



Southfields Grid
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

*Making a difference
to life on the Grid*

GRID NEWS

Autumn 2020



Our MP Fleur Anderson (centre) joins in the fun with fellow judges Tim Taylor and Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty

OUR 2020 FRONT GARDEN AWARDS ARE BLOOMING MARVELLOUS!

by Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty, chair of judges

The judging is over for the SGRA Front Gardens Awards. Gongs have been handed out to 164 households - 20 golds, 46 silvers and 98 bronzes. Added to this are 12 for best street planting, making a total of 176 awards. The judges were delighted by the creative displays which ranged from vegetable gardens to rambling roses, overflowing window boxes, herbs and blooming pots.

We met so many lovely residents and were impressed by their enthusiasm for gardening. Flowers, herb patches, butterfly and bee friendly plants, shrubs and even 'wheat' adorn the many planted tree bases. We often read comments on Twitter and Facebook about how happy the street planting makes passers-by feel, so thanks for cheering us up as we walk through the Grid.

The "Spectacular Sunflowers of Southfields" is also a wonderful community based fun event, and we had some lovely winners in this too. One of the winners was aged only 6 - hopefully he can inspire a few more

junior gardeners! You can see a full review with some lovely pictures in our centre page spread. We have also published a map showing the location of the Front Garden and Street Planting Awards. Do take a 'green' Grid tour of our award-winning gardens and tree bases.

CHANNEL SWIM SUCCESS FOR OPEN WATER FAN SOPHIE

Southfields celebrated a fantastic sporting achievement late last month when Elsenham Street resident Sophie Brunt swam the English Channel for the first time. Starting from Samphire Hoe near Dover in the early hours of Bank Holiday Monday 31st August, she made it safely across accompanied by Gemma and her support team on board the "Sea Leopard". She stepped onto French soil in a time of 15 hours and 16 minutes. "I have



On her way back to the UK, a delighted Sophie

always enjoyed swimming", said a tired but happy Sophie after recovering her breath, "and this has been a dream of mine since a very early age".

A teacher at Wimbledon Park Primary School, Sophie is a keen swimmer. She has been heavily involved in the "Swimbleton" group's project to introduce open-water swimming to Wimbledon Park's lake. "Open water swimming is great fun and growing massively in popularity, especially since COVID-19 closed so many swimming pools. There is quite a swimming community in Southfields and I was grateful for their support. I am very much a social swimmer, but one who had a dream. Many local swimmers regularly head to lakes at venues such as Shepperton and Dorney. It would be terrific if we could have a facility on our doorstep and in such a great setting where people can come together to enjoy swimming."

Sophie's swim was also raising money for Macmillan Cancer Care, to help some Southfields friends in need. If you'd like to top up her funds simply search for her page on www.justgiving.com. Swimbleton continue to press Merton Council for open water swimming in Wimbledon Park, but a decision has been deferred since March to allow more reports to be submitted.

Keep up to date by following

www.swimbleton.co.uk

EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to a more "normal" issue of Grid News, following our commemorative lockdown-themed one in June. I am sitting temporarily in the Editor's chair as Philippa is working elsewhere at present. We have our usual blend of news and features for your enjoyment, the latest news from some of our local groups, plus a couple of interesting local history features. There are also 4 pages of local businesses to consider when you need someone or something doing.

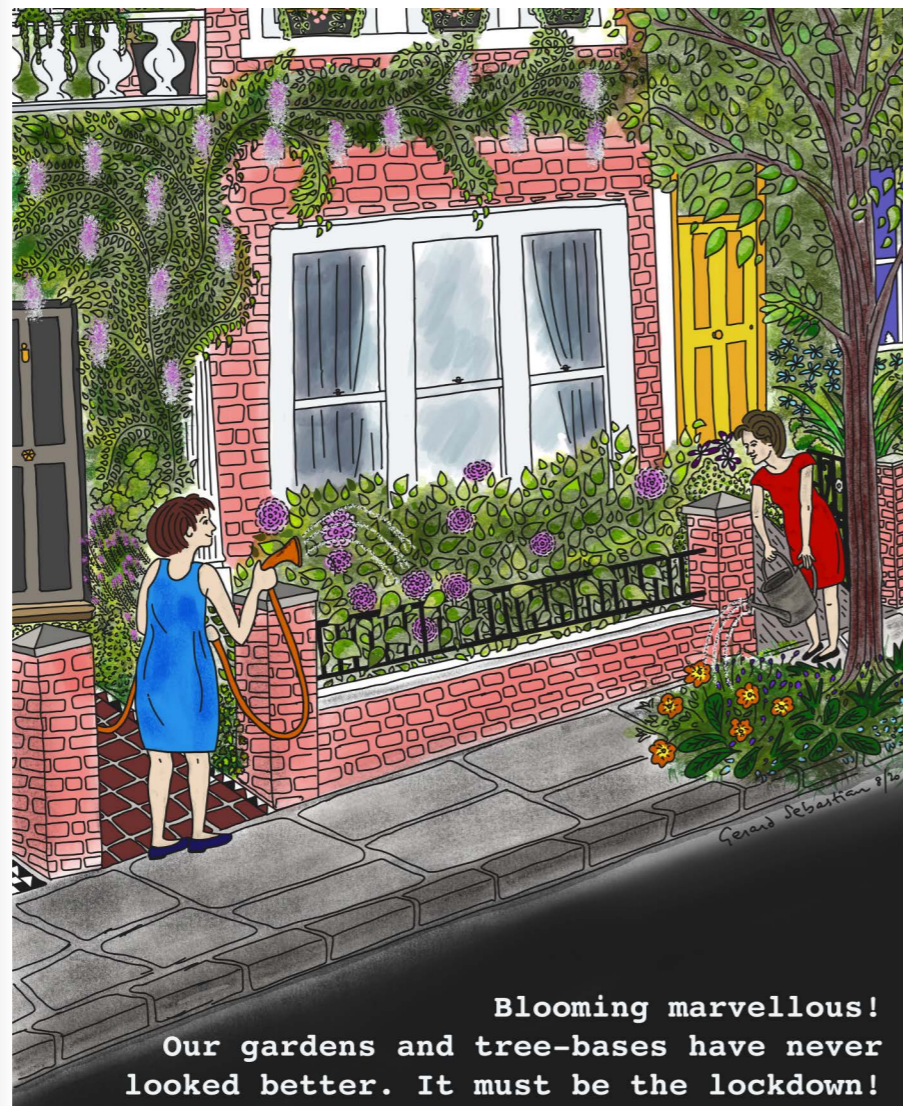
Over the summer the Southfields Grid Alliance, formed by us, St Barnabas Church and the "Grid Mummies" network, have been continuing their fine work running errands and helping those who may be vulnerable. Demand has fallen, but we still have our organisation "locked and loaded" should any second wave of COVID-19 occur, meaning more people staying at home. Our special thanks to the remarkable Becky Watts, featured in our last issue, who continues to coordinate requests for help every day. She done this without a single break since March, and is on 07734 07734 818540 or rebeccadwatts@yahoo.com if you ever need help.

Treasurer Chris Puleston writes on this page about our annual members donations drive, which gives us the funds to do so much for this area. People always assume we get funded by the council or somewhere - we wish! Please do consider becoming a member by using the enclosed envelope to both donate and provide us with your contact details. We are now using a new members database which means we can now send you regular news, information and notes. I recommend you also stay up-to-date with the latest Grid news by "liking" our page on Facebook or signing up to our updates on Twitter. We are also posting regularly on Nextdoor, which reaches around 60% of Grid homes. You cannot escape

As ever, if you would like to get in touch to share a concern you think we can help with, or comment on an article in here, please do. It's info@southfieldsgrid.org.uk. Our next issue of Grid News will be out in early December. We enjoy publishing it - hope you enjoy reading it.

Best wishes

Charles Runcie



**Blooming marvellous!
Our gardens and tree-bases have never
looked better. It must be the lockdown!**

Cartoon by Gerard Sebastian

YOUR SGRA DONATION - WE ENSURE IT GOES A LONG WAY

Included with this issue of Grid News is our annual donation envelope. Your little bit helps us to either fund directly or contribute to Grid activities throughout the year. These include the annual Front Garden awards, Green the Grid, Window Wanderland, our annual Seniors Tea Party and indeed this very newsletter.

The SGRA financial year runs from June 1st to May 31st. Last year donations raised £2,816, or just over £1 a household. It would be superb if we could beat this target in 2020/21 so we can fund more activities. So please, do put something in that envelope as soon as possible. The minimum is

£3, but thanks to all of you who are more generous and put in a note of some colour. Please then return it to your street representative, whose details are on the envelope.

If you prefer to donate online, something we are all being encouraged to do at present, you can donate directly to our bank account. Using BACS the sort code is 20-90-69, our account number 83500020 or via PayPal to treasurer@southfieldsgrid.org.uk indicating your house and street if you are able.

Chris Puleston, SGRA Treasurer
chripuleston@gmail.com

CORONACAST: THE GRID'S VERY OWN LOCKDOWN PODCAST



Hannah Harris (right) with daughter Tilly about to record

Since lockdown started, Grid residents Hannah Harris and her daughter Tilly Harris have been busy making a topical podcast from their living room. "Coronacast" is its title, and about all things coronavirus, from health advice to people's stories and experiences, plus interviews with experts. As well as medicine, London GP Hannah and actor Tilly look at the impact of the pandemic on the arts, particularly the theatre.

In more than 20 episodes so far they have covered a range of topics including vaccines, mental health, long-haul COVID-19 and the Government's approach to the crisis. They also have timely discussions with their guests about how and why BAME groups have been disproportionately affected by the virus, and they talk about Black Lives Matter and what it means to them.

Together they decided to make the podcast early in the pandemic because of the conflicting and unreliable information that was out there circulating in the press, online and on social media. Guests have included frontline doctors Kelly Ameneshoa and Ben Ford, Professor of paediatric vaccinology Beate Campmann, independent SAGE founding member Professor Anthony Costello, as well as actors Esh Alladi, David Ganly, and theatre director Raz Shaw.

Hannah said: "I wanted Coronacast to be an up-to-date accurate source of knowledge that people could rely on. It was great to start a project with my daughter Tilly, who had just been sent home early from her drama school course in Dublin. We have had a brilliant response and developed a

following of loyal listeners, to whom we are very grateful. It feels good to try and do something positive in what has been a challenging time for the world."

Tilly added: "This project gave me a focus during such an uncertain time. Theatre is my passion and is one of the worst-hit industries, so I wanted to raise awareness about that, as well as give a voice to young people, whose lives and plans have been turned upside down like never before."

Hannah and Tilly had a break over the summer but have been busy recording again. More new episodes will be released during autumn and winter as we see if there will be a second wave.

All episodes are available on the usual podcast platforms including Spotify, Apple and Google. Follow this link for more details: <https://podfollow.com/coronacast/view> Contact Hannah and Tilly on questions@coronacast.co.uk or Twitter and Instagram via [@thecoronacast](https://www.instagram.com/thecoronacast)



ARE YOU HAVING A LAUGH? TEACHER ROB'S ONLINE COMEDY CLASSES

By Grid resident Rob Hitchmough

Worked full time on the National comedy circuit for over 20 years. I now teach drama, improvisation, and stand-up at various drama schools. In January 2019 I set up the Wimbledon Drama Club, which specialises in comedy for both adults and children. My first venture into online teaching was through a drama school at which I teach. It was a little daunting initially, and I was not sure what would and would not work. I have to say I was very surprised how easy it was, and within a week I had set up my own online stand up course. I now think and hope will continue to run, even when the world is back to normal. I have hosted over 100 on-line stand-up, drama and improv classes.

Of course many comics have become very successful having done no courses at all, but I think most people will be surprised by the number that have. A large percentage of actors have trained, and many wear their drama school like a badge of honour, but comedians are a little coy. It is almost as if taking a comedy course is cheating!

Two of my students run a comedy club called 'Whole Lotta Comedy' at The Berrylands pub in Surbiton. With social distancing firmly in place they have re-launched in the pub's beer garden, and recently they invited me along to perform at the venue. The whole evening was a joy. It was as if the audience had been starved of live stand-up, which I suppose they had. I would say there has never been a better time to take up stand-

up comedy.

Everyone is welcome to try out a free online stand-up or comedy improv class with no obligation. Contact me at comedywithRob@gmail.com



Stand Up by Rob Hitchmough

'GINS BY THE BINS' - THE PERFECT LOCKDOWN COCKTAIL FOR GRID STREETS

By Bella Park

They say every cloud has a silver lining. One of the joys of lockdown has been 'Gins by the bins', which takes place from 5.30 on Friday evenings in several streets around the Grid. SGRA chair Charles Runcie has been behind, Pirbright Road's Gins by the bins event, or GBTB as it is known in some streets: "Humans are social animals," he says. "This has really brought people

together, while remaining socially distanced of course!" In Pirbright Road neighbours barely on nodding terms before lockdown now look forward to a weekly catch-up over a G+T, or very occasionally wine. Resident Louise Irvine admits "There are several people who I'd never met before lockdown who I now count as friends".

For those who were shielding, 'Gins by the bins' provided a social outlet. "Before lockdown I was very sociable, but then I had to shield because of my health" another resident tells me. "With 'Gins by the bins', I feel safe because we are outside, we bring our own glasses, and we stay more than two metres away from others" The weekly gathering has also provided an opportunity for children to meet up, with older children entertaining the little ones, while their parents enjoy a much-needed hour off. Dorothy Park left Sheringdale Primary School last year: "When I was in Year 6 we were playground buddies for Reception and Year 1. This year I have been able to keep an eye on them for their parents while having quite a lot of fun hanging out with them too"

Weekly reminders are sent out on Friday morning on the street WhatsApp group. As well as these, Pirbright Road's WhatsApp group has featured sourdough recipes, offers of free fruit and vegetables following a glut, and reports of criminal activities. "It all helps to bring the community together", says Kim Bolton, another Pirbright Road resident. As the nights draw in, how will the spirit of 'Gins by the bins' live on? "Friday evenings won't be the same without it", laughs Charles. "We ended it in mid-September but have been talking about hiring out the church hall at the top of the street at Christmas, and there's always next year!"



Other brands are available!



Cheers, says regular Kim Bolton

GRID GROUPS CONTINUE TO KEEP CALM - AND KEEP GOING IN LOCKDOWN

The current pandemic has affected the activities and functions of many of our local groups and societies. However they remain determined to keep going, and here is a round-up of what some of them are up to.

St Barnabas Church

The church is open again for services. The halls are also opening for activities for children and older people, with COVID-safe conditions. An autumn fair was held on Saturday 19th September, and a series of COVID-safe music concerts are planned during the autumn.

Monday Club

This resumed at the beginning of July and has continued to meet weekly when the weather has permitted. They meet in the church garden at St Barnabas in small socially-distanced groups. This has been a welcome chance to see and chat to friends safely in the fresh air.

SingSWell Community Choir

They had to cancel its concert at the end of March, and like most choirs it has been unable to rehearse since then. However, like a good many music groups it has gone "virtual", piecing together individually recorded parts to make video versions of their work. They post their work online, including an arrangement of the Simon and Garfunkel classic "Bridge Over Troubled Water" which is at <https://vimeo.com/428755121> The choir agree it is not the same as making music together, but for now it has kept them going.

The Southfields Artists

They have not been active, as everyone was on self-isolation due to Covid19, so no exhibitions or shows. Some artists have even stopped any creative activities. slavica@melroseroad.net

Walk Wandsworth

given the COVID-19 restrictions their walking activities have not been taking place. Keep up to date on latest developments at <https://enablelc.org/walkwandsworth>

Southfields Sings!

the group have continued to meet and sing "virtually" since the start of lockdown. A recent highlight was our collaboration with some choir friends in Sweden, and we are looking ahead to exchange visits once travel is safe again. Southfields Sings! meets for the next segment every Tuesday evening from 15th September - 13th October, at 7-8pm via Zoom. Recordings are available to aid learning. For more information, contact southfieldssings@gmail.com

MEMORIES OF "THE FLICKS" IN SOUTHFIELDS, 1917-1968

A Grid resident recently obtained a rare programme dating from October 1924 which came from the old cinema in Southfields that many will remember. For those new to the area or have managed to forget, the building stood until 2014 on the site that Marks + Spencer and The Gym now occupy. The old cinema has an interesting history.

Few people know that the "Plaza" cinema was not called by that name until 1936. It was built in 1916 and opened as "The Lyceum" on 27th January 1917, which was of course during the First World War. The cinema had regular film screenings, a tea lounge, a music/dance studio above and a confectionery store adjoining it.

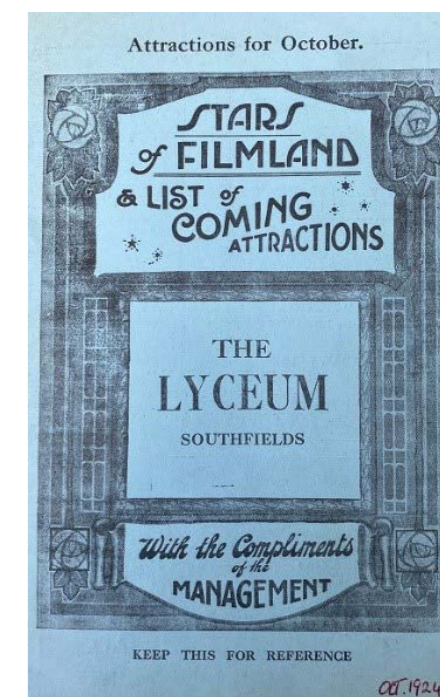
The cinema programme contains interesting information about the films to be shown, and over 20 advertisements for local businesses. The 'Manager's Chat' column for October 1924 describes the films to be shown that month. They include "The Song of Love", which was described as: "a tale of the tempestuous love of a desert dancing girl, for whose kiss proud Sheiks battled to the death". Films were certainly different 100 years ago!

Some readers will have heard of the noted architect Richard Seifert. He was only 26 when he designed the art deco facade and foyer that were added to the front of the original building in 1936, when it was also re-named "Plaza Cinema" with over 1000 seats. The Plaza survived over 30 years and brought enjoyment to many Southfields residents until it eventually closed in January 1968 with its last film "Georgie Girl". It then became a bingo hall for almost 20 years, in the days when bingo was popular across the whole country. In 1987 it became Jesters Snooker Club, then Riley's Pool and Snooker Club, until final closure in 2010. Planning permission was then sought to redevelop the site. Many readers will recall the local campaign to re-open the cinema. This was well supported but eventually proved unsuccessful, and the building was

finally demolished in 2014.

I have heard a few anecdotes from my neighbours about the snooker club, which was visited by professionals like Jimmy White, James Wattana and Tony Drago. Other residents may have memories and stories about the bingo hall. Hopefully there will also be some who remember the Plaza Cinema itself and it would be interesting to hear from them. There is, incidentally, a rumour that part of the building was used as an air raid shelter during the war, but it is not clear how true this is.

If any Grid residents have any information about this, or memories they would like to share about the old cinema, please get in touch with us at info@southfieldsgrid.org.uk



The cinema's programme cover

FRIENDS OF WIMBLEDON PARK SUMMER UPDATE

The grass has come back from the scarred landscape left after the Big Christmas Top was taken down. It is looking in fine form, both lush and verdant. However, as our FoWP ecologist Dave Dawson recently said, the same cannot be said of the Pines and Needles site, which is green with two annual weeds - Knotgrass and Pineappleweed. "Whilst providing food for birds, these will die back in the Autumn leaving bare ground. Not so good, but we are pushing for this area to be regressed".

After many months of planning and campaigning, we are happy to announce that a table tennis table has been installed next to the volleyball courts in the park. Local mums Lucy Kilborn and Julie Watts worked closely with the FoWP to gain permission from Merton Council to have this installed. Wimbledon Park Community Trust kindly funded it, and a local Dad called Greg who owns a landscaping business nearby installed it free of charge. We hope you enjoy some social distance-friendly ping pong with your friends and family soon.

Progress is being made on plans to improve the Revelstoke Road entrance. These include:

- refurbishment of the railway bridge



A new sporting arrival to the park

SOUTHFIELDS BUSINESS FORUM AUTUMN UPDATE

By Gill Habershon, SBF chair

COVID-19 has impacted on all of us, and the shops and businesses in Replingham Road, Wimbledon Park Road and the surrounding streets have been no exception. Since lockdown was lifted the businesses all had different needs. Alas, they are all still finding it difficult to cope with the new rules that COVID-19 has created. The footfall in Southfields is now just 10%, but hopefully now the holidays are over this will begin to creep up. The public realm improvement scheme is gradually working its way up to the top of Replingham Road, and hopefully they will be starting work in Wimbledon Park Road this month. Although everyone realises this will improve the area, it is hard to cope with the noise etc. at this time.

We have over the course of this year had some new shop openings. Gail's Bakery, who managed to arrive in our area in February just before lockdown came, are open in the former NatWest bank building. Then over the traffic lights in Wimbledon Park Road we have several shops opening. Polski Sklep, meaning "Polish Store", and the health food and vitamins shop Earthian are both situated where the Coral's bookmakers were. Next door the gentleman's barbers have taken over where Richard's Hairdressers were.

Finally the Fone + Vape Shop has replaced Decorative Antiques and Vintage, who have now moved around the corner to 43 Replingham Road.

Unfortunately we still have empty shops in Replingham Road and Wimbledon Park Road. Hopefully these will not remain empty for long. Barclays Bank is sadly closing on Thursday November 5th, so your nearest branch will either be the Wimbledon or Putney ones. The DeRosier coffee and chocolate shop in Wimbledon Park Road remains closed, but their branches in Revelstoke Road and Earlsfield are both open.

Southfields, like all other shopping areas, is fighting to stay afloat. If you want a vibrant Southfields you must continue to support them. This is vital if they are to survive.

habershonfamily@googlemail.com

Next SGRA meeting

Please note our next "virtual" public meeting on Tuesday 29th September, time tbc. You can find out full details of the agenda and special guests from

www.southfieldsgrid.org.uk

FRIENDS OF CORONATION GARDENS UPDATE

By Nada Savitch, FoCG secretary

One of the lessons that learnt from the COVID-19 lockdown is the importance of our local green spaces. The Friends of Coronation Gardens are glad to see how the Gardens have been used during the last few months. Social distancing meant we could not hold the events planned for this spring and summer, but we have continued to work with Enable Leisure + Culture which manages the Gardens on behalf of Wandsworth Council.

The Gardens looked lovely in the spring following our bulb planting efforts last autumn. Look out for the wildflowers, planted with help from Riversdale School children, and thank you to everyone who watered our new trees during the dry weather. Some of the paths were resurfaced during July, and we understand that work on the area in the corner of the Gardens will begin in the autumn.

More people using the Gardens means more litter, so we are grateful to those people who take their litter home with them. There have

been reports of anti-social behaviour after dark, so we were happy when Enable Leisure + Culture agreed to start locking the gates at night at the weekends again. They will be locked each week from 9pm-6am from Thursday - Sunday nights during the autumn.

Our annual meeting had to be postponed in April, but we will hold it either in person or online on 30th September 2020, 18 months since we were formed. Check our website for exact details. If you care about Coronation Gardens, please get involved. You can become a Friend or make suggestions via our website <https://www.focoronationgardens.co.uk>



YOUR SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM UPDATE



PC's Robbie, Don and James

By PC James Elvy

Your Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) is a group of Met police officers dedicated to serving our Grid community. We work closely with local authorities, community leaders and residents to decide policing priorities for the area.

We held our regular quarterly public meeting via Zoom on Saturday 8th August, and reported that our continuing priorities in the Southfields area were:

1. Anti-social behaviour
2. Burglary
3. Thefts from motor vehicles

In general crime numbers in the Grid went down in April, probably because of lockdown, but then crept up by the summer as lockdown eased. While thefts from motor vehicles were down, the main concern was the increase in bike thefts. This mirrors the national picture, with long waiting lists for new bikes making it more attractive for some to steal one instead. Burglary totals, including thefts from sheds, stood at 8 in March, 9 in April, 5 in May and 10 in June.

On public parks, the main issue is anti-social behaviour during the summer months. Things seem to have eased when pubs reopened. Our local park Coronation Gardens is now locked from 9pm-6am on Thursday to Sunday nights. Bikes stores are due to be installed, the first on Astonville Street.

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 21st November at 10.30am, probably via Zoom. Please follow our updates on Facebook and Twitter, and we can be contacted at southfields.snt@met.police.uk

GREEN THE GRID SUMMER UPDATE - THE GREAT BULB GIVEAWAY



By Karen Booth, Green the Grid

Green the Grid was excited to be back at the St Barnabas Autumn Fair on Saturday 19th September. We gave away free bulbs, thanks to the SGRA, to enable people to refresh Grid tree bases. We also had a "plant and seed, pot and tool swap". It was great to have so many great plants donated, many of which had been grown from cuttings!

Although we had to cancel our "Gardener's Question Time" back in

April, we have been keeping busy. We have welcomed all the positive feedback about our #timefornature campaign on Twitter, which has been sharing gardening tips, lockdown activities, featured plants on the Grid and an introduction to our local trees.

At the same time, this year's Front Garden and Street Planting awards have been given out along with the Spectacular Sunflowers of Southfields. It is wonderful to see the range and variety of planted front gardens, and how much tree base planting has been taking place. Thanks also goes to everyone who has "adopted" recently planted trees to ensure they are

regularly watered.

We look forward to seeing the bulbs appearing in tree bases all over the Grid by the Spring! Flags for tree bases are always available outside 119 Lavenham Road.

Finally we welcome Wandsworth Council's recently-launched campaign called "Love to Garden". It encourages people to nurture and grow their front gardens. Sound familiar? Details are on the council website

To keep up to date on what we are up to please follow us on twitter.com/GreenTheGrid or email us with any ideas at greenhthegridsw18@hotmail.com

DO WE WANT A LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD IN THE GRID?



Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are experimental schemes that aim to reduce traffic, noise and pollution in residential streets. We have recently seen how pleasant and safer the streets were when there was little through traffic. The idea

of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods is to deter rat-running and congestion. This can be achieved by restricting access by vehicles in some streets. This will not prevent local traffic and deliveries but aims to deter those who are cutting through the Grid to shave a few moments off their journey. Less traffic means less air pollution, reduced CO2 emissions and quieter streets. This should make our streets safer for both young and old, and encourage us to walk and cycle more.

There are a variety of schemes and several ways of reducing through traffic. The Council has just introduced a scheme in Tooting. We would need

to decide which streets are most affected by rat-running and the best way of deterring through traffic without affecting residents' access too much. We would have to demonstrate that any scheme we propose has the support of our residents. Astonville Street, Elsenham Street, Brookwood Road and Lavenham Road seem to be the busiest streets but your ideas are needed.

Please get in touch with us if you wish to participate in devising a scheme to put forward to the Council, via your street representative or to the Executive Committee direct via info@southfieldsgrid.org.uk

OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE BENCH WILL BE BACK!

Several of you have queried the whereabouts of the bench situated at the top of Replingham Road outside Caffe Nero. It was presented to the local community in 2002, to commemorate the street party held to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. A favourite of the late Mad John, one resident and his elderly neighbour used it for rest and recovery in their walk to and from the shops. They would like to continue walking but need this seat! With the recent improvement works going on the seat was taken away for refurbishment, is currently

in a council store, and will be returned once the paving works are finished in mid-October. Our grateful thanks go to the Thames Tideway project who undertook the restoration work, and it looks



Looking a bit scruffy



Back to brand new!

2020 SGRA FRONT GARDENS AWARDS - ALL THE WINNERS OF OUR ANNUAL SUMMER GRID SPECTACULAR!



Clare and Nick in their winning garden

Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty, chair of judges, rounds up this year's awards

Say hello to our Front Garden Award Winners 2020! Heartiest congratulations to Clare James and Nick Liszka, the overall winners of the 2020 Front Garden Awards. The couple, who live at 98 Elsenham Street, said they were 'chuffed to bits' to receive this award, which was made up of a £25 garden centre voucher plus a silver platter. Their garden has been in our sights for a few years now, as they won an award for 'Best Hanging Basket' (before we introduced our current bronze, silver and gold award system) in 2018, and it was a runner up last

year. So perseverance wins!

When Nick first moved into the house the front garden was all concreted over, with not a plant in sight bar the front hedging. In a true labour of love Nick dug up the concrete - he called himself 'The pickaxe man' during this period. Gravel was laid in 2010 but it was not until 2015, when Clare entered the scene, that a garden began to evolve. And what a lovely garden it is! In essence it is a cottage garden of informal design, attractiveness to wildlife, a mix of colours mixed with a modern twist e.g. railways sleepers interspersed with the gravel, a large sculpture of a dog ingeniously doubling up as a seat, large pots strategically placed to name but a few contemporary

elements. It bursts with colour and scent from late February through to September. Hedging plays a big part in this garden, with a camellia hedge by the side of the front path and Physocarpus hedging along the front wall, which is home to a family of blackbirds now.

The inspiration for their front garden came from visiting an exhibition about small urban gardens, and they set about creating their front garden about four years ago. Bar a few differences they are usually in agreement about what they would like to do in the garden, with Clare being given the title of 'creative director' and Nick 'The doer'! Sounds like a great compromise to me. Of course none of this comes about without lots of hard work and thought. Their garden is lovingly tended, and they are brimming with ideas as to how to improve upon it next year. I did point out that sadly they cannot win this award again next year! This year has been a difficult one for everyone, but both Clare and Nick have found great joy in their gardening, revelling in the colour, aroma, wildlife, and beauty that their garden affords them. It was lovely to talk to such dedicated and creative gardeners. Thank you Clare and Nick - we are also 'chuffed to bits' that you won this year's award. Very well done indeed!

Our search for the "Spectacular Sunflowers of Southfields" also led us to see some amazing entries.

The winner eventually came from 13 Lavenham Road. These were planted and tended by a 6 six year old boy, and at their height there were 23 sunflowers growing there! Others could be found at outside 173 Trentham Street, a beautiful display of sunflowers in different sizes, and the front garden of 139 Elsenham Street who had a wondrous crop of sunflowers. All used seeds given away by Green the Grid earlier this year, to encourage brighten front gardens.



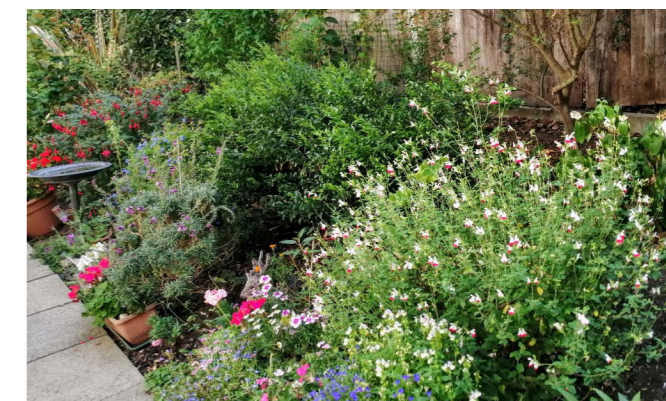
Clare and Nick, overall winners, receive their silver platter from the Mayor of Wandsworth, Cllr Jane Cooper.



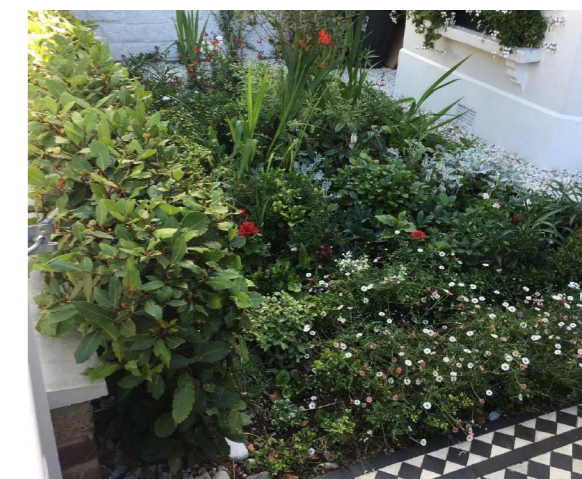
The winning garden looking at its best



This magnificent display was one of the winners of the "Spectacular Sunflowers of Southfields" award. At their height there were 23 sunflowers!



One of our runners-up was 62 Hanford Close. Audrey Juson is a keen gardener featured in our awards before.



Our other runner-up was a delightful display at 16 Lavenham, Road. Both received a £15 garden voucher

PROFILE - SOUTHFIELDS GRID'S "HISTORY MAN" NEIL ROBSON



Neil Robson

The theme of June's Wandsworth Heritage Festival was to have been "homes and housing". Luckily the work our contributors took in researching their walks, talks, exhibitions and open days will not go to waste, as this year's events will be postponed until next year. One of those local historians is Neil Robson. Neil is editor of the Wandsworth Historical Society's journal, and twenty years ago wrote "Roomy Villas" all about our very own corner of Wandsworth - Southfields Grid. Grid News talked to Neil about his passion for the area.

How long have you lived in the area, and what do you like most about it?

I moved into Southfields Grid just over 30 years ago. 'Location, location, location' - that's undoubtedly part of its magic. Close to good shops, easy access to public transport, and plenty of open space. But it is the people that make a community, of course, and perhaps because of the varied nature of the housing stock we have an extremely healthy mix across the generations. Our friends over the road have lived there since 1959. In contrast some of our other neighbours are still learning the art of walking. Such a cross-section cannot fail to generate a good spirit within a neighbourhood.

You wrote 'Roomy Villas', the history of Southfields Grid, back in 2000. How did you get the title?

Right from the start of the project I was on the look-out for a catchy title. It had to be short with a bit of a snap to it, and with luck slightly whimsical. In Battersea Library one afternoon whilst browsing through a newspaper file for 1905 I came across a Wandsworth estate agents' advertisement promoting 'roomy villas' in Southfields. In a flash I knew I had found what I was after.

Was there anything surprising you uncovered during your research?

There was indeed! I was at one point looking at the issues of the Wandsworth Borough News from September 1939 when out of the blue there jumped a brief account of a court case involving a woman who lived in the very house I live in now. Described as

'a daily help' she stole a sum of money from her employer on Skeena Hill 'to buy clothes for her evacuated children'. For that she was sentenced to one day's imprisonment. A naughty thing to do, obviously, but I can still recall the wave of pity I felt for her at the time.

What did you find out about the people who lived in the houses when they were first built?

The Edwardian author May Sinclair haughtily described Southfields in one of her novels as a 'paradise of little clerks'. She was being sarcastic, of course, but it was close to the truth. Most of the early residents, on the Grid at least, seemed to have come from what we might primly call the lower-middle classes'. Almost all of them rented, rather than owned their own property, I mean. They seem so different from us, and yet so very similar. They knew how to get grumpy with officialdom just as we do, like the man in Replingham Road who wrote to the local paper in 1898 - no WhatsApp in those days - to complain that the smell from the nearby piggery was so appalling that you had to keep 'all your windows and doors shut for fear of being sick'.

And, like us, they knew how to celebrate as well.

On VE Night in 1945 people took to the streets enjoying the warm sunshine, with women in summer dresses and men in just their shirt sleeves. This 8th May, 75 years on, we did the same thing to commemorate VE75

Day whilst maintaining a proper distance of course. Strolling around in similar weather, calling out good wishes to neighbours, and admiring the often home-made decorations hanging from the fronts of people's houses celebrating everything from VE Day to the NHS - it was extraordinarily touching.

You can still access Neil Robson's history of Southfields, entitled "Roomy Villas", either online as an e-book or in print format from Southfields Library.



Brookwood Road (Wandsworth Libraries & Heritage Service)



Replingham Road (Wandsworth Libraries & Heritage Service)



Southfields Grid residents celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012" (Neil Robson)



Hard at work

What this doing digging up our High Street? Replingham Road was shut in August as part of the ongoing public realm improvements, to enable a

"raised table" to be installed as a traffic calming measure. SGRA Executive member Ann Kerr took these unique pictures of the street reduced to a thousand bits and pieces.



Don't drive on this!

GRID NEWS NOTES

Generous support for Wimbledon Food Bank

A resident made attractive fabric masks over the summer, then donated their proceeds to the Wimbledon Food Bank. They were sold in "Chalk" on Replingham Road and flew off the shelf at high speed. She is now taking a well-deserved break - thank you!



We ReCycle comes to the Grid

WeReCycle is a new initiative on the Grid, being set up by some residents, and looking for people passionate about practical recycling. Do you want to join this start-up project, and help make Southfields the best recycling neighbourhood in the borough? If so please contact Sue Lovell-Greene at lovellgreene@aol.com or ring 020 8874 1756 for details.

New Concert Series

Plans for a "Sounds of Southfields" weekend arts festival in the Grid in June had to be abandoned, so the team have been wondering how it might change with the times. They plan to promote a string of one-off events over the next few months, designed to ease people back into attending live performances locally. These will take place at St Barnabas Church, and will be short concerts of approximately 45 minutes with no interval. Online ticketing, strict audience size limits and a socially distanced layout within the Church will hopefully ease people's health-related fears.

The first will take place on Saturday, 26th September. They are considering two or perhaps three shows on that day, depending on demand. The concert will be given by The Augustus Consort, a group of local professional singers and friends drawn from the ranks of The BBC Singers, I Fagiolini, Tenebrae, The Tallis Scholars, Solomon's Knot and more. Other concerts in the series will include the premier of a new arrangement of Ralph Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music for the reduced forces of vocal quintet and string quintet; a service of sung Compline, the Church of England's atmospheric night-time rite; and performances of interesting and inspiring art song repertoire.

General inquiries:

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To purchase tickets:

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LOCAL PLANNING UPDATE

By Margaret Brett, SGRA Executive

The improvement works to the pavements in Replingham Road should be completed by the end of October, when the works will move to the south east side of Wimbledon Park Road. The changes to the underground station forecourt should start later, in the summer of next year.

The development at the rear of 235a-237 Wimbledon Park Road was approved by the Planning Committee in June. There was a last minute revision of the ground floor plan to allow rear access by Chanteroy to its basement, which would otherwise have been blocked off. Planners said that issues such as the terms of a lease or deeds over land affected by the proposals are not material planning matters. We at the SGRA are monitoring this location for any further changes, and there is already an application to alter the basement of 235 Wimbledon Park Road from retail to residential with access from the rear. This would be impossible if the plans just agreed were to be implemented.

There is considerable opposition to the current planning case to erect a 20m Huawei 5G telecoms mast plus associated cabinets on the footpath outside St Cecilia's School. This should be affected by the recently announced government policy banning the introduction of Huawei 5G masts.

The new "permitted development" planning rules relaxation allowing an additional two storeys to be built is for buildings dating from July 1948.

There has been an extension to the hours of construction allowing work to continue until 9pm and 8pm on Saturdays.

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Ann Kerr at 72

Clonmore Street, South Block 80-179

Nick Steiner at 116

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Andrew Dunley at 90

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If you have any news, stories or information you think would be interesting to the Grid community, please contact the editor, Philippa Haslegrave by Sunday 8th November.

THANK YOU TO ALL TREE ADOPTERS AND WATERERS



Gardening poet James



Amy loves the Grid trees

to breathe and the more there are, the healthier our planet will be".

All emphasised the importance of looking after our local trees and our environment. A huge thank you also to our SGRA street reps, who took on the task of knocking on doors of residents living close to a vulnerable tree and inviting them to 'adopt' it, water it regularly, and encourage their neighbours to do the same.

By Serena Potter

Young trees have been given a helping hand by thoughtful residents during these recent dry months. Younger residents James, Ava, Marcus, Lily and Chloe have contributed their thoughts and are watering regularly. Lily and Chloe on Elsenham Street have named their trees 'Kenneth' and 'Malcolm'. They and Marcus designed posters which can be found on trees around the Grid. Look out for them!

James has written a lovely poem: "Please stop and think and give your tree a drink! Be kind and water our young Grid trees, while we enjoy the summer breeze. The sunshine makes the leaves glow, and the water will help them grow! Ava wrote a powerful paragraph - 'My tree is like my baby. If I do not take care of it or feed it, the tree will not grow, and its life will not be worth living. We need trees

During lockdown I carried out a survey of street trees planted by Wandsworth Council and recorded around 45 trees planted during the past 3 winters. You can see where they are on the lovely map below. Those supported by a green stake were planted in the winter of 2019/20, those with red stakes during 2018/19 and those with yellow, the winter of 2017/18. Stakes are removed regularly by Enable, who carry out the tree maintenance contract for Wandsworth, so some may now have gone, but the trees still need our help. Trees with a black dot on the map have no stake but look as if they need some extra watering.

ALL trees need extra help during the dry weather, so please do water any age tree near you.

For further information please go to:

www.wandsworthtreewardens.org/tree-watering/



If you are concerned that a tree near you is struggling, or interested in becoming a Wandsworth Tree Warden, please contact me at sjpotter304@gmail.com or the Wandsworth Tree Wardens www.wandsworthtreewarde.org