



HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Newsletter



No. 11 Autumn 2004

Welcome to our latest newsletter. The core of this edition is our chairman's report for the last year. We also have articles from Group members and other contributors, including features on the Empress State building and the monuments of St Paul's Church. John Goodier looks at industrial heritage and also at Hurlingham Park and our Mayor adds some recollections of pre-war polo matches at Hurlingham. Nigel Hensman documents the conversion of the Brook Green synagogue into the Chinese Church in London, and Howard Bailes of St Paul's Girls' School draws our attention to the school's buildings in this its centenary year.

Former Synagogue Becomes Chinese Church in London

The former Hammersmith and West London Synagogue complex in Brook Green has been given a new life as the Chinese Church in London. Originally constructed in the 1890s, the complex has been restored and sensitively extended by its new occupants, and services have already started. In general, the conversion represents a successful re-use of a Council-registered building of merit. Some of the original stained glass fortunately remains. However, other glass has sadly gone: that from the five eastern windows was transferred to the Jewish community and other glass was regrettably sold off. The two foundation stones dated 1890 and 1896, formerly set into the front façade, have also disappeared in somewhat mysterious circumstances. However, we are glad to see that two stones dated 1894 remain at the rear of the main building.

Nigel Hensman

Recording Our Industrial Heritage

Very little industrial heritage remains in Hammersmith and Fulham. Apart from the canal and parts of the riverside, the main areas where you can find older industrial buildings are Hythe Road, the Willesden Junction neighbourhood, the district north of the new Shepherds Bush development area, and the Imperial Gasworks site at Sands End. Scattered about the borough's back streets you can also see a few laundry buildings and small workshops in places like Waldo Road and Peterborough Road.

What remains of the borough's industrial heritage is under threat, for example from the London Plan, which regards many of these old industrial areas as potential sites for new houses, and from the fact that new office buildings often have a functional life of only 25 years.

It is very important to record both the architecture and the history of a building before it disappears. Currently there

are plans to redevelop the Prestolite factory site in Larden Road for housing. This is believed to be the oldest part of the small Warple Way industrial estate straddling the Hammersmith and Acton border. The 1930s and later buildings may be retained and converted to housing, but the classic fire trap roofed section near Valetta Road, built when C. A. Vandervelt's engineering firm moved to the borough in 1904, will almost certainly go.

The Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society is building a database of industrial sites, and local history libraries in our borough and throughout London have some relevant archival material. Nevertheless, it remains the case that much of our industrial and business history has been and is being lost for want of awareness of its importance and resources to record it before it disappears.

John Goodier

The Monuments of St Paul's Church, Hammersmith

The present St Paul's Church at Hammersmith Broadway was built in the 1880s. It replaced the chapel-of-ease belonging to All Saints Fulham, which had stood on the site since 1631. Nothing remains of the chapel, but fortunately many of its memorial monuments were saved and are now displayed inside the present church.

The situation in the churchyard is not so good. Just before the demolition of the old church in 1882, Charles Winter, the assistant master of the St Paul's church school, carried out a survey of the 553 headstones and recorded their inscriptions in a notebook, a copy of which can be seen in the borough archives. Only about a tenth of the headstones he recorded have survived. These are now placed against the exterior walls of the church and the churchyard.

Most of these stones are largely indecipherable because of damage from rain and frost. However, some can still be made out. Just to the east of the main door of the church is the attractive table tomb of the Fenn family, dating from the 1790s and constructed out of ashlar with fluted corner pilasters. The worn inscription refers to Elizabeth Colvill who married into the Fenn family. She was the daughter of composer and organist William Boyce (1711-1779), who lived in Hammersmith in the 1760s. The Jones family table tomb on the south side of the Lady Chapel (next to the flyover) is Grade II listed but in a very poor condition with two sides of its railings broken, considerable damage to its limestone plinth and buddleia growing out of one side. The church is planning to restore and re-site the tomb in the next few years.

Outside the church tower is the largest clutch of tombs, including that of Sir Nicholas Crispe, the 17th-century merchant who lived on the riverside in what later became Brandenburg House, near the end of modern-day Queen Caroline Street. Crispe's body was originally interred in his family vault in the City. After resting there for 233 years it was moved in 1898 to Hammersmith and placed in a chest tomb by the rear door of the church. There is also a monument to Crispe inside the church (*see left*).



The most dramatic external monument is the Grade II listed headstone to Richard Honey and George Francis, shot dead in 1821 during rioting caused by the passage of Queen Caroline of Brunswick's funeral procession through central London en route to Harwich (Queen Caroline lived in Brandenburg House in Hammersmith). The headstone refers to the 'melancholy events' and 'the disgraceful transactions of that disastrous day'. Poignantly it also records that Honey left 'one female orphan' and Francis a widow and three young children.

Inside the church the walls are decorated with memorials that provide a potted history of Hammersmith over the past four hundred years. These memorials include: the Earl of Mulgrave who captained *The Beare* in 1588 against the Spanish Armada; W. Tierney Clark who built the first Hammersmith Bridge in 1827; James Smith, a wealthy salter, whose second wife bore him fifteen children; and another less fortunate Smith from Fulham who was killed in the Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854 aged 21.

There are several heart-rending memorials to young sons killed in the First World War: Francis Phipps, a midshipman, killed in the Battle of Jutland aged seventeen; Ronald Chibnall aged twenty who 'fell gallantly' leading his men into action under very heavy fire at Glencorse Wood near Ypres, 31 July 1917; and Lewis Bryett who died of wounds in France just three weeks before the armistice and his 20th birthday.

Finally, just to show that memorials can also provoke wry smiles, Thomas Worlidge, a painter who died in 1766 and who is now remembered in Worlidge Street, left us this modest epitaph:

He who had Art, so near to nature brought,
As ev'n to give shadows, life and thought,
Had yet, Alas! no art or power to save
His own corporal substance from the grave.
Yet tho' his mortal part inactive lies
Still WORLIDGE lives, for genius never dies.

Barrie Stead

(Editor's note: Barrie Stead has recently completed a detailed audit of the monuments of St Paul's Church for the Group. A copy has been deposited in the borough's Archive and Local History Centre.)

The Empress State Building

During the late 19th century the Earls Court area on which the Empress State Building and the Earls Court Exhibition Hall now stand was an awkward triangle of railway tracks, sidings and depots, all of which rendered the land useless for residential development.

The West London Railway track ran north-south through the site between the main Earls Court Exhibition Hall and Earls Court Two. To the west was a massive shed, named Empress Hall in 1876 by the then Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, following his creation of the title 'Empress of India' for Queen Victoria.

Empress Hall was used primarily as an entertainment venue. In 1887 it hosted Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which gave Victorian Londoners their first glimpse of real cowboys and indians. Queen Victoria herself attended two command performances here.

In 1896 on a site just north of Empress Hall, a retired naval officer, Walter Bassett, constructed the Great Wheel of Earls Court, an enormous 300-foot high Ferris wheel based on the celebrated Ferris wheel that thrilled crowds during the Chicago Exhibition in 1893. The Earls Court Wheel weighed 1,100 tonnes with 40 cars suspended around the perimeter, each capable of accommodating 40 passengers. A complete revolution took 20 minutes: one commentator described the experience as 'rising as if in a balloon, in a comfortable carriage, without risk and without exertion'.

Much to the embarrassment of the operators, the Great Wheel ground to a halt at 7.40 pm on 21 May 1896 shortly after opening. Some reports state that passengers were suspended above the ground for four hours; other reports

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The original St Paul's Church, Hammersmith, from Faulkner's History of Hammersmith, 1839

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Chairman's Report

September 2004

This year the Group's work has focused on a new edition of our *Local List*, which is now in alphabetical street order instead of survey areas. This should make it much easier to use. As always it includes statutorily listed buildings, buildings on the Council's register of buildings of merit and buildings the Group considers worthy of retention. The new edition includes additional details on many buildings and a new section on historic parks and gardens in the borough. Copies will be available at the AGM.

We have also been getting to grips with major changes to the planning law, ranging from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill and the mayor's London Plan to the proposals for changes to the historic buildings regime.

We have been involved as ever in planning applications, with Lots Road/Chelsea Creek continuing as a major concern with far reaching effects. We have given evidence to two appeals. And our work continues on the conservation area profiles.

Fulham Palace

As members will know, we are represented on the advisory board of Fulham Palace, the borough's most important historic building with an outstanding setting, and its restoration has continued to be a major issue.

The Group is delighted that the Council and Fulham Palace Trust have been successful in their joint application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £2.56 million grant towards the cost of the first phase of works to restore the palace. All of the funding is now confirmed and a design team has been appointed to draw up the plans in detail. The works will go out to tender in November and are expected to start on site in April next year.

In the meantime, the project director, Scott Cooper, is drawing up a draft strategy for phase two of the works. Based on the public consultation undertaken last year, the draft strategy will seek to ensure the enhancement of the museum, the conservation of the west courtyard, the restoration of the grounds and the repair and reuse of all of the outbuildings including the Gothic lodge and vinery – both of which are on English Heritage's buildings at risk register. The draft strategy will be subject to a further round of public consultation before it is finalised, probably sometime in late 2005.

The London Plan and Changes to Planning Legislation

Members will know that the mayor's London Plan, the first strategic plan for London since the Greater London

Development Plan, has now replaced the Regional Planning Guidance for London and all Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) are required to be 'in general conformity' with it.

You will know from my last chairman's report and our spring newsletter that we had major concerns, shared with English Heritage, about the lack of priority given to the historic environment in the draft London Plan. The inspectors in their report supported many of our arguments for improvements to the plan.



The early 15th century archway and the vinery, both Grade II listed, in the walled garden at Fulham Palace, viewed from inside the garden

When the final plan was published in February 2004 we were relieved to find that the mayor had included most of the inspectors' recommendations. The policies on the historic environment are now fuller, the Blue Ribbon Network policies are incorporated into the main body of the plan and the *Thames Strategy – Kew to Chelsea* is recognised as an appropriate appraisal. The policies for tall buildings are not as prescriptive and the important views towards St Paul's Cathedral are now reinstated. (As a result of our evidence to the London Plan's examination in public, the Group has been invited to join the mayor's working party on the protection of views.)

However, the problem now is the way the mayor interprets the plan when he comments on planning applications. In his responses he is supporting the policies for growth – build high and build dense – and ignoring other policies. The whole situation is complicated by changes in planning

law. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill recently received the royal assent. In September when the Act comes into effect, the London Plan will become part of the development plan for the borough. In addition work will begin on replacing the UDP. In future we will not have a UDP but a Local Development Framework (LDF). This will comprise a loose-leaf collection of Local Development Documents. It is meant to be a simpler system than the UDP. Given the amount of detailed work that went into the present UDP, both by borough officers and voluntary groups like ours, we trust that much of the agreed policies on the environment, historic buildings, conservation areas, open space, the river, the canal and the local register of buildings of merit will survive in some form.

Examples of valuable borough policies are the long-standing, criteria-based, policy on tall buildings, the new policy on shop fronts introduced at the last UDP review and the new concept of 'good neighbourliness'. The policy on shop fronts has been successful in retaining valuable old shop fronts, for example the 1930s' front of the Duke of Cornwall pub in Fulham Palace Road and the old Lloyds Bank building at Hammersmith Broadway, now Ladbroke's. The policy of 'good neighbourliness' enabled us to argue successfully at several appeals that the proposals were 'un-neighbourly'.

Changes to the Heritage Protection Regime

Earlier this year I represented the Group at a seminar at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on their consultation paper *Protecting the Historic Environment – making the system work better*. I was the only representative of a local group among the representatives of the heritage and development industries. Whilst some of the ideas in the proposal are helpful, there is an underlying fear that 'working better' is DCMS PR-speak for 'weakening' in order to remove a check on development! These proposals are now being tried out in parts of England and legislation is expected later.

On 23 September Simon Thurley, chief executive of English Heritage, is giving a lecture to the London Forum on 'The Importance of Heritage in Regeneration'. No doubt he will be questioned about the changes being proposed. HBG members are welcome – see details on back page.

Shepherds Bush and the White City Development

The 'greening' of Shepherds Bush by the planting of mature trees along the western and southern sides of the Green together with paving improvements – part of the planning gain from Chelsfield's White City development – is a plus for the conservation area. Sadly a number of the new trees have died but we understand these will be replaced this autumn.

On the minus side the 'greening' we have long advocated at the eastern end has not yet materialised. The dreadful concrete planters with half-dead plants remain. Is there a good reason why trees cannot be planted instead? Now that the major demolition has taken place and we have lost the White City Arch there is an extension to the 'concrete desert' at the eastern end. However, the plan for the rebuilt underground station does allow for some landscaping

though no details are yet available. Certainly the temporary bus station with its obligatory huge advertisements has not made short-term improvements!

We understand that the plan to urbanise the common itself is no longer being actively considered by the Council. At the time of the original consultation we expressed our strong view that at Shepherds Bush we had a valued and historic survival of common land and that it should not change its essential nature, though appropriate improvements would be welcome. Now we look forward to a more modest scheme of improvement.

The north side of the Green has an interesting and eclectic mix of 19th and 20th century buildings. The Group has been arguing for a number of years for an improvement scheme involving the shop fronts, paving and street furniture. We hope that this can be implemented independently of any decision on the proposals for the Uxbridge Road tram.

There is no further news on incorporating the Wood Lane station frontage, with its early London Transport sign, into the new underground station in Wood Lane. We continue to press for this, along with the completion of the terrace of cottages in Shepherds Bush Place and the re-erection of the White City Arch or at least a smaller scale replica of it as a link with the past history of the area.

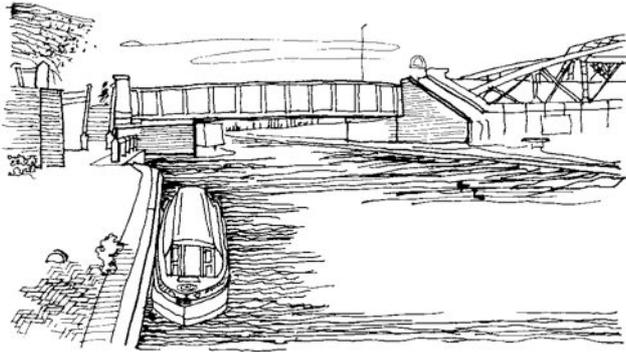


The White City Arch at Shepherds Bush as it appeared in 1935. It was built in 1908 as the entrance to the White City exhibition grounds and demolished in 2003

The Group has contributed to the consultation on the development framework for the White City opportunity area and stressed that, as it is partly in the Wood Lane conservation area, any development should take into account the effect on the conservation area and the nearby Shepherd's Bush conservation area and should respect the listed Dimco building and the BBC TV centre, a building of merit. We also pointed out the need for appropriate open space and the opportunity to extend the green corridor along the railway.

The Canal

There is a proposal for a waste sorting and transfer station to be built at Old Oak Common sidings alongside the canal. Built in 1801, the canal is probably the oldest industrial monument in the borough. It is also a linear open space, a nature conservation area, a green corridor and the tow path is part of a long distance canalside walk. Using the canal for transport, the use for which it was originally built, is welcome, provided that the new use is managed to cause as little pollution and disturbance to neighbours and other users as possible and that every reasonable effort is made to accommodate the wildlife and enhance the landscape of the canal and the public tow path on the opposite bank.



The Grand Union Canal and Mitre Bridge (carrying Scrubs Lane) in the north of the borough

Lots Road and Chelsea Creek

As previously reported, the Circadian proposals for what is known as the 'Lots Road development' cover the area on either side of Chelsea Creek with part in our borough and part in Kensington and Chelsea. Hammersmith and Fulham gave permission and Kensington and Chelsea refused permission for their respective parts.

The minister has now called in the Hammersmith and Fulham part of the scheme and Circadian have appealed against the Kensington and Chelsea refusal. We are expecting a public inquiry into the whole scheme next year.

The Group will be appearing at the inquiry along with other resident and amenity associations. Our concerns include the damage to the Sands End conservation area, the effect on the river views of the two tall towers – one 37 storeys and one 25 storeys, the unsatisfactory nature of the Riverside walk, lack of public open space, particularly green space – the loss of the avenue of mature trees and encroachment into the Creek.

Imperial Wharf and the Sands End Riverside Park

The results of the public consultation on what local people would like in their new park are now published. Not surprisingly, the future park's riverside location is seen as one of its 'major attractions'. The park should have 'an open, natural design' and should 'extend seamlessly to the riverside and its banks'. 'Activities on the river should be encouraged and facilities provided', particularly 'safe play facilities for children'. Wildlife in the park rates highly, especially with children, and adults want to use the park for exercise, walking and 'sitting quietly'.

The Council is now discussing a new design with St George to replace the formal gardens separated from a very urban riverside walk as currently proposed. We continue to be very concerned that St George have constructed much of the riverside walk without having detailed planning permission either for that or the adjacent park.

Olympia

The application to build on the Olympia car park, reported in the spring newsletter, was refused on appeal for a variety of reasons. The report was a complicated one and the inspector summed up as follows: the proposal 'has sacrificed many environmental quality objectives for the sake of maximising the amount of accommodation' (almost a theme of the arguments the Group and others make at many appeals!). We were pleased that our arguments that the use of the car park had a direct relationship to 'the future well being of the Olympia Exhibition Centre' (a recently listed building) and that an 'opportunity to promote the green appearance of the green corridor' had been missed were grounds for refusal.

The River

I am pleased to report that the *Thames Strategy – Kew to Chelsea* has appointed a full time co-ordinator, Trenton Oldfield, to pursue the policies and projects contained in the strategy – many of course linked with the historic environment. We congratulate Chris Munro, who has been the temporary part-time co-ordinator for the last year, for what he has achieved. He has set the enhancement process in motion and a number of projects are underway.

The project to restore **Broomhouse Drawdock** – removing the accretions of years and returning it as far as is practical to its original form as a public access point to the water – is scheduled to start as this report is being written. This historic drawdock dates back to medieval times and we hope that more of the old stone causeway, recorded in early 20th century photos, will be revealed when the mound of concrete is removed. Historic drawdocks are continuations of old roads onto the foreshore, hence the stone causeways like the one here. When the work is finished the drawdock, which has been shut off for years, will return to public use. That will be a moment to celebrate!

The Group has been closely involved in work on the first of several new **information boards** planned to be installed along the riverside in the borough. The boards will identify landmarks and present historical and ecological information. Considerable effort has gone into establishing a design and style for the first board that will make it attractive and informative, and also suitable to be used as a template for later ones. This first board is intended for the open space near the Old Ship Inn in Upper Mall.

Conservation Areas

This year the Group has contributed to four more conservation area profiles: Brook Green, the Gunter Estate, Studdridge Street and Queen's Club Gardens. I am pleased to report that all except Gunter have now been adopted by the Council. We are pleased that the Council has agreed to include the Queen's Club in the Queen's Club Gardens conservation area.

Enforcement

As reported in the spring newsletter, the Group continues to be concerned at the epidemic of large and intrusive advertisements, many of them unauthorised, which has such a damaging effect on the townscape. We support the Council in its efforts to enforce the removal of unauthorised signage. Some signs have gone but there are more that need to go. We particularly liked the story of one London borough using an anti-social behaviour order to restrain one regular offender!

Pubs

The borough has a wealth of historic pubs. Just published is Group member Chris Aimes' *Hammersmith and Fulham Pubs* containing many historic photos from the borough archives. Also just published is the CAMRA regional inventory of historic pub interiors in London, which includes three entries for our borough: the Dove in Upper Mall, the Hope & Anchor in Macbeth Street and the Queen's Arms in Greyhound Road. Further details of both publications are on the back page.

On pub names, Finnegan's Wake in the Fulham Palace Road has reverted to its old name of the Duke of Cornwall, and the Goose at 360 Wandsworth Bridge Road has become the WB Tavern – almost the old Wandsworth Bridge Tavern.

The Group always tries to secure the retention of any integral signage. As part of its refurbishment, the name of the Duke of York in Perrers Road is now to be reinstated in its original place on the gable. Let's hope the new pub when it opens will keep the old name.

Building Updates

Odeon, Shepherds Bush Permission has now been granted to convert this listed cinema into a hotel.

Craven Cottage Fulham Football Club is back at Craven Cottage with an all-seater, 22,000 capacity ground. The Group is pleased that the important listed Stevenage Road stand and turnstiles and the cottage itself, 'a rare survivor of early football ground buildings', have been retained. A condition of the permission granted for the alterations to the ground was that there should be new planting along the boundary with Bishop's Park to provide a screen. The Group is not happy with the minimal planting proposed and has asked for improvements.

Hammersmith Pumping Station The *Evening Standard* featured the Group's defence of the pumping station in a feature in May headlined 'Heritage Heroes'.. The Group is concerned that the overlarge riverside extension, for which unfortunately permission was subsequently given, will damage the views of the landmark building from the river. Defeated heroes on this occasion unfortunately!

31 Irene Road is the last remaining prefab in the borough. It is owned by the Council and is a building of merit. The Group is concerned that if the land is developed the prefab should be saved and re-erected elsewhere in the borough.

St Paul's Church, Hammersmith has recently applied to redevelop the site of 3 Sussex Place with an eight-storey building to provide a community centre with residential units above. There is also an outstanding planning application for an extension to the listed church to provide

offices. In addition, the church is proposing to cut off the west end of the church with a 'glass box'. This latter proposal does not need planning permission as it is covered by ecclesiastical exemption. The churchyard containing three listed tombs and others of interest is on the English Heritage buildings at risk register. We have written to the Council asking that the church's expansion plans should be looked at as one and not dealt with piecemeal. We are sad that the marvellous interior space of the church should be divided up, and we consider it a priority that the listed tombs – mentioned in the St Paul's monuments article elsewhere in this newsletter – should be restored.

The Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting this year is on 16 September at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA), 153-155 Talgarth Road. The buildings that now house LAMDA include the original teacher training college and kindergarten designed by John Salmon Quilter for the Froebel Educational Institute. The Institute remained here from its opening in 1904 till its move to Roehampton in 1946. The buildings were then purchased by the Arts Council for the Sadlers Wells Ballet School, later the Royal Ballet School. Further details are included in the AGM mailing and we look forward to seeing you there.



LAMDA, 153-155 Talgarth Road, designed by J. S. Quilter in 1894 for the Froebel Institute Training College

Our Work

As you can see, the amount of work the Group undertakes is wide ranging. I am deeply grateful to all the members who help, particularly committee members, the surveyors who work on the *List* and Michael Plumbe, who maintains the database for the *List*. Please contact us (details on back page) if you would like to help with research or in any other way. We are always delighted to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to any aspect of our work.

Angela Dixon

Stop Press: Blythe House, the former Post Office Savings Bank in Blythe Road, and West Kensington Post Office and delivery office adjacent have just been listed Grade II. The listing includes the gates, railings and boundary walls. The Odeon Cinema (now the Carling Apollo) has also been upgraded to Grade II*.

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claim that it was not until the following morning that the last passenger was allowed to disembark. Whichever version is true, historians agree that each of the unfortunate passengers was compensated with five guineas, a large



Walter Bassett's Great Wheel of Earls Court, erected in 1896 and taken down in 1906

sum for the time and enough to produce a queue of 11,000 people the following day all wanting to try out the Great Wheel experience, presumably in the hope that it would get stuck again. In fact, the Wheel never broke down again and over two million passengers were able to enjoy it before it was demolished in 1906.

The Empress Hall continued to be used as an entertainment venue during Edwardian times, when it claimed to be the world's largest ballroom. After that it had several uses: as a centre for Belgian refugees, a Rolls Royce garage and a gymnastics venue for the 1948 London Olympics. Its final use was as an ice rink where Pantomimes on Ice were pioneered. The Hall was demolished in the late 1950s.

Construction on the current building, Empress State, commenced in 1961. The architects, Stone Toms, designed it on a Y- shape plan, with three wings extending 37m from a central core to equilaterally placed satellite cores. With 27 storeys and 320 ft high, Empress State Building, as it was then called, was the tallest building in London until it was overtaken by Millbank Tower in 1962.

When the Admiralty, which had occupied Empress State since 1962, moved out in the late 1990s, Land Securities embarked on a major refurbishment programme, adding three new floors and a revolving meeting venue at the top. By far the most significant change was to the south elevation, which was extended 5m outwards on all 27 floors. Empress State now provides 420,000 sq ft of office space with some of the best views in west London.

Matt Harrington

Centenary of St Paul's Girls' School

This year St Paul's Girls' School on Brook Green is celebrating its centenary. Opened in January 1904, the heart of the school is Gerald Horsley's original school building of 1903-4, a minor masterpiece of the Arts and Crafts. As a disciple of William Morris, Horsley was determined that the structure and furnishings of his building should be both beautiful and useful, and that its appearance should be true to its materials. The strawberry pink brick, white stonework, fine slates, casement windows, wrought-iron gates (requisitioned in 1942 and not replaced until 1956), the Devonshire and Italian marble of the entrance hall and the oak panelling, are all testimony to his beliefs.

St Paul's was born of High Victorian ideals and the reforming drive of Gladstone's first ministry, though its 33-year gestation was preternaturally long. Once it was launched, however, the school had the finance, expertise and lofty ideals of the Mercers' Company behind it. 'There is room', wrote Sir Joshua Fitch to the Mercers in 1894, 'for a school of the highest type, splendidly endowed and equipped, attracting to itself teachers of distinguished skill and qualification, and worthy in all respects to rank as the sister institution of St Paul's...'

It's well known that music was an important part of the school day from the beginning. But physical exercise and sporting prowess were also taken seriously from the start. Bute House and its five acres were acquired by the Mercers in 1916 and soon used as the sports field. St Paul's was the first English girls' school to have its own swimming pool. That was in 1910. A sports hall – its glass and awnings evocative of a moored liner – was opened in 2000. To the credit of its architects, the Fitzroy Robinson Partnership, the hall won the Hammersmith and Fulham Council's Best Building award for that year.



St Paul's Girls' School on Brook Green, designed by Gerald Horsley in 1903

Future architectural projects at the school include the refurbishment, in consultation with English Heritage, of the great hall of 1903-4 and the singing hall of 1913, both the work of Gerald Horsley. There are also plans to overhaul the Fitzroy Partnership's Celia Johnson Theatre, opened by the Queen Mother in 1985 and now showing signs of wear.

Howard Bailes

Hurlingham Park

The Hurlingham Club was opened in 1869 at Hurlingham House. Ten years later it acquired neighbouring Musgrave House. On part of this site and on some land already owned, the club laid out a polo ground and associated stables and grandstand. Another polo ground was later established on what is now the Sullivan Court Estate. In 1942 the land was leased to Fulham Council for allotments. Nine years later it was compulsorily purchased by the London County Council with funding and support from a wide range of organisations and made into a public park. The contributing organisations are listed on a plaque just inside the main gate dated 11 September 1954.

The park's main role today is sports and recreation. A children's play area, bowling green and all-weather courts feature on the Musgrave House land, and there is a sports field and running track on the former polo ground. The original grandstand has been replaced in recent years by a modern changing facility. There is a small rose garden hidden amongst the facilities on the Musgrave land and some planting around the park entrance. Many good trees line the park perimeter and the boundary between the two parcels of land. The park is well used for formal and informal team games and individual exercise. The Sullivan Court Estate on the second polo ground is well laid out. For those seeking a more formal park, South Park is only a short walk away. Hurlingham Park probably gets few people coming to see it from other parts of the borough, but it is well worth a visit.

John Goodier

A Mayoral Recollection of Hurlingham Park

In 1936 Queensmill School where I was a pupil received an invitation to visit the Hurlingham Club to watch a polo match. On the big day we marched from the school to the club rather excited at having a half day out of school and wondering what was in store for us as none of the children had any idea what was involved in a polo match.

We reached the club entrance in Hurlingham Road, went through the gates and followed the road that led to a large field. We were instructed to sit by a white line but not cross it. After a short while some men arrived riding on ponies and carrying long sticks with knobs on the end. Someone produced a small white ball and hit it with a stick. Then they all went chasing after it.

The exciting part was the way the ponies were able to turn so quickly even when they were running so fast. Our day ended when we all received a bag of fruit and sweets.

Now in 2004 I have gone full circle. After 68 years I paid my second visit to the Hurlingham Club, as Mayor of Hammersmith and Fulham, to have a very enjoyable lunch as the guest of the chairman.

I have, however, made many visits to the original polo pitch, now part of Hurlingham Park following its acquisition by London County Council. I can stand on the running track in the park and still see in my mind's eye those ponies dashing around.

Cllr Charlie Treloggan, Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

DIARY DATES 2004

16 Sept: Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group AGM, LAMDA, 153-155 Talgarth Road W14. 8pm.

17 Sept: Closing date for entries to Hammersmith and Fulham's summer photo competition. Details from www.hfla21.org.uk or David Wardrop, tel. 020 7385 6738.

18-19 September: London Open House weekend and the Mayor's Thames Festival.

23 Sept: London Forum AGM and Simon Thurley lecture on the importance of heritage in regeneration. 6pm. 70 Cowcross St EC1. 020 7834 5173 for details.

19 Oct: London Forum debate on public open spaces. 6.30pm. See above for venue.

16 Nov: London Forum 'update and implications' on Crossrail and Eurolink. 6.30pm. See above for venue.

GROUP OFFICERS AND CONTACT DETAILS

• *Chairman:* Angela Dixon, 31 St Peter's Square W6 9NW. 020 8748 7416. dixon.angela@talk21.com

• *Treasurer:* Jo Brock, Flat 12, 43 Peterborough Road SW6 3BT. 020 7731 0363.

• *Planning Secretary:* Roger Warry, 4 Ravenscourt Road W6 0UC. 020 8748 1030.

PUBLICATIONS

• *Hammersmith and Fulham Pubs*, by Chris Amies. £12.99 from Tempus Publishing. Tel: 01453 883300.

• *The London Regional Inventory of Pub Interiors of Special Historic Interest*. £3.50 inc. p&p from CAMRA. Tel: 01727 867201.

• *Local List* published by the Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group. £17 to members and £20 to non-members. Available from the chairman. Tel: 020 8748 7416. **New edition** available at the AGM.

• *Bradmore House* published by the Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group. Illustrated. £5.00 inc. p&p. Available from the chairman. Tel: 020 8748 7416.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subs are £5.00 for individuals and £15 for groups.

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NEW MEMBERS

We are always looking for new members to help us in our work. Please contact either the chairman or treasurer for further information (contact details above).

EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you would like to receive information from time to time between newsletters, please ensure your email address is registered with the chairman – contact details above.

NEWSLETTER CREDITS

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