

Friends of THE TWICKENHAM MUSEUM

December 2011 Newsletter



NO MUSEUM FOR CLEVER PROFESSOR

So rang out the headline in the *Richmond Guardian*, 24th September 1987, announcing the 'mementoes of Twickenham's craziest citizen' were lying in a garage soon to be lost forever unless they found a new home.

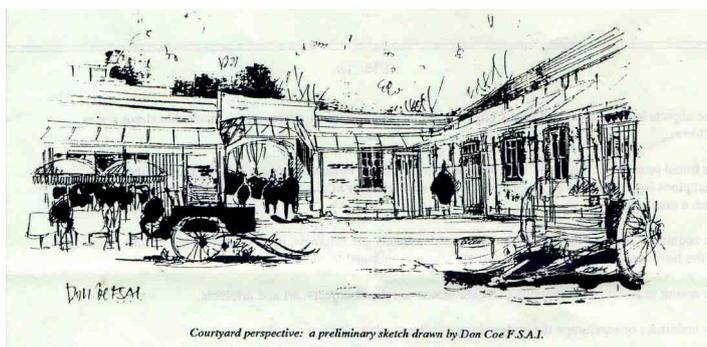
The idea of a Museum for Twickenham was raised at the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society AGM the previous year, and in 1988 a working party was formed.

The Friends of Twickenham Museum was founded in July 1991 with an exhibition held at Orleans Gallery entitled *A Museum for Twickenham?* Two years later the working party became an independent charity with the objective of establishing within Orleans House Gallery and Stables a permanent Museum celebrating the old borough of Twickenham.

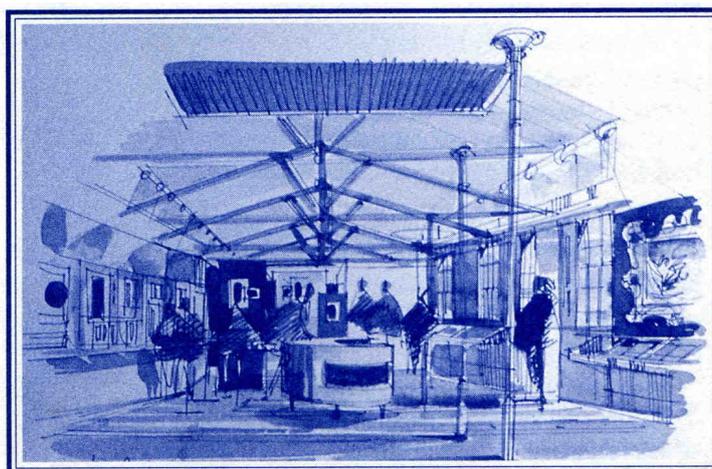
In 1994, Jack Ellis, a long-time member of The Twickenham Society, died leaving his estate to the trustees of the charity. This included his house on the Embankment.

In view of uncertainty about the future of Orleans House Gallery the trustees resolved to establish the museum here but extended litigation delayed possession until 1999.

The house was gradually emptied of its accumulated contents and plans drawn up for major conversion work. Open Days were held in 2000 with small displays mounted, opening to the public on 15 December 2001, exactly 10 years ago.



Courtyard perspective: a preliminary sketch drawn by Don Coe F.S.A.I.



NEW EXHIBITION: SPORT IN THE BOROUGH

With the Olympics coming to London in 2012 it is only right and proper that our annual exhibition centres on the importance of sport and the part that it has played across the generations in the old borough of Twickenham.

Sporting History in Twickenham, Whitton, Teddington & the Hamptons celebrates the various aspects of sporting history in the old Borough including rugby, soccer, cricket, rowing, sailing, cycling, athletics, swimming, horse racing, tennis, bowling and skating.

Olympic Games participation medals for the 1948 London Games and the 1924 Paris Games will be on display along with a wealth of historic images and artefacts accompanied by a fully illustrated guide.

VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS

Our volunteers are critical to the success of the Museum - it is only through their dedication and professionalism that we are able to keep the museum open. New volunteers welcomed throughout the year include Sarika Sharma (who has subsequently gone up to Oxford to read history), Lidia Small-Baczkiwicz, a cartographer for BP, Wendy Verrall and Mary Wackerbarth, a trained volunteer guide at Marble Hill House. Whilst budding Ph.D Fern Riddell and trainee teacher Schira Turner have left us, Harriet Bachrach is looking to make a welcome return onto the volunteer rota. Our newest volunteer, Peter Parkinson, started this month. Alex Skinner is the name to remember and 8941 0669 the number to call if you, or someone you know, has a couple of hours a month to spare as a volunteer.



Craneford Stadium 1968, now Twickenham Stoop

GROTTO NEWS

Because of its close associations with The Museum, Pope's Grotto is viewed as very much our 'off-site' artefact. The working party managing it has now become a Trust looking to attract financial donations to raise money in small amounts without having to go to the Heritage Lottery Fund or English Heritage. Originally it had been hoped to obtain a lease from Radnor House School but this has not proved possible. Twickenham Museum, together with The York House Society, The Borough of Twickenham Local History Society and The Strawberry Hill Residents' Association are all lending moral support.



The Grotto as drawn by John Serle in 1745

Opening times: Tuesdays and Saturdays 11.am to 3.00pm; Sundays 2.00pm to 4.00pm

REACHING OUT

The commitment announced in last year's Newsletter to regularly refresh The Museum has been met and much exceeded. The new policy of 'Receive & Show', which sees newly acquired artefacts put on show sooner rather than later, includes a host of interesting objects. Some fine Paleolithic flints courtesy of the Richmond Museum join Neolithic pottery and bones excavated in Church Street by the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society in 1966 as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations. And that key disseminator of local history for decades, Dr Dick Cashmore, offers a flavour of Empire with his Solar Topee and ceremonial sword on display.

This summer we reached out to play a part in a number of local events. The organisers of a temporary beach at Champions wharf were very keen to involve The Museum in recording peoples' play memories as part of the project. We responded with a series of display boards showing People at Play across the centuries and even managing to attract three local council officers who didn't know we existed!



A small person at play

Parents of older children were very pleased with Museum volunteer Wendy Verrall's excellent summer activity, which involved a quiz to look and find items around the museum with each child drawing or colouring-in their favourite object to be inserted into a Museum key ring fob.

The weekend of 17th & 18th September not only welcomed the annual Open City event but made good use of extended opening hours to become part of the weekend of river related activities and entertainment on Twickenham Riverside that centred on the Great River Race.



A twin-panel display stocked with images was mounted to complement the historic Charlie Shore Boys' & Girls' Regatta re-enactment (seen above in 1910), a popular event that ran from 1894 to 1950.

Aurora Metro Arts and Media is a local arts and education charity currently seeking funding for a project about the musical heritage of Eel Pie Island. Involving a film with interviews and historical footage, The Twickenham Museum will join live music events, workshops, discussions and exhibitions as 'the first port of call for support'.

COLIN WHITE

Maurice Parry-Wingfield writes of our late, lamented Honorary Treasurer: 'what Colin did for the accounting of the Museum should be recognised as something quite exceptional. Having little or no accounting experience, he devised a system which worked well, making my task on the annual visits a straightforward and enjoyable one. Because the Museum is a charity, you start with plain accounts that show income and expenditure and the balancing surplus. This is only the start of it.'

'Charities are required to present accounts in the format set out in what is called the SORP. This means that the ingredients of the plain accounts have to be thrown up in the air and reassembled into something much, much longer and scarcely comprehensible. Colin managed to master these complexities and produce accounts in the required, counter-intuitive format. Mastering this will have taken a very large amount of his time and energy'.

Another name synonymous with our local history, volunteer **Joan Urwin** also sadly passed away this year.

Robert Youngs has taken over as Honorary Treasurer and was taught well by Colin. 'A storming year for publications,' is how Robert put it with the coffers bulging substantially from the sales of books and our new line of postcards proving especially popular. Across a remarkable year for sales at a time when money is scarce, The Museum's projected income by May had already exceeded the forecast by 60% with sales of publications way ahead of their predicted volume.

The latest edition to the book table is a *Centenary Celebration of Nelson School, Whitton* by David Rose, priced at £6.00.

POPE IN DANGER

Our sharp-eyed librarian Jean Cranswick and bibliographer Heather Morgan spotted in autumn 2010 that a sprinkling of fine dust lay near the base of the spine of several of our rebound old books.

Correctly scenting an attack by insects, they sought advice first from the British Library, whose representative failed to appear, then from a professional book conservator who did arrive but suggested freezing treatment in Ipswich costing £2000.

An accredited freelance library conservator of international repute gave it as her opinion that furniture beetles had been but were now gone. There was nothing to do but inspect books regularly, especially in early summer, dust internally and only resort to freezing (domestically) as necessary. We looked carefully through the books with a Camberwell College student of conservation and installed an hygrometer (the beetles die if humidity exceeds 65%).

It had been an instructive episode.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Earlier in the year a small furry interloper was spotted scurrying down the chimney by a sharp-eyed neighbour. Suzannah Herbert was alerted and a sweep called in to investigate. A huge amount of vegetative matter (most of it climbing hibiscus from next door) was found littering the attic flue in the form of a cosy nest. At the sight of the sweep the creature made off and the chimney capped to prevent a re-entry.

