



No. 24 Spring 2011

OUR HISTORIC RIVERSIDE AT RISK

We are alarmed at the growing threat to our historic riverside, one of the jewels of the borough. The historic strand from St Nicholas's church in Chiswick, along Chiswick Mall and Hammersmith Upper and Lower Malls down to Hammersmith Bridge, is a sequence of historic houses dating from the 17th century onwards. Many were built before there was a bridge when Hammersmith was a country retreat for city dwellers. Several have associations with notable figures from the past, including William Morris and Charles II's widow Catherine of Braganza to name but two. A wonderful reminder of Hammersmith's past, the riverside is one of the last bits of 'arcadia' before 'metropolis' starts further downstream. All who walk or live beside the river enjoy the elegant and eclectic landscape with its historic buildings, gardens and fine views. Our picture below shows how little the riverside around the Dove pub has changed since the early 19th century.

However, the proposals for the King Street regeneration scheme (see last newsletter for details) threaten this riverside inheritance. The scheme includes seven to nine storey buildings, bulky 14 and 15 storey tower blocks and a pedestrian bridge over the A4. Taken together, the proposals will damage the surrounding conservation areas and the setting of both the listed town hall and early 18th century Sussex House. They will also involve the demolition of a 1930s cinema and cut a swathe out of Furnivall Gardens. The scheme will overwhelm the riverside landscape and intrude into local views.

What value does the council put on our heritage?

This planning application has grown like topsy from the original council brief and has aroused unprecedented opposition. The Georgian Society, the Victorian Society, the Twentieth Century Society, the Cinema Theatres Association and virtually every local amenity group have



An early 19th century view of the Dove and adjacent riverside, taken from roughly where the pier is today.

all come out against it. CABE has criticised the architecture. English Heritage has said that the proposals ‘will cause considerable harm to the historic environment’ and recommends that they should be ‘fundamentally reconsidered’.

There is no such thing as a free office...

The council argues that the new council offices should cost the taxpayer nothing. But what price do we put on our historic riverside? The damage to that is too high and it will be a continuous and recurring loss, not just an economy over a three-year period. The brief should be reconsidered.



This image from the council’s website – looking north from Furnivall Gardens across the Great West Road – shows how the proposed new blocks will dominate the listed 1930s town hall. The town hall is second from right. The new blocks are either side of it. Those on the Great West Road are in darker ink.

PLANNING POLICY ON ‘REGENERATION’ UNDERMINING HERITAGE

Another worrying matter is the changes that have been proposed to planning policies in the council’s Core Strategy. (The Core Strategy is part of the LDF – the Local Development Framework – which is replacing the UDP – the Unitary Development Plan.) These changes undermine the respect that until now the council has accorded its historic inheritance through the suite of policies in the old UDP. The Group has commented at every stage of the consultation on the LDF, but our comments have so far been virtually ignored. In particular, the policies fail to recognise the importance of respecting our historic inheritance in regeneration schemes and they ignore the idea of ‘heritage-led regeneration’.

The town centre boundaries are being extended below Hammersmith Bridge to include Queen’s Wharf and Hammersmith Embankment. As a result the current proposals for Queen’s Wharf next to Hammersmith Bridge are as high as the bridge; they crowd it and intrude into the views. The new proposals for Hammersmith Embankment (or Fulham Reach as the developers call it) are for a dense and high residential scheme, out of scale with the surrounding streets and without the open space and river sports facility agreed in the earlier scheme (granted planning permission in 2007).

The importance of Hammersmith Bridge was emphasised recently when English Heritage upgraded its listing status to Grade II*. English Heritage commented that ‘the architectural quality of Hammersmith Bridge is remarkable’ and that ‘its striking form, with monumental

towers capped with turrets, is one of the most distinctive on the Thames’. Any nearby development should leave the bridge as the dominant building in the views. The Group will continue to argue for this on all occasions as part of its support for the general principle that new developments should respect their context.

Chairman’s Update

Disproportionate Development

Our major concern over the last six months has continued to be the disproportionate development being proposed in historic contexts under the banner of ‘regeneration’ (see lead story). We understand the need for viability. But as a result of the council’s policies, the ‘hope value’ of sites has grown, fuelling the expectation of developers for very large schemes irrespective of their historical context.

Consultation Deafness

Consultation meetings are numerous, but sadly on larger schemes they often seem little more than presentations of pre-prepared plans rather than genuine consultations. Scant notice appears to be taken of what we or other residents groups say. The result is that real participation in a development’s design is virtually non-existent.

It is surely reasonable to expect that consultation may lead to design changes in order to accommodate sensible criticisms and suggestions, particularly when a group has detailed knowledge of a site, its context and the relevant planning policy. Frustratingly, consultation often seems to be just a box-ticking exercise to be completed as part of the planning application process.

The King Street regeneration scheme described above is a good example of ‘consultation deafness’. It looks as if the two schemes at Queen’s Wharf and Hammersmith Embankment will be similarly hard of hearing, though we still hope that residents’ views will lead to improvements.



Views of Hammersmith’s picturesque 19th century bridge are likely to be damaged by proposals for Queen’s Wharf (see left).

The Archives

As members will know, the Group has long been a supporter and frequent user of our excellent archives and local history service. We had a fascinating members' visit there last summer, following which the borough archivist contributed the article on page 8 below. Members have used the archives for many different projects, including our *Local List* of historic buildings, the history of Bradmore House, the survey of the borough's public sculpture (now on the council's web site), contributions to planning appeals, research for guided walks and of course articles and illustrations for our newsletters.

The Group was very concerned to learn recently that as part of the council's proposed budget cuts, the archives were to be virtually closed down from the end of February without any prior consultation with users. In future there would be no dedicated archivist, the reading room would be shut and there would be no direct access to documents for research.

Together with representatives from the Hammersmith Society, the Fulham Society and the F&H Historical Society, the Group has had meetings with the council to try to find a way of keeping our archives service active and accessible. At the time of writing this working party is discussing a number of suggestions and a solution is looking possible involving volunteers supporting a professional part-time archivist so that the work of the archives will continue and the reading room be open for research, albeit for a reduced amount of time.* This is a short-term solution. We will also be discussing the long-term future of the archives when the lease on their Lila Husset premises next to The Ark – now on a peppercorn rent – is reviewed. The Group considers the archives an essential service for residents. Local collections should be kept together and up to date and they should remain local and easily accessible to borough residents.

* *Editor's note:* anyone interested in volunteering in the archives is invited to contact the Archives Department at archives@lbhf.gov.uk with their name, address, telephone and email address and a brief note of why they are interested and any experience they may have.

Fulham Palace and Bishop's Park.

The restoration work on the palace and the park, funded by the lottery (see last newsletter), is proceeding apace. A full account appears below on page 5. We are particularly pleased to see part of the moat being excavated (see picture right). This is an idea that the Group has championed for many years. We hope that in the current phase of restoration it will be possible to mark on the ground in a permanent way the entire circuit of the moat. The moat was filled in in the 1920s.

The Fulham Palace advisory board, on which I have represented the Group, has had its final meeting. As from 1 April, a new trust has taken over the governance of the palace. We look forward to hearing from Tim Ingram, the chairman of the trust, about his plans for an advisory forum of some kind to replace the advisory board.

Railway Heritage

With the proposals for Crossrail and HS2, Old Oak Common looks like becoming a hot spot for new railway development. For an update, see Michael Bussell's article below on page 8. The Group will continue to emphasise the importance of the railway and canal heritage and will work to ensure it is adequately recognised, recorded, preserved and enhanced in the new developments.

Planning Policy

I gave evidence at the examination in public (EIP) into the Revised London Plan on heritage issues including the policies on high buildings and views. At the time of writing we are awaiting the inspectors' report. The Group is about to give evidence to the EIP on the borough's Core Strategy. Along with other conservation groups, we fear that the government's proposed changes to the planning regime may have a damaging effect on our heritage.

Listed Buildings

The former Royal Masonic Hospital next to Ravenscourt Park has been upgraded to Grade II*. An application has been submitted for converting the neighbouring former nurses' home, known as Ashlar Court and listed Grade II, into apartments. Whilst we do not object to this in principle, we consider that the proposals for extra floors and extensions are too large and will damage the historic setting of the hospital and the listed houses in Ravenscourt Gardens.

We continue to be concerned about local buildings on the English Heritage *Buildings At Risk Register*. At 34 Black Lion Lane W6 restoration work started then stopped and the building is now deteriorating. At the former Wormholt Library and Infant Welfare Centre in Hemlock Road W12, which we were instrumental in getting listed, we will continue to press for restoration as part of its proposed change of use to a school.



A section of the Fulham Palace moat emerges as a result of recent excavations. The entrance bridge over the moat – yet to be fully revealed as such – is at the far end. To the right is one of the two palace entrance lodges.

The council has approved the sale of further listed buildings in its estate. Previously the former St Paul's high master's house in Hammersmith Road, the Castle

Club and Wormholt Library had been put up for sale. Fulham town hall has now joined them along with locally listed Palingswick House (see article on page 4). The group is concerned that these buildings should not be allowed to deteriorate, should be fully restored by any new owner and that Fulham town hall, as a former civic building, should retain some kind of public use. We are pleased that the council has decided not to sell the Hammersmith Library in Shepherd's Bush Road.

Open Space and Landscape

I have reported in previous newsletters that regretfully we had to object to the plans for **Shepherd's Bush Common** because they would change the historic character of the common from village green to urban park. We are awaiting the date of a public inquiry and we shall be arguing for a design philosophy of 'less is more'.



Here's a sight we are unlikely ever to see again: sheep on an unmetalled Shepherd's Bush Road. The historical importance of sheep to the area and the common is evident from the name.

We are also objecting to the fact that the Core Strategy removes protection from some areas of open space. The Linford Christie stadium's status is no longer shown as Metropolitan Open Land, presumably so it can be developed for non-sports use. A section is shown removed from the boundary of South Park and the council has stated they wish to sell it. In both cases we support the Friends groups in their objections.

Hammersmith Palais A new application for student housing has now been approved. The latest scheme is a better neighbour than the original one to the surrounding listed buildings and conservation area, though sadly it rises to 10 storeys at the rear. We hope that it will also provide an appropriate replacement of the historic music venue which in 1919 introduced jazz to this country with the visit of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. We wait to see...

Sits Vac

There is a great deal happening all over the borough and the workload of the Group, never light, is consequently growing all the time. We would be very glad to hear from any members who might be willing to undertake research and/or follow up, even on a small issue. Please do contact

me or one of the committee if you would like to discuss. And finally, if anyone has photos or other historic images of the borough, please do get in touch with our picture librarian, Mike Derome – contact details on back cover.

Late Good News

The **Bryony Centre** in Bryony Road W12 (see last newsletter) has been saved from demolition and will now be incorporated into the new Cambridge School on the Phoenix High School campus. The **intrusive advert** on the side of the former Wandsworth Bridge Tavern at the corner of Wandsworth Bridge Road and Carnwath Road has finally been removed. We congratulate the enforcement team and thank them for the tenacity with which they negotiated their way through all the legal obstacles. And we look forward to the removal of similar eyesores in the future!

Angela Dixon

HOUSE WITH A HISTORY

In June 2010 a listed building application was submitted to English Heritage for Palingswick House on King Street. This was in response to the council's proposals to review its property portfolio and potentially dispose of some historic assets. Although news has been received that the listing application was unsuccessful, the research carried out for the project proved very interesting and is summarised here.

The land Palingswick House occupies was once part of the Seagreens estate, a landholding that first appears in records in 1657. Seagreens' best-known owner was Louis Weltje, head chef to the Prince of Wales, later George IV. Weltje purchased the estate in 1790 and on his death in 1810 left it to his brother Christopher Weltje. Christopher married Ann Sophie Buhl. The main house at Seagreens was located on the Upper Mall next to the river, but the grounds stretched back to the High Road (now King Street). The couple were still living in Seagreens in 1839 when Thomas Faulkner wrote his well-known history of Hammersmith.

The first building known to occupy the current site of Palingswick House (set back from King Street) was Buhl House, presumably named after Christopher's wife's family. This is likely to have been a new property on the estate. Buhl House first appears in the Hammersmith rate book of May 1849 when Barnabas C Steel(e) is rated for a house, buildings, garden and yard on the High Road (now King Street). The rateable value of £84 is much higher than the surrounding properties, which suggests Buhl House was a large property.

Barnabas Steel, a Suffolk-born wharfinger, lived at Buhl House till his death in 1872. By this time the house had been renamed Marlesford Lodge. The next occupant of Marlesford Lodge was Charles Collins Steel, presumably the son of Barnabas.

In the 1880s Marlesford Lodge passed into institutional use when it was acquired by the Kensington & Chelsea Board of Guardians. They converted it into a boarding school for children whose parents had gone into the workhouse. Children were only held at Marlesford Lodge for a short time. Once they had been screened and health checked, they – or at least those deemed suitable – were sent on to the main, or ‘union’, school at Banstead in Surrey. By 1885 Marlesford Lodge was accommodating 130 children and infants.

The London County Council (LCC) took over Marlesford Lodge. In 1944 a scandal erupted involving a seven year-old girl and her placement at the home. Home Secretary Herbert Morrison made a statement in the House of Commons in which he proposed an inquiry into remand homes run by the LCC. The inquiry found the LCC not guilty, but criticised its failure to provide cultural and intellectual stimulation for the girls in its charge. Later, Herbert Morrison visited Marlesford Lodge, spending an hour there. During April 1945 there were repeated newspaper reports of riots and escape attempts; four girls broke 16 panes of glass and three lockers.

Around 1954 Marlesford Lodge became Palingswick House hostel for diabetic children and continued as such until it was closed in 1980. From 1983 it has been occupied by various community organisations.

Joanna Sanderson, Historic Buildings Group

Editor’s note: current press reports indicate that Palingswick House is likely to become a new ‘free’ school once sold by the council.

MUCKING ABOUT IN MOATS

As many of our regular visitors will already know, Fulham Palace is, once again, something of a building site. This time though it is not the palace itself that is being restored, but rather its outbuildings and grounds together with the whole of the adjoining Bishops Park. The works are the result of a successful £4m Parks for People grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund with £2m partnership funding from Hammersmith & Fulham council and further support from the Western Riverside Environmental Fund, English Heritage, the Playbuilder Fund, Transport for London and the Heritage of London Trust.

The main contractor – Vinci UK – started on site in October 2010 and despite a somewhat challenging winter are now in full swing. Works to repair Gothic Lodge are under way, as is the conversion of the palace’s redundant stable into a new education facility. Excavation of a large section of the ancient moat is well advanced and so too is the slow exhumation of the long-buried bridge that crosses it (see picture on page 3 above).

Works to the walled garden are also up and running with repairs to the potting sheds progressing well. Recent archaeological excavation in this area has revealed a striking string of brick culverts beneath the vinery base walls. These once allowed the roots of the vine to grow

outside and benefit from regular rain and mulching whilst the grapes and leaves stayed protected under glass. When the vinery is reinstated and replanted, the culverts will perform much the same function again. The box of the knot garden was widely blighted and, sadly, quite beyond redemption. As such, it has been removed, along with the infected soil, and will shortly be replanted with a fresh, blight-resistant, strain of box to its original layout (curiously the layout that will be so familiar to many of you was slightly different to its 19th-century plan).



These recently rediscovered culverts in Fulham Palace’s walled garden allowed vine roots to grow outside the vinery and benefit from regular rain and mulching. They will perform the same function again once the vinery is replanted.

As the walled garden is to be returned to productive reuse we have, with some regret, removed some of the trees that were planted within it during the early 1980s and the site now looks somewhat forlorn as a result. But that will soon change. Cross walks and perimeter paths are to be laid in the coming months and we are beginning to build a volunteer base to start the process of replanting the walled garden with vegetables and flowers in the summer. With guidance from a soon-to-be-appointed head gardener and structured on-site horticultural training within the new education facility, this promises to be a remarkable resource for borough residents. If you wish to become involved, please email your details to volunteering@fulhampalace.org and we shall get back in touch with you a little later in the year.

Bishops Park is progressing well too. Old and unsightly buildings have been removed and long views across the bowling greens opened up. Work will soon begin on the construction of a new community building that will be both a new home for the bowling club and a space that can be used by community groups. Refurbishment of the café has started, as has the remodelling of the central core area to create a central recreational space enveloped by extensive new play areas. The coming quarter will bring the restoration of the lake, the reinstatement of the urban beach and the creation of three large pools for kids' water play. It is hard to overstate the degree to which the historic integrity of Bishops Park will be reinstated and its value to the people of Hammersmith and Fulham reinforced. It's transformation will, I believe, be remarkable.

Works are due to end in September. For regular updates and to learn how to become a Friend of Bishops Park, go to www.friendsofbishopspark.com.

Scott Cooper, Fulham Palace Trust

SEEING THE LIGHT

It was common practice in the 1970s and early 1980s for the council to remove the windows of its older housing stock and put in aluminium replacements. Two such blocks given this treatment were Carnwath House and John Dwight House in Carnwath Road, Fulham.



John Dwight House in Carnwath Road, Fulham, has been fitted with new windows which, although plastic, bear some resemblance to the blocks original windows of ca 1940.

Carnwath House, opened by the mayor of Fulham on 21 February 1936, is a grand neo-Georgian building which originally had square-headed timber sash windows with a mixture of 6-over-6 and even 8-over-8 lights (plus one arched window). John Dwight House, opened in 1939 or 1940, is in the art deco style and was originally fitted with Crittal-type metal windows, with narrow horizontal and vertical glazing bars.

Last year the housing department decided that the supposedly long-lasting aluminium replacement windows of these two blocks again needed to be replaced. A planning application was made for the fitting of new

windows in uPVC to the same design, or lack of it, as the aluminium. The HBG took this as an ideal opportunity to reverse the previous vandalism and have the windows returned to their original design. After some discussions with the housing department, it was felt a compromise in uPVC could be achieved affordably.



The new windows for Carnwath House in Carnwath Road, Fulham, are plastic like those in John Dwight House, but the design once again respects the context.

The design of the windows for John Dwight House moved some way towards the original Crittal-type design, with the application of narrow horizontal glazing bars. For Carnwath House, the housing department used for inspiration the replacement uPVC windows in the Guinness Trust buildings on Fulham Palace Road. These have individual panes of glass rather than 'stuck-on' glazing bars and are arguably indistinguishable from wood.

The work has now been completed and if you happen to be passing along Carnwath Road you can judge the results for yourself.

Anthony Jelley

HALL OF PILLARS

EC&O, the owners of Earls Court and Olympia, have recently received planning permission for various works at Olympia. One of the schemes is the conversion of the Pillar Hall function room into a restaurant. If this plan goes ahead, we will soon have access to what is surely one of the prettiest semi-public spaces in Hammersmith.

The Pillar Hall and the Grand Hall at Olympia were originally built as the National Agricultural Hall in 1885. Harry Edwards Coe was the architect and James Edmeston the interior designer of the function rooms. Olympia's façade along Olympia Way – in red brick with stone dressing – is in a heavy and grand style that would later become known as Edwardian Baroque. There is an entrance to the Pillar Hall at the far end of the façade, but access today is more usually via a bar in the Great Hall.

The interior of the Pillar Hall is in an eclectic classical style. The pillars are painted to look like red marble and

have gold Corinthian capitals. The flat ceiling is divided into areas, the principal ones containing plasterwork of flowers and trumpets. Pilasters on the wall match the placement of the pillars and also carry decorative plasterwork. The rest of the walls are in grey, blue and two shades of brick-red matching the pillars. The floor has a blue carpet, but I suspect that there is – or was – good tile work underneath. Many of the fittings are original, but the windows in the hall were replaced in 1923 with an art deco design of coloured and clear patterned glass in metal frames. The whole effect is quite delightful and should make an excellent venue for a restaurant. I suggest you whet your appetite with a quick look at Pillar Hall on the EC&O website!

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

MEYRICK'S MANSION

Peterborough House, on the southeast side of Parsons Green, was one of the most important houses in Fulham. It had its origins in a 14th century estate called Brightwells. In the early 17th century the property came into the possession of the Carey family and acquired the name Villa Carey or Carey House. After the restoration of Charles II in 1660, John, Viscount Mordaunt, ardent Royalist and husband of Lady Elizabeth Carey, took up residence in what had become known as Parsons Green House. He spent the rest of his life there and was buried in 1675 in Fulham church.

The glory days of Parsons Green House – renamed Peterborough House when Charles, Viscount Mordaunt, inherited the earldom of Peterborough in 1697 – were undoubtedly in the 18th century. The house was described as ‘a very large square regular pile of brick and has a gallery all round it upon the roof...It has an abundance of extraordinary good rooms with fine paintings etc, but is most remarkable for its spacious gardens, there being above twenty acres of ground inclosed [sic]’. The earl was a keen gardener and the grounds had shady cypress trees and pleasant wildernesses with fountains and statues. In 1764 a reward was offered for information leading to the discovery of ‘the villains who lately broke the statues etc in his lordship’s garden’.



A late 19th century view of Peterborough House, built in the 1790s with a ‘lofty portico’ part of which is visible at the left.

At Peterborough House the earl entertained prominent men of letters of the day including Addison, Pope and Voltaire. Jonathan Swift was a frequent visitor. His biographer wrote: ‘When the air of London began to affect his lungs, he went for some days to the Earl of Peterborough’s seat at Fulham, where he always met with a hearty welcome.’ The earl’s second wife was the celebrated singer and actress Anastasia Robinson, although the marriage was kept secret for many years.



The spacious grounds of Peterborough House and their fine old trees disappeared beneath Chiddingstone and other new streets around 1900.

In 1797 Peterborough House was sold to John Meyrick. He promptly pulled down the old mansion, which faced the southeast corner of Parsons Green, and built a new house a little to the east to designs by the young architect Aaron Henry Hurst (1762-99). The new house, with its ‘elegant elevation of white [Suffolk] brick’ and its ‘lofty stone portico, ascended by a semicircular flight of stone steps’ was ‘seated in the midst of a paddock of about 12 acres, surrounded by a shrubbery walk, and enclosed by a lofty wall...’. The evidently comfortable establishment included ‘stabling for six horses, coach houses, and a complete farmyard’. Colonel Meyrick, who formed the Fulham Volunteers (part of the national response to the threat of invasion from France), did not enjoy his new property for very long. After his death in 1805 the estate was broken up into lots. The majority of the land south of Pomona Place, about 18 acres in total, was leased out for market gardening and fruit growing.

Throughout the 19th century the house passed through a succession of owners and tenants. By 1885 it was a private lunatic asylum – the fate of a number of large houses in Fulham. The final break up of the estate began in 1897. Within a few years the elm, beech, oak, sycamore and ash trees in the grounds were felled to make way for a network of streets and houses. Chiddingstone and Quarrendon Streets cover the site of the mansion. An article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 31 August 1900 lamented the end: ‘Peterborough House...is still standing; it looks very forlorn in the midst of the desolation that has been wrought around it, and will very shortly be a thing of the past.’

Anne Wheeldon, Hammersmith & Fulham Archives

ALL CHANGE AT OLD OAK

Newsletter 23 reported that a party from the HBG and others had visited the disused Old Oak Common locomotive depot, built in 1906 by the Great Western Railway. The site here is to be cleared in advance of the construction of the maintenance depot for Crossrail, which will create an east-west main line rail link across London. Guides on the visit were members of Pre-Construct Archaeology (P-CA), who were undertaking an archaeological assessment of the site and its buildings commissioned by Crossrail.

Their report appeared in October. Through the good offices of Crossrail we have had sight of it, on the understanding that it is currently restricted in circulation. The documentary research undertaken as part of the study adds considerably to knowledge of the depot's history and construction. In parallel with this, the report recommended professional recording of particular buildings and other standing structures. This was in line with the recording proposals that were shown to us on our visit in June last year. We understand that this work has been commissioned and is well advanced, and we look forward to seeing the results. The P-CA report also contained recommendations for salvage of a modest but valuable number of particular components of technical and historical interest from several of the buildings, which the HBG is keen to see implemented.

The article in Newsletter 23 also reported that the last surviving turntable at Old Oak Common depot was to be transported to the preserved Swanage Railway in Dorset, where it can be restored to active use by steam locomotives. It is good to report that this move was successfully carried out in November 2010.

Meanwhile...the proposals for the new high-speed rail line HS2 have been taking shape, with much debate as to the choice of route and the places to be linked to London, including possibly Heathrow Airport as well as Birmingham and cities beyond. On 20 December 2010 Philip Hammond, the transport secretary, announced a proposed line of the route for consultation. This will run from central London in a tunnel, passing under the West London line immediately north of the Grand Union Canal at Mitre Bridge, rising to a surface-level station box at Old Oak Common, on the site of the railway sidings between the locomotive depot and the Great Western Main Line. The council has expressed support in principle for the HS2 project and its potential to regenerate the northern part of the borough.

A further proposal by consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff is for an Old Oak Common interchange that would create a new 'hub' railway station with high-level platforms straddling the canal and serving the West London line, located above platforms serving the Great Western main line including the Heathrow Express route. This station could also serve Crossrail and the proposed HS2 high-speed route, and through new track connections could also link with the West Coast, Midland and Chiltern main lines.



Bridges carrying the West London Line across the canal and Great Western main line in the north of the borough would disappear if plans for a high-level interchange station linked to Crossrail go ahead. Mary Seacole Park is in the foreground.

It must be stressed that these are still only proposals that will be subject to consultation (and doubtless to close financial and environmental scrutiny) before anything is firmly decided, particularly in the present economic climate. A scheme on the scale proposed would clearly have a significant impact on the character and heritage of this area – not least on the canal. So it timely that the HBG has just completed a draft profile for the Grand Union Canal conservation area, and submitted it to the council. But we can see future work for the HBG in pressing the case for heritage matters to receive due attention, alongside other considerations.

Michael Bussell

BOROUGH MEMORY

Hammersmith & Fulham Archives and Local History Centre was opened at the Lilla Huset ('little house' in Swedish) in Talgarth Road in 1992. Previously the service had been spread over three sites – Hammersmith, Fulham and Shepherds Bush libraries – so the borough was fortunate to get an opportunity for planning gain when the Ark was built next door.

The centre collects anything, in any medium, that records the history of the borough and its people, up to the present day. As a result of at least a century of collecting by local libraries, the centre has very good resources of heritage material. The archives of the local authority date back to the 17th century and include vestry records and rate books for the parishes of Fulham and Hammersmith. The drainage application files, 1860-1986, contain many plans of houses and buildings. In addition, a number of local organizations and individuals have deposited or donated records, including schools, nonconformist churches, charities and businesses.

The centre also holds some 60,000 old photographs of the borough, as well as prints, engravings, postcards and about 600 topographical paintings. Artefacts include a complete set of the Kelmscott Press books, printed by William Morris in Upper Mall; Doves Press and Eragny

Press books; and pottery by William de Morgan and Fulham Pottery, the well-known stoneware manufactory that existed for three centuries in Burlington Road.

The extensive stock of printed books, pamphlets, reports, and periodicals such as school and parish magazines is complemented by a series of local history files containing newscuttings and printed ephemera. Ordnance Survey maps dating from the first edition of the 1860s, as well as earlier maps such as John Rocque's (1741-45), are essential for tracing development in the borough, and the local newspapers fill in background detail of change in the locality from 1855 onwards. Individuals are listed in local directories and electoral registers. Special collections include material on the White City, and a series of scrapbooks, photographs and ephemeral items, c.1890-1930, presented by Sir William Bull, MP for Hammersmith.



Archaeologists excavating burials in the churchyard of St Paul's, Hammersmith. (See article right.)

Why does it matter that the centre exists to collect these kind of resources? The centre is the memory bank both for the local authority and for the inhabitants of Hammersmith and Fulham. It is important that, in an area of London that has seen a great deal of change, people should have the opportunity to understand those changes. The centre's resources are evidence of the past, open to interpretation but at least authentic.

Nowadays there are new challenges and opportunities for services such as the Archives and Local History Centre. External factors that need to be faced (and often embraced) include increasing use of the internet. Digitisation of resources, especially for family historians via websites such as Ancestry, is very convenient for readers but means fewer visitors to the centre. However there is still a place for archivists, who can help readers to find and interpret material, giving added value that is not necessarily found on the web.

Jane Kimber, Hammersmith & Fulham Archives

Editor's note: the above article was written before cuts in the archive service were announced. Volunteers are now being sought to help run the archives. See page 3 above.

OF COFFINS AND COFFINPLATES

The present church of St Paul's Hammersmith was completed in 1889 and stands on the site of an earlier church, founded in 1630. This original church was enlarged in 1864, before being largely demolished and rebuilt further to the west. The western tower of the old church was retained and now stands at the eastern end of the current church. The size of the churchyard increased over time and the western area was extended by a gift of land from a Dr William Black in 1828.

As part of a major refurbishment, the church is now adding an extension with a basement to the building's west end. This has required the exhumation of burials in the western part of the churchyard estimated to date from 1828 to 1853 (when an act of parliament prohibited further burials in urban churchyards).

Oxford Archaeology (OA) were commissioned by Richard Griffiths Architects on behalf of the church to undertake the exhumation work. It has been completed in three stages. In January 2009 OA carried out an excavation of 10% of the site area in order to evaluate the density and depth of burials. From January to March 2010 a trench around the perimeter of the site was excavated in advance of the construction of a piling wall for the basement. Finally, between June and August 2010 a main phase of excavation was undertaken to clear the remaining burials from the footprint of the proposed new building. The total number of individuals exhumed during these operations was 649.

The gravestones in this area had long since been cleared so there were no above ground markers. Removal of the burials involved using a mechanical excavator to clear away the upper levels of soil and gravel in the churchyard and then careful hand excavation of each individual grave by an osteologist. Burials ranged in depth from 1.5-3.5 m below the present ground surface, with most clustered around 2.5 m. In addition to the bones any personal items in the graves and any remains of the coffins or their fittings were also collected and recorded. A survey record was made of the exact location of each burial. Most of the archaeological work was carried out in conjunction with the main contractors on the site who provided all the logistical support. The piling line excavation in particular had to be carried out using special trench shoring boxes to protect the archaeologists.



A recently excavated burial at St Paul's church, Hammersmith, complete with preserved coffin plate.

Excavations were aided by the fact that the graveyard had been used for a relatively short period and although many of the graves contained multiple occupants the burials

were neatly arranged and had suffered only minor truncations. No brick vaults or shaft graves were found, but a small number of lead lined coffins were uncovered. Because of the survival of the lead plates a very small number of individuals can be identified by name.

From September to December 2010 the archaeologists worked in facilities set up on site to wash all the remains and make a detailed record of each individual. This information should provide a valuable insight into the nature and health of the population at this time. The church is keen that the remains should keep their individual integrity and be retained on the site. However, below ground reburial within the church or its grounds is not permitted. Each set of remains will therefore be individually boxed and deposited in an ossuary which is being created in the church tower for their long term storage. In due course a report will be produced detailing the exhumation process and presenting the results of the osteological examinations.

David Score, Oxford Archaeology

GROUP GATHERING

Last year's annual meeting was held at the refurbished parish centre of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Brook Green, on 3 November 2010. The church itself was opened in 1853 and is now listed Grade II*. It was designed in the Gothic revival style by William Wardell, an architect later responsible for two Catholic cathedrals in Australia. The spire was not added until 1867. Its architect was Joseph Hansom of Hansom cab fame. Hansom died at 399 Fulham Road in 1882.

This year's meeting was held later in the year than usual in order to avoid the party conference season. As a result, our chairman was able to welcome both the borough's MPs, Andy Slaughter and Gregg Hands, together with the mayor, Councillor Adronie Alford. HBG members were also joined by guests from many other groups and associations.

As in previous years, borough archivist Jane Kimber brought an excellent exhibition, this time illustrating the Brook Green of the past. This was much appreciated and enjoyed by all who had the chance to see it.

After the formal business, including elections of officers and committee, the chairman introduced our guest speaker, local artist Ben Johnson. His highly appropriate theme was 'Artists in Residence'. He described how living and working in Hammersmith had influenced the way he approached art, its creation and its social context. He brought some delightful slides of his former local studios as well as his current one in Dalling Road, where his neighbours are Sir Peter Blake, Susie Allen and Peter Huxley. Ben Johnson used illustrations to describe his use of digital and computer technology to analyse original 'photographs' in order to create detailed townscape 'drawings', all of which he then colours manually using spray cans. His methods and his inclination enable him to involve many people in the production of individual works: he described both a large

participatory project carried out while he was artist in residence at the Walker Gallery, Liverpool and also the more recent Peoples Panorama in London. After questions and discussion, the chairman thanked him for such an original and fascinating talk. She reminded members that he would soon be exhibiting at the National Gallery to coincide with the Canaletto exhibition. Furthermore, members of the public would have a chance to see him working on a new panorama there, this time of the roof level view over and beyond Trafalgar Square.

To conclude the meeting, the chairman thanked Father Terry Tastard and the parish for their welcome to the parish centre and for their help with the arrangements. It was not possible for members to visit the church before the meeting, but Father Terry has kindly arranged a special tour for us in May (see back page for details).

Richard Scot, Hon Sec, Historic Buildings Group

POPE OF STARCH GREEN

Starch Green has seen better – and worse – times. When the pioneering public health doctor John Snow referred to it in his historic 1855 text as one of the London areas that had been badly hit by cholera, he did not attribute the infection to the reservoirs of the West Middlesex Company, whose water was obtained from the polluted Thames at Hammersmith. Instead, Dr Snow blamed the mortality rates on the overcrowding and poverty of the local people, many of whom would have been Irish immigrants labouring in the nearby brickfields.



Dr Harry Campbell Pope's house at 280 Goldhawk Road, photographed in 1970. 'Dr Pope's Surgery' is still visible today on one of the gateposts.

Another name found on earlier maps, Gaggle Goose Green, recalls the days when flocks of geese, herded up on foot from the countryside on their way to the London markets, were penned up overnight at various stopping places along the way. But by the turn of the 19th century, pictures of Starch Green show a well-maintained public space with substantial Victorian villas bordering a large pond with a central planted island. The pond, probably a legacy of the brickfields, came to be seen as a liability and was filled in by the council some time in the 1920s. So only two features from this period survive into the 21st century. The first is the magnificent London plane tree near the bus stop (sadly now lacking its original

circular seat). The second is the handsome two-storey house now known as 280 Goldhawk Road.

Formerly called Blooms Grove or Brooms Grove Villa, 280 Goldhawk Road was built in 1841 by the Askew family, who had links to the parish of Ashchurch, near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire. Its first occupants were a clerk and magistrate, John Nicholls, and his family. But what has always intrigued local residents is the carved inscription still visible on one of the gateposts: Dr Pope's Surgery.

Born in Hertfordshire in 1849 and educated at Haileybury, Harry Campbell Pope studied medicine in Liverpool, London and Birmingham before settling in Shepherd's Bush in 1876 to practise. By this time he had already spent a year as house surgeon at the Seaman's Hospital in Greenwich.



Dr Harry Campbell Pope pictured in the Parisian weekly magazine L'Encyclopédie Contemporaine Illustrée of 7 February 1897 alongside an article describing his paper on 'The Origins of Disease'.

This institution had been located for some years in HMS *Dreadnought*, a 104-gun ship that had seen service at Trafalgar. But by 1870 the hospital had transferred most of its clinical work to dry land. Dr Campbell Pope's experience treating the seafarers at Greenwich would have familiarised

him with cholera, scurvy, typhus and tuberculosis as well as with other and more exotic infectious diseases.

During his life at No. 280, he became an active member of (inter alia) the Obstetrical Society, the Medical Society of London, The Gynaecological Society, and the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society. He was also chosen as the first chairman of the Kensington Division of the British Medical Association. At the same time he was publishing important papers on a variety of subjects, including one on the causes, diagnosis and treatment of diphtheria. Dr Campbell Pope was also medical officer to the London County Council Fire Brigade and Parks Police, and physician to the Jewish Rescue Home at Charcroft House in Shepherd's Bush. (Charcroft House was a refuge for unmarried mothers, many trafficked into London through the East End docks, mainly from Russia and Eastern Europe. Inmates were subjected to a strict regime of moral reform and trained to become domestic servants while their babies were sent away to be fostered or adopted.)

When Dr Harry Campbell Pope died of heart failure at the early age of 56 his well-attended funeral service was held at St Luke's church, Uxbridge Road, where he had been a prominent member of the choir. He was buried in Hammersmith Cemetery in Margravine Road on 5 January 1906. His grave is identifiable, but sadly neglected. It bears the inscription 'Faithful Unto Death'.

Starch Green today is little more than a patch of grass at the busy junction of Goldhawk Road and Askew Road. With heavy north-south and east-west traffic polluting the air on two sides, it is not a place to linger and is mainly used as a pedestrian short cut between the two main roads. But as indicated in Newsletter 23, it is an historic location that deserves more attention, not least for having been the residence of this remarkable Victorian who was such a public-spirited citizen of Shepherd's Bush.

Annabelle May

SILVER SCREENS

On 8 April 2010 something remarkable happened in the world of cinema: the world première of a film called *The Infidel* took place at the Apollo in Hammersmith (the former Gaumont Palace, later Odeon, cinema). The significance of this event was that this huge building – with over 3,500 seats (the largest seating capacity of any cinema or theatre in London) – was almost completely full for a film performance, possibly for the first time since large-scale film attendances started to dip in the late 1950s.

The Apollo has recently changed hands and HMV, the new owners, are interested in film to a greater degree than the rock music impresarios who have run the place over the last couple of decades. They were therefore receptive to the suggestion from *The Infidel's* distributor that the first night be in Hammersmith rather than Leicester Square. Not only did we have the film on a gigantic screen, but as a prelude we were treated to a recital on the



The original Compton cinema organ at the Hammersmith HMV Apollo.

Compton cinema organ. A miraculous survival, this has probably not been seen as part of a film performance since the 1950s. It was wonderful to relive the atmosphere of big-time movie going as it used to be half a century ago. Let's hope HMV repeat the experiment.

For the start of cinema in Hammersmith and Chiswick, one has to go back to 1909 when the Palais at 356 Chiswick High Road opened as a 'shop conversion'. In the early days of film, before the first purpose-built cinemas, all sorts of premises were pressed into service. Many showmen simply rented a shop unit and equipped it with projector, screen and seating of some description. The Palais was one of these early conversions and it served as Chiswick's first permanent cinema until 1922, after which it became a Woolworth's store. Other entrepreneurs adapted public halls. This happened with Chiswick Hall, also in Chiswick High Road, which operated as the Royal Electric Theatre from 1912 to 1933. This building survives today as The Old Cinema antiques emporium.

From 1 January 1910, after a number of appalling fires, the early picture palaces had to observe certain safety rules. For example, the projector (with its highly combustible nitrate-based film stock) had to be placed in a fire-proof booth, emergency exits had to be provided and rudimentary fire-fighting equipment (very often just a few buckets of sand) had to be on view. Many of the old 'conversions' went out of business as a result. But hundreds of new purpose-built cinemas appeared. Typical of the new breed was the Electric Theatre of 1910 on the corner of Chiswick High Road and Duke Road. An audience of 400 could be accommodated in its 75 foot-long auditorium and it had a screen 26 feet wide. It lasted until the early 1930s. Portions of the external walls are still extant.

By the 1920s interest in film was growing fast, stoked by the huge output of the American film industry, which had more or less taken over worldwide during the First World War, and by the popularity of stars such as Charlie Chaplin. To meet this demand, the film exhibition industry started to build cinemas on a greatly expanded, American, scale. A local example of this new type of 'super cinema' was the Pavilion of 1923 facing Shepherds Bush Green. On opening, the Pavilion, with 2,776 seats, was the largest cinema in London, possibly in the country. It was also one of the first cinemas to be treated as 'serious' architecture: the RIBA awarded it a medal. Its architect, Frank Verity, said at the time that he had designed it 'in the spirit which he considered the Romans would have brought to the problem of the super cinema had they happened upon it'. Sadly, his spectacular Roman-inspired auditorium was destroyed by bombing in World War II. After the war, the building was restored as a cinema. Now it is scheduled for conversion into a hotel, though its main façade, protected by Grade II listed status, will be largely retained.

As is well known, the interwar decades were the great era of mass film-going. Much of the population went to the movies at least once a week. Movie-going was, of course, escapism and many cinema operators pandered to this desire by providing cinema interiors which were in themselves escapist. Most extravagant were the flights of fancy into the Gothic or the Spanish-American, but exhibitors had different ideas on what would sell seats. By the time the builders of the Shepherds Bush Pavilion – the Davis family of cinema entrepreneurs – came to build another great cinema in west London the art deco style had arrived from France. It was also now desirable for cinema interiors to resemble luxurious West End hotels. The result was the Gaumont Palace. Robert Cromie, its architect, looked for inspiration to France for much of his decorative detail for the Gaumont Palace, and to Germany and America for the dramatic fan-shaped plan of the auditorium. The latter allowed him to fit a large theatre into a difficult curving site and to ensure that most of the audience were placed at an optimum distance from the screen. *(To be continued.)*

Richard Gray, Cinema Theatre Association

(Part II of this article will appear in Newsletter 25. Ed)

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HBG EVENTS

Holy Trinity Brook Green: Sat 7 May 2011

Tour of Holy Trinity Church, Brook Green (venue for 2010 annual meeting) led by Father Terry Tastard. For more details of church, see intro to annual meeting report p. 10 above. Cost £10, pay on the day. Booking essential: Richard Scott – rbc.scott@yahoo.co.uk, 0788 443 46631 or 020 8749 3963 (email preferred).

Annual Meeting: Thu 20 Oct 2011

Our 2011 annual meeting will be held on Thursday 20 October in the new extension to St Paul's Church, Hammersmith. Doors and refreshments 7pm; meeting 8pm. Full details will follow later in the year.

OTHER EVENTS COMING UP

- 11-12 Jun: Open Garden Squares
- 26 Jun-3 Jul: Celebrating Fulham Week
- 2 Jul: Parsons Green Fair
- 10-11 Sep: The Mayor's Thames Festival
- 17-18 Sep: Open House London

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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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

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