

The Friends of Twickenham Museum

Our April newsletter expressed the hope that we might all soon meet and celebrate our future home on the Embankment, but we are not quite ready for this. Instead, we hope you will participate in a **GRAND SALE** of its contents, described on the accompanying poster.

25 The Embankment

We have sorted through the contents of the house and some clearance has already taken place. There is still much work to be done, both in preparing goods for the sale, and at the sale itself. The enclosed slip seeks the help of those who can give practical assistance over the next few weeks. Those who can come to the house on Tuesday or Thursday mornings, whether to help or just to look in, will see it in its present state and gain some idea of what we are planning for its future.

Action

We have been concerned, as you might imagine, with matters more fundamental to the creation of the museum than merely clearing the house.

1 We have had encouraging discussions with the Council about the use of the property, and with the support of our immediate neighbours have now submitted a Planning Application for partial change of use. Approval will enable us to establish the museum on the lower two floors, leaving the top floor to be used by a resident custodian.

2 We have carefully considered the building work needed to put the house into good order. Alterations to a listed building are a sensitive issue, and we have had helpful preliminary discussions with Council officers. We shall need more money than we have at present, and our sale of goods will be a first step in this direction.

3 We have been considering how to embark on a major fund-raising campaign. It has become evident that more funding is required than local resources can provide, despite our comparatively modest ambitions. A focus is needed that will appeal to the wider world. We not infrequently hear surprise expressed that in Twickenham, of all places the most closely associated with Alexander Pope, there is little more than a grotto and a memorial in St Mary's

Church. We believe that our house, so near to where Pope is buried, can fill this gap. The resurrection of Pope's grotto, under the guidance of Tony Beckles Willson and by courtesy of St James Independent School for Boys is an important and parallel step.

4 The position and history of 25 The Embankment offers another theme. Our house has stood facing the river Thames since around 1720. For nearly half a century it was occupied by the Hammerton family, watermen and ferrymen to the community since the 17th Century. Dick Cashmore has undertaken a detailed investigation of the history of the house and its owners, showing that for over a century it was owned by the Twining family, whose own history is inextricably linked with Twickenham's.

Acquisitions

In the January 1998 newsletter it was noted that Mrs Margot Butt, widow of Professor John Butt of Edinburgh University, had offered to donate his archive of Pope literature to Twickenham, provided that we could house it appropriately. This moment approaches, and with it the prospect that the Museum can incorporate facilities for the study of Pope. Mrs Butt is planning to visit Twickenham in November to see for herself, and her approval would arouse interest and support abroad as well as at home.

Mavis Batey

Many of you will already be aware of the great interest in our project shown by Mavis Batey, who as President of the Garden History Society, has helped us in so many ways. In particular, our joint publication **Alexander Pope's Grotto in Twickenham** has already earned nearly £1000 for the museum. Above all, by making our work more widely known to those in related fields she is generating support which may well prove crucial to our future success. At a recent trustees meeting we agreed unanimously to invite her to become our first Patron, and she has been pleased to accept.



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