

Five years in Southfields

a reflection by Revd Bertrand Olivier, Vicar of St Barnabas.

Time seems to have flown by since I arrived in Southfields, early in 2000, from an inner-city parish in Walworth, near the Elephant and Castle. As the then new parish priest, I was made very welcome by the community here, and I have been very conscious over the past five years of the many ways in which people build community in this part of London.

Even in this fairly short period of time, there has been much change. Many houses now boast loft extensions, and there has been much building work overall, with for instance the former shops of Brookwood Rd being converted into houses. Front gardens on the Grid also all seem to receive a lot of attention and generally the streets feel brighter and cleaner. As the popularity of the area continues to grow, we all have had to deal with the problems of car parking, and the new parking restrictions. This is an issue which will undoubtedly continue to rumble in the background.

And there have also been changes in the profile of the Grid population. When I arrived, there were still many of our long-time Wandsworth residents, but over the years, numbers have gone down, and as they go, their place is taken by young families with children, or by groups of friends from abroad. Southfields continues to live up to its nickname of 'nappy valley', and who would have thought that so many South-Africans would find our area a home from home.

All this change, whether gradual or rapid, does not happen without the occasional problems, and I have been very encouraged to see how the local community has been helped through all this, not least by the hard work of the many volunteers who make up the Southfields Grid Residents Association, and who faithfully look out for the well being of the whole local community. Such commitment is rare and, without it, the local community would soon know the difference.

It has been especially encouraging to see younger people join the SGRA steering committee, so that the ongoing work can be sustained.

Community building is very important in a place like Southfields. Many young mothers already connect in GP surgeries, the local parks and the local coffee shops. The church has also been an important place of meeting for old and young alike, a place where all generations get together to worship but also to get to know each other. At St Barnabas, we have seen a significant growth in attendance in the past five years, and especially with many young families joining in. We have worked very hard at ensuring that all are welcome, including families with young (and sometimes noisy!) children, and we provide a crèche as well as our 'Rainbow' Sunday school during our main service, and ensure that children can participate in the liturgy. Through the dedicated work of our volunteers, numbers of children on our role has grown to over 120 (although not all come at once!), and this makes St Barnabas a vibrant and exciting place to be. We also restarted a church choir two years ago, as well as the Southfields Youth Choir, and continue to host many activities for the local community, from ballet to music classes, playgroup, mother and toddler group, Keep Fit for the over 50s, and of course the monthly meeting of SGRA.

Southfields is a great place to be in, and this is because so many local residents take responsibility of making it that way. As I now prepare to leave this area for my next post at All Hallows by the Tower in the City of London, I am more acutely aware of all that I will leave behind. May I wish you all best wishes for the years to come.

For further information, you can check the St Barnabas website on www.stbarnabas-online.org.

SGRA committee...

Chair:

Mike Caswell

Deputy Chair:

Mark Page

Secretary:

Gill Watmough

Treasurer:

Carol Gray

Street Representatives.

Astonville Street

Maurice at 478 Merton Road

Brookwood Road

James & Mark at 91

Clonmore Street

Nick Steiner at 116

Elborough Street

Mike Caswell at 96

Elsenhams Street

Eddie Lewis at 4 Lavenham Road

Engadine Street

Jack & Doreen Gray at 33

Hanford Close vacant

Heythorpe Street

Neil Robson at 119

Lavenham Road

Mark Davie at 155 Clonmore Street

Merton Road vacant

Replingham Road vacant

Revelstoke Road

Chris Wright at 190

Trentham Street

Mark Page at 133

Dates for your Diary...

Tuesday 24th May 7-30pm

**SGRA Annual General Meeting,
St Barnabas Church Hall, Lavenham Road.**

This is your opportunity, as residents of the Grid, to voice opinions, concerns, questions etc and listen to experts/decision makers regarding local and regional issues. The Major Elect, the sitting MP, the local police and your Ward Councillors will be attending as will Elizabeth Howlett, in her capacity as GLA Member for Wandsworth and Merton, who is our guest speaker. Refreshments provided.

June 2005,

**Front Garden
Competition**

Saturday 23rd July, 2pm

**The Grid
Softball Tournament
Wimbledon Park**

Followed by a barbecue at
St Barnabas Church Hall,
Lavenham Road in the evening.

SGRA

Garden Parties

During the coming months as the days get warmer, no doubt, many Grid residents are looking forward to having barbecues and parties in their gardens. It has been suggested that we ask Grid residents to consider their neighbours when staging these activities, especially with respect to noise and smoke. **Thank you.**

THANK YOU

Thank you to Lavenham Mini Market, Suzelles, Freshers Fruit & Veg, McCluskeys, The Village Butcher, Budgen, McCluskeys and Chris Hairdressers Brookwood Road for their kind contribution of raffle prizes for the Golden Oldies Party In January. This ever popular event was attended by over 50 "golden oldies" from the Grid. Thanks also to Eddy Byles for his beautiful singing and the Mayfielders for their excellent entertainment. A big thank you also to Deputy Mayor Cllr. Jim Maddan and Tony Coleman MP for attending.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our collection at Southfields Underground Station during the annual SGRA carol singing event. We raised £313 for St George's Hospital special appeal. Thank you also to Major, Councillor Chief Mrs Lola Ayonrinde, Tony Coleman MP and his family and Councillor Richard Vivian and Councillor Jan Leigh for attending.

SGRA collections

During May and June, your SGRA street reps will be knocking on doors asking for contributions towards the running of your residents' association (£1-00 per adult for every household on the Grid covers our annual costs). **Please give generously as this is our main source of income.**

Grid Over 50s Club

The over 50's group now meet on Mondays between 2pm to 4pm in the small hall at St Barnabas in Lavenham Road. We provide home baked cakes, some fun quizzes, other activities and good company. We welcome new members so do drop by and visit us. **For further details speak to Margaret Brett on 020 8870 5364.**

Wimbledon Park Paddling Pool

This summer Merton Council are funding the opening of the Wimbledon Park paddling pool from mid July to the

end of August. However, there is great demand for the pool to be open from mid June. The SGRA is contributing £200

towards the cost of opening the pool for an extra month and hope many Grid families enjoy this additional facility.

The District Line - Justine Greening

Like many people living in Southfields, I use the District Line from Southfields station a lot. Its often a frustrating experience! Along with other District Line users, I get totally fed up trying to get home on a crowded Earls Court station when every tube coming in seems to be going absolutely anywhere apart from towards Wimbledon. By the time a tube does turn up there are so many people waiting you all have to cram on board. Add to that an unreliable service, and after a day at work, when you just want to get home without any hassle, it's the last thing you need.

I've met up with London Underground (LU) District Line Manager, Bob Thorogood and senior LU management to make sure they are working on getting more tube capacity to feed our stretch of the line and improve the service. An extra carriage on the smaller Edgware Road tubes is now planned. It's a step forward, but we need it to happen in the next few months if at all possible, rather than years. I'll be seeing Mr Thorogood every month if I can to make sure those plans for more capacity become reality and are not forgotten or "de-prioritised" as so often happens.

I would also like to see London Underground clean up its

property locally. Granville Road residents have been trying for some time to get what should be a simple thing achieved – the graffiti removed from the LU bridge over Granville Road. The District Line's Mr Thorogood told me that there has been no action because there isn't any plan in place to remove graffiti from its bridges and tracks in the Wimbledon and Putney part of London. London Underground shouldn't need a plan – keeping their property clean should be part of their every day activities.

Residents who want to keep their neighbourhood clean should be supported. With help from Southfields councillors, I am looking into whether we can use changes in the law to force them to take responsibility for their property.

That's if for now, but if you want me to help out with a local issue or you'd like to tell me about your concerns for Southfields then get in touch either by calling 020 8944 0378, or emailing me at justinegreening@putneyconservatives.com I can't promise to solve every problem, but I'll certainly try.

Front Garden competition 2005 - Carol Gray

Can you believe it's 4 years since we last held our front garden competition? Proof indeed that time flies. Grid gardens have maintained a high standard in the meantime and have been a pleasure to behold (witness the letter - totally unprompted - from Mel T in our Summer 2004 newsletter). However, we thought we would spur you on to even greater efforts this year.

The competition will take the form of street reps walking their streets at the end of June to determine the nominations and these will be reported to the SGRA Committee on 28th June. The panel of judges will then visit all the nominated gardens to choose the overall Grid winners. Prizes will be gift vouchers/plants kindly donated by The Kew Gardener.

The categories will be:

- Best traditional garden
- Best modern/designer garden
- Best container garden
- Best single container/window box

These categories reflect what we've learned from past competitions - that it's a difficult task comparing the merits of gardens which are so diverse. We think that these prize categories will mean that all residents are in with a chance of winning, whether they have a house or a flat, whether they are green fingered or design oriented and whether the garden contains paving or bedding. However, if your garden consists of a pile like the contents of a skip - it's probably safe to assume that you're not in the running! Good luck and good gardening. The results will be announced in our next newsletter in September.

The Elborough Street Surgery - from the Practice Manager

What changes there have been on the Grid. I have lived on the Grid for 34 years and have watched over the years the changes taking place. No where have more changes occurred than at the surgery. There has been a surgery on Elborough Street for 40 plus years. No mean feat in this day of ever changing demands by the NHS and its users. The practice has grown to its present size to meet the needs of its practice population and the changes within the NHS.

There may be some of you who remember Dr Brooks, who used to

practice from the ground floor of No. 83. She bought No. 81 and the surgery expanded to to the ground floor of 81. Through various changes of ownership we have now expanded to the whole of 81 and have 3 partners, 2 clinical assistants and 2 practice nurses. We train medical students and are a training practice for registrars.

We are very conscious of the changing population and hope to meet their demands. We are an all female practice, not by design, but part of our reputation has been

built on this. Some of the services we offer include smoking cessation advice, a dedicated well woman clinic, along with dedicated Diabetes and Heart disease clinics. We also have a well baby clinic. We have an appointment system which enables you to book on the day, and we offer limited appointments, which are pre-bookable, for the working population.

For further information about the practice, why not visit the web site www.elboroughstreetsurgery.co.uk or telephone 020 8874 7113.

The Grid Softball tournament

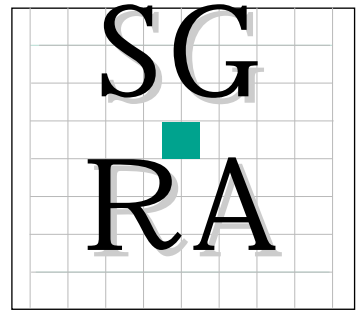
This summer we are organising a softball tournament, in Wimbledon Park, between teams from each street on the Grid. The date of the tournament will be Saturday 23rd July, followed by a barbecue at St Barnabas Church Hall. Each team requires

9 players, however if required, streets can combine to achieve the numbers. We are looking for people in each street to drum up support from friends and neighbours, to form a street team, appoint a captain and to call **David Crowther** on **020 8877 0932** by

27th June. If you are struggling to create a team, please contact your SGRA street rep for help. This is a great opportunity for the Grid community to get together, as we did for the Queen's Golden Jubilee street party, at both the tournament and the barbecue.

Crime on the Grid

from the Editor



The following are the crime figures, kindly supplied by PC Stephen Rogers, for the period 27th October 2004 to 29th March 2005.

- Astonville Street** - Theft from motor vehicle (2), Theft (1), Criminal damage to motor vehicle (1), Threatening phone call (1), Common assault (1), Burglary (1).
- Brookwood Road** - Burglary (2), Theft of motor vehicle (1), Theft from motor vehicle (2), Criminal damage (1).
- Clonmore Street** - Theft from motor vehicle (1), Criminal damage (1).
- Elborough Street** - Burglary (3), Robbery (1).
- Elsenham Street** - Theft of motor vehicle (1), Criminal damage (1).
- Engadine Street** - Theft (1), Criminal damage (1).
- Hanford Close** - Robbery (2), Theft (1).
- Heythorp Street** - Criminal damage (1), Criminal damage to motor vehicle (1), Theft from motor vehicle (1).
- Lavenham Road** - Theft (1), Theft of motor vehicle (1), Criminal damage (1).
- Replingham Road** - Burglary (4), Criminal damage (7), Theft (8), Assault (6), Theft from motor vehicle (3).
- Revelstoke Road** - Theft (2), Criminal damage (1).
- Trentham Street** - Theft from motor vehicle (1), Theft (1), Criminal damage (1), Criminal damage to motor vehicle (1).

Council matters on the Grid

A message from the Councillors for Southfields Ward: Jan Leigh, Simon Roberts and Richard Vivian

The telecoms company Vodafone wrote to us recently to tell us that it would be applying to Merton Council for planning permission to build a 40 foot high mast on the south-west corner of Durnsford Road and Revelstoke Road, to send and receive signals to and from mobile telephones.

The proliferation of telecoms masts has become a matter of concern to many people, not just because of the possible health risks caused by radio signals but also because of the general tendency of "street furniture" like this to block pavements and drivers' sight lines and to spoil the appearance of a neighbourhood. Government planning guidelines make it almost impossible for local authorities to refuse planning

permission on public health grounds, though they can do so for any of the other reasons mentioned.

The location that Vodafone has chosen is just south of the borough boundary between Merton and Wandsworth. This means that if and when it makes its application, it will be for Merton Council to decide, but Merton will have to consult Wandsworth Council first. If you have any views on the prospect of having a telecoms mast on the edge of the Grid, please write to the Borough Planner at the Town Hall, Wandsworth High Street SW18 2PU (or e-mail him at boroughplanner@wandsworth.gov.uk). The decision is not in his hands, unfortunately, but at least he can tell

Merton Council of your views.

Finally, looking back at what we wrote in the last issue in December, we are glad to say that the new pedestrian crossing in Merton Road by the bus stop outside St. Barnabas Church was installed in late January. The reconstruction of the pavements along the whole length of Clonmore Street is on target for completion by the end of May. And the four closed circuit TV cameras in Replingham and Wimbledon Park Roads should be in place by early June.

jleigh@wandsworth.gov.uk
simonroberts@wandsworth.gov.uk
rvivian@wandsworth.gov.uk

Heythorp Street Digs Deep for Cancer Care - Neil Robson

Well done to the residents of Heythorp Street for the generous way they responded to a local charity initiative last Christmas. Two residents Malcolm Brereton and Angela Rowan went from door to

door collecting for **Marie Curie Cancer Care**, the charity that provides practical help for people with cancer. Together they raised an amazing £130 – and that was from visiting just part of the street! So if

you would like to help Angela and Malcolm collect an even larger amount this coming Christmas, please call them on **8874 7802**. So many people benefit when we give to appeals like this.

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