

VICTORY CHRISTMAS – 1945

by Neil Robson

Sixty years ago, for the first time in six years, the residents of Southfields could look forward with happiness and pride to a Christmas of peace. Victory had been won, though it did not bring with it the return to normality that was so eagerly awaited. Quite the reverse; the end of 1945 was marked by increasing shortages and continued deprivation. 'We are finding our shopping problems more acute and food restrictions still with us,' ran the long suffering editorial in the Wandsworth Borough News on 21 December. Coal supplies remained uncertain, a government advertisement warned 'Be careful with your fuel,' and people resorted to burning wood or putting on extra layers of clothing. 'The bottle shortage is more serious than ever', cried United Dairies, who had a branch at the top of Elsenham Street, and it pleaded with its customers to put out their empties the same day or risk the supply of milk breaking down. Wandsworth Council appealed to householders to let their spare rooms to bombed-out couples and returning servicemen, but the response they got was negligible. Women feared sharing their kitchens, according to the explanation at the time.

The men were indeed coming home. Returning prisoners of war had their own difficulties patching up their lives, though one step in that process was the special free showing at the Granada, Clapham Junction of a compilation of newsreels to catch up on the

events 'which happened while you were away'. Some men came back to happiness, like Seaman White of Clonmore Street, who got married in St Barnabas Church that November after an absence of two-and-a-half years fighting in the Far East. Others found new jobs, like Capt. Reid, recently demobbed after six years in the Army Cinema Service. He was appointed as the new manager at the Plaza Cinema (now Riley's Snooker Club), and announced that he planned to raise the prestige of the place. His impact was not immediately apparent, however; the film he showed in Christmas week was the slapstick 'Turned out Nice Again' starring the eternally jovial George Formby. It was nearly five years old.

So it was a case of hope mixed with disappointment. The WBN felt obliged to reflect that 'the reconstruction of our national life is not going altogether smoothly,' adding that freedom from excessive control must be regained. 'In 1945 we liberated Europe,' it concluded. 'In 1946 we must liberate ourselves.' That optimism would be fulfilled with getting the remaining troops home, switching the factories to peacetime production, and building houses once again. But with food rationing destined to continue till 1954, the return to normality would be a very slow process.

Source: Wandsworth Borough News / Wandsworth Local History Service, Battersea Library (020 8871 7753)

SGRA committee...

Chair:

Mike Caswell

Deputy Chair:

Mark Page

Secretary:

Gill Watmough

Treasurer:

Carol Gray

Street Representatives.

Astonville Street

Maurice at 478 Merton Road

Clonmore Street

Nick Steiner at 116

Elborough Street

Mike Caswell at 96

Elsenham Street

Eddie Lewis at 4 Lavenham Road

Engadine Street

Jack & Doreen Gray at 33

Hanford Close vacant

Heythorp 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 20th December "Christmas carol singing"

From 5-30 pm the SGRA choir will be singing Christmas Carols outside Southfields Underground Station. We will be collecting money for Putney Home so please give generously.

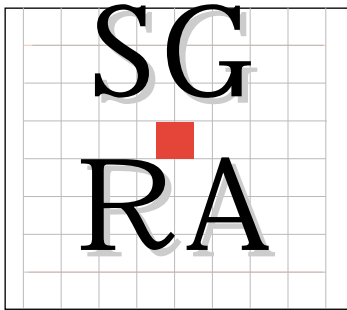
Saturday, 2pm, 21st January 2006

"Grid treasure hunt" for all ages.

Starts at St Barnabas Church Hall, Lavenham Road.

Golden Oldies Party, Saturday 8th April 2006.

3pm to 6pm at St Barnabas Church Hall,
Lavenham Road.



FROM THE TOWN HALL.

Council matters on the Grid

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

We are very conscious that petty crime and antisocial behaviour in Merton Road caused by small numbers of young people is causing residents a lot of concern. Inspector Alison Dollery, the new head of the Wandsworth Police sector, has been invited to the next meeting of the recently-established Southfields Safer Neighbourhood Panel – at 6.30 pm on Tuesday December 6 at Southfields Community College – to update us on the actions her officers are taking to prevent this. She will also tell us about the type of evidence that residents may be able to give to the Police that will help them prosecute troublemakers.

If you would like the panel to know of any local crime or public safety issues of concern to you, please contact either Jan, who chairs it, or Jenny Nickels, its secretary, whose e-mail address is jenny@mlsbusinesscentres.com.

Licence applications by pubs and clubs under the new Licensing Act are causing a great deal of concern to many of those who live nearby. And here in Southfields there is the added concern that the Government's encouragement of 24-hour opening will ruin the very character of our quiet residential neighbourhood.

Jan has supported residents in their objections to Wandsworth Council's Licensing Committee to recent applications by three local pubs to extend their opening hours – with some success. For example, Breaks at 227-231 Wimbledon Park Road (formerly Jesters Snooker Hall, opposite Southfields Station) was given a 12.30 a.m. closing time rather than the 1.30 it had applied for.

It is most important for residents to remember that, under the new Licensing Act, the Council cannot reject or even amend a licence application if there are no valid objections. This makes it all the more important for residents to take the trouble to make their views known to the Council when an application is made.

Another thing that residents can do is to monitor compliance by pubs and clubs with the terms and conditions of their licences after they are awarded. These are set out in decision notices that the Council sends out to all objectors to an application. Decision notices for Breaks, the Old Garage (20 Replingham Road) and the Pig and Whistle (481 Merton Road) are also posted on the SGRA's

website; alternatively, please ask one of us to send you a copy if you are interested.

We are sure you will welcome improvements to the Council's new street cleansing contract that will start next April, under which the main streets in Southfields will be swept three times a day rather than twice. The Council specifically identifies Southfields in this contract as a "local shopping area" that is suffering from rising levels of street litter. The extra clean will cover Wimbledon Park Road between Pirbright Road and Gartmoor Gardens, and the entire length of Replingham Road. It will also extend for 20 metres up all side roads leading off them. Hopefully this will make the centre of Southfields a cleaner and more attractive place for us to shop in.

Finally, the Council plans to install a number of traffic safety measures in Merton Road between Brookwood Road and Penwith Road some time next year. These will comprise:

"Entry treatment" at the entrances to various side roads: Brookwood Road, Lavenham Road, Bodmin Street, Strathville Road and Penwith Road. This will involve built-out corner kerbs and raised road surfaces flush with the pavement, which should slow traffic turning into and out of these roads.

Raised pedestrian crossing by the entrance to Brookwood Road. This should force traffic to slow as it approaches the crossing.

Vehicle-activated speed limit signs near the entrances to Strathville and Lavenham Roads, which will automatically flash a signal if a vehicle passing close to them exceeds the speed limit. These will be the first of their kind in Wandsworth.

We hope these measures will make it much safer for pedestrians to cross both Merton Road itself and the various side roads along this stretch.

jleigh@wandsworth.gov.uk
simonroberts@wandsworth.gov.uk
swansea@wandsworth.gov.uk

GRID TREASURE HUNT

Following the success of the Grid Softball tournament and barbecue in July and demand for more events, we are now staging a Grid Treasure Hunt. It will start at St. Barnabas Church Hall at 2pm on **Saturday 21st January 2006** and is open to all age groups including young families.

There is no need to form teams, just register your interest and we will form the teams for you. After the hunt we will

give out prizes to the winners, during which nibbles and mulled wine will be served.

There is no entry fee, however, for catering purposes, please register your interest either with **David Crowther** on **020 8877 0932** or your SGRA street rep by 7th January. This is a great opportunity for the Grid community to get together again as we did for the Softball Tournament.

Greetings from St Barnabas by Margaret Brett

In June we said a sad farewell to Rev'd Bertrand Olivier but celebrated his time here in Southfields with a great party. We are actively seeking a new priest and, in the meantime, it is business as usual at St Barnabas with the help of visiting priests and the Rev'd Penny Seabrook our curate.

December can be a time of great stress but we can take time out to make it a time of joyful anticipation when we can reflect on the real meaning of Christmas and the coming of Christ as a human child. There are a number of events at St Barnabas when there will be a chance to consider the wonder of Christmas:

Sunday 11 December	3pm	Christingle Service – Children's Nativity Tableau followed by refreshments
Saturday 17 December	7.30pm	Concert by St Barnabas Church Choir and Southfields Youth Choir
Sunday 18 December	5pm	Carol Service followed by refreshments
Saturday 24 December	4pm	Christmas Eve Crib service for children. Children are invited to come dressed as Angels, Stars, Shepherds or Kings.
Saturday 24 December	11.15pm	Midnight Mass – choir will sing from 11pm
Sunday 25 December	10.30am	Christmas Family Eucharist

The local churches will be singing carols at Southfields Station on Thursday 22nd December from 5.30-7pm in aid of Crisis. Do support us.

A joyful and peaceful Christmas to you all.

THE GRID'S LOCAL SCHOOL

By Christina Piombo, Head Teacher, Riversdale Primary School

We are again at that time of year when parents of young children coming up to school age are thinking about which school to send them to next September.

Riversdale School, with its distinctive building on the edge of the Southfields Grid, has prepared thousands of children of local families for their secondary education and adult life since it was built in 1895. A lot of new things are happening here that we look forward to showing parents who come to visit us over the next two months or so.

One of the first things you are bound to see is a huge building site behind the main school building, where the kitchen and dining room are being totally rebuilt, together with a new covered corridor to connect this annexe to the main building for the first time. The work is on schedule for completion in March, i.e. well before the start of the next school year.

Inside the main building, our 10 metre indoor swimming tank has been completely overhauled during the past year. We are almost unique among Wandsworth primary schools in having such a facility on site, which means that all pupils between the ages of 5 and 8 can have a weekly swimming lesson without having to leave the school site. And the children's

washrooms and WCs on each floor have been refitted, redecorated and expanded, so that pupils no longer need to go to a different floor from where their classroom is located.

Back outside, we have reclaimed a derelict area beside the former school keeper's house to create a new environmental area complete with a pond, where pupils can now enjoy studying wildlife in its natural surroundings.

We pride ourselves at Riversdale on running a very "child-friendly" school in a caring environment with a strong sense of inclusion. But we also set high standards of behaviour and expect high levels of attainment by our pupils, based on a strong work ethic. We try to offer an exciting, challenging curriculum featuring regular trips out of school – you may well have seen groups of our pupils out and about, dressed in the turquoise tops bearing the school badge that characterise our uniform.

Our high staff to pupil ratio across the school helps give children the opportunity to excel in a variety of fields. We track the performance of gifted and talented pupils under the Government's Excellence In Cities Initiative to ensure that they achieve their full potential. We introduce all pupils to a foreign language in Years 6 (the upper

year of Key Stage 2). And we give all pupils the chance to excel in a variety of non-core subjects by offering expert tuition in activities such as drama, football, learning of an instrument (guitar in Year 4 as part of the Music curriculum) and African drumming.

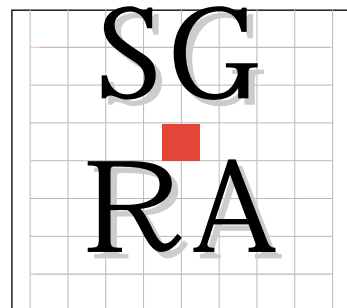
We have a full sports programme, both in lesson time and outside. The school playground has a football pitch with a safe, all-weather playing surface, and for other sports we are fortunate to be able to use the excellent facilities nearby at Southfields Community College.

Other activities include a weekly Homework Club and a number of other after-school clubs, not just for curriculum subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT) but also for arts, sports and music. And for children whose parents have heavy work or study commitments we run a daily Breakfast Club that opens at 8 am and an after-school care scheme that continues till 6 pm.

Parents are welcome to come to look at the school at 9.30 on any Thursday morning during term time, or at another time by arrangement. Please telephone the school office on **020 8874 6904** to make an appointment. We look forward to meeting you!

Crime on the Grid

from the Editor



The following are the crime figures, kindly supplied by PCSO Jacek Zebracki, for the period 2nd July 2005 to 25th November 2005.

- Astonville Street** - Theft from motor vehicle (1).
- Brookwood Road** - Burglary (1), Criminal damage to motor vehicle (1) .
- Clonmore Street** - Theft (1), ABH (1).
- Elborough Street** - Theft (1).
- Elsenham Street** - Theft from motor vehicle (1), Criminal damage to motor vehicle (1), Theft (1).
- Engadine Street** - Theft (1).
- Heythorp Street** - Theft from motor vehicle (1), Theft of motor vehicle (1), Theft (1), Criminal damage (1).
- Lavenham Road** - None.
- Replingham Road** - Burglary (2), Theft (3), Criminal damage (3), Assault in pub (1), ABH (1), Shoplifting (3), Drugs possession (1), Deception (1), Forgery (1), Theft from motor vehicle (1), Robbery (1).
- Revelstoke Road** - Theft from motor vehicle (1).
- Trentham Street** - Theft of motor vehicle (1).
- Southfields Station** - Common Assault (1).
- Merton Road** - Burglary (1), Theft (3), Attempted burglary (1), Shoplifting (1).

If you have any information or concerns regarding local crime contact your local police officer:

PC 995 WW Darren Hunt, darren.s.hunt@met.pnn.police.uk

or

PCSO 7148 WW Jacek Zebracki, jacek.zebracki@met.pnn.police.uk

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ASPIRE CENTRE

In September, Southfields Community College opened its £2million sports hall and external climbing and traversing walls. These facilities plus the fitness suite and indoor swimming pool are open to the public. There are classes and courses for the public during the day, in the evenings and at weekends. Individuals and clubs can also book to use the sports facilities. Structured courses or informal individual use for activities such as fitness training, yoga, swimming, badminton, rock climbing etc are available.

Individual membership of the Aspire Centre is required which will give you access to the fitness suite, climbing walls and the swimming pool as well as subsidised rates for hire of facilities, cheaper rates to ACL courses and other classes. Members have to complete an induction before they can use the fitness suite and climbing walls.

The Aspire Centre not only hosts the sports

facilities but also Adult and Community Learning (ACL) and the City Learning Centre (community ICT facility) with courses such as pottery, flower arranging, languages, computer software/IT, digital photography etc available.

For information on sports facilities at the Aspire Centre contact:

Tel 020 8875 2603

email

aspire@southfields.wandsworth.sch.uk
www.aspirecentre.com

For information on Adult and Community Learning courses, contact:

Tel 020 8874 6474

email

aspire@southfields.wandsworth.sch.uk
www.aspirecentre.com

**Southfields Community College,
337 Merton Road, London SW18 5JU.**

Grid Over 50s Club

The group for those over 50, called the Monday Club, meets on Monday afternoons between 2pm to 3.45pm in the small hall at St Barnabas Church in Lavenham Road.

We have home baked cakes and try to do some fiendish but fun quizzes. We enjoy good company, play bingo sometimes and have occasional speakers.

We welcome new members so do drop by and visit us. For further details speak to Margaret Brett on **020 8870 5364**.

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