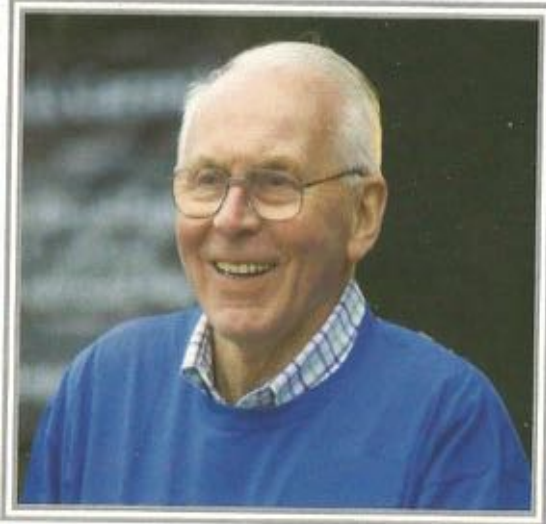




A voluntary organisation which seeks to preserve, protect and enhance the riversides of Hampton & Molesey

NEWSLETTER No 2, WINTER, 2014/15

OBITUARY



Marshal Lees, 01.07.1936 – 19.01.2014

It is with deep regret that we must report the death of another of our Trustees, Marshall Lees, earlier this year after a short illness. Marshall was the first Chairman of the former Hampton Riverside Trust, which he was instrumental in establishing and guiding through its first formative five years. He was also well known in Hampton for his key role in saving the Hampton Open Air Swimming Pool and helping to make it the communal success it has become. Marshall was for some years a Richmond Borough Councillor representing Hampton and was also closely involved in the affairs of St Mary's Parish Church. Along with a large gathering of his friends and relatives, our present Chairman attended Marshall's funeral service that was held at St Mary's last February.

CURRENT ISSUES

Probably the most controversial of the issues that the Trust has sought to address in recent years is the development of the old **Jolly Boatman** site near Hampton Court Bridge. Our readers will know that planning permission was granted several years ago by Elmbridge's Conservative Council for what the Trust and most other local organisations and residents consider to be over intensive and inappropriate development for such a prestigious location opposite Hampton Court Palace. To date there is still no physical sign that the developer is proceeding with construction as planned.



However, our Chairman has contacted Avant Homes (who recently took over the ailing Gladedale who were the original developers) and was told that they were still intending to go ahead when remaining details had been resolved with Network Rail. Some important elements of the approved plans still appear unviable to many of us – not least the proposed underground car park which would be below the water table –and we shall continue to keep a close eye on this sorry saga.

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Another issue giving rise to considerable local controversy is the development of the former **Hucks Boatyard**, which the new owner has renamed Hampton Riviera. Following widespread protests about unlawful development that was taking place on the site, including strong objections from the Trust, the Planning Inspectorate finally agreed to hold a Public Inquiry which was held earlier this year at York House in Twickenham.

A wide range of local organisations gave evidence to the Inquiry, including the Trust through our Chairman. The Planning Inspector's Decision was widely welcome – he forbade the siting of residential houseboats at the "Riviera", required the dismantling of a number of offending piles and pontoons, restricted the use of buildings on the site to purposes directly associated with boatbuilding, and required some offending structures to be removed or curtailed.

This was about as much as the Trust could reasonably have hoped to achieve and we were very pleased with the verdict. However, there remains concern that the owner appears to be largely ignoring the Inspector's decision. He has advertised residential luxury houseboats berthed at the "Riviera" and appears to be constructing large houseboats there. There are also questions over the uses to which buildings on the site are being put and whether this may be in breach of the Inspector's decision. In addition, he has submitted new planning applications that appear to conflict with the constraints the Inspector imposed.

Our Chairman has written to Richmond's Planning Department suggesting that it may be necessary to obtain a Court Order to restrain such apparently irresponsible behaviour.

Illegal Mooring has been a problem along our riversides for many years. Some parts of the Hampton riverbanks have been particularly blighted by long term mooring. Richmond Borough maintained that it was inadequately empowered to cope with this problem and, following a lengthy period of pressure from a wide range of local bodies, including the Trust, the Council finally agreed to seek new byelaw powers to facilitate the removal of illegally moored vessels.



It has taken several years of "to-ing and fro-ing" with the Department of the Environment, but the stage has finally been reached where, following a period of public consultation on the draft byelaw, the necessary powers may soon be put in place. Areas where mooring will be permitted will be limited and only allowed for 24 hours. The Council has said it will police this effectively and there will be fines for proven offenders which become punitively cumulative over time.

All of this is most encouraging and if it comes to pass as planned it should resolve the problem on the Hampton side of the river. However, one obviously undesirable consequence is that illegal mooring on the Molesey side which, until now, has been no more than a relatively minor irritant, may become a more serious problem.

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This is something that the Trust will be watching closely. We have in the past secured fairly prompt cooperation from the relevant authority, which on the Molesey side is the Environment Agency, in moving illegal moorers on. We shall need to keep alert to future developments and must maintain our good relations with the EA on this issue.



The Trust is involved in a number of developments affecting the popular **Molesey Riverside**. Members will be aware that the Environment Agency has been working on the restoration of Molesey Weir for the past two years or so. To enable this important project to take place it was agreed that the EA could establish a temporary depot on the Hurst Park riverside. This work should come to a conclusion within a few months and our Chairman has been in negotiation with the EA and Elmbridge Council about the scope for some “payback” to the local community for the significant inconvenience caused.

The EA will of course be restoring the riverbank and towpath immediately affected by their operations. We are hoping that they will also restore a longer stretch of the towpath which is in a poor state, especially in wet weather, using the large volume of gravel in and around their depot.

A Hurst Park resident has proposed the construction of a Boules Terrain in that general area and the Trust has taken up this excellent

idea as suitable payback by the EA. Boules (or petanque) is probably familiar to members, particularly those who have journeyed to France where it originated and is widely played. There are no less than 8 Boules pistes at Oxshott and 4 in Richmond and the game is catching on. Our Terrain would be open freely to the public but it may be that a local club would also be formed and a significant number of residents have already indicated interest in this possibility.



An attraction of the sport is that it can be played by persons of all ages and abilities - so it can be fun for all the family, competing together. It requires very little in the way of equipment and the terrain is simple to construct and maintain. Elmbridge are broadly sympathetic to this proposal and we are hopeful that negotiations with the EA will bring a positive outcome.

Other Issues. The Trust keeps an eye on developments affecting our local islands. There is some concern about recent building on Garrick’s Ait, which has been properly constrained by Elmbridge’s height restrictions, but several property owners have been permitted to excavate below the flood line in order to construct a raft which, at least in theory, would safely float their dwellings in the event of a flood. Some are concerned that such excavations could eventually destabilise the island. The ownership of Platt’s Eyot changed

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hands last year and to date the new owners have helpfully tidied up the banks of the island and created a good impression among the businesses that operate there. However, we should probably expect that at some point there will be a new planning application for development on the island and we will be keeping a watch out for this.



The former Hampton Riverside Trust was involved in supporting the refurbishment of Garrick's Temple in the 1990s and we continue to take a keen interest in this Grade I Listed building. We are pleased to learn that the Temple has had another successful season, with public openings and a variety of performances, dramatic and musical, and well attended Family and Open House Days. One notable event was a memorial party for the late Colin Hunter, one of the founders, along with Marshall Lees, of the Hampton Riverside Trust.



There are many structural and maintenance problems at the Temple needing attention with

varying degrees of urgency and the Council has approved a substantial budget for the implementation of the necessary work which, it is hoped, will start in the near future. There are ambitious plans for converting the other building on the site (known as the Loggia) into a weather-proof teaching facility, gallery and community centre, and an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund is in the course of preparation.

The external work on repairing Garrick's Villa, following the disastrous fire some six years ago, has been completed and progress has been made on refurbishing the interior. It is hoped that the residents will be able to return in the near future.



The floods early this year were the worst in this area since 1968. However, few properties in Molesey were flooded this time and it was reassuring to see how effectively the Hurst Meadows flood plain absorbed the excess water. This photo is a rather exaggerated version of "rain stopped play" at the cricket ground!



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The Trust's Website

www.hmrt.org.uk

A long time in the making the HMRT website went live in the summer. It is still a work in progress and we will be adding much more information and images over the coming months.

Your input is very welcome; if you have pictures or stories to add then send them to

mail@hmrt.co.uk

Make it a habit to check the site on a regular basis as we add new stories and images.

Panorama of The Thames.

The image below is taken from the Panorama Of The Thames' new website.



Those who attended our 2013 AGM at Molesey Boat Club were greatly impressed by John Inglis's presentation of his innovative project which is creating superb photographic panoramas of the two banks of the Thames from Hampton/ Molesey to Tower Bridge. He has also already restored and digitised the Georgian panoramas published in 1829 to enable fascinating "then and now" comparisons which you can see online now at www.panoramaofthethames.com

– click on the images for accompanying notes on the history of the buildings and features. However, more funds are needed to enable John to complete this historic work and, in particular, to photograph the Hampton riverside, so the Trust has made a contribution of £1,000 to the project.

This is an unusual step for the Trust – our annual expenditure is generally very low (e.g. in 2013/14 it amounted to the princely sum of £10!) – but our bank balance is relatively healthy and the Trustees decided unanimously that this project, which is so central to the Trust's interests, should be supported with a substantial financial contribution.

John has confirmed that this will enable him to get on with completing the Hampton Riverside, which I am sure everyone is keen to see included in this historic work.

Further contributions to help get the job done would of course be very welcome

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