



Prospect

February 2010

Price when sold £1

Renovations at Rose House



The servery and floor in the hall at Rose house were both installed about thirty

years ago. Over the years the servery has been generously and lovingly improved by BCA volunteers who did much of the work themselves as needs became apparent. Storage cupboards, a second worktop and a fridge were among welcome additions and, more recently, new tables have been provided.

However, it was obvious to the BCA Executive Committee that having given years of good service the servery was badly in need of refurbishment. After much consultation, plans were drawn up last autumn and I am glad to report that the work is now complete. First to be done was the wooden floor, which has presented serious maintenance problems over the years but has now been restored using the latest modern materials. Then came the servery itself which, in addition to new units, now boasts up-to-date equipment that makes it very attractive as a meeting venue. All work was carried out by local companies

and the BCA would be pleased to recommend the firms concerned.

If you are looking for a venue do go and see the hall for yourself. Both it and other smaller rooms at Rose House are available for hire on a regular or occasional basis: contact Julia in the BCA office (8878 2359) for details of rates and availability.

Liz Collison



Keep off the ice!

The ice may be strong enough for the birds but it is still extremely dangerous. Should we experience another cold snap this winter please keep off the ice and ensure that children and dogs do not venture onto Barnes Pond which is over two metres deep, shelving steeply from the edge.



During the freezing weather last month Russell, the Commonkeeper, broke the ice to ensure that the birds had access to some clear water

BCA Christmas cards

The colourful cards featuring Caroline Silver Lewis's photograph of a snowy Barnes Green were a huge success. The 9000 cards ordered soon sold out, realising a profit of about £1500, which is being used to help pay for the renovations to the hall and kitchen at Rose House.

Thank you, Caroline!

Membership renewal

Although the December/January issue of *Prospect* was distributed commercially to every household in Barnes, we understand that some members did not receive their copy. We can only apologise and suggest you pop into Rose House to see if there are any spares.

The last issue included a membership renewal form. If you do not have one, please contact Julia, bca@barnesvillage.org.uk, 8878 2359, fax 8878 6101, or download one from the BCA website www.barnesvillage.org.uk.

Stop Press

As *Prospect* goes to press we are dismayed to learn that the Minister for Culture and Tourism has announced that proposed changes to Royal Parks Regulations will be implemented later this year, subject to parliamentary approval. This includes parking charges for Richmond Park (£1 first hour to a maximum of £3 all day) and Bushey Park.

BCA



matters...

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News from the Executive

A Happy New Year to all our readers.

This issue I want to focus on our need for a new chairman for the Environment Group. Whilst it is a separate team, it works as a specialist sub committee to the BCA. Sue Boyd, the current chairman, has been elected as a Trustee to the BCA and wishes therefore to resign her chairmanship. Sue has done sterling work for this team over many years and we give her our heartfelt thanks. The Group is an important part of the BCA with a wide brief including planning, transportation and general environmental issues. It includes keeping an eye on the Common and other open spaces which are so enjoyed by local residents. This role would suit someone who is interested in Barnes and the environment and is looking for a new challenge. It doesn't matter that you have not sat on a committee before, new faces are always appreciated! Sue will be available to share her huge knowledge and experience with the new chairman.

So if you know of anyone, or indeed you yourself would like to apply, please contact the BCA via the office on 8878 2359 or e-mail isobel.woolf@btinternet.com.
Isobel Woolf, BCA Chairman



Friends of Le Pecq

Two visits are in the process of being arranged – one in each direction. We are planning a visit from Le Pecq to us in Barnes, 7th-9th May and for a visit in the opposite direction from Barnes to Le Pecq, 4th-6th June.

Details for the visits have yet to be worked out and will in any case take account of the wishes of those taking part. If you would like to know more or to be involved in any capacity in either or both of these visits please contact me at lepecq@barnesvillage.org.uk or via the BCA office on 8878 2359.

Mike Spillane

Barnes Railway Bridge

We understand that in order to complete restoration work on Barnes Bridge more closures are necessary. The footbridge is likely to be closed from 1am Sunday 14th to 4am Monday 15th, and 1am Sunday 21st to 4am Monday 22nd February, and from 9.30am to 3.30pm, Monday 15th February to Friday 5th March.

Contact the Hotline 0800 389 5901 for further information.



Environment Group report

The proposal to build a new sports hall at the **Harrodian School** near the boundary with The Meres flats and Lonsdale Road was discussed again. I wrote to Richmond Council about our principal objection, which is the loss of Metropolitan Open Space. The school has expanded greatly, which reflects how successful it is, and many BCA members send their children there. The proposed new hall is very large, is nearly as high as The Meres (which would be in its shadow), and would have a major impact on Lonsdale Road and the Leg o' Mutton nature reserve.

We need to be vigilant regarding proposals to build on **Metropolitan Open Land**. One of the joys of living in Barnes is that we have inherited those areas which were designated as open spaces when there was pressure, which still exists, to build and expand outer London. This is why we welcomed Barnes Vision with their proposals to leave the open spaces at Barn Elms for sport of all kinds, with the minimum of new building, thus hopefully using and preserving our inheritance.

The Council began implementation of the formal merging of the Barnes **CPZs B1, CBI and CB2**, along with other minor operational changes, last October. There are a number of complex issues which cannot all be carried out simultaneously but we have been told by the Council that lining in areas

to the south of Church Road and around Hammersmith Bridge has been completed, though it would seem that signage has yet to be altered. The parking at Small Profit Dock continues to be blocked by commuters. It is very important that this is kept clear as this part of the river is used extensively by children, rowers, etc, and provides direct access to the river in an emergency.

Incidentally, tides were exceptionally high in December, particularly at the full moon, which was a 'blue moon', the thirteenth full moon in the twelve months of 2009.

There has been no word from anyone about taking over from me as **Chairman of the Environment Group**. It would be very sad if this group should close through lack of a Chairman. It is a job for someone who is interested in the wider issues of the environment. Although we do not concern ourselves with individual planning proposals, we do have an overview on what would impact on the whole community. The Environment Group was formed when the BCA began. It was the impact on the environment of Barnes as a whole when a proposal was put forward to demolish houses to build a block of flats in Church Road and a supermarket on the site of Rose House in the High Street that galvanised people to form the Association.

I do hope to see some new faces at the Group's meetings in Room 1, Rose House on Monday 22nd February and Monday 22nd March at 8pm!

Susan Boyd, Chairman

Milly is missing

Julia in the BCA office moved house just before Christmas – 18th December – and Milly, one of the family's cats went missing. Jack, Julia's son, is very upset and would like to know that Milly is alive. She could be staying at your house during the cold weather.

If you see a small tabby cat with white fur under her throat it could be Milly. If you have any news of her please contact Julia at Rose House, 8878 2359.



Christmas Lunch at the Barnes Green Centre

On Christmas Day the BCA entertained over fifty people who would otherwise have been alone.

Everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves. The BCA wishes to thank all the volunteers who gave up their time to make the day so successful, especially chef Rita Robinson, Rosie Findlater, Dorothy Paignton and Micky Forster.

We also sincerely thank the very kind Barnes family who made a most generous Christmas gesture donating a cheque which paid for the whole meal.



Police Liaison Group

Barnes Police Liaison Group is holding a meeting at Jenner Hall, Jenner Place, Barnes on Wednesday 17th March at 7pm. All welcome. For further information please contact Julie Farrant bplg@hotmail.co.uk.



Hammersmith Bridge closures

As a result of improvement works, including a new bus barrier and Toucan crossing on Hammersmith Bridge Road, there are continuing bridge closures and disruption to bus services every weekend from 5am Saturday to 5am Monday until 13th March. It will also be closed completely from 13th-22nd February.

- Bus 283 does not serve stops south of the bridge
- Bus 72 diverts via Upper Richmond Road to Putney Bridge
- Buses 33, 209, 419, and 485 terminate at Lonsdale Road from the south
- As of 30th January the 33 bus is a 24-hour service

The bridge remains open to pedestrians and dismounted cyclists at all times.

We are told that the works on and around Hammersmith Bridge form part of a bigger Transport for London and Hammersmith and Fulham scheme, to improve the workings of the Hammersmith Gyratory. The plan is to improve access to and exit from the gyratory for everyone: cars, buses, bikes and pedestrians, thus helping west London generally.

Whilst Barnes councillors Christine Percival and Rita Palmer were able to input fine-tuning to the design in north Barnes many people, while accepting this, would have liked more notice from their local Council of inconvenience to come.

Curiosity Corner

Did you know that Hammersmith and Fulham Council 'owns' Hammersmith Bridge? Richmond Council 'owns' Richmond Bridge and Kew Bridge; Hounslow Council 'owns' Chiswick Bridge. As Highways Authority, Hammersmith has final control over the hundred metres immediately to the south of 'their' bridge, i.e. 'our' Castelnau. Presumably on highway matters, Richmond has a strong say on the first hundred metres north of Kew Bridge into Brentford. As local Planning Authority, however, Richmond controls the area right up to Hammersmith Bridge and indeed half way across it. Don't ask!

BCA Spring Tour, 22nd-26th April

I have had many requests to organise a holiday for 2010 but insufficient numbers and requests for single occupancy rooms have made it impossible to repeat our previous trips. However, I have explored the possibility of sharing a tour of the Lake District with a group from Hanwell, which would ensure pickups from Barnes as usual and the coach staying with us whilst away.

The full programme includes visits to Crown Derby, Holker Hall and Gardens, Kendal, a Lake Windermere cruise, Lakeside & Haverthwaite Steam Railway, Beatrix Potter Gallery, Botany Bay in Lancashire and Amerton Farm, Staffordshire on the way home, with half-board accommodation for four nights at the Best Western Shap Wells Hotel. The cost will be £315, sharing, or single occupancy (if available) £365.

All bookings must be confirmed by **20th February**. Contact me on 8741 3028 for full details.

Rita Robinson



Lake Windermere

Update from the Barnes Retail Champion



As I write this I see grey skies over a grim cold river, snowy surfaces and the familiar flurries of the next snow shower. But by the time you read this I hope that the snow has melted, the sun is out and signs of an early spring are giving us optimism for the year ahead.

This is the research and planning phase for the economic life of retail Barnes in 2010. As our Christmas lights come down we hope to put up some beautiful banners (designed by Caroline Gardner) to stop people just driving through and missing the best. The same design will be used on a new exclusive Barnes bag, the prototype for

which will be on show soon. Some shops have introduced hanging baskets to enhance the attractiveness of our quaint Edwardian frontages. These should come into their own as spring moves into summer and we hope to be planting again wherever we can. The displays next to Two Peas in a Pod and the Coach and Horses proved to be a great success last year. We plan to launch a Barnes loyalty card, designed to encourage you to shop locally and have some fun in the process. A questionnaire will be delivered to some homes to try to match shopping tastes to shopping experiences. This might help us fill empty shops with the right mix of goods and services. Barnes Fair this July will have a local shops theme and a number of other events are in the pipeline.

The Retail Champion works entirely with voluntary help. Offers of expertise, help and possibly sponsorship would be oh so gratefully received. We would love to set up a website promoting Barnes as a culinary centre, with recipes related to our specialist

shops, including a vox pop with local people extolling the virtues of living in and visiting our village. But at the moment that is beyond our financial dreams.

Meanwhile please submit the questionnaire (should you receive it) and suggest any ideas you might have. Our aim is to keep the economic heart of our village alive and thriving so that we can all enjoy a walk to the shops, the true centre of our community. I am sure that this is what every Barnes resident would want and yet the chains, super shops and Westfield-style developments threaten the very existence of our independents, as does internet and mail order shopping. If we don't attempt to buck the trend we could end up with retail deserts stretching across the suburbs. Moreover, for those who argue that shopping locally is expensive, remember you are saving on petrol, reducing your CO² input as well as benefiting from unique goods and personal service.

Sue Nichol, Retail Champion

Carol Service raises £8000

A local family charity, Home-Start Richmond, is celebrating after one of its Barnes volunteers raised £8000 from a Christmas carol service. Pat Macdonald-Brown, with help from Cathie Sacré, organised the event at St Mary's Church, which was attended by about four hundred people, including the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames and several famous names from TV and theatre.

The Reverend Paul Holland welcomed the congregation before readings from actors Niamh Cusack, Patricia Hodge and Moray Watson and BAFTA Award winning composer Howard Goodall. Colet Court Recital Choir started off the singing with a beautiful solo of *Once in Royal David's City* and Susan Kramer MP, the charity's Patron, made an appeal for donations.

Organiser Pat said "I have been a volunteer with Home-Start Richmond for ten years and I know what a fantastic job they do in supporting families in our Borough. I wanted to raise money to train more volunteers as there is a waiting list of parents who are experiencing complex difficulties. For many, having a Home-Start volunteer to help them could make all the difference to their lives."

Martina Philips, Scheme Manager at Home-Start Richmond said, "We are so grateful to Pat for all the hard work she has

put into selling tickets for the event and organising all the details. It really has been a magical evening and we are delighted that so many people could attend."

Home-Start is a national charity with local branches that trains volunteers to visit families who are struggling to cope. Home-Start Richmond was set up in 1995 and last year helped 120 local families, including 240 children, in Barnes and the surrounding areas. It has sixty home-visiting volunteers who spend a few hours a week helping

parents with children under five. The volunteers visit parents at home using their own parenting experience to support other mothers and fathers, giving them practical and emotional help. If you would like to know more about the charity's work, contact Martina Philips 020 8487 8500, info@homestart-richmond.org.uk, martina@homestart-richmond.org.uk or Angie Ahmed, Marketing & Fundraising, 07798 812496, angie@homestart-richmond.org.uk.



Left to Right – Patricia Hodge, Neil Spurrier (Vice Chair of Home-Start Richmond), Felicity Clarkson (Chair of Home-Start Richmond), Mayor Celia Hodges, Susan Kramer, Hilary Whitehall, Moray Watson and Howard Goodall with Colet Court Choir

How to improve the local rail service

The Windsor Lines Passengers' Association is the rail users' group for all local railway lines through Richmond and Hounslow, and the BCA is a corporate member. It has a modest membership but a very active committee which meets regularly with South West Trains and Network Rail to put forward suggestions for improvement in all areas of concern – timetables, fares, ticket offices and machines, visual information displays on platforms, station access, car parking, etc. They listen to Association members because they make specific points, not generalised rules, and keep on asking until they have the answers.

More people are needed on the committee. If you are interested ring me on 8748 0049 or join as a general member and keep an eye on our stations. For further information see leaflets in Rose House Reception or e-mail Brendan Gash on membership@wlpa.co.uk.

Margaret Sharp

Freedom Pass makeover

Prospect wishes to remind all holders of an older person's Freedom Pass that if they have not already done so they need to apply for a new one before 13th February. Residents must apply **in person at a local post office** with a completed application form (available from any post office), a standard passport photo and proof of name, age and permanent residence. The user's photo will be displayed on the front of the new-look card, eliminating the need for a separate photo ID card and will be valid for five years instead of the current two.

Your new card will be posted to you five to ten days after you apply; until you receive it continue to use your current pass. Please note that all old style passes will be invalid after the 31st March. For further information go to www.freedompass.org or call 8831 6312 or 8831 6191.

Car Clubs are like Marmite: love them or hate them

Some people are delighted by the convenience and savings that membership of a Car Club can bring. For example, "never mind saving the planet, it is good to save the cost of running a second car". By September 2009, there were at least 2154 car club members in Richmond upon Thames, of whom some 277 live in SW13 and 213 in SW14. Council-estimated end-of-year figures were 5000 members overall; a fuller, new report will be available on the website in a matter of weeks. Others, particularly those facing the worst parking problems in their local CPZ, are bitterly opposed. Many people would probably have responded better to the creation of the car club bays if only they had been consulted in the first place.

Since last March, in the borough as a whole, at least seventy parking bays reserved for the collection and return of car club vehicles have been marked out, including, in SW13:

- Streetcar: Single bays in Riverview Gardens, Washington Road, Station Road, Suffolk Road, Thorne Street, Byfeld Gardens, Queens Ride, Lonsdale Road and Elm Bank Gardens
- Citycar: Single bays in Cleveland Road and Trinity Church Road
- Zipcar: Double bays in Arundel Terrace and Glebe Road.

It remains to be seen how usage of these various bays will build up; at the moment it looks very low. Next time I go searching for statistics, I must look for the total number of parking spaces in the borough....

Katie Gent

Local secondary school to become an Academy?

Shene, a fresh start



On a chilly January evening, St Mary Magdalen's church hall was packed with over 200 parents interested in being part of the future of Shene School, together with Susan Kramer, MP, Lesley Kirby, Head of Shene and several Governors and local Councillors.

There were parents standing in the corridors, sitting on tiny nursery chairs and squashed into corners.

The Parent Promoted Foundation (PPF) for Barnes, Mortlake and Sheen invited David Fuller, MD of Education at AET to meet local

parents and hear their views. AET is the preferred sponsor for the new Academy due to replace Shene School in September 2010.

The PPF is a charitable body dedicated to supporting the growth and development, through to sixth form, of an excellent state secondary school – a school which provides a safe, inspiring and high-achieving environment for children of all abilities to continue their learning and personal development.

Paul Mason, founder of the PPF, said that this is a time to look forward and be part of the future, not to look back. David Fuller of AET said that he was there to listen to parents' views and wishes, not to present a vision before listening. The meeting was a huge success with many parents going away more positive and informed than before.

The PPF has developed a website www.ppfshene.org.uk with a wealth of information and links to help parents and other interested parties understand the process, be part of the future and ask questions. Join them to keep up to date with the plans and to complete a quick online survey to gather a wider community opinion



Left to right: David Fuller, Academy Enterprise Trust; Paul Mason, Parent Promoted Foundation; Susan Kramer, MP

about the future school.

The PPF is committed to putting the community at the heart of the new school and urges all parents to join their mailing list.

See below for details of consultation meetings at local primary schools.

Harriet Lawrence, Parent Promoted Foundation

Proposed new Shene Academy

Formal Consultation Meetings will take place on

Tuesday 9th February

Lowther School, Stillingfleet Road at 2pm
Barnes Primary School at 7pm

These meetings concern all present and future parents, all present and future grandparents and all who believe that a healthy community needs a good local state school

Deadline for comments to the Council is
Friday 19th February:
e-mail m.paul@richmond.gov.uk

Shene School travels onwards and upwards

Highlighted by the *Evening Standard* recently as one of only 26 schools across the nation to improve by more than 10% (and with a senior leadership team, teaching staff and governing body deemed recently by Ofsted to be more than earning their laurels), pupil behaviour, academic expectation and realisation is on course to make Shene School one of the most successful in London.

In the past two years under the aegis of Headteacher Lesley Kirby, who will lead the new Academy, the profile of Shene has radically improved. She says "I am thrilled – but not surprised. Staff and students have

worked extremely hard, some (according to *Fischer Family Trust* data) performing at a level exceptionally above expectations for both the more able and for those pupils arriving from primary schools with less good results who were supported and encouraged to be part of these outstanding achievements".

It is fast becoming a school able to offer local children a safe, secure and academically focussed environment. The open door policy encourages visitors – go and see for yourself what is on offer and help to close the gap between perception and realisation.
Mona Adams, Community Governor, Shene School

Light Lunch with musical entertainment

12.30-1.30pm

St Michael's Community Centre

next to St Michael's Church – entrance from Elm Bank Gardens
or Charles Street



Hosted by FiSH volunteers on the first Friday of the month

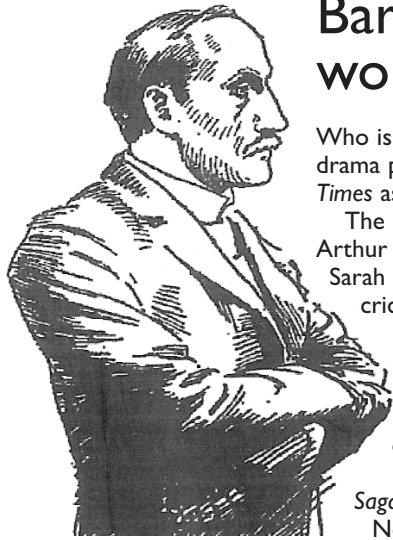
5th February: *Bruno Bower, oboe*

5th March: *John Tyman and Eleanor Stanier*

Donations to FiSH for the lunch welcome

Please ring the Busline 8876 3765 for help with transport

NB: No lunch in April, Good Friday



Barnes fraud made world news

Who is this man? He was the prime actor in a late-Victorian drama played out in Mayfair and Barnes, recorded by the *New York Times* as 'a million-dollar fraud hitting fashionable London'.

The supporting cast included the future King Edward VII, Sir Arthur Sullivan (without WS Gilbert), Oscar Wilde, the actress Sarah Bernhardt, Winston Churchill's father Randolph, the cricket legend WG Grace, and several peers of the realm.

The leading man was a Cambridge-educated doctor, an Army officer, and a favourite in society, whose rise and fall will be told in the Barnes and Mortlake History Society's special event at Barnes Methodist Church Hall on Saturday 13th February at 2.30 pm.

Murray Hedgcock will explain all under the title *A Barnes Saga: St. Ann's, The Lyric Club, and a Million-Dollar Fraud*. Non-members welcome, £2.

Handel's *Messiah* in all its majesty

Barnes Choir is recognised for adventurous programme planning, often exploring lesser known works, ancient and modern. In December they returned to probably the best known piece in the choral repertoire, Handel's *Messiah*, performed before a large and appreciative audience in the recently refurbished Duke Street Church, Richmond.

Robert Milner's dynamic interpretation of the opening tenor solo *Ev'ry Valley* set the tone and listeners realised that they were about to hear an accomplished performance of this great work. The alto part was sung, as Handel intended, by a counter-tenor. In many modern performances this is often allotted to a female alto but Simon Baker's unique and powerful voice added much to the musical interpretation and was for many the highlight of the evening. Deborah Stoddart, the soprano soloist, displayed a lovely legato line and beautiful tone, whilst the bass Stefan Sanchez was wonderfully exciting in *Why do the nations?*

The seating arrangements for the choir posed problems, not least for the conductor, Andrew Charity. The sopranos were on one side and the altos on the other of this very wide church, with the men in two rows across the middle. The balance of voices was distorted for many of the audience, unless sitting in the centre or in the balcony. The familiar choruses were well managed, the relatively few male singers doing sterling work in the more fugal sections. Some of the climaxes needed more force from all voices, especially in *For unto us a Child is born* and indeed in the *Hallelujah* chorus. However, despite all Andrew Charity's energetic work, some of the lesser-known choruses would have benefited from a less disparate choir.

Accompaniment was provided by the Mercury Chamber Orchestra, whose sympathetic playing greatly enhanced the overall performance. The reliability of the *continuo* by the lower strings and the brilliance of the trumpet player were outstanding. It was good to hear a full scale version of this majestic work and Barnes Choir is to be congratulated on mounting such an enjoyable performance.

Pam Frazer, www.artsrichmond.org.uk

For your diaries:

Barnes Choir will be performing Monteverdi's *Vespers* (1610) on Saturday 27th March at 7.30 pm in St Mary Magdalene's Church, Richmond.



Jeeves comes to the OSO

Barnes Charity Players present *Come on, Jeeves!* a comedy by P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton at the OSO, Barnes Green from Tuesday 23rd to Saturday 27th February, at 7.30 pm. Featuring everyone's favourite butler, this romp is set just after World War II, when an assortment of characters descends on the decaying country house of the Earl of Towcester, where the inimitable Jeeves is now in charge. Can Mrs Spottsworth save the Earl from financial ruin? Will Sahib Biggar find his winning ticket? Why does the ghost of Lady Agatha flush the lavatory? Will young love win through?

With John Mounsey as Jeeves, this Wodehouse classic is directed by Marc Pearce and tickets at £10 and £8 are available from 8th February at the OSO Box Office or by calling 020 8878 0419.



FiSH Tuesday Talks



Barnes Green Centre at 11am

Coffee from 10.30am, Talk 11am (40 mins)

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 2nd February | Julie Etchingam: <i>Gathering and presenting the news on TV</i> |
| 9th February | Outing to Fulham Prep School: <i>Short drama presented by students</i> |
| 16th February | Sue Boyd: <i>Isolde Menges – Virtuoso Violinist and Sue's mother-in-law</i> |
| 23rd February | Moray Watson: <i>Looking back and dropping names</i> |
| 2nd March | Yvonne Wake: <i>Eating as a family – times have changed</i> |

'Beat the Recession' Jumbo Jumble Sale



St Mary Barnes Scout Group will hold their annual Jumbo Jumble Sale in Kitson Hall on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th February. Admission is £5 on Friday, 7-9pm, and £1 on Saturday, 10am-2pm.

They will be delighted to receive items to sell (no large furniture). To arrange collection please ring 8741

7772, 8876 1168 or 8241 8434.

All proceeds from this major fund raising event go towards running the Scout, Cub and Beaver Groups which provide local children with interesting and fun training, particularly in outdoor activities.

They could not do this without their friends and supporters at the BCA and look forward to meeting up again. Please support them by donating items, helping to sell, or by visiting the Jumble Sale to buy useful and exciting items from the vast array of items on offer. As always, there will be incredible recession-beating bargains for gifts or personal use in *Daisy's Den of Delights* and superb clothing offers in the *Good as New* section.

Mike Dixon, Chair, St. Mary Barnes Scout Group Executive

Volunteer as a Trustee for Barnes Workhouse Fund



Richmond Council for Voluntary Service (RCVS) is seeking a nominee to join the Board of the Barnes Workhouse Fund, a local grant-making trust and a registered social landlord in respect of its governance of Walsingham Lodge, an almshouse in Barnes. Trustees must be residents of Barnes.

Applications would be welcomed from those whose skills complement those of the Trustees already on the Board. You might have some or any of the following:

- a specific interest in social or sheltered housing
- experience of the workings of the voluntary and community sectors locally
- knowledge of the local authority setting
- experience of finance/accountancy procedures
- availability during the day time as well as evenings
- information technology skills

For more information about this exciting opportunity visit the Barnes Workhouse Fund website: www.barnesworkhousefund.org.uk or contact David Sidonio, Chief Executive of Richmond Council for Voluntary Service, e-mail davids@richmondcvsv.org.uk, telephone 020 8255 8194.



Registered Charity No.1075259

Registered as a Company in England & Wales No.3730089

Music at St Paul's, 2009-10 Season

Gemma Rosefield, cellist, is joined by **Katya Apeksheva**, piano, in masterpieces by Beethoven and Mendelssohn

Wathen Hall, St Paul's School
Lonsdale Road

Wednesday 10th March
Tickets £15 and £10 (concessions)
Details: www.wathenhall.com
and 020 8746 5424



Learning to Listen



This course of six 2½ hour sessions in basic counselling is aimed at anyone involved professionally or personally in a listening role who would like to improve listening skills. This is a vital and useful skill required by all FiSH volunteers but everyone is welcome.

A new course (dates and venue to be confirmed) will start in March – for further information and to register (places limited) contact the FiSH office 8876 3335, info@fishhelp.org.uk; or Kit Peck 8876 2940, kit@wellside.demon.co.uk. Please indicate your availability – day of the week, daytime or evening.

Free for FiSH volunteers; £180 for all others.



Barnes Literary Society

Lee Langley

The Lure of the Faraway

Our early years have a profound effect on our lives and for those brought up in an exotic environment and transported to another culture a feeling of not belonging can result. For a writer this sense of loss and exile can be used to advantage, as in the case of prize-winning author Lee Langley who spent a nomadic childhood in India and whose writing has been influenced by her early years – like, as she says, 'a shadowy reef lying beneath the surface'.

Lee was born in Calcutta and draws on her experience of life in faraway places as the background for her narrative. She has written a series of novels based in India that include *Changes of Address*, *Persistent Rumours*, and *A House in Pondicherry*. The lure of the faraway always features in her writing, and in her recent books *Distant Music* and *A Conversation on the Quai Voltaire* the stories are set in exotic backgrounds. Lee is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a recent president of *artsrichmond*. She has been shortlisted for the Hawthornden Prize and has won the Writers' Guild award and Commonwealth Writers Prize. For further information see www.contemporarywriters.com/authors. This event for members and their guests will be held on Wednesday 17th February at the OSO by Barnes Pond at 8pm. For membership details please see www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk or contact 8748 2558.

By Underground from Priests Bridge to the Thames



Beverley Brook, seen from Priests Bridge, is both beautiful and surprising. Water channelled beneath the Upper Richmond Road, The Willoughbys and Priests Bridge emerges into a leafy complex, a pub wall to the left and a wooded bank to the right. Nature and engineering harmonise in a perfect picture for the photographer, particularly when there is a good flow of water. While the brook continues its leisurely way downstream, the spilled flow disappears in a rush under the adjacent building. But why such a complicated structure and where is the water going?

Priests Bridge, says the historian Charles Hailstone in his *Beverley Brook Notes*, was named Prestbrig back in 1479. The bridge served as an important pathway for priests coming and going between Wimbledon church and a chapel attached to Mortlake Manor House, west of Ship Lane. The Manor of Mortlake goes back to Anglo-Saxon times when it consisted of Mortlake village itself, Barnes (until 939 or thereabouts when it became a separate manor), the village of Putney, and the tiny hamlets of Roehampton and Wimbledon.

"Within living memory the slow ditch on the western side of White Hart Lane defined the boundary between Mortlake and Barnes", reports Mr. Hailstone. So we can surmise that Beverley Brook has always been diverted here, in summer feeding the eastern end of the Mortlake water meadows, in winter relieving excessive flow in the brook. Using evidence from the 1618 survey of Mortlake a local map of the brook was made by James Taylor in 1783, ahead of engineering works all along its course. The map, now residing in the Guildhall Library, provides an invaluable picture of the landscape prior to urbanisation.

In 1924 royal assent was given to the *Culvert Bill* and its completion in 1927 marked one of the earliest stages of work to protect urban developments from flooding. Priests Bridge culvert was built for a sum of £8,000 borrowed by Barnes Urban District Council from Eastbourne County Borough and was paid off in five years. Low-lying areas alongside Beverley Brook, from Station Road through the Common and Barn Elms to the exit of the brook into the Thames at Putney, immediately benefited. The increased water flow was largely the result of housing developments along the whole watercourse starting where the brook rises near Worcester

Park and similarly on its major tributary the Pyl. In both these areas the treated water from sewage works was discharged into the brook and today accounts for some 60% of the total flow. Even so, the water is cleaner today than in former times when smaller communities deposited raw sewage into the brooks. Today the streams originating in Richmond Park, which feed Isabella Plantation and Pen Ponds, continue to introduce 30% of fresh water into the flow, the remainder from rainwater run-off.



The Priests Bridge culvert flows beneath the Mortlake side of White Hart Lane taking it under the house recently built to the west of the railway crossing and eventually beneath the modern flats adjacent to the White Hart Inn. Our photographs show the 'tube' entrance at Priests Bridge and its exit to the Thames.

The shade of Adomar, the priest who walked this way in 1348, would marvel at the drained marshlands and the bustling community that now inhabit them and whose lives are dependent on water engineers.

Urban developments continue to proliferate and the Priests Bridge culvert was essential to the control of the brook when, in 1976, the entire flow was diverted for a period of six months. This facilitated building work on the housing and leisure complex at Ashlone Wharf, Putney where Beverley Brook flows into the Thames.

William Mortimer

(With thanks to Jane Baxter and Carol Foster at the Local Studies Collection in Richmond and to Maisie Brown of the Barnes and Mortlake History Society)

Fresh air, exercise... and a large slice of chocolate cake!



Winter is a great time to visit the Wetland Centre because so many of our feathered friends return to London to find food and shelter in the lakes and pools on the reserve.

And the wingless visitors tend to come along for the same reasons! It's great to see so many people visiting the Centre to spend a few hours in the fresh air watching the wildlife and then returning to the shelter of the café to warm up.

Following a wonderful festive season and the busiest Carol Service yet, January brought an influx of visitors. This is a great time to become a member of WWT. For a reasonable fee you can gain free entry to the Centre all year round, as well as the eight other WWT Centres around the UK. Members have unlimited access to scenic walks, stunning wildlife and lots of events. For instance, there are daily guided tours, loads of children's activities (don't miss *Animal Magic Weekend* on 13th and 14th February) and special events such as *Introduction to bird*

watching, a practical course to help identify different birds and understand more about their behaviour.

So, if you are looking for something a bit different to do in the New Year, pop along to the Wetland Centre. Not only do you stand a good chance of seeing a rare winter visitor, the bittern (never before seen in a treetop!), but you can also start 2010 as you mean to go on, with some exercise, fresh air, interesting activities – and a slug of caffeine with a large slice of cake as a reward for being so good!

Catherine Starling



Certainly the star performer of the seven bitterns – a record number for the site, probably drawn by the 'relative' warmth of London in early January. Photo, John Day

Shelter from the storm

The Saturday night shelter at the Methodist Church on Barnes Green is going well and is now half-way through its winter schedule. Boxing Day was celebrated in style with fancy table covers, crackers, party poppers, sweets and cocktail sausages plus mince pies kindly donated after the BCA Christmas lunch. Gifts of new socks, razors, etc, which had been placed in donation boxes at Rose House and in Barnes churches were given to the Central Project to be distributed as they saw fit.

There are thirty-five regular guests, including a couple of women, plus eight to fourteen people who are fed outside. They receive shelter for the night only in extreme weather conditions when they bed down in the wide passage on the ground floor, which is as warm and snug as the rest of the building and has access to the toilets. The guests are consistently friendly and appreciative.

The volunteers, though pretty exhausted at the end of their four-hour stints, have found the whole experience very worthwhile and really rather fun. Each of the three teams is led by a gallant cook – catering for fifty is no joke! I will not name names but, nevertheless, extend to them my admiration and gratitude.

Jane Sherwin

Down on the allotment



My gardening book says the Jerusalem artichoke is easy to grow but difficult to get rid of. After a war of attrition against my own artichokes

I have surrendered and let them grow freely in a far corner of the allotment. In summer they form a large clump of tall stems with bunches of pretty yellow flowers, like miniature sunflowers, which is what they are. I rarely dig up the tubers because they are a bore to prepare – all those knobles and thick skin.

On Christmas Eve, however, as the day was fading, I went down to the allotment so that I could say at least some of our Christmas dinner was home grown. With numb fingers I broke off a handful of Brussels sprouts, not really enough but hoping that less would be more. Luckily there were also the artichokes

and I gratefully forced my fork through four inches of permafrost at the base of the dead stems to dig up a bucket-full of splendid tubers. Washed and parboiled for ten minutes the leathery skin

is easily stripped revealing a pristine tuber which roasts like a dream.

The French generally consider them only fit for animals though I did find a recipe for *soupe de topinambours*, as they call them, something to do with their American origins. It turned out to be an insipid affair which had to be beefed up but it did prove that their windy reputation is exaggerated.

Jack

Would you like to donate a memorial bench on Barnes Common?

Richmond Council and the Friends of Barnes Common are hoping that ways can be found to replace the six fine oak benches stolen from the Common last year. Unfortunately the excess on the Council's insurance meant that immediate replacement was not possible due to lack of funds in the budget for this unexpected extra cost. As we know, the bases are ready, so all that is needed are the benches – properly secured!

So if you like the idea of giving a bench *in memoriam*, or which you yourself could enjoy, please contact info@barnescommon.org.uk or Mr Kevin Waggott at Richmond Council Parks Department.

Mike Hildesley, Chairman, FOBC