



Guest column: The Friends of Radnor Gardens

Poised for a facelift next year

Residents of Strawberry Hill have waited nearly a decade to see restoration work and improvements to Radnor Gardens get under way. Now with lottery funding promised to meet most of the cost, these historic gardens are to be given an exciting facelift with work starting early next year.

Landscape architects Kim Wilkie & Associates have just won the contract to implement the plan which the Friends of Radnor Gardens put before local residents in 1996. The plan will go for further consultation before implementation.

The scheme meant raising a target of £100,000 and some £10,000 is still needed to meet our share of the proposed improvements. In the meantime, the Council will be undertaking some urgent repairs this year, mainly to the entrances and walls.

Family and Music Day

The fundraising annual music and crafts event, which the Friends have organised for the past 12 years, will take place on Sunday, June 20, the last day of the Twickenham Festival and be sponsored by the Rugby Football Union.

Radnor Gardens Family Day - formerly Music Day - will include information about the plans for the gardens as well as a greater focus on crafts, the participation of local community groups as well as plenty of fun for children. It will be accompanied by a music programme largely featuring local talent. Popular attractions will include food, beer tent and a Pimms bar. To make this potpourri of delights go with a swing, volunteers are asked to contact Pat Schooling.

Pat Schooling, Vice Chair, Friends of Radnor Gardens

For enquiries about stall space, contact Pat Schooling on 020 8892 4949; for the music programme contact Fraser Cullen on 020 8831 6533

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The Bulletin



Time for lip smacking Strawberry Fare?

Gourmet strawberry delights will be on the menu for Music Day on June 20 when SHRA launches its first Strawberry Fayre.

SHRA is seeking volunteer cooks to explore the many mouth-watering ways that strawberries can be presented from possets, to syl-labubs, from tarts to tianes, from jams to junkets. Or the

classic strawberries and cream.

Funded by your subscription, SHRA will provide the strawberries for the volunteer cooks to prepare. The strawberries might even be hand-picked by the cooks from a nearby farm to their own demanding standards if they wish. Their dishes will be sold at nominal prices at the SHRA

stand during Music Day.

Volunteers will also be welcome to serve the strawberry delights along with tea, coffee and soft drinks.

It is hoped that the first Strawberry Fayre will be the bellweather for a much more ambitious programme in coming years.

Volunteers are asked to call Clare Phelps on 020 8892 5863 or e-mail clare.phelps@shra.org.uk

Post Office under threat

Use it or Lose it!

The threat of closure hangs over Strawberry Hill Post Office in the wake of a dramatic fall in the number of customers, fears sub post master Jay Patel.

Business has dropped by 40% in the last six months, largely due to a decrease in pension collection. Jay is reluctant to close the Post Office. He believes it could signal the decline of the Strawberry Hill as a shopping location and impact on the other businesses. However, he stresses that it can only remain open if commercially viable

The Post Office, meanwhile, is encouraging closure of sub post offices by offering cash incentives. In the last year, two local post offices - in Heath Road and Stanley Road - have shut. The nearest Post Office to Strawberry Hill is in the town centre.

To encourage Post Office custom the range of services available has grown substantially. The Post Office can now be used to:

- bank or withdraw cash
- order commission free foreign currency
- buy travel insurance for ski,



Jay: "I am reluctant to close the Post Office"

- summer and mini break holidays
- pay a wide range of bills - gas, electricity, water, TV licence, Council tax, Income tax,

Twickenham Ward, has joined the call to preserve the Post Office by distributing 1,000 leaflets with copies of her party newsletter.

The 39th Annual General Meeting of The Strawberry Hill Residents Association. 7.00pm, April 5 in the Waldegrave Room, Strawberry Hill House. All are welcome.

Catalogues, TV and video rental, mobile phone Council Clare Head, South

Parking curb to aid shopping

Among the proposals which we understand are being put to Richmond Council is a 20 minute parking restriction in Wellesley Parade. Shopkeepers believe this is a long enough parking period to attract shoppers and that it will also prevent the abuse of the parking spaces.

Renewal of subscription of £3.00 per home* for 2004

The subscription renewal may be made by cash, cheque or standing order made payable to Strawberry Hill Residents' Association to: Richard Spires, 70 Popes Avenue, Strawberry Hill, Costcutter by the station, Strawberry Hill Post Office

**Donations above this amount are always welcome*

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Dates _____

Amount _____

Why knowing your views is important to us

The questionnaire enclosed with this copy of The Bulletin will help the Committee understand your views and formulate policy for the coming year.

The results of the poll will be made known at the Annual General meeting

on April 5 to be held in the Waldegrave Room at Strawberry Hill House.

This is the second time that an residents' opinion poll has been carried out. The Committee has resolved that it will become an annual feature. The previous poll

produced nearly 300 replies characterised by offers of help from willing volunteers for SHRA events. These offers are always welcome. Please contact any member of the Committee (names and numbers on the back page)

Win a SHRA T-shirt

As a small incentive, the Committee will draw five names from a hat at the AGM to win the new SHRA T shirts (in glowing SHRA pink). Your Committee members have already tried them out (see Clean up story)

Crossrail crossing threat recedes

Should Transport Minister Alistair Darling approve the Crossrail proposals in March, the Crossrail executive has promised to provide a speaker for the SHRA AGM.

However, the SHRA Crossrail sub committee, chaired by Dr. Arthur Tarrant, has formed the view that the plan to extend the project beyond Richmond to Kingston is not likely to go ahead. This opinion follows meetings with Crossrail in January.

At the same time, Crossrail has given assurances that the level crossing will not be closed should the extension to Kingston be built.

The extension would result in eight more trains per hour passing through Strawberry Hill and the level crossing would be closed more frequently as a result.

Dr Tarrant has also participated in the discussions between the Richmond X-rail Group and Crossrail over compulsory purchase of homes and gardens. Dr Tarrant says that Crossrail has been very receptive and helpful. Three new proposals are under review which would reduce the demolition and land take considerably.

Delays hit CPZ decision

A Richmond Council decision on parking and issues such as whether to create a CPZ in the roads around Strawberry Hill station was expected in late

January. However, the Transport Committee, led by Cllr Kreling, has not completed its work and no final date has been given. The council sought residents' views last year. However, as the level of response was under 30% in some streets, the Council was expected to carry out a further enquiry to see if it could get a sharper focus on residents' views.

Civic Pride Funding

A SHRA application for a grant from the Civic Pride Fund to set up a series of awards for householders and local contractors who had contributed to improving the local environment has been turned down.

Clean up gang hits station



A six person clean up gang of SHRA Committee members hit the rubbish-strewn strip of land beside Strawberry Hill station one Sunday morning recently. The anti-litter hit squad, wearing their new SHRA T-shirts, are left to right: Mike O'Hagan, Graham and Stacey Adams, Clare Phelps, Eugene Bacot (back to camera) Robin Walters.

Yard clean up in sight



Spacia, the trading arm of Network Rail responsible for the rubbish-strewn station yard, has said it will inspect the site during March. SHRA and local garage manager Justin Bland have asked to be present. SHRA has complained frequently about dumping of rubbish and abandoned cars.

Books donation to Twickenham Museum

Following reprinting of Anthony Beccles Willson's fascinating book on Strawberry Hill, ten copies have been donated to Twickenham Museum. Copies can be ordered from Clare Phelps, priced £6 each

Villas on the Thames

The glorious history of Twickenham's riverside villas will be recounted by Catherine Pary-Wingfield at St Mary's Church Hall at 8pm on April 19. This is the first of a series of annual lectures hosted by the Trustees of The Twickenham Museum in aid of Museum funds.

The Planning Process Revealed

You may wonder how some developments get permission to go ahead, or, at least, without strict conditions or compensation. The following examples may provide an insight into how the planning process works.

The Grange Avenue development was rejected by Richmond Council, but was passed on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. The Planning Inspectorate comes under the Office of the Deputy

Prime Minister (ODPM), and neither the Council nor community could realistically challenge a Planning Inspectorate decision.

Another planning issue is the enlargement of St. James's School, part of a PFI(Private Finance Initiative) contract, negotiated by Richmond Council for building and maintenance work on six schools in the Borough. PFI/PPP (Public Private Partnership) is an

initiative of the previous government, adopted by New Labour.

Negotiations can be long and difficult, and, under PFI/PPP rules, are largely confidential (your elected representatives are sworn to secrecy) in order to protect the interests of the private partner. But, this kind of contract allows a council, in effect, to take out a mortgage with a private investor - over a period of 30 years in this case - to cover the

cost of the work.

There is a strong argument in favour of such arrangements, but, in the process, the interests of residents - Golf Side and part of Shaftesbury Way in this case - can be set aside for the greater good. Metropolitan Open Land - Wellesley Road Playing Field in this case - can be passed, without public consultation, into private hands - the Archdiocese of Westminster in this case.

Robin Walters

Twickenham Pool Site Inquiry

The Inquiry by the Planning Inspectorate into the Council's proposed temporary, first stage scheme for the partial development of this site closed on Friday, 27 February after six days.

The proposed plan, which involves knocking down the old pool buildings, was passed by the Council with the qualified support of the Twickenham Society Group, on which SHRA is a represented.

However, the scheme was referred to the Government Office of London (GOL) by The Twickenham Riverside Terrace Group, which wishes to retain and restore part of the old building. The GOL decided that the matter should be subject to a recommendation to the Secretary of State following an Inquiry by the Planning Inspectorate.

Valuable consultation

The Inquiry has proved a valuable continuation of the public consultation process, and has certainly not been a waste of time and money.

Other factors have resulted in delay. But,

whatever the Secretary of State's decision, we still have to agree on an acceptable long term development for the site as a whole.

Full details of the Inquiry can be found on The River Centre web site (www.rivercentre.org.uk), and a decision is expected in April/May.

Border disputes over expansion

The College has been very helpful in cooperating with residents of Michelham Gardens and Clive Road to resolve 'border disputes'.

The College has cut down numerous very large trees bordering on the gardens of homes in Michelham Gardens, permitting more light to reach the back of the houses and their gardens.

Following a protest by residents over the expansion of on-campus student accommodation. Plans, acceptable to residents, have now been lodged with the Council.

Parking

There remains the problem of student parking

on the public highway, and the College is currently engaged in a debate with the Council and community about this.

The College says it could not afford to build an underground car park, but assure us that their policy is to discourage students from bringing cars into the area. This includes limiting the amount of on-campus parking, which is also a policy of Central Government.

Wellesley Road Playing Field still MOL

Wellesley Road Playing Field remains MOL even though it has been passed into the private hands of the Archdiocese of Westminster. It is designated as a school playing field, and will revert to public ownership should St. James's School cease to be a school.

Anyone may apply to use the playing field or any of the school facilities for sport or leisure activities by contacting Jarvis on: tpi.helpdesk.south@jarvis-uk.com or on 020 8885 9392, or by visiting the Jarvis office at the school.

The charge to the local community is expected to

be £25.00 per hour. Drainage works on the field, being carried out by Thames Water under an enforcement order, should be completed by the end of April.

Waldegrave Residents and Newland House School

The recently established Waldegrave Residents Association (WRA) has been set up with two principal aims. The first is to contain a proposal to expand Newland House School, and to prevent the proposed development of No.11 Waldegrave Park, owned by the school, to fund the expansion. Consultations with the School have closed, and, so far no planning application has been lodged with Richmond Council.

The second, long-term objective is to preserve the integrity of Waldegrave Park, part of which falls within a conservation area. Waldegrave Park is a wide, tree-lined road of magnificent, largely Victorian houses.

For further information, contact James & Gillian Robbins (8892 7662) or Hugh & Birgit O'Brien (8892 8515).