

# Wandsworth Society

Newsletter November 2015

## Past, present, future



The Grand Hall of Battersea Town Hall (1893),  
now Battersea Arts Centre, after the fire this year



Burntwood School, Tooting winner of the 2015 RIBA Stirling Prize,  
the UK's leading architecture award  
(architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris)

# The *moving* museum



*The Victorian 'apothecary corner' of the excellent café at the Wandsworth Museum's West Hill location from 2010 to 2015 – if you never visited it, you are now too late. Christina Dawson reports on the last Friends' AGM.*

The story of Wandsworth Museum over recent years has certainly been one of change, not to mention 'moving'. 7 October 2015 saw another stage in its journey - the last AGM of the Friends of Wandsworth Museum (FoWM). Early next year, after eight successful years, the Friends will be officially wound up. Sad that such a vibrant, dedicated group should close down, but there is cheer too. This is part of the Museum's journey to full integration with the BAC.

We are all having to re-think our ideas about what a museum should be, and we were fortunate that Sue Walker, Director of Wandsworth Museum and David Jubb, CEO and Artistic Director of BAC, were at the AGM to explain what is happening and present their ideas for the Museum's future and its Collection (currently in storage at West Hill), as they work towards full integration with the Arts Centre.

As ever, money is at the heart of the changes taking place. Lack of it has caused the Museum to close its doors. Local government cuts and the demands made by alternative funding sources before they release cash are having a dramatic effect on small museums – 42 closed between 2002 and 2012, the majority in 2010-12. Absent new ways of operating and new partnerships, small

museums will have great difficulty to survive. The image of a place where visitors wander round looking at objects in glass cases appears to be no longer viable.

We are very fortunate, therefore, that Sue and David have come up with a solution – working together to make it part of the Arts Centre, with access to its resources. This will not be a one-way street; David believes that the Museum will also help enrich the activities that BAC offers and enable them to reach out into the community. Our museum will survive, in a different form.

Sue and David are offering us the "Moving Museum", an innovative idea that moves away from traditional static displays to ones that literally move around the building and, eventually, it is hoped, travel on a "bus" to all parts of the borough.

They envisage the Collection as being at the centre of this enterprise, brought out of the West Hill basement and shared by the community. The active involvement of schools, businesses and a range of local societies is an important part of this vision. An example is the recent *Battersea Power Station* history exhibition, funded by the developers.

This sounds positive and exciting, but there are concerns, particularly about the potential loss of an important aspect of a museum visit - browsing, looking and learning, relating to objects. It's not just oldies who like to potter round! Children are interested in both traditional and interactive displays, often related to their school work. Hopefully, there will be some such, and space to sit and contemplate and chat about them. That seems utterly in tune with BAC's thinking.

The wide range of questions following the presentation – the role of volunteers, the place of oral history, differing BAC and Museum audiences, governance arrangements - revealed a huge continuing interest. It remains to be seen whether this translates into active involvement with the new institution. It would be nice to think that it will

# Wandsworth Society

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## **From the Chair – Past, present, future**

No one sat down to think about a 'theme' for this Newsletter. But there does seem to be a common thread – 'change and renewal', to coin a phrase – in this collection of reports and news about our activities and concerns. Perhaps not a new theme....

It is sad that Wandsworth Museum's collection is no longer on permanent display, but stored in the West Hill basement. And one consequence of amalgamation with the Battersea Arts Centre is the winding up of the Museum's 'Friends' - whose extensive cultural and educational activities have been so well led by Sheila Allen and her team of helpers. But it is good to know (Christina Dawson's report opposite) that progress continues with imaginative plans for the future. We must hope that the Museum will soon be 'moving' in earnest, and playing a significant part again in the lives of local people of all ages and backgrounds. A local museum should be a communal 'focal point' – but a *mobile* focal point will be quite a challenge to create...

Another source of sadness was the BAC's 'great fire'. The Grand Hall is currently a 'ruin museum', a magnificent, gigantic 'art installation'. As John Dawson's article describes, the fire also creates an opportunity, however, to 'renew' a fine building through both 'conservation' and 'modernisation'. There is no necessary conflict between the two. Sensitive re-development has always been central in the Society's concerns. No apology, therefore, for a long article about the recent recital and discussion of those concerns, and the Society's role and relevance, at our 'local planning forum'.

As well as events covered in this issue, I should mention some others – a number of walks led by Caroline Pook, a 'Wandle walk' with Bruce St-Julian Bown, and an excellent talk and Q&A, hosted by the Roads and Transport Group, with Steve Kempster, a Council officer, whose presentation deserved a much larger audience.

As we all try to get healthier (don't we?), the Grubb report on October's 'eating meeting' is well worth digesting. Just as seriously, we should do a 'health check' on the Society too: in the coming New Year (our 45<sup>th</sup>), we need to think about the Society's own 'conservation' – and need for change and renewal.

*David Kirk*

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# Local planning forum

Jenny Massey (who took the picture) and Caroline Pook report

We had hoped for a debate on 17 September with two Wandsworth Councillors, Piers McCausland (Con) and Jeremy Ambache (Labour), both members of the Planning Applications Committee (PAC). In the event, Jeremy was unable to join us. However, we were also treated to informative presentations by Peter Farrow and John Dawson of our own Planning group, on the history of local planning and the Society's role.

**Town planning has a long history** – there are examples from antiquity of cities laid out on a grid pattern, with communal facilities. British town planning became important during the Industrial Revolution – to deal with the risks of unchecked urban development. The first of many Town Planning Acts came in 1909. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), enacted by the Coalition government, sought drastically to reduce a plethora of planning legislation. It sets out a national policy within which regional and local authorities (the Mayor of London and Wandsworth Council for us) are required to prepare their own plans.

**The NPPF**, recognising that the country needs to accommodate growth, rests on a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development' but also emphasises 'deliverability'. The Wandsworth Plan, derived from the London Plan, covers the whole of our borough. While the Society and the Council may often disagree, the Council deserves to be congratulated for having developed its own Local Plan - one of only 49 of 336 local planning authorities to have done so. The Plan comprises 225 separate documents and many detailed policies, all subject to regular review with local representatives and bodies, including the Society. (KFC raised objections to a proposed Council policy to reduce childhood obesity, believing it would damage their expansion plans!) The Plan provides a 'core strategy', showing the main changes proposed for future years, and a Development Management Policy Document that discusses matters such as 'tall buildings policy'.

**Cllr Piers McCausland** has served on the PAC for over a decade. The planning process, he explained, was based essentially on common law: 'you can do what you want so long as it causes no nuisance'. Judgements about planning issues are not, and should not be, party political. While the PAC's membership reflects the Council's political complexion (Conservative for 40 years), members of the same party often disagree. Decisions are not

driven by property developers: Piers had early experience as a developer, but no current PAC member is one; a range of experience and perspectives is represented.

John Dawson discussed **the Society's origins and roles since 1971**. By the 1960s London was threatened by cheap, badly designed development in a "modern" style, as large areas of the post-war city were swept away for redevelopment. For an earlier generation, dirty Victorian monuments such as the Euston Arch and the City's Coal Exchange had had their day – their demolition proved a turning point in post-war London's development (Betjeman *et al*). Concerned citizens were encouraged by the formation of the Civic Trust (1959), its founders including Duncan Sandys, MP for Streatham who, as Housing Minister, had initiated 'Clean Air' and 'Green Belt' legislation in the 1950s. Under the Trust's wing, new 'civic societies' across the country encouraged recognition of the importance of our built environment and open spaces, and opposition to the clearance of swathes of London. (But the Greater London Development Plan of 1969 still included 'Ringways 1 and 2' that would have removed the hearts of Wandsworth and Putney!)

**Statutory recognition of the importance of the urban environment** was needed to prevent further depredation. Sandys was involved again in the passage of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. "Conservation" was born. Influential works on architecture, such as Pevsner, were more widely read. Over 1,000 'civic societies' were formed (Wandsworth's in 1971), all seeking a creative influence on decision-making. **If we are to play an influential role, our Society, like others, cannot simply be negative.** If we say 'no', we should always offer a better alternative. "Conservation" – a term now incorporated in 'officialese' – does not simply mean, we should remember, "preservation". It requires a positive understanding of the qualities of a town centre or neighbourhood, so that change can evolve sympathetically – but a challenge to the *status quo* is sometimes welcome! True 'conservation' involves **a living, evolving built environment, not a dead one preserved.** As well as buildings of all sorts, the Society's work needs to encompass our 'open spaces' (public and private, land and water); all modes of transport; related infrastructure; and trees.

**What has the Society achieved?** Early on, we helped to get the Tooting Granada listed (Grade1); saved the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building and secured its listing (Grade 2\*); and led the fight in the early 1980s against plans to widen the A205 across Wandsworth Common. We have participated in public inquiries (most recently the Ram Brewery



*Picture shows from Left to Right: Cllr Piers McCausland, Peter Farrow, David Kirk and John Dawson*

site) - and sometimes won! We have discussed with Councillors alternative ways of developing such sites without tall buildings. We meet and liaise with developers, including large public ones (eg for Springfield Hospital). We pursue bad buildings and bad practice, seeking enforcement action by the Council when needed. We are involved in Crossrail 2 consultations and with TfL on the Town's gyratory. There are other current issues: the lack of affordable housing, the sell-off of school buildings; the loss of industrial and service sites. We seek constructive links with the Council and other bodies, to discuss how best to achieve an attractive, sustainable local environment in which to live, work and play.

Piers was clear that **high residential land values** - the price we pay for being a 'global city' (and such a city was surely desirable, in his view) drives the race to build in Wandsworth and is the cause of developer demand for high-rise residential density. Others were concerned that the scale of new residential development and the loss of employment space is making Wandsworth a 'dormitory suburb'. And **how can developers 'ride roughshod' over published guidelines?** Piers reminded us that London is one of the top three cities people want to come and work in. There are nine areas across the borough where tall buildings are allowed, including the five town centres. In his view, tall buildings in town centres do little harm. And new development helps to fund new local infrastructure. Others suggested that too little attention was being given to improving local infrastructure, and the lack of new jobs. **Are we just building costly expensive flats without a real plan?** The Mayor of London has a target of 50% of affordable housing in new development; in some recent schemes the figure has been as low as 5 or 10% - and "affordable" is not affordable for most people.

### **What explains some recent Council decisions?**

The 'local plan' for the South Thames College site was for a replacement building of less than eight storeys. A tower of 26 storeys was nonetheless approved for 'Garratt Place', the Council arguing that the benefits outweigh the acknowledged harm to a conservation area. This was, as Piers saw it, essentially a matter of judgement - and "people decide who they vote for".

### **Has the Localism Act 2011 made a difference?**

It introduced the concept of community planning, 'bottom up' rather than 'top down', through the preparation of 'neighbourhood plans', and the potential designation of eg pubs or petrol stations, as 'assets of community value'. In Peter's view, not much of this has happened in our area, partly because 'neighbourhood' plans must comply with existing national, regional and local plans and policies. Given Wandsworth's Local Plan - which we regularly seek to influence (see picture) - the Society has not been active about 'neighbourhood planning' (but perhaps we should be?).

### **We also heard about the scale of the PAC's - and our Planning group's - work.**

PAC members are faced with a huge task, every (monthly) meeting being supported by several hundred pages of Council officers' reports on applications across the borough (Piers reads it all). Our own Planning group also meets monthly and also works hard: those of us who sit back, while others get on with it, were awestruck by its energy and commitment. Thanking our three speakers, David Kirk recalled an FE Smith story. 'FE' was once told by a judge "I have listened to you for an hour, Mr Smith, and I'm none the wiser". "None the wiser perhaps, m'lud" FE responded, "but certainly much better informed". And we were, indeed, much better informed!

# A visit to the BAC's Grand Hall

*John Dawson reports*

On Saturday 10 October I and others were fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the fire-gutted ruins of the Grand Hall at the old Battersea Town Hall on Lavender Hill, now of course home of the flourishing Battersea Arts Centre. Small groups of interested 'locals' walked down Theatre Street, along the west flank of the building, to enter the hall's remains by a scorched basement staircase. We found ourselves walking into an extraordinary space.

The once ornate 'grand' late Victorian public hall is now a vast 'yard', full of debris, sorted into piles of salvaged materials. They included writhing, grotesquely contorted, steel girders from the roof, tortured by the fire (see the cover picture of this Newsletter).

The fire erupted in the roof of the hall during the afternoon of 13 March this year. The Lower Hall and lower parts of the periphery masonry walls remain intact, though water-damaged. Miraculously, the two proud brick gables at either end of the Grand Hall remain standing, temporarily supported by heavy steel buttresses to avert the danger of collapse until a new roof structure can be built (this picture).

After walking around in wonder, our group, one of several being hosted that day, met the project architect for the rebuilding. She described the process of reflection and design in her practice's office, motivated by BAC, their client, who had asked whether a new hall could better facilitate the disparate activities which the hall had previously struggled to accommodate. We were shown a model of the proposed new Hall which came apart to illustrate ideas being considered to meet BAC's challenge; types of seating and seating arrangements, the introduction of demountable balconies, moving the irreplaceable organ (by good chance largely moved from the Hall for restoration before the fire) to the south gable - away from the proscenium arch stage, so that orchestras could play under it, with the audience's back to the stage, are examples of the radical ideas being considered.

Part of the redesign requires the new hall to be very practical to run, to accommodate easily manageable lighting, sound, and air handling systems servicing the hall and its various uses. The original roof space was commodious and housed basic services, but it was permanently divided from



the hall by the heavily coffered and elaborately panelled plasterwork of E W Mountford's concave ceiling of 1893. The architects and BAC feel that this principal, memorable feature of the hall should be replicated.

However, the original solid ceiling caused acoustic as well as other problems. A new solid ceiling would mean that the reconfiguration of services to meet the ever-changing needs of users would be neither feasible nor practical. The architects are therefore now proposing that the hall should be open to the roof space to meet the servicing needs. But the replacement concave ceiling would be formed of an open patterned fretwork to replicate the coffers, patterns and panelling of the original roof - but not as a solid membrane. The fretwork would 'iron out' acoustic deficiencies and allow ease of use, through the openings, for the services. The model shown in the picture below clearly demonstrates this thinking. Its design ramifications are now being scrutinised. While the building itself was fully insured, the costs of such improvements would be met by the building owners. Costs, however, were not discussed on this occasion.



**The architects' model for the new Grand Hall**  
(pictures: John Dawson)

both structural and service – a most creative world that awaits the talented young of either sex!

*David Kirk adds*

*The BAC hopes to host future visits of the sort that John joined (as did other Society members). We'll communicate details to members, as and when available. Interesting to learn that, while there are rumours and theories, we do not know how the fire started - and perhaps never shall. Another remarkable fact about the old Town Hall is that the Council contemplated demolishing it in the 1970s. These days the Society is supporting Council efforts to commemorate – with a 'blue plaque' – the architect, E W Mountford, who lived in Westover Road, Wandsworth.*

Rather, the visit to the grim, fire-ravaged site was a time for reflection. For this observer, the architect's raising of the roof of the model of the hall to reveal her ideas for the interior was a special moment. It was like seeing the bursting from its shell of a baby phoenix, soon to grow and transform this once splendid building into an even grander 'Grand Hall' - for practical use by future generations from Wandsworth borough and beyond. I look forward to seeing the project progress and materialise into a fine new hall.

Imogen Long of the conservation and historic building architects' practice, Haworth Tompkins ([info@haworthtompkins.com](mailto:info@haworthtompkins.com)), is the young architect responsible for the Hall's resurrection. Her appointment to this important role should send a message to Wandsworth's parents and schools: our construction industry is short of professionals such as architects and engineers,

*While talking of architecture... great news for our area that the new Burntwood School, Tooting (see cover picture) by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, deservedly won the prestigious RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stirling Prize this year. The award is presented to the architects of "the building that has made the greatest contribution to the evolution of architecture in the past year". The Society organised a visit to the school to view its architecture a couple of years ago – more should have attended. We hope to organise another tour. Encouraging the best in modern architecture is one of the Society's concerns. We shall be hoping to contribute recommendations for the 2016 annual design awards made by Civic Voice and Wandsworth Council. If you have suggestions for recommendations, let us know and discuss. -*

## **'Enable' Leisure and Culture, the "start of a great adventure"**

In its continuing efforts to cut costs, the Council is 'out-sourcing' its Leisure and Culture Department. On current plans, the services will be delivered in 2019 by a private sector company selected by competitive tender. Meanwhile... When Paul McCue, the Council officer responsible for Leisure and Culture, asked his staff whether they wanted to be part of a new 'staff mutual', he had never imagined that over 92% of them would vote to join with management in a "great adventure", as he described it on 1 October at the official launch of 'Enable'.

The new organisation is a company limited by guarantee and is applying for charitable status. As a 'public service mutual', it is a form of 'social enterprise'. It will run arts, bereavement services, parks and open spaces (including Wandsworth Common), sports facilities, events, the Council's film office, the borough's public halls and Putney School of Art and Design. Its board of trustees is chaired by a local resident, former architect Clare Frankl-Bertram. As she describes it, the trustees' presence "ensures a level of security about the service continuing as usual... We will be working with stakeholders including community groups, the Council, existing contractors..." The Society should wish Enable well



## Examination of the Wandsworth Local Plan: a hearing at the Town Hall July 2015

David Smith, the Inspector, hears evidence from local societies. Peter Farrow leans forward to make a point, with Bruce St-Julian Bown, also representing the Society, behind him to his right. Another member of our Planning group, Cyril Richert (who took the picture) represented Clapham Junction Action Group. The Society has submitted comments on modifications proposed following the hearings. More at:

[http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/1004/planning\\_policy/1347/local\\_plan\\_review](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/1004/planning_policy/1347/local_plan_review)

## The hundredth edition of the Wandsworth Historian

A somewhat 'intimate', rather coy, advertising image, published in a local newspaper in the 1880s, with a hint of sexual ambiguity, may seem a little 'naughty' even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The history of the late Victorian corset and 'bustle' should not be forgotten when we consider the effects of the fashion modelling of today on perceptions of the 'body beautiful'.

The advertisement is taken from the hundredth issue of the *Putney & Wandsworth Borough News* of 15 May 1886. It is reproduced in the hundredth (Autumn 2015) issue of the *Wandsworth Historian*, the journal of the Wandsworth Historical Society that brings its readers latest research on local history across the borough. Among other things, the issue looks back at the hundredth editions of three local newspapers. Other articles highlight the impact of the prolific nineteenth-century Putney house-builder, William Robert Williams; explore the obscure origins of Battersea's John Burns MP; and venture into the medieval past of Wandsworth itself.

Copies of the *Wandsworth Historian* are available for £3.00, plus £1.50 for postage and packing, from WHS, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or by emailing [ngrobson@tiscali-co.uk](mailto:ngrobson@tiscali-co.uk). Cheques should be made payable to Wandsworth Historical Society. Or you can buy a copy at one of the WHS's monthly meetings, details at

[www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk](http://www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk)

David Kirk

# Planning News

What's new? Curiously, not a great deal of significance, if one disregards the continuation of the multitude(s!) of those wishing to extend their kitchens and put another floor on either the side or top of their houses! Where 'permitted development' is not allowed, individual planning applications have to be submitted, to be considered by planning officers for their recommendations. We agree that this is a vital part of the planning process but it may not be best use of planning officers' time.

Oh! I hear you cry, but what else have they to do? The answer is an enormous lot, with a reduced staff. Government decrees that reviews of adopted plans should be reconsidered almost as soon as the previous plans have been put into action. We live in a borough that has seen great change in the last few years - no sign of this abating, as many post-war and 1950s and 60s areas are considered to need rebuilding or require change of use to meet current requirements.

We may not like such change, but we cannot bury our heads in the sand: unless local infrastructure, schools, medical facilities and space for the elderly and infirm are incorporated, we shall not be serving future generations.

## **Wandsworth Town Gyrotory**

We shall be having a further meeting with TfL to review the latest position.

## **Crossrail 2**

The Society was represented at a further 'community engagement' panel in October. Despite Wandsworth Council concerns, Crossrail 2 may now be routed via a new station at Balham rather than Tooting Broadway. Further public consultation is starting. See [www.crossrail2.co.uk](http://www.crossrail2.co.uk).

The Society will wish to contribute.

## **Feathers Wharf**

A public exhibition of current proposals was held following a meeting with the Western Riverside Waste Authority. We have commented on the planning application, making clear that we are delighted after so long that the high-level walkway above the transfer station is to be completed and opened, with the riverside path beside the Thames and the Wandle also made available for another link in the Thames path.

However, we are disappointed that only a three metre width of path is proposed - inadequate to provide for pedestrian and cycle use; provision for a six metre width is more usual. The Environment Agency currently has a six metre strip available for maintenance. There is also virtually no provision for public open space, which all previously adopted local plans provided. A great step in the right direction, but, please, planners get it right, what you grant now will be with us for the next 20 years (the length of lease proposed).

## **East Hill 'hideous hoarding'**

No further news, although trees immediately behind the location of the sign have been severely lopped and the Leonard Cheshire day centre closed - "for two years for refurbishment" we are told, its services now being provided elsewhere.

## **Trinity Road illuminated 'signs'**

We had been advised that the Council considered the matter closed. We now understand that a report on our request for enforcement action will be submitted to the Planning Applications Committee.

## **The Alchemist (former Fishmongers' Arms - now demolished!), St John's Hill**

The Council is awaiting revised plans for the site - where no contractors are currently in evidence.

## **Homebase, Smugglers Way**

A meeting took place in August with the architect and consultants of the site owner, following our comments to the Council in relation to the Environmental Impact Assessment. We were pleased to learn that revisions to earlier proposals showed a significant reduction in height to the tower block - but it may still be too high - and further changes which appear to benefit the scheme. Concerns remain about vehicular accessibility, density and lack of employment uses on the site. We await the planning application.

## **Air monitoring in the borough**

The planning group is seeking Society members to join a group who will actively monitor the air quality of our roads, open spaces or any other part of our area. This will assist the Council with their monitoring. If you are interested in taking part, please contact me.

We hope that those who attended the Society's **Local Planning Forum** in September enjoyed the presentations and subsequent discussion. Our thanks to John Dawson and Peter Farrow for their well-researched contributions (see pages 4-5).

*Philip Whyte*

# Poetry, music and other delights

## **‘The Woods Cry Out’ – a Wandsworth commemoration of World War One**

The Society is supporting this charitable event, organised by Putney Music on **November 11 & 12**, at 7.30pm in the Civic Suite, Wandsworth Town Hall. Actors performing include Society members Wendy Gifford (better known to some of us as Wendy Cater) and Timothy West, and Clive Merrison.

The event, devised by Sue Rolfe and Andrew Neill, commemorates Wandsworth’s involvement in World War 1 and tells the story of the Wandsworth battalion. The title is taken, however, from ‘*At nightfall the autumn woods cry out*’, the first line of an Austrian poem of the period. There will be readings from German poets who, like their English counterparts, stress the need for compassion and comradeship. Works by Wandsworth poet Edward Thomas and by the men and nurses of Wandsworth’s Royal Victoria Patriotic Hospital will be read – and material from *The Wipers Times* too! The programme also includes some classical music, such as Elgar’s settings of Rudyard Kipling’s poems from *The Fringes of the Fleet*, and popular songs of the time.

**This event, also supported by the Battersea and Putney Societies and the FoWM, is in aid of SSAFA – the charity that offers lifelong support to members of the armed forces, veterans and their families. (More at: [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk).) Book now!** Tickets, costing £12 or £7.50 for 18 and under (suitable for 11+), are available from Tara-arts.com or on 020 833 4457. Doors open at 7.00pm; refreshments available (licensed bar).

*David Kirk*

## **And at our Christmas party...**

... at 7.30 for 8, on Saturday **5 December** (just 365 days after the last one!) will be held again at St Anne’s Church Hall, St Ann’s Crescent. The party is an opportunity for all Society members to enjoy a social gathering, see old friends and meet new ones. There will also, as usual, be music.

This year we shall be entertained by the folk group Porchlight Smoker (which I know rather well and can recommend - to old and young...). It will show off the band’s multi-national song-writing talents: Scott Smith, from Wichita, Kansas, bringing an extensive knowledge of the American folk tradition, Scotsman Steve Bell’s Celtic folk influence, and London-born Fred Gregory’s very English identity – the three combine to produce a unique and exciting sound. The band has been described as ‘an absolute gem’ and one that offers ‘original songs that will have a lasting impact’. Preview available at [porchlight smoker, porchlightsmoker](http://porchlightsmoker.com).

**Please book ‘tickets’ in advance – by 30 November at the latest – and pay at the door.** Early booking helps us to cater more efficiently and saves you £2. Book with me by 30 November and the cost is £10 a head – for entertainment, good conversation, a glass of wine and a fork supper. **E-mail [vtaylor@davies@gmail.com](mailto:vtaylor@davies@gmail.com) or call 8767 3814. If you do not book in advance, the cost is £12 at the door.**

*Valerie Taylor*

**The Society’s soirées**, musical and sometimes otherwise, will resume early in the New Year, we hope.

**An opportunity to hear the 51<sup>st</sup> State Band of the World Heart Beat Music Academy** which featured in our September Newsletter. Its next concert, with guest artist Toni Kofi, is on Friday 13 November at the Putney Arts Theatre, Ravenna Road, SW15 6AW – two performances, 7 and 8.30 (tickets, £9.50 a head, available from [www.world-heartbeat.org](http://www.world-heartbeat.org)). An “exciting evening of music” is promised, to display the “variety, energy and dedication of the Academy’s students”, presented by the Canadian songwriter, Tami Weis.

**Local art and drama - see ‘Also of interest’ on our Events page at [www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk](http://www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk)**

Trevor Grubb\*reflects on

## Eating Habits: Food for thought / thought for food

On 8 October we were offered an interesting experience at the Society's monthly meeting: thinking about what we eat - where does our food come from? how is it produced? why do we waste so much food? Les Kemp from 'EcoLocal' proved an enthusiast for his subject and encouraged us to think about all aspects of our food and how to improve eating habits. What are the issues? Our ecological footprint is **too big!** We **must** reduce it.

**How?** Where does our food come from, how far has it travelled, how much of the world's precious resources is used in its production? Even food produced in the UK often has to travel long distances before it reaches us. We need to look at labels and see if we can modify our food intake and use local products wherever possible. And we should aim to grow some of our own food – even in a window box! The use of water is vital in producing our food – over 3,000 litres per person per day. On top of that, we each use, on average, about 150 litres of water a day – for cooking, cleaning, washing and flushing.

**What about waste?** We all think we know we waste too much food, but the facts are staggering. For example, in this country we throw away **every day** 1.4 million bananas, 24 million slices of bread and 1.5 million tomatoes – plenty of mutterings among the audience, **“of course we don't throw away anything!”** But we all throw away too much.

**What can we do about it?** It's not all doom and gloom and statistics! We sat around tables in small groups and examined an 'eatwell plate', designed by Public Health England (see below) to show what constitutes a varied and nutritious diet and the desirable proportions of fruit and vegetables, protein (meat, fish, eggs, beans), starchy foods (bread, rice, potatoes, pasta), milk and dairy food, and food with high fat/sugar content. This proved an interesting exercise - as we had first listed all the food we could think of under the various headings. The results were remarkably similar between the tables, but produced a variety of questions and a discussion ably led by Les. All in all, an interesting, challenging and thoughtful evening – and one that was not at all what I had expected. So exciting, that it was almost 10pm when we concluded the session!

\*my real name of course!



# Wandsworth Society Calendar 2015-16

## Events

Except for 'The Woods Cry Out' and our Christmas Party (for both of which there is a charge), the venue for all these events is West Side Church, Melody Road, SW18 2QQ (the corner with Allfarthing Lane) and the meetings are open to all at no charge – although we hope of course that newcomers will join the Society.

Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November,  
Town Hall Civic Suite, 7.30

## The Woods Cry Out

a reflection in words and music on World War One. Book now – see page 10.

Thursday 19 November, 7.45 for 8

## Municipal Dreams

an illustrated talk by John Boughton

John is a social historian and blogger. His blog [www.municipaldreams.wordpress.com](http://www.municipaldreams.wordpress.com) charts the reforming efforts and achievements of local councils in improving the lives of the people. It focuses particularly on the history of council housing – its design and ideals, its social and political context, its successes and failures. In his talk John will discuss some of the important council housing schemes in the Wandsworth area in order to tell this wider story.

Saturday 5 December,  
7.30 for 8 St Anne's Church Hall

## Christmas Party

with folk group Porchlight Smoker.  
Book now – see page 10.

Thursday 14 January, 7.45 for 8

## The Wandle Valley Regional Park

Talk and discussion with Sue Morgan, CEO

Thursday 11 February, 7.45 for 8

## The Royal Victoria Patriotic Building and 'London Reception Centre' in World War Two

Illustrated talk by local historians Paul McCue and Simon McNeill-Ritchie

Thursday 10 March, from 7

**Our Annual General Meeting – details to be confirmed**

## Walks

All walks, except for the 'city walk' on 16 February, will be led by Caroline Pook, with the group assembling at 9.30am outside 'M&S Simply Food' at Clapham Junction Station - no need for prior booking. If you want more details (or would like to meet the group later on the route), please e-mail - [caroline@pookfamily.co.uk](mailto:caroline@pookfamily.co.uk).

Tuesday 3 November

**Falconwood to Woolwich (part of the Capital Ring) – a 7-mile walk**

### Winter walks

Shorter walks, culminating in a site visit. The length of the walk will be tailored to the day, depending on the weather, but will not exceed 4 miles on flat firm surfaces. We always find a warm café for a sociable lunch, often inside the house or museum we are visiting.

### Further details on our website....

Thursday 3 December

**Enfield Country Park and visit to Forty Hall** (admission free)

Friday 22 January

**Limehouse Basin, via Victoria Park, to Hackney, to visit Sutton House (NT)**

Tuesday 16 February

**Tour of Kensington Village led by Blue Badge Guide Angela Down** (charge)

Monday 22 February

**Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens and Holland Park to Leighton House**

Tuesday 22 March

**Regent's Canal to Shoreditch and Geffrye Museum (Museum of the Home)** (free)

**More details of our 2016 events will be available on our website**

[www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk](http://www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk).

The website also gives latest details of all Society activities, and you can use it to join the Society – or you can come along to one of our meetings and join on the spot if you wish.