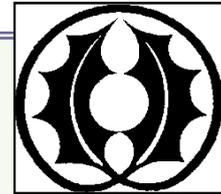


The John Innes Society Newsletter

Issue No 298

June 2023



FOR CONSERVATION IN THE JOHN INNES ESTATE AT MERTON

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johninnesociety.org.uk

CORONATION WEEKEND CELEBRATIONS: SHERIDAN ROAD AND CHURCH LANE

The fabulous community spirit on Sheridan Road as neighbours gathered to celebrate a moment in history and share friendship, food and fun for a Coronation Street Party, part of the official Coronation celebrations from 6-8 May 2023.



Street Parties were also enjoyed in other local roads including Daybrook, Dorset, Erridge, Mostyn and Stratton Roads, to name but a few.

SPRING PLANT SALE 2023: SOLD OUT IN 50 MINUTES!

See pages 4-5

MUSIC in the PARK 2023

Back after too long a gap our Music in the Park event returns to the John Innes Park on **Sunday, June 25th from 3pm until 5pm.**

We have invited The Colliers Wood Community Orchestra to play for us. Founded only in 2018, despite lockdown interruptions, the Colliers Wood Community Orchestra has gone from strength to strength. As a community orchestra, the members are musicians of varying abilities but all have equal enthusiasm for their very varied repertoire of popular classics, folk and contemporary music. Last year they played at the Wandle Arts Festival with great success.

We are keeping our tickets priced at 2019 rates, i.e. £10 per adult and free entry for up to three children for each adult ticket holder (who must remain the person responsible for them). As always the proceeds of this event go towards the work of the Friends of the John Innes Park.

Please note that seating is not provided – bring your own chair or groundsheet but be aware that we cannot guarantee that the grass will be totally free of detritus despite our best efforts to check beforehand. Bring your own picnic tea as refreshments are only available for the orchestra. Above all, let's wish for good weather.

Tickets are available from Alison Cousins via alisoncousins@gmail.com (contact details on the back page).

Alison Cousins

THE ARCHITECT OF MERTON PARK

On Saturday April 15th the Society held a launch for the long-awaited biography of Henry Goodall Quartermain. Local historians and a few residents of Quartermain houses joined the committee in thanking Nicholas Burton (pictured right) for providing the Society with a new title for the publications portfolio, and in particular for a much needed resource on the architect appointed by John Innes to develop our garden suburb.



Nicholas was congratulated on his depth of research and perseverance through both the pandemic and a house move. The Society also has reason to thank him for enabling the eventual

transfer of the original architectural plans from Finch's to our archives and his mother for

digitising them.

Nicholas spoke of his admiration for Quartermain's work and of the lack of information about the man himself and his many other interests which had led him to write this booklet.



Before signing copies (with a carefully chosen pen!!) Nicholas was asked to perform the initial cutting of a cake depicting one of Quartermain's photos of his own home on Dorset Road. The cake (pictured left) was baked by Desé Child and was much appreciated by everyone.

Details of the booklet (Henry Goodall Quartermain : his life, career and architectural legacy) were in the March edition of the newsletter.

Alison Cousins

An evening Swift Walk will be held on Saturday 1st July, in support of National Swift Awareness Week (1st - 9th July 2023)

The walk will commence at the War Memorial, Wimbledon Common, at 7.15pm. There will be a short talk on swifts, followed by a walk around the area to look out for local swifts. The walk is expected to finish around 9pm, near Merton Park tram station. Hopefully we will spot swifts, but this cannot be guaranteed, as they are elusive birds and their behaviour depends heavily on weather conditions. In the event of rain, the walk will automatically be cancelled and re-scheduled. Binoculars will be helpful but not essential. Numbers of attendees will be limited and early booking is recommended.

To book a place on the walk, please email Louise, at wimbletonswifts@outlook.com.

Fun facts on swifts:

- ◆ Swifts are related to humming birds, not swallows or house martins.
- ◆ Swifts are the fastest birds in level flight and can fly at 70mph.



- ◆ Swifts eat, drink, sleep and mate on the wing.
- ◆ Swifts have tiny feet and cannot perch.
- ◆ Swifts can fly as high as 10,000 feet.
- ◆ Swifts weigh about 400g, the same as a Cadbury's cream egg!

Louise Cole

JIS SPRING PLANT SALE 2023

Our Annual Spring Plant Sale took place on 13 May. Despite cloudy weather many people came to buy bought-in plants, vegetables, home bakes and refreshments as well as generously donated plants. The Sale was attended by well over 200 visitors and made a profit of about £1,450 for the Society to spend on local improvement projects.



Clockwise from top: The “early birds” outside 5 Sheridan Road for the annual JIS event, the queue for the Spring Plant Sale gathers momentum, the hanging baskets tables, some of the donated plants and the colourful bought in annuals. All ready to be bought!



JIS SPRING PLANT SALE 2023



Clockwise from top: So many visitors we ran out of most plant offerings in 50 minutes, donated miniature cacti pots and bought in cosmos, gerberas and geraniums.

Photo credits: Hubert Child and K Welch

I would like to thank Desé & Hubert Child for once again offering their garden for the sale and all the growers, cake bakers, those who drove to the wholesalers to pick up the plants and everyone manning the stalls for all their help. We wouldn't be able to run such a successful sale without all of you. I would especially like to thank Ann Redfearn and Viv Tuley, who gave me so much help and advice.

Ingrid Holtz



HOW WE LIVED 50 YEARS AGO

In the last issue, we mentioned that the circus had returned to Mostyn Gardens and asked whether anyone remembered it. No responses were forthcoming, and it seems likely that 1973 was the last occasion on which a travelling show visited Merton Park. The Wimbledon Borough News reported that the recent circus in Mostyn Gardens left "pavements battered and broken, and a park turned into a quagmire".

This was the second year the circus had visited, and the council said they would have

second thoughts before asking them back again. Circus owner Gerry Cottle, educated at Rutlish School, offered to pay for any damage but said they are

now too big for the site and would not be coming back. And that, presumably, was that.

Entertainment in Merton Park then took a more familiar turn with the Parish Players production of an Agatha Christie play. It was the ever-popular mystery now known as *And Then There were None*, although that is at least the third title for the piece. Current members David Golder, Graham and Carol McCubbin, Geoffrey

Start and John Gout were all in the cast, proving once again that PP members are a loyal bunch.

At St Mary Merton, the focus of much parish fund-raising was the Hambro House Orphanage, in Treville Street, Putney Heath, which had opened in 1879 with the aim of supporting and educating girls who were orphans or fatherless. In 1919, the home was taken over by the Waifs and Strays Society, and boys as well as girls were admitted from the 1940s, and could live in

the home from the age of 3 to 16 years. There must have been much excitement in 1964, when the Beatles visited the home and helped the children to paint Easter eggs.

Parishioners at St Mary's were long-term supporters of Hambro House through such activities as knitting blankets and arranging

outings, as well as raising funds.

All this would come to an end the following year, however, as Hambro House closed in 1975, and the building is now a private residence. By this time, however, the Waifs and Strays Society had become the Church of England Children's Society, a charity which is still supported every year by the parishioners of St Mary's.

Chris Abbott



The cast taking a final bow at "And Then There Were None", 1973.

Photo credit: Parish Players archives.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Please send your submissions for the next issue of the Newsletter to

mail@johninnesociety.org.uk by Wednesday 23 August.

It will be distributed on Saturday 9 September.

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Community project: MOSTYN ROAD DAFFODILS

It was very pleasing to see all the daffodils out in Merton Park this year. Whilst the flowers have now faded their stems are still strong and our grass verges are wilder than ever!

It's great to see that the fading flowers have ushered in what seems to be a new trend of 'No Mow May', an effort to encourage more wildlife and especially bees, into our verges before they are cut back in June. Once the daffodil stems have wilted and all the goodness has gone back into the bulbs our verges will be restored.

This year has been an outstanding success for planting. I never thought that when we started in April 2021 we would be planting 19,350 bulbs in October 2022. People asked how many we planted and I would casually say "Loads" but the reality is that's almost a tonne - 1000kg!. This is on top of the 16,250 we planted in October and November of 2021.

Funding has always been a bit of a challenge and we were fortunate in 2021 to be able to use the Ward Allocation Fund which wasn't available to us in 2022. Merton Park has a strong sense of community and social media has a wide reach, so it wasn't long before residents started donating to our crowd-funding campaign and The John Innes Society and

Evolution Creations Wimbledon Ltd also made generous donations. We even had people donating that didn't live in Merton Park but had connections to The John Innes Society. Without these donations our daffodils would never have been planted this year so we owe them all a massive thanks. I am delighted to say that our local councillors tell me the Ward Allocation Fund is back for 2023 and support for our efforts is still strong.

Trying to balance the requests for daffodils and the money raised was a worry for a while. I remember when our street rep Cathy from Mostyn Road told me she had worked out she needed 10,000 bulbs to cover 1328 metres. It seems as though I had encouraged her a bit too

much to expand on the verges she had planted outside her house the year before!

There were over 80 volunteers involved this year but Cathy stands out for her unrelenting enthusiasm. She delivered leaflets to 180 houses and set up five teams of residents to help. Most impressive was getting 12 sixth formers from Rutlish School to help plant outside the school entrance and on the verge leading up to South Merton Station. The stories continue with people planting in torrential rain and whole families taking part in getting the bulbs in the ground. Really inspiring stuff!

Along came February and March 2023 and efforts were finally rewarded with an amazing display along the length of Mostyn Road and the rebirth of those bulbs planted in other roads in 2021-22. Circle Gardens looked an amazing centrepiece again with many of the adjoining roads also showing fantastic displays. Not all of Merton Park has suitable grass verges but we



Photo credit: Ian Delaney

hope to fill in a few more gaps next year.

Writing this article after a weekend of Coronation celebrations shows us what something as simple as the daffodil can do. Like the Coronation and the Platinum Jubilee, the project has brought together so many people who never knew each other before. Many friendships have been made, WhatsApp groups formed, many a ladder loaned and bowl of sugar borrowed. This is the real benefit of all our efforts and an unexpected one too. Congratulations to everyone involved. Long live the Daffodil.

JASON BESANT

SAVE THE DATE!

MUSIC in the PARK 2023: Sat 25th June from 3-5pm in the John Innes Park.
 Tickets available on the gate but advanced booking advised (see page 1).

SWIFT WALK 2023: Sat 1st July meeting at the War Memorial,
 Wimbledon Common at 7.15pm. [Booking recommended](#) (see page 3).

At the Coach House

Bridge Club: Mondays at 7.30pm

Bridge Classes: Thursdays at 7.30pm

Coffee & Social Mornings: First Friday of the month. 11am - 1pm

Friends of the John Innes Park Gardening Group: Second Friday of the month
 at 9am by the mulberry tree

The John Innes Society Contacts

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