

RIGRA

THE RIVER GARDENS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2021

Welcome to the Summer Newsletter. Zoran Almuli writes about the progress being made by the Landscape & Estate Appearance group across a range of matters aimed at improving our immediate environment. The Community Engagement Group, meantime, has collaborated with The John Roan School, and reached out to The AHOY Centre, the river-based charity not far from River Gardens. Both are featured below and both offer the opportunity to mentor. By chance, a report has just been published, which was recently discussed on BBC 4 Radio Today about the importance of supporting young people through mentoring and how individual mentors can change the paths of young peoples' lives. So, whilst the Committee and its project groups continue to wrestle with vital issues, some of which have been featured in previous Newsletters, we thought that it would be good to hear from other voices. Dana Pavel continues her progress along the riverfront, writing this time about the Power Station, which looms large on our horizon. Finally, there will be a Call for Volunteers in August for elections to the Committee (please see the last page for more information), and we will shortly issue an online survey to seek views about the Health Suite. The Comms+Vote team hopes that you find this fifth Newsletter instructive and, as always, we welcome feedback.



What is RIGRA?

The River Gardens Residents Association (RIGRA) represents the interests of the private residential leasehold tenants. Its membership includes residents from all the private residential blocks. The RIGRA Committee is a group of volunteer residents who act on behalf of the Association in negotiations and discussions with London+Regional and Bellway, the two developers, and with Rendall & Rittner (R&R), the Managing Agent for the whole Estate. So RIGRA has a relationship with Bellway, L+R and R&R, and advises them in the interests of the residents but has limited authority. The Committee welcomes all residents to contact us on general matters in relation to the Estate and we will do everything within our powers to help.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION
AND THE COMMITTEE,
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Talking About... RIGRA's Landscape & Estate Appearance Group

WITH ZORAN ALMULI, CHAIR OF THE GROUP

I really enjoy living at the River Gardens. However, with 300 metres of riverfront and so many public areas, the development has its challenges. I was already quite concerned about the increasing amount of litter and maintenance issues when I joined the RIGRA Committee and it became clear that I was not alone in my concerns. So the Landscaping & Estate Appearance Group was formed in October 2020.

The group's primary purpose is to ensure that the River Gardens remains a desirable and pleasant place to live. So we try to address both internal and external issues, and keep on top of these through a Maintenance Tracker. Internally, we identify and report cleaning and maintenance issues, and then work with Andy Wadsworth, the Estate Manager, and his staff to resolve them.

Outdoor litter has recently been our main focus. We started with an extra bin provided by the River Gardens Café. Andy then approached the Royal Borough of Greenwich and our negotiations led to delivery of six large bins for the riverside and Banning Street, which have already made a noticeable difference. Sainsbury's and the Coop have been persuaded to provide bins by their stores, and the Coop allowed us to remove the giant Costa Coffee cup. We also hope to find a better solution to their outdoor cardboard recycling cages. A fledgling litter-picking group has also been started under the guidance of Fiona Guadagnuolo that regularly de-litters the riverside, public walkways and Banning Street.

Garden maintenance has improved considerably since Bartholomew Landscaping was appointed, and we are experimenting with them to see whether prickly planting will deter people from climbing the riverside fence. One issue that we would like to consult residents over is the wavy lawn. This is an area that clearly needs attention but any changes to its design and use will require planning approval. So this project is not entirely straightforward. In the meantime, we are considering what would be involved in starting a residents' gardening club, and how it would work.

New signs about unauthorised vehicles, noise, litter, dog fouling and the like have been ordered. Whilst on the subject of signs, the Council is putting pressure on Durkan to add stencilled markings to the cycle lane to improve safety.

We currently have eight members of our group and would welcome more volunteers: please do contact me if you are interested. Meanwhile, we can all achieve remarkable results as individuals going about our daily lives. These include small things such as cleaning up after your dripping rubbish bags in the lifts and corridors; leaving corridors free of doormats, shoes, and more; putting litter in the bins provided as well as keeping dogs off the planted areas, and clearing up after them. I am sure that you understand my drift, and your cooperation over these and many other examples will be greatly appreciated both by the group, your fellow residents, and by the R&R staff.

ZORAN ALMULI, ✉ ALMULIZORAN@GMAIL.COM ☎ 07720 351982

In Our Neighbourhood



ELEANOR PORTER (LEFT, PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE JOHN ROAN SCHOOL) AND JANET FOSTER (RIGHT, PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DANA PAVEL)

Talking About... The John Roan School, Greenwich

ELEANOR PORTER, TEACHER OF HISTORY TALKS TO JANET FOSTER,
A MEMBER OF THE RIGRA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

JF: Elly, please tell me a little about The John Roan School (TJRS).

EP: TJRS was founded in 1677 and is one of the oldest state schools in the country, with a sixth form provision, based in Greenwich. Many of our students qualify as Pupil Premium or for Free School Meals, and we are determined that all of our students are given as much exposure to a broad range of ambitious careers as possible. This is vital as they start to make important decisions. As our mission

states, we are seeking to bring out 'The best in everyone'.

JF: Eleven people who live in River Gardens or are closely related to the estate contributed short autobiographical clips for your Taster Day. Did this suggest a way forward for further collaboration between TJRS and River Gardens?

EP: That was a wonderful start and we were so pleased with the resulting video. We are seeking exactly this range of professionals to take the next step: people who would be interested to act as virtual mentors for students. We are conscious that many of our students have been at home when they would like to be gaining work experience and assessing various careers.

JF: So there is a strong connection between mentoring and students gaining work experience?

EP: Absolutely. The mentoring encourages students to think about where and how to apply, and to improve their skills to do so. Work experience is vital for university and apprenticeship applications, and for personal CVs. It is also a crucial motivator, nurturing students' ambitions and helping them to contextualise why they should seek to get the best out of their education.

JF: What does the mentoring involve?

EP: To be a mentor as part of the mentoring programme, we are asking that you:

- Speak to your mentee once per half term for 45 minutes to an hour at a time, which amounts to six times a year.
- Set your mentee a deliverable piece of work for each meeting. This could be a piece of research, a pitch, a presentation, a re-written CV or an application for a job. The piece of work should take the student no longer than 1-2 hours to complete and should be worked into the mentor meeting.
- Hold the meetings, preferably in person although meeting on Microsoft Teams can also work.

JF: What do the students commit to?

EP: We ask students to submit an application to be your mentee within the school. This will also help us to ensure that the mentee with whom you work is really committed to getting the best out of your guidance and expertise.

JF: Is there anything else that you think a resident interested in mentoring should be aware of?



FOUNDERS DAY 2021



EP: There are a few things to consider if you would like to be one of our mentors. You will need please to: supply an enhanced DBS; provide two character references; be willing to participate in a safeguarding training session, which will either be provided by the school or with an external provider; and to provide a CV, which will not be shared with students but which will be used to write a short blurb about you so that students can apply to you.

JF: Are there other opportunities for residents of River Gardens to become involved, should they be interested?

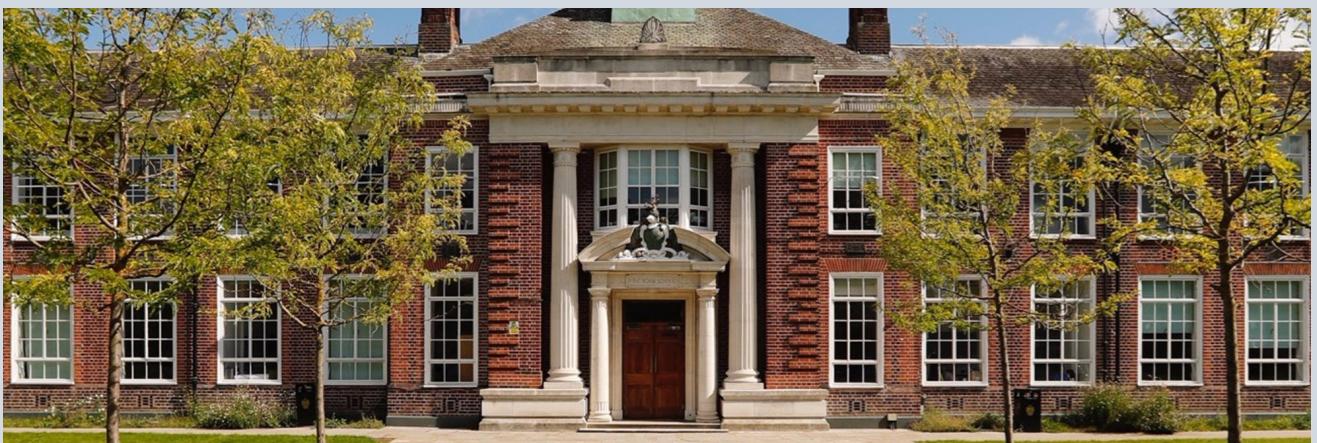
EP: We lay on lunches to which we welcome speakers from the world of work to share their experience. These offer the opportunity for career networking for our students and to learn at first hand from professionals in a variety of work places.

JF: What should the next step be for someone interested either to mentor or to speak at one of your lunchtime events?

EP: I would be delighted to hear directly from residents or they might like to contact you. Either way, I would be happy to talk to them and explore the common ground.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF THE AHOY CENTRE



Talking About... The AHOY Centre

WITH DAN O'SULLIVAN, FUNDRAISING MANAGER

Just a stone's throw away from River Gardens you will find The AHOY Centre. It's likely that you would have walked past the blue railings of their boating yard or marvelled from your window at their sailing and rowing boats out on the river. **But do you know what they do and how you can become involved?**

AHOY is a water-sports charity, utilising the River Thames to provide opportunities and training to disadvantaged and at-risk young people and disabled people within our community. A body of water that many of us take for granted, the

river, provides an alternative classroom for local young people. Each year AHOY works with hundreds of them to gain sailing qualifications, develop transferable and employable life skills, provide inspiration, and meet like-minded people.

The Centre is always full of life with programmes running almost every day including apprenticeship schemes, activity programmes and after school clubs. On the water, the activities work towards achieving internationally recognised Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications in sailing and powerboating. On land, the activities consist of a diverse range of nautical based challenges and boat maintenance. They also include cooking and indoor rowing sessions both of which aim to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The charity ensures that its programmes are accessible to everybody whether you are in or excluded from school, struggling from social isolation, facing mental health challenges or have a disability. The mission is to support those young people who are disadvantaged for any number of reasons that range from poverty, to behavioural issues, to a lack of support, space and equipment to thrive at home. This is why the passionate and experienced staff at the centre are continuously re-evaluating how they can maximise the support they give their beneficiaries, from building an on-site study area for students needing space to revise, to providing hot meals during lockdown for families who had previously benefitted from after school club meals.

The AHOY charity hopes that, with the increasing legacy of COVID, tackling education inequality and providing opportunities for those marginalised in our communities, it is a cause that the residents of River Gardens may be keen to support. AHOY offers a unique way for residents to become involved: so if you are eager to experience the Thames from a perspective different to the one out your window - now is your chance!

You can for example, challenge yourself with one of our brilliant *kayaking expeditions* that start from the centre and journey towards Westminster past some of London's iconic landmarks before turning back and finishing at River Gardens. Or, gather a team of six for an unforgettable *rowing challenge* as you pull together for 8.5 miles along the river. With equipment and training provided, all that AHOY needs you to do is have fun and help to raise money for our charitable programmes.



There is also the opportunity for River Gardens to host its own challenge day for either sport. AHOY are highly experienced in leading sizeable events which could be tailored to meet the expectations of residents.

To enquire, please email rowing@ahoy.org.uk or visit AHOY's [website](#) to find out what other challenges we have to offer. If you wish to contribute through *volunteering* at the centre please email [Marta Szymanska](mailto:Marta.Szymanska@marta@ahoy.org.uk) marta@ahoy.org.uk to explore the many opportunities available. Or feel free to email me: dan@ahoy.org.uk. One other option would be to email [John Wallace](mailto:John.Wallace@rigracomm@gmail.com) at rigracomm@gmail.com. He leads RIGRA's Community Engagement group and you might like to form a River Gardens group to kayak, to row, to organise a challenge day or to volunteer. In any event, all of us at the AHOY would be delighted to hear from you.



The Greenwich Power Station

FROM A HOUSE TO A POWER STATION: OVER THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF GREENWICH HISTORY



CROWLEY HOUSE BY MOONLIGHT. OIL ON CANVAS BY HENRY PETHER (1828-1865). THE HOUSE, THE LONG BUILDING, COMES FIRST, AND THE WAREHOUSE THAT CROWLEY ADDED ON IS BEYOND (COURTESY OF DARNLEY FINE ART)

The imposing Greenwich Power Station was constructed on the site of what was once Crowley House. The house, named after Sir Ambrose Crowley III, dated back to the mid-seventeenth century and, before Crowley, had several owners. These included Sir Andrew Cogan, a Royalist who made his fortune in the East India Company; Gregory Clement a Regicide MP who was hung, drawn and quartered following the Restoration; and George Bouwerman who held a patent from Charles II to supply ballast for Navy ships at Ballast Quay, which he lost due to his excessive expenses in an attempt to become an MP.

Crowley acquired the house in 1704 when he moved to London to fulfil his political ambitions. His business, based for

the most part in Newcastle, was at this point one of the largest ironwork manufacturers in Europe. The company had a wide range of contracts that included making anchors for the Royal Navy and more controversial ones, such as supplying plantations and slave ships with iron shackles and yokes.

Crowley died in 1711, and the house and the ironworks were subsequently owned and run by a variety of family members. In 1782, the business was taken over by Isaiah Millington, a long-time employee, at which point the company changed its name to Crowley, Millington & Co., and his family came to own Crowley House. In the nineteenth century the building functioned as an inn, the Golden Anchor, which was also used as a meeting place for a Masonic Lodge. The house was finally demolished in 1855, and replaced by stables and a depot for horse-drawn trams.

The Greenwich Power Station was built on this site, in two phases, between 1902 and 1910. The jetty in front of the power station was built in 1903 as part of the first phase, and included two cranes used to move coal from Thames barges into the power station, and to carry back the ash to the barges for disposal.

The station was designed by W E Riley, London County Council's architect, and partly constructed by the council's own

labour force to supply power for LCC's tramways. The electricity generated by the station was carried via two tunnels, one going north and the second south. The station's capacity was increased in the 1930s to supply the expanding Underground and trolleybus networks. The two chimneys closest to the river were built in the first phase to a height of 76m (249 ft). The smaller third and fourth chimneys were added in the second phase, built to a lower height of 55m (180ft) as a result of complaints received from the Royal Observatory about the smoke that was polluting the night skies.

The power station was converted in 1972 to run on oil instead of coal, with gas-turbine engines for peak-loads and with road tankers delivering the oil. The modernisation programme in the 1970s also offered the opportunity to reduce the height of the first two chimneys so that all four were identical. Today the power station provides back-up power for the London Underground.

New plans for the Power Station were unveiled by Transport for London at the start of 2015 when Boris Johnson was Mayor. However, objections were successfully lodged with the Environment Agency, and the proposal was withdrawn in 2016. A review is pending to ensure that the plans for the station align with the priorities of the Mayoral administration under Sadiq Khan.

On the station's riverside wall there is a collection of ceramic tiles created by Amanda Hinge as one of the many millennium projects along the Thames. The plaques tell the story of a boy called Stan who, while walking his dog on the Thames foreshore, finds a strange creature looking at him. The story has a happy ending with the regeneration of the natural environment, which is very much in tune with the cleaning of the Thames.



A VIEW OF THE GENERATING STATION AND GASWORKS FROM THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY, TAKEN AFTER 1910. (IMAGE COURTESY OF ROYAL OBSERVATORY GREENWICH)



THE GREENWICH POWER STATION (COURTESY HISTORIC BRITAIN)

CONTACT RIGRA BY EMAILING:
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SIGN ON TO **RIVER GARDENS FORUM** AT **RIVERGARDENFORUM.UK** FOR INFORMATION ABOUT RIGRA INCLUDING MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

YOU CAN SIGN UP WITH THE INDEPENDENT RIVER GARDENS WHATSAPP GROUP BY CONTACTING ONE OF ITS ADMINISTRATORS WHO ARE LISTED ON THE SITE, STARTING WITH **ALEKSANDRA GIRLING**

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IF YOU WISH TO JOIN THE FIRE CLADDING WHATSAPP GROUP PLEASE CONTACT: **ALEX ARISTIDOU**

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JOIN THE RIVER GARDENS FACEBOOK PAGE, WHICH YOU CAN FIND AT '**RIVER GARDENS GREENWICH**'

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A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Three Committee members – Jane Lawrie, Louise Billington, and Zoran Almuli – were co-opted by the Committee, and they must now seek election. This provides an opportunity for a Call for Volunteers to Leaseholders to join the Committee. Details about this invitation will follow by email as will news of a subsequent online election via Simply Voting in the event that two or more Leaseholders apply. Please do contact John Wallace at rigracomm@gmail.com if you would like more information.

JOINING THE RIGRA COMMITTEE AND ITS PROJECT GROUPS

The Committee is always seeking to keep its membership fresh and representative. So please do contact us if you would like to help, and have an interest in how the Estate should be run and have skills that you may think will be useful. You may alternatively be interested in joining one or more of the Project Groups listed below. If so, please do contact the people who chair them who will try to answer any questions that you may have.

COMMITTEE PROJECT GROUPS

BUDGETS & FINANCE

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CAR PARKS

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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COMMS+VOTE

PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR THE CO-CHAIRS

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Ahmed Omar (Atlantic), Alex Aristidou (Granite), Carrie Thompson (Granite), Colin Forrest (Vice-Chair, Granite), David Cutts (Chair, Granite), Igor Ribeiro de Oliveira (Iverson), Jane Lawrie (Wyndham), John Wallace (Secretary, Henry Hudson), Louise Billington (Granite), Mark Pinney (Wyndham), Nick Niknam (Block 9, 35 River Gardens Walk), Tom Bedford (Iverson), Zoran Almuli (Wyndham)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE COMMITTEE, PLEASE CONTACT JOHN WALLACE ✉ RIGRACOMM@GMAIL.COM

COMMS+VOTE TEAM

We would welcome feedback on the Newsletter and any ideas that you may have for its content in the future. Please do contact either:

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EGRA: EAST GREENWICH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

You can visit www.egra.com or email info@egra.com to learn more about the association and how to join it.