
From: Malcolm Grimston <malcolmgrimston@outlook.com>
Sent: 25 June 2025 07:14
To: News from Councillor Malcolm Grimston
Subject: Augustus Road news update July 2025

Hi all. Please pass this on to anyone you think might find it interesting and share it with your household. If you know of anyone who might like to receive the newsletters please ask them to email me. You can follow me on X (Twitter) @malcolmgrimston. If you wish to unsubscribe please email me – it would be very helpful if you could confirm if you have moved away.

AELTC AND THE GOLF COURSE

The next milestone in the saga of the All England Lawn Tennis Club's plans to convert the former Wimbledon Park Golf Course into an extension of the current grounds is the hearing at the High Court on July 8/9 – a Judicial review of the Greater London Authority's decision to grant the scheme planning permission last year. There will be a demonstration by opponents of the proposals outside the High Court on July 8. Protestors are intending to meet en masse at Wimbledon Station at 07:30 and travel up to Temple – obviously West Hill folk can join at Southfields or East Putney. Otherwise you can make your own way there to meet outside the Royal Courts of Justice in The Strand at 9am. High Court sessions typically run 10.30am-1pm and 2pm-4.15pm but campaigners need to be in place early to catch breakfast TV. The courts open to the public at 9.30am. New SWP badges will be available, participants are encouraged to wear hats, fancy dress etc. and local resident Paul Hargreaves has written a theme tune – you can learn the words [here](#). If you are going to bring a banner then the organisers say that simple slogans work best, e.g. Green Not Greed, Love Tennis Hate Concrete and You Promised Never To Build On Our Park. Save Wimbledon Park (SWP) suggests the following themes:

- damage to the planet and environmental destruction;
- profit before planet, greed before green, Big Sport steamrollers local communities;
- AELTC has not been listening for 4 years – their 'consultation' has resulted in no major changes to their plans;
- by going back on their word not to build on the golf club AELTC have undermined public trust in what they say and do, now and in the future;
- if AELTC are allowed to build on Metropolitan Open Land it sets a potentially disastrous precedent for the safety of the other 50 MOLs in the Greater London area.

Meanwhile I noticed in their recent Community news that the AELTC refers to closing Wimbledon Park Road between Princes Way and Bathgate Road during the Championships. I'm seeing if Wandsworth Council has any views on this – I am a bit worried as the closure of Church Road is already causing significant inconvenience for West Hill residents trying to get to Wimbledon. It is also not clear to whether the Wimbledon Park Road end of Princes Way is suitable for buses travelling to Wimbledon and St George's Tooting – if not then the southern end of WPR would in effect lose its bus service altogether. Unlike Church Road, for which Merton is the highways authority, Wimbledon Park Road comes under Wandsworth.

ALBERT DRIVE

Opposite 1-6 Southfields Court there are a couple of street gullies (right), one of which is blocked, the other of which makes a rather loud rattling sound when a vehicle passes over it. (Not for the first time) I have reported them in to the Highways section for attention.

WIMBLEDON PARK ROAD

I've had several complaints about the unsightly and potential hazardous patches of asphalt that have appeared on the pavement in several places on Wimbledon Park Road, e.g. outside Drop Shot etc., following recent emergency gas works carried out by SGN. I am told that the asphalt is a temporary measure so that the excavation could be closed without blocking off the footway. SGN have six months to return to remove the temporary asphalt and repave the footway to match the existing stones. Should SGN not complete those works by the November 12 then the Council will be able to start issuing defect notices which will incur a financial penalty until the work is done.



LIME BIKES

The battle to maximise the undoubted benefits of the Lime/Forest etc. bikes schemes while preventing the problems the bikes cause when left thoughtlessly on the pavement continues. This is an all too common example (right) of a bike being left obstructing a junction, despite there being a dedicated parking zone very close by. This case was reported to Lime at london-ops@li.me and the rider received both a fine and a warning; please do report any similar issues to the operators. There are ongoing problems with bikes parked in the disabled bay at the Augustus Road end of Sutherland Grove as well. Transport for London (TfL) has also started issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to Lime and Forest for e-bikes abandoned on Red Routes such as West Hill; 333 FPNs have been issued to the companies and more than 190 warning letters. Badly parked Forest bikes can be reported at cs@humanforest.co.uk.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS, SOUTHFIELDS STATION

The traffic lights at the station crossroads were out for some time – TfL were informed about it and did make several visits to try to sort it out.

HELP WITH ENERGY BILLS AND FUEL POVERTY

UK Power Networks, the company responsible for the network that distributes electricity round London, the south and the east of England, has commissioned the 'We Are Group' to deliver a range of free advice services to help individuals and families struggling with fuel poverty. This support includes:

- income maximisation and help to reduce household bills;
- energy use guidance, including time-of-use tariffs;
- smart meter support
- scam awareness and protection
- debt advice
- water efficiency guidance
- free winter warm packs.

Everyone who connects with UKPN is offered a personalised one-to-one appointment to tailor the advice specifically to their situation. UKPN says that the scheme is regularly scoring 10/10 in independent customer satisfaction surveys. You can find the service leaflet [here](#) for more details.



HISTORY CORNER - ALBEMARLE



One of the exciting aspects of local history (for me anyway!) is when someone contacts me with photographs of one of our old buildings which I have not seen before. This happened recently with regard to Albemarle (left), which occupied the same site on Wimbledon Park Side as the later development which has inherited the name. In its early years the villa was home to George Robert Stephenson (1819-1905, right). Nephew of George Stephenson (1781-1848, the 'father of the railways') – GR's father Robert (1785-1837) was George's brother – and

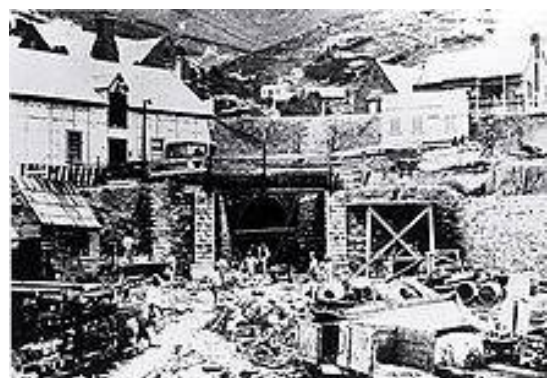
cousin of George's son, the Robert Stephenson of pioneering locomotive *Rocket* fame (1803-1859), he moved into the property in 1861 from Grantham in Lincolnshire – he also owned a property called Albemarle in the Isle of Wight. He had collaborated with his cousin on the South Eastern Railway and the great tubular Victoria Bridge across the St Lawrence



River in Montreal, the entire length of which including approaches being about two miles. When Robert died, George Robert took over his locomotive works and several collieries. Some of his most notable work was done in New Zealand, where for example he supervised the survey and arrangements for the construction of a railway from Christchurch to Lyttelton harbour: today the Lyttelton rail tunnel (below right, under construction) is the oldest still in use in the country. According to Charles Rooking Carter (1822-1896), a renowned New Zealand contractor and politician with whom he worked, GR Stephenson was "a tall, well-made man, frank and homely in look and manners". GR told Carter that when a boy he would have to descend a coal pit and look after the lamps and ventilation from three o'clock in the morning till twelve noon. After this period he worked as a Mechanical Engineer and drove the *Rocket* in 1829. As he became more involved with, and eventually took over, his uncle and cousin's businesses his income rose: by the mid-1860s he was earning £8,000 a year from the Newcastle locomotive works, £30,000 a year from the coal mines etc. and £7,000 as an engineer, a total of £45,000, worth rather more than £5 million in today's money. His four sons (Robert, George, Henry and Thomas) were educated and trained to continue in the family business and, in Carter's words: "even his two accomplished daughters [Isabel and Jane] take a delight in the business of a practical engineer, for he pointed out to me a piece of bright iron, filed up by one of them, and a piece of wood in the lathe, in process of being neatly turned in a difficult geometrical pattern by the other." GR was President of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1876 and donated land which now houses their headquarters in Great George Street in Westminster.

For many years in the late 19th and early 20th centuries Albemarle was home to Richard Sims Donkin (1836-1919, left), a partner in Nelson, Donkin & Co., steamship owners of Newcastle, and a member of the committee of Lloyd's Register of Shipping. In the 1885 General Election he was elected Conservative MP for the new constituency of Tynemouth, holding the seat until he stood down in 1900. After his death his widow Hannah, née Dryden (1840-1929), and daughter Susan Straker Donkin (1866-1944) moved to Southfield House on Victoria Road (Drive). Susannah had been the victim of a prolonged campaign of stalking by a tailor, Walter Tricks (1853-1915), who for five years hung around the area and sent her letters accusing her of all kinds of immodesty and immorality. He was eventually brought to trial in 1909; the jury found him guilty of libel but did not think him responsible for his actions. Dr Scott of Brixton Prison stated that the prisoner had "insane delusions and was of unsound mind, although sufficiently intelligent to follow the trial" and the judge said: "I think Tricks ought to undergo proper medical treatment; he seems to be a lunatic."

Albemarle (House) later became a school, its name remembered in the present Albemarle School in Princes Way. The school's principal for some years was Miss Margaret Parratt (1842-1931), described as the school's fairy godmother. One of her pupils was Catherine Makepeace Thackeray Ritchie (1911-1995), granddaughter of Sir Richmond Ritchie and Anna Isabella Thackeray Ritchie of Southmead (and therefore great granddaughter of the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray, perhaps best known for his satirical novel *Vanity Fair*), and also of social reformer Charles James Booth (1840-1916), author of *Life and Labour of the People in London*. The school's



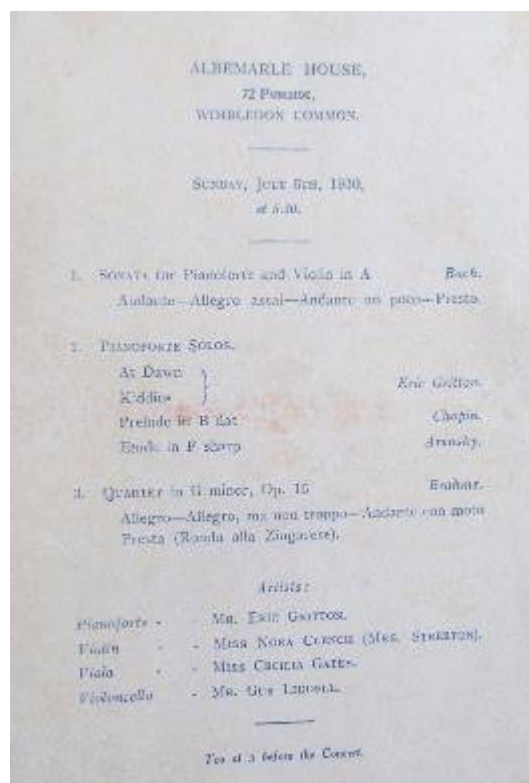
impressive musical tradition is illustrated in this programme (right) from 1930. The cellist, Guy Maynard Liddell (1892-1958), was the nephew of Francis Charles Liddell of The Firs, Inner Park Road and a second cousin (once removed) of Alice Pleasance Liddell (1852-1934) for whom Lewis Carroll wrote *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. Guy married Hon. Calypso Baring (1905-1974), daughter of Cecil Baring, 3rd Lord Revelstoke, of Oak Lodge on Princes Road (way), though the marriage was dissolved in 1943. He had been intending to pursue a career as a professional musician but instead became a noted intelligence officer, heading B Division of MI5 during World War II in charge of counterespionage. However, rumours circulated that he was a double agent (he recruited art historian Anthony Blunt, who turned out to be 'the fourth man' of the notorious Cambridge spy ring which included Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess and Kim Philby) and he was denied the Director Generalship of MI5 after the War. His diaries have been published. Violinist Nora Clench (1867-1938), who was Canadian, had been a child prodigy who later formed a renowned string quartet which bore her name. She married Austrian artist Arthur Street (1867-1943). Violist Cecilia Gates had been a member of the first professional all-women string quartet with Guy Liddell's mother, Emily Shinner (1860-1901), later playing with the Clench Quartet and taking part in the premier of Cyril Scott's String Quartet in 1903. Pianist Eric Gritton (1889-1981) was a composer, like his father, brother, son and grandson: his choral pieces *O stay Madonna* and *Thee we adore* are still occasionally heard today.

Albemarle was purchased by Royson Estates in 1935 and the present development was built soon afterwards, though the lodge of the previous villa survives (it can just be seen on the left of the photograph above). An early resident of the new Albemarle (apartment 24) was Air Commodore Lyster Fettiplace Blandy, CB, DSO (1874-1964). Blandy was in command of British Army wireless communications in France during the early part of World War I, later performing a similar function for the Royal Air Force. In 1918 he was appointed Controller of Communications at the Air Minister and senior RAF representative on the newly instituted Wireless Telegraphy Board. In 1921 he served as Head of the British Delegation to the International Technical Committee on Radio-Communication in Paris and in 1923 unveiled the War Memorial at Biggin Hill. Coming out of retirement at the outbreak of the Second World War he headed up Y Service, the RAF signals intelligence intercept capability, serving into his seventies. His neighbour at number 13 was George William Snazelle (1892-1969, left), who had been the "courteous and popular" manager of the Electric Palace at Clapham Common (which could seat up to 1,000 patrons) until its closure in 1918, having previously worked at Ladbroke Hall, North Kensington (which consisted of a large hall used for whist drives, a cinema and a ballroom) and the Electric Palace, Highgate. His grandfather, George Harry Snazelle (1848-1912) was an opera singer, in which role he was mentioned in the memoirs of conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, *A Mingled Chime*. As a young man Beecham got a post as conductor of the Imperial Grand Opera Company and records "that inveterate old joker, G.H. Snazelle, who was playing Devilshoof [chief of the gypsies in Michael Balfe's *Bohemian Girl*], succeeded in setting fire to the stage as a farewell gesture on the last night." Snazelle later developed a one man show, *Music, Song and Story – Pictorially Illustrated*, and became one of the stars of English magic lantern entertainment: he was responsible for the word 'snazzy' entering the language. He toured extensively round Australia, America, Canada, South Africa and the islands of the Pacific and was particularly known for his monologue "How Bill Adams won the Battle of Waterloo" which received a reference in H.G. Wells's autobiography.



SURGERIES ETC.

I hold an advice Surgery at Southfields Library from 11 till noon on the first Saturday of the month; you don't need an appointment, just turn up. I bring along copies of my book on our local history, *West Hill and Wimbledon Park Side – Story of a Council Ward* but if you want to get a copy (or more!) and can't make the Surgery, please get in touch and I will drop them off (£9.95 paperback, £17.95 hardback).



Best wishes,

Malcolm Grimston

MALCOLM GRIMSTON
Councillor (Independent), West Hill Ward

