

Waterlow Court: an interesting past



(Above) Waterlow Court today. (Below) Interior pictures circa 1910.

At the start of the twentieth century there was an increasing awareness amongst women that there was a different way of doing things. The invention of appliances like the sewing machine gave women an opportunity to work from home and the invention of the bicycle gave them freedom. Further inventions such as the typewriter and the telephone opened up completely new work opportunities in offices and shops, as did the rapid expansion of the school system, and the emergence of the new profession of nursing.

Henrietta Barnett had denounced as blasphemous the notion that "a woman is a non-entity unless joined to a man". She was involved in supporting working women and believed in the suffrage movement, so, as she planned her Garden Suburb, she wanted to include in it "a discreet settlement of self-contained dwellings for single working gentle ladies".

This resulted in Waterlow Court. The building was named for Lord Sydney Waterlow who, in 1860, had founded a philanthropic housing company called The Improved Industrial Dwellings Company. This company built the Court in 1908-9 as philanthropic housing for single young women.

Waterlow Court was designed by the architect Baillie Scott in the Arts and Crafts style. It was situated at the end of a cul-de-sac. A lych-gate (a gateway covered with a roof) opens to a timber-framed and covered walkway which leads to a quadrangular building of lime-washed brick with timber-framed exterior elevations and low tiled roofs that feature a timber cupola and high brick chimney stacks.

The round-arched arcades create a 'cloister' effect and serve as a walkway to the ground-floor flats. They also give access to the dog-leg staircases with 18th century style balusters that have Jacobean style handrail and newel posts with turned finials.

The windows are mullioned, leaded casements and are of an original design. The interiors of



some of the flats have exposed timbers and dowelled joints. All the doors, chairs, chests and cabinets were also specially designed. The courtyard has sheer unbroken white plaster walls and smooth undecorated round-arched cloisters which, surprisingly, give softness and gentleness to its proportions.

Around the buildings are five landscaped areas with lawns, beds and a wild garden with 35 fruit trees. The layout remains similar today to that of Baillie Scott's original plan; it is likely that the planting scheme was inspired by Gertrude Jekyll.

Waterlow Court had 50 individual flats of three to five rooms, with a communal dining room, a small Common Room, housekeeper's and servants' accommodation and a kitchen where communal meals were prepared. It was understood that these professional ladies may not have been able to afford their own servants - but they could afford bicycles and there is a contemporary bicycle shed.

The communal rooms were later converted to flats and the complex now has 54 flats in all. In 1943 residency at Waterlow Court was opened up to single men, and couples were admitted in 1954.

Waterlow Court is now a Grade II listed building. The owners of the flats have a share of the freehold and help to manage the Court through an elected Board of Directors.

In 2019 a one-bedroom flat described as 'truly unique and rare to the market' was offered for sale at an asking price of £475,000.

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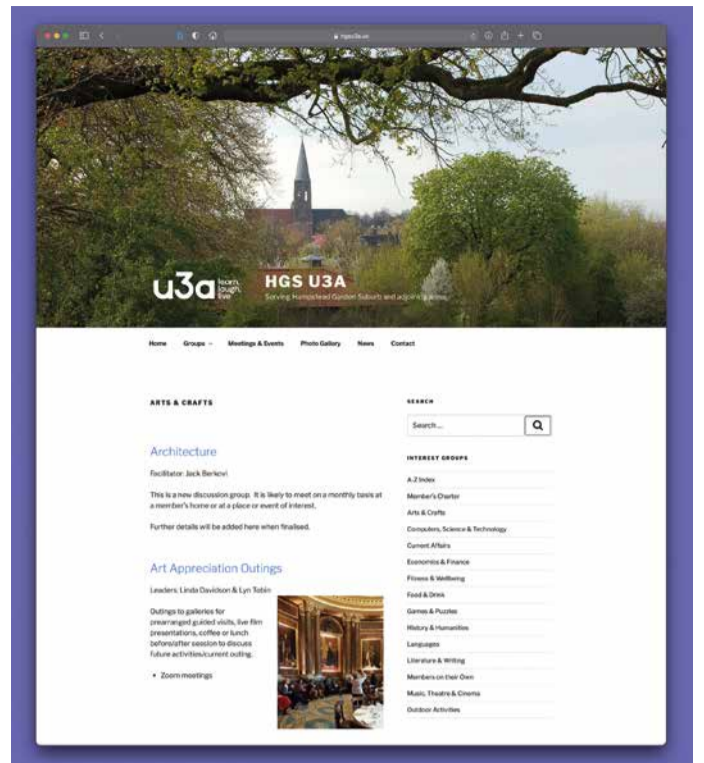
Learning online at HGS U3A

Our Autumn Term has started on an incredibly positive note. We have now progressed to over 40 online groups.

Whether you want to join a Gentle Exercise class, learn or improve your language skills, delve into the complexities of crime with our Crime Club, learn about faraway places with our Talking Travel group, engage in Art and Drawing, become a member of the cast for our Play reading group or join in our fortnightly popular London Quiz, there is something there for everyone.

We are also particularly appreciative and proud of our professional Group Leaders who give our members the opportunity to pursue new interests or develop their skills. Our U3A would not function without their dedication and the loyalty of our members.

October was a busy month for our Topical Talks; ranging from a Talk on Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery (part of our Crime Club), another talk on 'Poisonous Plants Make Good Medicines' and we were particularly indebted to Evan Davis, the brilliant radio presenter and journalist who fitted us into his busy schedule. His talk was about his new book 'Post Truth'. We have further talks planned: one on Cyber Crime, another on Forensic Accounting in a criminal trial, and a third one entitled 'How



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the Pandemic Has Nudged Practices and Prospects for Digital Health Technologies'. We are also grateful that Professor Baum agreed to facilitate a monthly series entitled 'Science and the Arts: Medical Humanities', which has proved to be immensely popular.

Online learning continues to provide the opportunity to have larger group meetings and develop groups with a wide choice of subjects. Although the 'new norm' is not an exact

substitute for personal contact, nevertheless U3A is maintaining the human connection. The core values of U3A are continuous learning, developing your interests, making friends and also trying something new. We endeavour to ensure we continue to fulfil this for our members.

We also welcome new members and new ideas. We are an integral part of the local community, so please do check us out at hgsu3a.uk/.

DAPHNE BERKOVI

What's new in the Virtual Museum

Over the last few 'Covid' months, the HGS Virtual Museum has seen the number of visitors to its website rise, with many of them coming from overseas, especially with enquiries about family history connected with the Suburb. Work continues on increasing the collections - the 1911 Census Collection will be added over the coming months.

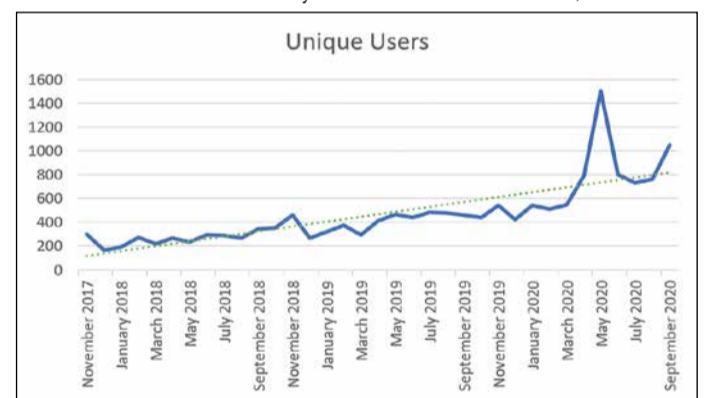
Thanks to those of you who have submitted WW2 memories for all to read - the Museum's expansion and range relies on local people to share their unique Suburb experiences, knowledge, history and artefacts. A prime example is the 1940 diary just sent in by Denise Cooper's daughter, Caroline Wright: "Tuesday 31st December 1940 - Well today I was married and for the last time I write in my diary as Denise M Peverett. I

am now Mrs S P Cooper. Spent the morning in general preparation. The whole family there including Gladwys and Laurie, the baby and 2 dogs. Nearly reached chaos as the doomed hour of 2 pm approached. Awfully nice wedding ceremony at the Free Church...The reception at the tea house was quite fun..." You can catch up with the rest of Denise Peverett's 1940 Diary at

hgsheritage.org.uk, in the WW2 Personal Memories section.

Younger visitors will soon have their own 'Fun-sized Collections' in the Museum, with the introduction of child-friendly material for school-aged kids for each of the featured Collections. The first one will be WW2, which should launch in early 2021.

MARJORIE HARRIS



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