
From: Malcolm Grimston <malcolmgrimston@outlook.com>
Sent: 26 September 2025 07:09
To: News from Councillor Malcolm Grimston
Subject: Augustus Road news update October 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.

DISTRICT LINE

I've been onto TfL concerning the deterioration in performance on the line, notably during Wimbledon and exacerbated by problems with the lift at Southfields Station, and received this reply. "Dear Councillor Grimston, we want to apologise to Londoners, and visitors to our city, who have faced disruption on the District line in recent weeks. This was due to an unfortunate number of unrelated challenges, including various infrastructure failures involving track and signalling, hot weather-related incidents and train faults. TfL and Network Rail remain committed to supporting The Wimbledon Championships by delivering a high-quality transport service. While services have generally been reliable during the Championships over the last decade, this year, a series of infrastructure failures and operational issues have impacted performance. We collaborate closely with Network Rail to operate the District line, particularly ahead of and during the Championships. In response to the recent reliability issues, senior leadership of TfL and Network Rail have met both during and after the Championships to discuss both the additional tactical mitigations we can put in place and the plans for longer-term investment on the Wimbledon branch. We want to ensure we use the lessons learned to improve the District line's performance long-term and support the Championships into the future. We also remained in close communication with the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, sharing updates on the line's performance. A debrief took place with the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club after the Championships concluded." My impression is that if anything things have deteriorated since Wimbledon – some of you have said that the strike didn't make any noticeable difference! – and matters haven't been helped by problems with the lift at Southfields Station. I've asked our officers to keep the pressure up. There is an interesting explanation at [This is why your commute is hell: Putney's transport meltdown exposed - Putney.news](#).

STRAY DOG

I have had reports of an unaccompanied Rottweiler or similar breed roaming the streets of Southfields recently, attacking other dogs and generally causing anxiety. The dog section tell me that it sounds like this might be a dog which they are already investigating. If so it is a regular stray that lives off Beaumont Road; officers know it was out on its own last Friday and Saturday. The owner of this dog was issued with a Community Protection Warning Letter (CPW) last Friday and officers are considering upgrading that action to a Community Protection Notice (CPN). Please let me know of any further sightings.

'COURIER FRAUD'

Putney and Wimbledon, along with Blackheath, currently have some of the highest levels of 'Courier Fraud' in London. Courier fraud involves criminals calling the victim on the phone impersonating police officers, bank officials or other trusted figures to deceive victims into believing their bank accounts have been compromised and that they must assist the police, or other trusted agencies, with an investigation. They will then manipulate the victim into withdrawing money, or purchasing high value goods. Later they send a courier to the victim's home to collect the money or goods. With 80% of victims being over 65 years (average age is 78), older people within our communities are sadly at high risk of exploitation and loss of their hard-earned pensions and life savings. The Metropolitan Police are running an eight-week exercise called Operation CallBack between 6 October and 28 November, including presentations and community engagement events for anyone who comes into contact with elderly or vulnerable people. If you want more details please contact me.

COMMUNITY ROADWATCH

There will be a 'Community Roadwatch' event in Kingsmere Road on 29 October from 9am to 10am. The police will have their speed guns, which residents can use, and although no tickets can be issued it does give speeding cars pause for thought when they get a letter through the post. Community Roadwatch requests can be sent directly to the police at CommunityRoadwatch@met.police.uk.

LIME BIKES

Wandsworth Council has launched a new enforcement scheme that will see officers remove and impound dangerously parked e-bikes at operators' expense (see [New scheme will tackle dangerously parked e-bikes and e-scooters - Wandsworth Borough Council](#)). The new approach comes against the backdrop of similar measures across London; so for example Camden Council has been issuing Fixed Penalty Notices of £100 per bike for bikes found left in resident, business, disabled and doctor parking bays and have taken new powers to control poorly parked e-hire bikes through contract approaches with operators. Westminster has secured commitments from Lime to install bluetooth beacons to improve geofencing and provide staff at high priority parking locations at peak hours. The legal reality is that e-bike operators do not have to ask permission to operate on the streets and councils have little or no power to ban or restrict the use of hire e-bikes. (The situation is different with e-scooters.) However, councils do have the right to deal with any obstruction on pavements or the road (under the Highways Act), and this is what the new enforcement scheme relies on. Officers will patrol the borough to monitor for issues and respond to online reports from the public, targeting vehicles that are lying across roads or in roads, preventing other road users from passing safely, positioned on pavements so pedestrians have to step into the road or likely to fall over. Naturally we will all be interested to see how successful this scheme is in balancing the undoubted benefits and popularity of e-bikes with the problems caused by a minority of users.

BUSES

Like the tube, Wandsworth has no say over buses and complaints should be directed to tfl.gov.uk. Recently I've been hearing of buses on the 93 route for Putney Heath terminating at Tibbet's Ride for no apparent reason; one resident walked to Putney Heath only to see the very same bus had got there in front of him.

TREES

The Council has around 16,000 street trees and 60,000 in our parks. I get a large number of complaints about overgrowing trees causing problems such as blocking light and dropping sap or needles onto parked cars below. The Council's tree policy can be found at [tree policy](#). In the document the circumstances in which the Council will and will not cut trees back is laid out. The focus of such works is on:

- maintaining tree health;
- ensuring trees do not pose a danger to public safety;
- avoiding damage to the built environment;
- maximising the benefits of any given tree in any given location.

The Council will not prune or remove trees for any of the following reasons:

- shade prevention;
- interference with television/satellite signals and private CCTV operations;
- contact with overhead telephone lines;
- branches overhanging neighbouring properties;
- prevention of animal and insect droppings or squirrel access;
- trees perceived as being too big;
- seasonal occurrences such as leaf, flower, seed and fruit fall.

I've been contacted by a group called Urban Canopy, a community gardening organisation based in south London that works with school groups, residents associations and park user groups to improve their green spaces and provide horticultural education. "The Future Forest" is a community tree planting project that "aims to challenge people to think about our changing climate, its local implications and how we can act on this." Urban Canopy is currently looking for community groups (schools, residents' associations, park user groups etc) who might like to participate in the project over the 2025/26 winter season. The project will involve local people in planning, planting and caring for trees in their communal green spaces. As well as learning these skills this project will also focus on how climate change will impact on the local environment in the future and the role of tree planting in responding to this challenge. You can get more information at info@urbancanopy.org.

LEARN TO LOVE TO READ

A few months ago I mentioned a small local charity called Learn to Love to Read (L2L2R) which focuses on supporting children up to the age of 11 who are most at risk of falling behind with their reading. L2L2R, which works with children and their families, provides volunteers to nine primary schools across Wandsworth, including Southmead and Ronald Ross in West Hill Ward. Volunteers don't need any previous experience but do need to be patient and encouraging in supporting the children with whom they read. L2L2R will provide full training and ongoing support; volunteers go into school one afternoon a week to read with children aged 5-8 and the organisation also offers virtual volunteering where volunteers read with children online over Zoom. Four new volunteers came forward after the article but more are needed; if you would like more details please go to <https://www.learn2love2read.org.uk/>.

HISTORY CORNER – GAYTON LODGE



From 1862 Gayton Lodge (left), where the southern part of Selhurst Close is today, was home to George Henry Holland (1818-1891): he named the house after his former home of the same name near Ross-on-Wye where his first child, Ann, had been born and the family was to occupy the villa until 1908. In 1962 Pevsner, the great writer on British architecture,



described the house as “grand symmetrical Tudor with ornate decoration”: according to George’s fourth son, Spencer Langton Holland (1856-1936), it had a tower, with a dragon for a weathervane, and a good view over the Common. The drawing-room was a pleasant big room, running the whole width of the house and opening into the conservatory, a constant summer sitting-place. The garden beds were planted out each year with geraniums and calceolaria and beyond the garden was the wilderness – some good firs, beeches and oaks – with a croquet-lawn and a swing on which Scott went to prodigious heights but “the house as a whole was not noteworthy and was bitterly cold in winter”. George Holland was the son of Swinton Colthurst Holland (1777-1827), a partner in Baring’s Bank, and his wife Anna, née Willets (1779-1845), niece of the famous Staffordshire potter Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795). Hailing from Worcestershire, in the 1820s Swinton and Anna lived in the Priory in Roehampton (seen right in the 1840s), now the famous hospital for addiction therapy: Swinton was to die there. George Holland married Charlotte Dorothea Gifford (1818-1897), eldest daughter of the 1st Lord Gifford (1779-1826), the Exeter MP and lawyer who served in Lord Liverpool’s government and became Lord Chief Justice in 1824. As Sir Robert Gifford he conducted many famous cases, including those against the Cato Street Conspirators (who had attempted to murder Prime Minister Lord Liverpool and his entire Cabinet in 1820) and Queen Caroline (whose husband, George IV, tried to divorce against her will, again in 1820). The Hollands’ first son, (Henry) Scott Holland (1847-1918, below left), was ordained in 1872 and rose to become Canon of St Paul’s Cathedral in 1884, though his preaching style was not to everyone’s taste. His obituary recalls: “his speech was too rapid for a building that plays havoc with a hurried delivery. The epithets came in torrents, yet the shortest of sentences came often as check to the flow of words. He could stir zeal. He could delight the intellect. He could sometimes puzzle the shrewdest. But he could hardly set men’s hearts aflame.” Nonetheless Prime Minister William Gladstone offered Scott the Bishopric of Norwich, which he turned down, eventually becoming Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. He published a biography of soprano Jenny Lind, whom he knew as a neighbour (at Argyle Lodge): another local friend was Wentworth Hankey of Richmond House (where Chilworth Court is today)



and he also maintained a 40-year friendship and correspondence with Mrs Mary Drew (1847-1927), Gladstone’s daughter. Scott is also remembered for the hymn *Judge eternal, throned in splendour*. He took a great interest in the development of St Paul’s Church on Augustus Road, notably the reredos: the dog at the feet of St Ursula is modeled on Buzzy, beloved pet of his sister Amy Charlotte Holland (1853-1907). Another of George Holland’s sons, Lawrence Gifford Holland (1851-1893), went to Ceylon to cultivate coffee before becoming Assistant Secretary to the National Portrait Gallery – he also wrote essays on Shakespeare (he knew a dozen of the plays by heart), gathered together in a book after his death by his brother Scott. He joined the Post Office Volunteer Force but sadly



died at Aldershot in 1893 from the effects of sunstroke during manoeuvres – he received a military funeral. Spencer Langton Holland was a lawyer, student at Lincoln’s Inn when aged 22 and called to the Bar in 1881. He published *Democracy and the Established Church* in 1888 and was a keen amateur cellist. Another son, Colonel Arthur Gambier Holland, moved from Gayton Lodge to Spencer House on Park Side and then to Ambleside on Albert Road.

From 1910 Gayton was occupied by Thomas Forrester Agar (1850-1932), brother of Richard Agar of Edgecombe Hall, and his wife Clara, née Fernihough (1862-1941). Thomas worked on the railways and volunteered for the Royal Engineers, being promoted to Lieutenant in 1917. In 1884 he had cofounded a very successful windmill and agricultural implement manufacturing and spare parts business, Agar, Cross and Co. Ltd, based in Argentina, with his brothers, James Senior Agar (1860-1925) and William Annesley Agar (1864-1941), and Malcolm Cross. Its best known product was the ‘Aermotor’ windmill (right) for pumping water, made in Chicago: Agar Cross sold over a million of them in Argentina, many of which are still running on estancias today. The company was reorganised in 1967 as a

supplier of agricultural chemicals and fertilisers. In the late 1890s Thomas was for a time Argentinian Consul General



in his native Glasgow (Malcolm Cross was the Puerto Rican Consul at the same time). Clara left £132,000 in her will, worth over £6 million today. Thomas and Clara's son, Matthew Forrester Agar (1891-1958), was a metal presswork engineer and fine ice hockey player, playing in goal for the victorious Great Britain team in the 1914 LIHG (Ligue Internationale de Hockey sur Glace) championship at Chamonix in France. James Senior Agar's daughter, Eileen Forrester Agar (1899-1991), was a renowned surrealist artist.



In 1939 an application was made to demolish Gayton for flats but World War II intervened and Gayton was taken over by Barclays Bank. In the immediate postwar period London County Council bought Gayton and five other villas, complete with their grounds, to create what would become the Argyle Estate. Planning permission was refused to convert Gayton into offices, it being reserved to house the homeless; in 1948 its only registered occupant was the caretaker, Richard Thomas Jux (known as Henry, 1881-1959, left), a Wandsworth Council employee who had started his working life as a roadsweeper. Gayton and Martholme, the next door villa, were temporarily taken over by the GPO (the General Post Office, which was also responsible for telephones at that time) to form its South West Area HQ, responsible for overall management, billing customers and training. They were demolished in the mid-1960s to make way for three ten-storey blocks, each containing 40 flats and known as Bookham, Caterham and Selhurst Houses (right), as part of the Argyle estate (phase 4). They were built using the Danish Larsen Neilsen industrialised precast concrete building system, which had also been used at Ronan Point, the block in Newham which partially collapsed in 1968 after a gas explosion, killing four people. The Greater London Council, which owned the blocks at the time, strengthened them in 1969 but in 1987 Wandsworth Council decided they were still unsafe and would have cost £56,000 per unit (£165,000 today) to put right. Instead the site was sold for redevelopment, the blocks were demolished and Selhurst Close was built in the early 1990s. One of Gayton's original gateposts still stands in the grounds of Selhurst Close (left).

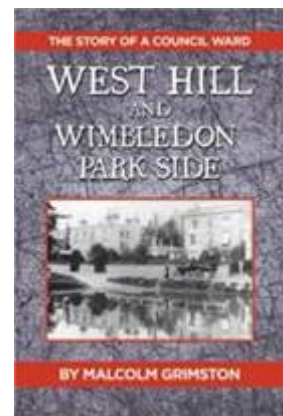


SURGERIES ETC.

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