



Prospect

March 2008



Barnes High Street with Rose House, the headquarters of the BCA, on the right

Barnes – a wake-up call

The Barnes Community Association was created thirty-four years ago, partly the result of a developer's attempt to demolish Rose House to make way for a supermarket. Direct action, in that local residents banded together to buy the property, solved the problem. Since then, the BCA has remained actively involved in helping to keep Barnes a green and pleasant place to live. Change is a fact of life, and we do not wish to keep Barnes preserved in aspic, nor do we demonise responsible development. But, led by the Council and its planners, we do expect due account to be taken of the need to maintain the existing mix of retail and other amenities as far as is possible. This applies both to Council planners and to developers. Whenever there is planning gain, let it benefit all of us.

Small shops are the lifeblood of Barnes, but they are as subject to the power of market forces as anyone else. They have no divine right to exist, and need to help themselves, but throughout the UK they are facing particular pressures, both from large rent increases, and from the inexorable rise of supermarkets. Here in Barnes, and seemingly all of a sudden, large areas behind our High Street and elsewhere are facing development plans which could well change the face of our village in a way for which we are not fully prepared. (See map and accompanying text on pages 6 & 7.)

We at the BCA feel that any backland development must respect the feel and scale of Barnes. You may ask 'what can we do?' The answer is to make your voices heard – talk to us and write to us, and to the local papers, your Councillors and your MP. Join the BCA – the stronger the Association, the stronger your voice. When particular planning applications come in, register your specific comments on them. Please also be sure to shop locally whenever you can.

Planning regulations often appear to favour the developer – but there are boundaries – and we as a community can certainly have some influence on overall Council policy in these sometimes grey and technical areas. We have two aims in this matter: one is to influence Council medium-term planning policy for Barnes and the other is to scrutinise planning applications to make sure they are sensitive and low-key, avoiding the larger retail units. We will do all this while remaining, as ever, resolutely non-political. Please be fully aware of the consequences of apathy and inaction. We will work with all other local groups which share our views, and will keep you posted.

David Stott, BCA Chairman

Welcome to Prospect

At their last meeting the Executive Committee of the Barnes Community Association took the decision to deliver the March issue of the newsletter to all homes in Barnes as they believe it is of paramount importance that all residents should be aware of the threat of unsuitable redevelopment in our village. Please take time to read the articles opposite and inside; if you are not already a member of the BCA, do join.

A date for the diary

You may like to make a note of the date of the **BCA's AGM** which will be held at Rose House on Thursday 17th April. Look out for further details in next month's *Prospect*.

At the AGM we will be electing the Executive Committee and officers for 2008-9. You will find a nomination form on page 3. If you would like to be considered for election or know anyone you think might be interested in standing for election please complete and return the form – obviously having first obtained their agreement.

Do you want to continue receiving Prospect in 2008?

Prospect is the newsletter of the Barnes Community Association. Published ten times per year, it is delivered free of charge to members' homes. If you have already renewed your membership for 2008 or pay by standing order, thank you – you need take no further action. If you have not paid your annual subscription or would like to join the BCA so that you can continue to have *Prospect* delivered to your door, please complete the enclosed membership form and return it to us at Rose House with the appropriate

subscription by 15th March. Do consider setting up a standing order as, once done, you will no longer need to renew your membership annually. However, please remember to let us know if you change your address.

Further copies of the application form are obtainable from Rose House or can be downloaded from our website www.barnesvillage.org.uk. If you have any queries regarding membership please call Julia on 020 8878 2359, Monday-Friday between 9.30am and noon.

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matters...

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Environment Group Report

We welcomed **Patricia Newton** of Barnes Vision to the well-attended first meeting of the year. Among the many items considered were:

Petition over Barn Elms:

The new group Barnes Vision and their objectives were discussed. It was concluded that we all will pursue our aims to find a workable solution for the playing fields.

Rocks Lane Tennis Club:

Natural England has objected to the retrospective planning application and requested an Environment Impact Assessment report. The Council is seeking legal advice on an EIA report and also on issues of access and floodlighting.

49 Church Road:

There has been considerable upset about this application to redevelop this site and the loss of the New Grafton Gallery and two shops.

The Council has granted permission for the redevelopment.

De Worde House, Lonsdale Road:

There were many objections from local residents to this redevelopment and permission has been refused.

Barnes Bridge:

Together with the West London River Group we have worked on plans for repainting (the bridge was originally grey) and Richmond and Hounslow are waiting to hear from English Heritage. The application by the PLA to put signs on the bridge has been refused permission.

Heathrow Third Runway:

A letter on our behalf has been sent objecting to this proposal. Part of the objection is that a new runway would necessitate the stacking of aircraft over a very much larger area of West London.

Small Profit Dock Gardens:

The name will remain and the Council has agreed to a new sign to replace the one for

'Lonsdale Road Open Space'. So that the river can be seen from the gardens, two or three 'windows' will be cut through the trees, and there will be further improvements to bed down the upper path surface.

Dukes Meadows:

The Friends of Dukes Meadows have called a meeting to discuss improvements for transport and access to the meadows. We have a watching brief as what happens on the meadows affects our riverside.

Thames Strategy:

We will discuss the proposed towpath project, 2008-2012 at our next meeting and submit our thoughts to Thames Strategy.

As you can see from the above report the Environment Group is busy on your behalf. We are always looking for members who will give a little of their time and expertise. If there is something you are concerned about which you feel will affect the community, please tell us about it.

**Next meeting Rose House,
31st March, 8pm**

Susan Boyd, Chairman

Extension to Hammersmith bus station opens

Transport for London has built a new extension to Hammersmith bus station at ground level on the corner of Hammersmith Road and Butterwick in order to relieve overcrowding and to provide extra capacity with more space for both passengers and buses, including those towards Barnes on routes 33, 72, 209, 283, 419, 485 and 609.

Barnes residents who travel by bus had little notification of these major changes which started last month, causing disruption and even danger to passengers crossing to the various bays. Travellers will, once again, be exposed to all kinds of weather with only a small roof to protect them from the rain, wind and cold of Butterwick. So many complaints are anticipated that there is already a pile of complaint forms ready at the information desk!

Leaflets about the new arrangements are available at Rose House or can be obtained from the bus station.



The 419 is one of the buses serving Barnes residents which now leaves from the new, ground-level, extension

Richard Greenwood



Friends, neighbours and colleagues will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Richard Greenwood, pianist, music teacher and life-long resident of Barnes. His many friends will also remember his great knowledge and love of wildlife and the joy he found in sharing this – tales of badger watching in Richmond Park, enjoying the wildlife at the Wetland Centre and the Leg o' Mutton Nature Reserve.

All are welcome at a Service of Thanksgiving to celebrate his life at St. Mary's Church, Barnes, on 26th March at 2pm, which will include musical tributes by friends and by the Royal College of Music.



Aide-Memoire

There is still time to join the next walking/golf weekend with family accommodation in **Le Pecq**, 11th-13th April. For further

information please contact Mike Spillane, mhspillane@hotmail.com, or via Rose House. Mike would also like to hear from you if you wish to take part in a similar weekend, 1st-4th May, when the 'alpicois' will be visiting Barnes, particularly if you can offer hospitality.

The Barnes Workhouse Fund – Trustee vacancy

The Barnes Workhouse Fund is a local grant-making charitable trust (Registered Charity No. 200103) which helps people in need who live in Barnes and which owns the sheltered accommodation in Ferry Road and Berkeley Road, Barnes known as Walsingham Lodge.

The Fund is looking to appoint a new trustee to fill a vacancy which is about to arise on its Board. The board of nine trustees sets the strategic direction for the charity, decides on grants to voluntary organisations and to individuals and oversees the management of the Fund's sheltered accommodation. Trustees must be residents of Barnes and meetings are held locally every month.

All candidates are welcome, but to complement the skills of the Trustees already on the Board, applications are currently encouraged from those with

- Interest and experience in the area of social welfare and community care
- An appreciation of some of the activities of voluntary organisations in the local area.

The role would include active membership of the Friends and Residents' Committee of Walsingham Lodge. Candidates should have some familiarity with information technology.

This is an ideal opportunity for those Barnes residents who would like to give something back to their local community. Interested candidates should contact the Clerk to the Trustees, Mrs Miranda Ibbetson, as soon as possible on 020 8241 3994, e-mail barnesworkhousefund@tiscali.co.uk. Please send your CV to the Clerk at PO Box 665, Richmond TW10 6YL. Further information is available at www.barnesworkhousefund.org.uk. The final closing date for applications is 15th May. Selected candidates will be invited for interview with the trustees.

It may not be too late...

We understand that there may still be one or two places available on the **BCA Spring Tour** to France. The trip, 13th-18th May, is based in Caen, Normandy and includes coach travel from and returning to Barnes, b&b hotel accommodation and a full programme of excursions.

For more details contact Rita Robinson, 8741 3028 or via bca@barnesvillage.org.uk putting 'BCA Spring Tour' in the subject line.

Vocal Festival

A brand new vocal festival, **The Voice '08**, will be taking place at St Paul's School, Lonsdale Road, on Saturday 8th March. It will feature workshops, master classes and performances from some of the top names in vocal percussion and technique, including Tobias Hug of *The Swingle Singers*. The aim of the day is to bring together singers of all ages and musical backgrounds to celebrate the power and versatility of the human voice. Anyone who loves to sing is welcome.

The day will begin at about 10.30am with a vocal percussion masterclass, followed by an informal lunchtime concert to allow groups from schools and universities to perform a song or two to the other attendees. The afternoon will be a variety of sectionals and massed rehearsals, and will culminate in an early evening concert.

As an added bonus, the same evening will see the European final of the International Competition of Collegiate 'A Cappella', showcasing the art of student singing, and a performance from the Yale group *Out of the Blue* who are flying in especially for the occasion.

Tickets are priced at £20 (£10 concessions) for a day ticket and £10 (£7 concessions) for the evening concert, or for both daytime activities and the evening concert an all-in-one price of £25 (£15 concessions). To book please contact the Wathen Hall box office on 0208 746 5338 or book online at www.stpaulsschool.org.uk



Yale student vocal group Out of the Blue



Election of Officers and Executive Committee

The Constitution of the Association provides for the election of four Officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary) and not more than sixteen other elected members.

Nominations for membership of the Committee may be made by members of the Association and representatives of affiliated bodies. The election will take place at the **Annual General Meeting** in Rose House on **Thursday, 17th April 2008** at 8pm.

Nominations, on the form below, should reach the BCA Office at Rose House by noon on **Thursday 10th April**.



NOMINATION FORM

Name of person nominated

Nominated for Officer or Member of Committee

Proposed by

Seconded by

Tick that nominee is willing to stand

FiSH Tuesday Talks



Barnes Green Centre
at 11.00am

Coffee available from 10.30am

4th March

Roslyn Cassidy: *Eco-Funerals made easy*

11th March

Nick Phillips: *The medieval church at St Mary Barnes*

18th March

Nathan David: *Creativity and the Artist*

25th March

Sue Boyd: *Kensington Palace*

1st April

Diana Childs: *Richmond Carers Support*

All welcome

BCA to be copied in Beijing?

Those of us who were involved in the founding of the Barnes Community Association could never have imagined that thirty-four years later we would welcome a delegation from the capital city of China who were keen to learn from Barnes about how to achieve community participation in local government.

Welcomed at Rose House recently, the twenty-three delegates were not the middle-aged men in suits we had expected, but mostly women in jeans and jumpers. Their job titles were impressive. Wu Bei, the 36-year-old leader of the delegation, is Deputy Chief of the Community Work Division of Beijing Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau. The others were deputy directors or researchers from the same Bureau, or with similar positions in ten different Beijing municipalities.

The delegation visited other English community organisations. The BCA was



Delegates pore over a copy of Prospect

included because web research had shown that it is the only community association without local authority support. Mike Spillane addressed the group's questions, mainly about

the function of the association and its relationship with the local authority and voluntary organisations, whilst I told them about the history, explaining how the BCA had developed from a campaign initiated by an individual to save a much loved local building. I asked Wu Bei whether it was possible in China for individuals to start and publicise new organisations. "Yes," she said, "as long as they register with our bureau". Asked about the purpose of the visit to England she said "Local government is looking at ways to relieve the pressure of meeting all social needs; to share the burden."

After less than an hour the group had to leave to catch their flight back to China but they

expressed interest in asking more questions via e-mail. Hopefully we will find out if the BCA example makes any mark in the new China.
Janet Falush

BARNES TEAM MINISTRY THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

Key Lay Position of Children's Pastor

St Mary's Church, Barnes is looking to appoint a half-time Children's Pastor, ideally from May 2008. St Mary's has a well-established programme of work with children which aims to develop their innate spirituality and nurture their sense of belonging to the church. The children's pastor takes a key role in supervising this and in building on the progress of recent years.

They are looking for someone who

- is available for an average of 20 hours a week including Sundays
- shares their understanding of ministry with children
- has experience of working with children up to 11 years old
- is able to work in a team but is also self-motivated

Salary scale from £11-13,000 per annum

For further details, please contact the Team Rector, the Reverend

Ross Collins at rosscollins@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel: 020 8404 3177 www.stmarybarnes.org



Barnes Literary Society

Shakespeare and the Classics

We are familiar with the plays of Shakespeare, our greatest playwright, from as far back as our schooldays. Perhaps less well known are the bard's sources for the plots of his great dramas. An evening of *Shakespeare and the Classics* with classicist, John Davie and actors, will give an insight into Shakespeare's knowledge of classical literature and culture and its influences on his works.

John Davie, who teaches Classics at St. Paul's School and Balliol College, Oxford, is author of a number of articles on classical subjects. His talk will focus on Shakespeare's fascination with the classical world and the use he makes of these sources. He will demonstrate that the classics are of central importance in Shakespeare's plays, and show how he uses classical references. A group of young actors will declaim some memorable speeches to illustrate his argument.

This will be followed by the AGM – for Agenda see www.barnesliterarysociety.org

This event will be held on Wednesday 12th March at 8pm at the OSO by Barnes Pond. For membership details please see www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk or contact 8748 2558. Following on the Shakespearean theme a visit to the Globe Theatre has been arranged for members in April.

2008 Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race

This year the University Boat Race is on 29th March starting at 5.15pm. Whilst many people have their own favourite vantage spots, this year you might like to consider joining in the fun beforehand at the Pier House, Corney Reach Way, Chiswick where the bar will be open from 12.30pm with a barbecue, refreshments and live music.

Information: 020 8742 2713 www.chiswickpier.org.uk



Charity begins at home

At their recent AGM, Chair Peter Siddall reported on the activities of the Barnes Charity Players: in 2007 the productions were *Trelawny of the Wells*, directed by Keith Perry, and *Cinderella*, directed by Fergus O'Kelly. Every year profits are given to charity so Peter was delighted to be able to present cheques for £1500 each to representatives of three nominated local charities: Anna Potenza, Community Liaison Manager for Barnes Primary School, Wendy Kyrle Pope, representing the Community Club of North Barnes, and Kerry Lay from the committee of the newly formed St. Osmund's Youth Group.

Barnes Primary will spend the money on electronic visualising and enlarging equipment to help Key Stage 2 children; the Community Club, based at St Paul's School, will use the donation to help with Easter and summer projects providing healthy and positive activities and the acquisition of life skills for young people aged 10-17; the donation to St Osmund's will enable them to employ someone to run the Youth Group, showing teenagers how they can give back to their community.

Robin Eastwood



L to R: Anna Potenza, Wendy Kyrle Pope, Kerry Lay and Peter Siddall

Have you heard of NADFAS? Journalism – a proud trade



These initials stand for the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, a registered charity, with over 90,000 members. It promotes art study and helps conserve the

nation's art heritage and has over 300 affiliated societies, including the South West London Decorative and Fine Arts Society, SWLDFAS.

The Committee organises lectures and study days which take place locally, as well as visits and tours in the UK and abroad. Some years ago SWLDFAS produced the Church record at St. Mary's, Barnes, noting its fabric and furnishings. Members of the Heritage Volunteer section have developed 'hands on' conservation work at the House of Lords, the V & A and the National Archives at Kew. Grants have been made to support local arts projects.

The 40th Anniversary of NADFAS which falls this year is to be marked by a lecture on Stanley Spencer given by Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Barnes resident and former Bishop of Oxford, who is a well-known broadcaster and arts lecturer. This event for SWLDFAS members takes place in June in Barnes. Its main purpose is a fundraising project to adopt the painting *Madonna and Child with St. John*, after Annibale Carracci, in the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

For further information please contact the Membership Secretary, Jane Howe, 020 8748 3707.

Margaret Barrie, SWLDFAS Chairman

Not surprisingly, it was a 'members only' night at a packed Methodist Hall when the Barnes Literary Society welcomed Andrew Marr as its speaker. His subject? *Journalism – a proud trade*.

First, though, he referred to Chairman Fiona Smith's welcome of "the first speaker who has come in evening-dress". He explained that he had to go on to an award ceremony but also, he confessed with a grin, "I live in East Sheen and people there think that everyone in Barnes dresses in the evening. I sometimes venture into the High Street to the fishmonger and the cheese shop, but it's all a bit posh and scary".

Following that we settled down to a fascinating evening – his somewhat unorthodox entry into journalism; his life as a reporter, a political journalist, an editor and now a 'star' of BBC TV and radio, and author (the Barnes Bookshop in Church Road stocks all his books).

We were taken behind the scenes in parliament, mourned the passing of the old independent lobby correspondents, their place taken by organised press conferences, official 'leaks' and political 'spin'. He confessed to still being nervous at times, but none to equal the night outside Conservative Central Office when he had only one technician. The sole spotlight went off with a bang, the technician tried to



Andrew Marr with Fiona Smith

twiddle the bulb but it was incandescent and the unfortunate man shouted "f****" before knocking the lighting stand over and falling down onto the camera!

Circulation of newspapers is falling and so, to some extent, is the general news they offer. We also heard the name of the man who has great influence on both Labour and Conservative leaders, Rupert Murdoch.

After nearly an hour of fascinating talk and answering questions Andrew ended, somewhat cynically, by recalling a famous American editor who said editing was simple. "You separate the wheat from the chaff – and print the chaff".

Sally Holloway

Barnes unc

If you live in Barne

Do you want the village to become s

Some questions answered...

What is a brownfield site?

The derelict lands behind the shops in the High Street are considered to be 'brownfield sites', i.e. land on which industrial or commercial activity took place in the past and which may need to be cleaned up before redevelopment – see map.

Why have the Grafton Gallery and the two adjoining small shops in Grange Road closed?

We understand the leases were not renewed. It has been bought by one developer who applied and has got planning permission to make the premises into one large area, with new flats above. Council planning officers seem satisfied that this will be in keeping with the area. This site can be redeveloped within the building footprint, just like we can redevelop our own properties, but would need an application for change of use from small shops to, say, a restaurant.

Is this not a Conservation Area?

The conservation map in this area is difficult to define. It is evidently not within its parameters.

What about the old pubs?

The Sun is protected. *The Coach and Horses* is protected by the conservation area but there is a brownfield site adjacent and, as far as we know, the frontage will be retained with proposed additions. We understand that a planning application has been received from the owners, Young's Brewery, and the Richmond Housing Partnership but, again, this is a brownfield site and subject to restrictions of height, use, etc. Permission is being sought for the back of Claridge House (the detached building next to the *Coach and Horses*) to be demolished and consent sought for a new retail space plus eight two-storey 'residential units'.

Useful Contacts

- www.richmond.gov.uk
- Richmond upon Thames Planning Office: 8891 7300
- **Barnes Councillors:**
 - Paul Hodgins: 8487 8464, cllr.phodgins@richmond.gov.uk
 - Rita Palmer: 8255 8688, cllr.rpalmer@richmond.gov.uk
 - Christine Percival: 07733 222955, cllr.cpercival@richmond.gov.uk
- **Mortlake and Barnes Common Councillors:**
 - Anna Davies: 8876 5396, cllr.adavies@richmond.gov.uk
 - Zoë McLeod: 8973 4611, cllr.zmcleod@richmond.gov.uk
 - Eleanor Stanier: 8392 9366, cllr.estanier@richmond.gov.uk
- Susan Kramer, MP: 8876 8914, info@susankramer.org.uk

Planning Applications

To view any planning application, past and present, go to the website www.richmond.gov.uk and click on planning. From there, if you know the reference of the application put that in the search box or if you don't, type in the street you need for all the addresses which have been subject to planning applications. Click on the address which is of interest.

Don't forget that the south side of Barnes High Street is in Mortlake and Barnes Common ward and the north side is in Barnes ward.



Under threat? Shops – this affects you! Spoiled by inappropriate development?

What can we do?

Nobody can wish for the brownfield sites in this area to be left undeveloped. We simply want any development to be sensitive to and in keeping with its 'village-like' surroundings. We must watch the planning applications in the local paper; keep a constant watch on Richmond Council's website and object to everything we don't like. In doing this, we can't just say that we don't like it but must give reasons – density, height, unsuitable for the area, potential parking congestion and traffic problems, etc.

Join the BCA – for only £8 a year. The BCA Environment Group tries to monitor these developments but it is essential that residents keep watch too and contact the Council and the BCA if they do not like what changes are proposed. The number of complaints received by the Council does make a difference. Emphasise your support for a generally low-

key development but your opposition to a mixture of high rise flats, offices and shops overshadowing the existing buildings. If there is a public enquiry into any developments that affect your own property make sure that you attend and make your voice heard.

The problem with the two main developers who seem to be concentrating on Barnes village is that they keep submitting plans which, when turned down, are resubmitted, often with minor alterations. This means constant vigilance on the part of concerned residents. *Prospect* will try to keep you in touch, but we need your input as well.

Whom should we contact?

Contact details for the local MP, Richmond Council and local Councillors are given opposite.

Susan Boyd and Sally Holloway



Local shops – the role of the Council

In recent years Richmond Council has refused all planning applications for development of backland sites off Barnes High Street, but it has permitted a restaurant onto the street, on the site of the old KJ garage showroom. So far, the Government Inspector has supported the Council and local objectors in connection with all refusals of the backland sites.

Recently David Stott, Sue Boyd and Katie Gent met Council Forward Planners to be told we can expect:

- A Planning Brief for the backland to the south-west of the High Street. This will lay down general principles on traffic access and egress, scale of new buildings, spaces to be kept open, existing buildings to be kept, etc. Local people will be consulted before this Brief is adopted.
- An updating of the current Conservation Area Study, detailing what makes the village special. This was due in any case but Barnes has been moved up the queue.

The BCA was encouraged by the positive attitude and local knowledge of those talked to, but nevertheless the Council has only a limited right to shape the market, given that we live in a free market economy.

Map: Robert Martin
Photos: Gill Spillane

Save our Playing Fields

Patricia Newton of Barnes Vision chaired a recent public meeting to discuss the future of Barn Elms. Kitson Hall was packed, facing a panel of councillors from both main parties, including Serge Lourie, Leader, and John Coombs, councillor responsible for sport within LBRUT.

The thrust of an often rowdy debate was objection to 5.5 acres of the Barn Elms site being built upon as an 'enabling development' to fund the much-needed – and expensive – upgrade of the sports facilities. While the exact costings were not yet in the public domain, the Council suggested that £4m would be required, and Cllr. Lourie agreed with the overwhelmingly expressed view that

the refurbishment was of prime importance. He explained that, in the Council's opinion, the cost of this could only be met by selling or leasing the land to a private developer who would build a health and fitness centre on the designated site. When the suggestion was made that the community might try to find alternative sources of funding, his initial response that he would give them a week to do so was met with howls of derision, at which point he agreed that there would be an extension to the end of April. While it was not explained to the meeting how this might be pursued, it transpires that Barnes Vision has undertaken to organise a funding committee to develop a plan within this

timeframe. It is now understood that there is a definite possibility that the running track will be saved and there is, of course, no likelihood of the loss of the fishing pond.

The BCA's position is that, as in the past, we will be fully involved in any ensuing discussions without expressing a specific view as to the way forward until much more information is available.

David Stott, BCA Chairman

Footnote: Barnes Vision wishes to thank all their supporters and asks you to visit the new website for up to date information and to register your interest.

<http://savebarnelms.mfbiz.com>



Barnes Eagles Football Club – one of the main users of the pitches



Running track and shot-put 'cage'



Unusable tennis courts



Stand in poor state of repair



Shadwell's Pool at Barn Elms



Anyone for Photoshopping?

The editorial team is always delighted when readers compliment us on *Prospect*, but we are quick to point out that it wouldn't look as good as it does were it not for Anne Cotgreave, our layout guru. We thought, therefore, that you might like to know a little about this wizard of the website, this doyenne of design.

Born and brought up in rural Kent, Anne came to London aged eighteen to attend secretarial college. Two years later she moved here permanently and, apart from a short time flat-sharing in Kensington, has lived in the Richmond borough ever since, moving to North Barnes twenty-one years ago. "Barnes is a proper village

and everyone is so friendly – within a week of arriving we knew all the neighbours."

Initially Anne worked mostly in the music industry and also found time to study for a Sociology degree at Kingston Poly. But as a single parent to Daniel, now aged 22, she needed a permanent job, so set up as a freelance typist learning how to use a word-processor and, as time and technology moved on, a computer. "I joined the now disbanded Barnes Small Businesses Group, was 'volunteered' to join the Barnes Fair committee and never looked back!" Now she works from home specialising in web design and publication layout, but also 'trouble-shoots' and teaches people how to get to grips with a computer. As so much of Anne's work is solitary, she very much enjoys being part of the *Prospect* team.

When Anne is not busy at her keyboard she can be seen walking her Wheaten Terrier, Finbar, on the Common or round the Leg o' Mutton reservoir. She is also passionate about gardening and wildlife, birds in particular, remaining a country girl at heart. The BCA just hopes she doesn't decide to return to her roots!

Gill Spillane

London aged eighteen to attend secretarial college. Two years later she moved here permanently and, apart from a short time flat-sharing in Kensington, has lived in the Richmond borough ever since, moving to North Barnes twenty-one years ago. "Barnes is a proper village



Winter surprises and signs of Spring

Visitors to the London Wetland Centre this winter have had the good luck to see seven Yellow-legged

Gulls and seven Caspian Gulls amongst the more common varieties. The reserve has also attracted a London scarcity, two Glaucous Gulls, whilst nationally-important numbers of Shoveler have been counted on the reserve, over 190 so far. The wintering wildfowl are looking splendid and visitors can expect a season full of surprises throughout the grounds. Flocks of Wigeon feed amongst the Highland Cattle on the banks of the wader scrape, and the Bittern has been spotted quite frequently from the observatory. Three Jack Snipe and four Water Pipits all made for significant sightings in London.

Water Voles are making regular appearances now that a feeding station has



Indian Runner ducklings eager to explore their surroundings (photo: Marc Pearce)

been installed near the bridge by the Dulverton Hide. They have been delighting staff, volunteers and visitors alike by munching away on carrots in full view. There are no guarantees when the voles will appear, but they are being seen most days at present. Signs of spring have already sprung as newts

have appeared in the pond zone and are being caught by the pond dippers. Sign up for a members' walk on 25th March to get the wardens' outlook on the other seasonal changes happening on the reserve.

The events calendar is filling up for spring and children will have plenty to see and do during Easter weekend, 21st-24th March, when Sir Rabbit and Mr Heron make special appearances to distribute tasty chocolate eggs. The Centre is expecting some exciting new arrivals – a family of Indian Runner Ducks, generally considered the 'funniest' of the captive ducks with lots of character. The eggs will be on view in their incubator from 18th March,

with special 'behind-the-scenes' viewings, before hatching out during the second week of the Easter school holidays.

The full schedule of events can be found on www.wwt.org.uk/london, or call 020 8409 4400 for more information.

Stasa Veroukis

Down on the allotment



Soft fruit dealt with on time this year: autumn raspberries cut down, recycled as pea sticks, peas sown last autumn now six inches high. Broad beans doing well – might need

staking later. Haven't bothered to prune the red and black currant bushes this year but fought with a clump of grass which had locked itself on to the blackcurrant's roots like a Pit Bull Terrier – probably unwise to dig the currant up in a fury to remove the

grass. Popped the bush back in but wouldn't blame it if it died. Book says feed bushes with sulphate of potash. Mulched them all liberally and the rhubarb, coming up already, and the still dormant dahlias with organic rotted manure in preparation for drought this summer. Strawberries need tending but may let them have their head and start a new bed with the runners in the autumn.

Elsewhere much bare earth, remnants of last year's Swiss chard which will produce again by May, flat-leaf parsley still useable. I'll sow spinach when finished fitting out new traditional potting shed in back garden at home. This is to be a working shed and not the traditional grumpy old man's retreat.

Intend to be happily sowing, potting out and planting out by April so that this time next year the allotment will be bursting with winter vegetables, sprouts, cabbage and leeks, followed by purple sprouting broccoli, the poor man's asparagus. By that time it will be warm enough to get this year's crops in. That's the idea anyway. Determined not to let allotment be paved over with good intentions.

Memo: must get early seed potatoes for 'chitting' (sprouting) in old egg cartons.

Jack

We hope to bring you further words of wisdom from 'Jack' at regular intervals – Ed.