

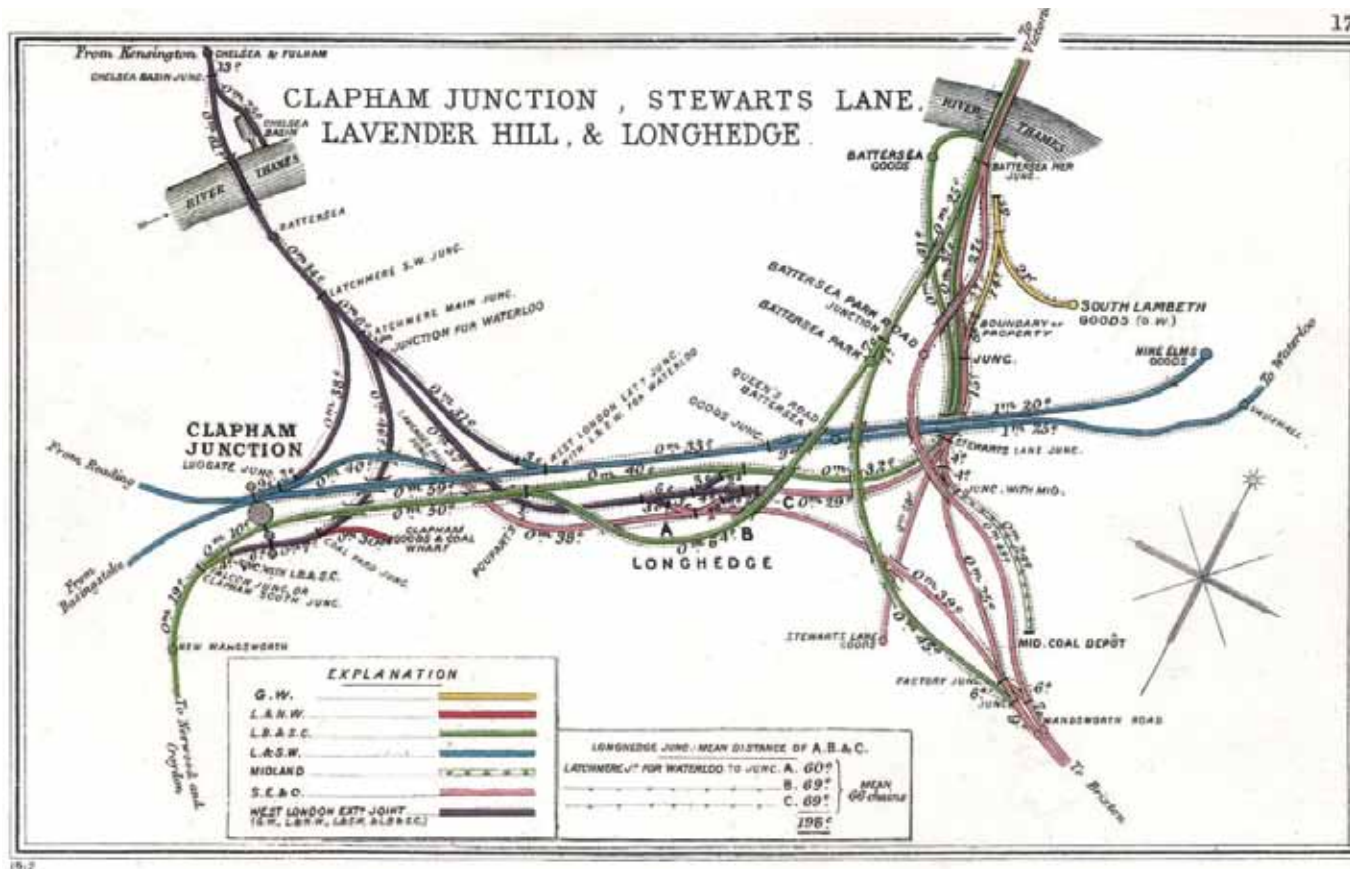
Battersea Matters

the newsletter of the Battersea Society SUMMER 2016



How the railways carved up Battersea

Sue Demont unravels the Battersea Tangle



Transport groupies who grew up in the 60s and 70s remember well how those decades were characterised by the predominance of the motor car and the rapid expansion of the motorway network, which perhaps hit its peak of fame (or infamy) with the construction of 'Spaghetti Junction', the extraordinary looping and spiralling A38(M)/M6 interchange in Birmingham. But how many of us knew that our local area houses a much earlier but equally notorious predecessor – the 'Battersea Tangle'?

Demolished

It all started back in 1838 with the opening of Nine Elms Station; at the time this modest but architecturally significant building (by William Tite,

sadly demolished in the 1960s) was London's third railway terminus, preceded only by London Bridge and Euston. Built by the London and Southampton Railway Company, Nine Elms enjoyed just ten years as a passenger terminus before being replaced by Waterloo, but its brief incarnation was not without incident.

Eloping

The Times reported that a riot was narrowly averted one Derby Day, when ten times the number of passengers turned up for the number of seats available on the Epsom-bound train. More sedately, both the Duke of Wellington and Queen Victoria were early patrons of the station, and the poet Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett embarked from

its platforms when eloping to Italy in 1846.

Nine Elms may have been rapidly superseded, but this did not signal any reduction in Battersea's importance for the fast expanding rail network. Like the motorways for the 60s generation, the railway rapidly became THE mode of travel for Victorian Britain. London termini sprung up thick and fast as rival companies competed for the lucrative market for travel to the capital. People from all strata of society could be accommodated on the new trains, whether in First Class luxury or in deeply uncomfortable open wagons which did not even qualify as Third Class. Battersea found itself at the epicentre of this competition for business. *continued on page 3*



Don't forget to visit our website: batterseasociety.org.uk for regular updates on Battersea Society news, events and planning matters

From the editor



If you have ever ground your teeth in a car trying to negotiate the streets east and north of Clapham Junction station,

Sue Demont's article on the railways will demonstrate the origins of the dead ends and complicated road patterns. Unbridled and unregulated competition between different railway companies is the culprit.

On page 14 Robert Molteno sings the praises of Northcote Road as a good example of a street with great 'place' function, where people like to congregate and enjoy life. Northcote Road is my local high street and I enjoy it very much. But its coffee shops and pleasant corners for people to stop and chat are only there because the immediate area has

become one where people can afford both the money and the time to spend an hour chatting in the sunshine over a £2 cappuccino. As Robert says, how pleasant a street feels for people on foot or on bike depends on factors ranging from volume of traffic to the energy of businesspeople. But it also reflects local residents' lifestyles and the salaries or inheritances that support them.

At the AGM in March some new trustees were elected to the Battersea Society. You can read about all the trustees, old and new, on page 4.

Twinning

By the time you read this, we will know whether we are still part of the European Union. Whichever way the referendum goes, I propose that Battersea considers twinning with an arrondissement or borough in Paris – Montparnasse

perhaps. Cultural exchanges, cooking lessons, (we could teach the Parisians how to make a decent cup of tea), mutual visits between choirs and football teams ... we could have fun and learn a lot about people from another great European city.

Whatever our politics, I imagine most of us are proud to see a former Wandsworth councillor, Sadiq Khan, become Mayor of London. Boris Johnson had a reputation for over-riding local councils when developments were called in, for example in the case of tall towers. Let's hope Mr Khan takes a more localist view.

batterseasociety.org.uk
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Man on the Battersea Bus

Mike Roden reflects on tea-drinking, Shakespeare, a fishy story and Egyptian geese.

I like a nice cup of tea in the morning. No, I'm not about to burst into song, I'm just saying that is my drink of choice first thing in the morning, before I rise and face the day. It seems I'm in the minority now; apparently tea-drinking in the UK has dwindled to less than half what it was in the 1940s. Once upon a time everything stopped for tea, though you might get into your dressing gown and have a comforting milky drink before bedtime. Nowadays the young people of Battersea seem to be going the same way, tarrying in coffee shops while checking their smartphones and sipping at cups of foaming hot milk vaguely favoured with coffee and sometimes scattered with chocolate. Thankfully they're not sitting there in their dressing gowns – yet.

I've never actually watched *Game of Thrones*, but I imagine that the recent excitement and speculation that was rife before the new series began may well have mirrored the rumours going round Southwark in the 1600s about the murky goings on to be revealed in *Master*

Shakespeare's forthcoming new Scottish play.

We recently saw an imaginative production of *Henry V* in Middle Temple Hall (where the first performance of *Twelfth Night* was staged) by a young and enthusiastic company called Antic Disposition. It was set in a field hospital during the Battle of Somme, with British and French actors playing the rival armies and royal families and reliving Agincourt while fighting a different common enemy. The play's talk of peace and reconciliation was of course a hollow one, and Europe's nations continued to fight amongst themselves for another five hundred years, and everyone – including England – had their share of bloody civil wars.

A question: if you had an allergy to fish would you buy fish? I only ask the question because Lidl recently warned that tins of herring on sale in their stores lacked the warning 'may contain fish' on the back. The fact that there was a picture of herrings on the front of the can under a big



word 'HERRINGS' did not alter the fact they'd fallen foul of EU regulations. The headline story failed to point out that they had omitted to label the tin with many other allergens which might be less obvious and potentially more dangerous than herring. This

fishy tale was naturally seized upon by the 'Let's Go it Alone and Hope for the Best' campaign. We are politically neutral here so we do have to say that there are other campaigns available.

Goslings

Finally, (and more cheerfully) the approach of summer means that goslings have arrived on the riverside near St Mary's Church. For several years now someone has thoughtfully put up warning notices asking dog-walkers to be aware that the local geese now have young families in tow. Up till now they have been orange-legged greylags but lately there are some new kids on the block in the shape of a pair of rather exotic Egyptian geese. No sign of goslings with them yet. When they do arrive I'm sure they'll be treated with the respect we should accord to all those who choose to make their home on this sceptred isle. Mind how you go. See you next time.

continued from p1 Battersea's great attraction as a rail thoroughfare was that it combined close proximity to London's West End with a still decidedly rural landscape. Whereas the construction of King's Cross required the wholesale demolition of a pre-existing community, the new rail link from the south coast to Victoria was forged through fields of wheat and rye. Longhedge Farm, close to the site of present day Queenstown Road Station, was still operating a large scale arable and dairy business (contemporary sources refer to its 'enormous herd of cows') when the London Chatham and Dover Railway (LCDR) came scything through its pastures with a network of high level viaducts. I can do no better at this point than quote from an impassioned monograph produced by a researcher at UCL's Bartlett School of Architecture.

'Not one but three sets of lines and bridges twisted and throttled Queenstown Road's neck, smashed in the head of the development and sundered the link with Battersea Park... The whole eastern flank was besieged by the LCDR's Longhedge Works, ensuring only further pollution and a demand for artisan housing. In 1857 – 8 the West End of London & Crystal Palace Railway (WELCPR), soon absorbed into the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway (LBSCR), was laid out at ground level just south of the London and South West Railway (LSWR), creating a dangerous obstacle across the old lane. Then in 1860 the LCDR obtained powers for yet another line, coming up from Clapham and Wandsworth Road and slashing through the east side of the farm.

Local railwaymen quickly coined the folkloric phrase 'Battersea Tangle'

to describe this extraordinary multi-level layout, still evident today to passengers departing from Clapham Junction for Waterloo, Victoria or London Bridge. Within a generation, and with another obvious parallel with road building, rural Battersea was comprehensively carved up to accommodate the needs of the most concentrated rail development in the capital.

Ferocious competition between the five rival rail companies traversing Battersea meant that lines had to be crossed and crossed again rather than making use of one another's tracks. This belatedly began to happen with the opening of Clapham Junction in 1863 – but was too late to unpick the 'Tangle!'

Flimsy

Whilst the rail companies had clearly benefited from their largely unfettered access, the inhabitants who arrived to work in the industry and service the workforce paid a considerable price. Housing, shops, factories, churches and pubs had to be crammed into the spaces between embankments and viaducts, creating not only social problems but physical danger due to inadequate crossing points over the competing lines. Frequent accidents were recorded on the flimsy steep and narrow steps provided by the LCDR/ WELCPR for the residents of the new Shaftesbury Estate in 1877 – estimated usage 420 persons per hour. It took years of intensive



The neo-classical station at Nine Elms was designed by Sir William Tite, the architect of the Royal Exchange

lobbying before the newly formed London County Council managed to help pressurise the rail companies into providing a proper tunnel and footbridge at Culvert Road.

Dead ends

In 1894 the local *South Western Star* bemoaned the 'multiplicity of dead ends, backs, left-over triangles of land, and railway arches with an ill-policed life of their own'. The following decade, Booth's Survey noted how Battersea's 'worst elements' were apt to take refuge in those blocks of housing which were isolated by blank walls or railway embankments. Orville Road off Battersea High Street was a particularly notorious spot because its adjoining railway provided an easy escape route for criminals. The 'Tangle' even affected the district's spiritual life; the promoters of a chapel for the Park Town Estate declined to erect a permanent building 'because of the dreadful noise, especially in the week, when ... at times it is impossible to worship God or to hear another speak and the strain on both brain and nerve would be too much for any minister.'

The *Survey of London* aptly describes the Battersea Tangle as 'a hapless piece of Victorian non-planning ... largely the upshot of provincial-based rail companies thrusting their way into London, impervious to local interests'. We must hope that the multinational companies currently redeveloping large swathes of north Battersea – not to mention Crossrail 2 – are taking a more socially responsible view than their 19th century forebears.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

The London Chatham & Dover Railway is one of the heroes or villains of Sue Demont's article (above).

One of the LCDR's engineers, a man who earlier was a fitter in the building of Stevenson's Rocket, played a major role in a union dispute in 1875 and, in

1907, was supported by a benefit event at Battersea Town Hall. His life is recalled in an article in the spring edition of the *Wandsworth Historian*, where you can also read about the lion who took a nap in a back garden in Plough Road.

For a copy, email ngrobson@tiscali.co.uk Cost £3 plus £1.50 p&p www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk

Meet the trustees



Ian Beardall

I have been a chartered accountant for over 30 years. I have worked in large firms in the City, and in-house with various organisations including both private companies and public sector organisations.

Having lived in the Wandsworth area since 1983, I take a keen interest in local matters, especially public transport and housing.

Wendy Deakins

In 1970, along with others, I was a founder member of the Battersea Society and also, in 1998, of the regenerated Society. I am a member of the Wandsworth Heritage and Environment Forums.

My work was originally in science and then I moved into the provision of government-funded housing, particularly housing and hostels for vulnerable people.



Sue Demont

I am a recently retired headteacher who has lived in south Battersea for 22 years and south London for 33. I hope to use my organisational experience, my skills as a historian, and my enthusiasm as a lover of nature to make a positive contribution to the work of the Battersea Society.

Harvey Heath

In my working life I was head of department in a

college of further education and after that I was a fundraiser for the British Heart Foundation.



I have been the Society's secretary since 2004. My activities for the Society have been in planning, air pollution, social issues and open spaces. I have lived in Battersea for 58 years.

I am a member of my local GP patients group and of the Wandsworth Common Management Advisory Group.



Susan Hoffman

I have lived in Battersea since 1992. I work as senior administrator at The Guild of Psychotherapists, with a remit ranging from financial management to marketing.

I am a campaigner for the encouragement of walking and the improvement of the environment for pedestrians. I served as a committee member of Wandsworth Living Streets for some years.

I have a particular interest in architecture and design and am a member of the Planning Committee. I hope I can bring my practical and organisational skills to my role as trustee.

Maureen Larkin (photo opposite)

My background was in export, buying and shipping equipment, food, vehicles and other goods to an agricultural research Institute in Nigeria, Benin and Cameroon. I often travelled to these countries.

My interests are theatre,

film, art, museums and first and foremost my family. I have recently resigned as membership secretary/events co-ordinator of the Battersea Society after about nine years.



David Lewis

I've always been deeply interested in London, its people, its buildings, its history, its environment. After leaving Oxford I have lived in Battersea for more than 50 years, and Christine and I have raised our family here. I'm equally concerned with, and active on, London-wide issues, as a vice-president of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies.



Sue Marshall

I have worked in both the private and public sectors. My last job was director of housing for Brighton.

After taking early retirement I set up my own housing consultancy, and also served on the board at Epsom and St Helier Hospital Trust. Currently I am lay chair of the GP members commissioning forum for Battersea.

A trustee of the Battersea Society from 2008 to this year, I have now been co-opted onto the executive committee. I am a member of the air pollution working group.

My interests are health, housing and the environment.

Sara Milne, Chair (photo opposite)

I have lived in Battersea for over 30 years. I work

full time as an independent PR consultant, specialising in the gardening and outdoor living sector and I am also a governor of Westbridge School and a volunteer appropriate adult.

When not walking my dogs in Battersea Park I may be seen cycling down the Wandle Trail to go foraging for jam and chutney ingredients.



Jenny Sheridan

After an early career running a business, I changed career to become a speech and language therapist. My speciality was adults with acquired brain injury and my last clinical job was at the Wolfson Neurorehabilitation Centre in Wimbledon. I then moved sideways into a role as editor of the national speech therapy journal, a job I loved. I now enjoy editing *Battersea Matters*.

I have lived in south Battersea for 25 years. One of my hopes as a trustee is that the Battersea Society will continue to foster the neighbourliness that I have found here.



Stephanie Tickner

I have had a varied career path, including working with elephants and rhinos at London Zoo.

I then changed career and trained as a museum assistant in the new Wandsworth Museum (then in Putney) where I expanded my local knowledge of Wandsworth generally, and in particular Battersea. I

have lived here for nearly 30 years.

In the mid-1990s I qualified as a City of London, Clerkenwell, and Blue Badge Guide and have been involved with tourism ever since. I am a guide at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.



Monica Tross

After a first career in advertising, I joined the Arts Council of England to extend my interest in theatre and the visual arts to my working life. Post retirement I studied history at Birkbeck, finishing with an MA in Social and Cultural History.

I have lived in Battersea for over 20 years and have been active in the Battersea Society for the past 10, chiefly been as secretary to the planning committee.

This has chiefly been as secretary to the planning committee

Peter Warburton

I am a dual-qualified nurse in mental health and for people with a learning disability.

Currently I am the lead nurse for safeguarding adults in a London clinical commissioning group.

I have been in Wandsworth for 15 years and Battersea for nine. I want to work with the local community to get the best out of our lovely area.

I love gardening and am a member of the Friends of Fred Wells gardening group who do voluntary work to improve our local park.

Planning Matters: Are we making a difference?

Monica Tross outlines some of the committee's workload

At the risk of sounding complacent I am able to report some successes. The application for a 'contemporary take on a Georgian Town House' next to the Prince of Wales on Battersea Bridge Road was refused with the Council quoting our comments on this 'bizarre proposal' at some length (2016/0608).

The application for an overbearing structure at Bourne Valley Wharf, made by the Council, has been withdrawn (2016/0346) although neighbours are not complacent and remain alert for a further application. And if the *Evening Standard* report is correct, TfL have accepted that the current form of the Vauxhall Bus Station should be retained. The report of the consultation indicated the extent of the reasoned objections more fully than is normally the case but further information is due in the autumn and TfL may merely have withdrawn to fight another day. We will keep you in touch.

More worryingly we have recently written about the applications to change offices to residential use in Coral Row, Ivory Square and Square Rigger Row – 2016/2092 and 16 others. We have also objected to proposals for an insensitive

overdevelopment of the Tesco site at 15 – 27 Falcon Road (2016/2027), as have many others.

APPLICATIONS WE HAVE SUPPORTED

One developer told us sadly that we never say anything nice about an application. It is true that we tend to think it is more important to use our time writing when we don't like something but that isn't always the case. We happily supported the Battersea Arts Centre's application for rebuilding following the fire – now approved, 2016/1359. We also liked the Covent Garden Market Authority's proposal for a 'meanwhile' hoarding to brighten the outlook for the school opposite to the building site and we have written to support this. 2016/1924.

CROSSRAIL 2

The report of the latest consultation (see the website for our comments) is now out and TfL are pondering this with further information to come in the autumn. There has been much concern about the impact of ventilation shafts, on Wandsworth Common and in other areas. I suspect that much as some of us might like



The listed Eduardo Paolozzi ventilation shaft at Pimlico

some modern art on our streets – such as the recently listed Eduardo Paolozzi ventilation shaft at Pimlico – this would not be sufficient to quell the concerns of those living nearby.

OPEN SPACES

Finally, let me send some news from colleagues on the Open Spaces Committee. This June the Council's Parks Departments – now a mutual called Enable – will be visiting many of our parks and open spaces to ask those using the spaces for feedback. Visit Enablelc.org/parksnewsletter to find out more. The survey will be on line from 1 July – 30 September.

For all other planning and transport matters: planning@batterseasociety.org.uk. We do like to hear from you.



Claire Ponder
Membership secretary

I have spent my business life in PR – in film, theatre, ballet, opera, music and the visual arts. Most of my career was spent working for the major film distribution companies on films including *Titanic*, and *The Fully Monty*.

Not quite ready for a quiet life, I also enjoy working as an ambassador for London's Brandenburg Choral Society.

I look forward to meeting many Battersea Society members.

Maureen Larkin retires as membership secretary

At the AGM on 10 March, I was surprised to hear Sara Milne announce an additional item on the agenda. It was me! I was overwhelmed by members' generosity in presenting me with £750 of theatre vouchers, a large bouquet of flowers and a lovely brooch in the shape of the Battersea Bee, the Society's logo. To all those members who contributed, I say a very big thank you. Your generosity is much appreciated. I shall look forward to many theatre outings and shall think of you while enjoying myself.

I am still on the executive committee and a trustee, and I look forward to seeing you again at future events.

Maureen Larkin



Not for me, not for you, but for us

Battersea Reference library has been proudly refurbished, says Diana Edmonds

At a time when public libraries across the country are being closed, libraries in the London Borough of Wandsworth are being renovated and refurbished.

Since 2013, all Wandsworth's libraries have been managed by GLL, a charitable social enterprise which also manages public libraries in Greenwich and across Lincolnshire. GLL is committed to improving and refurbishing library facilities across the borough. Significant work has been done at the libraries in Earlsfield, Northcote Road, and York Gardens, and the children's library in Tooting will have a makeover later this month. But it is Battersea Library on Lavender Hill, a Grade II listed building, which has seen the most extensive work, with additional funding being provided by the Council for some of the restoration.

Turret

There has historically been a real enthusiasm for libraries in Battersea. The Vestry of the Parish of Battersea was established as a local authority in March 1888, and immediately adopted the Public Libraries Act (1850). Battersea Library was opened to the public only two years later, on 26 March 1890. It was designed by E W Mountford, who also designed Battersea Town Hall (now Battersea Arts Centre). Like many libraries built in the 19th century, the building had space for the librarian as well as the books: the librarian lived at the top of the building in the turreted area, while the caretaker lived in the basement.

In its 126 year lifespan, the building has changed many times. Public demand was so extensive in the 1890s that library facilities had to be extended only eight years after the launch. In 1900, a children's reading room was added at the back of the site at an estimated cost of £557 (about £62,000 in today's money). A major change came in 1925, with the opening of a wonderful new reference library, designed by Henry Hyams. The double-level, oak-panelled reading room, with a glazed barrel-vault roof, is supported by three pairs



The restored entrance to Battersea Reference Library in Altenburg Gardens below left Inkwells become power outlets on the reading desks

of cast iron columns.

Soon after GLL took responsibility for Battersea library, we put plans in place for refurbishment and restoration. At the same time Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureaux started to look for a central facility to replace a number of small offices. It soon became clear that the needs of Wandsworth CAB dovetailed perfectly with space available in the library. And so earlier this year, Wandsworth CAB moved into vacant space on the first floor and created an attractive public advice centre on the ground floor, in the former children's library. Chief executive Phil Jew commented, 'Citizens Advice Wandsworth is delighted; we have increased our opening hours and are now able to help more people more quickly. It makes absolute sense to be co-located with the local library service.'

Storytelling

In the reorganisation of the building, the children's library was moved back to its original location at the rear; it provides a lighter, brighter space, further away from the noise of Lavender Hill. A glass screen now separates it from the main library,

providing security for the children but retaining the open feeling of the building. New equipment and furniture was bought, including a storytelling throne which has proved very popular – and which provides a great background for selfies.

Battersea Reference Library has Grade II listing – and the original study desks from 1925 which match the oak interior have been preserved. By 2015, they were in real need of restoration. GLL has used funding provided by Wandsworth Council to pay for the desks to be lovingly restored, polished and varnished. Funding from the Council is also being used to add power points. The inkwells fitted to each desk are now being used as plug sockets, with electricity replacing ink – a good example of how libraries are adapting to users' changing needs. More work is planned, including improving the lighting and looking for chairs to match the tables and to replace the modern pine chairs which were added in the 1990s.

We have also restored the reference library's separate entrance; the area has been cleaned thoroughly, and the railings have been repainted. Above the door, are the words '*Non mihi, non tibi sed nobis*', the motto of the Battersea Borough Council.



Archives

Use of the library has changed significantly over the years. For some years the building housed Wandsworth Museum. Now, the library includes, in addition to the reference library, a lending library and a children's library, the heritage service and the borough's archives. There is also a learning centre which specialises in supporting students to develop IT skills. Battersea Library has a broad collection of book stock, including a varied collection of non-fiction books and a large fiction collection; as well

as a special collection on European history. The children's library has an extensive activities programme, including baby rhyme times, story times, nursery and school visits.

The library is popular with local residents, particularly students, and use is growing. Over the past year,

Battersea has bucked the national trend, increasing both the number of visitors and the number of items issued. In 2015, Battersea Library had 172,128 visitors, up 4% on the previous year and issued 147,062 items, a massive 25% increase on the previous year. We would be delighted

if you were able to join our visitors this year. As the motto says, this library is for all of us.

Diana Edmonds MBE is head of libraries, GLL
diana.edmonds@gll.org

Open spaces are for the enjoyment of all

Jenny Sheridan meets the chair of Enable

Living round the corner from Battersea Park, Clare Frankl Bertram is well placed to observe the performance of Enable, the social enterprise she chairs. This staff mutual, currently applying for charitable status, took on the work of Wandsworth Council's leisure and culture departments, including the park and other open spaces, in 2015. Its managing director, Paul McCue, is the former deputy director of the department, and most of Enable's staff are former council staff. The organisation's role covers the arts, sports, events, filming and cemeteries as well as parks.

'I'm a strong believer in public services. I wouldn't have been interested in going for a role if it had been a private sector organisation,' says Clare. 'Wandsworth's decision to tender for the provision of services was essentially financial. Handing services over to the private sector would be likely to disrupt them. I saw this as the best way for local residents of outsourcing services – there are no external shareholders with conflicting aims.'

Entrepreneurial

Clare explains how providing services on behalf of the council can save money. 'Enable pays the council a fee for the right to provide services – it's rather like a concession. So it has to run a tighter ship and there are ways in which it can save on central costs. It also has an incentive to be more entrepreneurial and to go out to get more business, either by providing services or advice to other councils or by encouraging more people to use charged-for services like events in the park.'

Talk of events leads inevitably to Formula E. Clare points out that



Enable received no fees from the race apart from the services that it normally provides such as the park police and park maintenance.

Tolerance

She mounts a robust defence of the need to celebrate and cater for the diversity of Londoners and the differing ways we want to use 'our wonderful open spaces. Tolerance is needed and in fact is essential for all of us who live in cities. We don't all want the same thing or have the same interests. We may have to accept that a music event isn't the kind of music we like, but others do, and a concert only takes a few hours. Managing open spaces means considering the differing needs of dog-walkers, runners, children and people in search of peace and quiet.'

I mention some people's disquiet about the expense of Go Ape in Battersea Park. 'It is sad when local people can't afford local activities' she agrees. 'But it takes up very little space – and it's fun to watch people on it, and that's free!' The contract with Go Ape was agreed before Enable came into being. If a serious new potential user approached Enable, they would work out a

proposition together and put it to the council for a decision.

Wandsworth and Richmond Councils are progressing their finance-driven staff merger plans, but Clare says it is unclear at present whether this will affect Enable.

Enable's contract with the council is for four years, after which a new tendering process will take place. The organisation will have to prove that it can run services efficiently, keep up or improve standards and offer value for money. It may well be competing against large private companies such as Serco or Capita. At present Clare says that Enable's results are looking good.

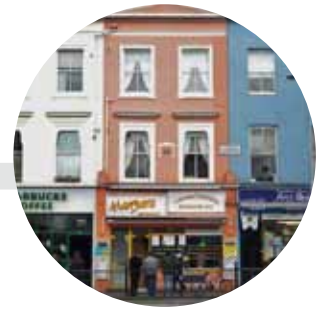
Design

Clare came to Enable through the Friends of Putney School of Art (PSA). When she retired as an architect she returned to her first love, ceramics, and started doing courses at Putney. 'I wanted to make things with my hands, rather than through other people,' she says. She got more and more involved with the PSA and through this link she applied, was interviewed and appointed as a trustee. Her background in design and property management was relevant, as was committee experience. 'My role as chair is like on any board: ensuring that meetings are run in an orderly fashion, that every trustee's voice is heard and that we don't deviate from our charitable objectives.'

Clare is keen to make it clear that Enable is not about diluting the commitment to providing good local services. 'It gives an opportunity for individuals or groups to put forward ideas for improving a service or developing a new one, and finding a more local response. If people approach us to tell us what they want they'll find a ready ear.'
www.enablelc.org

Great Bus Journeys of the World No 17

Mike Roden heads north on the 328 to Golders Green



Today my trip begins with a brisk walk over Battersea Bridge, and up Beaufort Street to Kings Road. The bus stop is on Limerston Street, a short walk to the left. The 328 bus is about to set off on its epic journey, and at twenty past ten on a rather grey May morning, I'm on my way.

This part of Chelsea is called Worlds End, apparently named after the pub we pass on the left. It has been here since the mid-1600s, though the current Grade II listed building dates from 1897 and has had its ups and downs lately.

Masterplan

After a quick detour round Thames Water's long-running road works we're get back on track and join Finborough Road. This is part of the Pettward estate built by the family of that name (originally from Putney) who purchased Finborough Hall near Stowmarket in Suffolk at the end of the eighteenth century.

I've covered this part of the journey in my piece about the C3 route in the winter 2013 edition of *Battersea Matters*, but I'll just mention the Finborough Theatre again above the pub at the junction with Ifield Street. This small theatre with a huge reputation is well worth a visit.

This area is still under the shadow of the controversial Earls Court masterplan for a 'new district for London'. But opponents have noticed encouraging signs that the new mayor Sadiq Khan does not share his predecessor's enthusiasm for the scheme.

After a long wait at Cromwell Road we head past the giant Tesco store and take a brief diversion through

upmarket residential streets before heading north again on Earls Court Road. On the right the jaunty young lady on The Princess Victoria's sign reveals a lot more leg than would have been appropriate when the place was opened in 1830. Here you are promised an authentic Spanish dining experience within a traditional Kensington pub...

As the bus turns onto Kensington High Street I spot the new home of the Design Museum – their planned move last year from Shad Thames to the site of the former Commonwealth Institute has been postponed until November.

We join a slow convoy of buses and pass Stafford Court where a blue plaque commemorates the singer Alma Cogan ('the girl with the giggle in her voice') who died in 1966 of ovarian cancer. She was only 34. The ground floor flat she shared with her widowed mother was often the venue for celebrity-strewn parties, with regular guests including Princess Margaret, Noel Coward, Audrey Hepburn and Frankie Vaughan

Roman roads

Turning up Kensington Church Street past St Mary Abbots Church we're now following part of the route for my trip on the 452 bus to Kensal Green (*Battersea Matters* Summer 2015). We head uphill along a twisting lane that long ago joined the Roman roads from Bath and Oxford to the City of London and now takes us to Notting Hill Gate, where the bus turns up Pembridge Road past the award-winning Gate Theatre. Further on there is a parade of 'alternative shops' – retro clothing, Japanese prints,

militaria. Very 1960s.

We pass Westbourne Park Station and under Westway. Looking down I see the somewhat murky waters of the Grand Union Canal which starts in London and 137 miles and 166 locks later ends in Birmingham.

Corbyn

After Harrow Road we head up Elgin Avenue. What looks like any well-maintained council housing estate has a dramatic history. In the early 1970s the sheer volume of derelict homes gave rise to a high profile squatting campaign, involving such figures as housing campaigner Piers Corbyn (Jeremy's older brother) and punk legend Joe Strummer of the Clash, who began his musical career in the nearby Chippenham Hotel.

By 1988 Westminster City Council (led by Dame Shirley Porter) adopted the policy of selling vacant flats to private developers rather than letting them. Protests grew and led to another influx of squatters breaking into sealed properties.

Eventually a local action group promoting resident control forged an uneasy alliance with the council and with their financial assistance demolished two tower blocks and replaced them with low rise homes. Twenty years on the estate is regarded by many as a model for community ownership of estates.

Headed for Kilburn we pass Paddington Recreation Ground which owes its existence to the persistence of one man. In 1887, acting for the local cricket club, R M Beachcroft bought nine acres of land, then rented an adjacent eleven acres and raised a relief fund to pay for the creation of an



Sights to see: The Finborough Theatre; Alma Cogan's house, Pembridge Road (photo Robin Sones); St Augustine's Church, Kilburn; Marie Lloyd's grave, Hampstead Cemetery; statuary, Golders Green Crematorium

athletics and cycling track, providing work for many local unemployed men in a time of recession.

Up ahead the skyline is dominated by the vast spire of St Augustine's Church. This Grade I listed building is affectionately known as the 'cathedral of north London' although despite its Victorian Gothic vastness and the ornate interior decoration it is merely a parish church. The bus forges on uphill towards Kilburn High Road, once an ancient Celtic trackway which was eventually paved over by the Romans and became famous as Watling Street. Now it is more prosaically known as the A5.

Well

Kilburn grew up on the banks of a stream called the Kilbourne known today as the Westbourne (one of London's 'lost' rivers) which flows – mostly underground – to the Thames. In the early nineteenth century the village was briefly famous as a place to take the waters from a local well with supposed healing properties, but its main development took place from the 1880s onward.

We're about half way through the town getting occasional glimpses down into the valley when the bus takes a right turn up Quex road. This curious name is a legacy of the Powell-Cotton family of Quex Park in Birchington, Kent who owned and developed much of the land round here.

On we go towards West Hampstead. This was once a tiny hamlet known as West End with two or three houses, but the railway and the people it brought in its wake changed all that, and the housing

estates spread ever outwards. We cross several sets of railway lines, witness to the fact that the town has three stations close to each other, serving the Overground, the Jubilee Line, and Thameslink.

Short Brothers

Heading out into the posher suburbs things speed up a bit and we're quickly passing Hampstead Cemetery. This opened in 1876 and now has no new burial spaces available. It has two Grade II listed mortuary chapels, which have been restored with the help of Heritage Lottery money. I finally find a Battersea connection when I later read that Eustace and Horace, two of the Short Brothers who founded their Aeronautic Works on Queenstown Road are buried here. Their companions include comic writer Alan Coren, Joseph Lister, who introduced clean surgery, and music hall star Marie Lloyd.

We're high up on Childs Hill now, which is nearly 260 feet above sea level. In 1808 the optical telegraph station located here became one of a line of telegraph stations stretching from the Admiralty to Great Yarmouth, part of Britain's national defences against French invasion.

Journey's end beckons. Golders Green has been here since the thirteenth century, taking its name from Godyere, a local family, but it is essentially a late Victorian suburban development. The large Jewish community took root here after Hitler's rise to power, and by the 1950s, the Jewish population had more than doubled. There are around fifty kosher restaurants and eateries,

and more than forty synagogues in the area.

One Golders Green claim to fame which cannot be ignored is its Italianate 'celebrity crematorium'. Kingsley Amis, T S Eliot, Sigmund Freud, Marc Bolan. Ivor Novello, Michael Foot, Amy Winehouse and Keith Moon were all cremated here.

And so at about five minutes to noon the bus finally reaches Golders Green Station and I disembark. It's a long way from Kings Road, Chelsea. Now for the pleasures of the Northern Line...

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Men in sheds

Mike Roden learns about a local project aiming to combat loneliness in older people

My grandad had the finest shed in the world. Small and compact, it contained a workbench with vice, tools hung neatly on hooks, tins of screws and nails stacked on shelves. It always smelled of wood shavings mingled with Old Holborn tobacco. Best of all there was a soggy, very comfortable old armchair, with a wireless. And when I was nine or ten I'd hide myself away in there, and read a book or listen to the wireless until I got turfed out. So armed with that misty-eyed memory I went along to Dimson Lodge on Battersea Church Road to find out more about the Battersea Men's Shed.

Men's Sheds is a movement that started in Australia as a means to help promote social interaction and reduce depression related illness in older men. One of the worst aspects of growing old, for both men and women, can be loneliness, which according to recent research can also be life-shortening, linked as it is with high blood pressure, strokes and a weakened immune system.

Skills

The idea is that 'Shedders' as they're known are provided with a meeting place with facilities where they can engage in projects alongside other Shedders in the community, or simply enjoy the company. Often there is a physical shed involved, but not necessarily. The scheme is about helping people – especially men – to become part of a network, to make friends, and use the skills and knowledge that they often feel are no longer useful to anyone.

Elaine Curley from Wandsworth Council told me that the Dimson Lodge project is run by supported housing services, part of the council's housing community services department, but was brought into being by the Shedders themselves who worked together to prepare a little-used storeroom at Dimson Lodge as a work room. This 'shed' is as neat as my grandad's, with an amazing number of tools neatly set out. Most of these have been donated, although the expensive looking power



Knowledge and skills are shared as projects take shape

tools have been mostly paid for by Wandsworth Council.

Elaine explained that though there wasn't a great deal of inside space, the sizeable outside undercover area could be utilised if necessary. There wasn't anything going on in the workroom when I visited as a sandwich lunch had been laid on for those who'd been invited to come along to find out more about the scheme.

One man told me that he just used to sit at home alone and watch the telly before he heard about this place. He'd worked with his hands all his adult life, but once retired, living alone in a small flat with no garden in which to put a shed he was typical of the person the Men in Sheds movement aims to help.

Camaraderie

'They're bringing lots of different skills with them,' Elaine explained, 'And enjoy sharing their knowledge.' It was clear that many of those there had found a camaraderie they thought they'd lost when they'd retired from workshop or office.

Sessions take place every Wednesday and are very well

attended, with a diverse membership. The scheme is mainly aimed at men (and women) over 55. There is no fixed charge but the organisers do ask for a voluntary contribution, which helps raise funds to buy materials or equipment they've been unable to source for free.

I met one very keen lady member, who thought it was excellent that men now had somewhere they could come. 'Stops them from being loners and brooding about things.' She's particularly interested in a major scheme under consideration. 'We're going to build a boat,' she told me. Elaine Curley confirmed this, though I got the distinct impression that she was slightly nervous what would happen when the boat was launched on the river....

Everyone is welcome to go along to Dimson Lodge on a Wednesday at 10am. The 170 bus to Clapham Junction stops just outside, and the bus stop for the Victoria bound bus is not far away on Westbridge Road.

If you have any queries just ring Geoffrey Cox on 020 7223 5335 or email Elaine Curley (ecurley@wandsworth.gov.uk)

Book review: Up in smoke

Duncan Parish enjoys a well-researched history of our famous landmark

An out-of-town couple crossing Battersea Bridge on the 170 bus turned westwards and pointed towards the Lots Road power station.

'There it is' the wife trilled 'but they've taken down two of the chimneys!'

'It's such a shame,' her husband responded, 'it used to be such a beautiful building.'

Fondly remembered

Taking the very English approach that publicly pointing out their error would only embarrass them, I stayed silent, hoping they would spot the real Battersea Power Station as we rode along the Embankment. Alas with only one chimney it currently looks even less like the building they fondly remembered.

With development now under way and a new chapter opening in the beloved Power Station's history, it's easy to forget the site's recent chequered past or quite how we ended up with such a gargantuan cathedral to power generation on our doorstep. Peter Watts' new book *Up in Smoke* is therefore a timely reminder. It takes us on a journey from the 19th century when the Southwark & Vauxhall waterworks occupied the site, purportedly producing water worse than simply drinking from the Thames itself, through the days as a cultural icon courtesy of Pink Floyd and Algie the flying pig, to the planned arrival of the American Embassy and the tube in the modern day.

Drinking

The book starts out as a fact-filled history of the area's past, its louche days as the home of the Red House inn that attracted the drinking masses surpassing 'Sodom and Gomorrah in abomination', the development of Battersea Park to encourage the residents of Chelsea across the river to raise our standards, to the arrival of heavy industry and the electrification of London bringing with it a need for large-scale power generation in the city.

Had the Americans been more successful in their first attempt to

build in Battersea a century earlier, my fellow passengers on the 170 might have looked across river towards the site of the Dream City theme park, the brainchild of Chicago engineer John Bennett. However like so many similar schemes since, it befell the Battersea curse and never made it off the ground.

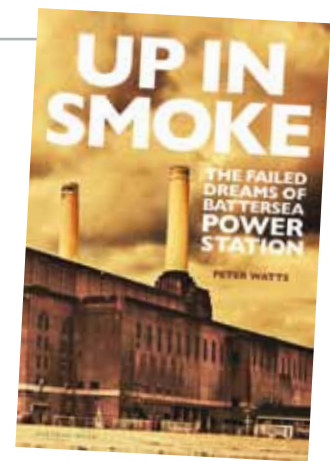
Instead the site became the focus for the London Power Company's plans for the largest power station in the capital. Despite protestations from the Archbishop of Canterbury and threats that it would 'kill every green thing within two miles of Battersea and bleach babies' consent was granted.

Thanks to the efforts of many engineers and architects, most notably Giles Gilbert Scott, what was once feared became much loved and by 1939 the new brick colossus had been declared a 'Wonder of Modern Engineering' and voted the second most popular modern building in Britain (behind the Peter Jones department store).

It survived the war, but the arrival of nuclear power meant Battersea's reign would not be a long one. However, its design, its location and its appearance in numerous film, TV and music productions had already secured its place in history. Before it was fully taken out of service the building was hastily listed by Michael Heseltine, an act which caused consternation at Wandsworth Town Hall and has shaped the site's history ever since.

Eccentric

The second part of Watts' book is a journalistic foray into what happened next, using interviews and research to expose what was going on behind the scenes as the site lay dormant for the next thirty years. It reveals not only the story of those eccentric entrepreneurs from home and abroad who tried to make their mark on the Power Station, but also of the national and local politicians working alongside them and of the members of the Battersea Power Station Community Group who fought to save



the building. Interestingly, today's development of densely built luxury flats would probably not have met Wandsworth's original criteria for the site.

Despite being relatively young for a London landmark – the foundation stone was laid on St George's Day, 1931 – Battersea Power Station's story is as remarkable as many of those much older. Watts' book is a brilliantly researched historical tour and well worth a read for anyone who has ever gazed fondly upon its chimney(s).

Up in smoke: the failed dreams of Battersea Power Station. Peter Watts. Pub: Paradise Road. £20.

LOCAL FARMERS' MARKETS

- The Lavender Hill farmers' market (actually in Ashbury Road) has closed, although it only opened in September 2015

The nearest farmers' markets now are:

- Putney: West Hill Primary School, Merton Road. Sunday 10 – 2
- Balham: Henry Cavendish School, Hydethorpe Road. Saturday 9 – 1
- Parsons Green: Thomas's School, New Kings Road. Sunday 10 – 2
- Pimlico: corner of Pimlico Road and Ebury Street. Saturday 9 – 1
- South Kensington: Bute Street. Saturday 9 – 2

Off the treadmill and into the community garden

Anastasia Hancock describes a scheme that combines fitness, befriending and fun

This August, GoodGym, a fitness community which combines running with physical tasks to improve the local area, will launch in Wandsworth. GoodGym was established as a response to two very different problems. Research revealed that over a million people in the UK aged 65 and over admit to always or often feeling lonely. At the same time, 6.56 million people were expending their energy trying to get fit in expensive gyms and their own homes, while local community areas were being neglected. In 2009 GoodGym was formed to harness the energy wasted on machines inside gyms to make a real difference in local areas.

Free

GoodGym launches here in Wandsworth in August thanks to funding from Wandsworth Carers, England Athletics and Wandsworth Council. Members combine a weekly run with physical tasks such as gardening, painting, and shifting earth in community gardens to help organisations across the borough. A qualified trainer will be leading the runs, which are free to join. The runners will be led on different runs throughout the borough each week, depending on the location of the task they are going to complete.

And with so many people over 60 saying they often feel lonely, some runners will also visit isolated older members of the community as part of their weekly workouts. Each runner will be paired with an older or vulnerable person in Wandsworth, who is known as 'the coach', as they help to motivate the runner.

The befriending scheme aims to reduce loneliness and improves wellbeing for both the runner and the older or isolated Wandsworth resident. 'The introduction of a young, fit and healthy person into my life has had a remarkably beneficial effect on my own self-esteem and confidence', says Barry, who has been paired with a runner. 'A regular change of views, coupled with my runner's progress give me an interest I was lacking.' The motivation is an important factor for

GoodGym members, as Lambeth runner Rebecca points out. 'Those lazy weeks when I just want to sit on the sofa, it gets me up, it gets me out there knowing that someone's waiting'.

Jobs

There will also be frequent missions organised throughout Battersea and the local area, which will be one-off jobs for vulnerable people. This might be clearing gardens, changing lightbulbs or doing little tasks for people who struggle to do them alone.

GoodGym operates already across many London boroughs, as well as in Bath and Bristol; Wandsworth is the organisation's newest location. The members will be found on Monday evenings throughout the year tending to community gardens in Wandsworth, and helping out at local charitable organisations such as the Katherine Low Settlement.

'GoodGym is going to be a real positive force in the area'

Energy

As GoodGym partnership manager Ed Field points out, interest in the local group is already high. 'We've been looking to expand into Wandsworth for years now and so are absolutely delighted to finally be starting there. We already have over 1000 runners signed up to take part in what will be the easiest and most social way to get fit in



Helping out in a community garden can be a good workout

the borough. Furthermore all that expended energy will do directly into helping local community projects and Wandsworth's most isolated residents. GoodGym is going to be a real positive force in the area'.

If you would like to join the Goodgym Wandsworth group, please contact me ana@goodgym.org or have a look at the website, www.goodgym.org.

Anastasia Hancock is a trainer for Goodgym Wandsworth. She lives in Battersea.

Planning permission granted for BAC

The Grand Hall will be even grander, says Jenny Sheridan



Battersea Arts Centre will be re-born after the massive fire last March. There never really was any doubt about it: the energy in the building and the people who work there, the support that poured in from the local area and far afield and the beauty of the building itself ensured that Battersea's old town hall would rise again. It has been, says artistic director David Jubb, a labour of love.

In May Wandsworth Council granted planning permission for the re-building of the Grand Hall. Externally it will look much as it always has. Inside there will be some

changes, the most obvious being the new ceiling. This will be a timber lattice, a copy of the destroyed plasterwork, but allowing space behind it for modern lighting, sound rigs and the associated technology. Beyond this, the roof will be visible.

The theatre organ, which was saved as it was away being restored, will be installed in a new position in the balcony. Lighting, acoustics and sound-proofing will be improved, offering the prospect of concerts, from rap to Ravel.

Ten thousand bricks from the old Hall will be re-used in the re-build.

A brand new open-air Courtyard Theatre will open in the heart of the building for an audience of up to 120, some sitting, some standing. The first production, Little Bulb's *Extravaganza Macabre* opens on 26 July.

Formula E

Victory for BPAG

Many Battersea Society members will be relieved to hear that this year's Formula E race in Battersea Park will be the last.

The Battersea Park Action Group's judicial review case against Wandsworth Council, which was due to be heard on 24 May, has been withdrawn, with the council paying the BPAG's costs. After the race on 2 and 3 July 2016, Formula E will be obliged to return the park to its pre-March 2015 condition.

As part of the terms for withdrawing the case, the BPAG has promised not to stand in the way of this year's event.

In subsequent years, Formula E want to run the race through the streets of central London. They are in talks with Sadiq Khan's officials.



Eye of newt and toe of frog

Wandsworth Common welcomes amphibians

Walkers on Wandsworth Common have noticed some shallow pools appearing just north of the main lake. These are amphibian ponds, designed to encourage frogs, toads and newts to make their home in Battersea.

Kevin Freed, biodiversity officer for Enable, explains that these shallow wetlands will fill naturally with rainwater and lake overflows. They will dry out in summer and autumn once the amphibians have finished the aspects their life cycle that require water.

Trees were coppiced to allow light into the area and the wood was stacked at the edges. The piles were covered with soil which will provide

a habitat for froglets, toadlets and newtlets throughout the rest of their life cycle.

Fencing

'We will start planting marginal and oxygenating plants around the pools in July,' says Kevin. 'This will include flowering rush, purple loosestrife and water starwort. While the plants are establishing, and to keep dogs away from the area, we will be fencing it off.

'I have noted just two common frogs to date but as vegetation around the pools develops they will become much more desirable by providing



Amphibians will soon be flourishing on Wandsworth Common

cover for both adults and emerging young'. Kevin will be monitoring the pools frequently.

For further information email biodiversity@wandsworth.gov.uk



The colossus of roads – or a pleasant street to be in?

Robert Molteno explores what makes the difference between a good street and a bad one

Walk along Northcote Road in Battersea and get a feel of the place. It's wide – room for two lanes of traffic and a line of parked cars on either side. Not too many vehicles as they cannot turn off the A3 into it; the pavements are wide and newly laid with smart brickwork and there are a few trees. The restaurants, coffee shops and bars spill out on to the pavement.

Now try Battersea Park Road, starting at Falcon Road and heading towards Latchmere Road. This is the A3205, a major east-west Red Route. The dual carriageway of York Road suddenly narrows down to two lanes. Vehicles crawl along bumper to bumper. There's a bus lane (in one direction) for the seven different bus services. But the lane doubles as Cycle Superhighway 8, and is blocked at various points by parked delivery vehicles. The pavements are too narrow for café tables and chairs. The road is noisy, the air polluted. There aren't many people about, and those that are hurry along to get away. It feels more like Putney High Street than Bellevue Road (at the southern end of Wandsworth Common) or St John's Hill.

Poisoned

The crux of the problem is cars. In the 1950s the UK had only a few million vehicles on its roads. Today (figures from 2014) there are 35.6 million licensed vehicles, of which nearly 30 million are cars. A huge city like London, with its growing population, simply cannot go on like this. The

streets are too dangerous for cyclists to ride safely or for children to walk to school, let alone play in the street. Pedestrians for two generations have been prematurely deafened by noise, poisoned by exhaust fumes (now a widely acknowledged health crisis), and generally put off from using local shops or visiting local pubs, cafes or restaurants. And drivers suffer the frustration of more and more congestion. There is no alternative! We Londoners have to use our buses, trains and the Tube for our short trips, or even walk or cycle them again, rather than private cars.

This issue is not confined to big roads. The average residential street gives up something like one- to two-thirds of the carriageway to parked cars. The rules of the road allow residents to clutter the public street with their privately owned means of transport which, for the great majority of the time, simply sits there stationary. This massively reduces the road space for people who do need to use their vehicles to get from A to B. This not only disadvantages everyone on foot and cycling; it is also dysfunctional for drivers who do need to use their vehicles for work. It is also deeply unfair to the half of London households who do not own a car.

Places

Transport planners today are re-thinking how our public streets are used. Movement is of course a key function for roads. But there is a growing awareness that many streets serve a second purpose, as places,

hosting the commercial vibrancy of an area. These streets are where large numbers of people congregate on foot because they want to shop there, or patronise local restaurants and cafes. But adapting a street to meet its 'place' function is not something that just happens. It has to be designed for, with measures to reduce and calm the traffic and to transform the ambience so that people want to spend time there socialising and shopping. Northcote Road is a successful example. Garratt Lane, the section a few hundred yards north of Tooting Broadway, has not made this transition; witness its many boarded up premises and generally run-down and uninviting look.

Clutter

Who can do what to make a street more attractive? That's the million dollar question. Government plays a big role, but sometimes only to block the changes local residents want. Local councils and Transport for London are important players; they have legal powers over the public highway, so can do things like getting rid of street clutter, or making special provision for cyclists, or lowering the speed limit. They can also tap into serious sums of money for any engineering measures that may be needed.

Wandsworth Council has done a number of good things. St John's Road has been repaved with a visually distinctive surface, a 20mph speed limit, cars excluded (except for a dog leg in the middle), and a pavement



treatment that signals clearly that the road is a pedestrian priority space. On Northcote Road new pavements have been laid and on St John's Hill they have been widened, and the street lined with a burgeoning avenue of trees.

But we all know councils are now seriously strapped for cash. Wandsworth is no exception. So are there other actors who can do their bit to transform our local shopping streets? Well, local businesses can make a real contribution. On Northcote Road, to take that example again, shopkeepers taking pride in their shop frontages is one such contribution. Not all businesses do that, of course. Contrast the little block of independents, Philglas & Swiggot, Osteria Antica Bologna and Goys the Chemist – each distinctive, colourful and individually decorated – with, almost opposite them, Starbucks, All Bar One and Oddbins with their standardised corporate frontages that their HQs dump down across the UK.

Mural

Or wander past the long established Italian restaurant, Buona Sera, which stretches across three buildings. Franco owns two of them. He persuaded the owner of the middle block to let him paint the first and second floors of all three in bright colours. What a striking look it gives to this stretch of the street.

Or look up when you next pass Bellevue Cleaners on the corner, and admire the huge mural that Billy, the owner, commissioned on the side of his building.

But perhaps the most remarkable contribution has been made by the

Northcote Road Business Network. In recent years it has been chaired by Jonathan Dyson, who works for the big international estate agents, Hamptons but lives locally. He has spent endless time talking to the shopkeepers, market traders and restaurants and bars along the street and suggesting they take some joint actions.

Sponsorship

One result is the hanging baskets – 46 of them this year – that decorate the street each summer. Each shop can have its own plaque on the basket, and pays the £150 cost involved. Another outcome is the Christmas trees in tubs that line the road in December. The annual Summer Fair, held on a Sunday in July and attracting 10,000 visitors, costs £50,000 to mount and requires both sponsorship and a company to run it. The commercial logic is that visitors will be attracted to Northcote Road and will return on future visits, to the benefit of the turnover of the local shops and other enterprises.

These activities are not easy; some of the chain stores tend not to get involved and some independent shops are sceptical of the economic benefits. And there are limits to what a business network can achieve. Sadly, the huge effort that Mark Howell of Aspire Estate Agents put in last year to trying to get a Northcote Road-style process going on Battersea Park Road has not got off the ground. What's more, where chain stores dominate a street, there is both less motivation to help make the locality more attractive, and often little or no discretion to act for the local manager.

We must not forget the essential role the council's town centre managers (TCM) have played in supporting businesses in making these transformations. Local businessmen told me that they simply could not have done it without the support, ideas, and facilitation provided by people like Lorinda Freint, the Clapham Junction TCM. What a tragedy that Wandsworth Council has decided to abolish all town centre managers from June 2017.

These innovative interventions spearheaded by conscientious and energetic local businesspeople can make a big contribution to improving our street environment. Right now, however, there are no mechanisms to enable these pioneers to enthuse other businesses to transform other streets in the borough.

Robert Molteno is secretary of Wandsworth Living Streets.

Battersea Society events

- **Thursday 14 July 6.30-9PM**
Annual summer party £10
- **Tuesday 19 July 11am and Sunday 24 July 2.30.** Guided tours of Fulham Palace and garden £10
- **September Tour of Houses of Parliament** *date to be confirmed*
- **26 September 3pm** Tour of the Linnaean Society £7
- **29 September, 6.30 for 7** talk on **A V ROE**, aircraft pioneer. £5

Details from events@batterseasociety.org.uk



Doddington & Rollo Roof Garden Family Fun Day, on 11 June
 A barbeque lunch, Lee sports a leopard face, Esme and Eva are getting stuck into the slug and snail hunt among the strawberries
 Photos: Suzanne Perkins



Church conversion commended in design awards

Wandsworth Council's design awards this year went to a building in Tooting (the sixth form block at Graveney School) and art works in Balham. In spite of the vast amount of new buildings in Battersea, only one received a commendation, the conversion of locally listed St Paul's Church, St John's Hill, into five flats and a new house.

There is also space for 'community use', a day nursery. After de-consecration the church previously

served as a community centre. Beryl Chung, the architect for Boon Brown, architects for the building (now named The Sanctuary), says, 'The main fabric was intact but a great deal of work was required to make the spire safe and to repair the ragstone walls



and the stained glass windows. We worked closely with the council's conservation officers to create a sympathetic restoration and change of use'.

Fêtes and festivals

The next few weeks are full of festivals and fetes.

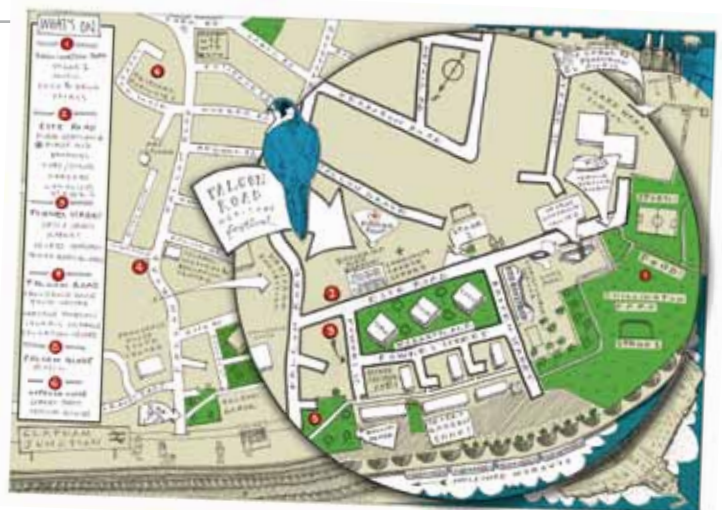
First up is the first Falcon Road Heritage Festival on Saturday 25 June from 11.30am to 9.30pm. This promises to be a bonanza of local goods and talent. There will be stalls with street food, games for the kids, arts and crafts and a stage in Shillington Gardens to display Battersea's musical talent.

The festival is organised by Big Local SW11 along with the London Fire Brigade and Christchurch Primary School, both of which celebrate their 150th birthdays this year. The fire station and the school are both holding open days.

The Battersea Society will have a stall, so do come along and say hello.

Jam

The annual Northcote Road fete is on 10 July. Along with countless food and craft stalls, the main attraction will be the giant screen to watch the Wimbledon men's tennis finals. Again, the Society will have a stall, selling home-made, locally picked



Map of the Falcon Road Heritage Festival: Nathan Jones

elderflower cordial and jam. We hope to see you there.