



No. 30 Spring 2014

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. One sculptor – Leon Underwood – and one architect – George Walton – are featured in this issue, but the bulk of the content relates to what turns out to be an incredibly wide range of structures – from mansion, school, shops and exhibition venue to bell tower, country club, television studio and artist’s studio.

This list demonstrates just what a rich built heritage we have in our borough. But let’s not forget that the borough is made up of spaces between buildings as well as buildings themselves and sometimes these spaces throw up unexpected delights – such as the extensive allotments at Fulham Palace. See page 6 below for the story of this century-old horticultural enterprise.



A poster by Andre Edouard Marty for the 1933 Motor Show at Olympia, by kind permission of the London Transport Museum. Olympia hasn't hosted the Motor Show since 1936, but its future as an exhibition venue seems assured. See next page.

PHOENIX FOR EUROPE

One of the artists featured in last year's Brook Green Artists exhibition at Hammersmith Library was Leon Underwood (*see Newsletter 29, page 3*). Underwood (1890-1975) lived close to Brook Green at 12 Girdlers



Leon Underwood's Phoenix for Europe sculpture, given to the borough in the 1970s and now in the Macbeth Centre.

Road and set up the Brook Green School of Art there in 1921. He had been born near Askew Road and had trained at the Slade. During the First World War he worked on camouflage. He was very versatile, working in many media, both paint and print, but was primarily a sculptor and had a furnace for casting bronze in his basement. Henry Moore came to his school and found him an excellent teacher. In the 1970s his widow gave to the borough of Hammersmith one of his most famous statues, a recently-completed bronze called *Phoenix for Europe*. It is now installed at the Macbeth Centre in the Hammersmith town centre, where it can be seen by all.

Gilia Slocock

OLYMPIA

The restoration plans involving the removal of the clutter to the front of the Grand Hall, the restoration of its sculpture to the original form and a new 'glass box' entrance have now received permission, as has the new scheme for a hotel on the corner site next to the listed 1929 building designed by Joseph Emberton. The Group opposed the previous scheme for an 'aparthotel' and welcomed the scheme now approved as providing a more harmonious neighbour for the elegant listed building. Olympia no longer hosts the Motor Show (*see 1933 poster on page 1*), but continues as a major exhibition venue. Its importance will doubtless grow as Earls Court closes. We are delighted the owners are investing in the restoration and improvement of this historic venue, which in its time has even hosted Buffalo Bill's Wild West show!

SHEPHERDS BUSH MARKET

There is no further news on the fate of the terrace of shops at 30-52 Goldhawk Road. At the time of writing we await the outcome of a public enquiry into the compulsory purchase of the shops from the owner-occupiers. The purpose of the CPO is to provide the site for a block of flats which will be an 'enabling' development for the Shepherds Bush Market scheme. The Group continues to support the traders in their fight to stop the demolition and hopes that the terrace can be retained and restored. We have been informed by the traders that the shops were built in 1862 as a single block

of ten and that they were developed by grocer's widow Mary Young. Architect George Edward Gordon designed the building. Although the shop fronts have suffered over the years, the actual structure of the shops today remains exactly the same as when they were built 152 years ago. The shop fronts could, of course, be fairly easily restored to their original appearance.



The shops at 30-52 Goldhawk Road as they are today...



...and as they were around 1900. The three-storey building on the corner is the former Railway Arms pub.

PETERBOROUGH HOUSE

I really became interested in Peterborough House while researching my book on Charlotte Sullivan who lived on the neighbouring estate at Broom House. Both houses are long gone. Broom House was bought by the Hurlingham Club who demolished it in 1911 and took over its riverside grounds. Peterborough House was demolished in 1901 to make way for the 'Lion' houses of today's Peterborough estate, built over its extensive grounds. The house itself faced the New Kings Road opposite the thin western strip of Eelbrook Common. Chiddingstone and Quarrendon Streets cover the site.

The house was built in 1797 for John Meyrick, founder of the Fulham Volunteers. Aaron Hurst designed it as a neo-classical box with a semi-circular drive at the front. The French-style interior included a drawing room stretching

all the way through the house from front to back. Mrs Meyrick's circular boudoir looked out on to the lawns and stately old trees in the garden. Feret, in his three-volume history of Fulham published in 1900, thought the kitchen dark and dingy, but he was impressed by a much older feature in the grounds – the ice-well.



The first Peterborough House, a 17th-century mansion on the south side of Parsons Green, where Peterborough Road is today.

The ice-well belonged to a much older house. In fact the original house, Brightwells, was built in the Middle Ages. In 1626 the Brightwells estate was inherited by Margaret Smith, daughter of Sir Thomas Smith, whose impressive monument can be seen in the chancel of All Saints church, Fulham. Margaret married Thomas Carey, second son of the Earl of Monmouth. They rebuilt the house opposite Parsons Green, calling it Villa Carey. It was decorated by Francis Klein who included a painting on an outside wall in the German manner. The Careys' daughter, Elizabeth, inherited the estate in 1657. She married John Mordaunt, created Viscount Mordaunt by Charles II. John's statue dominates the inside of the tower at All Saints.



The second Peterborough House, built in 1697 on the south side of New Kings Road, opposite Eelbrook Common, and demolished in 1901.

Lord and Lady Mordaunt's son Charles inherited the property and the title. When he became Earl of Peterborough in 1697 on the death of his uncle, he renamed the property Peterborough House. It was then in its heyday with distinguished guests enjoying the owner's

hospitality and the spacious grounds. Charles was a fascinating character who liked to cook for his guests, but he was an unpredictable military leader and a trial to the government. He married Anastasia Robinson, a singer and one of Handel's soloists, but only acknowledged her as his countess on his deathbed.

After Charles's descendants sold the estate, it eventually came into the possession of John Meyrick who demolished the old house and built a new one further east on the site described at the beginning. It was this house that was demolished in 1901 to make way for new streets and houses. However the name of Peterborough lives on locally, including on a plaque on the wall of what was Peterborough School (now renamed École Marie d'Orliac).

Sue Pierson

For more information on Peterborough House and the lives of its many occupants over the centuries, the best thing to do is buy Sue Pierson's new book. You can get it direct from the author herself for only £6.00 plus p&p (delivery in Fulham is free). Sue's contact details are 020 7731 6544 or sue@lancepierson.org.

GREENSIDE SCHOOL MURAL

We have reported in previous newsletters (*Newsletters 26 and 27*) on the 1950s Gordon Cullen mural at the Grade II* listed Greenside School and on the campaign to raise funds to restore it. The Group has previously made a donation to the restoration fund. We are pleased to report now that the campaign has raised the necessary funds and that the specialist firm Perry Lithgow has been commissioned to carry out the conservation work on the mural over the school's Easter holiday. The restored mural will be unveiled by the artist's widow on Saturday 10 May as part of a day-long celebratory Twentieth Century Graphic Arts Fair inspired by the mural and mid-century art and design. Entry is £2 (children with adults free) and everybody is welcome. The fair runs from 11am – 5pm on the school premises, which are in Westville Road W12 9PT.

Chairman's Update

The Group held its annual meeting last October at Colet House, 151 Talgarth Road (*see article immediately following*), where an HBG plaque commemorating Nicolai Legat had recently been unveiled (*see Newsletter 29, page 7*). Committee member Maya Donelan stood down from the committee at the annual meeting. I would like to start by thanking her for her many contributions over the years, especially for her work as a surveyor for the Group's *Local List* of historic buildings. Current officers are listed on the back page. Several people have expressed an interest in joining the committee, and we will introduce those who join us in a later newsletter.

Large projects have become a major part of our work. HS2 and the Old Oak Opportunity Area will be a great concern in the future. Currently the effect of the rail proposals on Wormwood Scrubs is a key issue. The Friends of Wormwood Scrubs are leading on this. Westfield part two continues. The realignment of heights of buildings consequential to the John Lewis plans raises some concerns.

Earls Court

The Earls Court redevelopment is beginning to take shape. We welcome the inclusion of a park following the route of the lost Counters Creek river. The river forms the eastern boundary of the borough and is an important linear industrial heritage site. The Group's main concerns in these projects are the preservation and context of historic buildings and the quality of design of new buildings. We work with other groups on these major projects. We continue to be involved in a range of smaller developments with varying degrees of success.

The situation with the borough archives is now more secure. The archives will move into the refurbished Hammersmith Library in Shepherds Bush Road and should re-open in their new home this summer. The professional support will be less than a few years ago when we had two archivists, but at least the continuation of the archives service seems assured.

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group

COLET HOUSE

The Group's 2013 annual meeting was held on Wednesday 23 October 2013 in Colet House, Talgarth Road. Colet House today is owned and occupied by the Study Society. We are grateful to the society for allowing us to hold our gathering in such splendid surroundings. We are also grateful to Kenneth Dunjohn of the Study Society for supplying this brief history of the house.

Colet House is part of a group of distinctive artists' houses in Talgarth Road occupying what was originally market garden land belonging to the Gunter family. Built about 1885 specifically to provide a stimulating environment for artists of all kinds, Colet House is much the largest in the group and, like its neighbours, follows the principle of having abundant workspace supported by appropriate domestic accommodation. It has two spacious ground floor studios and an exceptionally large first floor studio – 10.5m x 22.5m (35ft x 75ft) – the largest in London. [This studio was the venue for the Group's annual meeting – Ed.]

Dean of St Paul's

The eight smaller houses in the terrace to the east of Colet House were designed for bachelor artists in 1891, six years later than Colet House. All eight houses and Colet House have very high ceilings and huge windows facing north, originally over St Paul's school. The smaller houses are called St Paul's Studios after the school. Colet House is named after the founder of the school, John Colet, dean of St Paul's.

The architect of the smaller studio houses was Frederick Wheeler (1853-1931). Colet House's architect is not known for sure, but is likely to have been Fairfax Blomfield Wade (1851-1919), who later adopted the surname Wade-Palmer. Wade had a large practice in Sloane Street and was responsible for houses in Piccadilly, the interior of Londonderry House, many country homes and a magnificent residence for Lord Windsor, later Earl of Plymouth, at 54 Mount Street, Mayfair. Though highly regarded by his peers, Wade's public reputation was less than it might have been. Thanks to a riding accident, he was confined to a wheelchair for much of his later life and little has been written about him.



Nicolai Legat, ballet dancer and teacher and resident of Colet House in the 1930s, dancing with Anna Pavlova in Swan Lake earlier in his career. Pavlova had been one of Legat's pupils when Legat taught at the Imperial Theatre School in St Petersburg.

The inspiration for Colet House and the adjacent terrace reputedly came from Sir Coutts Lindsay (1824-1913), kinsman of the Earls of Crawford. He was an army officer, banker and later dilettante artist, collector and art entrepreneur and founder of the successful but short-lived Grosvenor Gallery – the great centre of the Pre-Raphaelites and an active rival to the Royal Academy. Lindsay and his colourful wife, Blanche, a Rothschild, were the first occupants of Colet House.

From the start Colet House had a multiplicity of occupants, mostly painters. It seems that Coutts-Lindsay, having established his gallery as an outlet for London artists, was set upon providing friendly, purpose-built premises for art creation. It has been suggested that it was an attempt to fulfil the Pre-Raphaelite dream of a house where the brotherhood could live together in perfect peace and harmony. He did not, however, sustain his own enthusiasm for Colet House, preferring instead his main home in Cromwell Place.

The Last Days of Arthur

At Colet House one of the new breed of women artists, Maud Beddington, who mostly painted children and fairies, appears from records to have lived and worked for around 40 years – from 1897 to 1938. But the most distinguished occupant was Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98). During his own last days he worked at Colet House on an immense canvas called ‘The Last Days of Arthur at Avalon’ which was too big for his main studio at his home in nearby North End Road. Burne-Jones was working on this painting at Colet House until the night before his death in June 1898.

Another artist who appreciated the scale of the main studio was Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956). By the early 20th century Brangwyn had built a reputation as a creator of large – very large – works. He was able to make most of these at his main studio at his home, Temple Lodge, just off Hammersmith Broadway. However, some commissions – notably huge murals destined for the USA and mosaics for the dome of Selfridge’s department store in Oxford Street – required an altogether larger space, such as Colet House’s top floor studio. Brangwyn described it as ‘a wonderful place...the finest studio in London...fit for Michelangelo himself’.

In the late 1920s and mid-1930s, the White Russian Red Cross held fundraising events at Colet House. This led to dancers from the Russian ballet having classes in its fine studios. Nicolai Legat, the Russian ballet master, established his school there and Colet House became his home. When Legat died he lay in state in the large studio and scores of famous names from the ballet world came to pay their respects. The Russian influence in the house increased to the extent that in 1938 P D Ouspensky, the philosopher and writer, chose it to be the headquarters of his work in London.

Profound influence

It was at Colet House that he founded a society, today known as The Study Society, or to give it its full name, the Society for the Study of Normal Psychology. Large gatherings assembled in the top floor studio. Ouspensky had a profound influence in philosophical and literary circles and attracted an immensely loyal following in what was known as ‘the work’.

In World War II the building was requisitioned by the Admiralty and was used by naval intelligence. One old hand reports that uniformed senior officers could be seen playing with wooden boats in a water tank in one of the

studios. At that time of course Field Marshal Montgomery was across the road at his old school, St Paul’s, planning the D-Day landings.

The house was returned to the Study Society in time for Ouspensky’s last lectures in 1947. After his death the house was leased to the Royal Ballet, their main school being next to Colet House on the west (Hammersmith) side. This is now the home of LAMDA, whose students currently use day rooms at Colet House. In 1957, with the Ballet’s own premises enlarged, the house was put up for sale and was again acquired by the Study Society, who occupy it today.

Kenneth Dunjohn, The Study Society

READERS’ LETTERS



Reading John Grigg’s piece on dirty laundry in Newsletter 29, I was reminded that Bayswater made a name for itself by taking in laundry and promising to keep the linen of the

gentry separate from that of the servants. It was apparently a unique selling point.

Yours faithfully,

Terence Bendixson, Senior Visiting Research Fellow
University of Southampton

(We would like to publish more readers’ letters/emails. Please address to the editor, Dr Andrew Duncan: andy@andrewduncan.co.uk or 19 Boileau Road, London SW13 9BJ.)

BBC TELEVISION CENTRE

Planning permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of the former BBC Television Centre in Wood Lane. We are pleased that the BBC will continue to have a presence in the Television Centre. Studios 1, 2 and 3 are to be refurbished and retained by the BBC and BBC Worldwide is to move into offices where the current main entrance is.



The Wood Lane side of Graham Dawbarn’s ‘question mark’ building for the BBC at White City, begun in 1955.

The BBC TV Centre was built on part of the White City exhibition site, starting in 1955 with Graham Dawbarn’s ‘question mark’ building listed in 2009. (The Group

carried out much of the research work which helped lay the foundations for the listing.) The external appearance of the ‘question mark’ building will essentially be unaffected although glazing will be either restored or replaced with exact replicas. The Helios courtyard elevation has been altered to include simple ‘shopfronts’ with extra windows that have been sensitively introduced into the patterned area above. English Heritage has approved these changes.

We are pleased that the developers intend to retain as many of the historic features as possible, including the main staircase within the ‘question mark’ building and the John Piper mural. We have asked that the Gill Sans typeface used in the original TV Centre also be used throughout the new parts of the development.

Angela Clarke, Historic Buildings Group

ALL SAINTS BELLS UPDATE



The ‘Churchwarden’ tenor, one of All Saints Fulham’s peal of 10 bells and one of the original six bells made in 1549 and recast and rehung in 1729.

While the work was being carried out, All Saints took the opportunity to have the bells refurbished at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. The restored bells have now been returned to the church complete with new clappers, wheels and ropes. A special service was held at the church to bless the bells in February, and the bells themselves were lined up down the centre aisle for all to see. For most parishioners, this was the first chance they had had to see their bells. The service marked the end of a two-year £550,000 restoration appeal. English Heritage produced a grant of £89,000. The rest of the money came from a range of fundraising activities, including cake sales, car washes and specially designed Christmas cards. The Group also made a donation. The bells are now being reinstalled in the church tower.

PALACE ALLOTMENTS

The allotments at Fulham Palace began during the First World War. They are in the former palace meadows,

within an area historically known as The Warren where rabbits were bred for the palace kitchens. When the First World War started, the Warren was used as an army drill ground. In 1916 Bishop Winnington-Ingram offered it to the people of Fulham as part of an early ‘Dig for Victory’ effort. The offer was not taken up, but later the meadows were officially requisitioned by central government for use by the public as allotments. The five-rod plots (approximately 20m x 8m) were laid out in early 1918. This plot size was half the national standard, but Bishop Winnington-Ingram chose it because he wanted to give as many people as possible the chance of having their own plot. The same plot size is still in use today.

When the war ended, the plottolders petitioned the bishop as landlord to take over the letting of the allotments. The Fulham Palace Meadows Allotment Association (FPMAA) was then set up with the bishop as president. The tradition of bishop as president continued until 1973 when the bishops ceased to occupy the palace. Between 1939 and 1945 the allotments played an important part in the Second World War ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign even though they shared their site with large concrete blocks to which barrage balloons were tethered. Some of these blocks remain in situ today.



Detail from An Allotment Scene, by Bindy Wallace. For enquiries, please contact the editor (email on back page).

Since 1958 the 406 allotments have been owned by the council, though they continue to be run by the FPMAA. Seeds, plants and produce are sold from a trading hut and a tea hut provides a meeting point for members. Each plot holder is required to grow vegetables on more than half their plot and regular inspections are carried out to make sure that this rule is observed.



Notice of Fulham council's wartime show of vegetables from local allotments to raise funds for the Red Cross prisoners of war fund.

The allotments are bordered on three sides by the line of the former palace moat – filled in in the 1920s – and are therefore within the scheduled ancient monument site. However, plot holders have consent to dig down into the ground up to 0.6m. One day a monuments inspector noticed that a particular plot holder was able to grow his prize carrots much longer than 0.6m. The plot holder explained his novel but entirely legal method – to the inspector's complete satisfaction!

Eddie Robinson, FPMAA

GEORGE WALTON

In the shadow of Westfield is an unremarkable Shepherd's Bush street with some interesting houses by an early 20th century Scottish architect who should probably be much better known than he is.

The architect in question is George Walton. Born in Glasgow in 1867 to an artistic family, Walton studied at Glasgow school of art and began his career by selling small pieces of work. These led to a commission to decorate one of Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms (a Glasgow institution around 1900). Having completed this job, he set up a company of ecclesiastical and home decorators. This in turn led to commercial commissions from Kodak amongst others. Kodak turned out to be a major client and J.B. Wellington of Kodak commissioned him to design a house in Elstree. It was this commission that steered Walton into full-time architecture.



Architect George Walton (1867-1933), painted by fellow Scot Sir William Oliphant Hutchinson in 1923.

One of his early, small, schemes was a trio of half houses at 28-32 Sterne Street W12. These are designed to look like one large house. The central house has been brought forward as a gabled bay. The general style is an arts and crafts version of Queen Anne. Like most of his buildings the design has an underlying classical symmetry.

In 1922 Walton built more houses in Sterne Street for Kingerlee and Sons, Oxford builders with whom he had worked since 1905. Although the site was restricted, he managed to fit in two cottages set back from the road (Nos 33 and 35) and a terrace (Nos 37–53), all in brick with rendered upper storeys and low-pitched slate roofs. The most notable feature is the fenestration of the upper floor, which results in each house having five windows. The shaping of the windows in the front doors nicely illustrates Walton's careful attention to small details. The overall effect of these houses is a subdued Art Deco. Walton himself lived at No 53, where he worked in a studio in the garden accessed by a side entrance. The interior design of No 53 included a rather grand hall, which made the place seem larger and lighter than it was.



Nos 37-53 Sterne Street, W12, designed by George Walton in 1922. The architect himself lived and worked at No. 53 in the foreground. The whole terrace is listed Grade II.

From 1926 to 1930 Walton relied financially on a retainer to provide textile designs for the Alexander Morton textile company. When this arrangement ended, he moved to Hythe, Kent. His last commission was for a memorial chapel to the atheist G Davidson commissioned by his partner for their estate in France. Little of Walton's work survives. Many of his interior decoration commissions were never recorded or published. The houses in Sterne Street are thus an important survival. Nos 33-53 are listed Grade II and the half houses are locally listed as buildings of merit. Walton is seen by some as an important member of the modern movement in Great Britain, and his designs for interior decoration, houses, furniture and glass were usually up to date and always very well thought through. He had an independent mind and a clear vision of what he wanted to create.

John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group



LATEST NEWS

Hurlingham House was built in 1760 and is listed Grade II* GV. It is a rare survival of a 'gentleman's residence and park' in central London. It is now the home of the Hurlingham Club and its grounds are designated 'metropolitan open

land', which has similar standing to green belt. Humphrey Repton (1752-1818) in his book *The Art of Landscape Gardening* discusses Hurlingham House and makes recommendations for improvements to the surrounding park. The Group is concerned about the club's future building plans, which we fear will damage the openness of the parkland, contrary to the adopted planning policy. One proposal for an indoor sports facility, which the Group opposed, has recently been approved. It is a worrying situation. We will follow up in our next newsletter.

WANTED

In our next newsletter, due out in the autumn, we intend to focus on the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. If you have any relevant pictures or stories of local interest, we would be pleased to receive them. Please email all contributions to the editor, Dr Andy Duncan, at <andy@andrewduncan.co.uk>.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

10 May

Twentieth Century Graphic Arts Fair at Greenside School, including unveiling of restored Gordon Cullen memorial by the artist's widow. 11am-5pm. For more details, see above, page 3.

1-30 June

London Festival of Architecture

14-15 June

Open Garden Squares

12 July

Annual meeting of SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) at St Paul's Church, Hammersmith.

HBG members are invited to attend but must book a place in advance with Lucy Jacob: lucyj@spab.org.uk; 020 7456 0915. Meeting starts 4pm.

5-9 September

Tall Ships Festival

13-14 September

The Mayor's Thames Festival. The theme this year is 'lost rivers' and the HBG is taking part by running two guided walks over the festival weekend exploring the 'lost' Counters Creek. Details will be on the festival website later in the year (<http://thamesfestival.org>).

20-21 September

London Open House

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HBG PUBLICATIONS

Local List £17 members, £20 non-members. *Bradmore House* illustrated booklet, £5. Tel: 07958 656 888.

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