

# The Hampton Society

The residents' association of Hampton, est. 1956 Summer 2020

## VE Day Celebrations: Young 'Uns Remember

▲ The crowds await the appearance of the Royal Family and Winston Churchill on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on 8 May 1945 (below)

**What happened in Hampton on VE Day? Like everywhere else, we concentrated on the celebrations outside Buckingham Palace, where the wireless told us the Royal Family would appear to lead the cheers at the end of the war in Europe. Four young people actually journeyed up to town to see it for themselves (and us as it turned out).**

Most of us were either unborn or too young at the time, but plenty of newsreel shown on television recently has revealed what we missed. One who didn't miss it was the Society's former Chair, Bill Weisblatt, who has written his account for us that was shared in our daily/weekly email newsletter\*. As a 16-year old schoolboy he was there in the crowd, well aware of the day's historical importance. Find his story towards the bottom of the [www.thehamptonsociety.org.uk](http://www.thehamptonsociety.org.uk) home page in the 'eNewsletter Back Issues' section. Click on the 'Read More' link on the 7 May entry.

Meanwhile, on that day, May 8, John Shankster, then aged 13, returned to an empty home in Yeldham Road, Hammersmith, at about 5.00pm. Everyone was out celebrating. John and his inseparable young brother Len, aged 11, knew Buckingham Palace was only a short penny ticket Tube journey from Hammersmith. That was where the real celebrating was about to happen. You could alight at Green Park station, cross the park to the palace, find yourself at the front of the queue and climb up the railings for a good view of the Royal Family above the grown-ups' heads – so they did. Len was a great climber and soon found a good spot.

All the cheering and repeated appearances of the Royal Family and Winston Churchill were fine until darkness loomed. Recollecting there was to be a bonfire back home, the boys returned the same way they had come and joined in the fun at Yeldham Road.

John later related that no special anxiety was expressed at their late arrival. His father was a policeman who had raised streetwise boys who knew their way around.

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*\*If you have not been receiving these email updates it might be that you have got a new address since you joined the Society and have not informed us. If you think this is the case, please drop us a line at [enquiries@thehamptonsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thehamptonsociety.org.uk) with your new email address and we'll update our records.*



## Notes from the Chair

**We're not out of the woods yet, but I for one will reflect on these past months as a time when I've been reminded of the strength of our community.**

From the moment we were instructed to stay at home, I'm sure, like me, you have witnessed an extra kindness within our community where neighbours have made absolutely sure that they are there for each other.

The clap for carers has been a heart warming beacon of unity in our streets. This could be the springboard for another seismic shift in how our country recognises the respect (and better pay) our nurses, doctors, teachers, bus drivers, municipal workers and delivery drivers deserve. Let's not forget the sacrifices these people have made for us when this all blows over.

### Daily and weekly updates

Many of us will be a bit more tech savvy as a result of having to use new methods to keep in touch with each other, near and far. During the crisis I increased the number of eNewsletters (daily, then weekly) to members with the intention of sharing as much information that came my way at a time of uncertainty. I am pleased that they have been well received. As well as highlighting some of the informative updates from Richmond Council, I have also included information from our cultural treasures such as the National Theatre, Southbank Centre, Tate, and more local institutions the Orange Tree and Rose theatres. I have been amazed at the wealth of entertainment that has been on offer to help us through. What I've especially enjoyed are the plays that I didn't manage to see in person at the time. However, as good as they've been, I am keen to return to the theatre and concerts as soon as possible.

### Helping hands

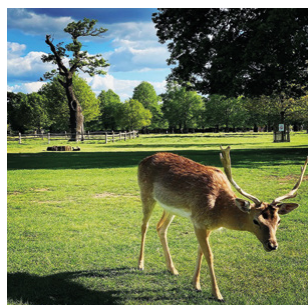
We have also seen a great number of acts of support. Close to home, members of the Society reached out and donated laundry products to the staff at Teddington Memorial Hospital at a time when an immediate gesture was most welcome. Thank you again to all those that contributed. The League of Friends of the hospital have also been feeding the staff in their time of need and the Jolly Coopers with Hampton & Richmond Borough FC have helped by delivering the public's donations to the Hampton Food Bank. There are many more examples of kindness so at the risk of missing anyone out, I would like to thank everyone for their generosity.

### AGM postponement

Like all of our scheduled events, the Coronavirus has impacted on our plans. We have been advised that under the current situation that it is acceptable for a body such as ourselves to postpone and reschedule "as soon as is practicably possible". We hope to provide you with a new date as soon as we can.

Finally, I would just like to say how much I have appreciated being able to enjoy our wonderful Bushy Park. The Woodland Gardens have been magnificent this spring.

Please continue to look after each other and I look forward to seeing you again soon.



**William Redfern, Chair**

*continued from front page*



*Our editor Maura Waters VE & VJ Day Celebrations mug from Heath Park Av. in Cardiff, where she grew up.*

Thirteen-year old Geoffrey Samuel's historic experience began the night before VE Day when, along with other St Paul's schoolboys evacuated to Berkshire, he was given an egg as a bedtime snack (one egg a month was the current ration!). After morning school, he travelled up to town with his father. Geoffrey writes "I was there outside Buckingham Palace when the Royal Family and Winston Churchill appeared before cheering crowds. Unforgettable".



Our last witness to VE Day at the Palace was only five years old. His parents took Nick Waters there from their home in Richmond, clearly hoping he'd remember – well something. People's legs and coloured lights of the anti-aircraft batteries are his memories, for only the night before, to quote Vera, "the lights (had) come on again" and the street lights, darkened during the war years, lit the celebrators' way home.

Another view of VE Day from Durban, South Africa, comes to us from Hampton Society member Vernon Dawes. As a seven-year old he lived there in his family's hotel, the Ocean View on Musgrave Road. On VE Day he recalled the guests' faces "being transformed with happiness – bunting and flags being hung in abundance in the public areas and a great deal of smiling and laughing, especially in the bar. With noisy pushing and shoving, people jostled for places at the bar. When a large military parade went down the road, we all trooped out to watch. Following VE Day, the bar served many returning sailors and soldiers either coming home to South Africa or in transit to other Commonwealth countries. It was a very happy time." **THS**



# Living in Lockdown; The Coronavirus Experience

**Just now, in June 2020, people the world over are living with a pandemic known as Covid-19. An effective vaccine to release us from social distancing, hand-washing and face masks could still be far off. But with a UK death toll above 40,000 we ignore rules at our peril.**

By the time you receive our next newsletter in early autumn all these strictures may be reduced, or simply disappear. Maybe we'll visit friends and family, hug our grandchildren, schools will reopen and we won't need to hold conversations standing six feet apart. Here in 'Lockdown', as we call it, we are keeping to our own households and its members, finding kind neighbours to shop for food, or else queuing outside supermarkets at set hours until they open for our age-group. Brits are not natural queuers for nothing!

Besides, on the plus side we've enjoyed the most glorious spring season of our lifetimes, a starry night sky that's also free from fumes, hardly any planes (both sight and sound of), less road traffic and an altogether much quieter environment that is universally appreciated.



**Meanwhile, here's an account of Life in Lockdown from Vernon and Sue Dawes.**

*"Although a scary and cautious period, this virus has both forced and encouraged us to do things we hadn't done in the past.*

*"On the 'forced' side, the essential search for food left no option for us but to get to grips with technology and embark on online grocery purchasing – a big learning curve for us! Despite registering with several conventional stores, the impossibility of securing delivery slots when one is not classed as vulnerable, according to the government database, but falls within the so-called vulnerable age group, resulted in our abandonment of the big name supermarkets. We had to find food in other ways. Enquiries to local businesses revealed that they very kindly deliver. This is supplemented by wonderful friends and neighbours who visit supermarkets for us. We are forever in their debt. The good things about all of this is are that we are helping local businesses to survive, learning something new and probably eating and drinking far too much because of the over-supply of victuals. Initially we felt like cavemen hunting on a daily basis for our next meal. I (Sue) was also forced to learn how to re-charge a car battery following the car's reduced use. I now ensure the car has regular outings.*

*"On the 'encouraged' side, clapping for the workers has been a wonderful experience and brought us closer to our neighbours. We are also communicating with many friends of long standing but with whom regular contact wasn't a fixture. The fine weather has made this trying time much more enjoyable, improved our gardening skills, persuaded us that sitting outside with a book is not a lazy thing to do, and horrified us at how dirty the windows look when the sun shines through them and forced us to do something about it. Next stop, clean the car!*

*"It is hoped that this whole episode has made us all more kind, considerate, knowledgeable and caring and that it is all here to stay."*

**Vernon & Sue Dawes, 30 May 2020** THS

## About your committee

The committee is the governing body of The Hampton Society. It consists of elected officers and up to six committee members. We meet four times a year to discuss current issues that affect the community to see where we can make a contribution. We also organise talks, visits and events for our members.

Any member of the Society is eligible to join the committee and can stand for election at our Annual General Meeting in April or be co-opted during the year. If you are interested in joining the committee and playing a part in the Society and Hampton's development, please contact the secretary below.

## Committee members

### Chair

William Redfern 020 8286 7071

### Deputy chair

Iacopo Sassi 07761 670911

### Secretary

Rosemary Hill 020 8973 3604

### Treasurer

Brian Brignall 020 8979 9499

### Membership

Linda Brignall 020 8979 9499

### Newsletter editor

Maura Waters 020 8979 9654

### Planning

Sylvia Bridge Le Cluse 020 8941 4450

### Other committee members

Alice Fordham 020 8979 3543

Lesley Cesenek 07540 342813

Contact us at **enquiries**

**@thehamptonsociety.org.uk**

## Update on Membership

### Over 84% of our members now pay by annual Standing Order

*We would really appreciate it if you do not currently pay by Standing Order to consider doing so when you come to renew your membership.*

**A warm welcome to our new members during lockdown!**

Newsletter production:  
Edited by Maura Waters.  
Designed and produced by William Redfern  
[www.williamredfern.co.uk](http://www.williamredfern.co.uk) 020 8286 7071.

# At least there was one Street Party!



**Hampton's VE Day celebrations came in two halves: the street tea-party for children pictured here, and the two-day jamboree announced in this yellow flyer for Carlisle Park a year later.**

We found only one little party guest who recollects the event. Gill Bertola, then living in Orchard Road, keeps this image framed on the wall of her home in Walton-on-Thames.

Gill is the little girl seated at the extreme left-hand end of the back row of children facing the camera. Although it was actually a Punch & Judy show they were watching, she says. Only six years old at the time, Gill remembers the children came from Cambridge, Falcon, Westbrook and Cleveland roads as well as Orchard Road. There was certainly no jelly or blancmange or even lemonade, she says. "My mother made barley water, so maybe we had that and probably sandwiches".

Maybe there was a little more variety in the fare offered at the following year's jamboree, as explained in this poster for Carlisle Park. Gill remembers her father had an allotment there during the war, which helps explain the year-long delay. Events started with a drumhead service and ended with a firework display, taking in children's sports, donkey rides and a Punch & Judy show. **THS**

## HAMPTONS VICTORY CELEBRATIONS

At the request of the Borough Council, your Hospital Appeals Committee consented to organise on your behalf, the Victory Celebrations. We trust that the programme, although chiefly for children, will attract and interest everyone.

**Sunday, June 9th, 1946**

**CARLISLE PARK, 3 p.m.**

**Victory Drumhead Service**

*(The Mayor and Corporation will attend.)*

**Monday, June 10th, 1946**

**OFFICIAL OPENING 3 p.m.**

*By His Worship the Mayor.*

**Children's Sports 3.10 p.m.**

**In Denmead School Ground**

*(Loaned with kind permission by W. D. James, Esq.)*

*Entries on Ground. Large number Prizes.*

Each child issued with a Voucher by the School Authorities will on presenting this at Carlisle Park, receive a book of tickets, which will enable them to obtain:—1 Bun, 1 Mineral, 2 Ice Creams, 1 Flag, and entry to view Model of famous Warship, Free of charge.

**Free Punch & Judy Shows - Donkey Rides**

**INTERVAL 6.30—7.30 p.m.**

**7.30 p.m. Parade of Hamptons Hospital May Queen and her Maids of Honour.**

**Followed by DANCING till 10.30 p.m.**

**DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS - 9.30 p.m.**

*Grounds Illuminated. Refreshments obtainable.*

*Music by Melford Radio.*

**Meanwhile support your Hospital Memorial Fund.**

## Events Update

**All of our events are currently on hold. We hope to re-schedule them as soon as it is considered safe to do so.**

**Our talks are free to members but when they do resume, please bring your membership cards**

*Due to the popularity of our talks and events and the size of our venues, we may have to turn people away if we run out of room. Arrive early to avoid disappointment.*

## Important Notice Regarding email Addresses

We are updating our membership database and we need to know if any of your details have changed. Please contact **Linda Brignall** on **020 8979 9499** especially if you have acquired or updated an email address so that we can be sure that you receive our regular eNewsletters. Finally, please add **enquiries@thehamptonsociety.org.uk** to your 'trusted' contacts and address book so that our messages don't get filtered out of your inbox.

## No email address?

*If you want to be informed of the latest event information but don't have access to a computer, please contact Alice Fordham on 020 8979 3543 and she will try to call you directly.*