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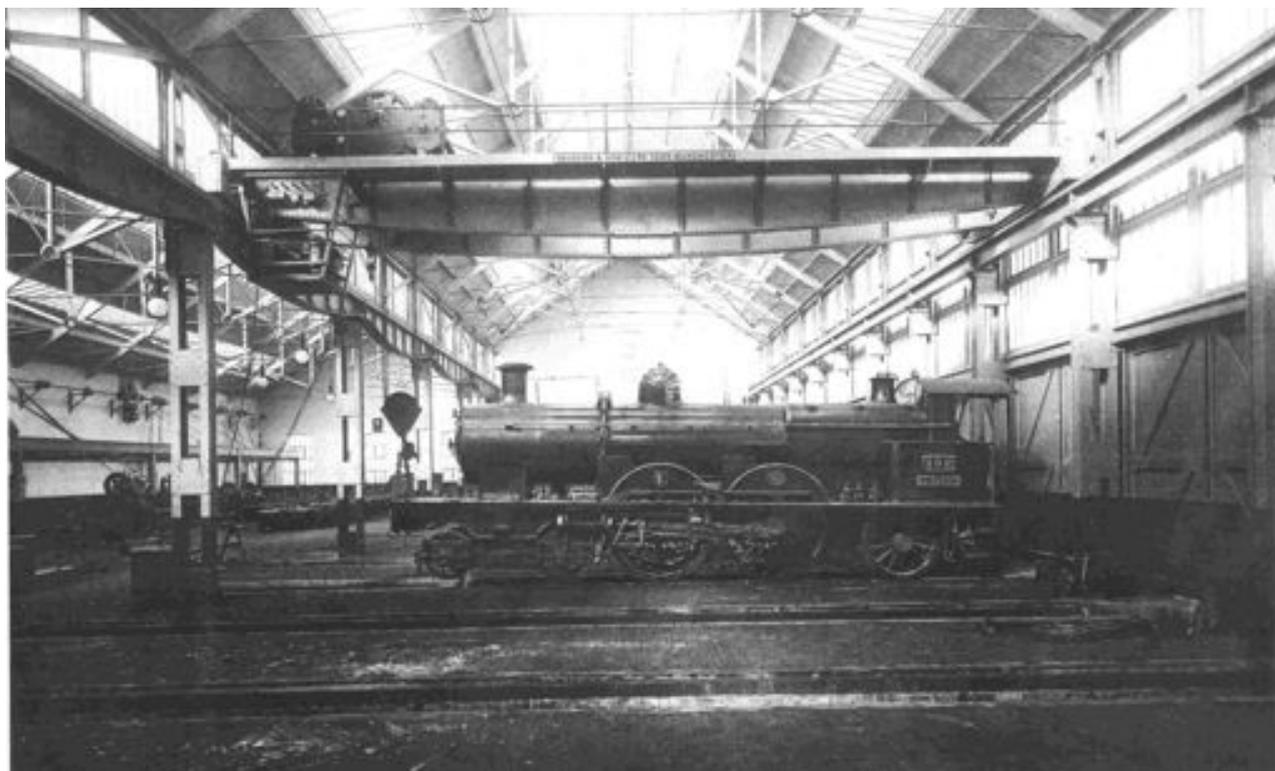
TOO LATE TO SAVE RAILWAY HERITAGE?

We have recently been alerted to an important railway building in the borough which is scheduled for demolition very soon as part of the Crossrail development – the locomotive lifting shed at Old Oak Common, known as ‘the Factory’ and built as part of a maintenance depot by the Great Western Railway (GWR) in 1906. Recently acknowledged by English Heritage as of special interest, it is now too late to list it because of the Crossrail Act. It may also be too late to dismantle it and move it elsewhere. However, it is not too late to record it in detail for posterity. The Group is supporting the urgent efforts to see that it is at the very least properly recorded.

Below: Steam engine No. 102 ‘La France’ under repair inside the Factory circa 1906. The overhead crane is supporting the loco nose while the pony truck (front wheels) is being swapped.

The railway complex at Old Oak Common is an unknown land which the HBG has not had access to. We along with other conservation bodies were unaware of what was there. It is surprising, and worrying, that Crossrail do not seem to have carried out a detailed survey of this railway area. This would have revealed the Factory’s historic importance earlier.

What else of historic interest is there that we don’t yet know about? With the recent government announcement that this area could be the hub for a high speed rail link, now is the time for a proper survey of the whole Old Oak Common railway area so that historic assets can be identified and recorded in good time. This will also allow time for consideration of possible re-use without holding up development. More on the Factory on the next page.



END OF LINE FOR FACTORY

As reported on page 1, an historic piece of railway architecture at Old Oak Common known as the Factory is soon due to be demolished to make way for Crossrail.

A report by the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society has shown the historical significance of this building. Spectacular and now unique roof trusses, with antecedents in some of I K Brunel's own designs, are some of the special features hidden within this unacknowledged industrial treasure.

The Factory was part of the 215,000 sq ft Old Oak Common (81A) locomotive depot opened on 17 March 1906. The running shed had four 65-foot turntables in a square hall giving ample working space around the 25 or more steam locos which could be stabled at each, thus permitting their rapid and economic servicing and deployment. Built by GWR chief engineer George Churchward and his team, the Factory combined the best global practices in one comprehensive model facility for both running repairs and heavier maintenance work on steam engines. It was replete with every convenience to aid efficiency and was the standard on which other GWR railway depots were based in whole or in part.

Such GWR engine sheds have all been lost to clearance or rebuilding since the demise of steam. One 1906 turntable remains on site in the Factory, the only one in London for use by visiting steam locos. This is soon to go. The Factory also had a heavy overhead crane. This survived the demolition of the rest of the site in 1965, continued in service until as late as 2009 and remains on the site today.

The Factory's survival is a remarkable tribute to a design that enabled it to evolve and adapt internally to suit the various locos of each age and to continue to serve heavy repairs into the current millennium. It illustrates the phased evolution of railways from steam through diesel. The old Factory must now make way for larger depot buildings for Crossrail's new fleet, an operational necessity as modern trains need no locomotives.

So the pedigree continues as it began. Crossrail are to repeat Churchward's adventure with their new depot on this historic site: 'a new depot for new trains on a new railway, equipped with latest technologies – surely a window on the future'.

An interesting proposition is for Crossrail to agree to the rumoured mounting of a bid to salvage part or all of the structure or its components, the intention being to relocate the building or parts of it, rather than simply 'demolish and disregard' the history being built over. The ambitious salvage idea would remind the present of the relevance of past endeavours. Further information on this site and the salvage potential is available.

The research undertaken and contributory material for this piece have been sourced from authorities specialist in their respective fields including, among others: Malcolm

Tucker, Engineering Historian; Robert Carr, Industrial Archaeologist; STEAM Archive, Swindon Museum; ET Lyons, GWR author: Contextual research; George Oliver JP: Railway operations history; English Heritage: GWR histories.

This note has been kindly supplied by Robert Hurst, a technical researcher who has been closely involved with the professional rail industry for about 20 years. Ed.

Chairman's Update

Archaeology

Archaeology has featured prominently in the borough in the recent months. Industrial archaeology becomes ever more important particularly on the railway land in the north of the borough (see lead story on front page). The results of excavations at Fulham Palace are exciting and Keith Whitehouse reports on digs in the moat and the walled garden. The Group has long advocated the restoration of the moat (see last newsletter) and welcomes the start of this work as part of the current lottery bid for Fulham Palace and Bishop's Park.

The Thames Discovery Programme working near Putney Bridge has found stakes in the river thought to be part of a fish trap and dating to the Iron Age. The footings of old Fulham Bridge have also been revealed.



View from Putney of old Fulham Bridge (on right), showing the old toll house straddling the bridge at the Fulham end.

The Environment Agency are currently working on two sections of the river wall at Thames Wharf and Palace Wharf. The Group has long argued that old features of the river wall should be properly recorded, dated, and if possible retained and restored rather than replaced. We have been in discussion with the agency to try and achieve this here (see articles below on pages 6 and 7).

Policy

Since my last report we have responded to a number of consultations on policy. We welcome the references to 'local character' in the mayor's **draft replacement London Plan** and have stressed the importance of respecting the historic context of developments. We are disappointed about the weak policy on tall buildings and

have proposed that there should be a presumption against tall buildings outside the existing commercial area such as Canary Wharf. We propose greater protection for local views.

The new draft **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 is the government guidance on the historic environment** which will replace the current guidance of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 Historic Buildings and Conservation areas and PPG 16 Archaeology. Along with many other conservation groups, we were very alarmed at the proposed watering down of the guidance, which would rely much more on opinion than on fact and make it much easier to demolish historic buildings. The Group considers that regeneration should respect its context and be conservation-led. We understand that the document is being re-drafted and we hope for a clearer, firmer document. ‘Certainty’ – an aim of the government to speed development – should include ‘certainty’ that historic assets will be identified, preserved and enhanced.

The latest document in the **Local Development Framework** (LDF) ‘loose leaf’ series’ is the infelicitously-named General Development Management Options (GDMO). This repeats some but not all of the policies in the Environment Chapter of the UDP (Unitary Development Plan). The Group argued that it should follow the UDP policies which have served the borough well and are widely supported. We welcome the support for conservation area (CA) profiles. The one for the Canal CA is specifically referred to in the section on the canal. The only problem is that it doesn’t yet exist! We continue to press the council for speedy action to complete the CA profiles – particularly the canal one - and the general design guideline for CAs.

Open Space

We welcome the newly formed **Friends of Furnivall Gardens**.

Those who were at the leader of the council’s summit last November will have heard the strongly expressed views on **cycling on footpaths**. There is now a proposal to develop cycle routes called ‘greenways’ in open spaces in central London. In our borough this includes cycle routes in Ravenscourt Park, Margravine Cemetery and Furnivall Gardens. Surprisingly, we and other amenity groups have not been consulted on this. Central funding for cycling encourages taking the easy option at the expense of the tranquillity and quiet enjoyment of open space by pedestrians – especially young families and the elderly. We have expressed our concerns and we understand that the proposals are being reviewed. We have also objected to the council’s proposal to route cyclists across the Upper Mall open space by The Old Ship. A much better option, which we support, is the proposal to make a formal commuter cycle route along the pavement of the A4. We have reminded the council that the Riverside Walk is a footpath.

The council’s proposals for **Shepherds Bush Green** were approved, including the aspects we had objected to

(see report in last newsletter). However, we understand that there will be some more limited consultation prior to submitting to DEFRA. We still hope for amendments to the amount of hard landscaping and the series of mounds. Sited at the junction of two drove roads into London, the common has the historic character of a village green, not an urban park. We believe this character should be respected and restored.

We are disappointed at the failure to take the opportunity to improve and extend the green landscaping at **Starch Green** as part of the adjacent development at 282-288 Goldhawk Road (dubbed the ‘Mediterranean Village’). This dense development results in the loss of 16 mature trees with virtually no replacement planting or green landscaping. Over the years the concrete has spread on and around Starch Green. We shall continue to press for improved green landscaping so that this open space can live up to its name.

Schools

We had a very interesting annual meeting on the theme of schools (see page 8) and the Group has continued to respond to the Building Schools for the Future consultations. We are delighted that two more of the borough’s schools have been listed recently: **Peterborough School** and **Queen’s Mill School**. We continue to urge that the **Bryony Centre**, the former village school on the Wormholt Estate, should not be demolished but re-used.

The latest HBG plaque is on the former Townmead Road School in Bagley’s Lane (see below). Most of the school buildings, last used by the Chelsea College of Art, were demolished for a new housing scheme, but the old school house has been retained and converted. I represented the Group at a ceremony on 4 February 2010 to inaugurate the new housing development and was delighted at the interest shown in the plaque.



Adverts

The Group has consistently objected to large advertisements – particularly the huge new advertising towers by the A4 flyover next to St Paul’s church (Hammersmith Centre) – as obtrusive in the street scene and damaging to the views of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the surrounding CAs. The borough has now published draft design guidance on advertising towers. Unfortunately the guidance only deals with Hammersmith Centre and the A4 corridor and, while it makes observations with which we agree concerning damage to CAs and listed buildings, ironically it accepts those towers that are already there – mostly on council land!

Wooded Tow Path in Barnes

We are delighted that the Port of London Authority’s tree planting programme has started. The mayor of Richmond planted the first tree at a ceremony on 25 February 2010.

Brief Updates

Olympia Aparthotel – regrettably granted permission after a call in.

Fulham Wharf – plans for a new Sainsbury’s superstore with housing and a new link in the Riverside Walk are being refined. We are pleased that it is proposed to retain the classical façade of the existing wharf building, but we are concerned at the proposed towers or ‘campaniles’. We hope there will be open space associated with the riverside.

Fulham Palace and Bishop’s Park – result awaited on lottery bid.

‘Armadillo’ at NCP car park site in Beadon Road – pre-application meeting expected on a revised scheme

Imperial Wharf Phase 3 – the planning application has slightly reduced the water area and the height of the tower since the pre-application exhibition. The Group has always argued for the restoration of the old Imperial gas works dock, but is not in favour of a ‘Dubai’ style lake and opposes a tall building there.

Crabtree Wharf – we are concerned that proposals for the pub’s outdoor sitting area and beer garden should not ‘privatise’ the riverside, obstruct the public right of access via the drawdock to the foreshore – a gravel beach at this point – or alter the historic character of the Crabtree Wharf area.

Canal access steps at Mitre Bridge – the Group has criticised the borough’s design for these as not preserving or enhancing the Canal CA. Although the council has given itself permission, we are pressing for a review of the double layer of security fencing which is particularly alienating and could be simplified.

St Andrew’s Church Fulham Fields – permission was given to demolish part of this listed church and replace it with a block of flats. However, the Group was instrumental in securing a section 106 agreement covering restoration of parts of the remaining church building.

Ashlar Court – there have been pre-application consultations on a proposal to convert this listed former nurses’ home on the old Masonic Hospital complex to residential use.

The Palais – a proposal to build over-dense student accommodation on the site was refused.

Odeon Shepherd’s Bush – a revised application for conversion to a hotel was agreed.

St Paul’s Church, Hammersmith – the Group is delighted that the shrouding and accompanying shroud adverts have been removed to reveal the restored church in all its splendour. Unfortunately the intrusive advertisement hoarding at the east end facing the Broadway remains. Before the scaffolding was removed the church kindly invited a small party to climb up the scaffolding to the top of the tower. The view of the river and Hammersmith was wonderful and it was fascinating to see close up the details of the restoration work on the stonework. The Group congratulates the church on the splendid restoration of its landmark building.

News of Members

We were very sad to hear of the death of John Sheppard on 19 October 2009. He had entertained us all less than a fortnight before at our annual meeting with reminiscences of his own days at Latymer and an amusing account of the sculpture in the school. In his years on our committee he made a great contribution to the Group’s work with his knowledge and enthusiasm. His comprehensive audit of the borough’s public sculpture – now available on the council’s web site – is a splendid memorial to him. His last work, a new edition of a book on London’s blue plaques, has just been published. We send our condolences to his widow and children. Please see pages 9-11 for a report of John’s talk at our annual meeting and further details of his book.



The late John Sheppard in characteristic pose while leading an Historic Buildings Group sculpture walk in St Mary’s Roman Catholic cemetery in the north of the borough.

On a happier note we congratulate Maya Donelan on her recent award of an MBE for services to the community in Hammersmith and Fulham. Maya is a long-standing member of our committee. She made a major contribution to our *Local List of Historic Buildings* and continues to be involved in its updating, work for which we continue to be very grateful.

Finally, we welcome a new amenity group covering the Mall CA – the Hammersmith Mall Residents Association otherwise known as HAMRA. We are delighted they have decided to join us.

Angela Dixon

SYNAGOGUE ON THE GREEN

It is not known when Jews first settled in Hammersmith and Fulham, but by the late 19th century they were numerous enough to support a synagogue. Subsequently, two other Jewish synagogues were established in the borough. There is no longer a Jewish community in Hammersmith & Fulham large enough to support a synagogue, but the borough's three former synagogues survive and are used for worship by other branches of the Abrahamic religions.



The former Hammersmith & West Kensington synagogue in Brook Green, opened in 1890 and closed in 2002. It is now used by the Chinese church in London.

All three synagogues were Ashkenazi Orthodox, that is used by Jews from eastern Europe. The oldest and largest is Hammersmith & West Kensington in Brook Green. Designed by Delissa Joseph and built by Chamberlen Brothers, it opened in 1890. At this time it was the most westerly synagogue in London. It was built for Jews in the new western suburbs for whom the New West End Synagogue of 1877 in St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, was too far away. Like the New West End synagogue, the

Hammersmith & West Kensington was part of the United Synagogue. In the mid 1890s classrooms, a minister's house and a hall were all added, with the designs again coming from Delissa Joseph. A further enlargement proposed in 1922 was not permitted as it would have disrupted the building line of the street, so in 1925 the existing building was restructured. New classrooms were eventually built to the east of the synagogue in 1957. The synagogue closed in 2002 and in 2004 the Chinese church in London took over the building.

The other two synagogues were part of the Federation of Synagogues, most of whose member synagogues were in the East End. The Shepherds Bush Synagogue started before 1918 with a hut at The Lawn, Shepherd Bush Green, before settling in Poplar Grove in 1924. It was rebuilt just before the Second World War and in 1962 a flat for the minister was added. It closed about 1989 and is now the local base of the Mormons.

A separate Fulham congregation developed in 1919. Fulham Synagogue in Lillie Road was built by A T Burrows in 1926 and consecrated the following year. In 1959 the Fulham congregation joined Shepherds Bush. Fulham Synagogue is now a Seventh Day Adventist church.

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

DANCE TO THE MUSIC OF TIME

For many years the Royal Ballet School occupied 153 Talgarth Road where the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art is now based. This is well known. Not so well known is the fact that next door at 151 Talgarth Road – Colet House – one of the great Russian ballet stars of pre-revolutionary Russia had his home and teaching studio. This star was Nicolas Legat.

Born Nikolai Gustavovich Legat in 1869, Legat joined the ballet company of the Mariinsky Theatre on graduation from the Imperial Theatre School in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1888. He was soon performing the principal roles in *Coppélia*, *La Fille Mal Gardée* and *Sleeping Beauty*, partnering the great ballerinas of the day, Mathilde Kshessinska and Olga Preobrazhenska. He also taught at the Imperial Theatre School, where his pupils included Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina, Mikhail Fokine and Vaslav Nijinsky, all of whom, in their turn, became stars both in Russia and abroad as Diaghilev brought the Russian ballet to the west. Legat was appointed ballet master to the Mariinsky Theatre, succeeding Marius Petipa, the choreographer of *Sleeping Beauty* and *La Bayadere*, among many others. He was a choreographer in his own right and his *Fairy Doll* remains in the repertoire of the Mariinsky ballet company.

As a teacher, Legat was the link between the pre-revolutionary Russian ballet, between Johansson, Petipa and Cecchetti, and his own pupils, Agrippina Vaganova, who never left Russia but who developed the foundation of the Russian classical style recognized the world over, and Alexander Puskin, the beloved teacher of Rudolph

Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Although Mikhail Fokine railed against Legat's adherence to the strict classical tradition, Legat did develop his own choreographic style in works such as *Les Sylphides*, *Firebird* and *Petroushka*.

Having lived through the revolutions and upheaval of the first two decades of the 20th century in Russia, Legat finally severed his ties with the Mariinsky Theatre and the Imperial School in 1923. He spent some time in Europe and was ballet master for Diaghilev's Ballets



Self-caricature by Legat, 1924

Russes in the mid 1920s before finally settling in London in 1930.

His home and studio were at Colet House, then 46 Colet Gardens but now 151 Talgarth Road. Legat lived on the ground floor. The large room on the first floor where Burne Jones once painted served as his dance studio. Large, light and airy with big arched windows, the walls were lined with photographs of dancers, with Serov's full-length portrait of Pavlova in *La Sylphide* taking pride of place. Legat was probably one of the very last ballet masters to play the accompaniment to his classes on the piano. His own ballet master, Christian Johansson, played a violin which he left to Legat but which was destroyed in the aftermath of the revolution in 1917. Legat's caricatures of Johansson and Cecchetti show them as ballet masters with their violins.

Legat's 'class of perfection' was attended by the founding figures of English ballet, including Ninette de Valois, Anton Dolin and Alicia Markova, as well as by the young Margot Fonteyn. His former pupils and colleagues, stars of the Mariinsky and Diaghilev companies, also attended his class whenever they appeared in London.

A short figure, completely bald, with intense blue eyes, Fonteyn remembered him as 'enchanting in his benevolent good humour'. This, and his sharp wit, can be appreciated in the many caricatures of his contemporaries and pupils that he drew throughout his life. These, alone, provide a unique record of the artists of his day over some 50 years. Collections are held at the National Arts Education Archive at the University of Leeds and at the Bakhrushin Theatre Museum in Moscow.

Legat died of pneumonia in January 1937. A photograph shows him lying in his coffin in the studio, surrounded by flowers, beneath the portrait of Pavlova. His studio was taken over by his widow, Nadine Nikolaieva, who went on to establish the Legat School, now located at St. Bede's School, Hailsham.

Jane Gall Spooner

PALACE PROBINGS

Recent archaeological work in the borough has concentrated on Fulham Palace and the adjoining riverside.

As part of the Phase 2 lottery bid to restore Bishops Park and Fulham Palace, archaeological work has taken place in the former moat, the borough's only scheduled ancient monument. The moat is first definitely recorded in 1392, but earlier archaeological work has discovered prehistoric and Roman remains, suggesting that its origins date back to Saxon or pre-Roman times.

It is proposed to dig out the moat either side of the palace entrance in Bishops Avenue to demonstrate that there used to be a moat surrounding the palace grounds and also to reveal the bridge across the moat. Most people have been unaware of this since the moat was in-filled during the 1920s. The moat would be dry, but long-term, flooding this short stretch of moat is a possibility. Test bores were drilled to ascertain the moat's depth and the make-up of the fill, particularly any contaminants. To remove the fill and dump it in an approved site is costly. The winding gear of the sluice gate is still visible in the riverside section of the moat. This was in use until the early 20th century. Dirty water could be released into the Thames and clean Thames water used to refill. However, with the failing of the sluice and the Thames becoming increasingly dirty, the moat became a stagnant ditch. The cost of cleaning was expensive. The sluice appears to have been first built in 1618 and rebuilt in 1842.



Recent excavations at Fulham Palace revealed the winding gear of the old moat sluice gate.

Trenching also took place in the walled garden to identify earlier garden lay-outs. The lottery would provide money to restore the greenhouse complex and walled garden. In

the centre of the garden, a water feature was uncovered which may be a well with a stone plinth, probably the base for a pump dating to the 18th or 19th centuries. Other trenches produced Roman pottery and coins, similar to finds made during earlier excavations.

As part of the Thames Discovery programme, archaeological work has been taking place along the Thames recording features, particularly ancient deposits and remains. These are being eroded away, partly due to the wash from boats. Along our stretch fronting Swan Wharf (Swan Bank), two wooden posts became visible on the foreshore. English Heritage took samples for Carbon 14 dating and were surprised to find that they dated to the Iron Age, approximately 100BC. At that time the foreshore would have been dry land and there are probably more posts to be found. Their use is uncertain.

The draining of the Swan Drawdock for cleaning gave the opportunity for the abutment walls to be examined, formerly part of the Fulham Bridge toll-house (see picture right and the article immediately following for more on this work – Ed). Until 1729 there was no bridge across the Thames between London Bridge and Kingston. Before that there was a ferry at Fulham, probably established in Saxon times when the river was no longer fordable. Private capital was raised to build a wooden bridge between Fulham and Putney. Tolls were charged for its maintenance and to pay dividends to the shareholders. A large toll-house was constructed on the Fulham side. Traffic and pedestrians went underneath an arch, above which were rooms used by the toll-keepers and for meetings. On the Putney side there was a much smaller toll-house building. Archaeological work revealed brickwork on the foreshore that appears to be part of the toll-house structure. In 1886 Fulham Bridge was replaced by the present Putney Bridge.

During the construction of the Swan Bank sheltered housing in 1978, the writer observed part of the toll-house base with its arch over the Thames. This unfortunately was partially destroyed by the construction of drainage.

Keith Whitehouse, Historic Buildings Group/Fulham & Hammersmith Historical Society

SWANNING AROUND WITH FROGS

October 2008 saw the start of the Thames Discovery Programme (TDP), a three-year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by the Thames Estuary Partnership at University College London. One of the aims of the project is to establish a survey of archaeological features at key sites on the Thames foreshore which can then be used as a baseline for monitoring future erosion or revelations. As the foreshore at low tide is the largest archaeological site in Europe, this is clearly a task beyond professional or university archaeology units. It is, however, just the sort of task that can be carried out by suitably trained enthusiasts who are prepared to be involved in the long-term. The name given to these groups is Foreshore Recording & Observation Groups – or FROGs.

Initial training commenced early in 2009 with a theory day followed by several weekend practical sessions. By summer there were sufficient trained volunteers to undertake a number of five-day practical recording projects. One of these was held at Putney between 22 and 27 August.

One of the main features recorded there was an extensive platform of Georgian red brick, the southern footings of the original 18th century timber bridge. It was only natural to look across the river to Fulham to see where the northern footings would have been, and several of us thought the Fulham site warranted a closer look.

After a public outreach day at Fulham Palace in July, two of us had taken a brief look at the old Swan drawdock, situated between Willow Bank and Carrara Wharf, at the junction of Ranelagh Gardens and Fulham High Street, just to the east of Putney Bridge.



The large toll-house straddling old Fulham Bridge at the Fulham end of the bridge, next to the former drawdock. Recent excavations in the dock have revealed part of the abutment wall of the toll-house.

When Carrara Wharf was converted to a residential development, the old drawdock entrance was sealed permanently and the old dock itself flooded to provide an aquatic nature reserve habitat for wildfowl and fish. Subsequently the dock had become silted up but, through the efforts of nature reserve organiser Rick Davis and a few helpers, most of the silt had been removed. This clearance process revealed a well-constructed cobbled floor to the basin. Some of the original dock wall and timbers were also still extant.

It was felt that the dock paving and the basin structure would make an interesting recording project for TDP members as it had a number of aspects which made it a particularly suitable training opportunity. The most significant was that the site, when drained, was accessible throughout the day, resulting in a less-pressured working environment than the short windows available when working on foreshore features. The site also offered an interesting prospect for continuation activity after recording. There was a narrow window of opportunity for

this work and in the first week of November a small group of TDP volunteers assembled to record the features that had been noted on the earlier reconnaissance.

While clearing away the silt and shingle at the foot of the western side of the drawdock we saw the unmistakable signs of Georgian red brick. After comparing the position of this layer with a variety of archive illustrations, it was clear that what we had found was part of the approaches and the toll-house at the Fulham end of the bridge. This was the archaeological equivalent of a hole-in-one!

After the initial elation came the process of meticulously recording the feature, both photographically and by drawing every brick. This level of detail was warranted by the significance of the find and by the fact that it would be inaccessible subsequently. This was the first recording made on the initiative of project volunteers and certainly seems to have proved the validity of the whole programme. The finds at Fulham will be recommended to English Heritage for scheduling.

*Nathalie Cohen, Team Leader
Thames Discovery Programme*

MUNSTER HOUSE GOES MISSING

Munster House, formerly known as Mustow or Muster House, stood at what is now the junction of Fulham and Munster Roads. Dating back to the late 16th or early 17th centuries, in 1705 it was described as a 'handsome, ancient house'. By 1814 it was much altered. The pseudo-gothic embellishments shown in the picture below were added in the mid 19th century.



A 19th century view of Munster House, Fulham, showing it after the old mansion had been fashionably 'gothicked'.

The earliest recorded owners of the house were the Powells, a Welsh family settled in Fulham by the 1570s. The estate was sequestered in 1664 for a time. This may have given rise to the legend that it was used as a hunting lodge by Charles II.

Around 1751 Munster House was turned into an asylum. In December 1751 the *Public Advertiser* reported that 'at Purser's Cross, near Fulham, in a healthful situation and open air, there is lately fitted up, in a decent and genteel

manner, a commodious house, for the reception of gentlemen, ladies and others who are afflicted with nervous or melancholy disorders'.

This asylum did not last long for by the end of the 18th century Munster House was a girls' school. Then it reverted into a private residence before standing empty for some years, 'tenantless and ghost-haunted'. For the last 45 years of its existence Munster House was again an asylum, this time for insane gentlemen. An advertisement from the 1850s described the house as containing 29 rooms. 'The pleasure grounds', it went on, 'are eight acres, walled in, studded with noble trees [one of which was a mulberry] and comprise lawns, a meadow, orchard, bowling green, green house, bowling alley, billiard and reading rooms and detached buildings for recreation and amusements'. Additional accommodation in a separate house included a padded room and refractory ward, thus 'doing away with mechanical restraint'.

Restraints might have proved useful as it was not uncommon for inmates to escape. Sometimes they would hide in Dancer's Nursery opposite, but one enterprising lunatic, in a state of nudity, ran down Fulham Road and through the High Street until he reached the toll house at the foot of old Fulham Bridge. The toll keeper wrapped him in a blanket and kept him warm until help arrived, but the September night air proved too much and the unfortunate man was dead within a month.

Munster House was an elaborately embellished building with eccentric ornamentation. Life size plaster figures at the entrance included one of the Venerable Bede. A picturesque octagonal building at the north end of the grounds was traditionally known as King Charles' Bower, but it was probably no more than a former summer house. Latterly it was used as a temporary morgue for patients who died at the asylum.

In 1894 Dr G Fielding Blandford, the eminent lunacy specialist, who had run the house for twenty years, sold the property. The house itself was not of sound construction. Although the outside walls were brick, the interior walls were made of lath and plaster and were infested by colonies of rats and mice which careered around noisily at night.

During the spring of 1895 Munster House was demolished. Its site was developed as Felden Street and the east side of Munster Road.

Anne Wheeldon, Hammersmith & Fulham Archives

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting on 7 October was attended by some 70 members and guests. The mayor and mayoress were there, as were councillors and council officers and representatives of many organisations and groups, including the Hammersmith and Fulham Societies.

We met in the Great Hall of Latymer Upper School. Designed by Hammersmith architect George Saunders, this dates from 1895 when the school moved to King

Street from Hammersmith Road. Since then there has been almost continuous alteration and redevelopment on the site. To the south, Rivercourt House on Upper Mall has been acquired for the prep school. The most recent Upper School additions are the Latymer Arts and Latymer Performing Arts Centres. Many members enjoyed a pre-meeting tour of these. A new science and library building is under construction and will open next year. The architects for these projects are van Heyningen and Haward, who also designed the sports pavilion at Wood Lane.

The theme for the evening was 'Our Schools Old and New' and there were three guest speakers. The first, the late John Sheppard, HBG member and author of the borough sculpture survey, described the history of the school, the Latymer Foundation and the memorials and works of art in the Great Hall. Having been a pupil at Latymer himself during the 1950s, John was able to add some interesting, evocative and informative personal touches (his address follows – Ed). The second speaker was Duncan McCallum, policy director of English Heritage. He started by illustrating some modern additions to historic school buildings, both good and more controversial, the latter including one at Tiffin School. He then related how English Heritage recognises that schools, like churches, have long occupied an important place in community life and, because of this, need to adapt to continuously changing educational and social patterns. The current programme to modernise all English secondary schools would have significant impacts on some important buildings; Duncan explained the English Heritage policies, priorities and guidance for such cases. Preservation need not preclude appropriate adaptation, but change of use should always be considered before demolition. The old Colet Court school is a good example of this. The third speaker was our host, Richard Niblett, assistant head of Latymer Upper. He described how the school, recognising its responsibilities as a Hammersmith education and facilities provider, has also managed its regeneration in the context of its architectural heritage. In addition, Paul Taylor, senior programme manager, explained how our council is approaching the 'Building Schools for The Future' programme.

The formal business included the approval of last year's minutes, together with the chairman's updates and annual report. Our treasurer Jo Brock, being indisposed, could not attend, but her very clear accounts were approved unanimously. The officers and committee were re-elected en bloc. The chairman invited anyone interested in filling a vacancy on the committee by co-option to come to a meeting to 'suck it and see'.

Jane Kimber, borough archivist, to whom the Group is very grateful for her unstinting support, brought a most interesting photo display of many of the borough's old schools. In addition, Heather Armitage, H&F Pensioners Forum, brought some pictures of the new HBG Plaque at old St Paul's School, commemorating the planning of D-Day there. Our thanks were extended to both exhibitors.

To conclude a successful evening, HBG chairman Angela Dixon said: 'the borough is fortunate to have many distinguished school buildings dating from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The challenge now is to adapt them successfully to meet modern educational needs without sacrificing their special quality'.

Richard Scott, Hon Sec, Historic Buildings Group

LAWYER'S LEGACY

An address delivered at the HBG's annual meeting on 7 October 2009 by the late John Sheppard.

Edward Latymer (1556-1626), of whom alas we have no image, came from a comfortably-off Suffolk family. He worked as a lawyer in the Court of Wards from 1594 until his death, and, in the way of those times, this brought many perks so that towards the end of his life he could fairly be described as wealthy. He owned substantial swathes of our present borough from Shepherds Bush down to the Hammersmith Road, as well as an estate in Edmonton, where of course another Latymer flourishes to this day as one of London's leading state secondary schools.

Wealthy men in those days sought to make their legacy positive in the eyes of God, and Latymer disposed of his estate in a series of generous bequests. In Hammersmith he directed his trustees to 'elect, nominate and choose eight poor boys inhabiting in the said town of Hammersmith and being within the age of twelve years apiece and above the age of seven years apiece'. He further directed the trustees to cause 'the said eight poor boys to be put to some petty school to the end they may learn to read English and to be so kept at school until they shall attain to the age of thirteen years, thereby to keep them from idle and vagrant courses and also to instruct them in some part of God's true religion'.



The Great Hall at Latymer Upper School, built in 1895 by local architect George Saunders when the school moved to its current King Street site.

For the first two and a half centuries the eight poor boys were educated in a variety of lodging places round the borough, and there were times when the thread of continuity was in danger of being broken. On one occasion the headmaster was arrested for bankruptcy, and several inspections by the trustees found incompetent teaching. In 1726, for example, they found the children

‘very backward in their learning’, and the teachers were directed to be ‘more diligent in their employ’. But, with additional bequests from various other local worthies, the foundation staggered on and by the mid 19th century there were some 100 Latymerians.

At last the trustees decided to purpose-build school premises on land owned by the foundation in Hammersmith Road, and the Latymer Foundation School, for boys aged seven to fourteen, was opened in 1863. Now at last competence took over, and by the 1890s, with the pupil numbers now up to 441, school inspectors could report: ‘This school fully maintains its very good state of efficiency. All members of the staff work with zeal and industry and the instruction generally is skilful and thorough’.

There was a gleam in the trustees’ eyes when they announced a future strategy in 1878 centred on the foundation of a secondary school to be known as Latymer Upper School. It was to take 17 years before this plan came to pass, and the present premises in which you are sitting tonight were opened on 9 January 1895. And in truth, for all the mazy history of the foundation since 1624, this is the true beginning of the modern Latymer. Secondary education was then in its earliest stages of development and required a more highly educated staff. Latymer was fortunate in that the first headmaster of the new school, CJ Smith, who served from 1895 to 1921, was a shrewd picker of teachers, and the great majority of them served the school for many years, several for over 30 years. If you look at the string running round the hall over the classrooms you see incised there the names of long-serving and much-loved teachers. RC ‘Archie’ Davies, a boy at the school before the First World War, and later, by my time, head of English, with the most imitable voice, like tearing calico, wrote of his teachers: ‘undoubtedly it was their pioneer work that gave the school that academic impetus that has remained to this day’.

CJ Smith and his successor, Edmund Dale, who served from 1921 to 1937, were both men of the highest Christian ideals, but they both, so the history tells us, saw their role as headmaster as being somewhat remote from the daily hurly-burly of school life. In their time the school earned a well-justified reputation as an academic forcing house, and you can see from the honours boards ranged around you that Latymerians were winning scholarships en masse. But with the arrival of Frederick Wilkinson as head in 1937, things changed. ‘Wilky’, who served until 1957, and was ‘my’ headmaster, was everywhere. It may be said that while the academic achievements rolled on unabated, ‘Wilky’ loosened the school’s stays. It was written of him: ‘one witnessed the transformation from a grammar school of high academic reputation and achievement, but one at which examination results and university successes were the top priorities, to a school where these things still counted for much, but became secondary to the building of a school where a boy’s individual needs and his relationship with his fellows mattered most’. Among ‘Wilky’s’ many

innovations was the establishment of a twinning with the Johanneum School in Hamburg in 1947, this at a time when Anglo-German relations were still firmly in the victor-vanquished mode. Similarly visionary was his overseeing of the first teaching of Russian in any British school, organised by FC Gregory who became head of languages. The first nine state scholarships in Russian all went to Latymerians.



The first Hammersmith Bridge, designed in the 1820s by William Tierney Clark, chief engineer to the West Middlesex Waterworks, whose pumping station was nearby. The bridge survived until the 1880s when it was rebuilt by Sir Joseph Bazalgette (see below, page 11).

From 1945 to 1977 the school was in the direct grant scheme, with somewhat over half the boys coming from, shall we say, ordinary backgrounds. I was supported here by the dear dead county of Middlesex and one was never aware of any gulf between those whose parents were paying and those of us who were being paid for. The range of extra-curricular activities in the 1950s was breathtaking and somehow one was able to be in the Combined Cadet Force, the Council for Education in World Citizenship and The Debating Society, be involved in editing *The Latymerian*, as well as playing football, cricket and badminton, and being successively a member of the Apprentices, the Journeymen and finally the Gild, the greatest society in Latymer’s history, which brought together an enthusiastic staff and a lively bunch of sixth formers in all manner of artistic endeavours. It was the Gild that nurtured the acting careers of the likes of Alan Rickman, Mel Smith and Hugh Grant, and it was at the Gild that Shaun Sutton, an OL from the 1930s, now head of drama at the BBC, came and talked about his career in television, which first gave me an idea of where my future might lie. As an OL now of fifty years remove, my greatest sadness about Latymer today is that the Gild no longer exists.

In 1977 Latymer opted to go independent, as opposed to comprehensive, reasoning that it would otherwise be vulnerable to local authority changes of direction. It also reasoned that the only way to maintain its standards of

excellence was to be in charge of its own destiny. Perhaps the biggest change of recent years has been the arrival of girls (unthinkable in my time). Now the Upper School boasts 1103 pupils – 649 boys and 454 girls. As a recent parent of a Latymerian, I have the impression that the school's esprit has survived the irruption of the sensible sex, and long may it stay so.

In memoriam John Sheppard, born 24 June 1940, died 19 October 2009, at Latymer 1951-58

John's last project – a new edition of Derek Sumeray's *London Plaques* – was published on 10 March 2010 by Shire (ISBN: 9780747807353). Ed.

WHAT'S COOKING IN TOWNMEAD ROAD?

Sainsbury's have bought Fulham Wharf in Townmead Road and have plans to build a brand new store on the site to replace their existing one, with new housing as part of the development.



A fairly recent photograph showing the Townmead Road elevation of the derelict factory building on Fulham Wharf which Sainsburys have bought and plan to re-develop.

In 1891 a new brewery was built on the banks of the Thames in Townsmead Road. The brewer was Kops and the builder was Thomas Gregory of Clapham. It was replaced or modified in 1889 by architect Richard Creed of Finsbury Circus. The external elevation facing the road was decorated with several rows of blind arcades, a decorative feature found on late medieval buildings. In 1917 the brewery was requisitioned by the Food Controller and converted to a margarine factory operated by Vandenbergh. The architect on this occasion was W. Newcome Wright of Whippell, Wheeler and Wright. Over the years many additional buildings were added and a soap works was set up to use waste or surplus fat. The factory continued in production until just after the Second World War when it caught fire. Remarkably, there is almost no record of the fire, though I have met a lady who recalls seeing it as a child. Others have also met witnesses. Margarine does not burn as fiercely as, for example, petrol so it is unlikely there was much structural damage. However, production never restarted and the site remained untouched for years. It was squatted for a while, which suggests that its structure was reasonably sound. Sainsbury's redevelopment plans include

preservation of the arcaded wall. If any one knows any more about the fire and why the site was abandoned, please let the HBG know.

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

BRIDGE MASTER

William Tierney Clark was one of the most distinguished civil engineers in the first half of the 19th century and he spent all his professional life in Hammersmith.

He was born in Somerset in 1783. His father, a distiller, died when Clark was still young so he was apprenticed, aged 12, to a Bristol millwright. From there he made his way to the Colebrookdale Ironworks, then the best place to learn the mechanics of cast and wrought iron fabrication for structural use. Clark must have been a talented worker for when John Rennie, the famed builder of the second London Bridge and the first Waterloo Bridge, visited Coalbrookdale, he invited Clark to join him at his Blackfriars works in London. There Clark continued his hands-on education. In 1811 the position of engineer became vacant at the West Middlesex Waterworks in Hammersmith. Successfully recommended by Rennie, he moved to the waterworks premises and lived there for the rest of his life.

Clark revived the moribund waterworks company, first, by installing more powerful pumps to increase the waterworks capacity, and second, by building new settling and storage reservoirs on the other side of the Thames at Barn Elms. After this reorganisation, his duties became routine and he began to take on outside commissions, though the directors of the waterworks kept him on as company engineer at a reduced salary and allowed him to keep his company house.

The need for a bridge at Hammersmith to shorten the journey to the Surrey side was becoming apparent in the early 1820s. The Hammersmith Bridge Company was formed in 1823 and it accepted Clark's proposal for the building of a suspension bridge at an estimated cost of £49,627 including land purchases. Clark was strongly influenced – and the promoters reassured – by Thomas Telford's successful large-span bridge over the Menai Strait (176 metres). The Hammersmith crossing, completed in four years, was the first suspension bridge over the Thames and set the pattern for Clark's three subsequent bridges at Marlow, Shoreham and Budapest. In the design of Hammersmith Bridge he demonstrated that his architectural abilities were equal to his engineering talents. The towers supporting the chains were in the manner of Roman triumphal arches forming a ceremonial progression over the Thames. The relatively low cost of the bridge was achieved by using the suspension method, which allowed the number of piers to be kept to a minimum (two).

The foundation stone of the first Hammersmith Bridge was laid inside the Middlesex cofferdam by the Duke of Sussex on 7 May 1825. The building of the bridge aroused great popular interest, particularly when the chains were raised. In 1829 the Boat Race was transferred

to this part of the Thames and the bridge became a convenient viewing platform. Count Széchenyi, the Hungarian aristocrat behind the Buda-Pesth Chain Bridge, was immediately captivated by the sight of Hammersmith and this led eventually to Clark's greatest challenge: the bridge over the Danube. Széchenyi visited Clark several times in Hammersmith during 1832 to discuss the Hungarian bridge project and many letters from Clark about it survive in Hungary to this day.

Clark lived and died in Grove Road just to the north-east of St Peter's church. The large house with a substantial garden with its own fountain probably fed from the



William Tierney Clark, painted by Miklós Barabás in 1842.

waterworks was pulled down long ago, possibly after the waterworks became part of the Metropolitan Water Board in the early 20th century.

Clark's mother Susannah and his sister Harriet lived in Black Lion Lane in one of the houses opposite the present Black Lion pub. Both women died in 1818.

Clark erected a memorial tablet to them that can still

be seen in St Paul's church in Hammersmith. He himself died a well-off bachelor in 1852 and there is a fine memorial to him in St Paul's Hammersmith as well (see below).

The most remarkable of the objects Clark left in his will was the gold diamond-studded snuffbox he received at the foundation-laying ceremony of the Danube Chain Bridge on 24 August 1842. This box, which had the letter F on its lid for Ferdinand Emperor of Austria, was mentioned in a contemporary report in *The Times*. Clark bequeathed it to Mary Elizabeth Croker, who erected the memorial to him in St Paul's church mentioned above. The whereabouts of this box, like everything else Clark owned, is unknown.

Sandor Vaci RIBA



Tierney Clark memorial in St Paul's church, Hammersmith.

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HBG EVENTS

Wednesday 9 June 2010

Special 'behind the scenes' visit to borough archives in the company of borough archivist Jane Kimber. Meet 2.30pm at Archives & Local History Centre, The Lilla Huset, 191 Talgarth Rd, W6. Cost £10, pay on the day. Booking essential: Richard Scott 0208 749 3963 or rbc.scott@yahoo.co.uk (email preferred).

OTHER EVENTS COMING UP

12-13 Jun: Open Garden Squares
 19 Jun-4 Jul: London Festival of Architecture 2010
 26 Jun-4 Jul: Celebrating Fulham
 11-12 Sep: The Mayor's Thames Festival
 18-19 Sep: Open House London
 3 Nov: HBG annual meeting

HBG PUBLICATIONS

Local List £17 members, £20 non-members. *Bradmore House* illustrated booklet, £5. Available from HBG chairman: 020 8748 7416.

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