
From: Malcolm Grimston <malcolmgrimston@outlook.com>
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To: News from Councillor Malcolm Grimston
Subject: Augustus Road news update December 2025

Hi all and Merry Christmas! 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.

ESTATE MANAGER

As you doubtless know if you live on one of our estates, each of the Council's estates has an estate manager whom you can contact about issues in your property (if you are a Council tenant) or in the area, including major works. Your estate manager for Florys Court/Augustus Road is Stacey Butts and her email address is stacey.butts@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk.

BASKET BRIGADE

Basket Brigade UK is a volunteer-led charity that brings together hundreds of people across London every Christmas to prepare and deliver baskets of food, love and hope to those who may be struggling during the festive season. Each basket contains all the raw ingredients for a Christmas dinner, including a roasting tin, potatoes, vegetables, stuffing, gravy and either a frozen chicken or a frozen nut roast. BB are currently inviting London charities, community groups, schools and local authorities to nominate individuals or families who would benefit from receiving a basket this Christmas and encourage volunteers to join them on their event days (23rd and 24th December) to help pack and deliver baskets across London. If you know of anyone who might benefit, or would like to volunteer or make a donation, you can find more details at <https://my.basketbrigade.org.uk>.

LIME BIKES ETC.

It is striking that Lime has started quite an intensive campaign on social media about its attempts to address the problems of abandoned and badly parked bikes (see for example [Lime on X: "We're keeping Hammersmith and Fulham, and London moving... From reducing overcrowding to responding faster when misparked bikes are reported, we've made huge progress in our London Action Plan. Read our progress update" / X](#)). Of course they are stressing the benefits of the scheme (quite reasonably) in terms of air quality, exercise etc., but also seem to be stepping up their efforts to deal with the challenges – we will see. I still get complaints for example that the Sutherland Grove e-bike parking bay often has too many e-bikes parked within the dedicated bay and the surrounding ones. The Council has asked the operators to monitor this location more closely and remove any excess vehicles. Wandsworth also recently started enforcement action against e-bikes and has included Sutherland Grove on our hotspot list to be checked regularly. Members of the public can report directly to the enforcement team via the following webform: [Report a street problem - Your report - Wandsworth.gov.uk](#). Although Wandsworth doesn't issue 'fines' it will issue a collection fee to the operators to retrieve their vehicles once they have been impounded by the enforcement team. Several Councils, including some of our direct neighbours, have been taking firm action – for example Kensington & Chelsea has seized 1,000 e-bikes since January and has charged £81,000 in 'release fees'. Westminster Council is issuing £100 on-the-spot fines to Lime and Forest for e-bikes left blocking pavements or public spaces.

AELTC

Save Wimbledon Park has been given permission to appeal against the High Court decision not to overturn the Planning Permission granted by the Greater London Authority. The Rt Hon. Lord Justice Holgate's reasons for giving permission included these words: "The grounds of appeal are arguable with a real prospect of success. The case law on scheme benefits, deliverability, relevance, material considerations and irrationality merits review by the Court of Appeal." Meanwhile, in October Lord Gus O'Donnell, sometime Cabinet Secretary and member of Wimbledon Park Golf Club and a current Director of the AELTC, tabled an amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill in the House of Lords which would in effect have overturned the implications of Day vs Shropshire, a Supreme Court case from 2023 which established that simply buying a piece of land which was protected by a Statutory Trust did not allow the new owner to ignore that trust without public consultation (I hope I have this right!). In early November, however, the amendment was dropped without a vote so Save Wimbledon Park's legal challenge, scheduled for the High Court in January 2026, remains on track. There is a summary of the debate on the Putney.news website at

<https://putney.news/2025/11/04/wimbledon-park-amendment-abandoned-after-peers-condemn-erosion-of-green-space-protection/>. As Labour Peer Baroness Young said: "This amendment has caused substantial concern that it erodes the protection of green space and removes long-standing public rights to green spaces, where the land is sold by a local authority, with or without public consultation."

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Among other activities, Holy Trinity Wandsworth (on the corner of Beaumont Road and West Hill) is offering a Christmas Day lunch from noon until 3.15pm for anyone looking for "community and company" – everyone is welcome but you do need to pre-book on the church's website at www.wandsworth.church/christmas. They're also having a family nativity at 10:30 on December 7 (with a real donkey) and a Carol Service at 5pm on December 14.

LEAF CLEARANCE

It's that time of year when the enormous operation to clear our streets of fallen leaves kicks into action. I've had a few comments suggesting that things have been a bit more difficult this year, with some pavements being covered in quite a thick layer of wet, compacted leaves which hide uneven paving and is quite slippery. I've raised this with the Waste and Street Cleansing Department, who assure me that there has been no reduction in service this year and that the teams are out working hard across the Borough to clear the leaves. However, due to recent weather conditions an unprecedented volume of leaves fell in a short period, creating a heavier than usual build-up. For context, I am told, a single vehicle recently spent almost four hours on just one road – collecting leaves, travelling to the tip, waiting to unload and returning, repeating the cycle until the road was fully cleared. The Contract Officer says he would "greatly appreciate residents' patience and understanding during this period as we continue working to keep the Borough clear".

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

South West London Law Centres run a series of free one-hour online webinars and workshops on various topics. The next one, on Monday December 1 at 1.30pm, is for carers and will cover benefits available for carers, key things to know before claiming and discounts, deals and other support. You can register here: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#).

RESTRICTED TURNINGS OFF WIMBLEDON PARK SIDE

My regular reminder about the restricted left turns off Wimbledon Park Side into Withycombe Road and Inner Park Road in the mornings. As a West Hill Ward resident you qualify for an exemption to these restrictions (as long as your vehicle is registered to your West Hill address at the DVLA). If you have a permit for any of the West Hill parking schemes (either on public or Housing roads) then you get the exemption automatically but otherwise you have to apply and renew the permit every two years. To apply for or renew an exemption you should visit [West Hill traffic management scheme - Wandsworth Borough Council](#) and follow the instructions.

HISTORY CORNER – WAR STORIES

In the month when we once again remember our fallen dead in the two World Wars it is worth reflecting on a few stories from West Hill Ward.



Gordon Dene (left), where 2-88 Keevil Drive is today, was built in 1900 by Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941), a celebrated architect and designer of furniture and textiles, for the barrister Cecil Edwin Fitch (1870-1940, right) and his wife Lilian Mabel, née Gordon (1874-1959), after whom the house was named. Fitch was called to the Bar in 1895 and served with distinction in the Great War as a Major in the Worcestershire Regiment and Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, being made a KBE in 1920. His son, (Cecil) Alexander (Gordon) Fitch (1899-1918), was killed in action at Jeancourt, just in front of the Hindenburg Line, on September 18th, less than



two months before the end of the Great War. One of his officers wrote to his parents as follows. "He always showed the greatest pluck and grit. He was always cheerful, even when conditions were as miserable and trying as they could be. During some of the recent shows the work called for a good deal of energy and resourcefulness and these characteristics were never lacking in Alec Fitch. The CO and I went to Brie and put a cross at the head of his grave. The nobility of the boy's life and the courage with which he met his death will, I hope, sustain you." His memory is still revered at Harrow School: there is a room in the War Memorial Building dedicated to him where his portrait hangs

over the fireplace with a light above it which is never extinguished. Alec (below left) had been a contemporary at Lambrook Prep School in Berkshire of fellow War victims Cyril Holkham Danger of Holkham on Inner Park Road and Raymond Asquith, son of Prime Minister H.H. Asquith.

Gordon Dene had another interesting War connection. During World War I it was occupied by Charles Henry Chevallier-Boutell (1892-1957), who served as a 2nd Lieutenant with the King's Royal Rifle Corps and was awarded the Silver War Badge in 1916. His second cousin, once removed (by way of his great grandfather, Rev. John Chevallier, 1774-1846), was Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener (1850-1916), one of Britain's most famous soldiers. In 1898 Kitchener had been credited with winning the Battle of Omdurman in the Sudan. He went on to become Commander-in-Chief during the Boer War of 1900-1902, imprisoning Boer civilians in concentration camps and pursuing a 'scorched earth' policy which gained him considerable notoriety. He became Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India, during which time he fell out with the Viceroy Lord Curzon, and then returned to Egypt as Consul-General. At the start of World War I Kitchener was appointed Secretary of State for War by Prime Minister Asquith: as one of the few to foresee a long war lasting for at least three years, and with the authority to act effectively on that perception, he organised the largest volunteer army that Britain had ever seen. He appeared in perhaps the most famous poster of the whole period, maybe ever (right). In 1916 Kitchener was traveling to Russia on HMS Hampshire when it struck a German mine and sank just west of the Orkney Isles: Kitchener was among 737 who died.

Robert Alexander (1836-1911) lived at Brant House on Park Side (also known as Argyle Lodge, where Esher Gardens is today) from 1905 until his death: he was an Irish-born shipowner who in 1868 founded the Sun Shipping Co. in Liverpool, known as the 'Hall Line', which operated cargo and passenger services and by 1874 was running over 40 ships. One of the Alexanders' five sons, Ernest Wright Alexander (1870-1934), was the sixth soldier to be awarded the Victoria Cross during World War I (on August 24th 1914), the previous five having been awarded the day before. The citation says: "For conspicuous bravery and great ability at Elouges on 24th August, 1914, when the flank guard was attacked by a German corps in handling his battery against overwhelming odds with such conspicuous success that all his guns were saved, notwithstanding that they had to be withdrawn by hand by himself and three other men. This enabled the retirement of the 5th Division to be carried out without serious loss. Subsequently Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major) Alexander rescued a wounded man under a heavy fire with the greatest gallantry and devotion to duty." The Alexander Way at Putney Vale cemetery commemorates his life.

In the mid-1920s Fairview (where 1-34 Stapleford Close is found today) housed Captain (Robert) Leslie Masters (1870-1949, below left). He worked as a barman in his father's pub, the Queen's Head at Icklesham, East Sussex (which is still open), before enlisting in the Army Medical Corps in 1887. After a career in which he served in the South Wales Borderers and the Voluntary Infantry Brigade and took part in the Nile Expedition of 1898 (being awarded the Sudan Medal and the Queen's Egypt Medal) and the Boer War (King's Medal), he was discharged in 1909. However he reenlisted in 1914 with the 40th Ambulance Brigade, becoming quartermaster in Birmingham before serving in Gallipoli and then France with the 90th Field Ambulance, where he took part in the Battles of the Somme, being awarded the Military Cross in 1917. He was mentioned in despatches in March 1918 "for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when a camp and some billets were heavily shelled by the enemy. He at once went to the rescue; some men had been buried in the ruins of the house and he rendered first aid. He then organised bearer parties from among his men and brought in four severely wounded men from the camp. By his disregard of danger, quick decision and good leadership he set a splendid example to his men and rendered valuable assistance to the wounded in the absence of a medical officer." However, he suffered a variety of war-related diseases (he was by now in his late forties) and was repatriated to Wandsworth Hospital where it was discovered he had a heart condition which was to keep him away from the rest of the War despite clear requests from The War Office for his return to the front.

In 1911 The Grove (where Admirals Court off Windlesham Grove is today) became home to Major Lionel Beaumont-Thomas (1893-1942, right). Lionel was commissioned into the army reserve in 1912, serving with the Royal Field Artillery and served with distinction in the First World War,



being awarded the Military Cross in 1917 for holding a stretch of ground after two of his companions had been killed. On the outbreak of the Second World War Lionel, who had resigned his commission many years earlier but still held the rank of Major, volunteered. He was promoted to Colonel in 1942 and sent to the Middle East where his son, Nigel (1916-1944), another recipient of the Military Cross, was serving. Lionel's transport ship was torpedoed about 100 miles off the West Indies in November 1942, with the loss of all hands except the captain.

And on a slightly different note – in 1918 Captain William Garrett Willcox, MBE (b. 1878) was staying at 77 West Hill Road; he had previously lived at 57 West Hill with his father,



James Alfred Willcox (1851-1905), and family and initially followed him into the art publishing business. However, he is best remembered as the first Organising Secretary of the annual poppy appeal for the British Legion, established in 1921 – indeed it has been said that he ‘invented’ poppy day, alongside Field Marshal Earl (Douglas) Haig (1861-1928). In the photograph (below right), taken in 1922, Willcox is on the right and Haig on the left. At its outset he said: “Poppy Day should not be looked on as a flag day: the poppies are meant to be a tangible way to show that people have not forgotten the war and the fallen”. Captain Willcox ran the appeal until 1946, by when it was taking around £600,000 per year (some £22 million in today’s values). Known for his eye for detail, in 1924 he wrote to the *Yorkshire Post* and other regional newspapers warning that the only poppies that the public should be buying had a green or black centre stamped with the words “Haig’s Fund”, there being many imitations in circulation which were being sold purely for commercial gain. He explained that the genuine Flanders Poppies were made in the British Legion factory by nearly 200 severely disabled ex-servicemen, employed all year round on the work. Some 25 million poppies were on sale by that year, requiring some 22 miles of silk and 42 miles of cotton lawn, with over 200 miles of green fringe for the stems and foliage. He steered the organisation through a disastrous fire in its King’s Cross factory in 1932, when 20 million poppies were destroyed, by focussing on producing large numbers of the cheaper (3 penny, worth 75p today) version rather than the more elaborate 1 shilling (£3.00) ones but asking the public to pay the higher price anyway. He is seen (left) loading boxes of the replacements in that year. He also developed the pilfer-free collection box to prevent the light-fingered from acquiring the takings.

SURGERIES ETC.

I hold an advice Surgery at Southfields Library from 11 till noon on the first Saturday of each 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* – always popular around Christmas time! – 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

