

an electoral history of

Fulham and Hammersmith

1900-2026

Adam Gray

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HAMMERSMITH

VESTRY ELECTION.

May 20th, 1897.

V O T E F O R

THE

INDEPENDENT

Progressive Candidates,

Who Oppose the Moderate Fad of Incorporation, and who advocate

Efficient, Economical, and Impartial Administration of our Local Affairs.

No.2 (BROOK GREEN ST. MATTHEW'S) WARD.

Balian, Christopher,
1, Woodstock Road, W.

Best, Emma Wardlaw
17, Netherwood Road, W.

Nichols, Frank
22, Rockley Road, W.

Nott, F. R.
18, Luxemburg Gardens, W.

Sharp, Lewen,
87, Brook Green, W.

No.3 (RAVENSCOURT AND GROVE) WARD.

Barnard, J.J.,
88, Dalling Road,

Lee, G. H.,
47, Mall Road,

Goodwin, H.,
37, Bridge Road,

Staton, R.,
60, Shaftesbury Road

FOR AUDITOR

Beasley, A.,
67, Dalling Road,

No. 4 WARD.

Beal, C. E.,
Roseneath, Queen Street,

Mathews, C. H.,
87, Devonport Road,

No. 6 WARD.

Ackland H. J.,
52, Latimer Road.

Courtney, Harry,
8, Norland Road, North,

Fulham Borough Council Election.

KEEP FULHAM in GOOD HANDS!

VOTE

on THURSDAY, NOV. 1st,

for the

CONSERVATIVE and MUNICIPAL REFORM CANDIDATES.

EAST FULHAM.

BARONS COURT WARD.

BOKENHAM, Dr T. J.
DEW, L. F.
FLEW, F.R.
SKETCHLEY, Miss C. J.
THESIGER, G. A.
WHITE, W.A.

LILLIE WARD.

BARBER, F. H.
COOK, C.A.
EVERARD, A. G.
JOHNSTONE, F.
McNAUGHTON, J. R. G.
PALMER, A.V.

WALHAM WARD.

LEWIS, E.
NEVILLE, A. D.
SOLOMON, W. F.

SANDS END WARD.

BAGGS, A.
CLARK, R. O.
MINUTE, A.
PAVITT, Miss R.
RENTON, G. R.
RICHARDSON, Sir THOMAS

WEST FULHAM.

MARGRAVINE WARD.

FALCON, Mrs. H. M.
FORD, A. W.
SALES, W. G.
THORESBY, F.J.

MUNSTER WARD.

ADAMS, A. C.
CORRIN, W. R.
CUMMINS, Mrs. H. I.
FAY, J. C.
MELVILLE, J. S.
MOORES, W. J.
STAPP, A. G.
STOCKWELL, W. J.

TOWN WARD.

CARNT, S. G.
EPPS, G. W.
IRONSIDE, C. W.
UPHAM, W. L.

HURLINGHAM WARD.

DODIMEAD, H.
HARPER, T.
MOORE, A.

INDIFFERENCE means SOCIALISM

Central Committee Rooms : -

EAST FULHAM: 468 Fulham Road, Walham Green, S.W.6 Telephone ; Fulham 4619

WEST FULHAM: Crabtree Lane, Fulham Palace Road, S.W.6 Telephone ; Fulham 3829

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Foreword

I began writing this book when I was 16 or so. My father had been a Fulham councillor for the whole of my life, a partly absentee father for most of the time because of his town hall duties.

At the end of 1985 the Conservative MP for Fulham, Martin Stevens died. I was thirteen and had absolutely no interest in politics but, as the by-election campaign commenced and posters proclaiming the Labour candidate, Nick Raynsford, "lives here" started going up across the constituency in their hundreds, one day I decided to accompany my dad on a campaigning session to see what it was that kept him out of the house so much of the time.

Like any initiate to party campaigning, at first I just tagged along as long-time family friends - former councillors like Dick Rayner - canvassed places like Reporton Road. I was hooked.

What hooked me? It was the vivid colours of campaigning; the reds, blues, yellows and greens - not to mention the political fringe that descended on Fulham. It was the challenge of increasing the number of contacts with voters and getting the latest haul of leaflets through doors. It was the excitement and tension of vote counts. And it was the competitive streak in me: I wanted to win and I hated losing.

The high of the by-election result: a Labour gain was followed a month later by a Labour landslide on the council. While Francis Fukuyama was researching his book "The End of History", my political history began: 1986 was the start. 1986 is now 35 years ago but the intervening period seems like very little time has elapsed.

A new world opened up before me. Councillors like my father received regular contact sheets listing all their details, alongside which were their ward details. What redolent names these wards had: College Park and Old Oak; Grove; Palace; White City; Starch Green, Sands End.

I knew some of the areas these wards covered but not others: they seemed far, far from my neighbourhood in the middle of Fulham. I knew my dad's ward: Sherbrooke, not least because I had attended Sherbrooke Primary School. I knew we lived in Colehill ward. Palace was across the road at the end of my street. I began to be able to almost see boundary lines wherever I went.

Then came the concepts of vote tallies and majorities - and how this cascade of numbers determines how many councillors each party wins and who then controls councils and governments. But more than that: where parties then need to organise to either shore-up their hold or challenge for power next time round.

An uncle then told me about a book that The Times published following each general election that contained every constituency result. My first edition of The Times Guide to the House of Commons was the 1987 edition: hardly a great election for Labour nationally or locally - we had lost our by-election gain in Fulham. But it absorbed me.

The way this book presented general election results I realised could be applied to local election results. And for an election junkie why absorb yourself in results for just 650 constituencies when there was a nation of thousands upon thousands of council wards out there? I don't want to claim I lack interest in general elections but my preference is local election results.

A few years later I came across Robert Waller's Almanac of British Politics which took the Times Guides one step further and profiled every constituency in the country. Again, if that could be done for constituencies, why not for wards? I wrote a summary of each of the Hammersmith and Fulham wards following the 1990 local elections and sent a copy to Robert, which netted me lunch in Millbank and a very kind acknowledgement in his subsequent Almanacs.

I then compiled all the Hammersmith and Fulham council election results going back to 1964 when the two boroughs were amalgamated and coupled them with those very basic ward profiles to produce the first edition of this electoral history, cheered on by the Hammersmith and Fulham electoral services manager Keith Hathaway and his deputy Steve Miller.

Being able to analyse election results got me into meetings planning election strategy and some notice distinct from being Ian Gray's son - this latter identity being not all that helpful in forging my own path given the controversies and antagonisms he provoked (some of which you can read about in this book).

My father's time as a councillor ended in 1990. Mine began in 1994 when I was elected for Crabtree ward, where my Nan and dad used to live. I held that seat in 1998 but, for a variety of reasons including the fact I had

become Labour's election agent for the borough of Wandsworth in 2000 and that Crabtree ward - with which I was strongly invested - was abolished in 2002, I stood down after eight years.

But I continued to collate and analyse election results and after each election this book of mine grew larger and larger. I strived to add value to each edition and eventually decided that 1964 was an arbitrary year to begin the volume with. Why not take the results all the way back to the founding of the two boroughs in 1900?

Not only would this produce a complete set of election results but it would also make it far easier to explain trends in Fulham and Hammersmith that did not necessarily make sense if you started looking at them only from 1964.

And so we arrive at this book - arguably too indulgent. But at least no one can suggest it's not comprehensive.

You will find in one of the clippings included in this book that former council leader Mike Goodman described my father as the "last Fulham nationalist". If I can slightly correct him: second last! I no longer live in Fulham: I've relocated just across the river to Roehampton, but Fulham will always be my manor, no matter how much it has changed and continues to change.

Some have asked why I put Fulham before Hammersmith in the title of this book. Perhaps that previous paragraph explains why; but anyone with knowledge of the area's history knows that Hammersmith emerged from Fulham; Fulham came first in so many ways (including electing a Labour council long before Hammersmith managed it). Plus it's my book: I can call it whatever I want!

There are plenty of people I wish to acknowledge beyond those I've already mentioned. I am immensely grateful to Hammersmith and Fulham Archives for giving me permission to use that wonderful photo of Fulham Borough Council in session in the beautiful Fulham Town Hall. Also for their help in digging out tomes of old council minutes from which I've been able to fill in missing councillor names and by-election results.

The press clippings I've provided - some of which I've transcribed because the original reports are too small or too faded to reproduce legibly - come from the online British Newspaper Archive. Frustratingly there are gaps in their coverage and local newspapers: the West London Advertiser, the Fulham Chronicle and the Hammersmith Gazette have all now vanished - but at least one of these papers has been digitised to provide most of the coverage of local elections up to 1990.

I have been liaising closely with the two eminent local election experts of our time: Professors Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, for some years - not just on this book but compiling, mapping and analysing local election results: it's essentially what I do with my life. Their three volumes on London election results enabled me to take the results in this book back to 1900.

There is the political family in Fulham Labour Party I was born into - far too much of which is no longer with us. The aforementioned Dick Rayner, June McMahon, Mike Goodman; characters like Demetri Stephanides who made meetings last far longer than they otherwise might, and Charlie Howard, Margaret Sondergaard, Charlie Jennings, the Steinharts, Hugh Duff and Doris Banfield; Peter Bartholmew, Will Unwin, Brendan Bird, Shirley Spiers, Margaret Ingram, Sinclair and Nita Budd (ditto Nita!), Min Birdsey, Iain Coleman and Joan Caruana. Many, many others.

And of course those who remain: Liam and Sue O'Neill, Frank and Vivienne Lukey, Andy Slaughter, Sally Powell, Millie and Barry Stead, John and Val Gorter, Gordon and Bridget Prentice, Lisa Homan, Nick Moore, Hilary Perrin and Ian Rashbrook, Cy Dougall, Billy Dann, John Garrett, Melanie Smallman - my flatmate and fellow Crabtree ward councillor; Rory Vaughan, Ghassan Karian and the others I served on the council with. Plus newer friends like Larry Culhane and Nicos Souslous.

This is a one-sided list so far so let me mention colleagues from across the aisle: Andrew Ground who comes from a similarly deep-rooted Fulham family and is a similar age; and Gerald Wombwell - a great character with a wicked sense of humour and a booming voice that could command the council chamber.

I also got on well with my Conservative counterpart in Crabtree ward for a year, Mark Simonds; and had a perhaps surprising friendship with Andrew Hands: Greg Hands' younger brother, who organised Sherbrooke ward for the Conservatives while I was organising it for Labour. Sadly, Andy died of cancer several years ago. Who knows how far he might have got in politics given his brother's success? I got to know Stephen Greenhalgh when working to save Charing Cross Hospital (first time around) and we remain on congenial terms.

I also want to thank the wonderful electors of Crabtree ward for their manifest good sense in voting me in and then re-electing me. I like to think that the area benefited a little from my eight years: the controversies like controlled parking zone T, and the achievements like Rowberry Mead and a cleaned up Thamesbank.

Many years before I became a councillor my dad had Adam Walk, which I ended up representing, named after me - he was asked to suggest the name for a new council block a couple of days after I was born when he was Chairman of Housing. I'm incredibly proud of Adam Walk: I think it's the best council estate in the borough! Whether this should be the way blocks are named is quite another matter.

This book could be described as a labour of love but I don't like such terms. Without wishing to be too self-aggrandising at least part of it is a Gray family history: between us my dad and I served thirty three years on the council; his contribution being far longer and, in many respects more consequential than mine.

As I've mentioned, many others recorded here are people who were family friends who served with my dad and maybe babysat me when I was wee. Others are people I served with or were coming through the ranks as I faded into the - this - history book.

Politics is a realm held in great contempt by the public - mostly completely understandably. But at grassroots level, and with only one or two exceptions, it comprises local people rooted in their neighbourhoods, seeking to improve the lot of the area they've been elected to represent for four years. Many of those who come to the fore are characters and a handful of these get mentions in this book.

Hammersmith and Fulham is one of the smaller London boroughs. In context it is not an especially significant borough for anyone who doesn't live there or hasn't contributed to it. It doesn't quite have the political stories of places like Wandsworth or Bermondsey or Tower Hamlets or Lambeth - though there've been a few excitements like Rate Swaps.

But this book is its electoral history.

Adam Gray
October 2022

Notes

I spent a lot of time researching this book, going through council minutes and newspaper reports, and other sources of information. Alas, sometimes the detail needed was beyond reach. Hence you will occasionally find by-elections that I know happened, but not the result. Hammersmith Council minutes in particular only reported the winners of elections, not the full results.

You will also find that, for a period approximately from 1945 to 1962 (again, principally for Hammersmith results), many candidates lack first names - just their first initial. There was a fetish for newspapers to only report candidates in such a way, which is vexing. Where candidates stood before in years where their first names were provided I have endeavoured to transpose them, but the vast majority only stood once, or only during that period of limited information. If anyone is able to shed light on some of these candidates' first names do please get in touch: agray72@gmail.com. If there is a future edition of this book I will update it.

You will also find, on occasion, sepia-coloured newspaper reports about the elections. These are my reproductions of original newspaper cuttings - either because the scans I have are poor quality and illegible or beacuse newspapers used to be printed very dense and difficult to read. The reports I have transcribed verbatim, even where modern spellings or grammar might suggest I've made a typographic error.

VOTE CONSERVATIVE

Barons Court

BARON
COWELL
CUSSEN
LAVER
MICHAEL
NICOL

Sands End

ASHPITEL
CLARK
HENRI
JACKSON
OLIVER
PAGE

Lillie Ward

BARKWITH
BEATTIE
BROWNE
CLARK
COATES
COCKBURN

Walham Ward

FETTES
JOYCE
SMITH

Town Ward

FOX
GALE
PICKLES
POULTER

Margravine Ward

EALES
EYNON
JONES
SHARRARD

Munster Ward

ANDREWS
BARTON
BONNEY
GREEN
HICKS
MILLOY
RUSSELL
SEARLE

Hurlingham Ward

LEISHMAN
MILLS
PARSONS

ON THURSDAY, MAY 12th

Published by E. G. A. Townsend, 765 Fulham Road, and D. L. Farrant, 462 Fulham Road

Before the boroughs

In the beginning there was chaos. And, for a considerable time afterwards - it could be argued until today, really - chaos continued.

In 1674 London's population was around a half million. It was well over seven million by 1913 - and most of the boom came in the nineteenth century when industrial-isation and empire made London the hub of vast wealth and epic squalor.

London grew so rapidly that a seemingly contradictory problem of a lack of governance combined with a mesh and mish-mash of commissions, ecclesiastical entities, royal charters, the corrosive self-interest of the City of London Corporation and so much more besides meant Londoners were sinking beneath problems the capital was simply incapable of fixing. It was a system of custom, convention and duty - but it failed to do its duty to the challenges of London on its path to becoming a world class city.

Who governed London?

The flippant answer would be nobody, at least until the mid 1800s - and even then "governance" would grossly overstate what passed as administration of the capital.

London was overseen by - or smothered beneath - 250 acts of law, administered by 300 different bodies which were enforced (or not) by around 10,500 commissioners. Compare those 10,500 largely unelected worthies with the 1,832 councillors elected in 2018 to administer a capital millions larger, and overseeing far more widespread, more complex services.

There was no overarching body governing London. And here it should be clarified that by London, I do not mean Greater London as we currently understand it, stretching from Uxbridge to Upminster and Cockfosters to Coulsdon. At the start of the nineteenth century there was almost no such construct as "London": the bulk of the capital - north of the Thames, west of the Lea - was part of the county of Middlesex.

There was, very loosely a Middlesex County Council, but in the main the county was responsible for the administration of law, via Quarter Sessions. The county was divided into Hundreds, of which Fulham's Hundred was Ossulstone - literally St Oswald's Stone; a marker on the edge of Mayfair, not far from the gallows of Tyburn in Hyde Park.

The Ossulstone Hundred stretched from Brentford to Bow and from Finchley to Fulham. Because the vast majority of Middlesex lived in the Ossulstone Hundred, in turn it was divided into administrative sections and Fulham was within the Kensington division.

The Hundred Quarter Sessions were presided over by Justices of the Peace whose powers were, essentially undefined and so largely open to their own interpretation. These Quarter Sessions were the municipal government of the county: they dealt with all manner of subjects now the responsibility of London's boroughs and, loosely, therefore Justices of the Peace were councillors - except that the administration was by court rather than council and committee meetings. The Quarter Sessions dealt only with what we would now call civil law; the central criminal court at the Old Bailey was responsible for administering justice to law breakers.

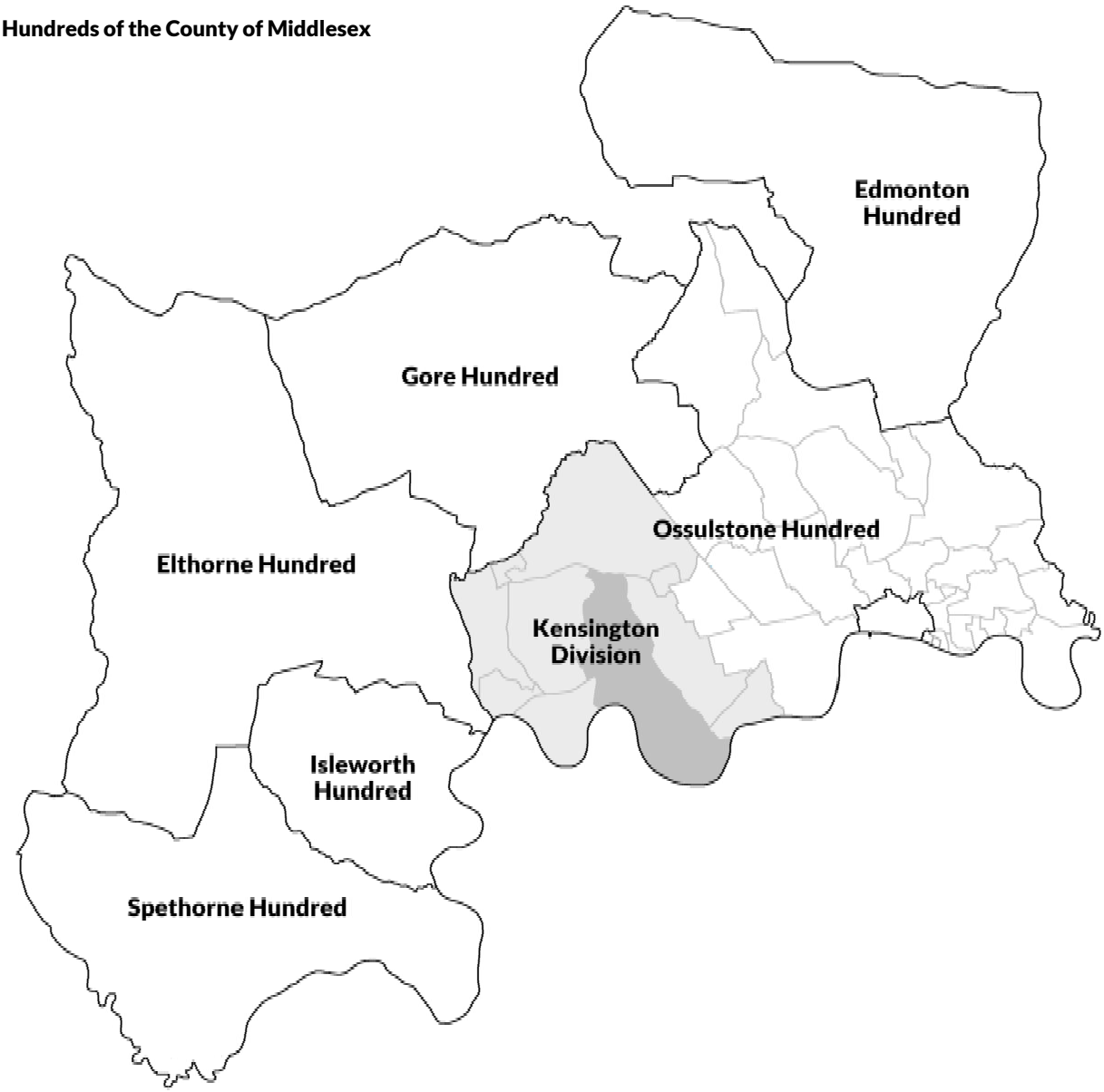
Nonetheless, JPs were still responsible for enforcing the peace, ensuring the administration of the Poor Law, maintaining bridges and highways, the Labour Code and the regulation of production and distribution. As Harold Hazeltine in "One Hundred Years Of The Quarter Sessions" wrote:

"This multiplicity of duties did not make for efficiency, and the lack of efficiency was most felt in urban districts like Middlesex. Largely for this reason, the Middlesex Justices failed to keep the peace in and around London, failed to deal adequately with the problem of the pauper and the vagrant and neglected their duties in respect of the maintenance of highways."

Because the Justices were failing in these fairly critical areas of administration, parishes more activist in nature, or perhaps just more beset by the consequences of the failures of the "higher-ups" began agitating, applying directly to parliament for charters enabling them to, for example, establish night watches - which in turn became parish constabularies, long before Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police.

The parishes were the second string in the historical bow of local administration, just as district councils are now the lower tier of local government in much of England beyond the cities and urban conurbations. Each parish - the parish of Fulham covering all of what is now Hammersmith and Fulham - had a vestry, administered by Vestrymen and usually presided over by the parish priest.

The Hundreds of the County of Middlesex



Again, the vestries emerged more through convention and custom than by legislation - and their duties primarily concerned the administration of the Poor Laws: the acts of parliament that provided for those who had fallen on woefully hard times, long before there was a welfare state.

The vestries ran into difficulties at the turn of the nineteenth century - roughly the same time as the Hundred of Middlesex did - though for quite different reasons. Whereas the Hundred was failing because it simply couldn't cope with the demands of a rapidly growing city, the Poor Law had effectively bankrupted most vestries because the Napoleonic Wars had produced wave after wave of unemployed and disabled soldiers.

This in addition to the needs of the longer-term poor overwhelmed the very limited provision vestries were able, or willing, to provide. Remember that vestries (and therefore ratepayers) had to raise their own funds for the poor and fiscal prudence was, to put it mildly, a preoccupation amongst those who were tithed to fund it.

One of the many nineteenth century steps along the road towards democratic local government in London was to strip the vestries of their poor law responsibilities (leaving them with remarkably little to actually do) and create two new bodies responsible for the most disadvantaged: elected Poor Law Guardians and Poor Law Unions - clusters of parishes that combined to run workhouse.

Whether these new bodies were any more effective than the vestry at administering the Poor Law is not the point: what is significant is that government was at last beginning to sort out the cobbled-together mess and actually legislating to create bodies with defined roles and responsibilities. In so doing, the church was at last - slowly - being excised from its role as the principal provider of grassroots local government.

Even so, vestries were not abolished until 1900 and Poor Law Guardians until 1929. Fulham Workhouse became Fulham Hospital and then an NHS Hospital after the Second World War and then rebuilt as Charing Cross Hospital.

In any event, the Dickensian portrayal of a Workhouse as a uniformly brutal, oppressive and terrifying means of subjugating children is a little wide of the mark. Without wishing to imply that these institutions were a vaguely appropriate way to provide for the poorest, the workhouse, in Fulham at least, was the last refuge for the destitute to receive medical attention and food. It was as benevolent an institution as the powers that be could muster in Victorian England.

As well as the Hundred and the Vestry there were other bodies, today regulated such as the Westminster Commission of Sewers, responsible for mains sewers throughout London but not secondary or sanitary sewers connecting homes to the mains. Then there were water companies which drew their supplies untreated from an increasingly foul and polluted Thames.

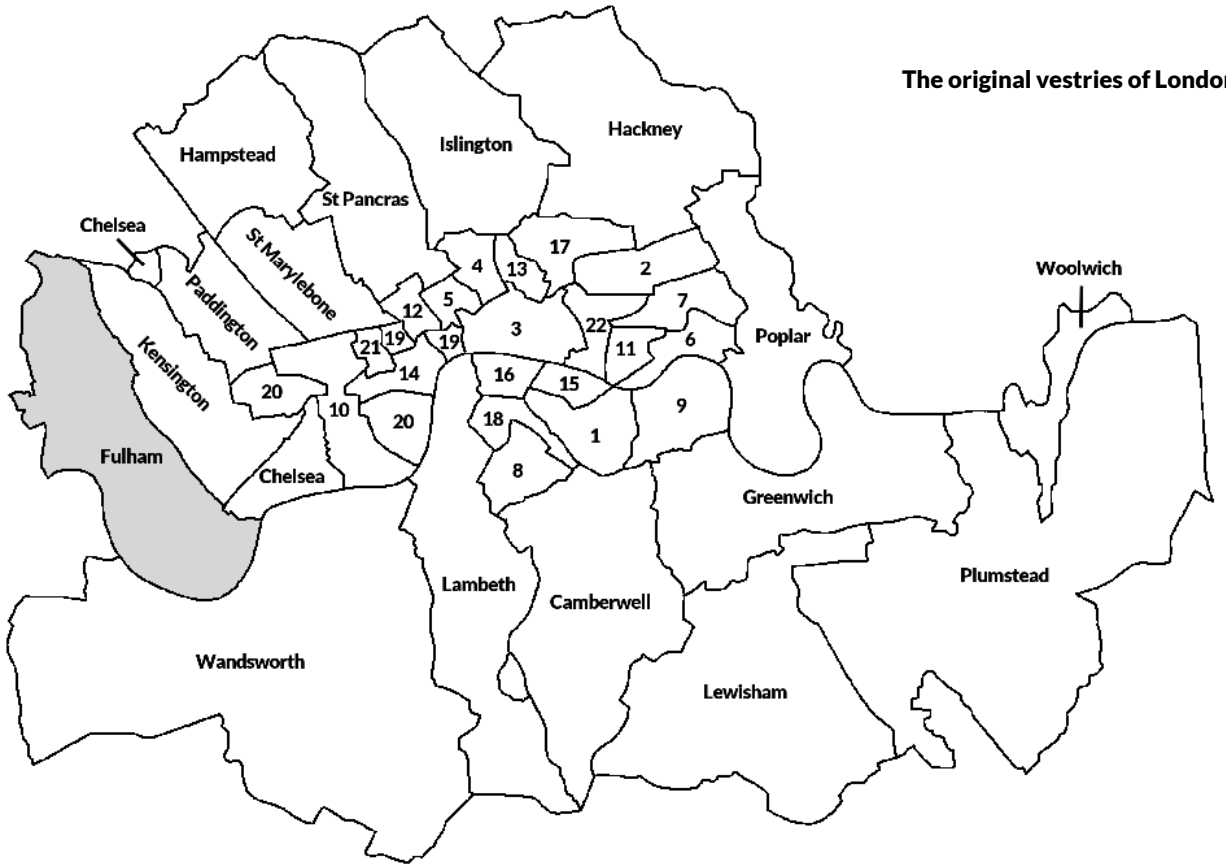
Problems of a rapidly growing capital

Earlier I described how the rapid growth of London led to the breakdown of the Ossulstone Hundred as the effective provider of municipal governance. What were the critical problems that exposed this incapacity?

The most obvious was the sanitation (or lack thereof) of London; with uncontrolled cesspits instead of underground sewers; raw sewage, industrial and farm waste being dumped straight into the Thames; and those unregulated water companies drawing this same, untreated Thames water for public consumption with little to no treatment to clean it.

These practices would, in and of themselves, have continued unabated were it not for the Great Stink of 1832, which made it impossible for parliamentarians attempting to work in the Thames-side Houses of Commons and Lords to ignore the problems of sewerage in the capital. More significant, though, were the Cholera epidemics that ravaged London in 1831, 1848 and 1853 (with influenza and typhoid outbreaks in between).

The original vestries of London



1. Bermondsey
2. Bethnal Green
3. City of London
4. Clerkenwell
5. Holborn
6. Limehouse
7. Mile End Old Town
8. Newington
9. Rotherhithe
10. St George Hanover Square
11. St George in the East
12. St Giles
13. St Luke
14. St Martin the Fields
15. St Olave
16. St Saviours
17. Shoreditch
18. Southwark St George the Martyr
19. Strand
20. Westminster
21. Westminster St James
22. Whitechapel

Although it took a while to disprove the theory that Cholera was an airborne disease spread by miasma (bad air) and demonstrate a clear link between drinking water contaminated by sewage, this was another critical - arguably necessary - step towards serious, defined and powerful municipal governance. After all, a miasma, floating around nebulously would be impossible to tackle.

But if these terrible diseases were caused by bad water, and that bad water was in turn created by human unsanitary practices - well, that was something humans could fix if they organised themselves. The breakthrough in identifying the cause led to a Royal Commission led by Edwin Chadwick, who would go on to become London's first Commissioner of Sanitation and preside over a Board of Health - he would commission Joseph Bazalgette to build London's revolutionary sewer network.

But, as with the bankruptcy of the vestries leading to the creation of Poor Law Guardians, this was a piecemeal response to a specific problem rather than a thought-through, comprehensive plan for London. It is an unfortunate feature of London's history that it has never benefited from a thought-through, comprehensive and fully-implemented plan. Even Abercrombie's Greater London Plan of 1944 was never completed - some might say thankfully given the post-war obsession of brutalist architecture and prioritising motorways over pedestrians. Elsewhere in this book we look at some of the damage this plan did to Hammersmith and Fulham.

The second reality of the growing city the middle and upper classes could avoid - even those with escapist villas in rural Putney, Wimbledon and Ealing was the state of the place: the lack of pavements, the unsurfaced roads; the potholes their carriages couldn't avoid; the state of their dresses and suits from the unavoidable filth outside after stepping out in the rain. The destitute, the vagrants and the beggars were easier to ignore but not to hide.

But the third driver of change - the decisive one - was political. The Tory Party had been in government pretty much from 1774 to 1830 with very brief Whig Party interludes, from William Pitt the Younger through Spencer Perceval, the Earl of Liverpool, George Canning and the Duke of Wellington.

The Tories of course were not blind to the rapid expansion of London and the problems accompanying it. But a mixture of indifference and division over how best to respond (perhaps, too, an appreciation of how daunting a task unravelling the mesh of bureaucracy would be) somewhat paralysed them. But then again these were conservatives: they believed in preserving the status quo, not upending the applecart.

The failure of government to act decisively led to shocking inequality, terrible abuse of the poorest, a wretched physical environment, rampant corruption and, inevitably therefore, a political backlash from the London electorate that, once manifest, led to rapid change.

When, in 1846, Tory Prime Minister Robert Peel forced the repeal of the Corn Laws through parliament he split his party. While the Corn Laws had no direct relevance to the evolution of London government (they were essentially measures within an agriculture bill principally affecting Ireland) they were indirectly significant for two reasons.

First, the Tory Party split that these laws caused enabled a lengthy period of Whig-Liberal government far more sympathetic to reform, and with the political strength and longevity to deliver it.

Second, the Anti-Corn Law League that campaigned so effectively against Peel's policy was arguably Britain's first mass protest movement - certainly one of the most effective. Citizens, many of whom had been emancipated in the Great Reform Act of 1832, were finding their voice, and finding how to use it effectively. Protest was becoming better organised and more confident, despite disasters like the Great Chartist Demonstration of 1848. The new voters began to use their heft to press for change.

So from the late 1840s London gradually became a largely Liberal city because the Liberals were seen as the party to radically improve conditions and overwhelm the vested interests blocking change.

Yet despite their commanding majorities in the House of Commons, the Liberals didn't find it easy to introduce comprehensive reform of London. The principal reason for this was not the Tory opposition in parliament - it was Tory opposition from the City of London.

The City of London - had been governed by its own corporation since medieval times. But its influence extended far beyond the square mile. It had been designated a "county corporate" to Middlesex - that is, it was able to exert huge influence over wider Middlesex without any reciprocity: no body or subject in Middlesex beyond the City could attempt to tax the hugely wealthy city or compel them to contribute to the needs of wider London.

To attempt to neuter The City, the Liberals established a Royal Commission in 1853. Royal Commissions would

become a favoured tool of successive governments to attempt to reform London: there were similar inquiries in 1893, 1921 (the Ullswater Commission), and 1957 (the Herbert Commission). The first Royal Commission on the Corporation made thirty two recommendations, almost none of which were implemented, with most of the handful that were being minor.

One that was of great significance was the establishment a Metropolitan Board of Works, though its jurisdiction did not extend to the City. The Corporation agreed to contribute to the Metropolitan Board without representation upon it, as well as to attend to certain structures and highways beyond its borders: the maintenance of Tower Bridge for example. To the extent that this first Royal Commission did not see its proposed reforms of the City adopted it was a failure. To the extent it laid the foundations for the establishment of the Metropolitan Board of Works - the forerunner of the London County Council - it was a significant step towards municipal governance of London.

The Metropolitan Board of Works

The Metropolitan Board, and local boards of works that finished off the vestries - at least in so far as their already pared-back role as providers of local government services (they still existed as ecumenical bodies) was established in 1855.

This was a flawed but important body: aside from building London's sewer system and the Westminster Embankment, locally it procured Wormwood Scrubs and Ravenscourt Park as metropolitan open land; it built Hammersmith Bridge and a stone Putney Bridge in place of the wooden Fulham Bridge. It also loaned the Fulham Board of Works a large chunk of the money it required to embank the river along the new Bishop's Park.

This is why, incidentally, if you ever visit Bishops Park and look at the insignia on the terracotta balustrades around the central enclosure, those coats of arms are not Fulham Borough Council's - they are those of Fulham's vestry, adopted by the Fulham Board of Works.

If the Liberal governments of Earl Russell, Viscount Palmerston and William Gladstone had hoped that the Act to Manage the Metropolis of 1855 would be the answer to London's problems, they were to be disappointed.

The Liberals remained intent on reforming the City of London despite, or because of, the failure of the 1853 Commission. In the absence of such reforms, they added to the responsibilities of the Metropolitan Board of Works, consolidating and incorporating the London Fire Brigade in 1866, regulating slaughterhouses (alongside household sanitation, slaughter-houses and piggeries were hotbeds of disease in London) in 1874 and providing improved dwellings for artisans and labourers in 1875. This was the first tentative expansion of the state into the provision of housing for the poor - the defining policy priority of the 20th century in London.

Without question the Metropolitan Board of Works began fixing London's infrastructure largely effectively, but its fundamental flaw was not its lack of ambition but that it was a body ripe for corruption from the outset. It was appointed rather than elected and with those expressing most keen an interest in being appointed to it being those seeking contracts from the new body. It held its meetings in secret. Scandal inevitably ensued.

A new political battlefield was also emerging - important because it affected the perception of the political parties for the first twenty years following the creation of the boroughs: centralism versus localism.

You might assume that the Conservatives were the party of centralised power and the Liberals the party of devolution given where these parties have tended to stand in more recent times. The reverse was actually true, principally because the Liberal Government was immensely proud of the Metropolitan Board of Works and viewed with intense suspicion any attempts to endow rival institutions with any level of power that may challenge it.

That Liberal opposition to giving the vestries any power maintained right the way through to the establishment of the boroughs: indeed, the only way the Conservatives got any Liberal support for establishing the boroughs was by asserting that they were the vestries in all but name.

Opposition to localism and devolution to neighbourhoods was an epic political misjudgement by the Liberals. Coupled to voter fatigue of the party's long period in government and the emergence of the Labour Party, it led to their rapid ejection from power at all levels just as the goal they had originally championed: the democratic enfranchisement of London, was achieved.

But we run ahead of ourselves somewhat. The Liberal government did appreciate that the Metropolitan Board of Works needed further reform but the expenditure of effort attempting to reform the City of London, a fading Gladstone administration and that resistance to decentralising power from the Municipal Board meant that further reform stalled.

The London County Council

From this moment the Conservatives became the champions of progress in London, initially not from within but through the emergence of the Metropolitan Municipal Reform Association: a right of centre grassroots pressure group. Their lobbying led to the Salisbury Conservative government legislating the Local Government Act of 1888.

This established the County of London with Fulham at its western extent. The act also re-established the vestries as the lower tier of municipal government in London. Hammersmith, which had been agitating to break away from Fulham, got its wish - the new vestries were not quite in the same form as the old.

The LCC covered what is now regarded as inner London: from Hammersmith and Fulham in the west; Highgate, Archway and Stoke Newington in the north; the river Lea and Woolwich in the east; and Sydenham, Dulwich, Streatham, Tooting and Putney in the south.

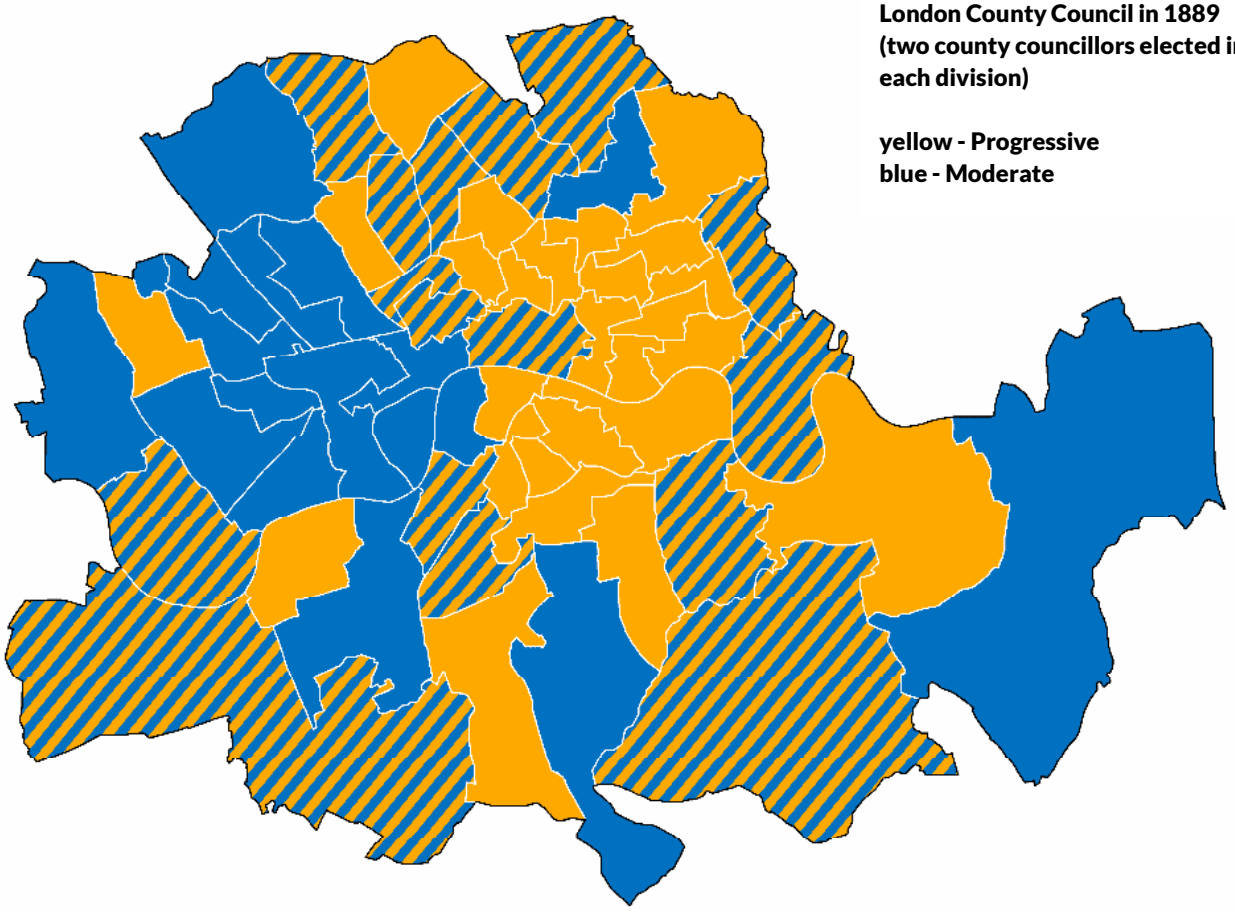
The intention of the Conservatives was always to reform the vestries at the same time as morphing the MBW into the LCC - it didn't happen because of that Liberal antagonism towards any body that might threaten the legitimacy of the central London-wide authority.

The first election of the London County Council took place in January 1889. Although the hope of Lord Roseberry, appointed the first chairman of the council, was that its members would not divide along party lines, two groupings quickly emerged.

"Moderates" was the title taken by its Conservative members; "Progressives" described the fairly broad tent of Liberals and radicals. The Trade Unions were beginning to agitate for a true party of the working class but the formation of the Independent Labour Party was still four years off.

That protracted battle for the hearts and votes of the working classes would destroy the Progressive Party in London and, whilst the two parties of the left fought over the same voters, they enabled a long period of Moderate-Municipal Reform administration of London - something discussed more in the following chapter.

Fin de siècle London was very much a Liberal city, though they were very much stronger in East London than the west.



Result of the first election to the London County Council in 1889 (two county councillors elected in each division)

yellow - Progressive
blue - Moderate

in de siècle London was very much a Liberal city, though they were very much stronger in East London than the west. Nonetheless, in the inaugural LCC election, Fulham elected a Progressive County Councillor: James Beale, alongside a Moderate: Robert Germaine. Hammersmith, much more conservative a district in its early days, elected a Moderate: Andrew Arter, and an Independent Moderate: Robert Cramp.

London wide the Progressives ran County Hall for the next eighteen years, and this in another major reason why the Liberals were reluctant to pursue any meaningful further devolution to the vestries: it would represent a diminution of their power. They were proud of the LCC - their creation, even if it had needed the Conservatives to enact the legislation setting it up. It was simply not in their partisan interest to give power away.

The partisan argument was, of course, the exact reverse for the Conservatives. Overhauling the vestries and giving them much more significant power would at least give them representation, if not power, in parts of London where they were powerless at county level.

In 1895 the Liberals returned to power, initially under Gladstone once again but soon thereafter Lord Rosebury. Their attempts to further modernise London's government again foundered over their attempts to reform the City of London; again through a Royal Commission with a tighter remit to amalgamate the city and county of London. Rosebury, who prior to becoming Prime Minister had been the first leader of the London County Council in 1887 championed amalgamation:

"The present arrangement by which a comparatively small district in the centre of London is detached from London and held aloof cannot be maintained. The object of parliament and of reformers must be that the city should be united with London as soon as possible and with as little friction as possible. Of all London reforms I lay infinitely the most stress on this, because each can supply what the other lacks, because so many reforms are contingent on it, and because you cannot have a complete municipality without it."

This second Royal Commission recommended what the Liberal Government wanted but failed because in 1895 the Conservatives returned to power and binned the plans.

The London Metropolitan Boroughs 1900



The Liberals had failed for a third time to reform the City and were entirely uninterested in reforming the vestries. In contrast the re-elected Conservatives were entirely uninterested in reforming the City but were very interested in reforming the largely ineffective, woefully inefficient, unwieldy and oftentimes corrupt vestries.

Which is exactly what they did.

The Vestries

The re-establishment of vestries as providers of limited local services was an example of the ridiculous in place of the sublime. Hammersmith had long been lobbying aggressively to split from the Fulham vestry, which Fulham opposed - but Hammersmith got its way. They were to a degree democratic in that there would be seventy two "elected" vestrymen serving three wards apiece.

The vestries were not successful in the least because they had far too many members to be effective. The egos of vestrymen far outstripped any notion of efficient work; vestry meetings lasted for hours and accomplished little. The vestries carried out some modernisation such as the laying of wooden pavements, some limited town planning as local neighbourhoods developed and expanded, and some very limited sanitation inspections. But both local vestries became renowned for their profligacy, as the West London Observer article following this introduction reports.

The Municipal Reform Association was organising in favour of Conservative-Moderate candidates with the aim of pressing Lord Salisbury's Conservative government to enact legislation creating elected municipalities.

On 1st March 1899 Arthur Balfour, the Leader of the House of Commons, introduced the London Government Bill, which created twenty nine Metropolitan Borough Councils within the county of London. As A.D. Harvey wrote in History Today in 2009:

"All the rhetoric of the Progressives on the London County Council about being the municipality of London, simply ignored the civic pride and community-consciousness of the municipal activists who were actually responsible for the greater part of local government affairs in the metropolis."

And, while the Conservatives played down the reform of vestries into boroughs to attempt to limit Liberal Party opposition to the plans, what the 1899 London Government Act did was to bestow far more prestige on the municipalities: mayors with chains of office, councillors with robes of office, grand town halls in place (in some cases) of rented out halls for meetings, or cramped vestry rooms; coats of arms and maces in which were vested the authority of the councils to make decisions.

The boroughs also provoked great pride in the areas they served - far more so than the vestries had - or indeed the current larger London Boroughs ever have.

So, with the Progressives in control of the LCC but the Moderates organising themselves as champions of the municipalities, the first election to the twenty nine new Metropolitan boroughs was set for Thursday 1st November 1900.

On that day the story of the boroughs of Fulham and Hammersmith began.

The West London Observer
Saturday April 9, 1887

The Fulham Scandals

Serious complaints are heard of the waste of time in the unseemly squabbles which so frequently occur at the meetings of the Vestry.

An instance of the kind occurred only at the last ordinary meeting. There was a running fire of words which culminated in the adjournment of the meeting until Saturday, to dispose of the remainder of the business on the agenda. This mode of conducting the affairs of an important parish ought not to be allowed to continue. Some steps really must be taken to prevent a repetition of those outrageous scenes, which tend to lower the dignity of the Vestry, and to bring local management into contempt.

It is just that mode of dealing with parochial affairs which enables those who are endeavouring to cast ridicule upon our present system, to urge upon Parliament to sweep it away, and institute one more in accordance with their views. It also tends to throw doubt upon the capabilities of Fulham to run alone.

The Vestry has had a separate existence a little more than twelve months, which is surely a sufficient time to enable the members to understand one another. But their proceedings and noisy disputes would lead to an impression that the very opposite is the case. There are not now any alien members of the Vestry. All the members represent one parish, having the same interests to serve, and therefore should be united for the common good of the whole body of ratepayers. They are not in the same position as they were when Fulham was united to Hammersmith.

In those days displays of hostility were natural, but not excusable. The Board of Works was composed of two contending parties, each looking with sharp eyes after the interests of the particular parishes which they represented and, in their eagerness to resent some apparent injustice words of an angry nature oftentimes flowed fast and furious. But with the single Vestry no conflicting interests exist.

It was for the purpose of obtaining an exclusive control over their own affairs that the idea of a separation suggested itself to those who were dissatisfied with the union. They wanted House Rule, and succeeded beyond all expectation in obtaining that desirable arrangement.

The Vestry is in full possession of Home Rule, and yet the internal arrangements are not proving satisfactory. Is it because the Chairman is impotent and unable to curb the glowing impetuosities of particular members?

We believe this interrogatory does not apply to the Vicar. The Rev. Mr. Fisher is an excellent Chairman, and as a rule he possesses sufficient power, combined with dignity and influence, to repress the outbreaks of extravagance which, unfortunately, are becoming the rule and not the exception. But Mr. Fisher cannot always be in his place to preserve order. There are times when a substitute is required to take the chair. It does not follow, we are afraid, that the substitute is equal in command to the original.

It is no use mincing words. A strong Chairman is required for the Vestry, and unless one is found in the absence of the Vicar the scenes which are a scandal to the parish and to local management may be expected at any meeting. For the credit of the parish it is unfortunate, because its financial affairs are improving. Notwithstanding the great amount of talk at the Vestry, members have succeeded in reducing the rates not, perhaps, to any appreciable extent, but of sufficient amount which will show to the constituency that the management of affairs under Home Rule has been, so far, beneficial to the parish. It is therefore unfortunate that this improvement should be endangered by the action of certain members, who appear unable to restrain their conflicting emotions. Probably if the action of the Vestry is again suspended the constituency may be heard upon the subject. The remedy is in the hands of the ratepayers, who may be inclined to send those gentlemen about their business, and replace them with others whose talkative powers are not so great. In the meantime, a strong Chairman, in the absence of the Vicar, should be found to preside over the Vestry.

The West London Observer
Friday May 21, 1897

Fulham Vestry Election

A SWEEPING MODERATE VICTORY

In splendid weather, the annual Vestry battle, not exactly of a Greco-Turkish kind, however, was waged in the borough of Fulham.

In all there were 23 vacancies to be filled up, and there were 49 candidates. The only ward in which there was not a poll was the Town ward, a "bloodless fight" having resulted in the election of Messrs. Charlesworth, Humphrey and H.W. Williams, who are fortunate in making their debut on the Vestry without a struggle.

Polling was from eight o'clock in the morning until eight in the evening, Mr. Arthur Robinson being the returning officer.

The contest was between Moderates and Progressives only in all the wards except the Sands End ward, where three Independent Labour Party candidates sought Vestry honours as well as Moderates and Progressives.

There was a plentiful supply of election literature. The Moderates made a point of announcing that, with a Moderate majority on the Vestry, the rates were reduced by 6d in the pound.

This brought forth the following manifesto from the Progressives:- "Ratepayers beware. The Moderate candidates are attempting to deceive you in order to snatch your vote by stating that they have saved you 6d in the £, or equal to £13,050 during the last year. This is an absolute falsehood, as the following figures, taken from the Vestry's accounts, show:-

Half year ending March 1896 - Amount required, £89,470

Half year ending March 1897 - Amount required, £40,650

A counterblast from the Moderates was to the following effect:- "Five Pounds Reward - if any useful Radical, and he would be very useful just now, would like five pounds reward, let him disprove the statement that the rates were reduced 6d in the £ - that is to say, for the year ending March 1896 they were 6s 11d in the pound; for the year ending March 1897 there 6s 5d, in the pound - reduction 6d.

When proof is produced the author may apply for payment to any of the Moderate candidates, or to Mr. J.S. Cooper, the Conservative Registration agent at the office: 6 Shorrolds Road. Vote only for Moderates."

A lesson in "Radical Arithmetic" was also issued and it was stated "They may rage and fume and shout and bluster and fib, but however much they pervert the truth the fact remains that your rates were reduced."

In the addresses of the Moderates it was also stated that "the greatest issues were involved in the present election. If Hammersmith succeeds in securing separation from the Fulham Union, an addition of over £100,000 will be made to the debt of the parish. The Progressives are now also trying to rush through the Vestry reckless and extravagant schemes which, if carried, would cost another £100,000 and mean still another 7d. in the pound addition to the rates.

We as Moderates are pledged to oppose these utterly ruinous schemes. The Moderates have also supported good wages and fair treatment to the Vestry workmen of all grades."

The Progressives circulated manifestoes to the effect that they would check extravagance, and it was mentioned that a sum amounting to nearly £800 per annum extra had been recently voted to increase the salaries of Vestry officials. They pledged themselves to promote the principle of direct and preferential employment of Fulham workmen by the Vestry, as also the payment of Trade Union rates of wages to all concerned; to support the establishment of swimming and washing baths; oppose the separation of Fulham and Hammersmith as, if this proposal were adopted, it would mean an enormous increase in the rates.

The programme of the London Reform Union was generally supported. In a handbill headed "The Truth about Poor Law Separation", issued by the Progressives, it was asked: "Who made application to the Local Government Board for separation?" and the reply given is "The Moderates!"

This is certainly a funny way of putting "the truth" about the matter. The Moderates of Fulham, it is very well known, have made no such application. As a matter of fact, the agitation for separation was started by members of the Hammersmith Vestry.

In several of the wards vehicles were used by both Moderates and Progressives to convey electors to the poll. Red-white-and-blue rosettes were donned by the Unionists, whilst the Radicals wore yellow favours. A coal van paraded the Margravine ward in the interest of the Progressives.

In the early portion of the day polling went on very slowly and it was not until after five o'clock that matters brightened up. In the Baron's Court ward the recording of votes went on very quietly, the voters attending at a rate of about 27 per hour. In this ward the Moderates had a very easy victory, the Progressive candidates obtaining the lowest number of votes of any of the Vestry aspirants, namely Mr. Hodges, 30; Mr. Baxter, 26.

In the Margravine ward voting became brisk during the last two hours of the poll, and voters had to run the gauntlet of a number of canvassers, anxious to present them with the literature of the various candidates. A good number of spectators assembled opposite Everington Street School to watch the rush of lagging voters, and there was some amount of chaff carried on amongst the bystanders.

It is said that several voters arrived at the school a few minutes before eight o'clock and found the gate closed, and that a protest was lodged. At the station presided over by Mr. H. Tapp a little incident occurred which ought to be a caution to smokers. During the day a man, on arriving in the booth, threw up his arms and shouted out "Oh, I am on fire!" Mr. Tapp jumped up and found that the voter's waistcoat was on fire. This was caused through putting a lighted pipe in his pocket, but the fire was quickly put out without personal injury.

The largest number of electors went to the poll in the Lillie ward. Voting was carried on steadily during the day and there was a good influx of voters between six and eight o'clock. In the station at which Mr. Vere was the presiding officer a ballot paper was handed to a voter who asked what he had to do with it. He was directed to the instructions posted up. There is a direction that the paper shall be brought to the presiding officer so that he may see the official mark on the back. He interpreted this to mean there was a mark at the back of the booth because, on going to the rear of the booth he said "I can't see any mark".

The complete victory of the Moderates in Lillie ward came as a complete surprise to many people.

There was much greater activity in the Walham ward on the part of the Moderates at this election than there was last year. During the last hour of the poll voters arrived in quick succession and the outside agents of the candidates were kept busy in distributing polling cards showing electors how to vote.

In the Munster ward, as regards vehicles, the Moderates had a great advantage over the Progressives. All the candidates were out and about during the day. Messrs. Mellish, Matthews and Perks seemed to be particularly busy. In fact it was evident that they did not mean to lose the election if hard work would ensure their success.

A couple of coal trolleys, laden with a cargo of not particularly clean-looking individuals, paraded some of the side streets and cheered, but why they were doing so - and upon whose behalf - nobody seemed to know.

During the day a motor car belonging to Mr. Dewar made its appearance in Dawes Road, with Mr. J.H. Squires Jnr. as one of the passengers, and caused a good number of persons to assemble. Placards of the Moderate candidates for the Munster ward were fitted to the car.

The Progressives in the Hurlingham ward held a meeting on Monday evening, when one or two lively scenes were witnessed by the score or so of electors standing round the White Horse signpost adjoining Parson's Green. The candidates, Messrs. March and Earland, gave addresses which were - at times - attentively listened to.

Mr March made some observations concerning the action of the Moderates at the Vestry which evoked much discussion. Another meeting was held in the King's Road the same evening.

The ward was actively canvassed by both parties. The Moderates put in some hard work. Besides sending workers out for the purpose of distributing leaflets, they secured a large number of vehicles for the purpose of bringing voters up to the poll. There was some activity at the respective committee rooms, both of which were in Parson's Green Lane. Towards the close of the poll working men attended in good numbers to record their votes.

In the Sands End ward the electors must have felt a little bewildered when the ballot paper was prevented to them by the clerk at the polling station, for there were no less than nine candidates for three seats.

In the words of an official there was a good deal of rough play in the district.

The Progressives, Messrs. Garlick, Schofield and Davis, were much in evidence during the day in bringing voters up to the poll. The Moderates were none the less active in this respect. It cannot be denied that in locating their committee rooms opposite the Free Library in the Wandsworth Bridge Road, they secured an excellent position.

Messrs. Balsam, Busby and Silles had numerous conveyances at their disposal and they made full use of the opportunities thus placed before them. More than half of the voters taken to the Langford Road Board School were, to all appearances, working men.

Just about tea time, Mr. J.M. Squires, who was accompanied by two friends, drove round the district in a light blue jacket and cap. Carts and vans were the chief vehicles used by the Progressives. Lads and youths indulged in a little horseplay which, however, was promptly

stopped. The opinion has been expressed that had the Independent Labour Party abstained from taking part in the election at least one Progressive would have been returned.

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COUNTING OF VOTES

At the close of the poll the ballot boxes were conveyed to the Town Hall and the counting of votes was commenced at nine o'clock in the small hall, under the direction of Mr. A. Robinson.

The first procedure was the emptying of the ballot boxes and the sorting of the voting papers, a separate table being provided for each ward. The counting for the Baron's Court ward was finished first, Munster ward coming second.

There was some dismay amongst the Progressives when it became apparent that the Moderates would gain a sweeping victory. In the Hurlingham ward the poll was close between Messrs. Green and March, and the latter candidate demanded a recount of some of the votes.

The votes recorded in the various wards were as follows:- Baron's Court ward: 855; Margravine ward: 682; Munster ward: 599; Lillie ward: 1,061; Walham ward: 791; Hurlingham ward: 472; Sands End ward: 780; Total 4,740.

RESULT OF THE POLL

BARON'S COURT WARD

ELECTED

Mr. Parker (M)	320
Mr. Patterson (M)	318
Mr. Keen (M)	316
Mr. Pendlebury (M)	246

No change

NOT ELECTED

Mr. Hodgins (P)	30
Mr. Baxter (P)	26

MARGRAVINE WARD

ELECTED

Mr. Salmon (P)	311
Mr. Merry (P)	227
Mr. Cook (M)	224

Two Progressive gains

NOT ELECTED

Mr. Crick (P)	211
Mr. Jones (M)	211
Mr. Marchment (M)	203
Mr. M. King (I.M.)	187
Mr. Harrington (I.P.)	109

MUNSTER WARD

ELECTED

Mr. Perks (M)	331
Mr. Mellish (M)	318
Mr. Marriott-Matthews (M)	305

Two Moderate gains

NOT ELECTED

Mr. Kingham (P)	255
Mr. Cooke (P)	253
Mr. Terry (P)	248

LILLIE WARD

ELECTED

Mr. J.W. Barker (M)	550
Mr. Codrington (M)	531
Mr. R. Gibbs (M)	523
Mr. Cope (M)	506

Four Moderate gains

NOT ELECTED

Mr. Jordan (P)	455
Mr. Margrie (P)	448
Mr. Whiteley (P)	437
Mr. Abery (P)	422

WALHAM WARD

ELECTED

Mr. Cranfield (M)	475
Mr. Drew (M)	463
Mr. Hollyman (M)	424
Mr. Rowcliffe (M)	403

Three Moderate gains

NOT ELECTED

Mr. Palmer (P)	317
Mr. Rosevear (P)	313
Mr. Richardson (P)	298
Mr. James (P)	280

TOWN WARD

Messrs. Charlesworth, Humphrey and H.W. Williams (Moderates) were elected without a poll

HURLINGHAM WARD

ELECTED

Mr. Littleboy (M)	257
Mr. Green (M)	242

No change

NOT ELECTED

Mr. March (P)	214
Mr. Earland (P)	194

SANDS END WARD

ELECTED

Mr. Balsam (M)	361
Mr. Silles (M)	335
Mr. Busby (M)	312

Two Moderate gains

NOT ELECTED

Mr. Schofield (P)	263
Mr. Davis (P)	245
Mr. Garlick (P)	231
Mr. Johnson (I.L.P.)	152
Mr. Brill (I.L.P.)	151
Mr Norman (I.L.P.)	149

Loud cheers greeted the declaration of the poll. After a cry of "Gentlemen, order please", Mr. F.O. Drew remarked that although he was not himself the highest placed candidate in the particular ward he represented, yet he had been asked to propose a vote of thanks to the returning officer, Mr. Robinson. All who had been candidates, or had worked at the polling booths, were of one opinion that the arrangements made by Mr. Robinson were excellent. He had been strictly impartial and had done his duty so as to reflect credit on himself and Fulham who had appointed him. He begged to propose a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Robinson.

Mr. G.W. March said, in seconding the motion, he begged to echo the sentiments expressed by Mr. Drew. They were very much indebted to Mr. Robinson. He hoped he would live many years to preside at elections in the future and that he might have the pleasure of putting him on the top. (Laughter).

The motion was carried with acclamation.

Mr. Robinson, in reply, said they would have to excuse him that night saying much, for he was somewhat tired. He hoped he would have the pleasure of serving them on numerous occasions. He was sure he should always endeavour to do his duty to their satisfaction. (Applause)

AFTER THE VICTORY MEETING AT THE CONSERVATIVE CLUB

After the declaration of the poll an impromptu meeting was held in the large hall of the Conservative Club, when the Moderate candidates were congratulated on their victory. Mr. J.W. Barker, who polled the largest number of votes, and headed the list in Lillie ward, was voted to the chair, and by request the successful candidates present supported him on the platform.

The Chairman thanked them for electing him in the Lillie ward. He should endeavour to do his duty to the best of his ability and he hoped to the satisfaction of them all. (Applause).

Mr. Easton moved a vote of hearty congratulation to the candidates on the success which had attended their efforts that day. He thought everyone was proud of the gentlemen whom Fulham was wise enough to select that day. Everybody must be satisfied that Fulham had done right for once this time, with one single unfortunate exception in the Margravine ward. The result in that ward ought to teach them the lesson that they would never win unless they were united. He was sure that was counter-balanced by the success they had met with elsewhere. (Applause).

Mr. J.S. Cooper most heartily seconded the motion, which was adopted with acclamation.

The Chairman, in briefly returning thanks, said he was in favour of Vestrymen working as amicably together as they possibly could. (Hear, hear).

Mr. F.O. Drew said he was quite sure that the successful candidates would not forget the Conservative Club, and the Radical Party would not forget also. He thought it was singular that their friend Mr. Barker should be in the chair that night. He was acquainted with work in stone, and he though he might prepare an epitaph to the dead radicalism of Fulham. (Laughter).

They had given it the death blow that night. Their opponents had tried to attack every single institution they held dear. If successful they would be running up the rates to an alarming extent. They tried to prosecute persons in an unfair manner, and to apply Acts of Parliament in the very strictest way. They had won this victory in the most marvellous manner.

Considering that this was looked upon as a Progressive part of London, he though that true progress was on the side of Conservatism. (Applause).

He could not sit down without tendering his thanks on behalf of his brother candidates and himself. Personally, he though a great deal of their success was due not only to the members of the Conservative Club and different organisations who had worked together, but especially their thanks were due to Mr. Cooper for the admirable manner in which he had engineered this whole business through. (Applause).

Mr Tom Groen said he could assure them that night that there was not a prouder man than he was. He did not take any credit to himself, but he had had - as they knew - individually one of the toughest fights at the election, and he gloried in their victory all along the line.

He thanked many friends for their kind assistance and good wishes. He was proud that in this tough fight he had managed to hold the flag aloft and had not lowered it to an able opponent. He was obliged to them, and hoped that this would be the fore-runner of greater victories in the future. (Applause).

Mr. R. Gibbs thanked them for the manner in which they had worked in the Lillie ward. They had received assistance from a great many present and he should like especially to mention Mr. Cooper. (Applause).

Mr. G. Mellish was next called upon, and in returning thanks said that while on the Vestry he should do the best he could in the interests of the Moderate Party and the ratepayers. (Applause).

Mr. Keen thought their fight in the Baron's Court ward had been somewhat farcical. One Radical candidate polled 30 votes and the other 26. He thanked them for their renewed confidence. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to see Mr. Tom Green and Mr. Drew re-elected.

Mr. H.H. Busby, in returning thanks, said they had had a hard fight in the Sands end ward and he thanked them for the good work they had put in for the successful candidates.

Mr. Perks said he had worked on the principle, "If at first you don't succeed, try again." He had tried before, and that day he had been successful. He hoped the plant he had planted that day would blossom to their satisfaction. (Applause).

Mr. Cooper said he was sure that he wished to express heartfelt gratitude for the way they had recognised his efforts. He greatly appreciated their efforts. He had one object in life, that the Conservative cause should prosper in Fulham. (Applause).

Mr. J.G. Stabb remarked that this was a time for congratulation. Who, six months ago, thought they would capture six seats in the stronghold of Radicalism in the Lillie ward?

The electoral history of Fulham and Hammersmith

The history of London's boroughs happens, entirely coincidentally, to parallel the emergence of the Labour Party as a significant force. It is this history that makes this book not (just) a dry record of facts and figures, statistics, lists and results but one that tracks the troughs and peaks of Labour's path to power, its ebbs and flows.

Let us first recap that Liberals initially contested elections from 1900 until the mid 1920s as "Progressives" while the Conservatives initially stood as "Moderates" and thereafter "Municipal Reform" - not under their national title until 1949. Although Labour was organising rapidly, in 1900 you won't find the party contesting any seats: radical candidates stood as Socialists or Social Democrats.

We finished the last chapter with the Liberal Party at the peak of its power, having dominated London politics for the final third of the Nineteenth Century. But a party in power for so long, and having been the receptacle for so long of the votes of all those who were not Conservatives, was ripe for collapse. Industrialisation and the resultant population explosion of London created a vast new working class for whom Liberalism was a pale imitation of the radical change it demanded.

The Liberals' collapse was swift and permanent but Labour did not emerge as rapidly as the Liberals declined. There were three reasons why the party did not rise as easily in local government as they did nationally.

First, the franchise was limited to ratepayers; not the populace at large. Ratepayers by definition were people who owned property on which rates were levied so the renting class - overwhelmingly comprising low-paid workers - was ineligible to vote for years after the boroughs were founded. Women too - insofar as universal suffrage for their sex was concerned - did not get the franchise until the 1919 council elections, though women who owned property could vote for their councillors, if not their MPs.

Second, while Labour and the Liberals were battling for the progressive vote they were also dividing it, enabling Conservative candidates to win more easily. In several of the wards least inclined to the Moderates/Municipal Reform in 1903, 1906 and 1909, they were able to win because Progressives (Liberals) and Socialists, Social Democrats or Labour split the vote.

Third, because the Liberal collapse was not simply due to the emergence of Labour but also to a backlash from middle class London over the cost of the progressive politics the party had pursued.

Why did the Conservatives define themselves as first "Moderate" and then "Municipal Reform"? It was because that branding encapsulated an argument that ratepayers wanted very much to hear at this time: first that they were moderate and the other parties were "extreme". Second that progress was all very well but the burgeoning state - locally as well as nationally, was wasteful. Sound management of finances was being sacrificed on the alter of all sorts of unaffordable programmes that needed prudent oversight.

Another feature of these early elections - as you will be able to see from the coverage I have transcribed at the start of each set of election results - is the activism of the local press. This was a second divergence between the boroughs: the Fulham Chronicle being a strong supporter of the Progressive cause (both capital and lower case P) that was oftentimes scathing of the Municipal Reformers and publicly fretted at the damage to their electoral chances the battle between Labour and the Liberals for the left of centre vote was wreaking.

That is not to say the Chronicle gave Labour a free pass: it was scathing, once the party had established itself in power municipally, of the radicalism of the council; of the laundry scandal (the council had tried to establish a laundry service whereby it didn't just provide washing facilities but employed the launderers in competition with private laundries - the courts eventually ruled they had no power to interfere to this extent); and of the council's insistence of using its own direct labour force to build council housing - the paper joined with the Conservative opposition in arguing that this both increased costs and put local building firms out of business.

The West London Observer (which focussed mostly on covering Hammersmith elections), in contrast, was a viscerally anti-Labour publication; focussed to the exclusion of all other issues on their desire to see rates kept low. You will read, as you progress through the election results, that they also continually moaned about the low turnout of ratepayers: how the majority were not performing their civic duty and how apathy could one day lead to a Socialist council being elected. They were right about that, though their partisan advocacy for the Constitutional Ratepayers Association no doubt contributed to Labour not breaking through in Hammersmith until 1937.

1900

Almost literally, the Conservatives wanted the earliest elections to the borough to be framed as "Mods vs. Off-Their-Rockers". It is a theme that has been one of the most significant dividing lines in politics: just think of how that concern played in respect of Labour's massive spending pledges at the 2019 general election (nationally, if not so much in London, at least).

But Fulham was not quite ready to embrace the message in the inaugural elections to the borough council in November 1900 (May council elections didn't come about until 1949). It returned a Progressive council with a majority of six: fourteen Moderates and one Independent forming the opposition. The Progressive wards were Lillie, Munster, Sands End and Walham while Margravine elected one Moderate, one Progressive and an Independent. In terms of votes, things were very close: the Progressives won 4,709 votes and the Moderates 4,548.

Hammersmith, being several degrees less liberal than Fulham, returned a comfortable Moderate majority of sixteen, with just eight Progressives and two independents. All these opposition councillors won in split wards: there were no Progressive strongholds. Four won in The Grove and Ravenscourt, two in Starch Green and two in River. The two independents came from College Park and Latimer and River. But, again, the count was narrower than the result it produced: 3,595 Moderate votes to 2,867 for the Progressives.

1903

1900 was the pinnacle of Liberalism in Hammersmith and Fulham. There followed a rapid collapse in their support as Labour emerged onto the scene and there was a big swing to Moderate-Municipal Reform.

The Progressives lost their majority in Fulham but were still able to run the council with the support of an independent Progressive in Walham and, the first two Labour councillors ever elected, in Margravine. The Moderates won more votes across the borough, 4,779 to 4,677 for the Progressives, but the Progressives just about kept hold of Lillie, Munster and Sands End: three of the four 6-member wards.

No Labour councillors were returned in Hammersmith, in part because the party only contested River and Starch Green wards.

Progressives actually gained seats despite their deficit with the Moderates widening. This was quite a turbulent election: the Progressives lost seats in The Grove and Ravenscourt but gained in River and Starch Green for example. Independent Moderates won all three seats in College Park and Latimer with populist Henry Hooper topping the poll with 60% of the vote.

1906 to 1912

The elections of 1906, 1909 and 1912 produced similar results. In Fulham, the newly rebranded Municipal Reform won a clean sweep of the thirty six seats. The schism in the non-Conservative vote as Labour battled for supremacy with the Progressives was fully revealed in this 1906 election - but only in Sands End and, maybe, Lillie was the combined Labour-Progressive vote greater than that of MR; and in Walham it was independent Progressives, not Labour, that let the Conservatives in.

In Hammersmith a different dynamic was occurring. Progressives had defected almost en masse to the first iteration of the Ratepayers Association in 1906 and, in a backlash against the "Old Gang" who had run the former vestry and the new borough for its first two terms, they snatched control narrowly: a majority of just two seats.

The "old gang" were seen as guilty of two unforgivable failures especially for Conservative politicians: they had not kept the rates low and they had not managed services well. So, at the start, the Ratepayers Association comprised Liberals, some socialists and social democrats and relatively apolitical residents and shop owners appalled by the misgovernance of their borough.

While Labour lost its foothold in Fulham's Margravine ward the party gained one seat in Hammersmith's Starch Green - albeit with just 21% of the vote in a thoroughly split ward. Again, the Hammersmith result in terms of seats didn't reflect the result in terms of votes: Municipal Reform narrowly won with 4,393 votes to the Ratepayers' Association's 4,269.

In 1909 Municipal Reform had thrown its lot in with the Ratepayers' Association in Hammersmith and they won a landslide thirty seats to six independents, Labour ousted in Starch Green despite a dramatically higher vote there. In Fulham the last Progressives ever elected regained Walham ward, but everywhere else voted for Municipal Reform for a majority of thirty.

Those three Progressive gains were undone in 1912, Fulham returning to a Municipal Reform monopoly. But in Hammersmith Municipal Reform uncoupled from the Ratepayers Association after the Ratepayers broke a gentleman's agreement with the Conservatives not to contest London County Council seats. Only five

Ratepayer councillors survived this battle, with Municipal Reform winning a majority of twenty six.

The First World War commenced in 1914 and so the elections scheduled for 1915 was cancelled. Councillors elected in 1912 ended up serving for seven years, though there were several resignations. During both the World Wars the parties agreed not to contest seats vacated by the other.

1919

The election held after the conclusion of the First World War, with its horrific death toll, was conducted in a world utterly removed from that of 1912. For the first time, the war had forced together the classes, even if class was stratified within the army every bit as rigorously as in wider society. It was far harder for the captains, lieutenants and other officers to ignore the conditions their privates, corporals and sergeants were returning to now they were familiar with their valour and suffering: especially in respect of housing and the linked issues of public health and sanitation.

The 1919 election propelled Labour - entirely unexpectedly - into power in Fulham; and to a sizeable, vocal opposition group in far more conservative Hammersmith.

Labour won twenty four councillors in Fulham - exactly twice the number of Municipal Reformers. The party won full slates of candidates in every ward except Baron's Court, Hurlingham and Town, two of which they didn't contest. Because they won the council they also were able to pick three Alderman, one of whom, Robert Gentry was Labour's election agent and became leader of the council. Labour polled 6,797 to Municipal Reform's 5,789 with the Progressives managing a distant 1,850.

The party got thirteen councillors elected in Hammersmith alongside one representative of the National Federation of Discharged Servicemen in Wormholt, two Progressive in College Park and Latimer (Labour didn't contest this ward) and an Independent in River. This gave Municipal Reform a majority of two seats but, of course, that was twice as many as they needed. Labour won Starch Green outright for the first time, four of the six Wormholt seats, two in The Grove and one in River.

The vote tally was similarly close: 4,657 for Municipal Reform, 4,294 to Labour and 1,748 for the Progressives.

1922 to 1931

The 1919 election was a false dawn for Labour. In 1922 they were routed in Fulham, and only retained three seats in Hammersmith. I have bunched the four elections that occurred in 1922, 1925, 1928 and 1931 together because they produced broadly similar results: the second era of massive Municipal Reform victories and Labour routs.

The difference between this period and 1906 to 1919 was that in the first Labour was emerging; now the party was organised, had tasted success and was getting trounced even in wards they should have won.

This was less about their performance in office in Fulham, or as the principal opposition in Hammersmith and far more to do with the national - and international - situation. The Russian revolution of 1919 had seriously alarmed conservative England. Labour contained within it - always has - a significant element sympathetic to the cause of Marxism, and this wing of the party was far noisier in the aftermath of the revolution.

The backlash against a too-radical-for-most Labour Party was initially not huge, though gathered pace dramatically from 1924 after the publication of the fake Zinoviev Letter, which alleged that Labour was a puppet of the Communist Party which had an intent to promulgate a civil war in England and paralyse the British Armed Forces.

In addition, the eclipse of the Liberal Party that occurred locally at the start of the century was now happening nationally: Lloyd-George's coalition government was nearing the end of its life and, just three weeks after the 1922 council elections, Conservatives led by Bonar Law would sweep to a (short-lived) victory.

In 1923 the Conservatives, now led by Stanley Baldwin, lost their majority but the first-ever, minority, Labour government elected then was too weak to govern effectively and its conduct towards Soviet Russia inflated the concerns (amplified soon after by Zinoviev): Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald both pushing to normalise relations between the two countries but also to drop treason charges against the Communist Daily, which had called for Army Officers to disregard orders in certain scenarios.

The inexpressiveness of the first MacDonald administration, the red scare and , perhaps most importantly, the replacement of the fervour for social change following World War One for a harking back to a halcyon time prior to the war, and a virulent opposition

among the electorate to rearmament led to an irresistible tide against Labour throughout the 1920s.

In Fulham, Labour veered between losing every single seat to just about managing to win Margravine and, possibly, Munster wards; in Hammersmith for election after election (bar 1928 - the one anomalous election of these early years in that Labour performed far better in Hammersmith than Fulham) the only Labour councillors returned were for the horrifically deprived College Park and Latimer ward.

Municipal Reform polled over 90% in Barons Court; in excess of 80% in Hurlingham, Town and Brook Green; and more than 70% in Lillie, Walham, St Stephen's and The Grove & Ravenscourt: that was 42 council seats decided by landslide margins.

Labour was riven by internal disputes from the very top of the party to the grassroots. It took the almost fatal split between Ramsay MacDonald's splinter "National Labour" and the bulk of the party which led to the 1931 general election and the landslide for the National Government - still MacDonald-led but Labour in name only - to save Labour.

Although decimated by the general election defeat and not seeming at all relevant in the midst of the greatest economic crisis of modern times, the split and election result did clear the party of the dissenting MacDonald faction and allow the process of rebuilding to begin.

1934

Often circumstances beyond the local political parties' control turned the tide. In 1919 Labour surged following the First World War. 1945 ushered in a period of communitarianism that made the Conservatives uncompetitive in the borough for thirty years. The Conservatives gained power in 1968, 1978 and 2006 during periods of substantial Labour government unpopularity. In Fulham 1934 was another change election, driven in part by tiredness with a Municipal Reform administration, but also because of intervening events.

In October 1933 the Conservative MP for Fulham East, Kenyon Vaughan-Morgan, died. The subsequent by-election became one of the all-time famous by-elections, not just because Labour gained the seat for the first time but also for the reasons they won.

The National Government had begun the process of reaming the country after the trauma of the First World War and the economic ravages of the Depression. The country was fiercely resistant to any suggestion of entering into armed hostilities ever again. Adolf Hitler, though he became Fuhrer in August 1934, was not a household name in Britain and certainly not regarded as the threat to the world he would become. Labour didn't just win: they pulled off a swing of 29.2%; with huge consequences for the country's preparedness for the World War that would erupt within four years.

Stanley Baldwin, subsequently defending his government's decision not to rearm during "the Locust years" said:

"I asked myself what chance was there - when that feeling that was given expression to in Fulham was common throughout the country - what chance was there within the next year or two of that feeling being so changed that the country would give a mandate for rearmament? Supposing I had gone to the country and said that Germany was rearming and that we must rearm; does anybody think that this pacific democracy would have rallied to that cry at that moment? I cannot think of anything that would have made the loss of the election from my point of view more certain."

Just as the 1986 Fulham by-election led to the Labour council landslide a month later, so the 1933 Fulham East by-election helped Labour gain Fulham council very easily indeed, with swings equal to, or exceeding those of the by-election (especially the eastern wards): 35% in Walham for example.

Labour won twenty seven seats to Municipal Reform's thirteen. The result was essentially the same as 1919, but seats had been redistributed between wards since that election to take into account population growth, and Labour won the growing wards - hence their larger majority.

But Municipal Reform actually polled the most votes: 14,541 to 14,235 cast for Labour. This disparity is largely explained by the huge margins MR won its strongholds of Baron's Court, Hurlingham and Town by (well over 70% in all three). Labour won its haul by far smaller margins. Labour ran Fulham without a defeat for the next thirty years - until the council was abolished.

Labour was less successful in Hammersmith: the Constitutional Ratepayers held onto power, but only by four seats. It was River ward that swung the election: it split five Ratepayers to one Labour. Had Labour won an extra 73 votes in that ward, they'd have won control of Hammersmith too for the first time.

Labour also won control of the London County Council for the first time in May 1934. With Herbert Morrison

running the capital and Labour running Fulham, a programme of council housing and other social reforms was soon to begin that would help entrench the party for the next four decades.

1937

1937 was an historic election for two reasons. For the first time a Labour administration was re-elected in Fulham: there was to be no rerun of 1922. Meanwhile, Labour finally won a majority - by a landslide - in Hammersmith: twenty seven councillors to just nine Constitutional Ratepayers.

This put paid to the Constitutional Ratepayers - they disappeared, presumably because their singular purpose: to prevent the election of a socialist council, had so spectacularly failed. That said, the various non-Labour groupings had kept the party out of power eighteen years more than Municipal Reform had managed in Fulham.

Six Ratepayers retained Brook Green and St Matthew's, while they split The Grove and Ravenscourt with Labour three councillors apiece.

This election Labour outpolled the Tories in Fulham: 17,317 to 16,641 for Municipal Reform. The reason they did better was significant improvement in Hurlingham and Town wards. Although apparently far from competitive there were swings of 8 and 9% to Labour.

1945

The councillors elected in 1937, like those elected in 1912, served more than twice their term length due to war. And, as with the elections that followed the First World War, in 1945 there was a huge vote for change. It was not just the privations of war that led to Clement Attlee's famous 1945 general election landslide, but also the hardships that had lasted throughout the 1930s and the perceived utter indifference of government to the plight of those not in the wealthiest echelons of society.

The elections to the boroughs came four months after the national landslide but the outcome was similar. Labour won every seat in Hammersmith - the first and only time Brook Green and St Matthew's ward voted Labour, while in Fulham Labour won everything except Baron's Court, including Hurlingham and Town for the first time.

The handful of Communist candidates standing scored some fairly impressive results too: 22% in Wormholt (where they were the only opposition to Labour) and 14% in Sands End and Starch Green.

1949

This election saw the first boundary changes in Hammersmith come into force, their large (up to six councillor) wards replaced by smaller, uniform 3-member wards. Fulham retained its pattern of larger wards unaltered.

There was a big swing back to the Conservatives in 1949. To an extent this was entirely predictable: the "change" election of 1945 had turned Britain far more to Labour than its intrinsic nature, so a swing from that (very) high water mark was inevitable. But, perhaps contrary to the halcyon image in which the 1945-1951 Labour government is held by many today, the party's popularity waned dramatically only two years into its term.

In part this was due to the usual wear and tear any government undergoes - and this government had driven much more radical change than others. But the consequences - especially the costs - of those radical policies began being felt by taxpayers. The grey grimness of ongoing rationing soon zapped the euphoria of victory in Europe. There were vast economic and financial challenges including a devaluation (lacking some of the impact of Wilson's later devaluation, but still a mark against Labour's management). The Conservatives had regrouped after the catastrophe of the 1945 result.

Labour came incredibly close to losing Fulham. Their 1945 majority of 28 was slashed to just two seats - though the Conservatives weren't especially close to winning those two needed seats: the smallest Labour majorities were in Munster where they won by over 800 (8%). They once again stacked up big majorities in Barons Court and Hurlingham, were comfortably clear in Town and gained Lillie. But the working class wards of Margravine, Munster, Sands End and Walham Green stayed loyal to Labour. In vote terms Labour polled 22,966 votes across Fulham and the Conservatives 22,829.

In Hammersmith, where the Conservatives had been wiped out in 1945, they returned to the council with twelve councillors, a Labour majority of fifteen. They won all three new wards which covered the old Brook Green and St Matthew's: nine Tory councillors there replacing the six outgoing Labour seats. The Conservatives also won Ravenscourt and came fairly close to winning Starch Green, Broadway, Wormholt and Grove.

1953 to 1962

Labour lost power nationally in 1951, ushering in a thirteen year period of Conservative government. Given one of the drivers of local government outcomes is a greater motivation to turnout by supporters of the opposition party, this resulted in a very stable period of Labour administration in Fulham and Hammersmith.

Hammersmith council recorded exactly the same result in each of the four elections over this period: 1953, 1956, 1959 and 1962: thirty-three Labour councillors and six Conservatives - Labour having gained Addison and Olympia in 1953 leaving the Tories with just their redoubts of Brook Green and Ravenscourt. The only competitive Labour-held wards during this time were Addison, Olympia and Starch Green. But the Liberals began working Broadway ward during this period.

Fulham was only slightly more volatile: and there only because Labour, having recaptured Lillie ward in 1953 began to mount a challenge to the Tories in Hurlingham and Town. Regaining the six seats in Lillie alone turned Labour's majority from two to fourteen (excluding six Labour Aldermen), but their siege of Hurlingham and Town enabled them to grow their council group to as many as thirty-three in 1962 - though they never managed clean sweeps of either ward.

1964

By 1964 Hammersmith and Fulham were both strongly and fairly uniformly working class boroughs. Elections to the new amalgamated borough were held a year earlier than normal to give the shadow councillors one year to help oversee the transition from two councils to one.

There were new wards to accompany the new borough. In Hammersmith, much of the 1949 review was kept intact, though with the Conservatives hard done by with the abolition of Ravenscourt and the amalgamation of Brook Green with Olympia. In the north of the borough depopulated College Park and Latimer was abolished, with College Park combined with Old Oak and most of the Latimer section moved to St Stephen's.

Fulham underwent a much more radical redrawing of boundaries. Out went the wards that had been in place since 1900 - Munster ward by 1962 having 17,000 electors and Sands End 11.000. In came 2- and 3-member wards better reflecting the communities of 1960s Fulham than when large tracts of the area weren't even developed in 1900.

Again, attempts were made to damage Conservative prospects. Hurlingham was extended into central Fulham - the council estates north of the District Line, and renamed Parson's Green. 6-councillor Baron's Court, always Conservative, was split into a safe 2-councillor Avonmore and a marginal but Labour-leaning 3-councillor Gibbs Green: a loss of four Tory seats without a vote being cast.

Marginal Lillie ward became safely Labour Halford. By essentially merging Walham and Sands End, a safe Labour Sandford ward was retained and a new fairly safe Sulivan ward was created. Munster was split into three wards: the safest Labour ward in Fulham: Sherbrooke, in the east, a comfortable Labour ward: Colehill, in the middle, and a marginal Labour ward, Crabtree, in the west, along the length of the riverside.

The intrinsic Labour lean of Hammersmith and Fulham, coupled with a benign national political environment for the party produced a landslide win: 53 Labour and 7 Conservative councillors, with Aldermen expanding that margin.

The Conservatives won both seats in Avonmore, three in Brook Green and a councillor apiece in Starch Green and Town wards. The Town result was a quirk because the ward result wasn't especially close: Labour won two of the three seats very comfortably. Rather, voters appear to have miscast their third vote; plumping for a Conservative candidate: B. Hill, instead of the subsequent Labour candidate: E. Hill.

With such a huge majority – a swing of nothing less than 15.4% and a gain of 24 seats would be needed for the Tories to win control in 1968.

1968

1968 was a catastrophe for Labour of the like not seen since 1931. The result was due to the massive unpopularity of Harold Wilson's Labour Government and it produced an almost exact mirror image result of 1964. Where there had been a Labour majority of 46 now there was a Conservative one of 48.

Conservative candidates who never expected to win were elected on some vast swings: 31% in Sandford and Sherbrooke, 33% in Coningham; 42% in College Park and Old Oak.

White City was the only ward in which Labour hung on to all three seats. Margravine and Sherbrooke split their representation so that both Fulham and Hammersmith returned three Labour councillors apiece.

At the very least, Conservative councillors now sitting on substantial majorities in wards like Crabtree, Starch Green, Addison, Town, Parsons Green and Gibbs Green – maybe even Grove and Sulivan – must have entertained hopes of having a majority robust enough to withstand all but the most ferocious swing back to Labour in 1971.

But below the headline figures the results were nowhere near as promising for the Conservatives. For Labour to regain control they needed a swing back of 8 points. 25 gains would give them a basic majority.

The most marginal wards – presumably because these were the ones Labour fought hardest – saw the least substantial (but still huge) swings to the Conservatives: 13% in Brook Green, 16% in Town, 19% in Avonmore and Colehill.

1971

1971 was a virtual red-wash of Hammersmith & Fulham, as not only did the borough return to Labour but the unpopularity of the Heath Government dissuaded Conservatives to flock to the polls while Labour supporters were incentivised.

The result surpassed Labour's 1964 landslide leaving the Conservatives with just two seats and representing the smallest geographic area of the borough it was possible to hold. Labour even took Brook Green for the first time – they would not win here again for 23 years. It was also the only election in which any party would exceed 60% of the vote.

Yet the swing back to Labour was far more uniform than the swing away from it four years earlier had been: in just one ward, St Stephen's did it exceed 30% and in seven (again, generally speaking the more competitive wards) it was below 20%.

The Liberals contested only two wards: Broadway, where they came a respectable third; and Halford a less impressive third.

Fourteen Labour councillors won by less than ten percentage points, and it's interesting to look at the wards Labour won by more in 1964 despite an overall lower share of the vote that year. Labour did worse in two distinct areas: Shepherd's Bush (though not uniformly), and South Fulham. In Halford, Parson's Green, Sandford, Sulivan and Town: the first parts of Fulham to gentrify Labour was back, but far less securely than seven years earlier.

1974

1974 produced Labour's third win out of four, but with its majority cut by twenty seats from the near-monopoly they had won three years earlier.

Their slide was due to two factors: a much stronger Liberal performance than 1971 (if for no other reason than they ran more candidates this time around), and a very much lower turnout. Labour struggled to motivate its vote just weeks after the February general election.

The Conservatives, whose vote also fell slightly, consolidated by regaining Brook Green and a seat in Town. To those they added three seats in Parson's Green ward and one in Crabtree; these two wards being the forerunners to Palace which was created at the next elections.

Had Palace existed in 1974 it would have cost the Tories a seat: they'd have won both in that ward, of course, but with the consequence that Labour would have won both seats in the smaller Crabtree and in Eel Brook.

The Conservatives also halved Labour's majority in Sulivan from 950 to 497, another south Fulham ward that would tumble in four years' time. The political impact of gentrification had begun to manifest in the far south of the borough; though as yet North Fulham stayed solidly Labour.

The Liberals' increased vote enabled them to gain two seats in Broadway for the first time in an all-out election (rather than a by-election): Simon Knott was back on the council after a three year absence. But he and his colleague Catherine Stratton could not budge popular Labour councillor George Simpson.

The results were inconsistent due mainly to Liberal candidates standing more widely and pulling in votes in different proportions from the main parties where they did. Brook Green swung strongly to the Conservatives but Avonmore slightly to Labour (aided by two "Conservatives Supporting Enoch Powell's Views", one an incumbent councillor, splitting the Tory vote, but only a little). In Halford and St Stephen's the Liberals won second place to Labour but very distantly.

There were also swings straight from Conservative to Labour, notably in College Park & Old Oak, where Labour polled nearly 90% of the vote. On the basis of 1974 votes, the Tories required a gain of 21 seats and a swing of some 14% to win control in 1978.

1978

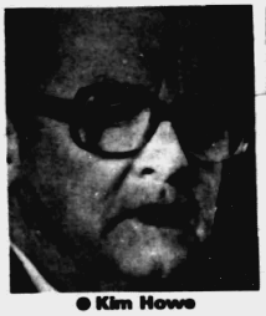
The Conservatives didn't get the swing they needed in 1978 to win a majority, but they came so very close.

Labour started out nine seats worse off than 1974 before even a vote was cast because the boundary review had culled ten councillors by reducing the size of the council from sixty to fifty seats. All but one of these was Labour.

Notionally, the 1974 result on these new boundaries would have been 39 Labour, 10 Conservatives and one Liberal: a majority of 28 seats.

On top came the huge anti-Labour swing of the embattled mid term Callaghan government and the gentrification of Fulham.

It's chaos as Tories come a cropper...



● Kim Howe



● David Clark



● Clive Killick



● Will Unwin



● Tony Powell

THE massive rate increase came as a result of an astonishing council meeting.

A 48.3 per cent rise tabled by the ruling Tory group was rejected, along with nearly £1¼m of spending cuts.

Rebel Tories, Liberal and Independent councillors united with the Labour opposition to bring in the new rate — by three votes.

Tory dissenters were Robert Killick, who voted with Labour, and housing chairman Richard Lazarus, who abstained.

Cllr Killick later announced he was leaving the Tory group to join Labour members Stephen Unwin and Hugh Duff in the Council for Social Democracy.

During the vote, Cllr Lazarus sat with his hands on the table in front of him, ignoring cries from Tory leader Kim Howe of "Richard, Richard ... ".

The two-man Liberal group, which normally holds the balance of power, also split. Leader Cllr Simon Knott voted with the Tories.

His colleague, Cllr Bob Mulcahy, joined independent Cllr Ettie Crawford supporting Labour.

The meeting began with Tory deputy leader Cllr Stuart Leishman presenting his party's budget for 1981-82, which would have meant a 48.3 per cent rate rise for householders and 38.9 per cent for industry.

Redundancies

The budget called for about 160 redundancies among blue and white-collar council staff, with spending cuts totalling around £6m.

Cllr Leishman said 79 per cent of the proposed rise was out of the council's control, being caused by increased demands for cash from the police, GLC and Inner London Education Authority.

He told members: "We are running a very tight ship, and members and officers will have to continue to look at their departments to increase efficiency and carry on with savings.

"We appreciate that this

By DENNIS GREENE

could lead to a reduction in the level of staff employed by the council."

But Labour leader, Cllr Tony Powell, said there were no precise details of how cuts were to be made.

He was also critical of the role played by Tory budget co-ordinator, Cllr David Clark.

He said the cuts would cripple the council's Direct Labour Building Organisation, with about 40 redundancies expected.

He was especially critical of the £1m cuts in running expenses, saying: "What are being cut — typewriter ribbons? Heating in old folks homes? Golf balls in putting greens? We don't know. Even Mr Pickwick would not budget in this way.

"These are the economics of lunatics — they want to sell council land and houses and then try to sack the valuers, solicitors and financial staff who provide the information."

Cllr Killick supported him, saying: "Both the rates are extremely high, frighteningly high. But the difference of £1.43m is very small."

He said if Tory cuts could not be made, they could force the council to introduce a supplementary rate later in the year.

Scrutiny

To cries of "dead on, boy" from the Labour bench, he too condemned Cllr Clark.

He said: "This man as a chartered accountant rates as my mother does as a map reader. She can follow the route the car is taking with her fingers on the map, but has no idea where the car is going."

Cllr Clark said every area of spending would come under scrutiny, but refused to give details of redundancies in each department.

He said: "We cannot even start discussing redundancies until we have a recommendation of support from this council."

He said there was plenty of scope for cuts in council running costs, and went on: "On books, printing and stationery, we spend £603,000 a year.

"Convert that into sheets of A4 paper and lay them end to end, and you can do four trips to Moscow or one trip to New York. We buy 54,545 light bulbs a year. We must be eating them."

He was defended by Liberal leader, Cllr Simon Knott, who said: "It may well be that Cllr Powell's amendment succeeds.

Responsibility

"If that is so, he must be prepared to take the responsibility of running this council because an administration that cannot carry its rate, cannot continue."

He supported the lower rate, but said he would oppose any redundancies or attempts to raise council rents, which were already too high.

Based on those 1974 notional results Labour lost two seats in Shepherds Bush (Starch Green), two in Hammersmith (one Labour seat abolished in both Addison and Grove), four in North Fulham (Colehill and Crabtree lost) and six in South Fulham (Eel Brook, Sulivan and Walham).

In the space of just four years South Fulham had gone from comfortably Labour to solidly Conservative: 12% swings putting Town and Sulivan wards beyond the party for the rest of their existence.

What made the defeat even worse for Labour was that many of the wards they lost had been drawn more favourably for them than their predecessors. New Crabtree was much better than old Crabtree; Eel Brook better than Parsons Green, Starch Green better than old Starch Green, Broadway better than old Broadway.

A new set of marginal wards was also created: Addison, Grove, Normand, Sherbrooke and Wormholt.

Conservatives made advances across the entire borough, most dramatically in the safer Labour wards. College Park & Old Oak swung 33%; Margravine 17%; Sherbrooke 22% and Wormholt 15%. Labour held these wards but the huge swings showed three things.

Firstly in Fulham that the Labour vote was simply upping sticks and moving out. Secondly that Labour had alienated a large share of those who had not moved out. Third that those who were moving in had very different political loyalties. And this result came before the Winter of Discontent!!

Because the big parties had parity of seats the two Liberal councillors became kingmakers. And they made Conservative leader Stuart Leishman king.

1982

Going into the 1982 council elections both main parties needed just two seats to win a majority, setting aside the defections to the SDP that set Labour back more (three Labour defections: Unwin, Duff and Cunningham, to one Conservative: Killick).

On election day, four wards voted differently to the way they had in 1978. Labour gained two seats from the Tories in Eel Brook and one in Starch Green. But one seat apiece in Sherbrooke and Wormholt went the other way, so Labour ended up with exactly half the seats.

It was even more infuriating than that: Labour lost a seat in Addison by just five votes, by six in Walham and by 72 in Wormholt - a defeat that Labour pursued to the High Court. See the Wormholt ward profile for more on this.

The very few changes in seats that occurred in 1982 belied the huge impact the SDP/Liberal Alliance had on the elections. They ended the election with no more seats than they had won in 1978 but in 1982 they polled 20% across the borough and contested every ward. In 1978 they polled just 4% and fielded only eighteen candidates. The Alliance took their votes almost equally from the two main parties: the Tories dropped 7.5 percentage points and Labour 7.9 overall. But these declines differed by different proportions in different wards.

In thirteen wards there was a Conservative to Labour swing; ten wards swung the other way. In Hammersmith wards the Alliance growth came from the Conservatives over Labour by almost two to one; in Fulham it was Labour hit harder by about five to three (with the exception of Eel Brook which behaved like a Hammersmith ward). Rapidly gentrifying Sherbrooke saw a direct Labour to Conservative swing.

On the council the Conservatives and Liberal Alliance coalition lasted four years winning every critical vote. The coalition was uneasy but the Labour opposition was riven by splits at both ends of the political spectrum: left-wingers refusing to vote to put Labour in power when they had the chance in 1985, those perceived to be on the right being expelled (then being readmitted on appeal) for not voting the group line on other issues.

With the ongoing gentrification of the borough, a proven ability to put previously Labour-held wards into play, and having won the Fulham parliamentary seat in 1979 things were looking promising for the Conservatives.

Then, on 10th January 1986, the Tory MP for Fulham, Martin Stevens, died.

1986

The death of Fulham MP Martin Stevens precipitated a by-election scheduled for April 1986: a month before the council elections. The impact that by-election would have on the council was huge. On the country, less so. The Labour by-election campaign was the first unveiling of the modern, disciplined electioneering methods that Peter Mandelson introduced as Labour's new head of communications.

The Labour candidate was local and moderate: former Sandford councillor Nick Raynsford. Thousands upon thousands of "Nick Raynsford Lives Here" posters adorned windows across the constituency. The Conservative candidate, not local (though only as far away as Kensington) ran a much less impressive campaign.

Labour regained Fulham on a 9% swing; then just months later showed how far the party still had to go in London when managing to lose Greenwich to the SDP's Rosie Barnes.

In Hammersmith and Fulham the Conservatives had no time to recover between their by-election loss and the council elections, and a wave of euphoria swept the tired coalition from power, and returned Labour with a landslide majority of thirty.

The Conservatives were left with just nine councillors, six of them from Fulham, and only Simon Knott's personal vote spared the Alliance from obliteration. Conservative council leader John Putnam was out in Avonmore, the first time Labour won this ward.

Wards that had been drifting from Labour: Colehill, Sherbrooke and Crabtree were brought back into the fold and majorities entrenched in shaky marginals like Gibbs Green, Grove, Eel Brook and Normand. Addison, which Labour had lost four years earlier by five votes, was now theirs with a majority well over 500. Wards that hadn't elected Labour before now did: Walham and Ravenscourt. It wasn't the Liberals who almost won Sulivan this time round: Labour was less than 100 from a seat here.

This was a new, young Labour group: just 13 of the 40 councillors had served in the previous fractious opposition group. Many went on to be key figures: Iain Coleman, Andrew Slaughter, Bridget and Gordon Prentice, Sally Powell, Colin Aherne..

The election of 1986 began a twenty year reign of control by Labour epitomised by consolidation on Hammersmith and the ongoing battle for supremacy in Fulham.

The bonus Labour got from the Fulham by-election is unquantifiable but, given that most of the gains came from Fulham ward, all by relatively narrow margins it clearly gave them some boost. Labour would have won in 1986 regardless of the by-election but possibly without the eight seats of Avonmore, Colehill, Crabtree and Walham. A 32 to 18 seat win would have been much less crushing.

The Labour administration was not especially united (though much more so than the 1982 to 1986 opposition group): there were many unexpected and, perhaps, unsuitable Labour councillors. The new Labour leader, Gordon Prentice, was disliked by a significant faction of the group and lasted only two years.

The first budget of the new Labour council hiked the rates by a vast 49.5%, just weeks before the 1987 General Election. That decision did not cost Labour the Fulham constituency at the 1987 election but it made the scale of the defeat much worse.

There was visceral fury at the rate rise in Fulham wards, especially among first-time Labour voters in the by-election who felt tricked into voting for what they believed to be a moderate Labour Party. Their council, it seemed, had turned out to be the tax and spend profligate Labour Party of old.

Gordon Prentice was replaced as council leader by new Sands End councillor Mike Goodman in 1988. Goodman was a capable leader, ideologically not really that different from Prentice but without the personal enmity of the more left-wing councillors.



Polls fight after MP's death

Marginal seat will test Tory support

Martin Stevens

THE major political parties are preparing for a crucial by-election following the death of MP Martin Stevens.

Mr Stevens, Tory MP for Fulham since 1979, increased his majority from 1,500 to just under 5,000 in the last General Election.

Both the Labour Party and the Social Democratic Party — who will fight the seat for the Alliance — are confident they can wrest the constituency from the Tories.

The by-election, which is believed will not take place until mid-Spring, is being seen as a major test of confidence in the Government which is still coming to terms with the resignation of Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine and the continuing Westland helicoptor crisis.

A six per cent swing would win the seat for Labour, while a 15 per cent one would bring victory to the SDP.

The Fulham Conservative Association is waiting until after Mr Stevens' funeral before plunging into the electoral battle, but the Labour party has already named their candidate, Nick Raynsford, a director of the Housing Aid Centre SHAC.

Fulham Labour agent June McMahon said the party was confident of picking up the seat.

She said: "We have an excellent party machine and believe many Fulham Conservatives are now feeling disillusioned."

The Alliance candidate will be chosen from a shortlist by a joint Liberal-SDP selection committee.

Tebbit pays tribute to a hard-worker

THE body of MP Martin Stevens was expected to be flown home from France this week.

Mr Stevens, 56, MP for Fulham died in a Paris hospital on Friday from septicaemia and heart failure after falling into a coma earlier in the week. He was taken ill while visiting friends after returning from a Christmas holiday in West Africa.

It is understood he contracted a leg infection in the Senegalese capital of Dakar.

Mr Stevens, a bachelor, had been MP for Fulham since 1979. He was born in London and educated in Harrow and Trinity College Oxford.

He was chairman of the Cancer Research Campaign's National Appeals Committee, and was a former vice-president of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

In a tribute, Conservative Party chairman Norman Tebbit said the constituency had lost an excellent hard-working MP.

1983 General Election results

Martin Stevens (Conservative) 18,204
Tony Powell (Labour) 13,415
David Rendel (Alliance) 7,194

But he was not a very lucky leader because almost immediately the rate swaps scandal broke.

Simply put, rate swaps were like modern-day spread betting, and not all that dissimilar from the mortgage-backed securities that brought about the 2008 financial crash. The council made a bet with financial institutions as to whether interest rates would rise or fall. One side, nearly always Hammersmith and Fulham council, guaranteed the other a fixed, secure interest rate.

The other offered a floating interest rate linked to whatever the national interest rate was at the time. If interest rates were lower than the fixed rate, the council received payments from the bank it was trading with. If they rose about the fixed rate, the council had to pay the bank on whatever amount it had ventured.

The swaps were begun under the Conservative-Liberal administration. Not a lot of people know that: when the story broke it was characterised as yet more proof that Labour could not be trusted with the public finances. But in fact no politician had approved rate swaps; didn't even know about them. They were a response by council finance officers to the problem of trying to grow council income without taxpayers bearing the direct cost through the rates. The officers did not tell councillors what they were doing.

Another local photogra-

Council leaders are off the hook in rate swaps fiasco

The story so far

IN THE early 1980s interest rate swaps were a popular tool of local government financial management, writes Miriam Rodell.

It was only the extent of Hammersmith and Fulham's commitment that made it stand out from the 77 other councils involved in similar deals. It seems Hammersmith and Fulham was just too greedy.

The deals were a gamble on the City's money markets. The banks and the councils 'loaned' each other identical sums of money. One side gave the other a safe, fixed interest rate, while the other gave a floating rate linked to the national base rate.

The only money that actually changed hands was the interest. In the vast majority of cases the Hammersmith and Fulham loaned at the fixed rate and borrowed at the floating rate. When the national rate was below the fixed rate the deals brought in a good return for the borough. But when interest rates began to soar the deals turned sour.

Evidence given to the Law Lords by the borough auditors indicated that by May 1989 the council stood to lose anything from £12.8 million to £406.3 million.

The council – and ultimately the borough's poll tax payers – were only saved from a massive bill by the decision of the House of Lords which ruled that the council had no legal powers to enter into the swaps in the first place.

The decision meant millions of pounds worth of transactions made by the authority since 1982 were null and void.

Since then the council has reached a number of out-of-court settlements with the banks on individual deals. The sums involved have not been revealed.

Massive bill hangs over heads of ratepayers

By GILES TREMLETT

...LL TAX payers may still ...ave to foot the bill for a ...council's multi-million ...pound illegal dealings on ...money markets

...An Appeal Court judgement ...last week means poll tax payers ...f Hammersmith and Fulham ...re anything from £80 is her to ...£1,500 worse off

...The judgement failed to de... ...ck once and for all if Hammer... ...smith and Fulham Council has ...to pay out on the "interest rate ...swaps" deals which brought it to ...the brink of financial ruin

...Sir Stephen Brown and Lords ...Justice Nicholls and Bingham ...ruled the majority of deals ...struck by finance officers at the ...Town Hall in 1987 and 1988 ille... ...But it overturned a previous ...High Court decision banning all ...dealings by any council on the ...money market ... which had ...been ruled illegal.

...tional banks, who would have ...been owed £164 million had all ...the deals been legal, now had ...the right to make the council ...pay that money back to them.

...As a result more legal proceedings are inevitable. Predictions on the amount of money Hammersmith and Fulham will have to pay on the deals vary wildly.

...Mike Goodman, Labour leader of the council, claimed it would only have to pay out £1 million. "We are more than capable of meeting the loan out... ...scives. The position of local residents and poll tax payers will not be affected."

...As the council had made £12 million profit on the deals before their legality was challenged and payments were frozen last year this would leave it with £9 million profit. This works out at about £80 per poll tax payer.

...But these five international ...banks ...

Judges have still not agreed after £164m rate swaps deal

...

● Flashback to the Gazette of March 2 last year

When it happened

- 1982: Hammersmith and Fulham Council makes its first deal on the swap market.
- July 1988: Borough auditor Anthony Hazell asks the council to seek legal advice. Finance director Lindsay Robb agrees to try and reduce the size of the swaps portfolio.
- February 1989: The auditor decides to take the council to court and asks for the swaps to be declared illegal. The council suspends all swap transactions. Council leader Cllr Mike Goodman claims the swaps were legal and the council has made £12 million profit.
- July 1989: At a preliminary court hearing the council admits it does not want to defend the deals. A report shows that following interest rate rises the council is heading for a loss on the deals.
- October 1989: The case goes to the High Court. The council asks the court to declare the deals illegal so it will not be liable for the losses. The application is opposed by five City banks who want their money back.
- November 1989: The High Court upholds the council's line that it had no legal powers to enter into the swaps transactions. But the banks give notice of appeal.
- February 1990: The Appeal Court decides some, but not all, of the swaps were legitimate.
- August 1990: The council's dinance director Lindsay Robb is sacked.
- October/November 1990: The council appeals to the House of Lords.
- January 1991: The Lords overturns the Appeal Court judgement, letting the council off the hook. Subsequently the banks took out writs against individual councillors and council officials. In recent months the council has reached a number of secret out-of-court settlements. Many cases are still outstanding.

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By TANITH CAREY

COUNCILLORS have been cleared of any involvement in the controversial interest rate swaps scandal by an independent inquiry.

Instead the blame has been laid on three finance officers singled out in the 850-page report which looks into how the council lost £200 million on the deals.

But the disgraced former Director of Finance, Lindsay Robb, has hit back saying that officers have been made scapegoats for the financial fiasco.

He is accused of "two grave errors of professional judgement" after failing to monitor the activities of the council's Loans and Investments Division.

In a television interview, Mr Robb – who was sacked a year ago and now works for Enfield Health Authority – said the report never intended to accuse councillors.

David Davies, secretary of Mr Robb's union the Federated Union of Managerial and Professional Officers said: "Lindsay is just the meat in the sandwich.

"We are talking big bucks here and I find it somewhat disingenous the way elected officers are trying to distance themselves from this matter."

Tory leader Gerald Wombwell has also hit out at Labour councillors who he says are to blame for failure to monitor the huge financial deals.

He said: "This is the most shameful financial speculation ever to have hit a local authority. The administration failed to control it and they failed to supervise it."

Also criticised in the report – which cost over £400,000 to draw up – is former Director of Finance Clive Holtham, who is accused of "most serious managerial failure."

The present deputy Director of Finance, Terry Price, is also slammed for misunderstanding the risks for ratepayers posed by the deals.

Leader of the Council Iain Coleman confirmed that Mr Price –the only remaining officer still with the council – is now the subject of a preliminary investigation.

He added: "No individual councillor past or present bore any responsibility for what took place."

But he said that he believed that all three officers involved thought they were acting in the best interests of the council at the time.

Instead he blamed the Government for placing "a financial squeeze" on councils which had forced local authorities to cast around for other sources of income.

He quoted the report's judgement that the 'cat and mouse' games between central and local government put pressure on officers to find extra cash.

Deputy leader Cllr Andrew Slaughter added that he was confident that Hammersmith and Fulham finances were now in order.

He said there had been a comprehensive review of procedures and management and committee structures since the multi-million pound deals were exposed in 1988.

The cost to poll taxers payer in the borough is now standing at at least a million pounds – the cost of the court battle against banks trying to recover cash owed by the council.

But Cllr Wombwell hit back saying that the financial reorganisation only amounted to "moving domino blocks around a board."

In July 1988 the District Auditor flagged up the rate swaps because interest rates had begun rising rapidly. In November 1989 the High Court ruled the scheme ultra vires: that the council never had the legal power to enter into the 500 plus swaps trades it had agreed to. This was desperately fortunate for the council and local ratepayers because by this point the scale of the council's deals had reached over £5 billion, and its potential losses because of the rising interest rates were between £12 million and £200 million. To put that sum in context, today, thirty years on, the council's total annual revenue is about £140 million.

This case went all the way to the House of Lords, the banks desperate to claim their fairly-won profits, the council desperate to avoid having to pay out. The Lords sided with the High Court, the swaps were declared null and void and the council thereafter settled swiftly with the banks using the £12m surplus the rate swaps account was in when the deals were suspended.

That rate swaps hit the headlines right up against the end of the 1986 to 1990 term was problematic for Labour as this difficult issue was fresh in the minds of voters heading to the polls.

One other issue, even bigger than the rate swaps, also emerged: the Community Charge. Given the uproar the charge, better known as the Poll Tax, had generated - especially among Conservative voters. was this an issue that would trump rate swaps and keep Labour in power?

1990

Depending on whether you view the 1990 results in the context of Labour's 1986 landslide or over a longer term they represent either a strong Conservative rebound or their inability to make further progress in Hammersmith.

The results, especially in Fulham, were dreadful for Labour: had the Fulham swing been replicated across the whole borough they'd have lost. The Tories regained all the Fulham wards they'd lost in 1986: in Sherbrooke both seats for the first time.

But in Hammersmith Labour easily held marginal Addison and Starch Green and, more tightly, Grove. They solidified their grip on Broadway as the Lib Dem vote collapsed: and this spared Labour the headline of losing a majority of 30.

But look closer at the results and they weren't quite so impressive for the Tories. They only just regained Eel Brook and only because the Alliance vote from 1986 collapsed entirely to them: had the Lib Dems stood here they may well have lost.

They won Ravenscourt and Crabtree back, but by nowhere near the majorities they'd enjoyed in 1978 or 1982. Normand and Gibbs Green stayed Labour by larger majorities than during the coalition years. Walham still didn't look safe. The Shepherd's Bush wards piled up big Labour majorities. Only in Colehill and Sands End did the swing to the Conservatives look "on track".

Nonetheless, the political impact of the swaps was deadly for Labour especially in increasingly Tory-leaning Fulham. A Labour majority of 31 was cut to just six. Even though it was a win for Labour, it felt like a loss.

How much of this swing back was swaps-driven and how much was it the unwinding of that unnaturally good Labour landslide of 1986 alongside a further four years of gentrification? That's up for debate. But it signalled a return to divergence: the Conservatives made just one gain in Hammersmith - Ravenscourt - and wards like Grove and Starch Green, supposedly more winnable for the Tories than Sherbrooke, barely shifted. If the Tories had won those, they'd have gained control.

To answer the question I asked at the end of the 1986 section, nationally the Community Charge led to huge Conservative losses. But in London - more specifically Central-West London - something very different happened.

Across the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon, Wandsworth and Westminster, the Conservatives gained eighty two council seats and Labour lost seventy two. There were local factors involved in each borough: Westminster had been implementing its so-called Homes for Votes policy, Wandsworth had been doing something similar but in a way compliant with the law, Hammersmith had rate swaps.

But the Community Charge had a significance that cut both ways in the Tories' favour. Wandsworth and Westminster had set zero or £5 Community Charges. In Labour Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham the Community Charge was huge in contrast with its neighbours. And taxpayers noticed - in a way they haven't, really, since Council Tax replaced the Community Charge.

The substantial Labour losses gave the left on the group political cover to move against Mike Goodman. Iain Coleman was in as leader, though with councils now so constrained by central government there was not all that much a left-wing leader could do that a more moderate one would not.

As an example, under Coleman Council Tax either rose only by inflation or was frozen. By now Labour had been out of power nationally for over a decade and wanting to win trumped flamboyant left-wing gesture politics - there was absolutely no political will locally to embarrass Neil Kinnock as the 1992 general election approached. The smaller but somewhat more united Labour group steadied the ship and knuckled down to delivering decent services, focussing on cleaner streets and council estates.

There was one further issue of consequence in the 1990 elections: the disintegration of the newly-formed Liberal Democrats. Following the 1987 general election, the Liberals had proposed merging with the SDP to create one centrist party. This messy merger almost obliterated support for the Liberal Democrats - they fell behind the Greens in national opinion polls and in the European Elections of 1994. It also decimated their activist base: whereas in 1986 the Alliance had contested all fifty seats, this year just 29 Lib Dems stood (against ten continuity SDP candidates, and seven Greens).

A pretty large centrist vote was up for grabs: in three wards only Labour and Conservative candidates stood; in two more just one minor party candidate made it onto the ballot. This vote, by and large - and certainly in Fulham - collapsed to the Conservatives: critical to the result in Eel Brook for example.

The Conservatives chose not to look on the 1990 results as an opportunity missed but, instead, a big advance. They were cock-a-hoop with a new group reflecting the brasher, more right-wing Conservatism that was now the norm in Fulham. They also had Labour in their sights: a 6% swing would give them the council again. But they'd need to advance in Hammersmith.

1994

Conservative hopes of closing the gap they had so dramatically narrowed in 1990 were dashed by John Major's mounting national unpopularity by 1994. Locally, Labour's second term had been much quieter than their first.

The Conservatives were also hampered by the recovery of the Liberal Democrats. They were nowhere as strong in 1994 than the Alliance had been in 1982 and 1986, but still their rebound came mostly from the Conservatives.

The most spectacular example of this was in Eel Brook which the Conservatives had won, just, in 1990. Now, hard campaigning over the threat of closure of Charing Cross Hospital split the vote in Eel Brook almost equally three ways, one seat going comfortably Lib Dem and the second eventually decided by the drawing of lots. See the Walham Green profile for more on this.

Eel Brook was not the only result decided by a coin toss. In Brook Green long-serving Tory councillor Tony Hennessy survived with similar fortune after the other Brook Green seat fell to Labour.

1994 was an election of split wards: alongside Brook Green and (initially) Eel Brook; Avonmore, Crabtree, Ravenscourt and Sherbrooke all elected one Conservative and one Labour councillor. Labour's majority expanded by ten seats to a much more comfortable sixteen. Because Labour majorities in former marginals increased as well - pretty much everywhere except Sands End - the swing needed for the Conservatives to win in 1998 widened to more than 10%.

1998

Labour has only gained two seats from the Conservatives in by-elections in Hammersmith and Fulham and the first of these was in 1996 in Fulham's Crabtree ward. The incumbent Conservative councillor in this split ward, having lost a bid to become leader of the opposition, decided to move to France at a point when the Conservative government was even more unpopular than they had been in 1994: just one year before the Blair Labour landslide of 1997.

Labour gained the second Crabtree seat after a campaign that brought former Fulham MP Nick Raynsford and Labour shadow Health Secretary Alan Milburn, among others, to campaign. A few weeks later, another by-election in Conservative Sulivan ward also saw a swing to Labour.

These by-elections were a forerunner to the 1997 General Election Labour landslide, the gain of the new Hammersmith & Fulham constituency and, one year later, another comfortable Labour win in the 1998 council elections.

1998 was almost a replay of the 1994 result. Labour's share changed by 0.1%; the Conservatives up 1.5% and the Lib Dems down 1%. That meant a swing to the Conservatives but it was Labour who gained seats.

Labour won both seats in Brook Green and Ravenscourt - for the first time since 1971 they had won every single seat in Hammersmith. They also gained a Conservative seat in Walham, and held the three other split wards (the Conservatives reclaimed the Crabtree seat lost in the by-election, so no change from 1994).

In consolation the Tories easily regained Eel Brook: future MP Greg Hands one of the Conservative councillors elected there.

The problem for the Conservatives was not their lack of progress in the marginals but how the next tier of wards split. In Addison, Broadway, Grove, Starch Green and Gibbs Green Labour piled-up record majorities. Even in affluent, exclusive Ravenscourt, Labour polled over half the vote. Even gentrifying Sands End swung slightly away from the Conservatives. Only in Normand, where Labour's vote had been affected by the clearance of the western end of the Clem Attlee estate for redevelopment, did the Conservatives run Labour close: 41 votes short of winning.

The overall swing required by the Conservatives to win a majority of one reduced to 8%. But to increase it to 3 they needed a 12% swing. But the electoral maths for 2002 would be scrambled because of another review of council boundaries, replacing the borough's mainly two-councillor wards with ones represented, in most instances, by three.

2002

If Labour had cause to feel aggrieved at how the 1982 results had broken against them, so the Conservatives had cause twenty years later. They had managed to win the popular vote yet ended up with ten fewer councillors than Labour. The new electoral boundaries, which neither party especially liked, had broken in Labour's favour.

The reason for this paradoxical result was that the Conservatives piled up overwhelming majorities in their safe wards but lost next-door marginals by handfuls.

The Conservatives amassed 68% of the vote in Palace Riverside, but lost Sands End by 69 votes. Despite cruising home in Parson's Green & Walham with a majority of 1,800, next door Fulham Broadway elected Labour by just 34 votes.

Had just a handful of votes fallen slightly differently – enough to flip these two wards and win Ravenscourt Park or Fulham Reach outright (these new wards split) they'd have had a council majority. It was that tight.

The difference between 1998: one year into a popular, newly-elected Labour government and 2002: one year into a second term administration people had become used to was palpable. Locally Labour had been in power for 16 years and was up against an aggressive, cynical and tireless Conservative opposition that desperately wanted power.

Although the 2002 result didn't give deliver it, it cut Labour back from their easy wins of 1994 and 1998, erasing the big leads they'd accumulated in wards like Addison, Gibbs Green (now North End) and Hammersmith Broadway, whilst tilting Hammersmith and Fulham from a Labour- to Conservative-leaning borough - all in just one election.

Just to rub salt into Tory wounds, Labour successfully appealed to an Election Court a 3-vote Conservative win in Sands End after some of their ballots were not stamped by polling station officials (so got rejected at the count). A re-run for that one Sands End seat was held and Labour retook it by four votes.

2006

If the 2002 result was contentious, 2006 was not. Labour's twenty years in office were brought to a jolting end with a Conservative landslide that routed every single Labour councillor from Fulham and washed as far into Labour's shores as Shepherd's Bush Green – a ward not Conservative since the 1968 to 1971 term.

The Conservative win was not just convincing in terms of seats, but also in votes: they won almost 50% of votes cast. In Sands End, which they had lost in 2002 by four votes, they now overwhelmed Labour by nearly 700 on a 16% swing. For the first time in a quarter of a century Addison voted Conservative - and by far bigger margins that it had during 1978 or 1982. North End had Conservative councillors for the first time in 38 years.

Labour came perilously close to doing even worse. The Conservatives were nine votes from winning a seat in Hammersmith Broadway and the Liberal Democrats twenty eight votes from winning a seat in Askew. Only two wards remained impregnable for Labour: three in Wormholt & White City and two in College Park & Old Oak.

Much of the reason for the Conservative advance was due to Labour government unpopularity: in the weeks prior to the council elections John Prescott's affair had been exposed, Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt was booed by nurses at their conference, Home Secretary Charles Clarke had admitted foreign-born prisoners had been mistakenly released and then vanished; and Tony Blair was being harried for a date to quit as Prime Minister by members of his own party. Labour was at its nadir.

The disillusion among core Labour voters is reflected in the fact that in Shepherd's Bush they lost twice as much vote share as in the rest of the borough: down a thumping 16 percentage points compared to around 8 elsewhere.

But the Conservatives had a plan to govern, including cutting Council Tax markedly, removing those with no real hope of being housed from the council waiting lists, selling off council estates and streamlining services.

In some wards there was a clear Conservative surge: they were up 16 percentage points in Avonmore & Brook Green, 16 in Sands End, 14 in Ravenscourt Park, 13 in Hammersmith Broadway and 10 in North End. But in others the Labour drop was larger than the Conservative improvement: down 14 points in Addison and 12 in Fulham Broadway for example.

Turnout was another factor in the Conservative success: up about 8 points everywhere except Shepherd's Bush Overwhelmingly these new electors did not vote Labour. But it led to the anomaly of Labour candidates losing with higher votes than they'd won by four years earlier. While Labour was gaining the odd hundred votes, the Conservatives were gaining many times more. In Hammersmith Broadway they went from 562 votes in 2002 to 1,152 in 2006; added 700 in Ravenscourt Park, 600 in Sands End, and 500 in Fulham Broadway and North End.

Labour's vote in the wards that were introduced in 2002 was wide but shallow and at risk of being swamped in a Conservative surge. In 2006 the Tory vote simply overwhelmed Labours marginal wards. Labour's was left needing a 6.5% swing to regain control.

2010

This council election, which occurred on the same day as the general election produced little change. Labour easily regained its lost seat in Shepherds Bush Green and a seat in North End. But that two seat switch was the full extent of the change and the borough ended up with two Tory councillors for every one Labour.

The result was better for Labour in terms of vote share. In 2006 the Conservatives had led by 17%. In 2010 their lead was trimmed to 9 percentage points: a 4% swing. The reason Labour didn't reap more seats is that they did best in wards they already held. In the north of the borough Labour's vote rose by 8 points; in Hammersmith and North Fulham it actually fell slightly, and in South Fulham it rose a little.

The Conservative vote fell borough wide, but by more in the marginal wards of Hammersmith and North Fulham. In both they dropped nearly 6 percentage points. Their slump was most noticeable in Avonmore & Brook Green where they fell by more than ten and in Munster, down by twelve. They lost their seat in North End not because of a positive swing to Labour but because their vote fell by six points more than Labour's did.

The Conservatives perhaps put too much weight on the headline number of councillors rather than the vote share changes. The council had begun its programme of reform. Council Tax had been reduced; and sell-offs of council buildings and land had reduced capital debt. The council had been at the forefront of the government's education agenda encouraging free schools. Toby Young's West London Free School, established in Pallingswick House in King Street being one of the most prominent.

The council had been working with developers Capital and County (CapCo) on a massive plan to redevelop the site of the Earls Court exhibition centre, which they wanted to extend west as far as North End Road, consuming the Gibbs Green and West Kensington estates. The Conservatives also wanted to sell off the Caroline Estate just behind Hammersmith Bridge and had longer term, more complex plans for the much larger White City estate too. The council wanted to shift focus from genuinely affordable housing for rent to intermediate homes for affluent professionals who were still priced out of the market locally.

The Conservatives also approved some large planning applications with much lower elements of "affordable" housing than Labour would have consented to, notably in Chelsea Creek and Chelsea Riverside in Sands End, at Glenthorne Road where the NCP car park once stood, in Seagrave Road (the more advanced section of the CapCo master plan) and in Farm Lane.

If vote shares for the main parties were both down, the votes had to go somewhere: the Liberal Democrats. The party won 20% - their biggest share since the 1982 Alliance heyday. Yet they fell back in their main target, Askew and didn't find anywhere else where they might break through.

In Fulham Broadway Labour was hit harder by the Lib Dem improvement than the Conservatives. But in Fulham Reach, Sands End and Ravenscourt Park the Lib Dems took more votes from the Tories. The Lib Dems were distant runners up in Palace Riverside, Parson's Green & Walham and Town. Overall the Lib Dems hurt the Conservatives more, and even though 2010 was a bad general election defeat for Labour, it was less bad than 2006.

This being a general election turnout rose significantly compared to 2006. It gave four councillors majorities in excess of 2,000 votes - the first of that scale since the days of much larger wards. But turnout it was still below 60% in five wards.

Labour was left requiring nine seats to regain a majority: the easiest being the two remaining in North End, all three in Ravenscourt Park and Fulham Reach and one in Addison, for which a swing of 4.8% was needed.

2014

2014 was an almost exact re-run of the 2002 elections with one important difference: to accompany its majority Labour also won the popular vote. Of course there were other differences: in 2002 Labour won all three seats in Sands End and one in Ravenscourt Park - this time both stayed Tory. But this time Labour gained all three in Fulham Reach, the first time they'd managed to win a full slate in this ward, and gained one in Avonmore & Brook Green. Fulham Broadway ward also fell to Labour - probably the biggest surprise to its ejected Conservative incumbents.

This result, to put it mildly, was unexpected. And none of the explanations trotted out quite fit. It was not the closure threat to Charing Cross Hospital that swung it: if that had been the reason Labour would have won Fulham Reach, the ward the hospital is in, by much more. The Lib Dem decline did help Labour - but only in some areas. History tells us that Hammersmith & Fulham Lib Dem voters are typically second choice Conservatives.

Instead, three factors explain these results. The first was a straightforward, run-of-the-mill mid-term swing against the incumbent Conservative government. 2010 had been the election to evict Labour from government after thirteen years as well as a council election year, and was only slightly less bad for them than 2006. By 2014 the gloss had come off the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition to a large degree.

In the four North Fulham wards where eight of Labour's gains came, the Tory vote was down seven points, Labour up nine - a direct swing. Lib Dem switchers were more of a factor in Hammersmith and the Conservative vote more stable but Labour gained just three seats here. Were this truly a Lib Dem to Labour swing Ravenscourt Park would also have been lost to the Tories.

The other two factors were linked: Conservative complacency versus active motivation among Labour supporters, and a wider assumption that their vote here was irreversibly growing and entrenching. Something had definitely happened, especially in Fulham: a sort of extra gear of gentrification where house prices had reached an echelon only the super-rich could now afford. But unlike the earlier waves of demographic change in Fulham, this was Conservative voters replacing Conservatives - indeed, in some cases non-voters: foreign nationals without the right to vote.

Turnout in 2014 fell back to the local election norm from the 2010 general election high; Labour clung on to more of their vote than the Conservatives did.

Labour in Hammersmith & Fulham has, therefore, avoided the fate that befell its neighbours in Wandsworth in 1978 when, eight years on from the Tory breakthrough there they fell short of winning by one seat and thereafter the Conservatives pulled away. Labour's majority was only six seats, just like 1990, though on a smaller council. The four Labour seats the Conservatives would need to regain control of the council would fall on a tiny swing of just 2%. But Labour could increase its majority to twenty on an even smaller swing of just 1.8%.

2018

National politics between the 2014 and 2018 council elections had an even larger impact on the local elections of 2018 than usual.

The cause was the 2016 referendum on UK membership of the European Union and the outcome - to leave, was in stark contrast to the way the borough voted: 70% to 30% to remain.

This put the Conservatives on the wrong side of local opinion - there had clearly been a large majority of Tory voters supporting Remain as well as a near universal backing for that side of the argument among Labour voters and others. It wasn't solely the referendum result that damaged the Conservatives: it was the way the party chose to then stand with the winning side of the referendum and deliver what Remainers would go on to call a "hard" Brexit.

The referendum saw the departure of David Cameron and Theresa May's version of Conservatism was of a very different brand: tailored to the Leave-voting majority beyond London.

If Brexit was the national cause of Conservative woes, the CapCo plan for the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates was a growing local cause. Since coming to power in 2014, Labour had attempted every device to unpick the sale of the estate - even countenancing an attempt to compulsorily purchase the land. None had derailed the demolition plan and residents were increasingly agitated by the looming loss of their homes and the limbo in which they were placed.

The plans hadn't really shunted votes in 2014 - Labour had regained North End ward (in which the estates were located) but on a not especially large swing. But by 2018 the estates had seen how hard Labour had worked to rescue them.

The result was a Labour landslide in terms of seats much like 1986: 36 seats to 11 Conservatives. Labour won the two formerly split wards: Addison and Avonmore & Brook Green, easily. They added Ravenscourt Park - the first (and only, given this was its last contest) time they held all three seats, and regained Sands End. Former marginals like Fulham Reach, North End and Fulham Broadway were easily held. Labour even came close to winning Town ward having put in a huge effort to turn out the Labour vote in the estates at the eastern end of the ward.

In North End, home of the West Ken and Gibbs Green estates Labour polled 68%. In 2006 they polled 40% there. Labour had managed just 19% in Town ward in 2006; in 2018 they polled 42%. Council leader Steve Cowan, who in 2006 had clung on to his Hammersmith Broadway seat by just 6 votes, won this time with a majority of 1,597.

Labour overhauled a 2010 Conservative majority of more than 800 in Sands End - in part due to the enormous amount of housing association homes in the Imperial Wharf development that had been completed in the ensuing time, but also by getting phenomenal turnout from the Townmead and Pearscroft estates. Like 1986, the Conservative opposition leader, this time Joe Carlebach, lost his seat. Again, it was in Avonmore ward.

To pull off a 1986-type result after 32 years of demographic change that should have made the borough much more challenging for Labour almost certainly means that the political norms that - in crude stereotypes meant voters living on estates were Labour and those in the streets Conservative, no longer applied.

Labour's core vote, at least in cities, hasn't changed but it has been added to by the huge proportion of borough residents from EU nations eligible to vote in local but not national elections; by young, liberal professionals alienated by a Conservative Party not really marketing itself at them any more; and even by normally reliable Tory voters whose jobs are linked to financial services and for whom Brexit created uncertainty and risk.

It is still too soon to say how long this realignment of London's voting intentions will last but it could herald a similar golden thirty years for Labour as occurred between 1945 and 1974. Whether it does or not, these results left the Conservatives needing a nearly 10% swing to regain the council in 2022.

2022

The borough's wards were redrawn again prior to the 2022 elections. It was Labour's plan that was overwhelmingly adopted and this, coupled with population growth in the north of the borough, made things significantly more difficult for the Conservatives - as though their troubles in London weren't sufficient. Add to that the Partygate scandal that had engulfed Boris Johnson for the previous six months and it was highly unlikely that the Conservatives would be on course to challenge for power this year.

The Labour council had largely had an uncontroversial second term in power - with two exceptions. The one that received London-wide, if not national attention, was the closure of Hammersmith Bridge because serious structural problems had again been identified, 20 years give or take since the last time it has needed closing for the exact same reasons.

The council asserted it could not afford to shoulder the cost of repair, and Transport for London - reeling from the pandemic loss of passenger revenue - pleaded similar poverty. The government with absolutely no political motivation to bail out either Labour Hammersmith and Fulham or Sadiq Khan's TfL insisted that it was their lot to bear.

The second, much more parochial issue, was the traffic pressure placed on the back-streets of Sands End by the huge amount of development that neighbourhood had undergone for over thirty years. The north end of Bagleys Lane and Imperial Road, plus Harwood Terrace, were now exceptionally busy.

The council's response was to implement a Low Traffic Neighbourhood in all but name. Suddenly non-local traffic was unable to access the grid of streets east of Wandsworth Bridge Road and the Conservatives championed those who were adversely affected by the change. Sands End was in any event the most marginal Labour-held ward in the borough and the Conservatives were quietly confident that they could regain it.

At the general election in 2019 the Liberal Democrats had seized second place in the Chelsea and Fulham constituency with their semi-celebrity candidate, the businesswoman Nicola Horlick. The Lib Dems, in a misreading of the electoral data, decided to target Conservative-held Munster ward at the 2022 council elections, Horlick (a Richmond resident) standing.

The council returned to having fifty councillors. Three of these new seats were in a re-created White City ward,

and College Park and Old Oak regained the councillor it lost in 2002.

Had the 2018 elections been fought on these boundaries Labour would notionally have won forty seats (up four) and the Conservatives ten (down one). And that was how the 2022 election turned out.

Labour won big: 54.4% to the Conservatives' 26.7%. That wa a far larger margin than the last time Labour had such a landslide in 1986. The rout was biggest in Hammersmith, Addison becoming the safest ward in the borough just eight years after it voted Conservative (albeit on better boundaries for the Tories). Brook Green, notionally the best Conservative ward after Sands End, produced a near 60% Labour vote. Sands End stayed Labour, though again not by much, suggesting a further underlying shift to the Conservatives there.

But it was the collapse of the Conservative vote in their safer wards that was almost as big a story as the Labour vote mountains of north Fulham and Hammersmith. The redrawn, renamed Parson's Green and Sandford, the best Conservative ward, should have been even safer than its predecessor, Parson's Green and Walham. Yet Labour's vote rose to 29%. It was still the only ward in which the Conservatives polled more than 50%.

The Lib Dems made little impact on Munster - coming third, but narrowly came second in Fulham Town - made much more Conservative in the boundary changes. This could have been a more promising Lib Dem target.

The Labour landslide left this borough, on paper at least, safer than Brent, Hounslow and Greenwich. The Conservatives needed a 20% swing to win in 2026.

2026

Come 2026 it had been twenty years since a council election in which Labour was in power nationally and locally had taken place. 2006 was a disastrous year both for the fading Blair government and the Labour council in Hammersmith and Fulham. In 2026 the Starmer government was even more unpopular than Blair's had been, but the consequences locally turned out considerably differently.

The biggest reason explaining that was that the Conservatives were unrecognisably weaker in 2026 than 2006 - when there had been no question that they were going to seize control locally. This year there was no question as to whether they were going to lose; just by how much.

In fact they lost almost as badly as 2022 in terms of seats, gaining two in Sands End and no more. They came pretty close to winning Lillie and Walham Green, but remained fairly far adrift in Brook Green and Avonmore: the eastern side of the borough being where all the action was (or was not) for some reason. Simply put, the scale of Labour's 2022 win was too great for the Tories to surmount, and their depleted membership was a shadow of the activist base that helped them sweep to power in 2006.

Labour was not infallible. Most notably the council had received dreadful inspection reports by the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman into its housing service and Hammersmith Bridge remained closed to vehicular traffic a decade after it had been closed. But this was not an election where local issues dominated the election.

Instead, the fragmented electoral landscape with Reform UK bursting onto the scene - impressively fielding a full fifty candidates in a borough not at all favourable towards the party - and the surge in Green Party support, made things much more chaotic.

The Conservatives lost (a bit of) support to Reform, and Labour lost a lot of support to the Greens, falling 17.5 points from 2022. That was a much larger collapse than in 2006 (9) or 1978 (11.2), but better than 1968 (23.8).

But decline is a secondary measure: what matters is the gap between the main parties. That gap - 27.7% in 2022, narrowed - but not enough: Labour was still 12.7% ahead overall, and more than that in most of the seats the Tories need to win a majority. In Shepherd's Bush the Conservatives are essentially extinct; in Hammersmith there are only the faintest flickers of life.

Instead the Greens have now established themselves as the challengers in the north of the borough, clearly second in every ward above Goldhawk Road. They were just 16% behind Labour in Coningham and Shepherd's Bush Green and 17% in CPOO. But their closest result was in West Kensington, where their sole candidate lost by 14.5%.

Reform did well nowhere, but there were pockets of support for the party in College Park and Old Oak and Hammersmith Broadway.

The Conservative path to power runs through Sands End, Walham Green, Lillie, Brook Green, Avonmore and Fulham Reach - but they need at least two more beyond the twelve in those six wards. West Kensington and Addison are the next most winnable but the Tories remain a long way off the pace: they won just 16% in Addison and 15% in West Ken.

Summary of borough elections 1900-2026

	Con seats	Con %votes	Lab seats	Lab %votes	LD seats	LD %votes	Other seats	Other %votes	Total	%TO	Maj
2026	12	24.2	38	36.9	0	9.1	0	29.9	50	39.4	26
2022	10	26.7	40	54.4	0	14.3	0	4.6	50	33.3	30
2018	11	33.7	35	53.4	0	11.0	0	1.8	45	39.4	24
2014	20	38.1	26	41.9	0	8.4	0	11.6	45	37.6	6
2010	31	43.4	15	34.1	0	19.8	0	2.7	45	61.9	16
2006	33	48.7	13	32.0	0	14.0	0	5.3	45	39.7	20
2002	18	42.5	28	41.0	0	14.1	0	2.4	45	32.0	10
1998	14	37.4	36	49.7	0	12.6	0	0.2	50	34.2	22
1994	15	35.9	33	49.8	1	13.6	0	0.7	50	46.3	17
1990	22	42.3	28	48.3	0	5.3	0	4.1	50	53.2	6
1986	9	33.7	40	50.8	1	13.4	0	2.0	50	51.8	30
1982	23	40.1	25	37.7	2	20.4	0	1.9	50	50.0	
1978	24	47.6	24	45.6	2	3.9	0	2.9	50	50.5	
1974	10	36.3	48	56.8	2	6.3	0	0.6	60	41.3	36
1971	2	36.5	58	61.6	0	1.8	0	0.1	60	47.6	56
1968	54	58.2	6	38.9	0	2.3	0	0.6	60	39.1	48
1964	7	33.9	53	62.7	0	2.7	0	0.8	60	32.0	46
1962 F	7	37.2	33	55.0	0	4.6	0	3.1	40	41.2	26
1962 H	6	31.1	33	64.5	0	4.0	0	0.4	39	31.4	27
1959 F	9	41.3	31	56.9	0	1.2	0	0.6	40	38.0	22
1959H	6	34.6	33	63.0	0	1.7	0	0.8	39	32.5	27
1956 F	10	34.2	30	58.4	0	0.0	0	2.8	40	41.3	20
1956H	6	34.2	33	58.4	0	1.1	0	6.3	39	33.7	27
1953 F	13	43.1	27	55.4	0	0.6	0	0.9	40	51.1	14
1953H	6	38.4	33	60.2	0	0.5	0	0.9	39	45.1	27
1949 F	19	48.5	21	48.8	0	2.1	0	0.6	40	50.2	2
1949H	12	45.9	27	52.7	0	0.0	0	1.4	39	40.9	15
1945 F	6	32.7	34	60.2	0	0.0	0	7.2	40	47.4	28
1945H	0	25.3	36	66.8	0	0.0	0	7.9	36	31.8	all
1937 F	13	47.1	27	49.0	0	0.0	0	1.7	40	46.6	14
1937H	9	43.4	27	54.7	0	0.0	0	1.9	36	38.2	18
1934 F	13	48.3	27	49.0	0	0.0	0	2.7	40	40.5	14
1934H	0	0.0	16	51.5	0	0.0	20	48.5	36	36.0	4
1931 F	40	70.6	0	27.0	0	0.0	0	2.4	40	30.1	all
1931H	0	0.0	3	33.3	0	0.0	33	66.8	36	33.0	30
1928 F	32	55.3	8	40.6	0	0.0	0	4.1	40	33.8	24
1928H	0	0.0	14	47.2	0	0.0	22	52.8	36	36.9	8
1925F	37	59.8	3	36.9	0	3.4	0	0.0	40	46.3	34
1925H	0	0.0	3	39.7	0	0.0	33	60.3	36	44.6	30
1922F	36	59.7	0	32.5	0	3.2	0	4.6	36	37.8	all
1922H	0	0.0	3	30.9	0	0.0	33	68.9	36	32.8	30
1919F	12	38.0	24	44.6	0	16.0	0	1.4	36	25.4	12
1919H	19	38.7	13	34.6	2	14.1	2	12.6	36	29.5	2
1912F	36	54.5	0	4.8	0	37.4	0	3.3	36	45.2	all
1912H	31	44.6	0	18.8	0	0.0	5	36.6	36	47.6	26
1909 F	33	56.7	0	12.2	3	31.1	0	0.0	36	50.7	30
1909 H	0	48.4	0	17.4	0	0.0	36	34.2	36	50.8	all
1906 F	36	53.8	0	11.4	0	26.6	0	8.2	36	49.9	all
1906 H	15	46.8	1	9.3	0	43.9	20	0.0	36	52.5	4
1903 F	16	39.4	2	10.3	17	40.1	1	10.2	36	47.1	
1903 H	23	41.7	0	6.9	9	34.9	9	16.5	36	50.3	5
1900 F	14	43.0	0	0.0	21	44.5	1	12.4	36	48.5	6
1900 H	26	44.8	0	0.0	8	35.7	2	19.5	36	43.5	16

notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts are proved. Friday, the 8th February, 1884, at one o'clock in the afternoon, at the said chambers, is appointed for hearing and adjudicating upon the debts and claims.—Dated this 22nd December, 1883.

Metropolitan Board of Works.

AT a Meeting of the Board at their Office, Spring-gardens, Charing Cross, this 21st day of December, 1883, amongst the Orders is as follows:—Metropolis Management Act, 1855; Metropolis Management Amendment Act, 1862; Division of the Parish of Fulham into Wards.

WHEREAS by the Metropolis Management Amendment Act, 1862, Section 41, it is enacted: "That when at any time upon any account taken of the population by the authority of Parliament, any of the parishes within the Metropolis not now divided into wards for the purpose of electing vestrymen, shall be found to contain more than 2,000 rated householders, it shall be lawful for the Metropolitan Board of Works, upon the application in writing of the vestry or of not less than 500 rated householders of the parish, to divide such parish into wards, and to determine, and set out the number, extent, limits, and boundary lines of such wards, but so nevertheless that no ward shall contain less than 500 rated householders, and that the whole number of wards shall not exceed eight, and the Metropolitan Board shall apportion among the several wards the number of vestrymen to be elected for such parish, and shall, in assigning the number of vestrymen to each ward, have regard as far as in their judgment is practicable, as well to the number of persons rated to the relief of the poor in each ward as to the aggregate amount of the sums at which all such persons are rated, and the number of vestrymen assigned to each ward shall be a number devisable by three." And whereas the parish of Fulham is within the limits of the Metropolis, as defined by the Metropolis Management Act, 1855, and is one of the parishes in Part I. of Schedule B of that Act, and at the passing of the same Act the parish was not divided into wards, and the Vestry of the parish of Fulham having now applied to us, the Metropolitan Board of Works, to divide the said parish into wards pursuant to the provisions of the said 41st section of the Metropolis Management Amendment Act, 1862; and whereas it appears from the last account taken of the population by the authority of Parliament that the said parish contains five thousand two hundred and eight rated householders, and that the number of inhabited houses in the parish is returned at five thousand eight hundred and thirty-three, and the rateable annual value of property at one hundred and ninety-eight thousand three hundred and thirty-two pounds. Now the Metropolitan Board of Works, having considered the said application, and having ascertained from the said last account taken of the population by the authority of Parliament as contained in the census return for the year 1881, that the number of rated householders for the parish of Fulham is five thousand two hundred and eight, and having taken into consideration the number of persons rated to the relief of the poor in the same parish and the aggregate amount of the sums at which all such persons are rated, and all the circumstances connected with such application, doth hereby order that the said parish of Fulham be divided into three wards to be distinguished by the names mentioned in the first column of the under-mentioned schedule, that the extent, limits, and boundary line of such wards shall be those described in the second column of the said schedule, and that the number of vestrymen to be elected for each of the said wards shall be the number mentioned in the third column of the said schedule.

The SCHEDULE above referred to.

COLUMN 1. Names Distinguishing Wards	COLUMN 2. Extent, Limits, and Boundary Lines of Wards.	COLUMN 3. Number of Vestrymen to be elected in Wards.
North End Ward.	All that portion of the parish of Fulham which lies south of the northern boundary of the parish east of the River Thames north of the centre of Crab Tree-lane, Crown and Lillie Roads, and west of the eastern boundary of the parish northwards of Lillie-road.	27
Walham Ward.	All that portion of the parish of Fulham which lies south of the centre of Crab Tree-lane, Crown and Lillie Roads east of the River Thames, north and north-west of the Metropolitan District Railway Extension to Old Fulham, and west of the eastern boundary of the parish between Lillie-road and the aforesaid railway.	27
South Fulham Ward.	All the remaining portion of the parish, lying between the above-mentioned Railway Extension and the River Thames.	18
		72

Sealed by Order,
J. E. Wakefield, Clerk of the Board.

L. S.

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

AT a Meeting of the Board, at their Office, Spring-gardens, this fourteenth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three, amongst the Orders is as follows:—

Whereas, by the Metropolis Management Amendment Act, 1862, it is enacted that when at any time, upon any account taken of the population by the authority of Parliament, any of the parishes within the metropolis not then divided into wards, for the purpose of electing vestrymen, should be found to contain more than two thousand rated householders, it should be lawful for the Metropolitan Board of Works, upon the application, in writing, of the Vestry, or of not less than five hundred rated householders of the parish, to divide such parish into wards, and to determine and set out the number, extent, limits, and boundary lines of such wards, but so, nevertheless, that no ward shall contain less than five hundred rated householders, and that the whole number of wards shall not exceed eight; and the Metropolitan Board shall apportion among the several wards the number of vestrymen to be elected for such parish, and should, in assigning the number of vestrymen to each ward, have regard, as far as in their judgment was practicable, as well to the number of persons rated to the relief of the poor in each ward, as to the aggregate amount of the sums at which all persons are rated, and the number of vestrymen assigned to each ward should be a number divisible by three: And whereas the parish of Hammersmith, is comprised within the limits of the Metropolis Local Management Act, and is one of the parishes in Part I of Schedule B of that Act, and at the passing of the same Act the parish did not contain two thousand rated householders and consequently was not divided into wards, and the Vestry of the parish of Hammersmith having now applied to us, the Metropolitan Board of Works, to divide the parish of Hammersmith into wards, according to the provisions of the 41st section of the Metropolis Local Management Amendment Act, 1862: And whereas it appears from the census of one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, made by authority of Parliament, that the number of inhabited houses in the parish was returned at six thousand seven hundred and nineteen, the number of rated householders at five thousand three hundred and seventy-three, and the rateable annual value of property at one hundred and eighty-one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine pounds: Now, the Metropolitan Board of Works, having ascertained, by the account of the population taken by authority of Parliament, as contained in the Census Return for the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, that the number of rated householders for the parish of Hammersmith is five thousand three hundred and seventy-three, and having taken into consideration the number of persons rated to the relief of the poor in the same parish, and the aggregate amount of the rating, and all the circumstances connected with such applications, doth hereby order that the said parish of Hammersmith, be divided into three wards, to be distinguished by the numbers mentioned in the first column of the Schedule hereto. And we do hereby set out the extent, limits, and boundary lines of the said wards, as the same are described in the second column of the Schedule hereto, in conjunction with the numbers distinguishing such wards respectively, and having regard as well to the number of persons rated to the relief of the poor in each ward as to the aggregate amount of the sums at which all such persons are rated, do hereby apportion the number of vestrymen to be elected for the said parish among the said wards, according to the respective numbers mentioned in the third column of the Schedule hereto, in conjunction with such wards respectively.

The SCHEDULE above referred to.

Column I. Numbers distinguishing Wards.	Column II. Extent, Limits, and Boundary Lines of Wards.	Column III. Number of Vestrymen to be elected in Wards.
North	All that portion of the parish of Hammersmith lying north of the centre of the road from Notting Hill to Stamford Brook, part of which is called Gold Hawk-road	24
Centre	All that portion of the said parish lying south of the centre of the road from Notting Hill to Stamford Brook, and within a line drawn in the centre of the high road from Kensington to Turnham Green, part of which is called King-street	27
South	All that portion of the said parish lying south of the centre of the high road from Kensington to Turnham Green	21

Sealed, by Order.

L. S.

J. E. Wakefield, Clerk of the Board.

Patent Law Amendment Act, 1852.

Office of the Commissioners of Patents for Inventions.

NOTICE is hereby given, that—

3278. William Glazier, of No. 235, Drake-street, Rochdale, in the county of Lancaster, has given notice at the Office of the Commissioners of his intention to proceed with his application for letters patent for the invention of "improvements in treating and utilizing certain refuse animal and vegetable substances, and the application of the resulting substances or matters to various manufactures."

As set forth in his petition, recorded in the said office on the 5th day of November, 1872.

To ALL the ELECTORS
OF
HAMMERSMITH

For your future
HEALTH, HAPPINESS
and WELL-BEING

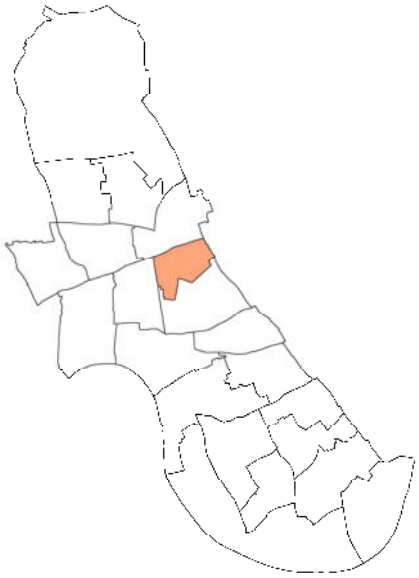
VOTE
for EACH of the

RATEPAYERS'
CONSTITUTIONAL

ALLIANCE
CANDIDATES
for your Ward
on
MONDAY

Addison ward

Joseph Addison, the 18th-century essayist, founding Spectator journalist and MP, was firmly linked to Fulham and Hammersmith - and the wider Holland Park area. Across the borough boundary in Kensington are Addison Road, Addison Park Gardens and Addison Crescent. Just across Hammersmith Road from Olympia is Addison Bridge Place.



Joseph Addison was also a regular visitor at Sandford Manor House in Fulham. And immediately south of Shepherd's Bush Green are Addison Gardens and the ward in this borough named after him.

Addison is, essentially, Shepherd's Bush South. The ward since the 2022 council elections resembles the one that existed 20 years before, with two councillors. In the boundary changes it lost all the area it gained from Brook Green ward in 2002 - most notably Sinclair Road with its almost 1,000 voters - but reclaimed the small section by Goldhawk Road tube station and the bus depot that had been in Shepherd's Bush Green.

Addison had - at least until 2022 - always been the borough's bellwether, falling to whichever party won the council in every election bar 1949. Not only has Addison always fallen to the overall winner, it is a good measure of how well that winner fares borough-wide too:

In the Conservative landslide of 1968 they won Addison by almost 1,000 votes.

In 1978 and 1982 when the Tories won most seats but without an overall majority, they scraped in here by less than 50 votes.

During 16 years of big Labour council wins from 1986-98, Labour held Addison by big majorities - but in their tight 2002 win they retained it by just 26 votes.

For the eight years the Conservatives controlled the council between 2006 and 2014, they easily held Addison.

With a narrow Labour council majority of eight in 2014 Addison returned to Labour - but they only beat the Tories by, again, 26 votes.

With a landslide majority in 2018, Labour won Addison by about 18% - comfortable but by no means a landslide.

In the 2010, 2014 and 2018 elections, not only did Addison choose the winning side; it was within 2% of the borough-wide margin for the winner.

The ward's politics haven't always been quite so attuned though. Originally it was a fair bit more Conservative than the borough, becoming markedly less so after the high-rise Charecroft council estate, along the southern edge of Shepherd's Bush Green, was built. Crossover came in 1982 when the ward became slightly less Conservative than the borough; then significantly more inclined to Labour up until 2002.

Addison was created in the boundary review preceding the 1949 elections, forged from the larger Brook Green and St Matthew's ward that covered the entire neighbourhood from Shepherd's Bush Green to Hammersmith Road. Brook Green and St Matthew's originally had nine councillors, slimmed down to six and only once - in 1945 - voted Labour.

Alongside a smaller Brook Green and an Olympia ward, all three began life electing Conservative councillors but, Addison was always the most promising for Labour.

The first incarnation of Addison was entirely east of Shepherd's Bush Road, from the green south to Bolingbroke Road and Dewhurst Road. What is today the western side of Addison: Sulgrave Road, Lena Gardens, the bus depot in Wells Road and Tesco (Osram Court:



formerly the Osram light bulb factory) was part of Brook Green, with the rest in Olympia ward.

Labour gained Addison (and Olympia) in 1953 and held onto them both, always by tight margins, until the old Hammersmith Borough Council was abolished. When Fulham and Hammersmith were amalgamated in 1964 Addison gained everything west of Shepherd's Bush Road right down to Hammersmith Broadway to give it a slightly odd bowed shape. But this extra dollop of voters was worth a third councillor for the ward.

This new territory did not prove especially good for the Conservatives for, despite a swing to the Tories in 1964, Labour won Addison by slightly more: just over ten percentage points. Despite the Labour win, the ward was still sixteen points more Conservative than the borough.

A 19% swing handed Addison easily to the Conservatives in 1968 but that was an aberrant election and in 1971 a swing of almost equal magnitude retuned the ward to Labour by, again, just over ten points.

The Conservatives narrowed the gap somewhat in 1974 and then, in 1976, a rare double by-election occurred. One of the Labour seats fell to Conservative Eleanor Belsham who, along with her husband Arthur, had won Addison in 1968. She would hold her seat for the next decade, if by knife-edge majorities: 58 in 1978 and 41 in 1982.

Minor boundary changes in 1978 again reduced Addison to a 2-councillor ward. By then the Charecroft estate was becoming occupied. This development probably prevented the Tories winning Addison more comfortably in 1978 and why, in 1982, Addison moved a little more towards Labour ward than the borough as a whole did.

BY-ELECTION SPECIAL.....

THE THREE-CORNERED FIGHT FOR ADDISON

WITH just a week to go before polling in the Addison Ward by-election it promises to be a close-run affair.

Labour are confident of holding the two seats on the borough council, although the Liberals claim to have stirred up plenty of support — especially in the Charecroft tower blocks.

Here are the runners in the six-horse race to the Town Hall.

Labour

LIVERPOOL-born Eddie Cunningham, one of two Labour candidates, is 36 and has lived in the ward for ten years.

His first plan, if elected, is to set up a regular advice service in Addison. Among his main concerns are housing — both council and private — free parking for Addison residents and playspace for children.

"Addison is one of the ten worst wards in London for amenities, so it is particularly important that we put pressure on the leisure and recreation committee for more adequate playspace," he said.

But his main concern is housing. "I want to see the existing stock of both council and private housing brought up to scratch and people given decent housing conditions — not as a gift from local politicians or unscrupulous private landlords, but of right."

Eddie is a legal adviser and serves on a local branch of the RSPCA. He is a governor of Addison and Lena Gardens primary schools.



Eddie Cunningham.



John Gorter.

ENVIRONMENT and employment are at the top of the list for John Gorter, the other Addison Labour candidate.

Aged 30 and married with one child, John is a systems accountant and governor of three local schools.

"I will keep a watchful eye to ensure there are no cut-backs on social services provisions to the elderly and especially the handicapped," he said.

He would also press for prompt action to restore Shepherds Bush Green which is "deplorable and unsafe".

Mr. Gorter is also compiling a list of vacant sites available for industrial development in Hammersmith.

"More and more jobs are being lost from the borough and our unemployment rate is high," he said. "We must look to see how we can remedy the situation before it overtakes us completely."

He also wishes to ensure that long-term residents do not have their rights usurped by "Chelsea trendies" now moving into the area, buying up flats and houses from local people who can no longer afford the upkeep.

John Gorter is an active trades union member.

Liberals

ROBERT BOWLES, a 50-year-old dry cleaner, has joined the Addison by-election fray for the Liberals to provide opposition to Labour on Hammersmith Council.

Mr. Bowles, a former member of Hammersmith North Labour Party, quit to join the Liberals three months ago because he thought the Labour Party had gone "too far left".

"I've been called a traitor in the camp, but it's like water off a duck's back — it doesn't bother me one bit," said Mr. Bowles, a father of five.

"I'm standing in this election because I feel there should be some opposition to the Labour Party who have things their own way and do just what they like," he said.

Mr. Bowles, who ran and lost in two previous by-elections for Labour, said he wanted a rates standstill. He is also demanding amenity cut-backs.



Robert Bowles.



Angela Rooney.

A WIDOW, 36-year-old Mrs. Angela Rooney is one of two Liberals fighting the Addison by-election.

Mrs. Rooney, head of the Guinness Trust Building tenants' committee, is campaigning on:

A better distribution of council funds, with a cut-back on leisure facilities and spending on theatres.

A better system of housing allocation to make use of empty properties in the borough.

Better care of geriatrics, with council payment of heating bills for the elderly.

A review of the points system whereby those on the housing waiting list for the longest time get extra points.

Mrs. Rooney says her third priority is traffic — she wants a review of danger spots in the borough with consultation of residents' and tenants' associations.

"I would also like to see one road for heavy traffic in the borough and an outer ring road around London to keep traffic out of the centre," she said.

Tories



Eleanor Belsham.

FOR 55-year-old housewife Mrs. Eleanor Belsham it will be her second campaign when she stands for the Tories.

Mrs. Belsham, a company director in a family printing business, is a former Hammersmith councillor. She intends to campaign for:

Improved housing conditions; Recreation facilities on the Charecroft Estate; And improved play centres for local children — divided into two groups, infants and older children.

She is a governor of Addison School and her voluntary work includes hospital visiting. She is chairwoman of Hammersmith Operatic Society, a Red Cross officer and a member of Hammersmith Charities.

"As a member of the Blythe Neighbourhood Council, I have always been concerned about the shortage of recreation facilities and play centres in Addison," she said.

"Extra Conservative councillors are needed in Hammersmith to make a stronger opposition and ensure as far as is possible economic and reasonable spending."



Chris Thorne.

ADDISON Tory candidate Chris Thorne is to demand an immediate ban on council house purchases.

Mr. Thorne, a 37-year-old shopkeeper from Addison Gardens, said: "I am very angry about the number of empty, council-owned properties in the borough.

"There are 685 standing empty with 6,000 families on the housing waiting list."

Mr. Thorne's campaign platform will include: a rates standstill; rent cuts; better road-sweeping of Addison pavements and stricter enforcement of dog-fouling laws; attracting more industry to the borough.

He believes that with a "sensible and careful policy" over a number of years, Hammersmith could peg rates without cuts in essential services.

'DIRTY TRICKS' ROW AFTER LABOUR LOSS AT BY-ELECTION

he victors



Eleanor Belsham



Eddie Cunningham

THURSDAY'S Addison Ward council by-election which resulted in a surprise Tory gain has been marred by a bitter slanging match between the Labour and Liberal camps.

Local Labour Party secretary Frank Ing has claimed that a "smear attack" by Liberal agent Simon Knott was largely responsible for the Labour loss. The two marginal seats were previously both held by Labour.

But although their man, Eddie Cunningham, clinched the highest number of votes on Thursday, second place went to Conservative Mrs. Eleanor Belsham.

The other Labour candidate, John Gorter, was beaten into fourth position, with the Liberals finishing as also-rans.

Here are the full details of the election:

Eddie Cunningham (Lab.) 999 votes
Eleanor Belsham (Con.) 969 votes
Chris Thorne (Con.) 920 votes
John Gorter (Lab.) 915 votes
Robert Bowles (Lib.) 192 votes
Angela Rooney (Lib.) 148 votes

A furious Frank Ing said afterwards: "I am a bit disappointed but not surprised in view of everything we have had against us."

He accused Mr. Knott of "mud slinging" and "dirty tricks".

"He is a shyster of the first order and completely unprincipled," added Mr. Ing.

Mr. Ing was referring to a Liberal election leaflet circulated in Addison ward telling people not to vote for Labour left-wingers who controlled Hammersmith North.

The leaflet added that Labour left-wingers Tony Benn and Michael Foot would be considered right-wing by Hammersmith Labour members.

"The voting showed that the people of Addison treated Simon Knott's diatribe with the contempt it deserved," said Mr. Ing.

"I would now hope he has learned his lesson . . . that smears and mud-slinging do not work."

But Mr. Ing added: "I still think he was largely responsible for splitting the Labour vote. I should say that about 100 of our votes went to the Liberals as a result of their smears. And those votes would have been crucial."

Simon Knott in turn complained of rudeness at Thursday night's count.

"John Gorter called me a guttersnipe and both Labour candidates seemed to be competing in insulting me," he said.

"My leaflet did not attack any individuals — I always try to avoid that. Many left-wingers happen to be very nice people. But I was attacking what they represent."

Mr. Knott admitted he was disappointed with the poor Liberal showing.

"The third party in any highly marginal seat always gets squeezed, although we did rather better than Liberals in other similar areas of London," he claimed.

Successful Tory, 55-year-old Mrs. Belsham, has served on Hammersmith Council in the past.

She said: "I am very satisfied. It gives me a much wished for opportunity to serve the ward. My previous experience must be a great help. I shall concentrate on Addison and its environment."

Thursday's percentage turnout of voters was 41.

But then London started swinging rapidly and significantly to Labour. Addison was part of that trend and by 1994 the ward was 22 percentage points better for the party than the borough.

Once again, new public housing helped Labour: the opening of the Tesco Superstore behind Little Brook Green with the Osram Court housing association flats above it. But that alone does not explain why the ward turned its back on the Conservatives - more than, say, Grove or any Fulham ward in those high-water years.

But Labour's supremacy did not last. In 2002 and 2006 Addison swung to the Conservatives, tracking very close to the borough norm but still slightly Labour-leaning.

Part of that was down to the 2002 boundary changes which made the enlarged ward more Conservative than its predecessor. But there was a hefty swing to the Tories on top.

What is it about Addison that makes it more "swingy" than other Hammersmith and Fulham wards?

A large factor must be the high proportion of private renters here, not just in Addison but in the whole W14 section of the borough: Addison, Brook Green, Avonmore and West Kensington. 42% of Addison residents rent privately.

Private tenants have two characteristics of relevance here. They are highly mobile, partly by choice, partly because they tend to hold relatively short leases on their homes and so move in and out of the ward in significant proportions.

Hence Addison can be more politically volatile than a ward with a relatively stable electorate. It's harder for politicians to build a personal vote because incomers know nothing of the politics of the ward or their councillors' record. But because this is Shepherd's Bush it's also relatively more affordable than either the wider W14 or Hammersmith neighbourhoods.

Second, because so large a share of their income goes on rent, these voters feel an acute part of the "cost of living crisis" generation - which means they are more open to a "retail offer" and have less political loyalty to any party.

After the 2008 financial crisis, presided over by Labour, crushed the housing market many will have been attracted to the pitch made by liberal Conservative leader David Cameron and George Osborne. After the pandemic they soured on the chaotic Conservative government and surged behind Labour. And, while plenty sloughed off to the Greens in 2026, they're basically still aligned with Labour; definitely not being won back by the Conservatives.

In some ways, Addison is the Shepherds Bush equivalent of Fulham Town: it has large townhouses, grand Edwardian terraces and imposing mansion blocks typical in that Conservative Fulham ward. It continues - to use that horrible sociological phrase - to "gentrify".

Over the past two decades the number of council tenants has fallen markedly and the shops along Shepherds Bush Road have started catering for a market with more disposable income. Fewer convenience stores specialising in international phone cards; more cafes and restaurants of the wide diversity you'd expect in this neck of the woods. This isn't remotely Fulham Road - yet - but compared to how it was twenty, thirty years ago it's unrecognisable.

It has streets - like Sinclair Gardens - that carry over the Palladian style of Holland Park and Earls Court: four-storey houses with basements and porticoed entrances. It has terraces in Addison Gardens that, if a Fulham resident found themselves there, might assume they were in SW6. But also ranks of streets full of four-storey homes with basements: an archeype Fulham does not have in abundance. And, running through the middle, Richmond Way with its strip of cafes.

Let's not get too carried away with the comparison between Fulham and Addison, because whereas in Fulham Town many of these big houses are single properties owned outright, in Addison more are subdivided and privately rented. There has been a trend of converting multi-occupancy houses into single dwellings but these big houses remain largely divided.

There remain plenty of bedsits and hostels, especially along Shepherds Bush Road.

Summary of results for Addison ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1949	52.6	41.4			6.0
1953	45.4	54.6			
1956	41.8	50.4	7.8		
1959	39.9	50.6			9.5
1962	41.4	51.7			6.9
1964	40.9	52.9			6.2
1968	60.7	34.5	4.8		
1971	44.3	55.7			
1974	46.3	53.7			
1976 By	45.6	46.2	8.2		
1978	50.0	45.3			
1982	33.7	32.7	17.0		16.6
1986	30.3	55.6	10.3		3.7
1990	34.6	55.7		9.6	
1992 By	37.0	56.9	4.4	1.7	
1994	23.0	59.2	12.3	5.5	
1998	25.0	57.4	17.6		
2002	40.5	44.2	15.3		
2006	42.5	30.3	10.4	14.8	2.0
2010	39.5	29.2	19.5	11.8	
2014	41.8	44.5	13.7		
2018	30.1	51.0	8.2	9.2	1.5
2022	14.9	70.4	14.7		
2026	16.3	46.2	8.6	18.8	10.1

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 1962

West Indian enters vote battle, and says . . .

'QUITE CONFIDENT I'LL BE ELECTED IN MAY'

IT is virtually certain that a coloured man will soon be helping to decide how to spend Shepherds Bush and Hammersmith ratepayers' money. For West Indian Mr. Spencer Ward, of Rockley-road, Shepherds Bush, is to stand for Addison Ward in the Hammersmith Council elections next month.

And Mr. Ward prophesied that West Indian faces will become increasingly familiar on the local government scene.

"I don't think it is unusual for a West Indian to stand for the Council. When we West Indians have settled here long enough to get to know the people it is reasonable to expect that a lot more of us will be nominated for Council seats."

Mr. Ward left Trinidad for England 13 years ago and has been a member of the Labour Party since he moved to Shepherds Bush in 1952.

He married an English woman and his sister married his wife's brother. He has an 11-year-old son who attends the St. Mary's Junior Catholic Boys' School at Brook Green.

Colour bar ?

He thinks that the colour bar in this country is not so serious as many people believe.

"If you are looking for a colour bar you can find it. One can put things down to colour when it's not that at all."

But he does not deny that a colour bar exists "though too much play is made of it. It tends to be built up in the papers theoretically and in turn is built up practically."

About Notting Hill race riots he said: "One has a feeling that the whole thing was staged by a few people for their own benefit.

"But one of the reasons for my standing for the Council is that it will help to break down whatever prejudice there might be."

Then Mr. Ward, who works in the finance section of the L.C.C. supply department, emphasised: "I do not intend to be a representative of the coloured people but of all people. Nationality makes no difference to me."

'Capable chap'

He expects to lose a few votes because of his colour, "but I am quite confident that I shall be elected. No one seemed to mind when I was canvassing on Sunday."

His main criticism of local councils: "There is a certain amount of stagnation. The same people with the same ideas get elected and there are very few differences of opinion.

"That is mainly why I shall stand—to introduce new ideas and opinions which are so badly needed, not only in this borough, but in others, too.

"But I am willing to just listen and learn for a time."

Commented North Hammersmith Labour Party agent Mr. John Carroll: "Mr. Ward's chances of being elected are extremely good. People are not so narrow minded as to vote against him because he is a West Indian though there may be one or two extremists.

"He is a very capable chap."

It is the northern end of Addison that has experienced the most transformation. Until the late 1960s, the south side of Shepherds Bush Green was much like the north: a parade of shops with flats above them and a small cluster of terraced streets behind: Roseford Gardens, Roseford Terrace, Shepherd's Gardens and Richmond Gardens.

This area was divided from the rest of Addison by the loop of the Kensington and Richmond railway that connected what is now the Hammersmith and City Line to the West London Line. In the trench through which that railway line ran stand the bus garage in Wells Road, Sulgrave Gardens, the Grampians, The Shepherds Building (Minford House), Rockley Court and the K-West Hotel. If you stand on the Addison Gardens bridge over the West London Line you can still see where the loop joined: the triangular Woodstock Studios building marks the fork in the line.

Art Deco The Grampians on Shepherds Bush Road hit the headlines in the 1970s when its owners went bankrupt and the administrators ceased letting flats with a view to selling the entire site. Over three years, 40 flats in the 175-apartment block became void, it became dilapidated, a squatters' rights group attempted to occupy it and the then Labour council looked seriously at purchasing it. In the end a private buyer was found and the Grampians remains privately owned and managed.

But it was the fate of the south side of Shepherd's Bush Green that made the largest impact. This triangle of land between the green and the railway was owned by the Campden Commissioners who, in the mid-1960s, entered into a joint venture with Parway Investments, the council and the GLC to build a shopping centre, multi-storey car

park and two 20-storey council tower blocks: Shepherds and Bush Courts, above it.

Shopping malls of this type were the epitome of "modern" in the 1960s following the opening of Arndale centres around the country. Wandsworth's Arndale was, at the time, the largest shopping centre in Europe and followed a similar - fairly disastrous - model of a mall with a huge, troubled, council estate towering above it.
Two later towers, Roseford and Woodford Courts, to the west of the shopping centre, followed.

Like many large council estate in the 1960s and 1970s, the Charecroft estate suffered shocking problems of vandalism, lift breakdown and poor amenities.

This went beyond simple indifference by the council - though perhaps councils were so preoccupied with the building of new homes that insufficient attention to their maintenance and the well-being of their tenants once built was paid.

Local news reports from the time document efforts by councillors and housing staff to fix the problems,but the tide of vandalism and poor engineering seemed overwhelming in that era. As John Boughton, the author of the Municipal Dreams blog wrote:

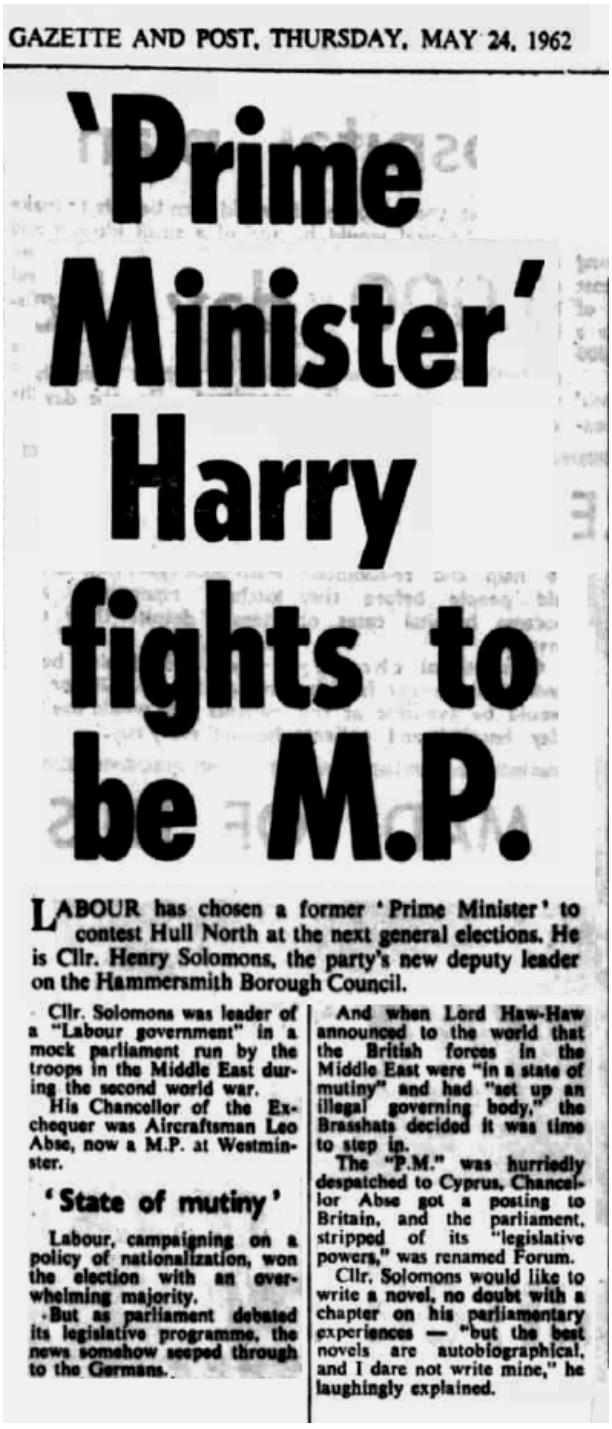
"This was a period – for reasons I've never seen convincingly explained – when antisocial behaviour spiked (football hooliganism was another manifestation of the same malaise). In housing terms, the obvious target of blame to many seemed to be the design of the new multi-storey, modernist estates – their lack of 'defensible space' and 'natural surveillance' in the jargon of the time and the design features – decks and stairways – held to facilitate crime."

The Charecroft is a happier estate today though not without problems - for example, a flat fire a few months after the Grenfell tragedy raised concerns about the cladding of the blocks, though this estate's was completely different to Grenfell Tower's.

This is still not an affluent estate and amenities for children are nowhere near as good as they should be. But there is far less crime, in part because the council eventually found vandal-proof CCTV and security doors, but also because that crazed wave of vandalism, so prevalent for a time, faded away.

The W12 shopping centre beneath the estate has struggled, in no small part because of the opening of Westfield just to the north which dwarves its older neighbour. But W12 has found a niche with shops catering to the residents living above and around it.

The Charecroft estate and Osram Court are not the only sources of votes for Labour from public housing. There is Sulgrave Gardens, built in the basin the railway line used to run through. This was recently added to by an Octavia Hill Housing Association development next door.



GAZETTE AND POST, THURSDAY, MAY 24, 1962

'Prime Minister' Harry fights to be M.P.

LABOUR has chosen a former 'Prime Minister' to contest Hull North at the next general elections. He is Cllr. Henry Solomons, the party's new deputy leader on the Hammersmith Borough Council.

Cllr. Solomons was leader of a "Labour government" in a mock parliament run by the troops in the Middle East during the second world war.

His Chancellor of the Exchequer was Aircraftsman Leo Abse, now a M.P. at Westminster.

'State of mutiny'

Labour, campaigning on a policy of nationalization, won the election with an overwhelming majority.

But as parliament debated its legislative programme, the news somehow seeped through to the Germans.

And when Lord Haw-Haw announced to the world that the British forces in the Middle East were "in a state of mutiny" and had "set up an illegal governing body," the Brasshats decided it was time to step in.

The "P.M." was hurriedly despatched to Cyprus, Chancellor Abse got a posting to Britain, and the parliament, stripped of its "legislative powers," was renamed Forum.

Cllr. Solomons would like to write a novel, no doubt with a chapter on his parliamentary experiences — "but the best novels are autobiographical, and I dare not write mine," he laughingly explained.

Between Minford and Westwick Gardens there is the Charcroft estate - a small, low rise tenement estate long council block in Netherwood Road and the council and housing associations own several properties in places like Lakeside Road, with its unusual white brick town-houses and wrought iron light stands at the top of the staircases to the basements.

The 1978-1986 Conservative-led council attempted to sell off the basement flats (they came with the rear gardens of the buildings) in Lakeside Road but most of the sales were halted when Labour won in 1986. The campaign to stop the Lakeside Road sell-offs was an early example of a community, led by an influential Residents Association, organising politically around a single issue and taking their fight to the politicians. And winning.

Addison also has a claim to a part in national political folklore. One of Addison's (and thereafter Olympia's) councillors in the 1950s was Harry Solomons. In 1964 Solomons became MP for Kingston-Upon-Hull North but his was a very short tenure: he collapsed in the House of Commons, and later died, in 1966. It was Labour's performance in the ensuing Hull North by-election that encouraged Harold Wilson to call the 1966 general election, which resulted in a Labour landslide.

Solomons was not the only Member of Parliament Addison has produced: Bridget Prentice served as a Lewisham MP for considerably longer having represented this ward from 1986 to 1992.

Addison also drew some local media attention in 1962 when Spencer Ward, a black candidate, was selected by Labour. Despite the speculation of the news headline reproduced on page 52 at that time this was a somewhat risky selection in a marginal ward. But Ward held Addison in both the last election for the old Hammersmith Metropolitan Borough and the first for the new London Borough of Hammersmith two years later.

In electoral terms marginal wards tend to fall into just two types. There are wards that can swing substantially, and wards where voters are much more entrenched in their political allegiances - for example a ward with perhaps a large council estate and a similarly sized affluent area competing. In these wards who wins depends more on which party is better at getting its vote out than the national political environment. Addison is very clearly in the former type: a swing marginal, for reasons discussed earlier.



LABOUR M.P. FAINTS IN THE HOUSE

THE collapse of a 62-year-old Shepherds Bush man in the early hours of Thursday morning further imperilled the Government's slender majority.

He is Labour M.P. Mr. Henry Solomons, of Flanchford-road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Solomons, member for Hull North, fainted in the House of Commons after an all-night Finance Bill sitting.

He was rushed to Westminster Hospital for "investigations."

A spokesman for the Central Labour Party said this week that Mr. Solomons was still being detained for observation. The Party, already strained to the limit to hold a majority in the House, are hoping it will be only for a few more days.

At her home in Shepherds Bush, his wife, Mrs. Anne Solomons said: "For six weeks prior to his collapse my husband had been suffering from lumbago. He was so busy going out at eight in the morning and returning home in the early hours of the morning that he did not have time to see his doctor.

"Then that last four hours in committee was too much for him He collapsed," she went on.

"Now at least he is getting some well deserved rest. I am hoping he will be out and about again in a few days," explained Mrs. Solomons as she rushed off to the Westminister Hospital to visit her husband.

Mr. Henry Solomons was a Councillor on the old Metropolitan Borough of Hammersmith up until its recent merger with the Greater London Council.

In 2022 Addison's bellwether status came into question, in part because of that status as a swing marginal. The ward swung to Labour by 17% if comparing that year with the different boundaries of 2018 or some 13% if you use the notional 2018 result. That was the largest movement to Labour of any ward and it made Addison the second safest ward in the borough. Labour polled 70% - their best share prior to this was 59% in 1994.

But in 2026 Labour did a lot worse, dropping 24 points to 46%; much more in line with historic norms. Yet the Conservatives barely benefited from that huge slide: they gained just 1.4% to end up with a still woeful 16%. Instead, the Greens - who had never contested the ward - won 19% and Reform UK won 10%.

This was not a Green target but the party did some work here, judging that the ward may be open to their demands for the council to divest its pension funds from investments in businesses with links to Israel.

The big population of young, left-leaning private renters also made Addison a ward with considerable potential for the party.

Because the Conservative vote didn't budge, that big Labour slide still left them with a substantial majority of around 30% - less daunting than the 55% lead of 2022 but still not exactly competitive. Even less so given they finished behind the Greens.

Until the Conservatives can put Addison back in play they cannot win Hammersmith and Fulham - so in that sense it is still a bellwether.

But it also shows how deep the hole the party is in, with Labour winning three votes for every one that went Tory. That is a huge gap to close and it almost certainly can't be done whilst Reform are winning 200 votes in Addison.

Addison stays with Labour

By NICK HOPKINS

NEW councillor Jane Hackworth-Young has vowed to fight homelessness in her ward after claiming a thumping Addison by-election victory for Labour.

The 44-year-old from Milson Road, West Kensington, put the problem first on her priority list within hours of trouncing her main Tory challenger.

Her win eases the pressure on the ruling Labour group in the council chamber, which retains its majority of six seats.

Voters defied miserable weather on Thursday last week to elect a new councillor to replace Bridget Prentice who was elected to Parliament in April.

Despite pre-election fighting talk from Conservative candidate Roderick Corrie, the evening count at Hammersmith Town Hall showed solid Labour loyalty in the ward.

After the figures were declared, Cllr Hackworth-Young said: "Obviously I am delighted with the result, but I know the real work starts now. There are a lot of hard, hard problems that we have to deal with.

"I am the new girl and I have no idea what committees I will end up on but tackling homelessness in Addison is an extremely high priority for me. It is a difficult problem but I hope we can find ways of housing people. Cllr Jeff Kenner (the other Addison councillor) has done marvellously well already."

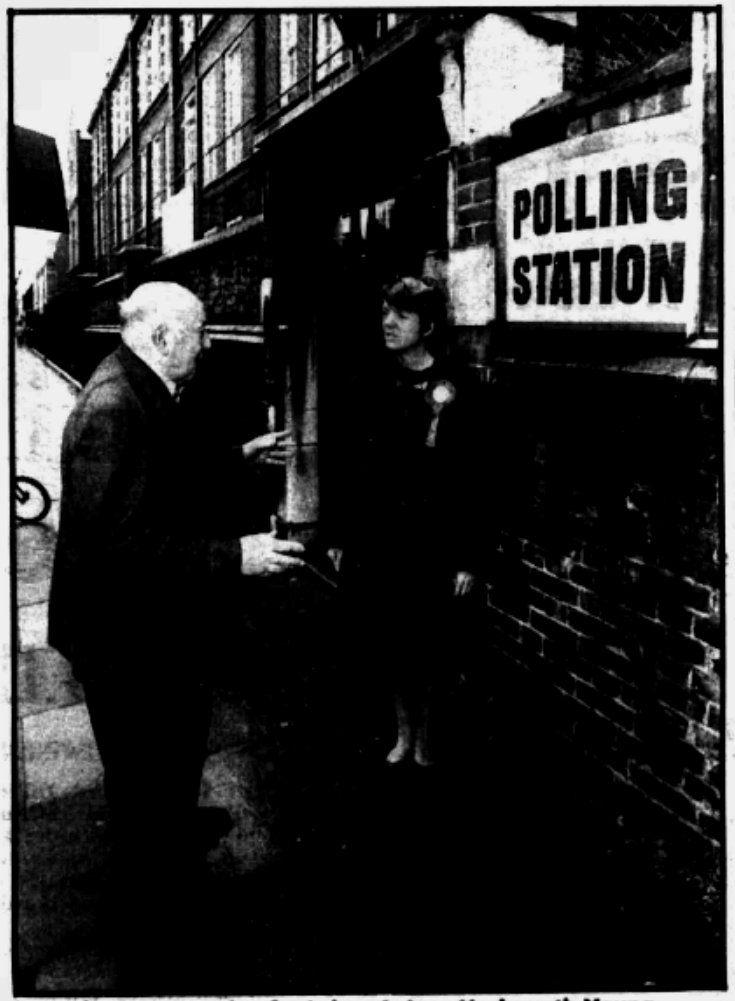
She added: "I am looking forward to our advice surgeries. People do not like ringing their councillors up – it is much better to have face to face meetings and the Addison surgeries are very well attended."

She says she is also looking forward to council chamber battles with other members. "Sometimes we all scream and shout at each other, which I think is a good thing. Getting issues out in the open is something the Labour party is good at."

The full results were:

Jane Hackworth-Young, Labour, 1,014 votes.
Roderick Corrie, Conservative, 695 votes.
Angus McIntosh, Liberal Democrat, 78 votes.
Roger Crosskey, Green Party, 30 votes.

The turnout was 40.2 per cent.



Last minute canvassing for Labour's Jane Hackworth-Young

Rollcall of Addison ward councillors

2026
- Jacolyn Daly
- Ross Melton

2022
- Jacolyn Daly
- Ross Melton

2018
- Adam Connell
- Sue Fennimore
- Rachel Leighton

2014
- Adam Connell
- Belinda Donovan
- Sue Fennimore

2010
- Alex Chalk
- Belinda Donovan
- Peter Tobias

2006
- Helen Binmore
- Belinda Donovan
- Peter Tobias

2002
- Siobhan Coughlan
- Ghassan Karian
- Melanie Smallman

1998
- Siobhan Coughlan
- Ghassan Karian

1994
- Jacqueline Abbott
- Jane Hackworth-Young

1992B
- Jane Hackworth-Young

1990
- Jeff Kenner
- Bridget Prentice

1986
- Jeff Kenner
- Bridget Prentice

1982
- Eleanor Belsham
- Simon Chase

1978
- Eleanor Belsham
- Simon Chase

1976B
- Eleanor Belsham
- Eddie Cunningham

1974
- Christine Hammond
- Louis Hanscombe
- Phyllis Perlin

1971
- Mildred Bamford
- Liam O'Neill
- Leonard Stanley

1968
- Arthur Belsham
- Eleanor Belsham
- Douglas Ward

1964
- Charles Parsons
- Ben Sawbridge
- Spencer Ward

1962
- Eric Gosling
- Charles Parsons
- Spencer Ward

1959
- Eric Gosling
- Charles Parsons
- Harry Solomans

1956
- Eric Gosling
- Robert Oak
- Harry Solomans

1953
- J. Brady
- Harry Solomans
- M. Wakeman

1949
- J. Giles
- J. Leach
- E. Webb

Avonmore ward

In her concession speech at the Fulham Borough Council elections of 1937, Labour councillor Ethel Rankin - who had switched wards and lost in safely Conservative Baron's Court - predicted that the ward would one day elect Labour councillors.

In narrow terms, Cllr Rankin was wrong: Baron's Court ward itself never returned Labour councillors. But today the area covered by that ward - either side of Talgarth Road - is represented by Labour councillors.

Baron's Court covered almost all of current Avonmore ward: the area bordered by Talgarth Road in the south, the borough boundary in the east, Hammersmith Road in the north and Edith and Gliddon Roads in the west. The only part not in Baron's Court was the area west of Gliddon Road. It extended south to include the Baron's Court estate and the area east of North End Road that, in those days, were railway sidings for the Lillie Bridge London Transport depot.

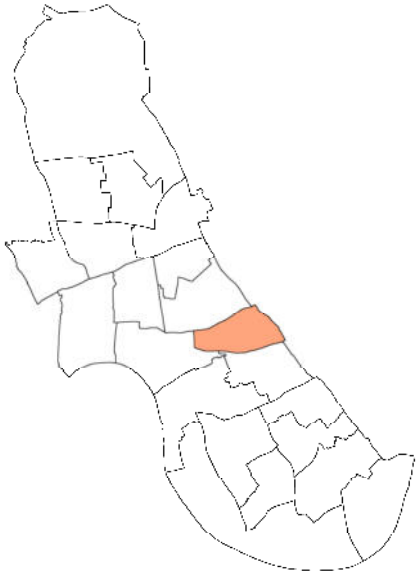
This six-councillor ward always returned Conservatives or whatever title they chose to stand under, and often piled up Conservative majorities that would not have looked out of place in the safest Tory boroughs.

Over 90% voted for Municipal Reform in three elections and over 70% in a further seven. In the two elections following the First World War: 1919 and 1922, they were unopposed.

Avonmore ward was first created in 1964 - in no small part because Talgarth Road had become the A4 - a dual carriageway so busy that it was now a physical boundary that could not credibly be crossed. The Conservatives won with over 60% despite Labour winning the borough by over twenty points. In their 1968 landslide, the Tories came close to 80%, before returning to just under 60% in 1971.

So the key question that needs explaining in respect of Avonmore is: why have the Conservatives lost control of their very safest redoubt in Hammersmith and Fulham? Let's return to that question circuitously.

Avonmore covers the majority of the historic village of North End: one of the founding settlements of what became Fulham.



The village began as a linear settlement on both sides of North End Road, with precious little beyond it other than the fields and market gardens that the Gunter family, principally, cultivated.

If Addison ward is associated with Joseph Addison, Avonmore - though you wouldn't know it from the ward name - is inextricably linked to the Gunter family, and in particular James Gunter; the market gardener, confectioner and property developer.

The Gunter brothers between them accrued a considerable amount of land in wider south Kensington; much of which, like Avonmore, was for the growth of their market garden businesses - though further afield The Boltons and Gunter Grove are examples of their property portfolio. What is now Gliddon Road represented the most westerly extent of their grounds.

The legacy of James Gunter is evident in Avonmore ward: not just Gunterstone Road, but Gwendwr Gardens - one of the few public spaces in the ward, gifted to the parish and laid out by the man himself.

It is a fluke of history but the creation of the London Boroughs in 1900 happened to coincide with the boom in house-building in Fulham. You will find some of those responsible for constructing Fulham serving on the borough council in the early days: Jimmy Nichols: who built the distinctive Lion Houses on the Peterborough

estate in the south, and John Flew: responsible for large sections of Avonmore.

A third of these big developers who worked with Flew: William Gibbs, built much of the Barons Court estate and Queens Club Gardens - perhaps even had the Gibbs Green estate named after him. Gibbs lived in Mornington Avenue, in this ward - though his house was demolished when Fulham Council widened North End Road.

This is incredibly densely packed West Kensington with a wide mix of housing styles; from long streets of huge (often sub-divided) houses like Edith Road, for example, to the sort of ornate red-brick mansion blocks of Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Avenues, or Bishop Kings Road more typically found in Knightsbridge.

money-lender who, on his death, bestowed £670,000 to a trust specifically for constructing homes for the poor of London. That doesn't sound much in modern terms but at it was equivalent to £30 million in today's money and London - especially what were then its outskirts like Baron's Court - was nothing like as expensive as it is today.

The Trust he founded was able to build eight substantial housing estates in a ring around central London, including two in Fulham: the Lisgar Terrace estate here and the Vanston Place estate in Fulham Broadway.

Immediately south of this estate was The Grange, a rather grand house occupied by the printer and author Samuel Richardson and later the famous Arts and Crafts



There are more modern mansion blocks like the massive North End House towers, and Baron's Keep in Gliddon Road; a horseshoe-shaped 1930s mansion block in the Art Deco ocean liner style, set around a central green.

North End Road divides the eastern and western sides of the ward. The eastern side is more densely packed and contains most of the council and housing association blocks.

The oldest of the estates: the Samuel Lewis Trust buildings in Lisgar Terrace, was built in 1927. Lewis was a

Movement painter Edward Burne Jones. The Grange was still standing after the end of the Second World War but it was dilapidated beyond salvage and so Fulham Borough Council purchased the site to build the Grange and Samuel Richardson estate.

Some of the grounds of the original Grange were retained: the sunken garden in between the two main blocks on the estate. Further blocks are scattered further afield; on both sides of North End Road, in Mornington Avenue and Edith Villas. This is all the Lytton Estate.

FULHAM CHRONICLE FRIDAY DECEMBER 23, 1927

Baron's Court By-election

DR. BOKENHAM RETURNED

No Change and No Excitement

Baron's Court Ward was not excited over the polling at the Fulham Borough Council by-election on Saturday. The ward is the stronghold of the Municipal Reform Party, and the result, generally anticipated, was a victory for the Reform Party's candidate, Dr. T.J. Bokenham.

Even his opponent, Mr Vanderhook, the nominee of the Labour Party, regarded his chances as hopeless, for, to use his own wards, he only allowed himself to stand to give the supporters of his party an opportunity of registering a vote of 'no confidence".

This concession will cost the ratepayers approximately £50, the estimated expenses of the election.

The vacancy was caused by the retirement from public duties of Mr. F. Holmes, L.C.C., who was elected under the Municipal Reform banner.

There are 5,960 persons on the electoral roll, and the result was:

Dr. Bokenham (MR)	...	958
Mr Vanderhook (Lab)	...	156

Just under 18.75 per cent of the electorate went to the poll.

The by-election was colourless. There were two stations, one at West Kensington Lecture Hall, Challoner Street, and the other at William Street School. Polling was from 8am to 8pm.

One Every Two Minutes

The Labour candidate with his agent, Mr Turner, was at the West Kensington Lecture Hall just before polling commenced, and within a few minutes of the booth being opened nine electors registered their votes. Matters were quiet all the morning, the average polling being about 30 an hour at each station.

Things livened up after noon, and between 1 and 2 o'clock the votes registered at both stations were 102.

During the afternoon the people of Baron's Court apparently went shopping, for the voting business dropped again, and things were painfully slow - so slow in fact that it was difficult to realise that there was an election in progress. By 7 o'clock over 900 had been to the poll, and balloting became fairly brisk.

Dr. Bokenham and his agent (Captain Parsons) visited both stations during the morning and afternoon. Dr. Bokenham was offered the use of seven or eight cars, and these he kept fully employed. His opponent had the assistance of Dr. Spero's car during the afternoon only.

Dr. Bokenham issued 6,000 addresses and a number of handbills, and his opponent 5,000 addresses. Mr. Vanderhook did not publish any handbills, but he held the only meeting of the election.

Counting the Votes

The votes were counted the same evening in the Council chamber at the Town Hall. The Town Clerk (Mr. W. Townend) was the Returning Officer, and six clerks counted the votes. Council commenced at 8.20, and was concluded soon after nine o'clock. Dr. Bokenham was accompanied by Mrs. Bokenham, and among his supporters present were his agent (Captain Parsons), Aldermen Clark and Armfield, and Councillors White and Pritchard.

Mr. Vanderhook, with Mrs. Vanderhook, was supported by Mr. Turner, his agent, Mrs. Kenworthy, wife of Commander Kenworthy, M.P., and a resident of Baron's Court ward), Mr. Louis Hill (a Labour ex-Mayor), Councillor Ballantyne, and Mr. Membery (a Fulham Guardian).

The announcement of the result of the ballot was received with mild applause, and Dr. Bokenham's smile, which he had been wearing all the evening, became more expansive.

In proposing the customary vote of thanks to the Returning office and his staff, Dr Bokenham said he appreciated the efficient manner with which the election was carried out. Although he had not been a resident of Fulham long, he had been privileged to take an active part in the representation of the borough.

Mr. Vanderhook had obviously experienced an anxious day and appeared to be relieved the 'job was over'. In seconding the vote of thanks he said he made no apology for contesting the election. He bowed out of the fight the same way he went in: it was a pleasant and clean fight. He hoped to have the opportunity of placing his call to the electors of Fulham on another occasion.

The Returning Officer, voicing his thanks, said he claimed no reward personally. The expeditious way the election was conducted was due to his efficient staff.

Candidates on the Results

When interviewed, Mr Vanderhook said the Labour Party was 'not the party with the cars'.

When Dr. Bokenham's attention was drawn to the difference of the number of cars lent by his supporters and the handicap of Mr. Vanderhook, he said: "Everything is fair except cheating. Why shouldn't we have cars?" Dr. Bokenham added: "I admire the pluck of Mr. Vanderhook."

Virtually all the rest of the eastern side of Avonmore comprises mansion blocks or large town-houses, many with basements. There are 19th-century blocks like those across Hammersmith Road from Olympia: Argyll and Rugby Mansions in Bishop King's Road, and behind them Marcus Garvey Park: the only public open space in Avonmore other than Gwendwr Gardens. Marcus Garvey, the black rights leader who tried to proclaim himself Emperor of Africa even though he was born in the Caribbean, lived in Talgarth Road towards the end of his life.

Avonmore Road is a mix of red-brick and terracotta mansion blocks and town-houses that dog-legs to become the Kensington Village small business centre.

Addison Bridge Place, opposite the West London Line, has a range of housing styles, including black brick Georgian town-houses more typical of Westminster. Harold Laski, the left-wing academic and Labour Party Chairman, of whom Clement Attlee suggested *"a period of silence on your part would be welcome"* lived here. His wife, Frida, served as a Fulham Borough councillor for Lillie ward and he was an Alderman from 1937 to 1949.

The western side of Avonmore - the Gunter side if you will - is somewhat less densely packed, with the five roads built on that estate: Gunterstone, Gwendwr, Glazbury, Trevanion and Edith comprising long terraces of four-storey houses, almost all subdivided.

If this profile had been written at any point prior to 1986 it would describe the second safest Conservative ward in the borough. Avonmore was the one ward the Conservatives never lost, even in 1971, when they returned just two councillors. Avonmore provided the seat of council leader John Putnam until 1986.

Then in 1986 Avonmore deviated. On a 17% swing, Putnam was ousted. Perhaps aptly he was defeated by a future Labour council leader (and Fulham MP) Iain Coleman, along with his partner and another significant councillor of that era, Sally Powell.

Because Labour believed their 1986 gain here was too good to be true, the controversies of the 1986-1990 term such as massive rate rises, the Rate Swaps scandal and the Conservative recapture of Fulham in the 1987 general election, neither councillor defended Avonmore in 1990. Coleman moving south to contest next-door Gibbs Green; Powell moving north to Wormholt; both far more secure.



Council by-election

TWO CANDIDATES CHOSEN FOR BARONS COURT

FIRST in the field with candidates for the borough council by-election in Barons Court Ward, caused by the resignation of Cllr. O. V. Michael, were the Conservatives and Liberals.

At the elections last year all six Conservative candidates in Barons Court Ward were returned with comfortable majorities. Mr. Michael, who was deputy leader of the Opposition on the council, has resigned his seat owing to business reasons.

It is likely that the by-election will take place on December 14.

CONSERVATIVE

Conservative candidate is 36-year-old Mr. Desmond Harrington Henri, of Barons Court Road, chairman of Barons Court Ward.

If Mr. Henri wins he will join his uncle, Cllr. V. A. Baron, on the council. A manager with the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which organises the motor show, Mr. Henri is

LIBERAL

The Liberal candidate is Mr. Bernard Davis, of Stanwick Mansions, Stanwick Road,

West Kensington, partner in a firm of accountants.

Aged 37, Mr. Davis is hon. treasurer of East Fulham Liberal Association and a member of the executive committee of the Barons Court Liberal organisation.

Mr. Davis has lived in West Kensington for five years. During the war he served with the Royal Army Pay Corps. He is married.

When he was demobilised he joined the British Legion and, as a member of the Clapton branch, helped to institute a scheme to aid returning soldiers. He was instrumental in forming a technical advisory bureau for the purpose of obtaining licences and concessions for ex-soldiers wishing to start in business.

The 1990 result suggests this was the right tactic because the Tories fairly easily regained Avonmore. Of all the surprise Conservative losses of 1986 this was the one that returned to their fold most convincingly.

But this was not to be a return to service as usual. An 8% swing back to Labour in 1994 ousted one of the Conservative incumbents with Labour's Keith Mallinson winning by over 100 (6%) - a larger margin than 1986. This was not an isolated swing: in next door Brook Green it was 10% and produced a similar result: one Labour, one Conservative councillor elected. There was a small swing back to the Tories in Avonmore in 1998, but not enough of one to oust Mallinson who held on by thirteen votes.

Several forces had been at work to produce these much better Labour performances. The W14 postcode area which covers most of this ward has been trending almost as substantially towards Labour over the past three decades as SW6 has travelled in the opposite direction.

In part that is because a pretty stable, politically engaged affluent, middle class demographic was replaced by a younger, less political and less affluent demographic, especially in the large private-rented sector. Avonmore has also become much less white: it has the largest population of non-British born citizens in the borough.

Perhaps, given that the ward has for decades had two fairly large council and housing association estates, the Conservatives were also flattered by how easily they won. Labour had its own wards and better targets to focus on, and the estates were outvoted by the rest of the ward up until the rest of the ward changed demographically. In a ward that was slyly and slowly trending towards Labour the Fulham parliamentary by-election of April 1986 may have given them sufficient of a boost to offset their lack of organisation for the council elections a month later.

The 2000 electoral review, which required the drawing of 3-councillor wards to enable annual elections, with one councillor elected each year, posed some challenges in this area. Avonmore was nowhere near large enough to justify an extra councillor.

But the physical confines within which the ward lies are considerable. While Hammersmith Road is less significant a road than Talgarth, it is still incredibly busy, ferrying traffic between Hammersmith Broadway and High Street Kensington.

And it is not just the road itself that is formidable: it is lined by substantial buildings - residential and commercial - that further prise apart the communities on either side. And, although this mattered little in practical terms, Avonmore was a Fulham ward, Brook Green a Hammersmith one.



TORY MAJORITY MORE THAN DOUBLED

Pointer of Barons Court By-Election

THE FULHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL BY-ELECTION IN BARONS COURT RESULTED IN A CONSERVATIVE VICTORY, AND THE MAJORITY OF 1,421 SURPRISED BOTH CONTESTING PARTIES.

THE LABOUR PARTY HAVE NEVER WON A SEAT IN BARONS COURT, BUT AT THE TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS A YEAR AGO, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LOWEST SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE AND THE HIGHEST UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE WAS ONLY 500.

FOR THE CONSERVATIVES TO HAVE MORE THAN DOUBLED THEIR MAJORITY AT A BY-ELECTION IS REMARKABLE AND REGARDED AS A POLITICAL POINTER.

Despite the rain in the afternoon and evening on polling day the voting stations were kept busy. West Kensington Central School had a constant flow between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., but St. Andrew's Hall was not so active.

The ballot boxes were conveyed to Fulham Town Hall where an expeditious staff, under the direction of the Town Clerk, Mr. C. F. Thatcher, were in readiness for the count.

The Figures

In less than half an hour it was obvious from a close study of the tables that the Conservatives had won, but there was a good deal of speculation as to what the majority would be. When the result was announced even the Tories were surprised. The figures were:—

Lieut.-Col. E. J. P. Cussen (Cons.) 2,695
Mrs. L. Coomber (Lab.) 1,274

Proud to Return to Council

Proposing the customary vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and his staff, Lieut.-Col. Cussen said: "Mrs. Coomber has given us a very clean fight. I think everyone will agree it is a great pity that the inhabitants of some troubled parts of Europe could not have been in Fulham to-day to see how an election should be conducted.

"I am very proud to have been elected to the Council. No one knows better than myself what a high honour it is, because I have previously been a member. I will do my best in the interests of the Council of which, as a corporate body, we are all so proud."

Seconding, Mrs. Coomber said she was always glad of an opportunity to pay tribute to the Council's staff. Agreeing with what Mr. Cussen had said she congratulated him on his success. "I know he is a very able man and that he will do his best to further the interests of the citizens of Fulham," she added.

"It has been a good fight—I always enjoy a good fight—and there have been no personalities. We are not downhearted and we shall fight again."

The Town Clerk suitably acknowledged the vote of thanks and said he could always rely upon his staff to provide an efficient and harmonious team for an election. Mr. Thatcher also paid a tribute to the agents of the parties contesting the election and said they had contributed in every way to the smooth running of the day.

Salvage ?

Arrival of the ballot boxes at the Town Hall was greeted with roars of laughter.

The vehicle used for the transport was a Borough Council motor-van, on the sides of which were pasted prominent posters :— "DON'T WASTE PAPER."

DEATH OF MISS H. A. PACKER

Accident at Fulham Hospital.

We regret to record the death of Miss Harriett Anne Packer, 28 Auriol-road, West Kensington, who was a member of the Fulham Borough Council from 1923 to 1928.

Miss Packer, who was 75 years of age, had been in failing health for the past twelve months. She passed away in Fulham Hospital on Sunday week.

A daughter of the Rev. J. G. Packer, vicar of St. Peter, Bethnal Green, for 30 years, Miss Packer was one of the first women to graduate at Oxford University. She had a great belief in the ability of women to play their part in national and civic life, and she was associated with the women's suffrage movement. She came to Fulham about 16 years ago, and became Principal of the Queen Elizabeth School for Girls at Auriol-road. Previously she was headmistress of Buxton High School. She was a staunch Conservative and became a prominent member of the East Fulham Conservative and Unionist Association.

Returned Unopposed in By-Election.

In 1923 Miss Packer was nominated for a vacancy on the Fulham Borough Council for Barons Court Ward at a By-Election, and she was returned unopposed.

Miss Packer was intensely interested in municipal and political matters, and she found plenty of scope for her activities. She was particularly keen on tackling local housing problems, and was actively associated with the launching of the Fulham Housing Association, of which she subsequently became a vice-president. In 1925 Miss Packer was elected a councillor for Barons Court Ward. Her poll of 2,356 votes was the lowest of the six successful Municipal Reform candidates in that ward. Although she did not take a particularly prominent part in Council debates, Miss Packer did a good deal of work behind the scenes as a member of the Public Health, Works and Highways, and Housing Committees.

As a Borough Councillor she had a ready tongue, and often crossed swords with political friend and foe. On one occasion a member of the Council, speaking against the staff appointment of a woman, said that men had to work to keep women. Miss Packer quickly retorted, amid laughter, that it was very often the other way about.

Defeated as Unofficial Conservative Candidate.

In the 1928 Borough Council election Miss Packer contested Barons Court Ward as an unofficial Conservative, and was defeated. She secured 649 votes—the highest number of votes polled by the seven defeated condidates, of whom six were Labour. This election was notable for the entrance into the political arena of the Fulham Housing Association, which issued a manifesto asking the voters to elect a Council that would be prepared to make the fullest use of the large powers conferred on borough councils, both for building and for remedying insanitary conditions.

The reasons why Miss Packer was not one of the official Conservative candidates in Barons Court at the 1928 election were adequately summed up in an editorial note in the "Fulham Chronicle" at the time. This read:—"Miss Packer has proved herself rather an extreme Conservative in some directions, and certainly very loquacious. Apparently it is thought that a Conservative of a more moderate type is likely to prove more acceptable to the rank and file of the party. Miss Packer prefers, however, to accept the decision of the electors, but she is making it clear that she is still a Conservative. A keen economist, she considers that a Fulham housing scheme could be evolved without placing any further burden on the State or the rate, but there are few members of her party who think likewise."

After her defeat Miss Packer became associated with the National Citizens' Union, serving on the committee. She remained a staunch Conservative, and attended two or three meetings in support of the Hon. W. W. Astor, M.P., at the last Parliamentary election. During her lifetime Miss Packer wrote several books, including novels.

Because there was no serious chance of crossing Talgarth Road, the only way Avonmore could expand were across Hammersmith Road and Gliddon Road: Avonmore and Brook Green ward was created. That said, given that two 2-councillor wards were created that year, it'd have been more logical for Avonmore to have been one of these instead of Palace Riverside.

Avonmore and Brook Green ward had quite opaque boundaries, zigzagging behind houses and across streets: it looked a little like the old fashioned clothes-irons that used to be heated on the hearth before electric steam irons came along.

Politically, though, there would have been very little difference in outcomes however the ward was drawn because the bits of Brook Green that transferred were mixed: the Springvale council estate for example off-setting the gated-off Windsor Way. Plus even more private tenants in the massive Latimer Court block near the Broadway.

The first election of the new 3-councillor ward was won by the Conservatives - a notional gain of two seats but the third by just 39 votes.

Between the 1998 and 2002 contests Keith Mallinson, always a relative outsider in the group, had resigned the Labour whip to sit as an independent. He had previously stood as an Alliance candidate in Ravenscourt and before that was a Conservative Party activist, so this was his fourth political description. Four became five in 2026 when he contested Avonmore in the Green Party interest.

Contesting the ward as an independent in 2002 Mallinson polled 327 votes (11%) - far from embarrassing even though it still placed him last - but a much larger number of votes than the 39 vote majority Cllr Jolyon Neubert (son of former Romford MP Sir Michael Neubert, who was parliamentary candidate for Hammersmith North in 1966) won.

Would Mallinson's absence from the ballot have given that seat to Labour? It's unclear for the simple reason that the Lib Dems only fielded two candidates, maybe to support Mallinson's bid or just because they struggled to find candidates in that election. Mallinson's 327 was in line with the Lib Dem share, so it can't be assumed that his vote came from otherwise Labour supporters - it's more likely he got, in the main, Lib Dem supporters' third votes.

Labour's Daryl Brown, a well-known and popular candidate who would later become a councillor and mayor, finished substantially - 150 votes - ahead of her running mates, so it could also be argued that the Conservatives would have won by more without her presence. But, of course, it's conceivable that 40 more Labour votes could have been found from within Mallinson's 327 and that some of his support came from Labour supporters he had helped as councillor.

Avonmore and Brook Green swung heavily to the Conservatives in 2006, giving them nearly 60% of the vote and majorities of between 738 and 816. But if the Conservatives believed they had fixed whatever glitch had cost them here in the recent past they were mistaken.

In 2010 the Lib Dems won 20% of the vote. All of their advance came at the expense of the Conservatives: Labour remained unchanged at just under 30%. This knocked ten points off the Conservative majority and pulled them just within range in 2014.

The Lib Dems polled over 20% in seven Hammersmith and Fulham wards in 2010 - the council elections that coincided with the *"I agree with Nick"* [Clegg] general election; they were only just below 20% in a further five. This was on a par with their best result in 1982, just after the Liberal SDP Alliance was formed, but this time they won no seats and weren't all that close in any. Because this party is so weak in Hammersmith and Fulham they could do little to build on that decent vote share and so, in 2014, they collapsed again. But the ten percentage points they won from the Conservatives did not return to that party. Instead it went to Labour - and that boost was enough to cost them one seat yet again.

The new councillor, Hannah Barlow, didn't last long: she resigned in 2017 causing a by-election held on general election day. Labour won Hammersmith in the general election by a landslide, and managed an easy by-election hold in Avonmore and Brook Green. Avonmore Residents' Association chairman David Morton won by almost 950 votes or 18%: the biggest Labour win ever.

The 2018 council elections were a re-run of the by-election result with Labour gaining the other two seats - the margin being very slightly narrower but far from close. Joe Carlebach became the second Conservative group leader to be defeated in Avonmore, 32 years after John Putnam was ousted here; and also the first time since 1986 that Labour had held all the seats in the ward.

In the 2019 electoral review Labour seized the chance to undo this chimera of a ward and return to separate Avonmore and Brook Green wards, both with two councillors. Avonmore is the same as it was before with some extra territory to the west of Edith Road. The St Paul's Court private estate, Shortlands and Colet Gardens, the sheltered housing in Watermeadow Lane and the one tower block estate in central Hammersmith, Linacre Court came in, plus the sprawling red brick West London College campus.

When the 2022 elections tested the resurrected Avonmore ward, Labour stormed the ward, taking over 60% of the vote. The Conservatives won just 23%. Look at the difference between the last time Avonmore was contested in 1998, and the 2022 result:

	Con	Lab	LD
2022	23.1	61.4	15.5
1998	45.6	42.4	12.0

This gave the ward's Labour councillors huge majorities: 36% and 42%; far larger than the Conservatives had won at any time other than their 1968 landslide. Was Avonmore now a safe Labour ward?

To this point there had been a remarkable swing in Avonmore. When the ward was first contested in 1964 it was 51 percentage points more Conservative than the borough was. In 2022, Avonmore was almost 11 points more Labour than the borough - and the borough had just voted Labour by a huge amount. That's a 31% swing to Labour across nearly sixty years and sixteen elections.

Avonmore has changed hugely in the intervening period: much of the Lytton estate hadn't been built at the ward's birth, the ward has become significantly more ethnically and culturally diverse and the political leanings of the huge numbers of private renters have shifted.

This has coupled with, of course, a steep decline in the fortunes of the Conservatives - but their problems here specifically were more than just Brexit, Boris Johnson, or having been in power nationally for fourteen years. The downward trend in the Conservative vote long predates the 2010 general election when they returned to government and continued after they were ousted in 2024.

Summary of results for Avonmore ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	71.3		28.7		
1903	64.2		35.8		
1905 By	62.7		37.3		
1906	74.1		17.9		8.0
1909	77.7		13.5		8.8
1909 By	2 Unop				
1912	Unop				
1917 By	Unop				
1919	Unop				
1922	92.9	7.1			
1922 By	Unop				
1923 By	Unop				
1925	89.3	10.7			
1927 By	86.0	14.0			
1928	62.1	11.5			
1929 By	75.8	24.2			
1931	94.4	5.6			
1931 By	Unop				
1934	76.4	23.6			
1937	74.1	25.9			
1937 By	Unop				
1938 By	Unop				
1941 By	Unop				
1943 By	Unop				
1945	58.7	41.3			
1946 By	67.9	32.1			
1949	68.6	31.4			
1950 By	71.8	24.4	3.8		
1953	61.4	38.6			
1956	61.0	39.0			
1957 By	57.9	42.1			
1959	63.2	36.8			
1962	49.3	31.5	19.1		
1964	61.1	38.9			
1968	78.6	21.4			
1971	58.6	41.4			
1974	50.2	35.6	11.3		
1978	61.7	31.6			
1982	55.2	27.4	17.4		
1986	42.0	47.4	10.0		
1990	51.8	37.9			
1994	42.1	44.0	13.9		
1998	45.6	42.4	12.0		
2002	41.4	34.8	12.5		
2006	56.9	29.0	14.1		
2010	46.1	29.0	21.0		
2014	43.2	40.3	9.3		
2017 By	34.9	52.8	12.3		
2018	37.5	52.4	10.1		
2022	37.5	52.4	10.1		
2026	20.8	38.6	5.8	17.2	17.4

Baron's Court ward results: 1900-1962

Avonmore and Brook Green ward results: 2002-2022

For the 2026 council elections, the Conservatives weren't prepared to completely write Avonmore off. They put it in a second tranche of target wards behind Sands End, Walham Green and Brook Green. Trying to regain his former seat was Joe Carlebach, while Keith Mallinson contested the ward for the fourth time, this time for the Greens.

Also standing as an independent was former Labour councillor David Morton, who had been suspended from the party's council group and then decided he was happier as an independent. So: four serving or former Avonmore councillors were on the ballot.

Labour, now back in government and not at all popular, tumbled from their 2022 heights losing 23 percentage points of support. The councillor who polled the second-most amount of votes, new candidate Joe Eaton, won just 35.8% which, in normal times wouldn't have been enough to win with.

But the Conservatives didn't make any progress. In fact they slipped to just 20%. Mallinson as a Green won 17%, Reform polled 8%, David Morton won 8.5% and the Lib Dems came last with just under 6%. So Avonmore is back in that twilight zone: not quite a marginal but with a far from impressive share of the vote. Just less unimpressive than anyone else's.

Some neighbourhoods trend in one direction or another over the long-run and this is especially true of inner city, urban districts like this, with huge churns of population. It would be more remarkable, in fact, if Avonmore's political leanings had not shunted.

The Tories still need Avonmore in their column to win back the council. But they remain a long way adrift: a 9% swing from winning both seats and only beat the Green candidate by 14 votes. That's why it's still very hard to see how they win this borough back.

Rollcall of Avonmore ward councillors

including Avonmore and Brook Green ward (2002-2022) and Baron's Court ward (1900-1964)

2022
- Joe Eaton
- Laura Janes

2022
- Laura Janes
- David Morton

2018
- Rebecca Harvey
- David Morton
- Fiona Smith

2017B
- David Morton

2014
- Hannah Barlow
- Joe Carlebach
- Caroline Ffiske

2010
- Helen Binmore
- Joe Carlebach
- Robert Iggulden

2006
- Will Bethell
- Robert Iggulden
- Alexandra Robson

2002
- Will Bethell
- Sian Dawson
- Jolyon Neubert

1998
- Sonya Hilton
- Keith Mallinson

1994
- Sonya Hilton
- Keith Mallinson

1990
- Sonya Hilton
- Julian Muller

1986
- Iain Coleman
- Sally Powell

1982
- Dominic Grieve
- John Putnam

1978
- John Putnam
- John Wylie

1974
- John Putnam
- John Wylie

1971
- Paul Dwyer
- Reg Simmerson

1968
- Harold Brandon-Brightley
- Reg Simmerson

1964
- Harold Brandon-Brightley
- John Tagg

1962
- Harold Brandon-Brightley
- Francis Fierz
- Laurence Giovene
- Nigel Parkinson
- George Shell
- John Tagg

1959
- Victor Arundell
- Kathleen Barton-Wright
- Evelyn Cribb
- Vlad Kopecky
- Richard Strong
- Mary Viney

1957B
- Cyril Partington

1956
- Edith Clark
- Gladys Cowell
- Robert. Gibbons
- James Harding-Marsh
- Alfred Laver
- Rosemary Longstaff

1953
- Gladys Cowell
- Derek Farrant
- Desmond Henri
- Alfred Laver
- Rosemary Longstaff
- Malcolm Nicol

1949
- Violet Baron
- Gladys Cowell
- Edward Cussen
- Alfred Laver
- O. Michael
- Malcolm Nicol

1946B
- Edward Cussen

1945
- Violet Baron
- R. Cockrill
- Alfred Laver
- O. Michael
- Malcolm Nicol
- Christina Sketchley

1943B
- Lewis Dew

1938B
- Malcolm Nicol

1937
- Edward Cussen
- William Davies
- Christina Sketchley
- Walter Soloman
- Jermyn Vincent-Hill
- William White

1934
- Thomas Bokenham
- Lewis Dew
- Frederick Flew
- Christina Sketchley
- Gerald Thesiger

1933B
- Claude Russell-Brown

1931
- Thomas Beckett
- Thomas Bokenham
- Hubert Bowden
- Catherine Fulford
- George Hodge
- William White

1928
- Thomas Beckett
- Thomas Bokenham
- Hubert Bowden
- Frederick Flew
- Catherine Fulford
- George Hodge

1925
- Frederick Bellenger
- Hubert Bowden
- Frederick Flew
- George Hodge
- Frank Holmes
- Harriet Packer

1922
- Thomas Beckett
- Frederick Bellenger
- Frederick Flew
- George Hodge
- Frank Holmes
- John Panes

1919
- Thomas Beckett
- Frederick Flew
- George Hodge
- George Keen
- Alan Panes
- Edward Thomas

1912
- Thomas Beckett
- Arthur Charleton
- George Keen
- John Nevile
- Edward Thomas
- Job Walbourn

1909
- Thomas Beckett
- Edward Easton
- Robert Harris
- George Keen
- Ethelstan Savigney
- Job Walbourn

1906
- William Birch
- Edward Easton
- Robert Harris
- George Keen
- Charles Pendlebury
- Job Walbourn

1903
- Edward Easton
- Robert Harris
- George Keen
- Charles Pendlebury
- Job Walborn
- William Woods

1900
- Edward Easton
- Robert Harris
- Stephen Parker
- Edward Scriven
- Job Walborn
- William Woods

Brook Green ward

Brook Green is exactly what it says it on the label: a brook running through a green. The brook in question was an offspring of Stamford Brook which enters the Thames on the western side of Furnivall Gardens, though today it's underground.

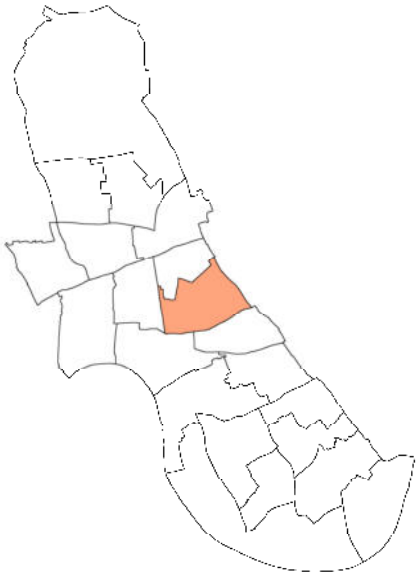
But this offshoot brook has some greater significance because it curved round: across Hammersmith Road, across Talgarth Road and then along the route approximately carved by Margravine Road, Yeldham Road and Chancellors Road. It became the boundary between the old Metropolitan Boroughs of Fulham and Hammersmith: Parr's Ditch.

When Brook Green was first established: that is, when houses sprang up around the green, London was so undeveloped that visitors could see as far as Harrow-on-the-Hill from there, and to the majestic pillars of Bazalgette's Hammersmith Bridge.

There are two distinct sections to Brook Green, reflected for around fifteen years after 1949 in its warding arrangements. The western end of the ward is Brook Green proper. That end is characterised by mainly large townhouses and a mesh of small streets spurring off the green and the undulating Blythe Road to the north. There are more single households here, a lower density of housing and more owner-occupiers.

The east end of the ward is dominated and shaped by the Olympia exhibition centre: a venue that has its own train station and is where local election votes often get counted. This end of the ward has a quite different character. There are the Palladian style mansion houses along Sinclair Road, running parallel to the borough boundary with Kensington, Maclise Road, Hazlitt Road and Gratton Road - the majority of them converted into flats. To some extent this is bedsit land, but fairly expensive bedsits and flats.

At this end of the ward can also be found Blythe House, the six-storey, Grade II listed Baroque former headquarters of the Post Office Savings Bank used in the Gary Oldman remake of Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy. Today it's used to store Victoria and Albert Museum artefacts, though it's still the sorting offices for the W14 postal district.



Olympia and Blythe House are truly imposing buildings occupying a sizeable footprint along the southern edge the ward. It's why they, along with other business parks office blocks and massive mansion blocks along Hammersmith Road, are one reason why forcing a merger of most of Brook Green with Avonmore ward was a bad (if unavoidable) idea prior to the 2002 elections.

Their presence establishes a clear boundary between the inhabited sections of the ward and Hammersmith Road. Yes, it can be crossed - any boundary can be crossed if you downgrade the importance of wards that make sense and representation that is as effective as possible. It just shouldn't be. Even what little housing there is in this part of the ward comes in massive scale: Latymer Court mansions on Hammersmith Road houses over one thousand residents in a 1932 art deco monolith. Not far behind, somewhat more modern - and modernist - blocks form the Windsor Way gated-off private estate.

These blocks add to the feeling of being in an urban canyon along the length of Hammersmith Road; that Brook Green begins some way behind them. The bustle at the Shepherd's Bush Road end of the ward makes you feel as though you are in the heart of a community whereas the heavily-trafficked and relatively sterile environment of Hammersmith Road feels very much like you're between communities, on a boundary.

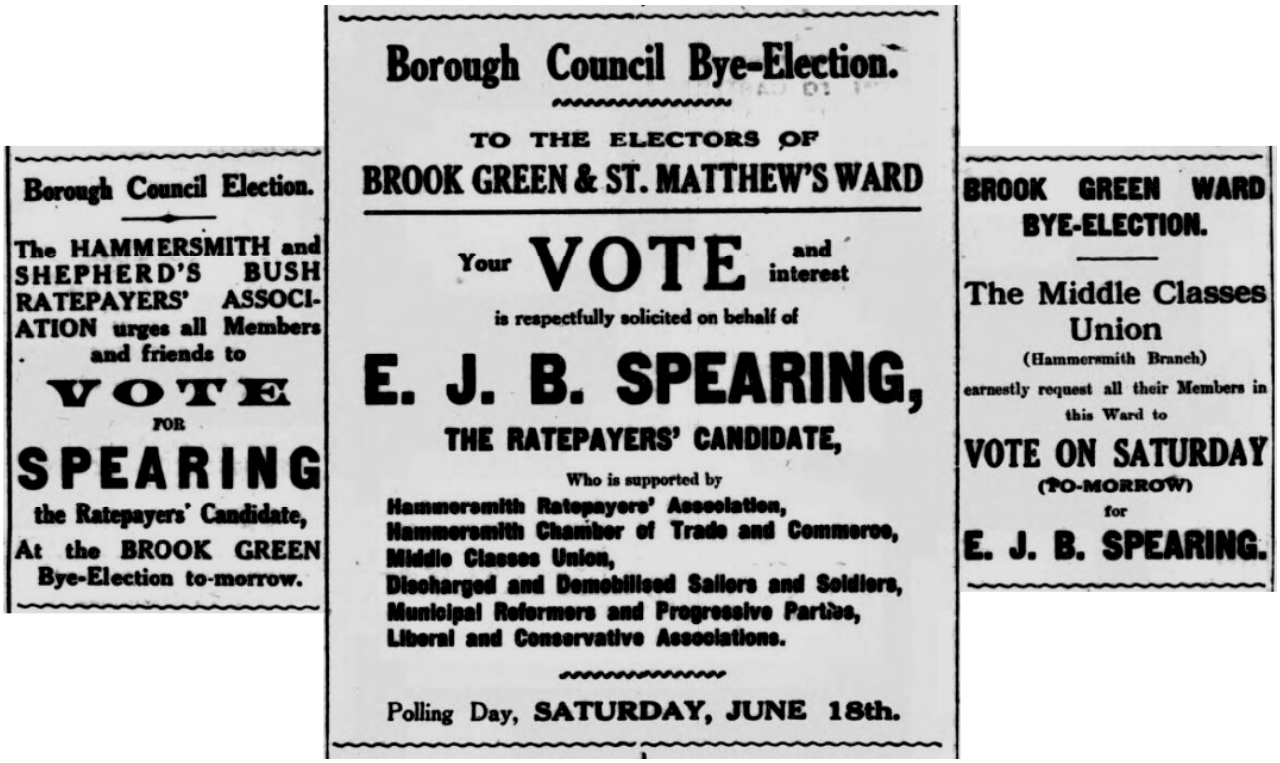
Between these two thoroughfares the streets clearly transition. Take Milson Road for example: at the Olympia end, its housing resembles those Palladian terraces just discussed. At its northern end there is a much lower housing density, with a more typically Hammersmith architectural style, close to the community hubs that are Masbro Road and St Matthew's Church, the parish of which gave its name to part of the larger Brook Green ward that existed prior to 1949.

Also in this transitional centre of the ward is the Springvale council estate: the only public housing of any size in Brook Green, though there are a couple of other small blocks in Milson Road and Springvale Terrace (separate from the Springvale estate). Springvale is an unusual estate comprising eight tenement blocks scattered around the eastern end of Blythe Road and adjoining streets: unusual because it so spread-out: a post-war infill estate.

The chart below epitomises the electoral balance of Brook Green: a ward that from 1970s to 2010 leant towards the Conservatives but which Labour managed to win every so often. Labour would have won a combined Brook Green-Olympia ward in 1962; they won the actual unified Brook Green in 1971; won a seat here in 1994 and both of them fairly easily in 1998; then one seat in Avonmore and Brook Green in 2014 and all three in 2018.

	Con	Lab	Lead
1949	3,261	2,231	**1,030** ●
1953	2,802	2,698	**104** ●
1956	2,029	1,985	**44** ●
1959	1,800	1,783	**17** ●
1962	1,550	1,699	**149** ●

Combined Brook Green and Olympia ward vote totals



From 1949 to 1964 the eastern end of Brook Green had its own ward: Olympia which, other than in its first contest, always voted Labour. Between them Olympia and Brook Green wards covered the current ward, give or take. That means that if we combine the votes from each, we begin to see how Brook Green swung to Labour throughout the 1950s:

But, just like Avonmore - once the only reliable Conservative ward in Fulham Borough - Brook Green has now flipped allegiance and it is Labour that nowadays usually wins the ward by similarly up and down margins.

The original Hammersmith ward on which Brook Green was founded: Brook Green and St Matthews, was vast by



the population numbers of its era, represented by eight councillors. Like neighbouring Barons Court in Fulham, this was always the Conservatives' (or Residents' Association's) best. Labour only managed to win it once - in their 1945 landslide - and normally they lost by large margins.

The better Labour, northern, half of this huge ward was cleaved off in 1949 to form Addison so core Brook Green should have been even safer than Brook Green and St Matthew's. In that election the Conservatives won it easily: 62% to Labour's 38%, while Olympia also went Tory a bit more narrowly: 57% to 43%.

But in 1953 an 11% swing flipped Olympia to Labour and a 4.5% swing in Brook Green halved the Conservative majority to just over 300. Brook Green then stayed where it was in 1956, 1959 and 1962 while Olympia kept improving for Labour. A clear east-west divide emerged.

In part, that was down to the post-war political realignment that made it acceptable - possibly even trendy, for more middle class areas to vote Labour. Demographically the wider W14 area: an area full of private tenants and leaseholders, was moving towards Labour as the demographic profile of renters changed and as the structure of families evolved.

In 2022, Brook Green returned as a ward in its own right, regaining the half that went into Avonmore and Brook Green and the half that transferred to Addison and the corner of the ward around the old West London Hospital opposite Novotel.

About 3,000 voters returned from Avonmore, 3,000 from places like Sinclair Road, Milson Road and Sterndale Road; and 300 from Luxembourg Gardens, Bute Gardens, and the southern end of Shepherd's Bush Road .

The re-creation of Brook Green should have been good news for the Conservatives. If the new boundaries made Addison a much better Labour prospect because of the loss of Conservative-leaning streets to Brook Green then the quid pro quo is that they make Brook Green better for the Conservatives - not by the same degree, but considerably better than Avonmore and Brook Green was. Brook Green became, after Sands End, the top target for the Tories in 2022.

Yet they didn't get close. Labour won almost 60% of the vote - their highest share ever by a long way. The Conservatives could barely manage 30%.

A 27-point majority is not marginal in anyone's book: it'd be the equivalent of an 18,000 constituency majority.

For Labour, Brook Green is a "floodplain" ward - by which I mean Labour doesn't need it for a majority: it's there to absorb Conservative votes like a flood plain, giving Labour a better chance in surrounding wards. By re-creating this far better Conservative ward, Labour became better placed in Addison and better placed in Avonmore.

But Brook Green doesn't seem to want to be an extra in Labour's landslides: it seems to be becoming firmly part of the Labour family. In 2026, Labour's vote fell by 17%.



FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1935.

OPPOSITION TO HAMMERSMITH'S NEW TOWN HALL SITE

ORGANISED PROTEST BY BROOK GREEN RESIDENTS

PETITIONING THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL

A STORM of indignation has arisen against the proposal to erect Hammersmith's new Town Hall on the tennis courts in the centre of Brook Green. The residents of Brook Green are up-in-arms against the idea, and an organised protest is to be made to the Hammersmith Borough Council. The whole of the residents of the area are being canvassed and it is expected all will sign the petition. Several letters from Brook Green residents expressing their protest against the scheme have been received by the "W.L.O." and are published in this issue.

The Hammersmith Borough Council's original site for the new Town Hall was on the South side of Brook Green near Bute House, this site being purchased in 1928 for about £36,000. At the last meeting of the Council just before Christmas it was decided to adopt a proposal contained in the General Purposes Committee's report that an exchange should be made with the London County Council of the original Town Hall site for another site on the tennis courts on Brook Green.

It was mentioned in the Committee's report that in June last Sir Brumwell Thomas, the architect of the new building, had suggested application being made to the London County Council for permission to erect the new Town Hall on a portion of Brook Green, and that the site purchased by the Council should be handed over in exchange. This led to an interview between officers of the County Council and the Borough Council, and a revised site plan was submitted to the County Council.

PROTESTS AT BROOK GREEN WARD MEETING.

Alarmed at the prospect of the new Town Hall being placed in the middle of Brook Green, there was a larger attendance than usual at the annual meeting of the Brook Green Ward of the South Hammersmith Conservative Association held at No. 2, The Broadway, on January 8th. The meeting was further augmented by other supporters and residents from the vicinity of Brook Green —who were also desirous of registering a vigorous protest against the proposed scheme. Councillor J. G. Jones was in the chair, supported on the platform by Councillor A. Saxby and Miss I. Soutar (Hon. Secretary).

In view of the concern of all present respecting the Town Hall question, the usual business of the meeting was transacted with marked expedition. The annual reports and accounts were formally submitted, and the amount to be passed to the main Association agreed. No changes were made in the officers of the Association, and the following were re-elected: Chairman, Councillor J. G. Jones; Vice-Chairman, Mrs. B. J. Samels; Hon. Treasurer, Councillor A. Saxby; Hon. Secretary, Miss I. Soutar. Delegates to the Executive Council of the Association: Mr. W. A. Amor, Mrs. Berry, Miss P. Bourne, Mr. H. E. Granger, Mrs. B. J. Samels, Councillor A. Saxby.

Following this the meeting immediately proceeded to discuss the question of the new Town Hall site, and Councillor Jones read the report of the General Purposes Committee, as published in the official Borough Council agenda, and also the resolution passed at the meeting of the Borough Council on December 19th, whereby the Council agreed that the new Town Hall should be built on the space at present occupied by the tennis courts in the centre of Brook Green.

Mrs. Barron was the first speaker, and she expressed her strong indignation at the proposal, and described it as a monstrous one. She urged the need for vigorous and immediate protest against the scheme, and stated that her attitude already had the support of practically every resident on Brook Green. She would strenuously oppose Brook Green being interfered with in any way.

Her remarks were enthusiastically applauded by all present, and every subsequent speaker endorsed her attitude. These included Mr. Granger, Mr. James Howe, Mr. Potter, Col. Firmin, Dr. Shepheard, Mr. E. Silas and Mr. Exley—none of whom had a single word to say in favour of the new scheme.

The meeting also discussed future action with a view to inducing the Borough Council to abandon their new idea, and a resolution was passed, which it was agreed should be presented to the Borough Council by a deputation of residents from Brook Green. Councillor Jones promised to introduce the deputation to the Council. The members of the deputation, and a committee, was elected forthwith, and many offers of financial support were made.

At the termination of these proceedings a formal resolution, expressing whole-hearted disapproval that Brook Green be altered in any way from its present state, was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.



THEY SEEK YOUR VOTES

Tenants' champion will fight this Ward

DISSATISFACTION with the Council's rent policy has led Hammersmith Council Tenants' Association to back an Independent candidate in the three-cornered by-election battle in Olympia Ward next Thursday (March 16).

The man the Association supports is 29-year-old Simon H. Knott, a stockbroker, of Bridge - avenue Mansions, Hammersmith.

An Association spokesman told the Gazette and Post: "We are hoping to start a new movement in the borough. Our main object is to put housing and rents on the public platform."

Mr. Knott stood as Independent Liberal Candidate for Barons Court in the 1959 General Election. He has twice contested municipal elections at Hammersmith — as a Tory in 1956 and a Liberal in 1959.

He is the present prospective L.C.C. and Parliamentary Liberal candidate for Barons Court.

Mr. Knott is married and has one son.

3 will fight

Other candidates in the three-cornered fight are Miss Winnifred E. Hardingham, Tory, and Mr. Len Stanley, Labour.

Miss Hardingham of Aynhoe Mansions, Brook - green, Hammersmith, a civil servant, has lived in the borough for 40 years.

She has contested the borough elections in 1953, 56, and 59.

Miss Hardingham serves on the governing and managing bodies of 11 Hammersmith schools.

She is also interested in old people's welfare.

Mr. Stanley was born in Hammersmith and has lived most of his life in the borough.

A cost accountant, he is financial secretary of the North Hammersmith Labour Party, and treasurer of Olympia Ward.

He is a manager of several Junior and Infants' Schools. He also takes great interest in the welfare of the elderly people in Hammersmith.

A staunch Trade Unionist, he was for many years a member of the clerical branch of the National Union of Theatrical and Kinema Employees, and is now a member of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers.

The by-election is caused by the death of Cllr. Ernie Freeman, a Labour member.

In any other political era a loss of support on that scale would spell a certain Conservative win. But their vote fell too - only by 2% and, given the size of the majority Labour was defending from 2022, they hung on by a comfortable enough 300 votes.

On the face of it, Labour's drop benefited minor parties. The one Green candidate took 14% - one of their weaker showings. Reform won just over 6% - another very weak debut, and an independent won 4%. Horatio Lovering, a former advisor to Rishi Sunak when he was Prime Minister, was one of the defeated Tory candidates.

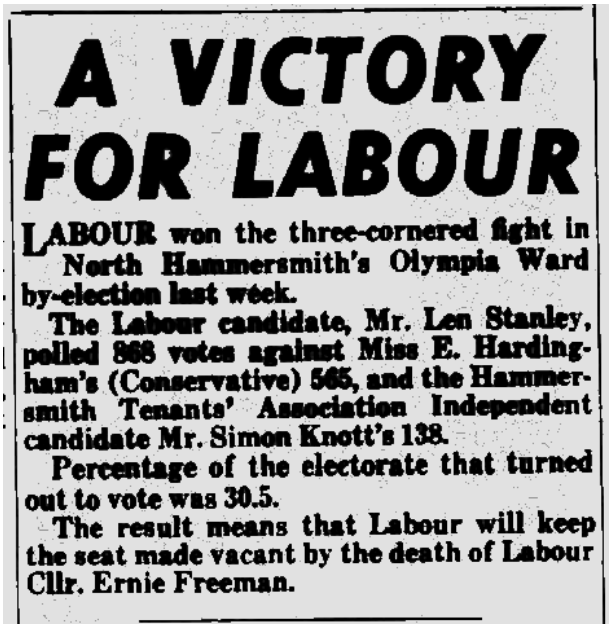
But this is still a relatively new phenomenon. Brook Green, had it still existed then, would have voted Conservative in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014; only in 2018 would it have (narrowly) gone Labour.

The ward is a perfect specimen of how London has turned against the Conservatives, though it seems plausible that this is the sort of area that could well switch back when Council Tax soars and other mooted taxes on homes such as the so-called "Mansion Tax" and Land Value Tax are introduced by Labour. Brook Green would be clobbered by such taxes, along with most of Fulham.

What had caused the Conservatives to weaken so much in what was traditionally their strongest corner of the borough? The answer is similar to that of Avonmore but, to reprise, several forces have been at work.

44% of residents live in rented accommodation here; they are more transient generally. 21% of homes here are still owned by either the council or housing associations. Note that those two figures represent just under two thirds of Brook Green voters.

There have been relatively few controversies in Brook Green; few by-elections, at least in the period since the war (quite a few in the early days as councillors from here routinely got elevated to Aldermen and had to vacate their seats as a result).



A VICTORY FOR LABOUR

LABOUR won the three-cornered fight in North Hammersmith's Olympia Ward by-election last week.

The Labour candidate, Mr. Len Stanley, polled 868 votes against Miss E. Hardingham's (Conservative) 565, and the Hammersmith Tenants' Association Independent candidate Mr. Simon Knott's 138.

Percentage of the electorate that turned out to vote was 30.5.

The result means that Labour will keep the seat made vacant by the death of Labour Cllr. Ernie Freeman.

Summary of results for Brook Green ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	67.0		33.0		
1903	62.7		37.3		
1903 By	59.4		40.6		
1906	49.2				50.8
1909					Unop
1912	65.6				34.4
1912 By	62.9				37.1
1919	44.2	25.8			34.2
1921 By					100.0
1922					Unop
1925					Unop
1928		19.3			80.7
1931		30.3			69.7
1934		35.5			64.5
1935 By		35.7			64.3
1937		40.9			59.1
1945	61.7	38.3			
Brook Green ward					
1949	57.2	42.8			
1953	57.2	42.8			
1956	57.5	42.5			
1959	43.1	58.1	41.9		
1962	56.9	43.1			
Olympia ward					
1949	57.4	42.6			
1953	46.0	54.0			
1956	41.3	52.3	6.4		
1959	40.5	59.5			
1961 By	36.0	55.3			8.8
1962	38.1	61.9			
1964	51.1	48.9			
1968	64.7	35.3			
1971	49.3	50.7			
1974	50.0	34.1	15.9		
1978	62.3	33.7			
1982	47.1	23.7	19.7	3.1	6.3
1986	39.3	32.7	19.6		8.4
1990	54.5	37.2	8.2		
1994	41.1	43.4	15.5		
1998	42.1	47.5	10.5		
2022	30.3	57.0	12.7		
2026	28.4	41.0	6.3	14.3	10.0

Probably the biggest uproar occurred in the 1930s, when councillors, unsatisfied with their gothic but fairly small Town Hall a the end of Shepherd's Bush Road, searched for a new site and arrived at Brook Green - the green itself - as their favoured choice.

There was a huge uproar, not just over the site but because the council stumped up £36,000 to purchase the land. That's about £2.6m in today's prices though it doesn't come close when factoring-in the vast premium that has been added to land in W14 since. There's a case that Brook Green is now priceless as no politician would survive even floating the idea of building on it these days. Eventually, Hammersmith Council decided to build the new town hall near the riverside.

Centrist voters have played a big part in the political trajectory of Brook Green. When the Liberals first contested the ward in 1974 all their support was drawn from Labour - and the Conservatives regained the ward as a result. When the Liberals didn't stand in 1978, their 1974 voters did not switch to Labour: they lined up behind the Conservatives. Much of that was due to the deep unpopularity of Labour in 1978 - most of these Liberal to Conservative voters were floaters wishing to punish James Callaghan's government.

But from then on there was a constant centre party presence in Brook Green. This pulled the Conservatives, not Labour, down - Labour was only damaged when the Green Party contested the ward. The average Labour share in the five elections between 1982 and 1998 the Liberal Democrats or Alliance contested Brook Green was only 36% - not usually strong enough to win. Labour has needed the Lib Dems to stand and the Green Party to not stand in order to beat the Tories.

The huge swing against the Conservatives in London, especially since the 2016 EU referendum, but dating back somewhat further, may well make these their very worst years in London: we're too close to them to be able to see clearly. But if Labour becomes the natural party of very affluent wards like Brook Green, then what role is there for any other party unless, in so becoming, Labour leaches some of its traditional support at the same time. A party that represents everybody represents nobody.

No matter how much Labour might believe it can be all things to all Londoners it cannot in the long-run because politics is the crucible in which different interests and values and priorities collide against each other to discover which is closer to the national interest every few years. Voters claim to want consensus and cross-party co-operation but the reality is that there should almost never be a consensus. When there appears to be it is often only because one side or another has moved away from what it was created to stand for.



Brook Green

The Conservatives need slightly more than a 5% swing to win Brook Green. That's doable provided a) that they start gaining, not losing votes; b) that the Greens or another left of centre party can maintain or build on its impact and c) they keep a lid on Reform's support. Brook Green is still about nine percentage points more Conservative than the borough which means they will always have a shot at winning here.

It's also the case that if the Conservatives can fall from a lead of nine points in 2010 to a deficit of nearly twenty eight in barely a decade, the reverse can occur - at least in theory. The really big problem the Conservatives have though is that their vote is increasingly stacked in their remaining South Fulham enclaves while Labour's has not only swelled considerably, but is far better distributed throughout this borough.

Rollcall of Brook Green ward councillors

including Olympia ward (1949-1964) and Brook Green and St Matthew's ward (1900-1949)

2026
- Stala Antoniades
- Adam Lang

2022
- Stala Antoniades
- Adam Lang

1998
- Polly Hicks
- Gerald Johnson

1994
- Tony Hennessy
- Gerald Johnson

1990
- Tony Hennessy
- Peter Prince

1986
- Tony Hennessy
- Peter Prince

1982
- Tony Hennessy
- Peter Prince

1978
- Tony Hennessy
- William Smith

1974
- Robert Field
- William Smith
- Nigel Waterson

1971
- Martin Hudson
- Dick Rayner
- Joseph Taylor (Lab

1968
- Robert Field
- Leslie Heading
- Gavin Tait

1964
- Arthur Belsham
- Robert Field
- Leslie Heading

1962
- Arthur Belsham
- Robert Field
- Leslie Heading

1959
- Arthur Belsham
- Robert Field
- Leslie Heading

1956
- Arthur Belsham
- Leslie Heading
- E. Tebay

1953
- Arthur Belsham
- Leslie Heading
- G. Messervy

1949
- Arthur Belsham
- J. Chambon
- Leslie Heading

Olympia ward

1962
- Jean Henry
- Harry Solomans
- Leonard Stanley

1961B
- Leonard Stanley

1959
- Ernest Freeman
- W. Grant
- Robert Oak

1956
- Ernest Freeman
- Violet Grant
- Charles Parsons

1953
- Gordon Bamford
- L. Glover
- Violet Grant

1949
- G. Jones
- M. Jones
- L. Lall

Brook Green and St Matthew's ward

1945
- L. Glover
- L. Kirby
- A. Lucas
- W. Lyons
- F. Slatter
- L. Thompson

1937
- Arthur Belsham
- Hilda Barron
- Joseph Jones
- Sydney Rayner
- Arthur Saxby
- Sydney Wood

1935B
- Sydney Wood

1934
- Arthur Belsham
- Horace Durrant
- Joseph Jones
- Sydney Raynor
- Arthur Saxby
- Thomas Spearing

1931
- John Bedford
- Arthur Belsham
- Thomas Courtney
- Thomas Irons
- Sydney Raynor
- Edwin Spearing

1928
- John Bedford
- Richard Bevan
- Patrick Grey
- Thomas Irons
- Edwin Spearing
- Joseph Woolerton

1925
- Richard Bevan
- Patrick Grey
- Thomas Irons
- Frederick Ratcliffe
- Edwin Spearing
- Joseph Woolerton

1922
- Richard Bevan
- Patrick Grey
- Thomas Irons
- Frederick Ratcliffe
- Edwin Spearing
- Joseph Woolerton

1919
- Alexander Beaumont
- Edmond Coke
- Oswald Hanson
- Thomas Marsh
- Charles White
- Joseph Woolerton

1912
- Thomas Bendon
- Richard Bevan
- Henry Foreman
- Oswald Hanson
- Edwin Jones
- Thomas Marsh
- Henry Watkins
- Charles White
- Joseph Woolerton

1909B
- William Jewell

1909
- Richard Bevan
- Dean Clements
- Joseph Jones
- Samuel Leah
- Thomas Marsh
- Walter Martin
- Frederick Ratcliffe
- Norman Shairp
- Richard Walker

1909B
- Hiram Ellis

1906
- Richard Bevan
- William Burns
- Arthur Carter
- Alfred Cockerell
- George Keogh
- Frederick Ratcliffe
- William Thomas
- Richard Walker
- Henry White

1903
- Thomas Bendon
- Richard Bevan
- Alfred Cockerell
- George Earsdon
- John Howell
- Thomas Marsh
- John C. Platt
- Alfred White
- William Williams

1900
- Thomas Bendon
- James Chamberlain
- Alfred Cockerell
- George Earsdon
- Ransom Hamilton
- John Howell
- Thomas Martindill
- Harry Simpson
- Alfred White

College Park and Old Oak

Part of North Pole Road falls within Hammersmith and Fulham. Appropriately enough, it can be found at the North Pole of the borough: in College Park and Old Oak ward.

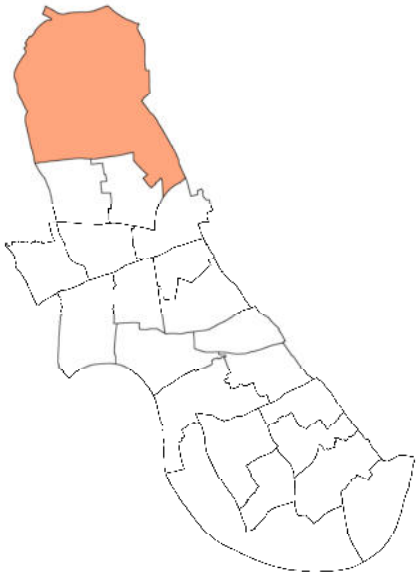
You can travel a long way past North Pole Road before you reach the far north of the borough and cross into Kensal Green and Harlesden, because College Park and Old Oak is one of the largest wards - geographically - in inner London. It stretches the one and a half miles from Harrow Road to White City; from East Acton to North Kensington.

In the midst of this vast sprawl is Wormwood Scrubs metropolitan open space - 200 acres bought for public use by the London County Council and the closest thing this borough gets to heathland. There's the Old Oak railway sidings - seemingly endless numbers of tracks to park trains, and the High Speed 2 Rail terminal being built there, the Hythe Road warehouse estate along the Grand Union Canal and, beyond that, yet more railway lines. The Paddington mainline slices through the ward.

The ward name encompasses just two of several neighbourhoods. College Park is in the far north-east of the ward: the Harrow Road end up near Kensal Green. Old Oak is as far as you can get from College Park and stay in the same ward: East Acton. There is only one road within the ward that connects the eastern and western sides of this disparate ward: Du Cane Road, and so what you end up with are a cluster of neighbourhoods separated from each other - sometimes by a couple of miles as the crow flies.

That makes this ward unique in Hammersmith and Fulham: everywhere else is based on one or two substantial neighbourhoods and derives its identity from that place: Sands End; the Brackenbury estate; Hurlingham and Bishops Park; West Kensington; Fulham Broadway; Wendell Park; Parson's Green; White City.

Because you cannot traverse the ward east to west, the population clusters run down each side: one down Scrubs Lane and Wood Lane; the other down Old Oak Lane and Old Oak Common Lane. This profile could follow the road layout but, instead, let's be contrary and go counter clockwise, starting in College Park.



College Park, so remote even from Shepherd's Bush, let alone Fulham or Hammersmith, that in the 1990s the Local Government Boundary Commission planned to transfer it to Brent. But in the 1990s Brent had a terrible "loony left" reputation, regularly in the news for mostly the wrong reasons, and College Park residents were having none of it. Already a little on the small side, losing College Park would also have cost the ward a councillor, so Labour was hardly keen on the idea either given it was one of their safest wards.

This area with its NW10, not W12 postcode; a small cluster of streets just by St Mary's Cemetery, gets its name from the fact that the land was sold by All Souls College, Oxford, in the late 1800s for development. It comprises just eight streets, plus a mews: Holberton, Kenmont, Letchford, Ponsard, Ridgeley, Trenmuir, Valiere and Waldo; modest but pleasant terraced streets with Kenmont Primary School in the middle. Plough Close - further towards Kensal Rise, was built around 2010: two modernist apartment blocks in a cul-de-sac.

The borough boundary with Brent has always been...opaque to put it mildly and here's an example because, while the Plough Close blocks are in Hammersmith and Fulham, the blocks built at the same time, either side of the entrance on Harrow Road are in Brent. It was decided the last time these boundaries were changed - the same review that wanted to move this whole area out of the borough, to run it to the south of Harrow Road behind the shops and houses.



But the boundary becomes more opaque when you move west towards Harlesden, past the end of Scrubs Lane. Here, Harrow Road curves northward and the boundary disappears into the sprawl of railway lines, across to Willesden Junction Station. Willesden Junction is not much closer to Willesden than Loughborough Junction is to Loughborough: this is actually the outskirts of gritty Harlesden.

Station Road, which Willesden Junction Station leads off, becomes Old Oak Lane as you head south. There are some somewhat Dickensian cottages lining this road, as remote from Shepherd's Bush as College Park is, and these were moved out of the borough into Ealing at that aforementioned review in the mid 1990s. Then you cross over the Grand Union Canal, Old Oak Lane forks and becomes Old Oak Common Lane, and suddenly you're in the Park Royal-HS2 regeneration zone.

Here is the Oaklands Rise development, one of those modern-day, extraordinarily high density, high-rise sites that are quickly coming to typify the Park Royal area with blocks up to 30-storeys. Oaklands is on what was Old Oak Farm, eventually buried beneath rail sidings and

industrial parks. I don't wish to overuse the description "isolated" but, at least until the HS2 terminus is open Oaklands Rise is near nothing, Willesden Junction station being about a kilometre away. Loverose Lane, the original road that runs around the outside of Oaklands, leads down to the reorganised Old Oak sidings: 33 docks for trains, immediately north of the HS2 station.

A BYE-ELECTION AT HAMMERSMITH

VACANCY ON THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

An enthusiastic meeting of the College Park and Latimer Ward branch of the Hammersmith Conservative and Constitutional Association were held at 2a, Brewster Gardens, on Tuesday evening, Mr. G. Alan Payne presiding.

On the motion of Mr. P. Tinckham, seconded by Councillor H. R. D. Hooper it was unanimously resolved that Mr. G. Alan Payne be nominated as a candidate to fill the vacancy on the Borough Council for the College Park and Latimer Ward, caused by the resignation of Mr. S. R. Pomeroy.

Mr. G. Alan Payne, in replying, thanked the members, and referred to his past long services in Municipal work, going back for 20 years on the old Vestry. The members present then formed themselves into an Election Committee.

THE NOMINATIONS.

On Wednesday, Mr. H. Thompson, the Town Clerk, received the nominations of two candidates for the vacancy in the College Park and Latimer Ward.

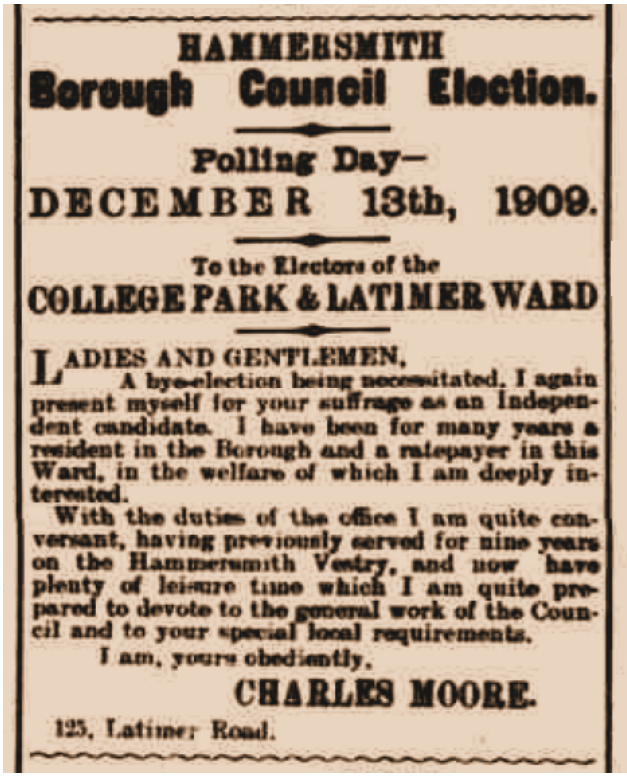
Mr. G. Alan Payne, dyer, of 7, Dalgarno Gardens, was proposed by Messrs. P. Tinckham, J. R. Bedford, and Holmes, and seconded by Messrs. J. Hooper, J. J. Knight, and Walter Shaw.

Mr. Edward Chas. Rawlings, solicitor, and Mayor of Hammersmith, of 4, Rivercourt Road, Hammersmith, and 6, Gunnersbury Avenue, Ealing Common, had for his proposers Messrs. G. P. Murfitt and F. Heighes, and his seconders Messrs. D. W. Manners and J. Broach Lawrence.

Come back out onto Old Oak Lane and you get the very strange juxtaposition of old Old Oak and new: right on the corner of Loverose Lane is an old-style London workers caff: the Nova Cafe (which has had a bit of a makeover since everything started being reconstructed around there), an MOT testing centre, a couple of business units and Nadi Park Royal, which bills itself as an events centre, in another tired 1950s tenement block, again surely about to be swept away by progress.

Continue on down the lane, and just past Wells House Road is the main entrance to the HS2 station: 14 platforms, almost half a kilometre long, which will connect the high speed line to Heathrow Express and the Elizabeth Line: the key section of the regeneration of the area. There's no additional housing planned for this site but it may kick-start the plans for the wider area - especially Hythe Road.

Anyhow, once past this end of the railways land, under the rail bridge, past this side of Wormwood Scrubs and you reach Wulfstan Street. This is the start of the Old Oak estate.



HAMMERSMITH

Borough Council Election.

Polling Day—

DECEMBER 13th, 1909.

To the Electors of the

COLLEGE PARK & LATIMER WARD

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

A bye-election being necessitated, I again present myself for your suffrage as an Independent candidate. I have been for many years a resident in the Borough and a ratepayer in this Ward, in the welfare of which I am deeply interested.

With the duties of the office I am quite conversant, having previously served for nine years on the Hammersmith Vestry, and now have plenty of leisure time which I am quite prepared to devote to the general work of the Council and to your special local requirements.

I am, yours obediently,

CHARLES MOORE.

125, Latimer Road.

The Old Oak estate: the first London County Council estate built in Hammersmith just before the outbreak of the First World War, is the largest population centre in the ward: over 3,000 residents live here. This cottage estate, inspired by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement with front and back gardens, unusually angled streets with plenty of grass verges and communal green spaces around road junctions, has its twin in the Wormholt estate south of the Westway. East Acton tube station is right in the midst of the Old Oak estate: the Central Line is one of the many physical boundaries carving up this ward.

I'm trying to liven things up says the Liberal

THE 'WHISPERING' ELECTION

VOTING for a borough councillor took place in Hammersmith's "whispering" by-election yesterday. It was a straight fight between Labour and Liberal for the College Park and Latimer Ward. Conservatives did not put up a candidate.

The vacancy was caused by the resignation last year of Labour Councillor T. A. Keating.

Canvassing was stepped up on Tuesday and Wednesday by the Liberal candidate, Mr. George Bender, who toured the ward in a loudspeaker van.

"I'm trying to liven things up," he said on Tuesday. "So far its been an extremely quiet campaign. Many people didn't even know about the election."

No fuss

Mr. Bender a chiropodist of 30, Westwick-gardens, Hammersmith, accused the Labour Party of trying to "push" their candidate without any fuss.

"They knew the Conservatives were not contesting the ward and they did not expect a fight from the Liberals. It came as a great shock to them when we did. Moreover we pipped Labour by starting our election campaign a day before they did.

"We would like to know why they tried to make it such a hush-hush campaign. It might well be called a whispering by-election. But I intend to change all that.

"There is a great need for some fresh thinking on the council. The other two parties seem to be bogged down in a quagmire of complacency and apathy.

"A Liberal voice on the council won't be able to dictate policy but at least it would be able to bring to the surface some of the hidden problems and difficulties confronting ratepayers."



Mr. Bender . . . why so hush-hush?

A policy

Mr. Bender says it's poppycock to say that Liberals have no policy. "We have got a policy but not a programme. People are inclined to confuse the two.

His opponent is Mr. Thomas Deely, of 80, Wormholt-road, Shepherds Bush. He has been a member of the Labour Party for over 15 years.

Commenting on the Liberal candidate's remarks on Tuesday, Mr. J. W. Singleton, Labour Agent for North Hammersmith said: "You can always expect amateurs to make all kinds of fantastic statements."

Conservative Agent Mr. W. Good said that the officers of his association considered it would be wrong for the ratepayers to waste £250 for a by-election that is worth nothing.

Another thing that infused their decision not to put up a candidate was the Government's drive to curb inflation and the fact that the election has come so near the end of the financial year. "To put up a candidate would be wrong and unfair to the ratepayers," he said.

NO HOME FOR TOM AND DOLLY

SHELL fish merchant Joe Green will lose his two horses, "Tom" and "Dolly," unless he can find a new stable by May.

Mr. Green, who is 58 years old, has been selling shrimps and winkles in West London for over 40 years. But now his stable in East Acton-lane is to be demolished under a development scheme promoted by Acton Council.

"The council offered me alternative accommodation in Osborne-road," said Mr. Green, "but when I went there I was told by the owner that they haven't had stables there for 10 years.

HIS SEARCH

"I went back and told the council, but they said they could not help me anymore, and that I would have to find a place myself."

Mr. Green has searched all over Chiswick, Hammersmith and Acton, but he has not been able to find accommodation.

"If I'm still without a place by May I will have to sell my horses," he said. "But I can't bear the thought of losing them. And I'm sure they'll pine for me. It's worrying me to death."

His oldest horse, "Tom," a 14-year-old gelding, has won numerous medals and cups at horse shows. "Dolly," a roan, hasn't been entered in any yet because "she's still only a youngster, but she has the makings of a winner," says Mr. Green.



At this end you can travel east-west through the ward, either along Du Cane Road, past Wormwood Scrubs Prison or the Westway, before its elevated section through Kensington. Westway is the southern boundary of the ward but a cluster of homes face this terribly busy, noisy and polluted road, and there are some three closes behind squeezed between it and the bank of the Central Line.

There is Bentworth Road (with Maurice Street and Terrick Street); Heathstan Road; and Primula Street.

There are also a couple of streets: Norbrooke and Hilary just before Savoy Circus and Old Oak Common Lane, leading back to the core Old Oak estate. Little pathways: Begonia Walk, Cactus Walk take us back to Du Cane Road. Once you pass under the diagonal Central Line bridge you pretty quickly leave the Old Oak end of the ward behind.

You are almost instantly on the edge of the Wormwood Scrubs Prison estate; the staff car park, a set of austere tenements built to house prison staff, the visitors centre

Labour romp home in ward election

LABOUR on Thursday won the College Park and Latimer Ward by-election with a majority of 819. The Liberal candidate polled 172. Conservatives did not contest the seat.

The figures were:

T. Deely (Lab.)	991
G. Bender (Lib.)	172
Soc. majority	819

There was a 23 per cent poll—which was described as exceptionally low by a town hall official.

This means that roughly one-fifth—1,163 out of 5,143—people voted.

'NOTORIOUS'

Mr. Bender, the Liberal candidate, said last week that the College Park and Latimer Ward was "notorious" for its low polling.

Mrs. J. S. Greenfield, secretary of the Liberals, said after the election that it was a shockingly low poll. "They just don't seem to care. But we're going to keep on trying."

Labour agent, Mr. J. W. Singleton, said: "The result is only what we expected under the circumstances. As for low polling, a lot depends on the opposition. If we had a lively organization against us they would have helped to engender interest."

and then the well-known gatehouse with its busts of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, the Victorian prison reformers. This is somewhat ironic given the criticism the prison routinely attracts by the leagues founded by them.

The presence of the prison is, pardon the pun, inescapable: Du Cane Road itself is named after the Director of Convict Prisons, Edward Du Cane, who designed it.

Beyond that is the vast Imperial College NHS Trust which includes Queen Charlotte's and Hammersmith Hospitals, and then the laboratories and research facilities of the university. Behind them is the Linford Christie Stadium. But also, across Du Cane Road, where previously there had just been the Central Line railway embankment, there are now quite new tenement blocks of flats; originally built by Du Cane Housing Association but now managed by the much larger Octavia (Hill) Housing Association. O'Driscoll, King, Galen, Daley and Dorothy Hodgkin Houses, plus newer blocks like Christie House further towards Wood Lane provide accommodation for Imperial students and key workers.

GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, October 20, 1983

Problems for Labour at the town hall

Petra quits council seat to get married



● Petra Luxton and daughter Sian

LABOUR councillor Petra Luxton is to quit her seat at Hammersmith Town Hall.

She has represented College Park and Old Oak since the 1982 local elections and is to resign because she is getting married and leaving the area.

She said: "I am getting married and moving away. It would be possible for me to carry on by coming in to meetings but I couldn't in all conscience."

A by-election will have to be held at her Shepherds Bush seat, but with an 800 majority it should be safe for Labour.

Ms Luxton, who has two children from a previous marriage, is to wed a member of the council's housing department. The couple plan to live in Hemel Hempstead.

She is a member of the housing policy committee and Labour spokesman on the housing executive committee. She resigned from social services two weeks ago to be replaced by Cllr Tony Powell.

Her resignation will be offered at the next full meeting at the council at the end of November.

She said she was sad to be leaving the council and added: "I would like to do it again."

Ms Luxton also added that the Labour group leadership were unhappy to accept her resignation and said it had been suggested she should come in for council meetings.

Labour leader Cllr Stephen Clark said: "When she leaves will be a matter for discussion between her and the Labour group."

He added the Labour party was not in favour of councillors living outside the borough they represent.

Her resignation will leave the Labour group on Hammersmith with 24 seats and the ruling Liberal and Tory group with 25.

Group calls for return of Labour's ex-planning chief

A COMMUNITY group has called for a rebel Labour councillor to be re-instated as opposition planning chief at Hammersmith Council.

The Hammersmith and Fulham Community Forum has written to Labour leader Stephen Clark protesting at the sacking of Frances Kelly from the planning applications committee.

Miss Kelly, was thrown off the committee last year after internal wranglings within the Labour Group.

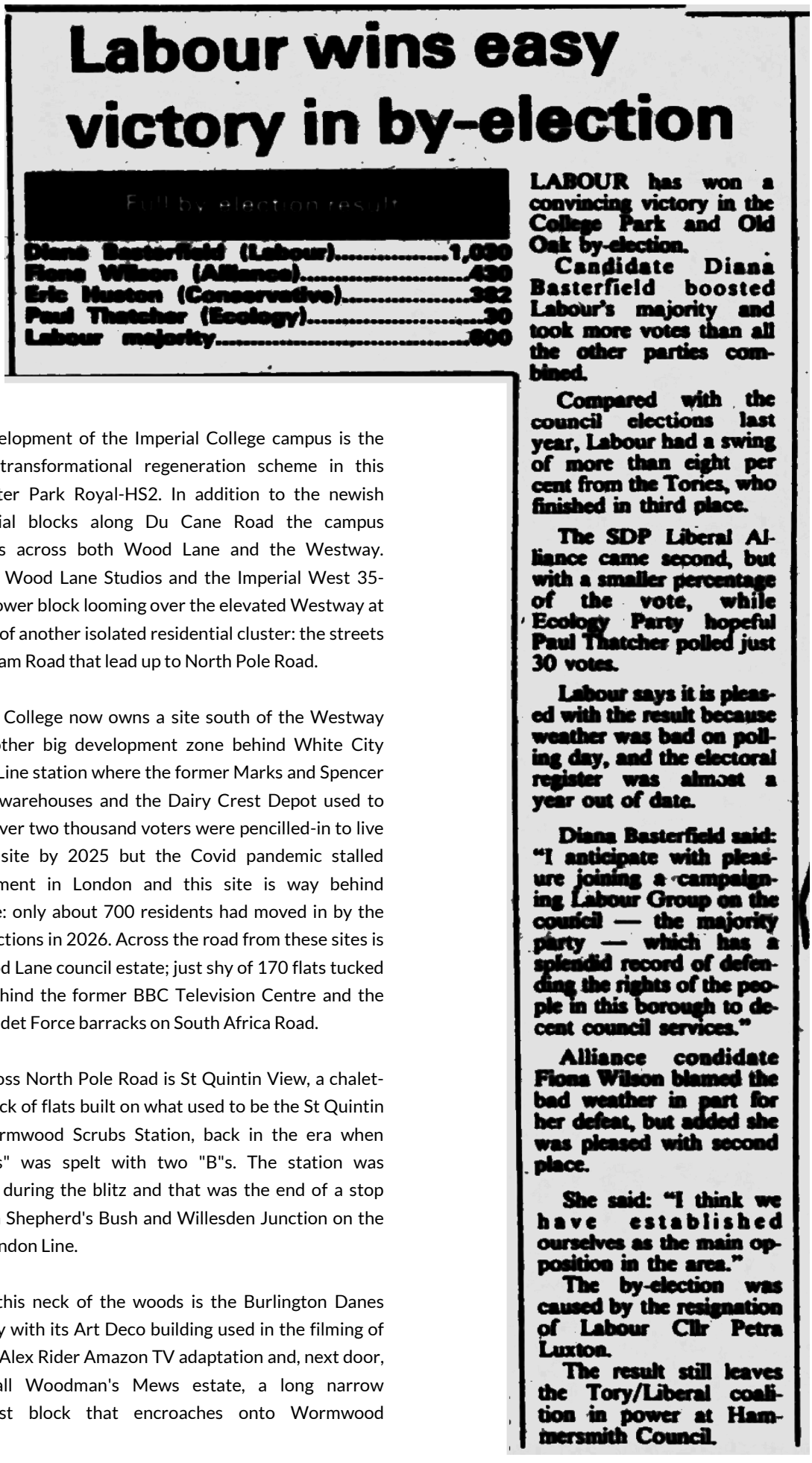
She and two other councillors, Ian Gray and Peter DeGory, refused to give an undertaking that they would vote in line with the Labour group.

The Community Forum believes discussion on major issues has suffered since Miss Kelly was removed.

Forum secretary Charles Tylee said Miss Kelly was widely respected in the borough for her knowledge on planning.



● Frances Kelly



Labour wins easy victory in by-election

Full by-election result

Diana Basterfield (Labour)	1,030
Fiona Wilson (Alliance)	430
Eric Huston (Conservative)	382
Paul Thatcher (Ecology)	30
Labour majority	600

LABOUR has won a convincing victory in the College Park and Old Oak by-election.

Candidate Diana Basterfield boosted Labour's majority and took more votes than all the other parties combined.

Compared with the council elections last year, Labour had a swing of more than eight per cent from the Tories, who finished in third place.

The SDP Liberal Alliance came second, but with a smaller percentage of the vote, while Ecology Party hopeful Paul Thatcher polled just 30 votes.

Labour says it is pleased with the result because weather was bad on polling day, and the electoral register was almost a year out of date.

Diana Basterfield said: "I anticipate with pleasure joining a campaigning Labour Group on the council — the majority party — which has a splendid record of defending the rights of the people in this borough to decent council services."

Alliance condidate Fiona Wilson blamed the bad weather in part for her defeat, but added she was pleased with second place.

She said: "I think we have established ourselves as the main opposition in the area."

The by-election was caused by the resignation of Labour Cllr Petra Luxton.

The result still leaves the Tory/Liberal coalition in power at Hammersmith Council.

The development of the Imperial College campus is the second transformational regeneration scheme in this ward after Park Royal-HS2. In addition to the newish residential blocks along Du Cane Road the campus stretches across both Wood Lane and the Westway. There is Wood Lane Studios and the Imperial West 35-storey tower block looming over the elevated Westway at the foot of another isolated residential cluster: the streets off Eynham Road that lead up to North Pole Road.

Imperial College now owns a site south of the Westway too: another big development zone behind White City Central Line station where the former Marks and Spencer storage warehouses and the Dairy Crest Depot used to stand. Over two thousand voters were pencilled-in to live on this site by 2025 but the Covid pandemic stalled development in London and this site is way behind schedule: only about 700 residents had moved in by the local elections in 2026. Across the road from these sites is the Wood Lane council estate; just shy of 170 flats tucked away behind the former BBC Television Centre and the Army Cadet Force barracks on South Africa Road.

Just across North Pole Road is St Quintin View, a chalet-style block of flats built on what used to be the St Quintin and Wormwood Scrubs Station, back in the era when "Scrubbs" was spelt with two "B"s. The station was bombed during the blitz and that was the end of a stop between Shepherd's Bush and Willesden Junction on the West London Line.

Also in this neck of the woods is the Burlington Danes Academy with its Art Deco building used in the filming of the first Alex Rider Amazon TV adaptation and, next door, the small Woodman's Mews estate, a long narrow modernist block that encroaches onto Wormwood Scrubs.

If you keep heading north up Scrubs Lane, once past St Quintin's View it suddenly feels very rural: Wormwood Scrubs to your left, Little Wormwood Scubs to the right - nothing but a tree-lined verge until you pass under yet another railway bridge, then over the Grand Union Canal and the Paddington mainline and you're almost back to College Park.



St Quintin and Wormwood Scrubbs Station

Already you can see the beginnings of the third regeneration area around the entrance to the Hythe Road industrial estate. Again there is the incongruity of these modern high-rise buildings either side of Scrubs Lane in between the entrance to the Powerday metals recycling yard with articulated lorries coming and going behind the blocks, across a level crossing and back into an entirely different area.

Hythe Road is the next turning off, running beneath the railway into the CarGiant mecca of near endless warehouses and showrooms and garages and the odd cafe to feed those who work here. Even though nobody lives here (yet), this is a neighbourhood all on its own with a maze of streets dissected by railway lines.

There were plans to build a living neighbourhood here around the focal point of a 40,000 seat QPR stadium there as their Loftus Road ground is hemmed in and impossible to expand. That would have shunted the club much closer to the neighbourhood it's named after on the edge of Kilburn, but CarGiant decided they could do something more lucrative with Hythe Road and the plans died.

Looking across these three vast regeneration sites: Park Royal-Oak Oak, Imperial College and Hythe Road, and you can see how, by the time of the next scheduled boundary review - around 2040, College Park and Old Oak could have undergone so much new development that it may be split into two - maybe even three - new council wards.

However it is then drawn it will be literally new and so nothing can be predicted about its future. But it has an interesting political history.

It's been split before. When Hammersmith borough was founded in 1900 College Park was part of a ward that meandered down Scrubs Lane and into chunks of what is now in Kensington around Latimer Road: College Park and Latimer ward. Everything else - though very little housing existed here then - was part of a huge Wormholt ward. In 1949, College Park and Latimer survived. But Wormholt, with the building of the Old Oak and Wormholt estates, had over 20,000 voters so was reduced to broadly the area it occupies nowadays and a new Old Oak ward was formed.

In its earliest days, Henry Hooper, who won as a Moderate, a Municipal Reformer and an Independent, was a mainstay of College Park and Latimer ward - one of those councillors known widely, who handed out sweets to kids on election day (something that would get him prosecuted these days, and possibly not just for election offences).

College Park and Latimer wasn't the first ward to elect Labour councillors, despite covering some quite desperately poor "slum" neighbourhoods around where the Edward Woods estate now stands. Before the poorly-built, damp and overcrowded houses were built this was part of the area of the Notting Hill Potteries and Piggeries; an area lacking sanitation where drainage holes and slurry pits were dug but soon overflowed with the most rancid filth. At least one person is known to have slipped into one at night and drowned, but even when a better-planned neighbourhood was built with sewers and sanitation it was still run-down, unhealthy and unsafe.

So perhaps it's surprising that the ward didn't go Labour until 1922. That Labour won in 1922 but not 1919 (to be fair they couldn't have: they didn't stand!) is a little remarkable as that was the first election of a decade of epic Labour defeats. Very few wards anywhere were held, let alone gained by Labour in 1922. However, once it elected Labour - and one of its councillors was the aforementioned Edward Woods, the council leader for much of Labour's time in power - it was rock solid: their only Hammersmith ward in 1922, 1925 and 1931.

College Park and Old Oak inherited that mantle when the boroughs were amalgamated in 1964 (though it lost the Latimer section, which was split between White City and

Narrow win in by-election

Fred holds ward for Labour

LABOUR scraped home in a surprisingly close fought by-election in one of their safest seats.

The College and Old Oak Ward in Shepherds Bush, Hammersmith was won by Frederick Inniss, 58.

The unemployed father-of-five narrowly fought off a surprise surge of support for the new centre alliance, the Social and Liberal Democrats.

The SLDP rocked the Labour vote in what should have been an easy victory.

The combined vote of



Frederick Inniss

the SLDP and the Owenite SDP candidates actually outnumbered Labour's total, whose 1986 majority was reduced from 1,000 to just 150.

Mr Inniss polled 829 votes, with SLDP candidates Martin Bryant coming second with 677. Tory David McCraith trailed in third with 329 votes, while the SDP's Ian McCourt came fourth with 183.

The by-election was called after the sudden death of Cllr Melvyn Silverman.

New councillor, Inniss blamed the result on a low poll. He said: "People assumed this was a foregone conclusion."

A staunch trade unionist, Cllr Inniss has held top posts in the transport union, the TGWU, and wants to set up a committee for the disabled. His wife, Poppy, was bedridden after an operation went tragically wrong.

Runner-up Martin Bryant said: "It was a very good result for us, but it would have been sensational if the SDP candidate had not confused the voters."

Reprieve for war widows

WAR pensioners and servicemen's widows will still be entitled to housing benefit after a last-minute reprieve by the town hall.

Hammersmith Council has been forced to scrap other schemes.

leviate the suffering facing the poorest of our members."

St Stephen's). But it can also be highly volatile. In 1964, for example, it voted Labour 88% and Conservative 12%, but in 1968 a 42% swing turfed out its three Labour councillors. In 1971 Labour got it back on a 29% swing, but they almost lost here again in 1978 on a 34% swing.



College Park and Old Oak ward swings

Then, in a 1988 by-election caused by the death of long-standing mercurial councillor Melvin Silverman, just after the SDP Liberal Alliance had collapsed and the then-named Social and Liberal Democrats were flat-lining at barely 4% in the national polls. Yet this new party pulled off a 26% swing to almost win the seat.

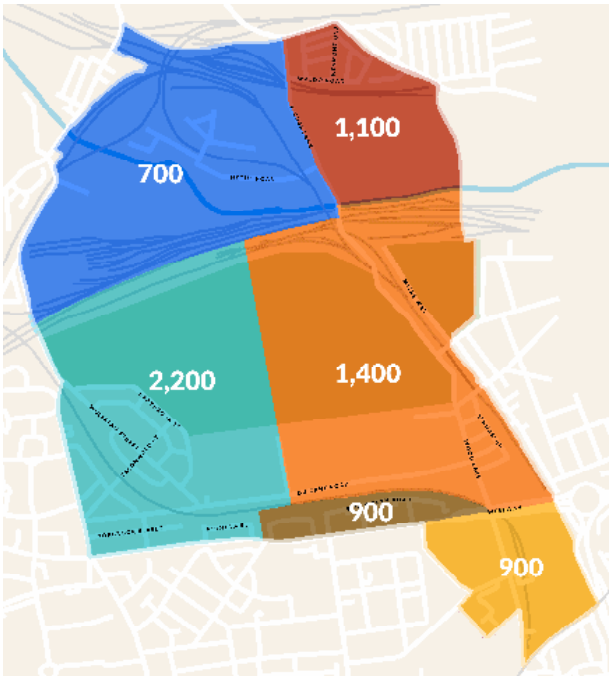
The swing to the Conservatives in 2006 would probably have been far bigger than 13% were it not for an independent (who later stood for the Tories there) who took 17%. If his vote had gone to the Conservatives it'd have been a 21% swing.

In 2026 the Greens polled their third best vote here, taking 25%; it was also Reform UK's best Hammersmith and Fulham ward - they took 15% (a third more than their borough average). Because the Greens didn't stand here in 2022 we can't) calculate a swing. But let's assume they had stood and polled so badly in 2022 they didn't even get 0.1% of the vote. That'd be a 27.5% swing. Labour fell from 72% to 42% - there were wards where they collapsed by similar amounts but that was the largest. It shows just how entrenched Labour is that they could lose that much and still win pretty comfortably.

Because this has been, essentially, a very safe Labour ward for the vast majority of its existence there have been some very long-serving councillors aside from Edward Woods the earlier mentioned Melvyn Silverman, William Church, Frank Ing, Margaret Fenelon and Wesley Harcourt to name five.

But it's also been a ward for councillors who have just been passing through. When Gordon Prentice, the Labour Opposition leader, was deselected by Gibbs Green ward prior to the 1986 elections, he made his way north to College Park and Old Oak - in turn he was deselected by this ward's members in 1990 and ended up standing in, and losing, marginal Crabtree ward.

Lester Holloway, who had made a bit of a name for himself as a schoolboy by organising a campaign to save Scrubs Wood, became councillor from his home patch in 1994 but was somewhat detached from the Labour group to the extent he didn't even know he'd been deselected before the 1998 elections. He later became a Lib Dem councillor in Sutton before rejoining Labour under Jeremy Corbyn.



How the electorate of College Park and Old Oak is distributed

For a ward with Wormwood Scrubs Prison in its midst it is perhaps appropriate that one reason College Park and Old Oak has been such a volatile ward on occasion may has been law and order. On Braybrook Street, on the edge of the Scrubs there's a memorial stone there in honour of three policemen, murdered at that spot by Harry Roberts and two accomplices in 1966, who the policemen had felt were acting suspiciously in close proximity to the prison. They were behaving suspiciously, but not planning a jailbreak: instead an armed robbery. When the policemen went to question them Roberts shot them dead.

This was one of the most sensational and horrific murders of policemen on duty and Roberts was only released in 2014 such was his notoriety. It was fortunate for them that the death penalty had only just been abolished as they'd have hanged, such was the outcry.

And it had a political impact in the exceptional 42% swing to the Conservatives in this ward in 1968, two years after the murder.



Daily Mirror

MASSACRED

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

18,000 JOIN HUNT FOR KILLERS OF 3 POLICEMEN

Story: Mirror Crime Squad Pictures: Mirror cameramen

That remains the highest swing to any party ever in this borough. 1968 saw a huge national swing to the Conservatives after Labour devalued the pound having repeatedly promised not to - but that swing got an extra kick in this specific ward. Labour went from 88% to 46% and then back to 75% in 1971 - almost as though nothing had happened in the intervening election.

The second big swing that occurred, in 1978, came at a time of significant social unrest in the UK: the era of strikes, power black-outs, soaring inflation, IMF bailouts and significant racial tensions. College Park and Old Oak was, in that election, one of three wards targeted by the National Front with its authoritarian law and order platform (the fabulously-named Horace Mullett being one of their candidates). The NF received their highest, albeit very poor, vote of 6% here.

The impact of the National Front on the 1978 elections is is looked at more in the Wormholt ward profile but, had they not stood in this ward, and making the tenuous assumption that NF voters would have been second-choice Conservatives, the Tories may well have won one of the College Park and Old Oak seats: their highest candidate was only 88 votes short.

Summary of results for College Park and Old Oak ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	67.0	33.0			
1903	62.7	37.3			
1906	52.0				
1907 By					
1909					
1909 By					
1912	49.0				
1919	50.9		49.1		
1922	34.9	45.1			
1925	36.2	63.8			
1928	37.8	62.2			
1931	44.4	51.9			
1934		73.3			
1937		58.2			
1937 By		86.1			
1940 By		Unop			
1945		Unop			
College Park and Latimer ward					
1949	30.7	69.3			
1953	23.1	76.9			
1956	11.6	88.4			
1959	13.5	86.5			
1962	16.1	83.9			
Old Oak ward					
1949	29.4	70.6			
1953	22.1	77.9			
1956	9.7	90.3			
1959	14.4	85.6			
1962	9.3	90.7			
1964	11.6	88.4			
1968	53.6	46.4			
1971	24.7	75.3			
1974	13.2	86.9			
1978	43.7	50.5			
1982	28.6	46.5	25.0		
1983 By	20.4	55.0	23.0	1.6	
1986	21.8	69.6	8.5		
1988 By	16.2	40.9	33.4		9.5
1990	15.4	57.4	27.1		
1993 By	20.4	72.7	6.9		
1994	13.1	76.5	10.4		
1998	10.0	74.1	15.9		
2002	15.3	67.2	17.5		
2006	19.7	45.7	18.3		16.3
2010	21.3	53.5	13.7		
2014	18.0	58.3	7.0		
2018	19.3	74.5	6.2		
2022	14.4	72.0	13.7		
2026	8.1	42.4	10.0	25.4	14.1

College Park and Old Oak is today a very much more diverse ward than it was in 1968 or 1978 - and a lot of that diversity has happened quite recently; just 26% of the ward today is white British when the vast majority would have been that in the 1960s. The proportion was 49% in the 2001 census. Reform did well in the cottage estate sections of the ward: the Old Oak and Westway areas, which are also the whitest.

This is one of the dilemmas of so-called regeneration in so-called deprived areas: you can alter the profile of an area by building vast new developments aimed at graduates and professionals so that a ward appears more affluent. Yet nothing at all changes for its longer-standing residents other than their neighbourhood gets shiny new buildings towering over it. They still work in lower-paid jobs or end up on benefits which take a greater toll on their life chances and long term health, just amidst an area with lots of new people resident whose lives are far-removed from theirs.

Bringing Imperial College to Hammersmith and Fulham is clearly a coup and a mark of prestige for the borough, but it does very little for the ward's existing residents - other than perhaps creating a few extra cleaning, caretaking or laundering jobs. In time, as this older population fades out that regeneration does almost nothing for what you might call the indigenous population may become irrelevant.

The projected population and electorate growth in College Park and Old Oak gifted Labour an extra seat in 2022 - the one that had been abolished in the previous boundary review.

The influx of voters - a large number of whom apathetic students - lack the political strength for now to influence the results here even if we assume they might want to.

Just 31% of the ward turned out in 2026 - and that was up from 27% in 2022. Partly that's because the ward has been so safe for Labour that the political parties targeted their resources elsewhere in the borough. But the Greens could have done much better focussing here -trying to turn out more of that significant student voting bloc that now exists, instead of wasting time in White City.

Having so big a collapse in 2026, and because the ward is changing so rapidly, Labour has to keep an eye on College Park and Old Oak in a way they haven't really had to for decades. They have threats from both left and right: from students who want a more aggressively radical political agenda, and from the diminishing white population that showed, without the party doing any work here, that they were receptive to a Reform message.

And that assumes that another tranche won't switch to the Conservatives (once again) after the government has compelled the council to raise Council Tax astronomically. But 2026 marked 55 years of College Park and Old Oak electing Labour councillors - 104 years since it first started doing so. That's a lot of history to offset a somewhat less clear future.

Aerial view of the HS2 terminal construction and the wider industrail zone in the north of College Park and Old Oak



Rollcall of College Park and Old Oak ward councillors

including College Park and Latimer ward (1900-1962) and Old Oak ward (1949-1964)

2026
- Wesley Harcourt
- Bora Kwon
- Alexandra Sanderson

2022
- Wesley Harcourt
- Bora Kwon
- Alexandra Sanderson

2018
- Wesley Harcourt
- Alexandra Sanderson

2014
- Wesley Harcourt
- Elaine Chumnery

2010
- Wesley Harcourt
- Elaine Chumnery

2006
- Wesley Harcourt
- Reg McLaughlin

2002
- Wesley Harcourt
- Reg McLaughlin

1998
- Wesley Harcourt
- Reg McLaughlin
- Melanie Smallman

1994
- Wesley Harcourt
- Lester Holloway
- Reg McLaughlin

1993B
- Patricia Migdal

1990
- Fred Inniss
- Hilda McCafferty
- Guy Rubin

1988B
- Fred Inniss

1986
- Diana Basterfield
- Gordon Prentice
- Melvyn Silverman

1983B
- Diana Basterfield

1982
- Margaret Fenelon
- Petra Luxton
- Melvyn Silverman

1978
- Margaret Fenelon
- Frank Ing
- Melvyn Silverman

1974
- Alan Breeze
- Margaret Fenelon
- Frank Ing

1971
- Margaret Fenelon
- Frank Ing
- Tony Powell

1968
- Rodney Bowler
- Katherine Broughton
- Frank Cherry

1964
- Frank Ing
- Robert Oak
- Melvyn Silverman

Old Oak ward

1962
- Frang Ing
- Robert Oak
- Jo Richardson

1959
- George Byrne
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur

1956
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur
- Thomas Morris

1953B
- Robert McArthur

1953
- Reginald Buckingham
- Ena Freeman
- Eric Gosling

1949
- G. Blenkin
- Ena Freeman
- Alan Martin

College Park & Latimer ward

1962
- James Bull
- J. Farndale
- M. Kemp

1959
- G. Byrne
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur

1958B
- T. Deely

1956
- Frank Ing
- Robert McArthur
- Thomas Morris

1953
- Reginald Buckingham
- Ena Freeman
- Eric Gosling

1951B
- Augustus Mingaye

1949
- G. Blenkin
- Ena Freeman
- Alan Martin

1945
- A. Miles
- Thomas Morris
- H. Thatcher

1939B
- Thomas Morris
- William Stanton

1937
- William Church
- A. Miles
- Edward Woods

1934
- William Bowerman
- William Church
- Edward Woods

1931
- William Bowerman
- William Church
- Edward Woods

1928
- William Church
- C. Symes
- Edward Woods

1925
- William Church
- W. Parish
- Edward Woods

1922
- William Church
- Wilfrid Turney
- Edward Woods

1919
- Charles Moore
- G. Murfitt
- Clara Pickett

1912
- Charles Moore
- Thomas Morris
- G. Murfitt

1909B
- Charles Moore

1909
- Henry Hooper
- Thomas Morris
- E. Rawlings

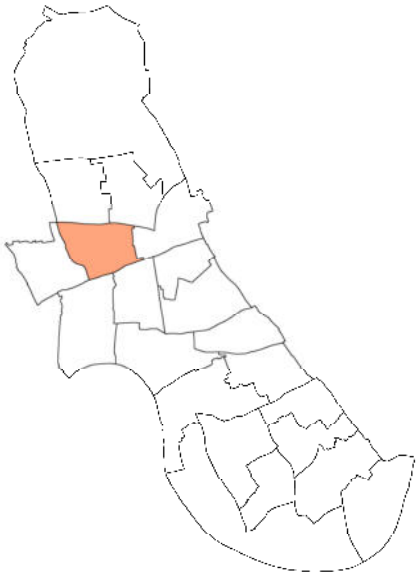
1906
- Henry Hooper
- Thomas Morris
- S. Pomeroy

1903
- Henry Hooper
- Edward Lock
- Thomas Morris

1900
- Henry Hooper
- Thomas Morris
- T. Rutter

Coningham ward

Several of Hammersmith and Fulham's historical wards made a return in 2022, among them Coningham: the ward that covers almost all of the long, densely-populated roads between Uxbridge Road and Goldhawk Road.



Why the name Coningham? Coningham Road runs approximately through the middle of this area (though it didn't originally: it was the eastern end of the ward) and is also the largest of these streets with over 800 electors. And the reason the ward's called this, rather than say "Shepherds Bush West" is because the freeholder who owned most of the land on which it was built was Charles Coningham Tubbs.

You'll struggle to find very much detailed history of any of the individual streets that form Coningham - and the main reason for that is that the area emerged almost overnight in development terms.

A map of the area from around 1870 will show an area of farmland and brickfields with the stubs of one or two roads emerging from Uxbridge Road and Goldhawk Road, yet by 1893 the road grid anyone would recognise today had been built. Just twenty three years to transform this 170 acres of Shepherds Bush. So, essentially, the history of any street in Coningham is the history of every street.

Of course, things are a little more complex than that: many different builders developed the streets - indeed, many different builders often developed the same streets producing something of a patchwork of styles and sizes. And while there was no planned architectural framework there were the fads and fashions of builders and craftsmen at the time that limited the variety of outcomes and made the area relatively architecturally homogenous.

The lack of a master plan for this area led to it being somewhat overwhelming: long residential street after long residential street hugely densely populated with no open space designed-in. This would have been especially oppressive were it not for the fact that the streets are very wide; far wider than you find in, for example, the Grove neighbourhood immediately to the south. In most of the Coningham streets you get parking on both sides AND enough space for two cars to pass without needing to give way.

This sense of space, which you also get in places like Islington, is added to by the buildings often being set back from the road; often with fairly sizeable front gardens or light wells for basement flats. But no public open space was planned into this street grid and so the area is just an endless urban grid of buildings. It wasn't until the Blitz forcibly redesigned some of the neighbourhood that Hammersmith Council was able to create Cathnor Park, right in the middle - just in front of the old borstal that became Stamford House secure unit.

Coningham ward was one of the wards created in the aftermath of the Second World War, in the 1949 boundary review. It was carved wholly from the old Starch Green ward - that part of it east of Askew Road.

Because the old six-councillor Starch Green ward was split cleanly in half it's easy to see how much better the half that became Coningham was compared to the Starch Green core. 1959 was a fairly poor election for Labour and they won Starch Green by roughly five points; and Coningham by roughly fifteen.

Coningham would, in time, prove to be one of Labour's strongest wards, albeit one with a fairly volatile vote. The only time Labour lost here was in their 1968 disaster - and then by less than 170 votes. Had the ward existed in 2006 they may well have lost again - to the Liberal Democrats - but we'll return to that assertion a bit later.

This is a ward associated with long-serving councillors;

Edith Woods (1949-1964) and before that for Starch Green), the sister of Edward Woods - the long-time Labour leader of Hammersmith council

Jim Bull (1971-1990), a wonderfully cantankerous man so well known in the ward that he would canvass by walking down the middle of the street and shout out which households were Labour rather than actually bothering to ask them!

Len Freeman (1949-1968), Mayor in 1967, who had a street on the redeveloped western end of the Clem Attlee estate named after him in 1999.

Ethel "Ettie" Crawford (1971-1982) who stood for the council to do something for families, like her own, with disabled children - but who later resigned from the Labour group and was made Deputy Mayor during the first Conservative-Liberal coalition after Health Minister David Ennals was dismissive of her pleas for extra funding for services for the disabled.

Christine Graham (1990-2002, and thereafter for Askew ward until 2006) who became deputy leader of the council, and Josie Wicks (similar tenure to Chris Graham), one of the more controversial councillors - her husband Les had served as a Coningham councillor briefly too.

Lisa Homan and Rory Vaughan (2006-date), two of the ward's serving councillors who've both now notched up twenty years representing this part of Shepherd's Bush, with Lisa also having eight years' service as a councillor in Margravine before that.

Though Coningham might not initially look like a strongly Labour ward due to the elegance of many of its Victorian houses and the spaciousness of its streets, there are three reasons why the party has more-or-less always been able to rely on it. The first is the Becklow Gardens estate, just off Askew Road. This is an estate in broadly the same style as the White City estate. There is also the much newer Elgin Avenue housing association terrace, built on the former Stamford House secure unit grounds off Goldhawk Road. But Coningham actually has a slightly lower proportion of council and housing association properties than the wider borough.

The second is that, while these long streets of grand three or four storey houses would have a higher likelihood of housing Conservative voters if they were all single dwellings, they are - in the large majority of cases sub-divided into flats or homes in multiple occupation, and a fair few are either housing association or council let.

The third reason is immigration. Coningham was - still is to an extent - the heart of the Irish population in Shepherd's Bush, though this has declined as the Good Friday Agreement established peace and the growing prosperity of Eire has encouraged many to return. Today, white Irish residents comprise about 3% of Coningham's population, down from over 6% in 2001. Wave after wave of further immigration has ensured that 64% of those who live here are not white English. Somali, Irish, Australian, Polish and French are the main ethnic groups. This leads to a diverse, multicultural and churning ward; by which I mean a large number of residents with high mobility who do not stay in the area (or at least the same dwelling in the area) all that long.

In the electoral review preceding the 1978 elections, Coningham expanded eastwards as far as the Hammersmith & City Line, making a logical ward of all of the streets between Uxbridge Road and Goldhawk Road, and between Askew Road and the tube line. This expansion accompanied the abolition of St Stephen's ward, which covered a broadly similar area to that of the current Shepherd's Bush Green ward.

In part, this low turnout helps explain the volatility of the vote. With so few voting, those who do cast their ballots have a greater impact on the result, so it only takes a relatively small change in the turnout of supporters of the minority party in a ward between elections to produce a much larger impact on the result than their underlying latency might suggest they have.

By the 2000 review, Coningham had become the largest ward in the borough; far beyond the electoral quota for 50 councillors. Labour proposed leaving Coningham unchanged because they were proposing five fewer councillors; enough to bring the ward to an acceptable electoral variance. The Conservatives, planning for a 51 member council and keen to make nearby Ravenscourt as optimal a prospect for them as possible by adding the southern half of Starch Green to it, proposed a new Askew ward that reverted, more or less, to the old version of Coningham east of Askew Road but also added the wedge of Starch Green north of Wendell Park.

The Conservatives managed to persuade the Commission that Askew Road was not a significant boundary in this area: that the road was a focal point of the community.

'IT GIVES ME PLEASURE TO THINK I HAVE HELPED'..



Together in the Mayor's parlour . . . brother and sister, Ald. Ted Woods, and the Mayor, Cllr. Miss Edith Woods, elected yesterday (Wednesday) to head Hammersmith Council for a further year

CLLR. MISS EDITH WOODS was yesterday (Wednesday) re-elected as Mayor of the borough of Hammersmith. Her brother, Mr. Ted Woods, a member of the Council for 40 years, was re-elected an Alderman, a position he has held for the past 25 years.

The Gazette and Post congratulates them on their re-election.

And the Gazette and Post commends them for their selfless dedication to the well-being of Hammersmith.

They are just two of the many people in Hammersmith of whom we can be proud.

Born in Chelsea, they moved at an early age to Shepherds Bush where their father had a grocery business. Mr. Woods helped in the business after leaving school at the age of 14. He remained in the retail trade until last year when he retired as manager of the London Co-operative Society's Fulham store.

Tradition

Miss Woods was manageress of an Oxford-street restaurant for many years and for a short time owned a restaurant in Acton.

If 67-year-old Mr. Woods is asked why he decided to dedicate his life to local government he will reply modestly and simply: "It is an important job which has to be done. After all, local government has been a tradition in this country for centuries."

When Mr. Woods was elected to the Council in November 1922 to represent Latimer and College Park ward there were only two other Labour members. They were the late Ald. W. H. Church and the late Ald. W. Turney. All three became Freemen of the Borough in 1948 — 11 years after the Socialists had gained control of the council.

Both on the Hammersmith Council and the London County Council, which he joined in 1949 and of which he was vice-chairman in 1959-60, Mr. Woods' main interest has been in housing problems. He is chairman of Hammersmith's Housing Committee and an outspoken critic of the Government's housing policies.

He was Mayor of Hammersmith in 1942-43-44.

Improvement

"I concentrated on housing after the first world war because of the distress I saw which was caused by bad housing.

"There was no attempt at all at that time to organize slum clearance. Conditions were bad to a degree we find it hard to visualize these days.

"While there is still a lot to be done there is no doubt that there has been a fantastic improvement."

Miss Woods joined the Council in 1945. "My main interest before that time was in singing but I had to give that up because of a throat infection.

For six years Miss Woods was chairman of the Library Committee and she is keenly interested in youth and the welfare of old folk.

"It gives me much pleasure to think that I have been able to help the old folk.

"I have every reason to feel proud of our welfare services."

Few will deny that Miss Woods has been one of the most popular and best loved Mayors of Hammersmith.

"The Mayoralty is to be looked on as a job of work. One has to uphold the dignity of the office both inside and outside the borough."

As with many main roads in boroughs like Hammersmith and Fulham, Askew Road is both those things: a far more substantial boundary than the rear garden walls of Wendell Road, for example, but also the centre of the community in terms of shops, its library, its pubs and the local churches.

The Conservatives were assisted in their argument because, at the Shepherd's Bush end of Coningham, Labour councillor Ivan Gibbons opposed his own party's proposal to split his White City and Shepherd's Bush ward into its constituent parts.

By undermining his party's plan he made the Tory proposal more credible - and didn't end up keeping White City and Shepherd's Bush together anyway. So Coningham was abolished and Askew ward, plus a Shepherd's Bush Green ward with more than a passing resemblance to the old St Stephen's, was created.

In its inaugural contest in 2002, Askew looked very much to be carrying on the traditions of Coningham. Although Labour's vote was down ten points on the Coningham outcome of 1998 this was not a swing to their main opponents: those ten points went to a Socialist Alliance candidate and independent left-winger Bert Showenberg, a GMB convenor at the council.

But in 2006 Labour came perilously close to losing Askew. Their vote fell a further 13 points to well below 40% and the Conservatives and Lib Dems, surged to 27% and 35%. The Lib Dems had been encouraged to target Askew by three sets of second places (albeit distant ones) in Coningham plus their first go at Askew when they'd won 18.5% without really trying.

Having failed to win Ravenscourt Park in 2002, they had a relatively decent organisation in close proximity. And the unpopularity of both the Labour government and Ken Livingstone's plan, as London Mayor, to run a tram line along Uxbridge Road created an almost perfect storm for the party.

A tram may not seem like the most outrageous proposition to cause scores of Labour voters to desert the party but look at a political map along the tram route and the political damage it did to the party in 2006 is remarkable, including playing a major part in costing Labour control of next door Ealing. It also played its part in helping the Conservatives win a seat off Labour in Shepherd's Bush Green. There were other factors of course: notably the Labour government's deep unpopularity, but the tram gave them a further kicking they could barely afford that year.

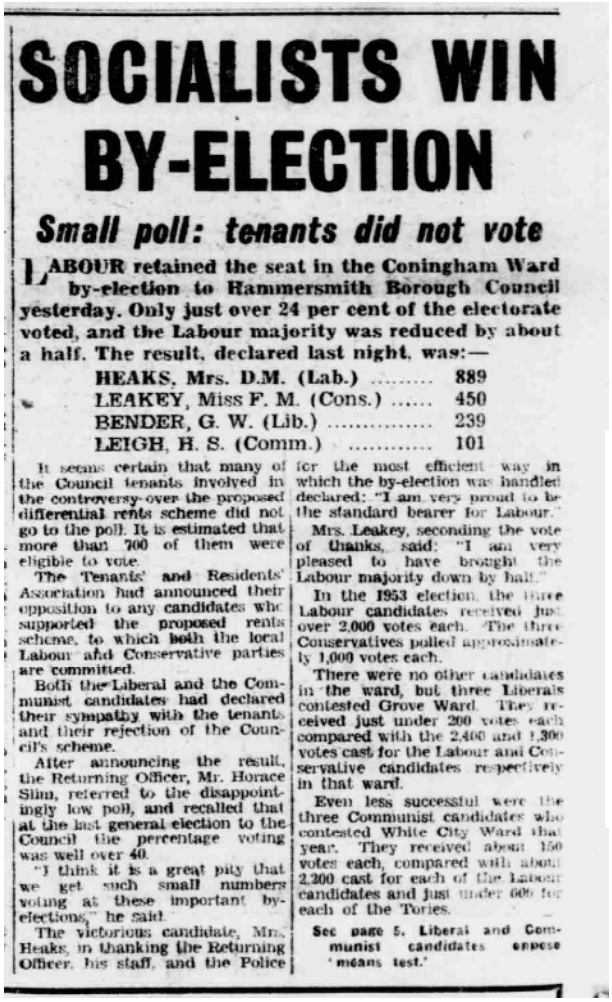


Labour's Askew vote was actually a couple of points lower than it was in Shepherd's Bush Green, where they lost a seat. The reason for the different outcome there from here was, of course, the opposition vote was much more evenly divided in Askew whereas it coalesced behind the Tories in Shepherd's Bush Green.

Had the Liberal Democrats been able to convince more voters who wanted to hurt Labour that they were the only ones who could "win here", that assertion would have become reality. But their bar charts - perhaps honest, for once - failed to convince.

But Labour was only 28 votes from losing a seat in Askew, and they only held all three because the Labour candidates' votes were tightly bunched, whereas in Shepherd's Bush Green one lagged significantly behind the other two.

Might the result have been worse if Coningham had existed back then? Maybe, because for the Tories to have won a seat in Shepherd's Bush Green they would have had to have polled well in the former Coningham parts of that ward around Lime Grove.



SOCIALISTS WIN BY-ELECTION

Small poll: tenants did not vote

LABOUR retained the seat in the Coningham Ward by-election to Hammersmith Borough Council yesterday. Only just over 24 per cent of the electorate voted, and the Labour majority was reduced by about a half. The result, declared last night, was:—

HEAKS, Mrs. D.M. (Lab.)	**889**
LEAKEY, Miss F. M. (Cons.)	**450**
BENDER, G. W. (Lib.)	**239**
LEIGH, H. S. (Comm.)	**101**

It seems certain that many of the Council tenants involved in the controversy over the proposed differential rents scheme did not go to the poll. It is estimated that more than 700 of them were eligible to vote.

The Tenants' and Residents' Association had announced their opposition to any candidates who supported the proposed rents scheme, to which both the local Labour and Conservative parties are committed.

Both the Liberal and the Communist candidates had declared their sympathy with the tenants and their rejection of the Council's scheme.

After announcing the result, the Returning Officer, Mr. Horace Slim, referred to the disappointingly low poll, and recalled that at the last general election to the Council the percentage voting was well over 40.

"I think it is a great pity that we get such small numbers voting at these important by-elections," he said.

The victorious candidate, Mrs. Heaks, in thanking the Returning Officer, his staff, and the Police for the most efficient way in which the by-election was handled declared: "I am very proud to be the standard bearer for Labour."

Mrs. Leakey, seconding the vote of thanks, said: "I am very pleased to have brought the Labour majority down by half."

In the 1953 election, the three Labour candidates received just over 2,000 votes each. The three Conservatives polled approximately 1,000 votes each.

There were no other candidates in the ward, but three Liberals contested Grove Ward. They received just under 200 votes each compared with the 2,400 and 1,300 votes cast for the Labour and Conservative candidates respectively in that ward.

Even less successful were the three Communist candidates who contested White City Ward that year. They received about 150 votes each, compared with about 2,200 cast for each of the Labour candidates and just under 600 for each of the Tories.

See page 5. Liberal and Communist candidates oppose "means test."

At the very least the Coningham result would likely have tracked very close to that of Askew.

With Livingstone gone and his tram plan with him in 2010, plus the far higher turnout caused by the council elections being held on the same day as the general election, Labour managed to open a more comfortable gap. But they still only polled an anaemic 44%.

As in 2006, the Conservatives and Lib Dems again split the non Labour vote almost evenly. In 2014, with Labour back in opposition nationally and London starting to swing firmly in the party's direction things returned to a semblance of normal. The Lib Dem vote evaporated - almost entirely switching to the Green Party, who won an impressive 19% at a time they were barely showing up in the polls.

But they were so weak organisationally that in 2018 they didn't even stand in Coningham: the Greens only fielded two candidates in the whole of Hammersmith and Fulham that year. But their vote didn't return to the Lib Dems: it went to Labour who won with a thumping 69%.

The 2019 electoral review saw an almost exact rerun of the arguments each party had made at the last review; Labour proposing to recreate Coningham, with Askew Road back as a boundary; the Conservatives to retain Askew ward and Ravenscourt Park ward on almost unchanged lines. This time the Boundary Commission went with Labour's plan.

Because the population of this part of Shepherds Bush has grown rapidly (Askew ward was by far the largest ward at the point the review started just as Coningham had been nineteen years earlier) the Coningham boundaries of old would have put far too many voters in the ward. Hence the revised Coningham doesn't quite reach to the Hammersmith and City Line: it now stops before Devonport Road.

The Green Party chose Coningham as its target ward in 2022: the only place it fielded three candidates (including former Coningham Labour councillor Ben Simms). I mentioned above that the Greens are organisationally very weak in this borough - at least they were until 2026 - and that manifests in their lack of data on voters.

In that absence they have to rely on previous election results and that 2014 vote share of 19% likely picked Coningham as their target.



Hammersmith Council in session

'Judas' jeers on Ettie's big day

A COUNCILLOR who quit the Labour party faced jibes as she went to collect her badge of office at a mayor-making ceremony.

And some of her former colleagues steered clear of her at a reception.

Cllr. Mrs. Ettie Crawford was chosen as Hammersmith's deputy mayor by the re-elected Tory mayor Bill Smith.

And as she went to receive her badge of office at last Wednesday's council meeting, Labour members muttered insults like "Judas" at her.

But Mrs. Crawford, now an independent councillor, is standing up to her critics — and preparing for an active year of office.

Mrs. Crawford left the Labour group over the plight of a severely-handicapped boy in a Shepherds Bush hostel — and the failure of David Ennals, then health secretary, to discuss the case with her.

She told the council meeting: "I believe as an independent councillor, and not a Judas, I have nothing at all to do with any political party from now on, and I don't intend to have.

"Contrary to what has been said I have not changed my colours. I have no colours now.

"I have come to the conclusion that not all the people wearing horns are on the administration side of the council chamber."

● A Labour councillor has made a scathing attack on a non-elected Liberal, who has been co-opted to Hammersmith Council housing committees.

Ian Gray said the only reason Anne Connaughton sat on committees was that Liberal leader Simon Knott wanted extra support for his party's views.

He said: "Her worth to the community and her record of experience is non-existent."

Miss Connaughton said she did not attend the meeting because she was unwell, and she described Cllr Gray as a spoilt child.

She said: "I think it is sour grapes on his part because he couldn't become housing chairman."

● Ettie Crawford

The same thing happened in 2026 when they decided to target White City because of the 2022 result there rather than understanding that this was a ward they could come a strong second in but not win.

Nonetheless, their 2022 choice of Coningham as their target made sense on the basis that they had performed fairly well in Coningham in the past, and there seems to be a latent anti-Labour vote that can, from time to time, be roused.

Coningham was a bad choice because it's very challenging to campaign in. A lot of households are behind entryphone buzzers, there's that high population turnover, you need a lot of activists simply to canvass one street - Coningham Road, for example, has almost 800 voters, and there isn't really a ward-wide commonality that gives campaigners a big issue or two to major on.

Nonetheless, the Greens won second place in Coningham's re-inaugural contest. Unlike in 2006 when the Labour candidates had all won broadly similar votes, there was a wide spread this time: Lisa Homan winning with 1,529 and Rory Vaughan taking 1,247. Part of the reason for this was that Homan, by fluke, was top of the ballot paper - though in some boroughs including this one there is also a habit for (presumably) some women voters only choosing to vote for women candidates.

The same wide vote spread happened with the Greens too: their top candidate winning 531 votes and their third candidate just 347. This was by no means a close result: on aggregate Labour won 60% and the Greens 19%.

Perhaps that's why the Greens chose to shift focus in 2026 to White City. They had worked Coningham and managed 19% (no better than 2014 when they hadn't tried); whereas they'd got 16% in White City without putting in any effort. They also, of course, could not have predicted the Green surge that would follow their leadership election in September 2025 that would put boosters under their membership, their campaigning and their electoral appeal in Labour-held London.

Borough mourns deaths of council stalwarts

LABOUR and Conservative supporters were united in grief this week after the deaths of two colleagues, ex-Labour councillor Jim Bull and one-time Mayoress, Lady Rosemary Belhaven.

HELEN WHITESIDE and PATRICK GARDNER report.



Jim Bull: one of a kind



Lady Belhaven: missed

ONE of Hammersmith and Fulham's best known political figures Jim Bull died of cancer in St Mary's Hospital on Monday.

Mr Bull served as a Labour councillor in Conningham ward for 20 years and served on many council committees.

He became a member of the Labour party in 1939 and was an active member of the Town Hall union Nalgo.

He joined the army in 1939, serving in the Middle East with the desert rats for three years then took part in the Normandy invasion in 1944.

After leaving the army in 1946 he became a hospital engineer, working at Colindale and Hendon Hospitals as a senior engineer until his retirement in 1983.

Mayor of Hammersmith and Fulham Joan Caruana said: "When they made Jim they threw away the mould. He has a wonderful sense of humour and it was that which carried him through life.

"When I first met him about 14 years ago I was terrified of him because he was bull by name and bull by nature. Then one day I had enough and shouted back at him and he roared with laughter. It was then that I realised that he had been winding me up all along!"

She added: "He was dedicated to his constituents and he loved them and his work on the council.

"There will never be another one like him."

Jim Bull, who leaves a widow and two children, had three grandchildren and one great grandchild.

His funeral will be held at Mortlake Crematorium at 4.30pm on Monday.

☆☆☆

ON the other side of the political divide, Conservative colleagues have paid tribute to leading councillor and former Mayoress Rosemary Belhaven, who died on Saturday aged 64.

They described her as a dedicated council member who would be sadly missed.

Lady Belhaven, who represented Palace ward for the Conservatives, came from a highly political family and served two spells on the council.

She was a councillor from 1982 to 1986 – during which she served as the Conservative chief whip – and again from 1990 until her death.

Lady Belhaven also served as Mayoress in 1985-86 during her first spell on the council, when Cllr Kim Howe was Mayor.

Conservative leader Gerald Wombwell said: "People will be very sad to hear of her death and will miss her very much. She was a very dedicated councillor."

Cllr Emile Al-Uzaizi, her colleague in Palace ward, said: "She was a great fighter, and after having an operation two years ago she decided to take a boat trip up the Amazon.

"That's exactly the kind of person she was – she would never let anything get her down. I shall miss her terribly and I know she will be missed by the Labour side as well. The Mayor, Joan Caruana, was very fond of her."

Lady Belhaven, who leaves five children, lived in Fulham for many years but moved recently to a new home in Battersea Church Road.

She died in Charing Cross Hospital on Saturday following complications from a kidney transplant operation in 1990.

Her funeral was due to take place today, Friday, at Our Lady of Dolours Church, Fulham Road.

Summary of results for Coningham ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Coningham ward					
1949	40.0	55.4			4.6
1953	32.3	67.7			
1955B	26.8	52.9	14.2		6.0
1956	15.6	64.8			19.6
1959	20.4	79.6			
1962	11.1	88.9			
1964	22.4	77.6			
1968	55.5	44.5			
1971	35.0	65.0			
1974	29.3	70.7			
1978	43.6	56.4			3.2
1982	24.9	49.2	18.1		7.8
1986	19.0	67.5	13.4		
1990	23.1	59.8			17.1
1994	15.1	69.7	15.2		
1998	15.3	61.1	19.0		4.6
Askew ward					
2002	18.5	51.9	18.5		11.1
2006	26.9	38.6	34.6		
2010	27.0	44.0	29.0		
2014	20.5	51.3	7.3	19.4	1.5
2018	17.7	69.2	13.1		
Coningham ward					
2022	12.9	60.1	7.3	19.7	
2026	11.3	44.8	6.0	28.4	9.5

Hindsight notwithstanding, they should either have stuck with Coningham in 2026 or gone after Shepherd's Bush Green.

After a somewhat fraught campaign in which various election forecasting sites flagged that the Greens were getting close to winning Coningham, Labour held on again pretty easily, albeit losing about fourteen percentage points of support (nowhere near as bad as their thirty point loss in College Park and Old Oak, 27 point fall in Shepherds Bush Green or 24 point drop in Addison. Labour won with 45% and the Greens took 28%. The Conservatives won slightly less than 12%, Reform UK 10% and the Lib Dems just 6%.

That Green share was just one percentage point behind the vote they managed in White City which they'd tried to work mercilessly. Coningham was a better result for them because Labour's vote was seven points lower here than in White City.

In fact the ward in which the Greens performed best wasn't anywhere near Shepherd's Bush: it was West Kensington. There they only stood one candidate (and that explains their good result there a little: a full slate would have pulled their mean vote lower).

Nonetheless, Shepherd's Bush is clearly their best part of the borough. Across the five W12 wards, Labour polled 46.5% (down 20) and the Greens 25.6% (up 19). In the rest of the borough the Greens polled 18% across the five Hammersmith wards and 12% in the ten Fulham wards. So, if the party ever wants to win seats in this borough their focus needs to be here.

Labour has had lurches of support in Coningham - and Askew - since it was created, but their trend line is basically flat. The ward is slowly gentrifying - but gentrification no longer equates to improved Conservative prospects in much of London.

2026 wasn't the first time they've failed to finish in the top two places in Coningham or Askew: they didn't in 2022, 2010, 2006, 1998 and tied with the Lib Dems in 2002 and 1994. That explains why, in 77 years of electoral history, they've only won Coningham once, and then only in their freak 1968 landslide. Nonetheless, the Tories have never been so distantly third here as they came in 2026 - and it looks like this may well be a permanent failure in a ward they simply don't know how to appeal to.

Rollcall of Coningham ward councillors

including Askew ward (2002-2022)

2026
- Lisa Homan
- Rowan Ree
- Rory Vaughan

2022
- Lisa Homan
- Rowan Ree
- Rory Vaughan

2022
- Lisa Homan
- Rowan Ree
- Rory Vaughan

2018
- Lisa Homan
- Rowan Ree
- Rory Vaughan

Askew ward

2014
- Lisa Homan
- Caroline Needham
- Rory Vaughan

2010
- Lisa Homan
- Caroline Needham
- Rory Vaughan

2006
- Gill Dickenson
- Lisa Homan
- Rory Vaughan

2002
- Christine Graham
- Tim Stanley
- Josie Wicks

Coningham ward

1998
- Christine Graham
- Tim Stanley
- Josie Wicks

1994
- Christine Graham
- Ben Simms
- Josie Wicks

1990
- Samantha Elvin
- Christine Graham
- Josie Wicks

1986
- Jim Bull
- Guy Rubin
- Joseph Mirwitch

1982
- Jim Bull
- Dan Filson
- Joseph Mirwitch

1978
- Jim Bull
- Ethel Crawford (Lab > Ind)
- Leslie Wicks

1974
- Jim Bull
- Ethel Crawford
- Alan Martin

1971
- Jim Bull
- Ethel Crawford
- Alan Martin

1968
- Hugh Barker
- Harry Hammond
- Irene York

1964
- Ena Freeman
- Leonard Freeman
- Violet Grant

1962
- Leonard Freeman
- Violet Grant
- Edith Woods

1959
- Leonard Freeman
- Fred Williams
- Edith Woods

1956
- Leonard Freeman
- Fred Williams
- Edith Woods

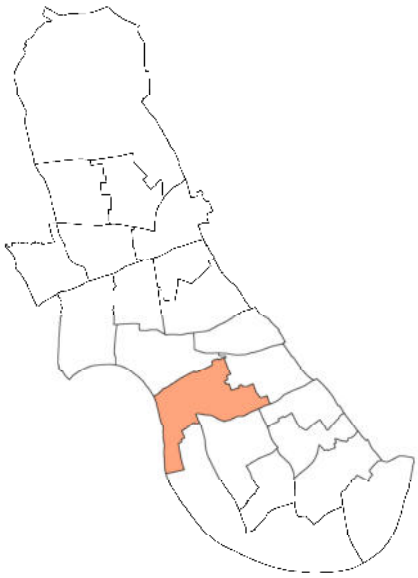
1955B
- Dorothy Heaks

1953
- Jack Cohen
- Leonard Freeman
- Edith Woods

1949
- Leonard Freeman
- John Hayes
- Edith Woods

Fulham Reach

Many believe that Fulham is pertains only to the SW6 postal district, south of Lillie Road. In fact the borough of Fulham predated postcodes and reached up into the W6 area almost as far north as Talgarth Road. It is essentially this area that Fulham Reach ward covers.



Fulham Reach was created in 2002, built around nearly all of Margravine ward: the area between Fulham Palace Road in the west and Queen's Club in the east.

Margravine was named after the Margravine of Brandenburgh, whose estate covered the area the new Fulham Reach development and Frank Banfield Park lies within. Queen Caroline lived in Brandenburgh House - not the hostel built for nurses that stands on Fulham Palace Road, but a grander villa nearer the Thames. Lord Melcombe, for whom the nearby primary school was named, also owned the land for a time.

Margravine is important in local Labour Party history: it was the first ward - in 1903 - in either Fulham or Hammersmith to elect Labour councillors; Emanuel Honey and John Bancroft. Later William Banfield represented the ward. He went on to be a Trade Union leader and MP whose son (Frank) and daughter-in-law (Doris) also became councillors.

Unsurprisingly, given this early support for the party, Margravine was Labour's best ward in Fulham. That may not say much in the context of their weakening position towards the end of the 20th Century but the Conservatives rarely bothered contesting it seriously. Even in their 1968 disaster Labour still held two of the three seats In Margravine.

The original Margravine was somewhat similar to the current version of Fulham Reach in that it reached across Fulham Palace Road to take in just over half of what became the Crabtree estate (in 1900 this was just Crabtree Farm) and the roads and factories immediately north; from Parfrey Street to Chancellors Road. In the east it stopped about half way through what is now the Bayonne estate but back then was a tight bunch of run-down streets leading from Lillie Road to Greyhound Road.

This was not an affluent part of Fulham, far from the market gardens that typified Fulham town and Parson's Green. Before Charing Cross Hospital was built, the Fulham and Hammersmith Union Workhouse occupied the site - just about the only provision the state made back then for Fulham's itinerant poor. Workhouses tended not to get built in affluent neighbourhoods.

Surrounding the workhouse were very tightly-packed terraces of cottages, many with the barest amount of outdoor space: the Bayonne estate, and several of the blocks within it are named after the streets - alleyways really - that were cleared to make way for it. These streets were interspersed with laundries (hence Laundry Road) and small factories and workshops.

The famous Charles Booth poverty map, drawn very slightly before the borough was founded and reproduced over the page, colour-coded the affluence or deprivation of every street in inner London. It shows several of Margravine's streets coloured dark or light blue: the poorest neighbourhoods. These areas include the land upon which the Field Road council estate now stands and Lurgan Avenue, which ran to the north of Aspenlea Road: where the tower blocks that house Charing Cross workers stand today.

Much of the rest of the area is shaded brown, which Booth classified as "mixed - some comfortable, others poor." The only road marked "well to do" - the wealthiest of Booth's classifications with bright red shading - is Margravine Gardens.

This was an almost uniformly working class ward and that was why Labour was competitive here from the outset. Nonetheless, the party's struggles: first to establish dominance over the Liberals/Progressives and then to challenge the Conservatives/Municipal Reform for power locally, meant that it wasn't until the Great Depression that the party could rely on Margravine.



The Booth povery map showing the Margravine area

This period also saw some of the party's epic lows: the taint of the Russian Revolution and thereafter the traumatising split caused by the Ramsay MacDonald-led National Government.

Of the twenty eight elections (not counting by-elections) fought in Margravine from 1900 to 1998, Labour returned councillors in twenty-two of them.

Margravine's Labour lean was made even stronger by the building of council housing. The first blocks: William Morris House in Margravine Road, and Mary MacArthur and Holman Hunt Houses - either side of the Queen's Club - were followed in the early 1960s by Cox and Horton Houses. Muscal - named after the field the block was built on and later still Chelmsford Close and St Alban's Terrace completed the Field Road estate, with the Matthews Hall community centre opposite Gastein Road and the Pear Tree pub just behind.

The very last estate the Greater London Council ever built, the Bayonne, opened in the early 1980s, covering a huge square bordered by Greyhound Road, Humbolt Road, Lillie Road and Everington Street. The Bayonne also provided a nursery school, some private housing on the western side of the estate: Abbey Gardens, Spencer Walk and Crammond Close, and something desperately lacking in the Margravine area: open parkland.

When the two boroughs amalgamated and wards were redrawn prior to 1964, Margravine lost its riverside extent and was pared back to Fulham Palace Road. The side it lost - the Crabtree estate side - was by no means poor territory for Labour in the 1960s.

This was still the Fulham of industrial wharves, the massive, grim- looking Manbre and Garton sugar factory and the Chancellors Distillery. But the Crabtree estate

So far very little excitement has been evinced over the by-election in the Margravine Ward for a member of the Fulham Borough Council, in place of ex-Councillor Cooper. The three candidates nominated - Messrs. W.H. Pritchard (Moderate), J. Prouse (Labour), and L.R. Hill (Communist) - are going to the poll, which takes place on Saturday next, December 17th, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. It is expected that the Returning Officer, (Mr J.P. Shuter, the Town Clerk), will declare the result about 9.30pm the same evening. One peculiarity about the contest is that for borough council purposes there are more women electors in the ward than men electors. The reason for this is that only those who furnish rooms or are householders are eligible to vote in local elections. This rules out a large number of men voters who, as lodgers in furnished rooms, are entitled to vote at Parliamentary elections, when the male voters are in the majority. Both Mr Pritchard and Mr Prouse got their election addresses in the hands of the voters during the week-end. Each claim to have been the first to have accomplished this important item in electioneering, but the two ran so close together that it would be better to put it down as a dead heat. The workers for Mr. Hill, the Communist, were still busy getting out his address on Tuesday.

In his address Mr Pritchard lays stress on the fact that he has lived in the ward over 36 years. He supports Trade Union conditions of labour and wages, and is opposed to municipal trading, as being unfair to the local tradesmen, and he is also against municipal direct labour, as this removes the element of competition. An important statement he makes is one in which he regrets that the Fulham Labour majority on the Fulham Council turned down the Government scheme for finding work for the unemployed, as it would have been a useful means of providing improvements at less than the cost price to the ratepayers. Mr Pritchard points out that he has been a member of the Fulham Board of Guardians since April 1919. The arrangements in connection with Mr Pritchard's candidature are being supervised by Mr W.J. Langley, agent to the West Fulham Conservative Association. Meetings on behalf of Mr Pritchard have been held by the Peoples' League but chief reliance is laid on the personal canvass of the ward, in which great help is being rendered by a band of women. On the whole, Mr Pritchard's chances are rather rosy. The streets in the vicinity of his committee room display a good sprinkling of his election cards. It is felt that a split in the Labour vote, caused through the presence of the Communist candidate, will just allow Mr Pritchard to creep to the head of the poll.

"A lot of the women voters want to know what it's all about," remarked one of the supporters of Mr J. Prouse, the Labour candidate. "We find that they are not much concerned about the election, but when we get them to talk, the women are keen in support of our man." This seems very hopeful for the chances of the organised Labour candidate. Like the Moderate candidate, Mr Prouse is not having any meetings but is relying on the door to door visit. Yesterday, a large portion of the ward had been canvassed, and the Labour workers were extremely well satisfied with the look of things. The district at the back of the Infirmary is expected to poll well for Mr. Prouse. His workers look down their election noses, so to speak, at the presence of the third candidates, Mr Hill. "The votes Mr. Hill gets are what we would have in the ordinary way," rather gloomily stated one of the prominent workers, "but we are buoyed up from the fact that we have an excellent candidate in Mr. Prouse. Another thing which stimulates us is that at the last Guardians election the Labour candidate, Miss Gilbert, was only defeated by about 26 votes by Mr Crowne. We think we shall succeed in pulling more than this number over to our side, as this election is causing more excitement than did the Guardians election."

It will be a close thing between Mr. Pritchard and Mr. Prouse. If anything lets down Mr. Pritchard it will be the apathy of the middle classes. There is a feeling among the Labour workers that the Moderates are not showing a united front. If this is so a dangerous shoal may shipwreck their chances of success. As far as can be gathered, however, there is little ground for this fear being realised, but canvassers quickly feel the pulse of the electors, and the Moderates may find there is something in it after all.

In his election address, Mr Prouse claims credit for the Labour party for introducing the Bag Wash. This may be a boomerang, however, as electors still remember the expensive litigation it led to: indeed the Borough Council has not yet finished with this matter, which has been reopened in the Law Courts. Perhaps Mr. Prouse will find that he has done himself no good in waving the Bag Wash flag. He mentions that the Labour Party are about to promote a scheme for the conversion of the casual wards in Margravine Road into slipper baths. What about the expense? Again, another item he advocates, the free wiring of working-class dwellings for electric lighting, will be another luxury which many ratepayers will object to, as possibly leading to higher rents. Candidly, is the time ripe for more fancy schemes? Some think that similar glorious enterprises at the public expense, with extravagant outlay of public funds, is that has caused Fulham to be in about £10,000 for the relief of boroughs who spent money too freely.

Mr Hill, the Communist, is utilising the manifesto from headquarters as his election address. This openly based on class war - workers v. the privileged class. We are afraid that with the example before the electors this appeal to hatred will be a damp squib. Moreover, the Communists are confessed supporters of the Poplar gang who, with others, squandered public money recklessly, indirectly leading to Fulham adding over 4d. in the £ to the rate to pay off these outside boroughs' debts. This will not appeal to the thrifty people in Margravine ward. It is because Fulham Labour leaders repudiated the action of the Poplar gang that has persuaded the Communists to run Mr. Hill as a candidate.

This is the first time the Communists have run a candidate in Fulham, It will puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to understand the attitude of Communists and Labour in this Fulham by-election. The Communist candidate, for instance, is bitterly opposed by Mr. Hanson, the local leader of the extreme section of the Communists. He turned up at one of Mr. Hill's open-air meetings and went for the speaker hip and thigh. It is, therefore, a nice pickle, and we should not be surprised if the electors washed their hands completely of this section. If there is a heavy poll the Moderates are hopeful of winning. Fulham has room for improvement in the matter of voting. At the last Borough Council election only about 25 per cent went to the poll.

was built for the wealthier working and affluent professional classes, so it was by no means as solid for Labour as Margravine east of Fulham Palace Road. That despite the fact that, by leaving behind Brandenburgh House, the Margravine title became a little misapplied.

From 1937 - the year Labour gained control of Fulham council for the rest of its existence, the party won Margravine with over 70% of the vote seven times, over 60% a further six times, and in every other case with more than half the vote - even 1968, when the ward split 50.6% Labour to 49.4% Conservative.

Margravine was also the only ward in the borough contested by someone who would go on to be leader of a major party, even if it was in opposition during the Blair years. In a double 1985 Margravine by-election, Iain Duncan-Smith was one of the two losing candidates (the other, Simon Burns, also went on to become a long-serving MP for Chelmsford).

Margaret Ingram - one of the Labour victors in that by-election - died three years later creating another Margravine by-election in 1988. Labour's candidate was called Tony Hastings and the party ran a surreal campaign attempting to win a majority of 1066 votes: their red and white window bills simply read "Hastings 1066". They didn't get anywhere close to that majority on a low turnout summer by-election with polling day beset by torrential rain, but at least Hastings won with more than 1,066 votes (he got 1,091). 1091 apparently marked the first recording of a major tornado sweeping through London. This by-election did not qualify as a repeat of that.

That is a brief guide to the history of Margravine. But Margravine is only the core of Fulham Reach ward. The ward almost survived the electoral review of 2000 because, despite insisting that all wards be drawn large enough to accommodate three councillors, the Commission then kept Margravine with two councillors at draft stage for no other reason than they wanted a 2-member ward in Fulham to balance Hammersmith's College Park & Old Oak. In turn they proposed that Palace ward expand to include all of Crabtree. The Crabtree ward of 1964 to 1978 did include all of the Bishops Park estate down to Putney Bridge, but not Hurlingham, almost two miles from one end to the other.

Labour fought hard instead for the Fulham Reach we, more or less, have today, though given how the ward ended up voting in 2002, they'd have been one councillor better off if Margravine had been kept. Except that, even though they lost two of its seats that year it was still a competitive ward they could expect to win back. That initial proposal of a 3-councillor Palace ward would never have been won by Labour.

Fulham Reach was almost all of Margravine - just a couple of northern streets transferred to Hammersmith Broadway. Bolted on to it came the northern half of Crabtree ward: the area between Fulham Palace Road and the Thames. This area is mostly the Crabtree estate: a patchwork of nine distinctive streets built in the 1930s whose houses originally sold for £285.

One of the political features of the Crabtree estate is that, while the majority of houses occupied by couples tend to vote Conservative, interspersed among them are some fairly large families - often immigrant families - who tend to be Labour supporting, so the balance of the estate is much more even than a straightforward tot-up would suppose.

A small amount of public housing on this side of Fulham Palace Road transferred too: Keir Hardie House opposite the hospital, Cobb's Hall and, next door, the Clifford Haigh House Housing Association block, plus Rainville Court by the river.

Crabtree ward existed from the unification of the two boroughs in 1964: essentially from the western sections of the Fulham Borough Council Margravine and Munster wards. The section contributed by Munster - essentially the Bishops Park estate - contained a lot of Conservative voters even then, but nowhere near as many as nowadays - and they were usually outvoted (just) by Labour: a classic marginal.

In the ward boundary review prior to the 1978 elections the Labour-run council attempted to improve the party's chances in Crabtree by creating Palace ward and putting half of the Bishops Park estate into it. Even though the newer, smaller, Crabtree was better for Labour - much, much better than Palace which produced overwhelming Conservative votes from its first election - it was not so much better that it could withstand the huge swing in 1978. So big was that swing that Crabtree looked reasonably safe for the Tories, and was the seat of the council leader for most of the eight years they were in power, Kim Howe.

But Crabtree fell to Labour in the 1986 landslide by the minuscule margins of 81 and 28 votes. Thus began a period when the ward was among the most marginal in the borough. The Tories regained it in 1990 beating former council leader Gordon Prentice and ousted Broadway councillor John Gorter: a rare example of two serving councillors defeated in a ward neither of them had represented.

Fulham Chronicle
Friday, November 30, 1934

Fulham Council

Four candidates for Margravine ward vacancy

There are four candidates for the Fulham Borough Council by-election in Margravine ward on Thursday next. The vacancy arose through the election of Mr. C. Lancaster, L.C.C. as an Alderman. Nominations were received by the Town Clerk (Mr. W. Townend) at Fulham Town Hall on Friday, the candidates being as follows:-

FALCON, Hilda Mary (M.R.) widow: 50 Margravine Gardens, Fulham. Proposed by Alfred Charles Milton, 83 Rannoch Road, Fulham, seconded by Frederick James Thoresby, 9 St. Dunstan's Road, Fulham.

HASKELL, Frank George (Com.) clerk, 24 Ewald Road, Fulham. Proposed by Albert Edward White, 14 Aspenlea Road, Fulham, seconded by Winifred Alice White, 14 Aspenlea Road, Fulham.

HOLINHBERY, Elizabeth Eva (Lab.) married woman, 5 Clonmel Road, Fulham. Proposed by Susan Rebecca Harrison, 39 Claybrook Road, Fulham, seconded by Eliza Gibson, 18 Aspenlea Road, Fulham.

LANSDELL, Charles Ernest (I.L.P.), clerk, 26 Crondace Road, Fulham. Proposed by Ernest Frederick Heckford, 44 Tasso Road, Fulham, seconded by Florence Maude Chilman, 44 Tasso Road, Fulham.

"Who's Who" of the candidates

Mrs. H.M. Falcon is a voluntary worker at the Greyhound Road Infant and Child Welfare Centre, a school manager, and vice-chairman of the Margravine ward branch of the West Fulham Conservative and Unionist Association.

Mr. Frank Haskell is 24 years of age and a member of the West London Youth Anti-War Committee. Early in August he was elected by the Knightsbridge Branch of the Shop Assistants Union to go to the Sheffield Youth Anti-Fascist Congress. At this congress he was chosen to go with four others to form the British section of a deputation to visit Germany. In company with his companions, Mr. Haskell was arrested in Germany and locked in a cell. They were released after undertaking to leave the country. Mr. Haskell was a Munster ward candidate for the Borough Council election on November 1. He polled 175 votes.

Mrs. E.E. Hollingbery is closely identified with the work of the Labour movement, being a member of the General Management and Executive Committee of the West Fulham Labour Party. She is also a school manager.

Mr. C.E. Lansdell is chairman of the Fulham Branch of the Independent Labour Party. For 25 years until his recent marriage, he lived at Gastein Road. He is a member of the National Union of Clerks, and is described as an active co-operator.

Although this win was hailed as part of the big Fulham swing back to the Conservatives, they gained Crabtree by fewer than 130 votes. In 1994 Labour regained one of the two Conservative seats by 22 votes. Then, in 1996, when the remaining Conservative quit to live in France, having been defeated in his bid to win the group leadership, Labour got the other seat too - the first ever Labour by-election gain in Hammersmith and Fulham (the combined borough, that is).

In 1998, that by-election gain was reversed and the ward split its representation again, with the new Conservative councillor in by just 75; he in turn resigned just a year later. The by-election was held on the same day as the European Parliamentary elections in 1999, one of the first bad results for Tony Blair's still new government. Hence the Conservatives won - by just twelve votes. Another squeaker.

Fulham Reach also got a handful of streets sandwiched between the Bayonne estate and Queen's Club Gardens, donated by the abolished Normand ward. These are typical, tightly packed Fulham terraces built for the manual workers the area needed back in the day, that are now hugely expensive and considerably Conservative leaning.

What happens when you expand the boundaries of a safely Labour ward into areas where the party has far less support? Well, if the first election for Fulham Reach had taken place in 1998, the answer would have been a slimmed down - but still substantial - Labour win, probably by around 59% to the Conservatives' 35%.

But a feature of both the 2002 and 1978 boundary reviews is that the baseline results these notional figures



were based on: 1974 and 1998 (2018 as well), were very good years for Labour. And the first election under the new boundaries occurred in a less positive year (2022 was, unusually actually a better year for Labour than 2018).

Had abour worked Fulham Reach in 2002 (the party assumed - not entirely unreasonably - that the ward was safe and sent its candidates to work in other parts of the borough) they could probably have saved the two seats that ended up going Conservative. But they didn't and Margravine councillor Min Birdsey was left as the only Labour representative in that set of three.

In 2006 there was a further swing against Labour nationally: arguably the party's worst performance since their 1968 disaster, and the Conservatives picked off the third Fulham Reach seat putting them ten points clear of Labour.

Although numerical majorities stayed the same in 2010, the higher general election turnout meant there was a small swing back to Labour in that year - and a surge in Lib Dem support - but Fulham Reach stayed blue.

In 2014, Labour just managed to regain the three seats here - their third candidate in by just 21 votes. But the swing back was the smallest of any ward they gained that year That hardly suggests that the reason given for the win: saving Charing Cross Hospital, had much impact in a ward with the highest number of healthcare professionals residing in it.

Over the course of the first four elections for Fulham Reach, 2002 to 2014, both main parties polled within a very tight ceiling and floor. Labour's vote was never outside a range of 37% to 45% and the Conservatives

Nine fight for seats on council

Conservatives bid to win in Labour stronghold

TORIES are set to challenge a Labour stronghold in a by-election next week.

They are certain Conservatives will win votes away from the Left in Margravine Ward which covers the Hammersmith and Fulham border.

Tory candidate Iain Duncan-Smith said: "I feel convinced that traditional Labour voters will vote for us because a lot of people are saying they are dissatisfied with their performance."

Nine candidates are fighting for the two seats on January 17 left vacant by the death of Cllr William Spiers in November last year and the resignation of Cllr David Jordan.

The outcome could drastically effect the make-up of the Conservative / Liberal controlled hung council which stands at 23 Conservatives, 25 Labour and two Liberal.

Conservatives, Labour and SDP/Liberal Alliance are fielding two candidates each.

The Ecology Party, Ratepayers Association and an Independent candidate are also standing.

Two former councillors Tom Champion and Margaret Ingram represent Labour. Mrs Ingram, who lives in Fulham, represented Wormholt Ward, Shepherds Bush between 1971-1982.

Civil servant Mr Champion, represented Margravine during the same period. He said: "Having been a councillor in Margravine in the past I intend to carry on the work that I left off when I retired.

"The most important thing for electors is that their cases are taken up as they used to be."

His Conservative opponents Simon Burns and Iain Duncan-Smith deny standards have gone down.

They are eager to win the seat to get a firmer grip on the Town Hall. Mr Burns said: "The main thing is to secure the election of more Conservative councillors because I think the record of this Conservative council is excellent. We have reduced the borough rate in the last three years."

SDP candidates Peter Tedder and Michael Orr also hope to challenge Labour's dominance in the ward. They criticised extremists in Labour's ranks.

In the 1982 council elections Labour won 1,700 votes in the ward compared with 1,000 for the Conservatives — a majority of 700. The SDP / Liberal Alliance won 350 votes.

Finely balanced Crabtree ward goes to the polls

Cllrs prepare for by-election battle

A BY-ELECTION will be held in Fulham next month, following the decision of Tory councillor Guy Mortimer to emigrate to France.

Cllr Mortimer, 54, and his wife Wendy are moving to Beziers, on the Mediterranean coast near Montpelier to live and work, realising an idea they first hatched eight years ago.

Crabtree ward, which was split between Cllr Mortimer and Labour Cllr Adam Gray at the 1994 election, is one of the most finely balanced wards in the borough, and politicians are already talking up the contest.

Labour says if there is a swing similar to the by-election in Town ward in January – which the Tories held – the Conservatives would lose the seat.

In turn, the Tories say Labour's decisions to cut Eternit Wharf leisure centre and Munster library will prove unpopular with the electorate.

By MIKE PARKINSON

Tory leader Gerald Wombwell said he would be sorry to lose Cllr Mortimer.

"It's his decision and I wish him very good luck," he said.

Cllr Mortimer was first elected in 1990, when he defeated former council leader Gordon Prentice, and he retained his seat in 1994.

Cllr Wombwell commended his colleague for his work on the education committee.

"Guy has spoken out in forthright terms about the collapse in standards in secondary schools and some primary schools," he said.

"On local issues he has worked with residents' groups on matters as diverse as bringing residents' parking to Crabtree ward, trying to save the Eternit Wharf Leisure Centre and stopping late-night music and noise in clubs."

Cllr Mortimer plans to work with local Conservatives to ensure his Party's successor is elected.

He told the *Gazette* "It's going to be a wrench leaving Fulham.



Emigrating: Guy Mortimer

"I have a lot of friends here. But we have been anticipating going to France for six to eight years. It's just a question of when we can sell the house."

Cllr Mortimer hopes to use his qualifications as a teacher of English as a foreign language.

Labour leader Cllr Andrew Slaughter insisted his party would take the seat from the Tories.

He said: "We're going to fight a vigorous campaign to try and win this seat back from the Tories because this authority's excellent record speaks for itself.

"We're one of the top London authorities when it comes to spending on education, provision of nursery places, free home helps, affordable homes, clean streets and we've been commended by the District Auditor for our efficiency."

The by-election is expected to take place on June 27.

never fluctuated beyond 41% to 50%. But then London turned against the Conservatives and in 2018 Labour won Fulham Reach 57% to the Tories' 27%. That still wasn't back to Margravine-level wins but it was plenty.

There are some wards that are fairly unstable; that comprise a lot of floating voters who are interested in the retail offer the parties present them with each election. Addison is a good example of these swing marginals.

London has far fewer of these than the wider country because the city is calcified between pretty affluent and acutely poor areas living side-by-side. This produces wards with entrenched blocs of voters who strongly identify with one party and strongly dislike the other main choice. In these sorts of marginals persuading voters over

is so difficult: elections are won by turning their solid bloc of votes out. Fulham Reach is this type of ward: an entrenched marginal. Or at least was, because following the 2018, 2022 and 2026 elections it's difficult to classify Fulham Reach as marginal given how comfortably it's voted Labour. But it is - in the same way that Los Angeles isn't beset by earthquakes...until it is. There is an underlying fault-line beneath Fulham Reach that is dormant for now. But it's there.

When population estimates were drawn up for the boundary review that occurred before the 2022 elections, the projected growth of neighbouring North End ward by 2024 meant that a tranche of voters had to be removed from it. Despite lying next to each other in a fully built-up part of London, there is actually a clear physical divide between the two. It is: Margravine Cemetery, the Queen's Club and Normand Park.

The least bad option for rebalancing the two wards was to move Queen's Club Gardens from West Kensington over to Fulham Reach. Queen's Club Gardens is a set of 33 mansion blocks set around a private green, very much in the style of apartment buildings you find around Sloane Square in Chelsea.

Moving its 700 electors over to Fulham Reach made this ward too large and so the new high-density residential development north of Winslow Road, nowadays bearing the same name as the ward (it was originally called Hammersmith Embankment), and the streets north of Charing Cross Hospital were moved to Hammersmith Broadway. There were about 1,100 voters in this area so, Fulham Reach also received the Fulham Wharves, north of Fulham Football Club.

Sixty six votes secures dramatic win in Crabtree by-election

Labour snatches ward in knife-edge victory

By MIKE PARKINSON

LABOUR'S by-election victory in Crabtree ward last week immediately prompted speculation that Fulham MP Matthew Carrington could lose his seat at the next general election.

It was the first by-election seat Labour has snatched from the Tories in 35 years – and they won it by just 66 votes.

Fired up by the result, council leader Andrew Slaughter threw down the gauntlet to Mr Carrington.

"This is the first sign of Matthew Carrington getting his marching orders," he said. "If anybody is sitting up tonight thinking about this result, it's Matthew Carrington.

"For the first time since he was elected as MP he must be seriously worried."

Mr Carrington said: "I am obviously disappointed we didn't win. We lost it very narrowly. It is a split ward between us and Labour. It is a small win to Labour and there was a low turn-out. Far from showing we are in trouble Labour aren't making anything like the impact locally the national opionion polls suggest. I am confident we will retain Sulivan ward with a large majority."

A by-election will be held there next month following the death of Jonathan Maiden.

Labour's winning candidate, Melanie Smallman said: "It's a fantasic result. We're really pleased. The council has had to make some hard decisions recently because of government cuts. People have realised what is going on and supported the council."

The by-election was called when Tory councillor Guy Mortimer stepped down to prepare for his emigration to France.



The victor: Melanie Smallman

From the start, the campaign was peppered with allegations of foul play from both sides.

Labour attacked Mr Carrington for sending a letter on House of Commons headed paper to 1,000 homes in Crabtree ward a few days after the by-election was announced.

The letter referred to similar issues on which Tory candidate Alex Karmel was campaigning: Labour's decision to close Munster Road Library, Horder Nursery School and Eternit Wharf Recreation Centre.

Under by-election regulations, parties have strict limits on how much they can spend on canvassing materials.

Labour claimed the Conservatives were bending the rules, but Mr Carrington said it was simply a coincidence.

The Tories hit back when Labour announced plans to re-open Eternit Wharf Recreation Centre for the school summer holidays.

After the centre closed in December last year, the council said it was negotiating with the Amateur Fencing Association to take it over. But the deal broke down and the centre stayed closed.

When Labour said Eternit Wharf would open in the summer, Conservative councillors said it was a measure to win votes.

But on the day of the by-election, a more crucial factor may have been the tube strike.

Tory campaigners said scores of their supporters who worked in the City were leaving their journey home until later because of the rush hour chaos.

That meant many of them missed the 9pm deadline for voting.

● Total votes polled: Melanie Smallman (Labour) 832, Alex Karmel (Conservative) 766, Brian Gallagher (Liberal Democrat) 98. There were five spoiled papers.

Summer magic

A FANCY dress competition and magic show are the highlights of the Clem Attlee summer spectacular.

The Notting Hill Housing Trust, involved in the redevelopment programme, is taking part in the family fair on Sunday from 2-6pm. The fancy dress competition will start at 3pm and magic show at 4pm. Youngsters can enjoy face painting and a bouncy castle. The barbecue opens at 2.30pm.

Summary of results for Fulham Reach ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Margravine ward					
1900	37.0		33.6		29.4
1902B	46.4	39.9	13.0		0.7
1903	34.2	40.5	25.4		
1906	53.3	25.3	21.5		
1909	57.1	42.9			
1912	52.6	22.4	25.0		
1912B	64.7		35.3		
1917B	Unop				
1919	37.8	62.2			
1921B	48.3	49.1			2.7
1922	55.2	44.8			
1925	48.4	51.6			
1928	36.3	59.9			3.6
1931	52.1	47.9			
1934	35.8	64.2			
1934B	37.1	59.8			3.1
1937	34.6	65.4			
1945	21.2	78.8			
1949	35.0	63.1			1.9
1953	28.5	71.5			
1956	28.2	71.8			
1959	28.7	71.3			
1962	25.4	74.6			
1964	20.7	79.3			
1964B	38.6	55.0	6.4		
1968	49.4	50.6			
1971	24.8	75.2			
1974	24.6	75.4			
1978	32.6	58.8	3.4		5.3
1982	31.3	52.6	10.8		5.3
1985B	26.0	51.6	13.2		8.4
1986	24.4	66.5	8.4		0.7
1988B	32.6	63.2	3.5		0.7
1990	30.7	60.5	7.7		1.1
1994	28.0	59.9	12.2		
1998	22.9	65.9	11.2		
Fulham Reach ward					
2002	43.5	42.1	10.4	4.0	
2006	50.3	38.2	11.5		
2010	44.6	37.1	18.3		
2014	41.4	45.1	5.8	7.8	
2018	26.8	56.5	7.2	9.4	
2022	24.8	63.3	11.9		
2026	21.2	43.7	6.5	16.6	12.0

Fulham's riverside has not always been the sublime Thames-side walk across the river from the Barn Elms wildfowl reserve it is today. The river used to work for Fulham: its banks lined with wharves and factories, cranes and warehouses.

The wharf industries gradually closed - the last of them, a petrol and oil storage depot by Eternit Wharf didn't shut until 1999. Then the council stepped in and bought them up, building a string of riverside estates all the way north to Rainville Road. The neighbourhood got a Thames Path and Millshott Close, Wheatsheaf Lane, Adam Walk and Rainville Court; plus three sheltered housing schemes: Rowberry and Meadowbank Closes and Cedar Lodge, plus the open space by Queen's Manor School: Rowberry Mead.These developments are why Labour remained competitive in the old Crabtree ward: staunchly loyal to the party and very high turnout.

A lot of this council housing has been sold off under right-to-buy but a lot has not and, even where it has been sold, many of those who bought stayed. Why wouldn't they, when their homes front some of the most spectacular riverside views in London?

These changes: Queens Club Gardens and the Fulham Wharves - in; the northern strip - out, were politically neutral; potentially even slightly beneficial to Labour if they could enthuse the residents of the wharves to turn out after two decades in an uncompetitive Conservative ward (Palace Riverside).

Queen's Club Gardens voters barely turned out in the 2018 elections when they were in North End ward and were well below the ward-wide turnout in 2022 and 2026. There is no way the Conservatives can win Fulham Reach without a big turnout here. The nature of Queens Club Gardens, like so many mansion block developments in the borough, has changed significantly since it was the core of the Conservative vote in the old Lillie and Normand wards but still.

In 2026, with a depleted pool of activists the Conservatives had to prioritise more winnable wards than Fulham Reach. They put in some work here but got no return on it, slipping to just 21%. Labour lost a lot more support - nearly twenty percentage points of it - evidently not to the Conservatives but instead to the Greens who took 17% and (maybe) to Reform UK which won 12% - one of their better performances of an inevitably poor set. Because of Labour's slump the gap closed considerably with the Conservatives but the top Tory candidate was still more than 600 votes behind and they need a swing in excess of 10% to win this ward back.

This is the sort of ward that could turn aggressively away from Labour if (or when) people find themselves paying a lot more Council Tax because the government has pulled millions of grant from the borough to fund councils elsewhere in the country. It may also be the sort of place that responds favourably to a Conservative Party pledging to remove people's main dwelling from Inheritance Tax: given even the smallest houses in this ward nowadays nudge a million pounds. But it will take a jolt of that sort of scale for people to once again consider the Conservatives. Until then, Margavine's Labour torch still burns fiercely after 126 years of elections.

Rollcall of Fulham Reach ward councillors

including Crabtree ward (1964-2002) and Margravine ward (1900-2002)

2026
- David Campbell
- Anna Magryta-Urban
- Nikos Souslous

2022
- Omid Miri
- Lucy Richardson
- Nikos Souslous

2018
- Iain Cassidy
- Christabel Cooper
- Guy Vincent

2014
- Iain Cassidy
- Vivienne Lukey
- Guy Vincent

2010
- Gavin Donovan
- Peter Graham
- Andrew Johnson

2006
- Paul Bristow
- Gavin Donovan
- Andrew Johnson

2002
- Min Birdsey
- Charles Boyle
- Gavin Donovan

Crabtree ward

1999B
- Amanda Lloyd Harris

1998
- Adam Gray
- Mark Simonds

1996B
- Melanie Smallman

1994
- Adam Gray
- Guy Mortimer

1990
- Guy Mortimer
- Elizabeth Randall

1986
- Marily Naden
- Sally Whitman

1982
- Patricia Fitzgerald
- Kim Howe

1978
- Kim Howe
- John Pearce

1974
- Doris Banfield
- Gwyn Evans
- Kim Howe

1971
- Doris Banfield
- Gwyn Evans
- Birte Little

1968
- David Ashby
- Christopher Horne
- Delphine Joseph

1964
- Birte Little
- Dennis Noel
- Elizabeth Sears

Margravine ward

1998
- Min Birdsey
- Lisa Homan

1994
- Lisa Homan
- Shirley Spiers

1990
- Tony Hastings
- Marilyn Naden

1988B
- Tony Hastings

1986
- David Dunwoody
- Margaret Ingram

1985B
- Tom Champion
- Margaret Ingram

1982
- David Jordan
- William Spiers

1978
- Tom Champion
- Bill Spiers

1974
- Tom Champion
- Dick Rayner
- Clive Soley

1971
- Tom Champion
- Eric Hill
- Sid Matthews

1968
- Eric Hill
- Roger Holroyd
- Jack Ireland

1964B
- Leonard Stanley

1964
- Frank Banfield
- William Molloy
- Florence Pusey

1962
- Eric Hill
- Sid Matthews
- WIlliam Molloy
- Florence Pusey

1959
- James Horton
- William Molloy
- Florence Pusey
- Henry Rickards

1956
- James Horton
- William Molloy
- Florence Pusey
- Henry Rickards

1953
- Frank Banfield
- James Horton
- Henry Rickards
- Thomas Winstanley

1949
- Frank Banfield
- James Horton
- Christopher Lancaster
- Thomas Winstanley

1945
- Frank Banfield
- A. Clare
- Christopher Lancaster
- L. Sogan

1937
- Frank Banfield
- Charles Boaden
- Jose Da Palma
- Charles Jewitt

1934B
- Elizabeth Hollingbery

1934
- Frank Banfield
- Charles Boaden
- Jose Da Palma
- Morgan Phillips

1931
- John Corcoran
- Arthur Ford
- Gladys Scales
- Charles Viveash

1928
- Sidney Ballantyne
- William Banfield
- Christopher Lancaster
- James Prouse

1925
- Sidney Ballantyne
- William Banfield
- Arthur Cook
- Christopher Lancaster

1922
- Arthur Cook
- Francis Crowne
- Henry Todd

1921B
- James Prouse

1919
- William Banfield
- Thomas Cooper
- James Ritchie

1912B
- Charles Cross

1912
- Arthur Cook
- George Franklin
- Arthur Guttridge

1909
- Arthur Cook
- Arthur Guttridge
- Edward Varge

1906
- Arthur Cook
- Arthur Guttridge
- Edward Varge

1903
- John Bancroft
- Arthur Cook
- Emanuel Honey

1900
- Arthur Cook
- John Cooney
- George McArthur

Fulham Town

Where is Fulham town centre? Nowadays, people might say North End Road or Fulham Broadway - these are, after all, where the bigger and busier shops are found. But neither of these is Fulham's High Street.

Fulham High Street is the western boundary of Town ward: the road that used to exploit the trade generated by Thames travellers crossing by ferry or later the wooden Fulham Bridge to Putney. Just behind the High Street in Burlington Road was John Dwight's Fulham Pottery - and the kiln survives to this day, almost hidden by an ugly 1980s office block that wraps around it. There are still shops in Fulham High Street but they tend to be small and boutique.

So this is Fulham town: the original settlement that spread from here up Fulham Road. And this is Fulham Town ward: a tightly packed grid of streets stretching east up to Parson's Green, with Fulham Road and the District Line as almost parallel spines.

As Fulham away from the river evolved, so market forces pulled traders into town and Fulham Road became a bigger shopping centre than the High Street. And that trend continued as Walham Green established itself, closer to Chelsea, with its own station and where the town hall was built, pulling Fulham east.

There isn't that much more that can be said about the historic evolution of Fulham Town ward. Because this was a ward of traders, businessmen and entrepreneurs it was a more affluent, more middle-class ward than the industrial wharves of Crabtree and Sands End.

Town was the scene of many nursery gardens providing a range of exotic plants for the mansions that typified Fulham in the 18th and 19th centuries - Mimosa Street is so named because of this and Dancer Road is named after the family that owned one of the largest plant nurseries.

In Town ward the houses are, recognisably of the same classic architectural "Fulham" terraced style, but they tend to be a storey bigger, slightly grander.

What makes Fulham Town interesting politically is how this affluent ward behaved electorally throughout the 20th century.



Town is the best local example of a ward that started off safely Conservative (or, to be strictly accurate, Moderate, then Municipal Reform) at the turn of the century, trended Labour from 1945 until the mid 1970s and then returned to being reliable for the Tories.

There is no demographic trend that explains why Fulham Town - indeed lots of pretty affluent neighbourhoods dotted around the outskirts of central London, like Northcote in Battersea, dallied with Labour for thirty-odd years before reverting to their natural voting habits.

Town didn't suddenly become a slum and then recovered; it wasn't so bomb-damaged that the council demolished it and built huge council estates as happened elsewhere in Fulham. It's residual population wasn't suddenly transported out and replaced by a new, quite different type of Labour-supporting voter.

An emergent party like Labour breaking onto the scene just after the First World War was always going to gradually improve in an emerging, growing urban area. The same forces that made Margravine a strong Labour ward existed in Town - just in smaller proportions.

Town started off as the second safest Municipal Reform ward in Fulham after Baron's Court. Yet by 1945 it was Labour when Baron's Court was not. Of the ten contests between 1945 and 1978, the ward returned full slates of Labour candidates just twice, but at least two Labour

councillors five further times. The Conservatives won all of Town's seats only in 1949, 1953 and 1968.

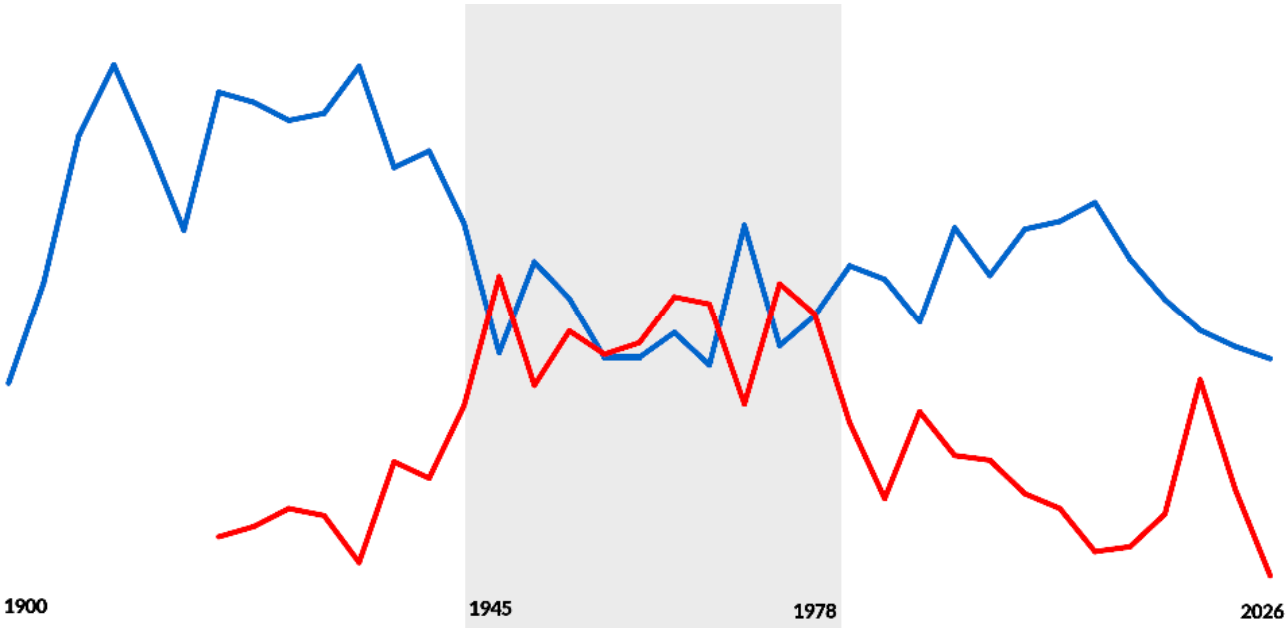
Labour was helped by the building of some council housing in the old Town ward, but not all that much of it. Arthur Henderson and William Banfield Houses, that sit behind Fulham Road from Fulham Park Gardens to Munster Road, are the largest and oldest blocks but there were also small infill estates scattered here and there: Ethel Rankin Court in Fulham Park Road; Burlington Place in Rigault Road and Bearcroft House in New King's Road.

It was also a substantially larger ward than today: not because it had wildly different boundaries but because so many more people were squeezed into these houses. In 1962 Town had over 8,600 electors.

the Beveridge Report: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and idleness.

High unemployment (especially with memories of the Great Depression very recent) was a scourge and the solution was full employment needing state intervention. Poor quality housing, made worse by the Blitz, required masses of new homes built by councils. State pensions and the Welfare State were needed to enable those too old or unable to work to live in dignity. The state needed to educate every child. And of course the NHS was needed to provide cradle to grave healthcare for all.

Yes, the parties could quibble around the edges: Fulham Council, for example, invested huge time arguing over whether the people building the council estates should be



Fulham Town ward results from 1900 to 2026 with the competitive era from 1945 to 1978 shaded

They lived in the packed terraces in the west of the ward; in the huge sub-divided houses in Fulham Park Gardens that sweeps around almost from New Kings Road to Fulham Road; in Crookham and Rostrevor Roads with their (unusual for Fulham) basement flats; and in the larger town houses between Fulham Road and Bishop's Road. Town also included the avenues nowadays in Munster ward, which also house stacks of residents.

But there was a national reason too, not just local ones. And that was the so-called "post-war consensus", where parties - and their voters - broadly agreed on what the challenges facing the country were and the solutions to fix them. In essence they were the five social ills framed in

directly employed or local private firms should be hired (Labour on the side of direct labour, the Conservatives on the side of local contractors).

The first time Labour won the council in 1919 they tried to establish a public laundry as part of a wider public sanitation drive which created the Fulham Baths in Vanston Place, which would have threatened private contractors and which eventually failed. But on those core principles there was no disagreement about the critical role the State had to play in building a better Britain.

That consensus naturally pulled the country leftward: it was the epitome of what Socialism argued for, after all.

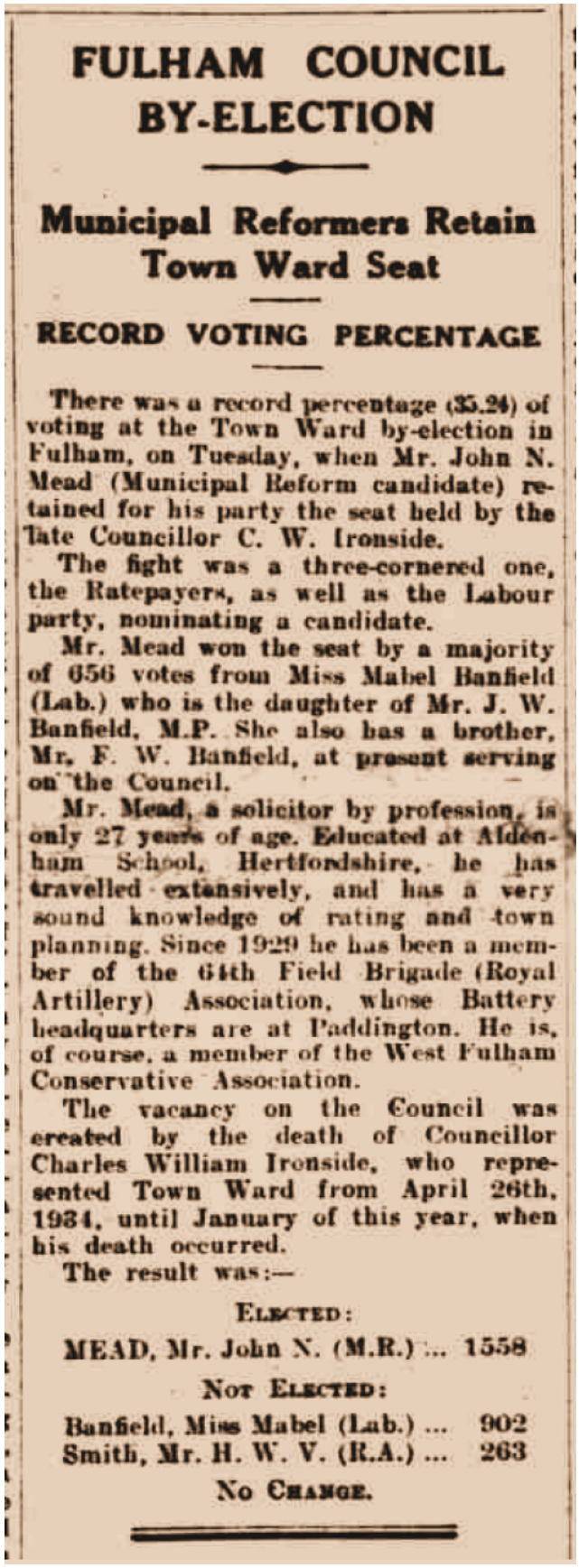
And provided there was something for everyone, not just the very poorest - and provided there was full employment so that paying for all this was spread across many shoulders - it was something a middle class Tory could vote for just as much as a working class Socialist. Furthermore, if you believed all that, didn't it make sense to vote for the party that intrinsically believed in a big state: Labour, rather than the one that looked at the cost of everything and the value of nothing - the Conservatives?

So these are the reasons Town improved for Labour: political consensus, dense housing, a growing stock of council homes with their working class tenants, and, house prices in the rest of the ward that, if towards the top end of the market were still broadly affordable and created a mixed if leaning affluent neighbourhood, unlike the Fulham Town of today.

Labour was also getting better organised, with a big membership and a full time election agent and assistant. Fulham Labour Party's headquarters, Harold Laski House, were in Fulham Road on the junction of Munster Road, opposite what was then the Durrell Arms pub. Labour had a permanent presence in an HQ equipped with a printing press from which to go out and campaign in Town.

But for all their campaigning effort, Labour never managed to make Town safe. In the same way that Hammersmith's Brook Green ward was only winnable in the very best Labour years, so Town in Fulham was somewhere the party had to work ceaselessly just to maintain a foothold. As that post war consensus disintegrated because the privations that fuelled collectivism faded, as unions became more militant, as the Empire was dismantled, the pound devalued and despite government efforts unemployment crept up, Labour's ability to hold Town disappeared with it.

In the last election of Fulham Borough Council in 1962, Town voted 52% Labour to 48% Conservative. Two years later, in the first election to the London Borough of Hammersmith, Labour's position had strengthened and they were about 15% clear. But a freak occurrence led to a Conservative winning despite this big lead: four hundred more voters marked their "X" against BARRY Hill, the Conservative, than for the other two Tory candidates while Labour's ERIC Hill, who came below his namesake, polled 400 fewer than his Labour running-mates.



FULHAM COUNCIL BY-ELECTION

Municipal Reformers Retain Town Ward Seat

RECORD VOTING PERCENTAGE

There was a record percentage (35.24) of voting at the Town Ward by-election in Fulham, on Tuesday, when Mr. John N. Mead (Municipal Reform candidate) retained for his party the seat held by the late Councillor C. W. Ironside.

The fight was a three-cornered one, the Ratepayers, as well as the Labour party, nominating a candidate.

Mr. Mead won the seat by a majority of 656 votes from Miss Mabel Banfield (Lab.) who is the daughter of Mr. J. W. Banfield, M.P. She also has a brother, Mr. F. W. Banfield, at present serving on the Council.

Mr. Mead, a solicitor by profession, is only 27 years of age. Educated at Aldenham School, Hertfordshire, he has travelled extensively, and has a very sound knowledge of rating and town planning. Since 1929 he has been a member of the 64th Field Brigade (Royal Artillery) Association, whose Battery headquarters are at Paddington. He is, of course, a member of the West Fulham Conservative Association.

The vacancy on the Council was created by the death of Councillor Charles William Ironside, who represented Town Ward from April 26th, 1934, until January of this year, when his death occurred.

The result was:—

ELECTED:

MEAD, Mr. John N. (M.R.) ... 1558

NOT ELECTED:

Banfield, Miss Mabel (Lab.) ... 902
Smith, Mr. H. W. V. (R.A.) ... 263

No CHANGE.

It is of course possible that some genuinely preferred Barry to Eric, though Eric perhaps got the last laugh in that he was one of just six Labour councillors elected in 1968 (this time in Margravine) while his comrades in Town were heavily defeated. He went on to become mayor of the borough in 1971.

Labour regained Town in 1971 - all three seats this time - but their majority was half that of 1964. South Fulham was the first part of the neighbourhood to begin gentrifying as young professionals who wanted, but couldn't afford, to live in Chelsea began searching for the nearest pleasant neighbourhoods to populate.



Fulham Chronicle
Friday February 11, 1938

Fulham Council

Four nominations for Town ward seat

Four candidates were nominated yesterday for a Fulham Borough Council by-election in Town ward, occasioned by the death of Mr. C.W. Ironside. The election will take place on Tuesday, February 15. Polling hours will be 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. There will be two polling stations - at the Artillery Drill Hall in Fulham High Street, and at Munster Park Chapel Hall.

The Fulham Ratepayers Association are not dismayed at the defeat of their candidates - allied with the Municipal Reform Party - at the election last November. One of their nominees on that occasion, Mr. H.W.V. Smith, is contesting this by-election. In this contest there is no alliance between the Ratepayers Association and the Municipal Reform Party. Mr Smith is standing in opposition to the Municipal Reform candidate.

The Labour Party has also nominated a candidate who stood at the Borough Council election - Miss Mabel Banfield. The nominee of the Municipal Reform Party is comparatively unknown in Fulham. Added interest is provided by the nomination of a lady by the Communist Party.

Particulars of the nominated candidates are as follow:-

BANFIELD, Miss Gladys Mabel (Lab), 3 Rosedew Road, Fulham; shop assistant. Proposed by Walter Rankin, 19 Burnfoot Avenue, Fulham, seconded by Elizabeth Eva Hollingbery, 5 Clonmel Road, Fulham.

MEAD, John Nielsen (M.R.), 69 Earls Court Square, S.W.5; Solicitor. Proposed by William Lewis Upham, 32 Epple Road, Fulham, seconded by Edward William Wilson, 955 Fulham Road, Fulham.

ROBERTS, Jeanette Pearl (Com.), 21 Finlay Street, Fulham; married woman. Proposed by Wilhelmina Holland, 22 Fulham Park Gardens, seconded by Robert Burn Holland, 22 Fulham Park Gardens.

SMITH, Harold William V. (R.A.), 51 Finlay Street, Fulham; civil servant. Proposed by Alfred P. Mobbs, 785 Fulham Road, seconded by Evelyn Bishop, 779 Fulham Road.

MISS G.M. BANFIELD

Miss Banfield is the only daughter of Mr. J.W. Banfield M.P., and a sister of Councillor F. Banfield. She unsuccessfully contested Town ward in the Borough Council election in November. She has taken a prominent part in the local Labour Party activities. She is a member of the executive and also of the general management committee of the West Fulham Labour Party, and secretary of the women's section. She belongs to the Shop Assistants Union.

MR. H.W.V. SMITH

Mr. H.W.V. Smith was born in Fulham and has lived in the borough all his life. He was one of the Fulham Ratepayers' Association candidates who, with the support of the Municipal Reform Party, contested Lillie ward at the November election. Mr Smith is well known as Scoutmaster of the 33rd West London Independent Troop of Scouts.

MR J.N. MEAD

Mr. Mead is 27 years of age. He has been a member of the West Fulham Conservative Association for some time. He holds a commission in the 64th Field Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery (T.F.), whose headquarters are at the Drill Hall, Fulham High Street. He has travelled extensively, and has a wide knowledge of rating and town planning.

Monday next week has been fixed as the latest date for withdrawals.

Out and About

It is not often that a Borough Council by-election creates much interest, but there are some unusual features about the contest that takes place next Tuesday in Town ward.

The necessary procedure for the filling of the seat on the council rendered vacant by the lamented death of Mr. Ironside began in a somewhat mysterious atmosphere owing to the fact that neither Labour nor the Municipal Reform Party announced their candidates until a few hours before the time for nominations. Town ward is regarded as a Conservative stronghold not only by members of that party but by Labour as well.

It is common knowledge that if only a Municipal Reform candidate had been nominated Labour would not have forced a contest. The Municipal Reformer would have been returned unopposed. From the start, however, there was a feeling that the Ratepayers' Association might intervene, and in that event Labour was determined to contest the seat.

The statement from the Communist Party, published in another column, discloses that that party thought that in any event the Municipal Reformer should be opposed. Hence the nomination of a Communist, who has since withdrawn, leaving Labour to fight two opponents. So the Ratepayers' Association and the Communist Party must share the responsibility for forcing a contest. Many Fulham citizens will welcome the intervention of a Ratepayers' Association candidate, especially one unfettered - for this contest at any rate - with any political alliances.

This is as it should be, for the Ratepayers' Association claims to be a non-political body, and as such has great possibilities. The Association has chosen as its nominee Mr. H.W.V. Smith, who is certainly about the strongest candidate they could have found.

We know nothing of his politics, but he is a Fulham man in the truest and fullest sense of the word. He knows his borough and its problems well, and he has always taken a lively interest in its local affairs. We know of no better qualifications for a candidate at any municipal contest.

Miss Banfield comes before the electors with similar qualifications as the Labour nominee, and a staunch upholder of Labour's rule at the Town Hall. Her chances in this three-cornered contest are by no means hopeless, even though Town ward is regarded as a Conservative stronghold.

Mr. J.N. Mead, with the backing of the well-tried Conservative organisation, is endeavouring to retain the seat for the Municipal Reformers. Although he has little or no previous association with municipal life, he is an enthusiastic young man intensely interested in local government and is an officer of the Territorial Artillery. At the triennial election in November Labour, in a straight fight with Municipal Reform in this ward, came within 661 votes of success.

There are 7,768 local government electors on the register - 4,344 women and 3,424 men. To win, all the candidates will require every vote they can possibly obtain, but the weather on polling day may well prove the deciding factor.

Back to the polls as Tory resigns

COUNCILLORS are preparing for a crucial battle that could decide Hammersmith's balance of power.

This follows the shock resignation of Tory Chief Whip Courtenay Warner on Thursday night which has forced a bye-election in the Town ward.

Both Labour and Tory leaders have promised to put up strong candidates for the election on June 28.

Cllr. Tony Powell said he was personally sorry to hear of Mr. Warner's resignation, but politically delighted.

He said: "So long as Mrs. Thatcher is in power we stand a good chance of winning the seat."

But Tory leader Stuart Leishman said the two Town ward seats were safe and his party would be putting up a strong candidate.

He said: "I am verry sorry to lose Mr. Warner because he was a good chief whip — but I don't think there will be any shift in the balance of power."

Mr. Warner has resigned on the advice of doctors, and is moving with his wife and four-year-old son to Norfolk where he will continue in the antique business.

Mr. Warner was elected to the council in May 1978, and after only a few weeks he was appointed Tory Chief Whip.

His resignation and Ettie Crawford's resignation from the labour benches leaves the two major parties with 23 councillors each — the balance of power being in the hands of Liberals Simon Knott and Robert Mulcahy.

Town ward was held by two Labour councillors and one Tory before the ward was reduced to two seats in 1976, when the Tories took both seats.

But even if Labour win the vacant seat next month it would not necessarily lead to a Lib-Lab pact.

Liberal leader Simon Knott said: "It would take at least 25 seats for Labour to take control of the borough. I have seen nothing of their conduct over the last 12 months to make me think they are fit to govern."

In 1974 Conservative Esme Clarke won one of the Town seats and in 1978 a 10% swing to the Conservatives put the ward well and truly beyond Labour's reach for good.

Councillor Clarke resigned in 1976 causing a by-election, something that Town has gained a bit of notoriety for. The ward has had at least nineteen by-elections since 1900 - that works out as one every six and a half years. Safe wards can sometimes end up bearing more by-elections than the norm because there is less risk to the incumbent party of losing, even if each one does tempt fate. In the modern era, seven of the eight by-elections that have occurred since 1964 have been due to resignation.

One seat in particular has proved jinxed: the seat that in 1986 was won by Diana Fawcett. She resigned in 1987 and Terry McGrath was the by-election victor. He resigned in 1993 and Tony Glover was the by-election victor. When he disappeared leaving a trail of suspect Housing Benefit claims in 1996 Stephen Greenhalgh, the future council leader, was the by-election victor.

He in turn resigned when he was appointed Boris Johnson's Deputy Mayor responsible for Policing in 2012. Greenhalgh's replacement was Andrew Brown who made way in 2022 for Andrew Dinsmore - and he resigned in 2025, purportedly to spend more time with his family, only to then pop up literally days later as a council candidate in Rutland.

Tories hold Town ward

THE Conservatives won Thursday's by-election for Hammersmith's Town Ward with a majority of more than 350.

The new Tory councillor, David Clark, replaces Courtney Warner who resigned because of ill health. Cllr Clark, 31, is a financial consultant

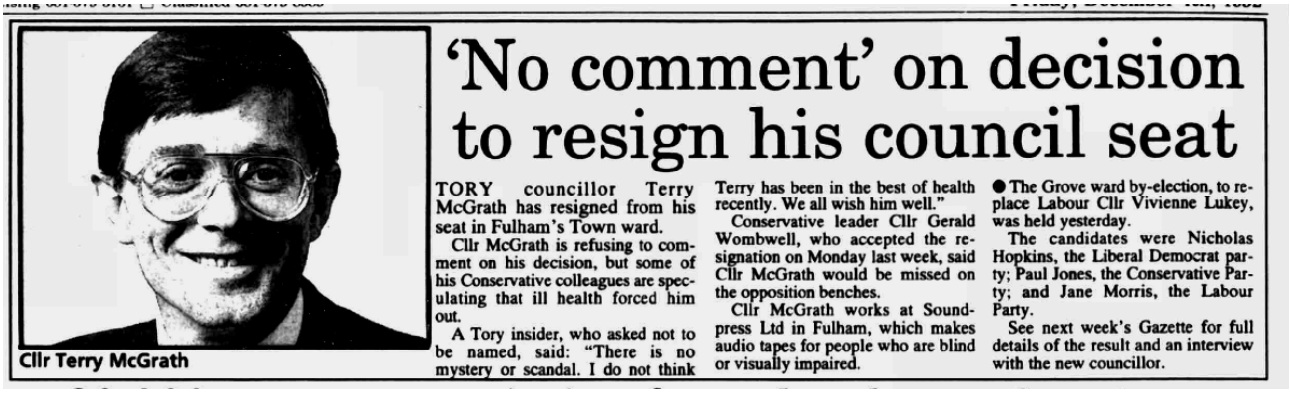
Martyn Heale, the former chairman of Hammersmith National Front, who says he's now working for racial harmony, polled just 10 votes.

Results of the Town Ward by-election, were: Moira Carroll (Liberal) — 168, David Clark (Conservative) — 1,144, Martyn Heale (Progress) — 10, Leslie Hilliard (Labour) — 790, Joseph Keats (Independent) — 9, Raymond Perrin (Independent) — 11.

The current holder of that fated seat, Liam Downer-Sanderson, will hope it doesn't eject him any time soon.

During the 2000 boundary review, neither of the big parties proposed retaining Town ward. Because of the criterion that all wards had to have 3 councillors, 2-member Town had to be enlarged regardless. But Labour wanted the Fulham High Street end moved to an enlarged Palace ward with the rest in a new Parson's Green ward while the Conservatives proposed a Filmer ward for the streets north of Fulham Road and a Parson's Green ward for the rest. The Commission rejected both ideas and rescued Town ward, extending it to Fulham Broadway.

This was a logical choice in some respects: this was still a "Fulham Road" ward. It contains three big council estates: Fulham Court, Lancaster Court (named not after the



Cllr Terry McGrath

'No comment' on decision to resign his council seat

TORY councillor Terry McGrath has resigned from his seat in Fulham's Town ward.

Cllr McGrath is refusing to comment on his decision, but some of his Conservative colleagues are speculating that ill health forced him out.

A Tory insider, who asked not to be named, said: "There is no mystery or scandal. I do not think Terry has been in the best of health recently. We all wish him well."

Conservative leader Cllr Gerald Wombwell, who accepted the resignation on Monday last week, said Cllr McGrath would be missed on the opposition benches.

Cllr McGrath works at Soundpress Ltd in Fulham, which makes audio tapes for people who are blind or visually impaired.

● The Grove ward by-election, to replace Labour Cllr Vivienne Lukey, was held yesterday.

The candidates were Nicholas Hopkins, the Liberal Democrat party; Paul Jones, the Conservative Party; and Jane Morris, the Labour Party.

See next week's Gazette for full details of the result and an interview with the new councillor.

county town of Lancashire but a long-serving Labour councillor and alderman, Christopher Lancaster) and Barclay Close. But these big council estates were atypical of Town and they also looked east towards the Broadway and North End Road - not for them the chi-chi boutiques of Fulham Road to the west. This was never part of the historic settlement of Fulham township.

Because Labour support fell off steeply in successive elections: 2002, 2006 and 2010, there was little sign that putting these council estates into Town had any political effect. There was also something of a hangover Lib Dem presence from the abolished Eel Brook ward which that party had won in 1994 and from which these central council estates had been donated. As Labour's vote declined, the Lib Dems were, on occasion, able to push Labour into third, but only just and still miles behind the Tories.

Even though Town was not the least bit close in 2014, the impact of the Conservatives implementing the outcome of the EU referendum gave Labour the confidence to have a real go at winning this heavily Remain-voting ward in 2018. The core of their strategy was to massively increase turnout from the estates at the east end of the ward.

Allegation of fraud: Tory quits

A TORY councillor has quit after an investigation into benefit fraud allegations.

Town ward Cllr Tony Glover faces prosecution after claiming income support while receiving thousands of pounds in allowances.

He was interviewed under caution by Department of Social Security officials on December 12.

Two days later, he tendered his resignation "for personal reasons". Fellow Tory councillors were left in the dark about the "reasons", as Mr Glover offered no explanation.

Left flat

He left his flat in Romney Court, Shepherds Bush Green, and friends, who believe he may be staying with his parents on the south coast, have not heard from him since.

The DSS is considering whether to bring court proceedings against Mr Glover.

The allegations will embarrass Conservative Party chiefs who are preparing to defend the vacant seat at a by-election on January 25.

The regulations governing councillors, entitlement to benefit are notoriously complex.

However, guidelines have been drawn up by the Local Government Information Unit.

In its publication *Councillors, Tax and Benefits: A Guide to the Rules*, the unit states: "Most of the allowances you receive as a councillor count as 'earnings' or 'remuneration' for both tax and social security purposes. You should therefore declare this income on your tax return and to any office where you claim benefits."

Copies of the guide were distributed to every councillor in Hammersmith and Fulham last summer.

Council records show that since his election in 1993, Mr Glover claimed nearly £5,000 in allowances.

Although he was entitled to some benefits, any payment should have been offset against his allowances.

Mr Glover was a popular figure in Town ward, the second safest Tory seat in the borough. Last year he played a key role in helping New Kings Road traders battle against bus lanes which they believed would stifle business.

Tory Cllr Adronie Alford said: "I was a very good friend of his, but I haven't heard from him since he resigned. I think some people decide on a clean break when they leave the council."

A council spokesman said: "Cllr Glover explained that he resigned for personal reasons and he has not added anything to that since his resignation."

A benefits Agency spokesman said its policy was not to discuss individual cases.

As the Town results since they were added suggests, these were not been the most enthusiastically Labour supporting estates ever built - Fulham Court in particular.

Fulham Court gained a reputation as a "problem" estate - in part because it is very high density crammed into a constrained piece of land almost on top of the District Line, with virtually no outdoor recreation space for its residents. It was also an estate on which, for whatever reason, white families tended to get housed. When it started to become more ethnically diverse there was some racial tension here, especially in the late 1970s when the National Front were as strong as they would ever be.

Labour never felt it get as big a vote from this estate as it expected to in the old Eel Brook - which the party had drawn in 1978 to be reasonably safe. But it never worked out that way, even in 1986 - indeed, the very narrow 2026 Labour win in Walham Green, of which those estates are now a part, might substantiate those beliefs further.

But in 2018 circumstances were quite different and the Conservatives were shocked at how Labour's new-found activism had driven up their vote in the

Tories take safe by-election seat

By MIKE PARKINSON

CONSERVATIVES across the borough are celebrating a by-election victory in Fulham last week.

Stephen Greenhalgh, 28, won more than half the total votes polled, dashing Labour and Lib Dem hopes of narrowing the margin between the parties.

Town ward is the Tories' second safest ward in the borough, but many were surprised that there was only a 2.5 per cent swing to Labour.

The combination of an out-of-date electoral roll and Siberian weather was blamed for a low turn-out of voters – fewer than one in three braved the icy winds to reach the polling stations on Thursday last week. The electoral roll is due to be updated next month.



Town ward winner Steven Greenhalgh

Mr Greenhalgh, son of Charing Cross surgeon Professor Roger Greenhalgh, said he was "delighted" with the result.

"Labour and the Liberals tried to campaign on national issues, but the bottom line is that you have got to fight a campaign on issues where the council can make a difference," he said.

"We will be fighting hard for local businesses in Fulham High Street, which have been affected by the bus lane."

Mr Greenhalgh, a management consultant specialising in sales and marketing, also intends to focus attention on the need for controlled parking across Town ward.

Council leader Iain Coleman, Labour's parliamentary candidate for Fulham, defended his party's record.

He said: "To be frank, Town ward is not great territory for us. I'm prepared to accept that Town ward and Palace ward are the only safe wards for the Conservatives."

A Labour Party activist added: "It's not really that indicative because it's such a low poll. It's a safe Tory seat, and I don't think anybody really expected miracles.

"It was useful for us as a dry run for the next general election. Many of our new members were involved in the campaign and we had a chance to try out a new computerised system of counting votes."

Labour also passed up the opportunity of embarrassing the Tories about fraud allegations levelled at former Conservative councillor Tony Glover, preferring instead to fight a "clean" campaign.

The by-election was called after Mr Glover tendered his resignation for "personal reasons".

It later emerged that DSS officials had quizzed Mr Glover about allegations that he had signed on without declaring his councillors' allowances, two days before he quit.

The DSS is considering whether to prosecute Mr Glover.

● Town ward results: Greenhalgh (Conservative) 670; Allen (Labour) 435; Green (Lib Dem) 160.

east end of Town, to the extent that the Tories concocted a fanciful story about Labour campaigners somehow fraudulently signing up postal voters by means of a petition. They even reported Labour to the police and got the Evening Standard to run this fake news "scandal". But no-one was arrested, charged or imprisoned: it was nonsense.

Yet postal voters did surge, almost doubling from 1,028 in 2014 to 1,929 in 2018. Voter turnout in the polling district that covered these estates - rose from just under 33% in 2014 to nearly 46% in 2018. 51% of Fulham Court turned out; just 40% of Burnthwaite Road - a pretty strongly Conservative street behind Dawes Road. Barclay Close turnout was 53%; Swan Court: 69%; Ravensworth Court: 59% and Lancaster Court 48%.

The Conservatives very nearly lost the ward. The lowest-placed Tory ended just 126 votes ahead of the top Labour candidate. Labour's vote rose over seventeen percentage points, mopping up a Lib Dem vote that halved to just over ten.

Had the Conservative vote fallen by anything like as much as Labour's climbed they'd have lost for the first time in over forty years, but they slipped by less than five.

That was a pretty impressive assertion of the resilience of the Conservative vote here: Labour's advance was basically driven by all non-Tories aligning behind them and that big increase in turnout.

At the 2019 electoral review the Conservatives tried to retain the existing Town ward but with a few streets from Hurlingham added to shore their vote up. Labour more or less wanted the Town ward that existed prior to 1978 back, regaining the avenues from Munster and the "villes" just north of Bishops Road. Munster would have become a two-councillor ward while Town would have retained three seats.

The two areas Labour wanted to transfer contained almost the entirety of the Conservative majority in Munster ward in 2018: the rest of that ward was essentially neck and neck.

Summary results for Fulham Town ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	41.2		30.9		27.9
1903	54.1		36.9		9.1
1906	72.9		27.1		
1909	82.0	18.0			
1912	71.9		28.1		
1912B	Unop				
1919	60.9				39.1
1922	78.5	21.5			
1923B	57.8				42.2
1925	77.2	22.8			
1925B	Unop				
1928	74.9	25.1			
1928B	75.8	24.2			
1931	81.8	18.2			
1932B	Unop				
1934B	68.9	31.1			
1934	71.0	29.0			
1936B	Unop				
1937	61.7	38.3			
1938B	57.2	33.1			9.7
1942B	Unop				
1944B	Unop				
1945	45.1	54.9			
1949	56.8	40.9			2.3
1951B	Result not known				
1953	52.1	47.9			
1956	44.5	44.9			
1959	44.5	46.4	9.1		
1962	47.7	52.3			
1964	43.5	51.4	5.1		
1968	61.5	38.5			
1971	46.0	54.0			
1974	49.9	50.1			
1976B	57.1	38.8	4.1		
1978	56.3	36.1	4.0	3.6	
1979B	53.7	37.1	7.9	1.4	
1982	54.6	26.4	19.0		
1986	49.1	37.5	9.5	3.9	
1987B	67.0	26.8	6.2		
1990	61.2	31.9	7.0		
1993B	61.3	31.7	7.0		
1994	55.1	31.3	13.6		
1996B	53.0	34.4	12.6		
1998	61.0	27.0	12.0		
2002	62.0	25.1	12.9		
2006	64.4	19.6	16.0		
2009B	63.4	17.7	18.9		
2010	57.2	20.2	22.6		
2012B	49.4	26.8	21.3	2.5	
2014	52.0	24.4	18.8		
2018	48.0	41.6	10.3		
2022	45.9	27.6	26.6		
2025B	43.3	16.8	23.1	4.2	12.5
2026	44.3	16.5	16.5	12.2	10.5

The notional Tory majority in Munster on Labour's proposed boundaries was just 17 votes - almost certainly the ward would have elected one Labour councillor had it existed in 2018 on these lines.

Initially the Commission went with Labour's plan. So, instead of attempting to undo the damage the commission's draft did to their hopes elsewhere in the borough, the Conservatives concentrated all their efforts on saving their five councillors in these two Fulham wards. That meant retaining Munster as the 3-member ward, complete with most of the territory that Labour wanted moved to Town; leaving Town with two councillors.

They succeeded: the one consolation for the Conservatives in an otherwise dreadful electoral review for them. But it was a standstill outcome for them: they didn't gain anything from the status quo - just held their number of seats here steady.

In the Coningham profile we looked at what happens when a party - in that case the Greens - target the wrong ward. They are not the only party that has done this.

The Liberal Democrats chose Munster as their target ward in 2022 but made little impact. In contrast they tied with Labour for a quite distant second place in Fulham Town, suggesting that they should have worked this ward far harder.

They got their chance to rectify this in the optimal political circumstances of 2025 when Labour's popularity was tanking and the Conservatives were losing votes by the bundle to Reform UK. The by-election caused by Andrew Dismore's resignation occurred just a year after the landslide Conservative general election defeat. Could the Liberal Democrats capitalise on the near-panic imbuing some corners of Britain's most successful political party and their principal opponents in Fulham?



No. There was actually a small swing from Lib Dem to Conservative in the by-election, and a slightly larger one from Labour - though all three of these parties lost vote share to Reform UK, who polled 13%.

The Conservatives won with almost twice as many votes as the Lib Dem and yet again the innate Conservatism of Fulham Town was reasserted.

The 2026 election, taking place less than a year after the by-election was essentially a re-run of the by-election, with the Lib Dems doing a lot worse and the Greens a lot better. But the Greens still only won 12% - their second weakest vote share in Hammersmith and Fulham and less than two points ahead of Reform.

Although the Conservatives aren't winning here by the sort of margins they have in the past, Labour is at historic lows and there is no conceivable way they can resurrect the spirit of collectivism that enabled them to win Fulham town decades ago.

Rollcall of Fulham Town ward councillors

including Town ward (1900-2022)

2026
- Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
- Liam Downer-Sanderson

2025B
- Liam Downer-Sanderson

2022
- Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
- Andrew Dinsmore

2018
- Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
- Andrew Brown
- Belinda Donovan

2014
- Andrew Brown
- Viya Nsumbu
- Greg Smith

2012B
- Andrew Brown

2010
- Oliver Craig
- Stephen Greenhalgh
- Greg Smith

2009B
- Oliver Craig

2006
- Stephen Greenhalgh
- Antony Lillis
- Greg Smith

2002
- Stephen Greenhalgh
- Greg Hands
- Antony Lillis

1998
- Antony Lillis
- Stephen Greenhalgh

1996B
- Stephen Greenhalgh

1994
- Mark Loveday
- Tony Glover

1993B
- Tony Glover

1990
- Terence McGrath
- Guy Roberts

1987B
- Terence McGrath

1986
- Diana Fawcett
- Fiona MacGregor

1982
- David Clark
- Fiona MacGregor

1979B
- David Clark

1978
- Fiona MacGregot
- Courtney Warner

1976B
- Fiona MacGregor

1974
- Esme Clarke
- Les Hilliard
- Will Unwin

1971
- Jonathan Boswell
- Ian Gray
- Les Hilliard

1968
- Paul Dwyer
- Peter Fane
- Sidney Lilley

1964
- Ian Gray
- Barry Hill
- Max House

1962
- Abe Desmore
- Ian Gray
- Les Hilliard
- Ian Jordan

1959
- William Hallam
- Les Hilliard
- Birte Little
- Thomas Parker

1956
- Brian Galpin
- Margot Noyes
- William Pittman
- Sidney Toms

1953
- Marjorie Gale
- Brian Galpin
- Eric Keeble
- Herbert Poulter

1951B
- Brian Galpin

1949
- A. Fox
- Marjorie Gale
- E. Pickles
- Herbert Poulter

1945
- Helen Fournier
- M. Jamieson
- C. Otley
- William Wallis

1942B
- William Moon

1938B
- John Mead

1937
- Charles Epps
- Charles Ironside
- John Melville
- William Upham

1936B
- John Melville

1934
- Charles Epps
- Charles Ironside
- Sydney Carnt
- William Upham

1934B
- Charles Ironside

1931
- Sydney Carnt
- Stanley Cave
- George Clark
- William Upham

1928
- Sydney Carnt
- Stanley Cave
- William Corbin
- William Upham

1928B
- Cyril Hicks

1925
- George Clark
- William Corbin
- Sydney Carnt
- William Upham

1923B
- Cornelius De Coster

1922
- George Clark
- Arthur Andrews
- George Peachey

1919
- George Clark
- Arthur Andrews
- George Peachey

1912B
- Charles Hawker

1912
- George Clark
- Edgar Sainsbury
- George Peachey

1909
- George Clark
- Edgar Sainsbury
- George Peachey

1906
- George Clark
- Edgar Sainsbury
- George Peachey

1903
- George Clark
- Charles Hawker
- George Peachey

1900
- John Flew
- Charles Hawker
- Henry Williams

Grove ward

The Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman film Far and Away culminates in a re-enactment of the Oklahoma Land Rush - where settlers could acquire 160 acres of land, essentially for free, by racing to a staked flag first.

The development of The Grove - or, more accurately, Bradmore Field - was not all that dissimilar, though speculators had to pay-up to build the grid of tightly packed terraced streets that are now called Brackenbury Village.

Where is this grove? Although no part of the area today resembles a grove, it is actually a clearly defined area: east of Paddenswick Road, west of the Hammersmith and City Line, north of Glenthorne Road and South of Goldhawk Road.

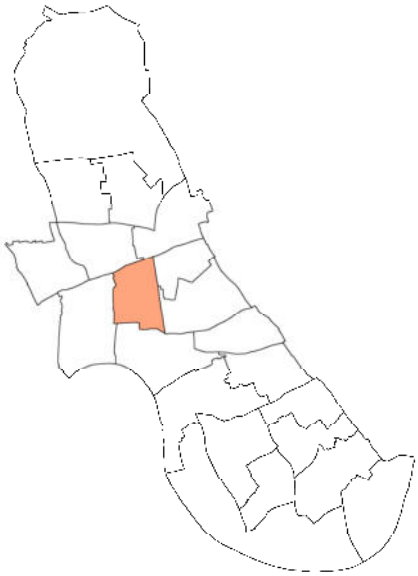
Askew Road follows the route of a tributary of Stamford Brook as it flows northwards, and what is now Paddenswick Road and Dalling Road do the same to the south: the brook's irrigation of Bradmore Field is why it became such a verdant grove.

Just as the bulk of Shepherd's Bush between Uxbridge Road and Goldhawk Road was developed very rapidly in the late 1800s, so too was this section of central Hammersmith. But The Grove itself - the road now called Hammersmith Grove - is older.

The founding electoral ward for this area was named "The Grove and Ravenscourt". This literally meant Ravenscourt, plus the road called The Grove, and precious little in between, at least for a few years.

Hammersmith Grove was marked on Rocque's map as far back as the 1780s - but just as a track or rural lane; no housing. Several Hammersmith & Fulham wards are associated with historically significant people: William Morris with Ravenscourt, Joseph Addison with Addison, James Gunter and Samuel Richardson with Avonmore, William Gibbs with West Kensington, Nell Gwynne with Sandford, William De Morgan with Sands End, John Dwight with Fulham Town, Sir John Lillie with, well, Lillie Road. For Grove, the central ward in Hammersmith, its patron is the builder George Wimpey, founder of the now multinational conglomerate construction firm.

Wimpey was born in Brook Green in 1855 and, as an adult, built a stone foundry here. Although his successful company principally focussed on road-laying he also had a significant interest in developing land for housing in Hammersmith.



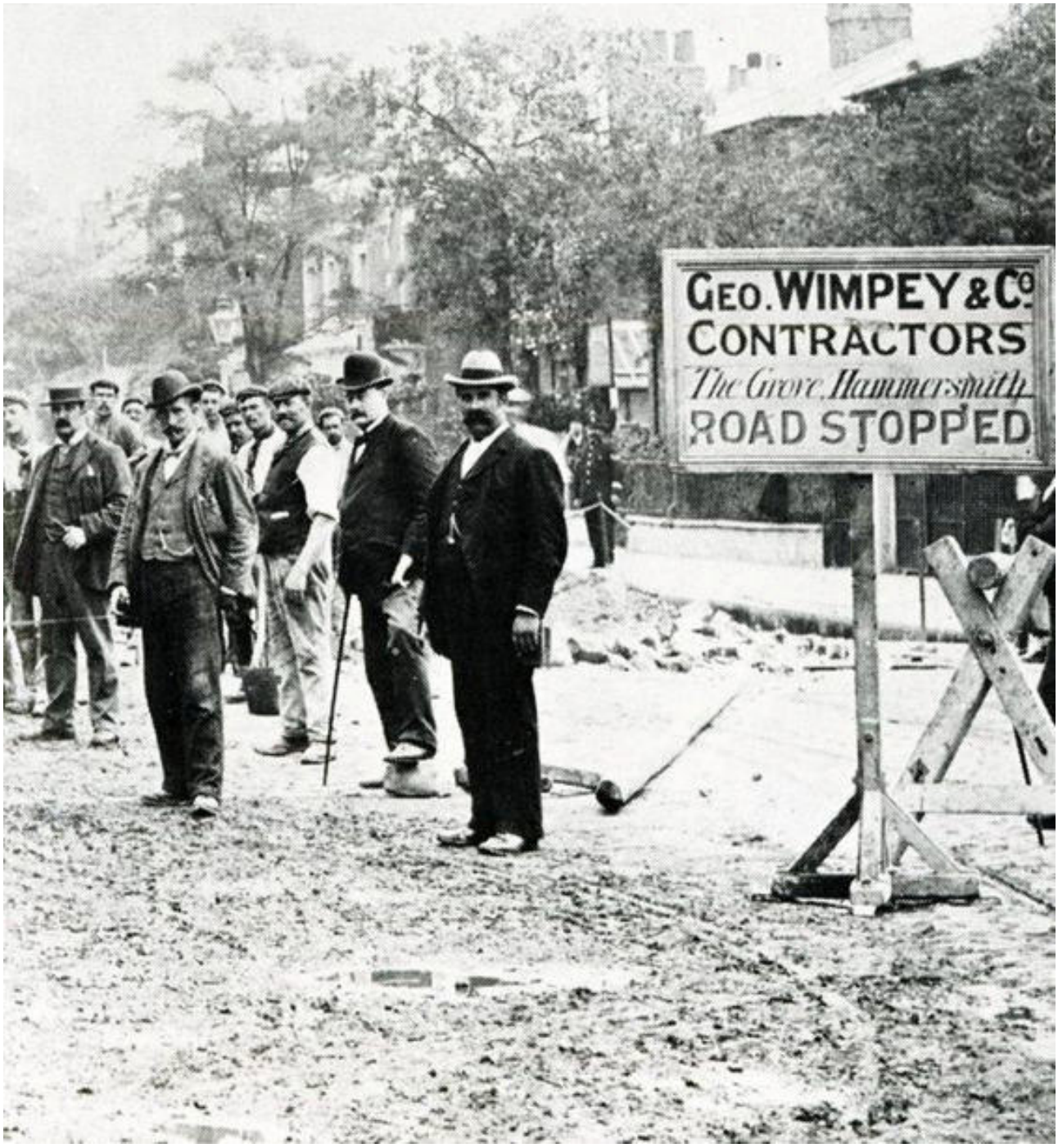
He constructed a sizeable chunk of Hammersmith Grove, where he eventually lived and where the Wimpey Headquarters were based. He also built the White City Stadium and much of the White City Exhibition site.

Wimpey did not construct the whole of Hammersmith Grove. Housebuilding here started before he was born in the 1840s and, even if he had been in a position to pitch for land it is too long a road for one builder at that time to have constructed: it's almost a kilometre in length.

There was almost feral competition to buy-up plots to help house a rapidly growing Hammersmith. The Council's Conservation Team parcel Hammersmith Grove into five distinct clusters of approximately similar architecture built in roughly the same time periods.

While Hammersmith Grove was being developed the Hammersmith and City railway came to Hammersmith. The line spliced central Hammersmith in two: just one narrow road: Trussley Road, now connected Brook Green in the east with the rest of Hammersmith west of The Grove.

The line was also an even more prominent physical feature than it is today because, while today's Piccadilly and District Lines slip under Beadon Road, when it was first built these lines were connected to the Hammersmith and City Line by a bridge over the southern end of Hammersmith Grove. There was a further connection to the West London Line where Richford Gate now is - arcing around just south of Shepherd's Bush Green.



Some of the early houses built along Hammersmith Grove were grand villas located in an almost rural idyll. But many more became multiple occupancy dwellings; and the streets gradually built west of The Grove were also high density, tightly packed and far more targeted at Hammersmith's burgeoning working class.

Not Hammersmith's poor but men who worked with their hands in decent trades who were not especially affluent but could afford reasonably decent accommodation close to their work. Hammersmith therefore was "zoned" pretty early in its existence: there were the wealthy enclaves of Ravenscourt and Brook Green; the working class in Bradmore Park and The Grove, and the poorest, most overcrowded area south of Glenthorne Road.

The area was not completely given over to housing: Godolphin and Latymer School established itself here in the late 19th century; and just beyond it at the end of Cambridge Grove were the Bradmore works: originally a piano factory and then the site of the Alliance Aeroplane Company. Further on it became the council's Education Department building and is now office space.

The Grove and Ravenscourt ward was, after Brook Green and St Matthew's the strongest Conservative (Moderate, Municipal Reform or Ratepayer) ward in Hammersmith. I've linked those three together but the Ratepayer's Association was not always aligned with the Conservatives, and in the early days often had the implicit support of Hammersmith's Liberals too.

Labour managed to get two councillors elected here in 1919 including the wonderfully-named Wellington Harding but were then unable to win again for almost two decades, when they won three of the six seats in 1937. Then they finally got full control of the ward in 1945.

After that, Ravenscourt and Grove were split into separate wards. Grove now just covered the area of Bradmore Field from Paddenswick Road to the railway and, shorn of the much more Conservative area around

Ravenscourt Park, began electing Labour councillors consistently and comfortably.

In 1949 - a relatively poor Labour year, though one in which they still kept control of Hammersmith, Grove voted 56% Labour to 44% Conservative. Stand-alone Ravenscourt, meanwhile, voted 63% Conservative to 37% Labour. And that's how they split for the rest of that borough's existence: Grove relatively comfortably Labour, Ravenscourt even more comfortably Conservative.

How Grove ward behaved later on, as it gentrified and got renamed by some "Brackenbury Village", raises the question why Hammersmith wards behave differenly politically to those in Fulham. If Grove had been a Fulham ward it would probably have been represented by Conservative councillors from the late 1970s to at least 2018. But it stuck with Labour when the boroughs amalgamated in 1964 right the way through to its abolition in 2002 - even with, at times, knife-edge majorities.

Compare Grove to what might be called its sister ward in Fulham: Sherbrooke - a ward that, like Grove, had very little public housing; was, in the main, a tightly packed grid of terraces of workers cottages and had, in fact, a far, far stronger Labour pedigree than Grove. Labour's vote in Sherbrooke in the 1960s and 1970s surpassed 80%.

Those are the similarities - here is the difference: Fulham gentrified earlier than Hammersmith, but the lag was not so great as to explain why, between 1974 and 1978, Sherbrooke swung to the Conservatives by 22% but Grove by just 5.5% (and that tiny swing despite Grove losing the Flora Gardens council estate in 1978 boundary changes). In 1982, Sherbrooke swung from Labour again by over five percentage points - enabling the Conservatives to snatch one of its seats; in Grove the swing was 0.2%.

That's not to say Labour was untouchable in Grove: they won in 1978 by just 20 votes and in 1982 by 26. They just didn't turn against Labour to the same extent as Fulham wards like Sherbrooke, did.

In 1990, after rate-swaps and big rate rises, the Sherbrooke swing from Labour was ten points - giving the Conservatives both seats there for the first time; in Grove it was 4.5% - one of two crucial Hammersmith wards Labour held in that election to keep them in control of the council (the other being Starch Green). Labour held on by 125 votes here that time.

By 1990, Grove was gentrifying at a far faster rate than Sherbrooke. it was these streets that were talked about whenever Hammersmith was mooted by estate agents as potential future homes for young couples looking for their first home or their first family home: the cottages of Iffley Road, Atwood Road or Cardross Street; the townhouses of Adie, Benbow and Overstone Roads and Brackenbury Road itself with its evolving cafe culture down the end with Aldensley.

The political divergence with Sherbrooke continued. A Grove ward by-election in 1992 resulted in not far off a Labour landslide : over 60% of the vote, and in 1994, Grove swung to Labour by six points; Sherbrooke by one. Now Grove had a Labour majority of 500; Sherbrooke was a split ward with the Conservatives narrowly ahead.



Clark quits as Labour boss

CLLR Stephen Clark is to stand down as Hammersmith Council's Labour leader.

Mr Clark, 36, who became a father in April, has told colleagues he is resigning because of increased family commitments.

He has been leader of the Labour opposition since the council elections in May 1982 and was returned unopposed in May this year.

He said: "I enjoy the job immensely but I believe I owe it to my family to spend a little more time at home than the job of leader will allow.

"I still intend to be an energetic councillor both at the Town hall and in my ward and I will assist the new leader in whatever way I can."

Elections for the vacant post will be held in mid-January and front-runners are thought to include deputy leader Gordon Prentice and opposition housing spokesman Ian Harrison.

Mr Clark is councillor for Grove ward and lives with his wife and son in Standish Road, Hammersmith.

● Cllr Stephen Clark


RICHFORD ST
BENBOW ROAD
BRACKENBURY ROAD
COULTER RD
AGATE ROAD
HAMMERSMITH GROVE
NASMYTH ST
CARTHEW RD
IFFLEY ROAD
OVERSTONE RD
BANIM STREET
ATWOOD RD
GLENTHORNE RD

Then examine the Conservative vote, which in Grove went from 43% in 1978 to the low thirties in the 1980s and 1990s before falling below 30% in 1998. In Sherbrooke, with the exception of a slight dip in 1986, the Conservative vote was consistently in the high forties from 1978 to 1998, even as this period coincided with increasingly unpopular mid-term Tory governments.

So part of the reason for Grove's Labour lean was a lag in gentrification, and another part was that Labour was able to ride the wave of Conservative government unpopularity in the 1980s far more easily in Hammersmith than Fulham because of that difference in speed of gentrification.

A third reason was the impact of the SDP-Liberal Alliance: from which larger party they drew more votes from when they contested every ward for the first time in 1982. In Grove there was no impact at all: both main parties ceded votes to them in almost equal measure. Labour lost 0.2% more votes to the Alliance in Grove than the Tories - in real money that's about three votes.

In Sherbrooke Labour dropped about ten points and the Conservatives held steady. Across the five Hammersmith wards the Tories lost two votes to the Alliance for every one Labour lost. In Fulham Labour lost three for every two the Conservatives forfeited.

That was the difference between the two halves of the borough in the 1980s but it doesn't explain why that difference existed. The reason is that the type of affluent resident moving into Grove throughout the 1980s and 1990s was simply more liberal and left-leaning; the sorts who were employed by the BBC, based then in White City and Lime Grove, or other media and the arts. Fulham was flooding with bankers, stockbrokers, fund managers and other city professions - far more likely to be Conservative supporters. This is something of a generalisation - but not that much of one.

A look at the feature on prominent locals on the Brackenbury Village website throws up casting agents, broadcasters, artistic directors, actors, artists, artistic producers, piano teachers and authors: Grove is simply more bohemian, progressive and cosmopolitan than Fulham - in modern terms more woke.

This is now a largely very affluent part of Hammersmith: nowadays there is little to split Grove from Ravenscourt in terms of the prosperity of these neighbours. There are three main MOSAIC categories - the modern day equivalent of Charles Booth's poverty map - which describe the main demographic groups street by street.

For Grove the dominant groups are:

- Well off older global professionals
- Prosperous Settled Young Professionals
- Prosperous Mobile Single Young professionals
- Mixed Inner City Urban



Those MOSAIC demographic descriptions are typically cringe-worthy, yet these three perfectly sum up Grove in the 21st century.

In 2000 Grove ward was chopped up in the boundary review. The ward was far too small to justify three councillors and, being splat in the centre of Hammersmith, was liable to be parcelled off to make the wards surrounding it larger.

THE GAZETTE
Thursday, December 24, 1992



Cllr Jane Morris meets her namesake, ex-Mayor Tom Morris

What's in a name? Nothing, except it links generations

NEWLY-elected councillor Jane Morris found out she had more in common with former mayor Tom Morris than just her surname during her election campaign.

Cllr Morris, who was elected Labour councillor for Grove ward in Hammersmith, met up with Tom on her campaign trail who, it turns out, was Labour councillor for the same ward for 36 years.

As well as being mayor from 1971 to 1972, Mr Morris is a freeman of the borough.

She said: "It was a coincidence that we both have the same name and are linked as Labour councillors for Grove ward. Tom Morris was also the name of my grandfather so we had a few jokes about that.

"Mr Morris told me a lot about the ward in his day and its history. The one thing that Tom felt had not changed much was the borough's poverty and he believes it is now as bad as it was when he was councillor 30 years ago. He also gave me a few good tips on canvassing."

Cllr Morris joined a training day for new Labour councillors on Tuesday and is looking forward to getting stuck in to her council work in the New Year.



Is by-election result a sign of things to come?

By MIKE PARKINSON

COUNCILLORS traded claims and counter-claims this week after the Grove Ward by-election revealed a 9 per cent swing to Labour.

Jane Elizabeth Morris, 29, swept to victory with 906 votes, while Tory Paul James Jones polled 493 votes. Liberal Democrat Nicholas Martin Hopkins trailed behind with 106 votes.

Labour leader Iain Coleman seized on the result as a precursor to 'a landslide victory at the next local elections'.

But his Tory shadow Gerald Wombwell dismissed the claim and insisted his side would dominate in the years to come.

Cllr Coleman said: "This is a spectacular victory for the the Labour Party. With a lead of this size over the Tories, we will have a landslide victory at the next local elections, as we did in 1986.

"Our victory reflects the confidence local people have in the council. Despite the severity of the financial hardship imposed on us by the Government, our residents recognise the scale of the achievement this council has made in continuing to provide quality services.

"The result also shows how unpopular John Major's scandal-ridden Government has become.

"We very much regretted the loss of Cllr Vivienne Lukey, who was forced to stand down as a councillor for Grove ward in order to comply with Government legislation on 'politically restricted' posts in local authorities.

"We were very fortunate in having a candidate of the highest calibre in Jane Morris and my colleagues and I very much look forward to working with her."

Cllr Wombwell said: "The Grove ward does not prove there is a trend of any kind.

"In July there was a 10 per cent swing to us in Broadway ward. It only shows how volatile the political situation is. Labour are in cloud-cuckoo land.

"We shall consign them to darkness in May 1994."

The new councillor, who is the European Liaison Officer for the British Post-Graduate Medical Federation, said she was 'delighted'.

As a keen campaigner for Friends of the Earth, she hopes to ensure environmental issues are brought to the fore.

But the outcome here was crass. Ravenscourt ward - becoming Ravenscourt Park ward - expanded into the western end of Brackenbury Village, snaffling everything west of Cardross Street and Banim Street. The remainder - the Hammersmith Grove side - was combined with Broadway ward so that it now stretched from the edges of Fulham right up to Goldhawk Road.

This Frankenstein's Monster of a ward was fine politically for Labour because, by 2002, they had seen off the Liberal threat in Broadway and it was now a very safe ward for them. It's just that this was a completely different neighbourhood: a ward of major roads and railway lines, of big council estates and shopping centres and office blocks. No-one given a free hand to draw wards in this area would have chosen to break Grove up like this and lump the majority onto Hammersmith Broadway.

This enlarged Hammersmith Broadway ward went Labour quite easily in 2002, 52% to 27% - just about how Grove had voted four years earlier. But in 2006 catastrophe nearly struck Labour. Steve Cowan, the future council leader who won the ward's third seat, was returned with a majority of just nine votes. Self-evidently the Grove section voted Conservative; possibly by as much as 10% given how much better the Broadway end was for Labour.

A combination of deep Labour government unpopularity coupled with the sort of liberal appeal then Opposition leader David Cameron exuded switched a lot of votes. Lots more Labour supporters simply didn't vote.

It's harder to say what would have happened in 2010 because there was a bit of a swing back to Labour.

Their majority in that third seat increased to 337 (7.1%) - maybe not quite enough to have suggested the Grove section returned to voting Labour.

But Grove's Labour leanings would have reasserted themselves in 2014 and the notional result for Grove in 2018 put the Labour majority back at 28% - almost exactly where it had been in 1998.

Though Labour hung on to Hammersmith Broadway in 2006 they lost the council. The new Conservative regime tried really hard to alter the politics of Hammersmith Broadway by attempting to sell off a council estate and approving major new housing developments with almost no affordable housing within them.

One of these was the multi-storey car park in Glenthorne Road: a Berkeley housing development of over 400 apartments called Sovereign Court.

But the political impact of such developments seems to be much less than was hoped for by Conservatives. In 2026 only just over a hundred voted, a turnout six points lower than Grove ward overall.

The only thing that can be said of new private developments is that they are likely to be somewhat less inclined to Labour than council blocks probably are; not that they are going to be dormitories of masses of new Conservative voters.

In 2022 Hammersmith swung heavily to Labour and the party finished with two thirds of the vote in Grove: over fifty percentage points clear of the Tories - an insane landslide given the sort of ward it is.

Summary of election results for Grove ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	35.5		39.0		25.5
1903	47.3		35.3		17.4
1903B	52.3		47.7		
1906	49.5				50.5
1909		14.9			85.1
1912	37.3	19.6			43.1
1912B	49.1	17.9			33.0
1919	42.1	39.4	18.5		
1922		31.3			68.7
1923B	55.4	43.2			1.4
1925		35.6			64.4
1928		47.2			52.8
1931		26.8			73.2
1934		44.0			56.0
1934B		42.2			57.8
1936B					Unop
1937		49.5			50.5
1945	36.6	63.4			
1946B	58.4	41.6			
1949	44.1	55.9			
1953	33.3	61.8	4.9		
1956	35.2	64.8			
1959	36.6	63.4			
1962	31.9	68.1			
1964	37.3	62.7			
1968	51.4	41.6			
1971	35.5	64.5			
1974	41.6	58.4			
1978	43.1	46.7			10.2
1982	35.4	38.6	20.6		5.5
1986	31.7	50.3	18.0		
1990	39.6	49.2	11.2		
1992B	32.8	60.2	7.0		
1994	32.5	54.1	13.4		
1998	28.6	56.6	14.8		
2022	16.7	66.4	16.8		
2026	16.9	48.9	8.2	17.8	8.2

Just as Grove was susceptible to wooing by David Cameron's brand of liberal, green-tinged Conservative, it has shown itself to be allergic to Theresa May's clunky "Brexit means Brexit", "Citizens of Nowhere" rhetoric and Boris Johnson's chaotic right-wing populism.

The Conservatives made a choice when enacting Brexit to champion Leave-voting England beyond London and the price is results such as this in the places they rejected.

The same thing happened in 2026. At least the Conservatives didn't lose further support, holding steady with 17%. But in 2026 the Greens overtook the Tories for second - just, with 18%. All of that vote share (the Greens didn't contest Grove in 2022) appears to have come from Labour who fell from 66% to 49% - more in line with the sort of results we expect from this ward. But that still left Labour 32% ahead of the Conservatives, making it Labour's safest ward of those elections.

And there's the dichotomy: twenty years ago, when Labour last did very badly in London, Grove voted Conservative. In 2026 it was Labour's very best ward. It may not look like it should be, but it is.

Rollcall of Grove ward councillors

including The Grove and Ravenscourt ward (1900-1949)

2026
- Hannah Bulmer
- Steve Cowan

2022
- Steve Cowan
- Helen Rowbottom

1998
- Chris Allen
- Steve Cowan

1994
- Les Aldridge
- Adam Farrar

1992B
- Jane Morris

1990
- Les Aldridge
- Vivienne Lukey

1986
- Vivienne Lukey
- Hugh Thompson

1982
- Stephen Clarke
- Hugh Thompson

1978
- Jennifer Clarke
- Stephen Clarke

1974
- Margaret Jackson
- Philip Jacobs
- Diana Jowett

1971
- Eric Gosling
- Frank Keppel
- Thomas Morris

1968
- George Boyce
- Christopher Gibbons
- Stuart Godwin

1964
- Eric Gosling
- Diana Jowett
- Thomas Morris

1962
- Stanley Atkins
- Thomas Morris
- Sidney Mountier

1959
- Stanley Atkins
- Sidney Mountier
- David Reynolds

1956
- Stanley Atkins
- Sidney Mountier
- David Reynolds

1953
- Elizabeth Finn
- Sidney Mountier
- David Reynolds

1949
- F. Eyre
- M. Pinnell
- Henry Reynolds

1946B
- Bertie Samels

1945
- Frederick Brader
- N. Chamberlain
- M. Pinnell
- E. Prosser
- Henry Reynolds
- George Richardson

1937
- Joan Bourne
- Frederick Brader
- Joseph Clark
- L. Glenister
- Bertie Samels
- Arthur Waller

1936B
- Patrick Murray

1936B
- Harry Martin

1934B
- Joseph Clark

1934
- Arthur Bentall
- Walter Davies
- Harry May
- Harriet Russell
- Bertie Samels
- William Waters

1931
- Henry Ainsworth
- Arthur Bentall
- Walter Davies
- Harry May
- William Randall
- Harriet Russell

1928
- Henry Ainsworth
- Arthur Belsham
- James Chamberlen
- Charles Johnson
- Sidney Raynor
- Lawrence Stevens

1925
- Henry Ainsworth
- James Chamberlen
- Victor Dean
- Charles Johnson
- Sidney Raynor
- Henry Wright

1923B
- James Fletcher

1922
- Henry Ainsworth
- James Chamberlain
- Walter Cunningham
- Patrick Finn
- Charles Johnson
- William Waters

1919
- James Chamberlen
- James Fletcher
- Louis Glenister
- Wellington Harding
- William Waters
- John Westcott

1912B
- A.F. Hunt

1912
- Thomas Bacon
- James Chamberlen
- Alfred Ebbs
- Louis Glenister
- Charles Johnson
- Henry Wright

1909
- Alfred Ebbs
- James Fletcher
- Charles Johnson
- Harry Linger
- Walter Tomes
- Henry Wright

1906

Walter Davies
- Alfred Ebbs
- James Fletcher
- James Hunt
- Walter Tomes
- Henry Wright

1903B
- Henry Watkins

1903
- Walter Davies
- James Hunt
- Charles Johnson
- Acton Phillips
- Walter Tomes
- Henry Wright

1900
- Charles Beal
- Fred Edwards
- Charles Johnson
- Acton Phillips
- Edmund Rawlings
- Walter Tomes

Hammersmith Broadway ward

Hammersmith has a picture postcard riverside. The jewel in its crown is the ornate but fragile Joseph Bazalgette Grade II* listed Hammersmith suspension bridge, closed to vehicle traffic since 2019 because it was designed to bear the load of occasional horse-drawn carriages, not SUVs, buses and trucks.

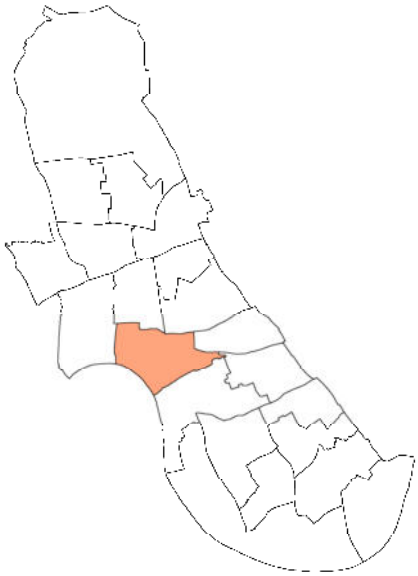
There are the two well-known pubs: the Blue Anchor and the Rutland Arms whose patrons block the Lower Mall by their numbers throughout the summer or whenever there is a regatta on the Thames. There are the three rowing clubs: Furnivall, Auriol and the British Rowing Headquarters at No.6. There is Kent House, the home of the Hammersmith Club. There is Furnivall Gardens and, across the A4, Hammersmith Town Hall. And, just off to the side of the gardens there is a Berlin streetlamp donated to Hammersmith by then city mayor but later German Chancellor Willie Brandt.

This is the front garden, if you will, for Hammersmith Broadway. But it is not an accurate representation of the ward. Hammersmith Town Centre has long been one of the least affluent parts of the borough, historically overcrowded and blighted by poor quality dwellings side by side with factories and industrial plants.

Go back before the Great West Road was built; when Stamford Brook emptied into a wide creek barges traversed that extended from the edge of Dove Passage all the way to King Street; when Furnivall Gardens did not exist but was, instead, a toxic, polluting Lead Mill and when, behind it were rank after rank of densely populated, poor quality terraces.

Stand at the end of Bridge Avenue with the crossing beneath the flyover in front of you and instead of that looped cul-de-sac, imagine one branch of the road connecting with Mall Road right the way down to the the riverside and the other: Bridge Avenue, connecting to Hammersmith Bridge Road just by Digby Mansions: two long, uninterrupted vistas. Imagine a maze of dark, narrow alleyways criss-crossing the entire area: Salem Place, Aspen Place, Wellington Road; Bridge Street, Middle Mall and Hampshire Hog Lane, to name a few.

Yes, Hammersmith had its picture postcard riverside but immediately behind it was an incredibly poor, industrial and overcrowded area.



It was how the powers that be decided to deal with the problems of this hamlet of Hammersmith that created the Broadway ward of today.

By the end of the First World War the housing situation was too much for the Ratepayer Association-run council to ignore; further, the public mood after the war made it politically impossible for councillors to ignore. A "Southern Area Improvement Scheme" was drawn up, essentially to relocate a sizeable portion of the local residents, then clear the slums and build new, better quality housing plus some open space as well.

Contributing some of the funding towards the London County Council's Wormholt estate to enable them to directly allocate tenants there was the first stage of this plan. The dense streets immediately south of King Street were the first to be emptied and cleared.

In 1926, once enough of Wormholt had been built to decant residents of the area around Trafalgar Street, Holcombe Street, Wellington Street and South Street, Riverside Gardens was the first council estate to be built in the area. A new town hall, alongside the estate, was approved eight years later after the council rejected a plan to build it on Brook Green. Aspen Gardens, of a somewhat similar design to Riverside Gardens, though with long open landings rather than internal staircases directly to flats, followed soon after.

The West London Observer
Friday December 11, 1925

BOROUGH COUNCIL BY-ELECTIONS

River Ward Victory Of Ratepayers' Constitutional Alliance Candidates

Yesterday (Thursday) polling took place in the River ward to fill two vacancies on the Hammersmith Borough Council, caused by Councillors A. Atkinson and C. Pascall having been appointed Aldermen.

The polling stations were at St. Paul's, St. Peter's and Waterloo Street Schools. There was very little excitement over the contest and a small poll was recorded, 1,043 persons voting out of an electorate of 6,000 for the ward.

Counting took place in the Council Chamber, amongst those attending being the four candidates, Alderman Dr. W.H. Burnhill, Mrs. Burnhill, Councillors W. South, J.H. Perry, J. Bedford, H. Wright, S.J. Raynor, A.R. Cracknell, and J.N. Claydon, Mrs. Bailey, Mrs Samels, Mrs. Russell, Miss Wilson, Capt. Berry, Messrs. J. Hamilton Cardwell, T.C. Moore, Saxby, Marshall, S.J. Ross and others.

Just before nine o'clock, Mr Hugh Royle, the Town Clerk, declared the result of the polling to be as follows:-

Elected

Mrs. F.S. Hodgson (Cons. A.)	628
Mr. R.B. Mumford (Cons. A.)	579

Not Elected.

Mr. J.T. Westcott (Lab.)	399
Mr. A. Batstone (Lab.)	389

The result was received with applause, Mrs. Hodgson, mounting a chair, remarked that she wanted to say how grateful she was to all who had helped her in the election. She wished to move a vote of thanks to the Returning officer and his staff for their courtesy and help. She would endeavour to repay the confidence they had reposed in her.

Mr. Mumford seconded the motion, and said he would do his best to merit the confidence reposed in him.

Mr. Westcott supported the motion and said he wished to say how much he appreciated the work of the Returning Officer and his staff. Although defeated, he was not disgraced; he had the opportunity of fighting again.

Mr. Batstone also supported the motion, and said he had been in forlorn hopes and in defeats before, so that he was not disappointed at the result of the election.

The motion having been adopted Mr. Royle, in replying, said it was to be regretted that not more of the electorate had voted. The ballot papers numbered 1,043 out of an electorate of 6,000. He thought that was very much to be regretted. He had to thank Mr. Francis for his valuable help in carrying out the detail work. There were only 5 spoilt papers and those were not for want of an official mark. He concluded by thanking the police for their services.

There were already two much older estates built by Victorian benefactors at the top of Fulham Palace Road. The first: the Guinness Trust, constructed in 1900, is four six-storey tenement blocks stacked one behind the other from Fulham Palace Road back to the tube line. The blocks are Dickensian: narrow, winding internal corridors with small flats.

Across Fulham Palace Road is the second: the Hammersmith Peabody, built on a much larger plot of land that wraps around the Hammersmith Apollo (the Odeon, as was) and St Vincent's Care Home. Although it looks as imposing as the Guinness Trust from Fulham Palace Road - a canyon of Victorian architecture - behind the frontage there is a mix of smaller blocks and cottages and a sunken garden square complete with pavilion.

In the 1940s the council decided to do for the area south east of Hammersmith Bridge what it had done for the area west of it and the Caroline estate, around Queen Caroline Street and immediately behind the Hammersmith Peabody estate, was built.

This estate of thirteen blocks of differing heights became the focal point of housing plans by the 2006 to 2014 Conservative council which wanted to decant and then sell the estate for redevelopment. This was part of a deal that turned Queen's Wharf and the historic former BBC sound stages at Riverside Studios arts centre into blocks of luxury Thames-side apartments.

The deal foundered not so much because of the fierce local hostility to the plan (though there was plenty) but because the financing was being undertaken by Icelandic banks just as they foundered in the first wave of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The last of the five big Broadway estates is Ashcroft Square, not built until 1973 when the King's Mall shopping centre and Lyric Theatre, above which it soars, was constructed. Although built on somewhat similar design principles to the Barbican - fairly tall continuous brick blocks around a central, planted square, this estate did not work well at first.

Its open design, intended to give residents easy access to the shops below and shoppers the ability to travel from the mall to the multi-storey car park over the tube line only served to bring vandalism and anti-social behaviour to both the estate and the shopping centre. Today, with controlled entry and the seventies wave of yob culture long gone Ashcroft Square is a much quieter estate floating above the throng of King Street. Plenty of King Street shoppers don't even realise there's a hefty council estate right above.

Hence an area of slums for the working poor was transformed by municipal intervention into an area of tenement estates for the working poor, with very little of old Hammersmith surviving.

SOUTHERN IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

In a report on the Southern Improvement scheme, the Housing Committee reported that, after carefully considering the Town Clerk's report and the whole position, we are of opinion that the carrying out of the scheme is essential in the proper interests of the whole of the borough and, more particularly, of that part of the borough.

Our chief difficulty is to devise some method whereby the scheme can be carried out without involving the Council at the present time in too great expenditure and without creating too great a disturbance of existing occupiers of residential and other properties on this site.

The Council will remember that it is proposed to reconstruct the area, when cleared, very largely by the erection of tenements. Plans and drawings showing the general lay-out and the type of buildings to be erected were prepared some time ago on the instruction of the Council by the Panel of Architects, and are on exhibition at the Town Hall. Those have already been approved by the Council and by the Ministry, but are subject to such modifications as may, from time to time, be desirable.

Map No. 3 attached to the Town Clerk's report shows a proposal for the erection of a first instalment of 36 flats, and we are advised that, of these, 18, viz., blocks Nos. 1 to 6 on the plan, can be erected on the area shown on map No. 1 as an open space and formerly known as Trafalgar Street without de-housing any persons now residing in the area.

We consider it of the utmost importance that care should be taken to carry out the reconstruction of the area in carefully selected sections over a period of years; that persons who will eventually become de-housed shall have an opportunity of becoming occupiers of other premises before the necessity for de-housing occurs; and, further, that business houses in the area should be negotiated with on the basis of their retaining, as far as practicable, their business premises or substituted premises within the area.

The Committee recommended --

(a) That, subject to financial assistance in accordance with the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1924, being arranged with the Ministry of Health and the London County Council, immediate steps be taken for the erection of blocks of tenements Nos. 1 to 12, shown on map No. 3 referred to above, subject to the details of the plans, elevations, specifications, etc. being approved by the Council.

(b) That, to enable the Council to proceed with the carrying out of the scheme, the Town Clerk is hereby authorised to serve the necessary Notices to Treat in respect of the properties included in the scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Statutes and "The Hammersmith (Southern Improvement Scheme) Order, 1922."

The recommendations were agreed to.



The original street layout of Hammersmth riverside

Cambridge Grove and Leamore Street (formerly Mansion House Street, where the Theatre of Varieties was) as they dive beneath the tube bridge; Chancellors Road, Chancellors Street, St James's Street and Crisp Road south of Hammersmith Bridge - these are just about the only residential roads that survive.

Then came the major roads - and other transport routes - slicing and dicing Hammersmith town up. All roads through Hammersmith converge at the Broadway - whether you're coming from Barnes, Chiswick, Shepherd's Bush, Kensington or Fulham it is pretty difficult to navigate Hammersmith without traversing the Broadway. The Hammersmith and City Line terminates here; the District and Piccadilly Lines cross through it on their way out to the suburbs; twenty one bus routes stop at the Broadway Centre.

The Abercrombie London Plan proposed major arterial roads into and out of the centre of London. To an extent progress on transport infrastructure was long overdue: aside from London's booming population, car ownership had exploded from less than 150,000 in 1910 to over 3 million in 1940. The planners' answer was disastrous, however: to prioritise motor traffic and subordinate pedestrians either via aerial walkways or subways.

One of their planned arterial routes ran from Hyde Park Corner, along Brompton and Cromwell Roads and out to Chiswick, where it forked at Hogarth Corner. And of course, running straight through the centre of Hammersmith. Something as inconsequential as a town centre could not stand in the way of progress, but how to enable traffic to flow easily amidst all the infrastructure, blockages and obstructions a place constructs for itself? The answer was to construct a flyover from Talgarth Road to the Great West Road. If cars can't traverse the road grid of Hammersmith, take them over it.

The flyover, of a similar design to The Westway further north, was designed to squeeze between buildings. St Paul's Church, the Hammersmith Odeon and the College Court mansion blocks ended up pressed right up against it, further annexing the south side of Hammersmith from the north while the street level became dingy, vandalised, fly posted and inhospitable to the people who lived around or visited the area.

A pedestrian could access the inner parts of the island to get to Hammersmith tube station, but now only by passing beneath the Broadway in dank, stinking subways full of vagrants and drunks.

BLIGHT STRIKES THE BROADWAY

Changing face of West London

THE old is coming down to make way for the new in the Hammersmith Broadway Redevelopment Area. But so slowly . . .

The lack of haste with which old, now-vacated buildings are demolished and the slowness to erect their replacements is causing concern to local businessmen and residents alike.

by David Hetherington

King Street — the main shopping street of the borough—was described as a "mess" this week by many of the traders who make their living there.

And in Hammersmith Broadway it was being joked that even "Junk City" — a secondhand furniture saleroom — had to quit the area because conditions were not fit for them to carry on business.

Empty shops, houses boarded up with tin and zinc and empty building sites up to seven acres big have become an all too prevalent feature of Hammersmith.

Uncertainty is the predominant mood among traders and residents. And in the planning department at Hammersmith Town Hall, the uncertainty seems to be even more marked. The council stands accused by its ratepayers of failing to make any dynamic impact on the area's redevelopment problem.

'Pathetic'

The manager of a major store in King Street described the redevelopment as "pathetically slow in getting off the ground." this week. As the years dragged by, he said, his firm had suffered a "complete loss of patience."

He gave as an example work on the major St. Martin's Property Company site on the north side of King Street. Demolition on the site began in March, and is still going on. "Any damned fool can knock down a few bricks, but we want to see something go up in their place," he said.

The experience at St. Martin's contrasts, strongly, however, with that on the British Oxygen Company site on the south side of King Street. Demolition was started just three weeks ago, and already piles are being erected on the site.

But uncertainty is not confined to the shape of new buildings before they have been built. A big question mark hangs over the future of the air terminal building nearing completion on the east side of Hammersmith Broadway.

The developers, Trafalgar House Properties, are carrying on negotiations with council officers — apparently with a view to abandoning the idea of an air terminal and using the space as offices.

The idea of the air terminal was hailed by the borough council as a potential major boost to the importance of the borough, and likely to attract thousands of foreign visitors to the area. Now, apparently, it has been decided that the terminal is no longer a viable idea.

The massive 600-bed Cunard International Hotel, towering above the air terminal complex will certainly attract thousands of tourists every year. But there are fears that they will arrive to find a serious lack of amenities.

Mr. Angelo Carraro, manager of Barry Aikman Travel Ltd., said there was virtually nowhere in the borough where tourists could eat at a good restaurant or buy souvenirs.

Another trader in King Street said there was "a total lack of amenities" in the borough and that there was "nowhere tourists could spend their money."

And Mr. Simon Knott, the prospective Liberal candidate for Hammersmith North, told the "News and Post" that King Street was "a disgrace."

He said he was fighting hard to get Hammersmith Council "to remove the blight from Bridge Avenue," on the south side of King Street.

Here, three-quarters of the houses stand empty, many of them with metal sheets covering their doors and windows.

'Ruin'

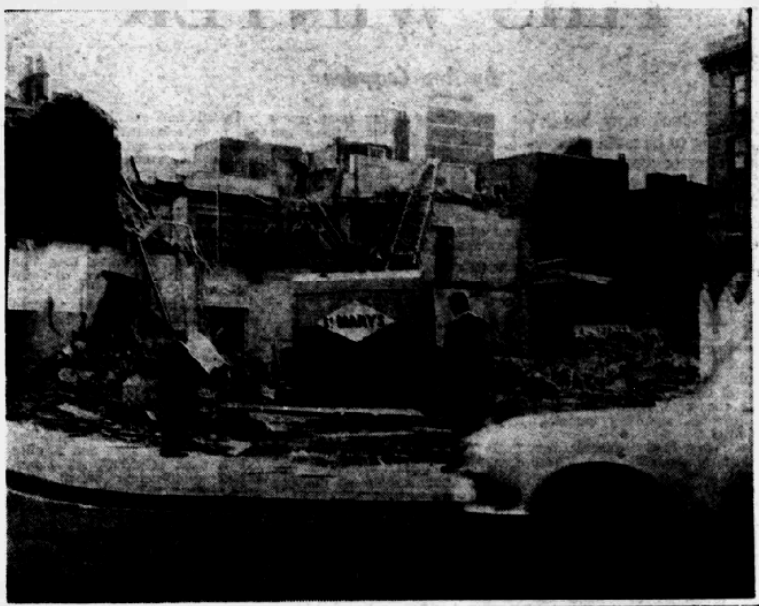
Said Mr. Knott: "These houses are just going to rack and ruin. The council could easily let them out as very badly needed homes for 20 families."

The council say they have kept the houses empty because of the uncertainty surrounding the plans for the area. It has been rumoured that the houses were to be pulled down and a car park built on the site.

A spokesman for the council denied this week that there was to be a car park, but added that the exact plans for the area were "still under consideration." The council say the overall plans for the redevelopment of Hammersmith Centre are the subject of an action area study which was now being drawn up by council architects and planners.

The study will go before the council in the autumn. From it the council's policy will be decided, with detailed planning the next step.

In the meantime, traders and residents will continue to describe the area as "a mess."



The scene at the corner of Beadon Road and Beadon Lane, where a site is being cleared to provide market space for the 21 street traders in the Lane. The traders will eventually move into King Street.



Simon Knott: "Bridge Avenue must be brought back to life."



Angelo Carraro: a desperate need for more amenities.

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In the early days it was the Broadway, not King Street, which was the town centre of Hammersmith: the old town hall was here; the police station; the Hammersmith Vestry depot; there were shops and pubs and even small terraced streets like Union Place, Britannia Court and Montague Cottages. Latymer Lower School was here and a carriage works for the District Railway.

The Broadway itself, already in long-term decline as King Street superceded it, was acquired by London Transport for a massive bus depot; and the eastern side of the island: Butterwick, became bus ranks, with passengers waiting in long glass shelters as four lanes of traffic roared past immediately behind them.

Irrespective of London's need for fairly straight, fairly direct highways to and from the centre of the city, the impact on central Hammersmith was rapid and deleterious. The island site, which at one time had been bursting with shops became almost deserted.

Today we tend to think of the Broadway as the whole island but the Broadway is just the western side, between St Paul's Church and Bradmore House. There never used to be an island here: Butterwick didn't exist until well into the 20th century. There was barely a south side either: the Broadway was essentially just a continuation of Fulham Palace Road.

The flyover cast everything beneath and around it into shade. It was a hostile environment. London Transport had wanted to redevelop the island with partners Bredero since the 1980s and had almost got the go ahead from the council just before the 1986 elections. But the Conservatives who were working on that blueprint lost power and the new administration didn't like the shape of the emerging ideas.

Labour, allied with Hammersmith Community Trust (one of whose key activists, Louanne Tranchell, would become a Broadway Labour councillor in 1994) wanted a relatively low density, mixed development including housing, a range of shops, the retention of the terracotta entrance to the tube station and a small public open space.

The Bredero plan comprised a ring of massive office blocks with ugly fake-marble cladding that dated almost as soon as it had been proposed. There was also a huge battle about the future usage of Bradmore House: a baroque 17th Century manor house once owned by Edward Latymer, the founder of the local public school.

Essentially, Bredero and London Transport won but the council did manage to reduce the density of the blocks slightly, which now only ring three sides of the island. Whatever the architectural merits - or lack thereof - of the Bredero scheme, Hammersmith did get a new shopping mall, the Butterwick bus ranks moved inside above the mall, and some improvements to the subways made them slightly less unpleasant for shoppers and commuters. Twenty years later the council filled-in the subways and street-level crossings were created, though still in the twilight beneath the oppressive flyover.

The council also turned the potholed car park beside the church into an urban park, so opening up the vista around St Paul's. These measures have mitigated the blight but it is still there - and will be until some fix is found to remove the flyover.

The effects of this seismic transformation of central Hammersmith had a huge impact on the area's population. Between 1922 and 1925 as residents were relocated to Wormholt, the electorate of River ward fell from 8,707 to 6,921 - the only Hammersmith ward to register a decline - recovering to 7,415 in 1928 after Riverside Gardens began to be occupied.

Despite the high levels of poverty and deprivation in this area, Labour did not really become competitive in the old River ward - the predecessor to Broadway - until this council housing started being built. Partly this was because the ward then, extended west to the borough boundary with Chiswick and so included the vastly more affluent stretch of riverside along Upper Mall, and St Peter's Parish just behind King Street. The poor were concentrated around the town centre, many did not have a vote and those who did had little motivation to use it. The wealthy were registered and voted.

Labour did not contest the first two elections of Hammersmith council, when Municipal Reform won most seats both times. Then the Constitutional Ratepayers' Alliance (CRA) easily seized the ward.

The CRA was not a Conservative Party shill. Likewise, the Progressives (Liberals) in Hammersmith were not at all amenable to surrendering meekly to their inevitable eclipse by Labour - a large and unusually aggressive hostility to the emergence of a "Socialist menace" took hold in Hammersmith, encouraged by the local newspapers - especially the West London Observer. The Ratepayers' Alliance was a political reaction against Labour, not for the Conservatives - and when the two fell

out, as they did, they stood against each other. Simply put, Hammersmith was a very small-c conservative borough from the outset, and that's why Labour struggled.

The first Labour breakthrough in River didn't come until 1928 when they won three of the six River ward seats - long after Starch Green and Wormholt had begun routinely electing Labour councillors.

It was another nine years before Labour took full control of River ward: 1937 - the last election the Constitutional Ratepayers contested. Then Labour won much more comfortably in 1945 - the last election in River ward.

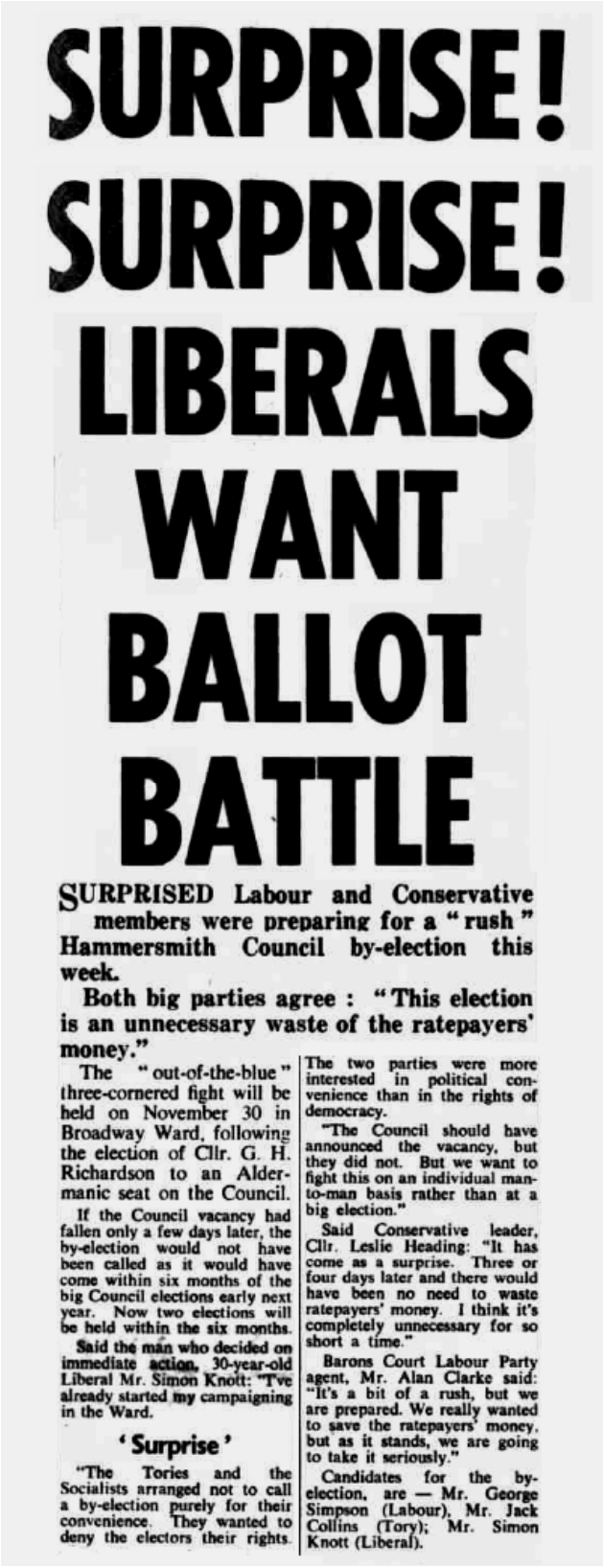
The Broadway ward that replaced River in 1949 lost the western Ravenscourt section and so was intrinsically much more Labour. Yet this supposedly more favourable ward didn't produce improved majorities for the party. They won, pretty comfortably, but by no means landslide margins: perhaps not what you might expect from a ward with the level of deprivation of Broadway.

But Labour began causing frivolous, unnecessary by-elections. This was especially unwise in a ward with a semblance of a Liberal Party organisation.

The first council by-election in Broadway occurred in 1953 when one of its just-elected councillors was elevated to Alderman and had to resign their elected seat. In that by-election the Conservatives chose not to field a candidate and Labour won with 84% of the vote on a 19% turnout. But the Liberals' 16% was not a dreadful attempt for a party that last contested River 35 years earlier.

The next by-election came in 1961 - again due to another unnecessary Aldermanic elevation. For the first time, Simon Harold John Arthur Knott was on the ballot here (having contested his home ward, Ravenscourt, in 1959 and the Olympia by-election as a Ratepayer earlier in 1961). Knott came third with 19% but this time in a three-party contest.

This by-election sparked one of the major political grudge matches in the borough's history as the Labour victor, George Simpson clashed repeatedly with Knott until his retirement in 1978. I got to know George a little during the 1989 Broadway by-election and he certainly savoured both the cause of that by-election (Knott's resignation) and the outcome of it.



SURPRISE!
SURPRISE!
LIBERALS WANT BALLOT BATTLE

SURPRISED Labour and Conservative members were preparing for a "rush" Hammersmith Council by-election this week.

Both big parties agree: "This election is an unnecessary waste of the ratepayers' money."

The "out-of-the-blue" three-cornered fight will be held on November 30 in Broadway Ward, following the election of Cllr. G. H. Richardson to an Aldermanic seat on the Council.

If the Council vacancy had fallen only a few days later, the by-election would not have been called as it would have come within six months of the big Council elections early next year. Now two elections will be held within the six months.

Said the man who decided on immediate action, 30-year-old Liberal Mr. Simon Knott: "I've already started my campaigning in the Ward.

'Surprise'

"The Tories and the Socialists arranged not to call a by-election purely for their convenience. They wanted to deny the electors their rights.

The two parties were more interested in political convenience than in the rights of democracy.

"The Council should have announced the vacancy, but they did not. But we want to fight this on an individual man-to-man basis rather than at a big election."

Said Conservative leader, Cllr. Leslie Heading: "It has come as a surprise. Three or four days later and there would have been no need to waste ratepayers' money. I think it's completely unnecessary for so short a time."

Barons Court Labour Party agent, Mr. Alan Clarke said: "It's a bit of a rush, but we are prepared. We really wanted to save the ratepayers' money, but as it stands, we are going to take it seriously."

Candidates for the by-election, are — Mr. George Simpson (Labour), Mr. Jack Collins (Tory); Mr. Simon Knott (Liberal).

Just six months after that by-election the 1962 full elections took place, with Knott improving the Liberal vote to 34%. The first signs that Conservative voters were willing to vote tactically for him to beat Labour appeared.

With the first elections to the combined borough in 1964, Broadway reverted to similar boundaries to the old River ward, producing a somewhat larger pool of non-Labour voters for Knott to appeal to. Despite this, the 1964 result was essentially a rerun of 1962: Labour on 46%, the Liberals on 32% and the Conservatives on 22%.

The breakthrough Broadway by-election came in 1967, the year of - but considerably before - Wilson's devaluation disaster that was the principal cause of Labour's wipeout in 1968. Again the cause was a resignation and this time the Liberals did not come last. On a 20.2% swing, Simon Knott won a crushing victory over Nigel Spearing, later to be Labour MP for Newham South. Knott polled 54%, Labour 27% and the Conservatives 20%.

It was a direct swing too: the Tory vote fell by just 2.5 percentage points while Labour slumped by nineteen. Simon Knott became not only the first Liberal councillor in Hammersmith of the modern era but the first Liberal councillor in any inner London borough at that time.

But his time on the council lasted just fifteen months: he was no more able to withstand the Conservative landslide of 1968 than Labour was. For the only time in Broadway ward's history, the ward voted Conservative, along with all but six other council seats. One of the councillors elected in 1968 was Sir George Bull, a son of William Bull, the Conservative MP for Hammersmith from 1900 to 1929.

There were no Broadway by-elections in the 1968 to 1971 term though Knott was the Liberal parliamentary candidate for Baron's Court in the 1970 general election, as he had been in 1966. He made no impact in any of the Baron's Court or Hammersmith parliamentary elections he contested but then he wouldn't have expected to win. His priority was to keep his name in front of the electors in one specific part of the constituency: Broadway ward.

In 1971 Labour regained Broadway from the Conservatives but it remained quite tight: Labour on a little over 40%; the Conservatives and Liberals tied on just under 30%. Knott finished more than 300 votes, or eleven points, ahead of his two Liberal running mates.

The national weakening of Labour's position in 1974 gave Knott the perfect storm to stage his second successful electoral assault on Broadway ward.



Cllr. Simon Knott — Liberal victor in Broadway ward by-election

MR. KNOTT'S FOUR-POINT PROGRAMME

SIMON KNOTT—the man who swept to victory in last week's by-election to become Hammersmith Council's only Liberal member—paused for a moment to consider his plan of action.

Then he summed up his four main aims:

To get the proposed rent increase for Hammersmith Council tenants, due on April 1 next year suspended;

To see the Guinness estate in Fulham Palace-road rebuilt;

To provide more accommodation for homeless families;

To improve road safety in Hammersmith.

These are his four immediate aims — but as far as long - term policies go Mr. Knott's chief concern is council housing.

Unrealistic

"I am gravely concerned by the phenomenal deficit on the housing revenue account," he said.

Mr. Knott feels that council building projects at the moment are unrealistic and that new buildings are going up which no-one can afford.

"What we need are more reasonable projects," he said.

Mr. Knott represents Broadway Ward — an area with a large number of council properties.

At the by-election on Thursday he won with an overwhelming majority.

● Unexpected visitor to Hammersmith Town Hall during election day was the newly elected Liberal leader, Mr. Jeremy Thorpe.

Peer 'better'

Lord Aberdare who was taken to Merthyr Tydfil hospital suffering from an internal haemorrhage is back at his St. Peters Square home in Hammersmith.

His wife said on Tuesday that he was feeling "much better."

GEMS HAUL

Jewellery, worth about £80, was stolen from a house in Norbrook - road, Shepherds Bush, last week.

He topped the poll with 1,370, his Labour nemesis George Simpson finished second on 1,054 and a second Liberal, Catherine Stratton, claimed the third seat with 997 votes.

One of the defeated Conservative candidates, Nicholas Bryce-Smith, attracted some notoriety a decade or so later when, as Chief Executive of the Lloyds brokerage Bradstock, he resigned and claimed his full pension just weeks before the losses the bank racked up became known and its final salary pension scheme was wound up.

The electoral review prior to the 1978 elections once again removed the Chiswick end of the ward to Ravenscourt - and with it went one of the three Broadway seats. These changes should have helped Labour. But Labour was almost as unpopular in 1978 as they had been a decade earlier and the Liberals were just too embedded in the core of Broadway. So it was the Labour seat that was lost: Knott winning by 350 (18.6%) and the new Liberal councillor, Bob Mulcahy by 127 or 6.8%. Broadway was now a completely Liberal ward.

One of the other factors that benefited the Liberals in Broadway was the support of the large Irish constituency in the ward. Both Knott and Mulcahy traded upon their Irish ancestry (Mulcahy was actually born in Ireland) and it aided them here possibly more than it would anywhere else.

But, all of a sudden, the Broadway result mattered far more than just parochially for immediate constituents. Twenty four Labour councillors had just been elected. Twenty four Conservative councillors had been elected. The two Liberals now held the balance of power.

While they remained publicly coy about their intentions in the council chamber, Tory leader Stuart Leishman swiftly sealed a deal with the Liberals and Knott became Chairman of the Social Services Committee.

It wasn't realistic to expect the Broadway Liberals to install another Labour administration. For one thing, while the Conservatives hadn't quite won the election, Labour had decisively lost it: half their 1974 had been lost. Labour's losses in Fulham wards especially were stunning. Labour was also entering one of those sporadic periods of ill-discipline that are almost unique to it, as the rise of the new left - especially in London politics, pulled the party apart. There were genuine questions as to whether a Labour minority could govern coherently for a full term, even if the will for a coalition existed.

Plus, in Broadway, Labour had been the Liberals' main opponent, and their battle had been bitter. Meanwhile the Liberals and Tories had been in opposition facing a huge Labour majority, informally collaborating to maximise scrutiny of a Labour administration that could do whatever it wanted.

In the event the entire council was fractious throughout the 1978 to 1982 term and the Conservatives were often far from happy with Knott's conduct. They weren't the only one: Liberals in the borough also had a fractious relationship with their lead councillor.

In 1959 the party hadn't intended to field a parliamentary candidate in Barons Court to help focus their limited efforts elsewhere - Knott stood anyway. In the 1983 general election he stood as an Independent Liberal against the endorsed SDP candidate and finished far behind him: 1,912 votes to the 4,925, which must have damaged an ego that sincerely believed he was the only reason his party had any electoral presence.

Knott's political priorities: austerity to balance the budget (albeit alongside pork barrel politics for his own ward), hostility to the arts, an emphasis on supporting workers priced out of the local housing market to get council housing ahead of what the tabloids would call "scroungers" and his aggressive hostility to Labour were not typical Liberal Party positions. Indeed, Knott's Conservative vice chairman of Social Services resigned in protest at Knott's apparent joy at making cuts in his department, claiming that he, Killick, was more liberal than Knott (Killick later became the only Hammersmith and Fulham Conservative councillor to defect to the SDP).

Knott could not help himself: he was unable to stop bragging that nothing happened on the council without his and Mulcahy's approval. He even claimed he ran the borough - which must have delighted actual council leader Kim Howe.

While the Liberals in the main held the Conservative line, towards the end of the term they started rebelling. Surely the looming prospect of the 1982 elections had nothing to do with this indiscipline but, first over Tory plans to sell off a site in Loris Road in Addison ward, which residents wanted to turn into a community garden; and then over the setting of the rate - on both occasions voting with Labour - Knott was making the council ungovernable. It led the Gazette newspaper to demand the whole council resign.

RESIGN!—OUR MESSAGE TO THE COUNCIL

HAMMERSMITH Council is in a state of unprecedented crisis. It is a crisis caused entirely by our so-called leaders at the town hall.

We hesitate to call them leaders because no one is quite sure who is in control at King Street.

For almost three years the council has stumbled from one confused decision to the next. Most of its time and energy has been spent in political backbiting and manoeuvres designed to hold on to power.

It started with a strange quirk of voting figures at the last borough elections which gave the Conservatives and Labour 24 seats each. This left the two Liberals, Cllr Simon Knott and Cllr Robert Mulcahy in a position to decide the political fate of the council.

Mr Knott became the Kingmaker and soon joined forces with the Conservatives to give them control.

Since then, all town hall decisions have had to be compromised to keep the support of the two Liberals.

So called debates in the council have been reduced to the status of a junior school row in the playground. Labour members have found themselves unable to articulate anything more than insults and jeers during discussions.

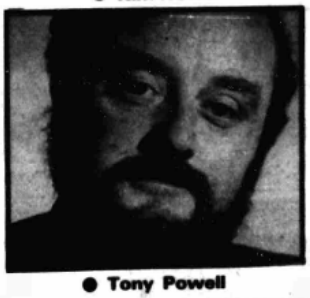
THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO RUN A POWERFUL LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WELFARE OF 160,000 PEOPLE.

You couldn't run a household of three people on those grounds, let alone an authority with a budget of £65 million.

GAZETTE opinion



● Kim Howe



● Tony Powell



● Simon Knott

This is what our elected leaders have to say about the chaos:

● Kim Howe, Conservative leader: A deal with Labour is impossible. He insists his party was elected to govern and will continue.

● Tony Powell, Labour leader: Offered talks, but no coalition. Insists on a ban on redundancies, agreement on rents and rates and continued arts spending. "I am not doing them any favours. They have got themselves in this mess."

● Simon Knott, Liberal leader: "Most of the decisions of this council are going to be made by Cllr Mulcahy and myself. Labour are incapable of governing and the Conservatives cannot do it without us."

Cllr Howe says his party was elected to govern and it will continue. He is wrong. The Conservatives did not win a majority at the election.

Privately the Labour Party members admit they do not want to take power with only 15 months to go before the next local elections.

None of them has a solution. They want to carry on treating our borough as a huge pawn in a silly game, with the accompanying machinations of political power.

The real losers are the people who live in Shepherds Bush, Hammersmith and Fulham — the young couples who found they could no longer buy a council house because one councillor with injured ankle failed to turn up and vote.

They are the electors who have had to sit back and watch while the Conservatives hold private council meetings in a pub back room.

The are the people who have watched one man — Simon Knott — gloat over the incredible power he acquired through a freak of voting.

It is time to end the confusion. The only responsible and dignified way out of the present impasse is for the entire council to resign and make way for a fresh administration through the ballot box.

For Mr Howe, Mr Powell and Mr Knott we have one simple message — it is time to go.

'Time to end confusion'

The 1982 elections reshaped the council only slightly. There was a small swing to Labour in Broadway which left Mulcahy's majority at just 58 and Knott's at 303. Labour needed to gain just two seats to regain the council - which they managed; it's just that they also lost one in Wormholt. So the Conservative-Liberal coalition was renewed, this time with Knott moved to Finance Committee chairman.

Labour's infighting was even greater this term - remarkable given that between 1978 and 1982 the SDP had been founded and two (later three) group members defected. Others who might have been regarded as temperamentally closer to the SDP end of the spectrum stayed but decided to be just as confrontational as the hard left within the group. All their leadership's efforts went into simply holding the group together.

But the borough was growing tired of this weak and fractious council: the calibre of services was not great; they were trying to sell off assets that meant a great deal to users: Fulham Palace, Fulham Town Hall, Fulham Court. "Price of everything, value of nothing" epitomised this council - and Knott was making those calls as Finance Chairman.

The Conservatives also appeared on the side of major developers instead of residents. In Broadway that was epitomised by the Council backing the Bredero plan rather than the grassroots Hammersmith Community Trust (HCT) proposal for a more human-scale, mixed development.

No doubt Conservative hackles were raised because HCT could easily be regarded as a Labour front organisation: John Gorter, who had lost Broadway in 1982 was an active member, for example. The HCT campaign clearly hurt the Conservatives and the Liberals in Broadway because they appeared to be on the wrong side.

In 1986, Mulcahy lost his seat in the Labour landslide - losing by almost 150 votes to Gorter. Knott clung on, but only by 56. From wielding immense power locally, Knott was now the lone Liberal Alliance councillor in an opposition totalling just ten councillors. Labour immediately began trying to undo the Bredero island planning deal and Gorter to start shoring up Labour support on the council estates.

Then, in 1989 Knott resigned his seat. Officially, he stepped down over health concerns, claiming his diabetes was out of control. The actual reason was very different: he had been accused of sexual impropriety towards a council officer. There was a certain irony that the man who had built up his local position on the back of by-elections had now created one himself - and at the very worst imaginable time for his party, undergoing the break up of their Alliance with the SDP.

It would have been impossible for the Social and Liberal Democrats (SLD) to have held Broadway without Knott in auspicious circumstances, and 1989 was anything but. The Social Democratic Party fielded a candidate against the SLD, even claiming to be the true heirs to Knott. They alleged that the Liberals were secretly glad to be shot of him and were betraying his legacy. The Green Party contested the ward for the first time and the Conservatives also put in a shift, having largely given the Liberals a pass for years.

Labour's Jacqueline Abbott easily gained the seat for the party - the first ever Labour by-election gain in the history of the amalgamated Hammersmith & Fulham. Although Labour's vote didn't rise the SLD collapsed to just 24% and the Conservatives improved to almost 20%. The breakaway SDP won 7.5%.

From then on Labour never looked back. In 1990 the Lib Dem vote slipped further to just over 12%, the Conservatives came second and Labour boosted its share by over ten points: in just four years Broadway had gone from being one of the most marginal Labour wards to their fifth-safest.

A further by-election took place in 1992, just a few weeks after John Major's triumphant re-election. Here the Lib Dems recovered a bit but the Conservatives also improved as Labour supporters stayed home, dejected. Cutting Labour's majority to just 7% represented the apex of Conservative support in recent times and the very comfortable Labour win of 1990 was repeated in 1994, then significantly improved upon in 1998: Labour winning with two thirds of the vote.

In the 2000 electoral review most of Grove ward was bolted onto Broadway. This new Hammersmith Broadway ward behaved as it was expected to in 2002: Labour won by almost two votes to one over the Conservatives.

But in 2006 the Conservative vote soared from 562 to 1,152. Had Labour's vote not increased a bit too, the Tories would have won.

Six parties name their candidates

By MIRIAM RODELL

THE Democrats have chosen a candidate to fight a by-election battle for their party's only seat on the council.

TV scriptwriter and part-time teacher Deborah Sutherland has been selected to stand for the Democrats in the Broadway ward election on May 25.

The central Hammersmith seat fell vacant last month when Democrat councillor Simon Knott was forced to quit through ill health after 20 years on the Council.

The campaign is vital for the newly merged party. Failure to hold the seat will mean it has lost its final voice in the Hammersmith and Fulham council chamber.

They will be fighting for the middle ground with Eileen Cox from the SDP and Edward McInnes from the Green Party.

But the Democrats are expecting their strongest competition to come from Labour who already hold the ward's other seat on the council.

Cllr John Gorter, elected to Broadway Ward in 1986, described Labour's candidate Jacqueline Abbott as 'brilliant' while Ms Abbott herself claims she has had 'tremendous response from voters on the doorstep.'



Deborah Sutherland



Sheona York

Her speciality is housing and she has been wooing local tenants groups with her campaign against the Housing Act.

Traditionally this is not happy polling territory for the Conservatives. But with Labour in power for two years Tory candidate Martin McTigue, 26, is hoping to cash in on gripes about council services, rate rises and the increase in council rents.

A life-long Hammersmith resident, Mr McTigue said: "Since the Labour Council took over in 1986 I have seen many changes. The streets have got dirtier while the rates have gone sky high."

Whoever wins on the 25th will face a demanding job. The ward has the largest proportion of council tenants in the borough and brings with it a huge workload.

Altogether there are six candidates for the by-election.

Jacqueline Abbott (Labour); Eileen Cox (SDP); Edward McInnes (Green); Martin McTigue (Conservative); Deborah Sutherland (Social and Liberal Democrat) and Sheona York (Anti-Poll Tax).

Abbott's election triumph

LABOUR has won a landslide victory in a crucial by-election poll.

The Democrats lost their last voice on the council when their seat in Hammersmith's Broadway ward fell to Labour candidate Jacqueline Abbott.

Ms Abbott, a former housing officer for Hammersmith and Fulham Council, took 44 per cent of the total votes cast, pushing Democrat candidate Deborah Sutherland firmly into second place.

The Democrats polled just 23.7 per cent of the poll, with third place falling to Tory candidate Martin McTigue with 19.5 per cent.

The by-election was called following the resignation of Liberal-turned-Democrat Simon Knott, who had held the seat for nearly 20 years. He was forced to quit last month through ill-health.

Interest in the election was high. More than 53 per cent of the electorate voted, compared to the average poll in the borough of 40 per cent.

Broadway ward is seen as natural Labour territory. It covers five large council estates and represents more council tenants than any other ward in the borough.

Labour Cllr John Gorter was elected to the second Broadway seat at the local government elections in May 1986.

At last week's count both Democrat agent Sean Cullen and SDP candidate Eileen Cox admitted Simon Knott owed his success as much to his personality as his politics.

New councillor Jacqueline Abbott specialises in housing. She lives in Shepherds Bush Road.

After the result was announced she said: "Voters have not only endorsed the policies of the Labour council but have quite clearly rejected the Government's Housing Act, Education Act and poll tax."

THE GAZETTE
Friday, June 9, 1989

Defeated Democrats attack old allies

AFTER losing a seat in a vital by-election battle last week the Democrats have lashed out at their one-time allies in the SDP.

The Hammersmith Democrats lost their last seat on the council when the Broadway ward fell to Labour. Now they are accusing the SDP of sabotage.

Branch secretary Sean Cullen, who acted as agent for the Democrats candidate Deborah Sutherland, said: "The Owenites (SDP) ran a campaign based on a systematic character assassination of the Democrat candidate Deborah Sutherland, in which they alleged she had participated in the framing and blackmailing of former Democrat councillor Simon Knott."

He went on: "Even on polling day itself the Owenites continued by telling voters that Simon Knott was voting for the Owenite candidate. As Mr Knott is not a voter in the Broadway Ward this lie was particularly absurd."

Mr Cullen claims he can back up his claims with a tape recording of an SDP canvasser making the allegations on the doorstep. He added: "The effect of the Owenite tactics is hard to measure but I feel absolutely sure that they prevented us from winning – as they were intended to do," he added.

Simon Knott held the seat for the Liberals for nearly 20 years and was an extremely popular councillor. The official line, repeated by Cllr Knott himself, was that he resigned through ill health. He suffers from diabetes.

But there were rumours that he had been forced out by a Democrat clique who wanted to replace him with their own candidate.

SDP agent Ian McCourt this week denied all the allegations made against the party.

He said he knew rumours were circulating among other groups, but he added: "I can say categorically that our canvassers were instructed to give ill health and nothing else as the reason for Simon Knott's resignation."

Summary of results for Hammersmith Broadway ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
River ward					
1900	38.7		32.3		29.0
1901B	47.5		21.3		31.2
1903	38.7		32.3		29.0
1906	48.2	23.4			28.4
1909		16.8			83.2
1912	39.7				60.3
1912B					100.0
1919	31.9	25.9	9.1		
1922	70.7	29.3			
1923B	47.2	38.5			14.2
1925		33.4			66.6
1928		51.4			48.6
1931		33.0			67.0
1934		47.6			52.4
1937		55.3			44.7
1945	35.4	64.6			
Broadway ward					
1949	45.7	54.3			
1952B	32.8	67.2			
1953B		84.1	15.9		
1953	37.9	56.3			5.8
1956	32.5	55.3			12.2
1959	36.4	58.1	5.4		
1961B	31.0	49.1	19.8		
1962	21.8	44.1	34.2		
1964	22.2	45.5	32.3		
1967B	19.7	26.6	53.7		
1968	40.9	29.6	29.5		
1971	29.7	44.4	25.9		
1974	21.3	37.5	41.2		
1978	21.9	28.4	42.6		
1982	14.0	33.6	43.8		8.6
1986	14.4	43.9	41.7		
1989B	19.6	46.2	23.9	3.2	9.1
1990	27.6	54.3	12.7		5.3
1992B	35.4	42.4	21.1	1.2	
1994	28.6	56.4	15.0		
1998	20.1	65.7	14.2		
Hammersmith Broadway ward					
2002	27.1	52.1	17.9		2.9
2006	40.1	44.3	15.6		
2010	35.4	45.3	19.3		
2014	25.7	51.7	9.0		13.5
2018	19.7	68.6	11.7		
2022	18.0	72.7	9.3		
2025B	13.3	53.4	12.5	7.1	13.7
2026	11.4	43.2	9.0	23.1	13.3

As a result the Conservatives threw everything at Hammersmith Broadway in 2010, convinced that the general election that would oust Gordon Brown from Downing Street, would give them the boost they needed. But the higher general election turnout helped Labour and their majority grew. 2014 took Labour's majority back to the level of 2002, and 2018 to the level of 1998. Steve Cowan, now council leader, who had won 43% in 2006, polled 71% just twelve years later.

The 2022 boundary changes put this Frankenstein's Monster of a ward out of its misery, returning Hammersmith Broadway to basically what it was prior to 2002, plus some extra roads between the Broadway and Charing Cross Hospital.

This should have made things a bit better for the Conservatives because the Fulham Reach development on the riverside, coupled with the Queen's Wharf development are new, exclusive apartment blocks, while the streets beyond the hospital have gentrified and have (or had) been very poor for Labour. Margravine Gardens and St Dunstan's Road were always the basis of the Conservative vote in Margravine ward, such as it was.

These, coupled with the existing Tory support in Broadway should have provided a decent basis for a challenge. But, yet again, exclusive new build blocks do not, these days, translate into piles of Conservative votes. Labour won 73% to 18% in 2022.

In February 2025 there was yet another by-election here when first-time councillor Emma Apthorp resigned to take a job at the UN. Held simultaneously with another by-election in Lillie ward, where the big parties' efforts were focussed, Labour retained the seat easily, though with a nearly twenty-point slump in their vote share. For the first time ever Reform UK finished second in a Hammersmith or Fulham ward, albeit with just 14% of the vote. The Conservatives polled 13%, Liberal Democrats 12.5% and the Greens 7%.

Labour fared worse fifteen months later at the 2026 election, their vote down 29 percentage points on 2022 - the largest drop other than College Park and Old Oak, but from that record high of nearly three quarters of the vote. Reform polled pretty much the same as in the by-election, doing quite well on the Riverside Gardens estate but still with 87% of those who turned out choosing not to voting for them.

Labour holds Broadway with comfortable majority

Cartwright to 'return streets to the people'

By NICK HOPKINS

LABOUR held on for victory in the Broadway by-election with a slashed vote and then promised a shake up of the 'dowdy' ward.

New boy Michael Cartwright promised changes with pedestrianisation of King Street a priority.

Cllr Cartwright believes it will not take too much cash to make Hammersmith a brighter place to live.

On Thursday last week, Mr Cartwright retained the seat for Labour with 668 votes, 110 ahead of the Tory candidate Toby Vintcent. The Liberal Democrat, Andrew Dickson, polled 332 votes and the Green hopeful Cherry Puddicombe, 19 votes.

The by-election was forced after the resignation of Ken Burlton, who had a 476 vote majority in the 1990 council elections when there was a much bigger turn out.

Cllr Cartwright said: "I was pleased to get a comfortable majority. By-elections can be very unpredictable and the middle of July is not an ideal time to have one."

He added: "One of my main concerns now is to improve the centre of Hammersmith, which has not improved since I moved here 10 years ago. In fact it seems to be deteriorating.

"I would like to see the town centre pedestrianised. That would help to improve the quality of our streets. At the moment the place is really dowdy. I want Hammersmith to be the sort of place people can take more pride in. I want to return the streets back to the people."

Cllr Cartwright will take up the pedestrianisation initiative with shopowners and traders to test their reaction before taking it to the council.

Michael Cartwright is 45, single, and lives in St Paul's Court, off Hammersmith Road. He is a partner in Christopher Smith Associates, a chartered surveyors' firm based in Kingston, Surrey.

Planning chairman

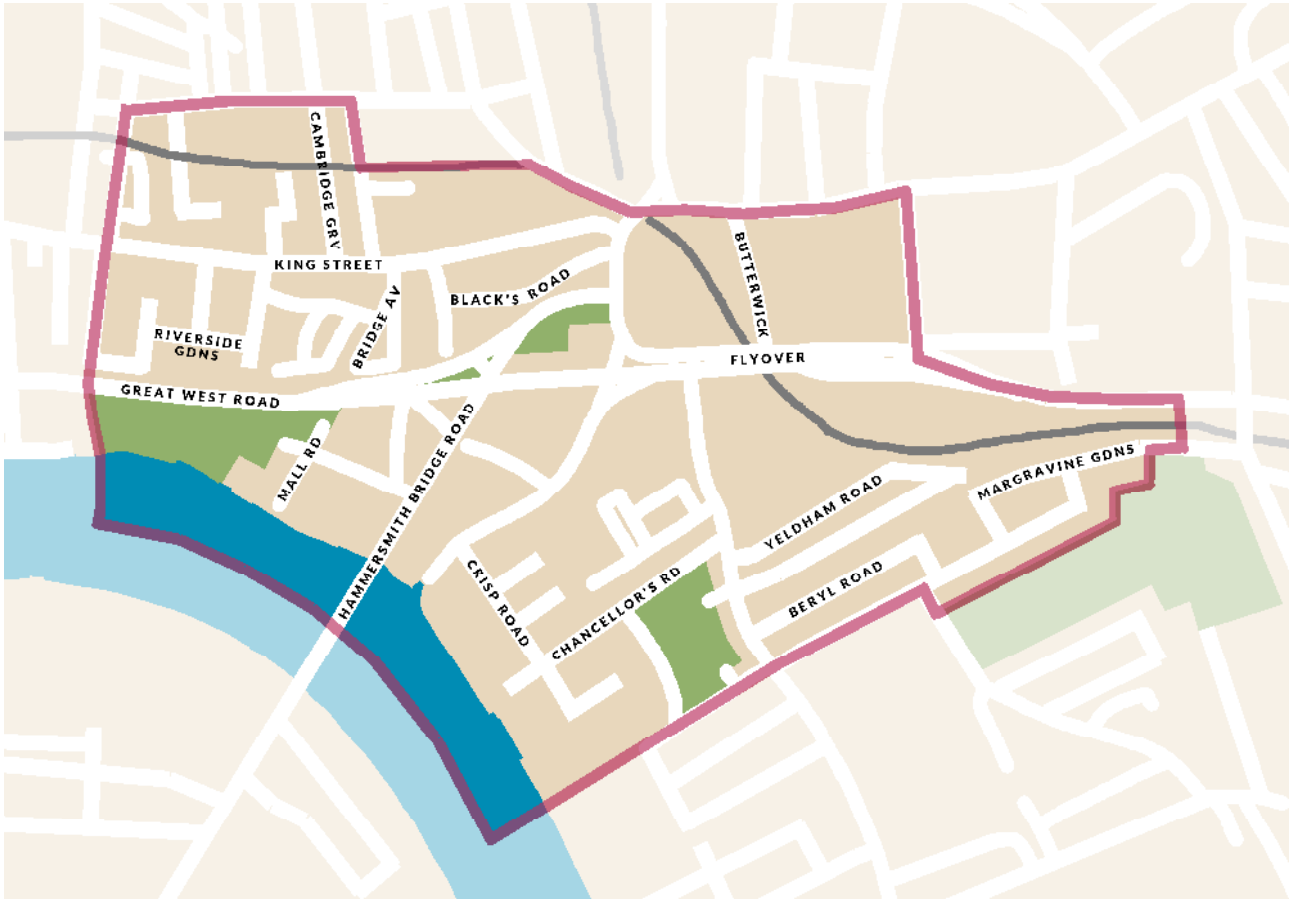
Cllr Cartwright is a former member of Ipswich borough and county council. He was chairman of the borough council's planning committee for six years, where he inspired and oversaw the pedestrianisation of a major shopping precinct.

He is currently chairman of the Hammersmith Community Trust, which runs the Emerald Centre.

Cllr Cartwright says working in Hammersmith and Fulham Council will be completely different from working in Ipswich.

"The council is much more aggressive here. It is much more like the House of Commons," he said. "In Ipswich we had more cross-party contact."





It was the Greens, who took 23%, that made the biggest impact. There were eight wards in this borough in which the Greens polled over 20% but this was their highest share outside of Shepherds Bush and West Kensington ward. The Conservatives and Lib Dems combined only just managed 20% between them.

It is more likely than not that this is not a ward in which the Greens can perform well enough to win. They have portions where they might reap scores of votes, and portions where they will not have much support at all.

Even after that big slump in support Labour won over 43% in 2026: that's a big bloc to overcome and requires a challenger to pretty much unite every non-Labour voter behind them.

Although there is less dividing a Green supporter from a Reform supporter than first meets the eye: a belief that the system is rigged against them and suffering from a cost of living squeeze being two. Nonetheless, the Greens have almost a step-by-step guide showing them how to win a ward as an outside insurgent, thanks to the historic candidacy of Simon Knott.

Rollcall of Hammersmith Broadway ward councillors

including Broadway ward (1949-2002) and River ward (1900-1949)

2026
- Molly Mantle
- Callum Nimmo

2025B
- Callum Nimmo

2022
- Emma Apthorp
- Patricia Quigley

2018
- Steve Cowan
- P.J. Murphy
- Patricia Quigley

2014
- Michael Cartwright
- Steve Cowan
- P.J. Murphy

2010
- Michael Cartwright
- Steve Cowan
- P.J. Murphy

2006
- Michael Cartwright
- Steve Cowan
- Lisa Nandy

2002
- Michael Cartwright
- Steve Cowan
- Huw Davies

1998
- Michael Cartwright
- Huw Davies

1994
- Michael Cartwright
- Louanne Tranchell

1992B
- Michael Cartwright

1990
- Jacqueline Abbott
- Kenneth Burlton

1989B
- Jacqueline Abbott

1986
- John Gorter
- Simon Knott

1982
- Simon Knott
- Robert Mulcahy

1978
- Simon Knott
- Robert Mulcahy

1974
- Simon Knott
- George Simpson
- Catherine Stratton

1971
- Marie-Louise Clarke
- Sylvia Harris
- George Simpson

1968
- Sir George Bull
- Elizabeth Gooden
- John Gould

1967B
- Simon Knott

1964
- Jean Henry
- Charles Howard
- George Simpson

1962
- Elizabeth Finn
- Edward Flynn
- George Simpson

1961B
- George Simpson

1959
- Elizabeth Finn
- Edward Flynn
- G. Richardson

1956
- Elizabeth Finn
- Edward Flynn
- G. Richardson

1953B
- Edward Flynn

1953
- William Brind
- L. Newton
- G. Richardson

1949
- William Brind
- William Field
- F. Turner

1945
- William Brind
- William Field
- Eric Gosling
- Frank Hewett
- Constance Turner
- F. Turner

1937
- Aldred Bannerman
- William Brind
- William Durtnall
- Frank Hewett
- W. Miller
- James Skilbeck

1934
- Alfred Bannerman
- Charles Bartley
- Sir Marshall Hays
- Elizabeth Hodgson
- Alfred Meeks
- Alfred Pascall

1931
- Charles Bartley
- Sir Marshall Hays
- Elizabeth Hodgson
- Horace Joyce
- Alfred Meeks
- Charles Pascall

1928
- Alfred Bannerman
- Thomas Cavell
- Sir Marshall Hays
- Elizabeth Hodgson
- Bertie Samels
- John Westcott

1925B
- Elizabeth Hodgson
- R. Mumford

1925
- Arthur Atkinson
- John Bedford
- Horace Joyce
- Charles Pascall
- Bertie Samels
- William South

1923B
- John Bedford

1922
- Arthur Atkinson
- Marshall Hays
- Henry Johnson
- Charles Pascall
- Bertie Samels
- William South

1919
- Albert Batstone
- John Bedford
- James Bewsher
- Marshall Hays
- Henry Johnson
- Charles Pascall

1912B
- Henry Johnson

1912
- Arthur Atkinson
- George Barker
- Joseph Levy
- Charles Pascall
- W. Sankey
- William Smith

1909B
- Arthur Atkinson

1909
- George Barker
- Samuel Bewsher
- Henry Johnston
- Joseph Levy
- Charles Pascall
- Isaac Russell

1906
- Arthur Atkinson
- Samuel Bewsher
- James Green
- Henry Johnson
- Joseph Levy
- Charles Pascall

1903
- Arthur Atkinson
- Thomas Chamberlain
- Philip Harris
- William Hunter
- Joseph Levy
- Alfred Neville

1901B
- Arthur Atkinson

1900
- Thomas Chamberlen
- Thomas Currie
- James Green
- Philip Harris
- Charles Pascall
- Sir William Richmond

Lillie ward

For whatever reason, the east end of neighbourhoods either tend to, or are imagined to, be their dowdier side. This is true of the eastern side of Fulham: the original settlements of North End, Walham Green and Sands End. Although these earlier settlements sprung up in broadly the same medieval period, in terms of the emergence of Fulham as one cohesive neighbourhood, East Fulham is older than West.

That's because London expanded from the centre outwards and so began on the eastern side. When Fulham borough was founded in 1900, much of the recognisable street pattern in the east had been laid out and houses and businesses begun, when large tracts of the Bishop's Palace side was still undeveloped.

The east also contained the railway lines, the major repair yard at Lillie Bridge, some sizeable factories and warehouses, and the Imperial Gas, Light and Coke plant in Sandford Manor. In other words, as well as being more heavily populated, it also contained areas that the Luftwaffe were ordered to take out during The Blitz. And, as a result, although Fulham wasn't a massive target during the Second World War, it took more bomb damage than the western side of the borough.

Several of Hammersmith and Fulham's council wards emerge from association with developers. If you are reading these profiles alphabetically then the relationship between Addison and Joseph Addison; of the Gunters with Avonmore, George Wimpey with Grove has been critical to their development as neighbourhoods.

Sir John Scott Lillie, the man who gives his name to this ward, lived in this part of town. His house, The Hermitage, stood approximately where Thaxton Road is today and the extensive grounds form most of the West Ken estate and some of the Lillie Bridge depot adjoining it. He has a school, a road, a bridge and a ward named after him.

Lillie was an army man. But he was far more: an entrepreneur, a radical Member of Parliament, an inventor, one of the earliest anti-vivisectionists and, as a native Irishman, a supporter of Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic leader who led the fight for independence from Britain. Lillie is largely responsible for creating what became the borough boundary with Kensington and Chelsea.



One of his investments was the Kensington Canal - a northwards extension of Sandford Creek up to West Brompton. This eventually became the course of the West London railway. The construction of the canal required a service road: today's Seagrave Road.

Today, Seagrave Road is quite diverse. It includes the London Oratory School, the gated-off Brompton Park Crescent development, an ambulance station and a mix of street-fronting properties. More recently it's also undergone some major residential development: Lillie Square, part of the wider Earls Court regeneration plan.

Sir John also opened the Lillie Arms pub, at the top of Seagrave Road, somewhat bizarrely now renamed the Lillie Langtry - there is no link between that actress and this area.

Sir John was near neighbours and friends with the Gunter family; they who owned a large chunk of Chelsea and what is now Avonmore ward. Although most discussion of the Gunter estate covers the large, cohesive section of western Chelsea, their estate also included a fair acreage of Fulham, including the area south east of Lillie Road.

This area, the Beaufort House estate, was originally market gardens and farmland. Here was built parts of Seddlescombe Road, Racton Road, Anselm Road, Ongar and Micklethwaite Roads and the feature street: Tamworth Street.

These streets are unlike any in Fulham. Ongar Road, the top of Seagrave Road, Rickett Street and Merrington Road appear very much South Kensington overspill in their style of grand four storey subdivided houses.

Micklethwaite, Tamworth and parts of Seddlescombe and Racton Roads have a unique style entirely: arts and crafts rustic, designed loosely to an architectural master plan for the entire estate. Further south is arguably the grandest road in the area: Walham Grove, with its mature plane trees and almost entirely intact, unaltered town houses with basements.



Most of these streets survived The Blitz unscathed - perhaps with one or two infill properties. There are infill council blocks in Racton and Anselm Roads, for example: Da Palma Court (named after one of Lillie ward's councillors - Jose Da Palma).

But a large section of Fulham west of North End Road did not. One of the most damaged sites was an area either side of Lillie Road, from Bramber Road and Queens Club Gardens south to St Thomas's Way.

In pre-war Fulham this was an area of tight alleys and long terraced street some lacking amenities but others a continuation of the sort of streets that exist today: like Hartismere and Rylston and Estcourt - streets that would not remotely be considered slums today. But there were no amenities, no open space, no Fulham Pools (at least not where they are now) and no school.

Roads that no longer exist, like Lintaine Grove, Pownall Place, Mulgrave Road, Jervis Road, Silvio Street, Kenneth Road, Goodson Road, Lillie Passage, Coomer Road, and Mooltan Street criss-crossed this area. The principal problem that Fulham Council needed to fix was not principally of slums but of serious and widespread destruction of the neighbourhood.

These ravaged, rubble-strewn bombsites became Normand Park, Normand Croft Primary School and the Clem Attlee Court estate: Fulham's largest council estate. The borough council purchased the entire site for £135,000. Today a one-bed former council flat in one of the low-rise blocks on that estate goes for far more than double that.

Hammersmith and Fulham is generally fortunate in that its councils tended to shun the radical architectural designs for council blocks that often quickly came to blight the lives of council tenants whose misfortune was to live in them. There are relatively few tower blocks. Most estates typify the "chalet" tenement style, albeit differing in aesthetic style depending on when they were built.

There are very few blocks that look like they were constructed out of lego, where dark nooks fostered crime and residents feared to venture outside at night. The closest Fulham came to crossing the line from innovative solutions that met housing need to fetishised architectural absurdities and were poorly constructed was the Clem.

The first blocks on the estate opened in 1955. The radical architecture was largely confined to the three Y-shaped 11-storey blocks: Jim Griffiths, Tom Williams and Hugh Dalton Houses - at that time the highest blocks ever built here. Later, two 16-storey system-built tower blocks: Herbert Morrison and Edith Summerskill Houses, were added. There was 7-storey sheltered housing block named after (then) East Fulham MP Michael Stewart, and alongside it Stafford Cripps House - a chalet style taller than usual block of maisonettes.

PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR

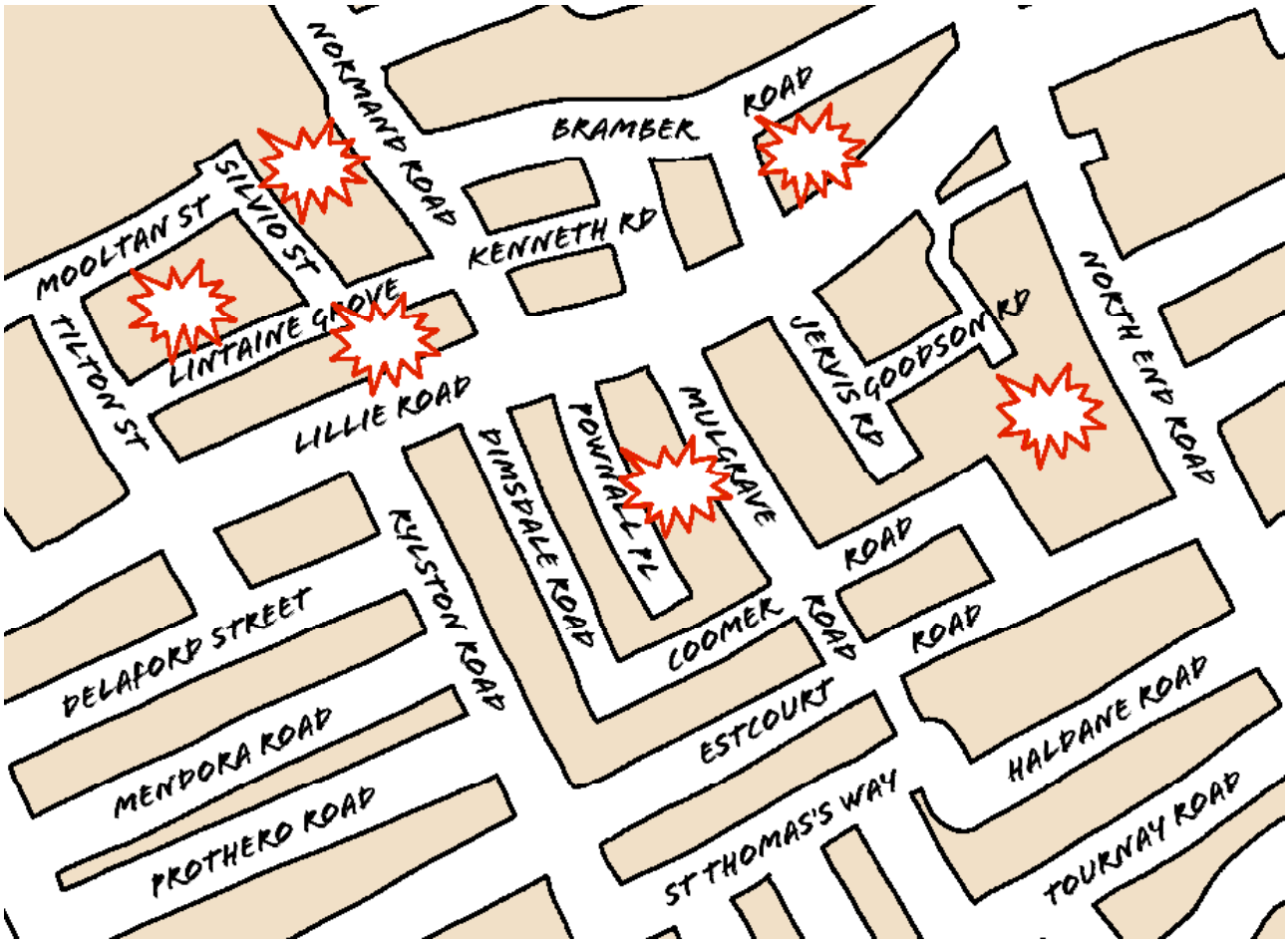
Redevelopment scheme south of Lillie Road

FULHAM COUNCIL proposed to spend £135,000 on acquiring property for a big housing and redevelopment scheme on a blitzed area on the south side of Lillie Road. The purchase price is based on a tentative estimate of the cost of acquiring all the properties affected.

The Housing Committee have reported to the borough council that among the bombed areas the council had in mind for housing development was "part of the Lillie Road area south of Lillie Road and east of Pownall Place up to the frontage of Bramber Road and bounded on the south by Coomber Road."

"The area comprises houses, housing sites and shops and other commercial and industrial buildings and premises, all of which suffered extensive war damage," states the committee. "In our view it is eminently suited to and ripe for housing development by the council. We have obtained a tentative estimate of the cost of acquiring all the properties affected, which amounts to £135,000."

The committee add that the opportunity has recently occurred of acquiring by agreement the freehold interests in two of the properties in the area. "Negotiations with the owners have resulted in tentative agreement on terms which appear to us to be reasonable," state the committee.



Bomb damage map of Lillie ward

Controlled entry systems had not been invented when the Y-blocks and high rises were built so the entrances were dingy, vandalised and urinated in. There was a small maze at the bottom between multiple entrances to the blocks, some leading to the lifts, others to the refuse chutes, and others straight out the other side.

Nonetheless, despite the litany of crime stories available online emanating from the estate; the problems it has had with drugs and gangs, and the only marginal diminution of deprivation on the estate, the Clem has never quite been as bad as sometimes gets depicted; and many of the design mistakes I've just detailed were fixed.

The western end of the estate, where the sub-level garages were, was cleared in the mid 1990s, along with one of the Y blocks and a couple of the smaller blocks, and new housing association homes: houses built around cul-de-sacs, with better play and community facilities, replaced them. Further housing association blocks have been built on the North End Road side of the estate in Coomer Place and at the new Mo Mowlam House.

The remainder of the estate was far more conventional (and successful), comprising very much smaller blocks set around a large green. But architects made other bad mistakes on the estate, like creating sub-ground garages with very poor quality children's play areas on top. Few kids would go near because of crime or the fear of it; few car owners would leave their cars underneath for the same reasons.

And there were plenty of innovations that the planners of Clem Attlee Court got right, right from the start. They provided a library at the entrance to the estate. All the ground floor flats and maisonettes got back gardens - which in the 1950s was a radical concept. There was that huge central public green.

It wasn't just post war cabinet minister after whom the blocks were named. Edith Summerskill was MP for Fulham West. Michael Stewart, though he did eventually serve as Foreign Secretary, was MP for Fulham East and then the combined Fulham constituency. There were two Tom Williams' who served as Labour MPs but one was MP for Hammersmith South.

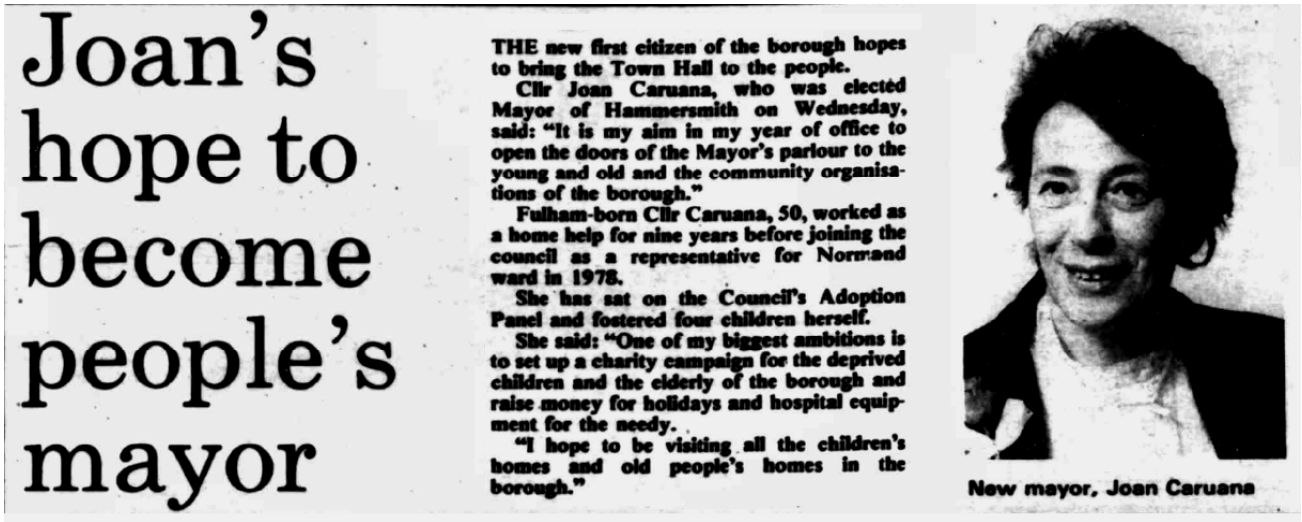
The newer housing association section departed from that naming policy further with a mix of later national politicians like John Smith and Barbara Castle, and local councillors like Margaret Ingram, who never represented the estate but lived in John Strachey House and Len Freeman.

There is one councillor who is not mentioned on any of the developments on the estate and who probably should be: Joan Caruana. Joan served for 24 years and was mayor of the borough four times, the first mayor when Labour returned to power in 1986. Joan was classic "old" Fulham with a gravelly voice honed from decades of chain smoking, and a fruity vocabulary, known throughout her ward, especially on the council estates.

But North End Road, especially here, is also a focal point for the communities living either side, being the main shopping centre in Fulham, with a well-known street market and formerly the only department store in the area: Barbers.

Barbers was the go-to shop for pretty much anything you needed in a time when North End Road was a far more affluent shopping centre than it is today; when it had a large Sainsbury's and a Marks and Spencer and a British Home Stores.

The North End Road store occupied the terrace between Armadale and Eustace Road: it's still there but has been broken up into several smaller shops. And the proprietor



Joan's hope to become people's mayor

THE new first citizen of the borough hopes to bring the Town Hall to the people.

Cllr Joan Caruana, who was elected Mayor of Hammersmith on Wednesday, said: "It is my aim in my year of office to open the doors of the Mayor's parlour to the young and old and the community organisations of the borough."

Fulham-born Cllr Caruana, 50, worked as a home help for nine years before joining the council as a representative for Normand ward in 1978.

She has sat on the Council's Adoption Panel and fostered four children herself.

She said: "One of my biggest ambitions is to set up a charity campaign for the deprived children and the elderly of the borough and raise money for holidays and hospital equipment for the needy.

"I hope to be visiting all the children's homes and old people's homes in the borough."

New mayor, Joan Caruana

Clem Attlee Court was born into the old Lillie ward on Fulham Borough council, but not until the end of its existence. But it came to be the fulcrum around which several different wards have been drawn.

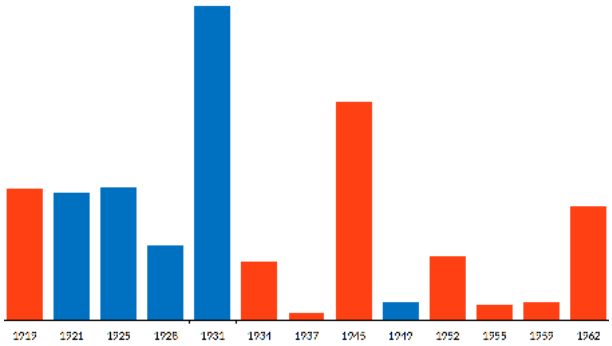
There was the old Lillie ward (1900-1965) and the new one (2022-date), there was Halford ward (1964-1978) and a very similar later replacement called Fulham Broadway (2002-2022) and, in between these years, three wards that covered central and east Fulham: Normand, Eel Brook and Walham (1978-2002).

It makes some sense to look at the two current wards of Lillie and Walham Green as one section: East Fulham, rather than two, not least because of all those different configurations of wards that have been drawn here. Sometimes, for example, North End Road has been regarded as where the boundary should be drawn: that was the case when Walham ward existed to the east and Normand and Eel Brook to its west.

of Barbers was a Lillie ward councillor: Fred Barber, a Municipal Reformer who represented his patch from 1922 to 1934. He was mayor in 1928 and donated the beautiful Fulham Mayoral chain to the borough.

Until the late 1940s, the Conservatives could always depend on Barons Court, Hurlingham and Town wards for thirteen councillors while, from the mid 1930s Labour usually won Margravine, Munster, Sands End and Walham for twenty-one seats. Lillie was the swing marginal.

That meant it went the way Fulham borough went - nearly all the time. Moderate and Municipal Reform from 1900 to 1934 (bar the Labour win in 1919), then Labour from 1934 to 1949 and from 1953 to 1964. But it was typically only won by small majorities and, even when that was not the case, it would swing by large amounts between elections.



Majorities in Lillie ward, 1919-1962

The original Lillie ward straddled Lillie Road: Queens Club Gardens and the ABC streets: Archel, Bramber and Chesson, were included. It stretched south as far as Dawes Road, Halford Road and the district line.

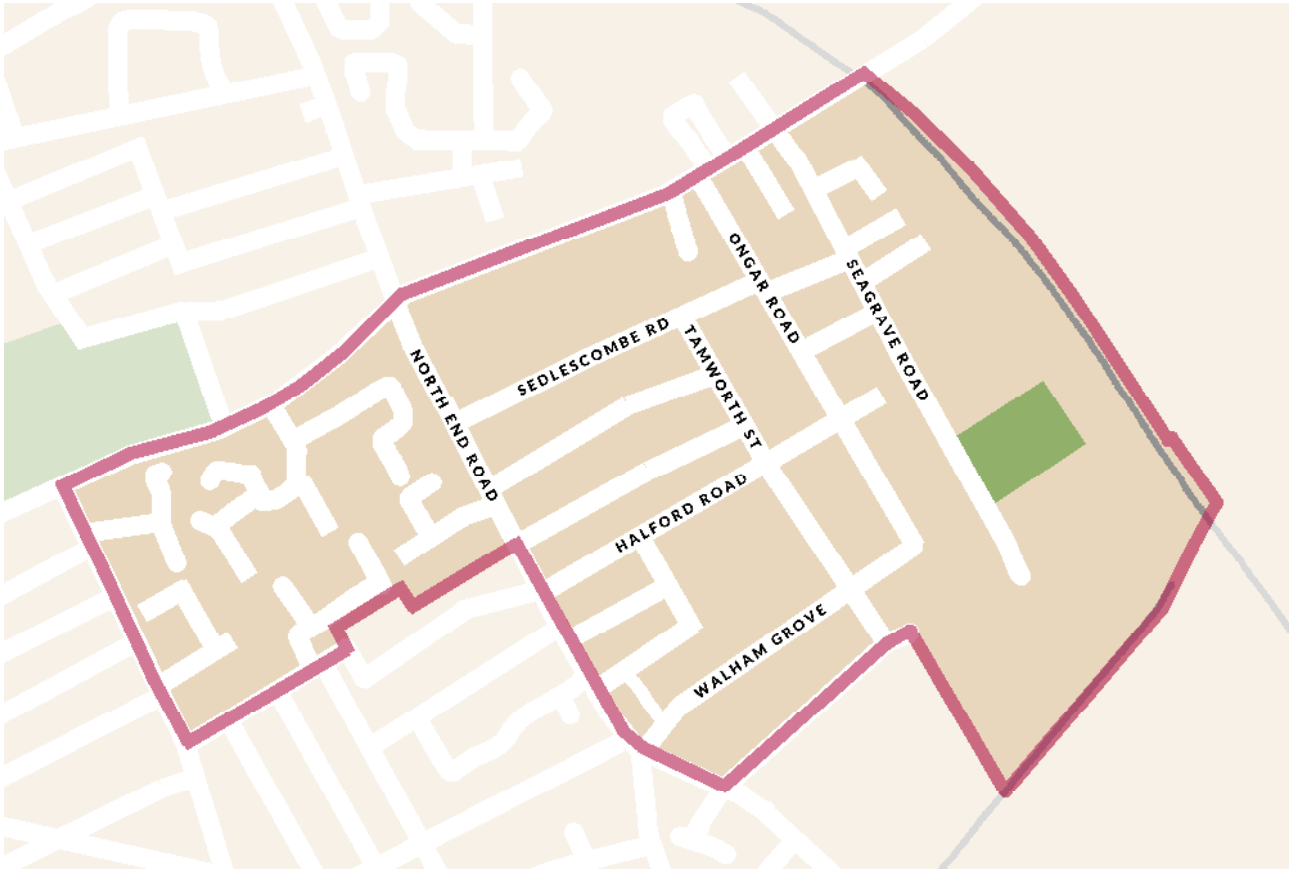
There were three reasons why Lillie was so marginal. First, there wasn't any council housing until the end of the ward's existence. Second, the ward was very mixed throughout: there was a healthy Labour minority in majority Conservative streets, and vice versa. Third, heavily Conservative Queen's Club Gardens was within the ward: and that always kept the Tories competitive even as Fulham swung to Labour.

When the boroughs were amalgamated, Lillie Road became the northern boundary of a new Halford ward. With the Clem Attlee estate built and Queens Club Gardens moved to Gibbs Green ward, Halford was massively Labour: they won with over 70% of the vote in 1964. Even though it was one of the long list of wards Labour lost in 1968 it is again some measure of its leftward lean that the Tories could only snatch it by just over 200 votes.

Fast forward to 1974 and you can see the beginnings of the gentrification-fueled Conservative advance in Fulham. Labour still won easily but far less impressively than 1964 when 1971 was a better year for Labour overall.

This Tory growth was not something Labour took sufficiently seriously at the electoral review prior to 1978. They were far more bothered about the marginal status of Gibbs Green ward, and the perennial problem of where to put Queen's Club Gardens.

Labour came up with the idea of creating an entirely new ward - an unusual ward - comprising the Clem Attlee estate from SW6, Queen's Club Gardens, the ABC streets and the new Maystar estate from W14, and the streets



Fulham Chronicle
Friday February 26, 1937

Lillie Ward By-election

Counting the Votes.

"I now have a slightly better view of the Labour Party than I had before. I thought you were very terrible people but in this election you fought hard and fair." So said Mr. R.B. Danks, the unsuccessful Municipal Reform candidate at the Fulham Borough Council by-election in Lillie ward, speaking after the declaration of the result at Fulham Town Hall on Thursday night last week.

For a by-election the contest aroused unusual interest. This was probably explained by the imminence of the London County Council election. Of the 11,001 local government electors on the register in Lillie ward, 3,966 went to the poll, representing a percentage of 36.05. There were three voting stations: Star Road school, North End Road School, and Halford Road School. The highest number of voters at any booth during one hour was recorded at North End Road School between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., when 101 people voted at it. Actually, this was the peak hour; the total number of voters at all three stations being 859. The next highest was 615 between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. The lowest was 70 during the first hour from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Political Opponents Talk Things Over.

The Town Clerk (Mr. W. Townend) had made the customary efficient arrangements for counting the votes at the Town Hall. The ballot boxes were speedily conveyed from the voting stations as soon as possible after polling ceased at 9 p.m. Before 9.30 the counting clerks were well on with the task. During the count supporters on both sides chatted freely together. The respective agents (Captain Parsons and Mr Johnson), anxiously watched the progress of events at the tables. The Mayor (Alderman C. Lancaster J.P.) had a long chat with Mr. Danks, the Municipal Reform candidate. The figures were declared at 10.23 p.m. Mr Hutchinson was a clear winner with 2,146 votes to his opponent's 1,811.

Proposing the customary vote of thanks to the Town Clerk as the Returning Officer, and to his staff, Mr. Hutchinson said he regarded his victory not so much as a personal tribute to the progressive work of the Labour majority on the Borough Council. The by-election had been a miniature parliamentary election. He hoped that under the guidance of the experienced members of the Council he would be an acquisition to the borough. "I am particularly pleased at this result," he said, "and I hope it is an indication of what is going to happen at the London County Council election."

Enjoyed Every Moment.

Having warmly shaken hands with his successful opponent, Mr. Danks seconded the vote of thanks. "I want to congratulate Mr. Hutchinson on the way he conducted this election," he said. "He has won on his merits and I have no excuse to make. No candidate could have had more enthusiastic workers than I had. From the start of the campaign I had the greatest admiration for them. We fought well and I enjoyed every moment. I have got a slightly better view of the Labour Party than I had before. I thought you were terrible people but in this election you fought hard and fair. If on either side we stretched one or two points, that is permissible in an election. I hope that in the future we may have the pleasure of meeting again in the same pleasant way."

The supporters of Mr. Hutchinson celebrated his victory by singing The Red Flag. This was clearly heard by a large crowd waiting outside the Fulham Road entrance to the Town Hall for the result. "We want Lester" they immediately began to chant, and kept it up until the Labour candidate came down from the counting hall. As Mr. Hutchinson left the building with prominent members of the Labour Party he was vociferously cheered by his highly elated supporters.

immediately west of Queens Club Gardens from W6. Normand ward should enough Labour voters to contain Queens Club Gardens and removing that mansion block development from Gibbs Green should make that ward safe.

That just about held if we're just looking at these two wards. Labour scraped a win in Normand by 82 votes. And they won Gibbs Green by 116 - unlikely that they would have done with Queen's Club Gardens still within it. But then the Conservatives won the wards the rest of Halford had been turned into: Eel Brook by twelve votes and Walham by 174.

1978 was a terrible year for Labour nationally, of course, coming towards the end of a struggling government that had lost its majority in the Commons. But then 1982 was barely any better, with the entrance of the SDP Liberal Alliance into the fray. In these East Fulham wards the Alliance took broadly similar amounts of votes from the Conservatives and Labour, though enough more from the Tories in Eel Brook to oust them.

1986 saw a massive swing to Labour in Normand and Gibbs Green particularly: clearly wards with big council estates were finally fired up again to turn out. Labour also gained Walham and held Eel Brook, though on a much

smaller swings that heralded trouble in both wards in 1990.

Those majorities crumbled again in 1990: Eel Brook and Walham were gained by the Conservatives, and Labour was reined-in in both Gibbs Green and Normand. They recovered a little in 1994 but, in 1998, when the western third of the Clem had been decanted for redevelopment the Tories again almost snatched Normand: Labour's lower majority falling to just 41 votes.

The boundary review prior to the 2002 elections abolished Normand ward and replaced it with a near-replica of Halford - Fulham Broadway ward - that most observers expected the Conservatives to gain. Yet Labour held on, if only by knife-edge majorities ranging from 34 to 93.

Labour would have benefited from the new Clem Attlee housing being occupied, but either they got a huge turnout from that estate, the Peabody estate in Lillie Road and the Lewis Trust in Vanston Place, or the Conservatives under-performed in the streets that had been increasingly strong for them in the old Eel Brook and Walham sections.

The Conservatives did win Fulham Broadway in 2006 and 2010 - and very comfortably too. But then Labour regained it as they recaptured the borough in 2014, on a huge 15% swing. A swing of that size was extraordinary; and perhaps it is again all about how motivated the Clem Attlee estate was motivated to turn out for Labour. That, of course, was the determinant of how comfortably - or not - the party had won Normand, after all.

Two-storey homes to replace high rise flats

£10.6 million redevelopment of Clem Attlee estate is welcomed. Report by **RUTH HUGHES**

PLANS for the new-look Clem Attlee estate have been unveiled following months of discussions and negotiations.

The high-rise blocks of the Hugh Gaitskell and Hugh Dalton houses will be demolished and replaced by 138 two and three-storey homes complete with gardens.

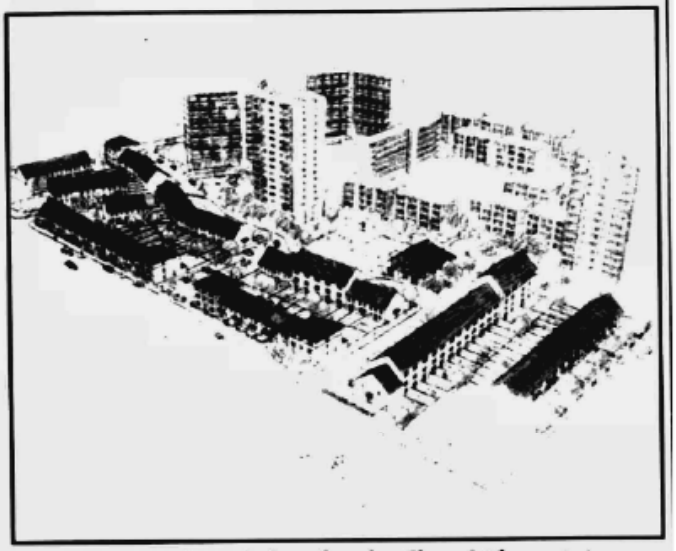
And a new community hall and better playground facilities will also be included in the £10.6 million development put forward by Wimpey Homes and Notting Hill Housing Trust. The plan was chosen by the council's policy resources and urgency committee at a recent meeting. However, Nye Bevan House looks set to be saved and refurbished in the redevelopment of the estate, which was opened by Labour's first post-war prime minister, Lord Attlee, in 1957.

Work is scheduled to begin in the winter, following negotiations with tenants who have expressed concern over a number of issues including the method of demolition on the 160 households. Arrangements for rehousing residents are under way.

Four other developers were in the running for the contract funded by a housing association grant and private money but the partnership bid from Wimpey and the NHHT came closest to the guidelines set out by the council said housing chairman, Ron Browne.

"The standard of submissions was generally high but we feel that the Wimpey bid came closest to achieving the aims of both the council and the tenants," said Cllr Browne.

"It's undoubtedly an exciting opportunity to revitalise Clem Attlee, bringing a quality and attractive new development together with new facilities which will benefit the whole estate. We're sure that the tenants will be delighted."



Artist's impression of plans for the Clem Attlee estate

Ward councillor and former mayor Joan Caruana said she was looking forward to a new era for Clem Attlee.

"They chose very wisely. In the years to come Clem Attlee estate will be brilliant," said Cllr Caruana this week.

"It was good to choose a contractor based in the borough because it will pick up our economy and employment," she added.

Summary of results for Lillie ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Lillie ward					
1900	48.5		51.5		
1903	46.0		54.0		
1906	59.6	11.1	29.3		
1909	56.8		30.2		
1912	62.6		37.4		
1917B	Unop				
1919	40.6	59.4			
1922	59.1	40.9			
1925	54.9	36.0	9.1		
1928	55.3	44.7			
1931	73.1	27.9			
1932B	46.3	37.7			16.0
1934	44.5	55.5			
1937B	45.8	54.2			
1937	47.3	52.7			
1945	26.8	58.3			15.0
1949	49.4	45.9	4.7		
1953	44.2	55.8			
1956	46.3	53.7			
1959	46.6	53.4			
1962	25.5	43.8	14.8		15.9
Halford ward					
1964	28.6	71.4			
1965B	29.1	58.0	12.9		
1968	53.0	41.6			
1971	30.0	64.7	5.3		
1974	36.0	64.0			
Normand ward					
1978	44.1	48.1	1.8		6.0
1982	36.5	44.0	18.6		
1986	26.6	59.6	12.8		1.0
1990	39.1	52.8	4.3		3.7
1994	35.0	53.1	12.0		
1998	42.1	47.0	10.9		
Fulham Broadway ward					
2002	44.8	47.7	7.5		
2006	50.2	35.0	7.6	7.2	
2010	49.8	30.0	20.2		
2014	41.3	51.8	7.0		
2018	35.7	55.5	8.8		
2019B	25.3	44.2	30.4		
Lillie ward					
2022	25.3	63.5	11.2		
2025B	30.5	40.4	18.4	10.7	
2026	28.4	35.9	8.8	17.2	9.7

Postal votes played a major part: 29% of all ballots cast in this ward in 2014 were by post - the highest share of all the marginals. Overall turnout in the part of the ward that includes Clem Attlee Court was dramatically higher than 2010: each of the ward's three polling districts contributed an almost exact third of the vote instead of the two more Conservative ones driving turnout four years earlier. Labour gained 200 more votes in 2014 compared to 2010. And in 2018, Labour widened their lead further.

In summer 2019 one of the Labour councillors resigned. The ensuing by-election came at the peak of Brexit-related, Theresa May-created tumult: a not especially great time for Labour given it was split over its approach to leaving the EU, but as disastrous in a heavily-Remain voting ward for the Conservatives as it would have been beneficial in a Leave-supporting area beyond London. The party that stood to benefit most, as they had in June's Euro-elections was the Lib Dems.

Had the election been decided solely on on-the-day, in-person votes there might have been a huge upset. But Labour's strength in postal votes and on the Clem ensured they held on - not easily, but comfortably enough. The Conservatives came a distant third in a ward they'd held until five years earlier.

Labour had never been happy with the wards imposed on the borough in 2002. They disliked how large they had to be to allow for three councillors, cutting across natural communities just to meet an arbitrary requirement - annual elections - that never happened in any event.

Politically, they also disliked the big council estates in central Fulham: Lancaster and Fulham Courts and Barclay Close, being wasted in Town ward. So they proposed two 2-councillor wards in East-Central Fulham. A recreated Lillie ward in the north, and a new Walham Green ward in the south. Despite the names, the successor to the old Walham ward is Lillie. A more favourable version of Eel Brook was the antecedent to Walham Green.

Lillie ward is the Gunter estate with Clem Attlee Court bolted onto it, and is the somewhat better ward for Labour because the Gunter side is still a lot more mixed. The best Conservative part of the old Walham ward was always Moore Park - the area south of the Chelsea Football Club ground on Fulham Road and that is in neither of these wards: it's part of the very safe Parson's Green and Sandford. Without this section, Walham would likely never have elected Conservative councillors.

That said, the areas east of North End Road are much larger than the Clem and have seen a lot of new exclusive

housing constructed: Lillie Square, Rainsborough Square and the Landau Building for example. If this area ever were to line up behind the Conservatives then even if every single voter on the Clem turned out for Labour they would lose the ward by a mile. Fortunately, from their perspective, they did not.

In fact it was Labour that won Lillie by a country mile in its first election, 2022. Labour took 63.5% and the Conservatives, still recovering from that devastating by-election in 2019 when they clearly lost masses of support in the streets to the east of North End Road, on just 25%. The Lib Dems collapsed from 30% in that by-election to just 11%, again demonstrating their incapacity to build on positive results in this borough.

Then another by-election in February 2025 when newly-elected Chelsea and Fulham Labour MP Ben Coleman resigned his council seat. The Lib Dems attempted to repeat their 2019 Fulham Broadway campaign but got nowhere having lost that potent "cancel Brexit" message.

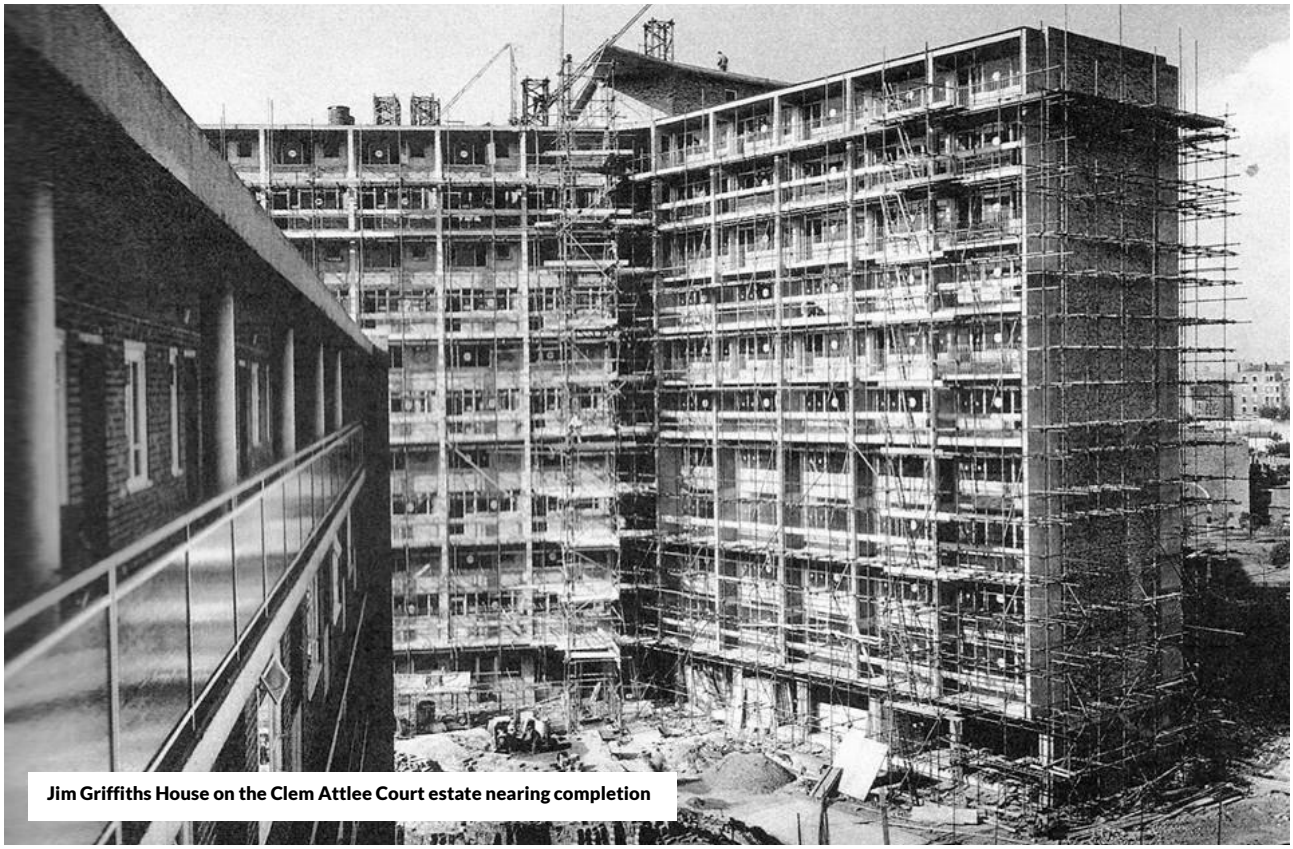
The Labour government elected just six months earlier was already unpopular and, on a relatively low turnout, Lillie ward swung back towards the Conservatives. Labour polled just 40% - down more than twenty-two percentage points on 2022. Had that loss of votes switched wholesale to the Conservatives, they'd have won - by a lot.

But while the Tories had made a reasonably big push, insufficient numbers of voters had forgiven their time in government. Decades earlier, this may not have mattered: you either voted Conservative or Labour and no-one else got a look in. But Hammersmith and Fulham was not completely immune from the fragmentation of politics and the growth of smaller parties.

So, of that 22-point Labour collapse, the Conservatives got an uplift of just over five points. The Lib Dems gained over seven and Reform, standing for the first time, won 10%. It's possible that a large chunk of the Reform vote came from Labour on the Clem: this is one ward where it shouldn't be assumed that Reform voters are all former Tories. But because the Conservatives benefited so little from Labour's slump, they lost the by-election by 111 votes. A 14% swing was not nothing, though.

In 2026 the Conservatives came closer still...or rather, Labour fell even more. This time they won just 36% - 27 points down on 2022. But the Conservatives only managed 28% - two points worse than the by-election. Those huge swings in Labour's support were back.

Because wards in this part of Fulham are so politically unstable no-one elected to represent the area can ever feel completely secure. After all, in just four years Labour's lead has gone from 38% to just 7.5%. Clever boundaries can't mitigate such a swing.



Jim Griffiths House on the Clem Attlee Court estate nearing completion

Rollcall of Lillie ward councillors

including Fulham Broadway ward (2002-2022), Normand ward (1978-2002) and Halford ward (1964-1978)

2026
- Sharon Holder
- Lydia Paynter

2025B
- Lydia Paynter

2022
- Ben Coleman
- Sharon Holder

2019B
- Helen Rowbottom

2018
- Ben Coleman
- Alan De-Ath
- Sharon Holder

2014
- Ben Coleman
- Alan De-Ath
- Sharon Holder

2010
- Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
- Rachel Ford
- Matt Thorley

2006
- Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
- Rachel Ford
- Aidan Burley

2002
- Dominic Church
- Andrew Jones
- Charlie Napier

1998
- Joan Caruana
- David Williams

1994
- Val Barker
- Joan Caruana

1990
- Joan Caruana
- Dan Filson

1986
- Joan Caruana
- Brian Vaughan

1982
- Joan Caruana
- Margaret Sondergaard

1978
- Joan Caruana
- Will Unwin

1974
- Alan Green
- Ian McCourt
- Sue O'Neill

1971
- Alan Green
- Sue Hedger
- Ian McCourt

1968
- William Griffen
- Marjorie Jarvis
- Nigel Parkinson

1965B
- James Beckett

1964
- Henry Babstock
- Jack Clarke
- Thomas Cox

1962
- Henry Babstock
- Catherine Clark
- Jack Clarke
- Charles Howard
- John Martyn
- Eileen Naylor

1959
- Helena Andrews
- William Bolton
- Jack Clarke
- James Moodie
- Eileen Naylor
- Grace Walter

1956
- William Ayres
- William Bolton
- Jack Clark
- Percy Coleman
- Anne Field
- Grace Walter

1953
- William Ayres
- William Bolton
- Thomas Edwards
- Anne Field
- Hugh Jones
- Florence Pusey

1949
- Percy Barkwith
- A. Beattie
- W. Browne
- Alan Clark
- Bertie Coates
- Harry Cockburn

1945
- Helena Andrews
- Percy Coleman
- James Forey
- Hugh Jones
- Florence Pusey
- G. Rushworth

1937
- Helena Andrews
- Neil Black
- Percy Coleman
- Lester Hutchinson
- Hugh Jones
- Frida Laski

1937B
- Lester Hutchinson

1934
- Percy Coleman
- Edgar Fraser
- Hugh Jones
- Frida Laski
- Jack Perotti
- Ernest Searle

1931
- Fred Barber
- Albert Everard
- Emanuel Gompers
- Frederick Joyner
- John McNaughton
- Gladys Waldron

1928
- Fred Barber
- Victor Franzini
- Emanuel Gompers
- Walter Leonard
- Christopher Milne
- William Morgan

1925
- Fred Barber
- Harry Booth
- Stephen Farley
- Victor Franzini
- Emanuel Gompers
- Thomas Speed

1922
- Fred Barber
- Harry Booth
- Stephen Farley
- Victor Franzini
- Emanuel Gompers
- Thomas Speed

1919
- John Clark
- Alice Gilliatt
- Louis Hill
- Thomas Lander
- John Lee
- George Lineham

1912
- John Bavin
- Harry Booth
- Patrick Cronin
- Charles Hovell
- Daniel Morgan
- William Waldron

1909
- John Armstrong
- John Bavin
- Harry Booth
- Patrick Cronin
- William Packover
- William Waldron

1906
- John Bavin
- Patrick Cronin
- Charles Hovell
- Henry Jones
- Abner Norman
- William Waldron

1903
- Arthur Appleby
- Edward Lee
- George Sly
- John Thomas
- Alfred Warner
- Thomas Whiteley

1900
- Ambrose Abery
- Arthur Appleby
- Henry Jones
- Edward Lee
- Alfred Warner
- Thomas Whiteley

Munster ward

When the borough of Fulham was founded in 1900, one ward covered almost a third of its area: Munster. The reason was that most of the western side of Fulham was almost entirely undeveloped, so Munster covered acres and acres of fields, flowerbeds and farmland.

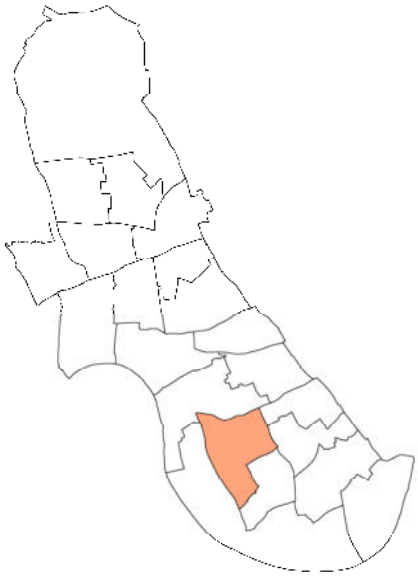
Even further in: the land between Fulham Palace Road and Munster Road was only partially built up. Munster ward encroached further - as far east as Rylston Road - which had been laid out as tight terraces of (mainly) cottages for working class families: roads like Orbain, Hannell, Prothero, Chaldon and Rosaline, all of which would eventually become Sherbrooke ward.

This geographically enormous Munster ward was also large in electoral terms, returning six councillors from 1900 to 1922 and eight thereafter. When Fulham merged with Hammersmith in 1964 Munster was abolished: chopped into two and half smaller wards.

Initially, Munster was voted Progressive: essentially because it only comprised that eastern Sherbrooke electorate which was working class and far from affluent. From 1906 onwards it swung to the Conservatives-Municipal Reform as the more westerly parts, considerably more affluent, were developed. But it was also due to the existential battle between the Liberals and Labour for the allegiance of those working class voters that, for a time, knocked both the left-of-centre parties out of contention.

As the Liberals inevitably lost that battle Munster swung towards Labour. They won all six seats in the 1919 election but could not hold on to them in 1922. 1925 was another dreadful year for Labour, but in 1928 they won half - four of the eight seats. That made Munster Labour's best Fulham ward after Margravine. Labour lost those seats again in 1931, but from then on it stayed in their column, all the way to the abolition of the borough in 1965.

Then the ward was abolished and split in three. The oldest, eastern end became Sherbrooke; the middle part between Fulham Palace Road and Munster Road became Colehill and the riverside went into Crabtree ward, along with the western end of Margravine.



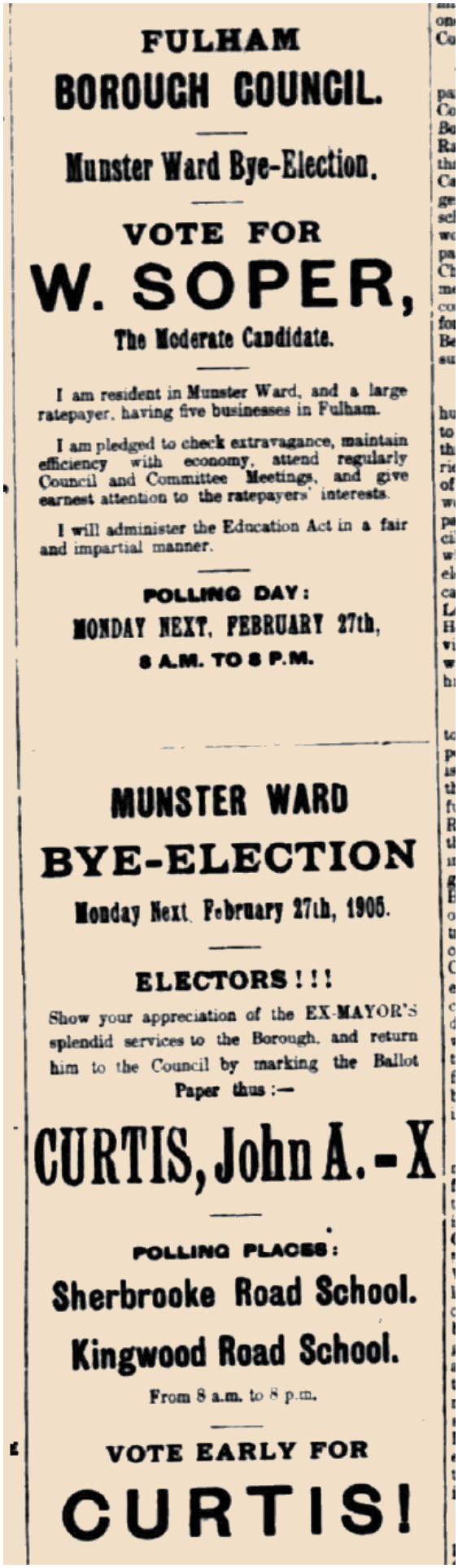
Labour won a crushing majority in Sherbrooke: 80% to 20%. Urban legend has it that the only road in Sherbrooke that Labour did not win was Fernhurst Street, very similar to the streets in Town ward just a bit further south. Labour won Colehill by 66% to 34% - similar to the last result in Munster in 1962. But Crabtree was marginal. Labour won by 52% to 42%, with the Liberals taking the rest.

Thirty-six years later, in 2002, Munster rose from the ashes: a different ward to the original, shorn of the riverside west of Fulham Palace Road and missing a chunk of Sherbrooke beyond Dawes Road, but otherwise an area that would have voted Labour by about 70% to 26% had it existed in 1964.

But in the interim Fulham had changed immensely, demographically and politically. Munster is the exemplar of that change: that decline of Labour in Fulham.

The Conservatives won Munster in its first contest in 2002 by 62% to 27. Measuring from the 2018 elections - a poor Conservative year, there was a 32.5% swing since 1964. If you compare 1964 to 2006 - Labour's worst ever showing - the swing was 47.8%.

Colehill slipped from Labour's grasp in 1978. They won it back, just, in 1986 a month after their Fulham by-election triumph - but came nowhere close in 1990 and slipped



FULHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Munster Ward Bye-Election.

VOTE FOR
W. SOPER,
The Moderate Candidate.

I am resident in Munster Ward, and a large ratepayer, having five businesses in Fulham.

I am pledged to check extravagance, maintain efficiency with economy, attend regularly Council and Committee Meetings, and give earnest attention to the ratepayers' interests.

I will administer the Education Act in a fair and impartial manner.

POLLING DAY:
MONDAY NEXT, FEBRUARY 27th,
8 A.M. TO 8 P.M.

MUNSTER WARD
BYE-ELECTION
Monday Next, February 27th, 1905.

ELECTORS!!!
Show your appreciation of the EX-MAYOR'S splendid services to the Borough, and return him to the Council by marking the Ballot Paper thus:—

CURTIS, John A. - X

POLLING PLACES:
Sherbrooke Road School.
Kingwood Road School.
From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

VOTE EARLY FOR
CURTIS!

further behind in elections thereafter. Sherbrooke, the safest Labour ward in Fulham in 1964, saw an even bigger collapse in their vote in 1978 (a 21% swing) though, because it was a far safer ward, they hung on pretty easily.

But they lost one of their Sherbrooke seats in 1982 - on the face of it because the Alliance ate into Labour but not Tory votes. In fact the ward had continued gentrifying rapidly over those four years - the vote movements were more complex than the headline figures of that year suggest.

Labour won back that lost seat in 1986 but in 1990 the Conservatives won both in arguably their most stunning result of that election. Labour was not quite done in Sherbrooke: they clawed back one of the two seats in 1994 and just hung onto it in 1998, but it was becoming ever harder for them.

The term "swing" is used to explain by how many voters in an area have moved from one party to another between two elections. In an area like Munster from the mid 1970s to at least the early 2000s the term was largely wrong insofar as the seismic political changes that I've just described were not about a stable population deciding it was no longer Labour and becoming Conservatives. In Munster the electoral changes here occurred because Labour voters moved out and Conservative voters moved in. This was a transplant, not a swing.

What caused this transplantation? There were two core reasons. The first was that soaring property prices in neighbouring boroughs pushed those for whom homes in these boroughs became just out of reach to venture into the "next best" areas, of which Fulham was prime. This is often caricatured as so-called Sloane Rangers wanting to buy in Chelsea but settling for Fulham - they were definitely an aspect of this trend but it was wider.

There were also priced-outs from what some sociologists describe as "first wave gentrification": areas like Camden, Highgate and Barnsbury (waves referring solely to when they began to gentrify). Fulham was second wave along with Putney and Chiswick, while Battersea and to some extent Hammersmith were third wave.

Fulham began to gentrify round about when the borough was amalgamated in 1964, but accelerated to an extent that is hard to describe in the early 1970s.


STRODE ROAD
CHALDON ROAD
MENDORA ROAD
ESTCOURT ROAD
DAWES ROAD
HANNELL RD
MUNSTER ROAD
SHERBROOKE ROAD
BRONSART ROAD
ROWALLAN RD
FILMER ROAD
ROSAVILLE RD
ST OLAF'S ROAD
MARVILLE ROAD
ROAD
KINGWOOD
DANEHURST STREET
FERNHURST ST
GOWAN AVENUE
COLEHILL LANE
BURNFOOT AVENUE
HESTERCOMBE AVENUE
OXBERRY AVE

The second factor was that Fulham's employment base was also changing rapidly. Almost all of the Fulham wharves across from Barn Elms had closed by the early 1970s; the Sands End industrial riverside and the power station too. In one sense these two trends: employment and gentrification, were linked in that as Fulham became less industrial, less gritty, less densely-packed, it became more appealing to those seeking a more genteel, less unaffordable environment in which to live. Victorian and Edwardian terraces that had been coated in grit and grime were ripe for a makeover.

Although Fulham is well connected to public transport, a huge proportion of the workers at these industrial sites, the factories and warehouses, lived locally and, when the work went, many of those who lost jobs had to follow employment opportunities out of the borough. Many of those households also rented - and landlords, attracted by the soaring value of the homes they owned were happy to sell up, forcing their tenants out too.

The windfall of soaring property prices enabled anyone fortunate enough to own their own home to sell up here and buy a substantially larger property, with a big garden, in a quieter, suburban neighbourhood like Sutton, Surbiton, Greenford or Uxbridge. So while sociologists and activists opposed to gentrification portray this phenomenon in almost unrelentingly negative terms - as something imposed by the rich upon the poor - it wasn't completely one-sided provided you had the golden ticket of an asset to sell.

Just as there were waves of gentrification across London, so there were waves in Fulham too. Hurlingham and Parson's Green gentrified first (though Hurlingham was hardly destitute to begin with). Fulham town, the Bishops Park estate and Moore Park went second; then central Fulham from west to east; then Sands End and Fulham north of Lillie Road.

More specifically still, in what has become known by estate agents as "Munster Village", gentrification here began in the avenues just off Fulham Road: Burnthwaite, Hestercombe, Oxberry, Ringmer and Waldemar, plus Gowan and Wardo slightly further up; and separately in the "villes" on the Sherbrooke side of the ward: Brookville, Marville, Parkville and Rosaville Roads. In fact the way to chart gentrification is incredibly simple: it starts in the largest properties and gradually works down to the relatively tiny cottage terraces and the mansion blocks.

The price growth of Fulham was astounding. House prices drove gentrification. And gentrification drove house prices. This is the crux of why Munster moved very rapidly from a solidly Labour to a solidly Conservative ward.

If you plough through the observations of local estate agents on property blogs you will often find claims that Fulham has had a recent, further wave of social change: the first being so-called yuppies: bankers, hedge-fund managers and other highly-paid professionals; the second being an influx of wealthy continental families attracted to the village atmosphere of neighbourhoods like Munster.

The changing type of property buyer has again influenced the nature of the area, as the Financial Times reported in 2017:

"As the area has become more cosmopolitan and family-friendly, a swath of hip restaurants and cafés has appeared. Pubs that once specialised in serving football fans now dish up truffle poached eggs and luminous, green juices, while hand-stencilled signs line the New King's Road between Hally's and St Clements cafés"

Does that pretentious nonsense not epitomise the Fulham of today, at least compared to the Fulham of forty years earlier?

Munster ward is centred, appropriately enough, on Munster Road which, in turn, was named after Mustow Field. The entirety of this area, and that covered by Fulham Town ward, and a fair chunk of the area to the north, were once Fulham Fields, before being tamed and cultivated into market gardens, and then turned into the street grid we are familiar with today.

Not quite all of Munster Road is in Munster ward: the stretch south of Fulham Road is in Fulham Town and always has been. Because the area was not all developed at quite the same time, and certainly not by one sole developer, there are somewhat wide variations in housing styles.

The eastern, Sherbrooke, side is generally more dense with smaller houses and tiny yards rather than gardens. But there's a mix: pretty, flat-fronted Orbain Road next door to the three-storey tenement flats of St Olaf's Road and the more typically Fulham bay-fronted terraces of Sherbrooke, Letterstone and Rosaline Roads.

DEATH OF MR. W. R. CORBIN

A Fulham Freeman.

A wide circle of friends will learn with much regret of the death of Mr. W. R. Corbin, a Fulham Freeman and formerly a member of the Fulham Borough Council. Mr. Corbin passed away at Putney Hospital on Tuesday. For the past 18 months his health has occasioned anxiety, but it was only three weeks ago that his condition became critical. Mr. Corbin was under the skilled attention of Dr. T. Duff Miller, and was assiduously nursed by his wife and daughter at his home, 8 Finlay-street, Fulham Palace-road. On Monday he was admitted to a private ward at Putney Hospital. On the afternoon of the following day he relapsed into a deep



THE LATE MR. W. R. CORBIN.

coma from which he never rallied. He had suffered from acute bronchitis, which led to a terminal heart failure.

Deep sympathy is felt for Mrs. Corbin, who was associated with her husband in the public life of Fulham for many years, and for Miss Corbin, who is also well known for her indefatigable efforts on behalf of charities.

Former Headmaster of Chelsea School.

Mr. William Robert Corbin was born in Southampton in 1862. He spent his youth in Hampshire, and came to London as a young man to enter the teaching profession. He was a member of the staff of Ashburnham School, Chelsea, and was subsequently appointed headmaster of Holy Trinity School, Chelsea — a position he held for many years until he retired about ten years ago. In his early days, when he lived in Walham-grove, Fulham, Mr. Corbin was vicar's warden at St. Oswald's Church, Anselm road, Fulham. In this capacity he served with three vicars of the parish, Revs. Watts, Wilbraham Ward, and Rowland Hedley.

Mr. Corbin was first elected a Municipal Reform member of the Fulham Borough Council in 1906. He served for a continuous period of 13 years until a Labour Council was elected in 1919. At the election of 1925 he headed the poll in Munster Ward with 3,427 votes. Three years later his public work was fittingly recognised when he was elected an Alderman. For six years he continued to render admirable service in this capacity. Mr. Corbin never claimed to be an orator, and what he had to say in Council was brief and to the point.

Zealous Committee Worker.

In committee he was a most zealous worker. For many years he was chairman of the Public Libraries Committee. A man of charming personality and imperturbable serenity, he was held in the highest esteem by friends of all shades of political opinion. In October, 1934, he received the highest honour the borough can accord. He was made an Honorary Freeman. He ceased to be a member of the Council when his Aldermanic period expired in 1934. He put up for election in Munster Ward but was unsuccessful. The cessation of his public work after so many years of diligent service was a severe blow, and it is not without significance that the decline of his health dated from that period. He served as a manager of central schools, and keenly interested himself in all social matters. He was a trustee of local charities, and the permanent chairman of the Fulham United Charities. During the War he served on the Fulham Military Tribunal and the Food Control Committee. He belonged to the Polytechnic Lodge of Freemasons.

Funeral Arrangements.

The funeral takes place on Monday. The interment will be at Fulham Old Cemetery at 11.45. It is requested that flowers should be sent to Putney Hospital or to the funeral furnishers, R. Brain, 13 High-street, Fulham.

The villes form their own little enclave, bookended by Bloom Park and Homestead Roads; and the area across Dawes Road is also a little isolated community, this time boxed in by the Clem Attlee and Aintree council estates and the imposing Sir John Lillie School.

The western, "Colehill" side of Munster is more uniform because it is built much like a ladder. Almost all of the roads run east-west; the two exceptions being the roads that spur off Fulham Road in the south, and the north of the ward where Fulham Cemetery occupies half the territory between these roads. There are more mansion blocks on this side, notably in Kingwood Road, Wyfold Road, Colehill Gardens, Waldemar Avenue and Vera Road and very much larger town houses like those that front Fulham Palace Road at the Fulham Road end.

There is very little council housing in this ward: unusually little for Fulham. But the first ever Fulham council estate: the Wyfold Road estate, can be found here.

That was added to later by the medium-sized Aintree estate: five tenement blocks of flats along Aintree Street and then two prefabricated tower blocks: Hartopp and Lannoy Points, across Dawes Road alongside two smaller blocks: Chasemore House and Donnelly Court.

Hartopp and Lannoy generated huge amounts of casework for local councillors from the moment they were built because they were not hugely different from the system-built construction model of Ronan Point, the Newham council block that partially collapsed when a resident's gas cooker exploded.

Gas appliances were banned from that moment on and there were frequent appeals to demolish the blocks from residents who never quite felt safe in them, despite the flats themselves being spacious and offering stunning views of the borough. Council officers - in a shocking case of ignorance or dishonesty - assured everyone that there were no faults with the blocks and claimed to have fixed high tensile cables through them so they could not collapse.

Both these claims were untrue and in 2018 it was proved that the cables did not secure the block and that the panels had not been constructed soundly. So these two giants - the foundation of Labour's vote in Sherbrooke - were demolished just fifty years after they were constructed.

As for other council housing here there is just St Peter's Terrace, a remarkably-designed block on different levels, a long curving ramp up to a podium deck and flat numbering that defies understanding, and the tenement blocks Rocque and Maton Houses in Estcourt Road. There are some council and housing association flats in St Olaf's Road, and the infill houses in Sherbrooke and Rosaline Roads where Sherbrooke Primary School once stood, and the lovely Octavia Housing Association block - almost a secret enclave set around a small courtyard - called Clyde Flats in Rylston Road.

Almost the whole of the old Colehill and Sherbrooke wards are now in Munster ward. This area had an electorate of over 15,000 in 1964 whereas the revised ward had just 8,734 electors in 2019. This shows the depopulation of Fulham.

The big swing against the Tories in 2018 didn't have that much impact Munster: they suffered a 6% switch to Labour but that still left them more than 400 votes clear. But their vote is not evenly spread throughout the ward: they are strongest in the south: the Avenues and the Villes.

At the 2019 general election: the "Get Brexit Done" election, the Liberal Democrats managed to squeeze past Labour to take second place in the Chelsea and Fulham constituency, though 11,000 behind the Conservatives. The Lib Dems had a moderately well-known candidate: the businesswoman Nicola Horlick and, in the 2022 council elections, she stood in Munster ward - despite living in Richmond-upon-Thames.

In the sense that, at that time, we were reaching the end of a long period of Conservative government, that party was deeply unpopular and the whole Lib Dem pitch was aggressively anti-Conservative. Munster was also the Conservative-held ward with the smallest majority in Chelsea and Fulham. But on any other consideration this was (another) bizarre targeting choice.

The Lib Dem advance at the general election came almost entirely from Labour, not the Conservatives. In Munster, the Tories had won with over 50% in 2018 so, even had they managed to persuade every single Labour voter to switch to them, they'd still have lost. And that would never be the case in a ward like Munster: however affluent the ward has become, this is not Twickenham; it's not Kew. Labour is simply too embedded here and the typical Labour voter in Munster is not a second-choice Lib Dem: they're a second-choice not voting.

FULHAM'S CHIEF WARDEN
Mr. J. T. Horton Resigns From Borough Council

In deference to the wishes of the Ministry of Home Security, Councillor J. T. Horton, Chief Warden of Fulham, has tendered his resignation as a member of Fulham Borough Council for Munster ward.

Mr. Horton announced his decision at a meeting of the Joint Munster and Margravine Wards of West Fulham Labour party. He gave a short history of his work in the A.R.P. service since its inception before the war. Starting first as warden, then elevated to district warden, he eventually took charge of Fulham shelters. Many innovations in the equipping of shelters were copied by other boroughs and the London Region.

When the illness of Alderman R. M. Gentry compelled him to relinquish the position of Chief Warden, Mr Horton was chosen to succeed him because of his wide experience in the Fulham A.R.P. Service.

Without Pressure

Mr. Horton addressing the meeting, said the Ministry had not laid down any definite direction, but without any pressure he had made up his mind and would tender his resignation to the Town Clerk. He hoped to have the opportunity of serving on the Council again later.

Councillor F. W. Banfield, as president of West Fulham Labour party and as chief whip of the Labour group on Fulham Borough Council said they could admire Mr. Horton's readiness to meet the Government's wishes He had a record, both as councillor and as an A.R.P. officer that would stand to his eternal credit. As ex-vice-chairman of the Housing Committee and vice-chairman of the Law and Parliamentary, in addition to being assistant whip of the Labour group, he had always carried out his work assiduously.

Made Sacrifices

He had made sacrifices from a financial point of view and so far as his home life is concerned. Such a record of public experience should not be lost for ever, and Mr. Horton's colleagues hoped he would be able to return to Council work again after the war.

Mr. Banfield proposed that the services rendered by Mr. Horton as a public representative should be placed on record by the Munster Ward Labour party, and the hope that, at the conclusion of hostilities he would have an opportunity of serving on the Council again.

Tributes were also paid by Councillors Mrs. Sogan and McIvor.

Summary of results for Munster ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	34.7		51.6		13.7
1903	27.0	18.4	36.0		18.6
1905B	32.9	32.3	34.7		
1906	46.5		26.3		12.1
1909	48.3	13.4	38.2		
1912	48.7		41.2		10.1
1917B	Unop				
1919	32.9	48.3	18.9		
1922	59.7	40.3			
1925	55.3	44.7			
1928	50.4	49.6			
1931	64.3	32.1			3.6
1934	42.9	50.4			6.7
1937	45.1	54.9			
1941B		Unop			
1942B		Unop			
1945	22.6	67.8			9.6
1949	44.8	55.2			
1953	37.8	62.2			
1956	34.8	60.5			4.7
1959	34.2	65.8			
1962	38.6	61.4			
Colehill ward					
1964	34.3	65.7			
1968	57.2	38.5	4.3		
1971	34.3	65.7			
1974	26.6	57.3	16.2		
1974B	31.8	53.5	14.7		
1978	46.6	43.1	3.5		
1982	49.3	35.5	15.2		
1986	40.5	43.3	8.3		7.8
1990	53.0	38.5			8.5
1994	52.3	35.8	11.9		
1998	59.7	29.7	10.6		
Sherbrooke ward					
1964	19.6	80.4			
1968	48.9	48.6	2.5		
1971	20.6	79.4			
1974	22.1	77.9			
1978	40.2	52.4	3.3		4.1
1982	41.2	41.6	15.7		1.7
1986	36.0	53.9	8.5	1.7	
1990	48.2	44.7			7.1
1994	45.2	43.6	11.2		
1998	46.6	44.1	9.3		
Munster ward					
2002	61.5	27.1	11.3		
2006	69.3	18.3	12.3		
2010	56.6	15.8	15.8	11.8	
2014	56.2	23.3	8.9	11.7	
2018	52.6	32.2	15.2		
2022	42.4	31.9	25.8		
2026	38.5	21.8	11.1	16.2	12.5

So the party did not win Munster - they didn't even come second, though they increased their vote by about twelve percent. About two thirds of their gain came from the Conservatives and a third from Labour. The Tories won by just under ten percent.

In 2026 the Lib Dems collapsed back to where they had been in 2018, all to the Greens who won 16%. Reform won just over 12% but this time - at least on the topline figures - only a third of their vote came from the Conservatives, while Labour fell back by about ten percent. Hence, the Tory majority returned to where it had been in 2018: around 14% ahead.

Munster councillor Adronie Alford was first elected in 1990 in Colehill ward, and has served continuously. She is already the longest serving councillor of the modern era (since 1964), but if she serves this current term out that will mark forty years - one year short of Sands End Labour councillor Percy Barton's record of service.

She will be re-elected as long as she wants to keep going: Labour simply don't have the votes to win Munster, at least as it's currently drawn, and the Liberal Democrats aren't able or willing to put in the election-after-election shift, even if this were the right ward for them to target. Which it isn't.

HOUSING SCHEMES AT FULHAM.

BOROUGH COUNCIL'S WYFOLD ROAD PLAN.

L.C.C. MOVE AS WELL.

A scheme for 36 working-class dwellings in Wyfold Road, Fulham, put forward by the Housing Committee, received the support of the Fulham Borough Council on Wednesday evening.

There will be three blocks of three-storey dwellings containing 36 tenements, i.e. 12 tenements in each block, one-half to be three-room flats (living-room and two bedrooms) and one-half four-room flats (living room and three bedrooms), each flat also to have a kitchenette, bathroom, w.c., and larder.

Subject to the assent of the Ministry of Health, and the purchase of the site for £2,000, the estimated cost of the building scheme is £23,114.

Councillor Holmes (Chairman of the Committee) in moving the recommendations, said it was very pleasing indeed to know that, at long last, they had a unanimous recommendation before them. He briefly outlined the scheme, and, referring to the rents of the dwellings, said on top of the 10s. 6d. per week the tenants would have to pay the rates, which would work out at something like three to four shillings a week.

Several Councillors spoke in support, and congratulated Councillor Holmes, his Committee and the Borough Surveyor.

The Committee's recommendations were unanimously agreed to.

Rollcall of Munster ward councillors

including Colehill ward (1964-2002) and Sherbrooke ward (1964-2002)

2026
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel
- Stewart Waine

2022
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel
- Dominic Stanton

2018
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel
- Dominic Stanton

2014
- Michael Adam
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel

2010
- Michael Adam
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel

2006
- Michael Adam
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel

2002
- Michael Adam
- Adronie Alford
- Alex Karmel

Colehill ward

1998
- Adronie Alford
- Christopher Round

1994
- Adronie Alford
- Antony Lillis

1990
- Adronie Alford
- Antony Lillis

1986
- Susan Brown
- Tom Lipscombe

1982
- Martin Howe
- Martin Lingens

1978
- Ann Hitchings
- Robert Killick

1967B
- John Stevens

1974
- Gladys Dimmick
- Liam O'Neill

1971
- Gladys Dimmick
- David Warboys

1968
- Kim Howe
- Mary Porter

1964
- George Dimmick
- Gladys Dimmick

Sherbrooke ward

1998
- John Garrett
- Tristram Kennedy-Harper

1994
- John Garrett
- Celia Johnson

1990
- Celia Johnson
- Alan Thomas

1986
- Ian Gray
- Nick Moore

1982
- Ian Gray
- David Tweedie

1978
- Hugh Duff
- Ian Gray

1974
- Joan Chapman
- Ian Gray

1971
- Joan Chapman
- Royden Morgan

1968
- Jenifer Godwin-Austin
- Sid Matthews

1964
- Sid Matthews
- Margo Noyes

Munster ward

1962
- Tony Chapman
- Elizabeth Desborough
- Gladys Dimmick
- James Horton
- Cecily Liardet
- Reginald Mitchell
- Royden Morgan
- Herbert Rainger

1959
- Elizabeth Desborough
- Gladys Dimmick
- Cecily Liardet
- Royden Morgan
- Reginald Mitchell
- Margo Noyes
- Herbert Rainger
- William Rankin

1956
- Elizabeth Desborough
- Frank Desborough
- Reginald Mitchell
- Royden Morgan
- Herbert Rainger
- Frank Rumsey
- William Rankin
- David Shopland

1953
- Elizabeth Desborough
- Frank Desborough
- Alan Jiggins
- Walter Parish
- Walter Rankin
- Frank Rumsey
- David Shopland
- William Wallis

1949
- Richard Bender
- Frank Desborough
- Alice Gilliatt
- Albert Frost
- Alan Jiggins
- Henry Rickards
- David Shopland
- William Wallis

1945
- Richard Bender
- Frederick Coates
- Alice Gilliatt
- James Horton
- Alan Jiggins
- W. Meade
- Henry Rickards
- Stanislaus Seuffert

1937
- Charles Abell
- Sidney Ballantyne
- Frederick Coates
- Alice Gilliatt
- James Horton
- Catherine Lusher
- Kathleen Pottle
- Stanislaus Seuffert

1934
- Sidney Ballantyne
- Alice Gilliatt
- Charles Jewitt
- Kathleen Pottle
- Ethel Rankin
- William Rankin
- Stanislaus Seuffert
- Joseph Ward

1931
- Frank Barham
- Helen Cummins
- William Fowell
- Grace King
- John Melville
- Alfred Stapp
- William Stockwell
- John Walters

1928
- Frank Barham
- Helen Cummins
- Sidney Farrall
- William Fowell
- George Lineham
- Lily Lineham
- Mary Shepherd
- William Stockwell

1925
- Helen Cummins
- Arthur Ford
- William Fowell
- William Purves
- George Redway
- George Solley
- William White
- William Wilcox

1922
- William Corbin
- Albert Everard
- William Fowell
- Richard Kelly
- William White
- William Wilcox

1919
- David Goodwill
- John Lewis
- Lily Lineham
- Jeremiah O'Brien
- George Patterson
- Owen Waghorn

1912
- William Allen
- William Corbin
- George Fleche
- John Hunt
- Joseph Meyer
- Frederick Winfield

1909
- William Bradban
- William Corbin
- George Fleche
- Joseph Meyer
- William Soper
- Frederick Winfield

1906
- William Bradban
- William Corbin
- George Fleche
- Joseph Meyer
- William Soper
- Frederick Winfield

1903
- Tom Beresford
- Christopher Courtney
- Benjamin Gillbanks
- Timothy Maloney
- Jeremiah O'Brien
- William Phillips

1900
- Ernest Avern
- Robert Black
- Henry Budd
- Benjamin Gillbanks
- Jeremiah O'Brien
- William Phillips

Palace and Hurlingham

Curving around the south-western riverside of the borough: from Wandsworth Bridge half way to Hammersmith Bridge, is the Palace and Hurlingham ward.

This is possibly the strangest ward in the borough in one respect: it cobbles together at least three distinct and physically separate neighbourhoods. These areas have one thing in common - and it is the reason this ward exists: they are all very strongly Conservative. Indeed, by 1998, the old Palace ward was comfortably in the top ten safest Conservative wards in London.

Palace was one of the new wards created in the 1978 boundary changes, taking the southern half of the oldest iteration of Crabtree ward and combining it with Hurlingham east of Putney Bridge, which came from Parson's Green ward.

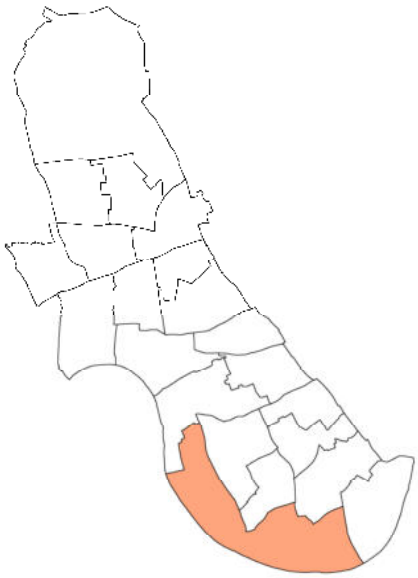
The southern half of Crabtree and the Hurlingham chunk of Parson's Green were the very strongest Conservative areas in each of their respective wards, so combining them created an impregnable Tory ward in Fulham. There weren't any of them before 1978.

Labour wanted such a ward because it drained Conservative votes from more competitive surrounding areas. Crabtree was meant to become a safe-ish Labour ward after it lost half of the Bishops Park estate. It didn't work out quite that way but, without the boundary changes Labour would never have got close. Not in 1986, not in 1994 and not in 2018.

Eel Brook was also meant to be a reasonably safe Labour ward, taking the northern half of the (somewhat outrageously drawn) Parson's Green ward and leaving out Hurlingham. But Eel Brook too went Conservative in 1978.

But the new Palace ward did become a sink of Conservative votes: 71%Tory in its first election of 1978; as much as 83% in a 1987 by-election.

There are a few scant pockets of resistance to the Conservatives in this ward - slightly more since the boundaries changed in 2022. The Robert Owen House estate off Fulham Palace Road, which was built on the old St John's House prison, is the largest. There is Swanbank Court, a sheltered housing block by Putney Bridge.



And now there is the large Sulivan Court estate: which isn't all that strongly Labour anymore and doesn't turn out to vote with much energy either; plus Philpott Square at the end of Peterborough Road, and some riverside housing association blocks in Carnwath Road.

There have always been two core components to Palace ward: the Bishops Park estate and Hurlingham. But until the new boundaries took effect in 2022 it had never been possible to combine all of both of these distinct neighbourhoods together.

The Bishop's Park estate is the northern section of the ward: a grid of long terraced streets sometimes known as the alphabet streets because they are named alphabetically: Bishops Park Road, Cloncurry, Doneraile, Ellerby, Finlay, Greswell, Harbord, Inglethorpe, Kenyon and Langthorne. After that they get a bit mangled, going Q (Queensmill), L (Lysia) and N (Niton).

Bishops Park Road is a street of mansion blocks - atypical of the rest of the estate, overlooking the tennis courts of Bishops Park. The remainder of the grid comprises semi detached houses; the larger ones constructed as single homes in the south while those in the north were custom built as flats.

This neighbourhood includes Fulham Football Club's Craven Cottage ground in Stevenage Road, the curving, ziggurat brown-brick 1970s River Gardens development and then a series of mainly - not exclusively - small council

estate cul-de-sacs that run north along the riverside beyond the end of the Bishops Park estate. These started out in Crabtree, transferred to Palace in 2002 and then moved to Fulham Reach ward in 2022.

Fulham Football Club has been a huge political issue in this area for decades, with the fate of Fulham Palace and the maintenance of Bishop's Park not far behind.

The football club was established long before the Bishop's Park estate was built in the 1920s and 1930s. When the estate was far more economically diverse the interaction between the club and the residents was generally smooth. But as Fulham house prices soared - with this area becoming among the most expensive in SW6 - the character of the estate changed.

Far fewer immediate neighbours were now Fulham Football Club fans and the inconvenience of being unable to access homes on match days because of road closures led to vocal unhappiness.

Wildly exaggerated claims were made that Fulham fans - among the most civil football supporters around - were defecating in front gardens and vandalising the neighbourhood.

There were proxy issues such as the impact of fans causing wear and tear of Bishops Park as they walked to and from Putney Bridge tube station, the lack of a Thames Path through the club's grounds and the blight of huge coaches carrying the football squads manoeuvring around narrow residential streets.

These gripes in turn led to blanket opposition to virtually every significant planning application the club submitted to modernise facilities and increase capacity. And because Palace ward had Conservative councillors amplifying the sense of grievance, the fate of Fulham Football Club became a party political issue.

There was a strongly held view among the diminished but still large army of club supporters in Fulham that choosing to move to an area with a major football club and then ceaselessly campaigning to (as they saw it) force the club out of that area was a somewhat outrageous thing to do. As most Fulham fans were working class, long term residents, the party more likely to embody these views was Labour.

The comparative strengths of these campaigns and counter campaigns ebbed and flowed.

Fulham went through one of its lowest patches from the late 1970s to the mid 1990s, plummeting to the (then) Fourth Division, lucky to scrape crowds of more than 5,000 a match, its ownership in the hands of property speculators with no instinctive loyalty to the club, holding land worth many millions. If the club could be shunted elsewhere (a ground share - indeed, a full merger at one point - with QPR in White City being floated endlessly) or

FULHAM CHRONICLE, DECEMBER 21, 1939

NEW HURLINGHAM WARD COUNCILLOR

Retired Indian Army Officer

As we announced last week a retired officer of the Indian Army is to join the Municipal Reform opposition members of the Fulham Borough Council. He is Colonel Charles Temple Morris, 87 Rivermead Court, Hurlingham.

The vacancy on the Council was created by the death of Councillor H. Dodimead. By reason of the arrangement for a political truce during the war, there will be no election. The agreement dictates that any vacancy occurring on the council by death shall be filled by the party to which the deceased member belonged. Colonel Morris will, therefore, be unopposed.

Colonel Morris has lived most of his life in India. He comes from a distinguished military family and was wounded in Lucknow.

After serving with the Yorkshire Regiment he was transferred to the Indian Army in 1900. During the Great War he served on the North West Frontier and in [unreadable] and was three times mentioned in dispatches.

Awarded C.B.E.

In 1922 Colonel Morris was awarded the C.B.E. for meritorious service. On his retirement from the Indian Army in 1931 he was selected to the Government of India for appointment as Army Minister to the Nawab of Rampur for two years.

Colonel Morris has been a member of the West Fulham Conservative and Unionist Association since he took up residence at Rivermead Court on coming to England in 1930. He is chairman of the West Fulham Conservative Campaigners' Corps and vice president of the Fulham Branch of the British Legion.

"I am anxious to render all the service I can on the Borough Council" the colonel told one of our reporters. "I had a great admiration of the conscientious service rendered to Fulham by the lat Councillor Dodimead and I hope to emulate his splendid record.

just wound up, these indifferent, guzzling owners were sitting on a goldmine.

The prospect of no more football on this side of Fulham pleased many of the Bishops Park estate residents while distressing those who wanted to safeguard the club from the rapacious ownership of Ernie Clay, who left the club deeply in debt, and Marler Properties who bought it off him.

When Labour regained the council in 1986 they attempted a compulsory purchase of the club. Farcically, this ended up being opposed by the club, then headed by Jimmy Hill, who for some reason preferred a bung of £5 million to leave the ground for good but keep the club itself alive - somewhat like Wimbledon F.C. being relocated to Milton Keynes.

The council's Compulsory Purchase Order was blocked by the government which led to something of a stalemate as the council had no intention of granting any permission to plans that would have redeveloped the ground. Meanwhile the owners failed to invest in the club, so Fulham seemed doomed to a tenuous existence at the bottom of the football league, awaiting a Conservative council that would permit the sell-off.

Fulham was saved when the club was bought by Mohammed Al-Fayed in 1997, whose investment turned its fortunes around, taking it rapidly through the ranks to the Premiership. It was now the turn of local residents to complain about plans for new stadia and luxury apartments.

When the club proposed to provide a Thames Path on a slight overhang over the Thames, concerns that rowers and sailors might be trapped underneath the cantilevered structure and drown became raucous. It seemed to those wanting Fulham to attain long-term security that only plans that led to the club's departure were supported by residents.

This was a ferocious political battle locally led by opposing community groups: the Fulham Alliance (anti the stadium redevelopment and dominated by Bishops Park estate residents) and Fulham United (pro-stadium, dominated by Fulham fans from far and wide, and especially backed on the riverside council estates).

Both groups fought to get the most submissions in to the council, for or against, to challenge or justify the local



NEWS 3

Labour bids £20m for Fulham ground

TOWN HALL chiefs voted to buy an ailing soccer team's ground for an estimated £20-million.

Ruling Labour councillors agreed to make a compulsory purchase order for Craven Cottage, the home of Fulham Football Club, where property developers want to build houses.

But amid rowdy scenes in the council chamber on Wednesday night, they were accused by Tories of taking risks with ratepayers' money. The council's leaders were warned:

- **The sale of land for housing may not cover the costs of buying the whole of Craven Cottage.**
- **The owners may be able to sue through the European courts because planning decisions have devalued their land.**
- **It may prove difficult to find a developer willing to join the Town Hall in creating the housing, football and leisure complex proposed.**

Conservative leader Peter Prince warned: "This crowd who cannot even run the Town Hall properly suddenly think they are going to be experts on football."

THE GAZETTE
Friday, February 19,1993

Sport

The battle for Craven Cottage

The threat to Craven Cottage has been a long, drawn-out affair, much of it unknown to fans and much of it confusing. *Chris Hatherall* sheds light on what has happened so far.

FULHAM'S problems at Craven Cottage (right) began in earnest in May 1986, when chairman Ernie Clay sold his interests in the club to Marler Estates for £4m.

Marler (who became Cabra Estates) already owned Chelsea's Stamford Bridge and the new Fulham chairman was David Bulstrode.

Despite a promising start he stunned fans in February 1987 by announcing plans to merge the club with Queens Park Rangers and develop the Craven Cottage site.

Those plans have since been scuppered by Hammersmith and Fulham Council's refusal to grant planning permission, and a dogged determination by everyone at Fulham to stay put.

Former player and television pundit Jimmy Hill began the survival plan by forming a consortium of supporters, and he took over from Bulstrode as chairman in April 1987.

In a bid to save the club from extinction, the future of Craven Cottage at this stage took second place to the future of Fulham FC.

Hill struck a controversial and complicated deal which saw Fulham accept money from the ground's owners in return for a promise that Fulham would leave the Cottage.

The club were to receive £1m when they left the ground and a further £5m if the owners were granted planning permission. In return, Fulham agreed not to give evidence at a public inquiry and not to support a compulsory purchase order called for by the council.

In the end the deal never came to fruition because Cabra Estates soon got into financial difficulties, and their creditors, the Royal Bank of Scotland, took over the freehold. However, the Fulham board are still gagged by a legal requirement not to talk publicly on the issue and this has left many fans in the dark.

Whilst chairman Jimmy Hill has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep Fulham at Craven Cottage, most of his actions and most of the discussions have had to go unreported.

The Gazette, Cottage Pie and Fulham fanzine, There's Only One F In Fulham have tried to keep fans informed.

But there have been just as many inaccurate and confusing reports in national newspapers and on television for fans to deal with.

Now the issue has come to a real head. The Royal Bank of Scotland must decide very soon what to do with Craven Cottage, and Fulham's lease runs out for good in three months time.



Negotiations have stalled between the two sides, and despite Chelsea's success in recent weeks a deal looks no nearer.

Public pressure could be the final spark needed to change that, and Fulham 2000 is all about creating that spark.

planning justifications for the expansion and to dominate local media coverage.

It is a measure of how every inch of give on this issue was hard fought over that it took thirty years from when new stadium plans were first floated for the Eric Miller (riverside) to finally be rebuilt, with that infamous walkway overhanging the Thames. Already there are complaints - well founded or vexatious - that the entertainment facilities in the new stand breach the peace of the neighbourhood.

South of the Bishop's Park estate is Bishop's Park itself, the Fulham Palace Meadows allotments - one of the largest allotment areas in inner London - and Fulham Palace: the residence of the Bishops of London until 1973. When the bishops vacated the Palace it was let to the then Labour council in 1975 on a 100 year lease.

The plan was to open a museum, cultivate the gardens - which extend back to All Saints Church - and generally conserve the most significant ancient monument in Fulham.

However, there was no money to pay for the renovation and upgrade works or, to put it another way, Labour had more urgent priorities for capital investment like building council homes. The Palace began to deteriorate significantly and, when the Conservatives won control, they attempted to offload the Palace: to sell the lease to a private buyer.

Along with attempts to sell off the Fulham Court council estate in Fulham Road, the closure of Fulham Baths without any replacement, and the intent to sell off of Fulham Town Hall (not realised until another Conservative administration came along after 2006), this

Town hall wants help to turn crumbling former bishop's home into conference centre

A palace fit for kingpins of business?



Fulham Palace, the former home of London's bishops, as seen after rebuilding work in the second half of the 18th century, necessary after years of neglect

Home to the bishops of London for the past 1,000 years, Fulham Palace now needs private funds to restore it to working order. **COLIN KEATINGE** reports

TOWN hall chiefs are seeking a private sector partner to help turn crumbling Fulham Palace into a conference centre.

The historic palace in Bishop's Avenue, which has been home to more than 100 bishops of London in the past 1,000 years, is presently leased to Hammersmith and Fulham Council by the Church Commissioners.

Now, 23 years into the 100-year agreement, the palace is costing the council more than £100,000 a year and much of it is in a state of disrepair.

John Putnam, chairman of the Fulham Society and an advisor to the Fulham Palace management board, said: "A very large amount of money needs to be spent to get the building in good order.

"The upper floor is virtually unusable at the moment. The old facilities, toilets and kitchens would have to be upgraded and there is a problem with the drainage."

A £4.3 million bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund is no longer being pursued because it was found to be "unrealistic".

An independent charity called the Fulham Palace Trust was set up in 1990 to restore parts of the building and run the Museum of Fulham Palace, which is housed in the main buildings.

All with their part to play, the trust, council, and Church Commissioners have to work together to find ways of making the palace solvent.

Using the private sector to provide top conference facilities for groups of 100-150 in the secluded grounds and palace would be one option.

Deputy for environment and contract services, Cllr Michael Cartwright, said: "We are looking to go into a partnership with some sort of organisation that would be able to run the palace for conferences, retreats, that sort of thing."

Cllr Cartwright did not deny the trust might be sidelined if it opposed proposals put forward by the council.

He said: "We're obviously very keen to come to an agreement with them.

"I'm afraid they're going to have to be rather more successful at making money than they are at the moment."

Deputy leader of the Tory opposition and palace ward Cllr Emile Al-Uzaizi said: "The genuine worry is that if we bring in the private sector then that may exclude many local people."

Another option is leasing two 19th century lodges at the entrance to the palace grounds or moving the museum from its present site in the main building.

John Rylance, chairman of the palace trust, said. "There needs to be space for education functions and exhibitions. My hopes, and the trustees', are for a viable and successful future for the palace."

Undeniably important, but historically neglected

THE FULHAM Palace grounds were given to the Bishop of London in 704 by the Bishop of Hereford, who apparently hoped the present would help "to purge the guilt of his sins".

A building was not constructed on the site until more than 300 years later. The first reference to a Bishop of London living there comes in the 12th century.

The grounds have often been more carefully tended than the house. A committee including the renowned architect Christopher Wren was appointed in 1715 to report on the dilapidation of the palace. However the building was not properly repaired and in 1749 it was found to be in a dire state.



The courtyard of Fulham Palace in 1798

Medieval parts of the palace were knocked down in the 1760s and towers and battlements added. These were later demolished, along with a brewery that fermented the bishop's tipple until early in the 19th century.

Bishop Mandell Creighton opened the palace grounds to the public early this century and regularly entertained more than 70 people at weekends. In 1973, when Bishop Stopford retired, the palace ceased to be used as a residence. The Grade I listed building was leased by Church Commissioners to Hammersmith and Fulham Council in 1975 for 100 years. The gardens, which are included in the English Heritage Register of Historic Gardens, were opened to the public one year later.

In 1987, after consulting residents, the council reported: "The palace and its grounds are of local, regional, national and international importance." Despite that it has been largely neglected and, apart from occasional functions and a museum which was opened in 1992, continues to be under-used.

● We are grateful to Historical Publications for the use of pictures from *Fulham Past* by Barbara Denny.

was a huge image problem the Tories created for themselves in the lead up to the 1986 council elections.

They regarded themselves as, by now, the Party of Fulham, yet here they were trying to flog off Fulham's crown jewels. The damage the Fulham Palace sell-off plan did to the Conservatives was significant, especially among their most staunch supporters - though not really sufficient to lose them too many votes in Palace ward.

It was the Labour council elected in 1986 that began the long path of restoring the palace and its grounds, opening the museum and making some tentative steps to addressing the decades of underinvestment.

In the late 1990s the palace won National Lottery heritage funding to fully address the needed works: the restoration of the walled garden with its curving greenhouse; to lay out the gardens properly; the recreation of some of the moat, new premises for the museum; and to make the palace estate financially sustainable.

This whole area of open space physically separates the Bishop's Park estate from the other neighbourhoods in this ward.

Residential development begins again at Fulham High Street. There is the imposing Parkview Court mansion block on Fulham High Street and a much more recently built development: Bishop's Gate, built on a former council depot. There are the medievel-feeling cul-de-sacs Church Gate and Steeple Close by All Saints Church.

Then, across the other side of Putney Bridge there is Swanbank Close sheltered housing, the end of Fulham High Street, gated-off Carrara Wharf, which was built on a former stone yard just beneath the railway bridge, and Ranelagh Gardens.

Under the railway brige we move into Hurlingham proper.

Hurlingham was a vast estate leased, then sold, by the Bishop of London to a succession of affluent individuals who built a "cottage" and later a villa somewhat similar in architectural style to the US White House. The owners allowed a variety of activities to take place on their land and, as this lovely spot leading down to the river grew in popularity, it was eventually turned into a private members' club: The Hurlingham Club.

Until the Second World War the club owned a vastly bigger slice of Hurlingham than it does now. The whole of Hurlingham Park was their Polo Field No.1 while the site of Sulivan School and the Sulivan Court council estate was their Polo Field No.2. During the war, these grounds quartered several military battalions and large chunks of the polo fields were turned into allotments to help with rationing.

After the war the London County Council sought to compulsorily purchase the entire Hurlingham Club site because, while Fulham had a supply of ornamental public parks, greens and commons, there was no recreation space in the south of Fulham. The demand for very much better housing for the working classes was loud before the war and infinitely louder after it.

And, despite Fulham being historically a district of market gardens, there were no allotment sites either until the Polo pitches were commandeered - the Fulham Palace allotments had not been designated such at that point.

Public open space was especially important as, in the main, the homes the LCC and borough councils were building were flats without private gardens. A rapidly expanding population desperately needed recreation grounds.

Such a vast acreage in south Fulham enabled a long list of social needs like these to be fixed. The borough council even aspired to turn Hurlingham House into a youth centre.

But the Attlee government would not allow so radical a plan: the club almost certainly had members and other advocates within the civil service and political ranks lobbying for it. Instead, the LCC had to settle for the two polo pitches. The Hurlingham Club cooperated with the appropriation of so much of its land to ensure it retained enough space to survive - indeed thrive.

This is a great example of how utterly different political values were then compared to today.

Immediately after the war it was deemed essentially patriotic for the State to seize vast tracts of private property to provide amenities - housing, recreation and healthcare - for the whole community to benefit from.

Today, not only would such a seizure from an exclusive elite institution like the Hurlingham Club be unthinkable but we see councils of all political persuasions across London gifting council estate land to developers to build private housing: the literal reverse of what happened in Hurlingham. Municipal-isation versus privatisation.

Back then the two sides in the council chamber were divided only on whether the borough should build Sulivan Court using its own workforce (the Labour preference) or contract the work to existing local builders (the Conservative position).

But Hurlingham is far more than its club, and the land the councils procured from it.

Hurlingham proper comprises two distinct types of housing. Three huge mansion blocks dominate the riverside: Hurlingham Court - one block a fairly ugly and atypical 1960s 9-storey block, the other an elegant and ornate red brick building that would not look out of place in South Kensington.

Next door is the overbearing 1930s art deco Rivermead Court, three eight storey blocks set around a courtyard. Eminent residents have included Lord Fowler,

Hurlingham playing fields victory

Ten weeks after the first intimation of his ideas on the proposed compulsory purchase of Hurlingham Club and grounds by the L.C.C. Mr. Lewis Silkin, Minister of Town and Country Planning, confirmed the Order with modifications that constitute victories for the club and playing fields.

Sixty acres were wanted by the L.C.C. for playing fields, an amenity park and riverside promenade. The Minister has said "Yes" to playing fields, authorising the L.C.C. to buy 20 acres (No.1 polo ground and stables) for that purpose.

But, despite a protest from the borough council and disapproving expressions from the L.C.C., Mr. Silkin has allowed the Hurlingham Club 40 acres of parkland and recreational facilities, plus its riverside walk.

"Hurlingham is some distance from the areas where congestion in Fulham is greatest and open space most needed," states the decision. "For this reason the case for the provision of football pitches and similar facilities is, in the Minister's opinion, stronger than that for an amenity park. Moreover, the evidence given at the inquiry made it clear that it is in space for organised games that the present deficiency is most acute."

When allotments can be given up

The polo ground and stables are well suited for conversion into playing fields, it is stated, and when the allotments can be given up there should be no difficulty in laying the ground out for games.

Referring to the 40 acres to be retained by the club, the Minister says they consist of a background of well-timbered parkland studded with recreational facilities that are already, at busy periods, inadequate to meet the needs of members and visitors, while the remaining parkland is too cut-up and scattered to absorb or provide relaxation for any considerable number of persons.

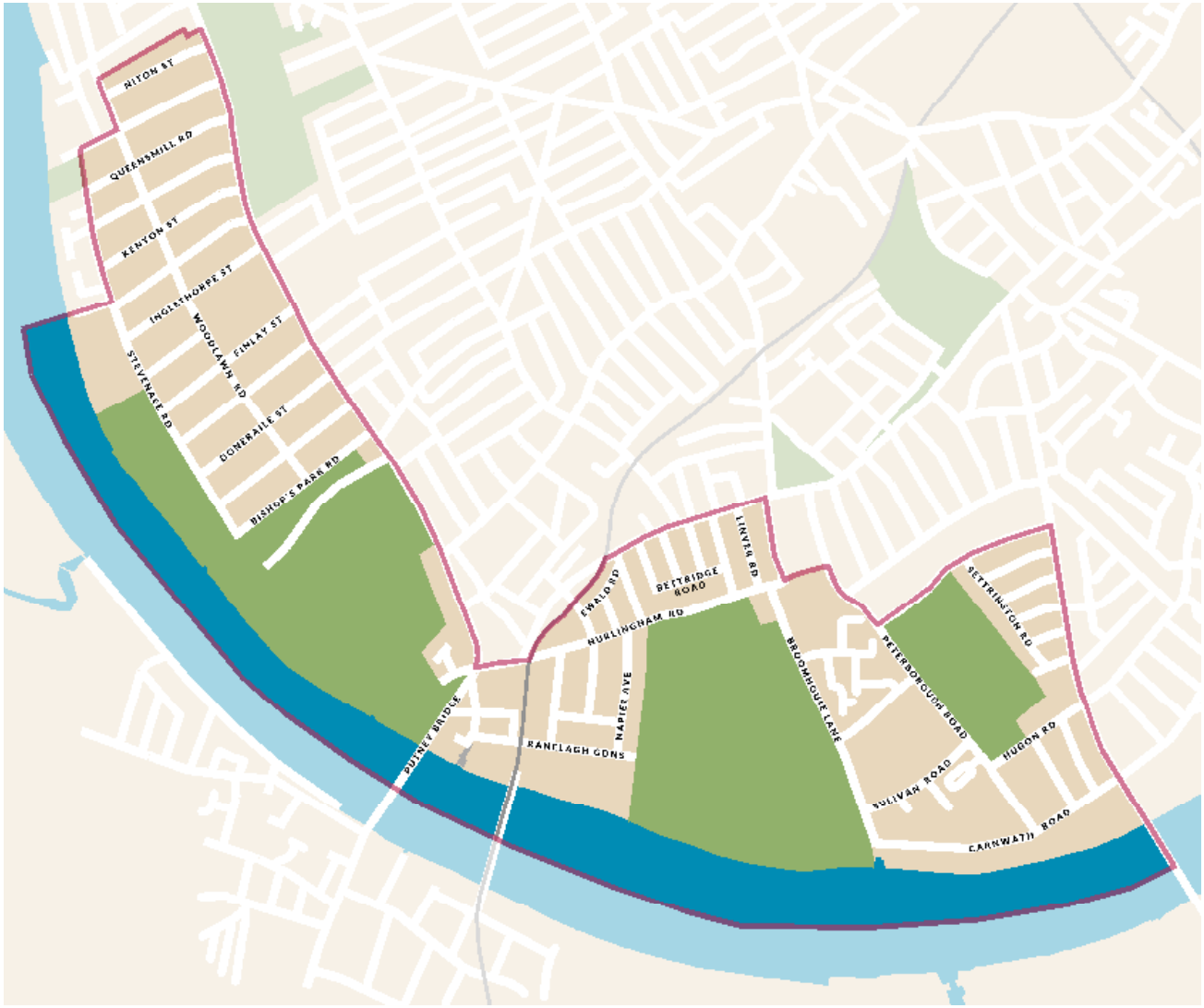
It would not be practicable to make more intensive use of the grounds without drastic remodelling of the layout and the consequent sacrifice of their present attractiveness. In the Minister's opinion, the club's extinction would be a loss to London, and at the inquiry the L.C.C. did not suggest a possible alternative site.

Alternative accommodation

Three properties fronting on to Hurlingham Road have been included in the area to be purchased by the L.C.C. The Minister asks, however, that the council should not disturb the occupiers of these properties, who serve the club, until alternative and convenient accommodation can be provided.

The borough council protested to the Prime Minister and Mr. Silkin that the deprivation of the Hurlingham Club river frontage from public use is a direct divergence from the County of London Plan.

On this question, Mr Silkin's decision states: "The line of the proposed riverside walk has been excluded from the Order as confirmed because the benefit to be derived from so isolated and inaccessible a stretch did not appear sufficient to outweigh the difficulties of construction and the damaging effect of severance from the remainder of the ground. The balance of advantage might, however, be shifted were the proposal revived as part of a wider scheme to open up the river front."



former Speaker of the House of Lords and Health Secretary in Margaret Thatcher's government; and, aptly enough, Lord Weatherill, former Speaker of the House of Commons from that same era.

There is one other huge modernist tower block across the road: Napier Court - again entirely out of keeping with the neighbourhood it's set in. These high density, imposing mansion blocks are one aspect of Hurlingham.

Another aspect is traditional Fulham terraced streets of varying scale and grandeur. The streets south of Hurlingham Road comprised larger houses not dissimilar to, and built around the same time as, the Bishops Park estate: Napier Avenue, Edenhurst Avenue, Hurlingham Gardens and Ranelagh Avenue.

Between Hurlingham Road and New Kings Road the houses are somewhat less imposing, but only by degrees. with a mix of very much sought after Parson's Green fringe streets like Linver and Alderville Roads and more tightly packed terraces squeezed around the District Line railway viaduct - roads like Foskett, Ewald and Grimston. There is also a huge orange Italianate stucco villa in Hurlingham Road occupying a plot that stretches all the way back to Bettridge Road.

It is common in built-up London for once-distinct districts to merge into each other as undeveloped land was built upon and the gaps between neighbourhoods disappeared. Hurlingham is a clearly identifiable, distinct and long-established neighbourhood of Fulham. But so too is Parson's Green and they blend together. Broomhouse Road - part of Hurlingham, is just across the New King's Road from Parson's Green itself.

Where is the boundary between the two? The streets north of Hurlingham Road were in the incohate Parson's Green and Walham ward until 2022. Before that they were in Palace. Before that they were back in a Parson's Green ward. And before that they were in Hurlingham ward.

Conservatives hold Palace ward

Sweeping victory for the Tories

By NICK HOPKINS

YOUNG Tory Andrew Ground steamrollered all the other candidates for a resounding by-election victory.

The 25-year-old was 1,000 votes clear of his nearest rival for Palace Ward when the result was announced on Thursday night last week.

His Liberal Democrat opponents, who caused fury by calling the by-election in the height of summer, stood firm behind their decision and claimed they had never expected to take the Tory stronghold.

Mr Ground, a marketing executive with Procter and Gamble, polled 1,280 votes last week. Behind him were Labour candidate David Dunwoody with 215 votes and the Liberal Democrat hopeful David Jacques with 111 votes. There was a 41 per cent turnout.

Fulham MP Matthew Carrington was one of the first to congratulate the new councillor after the count at Fulham Town Hall.

Mr Ground said: "Obviously I am delighted to have won. This is the first seat I have contested and it is nice to be representing an area where I have lived all my life. The main issues in Palace I will be concentrating on are the parking problems and the future of Fulham Football Club. We have big problems at the moment because commuters are parking in residential roads. Many people cannot park outside their own homes because of this.

"And if Fulham FC is to close then I will want to make sure any redevelopment is a sympathetic one to the needs of local people."

Councillor Ground takes over the duties of the late Lady Belhaven, who died in February.

The Conservatives had hoped to wait until the autumn to hold the by-election to replace her but the Liberal Democrats stepped in and demanded a summer date.

Councillor Ground commented: "By convention we should have been allowed to call the by-election. They showed a lack of respect for Lady Belhaven. I think they were trying to catch us on the hop. Calling for a by-election on the Thursday before the summer bank holiday must be the worst time in the year because so many people are on holiday."

But defeated Liberal Democrat David Jacques dismissed the claim: "There was not a low turn out for the by-election. We did not expect to win the seat – not this time anyway but we made the Tories work hard for their victory."

This inability to define the area is inherent in these repeated boundary changes.

The area east of Hurlingham Park has several different identities, again including Hurlingham. Is the Peterborough estate: the ladder of "Lion Houses" on the south side of New King's Road Parson's Green, or Hurlingham, or Sulivan? Is South Park Hurlingham or Sulivan? What about the southern, originally industrial, end of Broomhouse Lane and Peterborough Road: Hurlingham or Sulivan?

What's Sulivan? It is one of the growing list of former Hammersmith and Fulham wards: the area between Broomhouse Lane and Wandsworth Bridge Road, and New King's Road and the river. But it's more than just an archaic, arcane ward name. Much of the area was acquired by the Sulivan family who lived in Broom House, just by Parson's Green.

The Sulivan family's wealth came from the East India Company. They were major benefactors to local good causes. Locally they founded the Ray of Hope Coffee Club for Working Men - one of those paternalistic efforts by the wealthy to divert the working poor from the vices of pubs and alcohol. This establishment eventually became another exclusive private members club: The Parson's Green Club and, like Hurlingham, a large proportion of its grounds were thereafter purchased by the LCC to build Hurlingham and Chelsea Secondary School.

The Sulivans were also benefactors to St Dionis Church, Parsons Green and the gothic Elizabethan Ragged School for Children with Tuberculosis - which later became the Castle Club on the corner of Daisy Lane. Although the building certainly looks like it might date from the first Elizabethan era, the name on this occasion refers to Elizabeth Sulivan who was the younger sister of Prime Minister Lord Palmerston.

This is an atypical Fulham neighbourhood. It was one of the last to be developed so its architectural styles are far more modern and its laid out more like an outer London suburb rather than densely-packed inner London. Until the war pretty much everything west of Peterborough Road was either undeveloped or large factories and warehouses; and in the middle South Park prises each of these blocks of land apart.

There are bits: Daisy Lane, Peterborough Road and Sulivan Road built in the rural arts and crafts movement cottage-style houses.

Summary of results for Palace and Hurlingham ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Hurlingham ward					
1900	63.9		36.1		
1903	60.0		40.0		
1906	73.8		26.2		
1909B	59.1		40.9		
1909	68.9		31.1		
1912	68.8		31.2		
1912B	65.5		34.5		
1919	49.5	34.1			16.4
1922	73.8	26.2			
1922B	74.6	25.4			
1925	73.6	26.4			
1928	73.8	26.2			
1928B	73.0	27.0			
1931	84.4	15.6			
1934	71.3	28.7			
1937	61.2	36.8			
1939B	Unop				
1945	46.8	53.2			
1949	64.7	35.3			
1953	54.6	45.4			
1956	51.3	48.7			
1959	51.0	49.0			
1962	49.9	50.1			
Parson's Green ward					
1964	42.8	57.2			
1968	64.7	35.3			
1971	44.8	55.2			
1974	52.4	47.6			
Palace ward					
1978	71.5	21.9	5.0		1.7
1979B	69.2	25.2	8.4		4.5
1982	69.3	15.6	15.1		
1986	63.2	22.1	9.8	4.9	
1987B	83.2	12.3	4.5		
1990	69.9	19.1		6.6	4.4
1992B	79.7	13.4	6.9		
1994	69.4	20.6	10.0		
1998	73.0	17.3	9.7		
Palace Riverside ward					
2002	68.1	19.8	12.1		
2006	45.3	9.7	5.9		39.1
2010	63.0	15.6	21.4		
2014	61.8	18.4	6.9	12.9	
2018	62.1	23.8	14.1		
Palace and Hurlingham ward					
2022	44.7	21.6	14.9	14.0	4.8
2026	46.3	17.6	13.0	13.8	9.3

Hurlingham Square, on the corner of Peterborough Road, is a 1980s gated-off post-modern development and stands on the site of a paper factory.

The Piper Building was built on the site of a concrete works and was originally constructed as a laboratory complex for British Gas; its ornamental tile mosaics are now listed.

The Philpott Square council estate was built on an engineering works; the private Broomhouse Dock estate in Carnwath Road and the adjoining public housing stand on a chemical plant supplied from the river; and the most recent new housing blocks across Carnwath Road from Broomhouse Dock called Higham House were warehouses for construction materials suppliers.

This is, essentially, a new neighbourhood with some way still to go before it is settled. Most of the river-side of Carnwath Road that was once warehouses has been cleared and is now undergoing the sort of high-rise apartment block redevelopment that has transformed Sands End riverside and that of Wandsworth across the Thames. There is also a new public space by the riverside where one of the entrance shafts to the Tideway Tunnel - the super-sewer running beneath the Thames to stop waste flooding into the river when it rains heavily.

Finally there are the streets clustered south and east of South Park. The streets south of the park are smaller, more tightly packed cottages with a couple of inter-war tenement council blocks - Carnwath House and John Dwight House (named after Fulham's most famous potter).

The roads in the "V" between the park and Wandsworth Bridge Road: Settrington, Ashcombe, Beltran and Narborough, are larger and in the far more common Fulham style; Edwardian bay-fronted terraces.

There is also Clancarty Road which is an eclectic mix of many kinds of housing styles including the horse-shoe shaped private tenement block called Brightwells, which stands on part of the estate of John Tamworth, privy counsellor to Elizabeth I.

Politically, as with so much of Fulham, this Sulivan area is polarised and fairly evenly balanced. In the red corner are Sulivan Court, Philpott Square, Carnwath and John Dwight Houses and the public housing by Broomhouse Dock. In the blue corner: the majority of voters in the terraces and the ever-growing private residential estates.

There are more voters on the council estates than in the rest of the area for now, but this doesn't give Labour the edge, because the estates - especially Sulivan Court - vote in lower numbers than the streets.

The Conservative disaster that was 2022 did not leave Palace and Hurlingham unscathed. Of course they won the ward easily but their vote fell almost twenty points. The Sulivan section of the ward was pretty dismal for the Conservatives but so too was the Bishop's Park estate - at least by recent standards.

In 2026 the Conservatives did quite a bit better, though still by historical standards poor - they were still a distance below 50% of the vote, for example. But they did increase their vote, which wasn't the case in the majority of the borough. And Labour fell back so the Conservative majority increased to almost 30%. Reform also failed to make any headway. In the sense that no part of this borough is good hunting ground for that party, it isn't surprising.

But perhaps it might also be expected that the demographic profile of parts of Hurlingham - especially the huge riverside blocks, might contain slightly more older, more right-wing voters who could become Reform supporters. Maybe not. But the fact the Conservatives increased their share despite 9% going to Reform is impressive.

Palace and Hurlingham is both an unwieldy ward covering almost three miles along the Thames from Wandsworth Bridge to Crabtree Wharf; but it also couples together two whole, reasonably well-defined neighbourhoods that have similar demographic and political outlooks. There will be no political upsets in a ward like this. But the Tories have a long way to go to restore their vote to the heights it reached in the 1980s and 1990s. That may actually not be possible on these boundaries - but intrinsically Palace and Hurlingham should be at broadly the same level as its neighbour: Parson's Green and Sandford,

Rollcall of Palace and Hurlingham ward councillors

including Palace Riverside ward (2002-22), Palace ward (1978-02), Parson's Green ward (1964-78) and Hurlingham ward (1900-64)

2026
- Aliya Afzal-Khan
- Amanda Lloyd-Harris
- Jeremy Maddocks

2022
- Aliya Afzal-Khan
- Jackie Borland
- Amanda Lloyd-Harris

2018
- Donald Johnson
- Amanda Lloyd-Harris

2014
- Marcus Ginn
- Donald Johnson

2010
- Marcus Ginn
- Donald Johnson

2006
- Donald Johnson
- Minnie Scott-Russell

2002
- Emile Al Uzaizi
- Amanda Lloyd Harris

1998
- Emile Al Uzaizi
- Andrew Ground

1994
- Emile Al Uzaizi
- Andrew Ground

1992B
- Andrew Ground

1990
- Emile Al Uzaizi
- Lady Rosemary Belhaven

1987B
- Peter Hopkins

1986
- Emile Al Uzaizi
- Richard Hoddinott

1982
- Richard Hoddinott
- Stuart Leishman

1987B
- Lucinda Winter

1978
- Andrew Jackson
- Stuart Leishman

1974
- Andrew Jackson
- Barbara Leishman
- Stuart Leishman

1971
- George Dimmick
- Hugh Duff
- Susan Hall

1968
- John Akerman
- Patrick Ground
- Anne Partridge

1964
- Hugh Duff
- Ian Jordan
- David King

1962
- Hugh Duff
- Birtle Little
- John Wilkinson

1959
- Laura Mills
- Alan Watkins
- Wilfrid Watson

1956
- Stuart Leishman
- Laura Mills
- William Parsons

1953
- Stuart Leishman
- Laura Mills
- William Parsons

1949
- Stuart Leishman
- Laura Mills
- William Parsons

1945
- Charles Boaden
- Margaret Lancaster
- Joseph Ward

1937B
- Charles Temple Morris

1937
- Herbert Dodimead
- Thomas Harper
- Arthur Moore

1934
- Herbert Dodimead
- Thomas Harper
- Arthur Moore

1931
- Herbert Dodimead
- Thomas Harper
- Arthur Moore

1928
- Herbert Dodimead
- Arthur Moore
- Edward Pritchard

1928B
- Thomas Harper

1925
- Herbert Dodimead
- John Faulkner
- Edward Pritchard

1922
- William Brooks
- James Littleboy
- Edward Pritchard

1919
- William Brooks
- James Littleboy
- Edward Pritchard

1912B
- William Brooks

1912
- Herbert Dodimead
- Thomas Evans
- John Mobbs

1909
- Evan Andrew
- Thomas Evans
- Henry Praegar

1906
- Evan Andrew
- Frederick Drew
- James Littleboy

1903
- Evan Andrew
- Frederick Drew
- James Littleboy

1900
- Arthur Dabbs
- James Littleboy
- John Mobbs

Parson's Green and Sandford ward

Of all the founding settlements of Fulham, bar that township itself, Parson's Green is arguably the best known. It's the only one with a tube station - North End had one until Messrs Gibbs and Flew persuaded the rail owners to rename it West Kensington; and Walham Green had one until councillors decided it was time their borough had at least one station with "Fulham" in its title.

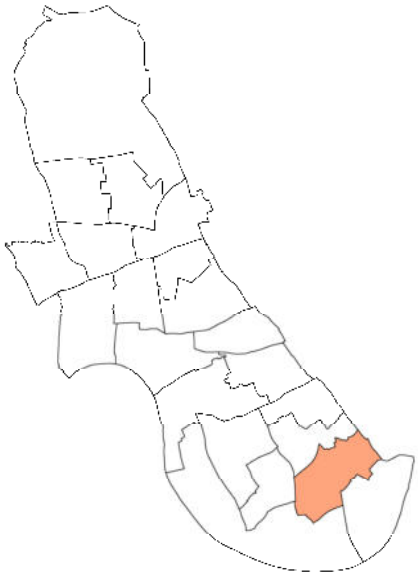
It is one of the most affluent parts of the borough and its most prestigious pub, the White Horse, is renowned across the capital among revellers. Yet, for all this, Parson's Green has for long stretches never been recognised politically. The reasons for that were discussed in the Palace and Hurlingham profile but essentially the problem is that Parson's Green blurs into surrounding neighbourhoods closer to the edges of Fulham.

When that happens, the central community - in this case Parson's Green - ends up donating parts to other wards. The area immediately behind Parson's Green Station, for example is in Fulham Town, even though the residents would identify as living in Parson's Green. Broomhouse Road, Linver Road, Alderville Road and the like are metres from Parson's Green - but in Palace and Hurlingham ward. The Peterborough estate is now in Parson's Green and Sandford ward but for decades were in Sulivan ward. Parson's Green itself used to be in Eel Brook ward.

And yet as a neighbourhood it has arguably the strongest "brand" in Fulham. It even has its own local newspaper: The Parson. Hardly anywhere has one of those any more!

Just like Palace, Labour was very happy with the creation of Parson's Green [and Walham, as it started out] in 2002 - and for the exact same reasons. Lots of the very strongest Conservative areas were packed into this new ward: the Peterborough estate from Sulivan; the Eel Brook Common end of Eel Brook; Moore Park from Walham.

The northern end of Sands End: places like Harwood Terrace and Imperial Square, which had become dreadful for Labour. As a result Sands End became defensible and Fulham Broadway became defensible, when the six council seats between them could have been put beyond Labour's reach.



Parson' Green and Walham also made sense in terms of the communities it served. Most wards are defined by very clear boundaries: Avonmore, for example, is hemmed in by the Hammersmith and Talgarth Roads, the borough boundary and Hammersmith Broadway. These are significant boundaries that separate the communities within Avonmore from those beyond. Then there are wards like College Park and Old Oak which, while having clear physical boundaries like the Westway actually draws together the neighbourhoods orbiting Wormwood Scrubs.

Parson's Green and Walham is a ward more like College Park and Old Oak. It serves the communities living either side of King's Road and New King's Road or, alternatively, the neighbourhoods that surround Parson's Green and Eel Brook Common.

New King's Road is the common thread through this ward; a focal point for the communities either side of it. The largest of these is the Peterborough estate, built across the grounds of Peterborough House: originally the home of Charles Mordaunt, the third Duke of Peterborough.

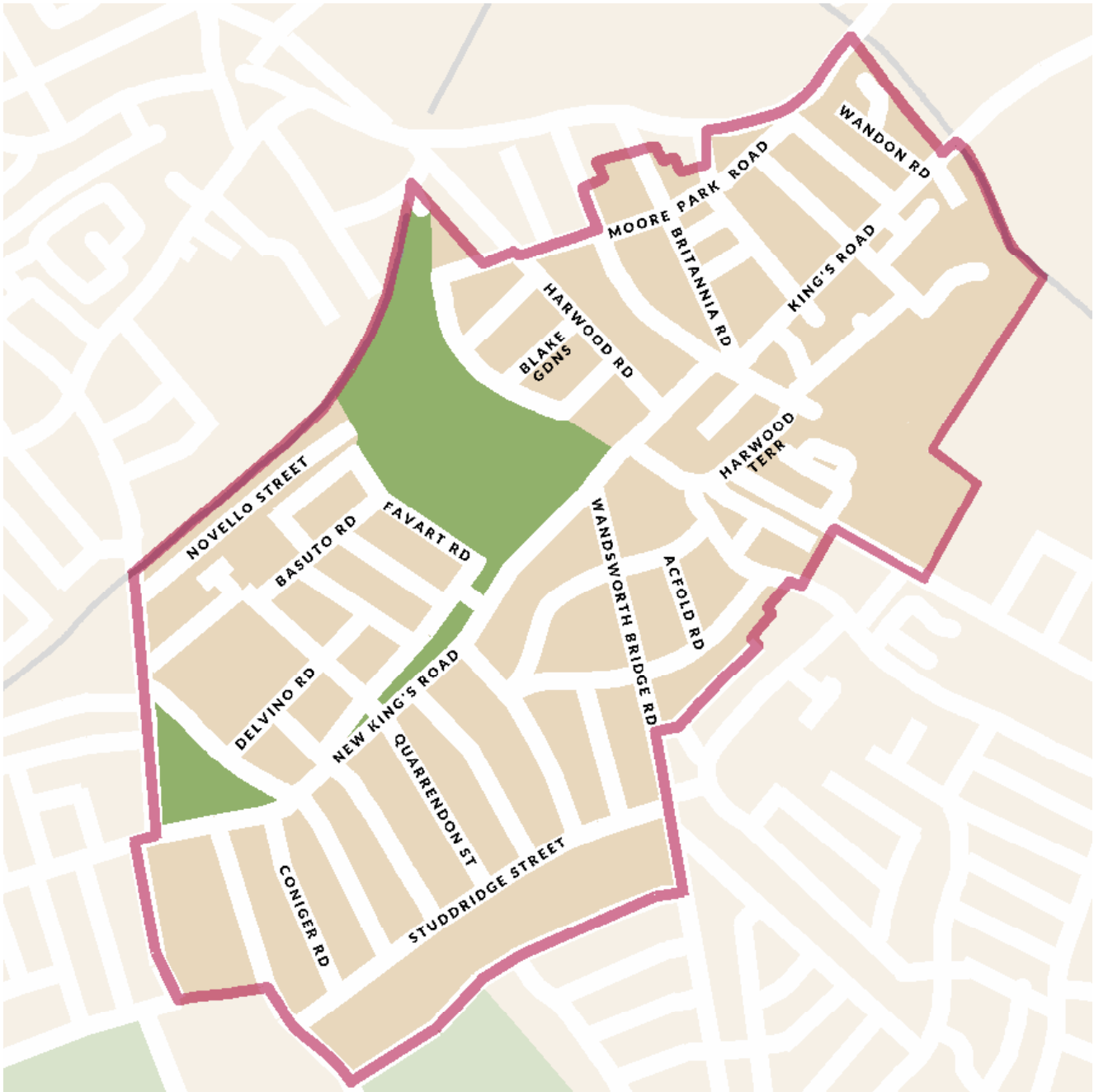
As the estate passed from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie it gradually fell in to decline - and scandal: one of its tenants, Richard Heaviside kidnapped a young woman he was smitten by, had her transported up the river from Lambeth and held her captive for over a year as his concubine.

Eventually, parcels of the vast grounds of the estate began being sold off to settle debts or because they were becoming unmanageable. Unusually it was just one builder, Jimmy Nichols, who developed this land - ensuring that the whole area was built in the same broad style: red brick houses designed in couplets with white awnings and decorative plaster lions.

The legend is that Nichols, who later became a Moderate (Conservative) councillor for Sands End over-ordered the lions: he planned to buy two hundred and ended up with over two thousand, so far more ended up decorating these houses than planned. Hence they became known as "Lion Houses".

There are somewhat different forms of this style: the New King's Road frontage comprises higher town houses and mansion blocks; the houses differ in size and some philistine owners have painted the frontages white, but overall the entire estate is in tact and of a piece. The estate extends across Wandsworth Bridge Road - or rather begins there because these were the first streets built. Then came the atypical curving Ryecroft and Stokenchurch Streets plus Coniger, at the other end of the estate. Quarrendon lies across the footprint of Peterborough House.

The Peterborough estate was the largest neighbourhood in the Sulivan ward (the Sulivans being the next door



neighbours to the Peterboroughs, living in Broom House) that existed from 1964 to 2002. It was the Peterborough estate that determined the political swing of Sulivan ward - a ward that started off very comfortably Labour but which, by its last election in 1998 was strongly Conservative.

Labour won Sulivan very easily in its first contest in 1964, taking two thirds to one third of the vote. They lost, as they did almost everywhere, in 1968 and in 1971 won it back, easily but somewhat closer than 1964: 63%-37%.

The gap narrowed again in 1974: 59% to 41%. And then Labour's vote collapsed. In 1978 a 14% swing enabled the Conservatives to take the ward easily enough. It was the rapidly changing demographics of the Peterborough estate, especially, that were driving the swing of Sulivan to the Conservatives.

So comfortable was the Tory victory in 1978, and so numerous were the marginal wards elsewhere, that Labour did not put very much effort into attempting to regain it in 1982.

This gave an opportunity to the Liberal-SDP Alliance, which had polled 11% in 1978. They finished runners-up, just 167 votes behind the re-elected Tories. Labour slumped to 23%.

Labour rebounded in 1986, getting to within 100 votes of winning - but even this result actually shows how strongly Conservative Sulivan had become: one of just four wards that elected full sets of their councillors that year.

From then on the Tories pulled away from Labour. By the time the ward was last contested in 1998, it was the Conservatives winning in excess of 60% of the vote, with Labour well below 30%.

Almost all of that Conservative lead came from the Peterborough estate. The rest of Sulivan was fairly evenly balanced, with the two big council estates (Sulivan Court and the Townmead estate) and the residual, diminishing Labour vote in the streets around South Park balancing out the new build exclusive developments like the Piper Building and Hurlingham Square.

Courage of mourned councillor

A LEADING Conservative councillor and former chief officer of the GLC died last week after a long illness.

Cllr Jonathan Maiden, 64, of Hurlingham Gardens, Fulham, leaves a wife, Jane, and four grown-up children.

He was first elected councillor for Sulivan ward in Fulham in 1990, and held the seat in 1994.

Tory leader Cllr Gerald Wombwell, who recruited Cllr Maiden just before the 1990 election, said he was "enormously sad" to learn of his colleague's death. "His wisdom and guidance were so valuable to us," said Cllr Wombwell. "I am only glad his suffering of the last few months has come to an end, but we shall miss him very much indeed. Above all, I'll remember an astonishingly brave man who bore a long illness with incredible courage and steely determination."

Mayor Iain Coleman said: "Cllr Maiden was well-liked and respected by both sides of the council chamber. It's sad to lose someone who served the council and his constituents with great distinction. Our deepest sympathies go to his family."

With his vast experience in the public and private sectors, Cllr Maiden was an obvious choice as the Tories' finance spokesman.

After qualifying as a surveyor, Mr Maiden spent two years in the Royal Artillery on National Service. He went on to become a captain in the Territorial Army's Honourable Artillery Company and was awarded the Territorial Decoration. After a successful career in the building industry, including 14 years at Bovis, he joined the GLC in 1976, where he held three chief officer posts, including general manager of Thamesmead New Town from 1981 to 1986.

Cllr Maiden was a charity worker and environmentalist. He was a director of the Fulham Palace Trust, a Fulham Society committee member and played a key role in the Royal Cambridge Home for Soldiers' Widows and the Francis Holland Schools' Trust.



Cllr Maiden (right) jokes with colleagues

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New Cllr says result was vote of no confidence in council

Triumphant Tories celebrate victory

By THOMAS HARDING

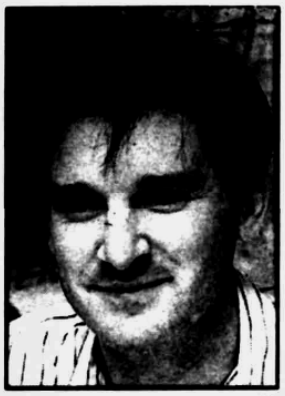
FULHAM Tories are celebrating their victory in the Sulivan ward by-election saying it sets a platform for them in the next General Election.

But Labour politicians believe another 3.4 per cent swing to them in a Conservative stronghold sounds the death knell for MP Matthew Carrington after the recent Crabtree ward defeat.

The result was announced after the last of 1,568 voters filed out of the assembly hall in Sulivan Primary School in the muggy heat of Thursday night last week.

Newly elected Nicholas Byron Botterill promised he would fight for better living conditions for the people in his ward.

Flushed with victory after winning with 52 per cent of the votes Cllr Botterill said: "I feel elated. This victory sends a strong message to the Labour council. It is a vote of no confidence by the Sulivan ward electorate on how they have been appallingly treated by the council. This especially includes those tenants who have been dreadfully treated in Sulivan Court."



Victorious: Nick Botterill

A 33-year-old bachelor and director of Teddies Day Nursery in Wandsworth Bridge Road, Fulham, he added: "I intend to fight on quality of life issues for the people in my ward."

To win the seat Labour needed a massive 10 per cent swing to overturn the Tory majority.

Before the count party officials said they would be delighted if they got a four per cent swing.

Council leader Andrew Slaughter said: "If this is the best they can do in a stronghold ward like Sulivan then we will win this seat in the next General Election."

But Tory leader Gerald Wombwell said: "This is a tremendous result for the Conservative Party. It sets us on the road to victory in Fulham for Matthew Carrington and will make Labour very nervous."

Lib Dem candidate Richard Patterson, 47, put on a brave face after winning only eight per cent of the vote.

He said: "I am very pleased that my first outing into local politics has produced this good result. It could have been better but it is a small step in building the groundwork for the future."

UK Independence Party candidate, Gerald Roberts, 60, quickly left with only two per cent of the vote after the count was announced.

● Total votes polled: Nicholas Byron Botterill (Conservative) 808, Ronald Burns (Labour) 609, Richard Patterson (Lib Dem) 121, Gerald Roberts (UK Independence Party) 29. One vote was spoiled in the 37.2 per cent turnout.

If the Peterboroughs and Sulivans are responsible for the western, Parson's Green, end of the ward, the Harwoods and Maxwells are responsible for the east: Sandford and Moore Park.

The Harwood family owned pretty much all of the land between Walham Grove and Sandford Manor; acres of market gardens watered by Counters Creek before it was turned into the Kensington Canal and then filled in when the West London Line was built.

As well as Harwood Road, Harwood Terrace, the Harwood Arms and the now closed Harwood Primary School, the three streets immediately east of Eel Brook Common are all named after members of the family.

A Charles Harwood was a Municipal Reform councillor for Walham ward in the early 1920s - perhaps a member of that family or maybe just coincidentally named.

J. Percival Maxwell developed the Moore Park estate: the area between Fulham Road and King's Road, named after his home town in Ireland. Moore Park was one of the earliest planned neighbourhoods in Fulham - as mentioned in other profiles,

Most of Fulham developed from the east and this area was closest to Chelsea. When the West London line was built a station was provided here - where the Wandon Road council estate now stands, and that helped make the district financially viable to construct.

Winding down after 20 years of work on the front benches

Since quitting two weeks ago as leader of the borough's Tories, Gerald Wombwell is enjoying his new-found freedom. MICHAEL GERRARD reports

THE telephone no longer rings constantly and the piles of council papers have been replaced by the *Daily Telegraph*, but Cllr Gerald Wombwell is enjoying his newly-acquired backbench life.

The leader of Hammersmith and Fulham Council's Conservative group for the past eight years, he resigned at the beginning of the month.

"I did not want to go on too long in this business and become some old figure shuffling around the town hall and people saying: 'He used to be leader 20 years ago, you know'," he explained.

"In the 10 days or so since I ceased being leader, the telephone calls have stopped as has much of my mail.

"My life is now my own again and I'm finding it quite marvellous.

"For the first time in a long time I am not doing two full-time jobs."

But after nearly two decades on the front bench, both in opposition and in power, one suspects that Cllr Wombwell's distinctive tones have not been heard for the last time.

Brought up in Bovingdon, near Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, Gerald Wombwell, 61, has lived in Fulham for 35 years.

For much of that time, he has worked as a marketing consultant from the Quarrendon Street home where he lives with his wife Elizabeth, an NHS manager in Wandsworth. They have two grown-up children.

First elected for Sulivan ward in 1982, when the Tories ran the council, he was immediately put o: to the front benches. He is particularly proud of the three years he was chairman of the environmental services committee.

He said: "In the early 80s many areas of council services were grossly overmanned and inefficient, the 'Spanish practices' were beyond belief.

"I made it clear to the trade unions that we were not hell-bent on privatisation, but getting the best efficiency for our constituents."

He admits that more than 400 workers were made redundant, but is proud that no days were lost to strikes. He said the council ended up saving millions of pounds.

Back in opposition during the late 80s, he sees the Tory group's exposure of the then Labour council's practice of gambling £6 billion on the money markets as another highlight.

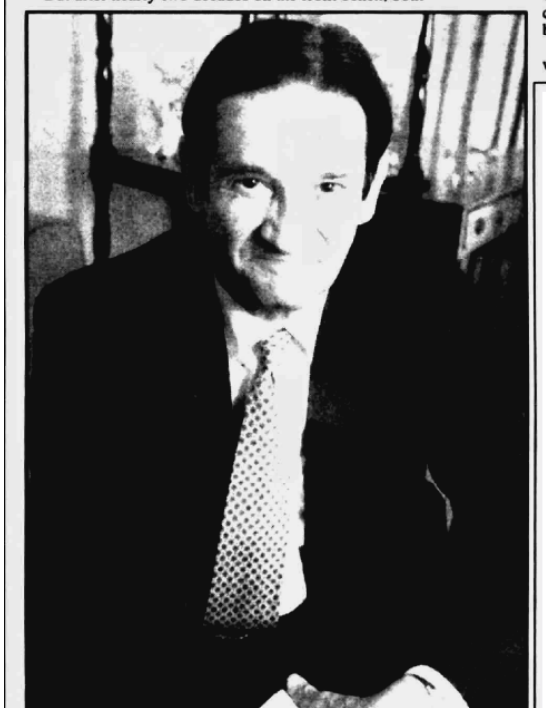
The House of Lords ruled the practice illegal, and the deals were gradually unravelled over several years.

Cllr Wombwell will retire from the town hall in three years, but says he wouldn't have missed it for the world.

He said: "It's a fascinating job. You are representing the needs of a population of 150,000 people in this borough and we are actively involved in so many areas of their lives.

"You represent them from cradle to grave, registering their births and deaths, and are involved in just about everything in between.

"But I am coming to the end. Twenty years is long enough."



East Fulham is different to West Fulham and one of the ways that is true is the different housing styles. Moore Park is an archetype: flat-roofed town houses, some with basements and large sash windows framed by thick moulded cornices. This style does not spread beyond North End Road. Coupled with other unique architectural styles like those in the Gunter estate this side of Fulham has a completely different feel to the west.

The difference is more than architecturally stylistic: the east of Fulham is more densely packed with much less public open space, there are more large public housing estates and it is generally less affluent than the west.

But nearly all of the estates are not within this ward: it is unique in not having any consequential council or housing association estates within it. They've all been carved out. Instead, the ward is getting an estate of a very different type: so-called Kings Road Park - which should have been called Sandford Manor.

Unlike Peterborough House and Broom House, Sandford Manor House still stands - though it's incredibly hard to find these days, hidden behind high walls down Rewell Street, which is more a path than a road.

Some historians claim the house was purchased by Charles II for his mistress, Nell Gwyn - its why the pub on King's Road on the corner of Rewell Street used to be named the Nell Gwynne and why Gwyn Close is so-named. Later owners, the Maynards, also have a residential cul-de-sac named after them here.

The name Sandford seems to have less to do with a ford crossing sandy Counters Creek, but a person: John Saundford, who owned the manor house back in the fourteenth century.

The grounds of Sandford Manor were huge, extending south as far as Townmead Road. The Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company purchased most of the manor's 24 acres of in 1824 and built their huge gas storage and processing plant that began the industrialisation of Sands End - and also the end of market gardening here: the gas plant quickly contaminated the neighbourhood.

The site was derelict for decades with just the massive rusting gas-holders left. There was an effort to list all five of the holders - as has been done, pretty successfully, with the gasometers in Camden by the Regent's Canal, where circular apartment blocks have been built within them. But the developers didn't want the constraints of these massive structures and, in the end, just one will survive once the building is finally complete.

Being stranded in the middle of Imperial Road, with the high brick wall of the plant on one side and the high brick walls of the assorted buildings that backed onto it from Bagley's Lane on the other, you could be forgiven for feeling in the middle of the sort of industrial wasteland politicians staged photo-opportunities in to show an intent to regenerate an abandoned community. I don't think any politicians used derelict Sandford for that purpose, even though it's only metres from Chelsea.

Other than the 25 acres all-in of the derelict gas holders, the area is a strange mix of Victorian streets, a spill-over of the Moore Park estate like (some of) Harwood Terrace and Avalon Road, plus the lovely, semi-hidden Imperial Square - built for gas plant workers. There are the pretty cottages along one side of Sandilands Road, which has been the ward boundary since 2002. There is the earlier-mentioned eastern end of the Peterborough estate; and some 1980s cul-de-sac housing. This includes Gwyn Close, Maynard Close, gated-off Cheryl's Close - plus Manor Court and Maltings Place.

These were the first parts of Sands End that gentrified and the solid Conservative vote from this end of the old Sands End was what first gave the party the idea that it could be competitive in that ward. For the same reasons, Labour hoped to jettison it from Sands End at the first opportunity.

That opportunity came in the boundary review before the 2002 elections. Labour had proposed a re-creation of the old Sandford ward - that is Sands End plus the Moore Park end of the former Walham ward. This would have been even harder for Labour to win than Sands End had become (it had been whittled down to just 12% by 1994) for reasons we've already looked at above. But was this a cunning double bluff? There was no political benefit to recreating Sandford and, just as turkeys tend not to vote for Christmas so political parties generally do not turn winnable wards into unwinnable ones.

The Labour plan allowed for a rebellion by Sands End councillor Brendan Bird to submit a counter proposal for the area, and get supportive community groups and residents to write in. That proposal suggested that Sands End should expand west, across Wandsworth Bridge Road instead of north, across King's Road, as far as Broomhouse Lane. Rather than lots more Conservative-voting streets this would bring the huge Sulivan Court council estate into the ward.

Because this was not a partisan proposal: neither Labour nor the Conservatives had proposed such a ward, it looked like a genuine attempt to draw a ward that best reflected the neighbourhood, and that much better ward for Labour was adopted. It's how Parson's Green and Walham ward came into existence too: the receptacle of not just Moore Park and the Peterborough estate but also that northern section of Sands End that Labour wanted gone.

Yet the Brendan Bird proposal was drawn up for him - to make sure it complied with all the review criteria - by those who wrote the Labour boundary submission. It was a roll of the dice: Labour had simply not believed that taking Sands End as far west as Sulivan Court would ever be adopted if they themselves had proposed it: it was the most optimal way Sands End could have been drawn at that point in time. The only way they might get the ward they wanted was to make it look like independent-minded councillors were staging a rebellion against their own party's proposal.

When the newly drawn wards first elected in 2002, Labour just about clung onto Sands End, while the Conservatives, unsurprisingly, won a landslide that surpassed even that of Palace ward in Parson's Green and Walham. They won by over 1,200 votes on a vote share of more than 70%.

Four years later - Labour's worst election result since 1968, the Tories increased their lead to 76% to 13% for Labour. That was the ninth largest Conservative vote in the whole of London that year: just a few Kensington & Chelsea wards plus Belgravia in Westminster, Wimbledon Village in Merton and the rural Bromley ward of Darwin produced larger Conservative shares.

In 2010 the much higher general election turnout gave the Conservatives the only majority exceeding 2,000 votes that the amalgamated borough has ever seen. Labour won Munster ward with majorities well over 3,000 in 1945 but that ward had over 17,000 electors: Parson's Green and Walham was 10,000 voters smaller.

Summary of election results for Parson's Green and Sandford ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Sulivan ward					
1964	32.9	67.1			
1968	56.0	44.0			
1971	64.7	35.3			
1974	44.8	55.2			
1978	50.9	38.2	10.9		
1982	42.6	22.7	34.7		
1986	46.9	41.7	11.5		
1990	58.6	35.0	6.4		
1994	54.2	34.4	11.4		
1996B	51.6	38.9	7.7		0.7
1998	62.3	28.2	9.4		
Parson's Green and Walham ward					
2002	71.8	16.9	11.4		
2006	75.6	13.4	11.0		
2010	68.7	15.1	16.2		
2014	70.2	20.4	9.4		
2018	64.2	21.3	14.5		
Parson's Green and Sandford ward					
2022	55.0	29.3	15.7		
2026	50.2	17.9	9.3	9.8	12.8

Wards like this and Palace are so Conservative that they are almost immune to swings away from the party. In 2014 when Labour regained the borough the Tories still won here by 70% and in 2018 despite the very poor Conservative result, despite Brexit, despite Boris Johnson's Partygate unpopularity they still won 65%.

The reason electoral reviews are required every twenty years or so is that populations shift. Some areas gain residents, some maintain their electorate and some even lose it - less of an issue in growing London. It is one of the structural problems the Conservatives have in this borough that the areas they represent tend to be fully developed, whereas the big sites where lots of homes can be planned tend to be in Labour-voting areas. That affects them because as the borough's population grows, their settled wards shrink relative to it. Then, when a boundary review comes around, they risk losing seats as representation shunts towards new neighbourhoods.

That was exactly the Tories' problem in Parson's Green and Walham. By 2024 it was projected to have 7,700 voters. That was actually an increase of about 500 since the 2002 election, but the borough's electorate had gone from 115,000 to 141,000 over the same period. So it was to become about 16% too small to retain three councillors.

We've already looked at how the wedge of Hurlingham was returned to Palace ward in 2022: that was a thousand voters removed. Another 800 or so were moved into the new Walham Green ward. And those two pockets of land being lost along with it already being small, deleted a Conservative councillor in their safest ward.

Because the area transferred to Walham Green was Walham Green itself, this slimmed-down ward needed amending. Several descriptions were considered: Eel Brook; Parson's Green and Peterborough; Parson's Green and Moore Park. Labour proposed Parson's Green and Sandford, reviving the Sandford ward title that had existed between 1964 and 1978, because it was historically the manor on which most of the eastern end of the ward had been built.

Labour pressed for - and got - one other fairly important change, and that was to include the derelict Imperial Gasworks site. This was irrelevant at that point because no voters lived there: in that specific point in time it didn't matter in which ward it was located. But when so-called King's Road Park is fully occupied it could have well over 3,000 residents. Voters are only now starting to come onto the electoral register from this new neighbourhood and it's far from completed. But by keeping those voters out of Sands End, that ward will remain competitive. And, for a change, Parson's Green and Walham is going to outpace the growth of the borough because of King's Road Park, meaning the Conservatives will have a case for regaining a third councillor or getting an entire new ward out of that end of Sands End at the next review.

Parson's Green and Sandford should have been even safer than its predecessor because the Oswald Stoll and Walham Green estates had been stripped out. The only public housing of any size left in this ward is Broxholme House at the end of Harwood Road, St Mark's Close in Parson's Green, and the Wandon Road estate, which was in Chelsea until 1998: Labour simply has no base here.

And yet, once the votes had been counted in 2022, Labour actually did better - substantially better - than they had in any Parson's Green and Walham election, reaching 30% of the vote. Where these votes came from is a puzzle. And yet despite this surge towards Labour, the Conservatives still won almost twice as many votes.

In 2026 the Conservatives fell back further, but not as much as Labour did, so their lead expanded from 26% to 32%. Reform won 13% - possibly a fair chunk of it from the Oswald Stoll Foundation; the Greens 10% and the Lib Dems 9%.

In Sands End, all the new development along the riverside contributed towards making that long-term Labour ward more Conservative (though seemingly not quite in the amounts it was expected to).

It will be interesting to see what impact the new neighbourhood being born in Parson's Green and Sandford has on its political leanings.

While New King's Park has been built as a, generally, upper end, exclusive development, in the context of the exceptional affluence of the wider ward it may, ironically, actually put more voters at least open to voting Labour into this ward. Nowhere near enough to create an electoral problem for the Conservatives, however.

Rollcall of Parson's Green and Sandford ward councillors

including Parson's Green and Walham ward (2002-2022) and Sulivan ward (1964-2002)

2026
- Jose Afonso
- Adrian Pascu-Tulbure

2022
- Jose Afonso
- Adrian Pascu-Tulbure

2018
- Mark Loveday
- Frances Stainton
- Matt Thorley

2014
- Nicholas Botterill
- Mark Loveday
- Frances Stainton

2010
- Nicholas Botterill
- Mark Loveday
- Frances Stainton

2006
- Nicholas Botterill
- Mark Loveday
- Frances Stainton

2002
- Nicholas Botterill
- Mark Loveday
- Frances Stainton

1998
- Nicholas Botterill
- Gerald Wombwell

1996B
- Nicholas Botterill

1994
- Jonathan Maiden
- Gerald Wombwell

1990
- Jonathan Maiden
- Gerald Wombwell

1986
- Guy Roberts
- Gerald Wombwell

1982
- Nicholas Browne
- Gerald Wombwell

1978
- Ernest Ibbott
- Sir David Roche

1974
- Vera Godden (Lab)
- Cecily Liardet (Lab)
- Tony Powell (Lab)

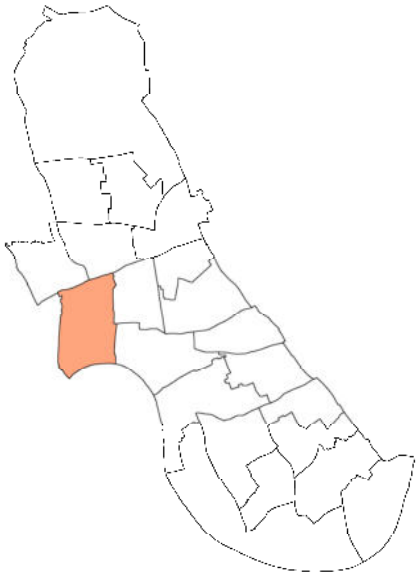
1971
- Malcolm Hall (Lab)
- Cecily Liardet (Lab)
- Will Unwin (Lab)

1968
- Simon De Vogheleare
- Caroline Ground
- Christine Wagner

1964
- Tony Chapman (Lab)
- Malcolm Hall (Lab)
- Cecily Liardet (Lab)

Ravenscourt ward

Hammersmith west of the Town Hall changes. King Street, for example, switches from being a relatively narrow one-way street; Hammer-smith's High Street, into a much wider, Plane Tree lined road with fewer shops, some mansion blocks, the modernist Polish Centre and the Latymer Upper and West London Free Schools.



Goldhawk Road narrows from a busy four-lane throughway towards Shepherd's Bush into a residential street before turning south to head towards King Street, or becoming Stamford Brook Road straight on.

The change is less along the Hammersmith Riverside but Furnivall Gardens splits Upper Mall from Lower Mall. Once through Dove Passage, Upper Mall rapidly starts to feel more like Chiswick than Hammersmith.

There isn't a hard border between Hammersmith and the neighbourhoods to the west: Chiswick, Acton, Stamford Brook, Bedford Park. That's not true in the south, where the boundary is the river Thames, or the east where you cross the West London Line into Chelsea and South Kensington.

It very much is a blur: the borough boundary is opaque. If, walking along the river's edge, you reach Chiswick Eyot then you've transitioned to Hounslow, but only just: some of Chiswick Mall is in Hammersmith, just beyond the blue plaque-adorned Hammersmith Terrace.

British Grove is the borough boundary; a narrow side street that runs from King Street down to the river - or at least it did before planners drove the A4 through the neighbourhood. There is still a British Grove South, as there are still southern sections of many of the roads that spur off from King Street, but it is tucked away behind Millers Court.

All of this area: a big slab down the western side of Hammersmith, is Ravenscourt ward.

The juxtaposition of the very old and quite new is a feature of riverside Ravenscourt because a lot of housing had to be demolished to make way for the dual carriageway; and in its place some modern housing blocks were built - like Lord Napier Place or Samels Court, named after the long-serving Hammersmith Conservative councillor Bertie Samels.

But the most famous residence on the riverside is Kelmscott House in Upper Mall, the home of the arts and crafts movement's most prominent figure: William Morris. Now a museum just a few metres upriver from the Dove Public House where Rule Britannia was composed, Kelmscott House shares Upper Mall with the Old Ship and Black Lion Pubs plus boathouses for Latymer Upper School and the London Corinthians.

This neighbourhood was planned as Hammersmith's genteel suburb - away from the overcrowded, semi-industrial, grimy Hammersmith town nearer the bridge. Here can be found - in St Peter's Square - the only residential square in Hammersmith with a landmark private central garden around which grand villas are positioned. Here too is the listed St Peter's Church, perched perilously right on the edge of the A4.

There is another Ravenscourt square with a green as its centrepiece - Westcroft Square - but it is of a different style and character altogether. St Peter's Square was deliberately planned and designed to be a piece of Mayfair in the west and, before the A4 drove tens of thousands of carts and horses through the middle of this neighbourhood, it was seamless, upper class Victoriana.

St Peter's Square was home to Sir Marshall Hays, one of the early council leaders of the old Hammersmith borough, and five-time Mayor. His picture hangs in the National Portrait Gallery.

St Peter's Parish covers the southern sections of Ravenscourt: the north is dominated by and oriented around the park itself. The park was once the manorial grounds of Ravenscourt House; owned by the same family that developed St Peter's Square and its surrounds: the Scotts.

When the Scotts eventually left the area, the grounds of Ravenscourt House were scheduled - a little like the Grove neighbourhood to the east - to become streets of terraces for the working classes.

But the householders living around along the western boundary of the grounds - in the road called Ravenscourt Park - determined to stop this. They demanded vast sums to buy out their leases which contained a clause preventing the building of housing opposite their abodes.

The ploy worked; the land became much less valuable to the freeholder and the Municipal Board of Works: the forerunner of the London County Council, purchased the grounds for the sum of £58,000 (£8 million in 2020 money) - of which Hammersmith Vestry contributed half. Ravenscourt Park was established.

'VOTE RIGGING' ROW AT TOWN HALL

By MIKE PARKINSON

LABOUR chiefs faced gerrymandering allegations this week after approving plans for a controversial housing development in Hammersmith.

If substantiated, the Conservative group's claims threaten to expose the council to echoes of the Westminster Council scandal.

Earlier this year, Westminster Council was accused by its district auditor of manipulating voting patterns with its 'designated sales' housing policy.

Tory councillors say that private leasing and housing association schemes approved by Labour in Ravenscourt ward are changing its voting pattern.

They believe the new tenants will vote Labour in gratitude for being given new homes. Many new tenants will be homeless families currently living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation.

At the 1990 election, the Conservatives polled just 150 more votes than Labour in Ravenscourt ward. Housing association schemes at the former Chambon factory site and 225 Goldhawk Road will bring up to 250 new voters into the ward.

Although the impact of these new voters will not be felt until 1998, 180 homeless people living in flats leased by the council in Hamlet Gardens are eligible to vote next month. Secret minutes of a Labour group meeting circulating among Tory councillors reveal that Ravenscourt has been targeted for a takeover.

Anger over plans for 84 new homes at the Chambon site off King Street erupted into a furious row at a meeting of the planning applications sub-committee on Monday.

Labour whip Colin Aherne was heckled and jeered when he accused 40 neighbours of the site of branding the new tenants as criminals.

His comments followed calls from some protesters for extra policing if the scheme went ahead.

"I call it shameful that you imply that every tenant of a housing association is a potential criminal," said Cllr Aherne. "I think that's absolutely shameful.

"This is a very good development. It takes people out of disgusting bed and breakfast property that costs this council millions to keep them in."

Earlier in the meeting, Ravenscourt Cllr Bill Smith appealed to Labour to defer the plans.

"I'm not ashamed to plead with the opposition," he said. "This is a brutal assault on the character of south Hammersmith."

Referring to Hamlet Gardens, Cllr Smith said: "This council has dumped on us a segment of humanity that's causing great anxiety. If you're setting out to destroy this part of south Hammersmith you will do immeasurable damage."

Cllr Smith's speech was cheered by the protesters, but there was even more applause for Tory leader Gerald Wombwell's speech.

After criticising the Chambon site consultation exercise and suggesting Labour had rushed the application through, Cllr Wombwell accused his opponent of forcing the developer to build affordable homes by turning down a planning application for private homes on the same site.

"This council has blackmailed the developer. It's an absolute disgrace. It's quite monstrous what you are doing to residents and we will most certainly overturn it after the 5th of May," he said.

After the meeting, one protester said neighbours had dubbed the proposed scheme 'Fort Apache' because it has 'barrack-style' terraces surrounded by four taller 'watchtower' blocks.

Deputy council leader Andrew Slaughter accused the Tories of 'cheap and nasty electioneering tactics'.

"The Tories may be up to gerrymandering in Westminster, but their efforts to lay the charge against us here are totally unsubstantiated," he said.

"The vast majority of schemes are in so-called 'safe' wards, both Tory and Labour, anyway, rendering the Tory argument obsolete."

The story of how the park came into being - that is, the story of how the wealthy surrounding the park acted to prevent this area from being built over for homes for the working classes is interesting because, in 1992 - history almost repeated itself.

When the Chambon Company - which manufactured printing machines in a factory just behind King Street - closed, local residents in that area backed by the ward's Conservative councillors, attempted to prevent the building of affordable housing on that site as well - claiming that it was a gerrymander to turn the ward Labour.

These "gerrymandering" allegations came shortly after the Westminster Homes for Votes scandal had broken. The Conservative-run council there, led by Dame Shirley Porter, had forcibly moved suspected Labour-voting council tenants in marginal wards like Bayswater and Little Venice into asbestos-riddled tower blocks in safe Labour wards. They then sold off their old flats to what they hoped would be Conservative-voting leaseholders.

Their hopes came true and all the marginal wards went Conservative in the 1990 elections, turning a Tory majority of four seats into one of thirty. The scam was exposed by Labour councillors and the District Auditor and the councillors responsible were disqualified and surcharged millions.

It is grossly silly to compare the forced march of low income families into asbestos riddled, decaying tower blocks with a plan to provide new housing association homes in the fourth-most expensive borough in London. It approaches the issue by putting the presumed voting intentions of new residents ahead of the housing need of the borough.

Indeed, the smearing of the would-be housing association tenants were even more defamatory, as the Gazette article covering that clash indicates.

The councillor at the forefront of that campaign - a councillor well accustomed to controversy - was Bill Smith. He, among all the others who have represented Ravenscourt, is the councillor most closely identified with the ward.

Ravenscourt ward was first created in 1949, taking the western end of the abolished River and The Grove & Ravenscourt wards.

Smith represented this ward for all but three of the fifteen years it existed (first time around) - it was abolished when Hammersmith amalgamated with Fulham in 1964. He then was elected an Alderman in 1964, and then won Starch Green (which is basically the current Wendell Park but also included the northern half of Ravenscourt) in the 1968 Conservative landslide.

He was then immediately re-elected an Alderman, which gave him six years' tenure on the council rather than a councillor's three. But he had to resign his council seat upon that re-election as Alderman, incurring a by-election which the Tories held with 61% of the vote in a straight fight with Labour.

As Alderman with that 6-year term he didn't need to stand in 1971: just as well as the Conservatives won no seats in Hammersmith that year. In 1974 he returned as a councillor for Brook Green, defended that seat in 1978, and then controversially won a seat in Wormholt ward in 1982.

He lost that seat in 1986 but was returned for Ravenscourt in 1990, twenty six years after he last represented the ward.

During that 41-year tenure, Smith was also leader and deputy leader of the Conservative Group on the council, and he was mayor for the first three years of the turbulent Conservative-Liberal coalition, 1978 to 1981.

An irony of Smith's vociferous campaigning against the Chambon affordable housing was that in 1994 he lost his Ravenscourt seat to Labour not because of this housing - it hadn't yet been built - but because of the national disaster John Major was driving his party towards, and because, as Smith rightly noted, the demographics of Ravenscourt were changing irrespective of whether a handful of housing association homes were built.

Despite those Conservative outbursts of outrage at Labour for attempting to gerrymander Ravenscourt, the ward has among the least public housing in the borough. The only council estate of any size is Flora Gardens which lies between Dalling Road and Ravenscourt Road. The Chambon site ended up with nowhere near as much housing - of any sort - on it than was mooted by the Conservatives: it is two cul-de-sacs of townhouses and some three storey blocks of flats at each entrance.

PROFILE . . . Cllr. W. Smith



LEADER OF THE UNDERDOGS

IN the councils of the great today the bloc vote is used o destroy logic and demoralize opponents. At less exalted heights men struggiing with social consciences see their ideas trampled underfoot by a colossus created through the twin evils of a democracy—public apathy or emotion.

That is why the liberal-minded and the protagonist of fair play must sympathize and support the pleadings and arguments advanced by Cllr. Bill Smith as he leads his Tory band of six in their monthly forays against the entrenched Socialists in the Hammersmith Council.

A flourish of activity at the end of a wordy debate; a sign from the Party whip, a forest of hands and the minutes record against him another defeat.

Mr. Smith is not a man who matured in an atmosphere of cut-and-dried politics. He was born in 1918 while nations were still counting up their dead; was educated in those years when the depression was earmarking its world-wide victims, and started his work-life to a background of pacifism at home and sabre-rattling abroad.

He opposed pacifism and added weight to his principles by joining a territorial unit in 1937. He was also interested in the Church, in scouting and politics.

★

AUGUST 1939 ended an era of appeasement and Mr. Smith found himself a gunner en route with the 64th Field Regiment to the Middle East. He carried with him memories of the proud service given to the Crown by his soldier-father while under Indian skies.

At his flat in Askew-road, Shepherds Bush, his father's brush with military greatness is retained on the face of a medal. It was one of those struck to commemorate Sir Francis Younghusband's successful expedition over the Himalayas into Tibet to forestall Russian activity in the area. His father made the trek.

Mr. Smith's service never reached these heights. He was in Irak, Egypt and the desert campaign. He went to Greece, saw hostilities end there against the Fascist forces only to see it re-appear in the civil sphere. He was wounded here in a brush with the Communists.

Back in England he was demobilized. He returned to the firm he joined on leaving North Hammersmith School back in the thirties. I.C.I., he adds, holds his fortunes.

★

IN 1947 his views hardened against Socialism in the atmosphere of discussion groups. The same year he joined the North Hammersmith Conservative Association and became an organizing secretary for his party in the same year.

In the next two years he fought a willing but losing fight for two Local Government seats. But in 1953 he entered the arena with the retirement of the Conservative representative in the Ravenscourt Ward. He found out his battles had only just begun.

His clarity of mind and capabilities as a speaker have been sharpened by several campaigns and many public appearances as a stump orator. By the side of Conservative stalwarts Tom Gee and John Howard he learnt national and local affairs. It has stood him in good stead.

★

MR. BILL SMITH believes today that he is a representative—and a proud one—of a party which is no longer "die-hard"; which has infused a living liberalizm into its social thinking, yet remained aloof from the popular dogmas.

Minority parties gain few laurels. But when checking the profit and loss account of his trading in local government affairs, Mr Smith remembers his group's exposure of the issue involving a consultant firm.

His searching criticisms spotlighted a blind policy by councillors which cost the ratepayers several thousands.

He remembers the outbursts against him when he suggested a differential rents scheme. He was sneered at for presenting a solution which savoured of the Means Test.

Two months later his critics ushered the scheme into existence. These are the thoughts he retains when facing the bloc vote. Men can, and do, change their opinions.

Let Mr. Smith finish his own profile: "We, on our own side, don't act under directives. We vote according to conscience and to commonsense.

"Despite the defeats we suffer and the abuse we accept, our path is quite clear. We will continue to defend just measures and attack the unjust.

"In this chamber we aim to be democracy's watchdog."

The redevelopment of Queen Charlotte's Hospital in Goldhawk Road also provided a mixed development of relatively affordable homes for sale, as well as some supported accommodation. It is not council housing that puts Labour in play in Ravenscourt: it is the changing voting behaviour of occupants in the mansion blocks, in particular, that has changed things.

There are three significant sets of mansions in Ravenscourt: Hamlet Gardens; adjacent King's Court, and Stamford Court in Goldhawk Road. Hamlet Gardens is somewhat like Queen's Club Gardens in Baron's Court; terracotta late Victorian four- and five-storey blocks. King's Court is a 1930s ten-storey art deco block of very small flats; as is Stamford Court, arranged in a horse-shoe shape.

Until the 1990s these sorts of blocks could churn out Conservative votes by the bucket load: they were the sort of apartments affluent professionals lived in for years and years. But, for whatever reason, this type of accommodation became outdated and somewhat unfashionable; many of the leaseholders became absentee landlords and the occupants became short-term tenants; younger, more indifferent to party politics.

It also became much harder for the blocks' managing agents to let these homes - and the growing housing shortage in London meant councils needed to look at flats in private blocks to meet its obligations to homeless families: these were the least unaffordable types of property for them to procure.

Deals were done between the council and housing associations to rent many of the flats and this of course changed their nature. In some ways this spurred further problems with the blocks; the flats not leased by housing authorities became harder still to let and there were increased problems of anti-social behaviour and crime, including an arson attack in 1998.

But Conservative problems here go beyond just changes in tenure to mansion blocks, which are hardly the most prevalent type of home here.

Again we return to the phenomenon of demographically similar wards which, in Fulham, are comfortably Conservative but in Hammersmith they find far harder to hold.

This phenomenon; of there being far more very affluent households with a very much more liberal outlook than you might find in Fulham - boosted by Hammersmith being a significant centre for media and what Americans call the liberal arts - was limiting Conservative reach in Ravenscourt long before identity politics polarised matters to their further disadvantage after the Brexit referendum in 2016.

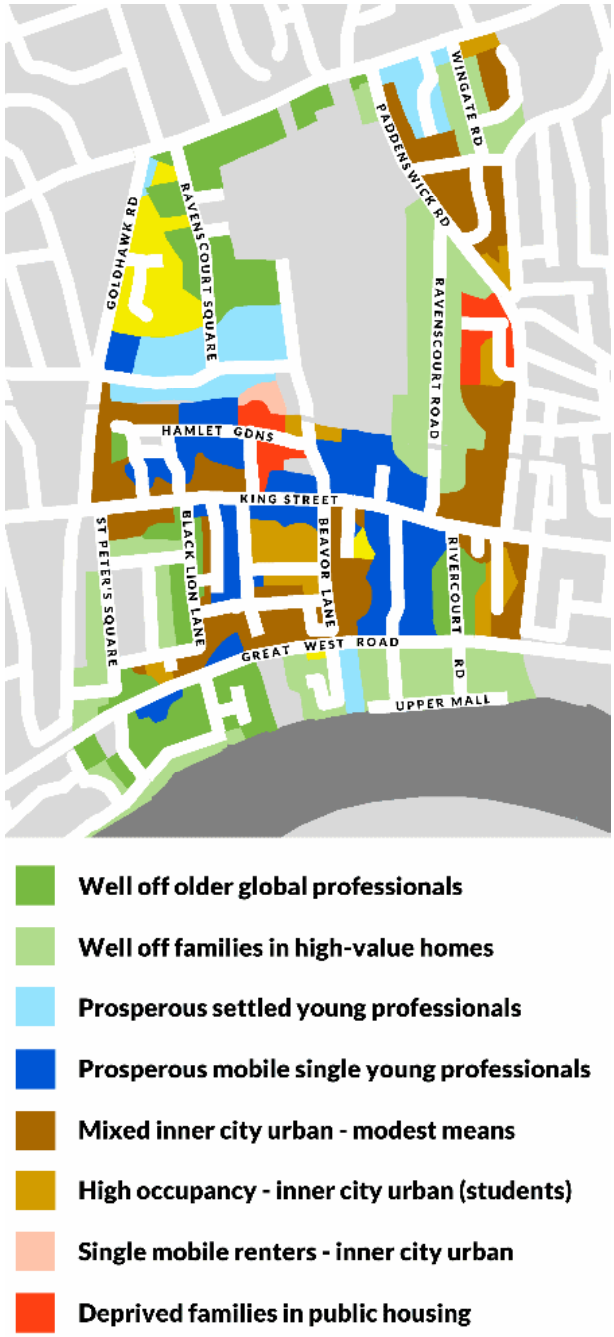
A look at the dominant Experian "MOSAIC" demographic categorisations says it all:

- Along the riverside and around St Peter's Square: *"Well off older global professionals"* and *"well off families in high value homes"*
- Between the District Line and the A4: *"Prosperous Mobile Single Young Professionals"* and *"Mixed Inner city urban - modest means"*
- Around Ravenscourt Park: *"Prosperous Settled Young Professionals"*
- Leaving just Flora Gardens, patches of Hamlet Gardens and the Queen Charlotte's site: *"Deprived Families in Public Housing"* or *"Families in Manual Occupations"*

The Ravenscourt of the 1950s was always a reasonably safe Conservative ward which they were able to win by between 15 and 25 percentage points.

When the ward was divided its Conservatism was enough to make Starch Green a highly marginal ward between 1964 and 1978, and to at least give the Tories a decent base of support in River or Broadway - even if that was simply too deprived a ward for them to win.

When Ravenscourt was resurrected in 1978 it went Conservative massively: by 66% to 31% Labour and 2% for the National Front (a somewhat strange choice of ward to contest). 1978 was a high water mark year for the Conservatives with Labour tanking in the polls and on course to be ejected from power for eighteen years. It was also notable for the absence of a Liberal Party challenge.



That changed in 1982. The Alliance won one quarter of the vote - and it came almost entirely from the Conservatives. Labour dropped 4.9%; the Tories by 16.7%. Only in Coningham was there a larger Conservative loss of support. Arguably the Alliance should have done even better here: easily beating Labour in an era when the party was fractured by the Bennite left and the SDP right.

Yet Labour's vote held up when you might have expected an affluent, liberal ward like this to shun a party seen as too far to the left: an era when the Conservatives got very close to winning Hammersmith constituency.

The Conservatives still won Ravenscourt easily: by over twenty per cent. But all of a sudden there was a significant third party presence, which in recent years has become a four-party presence including the Greens. And what that Alliance strength did, given it was more taken from the Conservatives more than 3:1 more than Labour, is pull the Tories down to levels where Labour - if they could escape their national unpopularity - might be able to challenge for the ward.

That's precisely what they managed in 1986, with the Alliance holding onto to almost all of the vote share they won in 1982. Labour gained more than ten points of support, essentially making the ward neck and neck, and Patricia Migdal became the first ever Labour councillor for Ravenscourt on these boundaries.

By 1990 the Alliance of the Liberals and SDP had ended and the new Liberal Democrats were so weak that they didn't even contest Ravenscourt. But both the breakaway SDP and the Greens did and, between them, they won 16% - still 7 points lower than the Alliance had in 1986. That seven points difference all returned to the Conservatives and so they regained the seat they'd lost. Then came those Tory claims of gerrymandering. But Bill Smith was right that the ward was changing, regardless of the Chambon site.

It was a demographic change but it was far more than that because Labour was attracting genuine switchers: people who had been Conservatives now being quite content to support a more progressive party. In other words, whereas Labour had needed a big centre party vote to pull the Conservatives to within reach, we were now entering an era where the party was growing strong enough to win Ravenscourt regardless of who else stood. It was the beginning of a trend that is still realigning this part of Hammersmith 30 years later.

Labour regained a seat in Ravenscourt in 1994, defeating Bill Smith for the final time in his long political run and despite the Lib Dems polling just 11%. Then they comfortably won both seats in 1998, taking over half the vote (and with the Lib Dems unchanged on 11).

That was a big win, seeing off Angela Clarke: the Conservative councillor here since 1982. It is a measure of how fraught Hammersmith and Fulham politics was in the period when Clarke was first elected - remember the council was then 25 Labour, 23 Conservative and 2 Liberal Alliance - that she may have had the birth of one of her children induced so she could make it to a council meeting and keep her party in power.

So far, the trend-line of Labour growth in Ravenscourt has been clear and steady. But two factors then intervened. The first was the boundary review before the 2002 elections. In this review the Conservative prevailed with their proposal to create a 3-councillor Ravenscourt Park ward. This expanded Ravenscourt two ways: in the western side of Grove ward, generally somewhat more Conservative-leaning than Grove overall was.

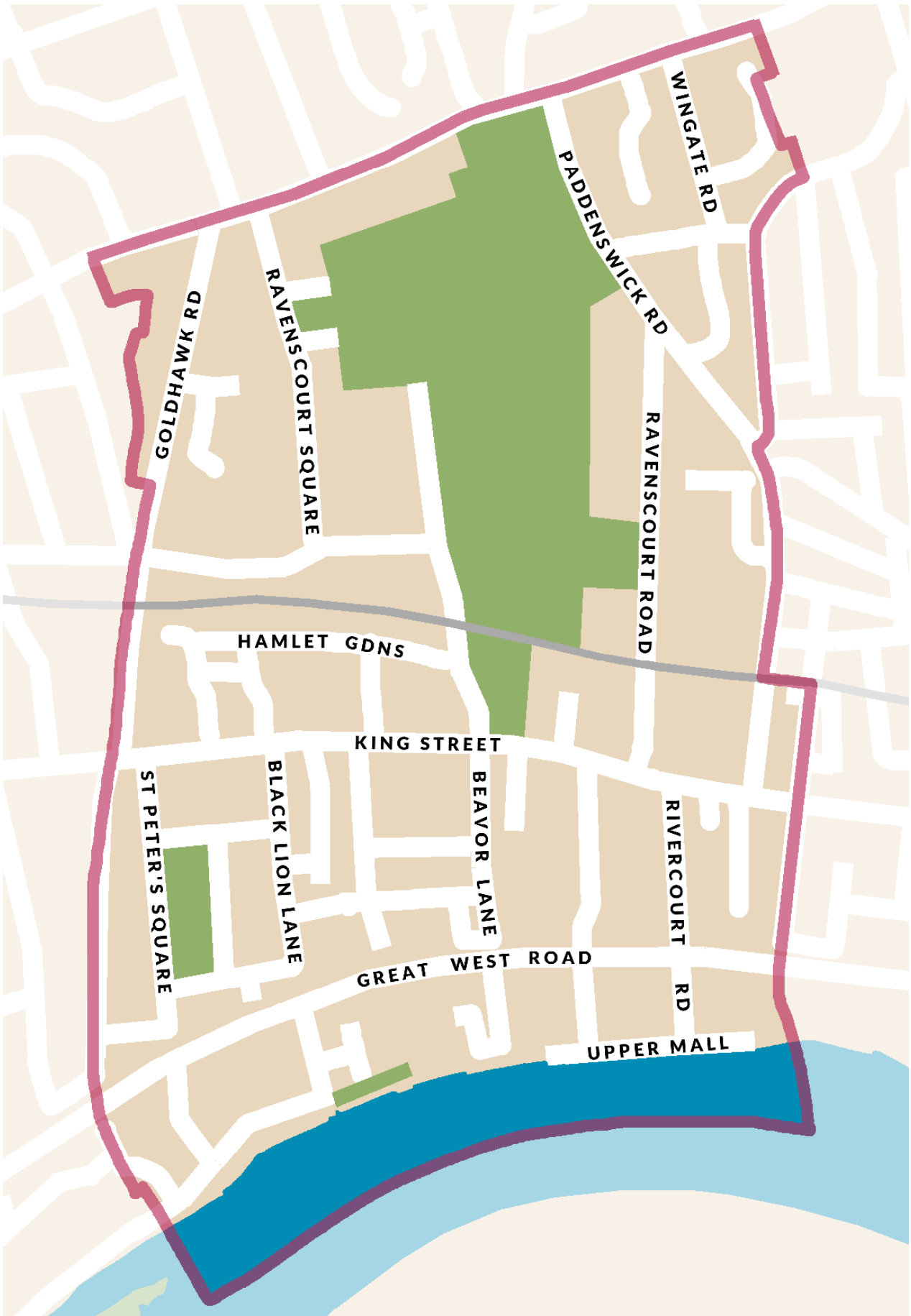
More consequentially, it encroached into the southern half of the abolished Starch Green ward, and this half was where the bulk of the Conservative vote in that ward was located. The Ashchurches: Ashchurch Grove, Ashchurch Park Villas, Ashchurch Terrace, and surrounding roads like Rylett Crescent and Binden Road, contain long terraces of pretty and quite grand villas - essentially a continuation of the Ravenscourt neighbourhood north of Goldhawk Road.

The Conservative plan also carefully excluded the Kelmscott Gardens council estate, just in front of Ashchurch Grove to ensure they could wring every Tory vote out without giving Labour a look in.

That better boundary for the Conservatives plus the already declining popularity of the Blair Labour government before the Iraq Ward had even happened, put Ravenscourt back in play. But only just: they could still only win one of the three seats in 2002, with 1998 Labour councillors Fiona Evans and Chris Allen (displaced from Grove) being elected alongside Caroline Donald. The defeated Labour candidate that year was Greg Jackson - later the founder of Octopus Energy.

The Lib Dems targeted Ravenscourt Park in 2002 and surged to 27% - most of which, atypically, came from Labour and certainly cost them that third seat here.

Caroline Donald died in 2005 causing the only by-election this ward has ever seen. 2005 was a stronger Conservative year than 2002 - even though the by-election took place just a month after the general election they had lost, which may have dampened some of the enthusiasm of Tory voters. But they easily held onto the seat, with a 7% swing from Labour. The Lib Dems only slipped back a little: they were still sapping huge amounts of votes that would more likely have gone Labour if there had been a forced choice.


WINGATE RD
PADDENSWICK RD
GOLDHAWK RD
RAVENSCOURT SQUARE
RAVENSCOURT ROAD
HAMLET GDNS
KING STREET
ST PETER'S SQUARE
BLACK LION LANE
BEAVOR LANE
RIVERCOURT RD
GREAT WEST ROAD
UPPER MALL

Then the second of the road-bumps in Labour's ascendancy. Following the Conservatives' 2005 general election defeat, the party chose David Cameron as leader: just about the optimal pick to attract progressive, liberal voters towards the party as Labour's baton passed from Tony Blair to Gordon Brown. By 2006, Labour's popularity had collapsed and Hammersmith and Fulham was firmly in the sights of this "Hug-a-Hoodie", "Vote Blue, Get Green" Cameron Conservative Party.

In the 2006 Conservative landslide, Ravenscourt Park was firmly in the majority, swinging further than it did in the by-election ten months earlier. The Tories won just over half the votes with Labour on 34%. Labour was only down 2% on 2002 - their least decline of any ward that year. But the Lib Dems had decided to try their luck in another ward: this time Askew, and they lost twelve points of support here as a result.

In 2010 the Conservatives won re-election in Hammersmith & Fulham, the election that coincided with the general election which that party came out ahead in too. Labour halved the Tory majority in Ravenscourt Park and the Lib Dems rebounded - back to the usual pattern of when the Lib Dems are up the Conservatives are down.

Yet in 2014, despite Ravenscourt Park being eminently winnable there was almost no swing and the Conservatives held on, even as Hammersmith and Fulham returned to Labour. Then there was the EU referendum and Conservative support collapsed in hugely Remain-voting wards like Ravenscourt Park in 2018. Labour finally won all three seats in this ward that year - and by almost twelve percentage points.

The next boundary review before the 2022 elections essentially returned Ravenscourt to its pre-2002 boundaries. Set aside the political consequences of that, which clearly favoured Labour: Ravenscourt Park was simply an ugly, badly drawn ward that split neighbourhoods. The smaller, 2-councillor Ravenscourt ward put all of the so-called "Brackenbury Village" back in Grove, and all of the neighbourhood surrounding Wendell Park back in Starch Green (now renamed after that park, but on identical boundaries to old Starch Green). It is a much cleaner representation of the west end of Hammersmith.

Labour won the redrawn Ravenscourt by a landslide amount in 2022: a majority almost three times larger than they had the last time it elected on these boundaries in 1998. Back then the ward voted 51%-36%; this time 54%-23%. So Labour hadn't gained that much in the intervening 24 years: it was the Conservatives who had crashed. It wasn't the Lib Dems who benefited: they won about 11% both times. Instead the Greens came third with 12%, having not stood in Ravenscourt Park in 2018.

This ward is perhaps a case study in how the places the Green Party targets are defined by the political outlook they espouse. Should not the party that most embodies environmentalism do well in an affluent, liberal ward where conservation and the preservation of green spaces, the cleanliness of, and expanding access to the Thames, the quality of new buildings being proposed for an area, matter - and that's before we even consider national and local Green priorities like climate change and net zero.

Look at the lists of officers for the Hammersmith Society, the Fulham and Hammersmith Historic Buildings Group, and they will be heavily populated by Ravenscourt residents. The Chair of the Hammersmith Society is former Ravenscourt councillor Angela Clarke (though she lives in Grove ward); the long-running chair of the Historic Buildings Group was Angela Dixon: another Ravenscourt resident. These are among the most politically engaged Hammersmith residents around: people who would be probably be at least receptive to progressive Green candidates canvassing them.

But probably far less receptive to the sort of Green agenda pushed by Zack Polanski's version of the party: a more widely far left agenda, down-playing environmentalism and characterising the sort of wealthy types who live in St Peter's Square or Ravenscourt Road as the font of all the country's ills.

In 2026, despite the surge in membership, the Greens found only one candidate to stand in Ravenscourt and all their campaigning resources were directed at White City. As a result they didn't do badly in Ravenscourt, but then they didn't tank anywhere in the borough. 18.6% is nowhere near their best vote share though: in nine other wards they polled higher.

Such was the plight of the Conservatives, though, that this was enough for the Green candidate to split their two candidates, effectively winning the same amount. Labour was down as well: again, they performed significantly better in Ravenscourt than the borough as a whole.

As a result Ravenscourt became the second best Labour ward in Hammersmith and Fulham - just behind Grove - a

result that looks inexplicable if approached from any conventional political angle: that affluence equals Conservatism and deprivation equals Labour support.

But we are in an era when affluence is no marker of party affiliation - at least in most of London; indeed lack of affluence in the country beyond London became a marker of Conservative and then Reform UK support, especially in areas that voted for Brexit.

The reason why Brexit is still crucial in understanding politics a decade and more after the EU referendum, is because that issue is just a marker for a raft of demographic trends that speak to values, not just wealth. If you attended university you are far more likely to have voted Remain - and beyond that have a range of political opinions that lean to the liberal end of the spectrum.

If you value mobility and travel you are again more likely to have voted Remain - one of the ironies of the referendum was that Remainers tend to leave the place where they grew up and travel, valuing mobility; Leavers tend to stay rooted in their communities of birth, childhood and adolescence. Hammersmith and Fulham is a borough of significant population churn and diversity, and so contains a horde of voters who look like they should be Conservatives, measured on their economic activity, but in fact are not - sometimes viscerally not.

This is the only way to understand why Ravenscourt now sits at the top of the Labour firmament in this borough. It's why the Conservatives are in long-term decline in very affluent wards like while Labour has found the going increaasingly tough in its traditional strongholds like Durham, South Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

It should still be noted that a majority of those who voted in Ravenscourt did not support Labour. But the non-Labour vote was evenly divided: 19% Conservative, 19% Green, 8% Lib Dem, 6% Reform, and it's the gap between first and second that ultimately matters under First Past The Post.

Summary of Ravenscourt results

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1949	62.2	37.5			
1953	57.6	42.4			
1956	65.3	34.7			
1959	55.0	34.1	10.9		
1962	59.9	40.1			
1978	66.0	30.9			3.1
1982	49.3	27.0	23.7		
1986	39.4	37.7	22.9		
1990	46.7	37.3	3.7	12.3	
1994	42.0	43.0	11.2		3.8
1998	37.3	51.3	11.4		
Ravenscourt Park ward					
2002	36.0	36.9	27.1		
2005B	44.3	31.4	24.3		
2006	50.6	34.1	15.3		
2010	43.5	33.0	23.5		
2014	40.6	33.8	7.9	17.6	
2018	34.5	45.8	19.7		
Ravenscourt ward					
2022	23.0	53.5	10.8	12.6	
2026	19.2	47.5	8.1	18.6	6.7

I've concluded other ward profiles by suggesting that the only way back for the Conservatives will be a significant political event that makes their messaging resonate locally again. That is true here as well - but even that may not be enough in Ravenscourt to refloat their boat. Labour has shown it has a high floor and a relatively fixed ceiling to its vote, which is solid and resilient. The Conservatives seem much more dependent on the waxing and waning of support for smaller parties here.

Rollcall of Ravenscourt ward councillors

including Ravenscourt Park ward (2002-2022)

2026
- Natalie Lindsay
- Harry Brackley

2022
- Liz Collins
- Patrick Walsh

2018
- Jonathan Caleb-Landy
- Bora Kwon
- Asif Siddique

2014
- Charlie Dewhirst
- Lucy Ivimy
- Harry Phibbs

2010
- Charlie Dewhirst
- Lucy Ivimy
- Harry Phibbs

2006
- Lucy Ivimy
- Harry Phibbs
- Eugenie White

2005B
- Lucy Ivimy

2002
- Chris Allen
- Caroline Donald
- Fiona Evans

1998
- Fiona Evans
- Hefin Rees

1994
- Angela Clarke
- Huw Davies

1990
- Angela Clarke
- William Smith

1986
- Angela Clarke
- Patricia Migdal

1982
- Lady Rosemary Belhaven
- Angela Clarke

1978
- Michael Christopher
- Clement Jarvis

1962
- Cyril Arnold
- Gladys Powers
- William Smith

1959
- William Smith
- Donal Thorpe
- Betty Wildman

1956
- William Smith
- Donal Thorpe
- Betty Wildman

1953
- William Smith
- Donal Thorpe
- Betty Wildman

1949
- W. Cook
- Benjamin Martin
- Bertie Samels

Sands End ward

After a 2008 by-election in Sands End, which the Conservatives won by over a thousand votes, it looked very much as though we had reached the end of history of this remarkable ward, once one of Labour's safest. A neighbourhood that had gone from market gardens and artists' studios to the industrial heart of Fulham, then a derelict wasteland with considerable deprivation, and then a place of exclusive steel and glass residential towers. Nowhere in this borough has Sands End's story.

If Munster is the ward that epitomises Fulham's transformation from Labour to Conservative, Sands End's Townmead Road is the street that marks that transformation. This is the road on which Fulham Power Station and the industrial wharves stood. At the end of Townmead Road was a coal yard with a huge dock next to Chelsea Creek; beyond that yet another power station in Lots Road.

Today the very last of those industrial sites: the Albert, Swedish and Comeleys Wharves by Wandsworth Bridge, are being converted into the latest set of luxury apartments. Fulham Power Station closed in 1978 and, other than its boundary wall on Townmead Road, is long gone. A third of the Sandford Manor site on which the Imperial Gas, Light and Coke plant was built is now "Chelsea Creek" - the rest is the emerging "King's Road Park". The coal yard by Chelsea Creek is now split between "Chelsea Harbour" and "Chelsea Waterfront". There are yet more of these innovative, absurd and geographically awry names to come.

That is the potted history of one road, but that road has a significance for the whole of Sands End. The terraced streets north of Townmead Road were built to house the manual labourers, the gas technicians, the power station electricians, the dockers and the engineers who kept Sands End's industry churning. Around 20,000 people were employed by the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company alone - and that was just one of the many industrial employers in this area. This was a huge working class community.

Fulham Borough Council which built and ran the power station even had its own fleet of flatiron coal ships, replete with their own grey and black "FBC" colours, to transport coal for the power station from Falkirk. The jetty where the ships docked on the Sands End riverside is still standing.



Over a very short period of time in the late 1800s, Sands End was transformed by the industrial revolution. William De Morgan, one of the arts and crafts movement's key figures - was based here (hence De Morgan Road) and then displaced from here as the neighbourhood became a non conducive environment.

There has been a Sands End ward in Fulham right from the founding of the borough. Large tracts of this ward were undeveloped when the vestry made way to the borough council: almost all of what would become known as the Sulivan side was fields or nurseries. No housing existed south of Stephendale Road, though there were wharves either side of Wandsworth Bridge. There was a tarmac plant at the end of where Glenrosa Street would be built, Britannia Wharf creating a canal to the Thames from its edge. The gas works was established east of Imperial Road.

In the beginning the ward included everything east of Peterborough Road and south of New King's Road.

Before the Labour Party established itself, working class neighbourhoods - especially ones founded on heavy industry in inner London, tended to vote Progressive, or Liberal. Sands End elected Progressive councillors in 1900 and 1903 - and probably would have in 1906 had Labour's emergence not split the non-Conservative vote.

Progressives won Fulham council in 1900: as well as Sands End they won Lillie, Munster and Walham, plus a

seat in Margravine for 21 seats to the Moderates' 14 and an independent. They kept control in 1903 despite losing their majority. But the Moderates swept every seat in 1906 and 1912, and all but three seats in 1909. After Margravine, Sands End was just about the weakest Conservative ward in the borough.

But it was still not until the end of the First World War that Labour first captured Sands End. But they couldn't hold it throughout the 1920s or 1931: a dire decade for the Labour Party. But they eventually won again in 1934 - and managed to hold onto it for a slightly longer period from then on: 72 years (bar one council term: 1968-1971).

Unsurprisingly, environmental concerns have been critical to Sands End over the years. By the 1940s Fulham Power Station, Lots Road Power Station, Battersea Power Station and the heavy industry lining the Fulham and Wandsworth riverfront were pumping so much smoke into the atmosphere that it was claimed twelve tonnes of grit was falling on Fulham every day.

Residents began campaigning for a grit-arresting plant that would filter out the particulate from the power station chimneys. But in the economic climate following the Second World War, Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Stafford Cripps vetoed the plans because there was insufficient steel to build it. "Cripes: Cripps gets to grips with grit gripes" was a headline the Fulham Chronicle sadly never ran with.

A by-election occurred here in 1947 right in the midst of this furore over the grit problem but, by now, Labour was so entrenched that the best efforts of Conservatives, Communists and the Fulham Residents Association couldn't much dent the majority.

In the end, local pressure and improving steel availability enabled the plant to be built, which may have resulted in less obvious pollution coating Sands End in grime but did little for the invisible impact on health of emissions over the area.

When Fulham amalgamated with Hammersmith in 1964 Sands End became Sandford ward, stretching north to the District Line and including the Moore Park area. Labour won almost three quarters of the vote in the first contest in 1964, lost it in 1968 by just five points, and then won it back in 1971.

But the 1970s was the decade when Sands End began to change rapidly again. Economic and industrial havoc to an extent at least as sudden and violent as that which devastated coal-mining communities in the 1980s, hit this community.

In 1972 the discovery of North Sea Oil made the Imperial Gasworks uneconomical: it closed in 1975. Fulham Power Station was decommissioned in 1978.

Unemployment in Sands End sky-rocketed and a mass exodus began as people followed the jobs they desperately needed out of Fulham. Townmead Road went from being the engine of Sands End to being an almost never-ending route through boarded-up wasteland.

But what the area had that more depressed northern areas did not was a central London location - and a

The West London Observer
Friday April 10, 1925

Fulham Borough Council

"DOUBLE" FOR LABOUR IN SANDS END

Polling took place on Saturday for the three seats on the Fulham Borough Council which became vacant as a result of the resignation of Messrs. Jacob, Malpas and Gantlett.

There were straight fights in both wards. Sands End was captured by Labour, who had two strong representatives in the field in Mr. L.A. Hill (the ex-Mayor) and Mr. J.A. Groves. Walham ward was held for the "M.R.'s" by Mr Alfred Davis, but a protest was entered by his opponents on the grounds that the names were no placed in alphabetical order on the ballot papers. Results:-

WALHAM WARD.

Elected.

Davis, Alfred	685

Not Elected.

Browning, John Murrie ...	494

SANDS END WARD.

Elected.

Groves, John Albert ...	1,251
Hill, Louis Albert ...	1,201

Not Elected.

Redfearn, Wm. Maunder ...	1,041
Minute, Arthur ...	1,027

Fulham Chronicle

No. 3,129 | WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE WEST LONDON ADVERTISER | FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1948 | Entered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper | PRICE THREEPENCE

TOWN'S MEETING OVER GRIT NUISANCE

Sir Stafford Cripps declined invitation to attend

TO BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW BAN ON ARRESTING PLANT

HEADED by the Mayor of Fulham (Cllr. J. T. Horton), a deputation is to seek an interview with Sir Stafford Cripps to try to persuade him to reverse his decision banning the installation of grit-arresting plant at Fulham Power Station because of the steel shortage.

This was the plan of action adopted by resolution at the town's meeting on the grit nuisance, called by the Mayor at the Town Hall.

Members of the deputation will be the leader of the borough's council (Ald. A.F. Coomber), leader of the opposition (Cllr. R.J.F. Cussen), chairman of the electricity committee (Cllr. J. W. Perotti), four Sands End residents elected from the body of the hall (Mrs. Margaret Welburn, Kilkie Street; Mr P.C. Strange, Furness Road; Mr. H. Oliver, Lindrop Street; and Mr C. Kendall, Cranbury Road), and a Hurlingham resident, Colonel G. S. Brighten, who was also elected by the meeting.

The Mayor stated that the deputation will meet in a few days' time to commence preparation of their case, suggestions for which are the compilation of health statistics (with particular reference to eye and pulmonary troubles) and an investigation into the borough's scrap steel in the hope that Fulham can find some to help towards the 1,200 tons required for the grit-arresting plant.

Coming to Fulham in July

The Mayor revealed that an endeavour to get Sir Stafford Cripps to the meeting had failed. But, he added, 'I have a firm promise that he will come to Fulham some time in July.'

At the end of the meeting Mr. F. V. Jacoby, who recently organised a conference on the grit problem, complimented the Mayor. 'It think we can say he's got grit' said Mr. Jacoby. 'It has been a very good meeting. Thank you, sir, very much.'

Both Mr. Michael Stewart M.P. and Dr. Edith Summerskill M.P., who approached Sir Stafford Cripps personally to urge the installation of the plant, were present, but only Mr. Stewart was called upon to speak.

Amount of steel revealed

The East Fulham M.P. referred to Sir Stafford Cripps's letter to him of Jan. 14 and revealed the amount of steel involved. Sir Stafford wrote: 'The modified Fulham scheme would require 1,200 tons of steel, most of it sheet steel and medium plate, which are both in particularly short supply. We could only go forward with the Fulham scheme by cutting still further really vital uses of steel. I am sure your constituents will understand that by this further sacrifice of their comfort for a little long they will be contributing materially to our recovery. As soon as ever the circumstances of the steel supply allow of it we shall, of course, encourage the progress with the work.'

A well-balanced case

'It seems to me we shall have to take hold of that last sentence,' said Mr. Stewart. 'I shall see that whatever facts and evidence that can be collected are kept continually in the minds of my colleagues in the Government. I hope Sands End residents will see their case is presented, not just in bits and pieces, but as a solid well-balanced case. It is on those lines we are most likely to reach success over the power station part of the problem. Important as this power station problem is, it must be kept in proportion to the whole of the problem.'

When the Mayor opened the meeting cries of approval greeted his remark. 'I anticipate there will be only one opinion - that the nuisance is intolerable and that pressure should be resumed to get something done to remedy it.'

Uproar

There were continual interruptions, amounting at times to uproar, when Cllr. J. W. Perotti, the chairman of the electricity committee, maintained that the majority of the nuisance did not come from the Fulham power station. 'Lots Road power station has grit-arresting plant in operation,' he said, 'but in spite of it you will find it does not arrest the whole of the grit from the station. I submit that only a small proportion, in comparison, of the nuisance comes from Fulham power station.'

Mr. Perotti had great difficulty in continuing his speech. From all parts of the hall people voiced contradictions.

Restoring order, the Mayor said, 'If we are going to get anything done we must act like responsible people. I am not going to let this meeting by smashed up by irresponsible people. If you want to say something for goodness' sake come up to the platform at the right time and say it.' (Appl.)



Here is Mrs. Alice Claydon, of No. 23, Clancarty Road, with the reply she received from Buckingham Palace after she had written to the Queen about the grit nuisance.

'Cleanest chimneys in this part of London'

'The Fulham power station chimneys are the cleanest in this part of London,' continued Mr. Perotti. 'The majority of the nuisance comes from surrounding factories and coal dumps. The borough surveyor and medical officer of health have been given the task of collecting evidence on behalf of the people of Fulham and the most important diagnosis they have made with reference to the grit falling in Sands End is that the majority of it has a large content of coal dust. There is no coal dust or unburned gases leaving Fulham power station stacks.'

With many interruptions Mr. Perotti went on to refer to gas works coal dumps that were continually on the move whereas, he said the dumps at Fulham power station were for storage. He maintained that the majority of the nuisance was from coal rather than grit.

Residents' views

Then came a long series of short speeches from Fulham residents. Among the points made were:

Col. G. S. Brighten: we are not discussing coal dust, but cinder grit.. Twelve tons a day of it falls on Fulham on the admission of borough officials, I am not going to admit that is the minor part of the nuisance.

Mr. Tom Monahan: I claim that the T.B. rate in Sands End is abnormally high.

'Exhibits' of grit

Mrs. Margaret Welburn, Kilkie Street (handing a glass jar of grit to the mayor): I sent another jar to the Minister of Health last year and had a reply that something would probably be done by the spring of this year. I got so fed up a fortnight ago I wrote to Sir Stafford Cripps and registered a parcel of grit off to him at No. 11, Downing Street. I am just fed up with living in muck.'

Mr Lester, Edenvale Street (handing in a brown paper bag of grit): To-night I went into the children's bedroom and swept that off their bed.

Mr. E. C. Clements: I think the present quality of the coal is a lot to do with the situation.

property market attracting the relatively wealthy priced out of Chelsea and looking for a nearby alternative. So began the rapid gentrification of Sands End.

When the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) demolished the power station in the early 1980s, it managed to release huge clouds of deadly blue asbestos dust into the skies over Sands End. This resulted in intense air quality monitoring by the borough council and a House of Commons debate in 1983 led by Tooting Labour MP Tom Cox - once a Fulham councillor and CEGB employee, whose father (also called Tom) was a long-time Sands End councillor.

The West London Observer
Friday July 1, 1927

Fulham Borough Council

M.R.'S BYE-ELECTION SUCCESS

MAJORITY OF 34 AT SANDS END.

MR. G.R. RENTON ELECTED

Polling took place on Saturday in the Sands End ward for a seat on the Fulham Borough Council, the bye-election being necessary as a result of the resignation of Councillor Pratt.

The candidates were Mr. Louis Albert Hill (Labour) and Mr. George Rudolph Renton (M.R.) and a fairly busy day was put in by both "camps". There was a last minute rush of voters, and it was considered that the fight would be a close one.

The county took place in the evening and before the result was announced, it was clear that a very narrow margin would separate the candidates. The Returning Officer read out the figures as follows:-

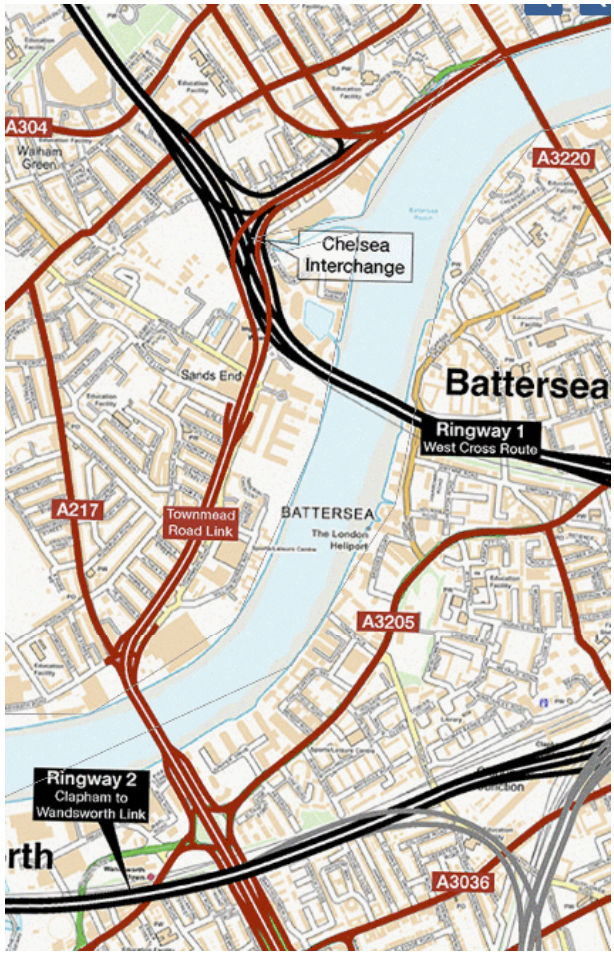
	Elected.	
G. R. Renton	... ...	1,781
	Not Elected.	
L. A. Hill	... ...	1,747

There was great excitement when it was realised that the Municipal Reformers had retained the seat by the very narrow majority of 34 votes.

At the meeting of the Fulham Borough Council on Wednesday evening, Councillor Pritchard introduced the new member. He had much pleasure in doing so, he said, because he had known Mr. Renton for many years. He had rendered excellent service to the borough in various capacities.

Councillor Driver supported, and the Mayor extended a hearty and cordial welcome to Councillor Renton on behalf of the whole Council.

Yet again environmental issues were at the fore in Sands End. And then again at the end of the 1980s when the government resurrected plans from the 1950s to complete the London orbital ringroad, which would have continued the West Cross Route from Shepherds Bush south to Sands End. It would then branch off in three directions: south, across Battersea rail bridge, east along Lots Road to Cheyne Walk, and west, turning Townmead Road into - at least - a dual carriageway to Wandsworth Bridge.



Had that idea ever been made real Sands End would have been blighted to an even greater extent than de-industrialisation had caused. But huge campaigns by the councils, residents groups and MPs eventually compelled the Department for Transport to again return those plans to the dusty filing cabinets they had been contained within since the Abercrombie Plan first decided motorways mattered more than residential neighbourhoods.

Despite all the Sands End homes changing hands at ever-rising prices, the area was still derelict as the 1980s rolled on. But the demolition of the power station enabled the CEGB to sell the land, upon which the first of the riverside residential complexes was built.

HAMMERSMITH FULHAM & SHEPHERDS BUSH
Gazette
Friday March 30, 1990 25p



SAFE-HANDS BEASANT BLOCKS BORO 62-64

Families celebrate scrapping of road plans

Victory!

By MIRIAM RODELL

THOUSANDS of families were celebrating this week after Transport Secretary Cecil Parkinson scrapped two massive road building plans for West London.

The announcement in the Commons on Tuesday afternoon was met with jubilation by campaigners in Shepherds Bush, Hammersmith, Fulham and Chiswick, many of whom said they would fight on for more investment in public transport.

Up to 200 homes in Sands End, Fulham, were threatened with demolition under one of the schemes recommended by Government consultants.

WEIR – the Western Environmental Improvement Route – was designed to end the traffic jams in Earls Court but the plan caused uproar among Londoners living on or near the proposed route.

The Sweeney family live in Kilkie Street in Fulham, one of the streets under threat. Although there was a strong chance their house would be demolished they decided to go ahead with plans to buy their home from the council.

The day after the announcement Jane Sweeney said: "I slept much easier in my bed last night and the rest of family feel great. My husband works from home so it's all worked out really well for us. It's wonderful news."

Fulham campaigner Tommy Hanley, a member of the pressure group All London Against the Road Menace (Alarm) said: "It's a great victory for London because Londoners have got together more quickly and reacted more strongly than ever before. I'm over the moon."

Turnaround

The decision to scrap WEIR, a dual carriageway running from Shepherds Bush to the Thames, represents a major turnaround for the Government. Although Ministers always said its future was dependent on the outcome of the latest consultation it was clear the road had top level backing.

It was only this time last year that Peter Bottomley, then Transport Secretary, described WEIR as a 'unique opportunity' to relieve traffic congestion in Earls Court.

In Chiswick the anti-roads campaign had centred on plans for a new south circular relief road from Barnes linking with the M4 at the Chiswick roundabout. That scheme was rejected by Mr Parkinson last December, at the same time that he announced consultation would go ahead on plans for a new road tunnel from Chelsea to Chiswick emerging at a huge new junction on Kew Bridge Road.

In February Tory MP Sir Barney Hayhoe presented a petition to Parliament against the scheme signed by 13,400 protesters.

With local elections looming the Government must have seen the road schemes as a political liability. It is understood road issues were top of the agenda when London MPs met Mrs Thatcher a month ago and that a group of Tory MPs met Mr Parkinson last week to argue that new roads would not solve London's traffic problems.

Regent on River was Fulham's answer to the sort of blocks going up in Docklands in the East End of London.

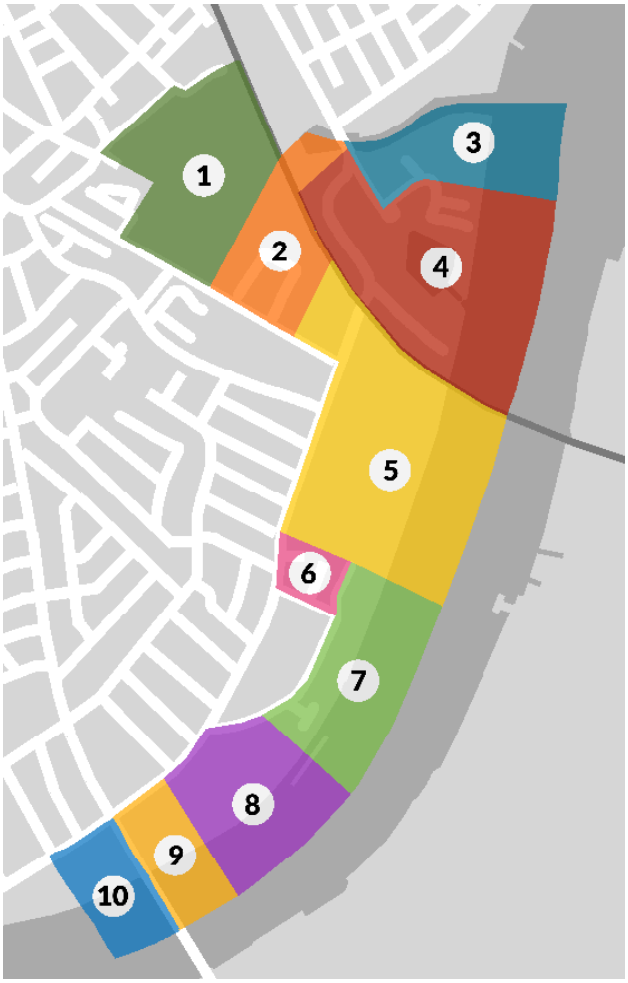
That site also brought the first of the "out of town" supermarkets to Sands End: a massive Sainsbury's store, replacing the much smaller one in North End Road. The council worked with London Transport, as it then was, to create a new "Hoppa" bus service that ran from Craven Cottage to this new supermarket in Sands End, zig-zagging through the Fulham backstreets on a hail-and-ride operation.

As Regent on River was being completed the shipping giant P&O bought the old coal wharf by Chelsea Creek: an area cut off from the rest of Sands End by the West London rail-line. Planning permission for a huge new residential scheme was granted in April 1986 just a month before Labour regained the council. Labour would probably have negotiated a rather different planning agreement for not a single affordable home was included in what was to become Chelsea Harbour.

Chelsea Harbour is a mix of high-end residential apartments; principally the 77 metre Belvedere Tower, and huge retail and office development, notably the Design Centre with its huge glass triple-domed roof, all built around a marina.

The biggest Thames-side development of all though was Imperial Wharf: the riverside between Regent on River and Chelsea Harbour.

After years of working out the viability of the site, cleaning it of all the leftover pollutants from the industry that had gone before, planning permission for 1,800 homes was granted. A Labour council struck a hard bargain for hundreds of affordable homes: 400 housing association rented units, another 400 shared ownership units and 40 sheltered housing units. The development also paid for a new riverside park and a station for Sands End on the West London Line.



How the Sands End Industrial sites have been redeveloped

1. Kings Road Park | 2. Chelsea Creek | 3. Chelsea Waterfront
4. Chelsea Harbour | 5. Imperial Wharf | 6. Chelsea Botanica
7. Regent-on-River | 8. Fulham Riverside | 9. Albert and Swedish Wharf
10. Hurlingham Wharf

Further huge residential developments were given planning consent in the early 2000s: Chelsea Creek, Chelsea Waterfront, King's Road Park, Fulham Riverside above the rebuilt Sainsbury's off Townmead Road, Hurlingham Waterfront and Albert and Swedish Wharf, either side of Wandsworth Bridge; and the bizarrely named Chelsea Botanica on Watermeadow Lane. These sites pretty much complete four decades of regeneration of Sands End - change that has completely remade this neighbourhood.

Let's just catch up with the electoral history. In 2002, new boundaries helped Labour cling onto Sands End. There was a 7% swing to the Conservatives but Labour also added 300 votes to their 1998 total, presumably mostly from the two council estates that came in from the abolished Sulivan ward: Sulivan Court and the Townmead estate.

As a consequence, Sands End stayed Labour - just. The third seat went Conservative by three votes but because of mistakes made by polling officials not stamping ballot papers correctly Labour was able to petition the High Court for a re-run in that one seat. The two Labour seats had been won by large enough majorities that the outcome would not have been altered by the unstamped ballot papers being discounted.
In the by-election, Labour's Colin Pavelin regained by four votes the seat he had lost by three two months earlier.

But this close result meant the writing was on the wall for Labour. They'd have lost in 2006 come what may, but the scale of their defeat was epic. Labour lost 200 votes but the Conservatives added more than 600, creating a 16% swing - the largest of that election. A 2008 by-election held on the same day as Boris Johnson's first London mayoral victory entrenched the Tories further: they won by 1,100 on a 50% turnout.

The gap, in percentage terms, narrowed slightly in 2010 but only because the Tories lost more to the Lib Dems than Labour did. This should have put the seal on Sands end becoming a solidly Tory ward, the way Sulivan had and Town had and Colehill/Munster had. But then confounding results started to occur.

In the upset election of 2014, Sands End very nearly became the icing on Labour's cake: a 7% swing brought them to within 60 votes of the Conservatives. Was it a fluke result?

Apparently not. Another of the ward's Tory councillors, Robert Largan, resigned in 2017 after being selected to fight the Bury South parliamentary seat (he lost but in 2019 became MP for High Peak in Derbyshire, before losing in 2024). With another remarkably high turnout: 63.5%, Conservative Jackie Borland won 2,845 votes and Labour's Ann Rosenberg 2,669. Huge votes for both.


IMPERIAL ROAD
HARBOUR AVENUE
PEARSCROFT RD
BAGLEY'S LANE
TOWNMEAD ROAD
BROUGHTON RD
HAZLEBURY RD
BYAM ST
ROSEBURY RD
STEPHENDALE RD
WILLIAM MORRIS WAY
DE MORGAN RD

Jackie Borland was a councillor for just eleven months because, at the 2018 council elections, Labour recaptured all three seats in Sands End and one of the winners was Ann Rosenberg, the loser of the by-election. Jackie Borland later returned as a Palace & Hurlingham councillor.

But how had Labour recovered? There were the usual national reasons: the EU referendum, the Conservatives appealing less to the sorts who might have voted for Cameron but not May, the splits in her party as she tried to get her version of Brexit, worse than remaining in many ways, through parliament.

But there were two significant factors unique to Sands End. The first was exceptional turnout of Labour voters from the Townmead and Pearscroft estates. In an election where turnout across Sands End was just 39%, on those two estates it was 73%. On Sulivan Court it was 50%; on Philpott Square, one of the smaller Sulivan-side estates it was 57%. Labour voters were clearly energised to vote at the same time as Conservative voters were demotivated.

The second factor was, surprisingly, the completion of the Imperial Wharf development. Remember the planning deal the then Labour council had done for an almost 50-50 split between full market price housing and public housing? That 50-50 split in units did not translate into a similar split of voters.

Simply put, while the market side of the development is either occupied by singles or couples, or indeed by foreign nationals ineligible to vote or simply left void as corporate investments, the affordable side was filled with large families. There are over 950 voters in the affordable side of Imperial Wharf; less than 550 in the market side. It's simplistic to suggest that all public housing tenants vote Labour and all leaseholders or private renters vote Conservative, but not so simplistic as to be misleading as to where Labour's renewed vote came from.

SANDS END CONTEST

Four Candidates For Borough Council Seat

THE PROSPECT OF THERE BEING FIVE CANDIDATES IN THE FULHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL BY-ELECTION IN SANDS END WARD ON DECEMBER 5 HAS NOT MATERIALISED

THE I.L.P. HAVE DECIDED NOT TO NOMINATE MR F. SCRIVENER THUS LEAVING ONLY FOUR ASPIRANTS TO THE SEAT.

THEY ARE:—

MRS. EDITH M. CLARK (CONS.);
MRS. LILY COOMBER (LAB.);
MR. FRANK HASKELL (COM.); AND
MR. J. H. RUSSELL (RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION).

The by-election has arisen through the election of Mr. A F. Coomber ,the leader of the Borough Council, as an alderman. His wife is one of the candidates.

I.L.P. NOT TO CONTEST

After intimating that they would be nominating a candidate, the Independent Labour Party have decided not to contest the by-election.

In a letter to the "Fulham Chronicle" the divisional organiser, Mr. G. W. Stone, gives this explanation: "Many issues of extreme importance particularly that of permanent conscription, have become matters of vital and immediate concern, therefore the I.L.P. has decided to forego this municipal contest in order to mobilise all its forces on the larger issues."

Ratepayers' Candidate An Ex-Marine

The Fulham Ratepayers' Association candidate, Mr. J. H. Russell, of No 6, Edenhurst Avenue, Hurlingham, is making his second attempt to secure a seat on the borough council

He unsuccessfully contested Lillie Ward as a ratepayers' candidate in the council elections last November.

Born in Sands End, Mr. Russell, who is a company director, property manager and estate surveyor, has lived in the district for 20 years, his parents being Kilkie Street residents. Before the war he served in the Royal Marines for two years. He left the service after an accident.

During the war, in the Fulham Home Guard, he rose to the rank of Major, finally commanding the headquarter's company.

A noted athlete, he won a Royal Marines' swimming championship

Conservatives' Choice

The Conservative candidate is Mrs Edith M Clark, of No 57, Wandsworth Bridge Road, chairman of the women's branch of Sands End Ward Conservatives and organiser of the "Reveller's" Concert Party.

At the Borough Council election a year ago Mrs. Clark polled most votes among the defeated Conservative candidates in Sands End.

She has lived at Wandsworth Bridge Road 27 years, and is a member of the local children's after-care committee, and of the Fulham Children's Invalid Aid Society.

A member of the W.V.S., she did invaluable work during the air-raids She is a schools manager of No 2 group (Langford Road Hugon Road, Harwood, and Peterborough Schools)

Labour's Selection

Six prospective candidates were considered by the East Fulham Labour Party, and the final voting was in favour of Mrs. Coomber who lives at No 11, King Edward's Mansions.

In the recent by-election in Barons Court Ward she was defeated by the Conservative candidate, Lt.-Col. E J P. Cussen, who obtained 2,695 votes to her 1,274.

Mrs Coomber was Mayoress of Fulham 1941-42.

Communist Nominee

The Communist Party announced some weeks ago that their candidate would be Mr. Frank Haskell.

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of the contents of the box, and this sum has been paid in at the fund headquarters.

Consultation promised over 40 acres of shopping and housing

Massive development on run-down gas site

By RUTH HUGHES

THOUSANDS of Fulham residents will be asked to give their views on proposals for a 40-acre shopping, housing and leisure development on a run-down British Gas site next to the Thames.

Plans and models of the site at Imperial Wharf in Sands End are to be unveiled by British Gas in October.

There will be a meeting to assess public opinion before Hammersmith and Fulham Council's environment committee considers the outline planning application in December.

There are currently 11 commercial properties on the site, including warehouses, a timber yard and a haulage company. Under the plans they will all be demolished. Tenants were notified in April to quit the site when their leases expire. British Gas will send a newsletter detailing its plans to 6,000 homes early next month. The company says it will ask residents for their views.

The council is defying pressure from British Gas to make a decison on the application by the Government's deadline on October 2, in order to consult residents fully.

Town hall chiefs are concerned about poor road and public transport access, the height and scale of the buildings planned, and land contamination as a result of its former use as a gas works.

The Association of Residents in Sands End (Arise) is keen for the project to involve the community.

Chairman Tommy Hanley said: "We are in favour of the development as long as it is in the interests of the community.

"There needs to be a lot of consultation and a new approach to prevent cramming too much on the site.

"It is far too big a development to rush. It is probably the biggest site to come up for redevelopment since Canary Wharf."

Mr Hanley, along with other members of the Sands End consultative committee, which is made up of residents and representatives from businesses and churches, is meeting council planners on September 2 to discuss the proposals.

The council's environment director Bill Myers said the development would undoubtedly have a massive effect on the area.

"Clearly the council is keen to have a comprehensive development which fits in with the community," he said.

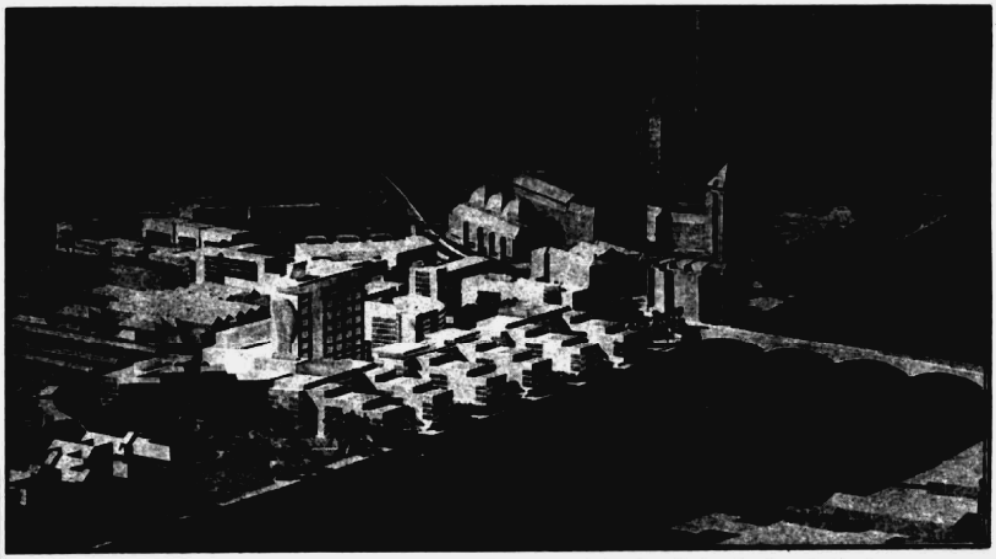
"No-one doubts that the site has been underused for many years, however such a large undertaking in a part of the borough which does not currently enjoy good public transport links will need careful planning if it is to be succesful."

A British Gas spokesman said: "We're hoping to forge good relations with the council. British Gas is not trying to force the council's hand and is not expecting it to reach a decision within eight weeks."

After the council reaches a decision, the plans could still face being 'called in' by the Environment Secretary, John Gummer, for a public inquiry.

The plans are to build:

- 900 new homes, including 15 per cent affordable housing;
- A 255 room hotel;
- A public park of between three and five acres;
- A new road parallel to Townmead Road from William Morris Way to the Townmead Road/Imperial Road roundabout. Traffic calming measures would be installed in Townmead Road;
- A river walk to Chelsea Harbour;
- A supermarket;
- Light industry units;
- A leisure centre;
- Offices;
- A bus terminal.



A model of the proposed development at the Imperial Wharf site in Sands End

Again, there was a turnout differential in 2018: residents of the Imperial affordable housing turned out at 64%; the rest of the development at barely 30%. So, extraordinarily, this vast new riverside development became not another vat of Conservative votes as expected, but a brand new Labour enclave.

To prove that 2018 result wasn't a fluke, Labour won Sands End again in 2022 after boundary changes removed the section west of Wandsworth Bridge Road. This Sands End was like 1978 to 2002 Sands End, minus the area north of Sandilands Road and with three councillors instead of two.

The changes were broadly politically neutral: that Sulivan section very slightly lent Conservative but not by much.

Labour held all three seats in Sands End on a 2% swing to them. Turnout was down a lot, and the ward was over 2,000 electors smaller. Labour's third councillor won with 1,098 votes. In 2018 the third Labour winner had won with 1,714 an, of course these were both a far cry from that 2,669 Ann Rosenberg had lost with in 2017. Still, it was the most vulnerable Labour ward - honestly the only one the Conservatives looked like having any chance of winning in 2026.

Labour was not doing much to win friends at this end of the borough - at least the vocal ones. There were growing problems with traffic in the ward with all the new housing that had been constructed.

There were very few ways of getting into the ward and those limited roads bore a weight of traffic. Labour tackled this by, essentially, banning all non-residential traffic - which included taxis and delivery vans: so issues of convenience and residents' safety getting home at night arose.

In Wandsworth Bridge Road for reasons best known to traffic planners, huge wooden planters had been placed in the road forcing cyclists out into the path of traffic. It's possible that those complaining were either non residents or Conservative voters. But the noise created suggested that Labour would struggle to hold the ward in 2026. All three Labour councillors stood down as well.

And Sands End did switch sides again - or at least two of the three seats did. Labour hung onto the third by 19 votes. Those two seats were the only Conservative gains in 2026 and they occurred despite the Tories not gaining any votes compared to 2022.

It was not an impressive performance by either main party. The Conservatives won with just 32.6% - down almost 7 percentage points on their 2022 loss and their worst share of the vote since 1986. Labour, though, fell nearly twenty percentage points, of which 16 appear to have gone Green: they didn't contest Sands End in 2022.

Winning seats is the primary aim of an election so, on that, measure the Conservatives sort of did alright. But winning when your vote falls - a lot - is almost a pyrrhic victory, and to return to the sort of vote shares they last won before all the steel and glass went up along the riverside seems very odd.

Summary of election results for Sands End ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Sands End ward					
1900	34.4		52.1		13.5
1903	33.0	17.3	49.6		
1905B	23.5	18.8	57.7		
1906	52.4	21.9	30.6		6.2
1909	53.2		46.8		
1912	51.5	10.3	38.2		
1919	27.5	52.5	20.0		
1922	40.3	34.3	13.2		12.2
1925B	45.8	54.2			
1925	56.1	43.9			
1927B	50.5	49.5			
1928	51.9	43.0			
1931	68.0	28.3			3.7
1934	38.5	61.5			
1937	40.8	59.2			
1945	26.0	60.1			13.8
1946B	35.3	53.8			10.8
1949	45.1	54.9			
1953	35.3	59.5			5.2
1956	32.3	64.5			3.2
1959	29.3	66.7			4.0
1962	31.2	63.6			5.2
Sandford ward					
1964	16.8	74.2			
1968	52.5	47.5			
1971	28.7	71.3			
1974	32.7	67.3			
1975B	35.6	54.1	10.3		
Sands End ward					
1978	36.3	60.9			2.9
1982	32.7	50.8	14.8		1.7
1986	26.2	52.2	21.6		
1990	37.5	51.9	6.9		3.7
1994	39.1	51.1	9.8		
1998	37.3	52.4	10.3		
2002	44.6	48.3	7.1		
2002B	44.9	45.1	9.9		
2006	60.0	32.3	7.7		
2008B	57.5	29.2	13.2		
2010	51.1	30.2	18.7		
2014	38.9	31.9	6.3	10.8	12.1
2017B	46.5	43.6	9.8		
2018	42.2	49.4	8.4		
2022	39.4	49.8	10.8		
2026	32.6	30.4	8.1	16.3	12.6



Double act: Twins Brendan and Tony Bird start their campaign trail for the local council elections
Picture by **SHANE DEMPSEY**

Double trouble for parties as twins enter fray

COULD it be double trouble for the Tories and Liberals at next month's elections when twins Brendan and Tony Bird try to land two seats for the Labour Party?

Brendan and Tony are standing in the neighbouring wards of Sands End and Sulivan, respectively.

The 44-year-old brothers share several common interests.

They both work in housing and play in the same football team.

Asked if they have a psychic link, Tony said: "I don't really believe in that sort of thing, but I once bought a rare record when I was visiting the South West, and when I got back, Brendan had bought the same one!"

Brendan has replaced ex-council leader Mike Goodman who has an increasingly busy work schedule as director of the charity Release. His co-runner in Labour-held Sands End will be Nadeem Aftab while the Tories field Michael Brennan and Stephen Greenhalgh and the Liberal Democrats, Mary McNamee and Gabrielle Minken.

In Sulivan Tony and Jeff Kenner – who has transferred from the virtually impregnable Addison ward – will be up against the Leader of the Conservative Group Gerald Wombwell and fellow Tory stalwart Jonathan Maiden. The Liberal Democrats add Joan Bonser and Peter Crystal to the equation.

For more election news turn to page 15.

That they could only increase their council group to twelve seats in a year of deep Labour government unpopularity and with seemingly some emotive local issues to make mileage out of speaks to the rut they are also in. True, they managed to put in play two wards north of Sands End: Walham Green and Lillie, and are not completely out of the picture in Avonmore and Brook Green, but they are still far from a straightforward path back to challenging for power at borough-level.

Reform UK almost certainly cost the Conservatives that third seat: they won 12.6%. That's only fractionally more than UKIP won in 2014: and that year all their vote appeared to come from the Conservatives.

Likely not every Reform voter was a 2022 Conservative but let's assume the majority were. Instead of 33%, the Conservatives could maybe have expected to poll 40%.

Also: why is turnout so low in what should be Conservative strongholds: the ladder of streets between Stephendale and Townmead; the Hever estate ("Bury triangle") and Broughton Road? Why aren't they getting decent turnouts from "new Sands End" along the river?

If the Conservatives cannot find a way to get at least a sizeable minority of public housing tenants supporting them, they likely cannot win this borough ever again - and will continue struggling to win Sands End too.

Rollcall of Sands End ward councillors

including Sandford ward (1964-1978)

2026
- Rob Harris
- Libby Hart
- Roseanne Meacher

2022
- Paul Alexander
- Ashok Patel
- Ann Rosenberg

2018
- Lucy RIchardson
- Ann Rosenberg
- Matt Uberoi

2017B
- Jacqueline Borland

2014
- Steven Hamilton
- Robert Largan
- Jane Law

2010
- Steven Hamilton
- Alexandra De Lisle
- Jane Law

2008B
- Alexandra De Lisle

2006
- Jeanette Bentley
- Steven Hamilton
- Jane Law

2002B
- Colin Pavelin

2002
- Brendan Bird
- Steven Hamilton
- Jenny Vaughan

1998
- Brendan Bird
- Colin Pavelin

1994
- Nadeem Aftab
- Brendan Bird

1990
- Nadeem Aftab
- Michael Goodman

1986
- Michael Goodman
- Tony Powell

1982
- Tony Powell
- Clive Wisbey

1978
- Joseph Feely
- Tony Powell

1975B
- Joseph Feely

1974
- Michael Finn
- Jack Ireland
- Nick Raynsford

1971
- Jack Ireland
- Alf Little
- Nick Raynsford

1968
- Ernest Ibbott
- Terence Moody
- Sheira Trehearne

1964
- Percy Barton
- John Browning
- Phyllis Cooper

1962
- Percy Barton
- John Browning
- Malcolm Hall
- Phyllis Cooper
- Leonard Fenton
- Dennis Liardet

1959
- Percy Barton
- John Browning
- Alfred Coomber
- Phyllis Cooper
- Leonard Fenton
- Dennis Liardet

1956
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Phyllis Cooper
- William Fraser
- Jack Ireland
- William Thom

1953
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Phyllis Cooper
- Thomas Cox
- William Fraser
- Percy Fenne

1949
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Alfred Coomber
- Phyllis Cooper
- Thomas Cox
- Percy Fenne

1946B
- Lily Coomber

1945
- Percy Barton
- Alexander Chaplin
- Alfred Coomber
- Phyllis Cooper
- Charles De Winter
- Percy Fenne

1937
- Percy Barton
- Richard Cook
- Alfred Coomber
- Thomas Cox
- Charles De Winter
- Solomon Vanderhook

1934
- Percy Barton
- Richard Cook
- Alfred Coomber
- Thomas Cox
- Charles De Winter
- Solomon Vanderhook

1931
- Albert Baggs
- Arthur Minute
- Rosina Pavitt
- George Renton
- Thomas Richardson
- Thomas Tombs

1928
- Arthur Driver
- Arthur Minute
- George Renton
- Thomas Richardson
- Donald Van Den Bergh
- George Waldron

1925
- Albert Baggs
- Arthur Driver
- Charles Fryer
- Arthur Minute
- Ernest Pratt
- Donald Van Den Bergh

1922
- Albert Baggs
- William Clarke
- Alfred Gantlett
- Stanley Malpass
- Ernest Pratt
- Donald Van Den Bergh

1919
- Thomas Cox
- Daniel Creed
- Joseph Dickinson
- John Groves
- Joseph Hayward
- Robert Wadman

1912
- Henry Crew
- James Edwards
- A. Howell
- W. Middleton
- Henry Norris
- Frederick Shaw

1909
- William Allen
- Henry Crew
- William Brooks
- James Edwards
- Henry Norris
- Aldred Sadler

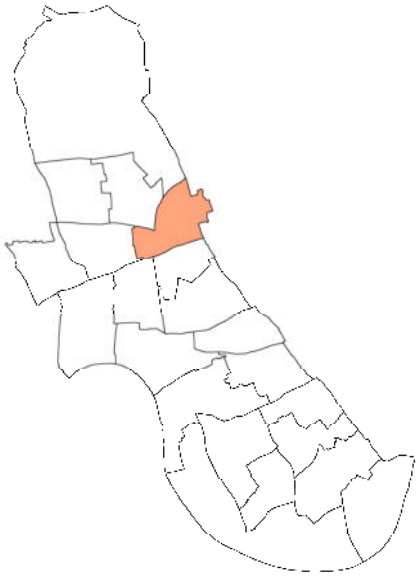
1906
- Frank Boynton
- Henry Crew
- Henry Norris
- Aldred Sadler
- Frederick Shaw
- William Whitty

1903
- Alfred Baxter
- Robert Davies
- Thomas Oakey
- John Rosevear
- James Comben
- John Palmer

1900
- Alfred Baxter
- Robert Davies
- Thomas Oakey
- John Rosevear
- William Serjeant
- Charles Steel

Shepherds Bush Green ward

Whatever the typical image of Shepherd's Bush is - seedy, down-at-heel, multi-cultural, working class, traffic-blighted - this area, and this ward specifically, has a claim to be as important as the West End for the birthing of entertainment, recreation and broadcasting.



Consider:

The bulk of the White City great Exhibition Centre, entered through an ornate towering archway on the edge of the green was here

The Gaumont Theatre in Lime Grove opened in 1915. This became the first - and main - BBC recording studios, where the first ever episode of Dr Who was made

Across Lime Grove from the Gaumont is the London College of the Arts where The Clash formed - arguably where punk rock was founded. Members of The Who and the Sex Pistols were based in this area, and scenes from Quadrophenia were filmed here

Next door to the college was the old Lime Grove baths and wash-houses, opened in 1907, which were the first state efforts in Hammersmith to improve the health, hygiene and cleanliness of the citizenery. The baths became Hammersmith's only swimming pools until new pools were built in Bloemfontein Road

On Shepherds Bush Green the Shepherd's Bush Empire still stands, now called the O2 - one of Britain's first live theatre venues. Prior to that this was a BBC live theatre recording studio where Crackajack was recorded

Next door, the now-closed and largely demolished Walkabout pub began life as one of the earliest cinemas, opened in 1910; but is being restored to its former glory and without the Australian colours of the Walkabout

Next door to that, the Shepherd's Bush Pavilion: another former cinema in an area that boasted a huge turnover of such venues when the medium first became popularly and widely available

Across the green, the offices where Spike Milligan first began creating the whacky off-beat humour that eventually became the Goon Show with Michael Bentine, Tony Hancock and Harry Seacombe still stand

And it doesn't really end there: the old, larger Shepherds Bush Green ward that existed until 2022 included the iconic modernist BBC Television Centre on Wood Lane; Queen's Park Rangers' Loftus Road football ground; and Hammersmith Park which contains surviving relics of Imre Karalfi's White City Exhibition Centre.

Ever so slightly further north was the White City Stadium, home of the 1910 Olympics and thereafter London's premier greyhound racing stadium until it fell into ruin and was demolished as part of the expansion of the Westway. That site, now in White City ward, became the BBC Media Village so the continuation of the cultural theme lives on, even in some fairly non-descript modern office blocks.

Shepherd's Bush Green therefore has a significance that is often overlooked nowadays - above and beyond the fact that the area just north of the green is Shepherd's Bush village: the very first settlement in the area. Yet Shepherd's Bush never really developed in the way other districts of similar size and with similar potential did. Why is that?

Chris Hamnett, Professor of Geography at King's College, has suggested that disastrous 1950s town planning; specifically the building of the West Cross Route and the Westway, blighted the area to such an extent that its development was retarded for decades.

The West London Observer
Friday July 22, 1921

Anti-Waste victory in St. Stephen's ward

THREE-CORNERED CONTEST - MR. W.W. POYNTER ELECTED.

A three-cornered contest took place on Saturday in St. Stephen's ward, Shepherd's Bush, to decide who should be elected a member of the Hammersmith Borough Council to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Councillor W.A. Gillies, and a good deal of interest was evinced in the result of the polling.

The three candidates were:- Mr. W. Barnett, Labour; Mr. A.R. Cracknell, Independent anti-waste candidate, who is an ex-Councillor and a Liberal in politics; and Mr. W.W. Poynter, anti-waste candidate, who was supported by the Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the Hammersmith branch of the Middle Classes Union, the Sailors and Soldiers Federation, and the Municipal Reform Party.

Mr. Poynter is a member of St. Stephen's ward of the Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush Conservative Association.

Each candidate had a display of election literature in the streets of the ward, in many of the windows cards being displayed exhorting electors to vote for their favourite candidate. In Devonport Road, where Mr. Cracknell resides, there was a good show of cards on his behalf, whilst in Lime Grove the majority of the cards exhibited were in favour of Mr. Poynter. Cards in support of Mr. Barnett were shown in several of the streets.

Polling took place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the L.C.C. School, Thornfield Road, there being four polling stations. The presiding officers were Messrs. W. Mortimer, G. Gate, C.W. Hill and A.S. Cross; Clerks, Messrs. Capes, Bird, R. Harris, Maidment and Adams. The arrangements for the election were carried out by Mr. Francis, under the direction of Mr. Leslie Gordon, the Town Clerk, who was the returning officer.

The candidates, with a number of supporters, assembled at the entrance of the school and did their best to enlist the votes of wavering electors by distributing cards and shouting out the names of the aspirants for municipal honours.

On a portable platform fixed in front of the entrance was a placard with the words:

Vote for Barnett
The Labour candidate

Workers! the anti-waste idea of economy is by reducing your wages, housing and education

Placards in support of the other candidates were also displayed in the vicinity. There was a steady flow of voters to the polling stations in the morning but the number increased in the afternoon and evening. Just before 7 the votes polled at the four stations were:- 226, 218, 272 and 168.

It was one of the liveliest Borough Council elections that has taken place

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

When polling ceased at 8 o'clock, the ballot boxes were conveyed to the Town Hall, the counting of the votes being proceeded with in the Council Chamber at half past eight. All three candidates attended.

About 20 minutes past 9 the Town Clerk declared the result as follows:-

Mr. W.W. Poynter (Anti-waste)	504
Mr. W. Barnett (Labour)	322
Mr. A.R. Cracknell (Ind.)	283

Majority over Labour candidate 182

Mr. Leslie Gordon then declared Mr. Poynter to be elected a member of the Borough Council, an announcement which was received with cheers.

The number of votes recorded was 1,114 out of an electorate of 3,473. There were five rejected ballot papers.

SPEECHES OF CANDIDATES

Mr. W.W. Poynter said, as the winning candidate, it was his proud privilege and honour of proposing a hearty vote of thanks to the returning officer for the able and efficient way he had conducted the election, and the members of the staff for the assiduous, careful and painstaking manner in which they had carried out their business. He also wished to thank the electors who had supported his election.

He wished sincerely to say if there was anything he could do for St. Stephen's ward and the whole of Hammersmith it would be his proud position to carry out. He thanked all who had assisted him in obtaining that magnificent majority. He trusted that he would prove worthy of their support and he concluded by again thanking them all sincerely. (Applause).

Mr. W. Barnett seconded the motion and said he wished to associate himself with the remarks made by the successful candidate, with reference to the good work which had been done by the officials in the election, and he wished to thank them heartily for what they had done. He wished to give hearty thanks to those who had worked hard in the election on his behalf. He accepted the position on grounds which were not personal. (Applause).

Mr. A.R. Cracknell said he had great pleasure in supporting the vote of thanks, because he had had the greatest courtesy from the Town Clerk and Mr. Francis; the latter, he thought, had done all the work. It was always a pleasure to come to the Town Hall to get any information.

He might say that he was proud that he had made his effort. His one object was to stand against a combination of forces to defeat the common end of real injustice.

He was against class, which had dominated Hammersmith ever since he had known it. He had been up against combines and wealthy concerns part of his lifetime. He had offered his services to get what he believed justice. Wealthy organisations had joined and worked together. He had got a letter from the Middle Classes Union asking that he might come forward as their prospective candidate. He was also nominated by the Executive of the Ratepayers' Association.

He congratulated Mr Poynter on his victory. He did not envy him his victory. He stood against class. He was not discouraged or downhearted. [Cllr Morris: Don't cry over it; get on with it]. He thought he would be far more useful off the council than on it.

He had been dropped by the Middle Classes Union and the Ratepayers' Association. He stood alone. He had not said a word against his opponents. He did say that the lying slander which had been said about himself was a disgrace to any body of people. He protested against dirty, underhanded and shameful statements which had been made in the borough. He fought for right principles. In conclusion, Mr. Cracknell said he supported the vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and his staff. (Applause).

Mr. Leslie Gordon, the Town Clerk, in reply said it was the second time in a few weeks on a Saturday night that he had had to return thanks for the very pleasing words said about Mr. Francis and those helping to carry out the election. Mr. Cracknell was quite right: Mr. Francis had done all the work.

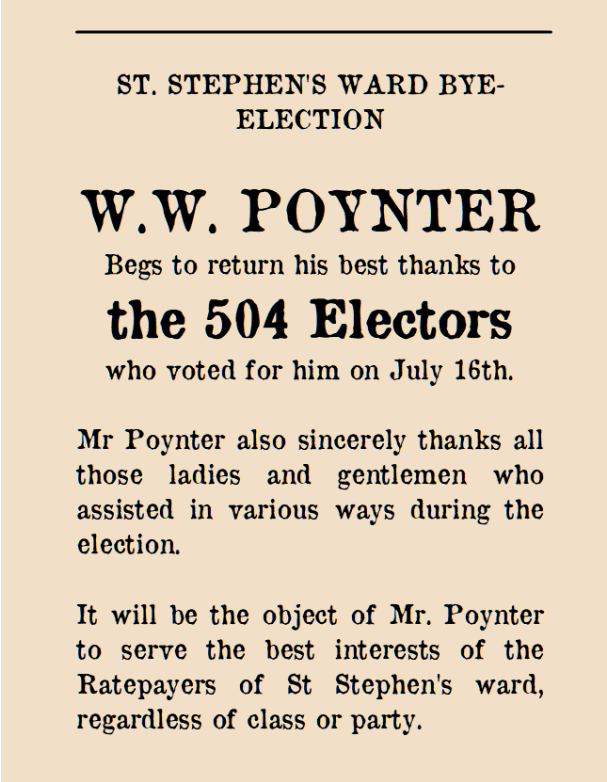
He would like to give them a few figures. He would like to congratulate the electors of St. Stephen's ward in showing an example. They had made the highest percentage at the poll they had known since 1919. The total of the poll was 31.5 per cent. against the lamentable return for Brook Green of 18 per cent. a few weeks ago. No one was more thankful than himself if the people came forward to vote.

In the first three hours of the polling the ladies polled in a majority. When the returns were analysed it would be probably found that the ladies polled not less than 50 per cent. That was some indication to Mr. Poynter in carrying out his duties as a member of the council.

He thanked the Press for their courtesy and the police for their assistance. On behalf of the staff he wished to thank them for the vote of thanks which had been passed. (Applause)

The West Cross route - fortunately abandoned before the planners were able to wreck even more of the area physically wrenches Shepherd's Bush from Notting Hill and the Edward Woods estate. The elevated roundabout at its northern end has "spokes", denoting the off-ramps that were to have extended north parallel to Wood Lane. Imagine all the homes destroyed and all the more recent developments like the Imperial campus sites that would have been lost to motorways if the craze for cars had never been curbed.

Professor Hamnett describes the West Cross Route as West London's Berlin Wall.



ST. STEPHEN'S WARD BYE-ELECTION

W.W. POYNTER

Begs to return his best thanks to

the 504 Electors

who voted for him on July 16th.

Mr Poynter also sincerely thanks all those ladies and gentlemen who assisted in various ways during the election.

It will be the object of Mr. Poynter to serve the best interests of the Ratepayers of St Stephen's ward, regardless of class or party.

Some have described Shepherd's Bush Green, ringed by its thick, almost constant streams of traffic where Goldhawk Road, Uxbridge Road, Shepherds Bush Road, Wood Lane, the West Cross Route and Holland Park Avenue all converge, as dystopian. It is challenging to cross to the green, especially from the south (Addison) side so that it can feel like little more than a traffic island rather than the feature the area is named after.

The character of Shepherd's Bush is slowly changing with the opening of the Westfield shopping centre and with the building of a vast amount of new housing aimed at a more affluent, home-owning demographic. It is this housing - and therefore population and electorate - growth, that had major implications for the council ward that covers this area.

Severe boundary pruning has meant that Shepherd's Bush Green has gone from being the largest ward (11,261 projected electors) to the smallest (3,769 actual ones in 2026). There are now three significant components to the ward.

- First, the streets west of the green as far as, but stopping short of Devonport Road.
- Second the original village of Shepherd's Bush north of the green.
- Third, the huge Edward Woods Estate, the other side of "West London's Berlin Wall".

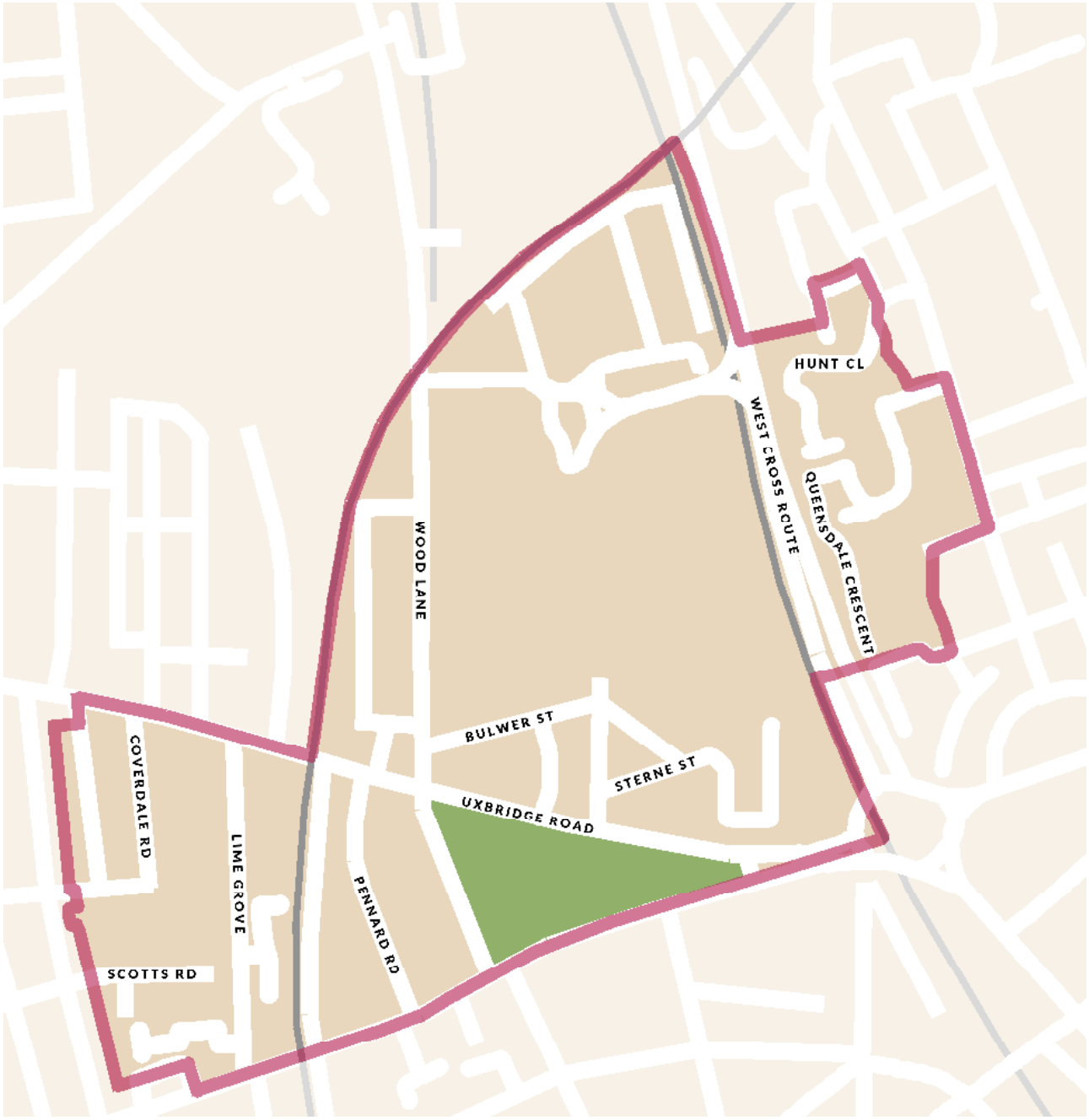
There will, eventualy, be a fourth: new private residential blocks squeezed between the Westfield shopping centre and the Hammersmith and City Line as it arcs towards Latimer Road station. These blocks should have been built and occupied by now but the Covid pandemic froze housing developments across London and it hasn't ever recovered. Just one has so far been built.

To the west of the green, the ward takes in Pennard Road, where houses on the evens side back onto the big entertainment venues. At the north end is the former Shepherd's Bush fire-station. Then there is the famous market that also runs from Goldhawk Road to Uxbridge Road, right beside and underneath the Hammersmith and City Line. Long-serving Shepherds Bush Green councillor Mercy Umeh is a stall-holder here.

This - the tube viaduct - used to be the ward boundary, with Coningham taking over further west. But the electorate grew so much between the 2002 boundary review (when Coningham was abolished) and 2022 (when it was resurrected) that Shepherds Bush Green not stretches beyond. Lime Grove is typical of the long roads - there are over 200 voters here, and this is one of the smaller ones, plus another seventy in the newer Gaumont Terrace and Gainsborough Court.

At the southern end there's the start of the William Church estate: Frobisher Court. William Church was, for years, one of the College Park and Latimer Labour councillors alongside Edward Woods, occasionally when these were the only three council seats the party could win in Hammersmith.

Both have estates named after them in this ward. The William Church estate is much the smaller, comprising



Frobisher Court: a four storey tenement block two eleven-storey tower blocks (Drake Court and Frobisher Court) - so only 46% the size of the Edward Woods towers!; and Raleigh Court and Scotts Court fronting Scotts Road.

The Lime Groves Baths extended back what felt like forever, down dark Victorian corridors. They closed in 1980, to be replaced by the White City pools in Bloemfontein Road, which survived a fraction of the time the original baths had lasted: built by the same dodgy firm that constructed Fulham Pools in Normand Park, and which were condemned around the same time.

So large was the footprint of the Lime Groves baths that a terrace of over 30 houses was built in Scotts Road where the pools themselves used to stand. The lovely Pools frontage still stands in Lime Grove, preserved next to the gothic University of the Arts campus.

There are a couple more roads in this little enclave of the ward: Coverdale Road, where Miles Coverdale primary school is, and Warbreck Road.

In the old larger version of Shepherds Bush Green that existed until 2022, the ward then stretched north across Uxbridge Road to include streets now in White City ward, including Loftus Road and Frithville Gardens which winds behind the BBC Television Centre to Hammersmith Park.

But this version's boundary follows the tube viaduct and only Macfarlane Road and Wood Lane up to where the line crosses it now remain of this area north of Uxbridge Road.

Then there is the original Shepherd's Bush village settlement centred on Sterne Street: a small diamond of cottage-lined streets immediately off the green, now dwarfed by Westfield, rising up to their rear. Shepherd's Bush Place - at least, that part of it that isn't the brutal metal side of the new bus terminus and central line station - is one of the prettiest streets in Hammersmith: it wouldn't be out of place on the Brackenbury estate or near Ravenscourt Park.



There are also small council blocks in this area: the pastel pink Aldine Court for example, and more recent mixed-tenure blocks like the unusually-shaped, wood-panelled Bourbon Place.

Shepherds Bush Village began in the old College Park and Latimer ward, but the green and the streets west of it all the way to Coningham Road were part of St Stephen's. In 1949 the village was moved into St Stephen's ward and, when the boroughs were amalgamated in 1964, St Stephen's boundaries looked considerably like the current Shepherd's Bush Green's.

Hammersmith used to extend into a larger area of Notting Hill around Latimer Road than it does today: it's where most of the electorate of the old College Park and Latimer ward resided. The map opposite shows the old borough boundary in pink (using the old road layout before the slums were cleared), while the area shaded green is how the line exists today.

Some of the names of the cleared streets were adopted for the blocks on the Edward Woods: Stebbing, Poynter, Swanscombe and Norland.

The slum clearance was part of that wanton municipal vandalism that included the West Cross Route (again, this map predates that) - and it was only a few years down the road when the fad for clearing away the slums.

There was no doubt the terraces in this area were often horrifically damp, massively overcrowded, lacked basic amenities and were amidst a squalid, destitute neighbourhoods: this part of Notting Hill was among the most deprived in London. But was replacing them with isolated and isolating skyscrapers better?

For years, the answer was probably no. Such was the blight caused to its residents by this estate that it may have helped end the push to build towering blocks and remove human scale environments for the poor, at least for a generation or two. This shift away from high rise estates came too late to halt construction of the Charecroft estate on the south side of Shepherd's Bush Green though.

The Edward Woods comprises three 24-storey blocks - Hammersmith wanted them 31 storeys tall but the Ministry of Housing vetoed that - and two low-rise podium blocks.



The world is a different place when you are 200 feet up. The huge While City stadium on the right becomes a miniature race track from the EInd floor of Hammersmith's new Latymer Road flats

HIS DREAM

Comes true after 46 years with skyscraper flats

FOR 46 years he had dreamt of this in times of vicious wage cuts, slump and hunger marches he had always before him visions of towering blocks of bright new flats for the people he knew as the sait of the earth.

On Saturday that dream crystallised Into Poynter Hnase the first of these 24. Moure skyscraper aincks to he declared open on Latymer Road's Edward Woods Estate, Hammersmith.

Mr. Ted Woods, who retired from Hammersmith Council three years ago after 43 years, said at the bioch's couning ceremony: "This culiminates a decision I made 46 years ago.

"When I was first elected to represent this ward I was shocked at what I found in this area. The property was worn out. It had been neglected during the whcls of the First World War and much of it long before that.

"It was 1922 and there were over a million unemployed. But during my years on the council it had been my ambition to do something about this neglected area."

Mr. Woods said he was conrevoed because he so much reapected the people of the ares.

"I've said it before and I'll repeal it. They are the salt of the earth," he declared.

Mr. Woods was a little apprehensive as to whether everyone would like living so bigh up.

"But if you build uowards you can afford to have open spaces round about," he said.

He wished all the tenants a pleasant life with good health and prosperity and said: "I hope also for the council that the experiment of lower blocks for which I am partiy responaible, le a success."

Mr. Woods then declared Poynter House open.

He need not have warried about people being scared of heighis.

Cllr. George Simpson, chairtoen ef the Houoing Committee. teid the gathering tkst 50 of the dats had already been accepted and no one had objecied to the height so for.

"As we tosre here this afternoon we will probably see foraiture vane moving in," he said snailing. "We on Hammerwnith Council are enly two pleased to be able to continue the work started by Ted Woods on the Edward Woods Estate."

The Mayor of Hammersmith, Mrc. Cleely Liarder, referred to Mr. Woods as the man known to mariy as "Mr. Hammersmith," because of his years on the council. And the said: "I am so glad he has come here today to put the finishing touches to the work he began on this estate."

The development will eventuaily inelnde three 24-storey hlurks of flats, six five storey blocks, eight shaps, a doctor's surgery and an estate affite.

Proviaion has also been made for a public open space rav pubiic houers and a site for a nursery school.

Thery will also be five covered cer parks.

Pcynter House provides in itself 178 heones, each firted with a refrigerator and s warm-air drying cehinet. The covered car park adiscent to the ctock provides spsce for ft: cert. The root of the cer palk is to be used a pedortrian welk-way and a children's play space.

A smattering of small shops, a pub and a scarcity of facilities for children displayed the divide between how the architects and town planners imagined this utopian dream of better homes, and the reality of the inhospitable, noisy, polluting and wind-swept areas surrounding the high rise blocks would be. And how isolating a scarcity of amenities was for residents.

Even though the estate was not that far from the shops and amenities of Shepherd's Bush as the crow flies, the hostile pedestrian environment made them physically remote - and unpleasant to get to. The boutique antique shops of Portabello Road, the other side of Notting Hill, were hardly going to serve the day to day needs of Edward Woods residents either.



Woman plunged 15 floors

Death fall at tower of despair

Norland House

A WOMAN died after plunging 15 floors from her balcony in a council tower block.

Patricia Mowinski, 44, was the third person in three months to die in a fall from Norland House on the Edward Woods Estate in Shepherds Bush.

After her death tenants were queueing up to leave the block dubbed a high-rise prison.

This week Hammersmith coroner Dr John Burton recorded an open verdict on Mrs Mowinski's death.

The court heard the woman died on May 13 after a stormy 11-year relationship with her Indian-born commonlaw husband, Babula Patel.

On the morning of her death, Mrs Mowinski was seen by Charing Cross Hospital pathologist Dr Ram Seth.

Her fingers had been stiched at St Charles Hospital where a psychiatrist had assessed her as mentally ill and referred her to Charing Cross.

Mrs Mowinski told Dr Seth she had smashed a window because she was angry after a row with her boyfriend over money. They both lived on social security and he had betting binges, Dr Seth said.

He said: "Alcohol and drugs appeared to be a problem. She admitted that she had smoked cannabis on a couple of occasions with one of the neighbours and she was getting ill effects from that, she said."

She said nothing suicidal to him and he diagnosed simple schizophrenia

PC Anthony Smith went to Norland House at 2pm on May 13 and found Mrs Mowinski's body on the grass outside.

Mr Patel told him they had returned from hospital and he went out to get cigarettes.

He returned and saw the settee on fire. He doused it then saw the balcony door open, went out and saw Mrs Mowinski's body below.

A report from Dr Bernard Fox, pathologist, gave the cause of death as multiple injuries

Despite the estate's isolation from the rest of Shepherds Bush and Hammersmith, when the borough boundaries were reviewed in the mid 1990s and it was proposed to move the Edward Woods estate into Kensington & Chelsea, residents demonstrated a fierce determination to stay put - and won.

That outcome was very fortunate for the estate given the lack of care Kensington & Chelsea's Tenant Management Organisation (its council housing services provider) demonstrated in respect of the 2017 tragedy at Grenfell Tower, literally just metres away.

But set aside the debates about whether the Latimer terraces should have been cleared, and about whether the estate that replaced them was the best alternative. Councils of both political colours quickly realised the scale of the problems here and wave after wave of improvements were made to the estate.

One of the podium blocks was demolished and replaced with both a significant open space and a different type of home: modern terraces. Lifts were upgraded - it's absolutely critical that blocks this tall have working elevators because, without them, residents soon become imprisoned in their homes, incapable of climbing and descending so many flights. Anti-social behaviour and vandalism were dealt with by controlled entry and concierge schemes. Most recently, a £16million refit has re-clad (with fire-safe stone) and reinsulated the blocks, and covered the sides of the towers with solar panels.

An LSE survey that tracked this ground-breaking environmental improvement found 68% of residents describing their homes as good or excellent. And the level of satisfaction was even higher among those who lived here the longest - those who remember how the estate was in the bad old days.

But the decision to move everything in that Latimer Road area to Kensington, left the Edward Woods estate in a weird looking cleft on the eastern side of the borough that cuts precisely but jaggedly around it. There is nowadays, at least a direct crossing from Westfield to the Edward Woods via a bridge over the West Cross Route that leads to Hunt Close and the Norland North open space. But that is the only physical way to move from one side of Shepherds Bush Green to the other while staying within it. No other Hammersmith and Fulham ward has such an "annexed" section - the closest is the Chelsea Harbour side of Sands End, but there's at least a road connecting that "island" to the rest of Fulham.

St Stephen's was one of the strongest wards for the Constitutional Ratepayers, who ran Hammersmith borough pretty much until the Second World War. Labour could not win a single seat here until 1937, long after every other part of the borough bar Brook Green had elected at least one or two of their councillors.

The reason for that is that Shepherds Bush was very different before the war. It was less densely-packed. There were no council estates. Imagine Shepherds Bush Green minus the Charecroft estate and 1960s shopping centre along the southside. Imagine the area without the Edward Woods high rises.

Imagine it with the great white arch: the entrance to the Great Exhibition site, where the bus terminus and station are now. Imagine the area with very little vehicle traffic - how easy it would have been to cross onto the green, and for that to have been a tranquil open space of similar quality to Brook Green, say. It'd have been a much more sedate, staid, conservative neighbourhood than it is today, with entertainment venues that catered principally for the locale.



The entrance to the Great White City, now where the entrance to Shepherds Bush tube station and bus terminal are

But after the war St Stephen's swung heavily to Labour, especially as the Constitutional Ratepayers stopped contesting elections and the Conservatives became the principal - oft-times only - competitors. But Labour's vote bounced around a lot and was a very low turnout ward: just a 19% turnout in 1964; 23% in 1962; 24% in 1959. That disinterest in democracy continued when Shepherd's Bush Green was created in 2002: 26% turnout that time, and 29% in 2022.

When Shepherd's Bush Green was drawn for the 2022 elections, it was safe enough - though by no means producing the margins of yesteryear. Labour polled around 48% with popular councillor Ivan Gibbons way out in front and the Tories on 28%,.

The problem, not at all obvious in 2002 but painfully so for Labour four years later, was that their third candidate, Councillor Jafar Khaled, had a history of trailing significantly behind his running mates. In White City and Shepherd's Bush ward this vote lag didn't matter in the least: Labour was never under threat there. But in Shepherd's Bush Green, it turned out to matter very much in Labour's disaster year of 2006.

This ward represented the high water mark of the Conservative landslide. They picked up the third seat: the one Jafar Khaled had held - by just four votes. Labour still finished five percentage points ahead of the Conservatives overall in that ward and their vote was tightly bunched: just 75 votes split the first and third Labour candidate.

But even that small gap was enough to let in Conservative Alex Chalk, later MP for Cheltenham and Solicitor General in Rishi Sunak's government. This result was not down to Labour failing to turn out the Edward Woods estate in a year core Labour council estate voters weren't especially keen to go and vote: turnout there was the highest in the ward that year.

In 2010, with the turnout turbo charge that general elections produce (up 28 percentage points in this ward), Labour's vote grew from 900-ish to well over 2,200 and they won all three seats by more than 800. Former Hammersmith and Fulham council leader and MP Iain Coleman topped the ballot while that Conservative 2006 winner, Alex Chalk, wisely relocated to Addison ward, which stayed Conservative. That makes him the only councillor to have represented all three sides of Shepherds Bush Green: Addison covering the its south side.

Labour consolidated further in 2014 as the Conservatives experienced significant electoral unpopularity in London and, by 2018 if you had to pick a ward you might have imagined they could have won, you would be unlikely to choose this one.

Some in Labour have worried that low turnout from this estate is what cost them that seat in 2006 and continues to be a threat. That concern is ill-founded: in fact all three sections of the ward poll in broadly the same proportions.

Summary of results for Shepherds Bush Green ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
St Stephen's ward					
1900	42.4		24.2		33.4
1903	67.2		32.8		
1906	36.6				63.4
1909					100.0
1912	72.9	27.1			
1919	57.2	42.8			
1922					100.0
1925		32.9			67.1
1928		37.3			62.7
1929B		29.0			71.0
1931		27.8			72.2
1934		48.9			51.1
1937		56.5			43.5
1945	27.0	73.0			
1949	41.0	59.0			
1953	35.8	64.2			
1956	22.5	77.5			
1959	26.1	73.9			
1962	21.0	79.0			
1964	49.3	50.7			
1968	68.7	31.3			
1969B	55.6	44.4			
1971	24.4	75.6			
1974	14.1	56.6	16.2		13.1
White City and Shepherds Bush ward					
1978	25.5	66.5			8.0
1982	15.6	62.9	17.2		4.3
1986	11.4	71.3	8.3		9.0
1990	19.2	80.8			
1994	14.1	72.0	13.9		
1998	10.1	78.2	11.7		
Shepherds Bush Green ward					
2002	25.1	62.0	12.9		
2006	35.4	40.3	24.3		
2010	27.0	48.0	21.0		
2014	17.6	50.1	7.4	25.0	
2018	18.3	71.1	10.5		
2022	14.2	70.5	15.3		
2026	7.2	43.3	14.1	27.0	8.4

For as long as this ward remains so over-represented, and provided the Edward Woods estate remains loyal, it is incredibly difficult for Labour to lose it: far more so than the larger Shepherds Bush Green was. At least to the Conservatives.

It remains to be seen what might happen if the "missing" 2,000 electors supposed to have moved in by now will realign this ward's politics. There is a square of land up against the West Cross route and the tube viaduct derelict and waiting for high rise blocks to join the sole residential tower this side of this vast regeneration zone.

The first block built north of Westfield, Newall Court in Bronze Way, had 101 electors at the 2022 council elections and 19% of them voted, within the typical range for new build developments. They tend to take some time to become fully engaged with local democracy.

Whether there is sufficient space on what's left of the Westfield site to build homes for 2,000 voters is questionable: it doesn't look large enough. But developments like these have shown time and again that developers (and politicians) are willing to sacrifice hard-fought for density standards to meet concocted housing targets. If the political trends that marked the 2026 council elections maintain, these still notional blocks may well put Shepherds Bush Green in play.

It might have made more sense for the Greens to target Shepherds Bush Green in 2026 - more sense than White City, anyway. The party hadn't stood here in 2022, however, so they had no data to measure how promising a ward it might be, whereas they had for Coningham and White City. But other factors should have weighed.

First, that this ward was so small: both geographically and in the numbers of voters. It could be canvassed much more quickly than the huge White City estate and the long, multi-occupancy streets off Uxbridge Road.

There are very few gated-off properties impossible to access here and lots of long terraced streets. It's also an easy place for campaigners to get to given the bus services and that the local tube station exits directly onto the green.

It also contains some of the demographics the Greens were particularly focussing on: council estate residents, a fairly hefty (at least for this borough) 18% Muslim and 20% black population, the second most even balance between ABC1s and C2DEs - essentially between white collar and blue collar residents - and a generally relatively deprived ward that wasn't really feeling much benefit from a Labour government.

They also had issues like he redevelopment threat to the cherished Shepherd's Bush Market (which also chimed with their anti-gentrification slogans), and some newly built private blocks full of cost-of-living crisis young professionals. Shepherds Bush Green in some respects

looks more like the Green targets of Golborne in Kensington & Chelsea and Harrow Road in Westminster - both of which they came very close to winning in 2026 - than White City does.

2026 majorities over the Green Party

● West Kensington	354	14.5
● Shepherds Bush Green	196	16.3
● Sands End*	479	16.3
● Coningham	443	16.4
● College Park and Old Oak	433	17.0
● Walham Green*	417	20.3
● Wormholt	435	21.2
● Avonmore*	475	21.4
● White City	527	22.3
● Munster*	341	22.3

*Greens in third place

And that strategic misstep showed in the 2026 results. The Greens came much closer to winning Shepherds Bush Green than White City, despite them working there and doing virtually nothing here.

What might they have achieved had they invested their big campaign days and their most motivated candidates in the correct place?

This turned out to be the Greens' second best ward - arguably their best given that they only fielded a single candidate in West Kensington and so their vote is probably over-stated a little there as a result. And, because West Kensington is a much larger ward than Shepherds Bush Green, Labour's numerical majority there is over 80% larger than here. Mercy Umeh only won by 175 votes.

We'll have to wait to see if 2026 was the Greens' last best chance to break through or whether the coalition of voters they put together holds in the longer run. Almost certainly if they're able to they'll target this ward in 2030 - but then so too Labour will work it harder.

If this Green ever does elect Greens it will be another chapter in the political votality of the heart of Shepherds Bush.

Rollcall of Shepherd's Bush Green ward councillors

including White City and Shepherd's Bush ward (1978-2002) and St Stephen's ward (1900-1978)

2026
- Zarer Qayyum
- Mercy Umeh

2022
- Zarer Qayyum
- Mercy Umeh

2018
- Andrew Jones
- Natalia Perez
- Mercy Umeh

2014
- Andrew Jones
- Natalia Perez-Shepherd
- Mercy Umeh

2010
- Iain Coleman
- Andrew Jones
- Mercy Umeh

2006
- Alex Chalk
- Edward Owen
- Mercy Umeh

2002
- Ivan Gibbons
- Jafar Khaled
- Mercy Umeh

1998
- Ron Browne
- Ivan Gibbons
- Jafar Khaled

1994
- Ron Browne
- Ivan Gibbons
- Jafar Khaled

1990
- Ron Browne
- Ivan Gibbons
- Jafar Khaled

1986
- Ron Browne
- Ivan Gibbons
- Jafar Khaled

1982
- Gwendolen Braggins
- Peter Degory
- Ivan Gibbons

1978
- Randolph Beresford
- Gwendolen Braggins
- Peter Degory

1974
- Randolph Beresford
- Gwendolen Braggins
- Peter Degory

1971
- Gwendolen Braggins
- Peter Degory
- Leslie Jones

1969B
- William Wearmouth

1968
- Nicholas Bryce-Smith
- John Duff
- Gabrielle Faulkener

1964
- Jim Bull
- Leslie Jones
- Frank Keppel

1962
- Eric Hunt
- Leslie Jones
- Frank Keppel

1959
- Robert Broussen
- Eric Hunt
- Leslie Jones

1956
- Robert Broussen
- Alice Foren
- Eric Hunt

1953
- R. Broussen
- Alice Foren
- Eric Hunt

1949
- Elizabeth Finn
- Alice Foren
- Sidney Mountier

1945
- Alice Foren
- George Mason
- E. Russell

1937
- George Mason
- Walter Ryan
- Naomi Wolff

1934
- Charles Blunden
- Elizabeth Davies
- Louis Glenister

1931
- Arthur Cracknell
- Elizabeth Davies
- John Rooke

1928
- Arthur Cracknell
- Elizabeth Davies
- Horace Durrant

1925
- Arthur Cracknell
- Elizabeth Davies
- Horace Durrant

1922
- Frederick Hill
- Elizabeth Davies
- William Poynter

1921B
- William Poynter

1919
- William Gillies
- Elizabeth Davies
- Arthur Prole

1912
- William Gillies
- Arthur Cracknell
- Frank Mayle

1909
- William Gillies
- Arthur Cracknell
- Frank Mayle

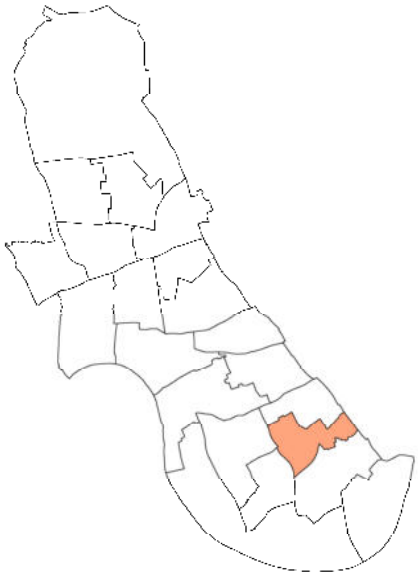
1906
- William Gillies
- Arthur Cracknell
- Frank Mayle

1903
- Joseph Apsey
- Job Boarder
- Richard Warner

1900
- John Glasier
- Job Boarder
- Alfred Hopkins

Walham Green ward

Fulham town was the principal settlement around which the western side of Fulham sprung up. Walham Green was the competing settlement on the eastern end of Fulham Fields. The green itself was a relatively small area bounded by Jerdan Place, Vanston Place and Fulham Broadway. It had a pond at its northern edge where St John's Church now stands, at the bottom of North End Road.



In many ways, Walham Green won the battle for dominance with Fulham town: today this is the much more active, bustling confluence of shops, roads and railway lines. When Fulham Borough Council was established its Town Hall was built across the road from Fulham Broadway (then Walham Green) District Line station.

Fulham Public Baths, in the era when the health and hygiene of the less affluent was a primary focus of municipal activism, and many homes lacked proper, unshared bathrooms, was built across North End Road from St John's Church.

In other ways it has done less well: this is the less affluent side of Fulham and the disparity between its wealthier sections and the rest is more stark: you pass between them almost instantaneously. It is a cliché in boroughs like Hammersmith and Fulham that wealth and deprivation live side by side with each other - but that does not make it any less true.

There hasn't really been a ward quite like the new Walham Green in the history of Fulham. It has some similarities to the Walham ward that existed in the old Fulham borough and it comprises the vast majority of Eel Brook ward that existed until 2002, but it is not the same.

The warding patterns for the eastern side of Fulham have been quite changeable over the years. The part of this neighbourhood east of North End Road has been, at various times, in Lillie and Walham wards; in Halford and Sandford wards; in a radically different, marginal Walham ward and then in Fulham Broadway and Parson's Green and Walham wards. The part of the area west of North End Road has found itself in Lillie, Parson's Green, Halford, Normand, Eel Brook, Town and Parson's Green and Walham wards.

The reasons for this turbulence are twofold. First, the area is so politically polarised that how the wards are drawn here matters more than anywhere else in the borough. Because the strengths of the parties have ebbed and flowed in Fulham dramatically so the best way to maximise political advantage has altered.

Second, because while there are a lot of reasonably strong physical boundaries in this area: Fulham Road, Fulham Broadway, North End Road, Dawes Road, the District Line and King's Road to name a few, many can also be argued to unite the neighbourhoods either side of it.

Take North End Road. It's the major road in east Fulham and the styles of housing either side of it are quite different. But North End Road is also the hub of this area: it is the shopping centre; there is its famous market and St John's Church. North End Road brings the area either side of it together; certainly more so than it does north of Lillie Road or Talgarth Road. So should North End Road be a ward boundary or at the centre of a ward? It's been both.

The view that won out at both the 2000 and 2019 electoral reviews was that North End Road was a hub more than a boundary and wards got drawn accordingly. Fulham Broadway ward, and to a slightly lesser extent the new Lillie ward, place North End Road at their centre.

Fulham Chronicle
June 28 1935

WALHAM WARD BY-ELECTION

Labour Retain Seat.

Polling in the Fulham Borough Council By-Election in Walham Ward took place yesterday (Thursday).

The election resulted as follows :-

ELECTED.

PHILLIPS, Mrs.N.M. (Lab) ... 1,175

NOT ELECTED.

COOK, C.A. (M.R.) 1,110

NO CHANGE.

Number of electors: 7,484 (men 3,514, women 3,970).

1934 result. - Elected: R.A. Bender (Lab) 1,964; G.E. Birt (Lab) 1,919; Mrs. J. Marsh (Lab) 1,875. Not elected:
A.D. Neville (M.R.) 981; W.F. Soloman (M.R.) 981; E. Lewis (M.R.) 941;
J.H. Greenwood (Ind) 309

A Straight Fight

The election was necessitated by the resignation of Councillor G.E. Birt. There was a straight fight between Mr C.A. Cook (Municipal Reform), and Mrs N.M. Phillips (Labour). A third candidate, Mr A.F. Heffer (Independent Labour Party) was nominated but with-drew. Mrs Morgan Phillips was sup-ported by the I.L.P. and the Communist Party.

Mrs Norah Mary Phillips is the wife of Councillor Morgan W. Phillips, chairman of the Finance Committee of the Fulham Borough Council. She is prominently identified with the West Fulham Labour Party and president of the Munster Park Guild. She is secretary of the London Co-operative Organisation (Western area).

Mr. Charles Albert Cook is the governing director of the well-known firm of exhibition furnishers and furniture dealers. He has a branch shop at Cook's Corner, North End Road, Walham Green, and a factory at Homestead Road, Fulham.

Polling Day.

In the early part of the day there was little activity on the part of the electors, despite the efforts of the supporters of both candidates. Each party had committee rooms, almost opposite each other, in Jerdan Place, Walham Green. Over the Municipal Reformers' rooms was a prominently displayed notice which read: "12,000 rate appeals in Fulham. Trader fight new assessments. You must vote for Cook." The Municipal Reform candidate had the assistance of a number of cars and in this respect the Labour Party were quite outnumbered.

Both candidates have been actively engaged during the week canvassing the ward.

Quite early yesterday morning a car freely decorated with Municipal Reform posters and fitted with a loud speaker, was urging people in Walham Green Broadway to "vote for Charlie Cook, the man you all know."

It was not long, however, before a Labour Party car, also fitted with a loud speaker, was touring the streets, urging the voters to support Mrs. Phillips. When the loud speakers were not being used to offer advice to the electors, gramophone music was relayed.

"Old Faithful."

As Mr. Cook's car passed the Fulham Chronicle office during the afternoon, "Old Faithful" was the record being played.

Mr. John Wilmot, M.P., whom one of our reporters encountered is Vanston Place, was quietly optimistic as to the result of the election, but he pointed out that up to tea-time there was a very low poll. A Labour supporter to whom Mr. Wilmot was chatting, had no doubt whatever. "We are going to win hands down," was his emphatic prophecy.

Business people, returning home via Walham Green Station, were canvassed by Labour supporters who distributed hand-bills urging support for Mrs. Phillips.

The youngsters entered into the spirit of the occasion with much zest. "We want Labour," was their lusty war-cry, as they paraded the streets.

Walham ward not only includes some of the principal business premises in the borough, but also some large blocks of flats including Fulham Court, Lewis Trust Buildings (Walham Green), the War Seal Mansions, and Broxholme House. Polling stations were at the Town Hall and the Harwood School, Britannia Road. Polling ceased at 8 p.m.

The votes were expeditiously counted at Fulham Town Hall, under the supervision of the Town Clerk (Mr. W. Townsend).

The result was declared at 9.15.

Mrs. Phillips, the successful candidate, proposed the customary vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and his staff. "I also want to thank my supporters for the splendid way they have thrown themselves into this fight" she said.

Mr Cook Claims "A Moral victory."

Mr. Cook seconded. "We have had a very straight fight," he said. Some of the Labour supporters laughed as Mr. Cook made this remark and he retorted: "I have behaved as a gentleman to Mrs. Phillips and she has behaved as a lady to me. She has fought a fair fight. I think she is a real good sport and I wish her every success. Good luck to her. But I must give you to understand that I have won a moral victory."

The Town Clerk mentioned that the voting percentage was 30.5 and commented that it was much above the average. There were only two spoilt papers in 2,287 votes recorded.

The conflict between roads being boundaries or hubs was demonstrated until 2022 because while North End Road was deemed a hub, immediately south Fulham Broadway with its yet more shops, and tube line, and Chelsea football club (and once Fulham's town hall) was split between three wards: Town, Parson's Green and Walham and Fulham Broadway ward itself.

So, in the 2019 boundary review, Labour argued that the Broadway was almost as significant a focal point of the community as North End Road is. They made the point that the communities in the estates just west of the Broadway looked to it far more than they did Fulham High Street - Fulham town. Likewise. those living just east of the station along Fulham Road, that were now in the sprawling Parson's Green and Walham ward were also part of this neighbourhood around the Broadway, not with Hurlingham and Parson's Green.

The Conservatives proposed more or less retaining the existing ward pattern - except they wanted Parson's Green and Walham to expand across the Broadway, including the Lewis Trust estate. It was a little strange to propose to keep a Fulham Broadway ward having removed Fulham Broadway from it.

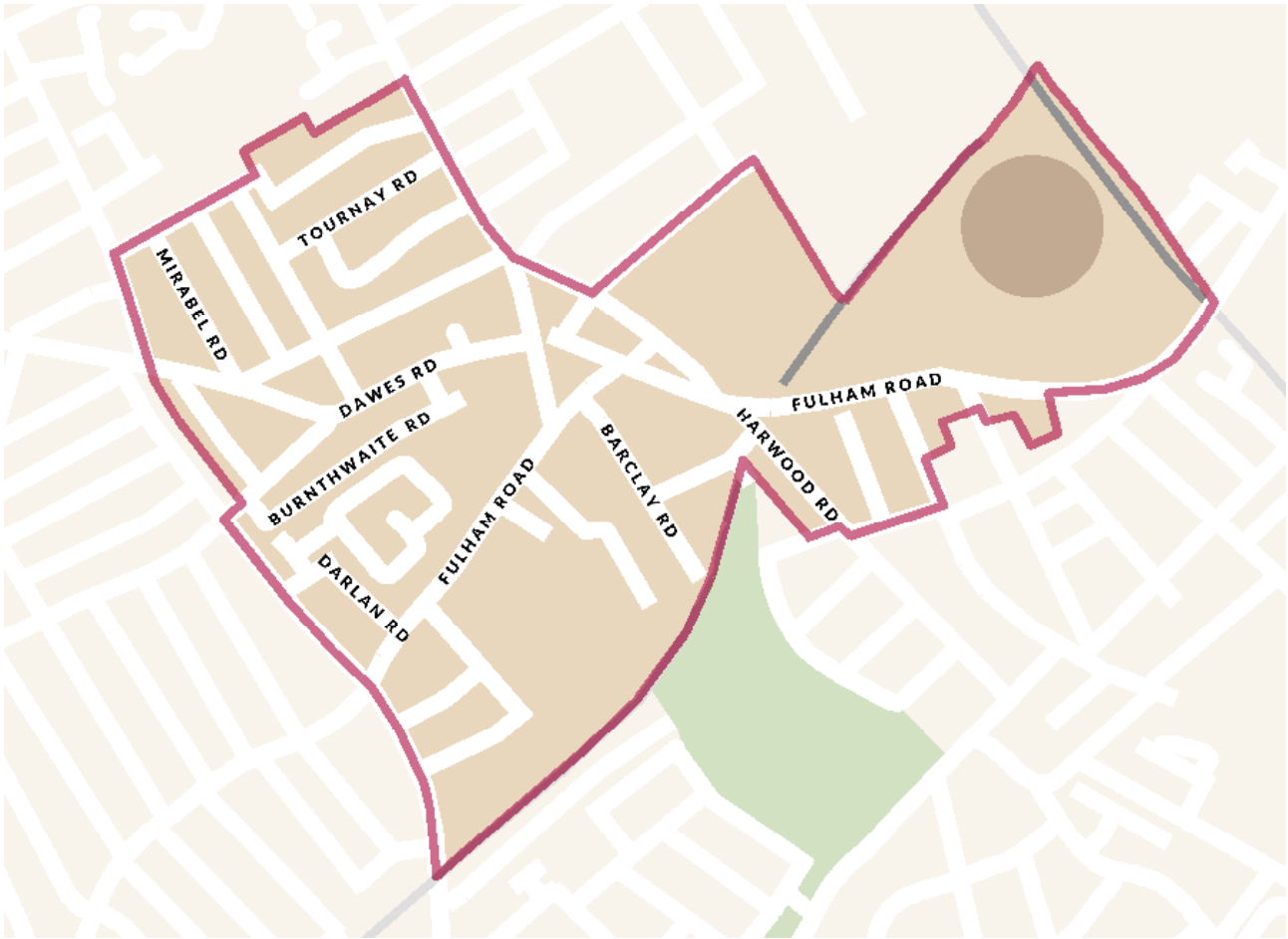
That's probably not why Labour's arguments prevailed so we have, for the first time since the Fulham Borough Council era, a true Walham Green ward: a ward that pulls together the communities all around St John's Church.

But if this ward is the successor to Eel Brook, why wasn't that very bad news for Labour? By 1998 Eel Brook looked, if not safe for the Conservatives still beyond marginal.

Eel Brook comprised three distinct areas: in the north the terraced streets below the Clem Attlee Estate with Dawes Road running through them. In the middle, either side of Fulham Road, a set of fairly large council estates: principally Fulham Court, Lancaster Court and Barclay Close. And, south of the District Line there was the small community surrounded by Parsons Green and Eel Brook Common.

The first two of these neighbourhoods - where the vast majority of the population live, are in Walham Green. The last is now in Parson's Green and Sandford.

Had Eel Brook existed in 1974, Labour would have won the ward by about two to one. But a notional 15% swing



in 1978 gave both seats to the Tories by just 28 and 12 votes. Had Labour won here - they fielded a serving councillor and Alderman in the expectation they would - they'd have kept control of the council. There are several wards they could say that about in 1978, though.

The reasons they lost are easy enough to work out: Labour didn't appreciate the scale of the swing about to hit them, nor the rapidity of the underlying demographic change in Eel Brook. Labour was deeply unpopular in 1978 and didn't get its vote out, and that very firmly Conservative Eel Brook Common section was enough to push the Tories ever so slightly ahead.

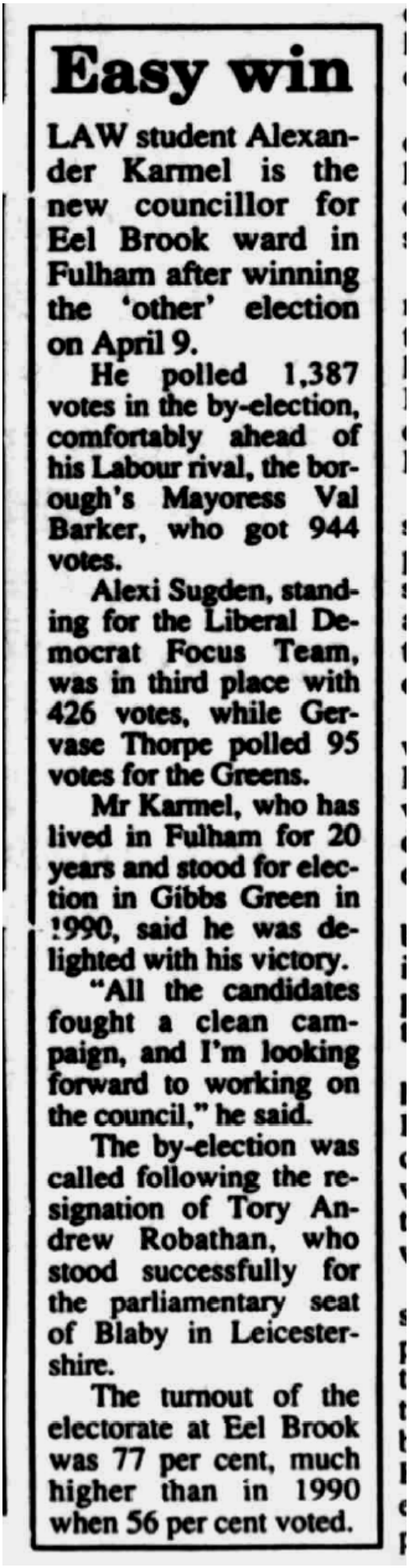
Labour captured the ward in 1982 fielding future council deputy leader Ian Harrison and high-profile Addison councillor Eddie Cunningham, who later defected to the SDP. But this Eel Brook gain was offset by Labour losses in Sherbrooke and Wormholt. A deeper look at the Eel Brook result shows a sort of negative win. Labour won because But regardless of why they won, they won. Labour was in by 51 and 44 vote majorities.

Labour consolidated somewhat in 1986, though the lowly 2.8% swing in that landslide year showed how the underlying demographics of the ward continued to shift away from them: it was the smallest swing to Labour in the borough.

For that reason, when the Tories regained the ward with majorities of 43 and 56 in 1990 Labour shouldn't have been quite so shocked. It was almost as if they hadn't noticed that central Fulham was moving away from them. For the third time in four elections Eel Brook had changed hands.

In 1992 there was a by-election in Eel Brook, held on general election polling day. The Conservatives held on by the largest margin in its history: 443 votes or 15.5%.
Of course, 1992 was a good year for the Conservatives so the likelihood of the ward staying Tory was high. But Labour might have hoped the much higher general election turnout would have turned their vote out on the council estates.

It may have done - but if so Labour shed bucket-loads of support to the new Liberal Democrat candidate: Alexi Sugden, who took 426 votes. Almost all of that vote came from Labour: without it there'd have been an almost exact rerun of the 1990 result.



Easy win

LAW student Alexander Karmel is the new councillor for Eel Brook ward in Fulham after winning the 'other' election on April 9.

He polled 1,387 votes in the by-election, comfortably ahead of his Labour rival, the borough's Mayoress Val Barker, who got 944 votes.

Alexi Sugden, standing for the Liberal Democrat Focus Team, was in third place with 426 votes, while Gervase Thorpe polled 95 votes for the Greens.

Mr Karmel, who has lived in Fulham for 20 years and stood for election in Gibbs Green in 1990, said he was delighted with his victory.

"All the candidates fought a clean campaign, and I'm looking forward to working on the council," he said.

The by-election was called following the resignation of Tory Andrew Robathan, who stood successfully for the parliamentary seat of Blaby in Leicestershire.

The turnout of the electorate at Eel Brook was 77 per cent, much higher than in 1990 when 56 per cent voted.

New Conservative councillor Alex Karmel may have expected a fairly solid tenure in this gentrifying ward - but a new Liberal Democrat threat had suddenly emerged.

When a review of NHS provision in London recommended the closure of Charing Cross Hospital in 1993, Sugden set up a notionally non-partisan campaign to save it. Hundreds of (coincidentally yellow) "Save Charing Cross" posters appeared in the front windows of Fulham houses and the media profile Sugden gained from her campaign made her better known in Eel Brook than the main parties' candidates.

The 1994 result was incredibly close. Sugden was a clear winner with 782 votes - over 100 ahead of ousted Cllr Karmel. Winning the second Eel Brook seat - apparently - was Labour's Billy Dann with 698 votes. But the other Lib Dem candidate, Simon Thompson, was just one vote behind him on 697. The Tories were only slightly further back with 674 and 668, with Labour's second candidate rounding the result off with 656. Less than 130 votes separated first from sixth.

That was not the end of the story. The Liberal Democrats alleged that when they attempted to cast a proxy vote for a supporter, polling clerks said someone claiming to be her had already voted. They petitioned the High court which, in September 1994, ordered the disputed vote be located - and which was found to have been cast for Labour.

That vote was voided, putting Billy Dann level with Simon Thompson on 697. A coin toss was ordered to pick the winner - Thompson won. Two Lib Dems ended up representing Eel Brook for the remainder of that term. Well, nearly all of it. In 1997 Thompson defected to Labour.

Sugden's disappointing four years dissuaded her from defending her seat in 1998 and, without her, the Lib Dems weren't likely to hold on.

Two abrasive, zealous young Conservative candidates had been chosen to fight the ward Greg Hands and Donal Blaney. The two easily won Eel Brook, though their boost came entirely from the 1994 Lib Dem vote which virtually halved, while Labour stayed exactly where they had been four years earlier. That headline figure almost certainly masks some more complex movements of voters between parties though.

The election of Hands and Blaney ushered in a new era for the local Conservatives: a far more aggressive, partisan and cynical brand of opposition replacing the firebrand but clubbable and statesmanlike leader-ship of Cllr Gerald Wombwell. Hands became Leader of the Opposition within a year and a local MP in 2005.

Labour often struggled to maximise its vote on the Eel Brook estates - especially on Fulham Court, which had been beset by problems pretty much since it was built in the mid 1930s.

Fulham Court was the first large housing estate built by Fulham Borough Council (the Wyfold Road estate was the very first, but it's only three dozen or so homes), and some mistakes were made designing it.

While Sulivan Court - and indeed the other estates clustered around Fulham Court that came later - had plenty of open space between blocks, Fulham Court was crowded into a compact site right on the edge of the District Line.

The council went for the maximum density they could attain because the borough's housing need was great - but this ensured blocks were stacked close together with very little outside amenity space. There was nowhere for local kids to play; no grassland for residents just to sit outdoors and relax or socialise, and the flats weren't especially large.

There were constant problems with damp, with vandalism and with violent crime. Many residents of the estate believed Fulham Court was being used by the council to dump Fulham's troubled tenants, nuisance neighbours and, more contentiously, black and other minority ethnic tenants.

It is no coincidence than in 1978 the three wards the National Front contested in Fulham all contained sizeable amounts of council housing and included Eel Brook. The far-right party attempted to exploit "local homes for local people" sentiment - "local people" being a cipher for white people.

The NF tanked in Eel Brook, winning just 78 votes in 1978, but it was the exact same dog whistle messaging - this time by the Liberal Democrats in Tower Hamlets in 1993 that fuelled the election of Derrick Beacon: the first BNP councillor ever elected in London.





A world of contrast in Fulham – Parsons Green, above, and Lancaster Court Estate, above right

Balanced on a knife edge



Hammersmith & Fulham – mapped out ward by ward

IN 1990, the Tories captured Eel Brook by a margin of just 50 votes. The Conservatives hadn't won the ward for 12 years and it was one of Labour's biggest upsets.

Since then the ruling Labour administration has had a poor showing in Fulham. The ward's 1992 by-election on April 9, the same day as the General Election, was a roaring victory for the Tories.

And this time, the Lib Dems, who presently have no councillors at the town hall, vehemently believe they are in with a fighting chance.

Lib Dem candidate Alexi Sugden told the Gazette this week that it was time for a change.

"The two traditional parties are so violently opposed to each other, there's little council business being done," she said. "We can change that."

But both Tories and Labour, who are "quietly confident", remained unconvinced.

"This is a two-horse race," said Alex Karmel, one of the two current Tory councillors in Eel Brook battling to hold on to their seats. "I don't wish to do down the Lib Dems, but really it's a knife-edge between Labour and Tory."

He added: "We believe that we will keep this ward and the Conservatives will be in administration after May 5. We're going to make this borough something to be proud of again. People are fed up with Labour."

THE election campaign trail is hotting up across the borough – nowhere more so than in one marginal Fulham ward. Eel Brook, slap bang in the middle of the borough's Tory heartland, promises to be a nail-biting experience for all three major parties. **GUY SMITH** reports

Labour candidate Billy Dann admitted the Lib Dems were pouring most of their energy into snapping up seats in Eel Brook. But he pointed out that even if they won, it would have no effect on council policy.

"They wouldn't hold the balance of power in the council," said the 26-year-old, who is studying for a doctorate at London University. "The Lib Dems are not going to win the seats but if people are unhappy they could vote tactically to get rid of the Tories."

But all three parties do agree on something. They know the ward is a social hybrid. It takes in a long strip of central Fulham from St Thomas's Way in the north to New King's Road in the south.

It has one of the largest council estates in the borough and at the same time boasts some of the most desirable properties.

The southern part of the ward taking in leafy Parsons Green, from London Underground's District Line is staunchly Conservative.

Between the railway line and Dawes Road, the council housing estates have traditionally been Labour.

Meanwhile, north of Dawes Road is fairly mixed. It appears this northern section will be crucial in determining the outcome.

Analysts have suggested that the Tories have started making ground in north Eel Brook as the area rapidly becomes gentrified.

Some areas, particularly Fabian, Hartismere and Tournay Roads, were Labour in the 1960s and early 1970s.

But then as Fulham became desirable and in the price range of many aspiring middle-class people, the character of the area began to change.

Eel Brook, getting its name from a former stream full of oily eels, is one ward to watch out for. There are other marginals including nearby Sherbrooke, and Walham, Starch Green, and the Grove.

The worry for all parties, in such close-run battles, is whether residents who said they will vote actually turn up on May 5.

It was with that BNP win in the East End fresh in the memory that a leaflet Greg Hands and Donal Blaney distributed on Fulham Court caused something of an uproar. By using the "Fulham Homes for Fulham People" mantra it again pandered to that exact same constituency the Front had been addressing.

The Conservative councillors stood by their leaflet, and it was effectively impossible for the council's housing department to disprove that its allocations policy was discriminatory against long-term locals.

Housing need had trumped local or "sons and daughters" ties in the award of council housing since a 1978 housing act. Even if it had been possible to refute the Tory claims, every flat allocated to a non-Fulham, non-white tenant would have reinforced the misapprehension.

In any event, Eel Brook was getting abolished at the 2002 council elections, with those central housing estates transferring to safely Conservative Town ward. Most Labour campaigning in this area disappeared with Eel Brook, at least until 2018, when Conservative national

unpopularity suggested that the Conservatives might not be able to hold Town.

Over 80% of Walham Green voters used to be in Eel Brook. But it's that remaining 20% difference - that matters.

Instead of the Parson's Green and Eel Brook section to the south, Walham Green ward runs east along Fulham Road to Stamford Bridge. While Fulham Road is regarded (largely correctly) as another exceptionally affluent area full of fashionable shops and expensive property, it is not uniformly so.

For a start it includes the Samuel Lewis Trust estate in Vanston Place, with over 400 voters. There are further smaller areas of public housing: the 1970s Walham Green Court estate, next to the town hall, and Cedarne Road behind it. Cedarne Road is a rather grand terrace of townhouses, somewhat like the sort of housing in North Kensington, divided into flats, which are housing association or council owned.

And, until 2026 there was also the Oswald Stoll Foundation housing association estate beside Chelsea Football Club's ground.

This estate, which was funded by subscriptions following the First World War: "war seals" as they were called, is housing for armed forces veterans. The trustees of Oswald Stoll were increasingly of the view that these 100 year old blocks were no longer fit housing and sold them to Chelsea Football Club, which has been desperate to expand its hemmed-in stadium to compete with the top Premier League clubs it believes it is amongst.

The trustees used the money Chelsea paid for their estate to buy homes on the brand new King's Road Park development for some (but far from all) of their residents. Oswald Stoll was largely decanted by the time of the 2026 council elections, but there were about fifty residents still there.

Uniting the Lewis Trust estate with Fulham Court, Lancaster Court and Barclay Close - while excluding the Eel Brook Common end - boosts Labour. At worst, from their viewpoint, Walham Green leans narrowly towards them. At best they can win it very comfortably indeed.

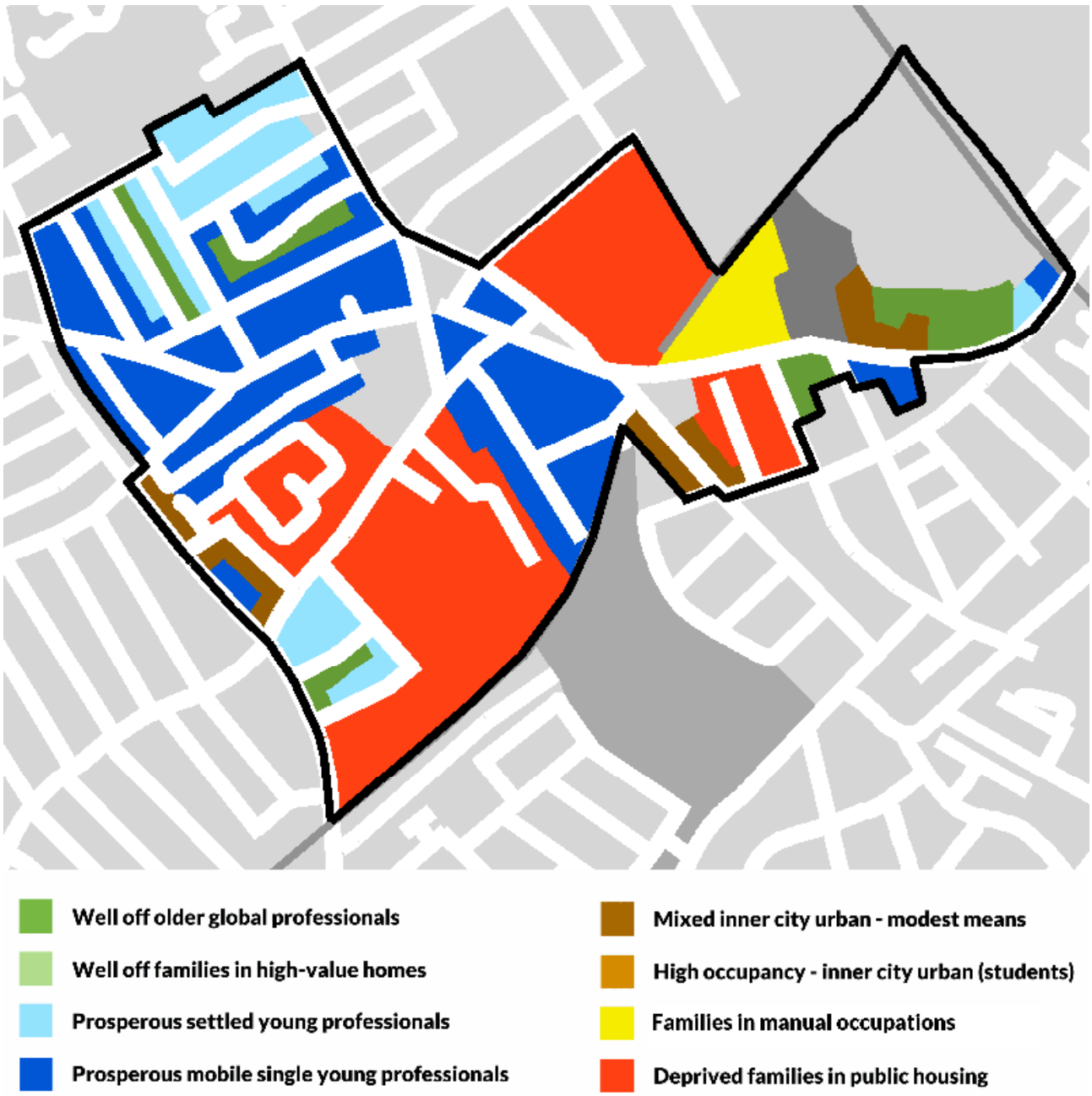
2022 was one of the "very comfortable win" elections. Labour won 53%, the Conservatives 27%.

Summary of results for Walham Green ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Walham ward					
1900	35.0		65.0		
1903	23.6		19.4	57.0	
1906	44.3		20.1	35.6	
1909B	46.7	6.2	47.0		
1909	47.2		52.8		
1912	52.1		47.9		
1919	33.2	37.9	28.9		
1922	43.8	30.2		25.9	
1925B	58.1	40.9			
1925	46.1	36.6	17.3		
1925B	50.7	49.3			
1928	61.0	39.0			
1931	70.5	29.5			
1931B	56.7			43.3	
1934	30.2	60.1		9.7	
1935B	48.6	51.4			
1937	28.0	43.1		28.9	
1945	24.6	69.4			
1949	37.2	55.5	7.3		
1953	33.2	60.7	6.1		
1956	29.8	70.2			
1959	28.1	71.9			
1962	23.3	76.7			
Eel Brook ward					
1978	46.8	45.8	4.0	3.4	
1982	38.9	42.1	12.6	6.4	
1986	41.7	50.4	7.8		
1990	51.8	48.2			
1992B	48.6	33.1	14.9	3.3	
1994	32.2	32.4	35.4		
1998	47.6	32.8	19.6		
Walham Green ward					
2022	26.6	52.9	10.2	10.3	
2026	31.1	35.7	6.1	15.4	11.7

But, while a 26% majority could not remotely be described as close, Labour still won Walham Green by less than they won the borough as a whole. Tht means that, were the parties to finish neck and neck boroughwide, Walham Green would likely be a Conservative ward. And a 53%-27% split did not represent the underlying political balance here anyway.

2026 showed why. Despite hardly being an impressive year for the Conservatives, yet again, they still pulled off a near 11% swing to reduce Labour's majority here to just 89 votes: 4% ahead. Labour lost a lot more support: down about 17 percentage points, than the Conservatives gained (up just under 5 points).



Walham Green ward MOSAIC map

Reform polled about 12%: one of their better results, and the Green candidate (they only fielded one) won 16%. If the Conservatives had gained as much as Labour lost, they'd have won Walham Green by a large amount.

It's not obvious, because Walham Green is so polarised, that there exist enough votes for the Conservatives to win here. That's not to say there aren't plenty of residents in the parts of the ward that are strongly Conservative-supporting who didn't vote: there are. But there are at least as many in the Labour side who didn't either.

In other words it may - just may - be the case that 2022 and 2026 showcase the range of results the ward can produce: big Labour win or narrow Labour win, but not a Conservative win.

Alternatively, the Conservatives can point to coming close despite 2026 being another poor year for them. In a better year, they will believe, they should be able to take this ward. Maybe not by a big amount - but a win's a win.

Both arguments are plausible and Labour cannot be complacent irrespective of which happens to be true. After Sands End this is now the most marginal ward in the borough.

Rollcall of Walham Green ward councillors

including Eel Brook ward (1978-2002) and Walham ward (1900-1964 and 1978-2002)

2026
- Sam Kelly
- Genevieve Nwaogbe

2022
- Trey Campbell-Simon
- Genevieve Nwaogbe

Eel Brook ward

1998
- Donal Blaney
- Greg Hands

1994 Election Court
- Simon Thompson

1994
- Billy Dann
- Alexi Sugden

1992B
- Alex Karmel

1990
- Andrew Robathan
- David Thorpe

1986
- Judy Atkinson
- Ian Harrison

1982
- Eddie Cunningham
- Ian Harrison

1978
- Richard Lazarus
- Philippa Sandeman

Walham ward

1998
- Frances Stainton
- Jenny Vaughan

1994
- Elizabeth Mills
- Frances Stainton

1990
- Diane Chiesman
- Frances Stainton

1986
- Valerie Barker
- Dan Filson

1982
- Diane Chiesman
- Julian Rampton

1978
- Nicholas Browne
- Diane Chiesman

1962
- Charles Cohen
- Jack Ireland
- Alf Little

1959
- Jack Ireland
- Alf Little
- Jack Perotti

1956
- Alf Little
- Jack Perotti
- Ethel Williams

1953
- Jack Perotti
- William Swann
- Ethel Williams

1949
- Thomas Holloway
- Jack Perotti
- Ethel Williams

1945
- Jessie Marsh
- Jack Perotti
- Frank Ruck

1937
- Richard Bender
- Jessie Marsh
- Jack Perotti

1935B
- Nora Phillips

1934
- Richard Bender
- George Birt
- Jessie Marsh

1931B
- Lewis Dew

1931
- Edward Armfield
- William Brooks
- James Turney

1928
- Arthur Atkins
- William Brooks
- James Turney

1925
- Edward Armfield
- Alfred Davis
- Charles Harwood

1922
- Edward Armfield
- Charles Harwood
- Isaac Jacobs

1919
- Charles Baker
- John Browning
- Arthur Sargeant

1912
- Stephen Farley
- Walter Gatrell
- James Lyon

1909
- Richard Dixon
- William Sayer
- Charles Thomas

1909B
- Frederick Haines
- William Sayer

1906
- Herbert Dodimead
- James Heathman
- HenryJanaway

1903
- Thomas Evans
- Aldhelm Parfitt
- William Sayer

1900
- Timothy Davies
- Peter Lawson
- William Sayer

Wendell Park ward

Starch Green is one of the significant ward names in the history of Hammersmith.

Nowadays, its a tiny open space at the junction of Goldhawk Road and Askew Road, but Starch Green was the acres of fields that the whole of Wendell Park ward covers - and a fair chunk of Coningham too.

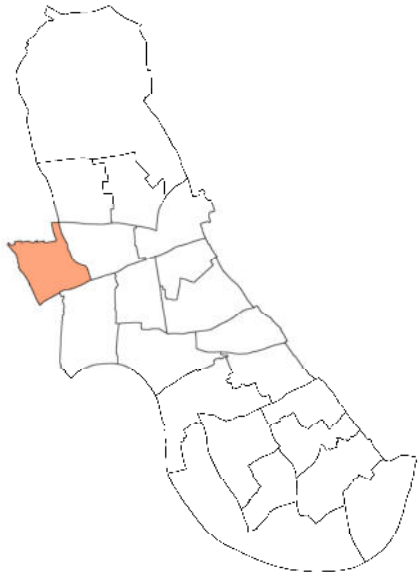
There was a Starch Green ward from the founding of Hammersmith Borough Council until 2002 though its boundaries ebbed and flowed - and today's Wendell Park is an exact replica of the Starch Green that existed from 1978 to 2002. It is a square of land bounded by Askew Road, Goldhawk Road and Stamford Brook Road, the borough boundary with Hounslow and Ealing - what used to be a railway line, and then behind the southern terrace of houses in Valetta Road.

It was the first ward in Hammersmith to elect a Labour councillor: William Davidson, in 1906 - perhaps surprisingly given that there were very much more deprived parts of the borough. It was often a very marginal ward, crucially electing two Tory councillors in 1978, and one in 1982 when the council hung.

Even in years when Labour won here more comfortably the ward typically swung away from them again the next election. But, like the borough as a whole, it began swinging away from the Conservatives in the 1990s and now looks a very secure Labour ward.

This is more of an "in-between" part of the borough than any other. It's not quite Hammersmith and it's not quite Shepherds Bush, though most of it has a W12 postcode. Some of it is W3. The Stamford Brook Road (southern) end feels like Chiswick. The Worple Road (northern) end feels like Acton. Chunks of it developed long after the rest of Shepherds Bush in a more arts and crafts suburban style atypical of the wider borough.

Starch Green/Wendell Park has leaned towards Labour to varying degrees depending on its precise boundaries since the mid 1930s; enticingly close enough for the Conservatives to fancy their chances - especially when the ward included the Ravenscourt Park area from 1964 to 1978, but normally beyond their reach.



Although nothing can take away the fact that Starch Green returned Labour's first ever Hammersmith councillor he won with just 21% in 1906 and it was only a heavily divided field of candidates that enabled Cllr Davidson to win that single seat (out of six).

After that success, Labour had to wait until 1919 to win here again (a full slate of six elected that year), then two seats in 1928, then all six again in 1934. After that it was Labour for thirty years until it split two Labour, one Conservative in 1964.

The original Starch Green spread east across Askew Road as far as Coningham Road - then the boundary with St Stephen's. It was this "Coningham" side of the road where Labour was stronger in the early years - not least because the side west of Askew Road had only been partially constructed: it stopped at the end of Bassein Park Road. Beyond was just the Green itself.

A lot of this area went by different names, initially. Most of Rylett Crescent was Fortesque Road; Curwen Road was Orchard Road and Starfield Road was Station Road; St Elmo Road was Rankin Street and Wilton Road West. Askew Road was originally called Starch Green, then became Victoria Road but the Royal Mail - overwhelmed by the number of streets being named after the Queen - pressed for a change, and so it was renamed after the principal land-owning family in the area: the Askews.

WEST LONDON OBSERVER, FRIDAY MAY 21, 1920

COUNCIL BY-ELECTION

CONTEST IN STARCH GREEN WARD.

VICTORY OF MUNICIPAL REFORM CANDIDATE.

Polling took place yesterday (Thursday) in the Starch Green ward to fill a vacancy on the Hammersmith Borough Council caused by Mr. G.T. Harris, a Labour member. There were two candidates - Mr. Thomas Charles Jones (M.R.) and Mr. Fielding Reginald West (Labour). From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. electors recorded their votes at three County Council Schools. In the early part of the day a small number of votes were recorded, but matters livened up in the evening.

At the close of the poll the ballot boxes were conveyed to the Town Hall, and the votes were counted in the Council Chamber, a number of Councillors and supporters of both candidates attending.

At half past nine Mr. Leslie Gordon, the Town Clerk, who officiated as returning officer, declared the result as follows:-

Mr. T.C. JONES (M.R.) 1,071
Mr. F.R. WEST (Labour) 1,027

Majority for M.R. candidate ... 44

The return of Mr. Jones, who was an unsuccessful candidate at the last election, is a gain for the Municipal Reformers.

The new Councillor proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and his staff, which was seconded by Mr. West, and agreed to.

In replying, the Town Clerk said the percentage of voters for a by-election was comparatively high; almost 25 per cent of the electors had gone to the poll. Nearly 50 per cent of those who voted were women. Only 5 voting papers had been spoilt.

Askew Road curves and bends not because it is askew but because it follows the twists and turns of a tributary of Stamford Brook - one of those rare lost London rivers that weren't turned into sewers by Bazalgette. This stream fed Starch Green pond at the foot of Askew Road which used to be in a roundabout at that slightly fraught junction where Askew, Goldhawk and Paddenswick Roads meet. The stream still feeds the lake in Ravenscourt Park with clean water.

Askew Road became important as both the centre point of the community - especially for those appreciating a drink or two as there were multiple pubs along the road, but also as a delineation between different neighbourhoods envisioned by developers and land-owners.

To the east of Askew Road the area was being constructed as long streets of big houses, most of them converted into several flats - meeting the needs of a rapidly expanding capital city. There was no open space planned in this neighbourhood: just a claustrophobic grid that packed residents in at a density that probably would not be permitted today.

To the west, architects were more creative with the street plan: again, far more suburban in layout and to a much lower housing density. There's the arc of Becklow Road as it becomes Gayford Road where it meets Cobbold Road, the grand Ashchurch neighbourhood and a grid of streets that then stopped at Rylett Crescent - beyond nothing but meadows until the railway line that ran behind what is now Emlyn Road.

STARCH GREEN WARD BY-ELECTION

DECISIVE VICTORY FOR EX-SERVICE CANDIDATE OVER 700 MAJORITY.

SECOND DEFEAT FOR SOCIALIST PARTY.

Considerable interest was taken in an election which took place in the Starch Green ward on Saturday to fill up the vacancy on the Hammersmith Borough Council, caused by Mr. G. Thomas, one of the Labour members having gone to Canada to take up an appointment there.

Two candidates were nominated. Mr. Edward Stephen Morris, who served as a lieutenant during the war, was put forward by the Shepherd's Bush Branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, and also obtained the support of Municipal Reformers, Progressives and members of the Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush Ratepayers' Protection Association and the Hammersmith branch of the Middle Classes Union. The other candidate was Mr. William Henry Church, the Labour and Socialist nominee.

POLLING STATIONS

Polling took place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Cobbold Road L.C.C. School, the Victoria L.C.C. School in Becklow Road, Westville Road L.C.C. School and St Mary's Church Room, Stamford Brook.

Not much literature was issued during the contest. Placards were circulated with the heading of the Shepherd's Bush branch of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation, asking electors to "Vote for Ted Morris, the Independent ex-Servicemen's candidate for Constitutional local government, in the workers and ratepayers' interests." On his red, white and blue polling cards were the words: "A real, live ex-Serviceman, he will be practical in every matter that affects the workers' and ratepayers' interests." Printed in red ink, bills were displayed in some of the windows in Cobbold Road and other streets, asking electors to "Vote for Will Church, the Labour candidate," and on his polling leaflets he was described as "a worker for the workers."

In the morning only a small number of voters took the trouble to exercise the franchise, but in the afternoon and evening there was more animation, though there was very little excitement over the fight for Municipal honours. In many instances, married couples recorded their votes at the same time. Up to 5 o'clock about 800 votes had been recorded at the polling station at St Mary's Church Room, Stamford Brook; at one station in Cobbold Road School, 298; and up to 4 o'clock at Victoria School, 672. Three hours later the number was over 800.

Mr. Morris had his Committee room at 169 Askew Road and Mr. W.I. Baxter, Secretary of the Shepherd's Bush branch of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation acted as his election agent. Amongst those who gave help in bringing up voters were Mrs Glenister, Mrs. T.C. Jones, Mrs Percy, Miss Burnett, Miss Pearce, Mrs Dodsworth, Mr D. Cawdron, L.C.C., Councillor C. Pascall, Councillor J.N. Claydon, Messrs E. Chapman, Sandlin, T.C. Moore, Franks, A.J. Ross, A.E. Hibberd, Piper, T.J. Brunsden, W. Winn, Collett (Middle Classes Union), Greenwood, Miles, Oates, Mussett, W.J. Johnson, Handley Jones, and a number of members of the Sailors' and Soldiers' Federation.

Motor cars were lent by Councillor L.O. Glenister, Captain Beatty, Messrs Clifton, Matthews and Wheeler.

The Committee room of Mr. Church was at the headquarters of the Labour Party, at 154, Goldhawk Road, and Mr. C.F. Greengrass officiated as his election agent. Amongst the workers on behalf of Mr. Church were Councillor W.H. Harding, Councillor and Mrs. J.P. Gardner, Councillor Mrs. Newhouse, Mrs. Mallinson, Mr. and Mrs. F.R. West, Mr and Mrs. Stevens, Messrs. L.H. Potter, Cheney, Morris, Goff, W. Turney, Dallimore, G. Barnes, E.E. Woods, and R. Batchelor. The Labour candidate had no vehicles lent him to fetch voters.

Mr Leslie Gordon (the Town Clerk) was the returning officer, and had Mr. E.W. Francis for his chief lieutenant in carrying out the arrangements for the polling.

DECLARATION OF THE POLL

At the close of the poll, the ballot boxes were removed to the large hall at the Town Hall, where men are employed on redecoration work. Counting of the votes was commenced shortly after half past eight. There was a good attendance of ratepayers interested in ascertaining the result of the contest, amongst those present being the Mayor (Councillor Marshall Hays), Alderman F. Mayle, L.C.C., Alderman H. Wright, Councillors I. Akehurst, L.O. Glenister, J. Bewsher, C. Pascall, J.P. Gardner, W.H. Harding, I.N. Claydon, and J.Y. Westcott, Capt W.I. Burns, Messrs W.I. Baxter, C.F. Greengrass, W. Sankey, Cecil Smith, Collett, Brunsden, A.J. Ross, West etc.

A large number of persons occupied the gallery, including several supporters of the Labour candidate.

Mr. Morris was present during the whole of the counting, and Mr. Church came into the hall at quarter past nine. About a quarter of an hour later, the Town Clerk, having checked the votes, declared the votes as follows:-

Mr. E.S. MORRIS (ex-Service nominee)	1,733
Mr. W.H. CHURCH (Labour)...	980
Majority ...	753

The Town Clerk said he had to declare Mr. Morris duly elected a member of the Borough Council for the Starch Green ward.

Vociferous cheers were given by supporters of the successful candidate, come of whom waved their hats. Counter cries were shouted from the gallery.

When silence had been restored, Mr Morris mounted a table, and said that it had fallen to his lot to propose a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk, who was the returning officer, and his staff, for the able and courteous way in which they had conducted this short but strenuous by-election. He could only say that he had no complaints to make. He had vindicated the existence of the ex-Servicemen's organisation in that contest. He should endeavour to be straight and honest for the good of the borough in which he lived, and when the time came when his tenure was ended, believe him he would not be ashamed of what he had attempted to have done. (Applause).

Mr. Church, who stood in front of the table received with applause from supporters in the gallery, with waving of hats, said there was no need for him to get upon the table. There were times when defeat was more honourable than victory. (Applause in the gallery). It was the first time he had sought any honour from the citizens of Hammersmith, and he took his defeat that night the same as had taken anything in the Trade Union and Labour movement; that was, as a man. (Applause).

His duty was to second the vote of thanks to the returning officer and his staff. He was very pleased that he had got the opportunity of thanking Mr. Gordon, Hammersmith was one of the places which took the lead during the time Mr. Morris and himself were answering the country's call from 1914 to 1918.

During that election he (Mr. Church) had not made any plea with regard to his military record. He simply appealed to the voters as a citizen. He could tell Mr. Morris as a soldier and as a member of the Federation if he did not know that the powers of Borough Council were extremely limited as to what they could do for the ex-Serviceman. He (Mr. Church) thanked everybody for the courteous way (not forgetting the Press) for the courteous way they had treated him.

He made an allusion to extremists being referred to in the Press, when there was an outburst of singing of "Tell me the old, old story" from a few of the supporters of the successful candidate. Mr. Church, in conclusion, said he was very glad to have had the opportunity of making his first appearance at a municipal election, and judging by the support he had had that night, he gave them the assurance that it would not be his last. (Applause).

The motion having been agreed to, the Town Clerk returned thanks for the hearty vote of thanks to the staff and himself, and interesting political speeches. With regard to the conduct of the Starch Green ward election there was one point which might interest them. The electorate on the present register was 8,968.

At the last by-election the number was 8,683; on that occasion 2,103 electors went to the poll. On this occasion 2,719 went to the poll. The increase was somewhere like 6 per cent. There was one variation this time, and they were rather anxious to see the result. They had put down an additional polling station to help electors to go to the poll.

There was the interesting question whether Thursday or Saturday was the most convenient day for a poll. From the returning officer's point, taking into consideration that 30.3 per cent voted; the question now was whether it would be better to have elections on Sunday.

Both candidates were cheered on leaving the Town Hall. Mr Church made a speech to his supporters outside the building, after which they joined in singing "The Red Flag."

Mr Morris, on leaving the Town Hall, proceeded to the Federation Institute in Goldhawk Road, and made a speech in which he thanked his supporters.

At the by-election in Starch Green ward last May, when Mr. T.C. Jones defeated Mr. F.R. West, the percentage of the poll was 24.2.

This was the field that was Starch Green. The green was used for drying laundry but the name predates the large-scale laundering services that employed many of the wives of the brick-makers who populated the area. So the field did not derive its name from the use of starch in the laundering process; just as Eel Brook Common didn't derive its name from a brook full of eels. The name appears to be a derivation of Storkes Tenement.

Even only half developed, this is clearly a different type of area; a mix of modest, more densely packed terraces in the north; and more grand villas in the south. And the reason it developed like that was that the south, just across from Ravenscourt Park, was more desirable and therefore attractive to the wealthy. Developers responded by building larger, more prestigious homes.

The economics that buying undeveloped, outlying land was a far cheaper undertaking than in the populated inner neighbourhoods also led Hammersmith Council to buy up land for housing estates.

There were three in this area: Emlyn Gardens, Kelmscott Gardens and Becklow Gardens, now on the Coningham side of the ward. Both these estates are in broadly the same style as the White City estate though nowhere near as large: long tenement blocks of five storeys.

The Emlyn Gardens estate, occupying almost half of the western side of Emlyn Road provided homes for about 270 families. But, just like White City, while building homes on the outskirts cost less, it also left residents isolated from their family and old community.

Very little got spent on the estate once built, so it became run down to the extent that it was eventually renovated in 1981 it cost over £14,000 per flat to fix the backlog.

As Starch Green developed its electorate grew from 2,608 in 1900 to 3,463 by 1912; 8,258 when the franchise was expanded after the First World War and nearly 12,500 by 1945.

TORIES WIN—BUT LOSE 700 VOTES

HAMMERSMITH Tories held their firm grip on the Starch Green Ward on Thursday, but not without a drop of 700 in their majority.

Carrying yet another Tory banner into the Council Chamber will be Mr. Victor Dessimone, 53, of Paddenswick Road, Shepherds Bush.

He polled 1,118 votes to beat Socialist Mrs. Rosie Johnson, of Emlyn Road, who had 651 votes.

For Mr. Dessimone, Thursday's result was the realisation of a life-long ambition.

Speaking at his home on Saturday, he said: "I am happy at the confidence shown again in the Tory party and the confidence shown in me."

Second try

Mr. Dessimone, who is in personnel management has worked in the borough for over 30 years.

He was an active member when Starch Green was the old Ravenscourt Ward before the change over of the boundary structure in 1964.

Issues he is most concerned about include housing and the lack of parking facilities in the Starch Green Ward.

This is his second stab at getting on the council. Many years ago he stood unsuccessfully in Coningham Ward.

Starch Green has always been a relatively safe Tory seat.

Even in 1964, when Labour popularity was at its height, they won one of the three seats.

But on Saturday, Mr. Frank Ing, Labour party agent for North Hammersmith, said that if the by - election had been held in any of the previously "safe Labour seats" such as Old Oak, St. Stephens or Forest Park, they would have won.

"Somewhere along the line the Tories lost 700 voters. This shows a movement — if slight — back to us," said Mr. Ing.

Mr. Richard Booker, Tory agent for North Hammersmith and Fulham said: "This was an absolutely first rate result."

He said the high poll of 26.5 per cent showed the effectiveness of the two political machines in their canvassing campaign.

At the boundary review in time for the 1949 elections, Starch Green got reduced to the area west of Askew Road. The new Coningham ward east of Askew Road was much more comfortably Labour than Starch Green from the start. Labour only edged the first election on these new boundaries 53-47%, though 1949 was not a great year for the party. They opened up a more comfortable lead in 1953: 58-42, but were hauled back again in 1956: 46-39 with 11% for independents and 4% for a Communist.

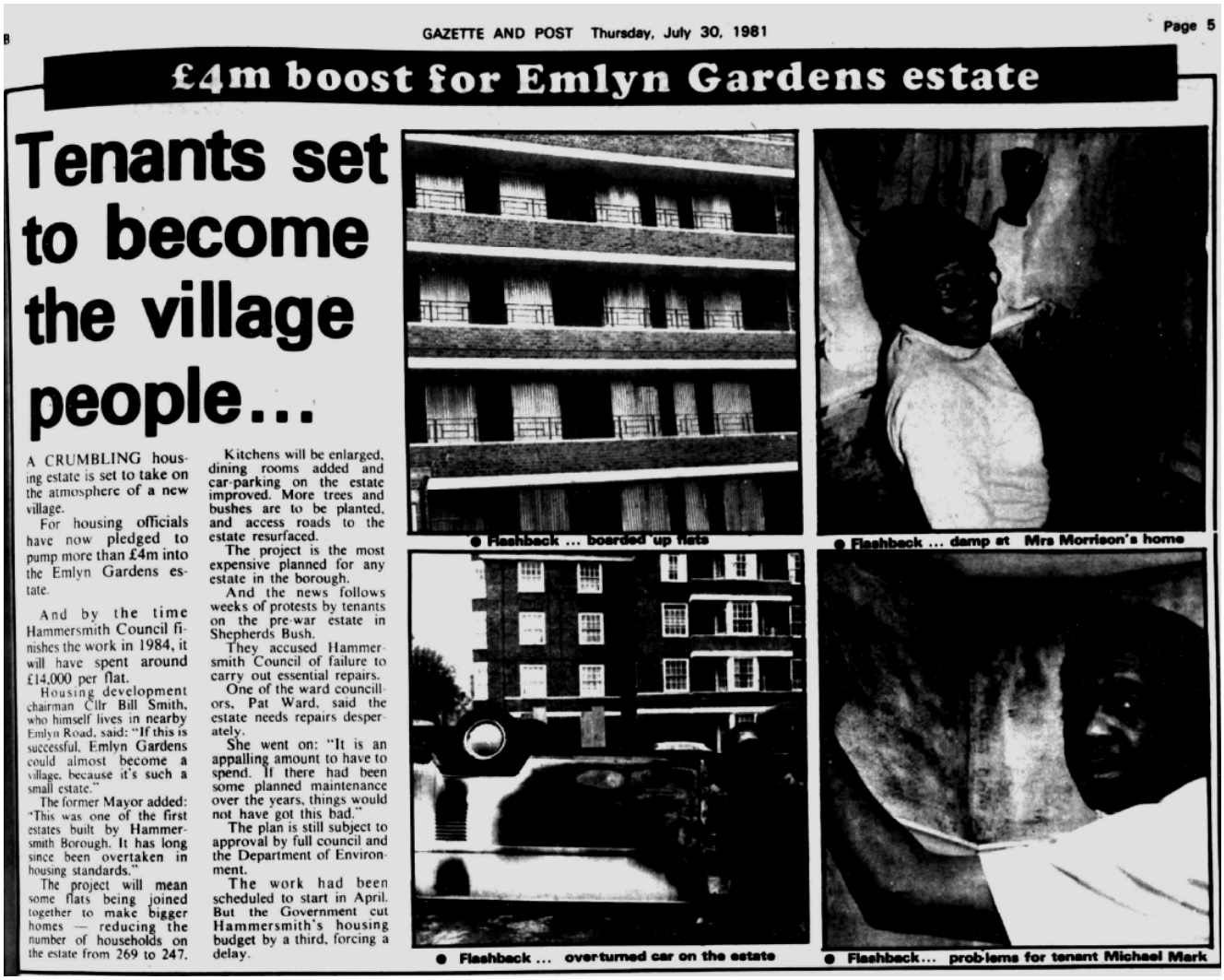
A new Starch Green was drawn when Hammersmith amalgamated with Fulham in 1964. All of the old ward was included but it extended south across Goldhawk Road, incorporating Ravenscourt Park down to the District Line. This added about 1,600 new voters from abolished Ravenscourt, which in 1962 voted 60-40 in favour of the Conservatives.

As a result Starch Green became even more marginal, electing a Conservative alongside two Labour councillors. The Conservatives then won by a landslide in 1968, Labour regained it comfortably in 1971 and then clung on to it by their fingernails in 1974: Les Wicks winning his seat by 16 votes.

Those 1964 boundary changes were reversed in 1978, returning the Ravenscourt Park area to a re-created Ravenscourt ward. Labour, whose idea this was, presumably thought this would make Starch Green safe for them again. But they were wrong.

The Conservatives easily won Ravenscourt in 1978 but they also snatched Starch Green, 54-46. There were wards Labour missed by less: Eel Brook and Addison to name two, but this was the only Shepherds Bush ward to elect Conservative councillors.

The 1982 contest, saw the Conservatives far more damaged by the debut of the SDP-Liberal Alliance than Labour. Labour lost nearly nine points of support but the Conservatives fell by sixteen. That was enough for Labour to recapture one of the seats but Pat Ward held on to the other by just 22 votes.



GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, July 30, 1981 Page 5

£4m boost for Emlyn Gardens estate

Tenants set to become the village people...

A CRUMBLING housing estate is set to take on the atmosphere of a new village.

For housing officials have now pledged to pump more than £4m into the Emlyn Gardens estate.

And by the time Hammersmith Council finishes the work in 1984, it will have spent around £14,000 per flat.

Housing development chairman Cllr Bill Smith, who himself lives in nearby Emlyn Road, said: "If this is successful, Emlyn Gardens could almost become a village, because it's such a small estate."

The former Mayor added: "This was one of the first estates built by Hammersmith Borough. It has long since been overtaken in housing standards."

The project will mean some flats being joined together to make bigger homes — reducing the number of households on the estate from 269 to 247.

Kitchens will be enlarged, dining rooms added and car-parking on the estate improved. More trees and bushes are to be planted, and access roads to the estate resurfaced.

The project is the most expensive planned for any estate in the borough.

And the news follows weeks of protests by tenants on the pre-war estate in Shepherds Bush.

They accused Hammersmith Council of failure to carry out essential repairs.

One of the ward councillors, Pat Ward, said the estate needs repairs desperately.

She went on: "It is an appalling amount to have to spend. If there had been some planned maintenance over the years, things would not have got this bad."

The plan is still subject to approval by full council and the Department of Environment.

The work had been scheduled to start in April. But the Government cut Hammersmith's housing budget by a third, forcing a delay.

● Flashback ... boarded up flats

● Flashback ... damp at Mrs Morrison's home

● Flashback ... overturned car on the estate

● Flashback... problems for tenant Michael Mark



Son Rotimi Adegoke was at his mother's death bed

Mayor's tragic secret



Mayor Janet Adegoke

A SON has spoken of his mother's suffering during the last hours of her life.

Rotimi Adegoke, son of the Mayor of Hammersmith Janet Adegoke, was at his mother's hospital bedside when she died last Thursday evening.

He has revealed she was too weak even to speak at the end, as the cancer she had fought against for months finally overcame her.

Cllr Adegoke, the first black woman mayor in London, was admitted to Hammersmith Hospital, Du Cane Road, on September 28 and died three days later aged 45.

She had been receiving treatment for cervical cancer since July but kept the seriousness of her illness secret even from her two sons and daughter.

The grieving children, Rotimi, 22, Jumoke, 19 and Kunle, 17, are still coming to terms with their mother's death.

Rotimi said: "I had no idea she was going to die. I think it was only when we saw her in hospital that it really dawned on us what might happen."

He said: "Right up to the end she was concerned only with helping other people. Perhaps that is what kept her going."

By COLIN TREGEAR

Flowers, cards and tributes have been flooding into the Adegoke home in Brent Court, Emlyn Gardens, Shepherds Bush, ever since Janet Adegoke's sudden death.

The mayor will be buried in Nigeria, fulfilling her wish to be placed alongside her mother. But a funeral service is being held today at St Saviour's Church, Cobbold Road, Shepherds Bush, for close friends and relatives.

The council will also be holding a special memorial service, although no date has been fixed.

Cllr Joseph Mirwitch will step up from deputy mayor to fulfil the duties of the Mayor until councillors have a chance to elect a successor to Cllr Adegoke.

For the children the mayor leaves behind, life will never be the same again.

Choking with emotion, Rotimi said: "She has given us all so much. Living with her day to day I just didn't realise how much she was doing for us and the community.

"I only hope I can put as much back into the community as she did.

"I am so proud of what she achieved."

The family have asked people not to send flowers to the funeral but would welcome contributions to Hammersmith MENCAP or Hammersmith Hospital for research into sickle cell anaemia.

Starch Green produced one of the Alliance's best results of that election, giving them a quarter of the vote - only ten points behind the tied Labour and Conservative parties.

Labour won both seats in their landslide of 1986 pretty comfortably. There was almost no change in the Alliance share in third: this was a direct swing from Conservatives to Labour. Though no-one knew it then, this was the end of Conservative representation in Starch Green.

One of the winning councillors, Janet Adegoke, was vice chair of the Emlyn Gardens Tenants Association. Janet became mayor of the borough in 1987 and the first woman of African origin to be elected mayor in the whole of the United Kingdom. But in the autumn of that year she died - apparently suddenly: she had been keeping a cancer diagnosis secret even from her family.

This led to a December 1987 by-election, just six months after Labour had been badly beaten in the general election. The result was close: the Conservatives cut Labour's majority to just 58 as the Tory voters that switched to the Alliance in 1982 returned to the fold. Labour's vote was down just one point; the Conservatives rose twelve.

In the 1990 election - the election that saw a considerable swing back to the Conservatives following the Rate Swaps scandal - the council ended up 28 Labour, 22 Tories. To get to 26 seats the Tories would have needed to win Grove and then Starch Green. But while seats in Fulham were falling to the Conservatives on big swings, in Starch Green the party managed to close the gap with Labour by 6%. Labour held on by about 10%.



Summary results for Wendell Park ward

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1900	51.9		48.1		
1903	18.5	17.0	25.6		38.9
1906	17.5	17.0			65.5
1909		39.4			60.6
1912	40.0	30.8			29.1
1919	33.6	46.7	19.8		
1920B	51.0	49.0			
1921B		36.1			63.9
1922		33.0			67.0
1925		45.0			55.0
1928		49.5			50.5
1931		37.0			60.3
1934		55.3			44.7
1937		57.8			42.2
1939B		55.0			45.0
1945	24.2	61.6			14.2
1949	47.4	52.6			
1953	41.8	58.2			

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1956	39.0	46.2			14.8
1959	43.0	57.0			
1962	37.7	62.3			
1964	49.3	50.7			
1968	68.7	31.3			
1968B	61.0	39.0			
1971	46.1	53.9			
1974	42.6	45.4	12.0		
1978	53.6	46.4			
1982	37.6	37.6	24.9		
1986	29.6	46.4	24.0		
1987B	41.9	45.1	13.0		
1990	38.8	52.1	9.1		
1994	30.2	53.9	15.9		
1998	26.9	56.9	16.2		
2022	19.8	62.6	17.6		
2026	15.6	47.7	7.8	21.3	7.6

From then on, Labour increased its Starch Green majorities substantially. The Conservative vote in the south of Starch Green hadn't faded but it was evidently no longer sufficient to keep them competitive.

So, in the 2000 boundary review, the Tories proposed splitting Starch Green in half and putting that strong southern half into Ravenscourt ward. The boundary they persuaded the Commission to implement was dodgy from Labour's perspective and ingenious from the Conservatives. It carefully excluded Emlyn Gardens and Kelmscott Gardens.

The key argument for warding this western side of Hammersmith in this way was that Askew Road was not a boundary but a hub for both sides of this neighbourhood, just as Ravenscourt Park was a hub for all the streets surrounding it; including the Starch Green side.

Arguments over whether a road is a boundary or a focal point are the currency of these reviews, though of course they can be both. Askew Road does draw people living either side of it because of its shops, the library and bus routes. But it's also clearly a more consequential boundary - because it's a busy main road - than residential backstreets like Ashchurch Grove and Wendell Road.

It was that argument, along with the area west of Askew Road being perfectly sized for a 2-councillor ward, that got Starch Green on its relatively square boundaries resurrected for a second time in the review prior to 2022. It was renamed Wendell Park: a more identifiable name.

In the 1998 elections; the last before it was abolished, Starch Green voted Labour 57%, Conservative 27%. In 2022 Wendell Park voted Labour 63%, Conservative 20%. The underlying swing from the Tories hadn't diminished and the ward was now indistinguishable from the other Labour Shepherds Bush strongholds.

Labour lost fifteen points of support in 2026. Like the other W12 wards, the Greens polled strongly: 21% here, having not stood in 2022. But, essentially, no different to the periods when the Alliance and Lib Dems had polled well here. There is evidently a sizeable not-Labour, not-Conservative vote in this neck of the woods.

Labour's decline here was less than in surrounding wards and so the ward rose up the rankings within the Labour firmament: it's now the safest of the wards north of Goldhawk Road. The Conservatives fell too: down to barely 15%, while Reform won a paltry 7.6%. This ward is too close to the Chiswick firmament for Reform to thrive.



Labour loses seat in narrow victory

Victorious Labour party supporters cracked open the champagne to celebrate a narrow by-election success.
They breathed a sigh of relief as their candidate Jane Sheehan was elected the new member for the Starch Green ward in Shepherds Bush, last Thursday.
Labour held the ward despite a strong challenge from the Tory opposition who reduced the majority to a mere 58.
At the council elections in May last year, the Labour Party enjoyed a cushion of more than 300 votes.

The election was held following the tragic death of former mayor, Cllr Janet Adegoke.
The winner, Jane Sheehan, 28, admitted she faced a daunting task following in the footsteps of such a popular figure.
She said: "The people in Starch Green had a great respect for Janet. But they voted for me and I am very pleased to have won."
She admitted the result was close, but said Starch Green was a well-known marginal area and the December date had caused many voters to stay at home.

Rollcall of Wendell Park ward councillors

including Starch Green ward (1900-2002)

2026
- Rebecca Harvey
- Asif Siddique

2022
- Rebecca Harvey
- Asif Siddique

1998
- Julian Hillman
- Greg Wilkinson

1994
- Tim Stanley
- David Williams

1990
- Tim Stanley
- David Williams

1987B
- Jane Sheehan

1986
- Janet Adeqoke
- Tim Sedgwick-Jell

1982
- Leslie Jones
- Patricia Ward

1978
- Eric Hutson
- Patricia Ward

1974
- Leonard Freeman
- Rosina Johnson
- Leslie Wicks

1971
- Leonard Freeman
- Rosina Johnson
- Leslie Wicks

1968B
- Victor Dessimore

1968
- Patrick Perry
- Myra Sexton
- William Smith

1964
- Alan Breeze
- John Collins
- Maria Havelka

1962
- Leonard Freeman
- Violet Grant
- Edith Woods

1959
- Leonard Freeman
- Fred Wiliams
- Edith Woods

1956
- Leonard Freeman
- Fred Williams
- Edith Woods

1953
- Jack Cohen
- Leonard Freeman
- Edith Woods

1949
- Leonard Freeman
- J. Hayes
- Edith Woods

1945
- Edith Woods
- J. Blenkin
- J. Blennie
- Percy Clelland
- A. Maycock
- Jack Pearce

1939B
- J. Smith

1937
- William Adams
- P. Andrews
- R. Bowen
- Elizabeth Cox
- Samuel Full
- Alexander Maycock

1934
- William Adams
- Percy Clelland
- Elizabeth Cox
- Samuel Full
- Harold Howe
- Gertrude Shand

1931
- Thomas Brunsden
- Joseph Clark
- Edward Morris
- John Perry
- Robert Twitchett
- George Vine

1928
- Thomas Brunsden
- James Gardner
- Molly Gardner
- Harry May
- John Morton
- Robert Twitchett

1925
- Thomas Brunsden
- Harry May
- John Morton
- John Perry
- Robert Twitchett
- George Vine

1922
- Horace Durrant
- Thomas Jones
- Harry May
- Edward Morris
- John Morton
- Robert Twitchett

1919
- Leonard Akehurst
- William Booker
- James Gardner
- George Harris
- George Thomas
- Robert Twitchett

1912
- John Adams
- William Branson
- Ellis Davies
- Francis Henning
- John Herbert
- Robert Safell

1909
- James Boyle
- Albert Brooks
- Thomas Davies
- Thomas Hodgson
- Harry May
- Robert Wallace

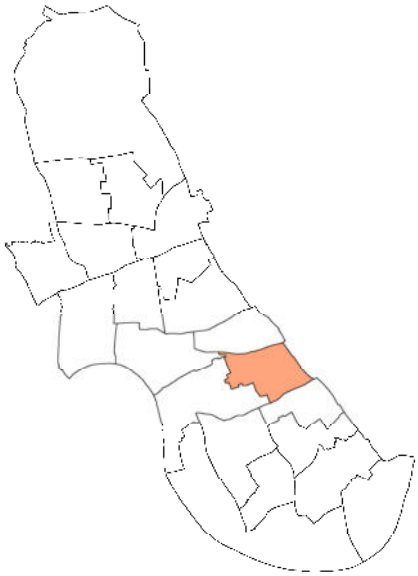
1906
- James Boyle
- William Davidson
- Thomas Davies
- Thomas Hodgson
- Harry May
- Robert Wallace

1903
- William Davidson
- Ellis Davies
- Herbert Hicks
- Thomas Hodgson
- Harry May
- Arthur Norris

1900
- John Andrews
- Charles Cramp
- William Davidson
- Ellis Davies
- Thomas Hodgson
- Arthur Norris

West Kensington ward

For years there was a Gibbs Green ward which very closely resembled today's West Kensington ward and the former North End ward. William Gibbs was the builder of much of the district of Baron's Court, so should he be the local personality with which this ward is most closely identified?



The answer is "not really" because Gibbs Green wasn't named after Mr Gibbs - that he built much of the place is purely coincidental. As far back as the 1600s there was a highway through this area called Gybbesgreen Lane.

William Gibbs' impact on the area is important, but so too is that of Sir William Palliser who commissioned the Baron's Court estate; the packed grid of streets between Margravine Cemetery and North End Road, which is the largest population centre in the ward - by a stretch.

There are three competing theories as to how Baron's Court got its name.

The first is that Palliser wanted a name for the area that competed with Earl's Court, the more well-known neighbourhood to the east. That's the claim that puts the apostrophe in "Baron's".

The second is that Palliser named the district after his Baronscourt estate in Ireland - and, if that idea is correct, there should be no apostrophe. Nor should it be two words. Searching through the local newspaper archives for stories about Baron's Court ward, you often find the Fulham Chronicle refer to it as Baronscourt when that wasn't its name, so perhaps this shows which theory the paper was inclined to.

The third suggestion is that the ancient name for the area was the Court Baron, a title deed held by the Bishop of London, who of course resided at Fulham Palace.

The Avonmore ward profile looks in greater detail at Baron's Court ward given that almost all of Avonmore was within Baron's Court, whereas West Kensington contained a large amount of the old Lillie ward.

Baron's Court was a safe Conservative ward - from 1945 onwards the only reliably Conservative ward in Fulham borough - while Lillie ward became a Labour-leaning marginal - between 1945 and the borough's abolition in 1965 only once electing Conservative councillors.

Until the 1960s, essentially only the side of this ward west of North End Road was inhabited. There were the mansions in Beaumont Road and Beaumont Crescent, and the houses set back along Lillie Road towards West Brompton. But otherwise everything to the east of North End Road was railway land: sidings, carriage sheds and the Lillie Bridge London Transport repair depot. This was a scale of land requisitioned for the railways only otherwise seen in this borough at Old Oak.

The Baron's Court estate was built to imitate the sort of grand housing seen in Earl's Court and South Kensington more widely. One of the characteristics of the estate is that, in the main, its streets run east-west but the character of each street is not uniform. That in itself isn't surprising: many sections of streets in the borough were sold off in lots with different developers building their lot in their own preferred style. But in Baron's Court there are, essentially, two styles of housing.

West of Vereker Road, whichever of the streets you pick, you will find red brick town houses and mansion blocks, mostly with basements - a style redolent of areas like Knightsbridge. East of Vereker Road you will find white stucco town houses and mansion blocks in the Palladian style, far more typical of Earl's Court and South Kensington.

And yes, there are exceptions to this generalisation. Comeragh Road changes character further west at the junction of Gledstanes Road; Barton Road and Palliser Road have a character all of their own: a more rustic arts and craft style of home, almost Swiss. But otherwise this divide between the white and red sides of Baron's Court is clear.

This is one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in the borough: over 4,000 residents are squeezed into this ordered grid of streets. It is a multicultural district; a high turnover district; overwhelmingly of tenants rather than owner-occupiers. It has among the highest proportion of European Union citizens, young and professional, taking advantage of the tube links at Baron's Court and West Kensington stations as well as the somewhat lower property prices than the next train stops further into the centre.

Mohandas Gandhi lived in Baron's Court Road as a student; so did Sir Geoffrey De Havilland, the aircraft designer. Marcus Garvey, the black rights crusader, lived in Talgarth Road, and Emily Davidson, the suffragette, in Fairholme Road. These four characters give something of a flavour of the mix of establishment and insurgence that cohabited in the Baron's Court estate.

Each of the four wards covering the W14 postal district: Addison, Brook Green, Avonmore and West Kensington has a somewhat different character from each other - but they are all quite distinct from the rest of the borough.

All were part of the relatively short-lived Baron's Court constituency: a Labour-leaning marginal, during the period when the borough's population fell and its constituency representation went from four seats, to three, to two and then to the mess we have today. They are all tightly packed districts of large houses or mansions mostly subdivided into flats or homes in multiple-occupancy. That type of housing tends to produce high population turnover - and the corollary of that is very low voter turnout.

Why are those two factors linked? Simply because if you are just passing through a community; here for six months, a year or maybe two, you are far less likely to engage with it; to care enough about local issues to find out who your representatives are and get active politically.

Throughout the 1990s, turnout from this part of Gibbs Green ward barely surpassed 20% even though it had the potential to wield far more electoral clout because it was



where the bulk of the population lived. In person turnout at the Bhavan Centre polling station in 2026 was just 26%.

Baron's Court ward extended as far south as Star Road. The Lillie ward section: the area from Star Road south to Lillie Road was of a different character and covered two different areas.

In the west was Queen's Club Gardens, a set of mansion blocks that was, without question, the Conservative stronghold in Lillie ward and which kept that ward marginal. In the east were a set of four streets: ABC streets - Archel, Bramber and Chesson, plus Turneville Road.

These were big houses with basements but almost all sub-divided and far less affluent than the Barons Court estate. Today many are owned by housing associations, a few by the council, though many of the privately owned homes - mostly at the western end, have gentrified considerably.

In the Lillie ward profile we looked at how a large part of this area was devastated by bombing during the Second World War. Eight high explosive bombs were dropped on the railway sidings east of Lillie Road - in addition to the bomb sites covering Normand Park and the Clem Attlee estate shown on the Lillie ward map.

Even before slum clearance sites had been drawn up for chunks of East Fulham and Baron's Court, Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan of 1943 was also destined to have a big impact on this neighbourhood. The plan set out the government's response both to the damage done to the capital by the war, and the relatively unplanned, haphazard way London had been allowed to grow prior to the war.

One of the radical solutions for a city with rapidly growing car ownership and the ensuing congestion it was creating, was a series of arterial roads from the heart of London out through the suburbs and beyond. One of these became the A4, which ran through Talgarth Road, demolishing its entire northern terrace to make room for the dual carriageway.

The southern terrace, already backing onto the District and Piccadilly tube lines, now had its frontage blighted by round-the-clock air and noise pollution. It was here that the end scenes of the film "Trainspotting" were filmed, in a tiny Talgarth Road bedsit.

The widening of Talgarth Road made it the most physical road boundary in the southern half of the borough. It was also one reason why Baron's Court ward ceased to be viable ward in 1964 when Fulham and Hammersmith amalgamated: it was just such an obvious divide between the two sides of that old ward.

Following the Blitz, Fulham Council had cleared three streets: Dieppe Street, Eli Street and Hilmer Street, and scrubland, to build an estate just behind Beaumont Crescent. This became the Gibbs Green estate: six low-rise tenement blocks. On the western side of North End Road they built Alice Gilliatt Court - named after the first female mayor of Fulham - in a similar style to Gibbs Green.

But this was just the start. The whole of the north side of Star Road was cleared and an estate that has gone by a few names: the Star Road estate, the Cheeseman's Terrace estate and the Maystar estate, was constructed. And, on most of the sidings immediately south of the Gibbs Green estate, the West Kensington estate was built.

Both Maystar and the West Ken estates are unique, at least in terms of this borough. Maystar was built on two distinct levels. At ground level the estate was divided into fairly small clusters of terraced maisonettes, often set around squares - Vine Square, Shuters Square and Orchard Square.

But the upstairs layer: Cheeseman's Terrace, was one of the remarkable - and eventually notorious - streets-in-the-sky estates. You could walk up a twisting ramp at the Vereker Road end and then along a seemingly never ending zigzag corridor right the way to North End Road.

This was one of those misguided architectural ideas that tried to replicate terraced streets but within a much higher rise environment. The archetype of this type of estate: Park Hill in Sheffield, was designed almost literally as a road - milkmen could drive their floats up to the street in the sky and fulfil their round as though they were on ground level. An idea fine in theory but often very not so in the lived experience of the residents.

While it made Cheeseman's Terrace a neighbourhood unto itself - separate from the ground floor estates, the upstairs concourse had very little oversight. That provided a haven for thieves, muggers and gangs; even for harmless but rowdy teenagers to mess around. The numerous stairs to it throughout the footprint of the

Cromwell Road Extension

More dual carriageway proposed

LATEST plans for the widening of Great Church Lane, Hammersmith, and Talgarth Road, West Kensington, are that the road is to be made a dual carriageway.

This amendment to the original proposal for the road widening was agreed to at a meeting of the London County Council on Tuesday.

Following suggestions from the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation the Town Planning Committee of the L.C.C. proposed an amendment to provide for the construction of dual carriageways, each 30ft. wide and allowing for three lanes of traffic, in place of the single carriageway, 45ft. wide, previously proposed.

This will enable a uniform road layout to be provided throughout the Cromwell Road Extension.

So far as the portion between Great Church Lane and Talgarth Road is concerned, the provision of a double carriageway will not involve the acquisition of any additional property but it will be necessary to re-house eight families.

The additional work will cost an estimated extra £35,000 and will involve the loss of some of the trees on the southern boundry of St. Paul's School playing fields. An offer is to be made to the governors of the school to provide and plant new trees to replace those lost.

CORONERS WILL HELP

Fulham Council's recommendation that local authorities should have fuller information about riders by coroners' juries when they are connected with fatal road accidents, has been replied to by the Home Office.

A report by Fulham's Works Committee says that the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee, who supported the recommendation, have been told by the Home Office that the Secretary of State has no authority to issue directions to coroners.

"He has, however," says the report, "brought the views of the committee to the notice of the London coroners, who have been good enough to say that they fully appreciate the desire of the metropolitan borough councils to have information about any recommendations made by juries in road accident cases, whether useful or not, and will in future keep this in mind with a view to notifying the councils concerned of all such riders and recommendations."

400 to be moved as council faces £5m bill



● Shambrook House — scaffolding provides shelter against loose bricks

Court battle over troubled tower block

By BILL PENN AND ALAN SEAY

THE council first became worried about West Kensington Estate when bricks and tiles started falling off from the tower blocks.

Scaffolding was put up round the blocks and an independent team of engineers called in to investigate the structure.

The results were enough to convince the council of the need to move out nearly 400 families while repair work is carried out.

While the council's top lawyers battle with M. J. Gleeson Limited for the cost of the repairs, the builders are aiming to recover thousands of pounds from the council which was retained from the £3.5m building fee.

Councillors and officers are refusing to discuss the progress of the legal battles.

Gleeson have built two other housing developments for the council — at Dorset Wharf and Star Road, in West Kensington.

Dorset Wharf has between 50 and 60 riverside flats and a community centre, and Star Road development contains shops and flats.

Liberal leader, Simon Knott, predicts the housing squeeze could result in the suspension of the transfer list for moves to alternative council housing and seriously affect the waiting list for homes.

He said: "They might as well close the transfer list down during the repair work on the estate. It is a very serious situation."

Housing chairman, Richard Lazarus, admitted: "Over time the tower blocks might become unsafe.

"At the moment the tower blocks are not unsafe, although there has been the odd brick slipping off — hence the scaffolding."

The potential housing crisis has also alarmed tenants' associations in the borough.

The secretary of the new West London Federation of Council Tenants, Frank Pillman, is calling for a total ban on housing for families from outside the borough.

He said: "There is a very serious housing problem which is going to get worse. The council must take a tough line on this.

"We also want to see good tenants protected by the council and a crackdown on rent dodgers who can afford to pay their way."

Residents on West Kensington Estate have already met councillors and officers to discuss the removal programme.

The chairman of the estates housing association, Rose Palmer, said families have resigned themselves to the move.

She said: "We know it is going to be a bit of an upheaval, but we are going to have to make the best of it."

A confidential document given to the Gazette gives details of the council's plans for payments to tenants to be moved.

Those moved permanently could receive a 'home loss payment' of up to £1,500.

They could also qualify for an allowance to cover carpets and curtains which cannot be adapted to their new homes.

The council may be prepared to pay up to £5.50 per square yard for carpets and £2 for curtains.

The report also says families moved temporarily can claim for storage costs for surplus furniture while the work is done and expenses for refitting carpets.

The council may also be making advance payments to tenants.

The estate is in North End Road.



● Simon Knott — transfer list is threatened



● Richard Lazarus — blocks are not unsafe

estate meant there were escape routes aplenty for them when the police were called.

In the early 2000s this street-in-the-sky was ended as the walkways were broken up and controlled entry systems introduced: now you can walk only the length of a block: a couple of dozen homes, with stairways at each end.

The West Ken estate was even bigger than Maystar. It's a mix of three types of housing. There are five relatively high-rise blocks of nine or ten storeys: Churchward and Fairburn, Desborough and Lickey, and Sharnbrook Houses. Staggered along North End Road are some zigzag four storey blocks. And swishing through the edges and centre of the estate are terraced streets of town houses like Aisgill Avenue, Ivatt Place and Stanier Close.

Gibbs Green estate was opened in 1961 and the West Ken in 1974. These were significant amounts of council housing: 160 homes on Gibbs Green, 315 on Maystar, 77 on Alice Gilliatt, and over 600 on the West Ken estate: well over 1,152 homes just on these four estates.

And, of course, there were the council- and housing association-owned homes in the ABC streets, smaller blocks like Browning Court 25 and 50 Vereker Road, Robert Gentry House in Gledstanes Road (whose residents get a free view of the Queens Club tennis tournament each summer as it backs onto the courts). and Ada Lewis House in Palliser Road.

To begin with, Gibbs Green was a highly marginal ward, given the presence of the Barons Court estate and Queen's Club Gardens - and because most of the council housing hadn't been built. But the massive demographic shift against the Conservatives among the sorts of leaseholders who live in Baron's Court had already begun. In the last elections to Fulham Council in 1962 the Conservative majority had been whittled down to 17%: 49% to 32% - and the stronger Tory areas had been moved to Avonmore. Labour had won Lillie ward in 1962 by 44% to 26, though a lot less of Lillie moved to Gibbs Green than did Baron's Court.

figure majorities elsewhere in the borough at that election.

The reason - or at least a part of it - was boundary changes. Gibbs Green was shrunk to a 2-councillor ward. The Maystar estate, the ABC streets and, critically, Queen's Club Gardens, were moved to Normand ward.

Gibbs Green became just the Baron's Court estate west of North End Road and the Gibbs Green and West Ken estates east of it. The change in the sort of people living on the Baron's Court: from stable, long-term Conservative-voting couples to transient, disengaged singles, eroded Conservative support enough that they simply weren't strong enough on this side to outvote the council estates. In 1982 this was one of the wards where the impact of the SDP/Liberal Alliance into the contest hurt Labour more than the Conservatives.



Labour leader fails to win backing of party

THE leader of a council's Labour group has been snubbed by his own party members.

Cllr Gordon Prentice, leader of the Opposition Labour group on Hammersmith Council, lost a fight to represent his ward again at the next election.

He has represented Gibbs Green ward since he became a councillor in 1982. But at a meeting of ward party members to decide who would fight Town Hall elections in May, he was dropped as a candidate.

The two councillors for Gibbs Green are Cllr Prentice and independent Labour member Cllr Frances Kelly. Miss Kelly has decided not to stand again.

Two new faces were chosen at the selection meeting last week — Mr Imtiaz Kabir, 29, and Mr Andrew Slaughter, 24.

Mr Kabir, an accountant for a co-operative, lives in the ward. Mr Slaughter, who works for a public relations consultancy, lives in Campana Road, Eel Brook.

Cllr Prentice, 34, has been leader since January 1984. He works at Labour Party HQ in Walworth Road.

He said: "This is nothing particularly unusual. It's just the way the Labour Party works. People are being selected and picked for things all over the place. It's no great shakes."

He said he hoped to find another seat. "I certainly hope to be on the council next year. It will be up to the Labour Party ward branches whether or not they want to invite me for an interview.

"The two candidates who have been selected for Gibbs Green are excellent candidates and they will have my full support and any help I can give them to get elected next May."

Mr Slaughter, who was an active supporter of the miners strike, said: "The party is very democratic and it is healthy to have a rotation.

"Gordon has been very effective against the Conservatives in opposition, and I'm sure he will be there when we are in office next year."

Labour - whose three councillors in 1964 included Betty Boothroyd, the future Speaker of the House of Commons - won the inaugural battle for Gibbs Green by barely 150 votes. They lost it by a country mile in 1968: 70% to 30% - it was the second safest Tory ward that year after Avonmore.

But then the council estates began to populate. Labour got Gibbs Green back in 1971 and increased their majority in 1974 (when there was a national and borough swing away from them). Nonetheless, Gibbs Green was hardly a safe ward and 1978: a big Conservative wave year, was rapidly approaching.

Yet the Conservatives did not win Gibbs Green in 1978. The result was tight - but nothing compared to the tiny

New councillor Gordon Prentice only hung onto his seat by twenty votes; a defeated Tory candidate being Michael Fallon, the future Conservative Party chairman and Defence Secretary.

Both Gibbs Green and Normand swung very heavily to Labour in 1986 after the Fulham by-election: a 16% swing here giving them over 60% of the vote. The ward looked safe for the first time. However, that was a slightly false dawn because both wards swung back more heavily than average to the Tories in 1990. Neither Gibbs Green nor Normand were exactly marginal - but they once again couldn't be called safe either.

Labour pulled significantly clear in 1994; then they won by a landslide in a 1997 by-election. Charlie Treloggan,

the new councillor, won with almost three quarters of the vote in a very low turnout summer by-election. By now Gibbs Green had diverged a lot from Normand: the Conservatives almost snatched that ward in 1998 while Labour's majority grew and grew in Gibbs Green.

In the electoral review of 2000, the pre-1978 version of Gibbs Green returned. Back came Queen's Club Gardens, those ABC streets and the Maystar estate. The new ward was (stupidly) called North End: confusing for those living in other wards North End Road ran through and not all that accurate historically as the township of North End was further north.

The first contest in North End was close. The Conservatives worked very hard to try to oust the council leader Andrew Slaughter and education cabinet member David Williams, and Labour only held on by 6%: 45% to 39%.

That sort of lead was nowhere near large enough for Labour to defend in 2006 when the third Tory landslide enveloped the borough. For the first time since 1971 West Kensington had three Conservative councillors. The Tory majorities ranged from 197 to 290.

The Gazette
Friday, July 4, 1997

Candidates line up for by-election battle

VOTERS in Gibbs Green, West Kensington, go to the polls next Thursday to choose a replacement councillor for Iain Coleman, who became MP for Hammersmith and Fulham at the General Election. **MIKE PARKINSON** looks at the candidates:

James Browne – Conservative

JAMES Browne is a 29-year-old barrister who lives locally.



James Browne

Part of his work involves helping people win compensation for road and industrial accidents. James has a very active record of community service and, having spoken to many Gibbs Green residents during the General Election, he is now fighting to improve the quality of life in the borough. He said: "I am campaigning for better quality council services and for a lower council tax, which, under Labour, has risen by 50 per cent over the past three years.

"I am also campaigning to take better care of our local environment; to end the sweetheart deals between Labour and the unions; and to stop squeegee merchants and beggars pestering residents at West Kensington tube station and at the Talgarth Road junction.

"I also want to establish a 24-hour graffiti and vandalism hotline and a pledge that work on cleaning up vandalism and graffiti will be started by council workers within 24 hours of a resident's complaint.

"It is also important to ensure the council's noise complaints line is run properly.

"Finally, I would like to improve controlled parking in Barons Court to stop commuters taking residents' parking spaces."

Tamara Dragadze – Lib-Dem

TAMARA Dragadze, 50, was born in Oswestry, Shropshire. Her grandparents came from Georgia in the former Soviet Union. She works as a university researcher and has a son, 18, and a daughter, 16, whom she has brought up in Fulham.



Tamara Dragadze

She said: "I would like to serve on the council of the borough in which I have lived for so many years and know so well.

"Parking problems in Gibbs Green continue to be difficult for some residents. Safety is another important issue, while others share like myself the anxiety of seeing their children unable to afford to remain in the borough once they have grown up. The Labour government has promised that affordable housing will be available. As a Lib-Dem councillor I would have the independence to speak my mind and make sure the council keeps its promises.

"I hope Gibbs Green residents will give me a chance to demonstrate that I can make a difference for important improvements to the area they live in.

"A third Lib-Dem councillor would make a real difference to the council, whereas an extra Labour or Conservative councillor would make no difference at all."

Charlie Treloggan – Labour

BLACK-CAB driver Charlie Treloggan has lived in Fulham all his life and in the West Kensington Estate for the last 25 years.

He is a widower with a daughter and two grandchildren and has been vice chairman of Fulham North Housing Forum and a leading figure on the West Kensington Action Group.

He said: "I have seen the problems faced by local people and many asked me to stand for the council because they know I share their concerns. Concerns about rising crime, about job prospects, about the availability of decent, affordable accommodation.



Charlie Treloggan

"For years people have suffered because Tory policies helped only a privileged few. Tax rises, a crumbling NHS, falling education standards and rising crime. That is the legacy they've left our new government. So, things are not going to suddenly improve. But I believe that things can and will get better.

"One example of how the new Labour government will make a positive and practical change for local people is the availability of accommodation at affordable rents. The Tories did not allow councils to use the money raised from the sale of council homes to build new accommodation.

"Labour, in government, will now allow councils to use the money over a period of time to build new homes for local people who need them."

The new Conservative council had big plans for West Kensington. Developers Capital and County (Capco) had purchased the famous Earls Court exhibition centre site, which straddled the borough boundary. The new Tory administration wanted to extend this redevelopment all the way to North End Road, demolishing the West Ken and Gibbs Green council estates in the process. This vast new neighbourhood would contain well over 10,000 new homes.

By 2010 the plans were at an advanced stage but were just that: plans. Nothing had been formally agreed, no contracts exchanged. But the council elections that year reminded the Conservatives why they needed to realign North End ward politically. Labour's Daryl Brown - a well-known community activist - won back one of the three seats here. But Hammersmith and Fulham stayed Tory and the sell-off plans proceeded. In 2012 the council sold the two estates to Capco for £105 million and the estates were on a clear trajectory to demolition.

Labour won back the remaining two seats in North End in 2014. There was little evidence that North End voters cared that much about the redevelopment plans - or perhaps it might be more accurate that residents may not have believed things would change if Labour won.

It's also wrong to assume that everyone here wanted to halt the estate demolition. One of the Conservative arguments was that the replacement neighbourhood would lift up a relatively dowdy area with higher quality housing. Some estate residents may also have looked forward to being allocated a new home within this neighbourhood.

But the newly-elected Labour council was committed to halting the plans for the estates. Yet despite going through the contracts with a fine tooth-comb they could not find a way to default on the deal and Capco was uninterested in selling them back.

By this time the estates had also organised themselves into a vocal, smart, high profile campaign. They called themselves "The People's Estates", got funding to hire a professional community organiser, roped in left-wing architects to come up with a viable alternative that would retain the estates, and started the process of trying to take community ownership of their homes.

These were all vital steps towards saving the estate, but what actually sank Capco was the economy. They had purchased Earls Court prior to the financial crisis and the land had lost a lot of value subsequently, gumming-up the



company's liquidity. Then the mayoralty of London switched from Conservative Boris Johnson to Labour's Sadiq Khan. Capco had lost the backing of the capital's mayor: the straw that broke Capco's back.

Now keen to get some liquidity into the site, they sold the Empress State Building: the 28-storey tricorn tower block on the edge of the Earl's Court site to the Met Police for £250 million. This was a bespoke deal but it gave hope that, as bits of the site were now negotiable, the estate sell-off might be reversed ignited.

In 2018 Labour, which had been vociferous in their championing of the estates, won North End by margins not seen since that 1986 landslide. All three councillors won with majorities of over a thousand on a near 16% swing - the largest swing in the borough that year.

A year later Capco, crushed by the continuingly worsening losses they were being saddled with because of their stagnant planning permission and the terrible headlines they were getting, sold their interest in Earls Court to Delancey. If it can be called a consolation, at least the first stage of Capco's masterplan: Lillie Square, in Seagrave Road, just across from the main Earl's Court site, had been partially completed.

Wanting to focus on the parts of the site that had been cleared - Earls Court One and Two - Delancey sold the two estates back to Hammersmith and Fulham for the same price Capco had purchased them for: £105 million. The saga was over, the estates were saved and the residents had won.

Earl's Court minus the estates still contained land with planning permission in North End ward. As such, when the 2019 boundary review commenced, the ward was projected to grow by almost 1,400 voters by 2025. That electorate would make the ward far too large, and so changes were needed.

North End - renamed West Kensington: the fourth name for this area (Baron's Court, Gibbs Green, North End, West Kensington) remained broadly unchanged but Queen's Club Gardens was removed.

Even though Queen's Club Gardens wasn't any longer quite the vault of Conservative votes it used to be, removing these mansion blocks made West Kensington virtually unwinnable for that party. They would not have won it in 2010 and 2006 would have been questionable.

West Kensington summary results

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Gibbs Green ward					
1964	45.5	51.3			3.2
1968	69.9	30.1			
1971	46.9	53.1			
1974	38.1	50.9	11.0		
1978	41.9	49.4	3.4		
1982	39.7	43.3	18.6		
1986	26.5	63.1	9.3		1.1
1990	39.3	53.8	6.9		
1994	31.4	56.0	12.6		
1997B	20.2	74.4	5.4		
1998	25.2	59.8	15.0		
North End ward					
2002	39.5	45.5	9.9	5.0	
2006	49.6	40.0	10.4		
2010	42.8	38.6	18.6		
2014	38.0	46.7	7.9	7.4	
2018	23.7	63.3	10.6	2.4	
West Kensington ward					
2022	20.3	64.4	12.8	2.5	
2026	15.0	39.0	9.7	24.5	11.8

Labour won another huge majority in 2022 - slightly smaller than 2018 but still 64% to 20%. But in 2026 Labour's vote crashed again: down more than 25 percentage points, leaving them below 40%.

If the Conservatives had been the beneficiaries of that Labour collapse they would have won the ward - but they lost about five points of support too, ending up 15%.

Reform debuted with about just under 12% of the vote - one of their candidates here being "Brexit Barrister" Martin Howe who had represented Colehill ward for the Conservatives in 1982: a gap between the two elections of 44 years - almost certainly a local record. But the Greens, who only fielded one candidate, came second to Labour - winning one quarter of the votes cast.

West Kensington was not a Green target ward: that can be seen in them only finding one activist to stand here. All their efforts were in Shepherds Bush, not Fulham - so this vote was even more remarkable. The gap between the third Labour councillor and the Green was just 283 or 11.5%, making this their best result in Hammersmith & Fulham. What might they have achieved if anyone had realised they would get so close and campaigned here?

Yet the ward does have flags that suggested it would make a decent Green target. Unlike White City: their chosen target, the Labour vote in West Kensington has been pretty volatile. The combined population living in council rented and private rented homes here is 76%.

The Baron's Court estate in particular contains stacks of the sort of young, transient professionals attracted to the Greens' left-wing message; animated by Gaza and other social justice causes - but not all that intent in turning out in a council election.

That's why campaigns and get out the vote efforts on polling day matter in a ward like this. Hindsight, of course - and Hammersmith and Fulham will likely never be the sort of borough the Green Party is strong enough to run the sort of intensive campaign needed to make this ward more competitive.

Labour's 39% is less than they lost by in 2006 and on a par with their 2010 showing when they still lost two of the three seats here.

It's part of a row of weak Labour showings down the eastern side of the borough: 38.6% in Avonmore, 35.9% in Lillie, 35.7% in Walham Green and just 30.4% in Sands End.

It's not obvious why this wall of wards especially soured on Labour in 2026 (compared to other parts of the borough more traditionally marginal) and somewhat remarkable that they still managed to win all but two of the twelve seats within them. West Kensington is the only one of them where the Greens finished second and is still the least winnable for the Conservatives.

As Earls Court starts to get built and occupied, it may realign politics in this ward. Lillie Square: that earlier part of the development in Lillie ward may have helped the swing to the Conservatives there. But Earl's Court will also contain a lot of private renters, a lot of leaseholders and some student accommodation - all part of a cost of living crisis constituency spending a huge chunk of their income on rent or mortgage repayments.

But it's unlikely to have voters on the register by 2030: the next council elections, so if anyone wants to stage an upset, they'll have to do so with the ward as it is now, not as it will be.

Rollcall of West Kensington ward councillors

including North End ward (2002-2022) and Gibbs Green ward (1964-2002)

2026
- Victoria Brignall
- Daryl Brown
- Florian Chevoppe-Verdier

2022
- Daryl Brown
- Florian Chevoppe-Verdier
- Sally Taylor

2018
- Daryl Brown
- Larry Culhane
- Zara Quyyum

2014
- Daryl Brown
- Larry Culhane
- Ali Hashem

2010
- Daryl Brown
- Georgie Cooney
- Thomas Crofts

2006
- Caroline Ffiske
- Sarah Gore
- Lucy Gugen

2002
- Andrew Slaughter
- Charlie Treloggan
- David Williams

1998
- Andrew Slaughter
- Charlie Treloggan

1996B
- Charlie Treloggan

1994
- Iain Coleman
- Andrew Slaughter

1990
- Iain Coleman
- Andrew Slaughter

1986
- Syed Kabir
- Andrew Slaughter

1982
- Frances Kelly
- Gordon Prentice

1978
- Frances Kelly
- Geoff Taylor

1974
- Marie Louise Clarke
- Frances Kelly
- Adrian Norridge

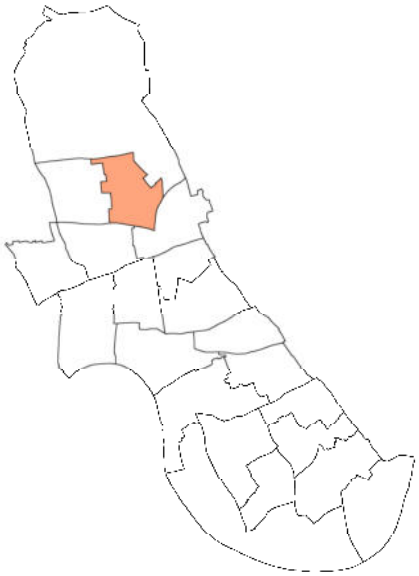
1971
- Adrian Noridge
- Harry Perlin
- Phyllis Perlin

1968
- Cyril Arnold
- Margaret James
- George Patterson

1964
- Betty Boothroyd
- Leslie Jones
- Harry Perlin

White City ward

The words of the Song "Pure Imagination" from the Gene Wilder musical version of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory could, instead, have been the theme-tune of the Great White City: the massive exhibition centre that stretched from what is now the Holland Park roundabout north to the Westway.



"Come with me and you'll be in a world of pure imagination. Take a look and you'll see into your imagination. We'll begin with a spin travelling in the world of my creation. What we'll see will defy explanation.

"If you want to view paradise simply look around and view it. Anything you want to, do it! Want to change the world? There's nothing to it.

"There is no life I know to compare with pure imagination. Living there you'll be free if you truly wish to be."

The Willy Wonka of White City was Imre Kiralfy. Imre Close off Ellerslie Road is named after him: an impresario who dreamt big and turned this space that had been brickfields and small-holdings into a site of white marble and plaster pavilions with echoes of the Ottoman-inspired Brighton Pavilion of John Nash. A British equivalent of the American Phineas Barnum of "Greatest Show on Earth" fame, perhaps.

There were canals lined with gondolas, ornate carved bandstands, gardens, a funfair and toboggan ride, historic exhibits recreating old London, and even mechanised displays; one requiring fifty tonnes of machinery to demonstrate how a flood destroys a village.

Here were staged huge Imperial exhibitions to celebrate great British triumphs; the first being the Franco-British Exhibition over the summer of 1908, marking the signing of the Entente Cordiale in 1904. There followed three further great exhibitions before the enterprise became a victim of the outbreak of war: the Japan-British exhibition in 1910 (the reason there is a Japanese garden within Hammersmith Park), the Brussels Exhibition and the Anglo-American Exposition of 1912.

Next door, on the site now occupied by the bland, technocratic buildings of the former BBC Media Village, stood a huge stadium within which the 1908 Olympics were staged.

Dorando Close, which is the ward boundary, is named after Dorando Pietri - the Italian runner who collapsed just shy of the finishing line and, having been helped across it by officials, was subsequently disqualified.

One of the last uses of the stadium was the 1934 British Empire Games (the forerunner of the Commonwealth Games). These were meant to have been staged in South Africa but the international condemnation of the country's apartheid regime meant they had to be relocated. It is in recognition of these games that many of the roads through White City have Commonwealth associations like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the city of Bloemfontein, where the games would have been staged.

The exhibition site never recovered after the war and the stadium became less and less used (briefly by QPR before their permanent move across the road). It eventually became a greyhound-racing stadium before the London Plan widened the Westway, necessitating the stadium's demolition.

The London County Council, by this time long controlled by Labour and intent on clearing away the slums and providing decent new homes for London's working class, discovered this affordable land right on the periphery of its administrative boundaries and began to plan a utopian estate.



It cost £1,729,126 (almost £36 million in today's money) had many critics right from the outset. From the left, the battle was between those who rejected blocks of flats in favour of cottage estates - a battle that was played out right here between the White City and Wormholt estates. The side arguing for blocks won.

They did so not because they rejected the arguments of the garden city estate advocates but because the needs of a rapidly-growing London meant that building to a much higher density than cottage garden estates was essential, in their view.

But even so, the uniformity and tightly packed plan of White City, which before the landscaping developed gave some allusion to the layout of prison cell-blocks, was also criticised: some demanding a wider variety of architecture on the estate: perhaps some tower blocks and some houses, within the overall footprint of units needed.

To be fair, the estate is not entirely uniform (and has diversified further as new sections have been added). There are blocks like Bentinck House in the north with direct access to flats from individual stairwells; and the more common design of long communal balconies. But nonetheless, it is the sheer uniformity of so many blocks clumped together that makes the White City estate feel somewhat oppressive.

The other criticism, which council Architects Departments have made again and again was to focus solely on the provision of housing without any attention to what the residents of these new homes were to do with themselves when they arrived. Leaving residents isolated and feeling abandoned inflicted far more economic blight on the estates they planned than the built environment itself.

That does not just mean local amenities like parks and clubrooms, nurseries and schools and gardens but employment opportunities and, short of that, quality, quick public transport to get resident to where the jobs were. Too often - and White City was a case in point - housing estates were built on land at the far-flung edges of London.

These estates also uprooted their new residents from their families and friends, communities and support structures. That was another reason why, no matter how modern and spacious than the places they were leaving, and with secure tenancies, many struggled to adapt to this new estate.

It may sound odd, today, to talk about White City, now surrounded by homes and a football club, and offices and the shops of Uxbridge Road, and Hammersmith Park as "isolated", but it was back when it was opened. To an extent it still is today.

The White City estate was troubled from the very beginning and, at least initially - Labour's opponents, hoping to win here in its first elections, tried to exploit these problems. Problems with repairs, problems with vandalism and anti-social behaviour, race problems, complaints about the level of rents and the standard of caretaking.

A search through newspaper cuttings concerning the estate can be sorted into three main clusters: reports about crime or criminals from White City; reports about structural problems with the estate or services being withdrawn; and reports of residents complaining that the estate's poor reputation wasn't deserved.

As with many estates with the reputation the White City gained, its nadir came in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

80th Year of Publication.



ESTABLISHED A.D. 1855.

THE

West London Observer.

COUNTY PAPER FOR LONDON, MIDDLESEX AND SURREY.

Independent. Impartial.

Friday, May 31st, 1935

White City as Housing Estate.

The decision of the London County Council to acquire by a Compulsory Purchase Order some fifty acres of the old White City Exhibition Grounds at Shepherd's Bush for a housing estate will do much towards relieving the slum problem in many parts of West London. The cost of the site, including its partial development as a housing estate, is about £500,000 and the scheme provides for the erection of 2,500 dwellings for a population of 12,500 persons. This action of the County Authority is the culminating point of an agitation put forward years ago when the housing shortage question and the conditions of overcrowding were much more acute than they are to-day. It was then strongly advocated that both the old White City Exhibition Grounds, which had been up for sale for many years, and those of the old Earl's Court Exhibition Grounds should be acquired for housing purposes, but the negotiations that ensued led to nought.

* * * *

Since then these derelict sites, once the unsurpassed pleasure haunts of London, have remained eyesores in their idleness and mass of debris, whilst a great clamour has existed for land so that better housing accommodation could be provided for thousands of poor families living under appalling overcrowded conditions and many of them having to sleep in underground rooms. It has remained for the present County Council to take the drastic step of acquiring by a Compulsory Order a large portion of the White City grounds and to transform it into a colony where people being dehoused in overcrowded areas can be comfortably housed. The housing scheme will result in the disappearance of the greater part of the exhibition grounds, about 35 acres being left untouched. The Stadium has for years led an independent existence and the part of the White City buildings which will remain to recall the past is the large entrance hall and the Court of Honour where each year the British Industries Fair is held.

* * * *

Many of the problems came from the fact that councils had been focussed almost exclusively on constructing new homes and paid insufficient attention to maintaining them.

Maintenance is wider than just the flats themselves but also the communal parts of the estate and the wider facilities that make an estates more than just a collection of flats. In the case of White City things like clubrooms and washrooms - because this estate was built before homes had utilities like washing machines and central heating. When those appliances did arrive the flats were often too small to accommodate them. A whole bunch of problems converged during this era:

- A backlog of repairs
- Government trying to curb the spending of the GLC and local councils
- The lack of controlled entry systems making it easier for burglars to gain access to flats, and to itinerants, muggers and drug addicts sheltering in stairwells
- The 1977 Housing Act, which obliged councils to prioritise homelessness over all other criteria, thereby altering the nature of occupancy on the estates from the mainly working to what might contentiously be called an underclass
- The failure of police to sufficiently impose law and order, and the permissive tolerance of petty crime and anti-social behaviour that made people feel less safe than they reasonably were
- Racial tensions as original residents complained that the estate was being used as a dumping ground for "immigrants"

Hammersmith and Fulham Council - Conservative-run in 1981 and keen to restrain Rates and spending, and for whom services to Labour-voting council tenants were hardly their top priority - did not welcome the transfer of responsibility for 3,000 flats here (plus the newer Bayonne estate in Fulham).

The reputation of council estates - especially large council estates like White City, never really recovered. There is a commonplace slander that council estates are violent and dangerous, crime-ridden, sinks of deprivation and despair, graffiti-strewn. If you are minded to disagree, think back to the last portrayal of a council estate in a book, newspaper, film or movie that was positive. The estates are always where the bad people come from and where the bad things happen and where the architecture is alien, frightening and unsafe.

It the vast majority of cases it isn't true. Perhaps it stems from the embedded British narrative that home ownership is the only valid housing tenure; that anyone who is a council tenant is a failure, lacks ambition, is not a participating citizen, has failed at life.

After the war, both main political parties were aligned on the goal of building a lot of council housing: to clear slums, to rebuild after The Blitz, and to finish the promise still incomplete from the aftermath of the First World War: Homes Fit For Heroes.

But as that consensus faded; as Labour's Housing Act of 1978 dramatically reshaped who was eligible for council housing, removing ability to pay from the criteria and also all-but halting the amount of council house building (there was no money left in the era of IMF loans), housing became a deeply partisan dividing line. Conservatives began to see Labour as weaponising council house-building to swing wards its way. In this borough Addison, Gibbs Green (West Kensington) and, arguably, Normand (Lillie) had their political trajectories swung in Labour's favour through the building of council housing. Much later on that would be true of Sands End and housing association housing.

When the Conservatives came to power nationally, their introduction of Right To Buy (a policy first tested by the Labour-run GLC) was seen by Labour as not just an attack on the supply of council homes (as councils were banned from replacing the homes sold to their tenants) but a devastating political attack. Of course, the problem with Labour's interpretation of the politics of Right To Buy was that it was turning Labour-voting council tenants into Conservative-supporting leaseholders not through any alchemy but simply because it was a wildly popular policy. Labour's trenchant and clumsy opposition to the scheme lost them as much support as the policy itself did.

But this housing culture war was disastrous. The council housing stock reduced substantially - nowhere near as substantially as in Wandsworth, but there the council did everything in its power to encourage Right To Buy, and had a much larger stock of homes to sell. But if the pool of homes reduces and the need for those homes remains steady or increases, the level of points - the level of need - needed to get to the front of the queue for a home increases too. If the need - and we're not just talking financial need but also social need - of the people housed on an estate increases, the number of problems on that estate likely increases to.

And, instead of the very mixed, diverse council estates of the 1950s which thrived, the Conservatives were able to start claiming that council housing itself was failing: that estates were becoming sinks of deprivation.

That, of course is a circular argument: it is not council homes themselves that are sinks of deprivation but those being allocated - by law - to them that are creating these deprivation hotspots. The Conservatives - any party - could change that by changing the eligibility criteria and building new homes.

Hammersmith and Fulham Conservatives wanted to repeat what their neighbouring Tories in Wandsworth had done in respect of council housing - which was to reduce the number of council homes, sell off entire estates to property developers, and dampen turnout of voters from council estates.

They attempted to sell this partisan agenda by arguing that house prices in Hammersmith and Fulham were so high that there was a hole in housing policy where many local residents were: people wanting to get on the housing

Burden of a bad estate — by MP

MP Clive Soley has raised questions about the plight of people living on White City estate.

Mr Soley, MP for Hammersmith North, appealed for assurances that Hammersmith Council will have enough resources to run the estate.

The GLC are to hand over White City — described as very unpopular by Mr Soley — to Hammersmith Council next April.

But the MP is worried the council will not have the staff or the money to run it.

He is also anxious that tenants are given up to date information on the transfer.

Mr Soley told the House of Commons last week: "The White City Estate is now a very unpopular estate as a place to live.

"The introduction of modern domestic methods such as spin dryers and washing machines started the decline.

"The kitchens and bathrooms were too small for the machines to be installed and the usual problem of decay took place.

"Major attempts are being made to refurbish it and bring it up to standard.

"If an estate of that nature is to be transferred to a local authority, one needs to be sure the authority has the resources to deal with it.

"I have also had numerous people coming to me and asking what is happening on the estate.

"There is total uncertainty, which leads to rumours and to fears. I understand well the anger of the tenants."

Mr Soley said the tenants were to hold a special meeting about the takeover which he would attend.

He was speaking during a debate on the GLC General Powers Bill a bill which gives extra power to the GLC to transfer their resources.

Houses 'left empty'

AN MP has claimed in Parliament that houses in Hammersmith are being kept empty in the hope of selling them.

North Hammersmith MP Clive Soley claimed people were being pushed down the housing list to help the Government policy of selling council houses.

The MP was speaking during a House of Commons debate on the GLC (General Powers) Bill.

Meanwhile ten members of Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush Women's Voice, picketed Glenthorne Road Housing Centre on Friday in a protest about the amount of empty houses in the borough.

ladder but without the sort of homes within their financial range. They argued that there were plenty of homes for the very poorest, even if not enough, and plenty of homes for the very richest, but very little in between: and that was to be their priority. They argued that several estates - such as the West Ken, such as Queen Caroline and such as White City - were reaching the end of their lives and could be rebuilt as part of big private sector "regeneration" schemes.

The Conservatives were right that housing policy did fail the sort of resident they had indentified. The unaffordability of homes in London isn't just a problem the Tories identified: it was a key Green Party campaign in 2026, after all.

And the Conservatives identified it but did nothing whilst in government to fix it. If anything, their Help To Buy scheme, the Stamp Duty holiday following the Covid pandemic, and their failure to even consider more council house building, made the problem worse.

It isn't possible to build "affordable" homes to buy because the same problem besets that idea as it does Right To Buy. It's affordable for its first buyer but any discount is then immediately lost: when the home is sold it's at the same market value as any other house in the neighbourhood. The lucky first buyer nets the entire profit.



THE WEST LONDON OBSERVER, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1955

NEW HAMMERSMITH PARK ON WHITE CITY ESTATE

THE opening of Hammersmith Park on the White City Estate today (Friday) at 3.30 p.m. will mark a further achievement in the L.C.C's drive for more parks and open spaces in London.

Among representatives of the L.C.C. and Hammersmith Borough Council will be the chairman of the L.C.C. (Mr. Norman Prichard), who will open the park, the chairman of the Parks Committee (Mr. Edwin Bayliss), the Mayor and Mayoress of Hammersmith (Cllr. T. A. Keating, J.P., and Mrs. Keating), and the M.P. for Hammersmith North (Mr. F. Tomney).

Hammersmith Park, which is situated in South Africa Road between the new B.B.C. Television Centre and the L.C.C.'s White City Housing Estate, covers about 7½ acres and is designed to meet the long-felt needs of a heavily populated neighbourhood.

The amenities now include three tennis courts and a bowling green (both of which are served by a pavilion), a children's playground, a paddling pool, and a large dry playground—each adequately served with shelter and conveniences. The lay-out also includes a small refreshment house which, it is hoped to build soon.

Beyond the tennis courts are spacious lawns planted with trees and further on a rock and water garden. Stone from the Forest of Dean was used to make the garden, and two streams, with many waterfalls, feed a pool, spanned by a typical lakeland pack-horse bridge.

Where the park is now, a 100 years ago, when Shepherds Bush was still a mere village and the land immediately west of Wood Lane was part of Old Oak Farm, there probably still remained a few of the oak trees which at one time covered much of the area, including the whole of Wormwood Scrubs.

Later came the world-famous White City Exhibition sponsored by Imre Kiralfy. After his successful exhibition halls, first at Olympia and then at Earls Court, he opened a Franco-British Exhibition in 1908.

The Court of Honour stood partly on the site of the present park, and the very popular Japanese garden in the 1910 Japanese-British Exhibition stood where the rock garden now stands.

WORLD FAMOUS

The outbreak of the first world war saw the end of the last exhibition of the type which had made the White City famous.

More recently during the past two or three years, after the Army's withdrawal shortly after the end of the last war, the area was once again allowed to return to its derelict state and, apart from the sports stadium, the cracked and crumbling plaster mask which had once transformed the brickfields into the world-famous White City was all that remained of the former glory.

In 1947 this area, about 20 acres, was purchased for housing, road widening and development by the B.B.C., leaving 7½ acres for use as a park. When finished, it is expected to cost nearly £50,000.

The existence of large areas of reinforced concrete, deep foundations, and considerable underground piping and drainage works have made the site a difficult one to develop.

YOUR HEALTH IN FULHAM:

Infectious diseases show 'a marked decline,' says M O H

Infectious diseases showed a "marked decrease" in Fulham, states Dr. Mary I. Adams, Medical Officer of Health for Fulham, in her annual report for 1954, just published.

The number of notifications of measles was down by 849 and whooping cough by 415 on those of 1953, says Dr. Adams, and

Shared ownership was an attempt to fix this: allowing occupants to purchase a share of the property and to increase that share as they saved or earned more, while paying rent on the remainder. This scheme was quite popular but it was also hugely costly for the owner-tenant with huge leaseholder charges, and lenders charging far higher mortgage rates on such properties (because, if there was a default they could not reclaim the home: it remained owned by the housing association). The combined mortgage payment plus rent often ended up considerably more than either just paying a mortgage or just renting.

In other words, it's all but impossible to create a policy that creates permanent affordable homes to buy. The least complex way of helping that pool of voters is to build more council homes and widen the eligibility criteria so that young professional couples could live in low-rent housing why they save up a deposit to buy. But that would never be a policy entertained by modern day Conservatives - even though, when estates were much more mixed they got a larger vote from them.



TERROR OF THE HOODED GANG

SHEPHERDS BU
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THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1987 Tel: 993 5821

A TEENAGE terror gang named the Condor Legion netted more than £40,000 in a two month series of burglaries and street crime.

The four strong gang, two of them schoolboys, spread a reign of terror over their Shepherds Bush neighbourhood, Knightsbridge Crown Court heard on Friday.

The hooded gang, who ransacked homes, left their name — taken from a Nazi air squadron — daubed on the walls of a local junior school they broke into, said Mr Howard Vagg, prosecuting.

One victim, rail guard Anthony Remidios, 60, of Auckland House, White City Estate, awoke in the early hours of the morning to find a hooded raider standing over him brandishing a meat cleaver and a dagger.

He was threatened and robbed "and subjected to a terrifying experience," said Mr Vagg.

A stretch of homes favoured by the gang backed on to a railway at Sinclair Road, West Kensington.

"They would walk along the tracks, which ... to the homes. They ...

Tenants get what they ask for to improve White City life

Estate's £14m facelift

Going to the people — p3

Estate's children speak out

CHILDREN were not forgotten when the Town Hall decided to ask people living on an estate for ideas for improvements.

Youngsters from three primary schools voiced their concerns for White City Estate, Shepherds Bush, in a special exercise.

The seven- to 11-year-olds came from Canberra, Ellerslie and Pope John schools.

They said they wanted more playgrounds and shops but less dog dirt, graffiti and litter.

One youngster said: "We haven't much space to play. All we do is ride our bikes on the road which isn't safe."

Another added: "You can only play football on the rubbish patch next to Hammersmith Park. All the grass appears between the flats gets dirty that way. The ball pinged."

"I would put up a sign saying people with dogs must stop them fouling the streets."

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Work begins at the White City Estate

White City – the dumping ground for immigrants?

Probe into housing discrimination claim

THE THORNY question of whether or not the White City Estate is being used as a dumping ground for black families may be answered in a special GLC report due out next year.

One thousand lettings over the past 12 months are being examined by GLC officials in an at... tempt to gain ...

not discriminate and we keep no records."

President of the ... Tenant...

carry out their duties properly, then you cannot have a slum.

Mr. Clinton Sesley, an executive member of the Hammersmith Council for Community Relations, attacked Bill Goble for his "underlying assumption that black people are problems."

"What ratio of black to white here would be satisfactory to the Tenants' Association?" he asked.

"Race relations is to do with people and I hope the tenants are seeing it in terms of people and not colour."

Bill Goble replied: "We live in a multi-racial society and as ... indigenous population ... will welcome this ...

being condemned as racialist."

It was the race relations experts themselves who had suggested discrimination, he said.

"They simply ask why there are so many black people on this estate. The GLC have given no answer at all."

Hammersmith's two community relations officers, John Rafferty and Ray Cruikshank, declined to take part in the debate.

But Mr Rafferty told the Gazette after the meeting: "The HCC R does want records kept. Our stated policy is that it doesn't matter where blacks are housed so long as the accom...

New crime crackdown on White City Estate

By JOY PERSAUD

POLICE are building new community links on a council estate as part of an initiative to crack crime.

The White City Estate's troubled reputation is the target for local community police officers, who point out that fear of crime makes the situation appear worse than it is.

It is hoped the initiative will reduce those fears and help trap criminals such as the arsonists who torched the bowling green store near the estate on Monday last week.

Community groups and the council were consulted about the pilot programme; so far, feedback has been encouraging. If everything runs according to expectations, all buildings on the estate will be incorporated into the policing project.

Rhodes House and Lugard House are two blocks that have been targeted for Neighbourhood Watch. Since the installation of entryphones last year, the number of burglaries has halved.

Police are working in conjunction with the council's housing department to improve basics such as lighting and the layout of walkways in a bid to deter loiterers.

A property-marking drive is also underway to deter burglars and so that stolen goods can be returned to their rightful owners.

PC Richard Flynn, one of the two officers in charge of the project, said he wants to dispel the fear felt by so many residents who will not set foot outside their front doors after dark.

He said: "The people that live here deserve to have peace of mind. We aim to strengthen the links we already have with the community. This estate suffers from an image problem, but there are estates in London which are far worse.

"Changes will start very soon. This is a long-term approach which will reap benefits in the future. Our ultimate aim is to reduce crime using a commun... approach."

A Business Watch scheme ... concentrate on establishments ... estate is also being set up.

Last Monday, the coun... bowling green store near ... Adegoke Recreation Cent... Africa Road was the target o...

Someone broke into an... and started a fire, possibly ... speed up the destruction ... estimated to be around £25...

Chairman of the ... Residents' Association, T...

"The fire was awful. Lo... are devastated. Where w...

"We don't feel safe, ... good idea to have ... Neighbourhood Watch ... teenage gangs going a...

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Spring clean for an estate

By Jane Ratford

A RUN DOWN housing estate is to get a £1.8m cash bonanza from the death of the GLC.

The money for improvement work is a goodbye present from the Greater London Council to the 1930s built White City estate in Shepherds Bush.

Most of the money will go on repairs to leaky roofs, damaged windows and security improvements in the 47 blocks, £50,000 of the money will be spent on improvements to the White City Adventure Playground and a mums and toddlers group, the One O'clock Club.

An extra £400,000 will go to former GLC housing estates in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Doubt hung over the money last week when Westminster Council took legal action to stop the GLC's final spending spree before abolition on April 1.

But the £43m earmarked for old GLC estates throughout London was released last Friday. Westminster has gone ahead with an appeal to stop the GLC giving away £25m to various voluntary groups.

The 2,000 families on the estate will also see other improvements this year. Last year the GLC announced it would give the borough £500,000 for a new council housing office in Bloomfontein Road, new heavy duty doors on the estate and maintenance.


White City estate . . . £1.8m for repairs.

£1.6m farewell gift from the GLC

Chairman of the GLC Housing Committee Tony McBrearty said: "London boroughs have been saddled with huge burdens of repair work by the Government, without any attempt to offer extra resources to pay the bills.

"The GLC intends to ensure that money for housing repairs will go into the homes where it is desperately needed."

Labour councillor Ivan Gibbons, who represents the estate, said: "This is a tribute to the persistence of White City tenants and their efforts to get work done on the estate."

SPRING ENTE

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Summary of White City ward results

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
1949	32.6	60.1			7.3
1951 By	35.8	64.2			
1953	19.8	75.2			5.0
1956	7.4	82.3			10.3
1959	11.1	88.9			
1959 By	13.9	86.1			
1962	14.3	85.7			
1964	13.0	79.9			7.1
1967 By	16.5	48.0	31.4		4.2
1968	32.5	44.2	17.3	4.3	3.2
1968 By	21.3	55.3	15.7		6.7
1971	15.0	79.7			5.3
1974	14.9	73.6			11.5
2022	9.9	63.3	10.5	16.2	
2026	7.0	52.0	3.8	29.7	7.5

No, the Conservative way in Hammersmith and Fulham was the way they had done things in Wandsworth: decant estates, net a big capital receipt for the empty estates, watch as new, far denser, private housing with an element of housing association-managed units within it, was built and then reap the political reward of Labour voters cleared out and Conservative voters bussed in.

The plan failed: the Tories didn't believe they'd only have eight years to implement this fairly long-term agenda and by the time they lost in 2014 the plans weren't far enough advanced to prevent Labour from unpicking them. None of the estates were decanted, let alone demolished.

But the irony is that, even where the Conservatives did allow new private developments: Chelsea Creek, Fulham Riverside, Lillie Square, Queen's Wharf, Fulham Reach, Sovereign Court: all these developments are turning out not to be the deep vats of Conservative votes expected of them. They are low-turnout. They are fairly high turnover. They contain huge numbers of renters, not owner-occupying leaseholders. And they are "cost of living" Londoners who have been looking to parties on the left to help them rather than the Conservatives - especially since Brexit.

Anyhow, we digress from the story of White City: an area far larger than just one large council estate.

South Africa Road divides the estate from the rest of the area: immediately to the south is Queen's Park Rangers' Loftus Road stadium. Next door the fantastically-named Batman Close council estate. Beyond that is Hammersmith Park: along with Wormholt Park the only public open space between Uxbridge Road and the Westway. There is the Army Reserve Centre, home to the B Company 4 Parachute Regiment and then the Wood Lane estate and the former BBC Television Centre; now a huge complex of residential apartments.

The rest of White City comprises long, densely-packed terraced streets running north from Uxbridge Road: Frithville, Stanlake, Tunis, Abdale, Loftus, Arminger, Ingersoll and Bloemfontein, as well as Ellerslie, which runs east to west.

These streets come in a mixture of styles but generally are large townhouses sub-divided into flats. There has been a bit of gentrification since the days of the old Hammersmith borough council White City ward when they were almost as good for Labour as the estate was. A fair few of the Conservative votes when they won a seat in Shepherd's Bush Green - and these roads were in that ward at that time - would have come from this part of that ward. But there are far more renters than owners here, and so there are nowadays plenty of Green voters here too.

Because of the redevelopment of the BBC Television Centre into a very large new residential estate, and other building projects in the vicinity, the White City area was projected to be entitled to two extra councillors by the 2022 elections. By reallocating a councillor from Wormholt, which became a 2-councillor ward, it was possible to resurrect White City as a council ward after a 44 year hiatus.

The revived White City includes almost everything east of (and including) Bloemfontein Road through to Wood Lane - the exception being the Wood Lane estate whose residents asked to remain in College Park and Old Oak ward. To balance electorates with next door Wormholt it also includes all of Bloemfontein Road: the residential terrace near Uxbridge Road, the new Cranston Court, the Wormholt estate cottages and Joslings and Creighton Closes, up by the Westway.

Across London in 2022 Labour struggled in its very safest wards despite its advances in Conservative leaning neighbourhoods. This was no different in Hammersmith and Fulham, even as the rest of the borough was swinging towards Labour: their vote fell in College Park and Old Oak, Coningham, Shepherds Bush Green and Wormholt, as well as in White City.

White City poll is judgement day on Tories

THERE IS just over one week to go to the White City by-election — the first since the Tories swept to power on Hammersmith Council in May this year.

Political pundits will be watching events very carefully on November 7.

The result could mean a loss to both major parties.

To the Tories it will be a yardstick as to how their reforms are being received in the boroughs.

The electorate of White City has been given the first opportunity to either show the Tories their support or no confidence.

The Labour Party could be in trouble because of Mr. Arthur Ingram's Independent stand. He was the former Labour councillor for White City and could capture many of the Labour votes.

Confidence vote is Tory target

MR GORDON BRIERLEY will be asking the people of White City for a show of confidence in the new Tory-controlled Hammersmith Council next week.

Mr. Brierley, who is 25 and has lived in Hammersmith all his life, is the Tory candidate in the White City by-election.

If he is elected it will be interpreted by the council as public support for the "winds of change sweeping through the Town Hall" since the Tories took office in May this year.

Mr. Brierley will be fighting for the support of the Tory policies now being vigorously implemented in Hammersmith after 30 years of Labour rule.

His election would be a sign to the Tories to continue full steam ahead with their task of "putting Hammersmith right."

Mr. Brierley, a surveyor and estate agent, is one of the managers of St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Primary School in Hammersmith.

He is also the Vice-chairman of the Coningham Ward of the North Hammersmith Conservative Association.

'Go with Gould' — Communist

ACTIVE TRADE UNIONIST Mr. John Gould is urging the people of White City to "Go with Gould" at the by-election and vote Communist.

Mr. Gould, who is married with four children, is aiming his campaign particularly at housewives, council tenants and young people.

He offers a change of policy and if elected, promises to express the militant voice of tenants, parents and the homeless.

Mr. Gould, 29, is the President of the Shepherds Bush First Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers.

He deplored the prospect of rent increases and said that people needed improvements to their homes not rent increases. They needed lifts in their flats and modern electric fittings.

"I am for the council building on every suitable site," he declared.

Mr. Gould condemned the stopping of new housing developments in Hammersmith, the sale of council houses and attacked the education and social services in the borough.

Former Mayor Labour's choice

FORMER HAMMERSMITH MAYOR Mrs. Cicely Liardet has been chosen to represent the Labour Party in next week's by-election.

Her election platform will be an attack on the new Tory-controlled Hammersmith Council plus a promise of an attempt to get a modern health and welfare centre in the White City Ward.

Mrs. Liardet, who was once chairman of Hammersmith's Welfare Committee, will be hitting out at the Tory policy of selling council houses and depriving the needy people on the council housing list of a home.

She deplores the Tory policy of cutting back on the social and welfare services in the borough in an attempt to secure a rate saving.

She accuses the Tories of being cheesepairing and attacks them for abandoning development schemes to private speculators.

And she will be taking up the question of developing the waste land in White City for recreation and will also suggest a sensible parking policy to solve the problem in this area.

She will also promise to get something done about dumping and burning refuse in the area.

Housewife is the Liberal

HOUSEWIFE AND COUNCIL TENANT Mrs. Violet Coombes will be standing for the Liberal Party in the White City by-election next Thursday.

Mrs. Coombes has promised to champion the cause of the council tenants and ratepayers of the borough. She has pledged herself to vote against every rent increase for council tenants and every rise in the rates.

Mrs. Coombes, who lives on the William Church Estate, was involved in a row with the council about parking earlier this year, and received notice to quit her home.

She is still living there, but claims she is standing for council because of the unsatisfactory treatment she received over a point of principle.

LABOUR VOTE UP

Ex-Mayor back

FORMER LABOUR Mayor of Hammersmith, Mrs. Cicely Liardet, swept to victory with a large majority at last week's White City by-election. The Tory vote was down on the May total.

The Tories polled second in White City last week as they did in the May Council elections. Labour's increased majority was a huge boost to their morale.

Confidence in the Labour Party was probably at its lowest ebb when the May elections took place. The parties ran a much closer race for White City then.

Mrs. Liardet said she would be putting up a good fight to try and continue the work she had started in Hammersmith.

Perseverance

She pledged to serve the people of White City as best she could. "There is a definite need for a health centre at White City," she said. "I am going to fight for one. Perseverance will get all things in the end."

Mrs. Liardet promised to stand firmly by her election address. She said she would take on any problem or point that was brought to her, big or small and do her best to do something about it.

Mrs. Liardet was thrilled with the result. The following morning she said: "I was delighted. I thought we would win, but I didn't expect so many votes because of the bad weather."

But she added: "I think people are beginning to realise now what they didn't in May."

Only 26 per cent of the electorate went to the poll.



Hammersmith Conservative Alderman Mr. Seton Forbes-Cockell, congratulates Mrs. Cicely Liardet after her victory at the White City by-election

How they voted

VOTING in the White City ward by-election:

Mrs. CICELY LIARDET (Lab.)	908
Mr. Gordon Brierley (Con.)	350
Mrs. Violet Coombes (Lib.)	258
Mr. Arthur Ingram (Ind.)	72
Mr. John Gould (Comm.)	54
Labour majority	558

The swing was towards either the Greens or the Lib Dems, not the Conservatives - and it was perhaps in part due to low turnout. Just 27.5% of voters participated in the 2022 elections. Of those who voted, Labour won 63%, the Lib Dems 10.5%, Conservatives 9.9% and the Greens 16.2%.

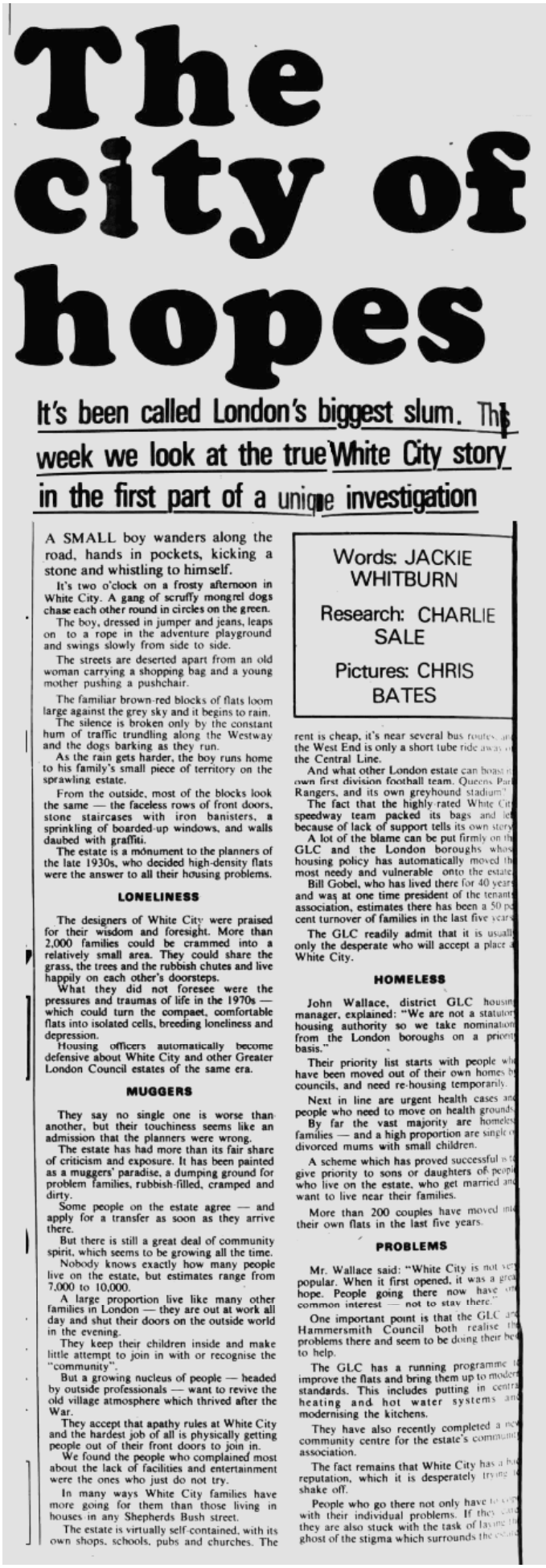
That 16.2% was the second-best Green Party performance in Hammersmith and Fulham in 2022. Their best: 19.7% was in Coningham. But whereas they had put all their campaigning effort into Coningham - their target ward that year, their White City share had come about without any effort whatsoever.

Following the election of Zack Polanski as Green Party leader in the late summer of 2025 - an election he'd fought on moving the party sharply left and to campaign on a far wider social justice and international agenda, the party surged in support. No doubt some of its new recruits were Jeremy Corbyn supporters alienated and actually encouraged to leave Labour under Sir Keir Starmer's leadership.

But yet more were youthful, ideological younger voters who felt as strongly as Reform UK voters that Labour and the Conservatives were a "uniparty" offering minor deviations from a "neo-liberal" policy agenda that focussed on enriching "baby boomers" at their expense; that supported Israel's "occupation" of Gaza, and that was enabling billionaires to enrich themselves while inequality ran rampant through society.

In the years of Conservative government, the Greens had begun doing very well in rural, normally very safe Conservative wards in the south east: places like Ashfield, Mid Suffolk, Herfordshire, Lewes, Folkestone. With a Labour government, it was going to become much harder to continue energising the non Conservative vote in rural areas and, with Labour's support plummeting to unprecedented lows, much easier to win in urban, "progressive", left-leaning areas.

London had its share of very promising areas for the Greens: notably Hackney, Walthamstow, Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth and Tottenham. They were far weaker on the western side of London: their only noticeable group of councillors was in Richmond-upon-Thames where their six seats had been "gifted" to them through a pact with the Lib Dems.



The city of hopes

It's been called London's biggest slum. This week we look at the true White City story in the first part of a unique investigation

A SMALL boy wanders along the road, hands in pockets, kicking a stone and whistling to himself.

It's two o'clock on a frosty afternoon in White City. A gang of scruffy mongrel dogs chase each other round in circles on the green.

The boy, dressed in jumper and jeans, leaps on to a rope in the adventure playground and swings slowly from side to side.

The streets are deserted apart from an old woman carrying a shopping bag and a young mother pushing a pushchair.

The familiar brown-red blocks of flats loom large against the grey sky and it begins to rain.

The silence is broken only by the constant hum of traffic trundling along the Westway and the dogs barking as they run.

As the rain gets harder, the boy runs home to his family's small piece of territory on the sprawling estate.

From the outside, most of the blocks look the same — the faceless rows of front doors, stone staircases with iron banisters, a sprinkling of boarded-up windows, and walls daubed with graffiti.

The estate is a monument to the planners of the late 1930s, who decided high-density flats were the answer to all their housing problems.

Words: JACKIE WHITBURN

Research: CHARLIE SALE

Pictures: CHRIS BATES

LONELINESS

The designers of White City were praised for their wisdom and foresight. More than 2,000 families could be crammed into a relatively small area. They could share the grass, the trees and the rubbish chutes and live happily on each other's doorsteps.

What they did not foresee were the pressures and traumas of life in the 1970s — which could turn the compact, comfortable flats into isolated cells, breeding loneliness and depression.

Housing officers automatically become defensive about White City and other Greater London Council estates of the same era.

MUGGERS

They say no single one is worse than another, but their touchiness seems like an admission that the planners were wrong.

The estate has had more than its fair share of criticism and exposure. It has been painted as a muggers' paradise, a dumping ground for problem families, rubbish-filled, cramped and dirty.

Some people on the estate agree — and apply for a transfer as soon as they arrive there.

But there is still a great deal of community spirit, which seems to be growing all the time.

Nobody knows exactly how many people live on the estate, but estimates range from 7,000 to 10,000.

A large proportion live like many other families in London — they are out at work all day and shut their doors on the outside world in the evening.

They keep their children inside and make little attempt to join in with or recognise the "community".

But a growing nucleus of people — headed by outside professionals — want to revive the old village atmosphere which thrived after the War.

They accept that apathy rules at White City and the hardest job of all is physically getting people out of their front doors to join in.

We found the people who complained most about the lack of facilities and entertainment were the ones who just do not try.

In many ways White City families have more going for them than those living in houses in any Shepherds Bush street.

The estate is virtually self-contained, with its own shops, schools, pubs and churches. The rent is cheap, it's near several bus routes, and the West End is only a short tube ride away on the Central Line.

And what other London estate can boast its own first division football team. Queens Park Rangers, and its own greyhound stadium?

The fact that the highly-rated White City speedway team packed its bags and left because of lack of support tells its own story.

A lot of the blame can be put firmly on the GLC and the London boroughs whose housing policy has automatically moved the most needy and vulnerable onto the estate.

Bill Gobel, who has lived there for 40 years and was at one time president of the tenants' association, estimates there has been a 50 per cent turnover of families in the last five years.

The GLC readily admit that it is usually only the desperate who will accept a place at White City.

HOMELESS

John Wallace, district GLC housing manager, explained: "We are not a statutory housing authority so we take nominations from the London boroughs on a priority basis."

Their priority list starts with people who have been moved out of their own homes by councils, and need re-housing temporarily.

Next in line are urgent health cases and people who need to move on health grounds.

By far the vast majority are homeless families — and a high proportion are single or divorced mums with small children.

A scheme which has proved successful is to give priority to sons or daughters of people who live on the estate, who get married and want to live near their families.

More than 200 couples have moved into their own flats in the last five years.

PROBLEMS

Mr. Wallace said: "White City is not very popular. When it first opened, it was a great hope. People going there now have one common interest — not to stay there."

One important point is that the GLC and Hammersmith Council both realise the problems there and seem to be doing their best to help.

The GLC has a running programme to improve the flats and bring them up to modern standards. This includes putting in central heating and hot water systems and modernising the kitchens.

They have also recently completed a new community centre for the estate's community association.

The fact remains that White City has a bad reputation, which it is desperately trying to shake off.

People who go there not only have to cope with their individual problems. If they succeed they are also stuck with the task of laying the ghost of the stigma which surrounds the estate.

In Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster: the boroughs that comprise the West Central London Assembly constituency, there were no elected Green councillors and no obvious targets.

So they decided upon a "kamikaze" strategy for 2026: targeting the very safest Labour wards in these boroughs. In Westminster that meant Harrow Road ward (73% Labour in 2022); in Kensington Golborne ward (70% Labour) and in Hammersmith - presumably because of that 16% Green vote, White City (63% Labour).

Three prominent young Green activists were selected who came replete with the social media skills that accompany election campaigns in the 2020s, along with big campaign days where Green members from across south west London were urged to come and help canvass.

While White City on paper looked the most vulnerable of those three Labour wards, it was considerably different to Harrow Road and Golborne. It has far less council housing: those two are effectively council estate wards. While White City has the largest Muslim community of any Hammersmith and Fulham ward, it is much smaller than those in Harrow Road and Golborne.

On election night the Greens very nearly won seats in both their other West Central targets, but came nowhere near winning White City. They increased their vote to 29%: impressive in comparison to the landslide margins Labour typically won this ward by. But Labour still polled 52%, down eleven points on 2022 but still over half the vote. The only election Labour has ever won less than that here was 1968. There were several wards in which the Greens got closer to Labour - there's a list in the Shepherds Bush Green ward profile. All that Green effort was for naught.

The Greens did best in the streets off Uxbridge Road - and that means that they should have targeted wards where similar streets comprise a much larger proportion of a ward. They might have done well in the BBC Television Centre development but getting in to talk to its residents is very difficult and turnout of voters there was the lowest in the borough. To win White City they would have needed a large majority of those voters and a large turnout. And then to do far better on the White City estate - which remained resolutely Labour.

The Green surge in 2026, even if relatively unthreatening in Hammersmith and Fulham compared to the London boroughs that party now runs, did reshape the electoral map of this borough somewhat. White City is no longer the safest Labour ward: none of the wards in Shepherds Bush are.

That's because the Greens, even when not coming close to winning, still took chunks off Labour's majorities. In contrast, Labour was more resilient in wards where the Conservatives remained their main challenger: Grove, Ravenscourt, Fulham Reach, so they have leapfrogged ahead of White City in that league table. That does not mean this Labour is at risk of losing White City - of course they aren't. The Greens need to look elsewhere for their first elected councillors in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Rollcall of White City ward councillors

2026
- Andrew Jones
- Natalia Perez
- Frances Umeh

2022
- Andrew Jones
- Natalia Perez
- Frances Umeh

1974
- Randolph Beresford
- Janet Hathaway
- Barry Stead

1971
- Randolph Beresford
- David Murray
- Barry Stead

1968B
- Cecily Liardet

1968
- Randolph Beresford
- David Murray
- Brian Powell

1964B
- Arthur Ingram

1964
- Randolph Beresford
- Dorothy Heaks
- Fred Williams

1962
- Dorothy Heaks
- Jack Pearce
- Fred Williams

1959B
- Thomas Morris

1959
- Dorothy Heaks
- Jack Pearce
- Edward Worne

1956
- Dorothy Heaks
- Jack Pearce
- Edward Worne

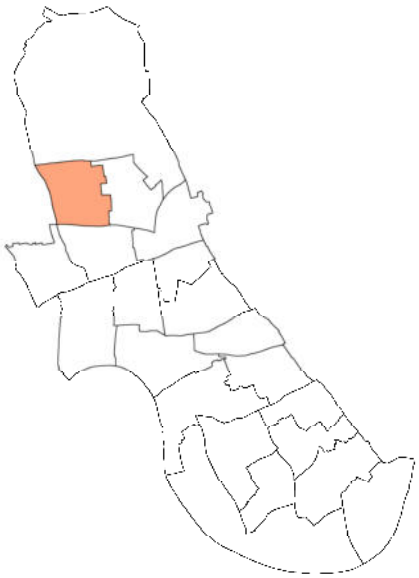
1953B
- Ena Freeman

1953
- Frank Hewett
- Jack Pearce
- Edward Worne

1949
- Frank Hewett
- Thomas Morris
- Jack Pearce

Wormholt ward

Wormholt is a ward of two big estates, two smaller estates and a grid of streets running north of Uxbridge Road and west of Bloemfontein Road.



The two big estates are the Wormholt and the Cleverly. Unlike, say, the White City or Edward Woods estates these are originals: they were here right from the time this area was planned out; they weren't built because of slum clearance or bomb damage or compulsory purchase of Brownfield sites.

Wormholt ward itself is one of the originals too: a ward that has existed since the founding of Hammersmith borough in 1900. Back then it was a massive ward geographically, stretching from Uxbridge Road right the way north to the Old Oak railway sidings and east to Wood Lane. Despite this vast area, in 1900 Wormholt had just 1,592 electors (though that excluded most women).

By 1919, the first year all women were enfranchised, the electorate stood at 6,289; by 1925 10,787 and by 1945 20,444. Then, in 1949, boundary changes reduced Wormholt to the shape it basically is today and its electorate was pared back to 8,082.

There were three reasons for the construction of the Wormholt estate, following the successful completion of the Old Oak estate to the north. The national priority was the Housing of the Working Classes Acts of the 1890s - a belated recognition by the powers that be of the atrocious conditions so much of London's working class lived in.

The local priority was the urgent need to re-house Hammersmith residents from the increasingly industrial and overpopulated riverside. Hammersmith Council's Southern Improvement Scheme had decanted much of the riverside and, while some residents were re-housed in the new Riverside Gardens and Aspen Gardens tenement blocks down there, there was still a sizeable homeless population left over.

The third reason was the changed political environment after the First World War. The two world wars realigned society's priorities - at least for a few years. Most historical focus is on the major changes made by the Attlee government after 1945: the establishment of the welfare state, the National Health Service and the huge drive to rebuild after the Blitz.

That same radical climate existed after the end of the First World War. For a time after the war ended, it was simply unthinkable for society to return to the way it had been four years earlier. In respect to housing in particular, returning "heroes" to homes infested with bugs, with damp-soaked walls, collapsing roofs and four or five families sharing accommodation unfit for one had to be ended, rapidly.

"Homes Fit For Heroes" was the cry, and homes like those on the Old Oak and Wormholt estates: cottage estates with gardens front and back, green spaces for kids to play safely and other amenities like schools and libraries were the response.

These designs all stemmed from Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement that created, for example, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Welwyn Garden City, the Dover House estate in Roehampton and Letchworth Garden City. Put simply, the recognition that government had a role in housing provision and that homes needed to provide more for their inhabitants to succeed than merely four walls and a roof.

Space - private and public - was required; and limits were needed on the number of people who could be crammed onto an acre of land. A certain quality of environment was an obligation for planners to provide, not an optional extra.

The West London Observer
Friday November 26, 1926

Hammersmith's Housing

COUNCIL AND THE WORMHOLT ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

150 HOUSES FOR HAMMERSMITH RESIDENTS

The principal topic of discussion at the Hammersmith Borough Council meeting on Wednesday evening last week was in reference to the development of the Wormholt estate and the Council's re-housing obligation respecting Hammersmith's Southern Improvement Scheme.

The Mayor (Councillor B.J. Samels, L.C.C.) presided over a good attendance. Ald. Marshall Hays L.C.C. reported that that on the previous day the L.C.C. had passed a resolution for acquiring a loan of £480,000 for the erection of houses on the Wormholt Estate. When the scheme was completed, said the Alderman, he though it would prove a very valuable and useful one. (Hear, hear).

The Housing and Improvements Committee, in their report, stated that for some time past they had been in negotiation with the L.C.C. with a view to the Council affording the Hammersmith Council some assistance in connection with the obligation imposed upon the Borough Council by the Hammersmith Southern Improvement Scheme Order 1922, to provide on site dwellings suitable for the accommodation of 1,078 persons of the working class.

The County Council were asked to allocate free of charge to the Borough Council 50 houses on one or other of their estates and also 100 houses on the Wormholt Estate upon payment by the Borough Council of an annual sum to be agreed. In support of the application a deputation recently waited on Lieut-Col. Levita, Chairman of the Housing Committee of the L.C.C. when the matter, together with certain points in connection with the purchase by the L.C.C. of the undeveloped land on the Wormholt Estate, was discussed.

A letter had now been received from the L.C.C. intimating that the Housing Committee of that council were prepared, so far as they were concerned, to concur in the arrangements provisionally agreed upon at the interview.

Regarding the Borough Council's re-housing obligation under the Southern Improvement Scheme the Committee mentioned that in consideration of the arrangements for the purchase of Wormholt Estate the County Council would assist the Borough Council by housing 50 Hammersmith families on one or more of its housing estates, free of charge to the Borough Council.

The County Council would also provide for the purpose of meeting the special needs of the borough, 100 houses on the Wormholt Estate, the Borough Council paying for each house allocated, the annual sum of £7.

The Committee further reported that having carefully considered the proposals, they considered they were such as the borough council might reasonably agree to. The accommodation (150 houses) which would thus be insured for the Council's nominees, together with the 111 tenements proposed to be provided in the southern area would, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health, meet the Council's re-housing obligation.

This would leave the balance of the land in the southern area, when cleared, to be developed in such a way as would recoup, or considerably reduce, the loss which would be incurred in the provision of the alternative housing accommodation referred to. The Committee recommended the adoption of the proposals.

Councillor Gillham disagreed with the proposals and said they were told they were going to get 50 houses free for Hammersmith families, but where were those 50 houses going to be situated?

He did not think they would be on the Wormholt Estate, but probably at Becontree or other places where the L.C.C. were to spend £450,000 to erect 562 houses on the Wormholt Estate, and why should Hammersmith be asked to pay £700 a year for the 100 houses to be allocated to the borough council? He was totally against such a proposal.

Councillor Church said they had parted with land which had been regarded as the most valuable in the borough. The L.C.C. were going to let them have 100 of the 609 houses if the Council paid for them, and yet the people had been told that this land was going to be developed for Hammersmith people.

During the last election statements had been repeatedly made by canvassers that at least 75 per cent of the houses would be let to Hammersmith people. The only persons who had made a consistent fight for this land, he contended, were the Labour Party.

A councillor: "Is this a political speech, Mr. Mayor?"

Councillor Church: "Well you cannot make one!" (Laughter).

Alderman Dr. Burnhill said that his own observations regarding that subject were that neither of the two gentlemen before him or behind him knew the true facts of the case or otherwise they would not have made the remarks they had.

The Council afterwards adopted the recommendation of the Housing Committee.

WORMHOLT ESTATE LIGHTING

Councillor Church called attention to the inadequate street lighting of Du Cane Road at the junction of Wood Lane which, he said, was a source of great danger to pedestrians.

Alderman Claydon said that not only was Du Cane Road badly lighted but this also applied to other streets on that estate and he though the Works Committee might make a special visit and see how the estate was lighted at night.

Councillor Woods also drew attention to the fact that a danger existed at the road by Mellitus School, as there was no warning notice to drivers that a school was there.

It was understood that the Works Committee would give these matters their attention.

The second of the big estates built here, and an altogether different kettle of fish, is the Cleverly. Built in 1928 by the Peabody Fund, it was originally a tenement estate of eighteen 3-storey blocks built around Sawley Road, apparently to a Sir Christopher Wren master plan, with ornate cornices and round windows. The estate was enclosed with wrought iron railings and gates were locked at night. There are about 500 residents of the Cleverly estate.

Ollgar Close is the third estate in Wormholt: a 1980s estate of long, four storey tenement blocks right on the corner of the ward behind Uxbridge Road and Old Oak Road. Nearby is Monk Court by St Luke's Church, of a similar style but a slightly higher density.

There is also a small estate of the same type of tenement blocks as on the White City estate at the top of Bloemfontein Road at the Westway end of Sundew Avenue: Hayter, Orwell and Wengham Houses.

And then there is the third large section of Wormholt: the roads off Uxbridge Road. Although the roads have a uniform appearance: virtually all running north to south they are not uniform at all.

West London Post
Friday December 10, 1926

Wormholt chooses Labour

Cllr. Turney's Decisive Win.

Owing to the celerity with which the Town Clerk and his assistants did their work, the result of the poll for the Wormholt ward municipal by-election was declared at a much earlier hour than was expected. It was not much after 9 p.m. on Tuesday that Mr. H. Royle announced that Mr. W. Turney, the Labour candidate, had polled 2,052 votes, and his opponent, Mr. R.W. Owen, the Alliance candidate, 1,657 votes, a Labour majority of 395 votes. Mr. Royle, as returning officer, therefore formally declared Mr. Turney elected to the Hammersmith Borough Council.

On behalf of Cllr. Turney, who had not then arrived, a supporter moved a vote of thanks to the returning officer and his assistants. Mr. Owen, in seconding the vote, said that he was disappointed, naturally, that the result of the poll had not been more favourable to him, but he thanked all who had supported him.

Mr. Royle, in acknowledging the vote, expressed his gratitude for the valuable assistance that he had received from the police, from his chief registration clerk, Mr. Francis, and from the whole of his staff. The election had gone through without any untoward incident whatever but he was, personally, disappointed at the small percentage of electors who had taken the trouble to go to the poll. In the 1925 election 48.7 per cent of the electors polled. The percentage on this occasion was as low as 34.4.

The new councillor, on arrival, expressed regret at not having arrived until after the declaration of the poll. This he attributed to some extent to the efficiency and expedition with which the Town Clerk and his staff had, as was usual, done their work. Mr Turney said that he held himself personally responsible for all that had been published and said concerning his opponent during the campaign.

Mr. Owen: Including the "outsider"?

"Yes, " replied Mr. Turney, "even that." He regretted nothing and withdrew nothing, he said.

The reception of the declaration of the result of the poll was received with almost boisterous enthusiasm by a large proportion of the gathering which nearly filled the large hall of the Town Hall.

In the west the cluster of streets around the Cleverly estate: Sedgeford, Aldbourne, Aycliffe and Wormholt Road all feel quite spacious and suburban; some semi-detached and with a strong inter-war style to them.

Then come Galloway and Thorpebank, longer, narrower, more tightly packed terraces with Willow Vale - a cul-de-sac with relatively new housing association assisted housing to their east. Adelaide Grove comes next with a variety of housing styles as parcels of land were sold off to different developers.

The southern end is more typical of a Coningham ward street: big town houses with basements, but halfway up the style reverts to small terraced homes of the style of Galloway and Thorpebank and Collingwood. Oaklands and Ormiston are similarly split in half architecturally, with Ormiston in particular at its southern end looking much like a Fulham terrace with mature plane trees.

There is also Uxbridge Road itself; a melting pot of cultures which local historian Richard Gregory asserts is *"a centre for Middle Eastern cuisine - Damas Gate has all the ingredients, and the best falafel wraps in London are made at Zeit & Zaatar."*

Put together, Wormholt was a ward of the not especially affluent but not destitute working class. Its estates were also whiter than the average, and probably a little older too - the homes here were principally for established families and the retired; not really starter homes and not accommodation for students.

Problems emerged on the Wormholt estate almost from the start: Labour in opposition on the council in the 1920s questioned how well built the homes were.

As more and more people acquired cars and traffic volumes increased, the estate became a rat run.

Urgent steps taken to save cracking houses

HOUSES on the Wormholt Estate have been shored up after large cracks opened in the walls and angry tenants are now blaming the council for neglecting the estate.

The emergency action was taken when cracks in six houses that first appeared eighteen months ago grew alarmingly wide during the hot dry weather.

At this week's meeting of the North Hammersmith Area Housing Board it was stressed that the houses were not in danger of collapsing and the action was only a precaution.

Construction engineer Mr. J. Addler said the houses would need to be secured by under-pinning, which would cost about £6,000 per house.

Investigation

He suggested that it may be cheaper in the long run to demolish part of the estate and redevelop.

"These are not the sort of places you or I would like to live in with large cracks appearing in the walls," said the council's housing chief, Mr. Tony Powell.

He promised a full investigation and a report to the next housing committee "as a matter of urgency".

Tenant, Mr. Dennis Hutt, of Sundew Avenue, can see daylight through the cracks in his bedroom and living room walls. This week his house was propped up with wooden beams.

"When it is cold, it is impossible to keep the place warm. What annoys me is that the council has taken nearly two years to take any action. I suppose it will be months before the cracks are repaired," he said.

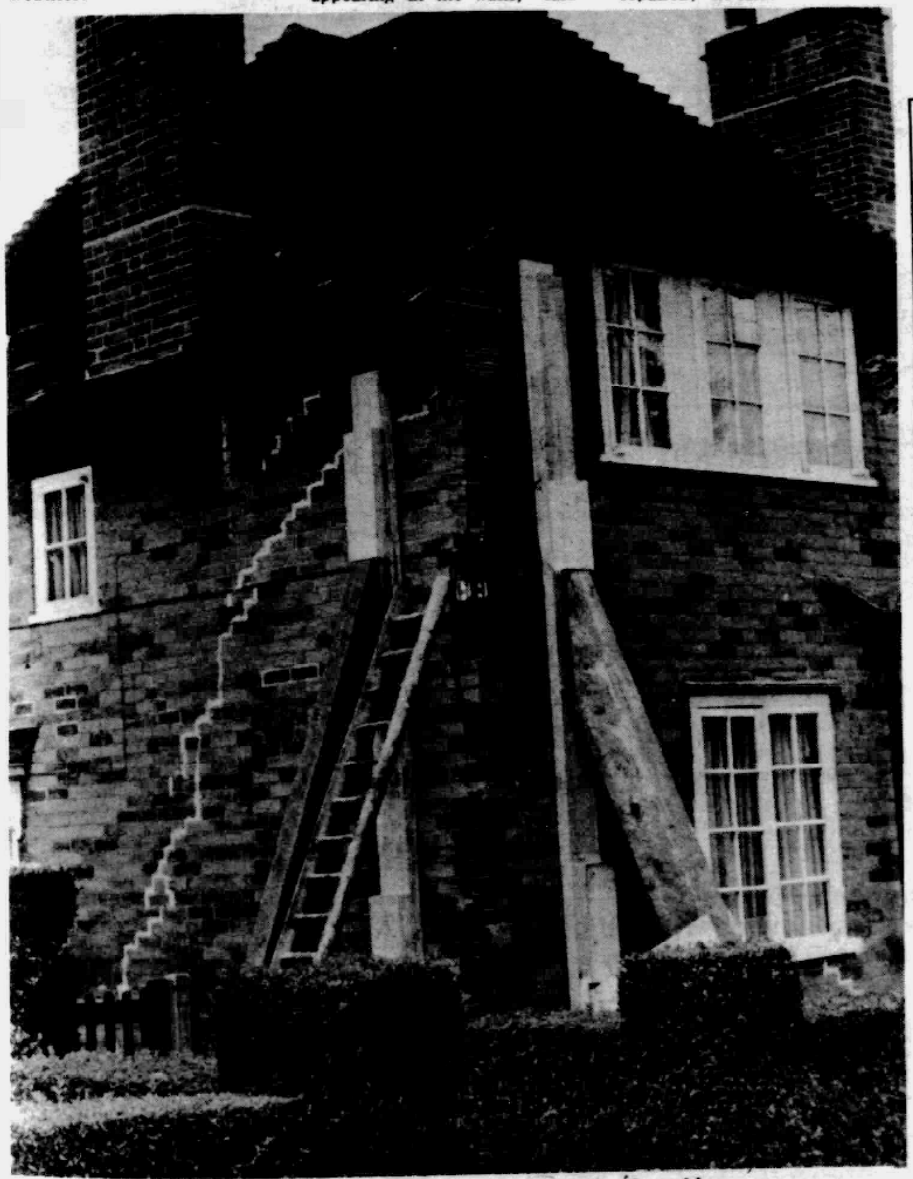
Cllr. Margaret Ingram, leader of the housing board, told the Gazette that the houses had gradually fallen into disrepair through lack of maintenance.

"This estate is in a terrible condition structurally, quite apart from the houses that are cracking. Now, at last, it seems that some action will be taken."

Foundations

It is thought that the cracking has been caused by insecure clay foundations. "The foundations are shallow and the soil is poor. The ground has moved," Mr. Addler told the board members.

Many of the footpaths on the estate are also in a bad condition because of cracking.



One of the houses on the Wormholt Estate shored up because of cracking

Taking to the water

LEARN to swim — that is the message from Hammersmith Council in its campaign to get all non-swimmers to take to the water.

The council's annual "Learn to Swim" campaign starts on Monday, August 2 and lasts for four weeks.

During this time free swimming lessons will be given by qualified instructors between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from Monday to Friday at both Lime Grove and North End Road baths.

The only cost will be the normal entrance fee of 8p for adults and 4p for children.

Any non-swimmer may enrol by turning up on the first day and filling in a form. There are no age restrictions but, because of the depth of the water, learners must be at least four feet tall.

Nearly 170 people learned to swim during last year's campaign and organisers are hoping for an even larger response this year.

Park trip

THE Independent Rambling Club made a trip to Holland Park last Saturday when they visited the Court Theatre for a performance by the Polish National Dance Company of Lublin.

The following day the club met at Horsley for a day in the hills and woods of the Surrey countryside. From Horsley station the ramble led through several farms to a lunch stop in Shere and the return journey.

GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, January 13, 1977

Cracked homes to be under-pinned

Work to start immediately on Wormholt homes

DESPITE assurances last November that a structural survey would be carried out immediately on houses on the Wormholt Estate, work has yet to be started.

This was reported at last week's meeting of the Hammersmith North Area Housing Board, where officers reported on the plans to make subsidence repairs to houses which had suffered recent damage.

Members had understood that work would begin with a structural survey on the day following November's Housing Services Committee meeting.

And chairman, Cllr. Margaret Ingram, commented: "We were given assurances before that they were going to start the following day."

She added that she had expected the officers would report that survey work was almost completed.

Worried

The Gazette was told in October that the survey would start shortly and would take up to four months to complete.

It was estimated that the survey could cost up to £30,000 and would also include some houses on the Old Oak Estate, Shepherds Bush — in all about 800 houses.

Many houses on the estate are still being shored up because of cracking in the brickwork and some tenants are worried that things could soon get worse if repairs are not carried out immediately.

But officers did report to last week's meeting that they had managed to start under-pinning some of the houses and that they hoped to complete ten before the end of the current financial year.

Following the meeting, Cllr. Ingram told the Gazette: "I have made inquiries and accept that they are now starting work immediately."

A spokesman for the council added: "It is a very complicated exercise a job of this nature has never been tackled before. Work will be started immediately and there will be a programme of under-pinning and maintenance."

In the 1970s a whole host of problems beset the area: cracks started to appear in many of the houses leading to demands on the council for underpinning work.

Dustmen started to refuse to collect rubbish from the back alleyways of the estate - asserting that these were dark and dangerous. Throughout the 1970s there was the growing problem of anti-social behaviour and yob culture that intimidated many of the residents.

There were muggings and general disrespect for authority documented on other council estates but, in fact, prevalent in society at that time. These problems were exploited by two newcomers to the political scene.

The first was the Liberal Party, desperate to expand its council base beyond Broadway ward. They found a hard-working, populist candidate in Margaret Connaughton - a foil for hard-working, populist Liberal Leader Simon Knott - and the two exploited grievance after grievance locally.

The second was the National Front for which - to the extent this was true of anywhere in Hammersmith and Fulham - largely white, aspiring working class estates like Wormholt were natural targets. This was a decade in which people were afraid, where government did not seem in control, where a rapidly growing black immigrant population had changed London communities, where grievances were not being adequately responded to, and where crime - and fear of crime - was rife.

The National Front targeted both Wormholt and College Park and Old Oak wards in 1978 precisely because of the presence of these types of planned, open, garden estates.

Nonetheless, their targeting was no more effective than anywhere else in London: they polled just over 4% in Wormholt in 1978 (just under 7% in College Park and Old Oak) and just over 2% in 1982. And that was that for The Front in Hammersmith and Fulham.

The Liberals did quite a lot better. They got their opportunity in a 1975 by-election caused by long-serving Labour councillor Arthur Ingram's death. Labour's replacement was Mary Best, caricatured (perhaps not even caricatured: she didn't shrink from the label) as from the hard left faction in Hammersmith Labour Party that had been agitating to get right-wing Labour MP Frank Tomney deselected.

This by-election was the first time the Liberals had contested Wormholt since the early days of Hammersmith Borough when they stood as Progressives. Hence, there was a novelty factor aside from the effort Margaret Connaughton and Simon Knott invested in the campaign.

So began a decade of problems for Labour in Wormholt ward. Mary Best won the by-election but Labour's vote crashed by 29 percentage points - nearly all of it going to the Liberals - who finished third with a hefty 28%.



Kids fear death in the rat-run street

● Simon Knott

FAMILIES are in fear for their lives and those of their children in a Shepherds Bush street that has become a rat-run.

Traffic roars down Bryony Road past three schools at speeds sometimes reaching 60 miles per hour.

One child has already been injured. She was knocked down by a car while crossing the road late last year.

She was lucky. The driver took her to Hammersmith Hospital himself where she was treated..

Liberal Councillor Simon Knott said: "Does someone have to be killed before anything is done?"

A petition signed by 15 residents has already been sent to Hammersmith Council urging speed restrictions.

A deputation of residents led by the Liberal G.L.C. candidate, Mrs. Anne Connaughton, put their case to a meeting of the council's transportation sub-committee last week.

Labour Councillor Mrs. Margaret Ingram, who lives in nearby Wormholt Road, said she supported any action the residents might take to improve the traffic conditions in Bryony Road.

"It is a very narrow road," she said. "Cars speed down it at about 60 miles an hour and then into Stevenston Road to by-pass Western Circus. It's a real rat-run and highly dangerous."

Three schools have access to Bryony Road — Hammersmith County, Christopher Wren and Wormholt Park Primary.

The road also runs alongside Wormholt Park and the Bloemfontein Swimming Pool.

Had just 128 of the 530 Liberal voters backed the Conservatives, whose vote held steady at just over 32%, Labour would have lost.

The result energised both the Conservatives and the Liberals and in 1978 Labour's majority was pared back further. Margaret Ingram, Arthur's daughter, held onto the ward's third seat by just 16 votes after a 15% swing to the Tories.

The 1978 to 1986 Conservative coalition administration was a turbulent affair - fitting given just how turbulent those years were for the country. Having a coalition partner in Simon Knott whose populist instinct often made him flinch at backing unpopular measures like rate rises, the Conservatives expended huge effort simply trying to construct a majority, council meeting by council meeting.



GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, April 27, 1978 Page 7

In the Front line

● A VIEW of the Old Oak ward on the boundaries of Acton and Shepherds Bush. This is one of the areas the NF is concentrating on.

Tenants take estate moans to the polls

TENANTS have hit back at National Front plans to concentrate on their area for next Thursday's council elections.

The Front are putting up candidates in College Park and Old Oak, and Wormholt wards — traditionally strong Labour areas — on the borders of Acton and Shepherds Bush.

And West London NF organiser Martyn Heale claims that the party has its largest support in these areas — which surround the White City Estate.

The Front are also standing in three other wards — Hammersmith Broadway, Addison, and one in Fulham.

Members are out most evenings and weekends, pushing leaflets through doors as the elections draw near.

Mr. Bill Stevens, a member of Wormholt Tenants Association, said it was likely that voters would have other issues on their minds when they went to the polls.

He added: "As far as we are concerned it is the day to day problems of living on a big estate that will be on our minds when we go to the polls on May 4."

Problems like the council's huge facelift for all the houses on the estate which has already brought worries about upheaval, and children being moved too far away from schools.

Mr. Ronald Hooper, who has lived on the Wormholt estate for 26 years said he was very worried about the increasing flow of traffic using his road as a through route to the busy Western Avenue.

He said: "This is the kind of thing I want to see the council doing something about."

Other tenants said they were concerned over how the new council would support plans for a community centre, how it would administer the three schools bordering the estate, and how it would improve facilities for elderly people.

Mr. Stevens said: "From my experience it's not the politics that influence people around here. It's practical results that count."

●Martyn Heale

"RIGHT, HOLD IT THERE WHILE I DRIVE TO NATIONAL TYRE SERVICE TO GET THESE TYRES RENEWED."

Big savings ... tyres

In 1981, the Liberals and the new SDP councillors who had defected from both main parties, voted down the Conservative rate proposal - indeed they passed a higher rate that Labour proposed. The Conservatives then announced that hey were quitting the administration, giving Labour a chance to take power.

In an extraordinary act, when the vote came to install Labour boss Tony Powell as Council Leader, the party was defeated because eight Labour councillors - all from Shepherd's Bush wards and all on the hard left, including Wormholt's Alan Breeze and Mary Best - abstained. The vote to elect a Labour council leadership fell: 23 votes to 19.

The eight rebels argued that installing Labour for just a year before elections would saddle the party with all the responsibility for decisions taken by a Conservative administration without the time to demonstrate to the borough what Labour could do instead.

Whatever the merits of that argument, Labour was split and demonstrably unwilling to do the task its voters had sent it to the town hall for: to run the borough.

If those eight councillors believed their behaviour would meet with reward in the 1982 elections they were in for a shock. Long-serving Conservative councillor, former Leader of the Council and the incumbent mayor, Bill Smith, decided not to contest his safe seat in Brook Green and instead switched to Wormholt.

Deciding that their team wasn't quite left-wing enough, Margaret

MARY WINS SEAT — BUT LABOUR LOSES GROUND

LABOUR left-winger Mary Best battled her way to victory in Thursday's by-election in Wormholt ward to win a seat on Hammersmith Council.

But she knew she had been in a fight.

Her vote in the three-cornered contest was down to below 40 per cent of the total. In 1973, at the last borough elections, the Labour percentage vote was 67.



Mary Best — the successful Labour candidate.

Most of the lost Labour votes went to Liberal candidate Ann Connaughton, with Tory John Barnes in second place, 127 votes behind mother of five Mrs. Best.

The voting breakdown was as follows: —

Mary Best (Lab) 735
John Barnes (Con) 608
Ann Connaughton (Lib) 530

34.4 per cent poll

The by-election showed a 13.38 per cent swing away from Labour, although local secretary Frank Ing was still "very delighted".

"Despite the efforts of the Tories, the Liberal election circus, traitors in our own camp and unfavourable Press reports just before the election, we still managed to win."

He blamed the anti-Labour swing on a combination of all these factors.

Local Liberal Simon Knott said: "It was a good result for us but not outstanding. We were disappointed about half of them voted, and not all of them for Ann Connaughton."

Conservative agent John Cole was pleased with the outcome.

"People are disenchanted with the Labour government in general and obviously we were also helped by the local Labour Party's internal problems.

"We held our vote while the socialist vote dropped. Considering the Liberals didn't stand last time, they did very well."

Ingram (Arthur's daughter) was deselected by Wormholt Labour activists. In her place was chosen Josie Wicks, the Labour Party election agent for Hammersmith and wife of outgoing councillor Les Wicks.

Smith was a Director of Queens Park Rangers Football Club and, prior to the election, distributed free tickets to QPR matches to Shepherds Bush schools - including those in Wormholt.

This was, apparently, commonplace for the three borough football clubs to do - though not via local councillors.

At the 1982 election Smith gained the third Wormholt seat by 88 votes. Given that the overall outcome of this election was Labour 25 seats, Conservatives 23 and Alliance 2, the Wormholt loss was critical, though Labour suffered even narrower losses in Sherbrooke, Addison and Walham.

GAZETTE AND POST Thursday, July 8, 1982

'I'm pleased and relieved' says councillor

Victory for Mayor in corruption case

THE Mayor of Hammersmith has been cleared of corruption allegations after giving away football tickets days before winning an election.

An election court dismissed a petition by Josie Wicks — the Labour candidate defeated by Cllr Bill Smith in the May borough elections.

Afterwards Cllr Smith said he was "pleased and relieved" — and blamed sections of the Labour Party for bringing the case to court.



● Victory for Bill Smith ... defeat for Josie Wicks

ELECTION POLL

The allegations centred around 1,200 free tickets sent to local schools for a Queens Park Rangers home game five days before the election poll.

A letter invited children and any parent who wished to go along and featured a picture of Cllr Smith, a director of Rangers.

Dismissing the petition, Commissioner Anthony Cripps, QC, said: "His governing principle was an act of kindness." But he added Cllr Smith and other candidates should bear in mind what had happened before going ahead with similar schemes at election time.

The Rangers' home game on May 1 was one of three matches to which children were invited last season. Tickets were sent to schools, including three in Wormholt ward where Cllr Smith was standing, and to the Wormholt Tenants' Association.

FORGERY

But in court at Hammersmith Town Hall, Rangers secretary Ron Phillips said the date for the free game had been fixed by the club, who had also asked for the photograph to prevent forgery.

Cllr Smith said afterwards: "There is nothing wrong with the scheme. We have been doing it for many years."

He added he thought the case had been put forward by a section within the Labour party at Hammersmith Council.

The result also keeps the ruling Tory-Liberal alliance in power at the town hall. The elections had left Labour as the biggest party but the alliance held power through Cllr Smith's casting vote as mayor.

The case was brought by defeated Labour candidate Josie Wicks, who claimed the free tickets broke election law by "treating" voters in Wormholt and making them more likely to vote for Cllr Smith.

Mrs Wicks said she felt "sick" about the election court's decision.

COSTS AWARDED

She warned: "It leaves it open to any candidate to give out free tickets or treat voters as long as they proved they had done it before or elsewhere. As far as I'm concerned it's a travesty of justice."

Mrs Wicks said she would not be appealing against the decision.

Labour party groups in Hammersmith and Fulham will now have to find several thousand pounds in costs awarded against Mrs Wicks.

Labour leader Cllr Stephen Clark said the party was very disappointed at the decision. He said: "We now have a situation in which someone who has position and power and is in the habit of giving largess can continue into the election period."

He added they would be meeting with Hammersmith North MP Clive Soley to see if there were any changes needed in election law.

Wormholt ward electoral history

	Con	Lab	LD	Grn	Oths
Wormholt ward					
1900	59.3		40.7		
1903	50.7		49.3		
1906	44.7				55.3
1909					100.0
1912	54.0	13.2			32.7
1919	28.8	32.9	12.6		25.7
1922		36.3			63.7
1925		48.5			51.5
1928		53.5			46.5
1931		35.7			64.3
1934		61.7			38.3
1937		66.8			33.2
1945		79.6			20.4
1949	44.1	55.9			
1953	34.9	65.1			
1956	32.4	54.8			12.8
1959	24.1	75.9			
1962	25.0	75.0			
1964	25.6	74.4			
1968	53.9	46.1			
1971	33.2	66.8			
1974	32.1	67.9			
1975B	32.5	39.2	28.3		
1978	37.5	45.6	10.9		6.0
1982	36.9	40.0	20.7		2.4
1986	32.9	54.7	12.4		
1990	36.9	63.1			
1994	25.2	62.3	12.5		
1998	18.0	67.3	14.7		
Wormholt and White City ward					
2002	19.1	64.9	15.9		
2006	25.8	50.2	16.6	7.4	
2010	23.5	60.8	15.8		
2013B	11.8	66.9	9.9	11.4	
2014	17.3	65.3	5.5	11.9	
2018	14.2	76.5	6.4		
2021B	20.6	70.0	4.1	5.3	
Wormholt ward					
2022	14.9	60.7	9.5	15.0	
2026	10.5	45.9	7.5	24.7	11.4

Labour challenged the Conservative win in Wormholt in the High Court, on the basis that Cllr Smith's handout of free QPR tickets amounted to "treating" - bribing the electorate in order to buy his election.

Although this was a finely-balanced argument, the High Court rejected the challenge, upheld Smith's election and awarded costs against Labour. The ruling also kept the council Conservative until 1986.

Putting aside the ethics of Smith's conduct, Labour has to reflect on how the Conservatives got that close in the first place. Right to Buy probably played a big role: 1982 was the first election after that government policy, wildly popular on estates like Wormholt, was launched. A second Conservative candidate won more votes than the defeated Labour candidate: it was a more complicated result than the party convinced itself it was.

The real problem for Labour was its big loss of support in 1978. The 1982 result was essentially a rerun - just with the third Labour candidate losing by 88 instead of winning by 16. The Conservative vote actually fell: Smith won 3.4 points less than the top Tory in 1978 and ran only 66 votes ahead of the second Conservative in 1982; hardly indicative of a vast personal vote.

By 1986, the national mood had changed and there had been eight years of a Conservative-run council. Of Labour's fifteen gains, only their majority in Addison outstripped the defeat of Smith, who lost by 539 votes. Thereafter the volatility of Wormholt calmed. In 1990 this was the only ward that swung to Labour. Further advances in 1994 and 1998 turned it into Labour's third safest ward.

In the electoral review before the 2002 elections the White City estate was bolted onto Wormholt, making the ward even safer. New developments like Banstead Court; a development of circular buildings built to face away from the noisy, polluted Westway; and the colourful Cranston Court on Bloemfontein Road, where White City Pools used to be, opened. The popularity boost that right-to-buy gave to the Conservatives in 1982 had ebbed; many of those homes may have been sold two, three or four times by now and the estates were more diverse.

By 2022 the Wormholt and White City area, plus the section of Shepherds Bush Green west of the Hammersmith & City Line arc, were forecast to merit five councillors: up one. The area could have been widened to create two 3-councillor wards, or not - in which case a 3-councillor and a 2-councillor ward would work. How the population was spread across this area meant that the White City end would make a cleaner 3-member ward than the Wormhold side and so, for the first time in its history, Wormholt went down to two councillors. Wormholt now just covers everything west of Bloemfontein Road.



Labour won this smaller version of Wormholt with 61% of the vote. The Greens and Conservatives tied with just 15% and the Lib Dems took 9.5%. No party campaigned here: the days when an upset was remotely likely were gone.

In 2026 there was a marked swing to the Greens, just as there was in all the wards north of Goldhawk Road. But they had the least impact. Labour's vote fell by fourteen percentage points and the Greens won 25%. Reform won 11.4%: higher than all the northern wards except College Park and Old Oak.

In fact the results in these adjoining wards were very similar and for the same reasons: the dominant neighbourhoods in Wormholt and College Park and Old Oak are the near identical Wormholt and Old Oak estates.

Had Reform had the resources to campaign in either ward they could have had an even bigger haul of votes from the two estates - nowhere close to being enough to win, or come close, but maybe inching towards 20% shares.

But while they did well here, Wormholt isn't in the same tier of Green Party targets as the other Shepherds Bush wards. There are higher levels of home ownership here, and Wormholt is still a lot whiter than the rest of Shepherds Bush.

The long roads running north from Uxbridge Road tend to be terraced streets of relatively small, family houses: possibly divided into upstairs and downstairs flats, but of a completely different nature to the large town houses closer to Shepherds Bush Green where there may be four or more dwellings in a house.

In other words, these are homes buyers are drawn to, less so renters. And renters are a far better Green demographic than home owners.

Because the Greens made less inroads into Wormholt it is now a safer ward, in percentage terms, than White City, Coningham, Shepherds Bush Green and College Park & Old Oak.

Rollcall of Wormholt ward councillors

including Wormholt and White City ward (2002-2022)

2026
- Max Schmidt
- Nicole Trehy

2022
- Max Schmidt
- Nicole Trehy

2021B
- Frances Umeh

2018
- Colin Aherne
- Sue Macmillan
- Max Schmidt

2014
- Colin Aherne
- Sue Macmillan
- Max Schmidt

2013B
- Max Schmidt

2010
- Colin Aherne
- Jean Campbell
- Sally Powell

2006
- Colin Aherne
- Jean Campbell
- Sally Powell

2002
- Colin Aherne
- Stephen Burke
- Sally Powell

1998
- Colin Aherne
- Stephen Burke
- Sally Powell

1994
- Colin Aherne
- Stephen Burke
- Sally Powell

1990
- Colin Aherne
- Sally Powell
- Sean Reddin

1986
- Colin Aherne
- Rohan Collier
- Ken Martindale

1982
- Mary Best
- Alan Breeze
- William Smith

1978
- Mary Best
- Alan Breeze
- Margaret Ingram

1975B
- Mary Best

1974
- Oliver Donoghue
- Arthur Ingram
- Margaret Ingram

1971
- Alan Breeze
- Oliver Donoghue
- Margaret Ingram

1968
- Derek Carter
- Jack Rose
- Albert Simpson

1964
- Vera Freeman
- Rose Hounsome
- Charles Van Gelderen

1962
- Robert MacArthur
- Jack Pearce
- William Trinder

1959
- John Hayes
- John Heaks
- William Trinder

1956
- Julian Blanckensee
- John Hayes
- John Heaks

1953
- John Gladwin
- John Heaks
- Alexander Maycock

1949
- Leslie Barker
- John Heaks
- Wilfred Turney

1948B
- Ernest Freeman

1945
- Norman Bartlett
- Reginald Buckingham
- Grace Field
- J. Gurney
- Alice Hallett
- Alan Martin

1939B
- Maud Edy

1937
- Reginald Buckingham
- Norman Bartlett
- Grace Field
- Alice Hallett
- Wilfred Turney
- Richard Kent

1936B
- Richard Kent

1934
- Reginald Buckingham
- Norman Bartlett
- Grace Field
- Alice Hallett
- Wilfred Turney
- Richard Watkins

1934B
- Reginald Buckingham

1931
- Charles Blunden
- John Claydon
- Reginald Cooke
- Lavinia Evison
- Richard Pritchard
- Arthur Saxby

1928
- Reginald Buckingham
- Edward Goldsmith
- Richard Kent
- Henry Mealing
- Sidney Rew
- Wilfred Turney

1925
- John Claydon
- Alfred Gillham
- Edwin Jarvis
- Nathaniel Davis
- John Rooke
- Lavinia Evison

1922
- John Claydon
- Alfred Gillham
- Edwin Jarvis
- John Rooke
- Gordon Stamper
- William Thomas

1919
- William Bourne
- John Claydon
- Henry Harris
- Edwin Jarvis
- Arthur Leggett
- Nellie Magee

1912
- George Mackinnon
- Gordon Stamper
- Wilfred Travers

1909
- Alfred Gillham
- John Cox
- John White

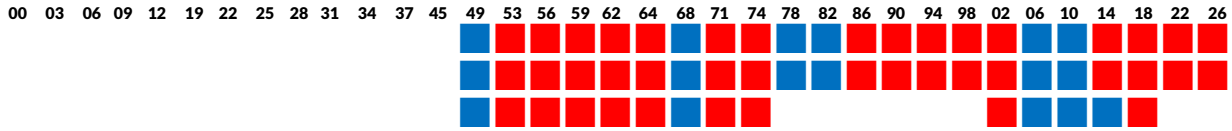
1906
- Alfred Gillham
- John Lewis
- John White

1903
- Albert Toley
- Samuel Pomeroy
- John White

1900
- Owen Coker
- Samuel Pomeroy
- E. Scolding

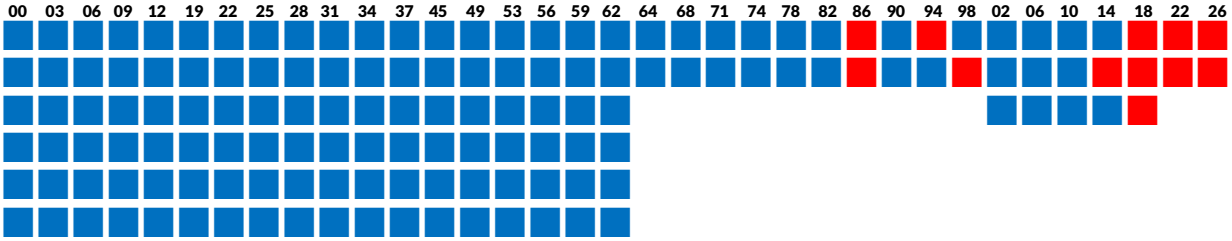
Ward histories

Addison ward



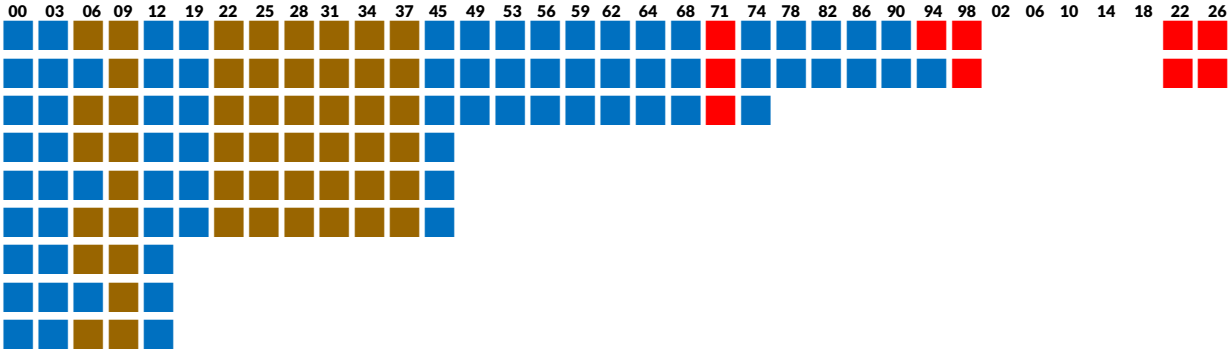
Avonmore ward

including Avonmore and Brook Green ward, 2002-2018 and Barons Court ward 1900-1962



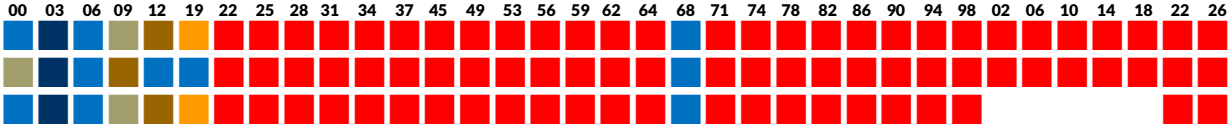
Brook Green ward

including Brook Green and St Matthew's ward, 1900-1949



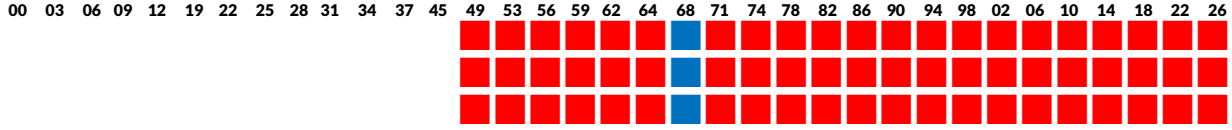
College Park and Old Oak ward

including College Park and Latimer ward, 1900-1962

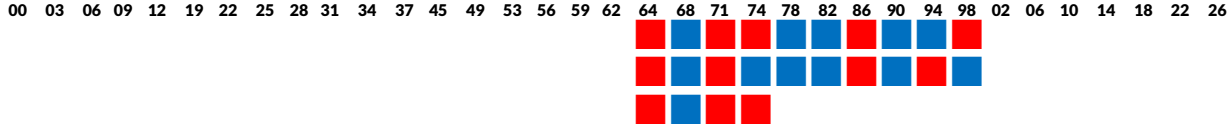


Coningham ward

including Askew ward, 2002-2022

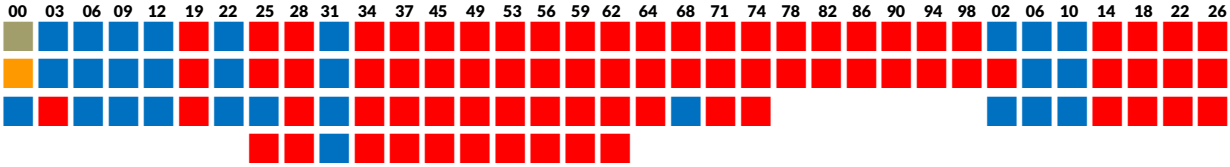


Crabtree ward



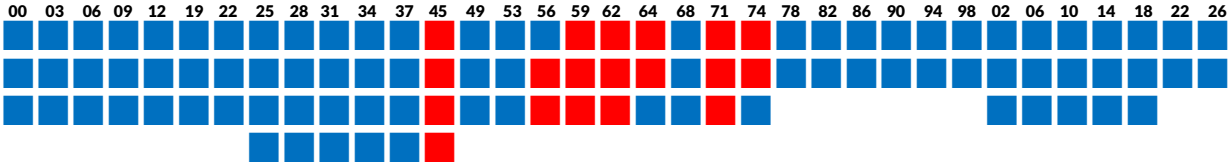
Fulham Reach ward

including Margravine ward, 1900-2002



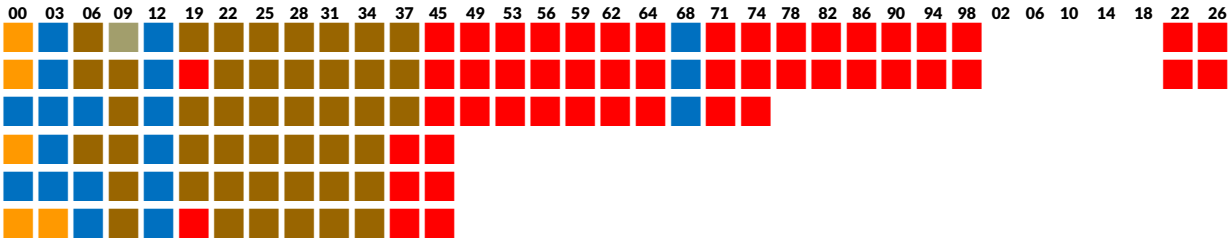
Fulham Town ward

including Town ward, 1900-2022



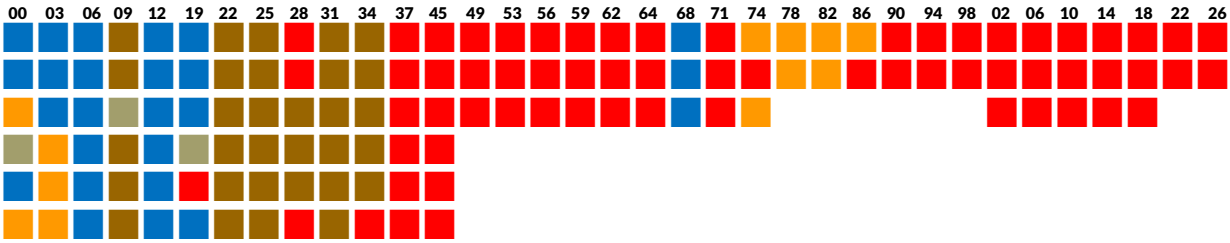
Grove ward

including The Grove and Ravenscourt ward, 1900-1945



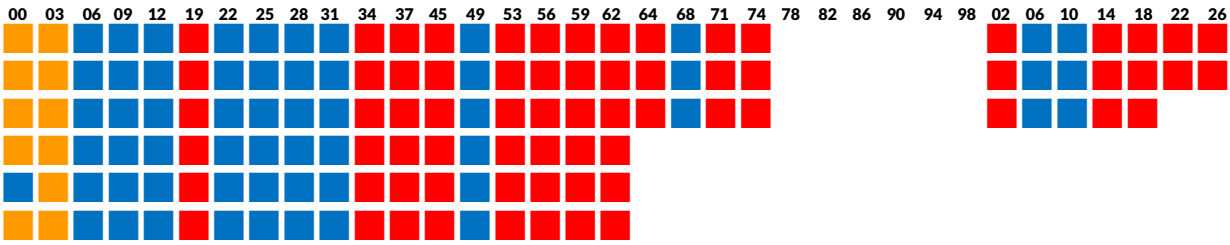
Hammersmith Broadway ward

including River ward, 1900-1949 and Broadway, 1949-2002



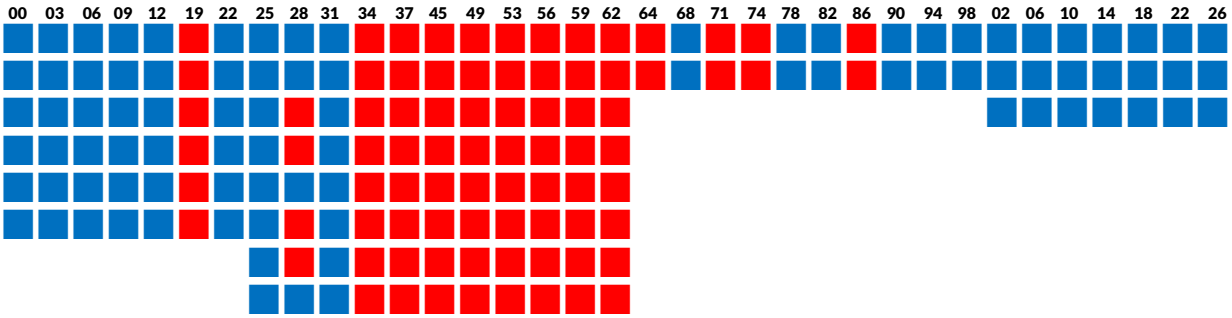
Lillie ward

including Halford ward, 1964-1978 and Fulham Broadway ward, 2002-2022

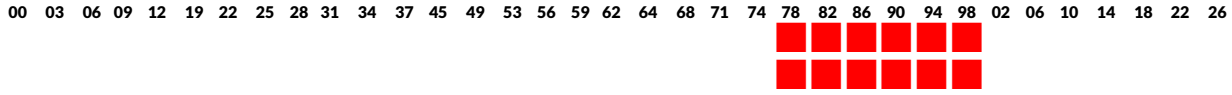


Munster ward

including Colehill ward, 1978-2002



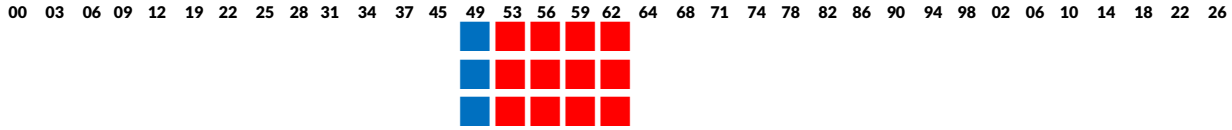
Normand ward



Old Oak ward

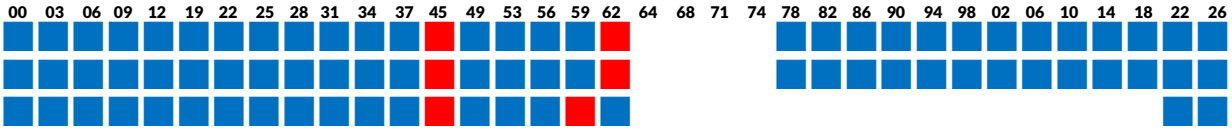


Olympia ward



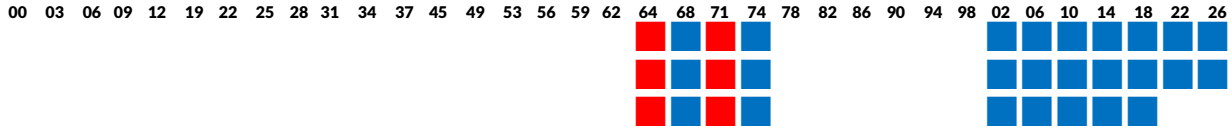
Palace and Hurlingham ward

including Hurlingham ward, 1900-1962, Palace ward, 1978-2002 and Palace Riverside ward, 2002-2022



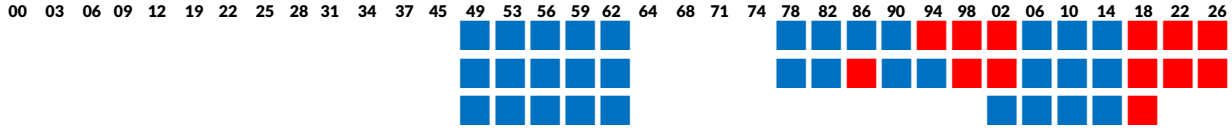
Parson's Green and Sandford ward

including Parson's Green ward, 1964-1978 and Parson's Green and Walham ward, 2002-2022



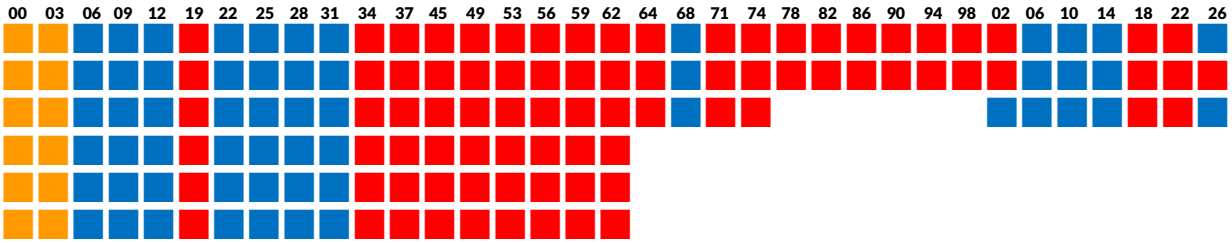
Ravenscourt ward

including Ravenscourt Park ward, 2002-2022



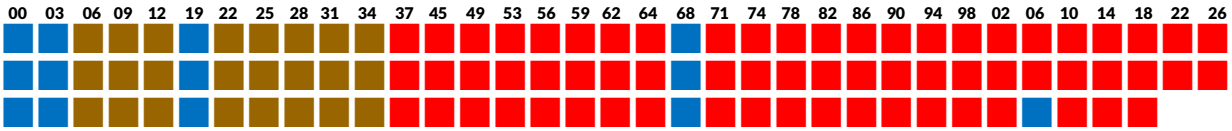
Sands End ward

including Sandford ward, 1964-1978

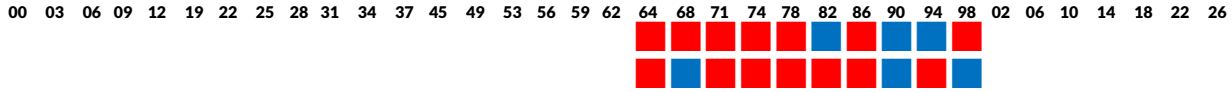


Shepherds Bush Green ward

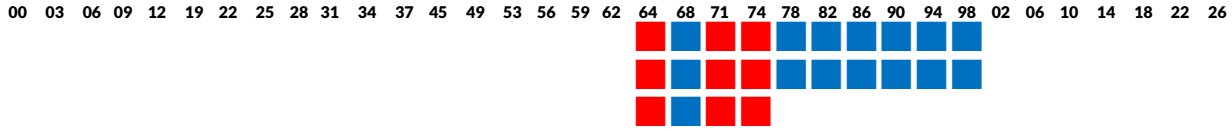
including St Stephen's ward, 1900-1974 and White City and Shepherd's Bush ward, 1978-2002



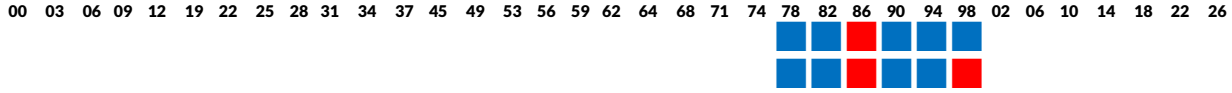
Sherbrooke ward



Sulivan ward

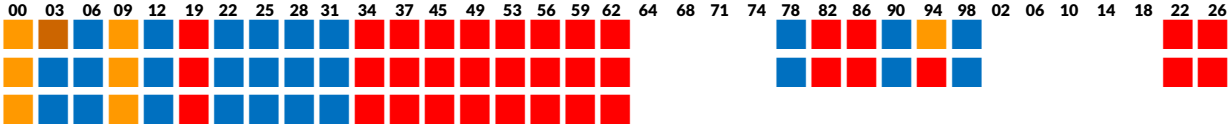


Walham ward



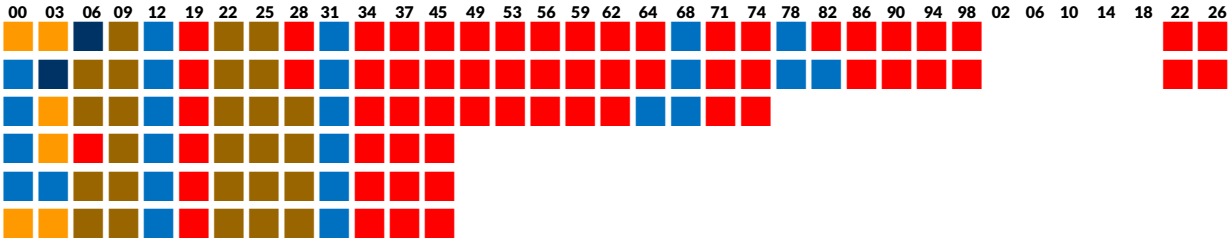
Walham Green ward

including Walham ward, 1900-1964 and Eel Brook ward 1978-2002



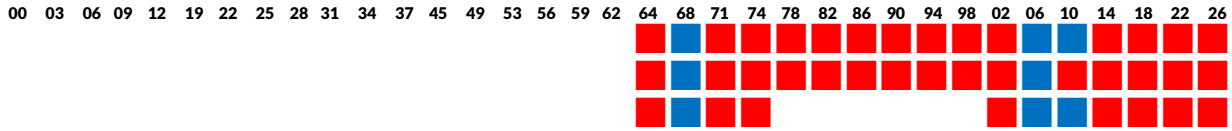
Wendell Park ward

including Starch Green ward, 1900-1998

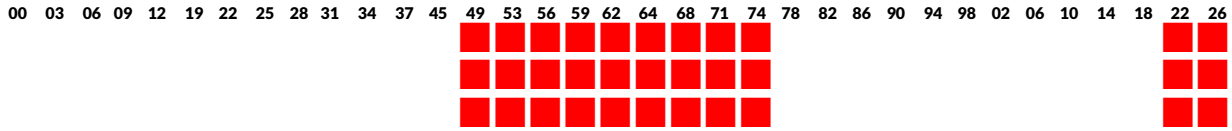


West Kensington ward

including Gibbs Green ward, 1964-2002 and North End ward, 2002-2022

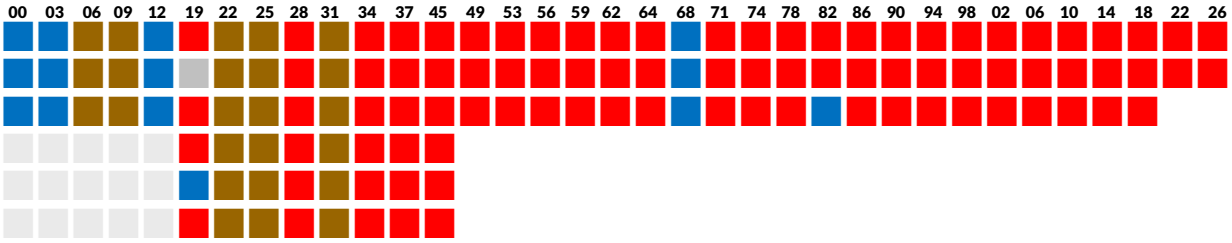


White City ward



Wormholt ward

including Wormholt and White City ward, 2002-2018



Key

- **Labour**
- **Moderate - Municipal Reform - Conservative**
- **Progressive - Liberal - SDP/Liberal Alliance - Liberal Democrat**
- **Ratepayers Association**
- **National Federation of Discharged Servicemen**
- **Independent**
- **Independent Moderate**
- **Independent Progressive**

Abbreviations used in results

BNP	British National Party
BUP	British Union Party
Comm	Communist Party
ComL	Communist League
Con	Conservative Party
CPA	Christian People's Alliance
CSEPV	Conservative supporting Enoch Powell's views
Eco	Ecology Party
Green	Green Party
Hum	Humanist Party
Ind	Independent
ICon	Independent Conservative
ILib	Independent Liberal
ILab	Independent Labour
ILP	Independent Labour Party
Ind Mod	Independent Moderate
Ind MR	Independent Municipal Reform
Ind Prog	Independent Progressive
Lib	Liberal Party
Lab	Labour Party
L/All	Liberal/SDP Alliance
LD	Liberal Democrat Party
Mod	Moderate
MR	Municipal Reform
NF	National Front
NFDS	National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers
NHAP	National Health Action Party
NW	Nursery Worker
PNP	Patients Not Profits
Prog	Progressive
Rate	Ratepayers Association
Ref	Reform UK
Res	Residents/Ratepayers' Assoc.
Rev Comm	Revolutionary Communist Party
SA	Socialist Alliance
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SDP/All	Social Democratic Party/Liberal Alliance
SLab	Socialist Labour
SLA	Save London Alliance
SLAG	Save London Action Group
SLD	Social & Liberal Democrats
Soc	Socialist
Soc Dem	Social Democrat
SLP	Socialist Labour Party
SU	Socialist Unity
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
Vil Ind	Village Independent
WRP	Workers' Revolutionary Party

Map of wards: 1900-1949

