



The John Innes Society Newsletter

Issue No 278

November 2019



FOR CONSERVATION IN THE JOHN INNES ESTATE AT MERTON

Registered charity 803759

johninnessociety.org.uk



“Gaiety Girl” outsmarts quizzers

For the second year running it poured with rain on Quiz Night. However, once inside everyone settled in with a drink (or two) and a chat with old and new table companions. Despite a brief and unexpected session of musical chairs at the start, the quiz itself started with a picture round to identify various monarchs. A fairly easy exercise which lulled us into a false sense of security !

Our Quizmaster, Chris Abbott, had indicated that this year’s event would have a bit of a local feel. Should we have panicked and brushed up on local history or could we “wing it”? The actual questions were a brilliant interpretation of local names, themes, and characters, which gave everyone a fair chance of success, as a few quizzers were from out of the area.

Star Quizzer of the evening was Ingrid Holtz who was the only person in the entire hall to know that the statue on top of Wimbledon Theatre is of Laetitia, the Roman goddess of

gaiety. Well now we all know. The real expert on local history remained firmly behind the bar and sensibly refused to be cajoled into giving clues of any sort.

The final result was a three-way tie, so the inevitable play-off took place. The first table to present three words from an anagram took the prizes. Congratulations to the team concerned. We were also delighted to welcome several new quizzers to the event. The evening was professionally orchestrated by Chris Abbott, who, along with Nick Vaughan-Barratt had compiled some excellent questions. Our thanks go to them, and to David Reeves as scorer, and Hazel Abbott and Maggi Chick for contributing to such an enjoyable, if somewhat cerebrally challenging evening.

Thanks are also due to my colleagues Ann Redfearn, Penny Clarke, and Katherine Watkins, on the organising team, and for help on the night, to Keith Etherington, Ingrid Holtz, and Viv and Simon Tuley. John Harding, Margaret Garrett, and Paul Hampson did wonders in the kitchen and at the bar, but special thanks go to Karen Etherington for organising the kitchen clear-up unasked.

Alison Cousins

SEASONAL SCAM WARNING

Christmas is fast approaching. Royal Mail & The Trading Standards Office are making people aware of the following scam:

A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a

parcel and that you need to contact them on 0906 6611911 or a similar Premium rate number.

Do not call any number on a card from PDS. If you call the number and you start to hear a recorded message you will already have been billed £315 for the phone call.

Harry and Doreen Spence RIP



death comes only four months after that of wife Doreen.

It is with sadness and a great sense of the loss of very good neighbours that we report the death on 10th October of Harry Spence . His

Harry and Doreen had lived in Merton Park for over sixty years and were actively involved in the local community. They cherished the friends they made locally, the village atmosphere, and the greenery and seclusion of the area, but also the proximity of essential amenities such as the newsagent's, the Nelson Health Centre, and Mr Falcone's Italian bakery on Merton Park Parade.

Joyful memories of Harry and Doreen will live on in all of us who knew them, cheering and guiding us for many years to come.

D Child

Remembering Theo & Kitty Wyatt

On Saturday, 5th October Margaret Reed and her family gathered in the John Innes Park to plant a tree in memory of her parents Theo and Kitty Wyatt. Margaret grew up on Wilton Grove and spent many happy times with her family enjoying the John Innes Park. The Reed family donated a Magnolia Stellata tree and it has been planted at the front of the park in the flower border parallel with Mostyn Road. The family also generously donated £150 to the JI Society which will benefit the gardening activities of the Friends of John Innes Park.

Jo Pfeifer



MERTON PARK— BLOOMING BUT FUMING

The latest Air Quality Monitoring Results for 2018 show that Merton Borough still exceeds the Government's Air Quality Objectives and must pursue improvements in Air Quality urgently.

As a very leafy part of Merton, we might hope that Air Quality in Merton Park was satisfactory, but the figures show otherwise. Of the 53 monitoring sites around the Borough, many of the highest readings for pollution are in our immediate neighbourhood. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is generally acknowledged as a particularly harmful pollutant, and the annual mean should not exceed 40 ug m⁻³.

Site No 23, which is outside 183 Kingston Road, had an annual mean of 58.3. In the winter months, when there were no leaves on the trees, the readings rose to 74.77. Think on this next time you try and cross Kingston Road or queue in traffic jams. What are you breathing in?

Site 44 (AA) which is outside Oxfam in Morden has a mean annual reading of 61.9 with monthly readings varying between 87.66 and 53.71. The Civic Centre in Morden has a mean annual reading of 51.3. In Wimbledon the readings for The Hand and Racquet on Wimbledon Hill show an annual mean of 65.6, nearly as high as the worst in the tables, at Merton Road South Wimbledon, which was 68.8.

Of the 53 monitored Merton sites, 36 had annual mean readings over or well over the 40 limit.

On the bright side, there was a slight overall drop since 2017 although some sites showed an increase. The measuring is mainly done near roads but for comparison there are also monitoring sites away from traffic, such as site 31 (LA) which is the alley from Charminster Avenue behind The Old Ruts Playing Fields. Here we see an annual mean of 20.5 although that rose to 30.12 in November 2018 – under the limit but why the upward spike during the month of November?

The full 57 page report, and the Action Plan for improvements, makes fascinating, if somewhat alarming reading. It can be found on <https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Annual%20Status%Report%20219.pdf>

You can also access this report and the reports back to 2015 by Googling *Local Air Quality Management – Merton Council*

Desé Child

Helen Nelson-Jones' cartoon below shows what was actually observed in an August traffic jam on Kingston Road – Rapid Response and Fresh Produce going nowhere fast.



JOHN INNES SOCIETY'S PLANT AND PRODUCE SALE – OCTOBER 2019



Raj Badiani and Philippa Tribler with Viv Tuley's wonderful wallflowers for amazing spring colour

Coffee and home-made cakes were enjoyed by visitors to the Coach House for the Autumn Plant and Produce Bring and Buy sale on Saturday 5 October and, this year, it didn't rain! Sales of compost were brisk and, as many bags had been pre-ordered, we had soon sold out.

The compost delivery team did a sterling job but comment that they are getting too old for the job! If anyone knows of a couple of fit young people who can help next year, please let us know. Visitors also bought spring bulbs, autumn/winter bedding plants, donated plants and a variety of jams, chutneys and other donated produce. The society made a profit of almost £500 and a few leftover bulbs will be planted in the John Innes Park and Kendor Gardens. We were a little disappointed by the donations, particularly of plants. The value of such events is enhanced when we can share plants which thrive in our conditions, so we urge you to think of plants you can divide or from which you can take cuttings or seeds.

Thanks to all who supported us and special thanks to those who helped to ensure a successful sale by donating plants, produce and cakes, helping to set up and sell and clear up.

Please put Saturday 9 May 2020 in your schedule for next year's Spring Plant sale. Also think about creating donations: when ordering from catalogues for spring, please think of planting a few extra seeds or plug plants or, when tidying and dividing in your garden, please save and nurture any extra plants or seed you can spare.

Ann Red-



Dorothy Mellor, Hilary Davies and Mary Fripp with donated plants

SPRING PLANT SALE on Saturday, 9 May 2020

at 5A Sheridan Road, SW19 3HW



Maria Priestland and Penny Clarke with spring bulbs and donated produce



Emer Drew, Peter McCoy, Ann Drew, Ginnie Kennedy and Hilary Yates enjoying coffee and cakes

FRONT GARDENS: PLAN NOW FOR NEXT SUMMER

Attractive front gardens are not just for looking at. They have an important role to play in reducing flooding and cleaning the air and they add to the value of a house.

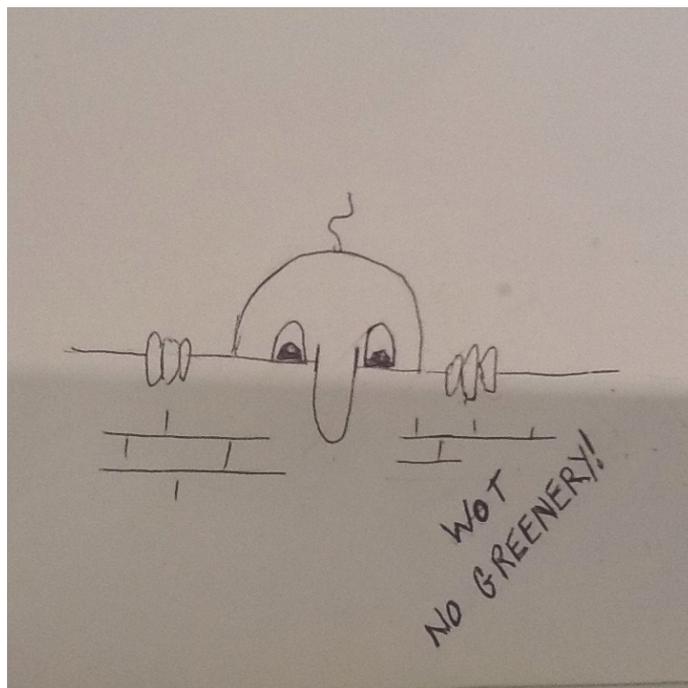
When a front garden is paved over the householder is missing out on the enormous benefits derived from having plants, especially a hedge. The more plants there are, the more carbon dioxide and dust like pollution (particulate matter) caused by traffic is removed from the air. An evergreen hedge - which should be holly in the Conservation Areas - provides the greatest benefit because its leaves capture the particulate matter all year round and the air near the house is cleaner. Trees are important as well because the particulate matter is captured on the trunks and branches as well as on the leaves and is then washed away by rain.

It is very much to our advantage that we keep our front gardens green which will then:

- A. clean the air and cool the atmosphere in summer
- B. prevent flooding
- C. help wildlife - as well as looking beautiful.

To raise awareness of the importance of front gardens, next summer we will be looking for a Prize-Winning Front Garden in a new way.

On Open Gardens day we will give visitors a short questionnaire with their ticket. This will ask them to look "over the wall or hedge" at any attractive front garden on their walk around the area. The owners of the front garden with the most votes will be offered The



ago by Marion Barclay in memory of her late husband. Unlike in previous years, there will be no categories this time. If anyone sees a garden that has a parked car in it and still manages to be green and beautiful, we will be extra pleased to know about it.

We are wonderfully green in Merton Park, but we must be careful that it is not reduced bit by bit. There are ways a front garden can remain attractive and environmentally friendly even with a car in it. There is absolutely no need to concrete or pave it over to all four corners.

We hope our competition will raise awareness of the benefits of keeping our front gardens as green and leafy as possible.

Helene Nelson-Jones

Best Front Gardens Cup, donated some years



**FOR ALL THE LATEST
NEWS AND EVENTS,
VISIT OUR WESITE AT
johninnesociety.org.uk**



HOW WE LIVED 100 YEARS AGO

In November 1919, the outcomes of the Great War were still to be felt in Merton Park as well as more widely. Shortly before Christmas, this poignant item appeared in the *Larne Times*, Antrim, Northern Ireland. It seems that a local man from Merton Park had gone missing during his service in Belgium in 1918 and his wife was still hoping for news of him. His regiment had been largely recruited from Northern Ireland, which explains the choice of newspaper.

I am endeavouring to trace a missing soldier, and wonder if you would be good enough to assist through your widely read paper. The soldier is No.

43619 Private P. J. Still of the 12th R. I. R. He was reported "missing" on 8th April 1918 at Wulverghem. Since then nothing has been found out about his fate. As that battalion was largely recruited from your district, there might be some possibility of some returned soldier knowing something of this man, and a small paragraph in your paper



Wulverghem Road, Belgium circa 1919.

might bring some details. Any information whatever would be thankfully received by his wife, Mrs Still, 5 Melrose Road, Merton Park, London S.W.



On Saturday 20th December however, a soldier who had returned safely was married at St Mary Merton. The Wimbledon Borough News reported the marriage of Mr Herbert J. Shepherd "a well-known Mertonian," late of East Surrey Regiment and King's African Rifles, and Miss Beatrice Gertrude Edwards of Bournemouth Rd. The article goes on to say that fifty friends and relatives attended the reception at the Masonic Hall.

The detail of the bride's clothes provides a fascinating insight into bridal fashions of 1919. The bride was charmingly attired in a cream gabardine costume," we are told, with moushin hat to match, her travelling costume consisting of saxe-blue tweed, with a fawn velvet hat." Does anyone know what a moushin hat might be? I can find no explanation as to whether that was a material of which the hat was made, or the style of the headgear. "The bridegroom's gift to his wife," we are then told, "consisted of a platinum ring, set with diamonds, while the bride gave her husband a rich engraved silver cigarette case." The happy couple had their honeymoon in Brighton and then planned to settle in Glasgow, where the groom was in business.

Chris Abbott

Return of “The Infants”

Judy Goodman’s excellent booklet “The Unfortunate Infants” is now back in print. Subtitled “An Account of the Bermondsey Poor Law Institution for Children at the Old Church House Merton, 1820 – 1845”, this describes the period in which inner city children from the overcrowded workhouse were sent to what was then a fairly rural area while their building was being extended. Most of the information is from the primary sources of minute books of the time, which are often quite detailed.

Our thanks to Peter Hopkins of the Merton Historical Society for all his patient work in creating a new master copy for us.

Copies are available at £2.00 from me (details on the back page) or whenever the Coach House is open for an event.

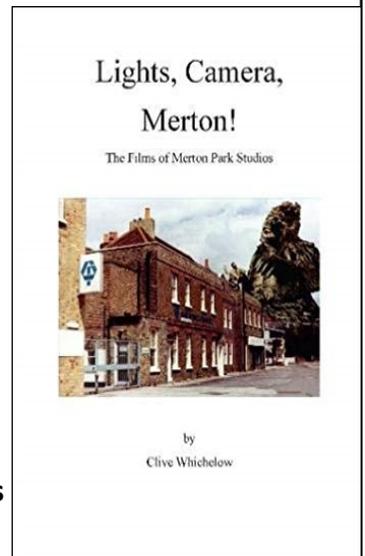
Alison Cousins

Lights, Camera, Merton!: The Films of Merton Park Studios

Clive Whichelow will present a talk in support of his new book in the Coach House on Wednesday, December 11th at 8pm.

These studios on Kingston Road were linked to some significant names connected to British cinema. Clive is a well-known local author and historian. This promises to be an informative evening.

Alison Cousins



2020 Subscriptions

Membership subscriptions are due for renewal on 1 January 2020 unless you have previously bought a three-year subscription which includes 2020.

The John Innes Society Committee has agreed an increase in subscriptions from 1 January 2020. Subscriptions were last reviewed in 2009 since when the Consumer Price Index has increased by 30%. The current income from subscriptions no longer covers the Society’s regular outgoings of rent and rates, insurance, utilities and newsletter production, etc which means we are having to use money from fund raising events to correct the shortfall, which we are reluctant to continue. The review has enabled us to make the 3 year membership option more advantageous to members. The new rates are:

	Current price / new price for a year	Current price / new price for 3 years
Single pensioner	£5 / £6	£15 / £15
All adults at one address	£12 / £15	£36 / £40

We are introducing an additional payment method using PayPal direct from the Society’s website. You can pay by credit/debit card via PayPal or use your PayPal account if you have one. You will still be able to pay by cash or cheque or by online transfer from your bank.

You can pay online at johninnesociety.org.uk/options2020 using PayPal or credit card. Alternatively complete the form enclosed with this Newsletter, scan it and email to memsec@johninnesociety.org.uk or post it to the Membership Secretary and make a transfer to Sort Code 20-96-89, Account Number 43851281 and use the first part of your address for the reference number (e.g. 21 Poplar). Or, by cash or cheque, payable to The John Innes Society, and send it with the completed form to:

Ann Redfearn, Membership Secretary, The John Innes Society, 21 Poplar Road, SW19 3JR.

Ann Redfearn

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Save the date!

All in the Coach House unless otherwise indicated.

Bridge Club and Bridge Classes
Most Mondays and Thursdays

Coffee Mornings
Second Wednesday of the month. 11am to 1pm

Friends of the John Innes Park Gardening Group
Second Friday of the month 9am John Innes Park

"Lights, Camera, Merton!" talk by Clive Whichelow
Wednesday 11th December at 8:00pm.

Guild Garden presentation by Dawn Canham
Tuesday 21st January at 7:30pm.

Coming our way!

Christmas Market at St Mary's Church Hall
Saturday 30th November at 11am.

Christmas in the Village
Sunday 8th December from 10 am to 5pm at Wimbledon Village

Pantomime: Jack and the Beanstalk!
Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th December at 11am and 1:30pm at Morden Hall Park SM4 5JD

Cinderella: The fairy godmother of all pantomimes
Sat 7th Dec to Sun 5 Jan 2020 at New Wimbledon Theatre SW19 1QG.

Santa Claus and the Night Before Christmas
Thursday 12th to Tuesday 24 December at Wimbledon Library SW19 1QG.

Pantomime by the Parish Players: Treasure Island
Thurs 9th - Sat 11th January 2020 at 7:45pm (matinee at 2:30 pm on Saturday) at St Mary's Church Hall SW19 3HJ.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Please send your submissions for the next issue of *The JIS Newsletter* to mail@johninnessociety.org.uk by **Monday, 13th January**. It will be distributed on **Sat 25th January**.