



The Twickenham Society

www.twicksoc.org.uk

Eel Pie Update

Issue 6 - April 2004

Pool Site Public Inquiry

The story so far.....

23 years after the Public Open Air swimming pool by the river was closed, and after several schemes were produced, consulted about and for one reason or another rejected the Council suggested a piecemeal approach beginning with the demolition of the Pool Building. The so-called short term scheme also includes a children's playground at the river end of Wharf Lane and some limited landscaping. The Twickenham Society has supported the approach while having reservations about the quality of building and landscaping materials and the longer term plans for the rest of the site.

The Twickenham Society Group comprises the TwickSoc itself plus other amenity groups and residents representatives and we have worked together to form a common approach. The Terrace Group and an individual architect have been focusing on plans which would largely involve the Pool Building

November 2003

The Council's scheme was ready for Planning Permission from the Government Office for London but the scheme was called in by the Secretary of State on several grounds. It was quickly apparent this would lead to a Public Inquiry. The Twickenham Society did not ask for the Inquiry and nor did the Council.

February 2004

The Inquiry started on 11th February and finished on the 27th and it took 6 days of Council Officers' time, 6 days of the Council's Barrister's time and 6 days of the Twickenham Society Group's time and of course 6 days of the Planning Inspector's time. There were of course representations from the Terrace Group, the individual architect and a number of residents and businesses. There was even a group of young adults from the Richmond upon Thames College requesting that a Children's playground could be extended to cover a skateboarding area.

Read all about it

All the submissions, Proofs of Evidence, Summaries, Opening Statements and Closing Statements exist and can be found with a written record of the proceedings on www.rivercentre.org.uk and there are links to this site from the Twickenham Society website, from Twickenham on-line and from the Council.

Our team was John Bell Vice Chair of the Twickenham Society and representing the Friends of Twickenham Green, Adam Brand, Chairman of the York House Society. Bill Double Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee of the Eelpie Island Association, Yvonne Hewett representing the Thames Eyot flats Derek Plummer former Chair of the Twickenham Society and the Environment Trust for Richmond and I, Judith Lovelace.

The Outcome?

The next stage will be a report from the Planning Inspectorate to the Government Office for London and to the Secretary of State (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) expected at the end of April/ beginning of May 2004.

This may be accompanied by Planning Permission and if so would enable the Council to seek tenders for the demolition work etc.

Reflections

- The short term scheme is fairly innocuous and would get things moving on that derelict and ugly site. Was a Public Inquiry really necessary? No but it was legitimately called and we live in a democracy!!
- The piecemeal approach is good because it gives people time to absorb and agree proposed changes; the downside is the longer timeframe in theory. After 23 years agreement would be good!
- I would not have missed the experience of being involved in an Inquiry of that sort and the great performances of all the parties involved.
- Ask any team members how we spent lunchtimes!!
- We must prepare to engage in discussion quite soon about the next phase of development
- Special thanks to all involved including Jack Beteridge who went on holiday for February and missed it but who left behind robust paperwork for us to rely on.

TWICKENHAM'S MONUMENTS

You wouldn't think Twickenham had a lot of monuments – there is a barely a statue to be seen in the town, apart from the splendid one of a soldier on the War Memorial in Radnor Gardens – but a visit to the website of the PMSA, or Public Monuments and Sculpture Association will surprise you. The website is: <http://pmsa.courtauld.ac.uk>

There are fourteen entries for Twickenham altogether. Apart from the war memorial, by Mortimer Brown, dating from 1921, there are the obvious ones like Sir Rattan Tata's fountain in York House (1910), (together with the little nymph on the shell in the Japanese garden). There is the Kilmorey Mausoleum in St Margaret's Road, and Pope's Grotto with its two figures, possibly of St Catherine of and St James, added after Pope's death.

Also listed is the Coade stone gilded lion on the Rowland Hill Gates at the RFU, designed in 1837, which stood outside the Lion Brewery in Lambeth for over a century. The lion, together with the one on Westminster Bridge, was preserved at the express wish of King George VI, and was presented by the GLC in April 1972 to mark the centenary of the RFU. The site also lists the four statues of rugby players on the entrance gates in Whitton Road, which were commissioned in 1996 to go with the redevelopment of the stadium.

Little noticed, but recorded, are the three female classical figures on the front of Twickenham Library, in Garfield Road, unveiled in 1906. Carved by Gilbert Seale, they represent science, literature and the arts. Either side of the entrance to the library, and separately recorded, are two medallions, of Pope and Tennyson. They are portrait heads in three-quarter profile within circles, with garlands and ribbon below. They were designed in 1906-7; they are also by Seale, who was employed by the architect, Howard Goadby.

Also easy to miss is the gold eagle outside the Matthew Poppy Advertising Agency in Richmond Road, just this side of the bridge. Not much seems to be known about it. But all visitors to the Civic Centre in York Street will know the sculpture inside the atrium, of three men climbing a rope. It is called "To the Top", and was done by Kevin Atherton in 1990 on a commission from Richmond Council. The three life size figures are cast in

bronze. It is supposed to be a comment on the problems of rising above bureaucracy, and the rope represents red tape. Outside the building even the humble seats are not omitted – four curving stone benches, designed by the in-house landscape architect when the civic centre was redesigned in 1990.

The sculpture in perhaps the worst condition in the area is the draped female classical figure in stone at the side of Orleans House Octagon. Few details are known, or given. The right arm is broken, fingers are missing on the left hand, and it is overgrown with lichen. The condition is described as "poor". The Gallery has the duty of care.

There is an unusual monument in Crane Park – two millstones lying by the pathway near a bridge over the Crane. They belonged to the Hounslow Gunpowder Mills, which closed in 1926. Each has a bronze plaque – one commemorates the Warden of the newly created Nature Reserve who died in 1994, and the other explains that the millstones incorporated the various ingredients of gunpowder between 1766 and 1926.

Many of these sculptures have long descriptive entries on the website, and the responsible authority is listed, as well as the state of the sculpture and the effects of vandalism.

Several thoughts are prompted by this admirable data base, which attempts to record statues and monuments throughout the country. First, is the list exhaustive? Are there any other monuments and carvings in Twickenham which the PMSA has missed, and deserve their, and our, attention? Secondly, are the responsible authorities, such as the Borough Council, carrying out their duty in preserving the monuments that come under their care?

And thirdly, are there any figures who should be commemorated in Twickenham whose effigies are manifestly lacking? The answer is of course, yes. Twickenham was home to two of the great literary figures of the eighteenth century – Pope and Walpole. Should not the council be urged to commission a statue, plaque, bas-relief or monument to remind us of them? Will anyone take up the baton?

Peter Hill

Riverside House

The House has now been sold to its previous tenant. The Council has agreed that the monies arising from the sale should be used within the estate as a whole and the Twickenham Society will be involved in the new "Trust" or managing body. We are expecting to hear from the Council shortly about those arrangements. We have not yet heard from the Charity Commissioners. Watch this space!

The Bishop of Kensington The Right Reverend Michael Colclough

Was our speaker at the March Twickenham Talk. I was pleased to see a good turnout for him! He spoke to us about his life and upbringing in Staffordshire, his decision to go into the Ministry, his meeting and marrying his wife Cynthia and their family. He had a fascinating story of the move from Kensington the Dial House. I had originally asked him to tell us about his job as a Bishop which he summed up as a bridge builder- from the original Latin title in the early church- ie **pontifex**. The bridges he refers to are those between him and the 100 plus priests within the Diocese.



"So I said to the actress"

He answered questions about the Anglican Church now, its strengths and weaknesses And

he fielded the entertaining question about "What The Bishop said to The Actress" – which the Richmond and Twickenham Times had used in advertising the event; he told us about visiting Thora Hurd when she was living in Brinsworth House and called her a "great giggle"!

Our thanks to Bishop Michael and we promise to invite him and Cynthia to other future events

Richmond and Twickenham Times

Its timely to say a big thank you to the R&TT for their unfailing coverage of the events we have and future events. Our chief supporter/reporter is Gail Hebert who runs The Bulletin but our thanks too to Sarah Bell who covers the Twickenham part of the Borough on news.

Unitary Development Plan

Every local authority has a UDP and it is reviewed periodically taking account of local regional and national policy issues. It has strong "planning" elements to it and some political input from the local authority Councillors. One of the issues which is contested in great detail is the designation of Metropolitan Open Land. If this designation is changed in part of the Borough it can mean that the Council is free to build eg houses on it.

The publication of the next updated UDP is due now (end of March/ beginning of April) and there will be an opportunity to challenge the report.

Church Street Closure for dining etc during this summer.

Last years spectacularly warm and extensive summer led to Church Street being closed to cars and open for the pubs and restaurants for most of June, July, August and a part of September. It seemed like a brilliant idea for the Twickenham Festival and then it went on and on and on.....

Many residents raised objections to the extent of the opening and made sure there was support from Councillors and other groups for a more reasonable approach this year. The upshot is that Church Street will be closed on Friday and Saturday evenings and between 12 and 5.00pm on Sundays.

Anyone heard the weather forecast ?

Forthcoming Events

<p>Monday 19th April Twickenham museum lecture</p> <p>St Mary's Church Hall at 8.00pm</p> <p>Catherine Parry-Wingfield VILLAS ON THE THAMES</p> <p>Tickets £5.00, in aid of Museum Funds</p>
<p>Friday 21st May 7.30pm - 10.00pm Grove Chapel Lower Grove Road - Richmond</p> <p>Annual Social Event</p> <p>Drinks and nibbles and an update on local developments</p>
<p>Monday 31st May</p> <p>HANDS Fair on Twickenham Green</p>
<p>Thursday 10th June 19:30-21:30 Twickenham Club, 7 Church St</p> <p>David Allan On Twickenham people and the Royal Society of Arts in the 250th anniversary year</p>
<p>Saturday 24th July 12.00 - 2.30pm at 30 Strawberry Hill Close</p> <p>TwickSoc members Garden Party a few drinks and nibbles in the sun (?) to celebrate the Summer</p>
<p>Thursday 23rd September 19:30-21:30 Twickenham Club, 7 Church St</p> <p>Esther Worboys Twickenham Town Centre Management Board</p>
<p>Friday 12th November 19:30-21:30 Twickenham Club, 7 Church St</p> <p>AGM plus talk</p>

Future meetings, events visits

Note that our regular venue for Twickenham Talks is moving down Church Street to number 7 the home of the Twickenham Club.

Any ideas for future speakers? Events or visits ?

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