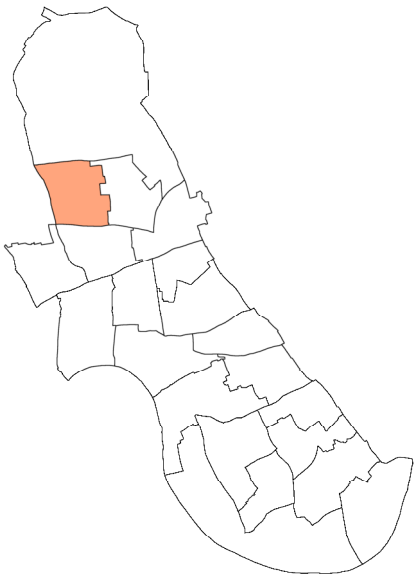
Wormholt ward

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.

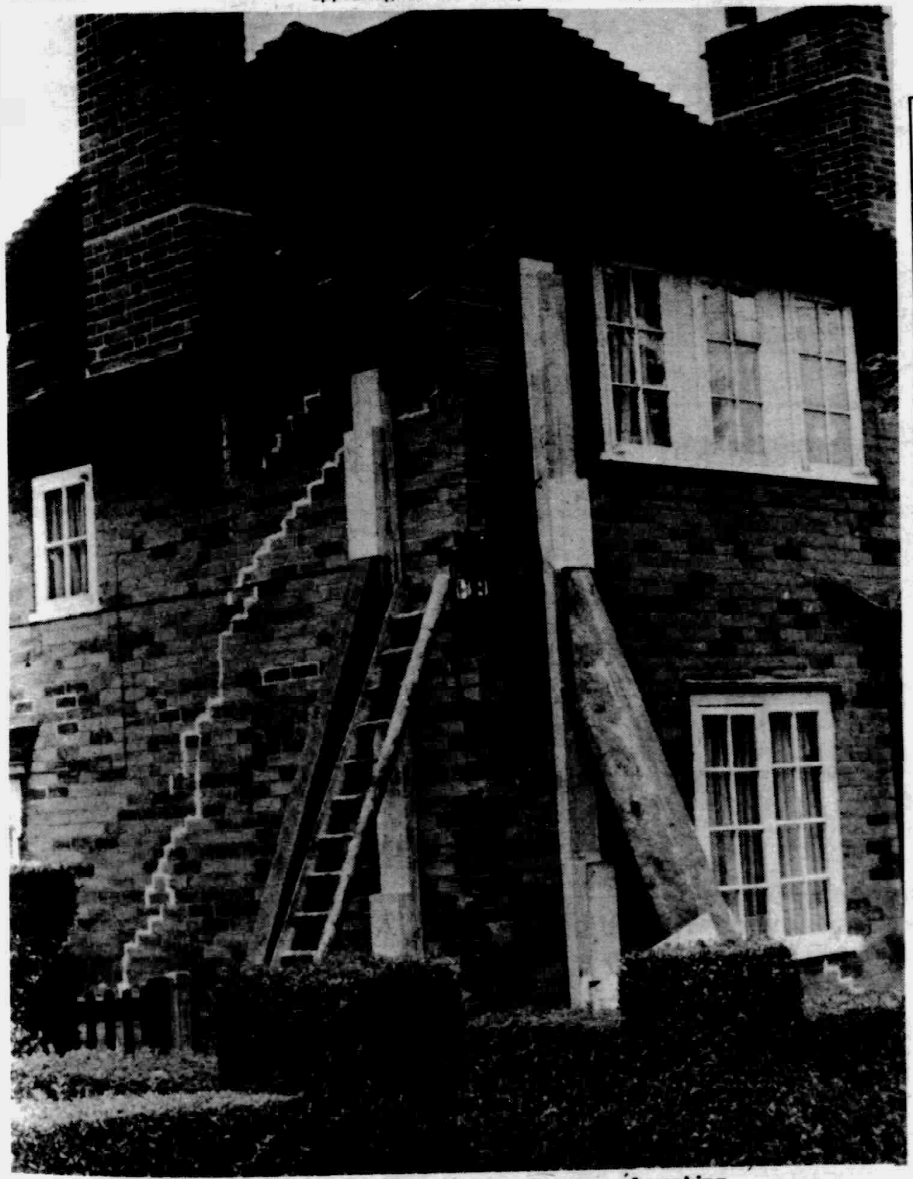
Cllr. Margaret Ingram, leader of the housing board, told the Gazette that the houses had gradually fallen into disrepair through lack of maintenance.

"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 Steventon 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.

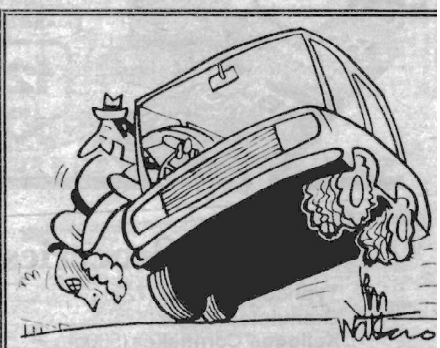
He said: "This is the kind of thing I want to see the council doing something about."

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

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

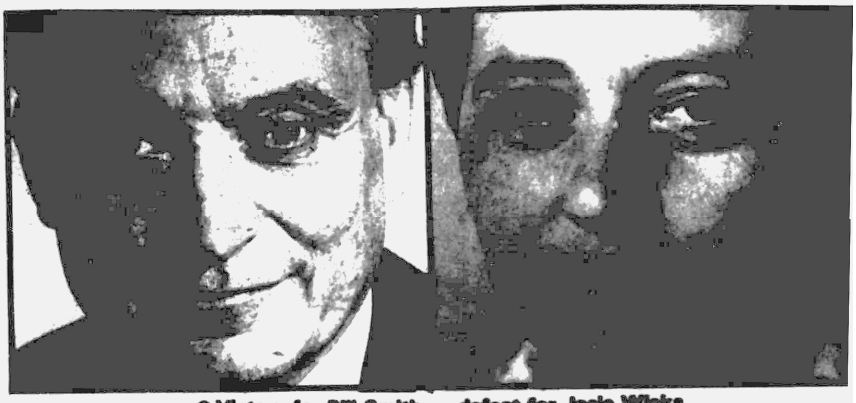
'I'm pleased and relieved' says councillor

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