficiency with, for example, policemen typing reports with one finger. Mark’s felt that part of the answer was for the police to employ civilian staff

David Knight wondered why aerosol cans were not restricted to reduce graffiti. John Bell advised that Vincent Cable MP had been told in an Adjournment Debate that this would be “an unfair restriction on trade”.

Given the shortage of staff, Lis Betteridge asked whether it was necessary for so many police officers to attend some incidents. Mark said that, it is rarely possible to send many officers. For example, when the recent golf club fire occurred there were only 13 police officers available for the whole borough. He commented that fire crews seem to have all the resources they need.

Philip Morgan was concerned about the number of police officers absorbed by an increasing number of matches at the Twickenham Stadium. He felt the people at the top did not understand what went on.

The Community Intelligence Hotline, by which information can be passed to the pro-active community team, is 8247-5863. (N.B. This is not a substitute for ‘999’)

Twickenham Talk, 13 June 2001

A LIFE IN LOCAL POLITICS or RAMBLINGS OF AN OLD FOGEY

Robert Hancock (Strategic Director, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames)

Robert has been with the borough, as a strategic director, for four years. He is due to move on to other pastures in May 2002. In inviting him to speak, I was aware, from earlier conversations, that Robert had had a very varied and interesting career. I invited him to use the talk to tell us about it. The alternative title to his talk is at his insistence. He wished to avoid a 'boring Local Government talk'. GBP/Ed

Robert's multifarious interests were reflected, in his opening, by a formidable (and not wholly comprehensible) list of some of the projects with which he had been associated. This included primary and secondary School PFIs (private finance initiatives), the Riverside Scheme, the Sixth Form College, College Partnerships, Barn Elms, social services, preparation for joint review, leisure, information technology and e-government! Also, he hastened to add, "thanks to the Twickenham Society – it has been a pleasure to work with you".

Robert claimed to be a passionate sailor and writer but wished to put his ramblings within the context of his particular passion – special needs education of children. He had been a teacher, head-teacher and head of the School Psychological Service; working (for thirty years) in both local government and the private sector.

Robert felt that his story was about characters, a passion to deliver results and achieve change (within constraints). It had been a pleasure and privilege to work in team settings (in which he included Twickenham Riverside and Richmond Theatre). There is, in Local Government, a far greater skill level and experience than is commonly thought. It is not just boring bureaucrats! Local government has, like charities, to both pioneer and challenge.

Robert told us that his background was as a services child, such that he developed the skills of travelling, hitch-hiking and meeting people from an early age. He had attended 15 schools and, at 15, had no qualifications. He had become a sailing instructor and white-water canoeing instructor and, like every Welshman, aspired to play rugby for Wales!

Later, by routes not described, Robert became deputy head and then head of Special Needs schools, a Senior Staff inspector in London, a Chief Inspector in Birmingham and, for five years, director of the Spastics Society. Later he was chief executive of the David Lewis Epilepsy Organisation. And, somewhere along the line, he published fourteen children's work-books, two text-books and worked internationally.

Robert had been most impressed by colleagues who developed a willingness to adopt 'Lifelong learning' as an integral part of their lives.

In Robert's view there were three facets to a good local government officer: character; solid skills based in a key front line service area such as teaching or social services; and an ability to transfer skills to any aspect of service delivery. He also felt there should be a: willingness to challenge bureaucracy from within, and an ability to get along with elected members (notwithstanding the trials and tribulations!).

Robert then focused on four of his workplaces over the past 32 years before considering whether local government has a future.

Head-teacher of a Special School in Portsmouth

This was one of the schools built by Jack Wright who had a vision for children with special needs. Robert was 29 at the time. Intentionally the school did not conform to the general perception at that time that 'special needs' were to be set apart. Pupils of the school remained on the rolls of their own schools. Reading, comprehension and number tests were carried out every six months and most children were able to return to their schools (often against the wishes of their parents and mainstream teachers). It was a battle for ownership and resources and to get parents to understand the system, know their rights and to argue for them.

Not much has changed in the intervening twenty-five years. Professionals (such as speech therapists and physiotherapists) still tend to protect their rights. Politicians still seem reluctant to commit themselves to helping children with special needs given the major finance issues involved. Resources are as limited now as eight years ago.

*General Inspector and Head of School
Psychological Service, Bromley*

As the first educational psychologist, Robert faced much opposition from the professional bodies. However, within four months, Robert received approval to double the size of the service and over 200 applications were received. Feuerstein's idea of "Teaching Thinking Skills" as an integral part of the curriculum in schools was developed in Bromley.

*Senior Staff Inspector of the Inner London
Education Authority (ILEA)*

Robert talked warmly of ILEA, which Mrs. Thatcher, at odds with Ken Livingstone, chose to abolish. The cost of the administration of ILEA, which Mrs. T. had criticised, was five times higher after abolition! ILEA had covered 1200 schools with a revenue budget of £1 billion. The SEN (Special needs) training budget, alone, was £18.4 million with 132 special schools and 214 independent schools involved. In Robert's view ILEA had the best research & development (R&D) service nationally. ILEA may not have been beyond criticism but have its successors done any better over the past 12 years?

*Director of Operations of Scope (previously the
Spastics Society)*

Robert described Scope as 220 independent charities, all looking to the headquarters. "Everyone owns you!" Working with trustees was similar to working in local government.

Fifty years ago Dr. Andreas Peto introduced the idea of 'conductive education'. It was based on the need to walk in order to go to school. Emphasis put on physical development as well as intellectual and academic. Dr. Peto's method was looked upon as a miracle cure. Nick Scott, Minister for the Disabled, was totally committed but, regrettably, did not remain in government. Amongst other things, Dr. Peto recognised the harm done to family life due to children with special needs. Robert noted, when at Scope, that the divorce rate of parents with children with special needs was 60%. This was understandable given the high levels of shock, trauma and blame.

Robert described the work of Scope in bringing Conductive Education to England. There is now a degree course in CE at Keele University.

The future of local government

Robert said he felt that there is no future for local government as it now is. Central Government wishes to fund schools directly, for example, and yet it does not wish to be accountable! There will be a continuing need for an organisation at local level to take the blame!

Local authorities are being forced to sell their housing stock. Local government may just become the interface between residents and companies delivering services: with responsibility for setting standards, contracting out and monitoring within the context of a community plan. In short, Robert felt that bureaucracy in this country had gone mad! Where else would it be necessary for the local authority's education programme to be subject to thirteen plans?! So much time is spent planning, writing papers and being inspected that the local authority has very little time actually to run any services.

Discussion

In discussion Jane Smith asked about the provision for special needs schooling. Robert pointed out that, whereas primary and secondary school pupils cost some £2000 and £3000 per annum, special need children can cost some £6000. It needed to be more generally recognised that early training of students with, say, Down's Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy, can save much expense in training and supervision later.

If Robert is right about the future of local government, what, Michael Lee asked, should the Twickenham Society be doing about it? (Joan Heath here interjected "Go back to Parish Councils!"). The speaker answered that people will be required to set the standards of the services required within the best value framework.

Brian Parker asked whether the closure of old peoples' homes was placing a load upon the National Health Service. Robert felt that health trusts tended to blame local authorities while controlling homeless waiting lists. The funding of hospitals in Europe is much higher. The voluntary sector is being asked to take on responsibilities unreasonably, such as being asked to run major service contracts. And he noted that the average age of volunteers is approaching sixty. At the same time, social services are often, and unfairly, derided.

This borough is one of the lowest-funded authorities in the country but it is obliged to run quality services. And now the government is talking about diverting resources from London elsewhere!

At the close, and to approbation, Judith Lovelace thanked Robert Hancock for a fascinating talk.

AND HOW GOOD IS YOUR TOWN?

by Mick Lowe

I have been a member of the Twickenham Society since I came to work for the Council in 1998 as one of the new Strategic Directors. It was in Twickenham that I met some of the most dedicated local people who give of their time freely for the benefit of all. Brian Parker was one of these and with whom I have remained in touch. Hence this small contribution to this newsletter.

Regrettably I do not live in the borough because, like most public sector employees, the difference between house prices and earned income makes the purchase of property locally a somewhat difficult affair!

I now own a small management consultancy company whose clients are mainly local authorities, other public bodies and not-for-profit organisations. This has taken me not only up and down the breadth of the country but also to many different countries abroad. During these travels I am struck but what I find and see.

As a child of Wimbledon I have known, visited and shopped in Twickenham and Richmond for more than 30 years and know the area well. When I visit other towns and cities, I tend, as you might expect of someone who believes in the public sector and who has worked in it most of his life, to observe and compare features such as the buildings, open spaces, general state of cleanliness, the state of town centres, street furniture, general ambience and the services that local authorities provide.

I find that there are massive variations. Without naming and shaming others, Twickenham and Richmond have become the benchmarks for what I see. This was not a conscious decision. I just find myself making favourable comparisons between this small part of south-west London and elsewhere.

This may surprise you who live in Twickenham. Of course, you have a right not to be satisfied with your lot but all I can say is that, if you have seen what I have seen elsewhere during the past three years, you may feel rather better about your own neighbourhood!

My final point is that communities are not made up of physical infrastructures. These are important but it is people and their relationships that make up a community. And it was the many people, of diverse skills and interests, who gave of their time to running and supporting voluntary and community groups that I particularly admired in Twickenham. Whilst those involved may sometimes wonder if their efforts are worthwhile, I am impressed by how much has been achieved to protect and improve Twickenham through this voluntary effort.

CONSERVATION MATTERS

Some observations by Brian Parker

- Had you noticed that the successor to 'MAFF' is the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Much has, and yet could, be written about rural affairs in the light of the Foot and Mouth epidemic but my immediate concern is that the environment is now, nominally at least, treated by government as a rural matter, divorced from urban affairs, land use planning and transport.
- I am sad, due to chemo-induced dizziness, now to be unable to use my bicycle for trips into and about Twickenham. My need to whizz off to meetings in York House or at the RFU has recently diminished but for those yet making many local journeys, particularly car-drivers, I have no hesitation in recommending the bike for speed, convenience and well-being. I say "particularly car drivers" because safety is best assured by understanding the motorists' viewpoint (and also, in addition to wearing an ugly hat, by checking whether the doors of parked cars could be opened in one's path!). By the way, you are subject to less pollution travelling along Heath Road on a bike than sitting in your car in the queue – and for much less time.
- Last November, although under the weather health-wise, I enjoyed staying with old friends in Ann Arbor, Michigan. And there is a city with a remarkable record for a wide range of waste reduction strategies. Besides offering kerbside recycling collections to residential properties, Ann Arbor provides collections to its multi-family housing communities as well as service to more than half of its 3000 businesses and agencies. It has a municipal compost centre, an expanded Drop-off Station and Materials Recovery Facility, a 'Buy Recycled' grant programme to encourage the use of recycled materials, together with educational programmes. I was particularly impressed to visit the 'Recycle Ann Arbor ReUse Centre', a great warehouse full of items of all kinds which people have brought in for resale (to the benefit of the city) rather than putting them on the dump. When will Twickenham follow this practise?



The Ann Arbor ReUse Centre's Warehouse

NEW PORTRAITS FOR TWICKENHAM

By Peter Hill

There is more good news for art lovers and historians in Twickenham. Three new portraits of historic figures associated with Twickenham are to be hung at Marble Hill.

The first is the portrait of Horace Walpole, (about which I wrote in the Autumn/Winter edition of Eel Pie) which was bought by English Heritage at Sotheby's on Nov 30th 2000 for £26,000. It is a late 18th cent. copy, perhaps by a man called Stuart, of the well-known 1754 portrait of Walpole, now in the National Portrait Gallery, by J.C.Eccardt. You may recall the illustration, which shows Walpole with his left hand resting on a book, with part of his new building in the background. This particular picture, only 17" by 13½", was rather dirty and discoloured when I saw it in the saleroom, with cracking on the varnish. English Heritage says it is with their conservators, and they hope to restore it before bringing it to Twickenham. There are two other known copies of the Eccardt picture

It is appropriate that the other two portraits coming to Twickenham will be those of Gay and Swift. They will come fairly soon, and Walpole will join them later. The portrait of John Gay, done around 1725, is by Enoch Seeman. This painter came from Danzig and had a successful portrait practice in London. Vertue noted him in 1723 as one of the new painters following on from Kneller. He mainly painted the aristocracy and men of letters, but apparently was a good copyist, and charged less than his more fashionable contemporaries.

According to English Heritage (E.H.) Gay, the poet and dramatist, was probably the first of Henrietta Howard's friends to see her plan for Marble Hill. She asked him in 1723 to keep it secret. She had a portrait of him in her apartment at court. In 1728 Gay wrote to Swift that a mezzotint of his portrait was being published from Mrs Howard's painting. 1728 was the year he had success with "The Beggar's Opera". He died, relatively young, in 1732.

The portrait of Jonathan Swift, done around 1735-40, is by Francis Bindon. Swift sat for Bindon, an Irish artist and architect, in Dublin. He did a full-length portrait and this new loan oil portrait, E.H. say, "is likely to derive from a

series of portraits done from those life sittings”. But unlike the formal full-length, Swift is shown in undress and in his own hair. E.H. describe it as “a compelling and moving image of the great satirist in old age”.

A label on the back of the frame says the portrait’s frame is made from wood taken from St Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin at the time of its renovation. The painting was given to Swift’s housekeeper in Dublin, who married the Sexton of St Patrick’s, who, they assume, used his position to obtain the wood for the frame.

Swift (1667-1745) was Dean of St Patrick’s and moved between Dublin and London. He too was a friend of Henrietta Howard and saw her plans for Marble Hill, and visited the site when it was being built. At the accession of George II in 1727 building work stopped and Swift wrote:

*My house was built but for a show,
My Lady’s empty pockets know;
And now she will not have a shilling
To raise the stairs, or build the ceiling.*

Perhaps when they are all hung, we could organise a Twickenham Society visit to Marble Hill to see them.

ph 20/1/01

N.B. These pictures have now, in the interval since Peter wrote his piece, been hung at Marble Hill. Ed

AND NEW OLD BOOKS TOO!

Catherine Parry-Wingfield advises that the Marble Hill Society have acquired four books from the library of Henrietta Howard, the Countess of Suffolk. Published in 1720 by Samuel Croxall, these contain translations of short chivalric romances and moralising tales by Cervantes and others. It was Peter Payan who put the Marble Hill Society in touch with the antiquarian book dealer who was offering the books for sale. It is hoped, Catherine says, that the books will be on display at Marble Hill shortly.

MAYNARD MACK

By Peter Hill

Professor Maynard Mack, the great authority on Alexander Pope, has died in America at the age of 91. He was Sterling Professor Emeritus of English Literature at Yale, and his masterwork which came out in 1985 was his biography of Pope, which ran to 800 pages. He also edited six of the twelve volumes of *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*.

When the TS was asked by English Heritage to organise the unveiling of the plaque to Pope at Mawson’s Buildings in Chiswick, next to Fuller’s Brewery, in October 1996, I wrote to Professor Mack asking him if he would come over and perform the ceremony. He replied from a village in Maine, in spidery handwriting for which he apologised, saying: “Let me say at once that I am much flattered by your proposal and would love to take it up seriously.” But he said it was out of the question because his wife was ill after a series of falls, and needed his attendance. He suggested Tony Beckles-Willson, who “will have more things germane to the occasion to say than anyone else”.

Tony did indeed do the unveiling, and made a memorable speech punctuated by the jingling of horse bells from the brewery dray that appeared from round the corner. Professor Mack sent me another letter two weeks later, saying he had left some information for me at Farmington in Connecticut which I was proposing to visit to see the Walpole Centre. He again sent all good wishes for the unveiling.

His obituary in the Daily Telegraph recalled his other works and essays on Shakespeare. It praised his meticulous research, and said his work on Pope “gave new life to scholarly biography and proved that academic writing of the highest standard could still be accessible to the general reader”.

Mack was praised for being not only a prolific and scholarly writer, but also an inspiring lecturer. It said he was popular with generations of students. It concluded: “Though widely viewed as the greatest scholar of Pope’s work, Mack was a man of modesty and charm who encouraged and inspired countless students. In 1996 an anonymous donor endowed a professorship at Yale in his name.” His wife survives him, with a son and two daughters.

TRAHERNE'S TREASURE

A personal reflection on the life and significance of Thomas Traherne (c1620-1674), poet and metaphysical writer

By Barrie Armstrong

Amongst the 'People of Note in the Parish', featured in the recently published history of 'The Parish Church of Teddington'¹, Thomas Traherne is accorded but a brief paragraph. This is squeezed in between portraits of the eminent Sir Orlando Bridgeman, one-time Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Charles II, to whom Traherne was private chaplain, and the distinguished scientist, priest and philanthropist Dr Stephen Hales.

However, brief though the description of Traherne's life, extracts from his meditations are quoted on the introductory pages of the booklet. For example (reproduced courtesy of the Vicar and Churchwardens of the Church):

"Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and Kings in sceptres, you never will enjoy the world".

Traherne was private chaplain to Sir Orlando, and nowhere near as famous as Dr Hales or, say, Noel Coward who is also featured in the Church history. As the Church history states, "Largely unknown as a writer until the twentieth century, when his *Centuries of Meditations* was published, he (Traherne) is now recognised as one of the great mystical writers of the Church". Even now, with the *Centuries* rightly regarded as one of the finest prose works in the English language (but, would you believe it, out of print!), Traherne remains mysteriously, or I would venture, deliberately anonymous. *Centuries* was written for his friend Susanna Hopton, and unsigned, and only one other book was published in his name in his lifetime (*Roman Forgeries* - 1673). So it is really no one's fault but his own that we have had to search for him and are still unsure how to think of him. Like the buried treasure that Jesus speaks of, symbolic of the Kingdom of Heaven, each one of us has to find him for ourselves, and looking back, that has taken many different people on many diverse routes

¹ The Parish Church of Teddington: Teddington St. Mary with St. Alban the Martyr: A Brief Guide. Text by George and Katharine Worth. Copyright: The Vicar and Churchwardens. June 2000

My own introduction to Traherne was in the seventies, soon after we moved into Teddington, and I remember reading that at his death he had bequeathed his 'hatt' to his brother. That was all he possessed, it seemed and I imagined him, affectionately, as an impoverished mystic, wandering the woods and fields and tow-paths, dreaming of paradise. He opened a door for me, inviting me into the church; and it was, to a large extent his *Centuries* that drew me back, in a serious way, to Christianity. I found the following section particularly inspiring:-

'The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me, their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal Cherubims! And young men glittering sparkling Angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls tumbling in the streets, and playing, were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die. But all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the Light of the Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared: which talked with my expectation and moved my desire...(From *Centuries* 3-3).

In St Mary's he kneels opposite Dr Stephen Hales, in the beautiful East Window, and I read up on him enough, I thought, to volunteer a talk on him one evening. Little did I know, at that stage, how much there was to know about him! He seems to grow at every reading for there is, in Traherne, an incredible capacity for understanding which aligns him with Shakespeare and Milton. He is a superb and original prose stylist and a passionate lover of God. He is a 'mystic', though I hesitate to use the term for fear of marginalising him in our evangelical understanding, just as St Paul was, who 'enjoyed visions and revelations of the Lord' (2 Cor.12). Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941), Anglican mystic and teacher, wrote:-

'Mysticism is the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or lesser degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment.'

Traherne wrote:-

'I chose rather to live upon ten pounds a year, and go in leather clothes, and feed upon bread and water....And God was so pleased to accept that desire ...I have had all things plentifully provided for me, without any care at all, my very study of Felicity making me more to prosper than all the care in the whole world (*Centuries* 3-46)

'God' said St Augustine 'is the only reality, and we are only real in so far as we are in his order, and he is in us.' So, in a sense, all Christians are mystics, and Traherne's lovely use of the word 'felicity' incorporates both St Augustine's meaning of 'reality', and Christ's 'Kingdom of Heaven'. The 'treasure' hidden in the field (Mt 13 44) was not buried in Traherne's eyes but there to be seen, in the immanent beauty of the corn' and pursued at whatever cost. And the treasure is Christ! The 'reality' is there for all of us, omnipresent, but elusive, sadly experienced by only a disciplined few in a life of love and prayer. As the church history implies, he remains difficult to evaluate but I believe he wanted us to search him out. The story of how his works have surfaced over the years is consistent with the man himself.

It is to a coterie of London book collectors and publishers, starting with the chance discovery in 1895 (over 200 years after Traherne's death) of two unsigned manuscripts on a street barrow, that we owe our earliest knowledge of Traherne. Initially thought to be the work of the poet Henry Vaughan (1621-1695), it was through the inspired detective work and judgement of Bertram Dobell, a bookseller, that the real authorship was uncovered. Although there was a resemblance to Vaughan in the vocabulary and versification, the writings seemed to Dobell to be of a more excited, intense experience. The joyful philosophy of Christian commitment was unlike anything he had previously come across. Then Dobell's friend Brooke (who had first found the manuscripts on the barrow) recalled a poem of similar ilk in a little book in the British Museum which referred to the author as, at one time, private chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgeman.

So the link to Thomas Traherne was made. Further research revealed him as 'a shoemaker's son of Hereford' who 'was entered a Commoner of Brasen-nose College on the first day of March, 1652; took one degree in Arts, left the House for a time, entered in to the sacred function; and in 1661 was actually created Master of Arts'. About that time Traherne became Rector of

Credenhill near to the City of Hereford and then, in 1669, Bachelor of Divinity. His authorship of two published books, *Roman Forgeries* (1673) and *Christian Ethicks* (1675) was soon established. Both were searched minutely by Dobell for any clue that might link the anonymous work in the manuscripts to these. At last came the break-through: there in chapter 23 of *Christian Ethicks* is a poem entitled 'As in a clock', lines of which also occur in the newly found, and mainly, prose work, which Dobell decided to christen *Centuries of Meditation*, given that the work was arranged by Traherne into sets of one hundred pieces.

Thus it came about that Dobell gave to the world, in 1903, the first edition ever to be printed of the poems of Thomas Traherne and in 1908, *Centuries of Meditation*. Since then other manuscripts have come to light, quite accidentally of course, true to Traherne's persistent anonymity.

In 1910 Sir Idris Bell published a collection of poems bearing Traherne's name, which he had discovered in the British Museum while looking for something else. "Surely one of the strangest tales in all the history of literature" wrote Gladys Wade, Traherne's biographer in 1944², and that was twenty years or so before yet further discoveries, making for an even stranger tale.

In 1964 James Osborn found *Select Meditations*. Then came the astonishing rescue of *The Commentaries of Heaven* from a burning rubbish heap in Lancashire in 1967, which was not attributed to Traherne until 1982. Who knows what other treasures may yet lie hidden?

Gladys Wade wrote: "In the middle of the seventeenth century, there walked the muddy lanes of Herefordshire and the cobbled streets of London (and, we might add, the towpath of the river Thames at Teddington) a man who had found the secret of happiness."

Traherne, himself, wrote of it thus:-

'Your enjoyment of the world is never right, till every morning you awake in Heaven.... till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars... till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God...

² Gladys I Wade *Thomas Traherne* Princetown University Press 1944

till your spirit filleth the whole world...
 till you are intimately acquainted with that shady
 nothing out of which the world was made...
 till you remember how lately you were made, and
 how wonderful it was when you came into it...'
 (From *Centuries* 1-28, 29, 30)

Yet Traherne 'came into it', between 1 March 1637 and 28 February 1639, not so wonderfully. 'Born to mean things' are his words, and 'It is not our parents' loins so much as our parents' lives that enthrals and binds us'. In all his writings there is no personal mention of his parents and we have little information about his background. His father, a poor cobbler, originally from the neighbouring village of Lugwardine, is thought to have died while Thomas and his brother, Philip, were small. The boys were probably brought up by their uncle, also named Philip, a well-to-do inn-keeper who was twice Mayor of Hereford, in a land of timbered farm-houses, of cider-orchards, of hills and woods and streams.

To Traherne:-

'All appeared new, and strange at first, inexpressibly rare and delightful and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which at my entrance into the world was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys'.

His life was not without difficulties. Of his own personal 'fall' he wrote:-

'The first Light which shined in my Infancy in its primitive and innocent clarity was totally eclipsed: insomuch that I was fain to learn all again. If you ask me how it was eclipsed? Truly by the customs and manners of men, which like contrary winds blew it out: by an innumerable company of other objects, rude, vulgar, and worthless things...by the impetuous torrent of wrong desires, finally the evil influence of a bad education...'
 (*Centuries* 3-7)

In *Centuries* 3-14, Traherne compares himself to 'a prodigal son feeding upon husks and swine', and of his friends he writes:

'Their Games, their Bowls, their cheating Dice
 Did not compleat, but spoil, my Paradise.
 On things that gather Rust,
 On modish Cloaths, they fix their minds
 Or sottish Vanity their fancy blinds
 Their eyes being all put out with dust.'

And then:

Sometimes I should be alone, and without employment, when suddenly my Soul would return to itself made to live in Communion with God...that I thought all the gold and silver in the world but dirt..
 (*Centuries* 3-17)

Traherne grew up in an England where battle, murder and sudden death were commonplace, where plague, syphilis and madness claimed thousands of helpless victims, where more babies died than survived, and where witches were burnt alive. It was amongst the horror of all this, but in the redeeming power of Christ and in the glory of creation, that Traherne sought to recover the uncorrupted, prelapsarian innocence of early childhood. Like the prodigal son,
 'Wantonness and Avarice got in
 A House, a Woman's Hand, a piece of Gold
 A Feast, a costly Suit, a beauteous Skin
 That vy'd with Ivory, I did behold
 And all my pleasure was in Sin.'

And like the prodigal son he was welcomed home and embraced.

He has been called 'A Devout Humanist', 'a master of the Affirmative Way', 'unusual in his lack of emphasis on sin'. This is presumably the reason *Christian Ethics*, his own main title, has been re-titled by the publishers *The Way to Blessedness*, but this implies, in my view, that Traherne is on the fringe of orthodox Christianity. And yet powerfully expressed in the *Centuries*, the most personal and beautiful and fluid of all his writings, is the extraordinary focus on 'the Cross of Christ':

'The abyss of wonders, the centre of desires, the school of virtues, the house of wisdom, the throne of love, the theatre of joys, and the place of sorrows... there we may see a Man loving all the world, and a God dying for mankind...O Thou who hast redeemed me'.

"Remember always that thou art about a Magnificent work," wrote Traherne, speaking to each one of us.



St. Marys the Virgin Church, Twickenham
 from the Champion's Wharf sculpture park.

TWICKENHAM SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (elected November 2000)

John Bell , 34 Albion Road Twickenham TW2 6QJ	8898-9618
Jack Betteridge , 14 Aquarius, Eel Pie Island, Twickenham TW1 3EA	8891-4159
Fraser Cullen , 12 Gothic Road, Twickenham, TW2 5EH	8241-2010
Mary Harper , 106 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8PY	8977-2806
David King , Events Secretary, 9 Talma Gardens, Twickenham, TW2 7RB	8892-8284
Judith Lovelace , 30 Strawberry Hill Close, Twickenham TW1 4PX	8892-3671
Philip Morgan , Honorary Secretary, 85 Heathfield South, Twickenham TW2 7SR	8892-6044
Brian Parker , Chairman, 17 The Green, Twickenham TW2 5TU	8894-1348
Derek Plummer , Vice Chairman, 28 Abbott Close, Hampton TW12 3XR	8979-7443
Bill Thompson , 22 Egerton Road, Twickenham TW2 7SP	8892-6560
Meg Wright , 138 Kew Road, Richmond, TW9 2AU	8286-6509

N.B. **Richard Spires** of 70 Pope's Avenue, Twickenham, TW2 5TT (8898-6355) was co-opted to the Committee in June 2001 and invited to act as Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

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Autumnal scene on Twickenham Embankment

You are cordially invited to the

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of the
THE TWICKENHAM SOCIETY**

to be held at
St. Mary's Church Hall,
Church Street, Twickenham
on Friday 9 November 2001

PROGRAMME

7.30 - Welcome and Introductions

7.40 - Guest Speaker – Dr. Ian Horsbrugh
(Principal, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and
President of the Association of European Conservatoires):
on

“What hope for young musicians and actors?”

8.35 - Refreshments

9.00 - Annual General Meeting

AGENDA FOR THE AGM

1. Chairman's Introduction and Report
2. Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Report (See over for 2000 Accounts)
(NB. In June 2000 the Committee elected Richard Spires to be Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary and David King to be Events Secretary)
3. Election of Honorary Secretary
4. Election of Executive Committee
5. Whither the Twickenham Society?
6. Any other business

NOTES

- The current Hon. Secretary is Philip Morgan who wishes to discontinue but will continue, at the behest of the Committee, as Assistant Secretary. Roger Hackett has agreed to stand for election.
- The current membership of the Executive Committee is John Bell, Jack Betteridge, Fraser Cullen, Mary Harper, David King, Judith Lovelace, Philip Morgan, Brian Parker, Derek Plummer, Bill Thompson and Meg Wright. All except Mary Harper and Derek Plummer are willing to be re-elected. Richard Spires is proposed for election.
- Other nominations for Hon. Secretary or Executive Committee may, with the consent of those nominated, be notified in advance of the meeting to the Hon. Secretary (at 85 Heathfield South, Twickenham TW2 7SJ: phone 8892-6044)
- In accordance with the Constitution, the Executive Committee elects officers other than the Hon. Secretary.

THE TWICKENHAM SOCIETY
Accounts for twelve months ending 31 December 2000

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	<u>2000</u>			<u>1999</u>	
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Surplus/(Deficit)</u>		
<u>Society functions</u>					
07/2	Chairman's Reception	----	85.00	(85.00)	(86.41)
11/3	Visit, Steam Museum	18.00	24.00	(6.00)	----
27/4	Visit, Henley R&R Museum	176.00	168.55	7.45	----
31/5	Twickenham Green Fair	260.50	20.00	240.50	428.90
28/5	Wine & Cheese Party	386.00	307.34	78.66	(27.93)
31/7	Garden Party	288.00	344.85	(56.85)	21.05
16/8	"Venturer" boat trips	228.00	180.00	48.00	40.00
9/11	Visit, Strawberry Hill House	72.00	50.40	21.60	----
19/11	Annual General Meeting	43.80	60.30	(16.50)	(14.97)
<hr/>					
Sub-totals		1472.30	1240.44	231.86	360.64
 <u>General Income</u>					
Membership subscriptions		702.00	---	702.00	762.00
Donations		60.10	---	60.10	38.50
Miscellaneous income		30.47	---	30.47	16.00
Bank interest		32.64	---	32.64	60.56
 <u>General expenses</u>					
"Eel Pie" printing		---	358.15	(358.15)	(445.98)
Membership fees & donations		---	102.00	(102.00)	(105.00)
Sponsorship (1999: "Borough in Bloom")		---	208.00	(208.00)	(325.00)
Re Twickenham Riverside Development		---	90.15	(90.15)	(347.18)
Photo-copying & stationery		---	73.40	(73.40)	(82.89)
Postage, telephone & fax		---	121.12	(121.12)	(112.84)
Miscellaneous		---	40.14	(40.14)	(39.48)
<hr/>					
Totals		2297.51	2233.40	64.11	(220.67)

BALANCE SHEET

	<u>31 Dec 2000</u>	<u>31 Dec 1999</u>
Current account	980.27	840.45
Savings account	1647.63	1619.64
Debtors	15.00	236.47
<i>less</i> outstanding cheques	(208.00)	(443.05)
<i>less</i> subs. received in advance	(12.50)	(15.00)
<i>less</i> creditors	(458.27)	(338.49)
<hr/>		
Net assets	1964.13	1900.02

gbp 25ix00

THE TWICKENHAM SOCIETY FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 17 October 7.30 p.m.

At St. Mary's Church Hall a Twickenham Talk

by **Prof. Fred Bachrach CBE**

(Professor Emeritus of Leiden University and Vice-President of the Turner Society):

"Turner and the Sea – the Sea and Turner" (An illustrated talk)

Saturday 27 October 2 to 4 p.m.

A visit to the **Musical Museum**, 368 High Street, Brentford

Price £3 per head (Reply slip below)*

Friday 9 November 7.30 p.m.

Annual General Meeting at St. Mary's Church Hall, Church Street, Twickenham

Guest Speaker: **Dr. Ian Horsbrugh**

(Principal, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and

President of the Association of European Conservatoires):

"What hope for young musicians and actors?"

Wednesday 12 December 7.30 p.m. (Postponed from 5 April)

At St. Mary's Church Hall, a Twickenham Talk

by **Bob Griffin** (Branch Manager, Waitrose, Twickenham):

"The John Lewis organisation: Spedan's unique gift"

Saturday 5 January 7.00 p.m. to c11 p.m.

Twelfth Night Party at 17 The Green, Twickenham

to be hosted by Brian Parker, health permitting.

No charge but please book (both to provide an idea of numbers and to make it possible to warn you if cancellation proves necessary)*

Wednesday 24 January 7.30 p.m.

At St. Mary's Church Hall, a Twickenham Talk

by **Serge Lourie** (Leader, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames):

"New Leader, New Lead"

For membership enquiries: please phone Richard Spires (on 020-8898-6355)

Reply slips: Please send to Philip Morgan, Hon. Secretary, 85 Heathfield South, Twickenham TW2 7SR

Yes please, I/we would like to attend the visit to the **Musical Museum** on 27 October.

Number of places required(@ £3 per person)

Cheque enclosed (payable to The Twickenham Society) for £

Name(s)..... Tel. No.

Yes please, I/we would like to come to **Brian Parker's Twelfth Night Party** on 5 January

Number of places required

Name(s) Tel. No.
