



No. 136 March 2008

Early carols greet the Christmas Tree unveiling

In a charming prelude to the Christmas tree ceremony, 20 children and parents from Archdeacon Cambridge School gathered to sing carols in the afternoon.

The request came from the school and SHRA was delighted to agree. This clearly extends the life and reach of our community Christmas tree. That evening the tree was decorated by local children before Carmel Kinnear, of the Kinnear Foundation, switched on the lights.

Free mince pies and mulled wine were the cue for the Strawberry Hill Singers to open the carol singing. A collection raised over £200.



Children from Archdeacon Cambridge School singing at Wellesley Parade

SHRA, together with a contribution from the Council, made up that sum to £300 from its funds, which will go to the Roy Kinnear Foundation for handicapped young people. The foundation is based in Waldegrave Road, opposite St Mary's College.

SHRA AGM TEES OFF AT GOLF CLUB



The Annual General Meeting of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association will take place at 7:00 for 7:30 pm on Monday April 14th in Strawberry Hill Golf Club, Wellesley Road.

Free coffee and tea will be available, as well as a cash bar. All residents are invited to attend.

Judith Lovelace, Chair of the Friends of Strawberry Hill, will give an insight into the work on Horace Walpole's gothic house and how £8 million of donations to restore the House to its 18th century splendour is being spent.

Three major applications approved

Residents packed the Salon in York House on Thursday 13 March, when the Council's Planning Committee met to consider 3 major planning applications in this area. So great was the demand for places that some members of the public had to wait outside for their application to be heard, whilst all seats, and even the steps, in the Salon were occupied.

The council approved all three applications. These applications focus attention on the continued erosion of green space and increasing density of developments. While the Waldegrave Road and St James's Church developments will now almost certainly go ahead, protests continue over the Family Centre (see box on page 2).

279 Waldegrave Road

This proposal is for the replacement of a detached house opposite St Mary's College with a four-storey block of 5 flats. Two close neighbours spoke against the application, citing insufficient car parking, density of development and that it is aesthetically out of keeping with other tile roofed detached and semi-detached homes nearby. Cllr Clare Head re-emphasised these points and observed that light spillage would be detrimental to

immediate neighbours and to wildlife. John Armstrong, on behalf of the SHRA Committee, referred to the semi-detached houses at 7 Cross Deep (the "Cross Deep Carbuncle") as an example of a modern design that can grossly intrude on the general townscape of an area and drew an analogy with the design of the proposed flats. Residents are worried that this approval may put other large houses on similar plots at risk from similar developments, to the detriment of the townscape and character of the whole area.

St James' Church Extension

Residents of Upper Grotto Road and Radnor Road complained that the extension to the rear of the Church would cause noise and traffic hazards in the narrowest part of Radnor Road, as well as being unsightly and that security of nearby houses would be compromised. Eugene Bacot, SHRA Committee member, and Cllr Head presented a comprehensive list of objections, including loss of habitat for wildlife. Supporting the application were a parishioner, a planning consultant and Father Ulick Loring, who noted that the church remained largely unchanged since 1885 and that the extension would provide a valuable neighbourhood amenity.

Gifford House Family Centre

The Council submitted this application to build a smaller Family Centre for the whole of the Borough on the site of the present Centre garden between Popes Avenue and Grange Avenue. Residents complained that living rooms of the houses in Grange Avenue will overlook a flat roof covered with solar panels.

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Strawberry Hill Post Office

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Transport

Wellesley Parade gets 2 hr limit

Richmond Council has agreed to examine SHRA's proposal to create a number of 2 hour parking bays and a loading bay in Wellesley Parade. While there is an issue over who owns the land, this is not considered to be a problem.

Brighter station and new ticket machine

Partial painting of Strawberry Hill station began in January. However, the bridge painting could not be completed because South West Trains engineers concluded it needed structural repairs. SHRA is awaiting further information.

Station car park

Following an enquiry from SHRA, SWT has said it is not interested in operating a car park in the station yard. The yard has been fenced and is now used only by tenants. This solves the problem of car and rubbish dumping.

Ticket machine

The long urged ticket machine for platform 2 was finally installed and operational by the end of February.

Waiting room watch

The waiting room on the Richmond-bound platform does not appear to be open at all times when the booking office is manned, despite SWT assurances. SHRA has raised this problem with SWT which has asked residents to monitor the situation.

Student parking

Residents are still complaining about parking by students in Strawberry Hill Road and Close. In Waldegrave Road, 25 out of 31 residents have asked for the same CPZ provisions as apply in Southfield Gardens, that is, partial restrictions in the morning. Since the building of St Mary's sports hall the College has 120 fewer parking spaces, but makes no reference to this in its prospectus.

Applications approved

From page 1

There are also houses and flats on two surrounding sides, including a building of Townscape Merit. They are also concerned that the proximity of the Centre will affect their privacy.

Teresa Read, SHRA Committee member and leader of the Gifford House Action Group, made a representation concerning the loss of 10 parking spaces in the new Centre. However, the Council will encourage staff to travel by public transport or bicycle.

Once the Gifford House development goes ahead the parking situation will be even worse. Residents worry that selling part of the Family Centre land will make the Gifford House site larger for sale by the Council and Care UK. The Council's Development Manager and the architect spoke in favour of the application.

Now residents are keen to see the proposals for Gifford House. The Gifford House Action Group will campaign for effective pre-application consultation.

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Did you know...

... that St James' hall was opened by King Manoel II of Portugal in December 1927?

The King and Queen Marie Amelie, who settled at Fulwell Park (now demolished), regularly worshipped there. They were generous supporters of the church and there are reminders of the Orleans and Braganza families, including the window to St. Anthony of Padua bearing the Braganza crest.

This, and many other fascinating facts about the area, can be found on the Twickenham Museum's website:

www.twickenham-museum.org.uk

Family Centre Call-In

Cllr Clare Head (South Twickenham) and Cllr Christine Percival (Barnes) have obtained a review of a Cabinet decision to close family centres in Mortlake and Barnes and to group all family cases at the Gifford House site.

The call-in is backed by the Gifford House Action Group which says the space for the family centre is too small, but releases the maximum amount of land for housing development.

Residents may request to speak at the review meeting which will be held at York House on 25 March at 7:00. You can register to speak before 14:00 on the previous day (call 020 8891 7191).

Have you been in Pope's Grotto?

No, not our excellent pub, but Alexander Pope's original 18th century grotto, partially under Cross Deep and only accessible through St James's School. Much of this fascinating and unique construction still survives. Ex-chairman of SHRA and local historian Tony Beckles Willson gives tours in the week of the Twickenham Festival, 13-22 June. Look out for the publicity in May.

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Friends of Radnor Gardens

Cafe may open this summer

By Cllr Clare Head, Chair FoRG

A busy three months has seen renewed work on the gardens and the bowling green by Richmond Council. Combined with an up-surge in membership, Radnor Gardens is poised to regain some of its old allure this year.

Summer Café

Chief among the improvements is the proposal to revive the café in the brick hut this summer. Richmond Council will be inviting tenders shortly; one firm applicant has already come forward.

The hut is being surveyed. It is hoped to create a pleasant refurbished area in front of the building with tables and chairs. Resurfacing in front of the building to preserve the grass while creating a stable surface has begun.

South Gate

Long overdue work on the South Gate started in February. There are plans to place bollards on the pathway to prevent vehicles driving on to the soft grass where they create ruts. The path from the main gate to the gazebo will be resurfaced and widened.



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FoRG AGM – March 31

The annual general meeting of the Friends will take place at 7:30pm on Monday, March 31 at the Pope's Grotto Hotel. The Friends' plans and hopes for continued refurbishment of the gardens will be explained.

Jason Debney, coordinator of the Thames Landscape Strategy, will speak about improvements to the gardens in the context of the Strategy.

We hope to see many of you there to share a glass of wine and to let us hear your ambitions for our delightful riverside garden.

Bowls Club

The Bowls Club green is in much better condition following work by Richmond Council. The upstands (the ditching at the edge) has been completely renewed and the green renovated to a high standard.



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Strawberry Hill Restoration Project

Beauty stripped bare. By Judith Lovelace.

Layer-by-layer, the original decoration of Strawberry Hill House is being peeled away to reveal original wallpaper and painting.

Furniture and wallcoverings have all been removed and the, now echoing, rooms will be on view when the House re-opens on March 23 for Sunday afternoon visits. Two of the most recent discoveries are a large grey fragment from the original staircase wallpaper and rediscovered 'ghosts' of pinnacles behind the wallcovering in the yellow bedchamber. The pinnacles had only been seen in 18th century engravings.

In the meantime, basic works are being completed so that the main restoration contracts can start in September. Separation works to establish independent water,



Judith Lovelace talks to a spellbound audience in Strawberry Hill House

electricity, central heating and drainage were completed in the Autumn.

Friends of Strawberry Hill House

Gothic art and the muses

An exhibition by Gothic artist Anne Sudworth heralds the start of an exciting series of events at Strawberry Hill House ranging from a literary lunch to an open-air performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

The house is the ideal venue for Anne's magical and haunting landscapes which are on show from March 17 to May 20.

Other events lined up for the Spring are:

- **Landscape and lunch:** Talk by Patrick Jones of the Landscape Agency on the restoration of the Strawberry Hill garden. Price: £18, includes lunch with wine. 11am, April 10
- **Celebration of Spring:** An evening of poetry and prose by Walter Houser and Geraldine Moffat; 7.30pm in the Long Gallery. Price: £5, includes refreshments. 7.30pm, May 1
- **An Evening with Simon Brett:** Author of the Charles Paris, Mrs Pargeter and Fethering series on books and writing. Price: £10, including refreshments. May 8, 7.30pm
- **Plant Sale:** Floral and herbal displays for your garden. All day, June 1
- **The Importance of Being Earnest:** In the garden, the first of a planned series of open-air plays, against the evocative backdrop of the House. Bring your picnic. Price: £12 per person. 5.30pm, June 29
- **Music and Fun Day:** Food, music, dancing, fairground stalls and fun for all the family. All day; July 13

For further information and ticket purchases see:

www.friendsofstrawberryhill.org

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Preserving the Post Office

Strawberry Hill was not on the list of Post Office closures in the London area published by the Post Office in February. However, a definitive list is awaiting confirmation at the end of March.

For nearly 30 years, Aparna and Jay Patel have been at the centre of village life.

The news that Strawberry Hill Post Office may finally be saved from the threat of closure is a tribute to the hard work of Postmistress Aparna Patel and her husband Jay who run the newsagents in Tower Road.

It is a busy life, starting at 5am in the morning to get out the newspaper rounds – Jay employs 11 delivery boys – and not finishing until 7pm in the evening, except for a half day on Sunday.

Since taking over the shop and Post Office in 1980, they have become central figures in community life. Their daughter Dipali (20) and son Dipesh (18) were born here. The Patel's contribute regularly to local organisations such as SHRA.

When they arrived in Strawberry Hill, neither Aparna, an industrial chemist, nor Jay, a computer sciences graduate, can have imagined they would become a community institution.

"We have worked hard to keep the Post Office", says Aparna. Jay adds, "While we are not on the list of Post Offices to close, we will



not be informed of the final decision until the end of March".

In the meantime, the Patels are in daily contact with hundreds of residents from morning and evening commuters to older people, and even local business people and those working from home. Jay says that many customers make use of the high-quality, comprehensive dry cleaning service, which offers a same day service.

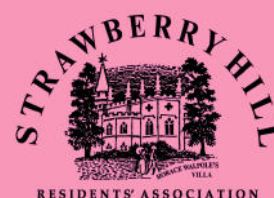
"We go out of our way to help the residents with post and parcels. A good service is the least we can offer," says Aparna. "People seem to pop in just to chat," says Jay. "It's part of what makes Strawberry Hill such a pleasant place to live."

Can SHRA help you with planning issues?

If you and/or your neighbours are concerned about projected building plans in your area, we are here to give advice and support. Together with local councillors, SHRA is able to help by giving advice on:

- 1 Coordinating objections
- 2 Pin-pointing acceptable grounds for objections
- 3 Explaining the workings of the Council's Planning Department

Contact Jose Relton or any member of the Committee.



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Additional donations are always welcome!

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