



The Bulletin

February 2020



Putney: At the Heart of London Rowing

Putney is unique as a centre for rowing, hosting the three Head of the River Races as well as the annual Oxford & Cambridge Boat Race. Phil Evison, Caroline Whitehead and Lynn Piercy will take a look at the history of Putney's riverside, the Boathouses and the development of rowing - not forgetting the vibrant life of the Embankment today - on **Monday 24 February at 7.30pm.**

Community Church, Werter Road SW15 2LL

For those of you inspired to go and see the action after this exploration of our rowing history, the relevant dates for upcoming events are:



Photo courtesy of Andrew Wilson

- **Women's Head of the River** – 7 March from Mortlake, start time 14.30
- **Schools' Head of the River** - 18 March from Mortlake, start time 12 noon
- **Men's Head of the River** – 21 March from Mortlake, start time 14.45
- **The Boat Race** – 29 March , Women's Race at 15.44 and Men's Race at 16.44

And more about activities on and beside the Thames - Meet the Mudlarkers

At low tide Thames mudlarks Florence Evans and Monika Buttling Smith hunt through the trash and treasure that the tide has revealed. Find out what they find at their talk on 27th February for the Friends of Putney Library.

Mudlarking in the 18th and 19th centuries was carried out by those desperate to make a living by selling scraps salvaged from the foreshore. It was a desperate way of earning a subsistence living, and most of the original mudlarks were young boys. In modern times, mudlarks search for clues about the people who lived here – finds might be bones from tanneries, roof tiles from the fire of London, clay pipes from the 16th century, and Caribbean shells used as ballast on a sailing ship.

"The river arranges everything by weight. This is the pottery beach – over there is metal..."

Modern Thames mudlarks forage out of enjoyment of squelching about in mud, and splashing in the river. They look on their finds as gifts from Old Father Thames, and the good finds come as a reward for taking rubbish out of the environment. It gives Mother Nature a chance to recover. We now have seals breeding in the



Thames, thanks to a thriving fish stock and cleaner water. Mudlarks have contributed to this, with each piece of plastic removed. *"It's also the thrill of the lucky dip. If you do find something, you may think it's not very interesting, but when you get home and research it, it turns out to be absolutely amazing."*

Come and find out more at **Putney Library, Thursday 27 February, 6 for 6.30 p.m.**

A Friends of Putney Library Free Event, refreshments provided.

Reservations appreciated: Call 020 8780 3085 or email charlene.coleman@gll.org

Advance notice of AGM

Our AGM will take place on **Monday 23 March**, when the speaker will be our former MP, Justine Greening, talking about her ongoing work on Social Mobility. More details in next month's Bulletin, when we will also be sending out nomination forms for those of you that would like to join the Executive.

If you want to know more about what it means to be a trustee (i.e. member of the Executive Committee) do come along as an observer to our meeting on 17 February – more details from secretary@putneysociety.org.uk. It is always good to get a fresh point of view on the Committee so do give it some thought.

Buildings Panel

Co-convenor: Andrew Catto
ac@andrewcatto.co.uk 020 8785 0077

Putney Embankment - Strolling along the Embankment last weekend I noticed that rowers are already practicing for next month's Head of the River Race. If you've ever wondered why Putney? Come along to our open meeting on the 24th February (details – page 1) to find out more about the past present and future of rowing in Putney.

The Local Plan - What gets built, or at least gets planning consent, depends on the Local Plan. Wandsworth are in the process of revising this and the Chairman and I, plus several other representatives of other local residents' associations spent a very interesting morning recently making suggestions for changes. Time will tell how much they will take on board. There's a long way to go before this is finally adopted, probably in 2022.

Alton Estate - Meanwhile Wandsworth, despite having been told that the Mayor of London won't approve the current scheme, continues to push ahead with plans to demolish the centre of the Alton Estate for

redevelopment. One community building has already been demolished without planning permission yet for the flats to replace it and six of the ten flats above the Co-op are boarded up. We have been promised changes to reduce the loss of trees, but it still looks like being a very expensive way to get just 30 extra council homes.

More new flats - The drive to make new homes affordable by building small continues. Last month it was a proposal for tiny bedsits on the High Street. This month we wrote to oppose an application for a new building where 10 of the flats would be small one bedroom units. Planning policy says 20% maximum this size in a development. We have also seen new proposals for small flats on top of an existing block in West Putney. Here the flats have to fit the space available. With a new building there is no excuse. Whether the rumoured re-awakening of house sales will change this remains to be seen.

Transport Panel

Convenor: Stephen Luxford
Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

The latest annual station usage statistics, covering the 2018-19 financial year, show that Putney station, with 8.614m passengers, continues to be one of the busiest stations in the country. However, for the fourth year in a row numbers have fallen. They are down from 8.8m the year before and dropped over 20% from 11.2m in 2014-15. SWR put this down to strike action, but this hides more deep rooted reasons as numbers are only down by 0.5% at Wandsworth Town and have in fact risen at Barnes Bridge. More likely factors are possibly the sharp decrease in office jobs in Putney, particularly in the Upper Richmond Road, and the move towards part-time and home working. Whatever is the cause, a loss of 2.6m passengers in just 4 years does not add weight to the case for a multi-million pound second entrance.

Falling passenger numbers is not good news for South Western Railway which has recorded a £137m loss. They acknowledge that they are in discussions with the Department for Transport about possibly terminating their contract in the next 12 months.

On the Underground, Wimbledon Park is amongst stations on the District Line earmarked for step free access.

Neighbouring Southfields has had lifts for some time. Meanwhile East Putney, which has more passengers than both stations put together, has no plans for lifts. Thank you to those who have contacted me since the last bulletin expressing support for greater priority to lifts at East Putney rather than a second entrance at the railway station. This is an issue we intend to raise with our new MP, Fleur Anderson.

As I mentioned in my last column, air quality on the High Street has dramatically improved since the introduction of cleaner buses; however in 2019, the annual NO₂ mean was still 50% above the EU recommended limit so there is still a long way to go. One further potential area of concern is the impact of the increased traffic on the Lower Richmond Road and Putney Bridge Road following the closure of Hammersmith Bridge. TfL estimate that an extra 5,000 vehicles a day are now crossing Putney Bridge, many down these two roads where there are no air monitors. More traffic may also be diverted here when Wandsworth Bridge undergoes its partial closure shortly. The Society is considering whether it might mount its own air quality monitoring exercise along these roads.

FUTURE PANEL MEETINGS

All members welcome, but please contact Convenor if new to the panel to check if there is sufficient space.

COMMUNITY:
13 Feb. 6 Norroy Road, SW15 1PF (18.30)
12 March 41, Norroy Road, SW15 1PQ
Co-convenors:
Vicky Diamond & Val Jones
vickysw15@aol.co.uk,
jones.val@gmail.com
T: 07746 022654

TRANSPORT:
11 Feb. & 10 March
46 Disraeli Road, SW15 2DS (19.30)
Convenor:
Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

BUILDINGS:
4 Feb. & 4 March
at 154 Putney High St., SW15 1RS (19.00)
Convenor:
Andrew Catto
ac@andrewcatto.co.uk

OPEN SPACES:
6 Feb. & 5 March
at 28 Howards Lane, SW15 6NQ (19.00)
Convenor:
Judith Chegwidan
judith.chegwidan@gmail.com
T: 020 8788 4489

Community Panel

Co-convenors: Victoria Diamond & Val Jones
Vickysw15@aol.com & jones.val@gmail.com 07746 022654

Looking after the health and wellbeing of individuals is a shared and complex responsibility – starting with ourselves. Promotion of good health, prevention of ill health and early treatment are key to maintaining good health and so it's reassuring to know there are excellent services, at all levels, to provide help when needed. NHS community health services are a vital part of the wider health and care services in our communities - but it's sometimes difficult to find out where to get help and how services link together to ensure that no one 'falls through the net'. **Information is key to finding the right service.** The Community Panel is committed to giving people information about local services which help them to stay healthy. This month the focus is on sexual health, sometimes overlooked because people are too embarrassed to talk about it or to seek help. There is a wide range

of services available across Wandsworth, always confidential and easily accessed – see the Sexual Health South West London website shswl.nhs.uk.

One fairly new clinic, opened in July 2019, is located within the **Danebury Avenue Surgery, 351 Danebury Avenue, Roehampton, SW15 4DU**. This friendly and welcoming nurse-led service is open on **Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9.00am-5.00pm**, offering confidential advice and treatment on contraception (implants, pills, depo injections and assessment for coil fitting) and sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening. An appointment-only service, book by phone 0333 300 2100 (lines open 8 am-7 pm, Monday to Friday), or online <http://www.shswl.nhs.uk>.

No need to visit your GP first. And there's free parking too.

Open Spaces Panel

Convenor: Judith Chegwidden
judith.chegwidden@gmail.com 020 8788 4489

Gardens - This year we were planning to re-run our front garden competition – but Wandsworth Council are now planning a borough wide front garden competition. The panel will have to reconsider our plans in light of this development. 'Greening the Grid' in neighbouring Southfields have recently pointed out that over half of London's front gardens are paved over and five times as many have no plants compared to ten years ago. This results in London losing a green space the size of two and half Hyde Parks every year. "*Greening the Grid*" have active community gardening sessions for local residents offering both plants and growing guidelines. Following on from our meeting on vegetable growing in January should we be organising more sessions with gardening advice? It is possible to plant up a front garden and keep maintenance to a minimum.

Absence of litter bins - Litter in the roads adjoining Wandsworth Park and along Putney Heath continues

to be a problem. Wandsworth Council believe that residents and visitors should take their litter home with them – but is this a practical option for sticky or greasy food wrappers? We understand that the trial of "*smart bins*" which compact rubbish and send a notification when they need emptying is still underway. If successful, this would provide a solution to costly daily emptying of bins and reduce litter near our open spaces.

Greening our High Street - Our local BID – Positively Putney - is looking at ways of introducing more green into the High Street and its adjacent streets, possibly using green screens, parklets and living walls. Well-designed parklets can offer seating as well as adding biodiversity. Green hoardings can soften the look of empty units on the High Street. We hope to be working with the BID to encourage more planting.

PUTNEY SOCIETY CONTACTS

See website for full details:
www.putneysociety.org.uk

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Return of the Riverside Studios



Not strictly in Putney – but just a riverside walk or bus ride away this exciting venue on our doorstep has recently re-opened after a six year redevelopment programme funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Originally an iron foundry, Riverside was converted into a film studio in the 1930s and was used as an ever-evolving film, television studio and arts venue until it was closed in 2014. It is now a brand-new complex of flexible performance and work spaces that include a state-of-the-art TV studio, a cinema/theatre, event and rehearsal spaces, bars and restaurants as well as a gallery and a display of Riverside's archive. For more information on performances, exhibitions and eating and drinking opportunities go to <https://www.riversidestudios.co.uk/>. **It is also possible to book a tour of the complex.**

Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability Winter Walk 2020



Saturday 8 February 10-13.30

Take part in a sponsored walk across 5 miles over Wimbledon Common; **starting and finishing at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, West Hill, SW15 3SW.**

Snacks, hot drinks and lunch will be provided. Registration fee: £10 per person, or £25 for a family - to buy tickets go to www.rhn.org.uk. Fundraising target: £100 per person, £300 for a family and £500 for groups of 6+.

Dear Editor

Roehampton leads the way

Last April, the 'Quietway' contra-flow cycle scheme was introduced in Roehampton High Street. Vehicular traffic now shares the one-way road with cyclists who come down from Putney Heath to Roehampton Lane, cycling against the flow of other traffic. It is part of the efforts to encourage us all to cycle more - to help to cut down on pollution.

There were some who were concerned that it would be very dangerous and that accidents were bound to happen. The street is too narrow they said. Pedestrians would be confused they feared. Well, it hasn't worked out that way, fortunately. No-one has been killed!

Everyone seems to be willing to be sensible and to accept that, if you go carefully, the cyclists, motorists and pedestrians can accommodate each other without any hassle.

'Look both ways - its OK'. This seems to be what people accept.

So, we can now expect to see the borough council proceed to introduce contra-flow cycling in the one-way streets off Putney High Street - Norroy, Chelverton, Disraeli, Werter and Montserrat Roads. It is long over-due.

Where Roehampton leads today, Putney follows tomorrow!

John Horrocks

The Arts Society, South West London Branch, has introduced a Young Arts initiative for 2020



Young Arts initiatives for 2020 - they are offering free entry to lectures for any students in years 12 & 13 (with student /oyster card identification). They will be contacting Wandsworth Schools in order to publicise this, but members may also know students who might want to benefit from this initiative. One of the lectures on offer is on 9 March when James Lindow will be examining the 'Genius of Raphael'; charting his meteoric rise to fame at the beginning of the C16. The lecture will analyse his early work in the Perugino workshop, his stay in Florence in 1504 and his work for the Papacy in Rome in 1508.

All Arts Society meetings are in the **Dryburgh Hall, Putney Leisure Centre and start at 8pm.** All visitors are welcome, but an entry fee of £8 is payable.

Much mentioned in the House!

Those of you addicted to the Parliament Channel may have noticed that the Putney Society was praised by our outgoing MP, Justine Greening, in her valedictory speech and by our incoming MP, Fleur Anderson, in her maiden speech.