

# **THE BATTERSEA SOCIETY**

## **Chair's Report for 2007/2008**

### **ANOTHER BUSY YEAR**

This has been a year of consolidation and development. Our main activities fall into three broad groupings: -

- 1) Campaigning around current issues
- 2) Enabling and arranging membership and public events, and
- 3) Developing awareness about Battersea past, present and future.

In addition, we need to develop our own infrastructure in order to be able to better undertake the above tasks.

Thus, we have campaigned a lot, as usual, and provided a regular series of events that have been well supported through the year. We have established a new committee to deal with community issues and our marketing committee has worked hard to help us develop a consistent and attractive public image, coupled with ways and means of increasing membership.

I hope you will agree that we have improved our communications with our members by producing two fine editions of the new Newsletter (New Editor - Jenny Sheridan) and we have at long last established our web site. ( [www.batterseasociety.org.uk/](http://www.batterseasociety.org.uk/) ). Huge thanks are due to Mike Roden, ably supported by Gail Treves Brown, for this. Articles for the Newsletter and items for the web site will be gratefully received - the contact list is at the end of this report.

We also are pleased to report that we have won an award this year. The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies awarded us the Media Impact Award for our joint collaboration to save the Wandsworth Museum. Other joint winners were the Wandsworth Historical Society, the Wandsworth Society, and the Putney Society. We wish we could say that all our efforts to save the museum were successful but we have at this moment in time a pessimistic view as to whether the museum will be able to open again.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

On 30<sup>th</sup> March our individual membership was 252. This was 36 higher (17%) than this time last year. Our target for increased individual membership this year is 25%. However, in addition to this there are a number of residents' associations and other community groups in membership which brings our 'de facto' membership to nearer to 1,000. We have high hopes that a combination of our regular new Newsletter, the new web site and an imaginative marketing committee will all contribute towards our target increase in our membership. One recent product of this activity is a marketing postcard which you will find on your seats today and we hope very much you will take home and give to a non member friend.

### **TRUSTEES**

At the beginning of the year your executive committee consisted of 16 members, of whom 13 were trustees. John Garvan, although nominated as a trustee at last year's AGM, was unable to take up his duties due to his illness. Monica Tross was co-opted as a trustee by the trustees and has energetically served the committee from the beginning of the year. Unfortunately two trustees, Christine Fremantle

and Gloria Cottesloe, resigned during the year. Both are missed for they contributed special insights and perspectives, for which I would like to thank them. As trustees we have met 6 times during the year.

## EVENTS

We strive to continue to provide a varied and interesting programme of events for our members. Unfortunately, the weather for our last Summer Party was dire - torrential rain forced us to hold it in the Crypt of St. Mary's Church, but nevertheless it turned out to be a great success and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. During the year after the party we visited Clarence House, Spencer House, Tyburn Convent and Linley Sambourne House - all very different - and very interesting. We had two fascinating talks - "Battersea Past & Present" by Brian Bloice and the Tate Lecture "Sickert & the Camden Group" by Nicola Moorby of Tate Britain. Two Open Meetings on "Battersea's Healthcare Needs - Options for the Future" and "Car Clubs" were well attended and caused lively discussion.

So far this year we have visited the Mansion House, Tate Britain Print Archives, toured the Royal Court Theatre and the Palace of Westminster. The Open Meeting at Wandsworth Town Hall on "The Environment & Sustainability" was well received by a large audience and the many questions raised after the lecture were answered by John Bowis MEP (our Member of the European Parliament), Cllr. Malcolm Grimston (WBC Cabinet Member for the Environment and Leisure) and Chris Church (Chair of London 21). We also had a very interesting talk by Prof. Penelope Corfield on "Vauxhall & Battersea Pleasure Gardens". Two most enjoyable social occasions were dinner at the Galapagos Restaurant and lunch at Thai on the River.

More talks and visits are planned for the rest of this year, as you will have seen from the programme recently sent to you, and already we are planning for 2009 and some bookings have already been made!

## PLANNING

Another active year in which the major issues have been: -

**Clapham Junction** A proposed partial redevelopment included some pedestrian walkways at the north west corner of the Junction, a new entrance to the railway station, some work to the station itself and two tower block of over 500 non-affordable residential housing. We had a private view and meeting with the developers (Delancey's and their agents Kinge Sturge) in January and gained an understanding of their aims. Our views have now been communicated ahead of there being a planning application and can be seen on our web site. Our main point is that Wandsworth Borough Council as the planning authority needs to pay particular attention to the effect of this intended development on the area and request that the Council have a clear concept of the appearance they plan for the area before they consider this application. The application when it is received is not likely to have any new provision for buses.

**Ralph West Halls Albert Bridge Road**...We see little improvement in the new application to the previous application in 2007 that was rejected by the Government Inspector.

**Battersea Power Station.** The new owners have now been in charge since November 2006. We are assured that significant cleaning up is taking place but, as they are only at the concept stage in their thinking, no new planning applications are to be forthcoming for some time (two years maybe) We met with the chair of planning, Cllr Leslie McDonnell, at about the time of last year's AGM, but learnt very little since at that time he himself knew very little. Since then, apart from attending Power Station

Forum meetings, we have concentrated on asking English Heritage for condition reports and have requested a site visit with them.

**Ransome's Wharf and Elcho Street.** We have raised the issue of saving a chimney in the Ransome's Wharf development and we look forward to having a meeting with the Royal College of Art to discuss their proposals for their new building.

## **OPEN SPACES**

We have continued to monitor the management and conditions of the open spaces in Battersea. The major event of the year was the application of the Wandsworth Borough Council earlier this year to extend licensing throughout Battersea Park. The Licensing Sub-Committee deciding to reject the Council's proposals. Six of the mansion blocks in Prince of Wales Drive, together with the Battersea Society, combined to object to the proposals. Luckily the mansion blocks were prepared to underwrite the costs of a legal team to take on the Council.

## **COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

We have for a number of years played a part in issues that have arisen in the community of Battersea but generally we have had no formal structure for taking them on board, and just relied on the activities of individual members. In September we changed all this and this new committee has already undertaken campaigns **supporting HACAN against the third runway at Heathrow**, held a **public meeting in September on Health Care in Battersea** as part of the pre-consultation exercise of the Wandsworth Primary Care Trust. We have followed this up by **submitting our evidence to the PCT on their present consultation**. This response can be seen on the Web Site. We have also supported the Wandsworth Older Peoples' Forum and its paper the Older Peoples' Strategy for Wandsworth. We are also proposing to support the organisation called **Living Streets**, which seeks to voice the needs of pedestrians in urban settings.

## **NEXT YEAR**

As above, we have set ourselves a target for increasing our membership by 25% over the current year. In all other respects we aim to consolidate and develop our activities. Personal knowledge, coupled with objective appraisal, of other civic societies reveals a huge range of types of bodies. Our web site is now amongst the very best. Indeed it is the only civic society web site to offer its own bookshop and DVD store! I believe our range of events and visits is impressive and compares very favourably with others. Our contribution to the local Battersea society through our planning and community committees carries depth and weight, such that I believe we actually do 'punch above our weight' locally.

All of this depends on the energies and hard work of the members of the management committee. I would like to pay tribute to the members of the management committee and those other members who are members of the various other committees. I recognise the hard work that they put in. I relish the sheer enthusiasm that is shown for the various issues that come before us. And, in particular, as the chairman of the society, I want to record my real and sincere thanks to all of those members who make this society such an enjoyable organisation to belong to and participate in.

28<sup>th</sup> April 2008

Tony Tuck: Chair

## CONTACTS

We are always very happy if more members want to support our work either by submitting articles for the Newsletter or web, or taking part in our discussions. If you wish to contribute your views please contact

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