



# The Twickenham Society

[www.twicksoc.org.uk](http://www.twicksoc.org.uk)

## Eel Pie Update

Issue 5 - September 2003

### Poolsite update

From numerous conversations, it has become clear that many are bemused by what is happening, and where the Twickenham Society stands. The following is a brief account of the events and of the last few months and the Society's response to them.

Amenity groups, who united in opposition to the Dawnay Day scheme, support the Council's long-term aims for the Twickenham Pool site, and accept the Twickenham Challenge as a fresh approach to determining and selecting a suitable public asset for the site. The current debate has been about the best way to implement the short term scheme whilst plans for the long-term scheme are developed.

Four short-term schemes were considered by the Council:

- The Terrace Garden Group's scheme, in which most of the pool buildings were to be retained and reused,
- The Twickenham Society Group's Waterfront scheme, by which the whole site was to be opened up and traffic re-routed away from the Embankment,
- Cllr Arbour's Jubilee Gardens, and
- The Dearle Henderson scheme for partial clearance of the site and inclusion of a playground.

All of these were designed to open part or all of the site to public use, and to bring an end to over twenty years decay.

In many respects, the least interesting of these schemes was from Dearle-Henderson, but that was the one for which the Council sought planning consent on 31 July. Amenity groups represented at the meeting were unanimous in calling for improvements to the proposed scheme.

It was argued that:

- The whole site could be cleared instead on one third,

- The children's playground would be better situated near the duck-feeding part of the Embankment rather than the Wino's corner,
- There should be public toilets and that fencing more in keeping with the riverside setting should be used.

These improvements were turned down by the Council.

The Terrace Garden Group remain of the view that their scheme would have served as both a short and long term solution, and that, with Council support, it could have been implemented already.

The Twickenham Society and other amenity groups believe that the Council's scheme is a positive step forward, and wish it well. But, there is a shared disappointment that the opportunity for an imaginative open space scheme that made use of the whole site has been missed.

Behind the scenes, the Council has been working closely with the candidates for the Twickenham Challenge. We await the outcome and the announcement of the next stage in the selection of the major public asset for the site, with the greatest of interest.

### The Mayors Charity

The Mayor's Charity for 2003/4 is the Richmond Carers Centre. The Mayor Councillor Nicola Urquhart held a reception at York House on the 4<sup>th</sup> September to publicise the work of her charity.

The Carer Centre provides advice and support to those who are carers in the borough. It is estimated that over 20,000 people are carers in the LBRuT, but the centre is only in contact with 900. Anyone who would like to help the centre or who wants to contact them for support or know more about their work can do so on 0208 744 3900.

They have a website at [www.richmondcarers.org.uk](http://www.richmondcarers.org.uk) and their address is 88 Queens Road, Twickenham TW1 4ET

## ONE MAN AND HIS DOGS

### [The letters of Horace Walpole reveal his lifelong love of dogs, as Peter Hill relates]

Horace Walpole kept dogs for most of his life – and frequently wrote about them. He was not a hunting man like his father – when Wootton painted the great Sir Robert, there were usually hounds at his feet. Horace tended to favour small, domestic, affectionate dogs. He treated them humanely – and he recognized this quality in others. He called it “dogmanity”.

He was unlucky, however, with his first dogs. In November 1739, while crossing the Alps for the Grand Tour of Italy, his black King Charles spaniel, **Tory**, was running ahead of the chaise horses when it was seized by a wolf. The postilion struck out with his whip, but in vain. It was “a cruel accident”, he wrote, to “*the prettiest, fattest, dearest creature*”. Horace screamed. His friend Conway, who had given him the dog, was “full of grief” for “*the rape of poor Tory*”.

Barely two years later a sad fate befell Horace's second dog, **Bettina**. He wrote in May 1741 to his friend Mann in Florence “*poor Bettina tumbled out of the balcony into the street this morning, and died in three minutes – was it not cruel and shocking – and is it not cruel to have all one's creatures come to such untimely ends?*”

A new favourite emerges in 1741 after his return from the Grand Tour – **Patapan**. Small enough for his lap, white and furry, it was probably of Italian origin. Many years later Walpole wrote “*tradition says that Patapan was given to the author by the peerless Lady Grifoni*.” The dog was quick to breed – “*he has lately taken a wife unto him, as ugly as he is genteel*”. Walpole had a puppy delivered to Sir Horace Mann – it was named Patapanino. The dog found himself living at 10 Downing Street for a time, before transferring to Houghton in Norfolk, where “*his Patapanic Majesty is not one of the least curiosities – the crowds that come to see the house stare at him and ask what creature it is. As he does not speak one word of Norfolk there are strange conjectures made about him.... a foreign prince, a Hanoverian...*”. Walpole's friends made a fuss of the dog – John Chute wrote a poem about him, based on an epigram by Martial, which Walpole says was thrown into the fire by Patapan, partly because “*he told me he never heard of a lapdog's reading Latin*”. In 1743 he had Patapan sit to the great animal painter John Wootton. When Patapan died in April 1745 Walpole said he was so upset – “*I am grown so fond of such little faithful companions*” – that he got two King Charles spaniels, one of which was called Pompey. At Houghton in the summer he even wrote a

long poem, *Patapan, or the Little White Dog*, in imitation of Fontaine.

There is a gap of over two decades before we come to **Rosette**, a tanned black spaniel. Walpole told Mann that she was his current favourite, partly because the dog saved his life. He was once undressing for bed when the dog barked at the chimney. “At last, not being able to quiet her, I looked to see what she barked at and perceived sparks of fire falling from the chimney, and on searching further perceived it in flames. It had not gone far and we easily extinguished it.” When Rosette died in October 1773 Walpole wrote an epitaph which begins: *Sweetest roses of the year Strew around my Rose's bier.....*

Eight years went by, until in May 1781, when he was in his 60's, he wrote to Mason “*I have got a new idol, in a word, a successor to Rosette, and almost as great a favorite...*” He explained that Mme du Deffand had made him promise on his last visit to her in Paris that he would take charge of her dog **Tonton** after her death. “*It has arrived and I am going to say it is incredible how fond I am of it, but I have no occasion to brag of my dogmanity ... he is now sitting on my paper as I write.*” Mme du Deffand also bequeathed to Walpole her snuff box, with an image of Tonton in enamel. Tonton, who became stone deaf and nearly blind, died in early 1789. Walpole had him buried behind the chapel at Strawberry Hill near Rosette – the memorial stone is still there, has been defaced.



**The image of Tonton on Walpole's snuffbox**

## STOP PRESS

### Strawberry Hill on World Monuments Fund Watch List for 2004

The World Monuments Fund has now put Strawberry Hill House on its “most at risk” list of structures in need of repair, renovation and protection. The mansion's endangered status ranks it alongside the Great Wall of China, the Panama Canal and the ancient Nineveh and Nimrud palaces in Iraq.

## An eventful Summer

Our first summer event was our party on **23 May** for Derek Plummer on the Richmond Venturer where we had food and drink and some eloquent speeches celebrating some of Derek's achievements, interests and local passions. His own speech about the Twickenham Society brought out its roots and its unifying influence in the area. In the light of our umbrella group role over the Riverside site in 2001, 2002, and 2003 we knew what he meant.

I am grateful to Gail Hebert for the photograph below and the excellent recording of the event and a brilliant write up in the Richmond and Twickenham Times.



Sitting behind Derek and Judith - Miranda Jagers of the River Thames Boat Project and Richard Faircliff former chair of the Twickenham Society

On the **26<sup>th</sup> May** we ran an information stall at the Fair on the Green. Useful that we were back again after missing last year but not a very effective stand. Not many members of the Society want to contribute but would it be different if we had a more direct mission eg running a refreshment stall for super soft drinks or Pimms? Your views very welcome

Marble Hill celebrated the Centenary of its grounds being open to the public over the weekend of **31<sup>st</sup> May** and 1st June The English Heritage Staff joined with The Marble Hill Society to make it a wonderful weekend of funfare, stalls, fancy dress and glorious weather and huge numbers thronged around the House.

A small and select group of us visited Peter and Rosemary Hill on the **21<sup>st</sup> June** in their lovely cottage in Chard in Somerset; I say cottage but they have converted some rooms into a granny flat and have altered the barn for office and spare room and painting space – its more like an estate!! A lovely lunch But do remind me not to travel on the day of the Summer Solstice to any location which requires passing Stonehenge. I came back by the M5/M4 several hours later.

Our last summer celebration was the Garden Party in my Garden on the **26<sup>th</sup> July** where some 25 members of the Society joined in eating and drinking and local gossip and general Twickenham fun. The last few guests and their hostess repaired to a local restaurant for a very late lunch. Next year we might plan the lunch as an optional extra.

Since that comparatively cool day with rain threatening we have enjoyed a very hot summer and look set to be back to autumnal events and meetings, and for some of us work !

## Special Treat at AGM - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Dr. Vincent Cable MP writes:

*"My search for material, via the history of parliament project, has been more productive than I had thought possible and with the help of the House of Commons library I have assembled election results and MP's biographies going back to the Napoleonic wars (for much of the time Twickenham was actually part of Brentford and the Teddington/Hampton end was separately represented in a different part of Middlesex). There is also interesting material on Middlesex MPs going back to the 14th century... I think it should prove to be of interest to your members"*

## Forthcoming Events

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Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October  
19:30-21:30 St Mary's Church Hall

Stephanie Kirkpatrick  
Curator of the Richmond Museum

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Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November  
19:30-21:30 St Mary's Church Hall

Annual General Meeting

And talk by our MP  
Dr Vincent Cable

on the MPs of Twickenham

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12<sup>th</sup> December

Christmas Party

– location yet to be confirmed

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12<sup>th</sup> February  
19:30-21:30 St Mary's Church Hall

John Inglis

demonstrating Twickenham on line  
– a presentation we have not seen before but  
the York House Society has.

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18<sup>th</sup> March  
19:30-21:30 St Mary's Church Hall

The Bishop of Kensington Dr Michael Colclough

A day in the life of our local Bishop!

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21<sup>st</sup> May

Annual Social Event

Grove Chapel  
Richmond

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10<sup>th</sup> June  
19:30-21:30 St Mary's Church Hall

David Allen, a life member

talking about the influence of  
Twickenham People  
on the Royal Society of Arts

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24<sup>th</sup> July

Garden Party

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