



No. 18 Spring 2008

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. 2008 is a significant year in our borough, representing as it does the centenary of both the 1908 White City Olympics and the Bishop Creighton House settlement in Lillie Road. We have articles on both. 2008 also sees the publication of Sue Pierson's book about local benefactor Charlotte Sullivan – see page 11 for Sue's article about Charlotte and her family. Elsewhere in the newsletter we have reports of HBG events (annual meeting and canal cruise), coverage of transport history and heritage (Hammersmith hub and Fulham river crossings), nature notes on Scrubs wildlife and Thames eels, and an update on Granville Sharp's grave and neglected public sculpture in the borough. Finally, please note the back page diary dates, in particular our treasure hunt on 17 May. This is our main fundraising event of the year and we are hoping for a good turn out with loads of people participating, including children. It should be both educational and fun.

Chairman's Update

Hammersmith Town Hall Redevelopment

Grainger/Helical Bar have now been chosen by the council as its development partners for the '**regeneration of King Street**' project. The site, includes the town hall car park, the cinema, the mansion flats on the eastern side of Cromwell Avenue and the Friends Meeting House as well as the area covered by the existing town hall extension and the modern offices in King Street to the east of the town hall extension. The listed town hall, designed by E Berry Webber and built 1938-39, is an elegant free standing brick building with a front facing



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the river where steps lead down from the mayor's parlour flanked by carvings of Old Father Thames. It is an important part of the splendid views along the riverside from Furnivall Gardens enjoyed by thousands every year who use the riverside walk.

The Group welcomes the proposed demolition of the obtrusive town hall extension and the restoration of the original north front to King Street with its ceremonial steps

rising from a civic square. However, we are concerned about the height and detailed design of the proposed new buildings (particularly their relationship to King Street, nearby listed buildings like the Salutation pub and the surrounding conservation areas), and we hope for detailed improvements.

The Group is strongly opposed to the current proposal – as shown in the recent public exhibition – to raise the level of Nigel Playfair Avenue in order to lead to a bridge over the A4. This would descend in ramps to ground level in Furnivall Gardens. At first glance this might seem an attractive idea, but it would actually be very damaging to the listed town hall itself and to the views of it from King Street and the riverside. The bridge and ramps were shown as looming over the listed buildings on the Mall (the 18th century Dove pub and Sussex House are very close) and the ramps would take up a lot of space in Furnivall Gardens and necessitate a re-design of the park. We support the Hammersmith Society in their long-standing proposal to have a ground level crossing to Furnivall Gardens, which until recently had been supported by both the council and Transport for

Left: *The south front of E Berry Webber's 1939 Hammersmith town hall, pictured in the July 1950 edition of Architecture Illustrated. The Great West Road had yet to be built in front.*

London. The second choice is to improve the underpass. It seems quite bizarre to improve one front of the town hall and then damage the other (an even better one) with this bridge and to allow development to encroach on a popular and heavily used park designed as a piece in 1951 to commemorate the Festival of Britain.

Open Space

The borough is short of open space and how we use and look after our existing open spaces is of great importance, as is ensuring that there is adequate open space provided in new developments. We welcome the increased priority being given by the council to open space though we were concerned at the very wide remit of the licensing applications for Bishop's Park and Ravenscourt Park. We await the publication of the borough's draft open space strategy and hope it will be robust in its defence of open space against the pressure for development.

The lottery bid to improve **Bishop's Park** and to restore the grounds and outbuildings at **Fulham Palace** is scheduled to be made at the end of March. Whitelaw Turkington were appointed as landscape consultants for the improvements to **Shepherd's Bush Common** and plans are being developed in consultation with a stakeholders' group on which the Group is represented. The plan for **Frank Banfield Park**, drawn up at the time of an earlier scheme for Hammersmith Embankment, is now being implemented despite representations from the local residents' associations and from the Group for a review of the out of date landscape plan. We continue to hope that some revisions can be agreed to avoid a sadly wasted opportunity.

The Riverside

The river and the riverside walk with the adjacent open spaces is the borough's biggest area of open space and one of the most valued for the wildlife, for the rowing and sailing, and for the views. Some of the best views are those across to the wooded tow path in Barnes, a rare and much appreciated bit of almost rural landscape in an urban area.

The Group is concerned about the loss of trees along this wooded towpath. The Port of London Authority (PLA) owns much of the towpath and its riverbank. As a statutory undertaker it is able to do things without the usual need for prior consultation or for a planning application. It has recently started on a rolling programme designed eventually to clear all the trees growing in the revetment on the opposite bank between Putney and Kew, which it argues are damaging the banking. This is being done without any plan in place for replanting trees or management of the existing landscape. The group is working with the Thames Strategy – Kew to Chelsea, Richmond council and other amenity groups to try to persuade the PLA to help draw up a long-term conservation management plan for the tow path to preserve this landscape for future generations. We would be glad to hear from any members who could help with this, particularly if they have appropriate professional expertise.

At Imperial Wharf, the design for **Sands End Park** has now been approved. The Group was very concerned that although there had been some modification to the original very formal design – dubbed the 'mini Versailles' – it still did not reflect the clear wishes of the local people as shown in the public consultation, namely that the design should be informal, natural, encourage wildlife and lead seamlessly to the riverside. Some minor amendments have been agreed, but we hope the developers, St George, will consider other suggestions we have made to bring the design more into line with what local people have asked for. The **riverside walk at Imperial Wharf** has been constructed without planning approval and was designed as an extension of the private development rather than signalling by its materials and street furniture that it is part of the public footpath along the riverside. The riverside walk should not be 'annexed by design' and we hope that when the application to the council is finally made, it will comply with the borough's design guidance in *StreetSmart*.

Streetscape

Members may have noticed that some of the worst of the large advertisement hoardings around the borough have been removed recently. We congratulate the council on taking a more robust approach and we encourage them to continue it. There was a very informative report recently to the Cleaner and Greener Scrutiny Committee (14 January 2008) on enforcement. It is on the council's website. It is worth reading and it offers good guidance to members on what could usefully be reported to the council for action.

Shepherd's Bush and White City

The work on the new Shepherd's Bush Central Line station has started. The Group continues to press for discussion on the surrounding landscaping. We have argued that the landscaping of the common should be linked with that around the new station and with the Thames Water roundabout. The roundabout looks more and more like a works site rather than the landscaped area which it was meant to be when it received approval in 1990. A review is long overdue.



Shepherd's Bush roundabout c1994, from the north and showing the famous water tower barometer on the left.

Listed Buildings

We have recently commented on several planning applications for alterations and additions to listed buildings. A major application concerned the church of **St John the Evangelist** in Glenthorne Road. Designed by

William Butterfield, built between 1857-59 and listed Grade II*, it was no longer required as a church. We welcomed Godolphin and Latymer School's proposed use as school assembly and performance space, especially as it avoided the subdivision of the building, could have community use and left the Lady Chapel available for worship. The downside is that there will be a visible stage with lighting and acoustic equipment, but all new works except for the flooring will be designed to be reversible.

The **Ravenscourt Park Hospital**, formerly the Royal Masonic, was designed by Burnett, Tait and Lorne and opened in 1933 to wide acclaim. It is Grade II listed. We are pleased that the building is to remain as a hospital, but we are concerned about the proposal to construct a radiotherapy wing under the extraordinarily serene south garden backing on to Ravenscourt Gardens. Although there will be changes here, they will be in the style of the original building and the garden, including its long lily pond, will be reinstated.



Wings with curved ends extend out into the garden at Ravenscourt Hospital. It is proposed to build a radiotherapy wing underneath the garden as part of the modernisation of the 1933 building next to Ravenscourt Park.

A very successful outcome was achieved at **St Stephen with St Thomas** church, Uxbridge Road (consecrated 1850, designed by Anthony Salvin, listed Grade II) where consultations between the church and their architect, ourselves, the Hammersmith Society and the local residents association produced a sensitive design for a new parish room adjacent to the church on the Coverdale Road frontage.

We also comment where new works detract from the setting of listed buildings and we objected to an inappropriate neighbour proposed for the Grade II-listed **King's Head** in Fulham High Street. We are delighted that work is about to start on the restoration of **Kent House** on Lower Mall, built c1762, which has in the past been on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk register. The ballroom/theatre at the rear, built c1923 and part of the Hammersmith Club, has already been restored. (*Editor's note: We are grateful to the Group's planning secretary, Roger Warry, for providing this listed buildings section of the chairman's update.*)

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The Group held its annual meeting on 1 October in the company of over 80 members and guests. The latter included councillors, council officers and representatives of more than 15 other organisations and community groups.

We were fortunate to be able to hold our meeting this year in the St Peter's Square home of award-winning architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands. The practice has only recently moved to No. 22, a listed 1830s house with associated 1880s laundry buildings behind. Island Records had been the most recent occupants and many well-known stars – notably Bob Marley – made records in the studios there. Extensive renovation was carried out before the architects moved in and, to quote our chairman Angela Dixon, 'we are delighted by the restoration – it's an excellent conversion of a listed building to modern use without the loss of its historic character'.

Tours of the buildings conducted by practice staff were followed by formal business, after which the chairman introduced the theme for the evening: Modern Building and Historic Context. The guest speaker was Alex Lifschutz of Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands.

Alex started his challenging talk by asking us whether cities would continue to change and whether we managed change well, prompting 'yes' and 'no' answers. He went on to suggest how the way we build can and should accommodate change. He described how many modern buildings, being designed for specific purposes, are inflexible and unresponsive to changing needs. We often have to demolish them when their original use ends. Examples cited by Alex included large and idealistic 1960s housing schemes, hospitals, halls of residence and offices.

Older structures have frequently survived because they were built in such a way as to allow or even encourage adaptation. 20th Century examples include the OXO and Hoover buildings and, more locally, the Piper building in Peterborough Road, Fulham. By the same token, Georgian and Victorian terraced houses are also adaptable to occupants' changing needs. While each remains superficially the same as its neighbours externally, alteration regularly results in widely differing interiors.

When we erect new buildings, the design needs to take account of the immediate architectural and environmental contexts. It also needs to incorporate sufficient flexibility to permit future change. Furthermore, proper private and public care for buildings and urban space helps build the sense of ownership that encourages community-driven city development rather than city development which is imposed on communities. The best of our heritage today came about because it grew flexibly, met people's changing needs and was therefore cared for sufficiently to survive. Our challenge is to alter our ways so that what we are building today survives to become the heritage of tomorrow!

There followed lively discussion, not only on what Alex had said, but also on current local issues including the proposed events licences for local parks. Councillor Ivimy assured the meeting that the council was responding to residents' concerns by amending the proposals. The Group also expressed its concern to the council that the replacement of timber windows with uPVC in council-owned homes was unacceptable on the grounds of sustainability, aesthetics and historic integrity.

Closing the meeting, the chairman thanked Alex for his talk and both Alex and colleagues together for their generosity in hosting the evening (including providing all the food and drink) and for the tours of the building at the start of the evening.

Richard Scott, Historic Buildings Group

THE SHEPHERDS BUSH OLYMPICS

The first Olympic games to be held in this country happened because of a volcano. The 1908 games had been awarded to Rome, but when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 1906 the Italian government found that it did not have the resources to cope with both the disaster and the Olympics. The British stepped in and the organisers of the Franco-British exhibition – coincidentally arranged for the same year – agreed to include a stadium for the games in the White City exhibition ground then being developed north of Shepherds Bush Green.

The British Olympic organising council had less than two years to prepare for the staging of the games. Construction of the 66,000-seat stadium started on 31 July 1907 and finished just 10 months later. Built by Wimpey's of Hammersmith, the state of the art oval arena had a 660-yard banked concrete cycling track and a running track, open-air 100-metre swimming pool and a diving pool with a collapsible high-diving tower. The cost was met by the Franco-British exhibition owners in return for a share of the ticket revenue.

King Edward VII officially opened the games on 13 July 1908. About 2,000 athletes competed, representing 22 nations. By far the largest contingent was the UK with 226 competitors. The next in size were Denmark with 126, Sweden with 111 and the USA with 68. Unfortunately, the weather from the opening day onwards was frequently rainy and chilly. Early attendance at the games was very poor, and it was only on the last two days that the stadium was filled to capacity.

It is fair to say that the 1908 games have been remembered mainly for controversy, particularly disputes between the US and the UK. In the first five days of competition the Americans lodged four official protests. In the final of the 400 metres, which was not run in lanes, British officials came on to the track and declared the race void before the runners had reached the finish line, accusing US runner John Carpenter of deliberately obstructing the British runner, Lieutenant Wyndham Halswelle. There was an undignified scene with spectators joining in the argument. The race was re-run two days later, but Carpenter's two American team mates

refused to compete, leaving Halswelle to run alone for the gold medal.

The marathon was run from Windsor Castle to the White City on the afternoon of 24 July, an exceptionally hot day. At 24 miles (Old Oak Common Lane), three runners were still in contention, including the diminutive Italian confectioner, Dorando Pietri, and the Irish-American runner, Johnny Hayes. Dorando speeded up and entered the stadium first, but, exhausted, turned the wrong way and collapsed. The clerk of the course rushed forward and helped him over the finishing line. It was a clear violation of the rules and US officials accordingly filed a protest. Dorando was duly disqualified and Hayes rightly declared the winner, but the general feeling was that the plucky little Italian really deserved the prize and the Americans were being poor sportsmen. Queen Alexandra presented a special gold cup to Dorando as consolation.



A victory parade – presumably improvised – for one competitor at the 1908 Shepherds Bush Olympics. Note the announcer with his huge megaphone. What are the chimneys at the back?

One particularly notable competitor in the 1908 Olympics was 60-year-old Oscar Swahn from Sweden. He took the gold in the running deer single shot and remains the oldest winner of an Olympic gold medal. Ray Ewry (US) won eight golds in a variety of jumping events. However, by the time the games finished on 31 October 1908, Great Britain had won a total of 56 gold medals and the US only 23. How times have changed!

Not all the 1908 events were held at White City. Hard court tennis and racquets took place at Queen's Club, polo was at Hurlingham, rowing at Henley and motor boat racing was on Southampton Water in August in a strong gale and downpours of rain. Very few countries apart from the UK had sent competitors to participate in such sports. These issues, combined with disputes over questionable officiating and American objections to the British system of scoring, led the games committee to declare that, despite Britain's tally of golds, an overall team championship trophy would not be given.

Despite the controversial nature of the 1908 London Olympics, most commentators agreed that they were well organised and the finest international sports meeting up to that time.

Post-Olympics the stadium continued to be used for athletics until 1914. After the war there was an attempt to sell it, but athletics resumed. The Amateur Athletic Association championships were held at White City from 1931 until 1970 when they moved to Crystal Palace. Latterly the stadium was used for speedway and greyhound racing. But with the departure of athletics and a downturn of interest in the dogs, the stadium was sold to the BBC. Demolition started soon after the last dog race on 22 September 1984. Changes of plan have meant that the BBC has spent longer than expected developing the site. A commemoration of the 1908 games with a list of medallists and the site of the finishing line are included in the design of the public spaces in the BBC Media Village.

Jane Kimber, LBHF Archives & Local History Centre, and John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

LOST HOUSE: SYNDERCOMBE'S COTTAGE

This early 17th century cottage fronted Shepherds Bush Green near the corner of Goldhawk Road. It was alleged to have been the house hired in January 1657 by Miles Syndercombe, a former Parliamentarian soldier, and his co-conspirators in a plot to assassinate the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, as he travelled to London. The location was crucial for the success of the scheme as the road was so narrow and bad at that point that carriages were forced to travel very slowly. The assassins planned to shoot Cromwell with specially adapted guns holding ten or twelve bullets and then to make their escape. The plotters were betrayed by one of their number and Syndercombe committed suicide by poison in prison on the night before he was due to be executed.



This old house at Shepherds Bush – long since demolished – is thought to have been the centre of a murderous plot to assassinate Oliver Cromwell in 1657.

In fact there seems to be no documented evidence to connect Syndercombe with a house at Shepherds Bush. The story may have originated with the antiquarian

Thomas Faulkner in his history of Fulham and Hammersmith, published in 1813. After recounting his version of the events, he stated that it was impossible to ascertain exactly where the house, which was an inn, was situated because it had been pulled down 'about forty years ago'. The cottage, which had later additions, may have been a separate building belonging to the inn. For a time in the mid 19th century it was known as Thatched Cottage and in 1882 it was renumbered 55 Shepherds Bush Green.

In May 1890 when the house was empty and due to be demolished, the owner exploited the legend by opening it to the viewing public with the entrance fee going to charity. Much was made of the purported link with Syndercombe and his plot to kill Cromwell. Features pointed out to visitors included the inevitable haunted room supposedly inhabited by the ghost of a conspirator who hanged himself in a cupboard. Sketches made of the interior showed low rooms with remnants of panelling and oak carvings. By August 1891 the property, said to be one of the last remaining thatched buildings within the county of London, had been pulled down. Later the Shepherds Bush Empire was built on the site.

*Anne Wheeldon
LBHF Archives and Local History Centre*

CANAL CRUISE

On the 9 September 2007 the Group enjoyed another joint trip with the Hammersmith Society on the Grand Union Canal. On this occasion we explored the canal further west than the previous year.

Our journey started at Brentford where the Grand Union joins the Thames. From here a minibus took us to Hanwell where we boarded our boat. For obvious operational reasons we started our voyage at the *top* of the famous Hanwell flight of locks, by the grim wall of the (former) London lunatic asylum. Before boarding, a few of us went to look at one the great mysteries of this stretch of canal: a metal bollard marked 'Hammersmith Parish 1868'. What is it doing here? The Hammersmith parish marker on the Paddington Arm of the canal is in stone and no other bollard like this is known. [*Somebody must have an explanation. Answers to the editor please – email address on back page.*]

Once on our way we immediately came to one of the engineering wonders of the canal – Three Bridges. In the 1790s William Jessop and James Barnes built a bridge to take Windmill Lane over the canal. In the 1850s the Great Western Railway, under Brunel, built a line to Brentford Dock and needed to go through the same gap by the Osterley estate that the canal had used. The solution was to take the railway in a cutting under the canal at the location of Windmill Bridge. The canal was put into an iron aqueduct and the road bridge replaced with a metal bridge. Thus road is above canal, which is in turn above rail. The name Three Bridges has passed into common use, although there are actually only two bridges. The third 'bridge' is a brick buttress across the cutting containing the railway.

Many companies associated with Hammersmith relocated to sites on the canal. The Martin brothers moved their pottery from Fulham to a disused soap works in Havelock Road. And in the 1920s Lyons transferred their operations to a modern factory on a greenfield site in Greenford 'where perfect food products are made by happy workpeople in healthy rural surroundings'. The factory has now gone, but the dock remains. Other former canal-side businesses included the Aladdin Lamp Company and Taylor Woodrow. The tall tower of the former still stands near the canal at the crossing with the Western Avenue. And at Ruislip Road in Southall Taylor Woodrow built their massive headquarters and research site over the canal. A Taylor Woodrow logo in brick and some of the supporting structure to the bridging offices can still be seen today.

Docks and side arms built to serve canal-side industries are a particular feature of the Grand Union in west London. Some are still in use, other have been filled in. The most interesting on our trip was the Military Wharf at North Hyde. Here, the guard house remains hidden in the trees. This was probably associated with the nearby Hounslow Barracks and is a rare instance of non-commercial canal usage.

During our canal journey we floated along the Grand Union main line to Hayes where we turned into the Paddington Arm. This eventually leads to Little Venice, but, after a fascinating voyage, we finished at Alperton, just a short distance beyond the start of the 2006 trip.

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

HAMMERSMITH HUB

During the first decade of the 20th century, an astonishing burst of activity completely transformed London's public transport system. In less than ten years the capital's horse drawn trams were replaced by electric trams; its two main existing underground railways – the Metropolitan and the District – were electrified; and no fewer than four new tube railways were bored through its clay subsoil.

The individual responsible for much of this activity was an American financier named Charles Yerkes. Having made a fortune out of electrifying Chicago's tramway, Yerkes arrived in London around the turn of the century with a determination to transform the capital's public transport system and also, it has to be said, with a distinctly dubious financial reputation.

His first step was to acquire control of the steam-operated District Railway and electrify it using the third rail system, forcing the rival Metropolitan, which for some reason had been flirting with an impracticable overhead system, to follow suit. Next he turned his attention to the tubes. Yerkes found that various plans for underground railways – some of which had already received parliamentary approval – had been lying around for years. Beating off competitors, including the great J. Pierpoint Morgan, he raised mainly American finance for low (if any) returns and turned these dormant plans into

reality, getting the railways built in double-quick time. In only five years between 1902 and 1907, the hearts of what were to become the Bakerloo, Piccadilly and Northern lines were all completed.

Charles Yerkes died before these three tube railways opened, but the company he founded – Underground Electric Railways of London – ended up controlling the District Railway, five tube companies (including the Central), three tram companies and the London General Omnibus Company. It was, in effect, the forerunner of London Transport.



Barons Court station on the District and Piccadilly lines, designed by Harry Ford and opened in 1905, a year before the Piccadilly line started running. It is now listed Grade II.

In all this feverish activity Hammersmith and its neighbour Shepherd's Bush featured prominently. London's first electric trams ran from Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush (to Kew). The Metropolitan and District railways both had a presence in Hammersmith's Broadway. The first of the new tube railways, the Central London Railway, known as the Twopenny Tube because of its flat fare and opened in 1900, terminated at Shepherd's Bush, close to the White City exhibition/1908 Olympic Games site. And the Great Northern, Piccadilly & Brompton Railway (soon to be shortened to the Piccadilly) had its western terminus at Hammersmith when it opened in 1907.

Last year's centenary of the Piccadilly line reminds us that it was during the transport revolution of the early 20th century that Hammersmith established itself as the busiest transport hub in London if not, as has been claimed, in Europe.

Richard Dixon

MARCHING MOTHS

In 2006 the Oak Processionary moth, otherwise known as *Thaumetopoea processionea*, a native of central and southern Europe, was found in several locations in London. The well-camouflaged grey adult moth has a wingspan of around 30 millimetres, but it is the habits of the caterpillars that give the moth its name. They appear from April to June and feed together in groups. When not feeding they congregate in communal nests made of white silk webbing spun up under a branch or on the trunk. The larvae typically follow one another head-to-

tail in long ‘processions’ to and from the nest and from one feeding position to another.

They feed on a wide range of oaks, and on other broadleaved trees too if there are any nearby. This moth is a major defoliator of oaks in Europe and could become so here. If it does become established, control will be difficult as the caterpillars are well protected from spray inside their nests. The timing of any action taken will be vital. One thing to be aware of is that like other moths such as the Brown Tail, the caterpillars are covered in hairs. Contact can provoke skin irritation and allergic reactions so the rule is: handle with care!

Oliver Leigh-Wood, Historic Buildings Group

SHARPENING SHARP

Last year we celebrated the bicentenary of the 1807 Act of Parliament abolishing the slave trade throughout the British empire. Just before the bicentennial year started, the Historic Buildings Group was among several local organizations which came together to campaign for the repair of the tomb of the man generally regarded as the father of the British anti-slavery movement, Granville Sharp. Sharp spent the last few years of his life living in his brother William’s house in Fulham (today’s Travel Inn near Putney Bridge stands approximately on the site) and after his death in 1813 he was buried nearby in Fulham’s All Saints churchyard.

The first move was to get the grave listed. English Heritage managed an uncommon turn of speed in securing Grade II status for the tomb in three months from proposal to minister’s signature (nine months is more normal, we gather). In the course of a feverish spring of 2007 we successfully raised some £12,000: major donations came from the Pilgrim Trust, the Heritage of London Trust, the Mercers Company, the Fulham Society and the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham; many smaller contributions came from private donors, including some two dozen descendants of the great man, glad to hear of our campaign.

On 8 July the repaired tomb was ‘unveiled’ at a special evensong service at All Saints. There were two highlights to the event. One was the contribution of two horns from the Bate Collection of Historic Musical Instruments in Oxford. These had formerly belonged to members of the Sharp family, who between them formed an accomplished chamber orchestra. The other was a eulogy delivered by celebrated historian Professor Simon Schama. And there, we sort of thought, was an end to it. But no...

The work on the tomb was essentially repair, not restoration. This meant that the carved words on the tomb, which, after nearly 200 years, were difficult to read, remained virtually illegible. However, beginning on 8 July and continuing ever since, visitors to the grave have almost universally exclaimed: ‘what a pity we can’t read the inscription to Granville’. So, having initially decided against re-carving his epitaph –on the grounds that it would have turned the tomb into something ‘new’

and thus made it perhaps over-prominent in a churchyard which has after all been closed to new burials for 150 years – we are taking up the cudgels again and are casting about for a further £1500 for this extra cherry on the cake.

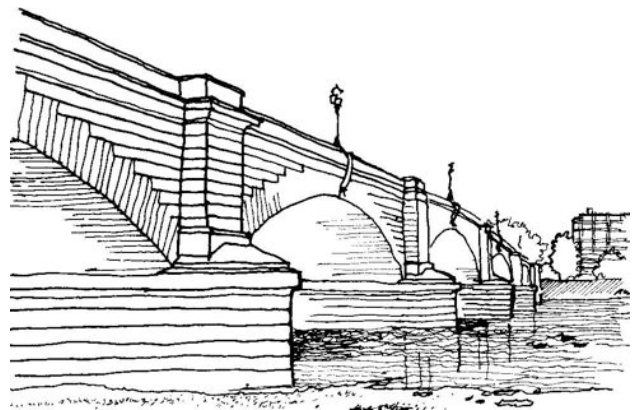
The work – when we get permission from the diocese of London and listed building consent from the council – will be done in situ by Robin Golden-Hann, formerly head conservator at Salisbury Cathedral and generally regarded as the best letter man in England. However, the re-carving will not include correcting the mistake in the epitaph: Granville’s age at death is given as 79, but he was actually 77. The English Heritage orthodoxy on this point is that mistakes in historic inscriptions are not to be tampered with.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the cost of the re-carving is invited to send a cheque made out to ‘The Granville Sharp Fund’ to the All Saints Parish Office, Pryors Bank Pavilion, Bishops Park, SW6 3LA. Alternatively, you can put money in our coffers by buying the booklet on Granville Sharp produced by our campaign. It only costs £3 and is available from many local outlets, including libraries, the borough archives and All Saints church, Fulham.

John Sheppard, Historic Buildings Group

FULHAM'S FORD, FERRIES AND BRIDGES

The earliest way to cross the Thames between Fulham and Putney was by ford. The site of the general cart ford, and possibly a Roman bridge, is marked by Thames View on the Putney side, formerly called the Platt. Spring Path, also on the Putney side, is probably the site of the horse ford. Ferries would have been the next solution to the problem. These may have been based at the Platt, where there were inns for people waiting for the right tide to cross. A passenger ferry from Brewhouse Lane to the Swan Inn in Fulham was in existence by the early 18th century.



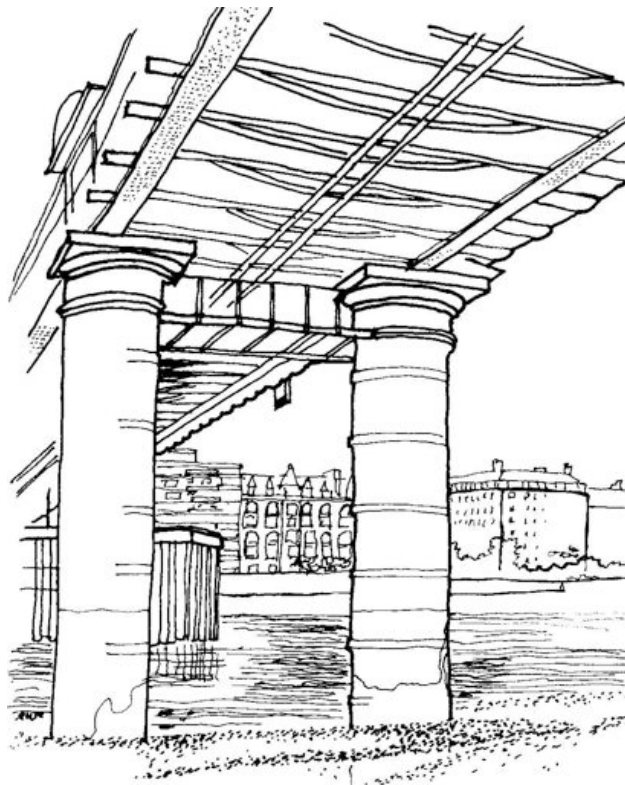
The river between Fulham and Putney was first bridged in 1729. This is the current road bridge, built out of granite by Sir Joseph Bazalgette in 1886 and widened on the downstream side in 1933.

In the late 17th century proposals for a bridge at Fulham were first mooted. There had been a temporary bridge of boats, built by the Parliamentarians after the battle of

Brentford in 1642 – about where the Hurlingham Club is now – but this had disappeared by the end of the 1640s. A bridge was obviously needed at Fulham as it was roughly the mid point between the only other bridges across the river in the London area at that time: London Bridge and Kingston Bridge. However, anyone who could find a reason to object to the Fulham bridge did so. In the end, it was only when Sir Robert Walpole was stranded in Putney because of the ferryman's over-indulgence at the Swan Inn on the Fulham side that the bridge project received the high-level political support necessary to make the project succeed.

The first Fulham Bridge, designed by Sir Jacob Acworth and built by Thomas Phillips, opened in 1729. A rickety-looking wooden structure, it ran directly from Putney High Street to Fulham High Street. The new wooden bridge served until 1886 when it was replaced by the present granite bridge designed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette. This bridge was widened on the downstream side in 1933. The new stone bridge was built from what is now Fulham Palace Road to Putney High Street, and it is the only London bridge to have a church at both ends.

The London and South Western Railway (LSWR) reached Fulham at Putney Bridge station in 1880. In 1889 it was carried across the river to the Putney side by Fulham Railway Bridge, designed by William Jacomb, engineer to the company and Brunel's assistant on the SS *Great Eastern*. Five iron spans cross the river. One more on the north side and two on the south connect with the brick and earth viaducts.



Sturdy columns support Fulham railway bridge, built in 1889 to carry the London & South Western Railway across the river to Putney. The bridge now carries the District line to Wimbledon.

In 1899 the District Line started using the line with the LSWR. The LSWR, by then the Southern Railway, ceased regular operation in 1941 and in 1994 London Underground (LU) purchased the bridge. An interesting feature on the Fulham side is the Second World War pillbox at the southern end of Putney Bridge station. Both the road and rail bridges are now – following the convention of naming Thames bridges after their destinations on the south side – called Putney Bridge.

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

NEW BLUE PLAQUE

On 12 December 2007 an English Heritage Blue Plaque was unveiled at 49 St Stephen's Avenue W12, a property now owned by the Shepherds Bush Housing Group. The plaque commemorates the Indian political and spiritual leader, Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). To quote English Heritage, 'it was at this address that a young Aurobindo took an interest in world politics and developed a strong sense of injustice at the British rule of India. He went on to become an important figure in India, and laid the foundations for the struggle for independence that was later taken up by Gandhi, among others. Since Aurobindo's death the worldwide reach and influence of his writings – especially *The Life Divine* (1939-40) – have grown significantly; he has been the subject of several biographies and there have been numerous critical studies of his work'. For more information, visit the English Heritage website at www.english-heritage.org.uk

Andrew Duncan, Historic Buildings Group

BISHOP CREIGHTON HOUSE CENTENARY

Bishop Creighton House (BCH) was founded in memory of Bishop Mandell Creighton, professor of ecclesiastical history at Cambridge from 1884 to 1891 and bishop of London from 1897 until his death at Fulham Palace in 1901.

Fulham had been an agricultural district of orchards and market gardens, but gradually with the onset of the railway the gardens and private estates were bought up by speculative builders. Older houses became overcrowded and insanitary. The bishop and Mrs Creighton, realising that the new population was experiencing many of the distresses of east London with no compensating religious or civic traditions, conceived the idea of a settlement as a way of providing assistance.

Historically in London, settlements – establishments set up in the poorer quarters of a large city where educated men and women lived in daily personal contact with the working classes for co-operation in social reform – had been in the East End, and it is striking that the need was felt for one in Fulham so soon after the arrival of the railway and the ensuing spread of poverty and deprivation.

In 1908, seven years after her husband's death, Louise Creighton took over three houses in Lillie Road for her new settlement. It was built to serve the communities of Fulham and Hammersmith, the area being regarded not as the two boroughs they in fact were, but as a network of

parishes crying out for workers. In 1908 the individual parishes were responsible for the residents in their streets. Social services as we know them today did not exist. The settlement was to hold eight residents with domestic staff. They were to be either fully experienced or prepared to take available training. And they were to be the nucleus of a much larger number of part-time volunteers.

During the early years of the settlement the work focused mainly on babies and children. The residents at BCH were instrumental in setting up a maternity and infant welfare centre in Greyhound Road, visiting families, acting as school managers, visiting and teaching children in the infirmary and workhouse and launching the first scheme for children's care committees. During the First World War, BCH undertook work with the Friends of Foreigners in Distress, looking after isolated and elderly German women who had not been interned, working with the unemployed and organising a club for the wives of serving soldiers and sailors. They were also involved in outreach work in Fulham Military Hospital.



Artist William Roberts later recalled that during 1912 and 1913, when he was a student at the Slade, his professor, Henry Tonks, 'was anxious to encourage our interest in mural painting and to this end obtained permission to decorate the walls of Bishop Creighton House in Lillie Road, Fulham. About half a dozen pupils took part in the scheme...My own contribution was a panel showing carpenters at work. The only other design I can recall was one by Dora Carrington of blacksmiths hammering on an anvil'. What a pity it is the murals no longer exist.

At the end of the war one of the most exacting tasks ever undertaken by BCH was holding classes for girls discharged from the munitions factories. These classes, being compulsory and a condition of the 'dole', were fiercely resented and the girls were of an incredibly uncivilised type, brutalised by their rough and dangerous work during the war. They had to be kept usefully occupied from 9 to 5 daily for many weeks, and every possible helper and device were called into play.

During the interwar years the work of the settlement expanded into a treatment centre for school children, and the aftercare of boys and girls entering industry at an early age became a preoccupation. An apprenticeship and skilled employment office was opened in 1926 and each year over a thousand children were sent to the country through the Children's Country Holiday Fund.

During the Second World War most of the clinics closed and the settlement was besieged with the numerous problems of evacuation, broken-up families and the unemployed. The building was bombed in 1940, but work continued from a rented flat until repairs were made. During the 1950s and 60s the work at BCH began to

focus more on the needs of the elderly and housebound. Today, in its centenary year, BCH's own projects are mainly concerned with the elderly and young disabled, but this does not prevent the organisation from being a vital centre of support for all the residents of Hammersmith and Fulham.

BCH will be celebrating its centenary with an open day on 16 May and a small exhibition at the Museum of Fulham Palace starting on Saturday 17 May and lasting for three weeks. For further information about either event, please phone 020 3080 0655 or email rgillert@creightonhouse.org or donelan261@btinternet.com.

Maya Donelan, Historic Buildings Group and BCH

COOKE'S PIE AND EEL SHOP

I have lived in Shepherds Bush for 35 years and I love it. Walk around our streets and you are seduced by a multitude of shops and cafés offering food from around the world. West Indian, Lebanese, Greek, Polish and Indian – it is all here and more. The Bush represents everything that's good about living in the most multicultural city on the planet. One of my real favourites in the area, though, is home-grown: Cooke's traditional Pie and Eel Shop.



Cooke's Pie and Eel Shop on Goldhawk Road, still going strong after over a century of serving traditional pie and mash.

Situated on Goldhawk Road, Cooke's has been a London landmark since 1899. It's easy to walk past it as you come out of the market. I would advise that you don't. On entering, you are confronted by brown tiled walls, Formica tables and a packed house tucking into steaming hot fare – delicious minced beef pies, sumptuous mashed potato, eels and green liquor, served like this since Queen Victoria was on the throne. Despite the Cooke's name, it has been in the Boughton family since the beginning. Mike Boughton remains tight-lipped when asked about the secret recipe for his pies. He will say that they are made daily on the premises and he serves them up to well over two thousand residents of Shepherds Bush each week. The liquor is a parsley sauce, which, with the

addition of malt vinegar, makes the eels surprisingly tasty. With a meal of pie, mash, liquor or gravy costing only £2.50, Cooke's is still providing thousands of working-class 'Bush' residents with a wholesome meal at an affordable price.

Councillor Colin Aherne, LBHF

LONDON EELS

The 'London' or 'Thames' eel is, or at least was, a common species in western European ponds, lakes, streams and rivers until the mid 20th century. Although it is a freshwater eel in its adult state, *Anguilla anguilla*, to give it its scientific name, migrates back to the marine Sargasso Sea south of Bermuda to spawn. The young elvers, just a few centimetres long, then swim back across the Atlantic with the help of the Gulf Stream. *A. anguilla* has no pelvic fins, grows to 40-50 cm as a mature adult and feeds on insect larvae, worms and other invertebrates when young and other fish and molluscs in adulthood. Females are longer than males and usually migrate further inland as adults. There are many other eel families, all fully marine, including the conger and moray eels. The South American 'electric eel' is actually closely related to carp.

Eels are eaten all over the world, not only by natural predators – mainly birds such as herons and cormorants – but also by humans. Together with oysters and salmon, they were a staple of Londoners' diets for several hundred years, served either stewed with mashed potatoes, pie crust and 'liquor' (a clear green gravy), or cold in jelly (solidified liquor and added gelatine). Charles Dickens specifically refers to the latter in both *Hard Times* and *Our Mutual Friend*, and of course in *Nicholas Nickleby* he sends Morleena Kenwigs to 'eat shrimps...and dance to a locomotive band' at the famous Eel Pie Island Hotel in Twickenham.



An eel fisherman with his eel pots at Corney Reach, Chiswick, in 1898. By this time, pollution in the Thames had all but killed off the eel fishing industry. Indeed, this fisherman, who came from Lambeth but fished for six months each year in Corney Reach, was the last of a dying breed.

Since at least Roman times eels have been fished using either simple nets or traps made of willow or traditional rod and line. Recently, the eel has revived somewhat as a popular foodstuff in Europe and the Far East. However,

commercial fishing techniques are now leading to declining eel populations. The eel now features on an international list of endangered species and in the UK DEFRA is seeking to reduce the number of eel fishing licenses awarded in England and Wales.

Stephen McAndrews, LBHF borough ecologist

JAILBIRDS and RARE BIRDS

At 42 hectares Wormwood Scrubs is the largest open space in our borough. It vies with the River Thames as the borough's most precious wildlife resource. In 2002 about 14 hectares (18%) were set aside by the council as the borough's first statutory local nature reserve. The reserve consists mainly of young woodland, woodland scrub and bramble with rough grass edges, in contrast with the bulk of the park which is mainly cut grass. The Kings Troop of the Household Cavalry uses the western half and the eastern half is covered in football pitches.

The Scrubs has survived as an open space through a specific act of parliament of 1875 which holds it '...upon trust for the perpetual use...by the inhabitants of the metropolis for exercise and recreation'. The council are trustees for the land as well as being the land manager and planning authority. The military's right of access and activity is enshrined in the same act; their interest in the site goes back to the Napoleonic wars. More recently the first tanks of World War I were tested there, as were De Havilland planes built in Cambridge Grove in Hammersmith. Common land, the Scrubs is now enclosed by the former Eurostar depot to the north, by busy roads into Brent to the east and west and by built development to the south. The latter includes Wormwood Scrubs prison, the Linford Christie stadium, Hammersmith hospital and Burlington Danes school.

As far as wildlife is concerned, the mosaic of trees, scrub and grassland attracts a variety of butterflies – 20 species recorded in as many years including the rare (in London anyway) purple hairstreak in 2007. During the construction of the Eurostar depot, dozens of common lizards were captured and then re-released into the Scrubs post-construction. Belying their name, these fairly rare reptiles are a protected species. They have survived not only in the area in which they were released, but in recent years have been seen all along the embankment forming the north-western edge of the park.

From the wildlife point of view, the jewel in the Scrubs' crown is its bird life. Almost 90 species have been recorded over the last few years, including several quite rare ones. House sparrows have plummeted in numbers in recent years, but they are still to be found at the Scrubs. Seven species of birds of prey have been seen in the last couple of years: common buzzard, honey buzzard, peregrine, sparrowhawk, kestrel, marsh harrier and short-eared owl. The common redstart, little bunting and Richard's pipit – the latter a species normally found in Asia – are all present on the Scrubs, as are ring-necked parakeets, virtually unknown in London 15 years ago and now ubiquitous. The parakeet roost on the Scrubs numbers over 1,000.

The Scrubs is worth a visit any time, but a particular day to put in your diaries is Saturday 5 April when there will be an open day to publicise the reserve. Entrance is free. Stalls and events based on the Old Oak Community Centre on Braybrook Road will operate between 11am and 3pm. There will be guided walks of the reserve and horse and dray tours of the wider Scrubs. All are welcome and there will be plenty to occupy younger people including a pet's corner, face painting and five-a-side football organised by Queens Park Rangers FC. We look forward to seeing you there!

Stephen McAndrews, LBHF borough ecologist

PHOENIX RISING?

There is no question that our borough has had a distinguished roll call of artist residents: Philip de Loutherbourg, Frank Brangwyn, Ruskin Spear, Gertrude Hermes, Eric Ravilious and of course, towering above them all, Henry Moore. However, if you were to ask who is the most famous artist to have been *born* in the borough, you would have to answer, why, Leon Underwood of course.

Underwood was born in Askew Road on Christmas Day 1890. After studies and service in the First World War, he moved into 12 Girdlers Road, Brook Green, living and working there till his death in 1975. It was at this address that he ran the Brook Green School of Art, with Moore and Hermes among his pupils. Of Underwood, Henry Moore wrote to his friend Roger Berthoud: 'he was the only teacher I learned anything from in a useful way'.

Now, thirty-three years after Underwood's death, the family connection with Girdlers Road is about to be broken as his granddaughter moves out. The Group, in consultation with the freeholder (the Girdlers Company) and the new residents – when they have settled in – is hoping to install a plaque on the property recalling Underwood's long residence and the fertile list of alumni produced by his one-man art school.

Underwood was versatile to a fault. It can be argued that his central work as a sculptor was always being undermined by his willingness to wander off and muck about in some other genre. So along the way he wrote a novel, some poetry, a ballet, made furniture, did a bit of weaving, tried metal casting, had a go at stained glass making, turned out oil paintings, watercolours, wood engravings, linocuts and etchings, and knocked out innumerable articles on art, especially 'primitive art', in pursuit of which he travelled constantly to Africa, South and Central America, Iceland and the Middle East. But it is on his sculpture that his reputation really rests and he has, with justice, been called 'the Father of Modern British Sculpture'.

After his death in 1976 his widow presented one of his most significant bronze works, titled *Phoenix for Europe*, to the borough. Underwood worked on this piece for 30 years before casting the final version in 1969. It is a male torso, 41 inches high, the head flung back in a kind of ecstatic trance. In the artist's mind, it was symbolic of the

rebirth of a shattered continent after the Second World War, bursting with fresh energy and hope. It is a matter of regret that the borough has never apparently considered a proper siting for this striking work. It presently languishes in the back garden of the Bryony Adult Education Centre – not even dignified by a plinth – with one of its arms used as a convenient point to tie off a frayed bit of string holding up a neighbouring rose bush.



Leon Underwood's 1969 sculpture, Phoenix for Europe, presented to the borough by the artist's widow and now – plinth-less – in the back garden of the Bryony Centre in Bryony Road, W12.

The Group has argued, thus far without success, that it should be moved and given a more respectful berth. Now in 2008 comes a great opportunity: Bishops Park is being refurbished, and as part of the refurbishment, the formal lake is being cleaned up and its fringes tidied. Regular visitors will know that there is a sculpture, *Eve*, already in residence. It too was presented to the borough by its creator, Edgar Allan Howes. Why not, we argue, have *Phoenix* there as well? Two striking pieces, both donated by local artists, safe on the side of the lake inaccessible to pedestrians and vandals, but close enough to the path to add interest to a stroll. I believe strongly that if the sculpture were to be placed here, we would at last be fulfilling our obligations to Mrs Underwood following her generous gift to the borough over 30 years ago.

John Sheppard, Historic Buildings Group

SULIVAN'S SCHOOL

In 1855 Horace Francis designed a Tudor Gothic style building for Laurence Sullivan of Broom House, Fulham. Laurence named it the Elizabethan Schools in memory of his wife Elizabeth, who had died in 1837 aged 47. The building comprised schools for 120 boys and girls and infants, accommodation for two teachers and two almshouses. The schools were for very poor children for whom the promise of a meal was more of an inducement than the education.

Laurence, although a wealthy landowner, had great concern for the poor and his wife obviously shared his

feelings. Her memorial tablet in the building describes her as known 'by the gentleness of her nature and by the activity of her benevolence'.

Laurence Sullivan had inherited money from ancestors involved in the East India Company. Elizabeth Sullivan was also wealthy as the sister of Harry Temple, who became Lord Palmerston and later prime minister. The Sulivans bought Broom House in 1823, together with a large area of south Fulham. They had five children. The youngest, Charlotte, was only 13 when her mother died. Charlotte and her sister Mary looked after their father and took over the management of the schools. In 1864, a year before their father died, Mary married the vicar of All Saints Fulham, leaving Charlotte to inherit Broom House and a considerable fortune.



The Elizabethan Schools in Broomhouse Lane SW6, built by Laurence Sullivan in 1855 in memory of his wife Elizabeth.

Charlotte used her great wealth to support many local projects. In her will, after legacies to members of her family, Charlotte left the residue of her estate to the West London Hospital, the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund and the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation.

The Elizabethan Schools had been endowed by her father. The Elizabethan Schools Foundation still administers money to local children in need. The building was taken over by the LCC in 1904, became a school for tubercular children in 1921 and finally closed in 1959. In 1970 it reopened as a youth club, known until recently as the Castle Club. The building – Grade II listed – is now for sale by the council and at the time of writing is under offer for renovation as a private home.

Charlotte Sullivan died in 1911 and her estate was sold off in lots. Broom House was demolished the same year and the grounds were absorbed by the Hurlingham Club. Today the Sullivan name lives on in Sullivan Road, Sullivan Court and the Sullivan Hall on Parsons's Green, the original site of the Parson's Green club.

Sue Pierson

Editor's note: Sue Pierson's biography of Charlotte Sullivan will be published by the Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society in 2008.

HBG EVENTS

Saturday 26 April: TOUR OF BBC TV CENTRE

Meet 3.30pm at White City underground. Donation on day of £5 per person to HBG to cover costs. Booking essential with John Goodier: 020 7160 4739 or fsslibrary@btconnect.com

Saturday 17 May: TREASURE HUNT

Hammersmith is the venue for this year's fun and educational treasure hunt. Pick up your entry forms from the Plough & Harrow, 120-124 King Street (children welcome) any time between 10am and 3pm and return by 5pm. Hunt should take about 2 hours to complete. Winners and runners up will receive great prizes generously donated by local businesses. Entry forms are £10 on the day or £7 in advance from HBG treasurer (address below – enclose sae and make cheques payable to Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group).

Saturday 14 June: ST MARY'S CEMETERY WALK

Guided walk round St Mary's RC cemetery with Group member and local sculpture expert John Sheppard. Meet 3pm at chapel in cemetery. Cost £5, pay on the day. Booking essential with John on 020 7736 3718 or john@shep89.freeuk.com

Thursday 9 October: ANNUAL MEETING

To be held at the BBC Media Centre at White City. The theme will be the 1908 White City Olympics.

OTHER EVENTS

29 Mar: University Boat Race

5 Apr: Wormwood Scrubs open day, Old Oak Community Centre, Braybrook Road, 11am-3pm

16 May: Bishop Creighton House centenary open day (exhibition at Museum of Fulham Palace opens 17 May)

17-31 May: Celebrating Hammersmith

7-8 Jun: Open Garden Squares

15 Jun: provisional date for GREENFEST West London (check www.greenfest.org.uk for latest info)

28 Jun: Celebrating Fulham. Until 6 July.

6 Jul: Parson's Green Fair

20-21 Sep: London Open House

HBG PUBLICATIONS

Local List £17 members, £20 non-members.

Bradmore House illustrated booklet, £5.

Both available from Group chairman: 020 8748 7416

OFFICERS

Chairman: Angela Dixon, 31 St Peter's Square W6 9NW. 020 8748 7416. angeladixon@bulldoghome.com • *Vice-Chairman:* Dr Andy Duncan, 2b Gastein Road W6 8LU. 07958 656 888. andy@andrewduncan.co.uk • *Hon.*

Secretary: Richard Scott, 61 Bassein Park Road W12 9RW. 020 8749 3963. rbcscott@yahoo.co.uk • *Treasurer:*

Jo Brock, Flat 12, 43 Peterborough Road SW6 3BT. 020 7731 0363 • *Planning Secretary:* Roger Warry, 4

Ravenscourt Road W6 OUG. warry6@aol.com

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

£5.00 for individuals and £15 for groups. New members always welcome. Please contact the chairman.

NEWSLETTER CREDITS

Editor: Dr Andy Duncan (andy@andrewduncan.co.uk)

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