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SGRA
The Newsletter
of the
Southfields Grid
Residents'
Association

Autumn 2011
SOUTHfields
Edited by: Lynn Harvey
Making a difference to life on the Grid.

OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE EVEN OLDER

At the SGRA AGM recently I found myself elected to the position of Chairman. Your long standing Chairman Mike Caswell decided after many years hard labour to retire and I would like to thank him for his wonderful leadership during that time. The SGRA is a valued part of living in Southfields and during Mike's Chairmanship we have been able to make our voice heard as the area has developed.



Mike Caswell MBE, hands back the SGRA Chairman reins after almost three decades to founder SGRA member and Hon Alderman, Tina Thompson.

Thus I, as the founder and first Chairman of the SGRA, found myself back in the hot seat. I would also like to thank Peter Stechman who joins me as Vice-Chair, Liz Becker who was elected Secretary and Lynn Harvey who has taken up the role of Editor of the Newsletter following Lesley Creswell's decision to move away from the Grid.

can review what action that has taken place since. Fundraising, communications, school places and planning issues are all areas of concern.

As the new Chairman, I will do my best not to reflect on the past but to move forward. I have already met with the majority of street representatives and had a look at the survey. As a result we have set ourselves a list of priorities. These inevitably include paving and I have asked Ward Councillors for a copy of the survey undertaken three years ago so we

On the subject of money – the annual subscription is due. If you miss your street representative who will be visiting soon, then please pop it through their door with your house number on. Thanks

At the same time please contact your street representative, Peter Stechman, Deputy Chairman or myself if you have any questions or matters you want to raise.

Finally, if there is an aspiring YOUNG chairman out there please, please contact me.

Dates for your Diary...

8pm Saturday 24 September – Jazz Night, Pete Downes Trio, St Barnabus Hall – Merton Road entrance. Tickets £6.00, concessions £3.50. Contact 020 8480 2290 or from the church.

5.30pm Tuesday 20th December – SGRA Carol singing with the Mayor in attendance at Southfields Tube station courtesy of London Underground and in aid of Trinity Hospice.

8.00pm Tuesday 27th September – SGRA meeting, St Barnabus Church. Presentation by Indigo about the plans for the snooker hall in Wimbledon Park Road.

Ongoing St Barnabus Church
Mondays 2pm in Parish Room (Lavenham Road entrance) – Monday Club, a social group for Grid Residents. New members welcome – just drop in.

11am Saturday 3rd December – Christmas Fair, St Barnabus Church

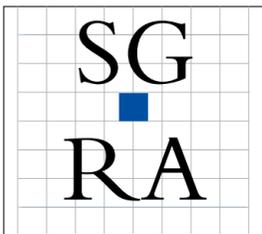
Thursdays 9.30am in Parish Room Under 3s Club.

SGRA committee...

- Chairman:
Tina Thompson 020 8874 5511
- Vice-Chair:
Peter Stechman 020 8874 5511
- Secretary:
Liz Becker 020 8874 5511
- Treasurer:
Carol Gray 020 8870 5706

Street Representatives.

- Astonville Street
Carly Powell at 32
- Brookwood Road
Pat Sheerin No 182 Elsenham St.
- Clonmore Street, Mid & North Blocks
Ann Kerr at 72
- Clonmore Street, South Block
Nick Steiner at 116
- Elborough Street
Mike Caswell at 96
- Elsenham Street
Kitty Alderson at 9
- Heythorp Street
Vacant – volunteers welcome
- Lavenham Road
Eddie Lewis at 4
- Merton Road
Maria Beckitt
- Replingham Road
Liz Belker at 130
- Revelstoke Road
Tina Thompson at 208
- Trentham Street
Peter Stechman at 147



CINEMA, BINGO HALL, SNOOKER HALL, WHAT NEXT?

SGRA Chairman Tina Thompson and Deputy Chairman Peter Stechman met with Mr Phillip Villars, managing director of Indigo Planning Limited recently.

Mr Villars is acting on behalf of Gresham who have purchased the snooker hall and he is currently meeting with interested groups to discuss the future of the building.

He explained that they are hoping to build a mixed development on the site consisting of some leisure facilities as well as some housing.

We discussed the impact of these proposals on the area and invited Mr Villars to come and talk to the whole SGRA committee in September when we next meet. He agreed to this.

If you have any comments please contact Tina 020 8879 0347.

Editorial

There have been lots of changes to the SGRA committee in recent months. We have a new Chairman, Tina Thompson and I have stepped in to edit the newsletter following Lesley's decision to move house.

Talking of moving and there seems to be regular movement within the Grid judging my the number of removal vans and skips as new owners move in – perhaps you might sometimes wonder about the history of your house and who originally varnished the banister or hung that faded wallpaper; Well now the 1911 census is available and Pat Sheerin is offering to undertake some of that research. Not so much Who do you think You Are? but more Who Lived in a House Like This?

I'm afraid that while I have lived in Southfields for more than 10 years, it is only recently that some faces have become more familiar. One face that is well-known to all local residents is our colourful character "John" and I was very interested to read more about his history in our new section on Face to Face with local residents. Watch out as we will be seeking other people to feature in this section in future.

The Association has been keeping up with planning developments during the summer and there is a report on changes proposed for the Riley Snooker Hall. Although the plans to maintain this as a cinema with community facilities have not been approved, the winning bid should include some local amenities. We will be watching this closely to ensure that the developers take account of residents' opinions.

Finally, the new committee would welcome your views, letters, ideas for articles for future editions so please drop me a line at I and I look forward to hearing from you.

Lynn Harvey
lharveyuk@yahoo.co.uk

The Grid Inn

The first pub on the Grid is working hard to improve its service to its customers and be a good neighbour.

A meeting was attended by senior management from Wetherspoon and members of the SGRA, local ward Councillors, the police and local residents (was a drink on the house the attraction). This was hosted by Samantha the manager of the Grid Inn. Various items were discussed such as what time were children permitted to remain till. (Answer 7pm). Someone requested bar stools and the use of TV was discussed.

Comments to Tina 020 8879 0347.

WHO LIVED IN YOUR HOUSE IN 1911?

Every ten years since 1841, a national census has been carried out across Britain and the information collected is kept confidential for 100 years. Since most of the houses on the Grid were built between 1904 and 1906, this year for the first time we are able to find out who lived on the Grid in 1911.

The Office of National Statistics has made this information available "online" and for a small fee you can trace your ancestors, by carrying out a "name search" or you can find out who lived at a specific address.

Pat Sheerin looked up her house in Elsenham Street and discovered that in 1911 it was occupied by a young couple from Battersea, Rose and Clyde, their maid, also called Rose, and a young visitor from Spain.

Being curious further research in the births and deaths register revealed that in 1914 Rose gave birth to a baby boy, Ronald. Sadly, Clyde was killed in 1918 towards the end of the First World War. A few months later Clyde's brother, William, who was lodging in another house in Elsenham Street, was killed in a separate battle in France. For now the search ends there but Pat cannot help but wonder what happened to Rose and baby Ronald. Did Rose marry again? Probably not, as so many men of marriageable age perished in the war.

If you would like to find out about who was living in your house in 1911, visit the census website, www.1911census.co.uk. For those who do not have internet access and would like to know who lived in their house in 1911, Pat can carry out this research for you. She has agreed with the SGRA committee to carry out searches of the 1911 census for individual properties and to provide you with an interesting glimpse of life on the grid, and further afield, in the year 1911. **Each search and information sheet, which includes a transcription of the 1911 census record for your house, will cost £20, (£10 of which will be donated to SGRA funds).** If you are interested please contact Pat on 07931 679 459.

Thames Water's Super Sewer

You may think that Thames Water's proposals for the 'super sewer' Thames Tunnel would not really be of much interest to us in the Southfields Grid. But it should be.

The project is aimed at reducing the amount of raw sewage entering the Thames, following heavy rain, and ours does – under Southside and straight into the river Wandle. The SGRA was invited to send a representative to Justine Greening's working group on the impact that the proposals have for Wandsworth. Our particular focus is on minimising the effect of construction in King George's Park. Thames Water are to put revised proposals forward in their next consultation document due out in September. **We will be scrutinising it carefully.**

TWO NEW GRID STORES



Appealing to the DIY enthusiast **Mark Dunmill** has opened a new ironmongery shop on the corner of Lavenham and Astonville following the departure of K&K Autos after 31 years trading. Mark claims to equal or beat the bigger stores and demonstrated this when one committee member bought

several cans of quality exterior paint at a considerable discount to the larger outlets. He has happy for you to drop by for a friendly chat about your DIY project or call him on 020 8871 1825 or email lavenhandy@hotmail.com

For the more energetic there is now a new bike shop on the Grid. Called **Cycleworx** and run by **Ben Thompson**, the shop not only sells an impressive range of new cycles and equipment but also undertakes repairs, servicing and upgrades.

Perhaps this latest addition might encourage residents to form an SGRA Cycle club and explore the Wimbledon Common cycle paths or check out Richmond and Bushy Parks.

If you are interested then please contact Peter Stechman, Deputy Chairman on peter.stechman@btpopenworld.com



WIMBLEDON PARK UPDATE

Merton Council is still refusing consultation which means that we are restricted to asking questions. As a result we have formed a subcommittee to deal with the workload caused by this problem. **Nick Steiner is the lead member with Mike Caswell, Tina Thompson and Pat Sheerin.**

Two petitions were raised by residents around the Revelstoke Road entrance. The first concerned disturbances during the Wimbledon fortnight. These nuisances included noise from angry voices and vehicle congestion occurring from 05:30 until late at night. We consider this behaviour to be un-neighbourly and wrong.

The second concerns coaches using this entrance instead of the better facilitated Wimbledon Park Road entrance. Since Revelstoke Road is a cul-de-sac, coaches cause congestion, they have to reverse and are obstacles to pedestrians that use this entrance. This, in our view, is an unnecessary hazard. Both petitions have been sent to Cllr Alambritis (Leader of Merton Council) and copies to Cllr Govindia (Leader of Wandsworth Council).

In order to get a better overview of the Park management we have just received answers to questions concerning financial and staffing matters using the Freedom of Information Act and we hope to use this in constructive dialogue with Merton council.

Most would agree that the seasonal car park is a mess and we have written to Cllr Alambritis enquiring about the likely timetable for submitting planning permission for the permanent base, the alternatives and the status of other car parking places that park users can see. Subject to replies we hope to provide you with these details plus background information so responses can be made in good time.

We are aware that there are a number of other issues and intend to pick these up in due course. We are also making contact with other resident's associations and individuals around the park and are finding they have similar concerns. We are also receiving assistance from our MP Justine Greening.

Nick Steiner
SGRA WP Subcommittee

Southfields Safer Neighbourhood Team - advice against Burglary

Over the month of June, there was a slight increase in the number of burglaries around the Southfields Grid area. These have now reduced again since; however the local police would still like to offer some crime prevention around burglary in order to help you protect your property and your home.

- When you leave the house, always remember to shut all windows and double lock your front door. Some Yale locks can be bypassed by slipping a piece of plastic between the door frame and lock in order to open the door. This is prevented by using a Chubb lock, preferably at knee height, to double lock the door. These locks cannot be slipped.
- Many houses have sash windows at the front which if not locked securely can be wedged open with tools. Do check the locks on your sash windows if you have them and ask a locksmith to recommend the best way to secure them.
- Make sure you lock away and valuables out of sight so that they are not visible to any would-be burglar through your windows. Also if you are about to go on holiday, cancel any deliveries or milk, as any milk bottles or deliveries left on your doorstep for a prolonged period will show a would-be burglar that there is no one at home.
- When at home, never be afraid to challenge any unexpected callers at your door. Always ask for ID (unless of course you know them!), and if you are suspicious of anyone that calls at your door, call the police.
- Don't leave any keys near a door or window, and never leave a spare key hidden outside either. At bedtime, make sure all doors and windows are secure before going upstairs.
- For further crime prevention advice on burglary, please visit www.metbumblebee.org

We are regularly patrolling the area around The Grid and Southfields, so do come and say hello when you see us about.

Metal Theft The high price of scrap metal has caused a rise in the number of thefts of metal, heavy iron drain covers and ladders. Other metal left in front gardens and passages is also a target. One heavy drain cover has been lifted from outside Lavenham Mini Mart. Residents should be on the alert, watch out for thieves and call the Police if you see anything suspicious, do not approach the thieves. If your elderly granny disappears one morning when going out for the newspaper, check out the drains, she may be down there.

Contacting the Police 999 or 101 The Metropolitan Police Service has announced a new way of making it quicker and easier to get the service you need and they've now introduced 101 - the new number to call to contact your local police. You can call 101 to report a crime that has already happened, seek crime prevention advice or make them aware of any policing issues in your local area. When a call is made they can speak to you in your own language if you cannot, or have difficulty, speaking English. If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, a text phone is available on 18001 101.

PATIENT POWER

Both surgeries have been represented at recent meetings where the new Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group has been explained and discussed.

The Wandsworth Pathfinder GP Consortium has been awarded a grant of £50,000 to develop and evaluate principles and modes for the integration of Patient Public involvement. (Their words not mine.)

The Wandle Patient Consultative Group has a new constitution and has representatives on the Wandle Local Commissioning Group Board.

I know clear as mud! What it means is that we, the Patients, have a small voice in the changes that are taking place.

Contact. Tina 020 8879 0347

Face to Face with Southfields Legend 'MAD' JOHN by Gerry Skeens

We all know John, don't we? Southfields' most iconic figure.



The bike, the beard, the blue eyes, the bandanna, the shorts and the shoutiness. The circular lifeboats that would have saved the Titanic, the outrage at the felled park trees, the need for a swimming pool, the idiot savant, the 'I'm not a bad man.'

Sometimes we're in the mood, sometimes not.

Personally, I've long wanted to discover what makes him tick and, recently, I managed to pin the great man down and spend a fascinating couple of hours with him in Starbucks (thanks for the indulgence, Starbucks) where, over mugs of tea, this is what I learnt. I think.

Born 28/9, 1935 in County Cork, Eire to Irish Catholic parents, JOHN WISE (yes, really) is the eldest of four? siblings. His father served in the Royal Airforce during WW2 when the family moved to Balham, finally crossing to Southfields where John now lives with his brother and sister(s). Until their deaths not so long ago, he helped nurse his parents who both had Alzheimers.

Attending St Mary's School in Clapham, a teacher discovered his artistic gift. He says he sees things in 3D.

At 17 he received a 'scholarship' to Wandsworth Technical College. He became a trainee draughtsman but didn't complete the apprenticeship, achieving an HND from night school in Mechanical Engineering/ Aerodynamics later.

Between 1957-59, he saw active service in Cyprus. An incident where the van in which he and colleagues were travelling rolled over causing a fatality left him suffering from stress. Shortly afterwards, in 1960, he hitch-hiked and bicycled his way to the Rome Olympics.

SGRA WEBSITE

Tina Thompson, new SGRA Chair is eager that the Association has a 'stand alone' website managed by the SGRA and Peter Stechman is the process of putting this together.

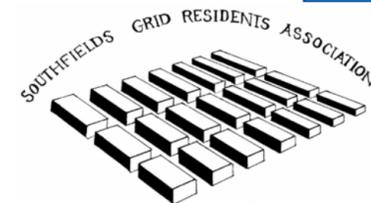
One of the many features proposed for the SGRA Website is to include an archive of previous newsletters, photos, stories, anecdotes and people on the Grid. So whilst the setting up and launching is under way, may we ask anyone who has any previous SGRA Newsletters to dig them out of the draw, cupboard, loft or shed and let Peter have them. Each copy will be scanned and returned, if still wanted by the owner and later uploaded

and available on the SGRA site. It would be good if we had a full set of hard copies and if doubles turn up they can be recycled.

There are 2,250 newsletters printed for each edition so there should still be some old ones out there. Peter already has a number of issues dating from 2004 but particularly needs the earlier ones. Founder member Tina believes the first newsletter would have been sometime in 1975, quite small since they printed it themselves on a hand operated Gestetner machine. The original Grid logo was found recently and is now shown on the right of this article.

There have been many articles written since the first SGRA Newsletter appeared chronicling the activities of Grid residents, businesses and issues too good to be lost.

The new website can ensure that they are kept for future generations.



The original SGRA logo

Also wanted are old photos, they don't have to tell a story but one that surfaced the other year was of Reg at three years old outside 28 Astonville Street, more importantly, the background showed the railings and finials that were installed in every street on the Grid..

Peter would also like to know whether anyone can recall Celia White who played the piano and drew with her right foot at the same time. She lived in Southfields in the 1960s when she was 15 and was something of a celebrity at the time. Or can you remember or perhaps you took part in the Duke of Edinburgh's visit to the Southfields Boys' Club in 1961

Email Peter if you are able to help.
peter.stechman@btpopenworld.com

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