

Changing London

AN HISTORIC CITY FOR A MODERN WORLD

LONDON'S SPORTING HERITAGE

There was much excitement when it was announced that London had been chosen to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Even those who would not normally take an interest in sport seemed caught up in the elation and enthusiasm of the moment. Uniquely, London is to be the host city for this great global celebration for the third time. We must now plan in practical detail how we shall rise to that challenge. And although this is a national and international occasion, it is also very special for London and Londoners.

It is now time for intense forward planning, but also to look back at London's sporting past. This issue of *Changing London* examines ways in which sport has helped shape the capital's built environment. As Richard Tames underlines in his overview of London's sporting heritage, our capital city has always been the great organiser and developer of modern sport. Rules were framed here, new infrastructures for sports like tennis were formulated and all around us there are reminders of sport's contribution to London life and leisure.

We now have a unique opportunity to build on that proud past and prepare for the future with confidence and pride. Let's seize the moment!



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LONDON HISTORIAN **RICHARD TAMES** OUTLINES LONDON'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANY SPORTS NOW ENJOYED BY MILLIONS ACROSS THE CAPITAL AND THE WORLD.

SPORTING LONDON: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

In Daniel Mendoza (1765-1836) London's East End produced the world's first sporting super-star, champion of All England at five foot six and a hundred and sixty pounds, the author of the first scientific treatise on boxing and the first British Jew to meet his sovereign. Mendoza retired from the ring to run a boxing academy which numbered Lord Byron among its pupils. The Stock Exchange now occupies its site.

Sport has been central to the recreation of Londoners and for centuries to their education as well. Thanks to two millennia of immigration London has always had the nation's largest concentration of youth with the urge to let off steam and show off. Extensive open areas like Blackheath, Hampstead Heath and Wimbledon Common have been the nursery grounds of club competition. The games mistress and the gymslip are both London inventions. So are sports journalism and broadcasting. The manufacture and sale of clothing and equipment for sport became a significant feature of the capital's economy as major stores established departments devoted to "Sports goods" and specialised outlets like *Lillywhite's* developed.

London did not invent modern sport as such; but it did organise it, establishing the governing bodies and formulating the rules for boxing, rugby, tennis and a dozen other

sports. Lord's, Wimbledon and Hurlingham weren't just the premier showcases for their respective sports, they also defined them. Wembley, Henley, Ascot, Bisley, Twickenham, Herne Hill, White City and Brooklands are London locations or appendages which became synonymous with great sporting triumphs. London and its environs provided the settings for the first known international competitions in table tennis, weightlifting and water polo, as well as Britain's first polo match, cycle race, Test century, indoor athletics meeting, 1,000 break in billiards and clubs for water skiing, show-jumping and synchronised swimming. Sports invented abroad, from polo and judo to snooker and speedway, have been introduced to the rest of the nation via the metropolis.

Londoners' passion for sport has a documented track record of at least a millennium. Knut, the Danish king who decided that London, not Winchester, should be the national capital, also decreed in 1016 that common folk should not be allowed to keep greyhounds. When it came to hunting the toffs had to be given an edge! Writing around 1173 William Fitzstephen, the first Londoner to write about London, praised the manly vigour with which the city's youth wrestled, ran, leaped and cudgelled, and how in winter they strapped animal bones to their feet to skim over the icy marshes of

Moorfields. Archery, requiring constant practise from youth onwards, was the premier sport and regarded by government for at least four centuries as a key element of defence policy. The name of Newington Butts is a reminder of the requirement for every parish to maintain a practice shooting-ground.



Real tennis at Hampton Court

Roger Ascham, learned tutor to Elizabeth I, was the first to argue in print that sport was an essential element in the education of a well-rounded man. He was also the author of a definitive treatise on archery, *Toxiphilus*, which is what made Henry VIII appoint him as his daughter's tutor in the first place. Football, hockey and other such pastimes were repeatedly banned by law as distractions from archery practice. The repetition of the bans itself confirms their popularity.

The introduction of the rapier in the 16th century led to the emergence of schools of arms and the establishment in 1540 by Royal Charter of the Company of Masters of Defence of London to regulate

them. Most famous of instructors was the 18th century Italian Domenico Angelo whose family business in St. James's Street carried on until 1897 when the premises were revamped as a fitness centre by Eugene Sandow, the pioneer of body-building.

Royal patronage has done much to bolster public interest in sport. In his youth Henry VIII was a keen player of real tennis, a fine archer and enthusiastic jouster. Charles II once had himself weighed before and after a two hour game of real tennis to see how much he had sweated off – over four pounds. He also introduced skating and yachting and awarded the first prizes for horse-racing. The otherwise unathletic James I was a positive fanatic for hunting and brought golf to Blackheath from his native Scotland. George II's brutal soldier son, 'Butcher' Cumberland, was a patron of prize-fighters and owned *Eclipse*, one of the greatest horses in the history of the turf. The sports of that day, from cricket to competitive 'pedestrianism', were nearly all accompanied by heavy gambling. The great 'clean up' came in the 19th century as the public schools fostered the cult of amateurism and institutionalised competitiveness through their elaboration of championships, leagues and cup competitions. At the same time the growth of a large, concentrated and increasingly

'London didn't invent modern sport – but it did organise it'

prosperous working-class in the capital provided appreciative mass-patronage for the commercialisation and professionalisation of sport as a branch of entertainment. The process of proliferation peaked in the 1870s and 1880s with the introduction of tennis, polo, greyhound racing, artificial ice-rinks, roller-skating and competitive cycling, the advent of the FA Cup and Test matches, county cricket, indoor athletics, 'Wimbledon', the establishment of London's first cycle-track, first physical training college and first enclosed race-

course and the founding of four still surviving athletics clubs and eight of London's leading football teams.

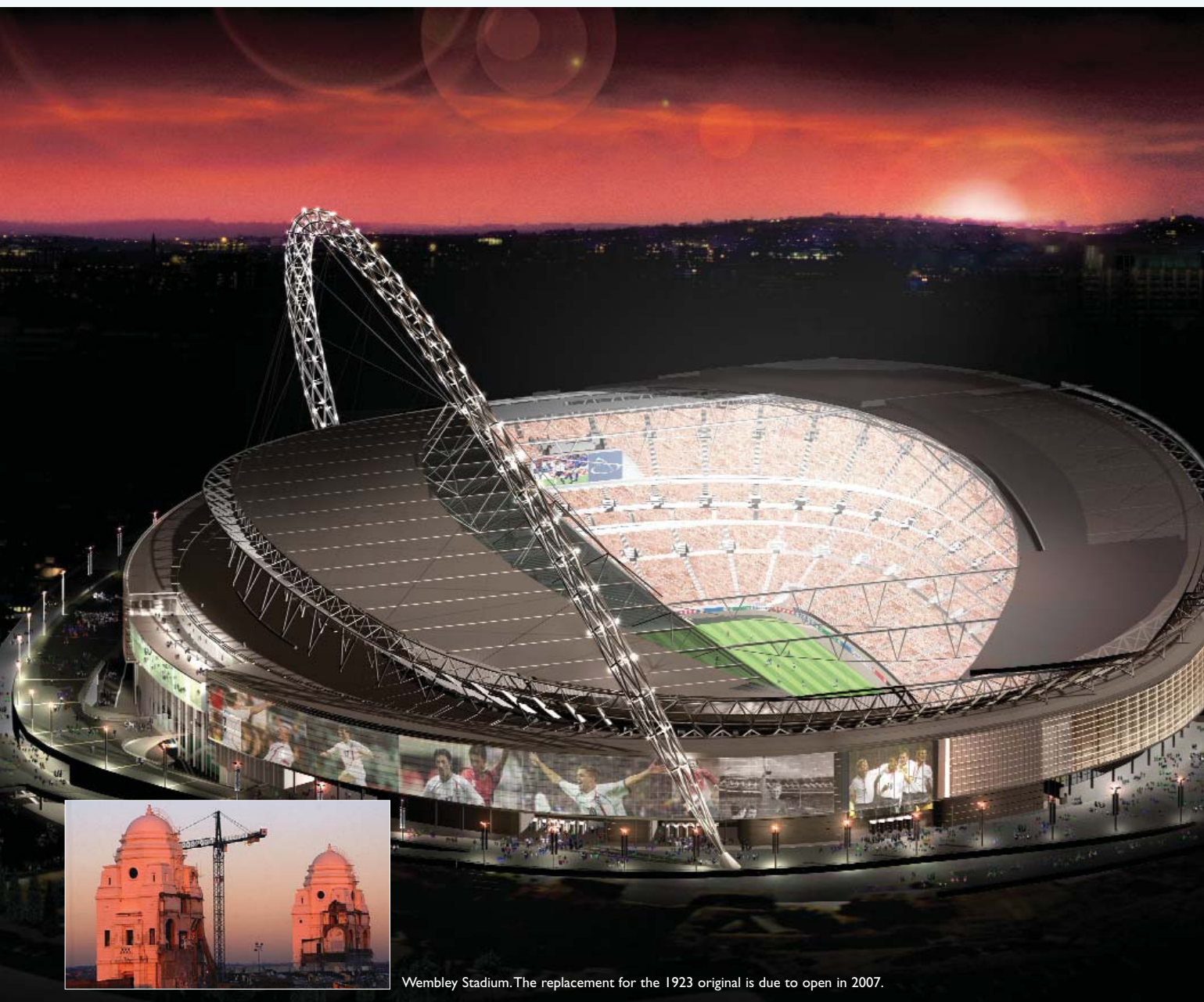
In making its bid to stage the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games London could claim a sporting heritage stretching back over two millennia to the gladiatorial and military exercises enjoyed by its Roman founders in the amphitheatre which once occupied the site where historic Guildhall now stands. London can also claim to have made its own contributions to Olympianism. The

1908 London Games were staged in the first ever purpose-built Olympic stadium (White City) featuring the first purpose-built pool. They were also the first at which silver and bronze medals were presented; the first to include throwing the javelin and the first winter event – ice skating; and the first to be commemorated in an official Report. And probably the last at which Britain would take more gold medals (56) than all the other competing countries added together (54).



Richard Tames is the author of *SPORTING LONDON: A Race Through Time* (Historical Publications 2005) which contains web addresses for most of the major sports discussed.

See www.phillimore.co.uk for other books on London by this author.



Wembley Stadium. The replacement for the 1923 original is due to open in 2007.

CHRIS SUMNER VALUES LONDON'S OPEN SPACES WHICH CONTINUE TO OFFER RICH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPORT

WIDE OPEN SPACES

'For centuries, London's heaths and commons have provided much-loved space for organised and informal sport'



London's Royal Parks owe their origin to the Tudor and Stuart monarchs' love of hunting and still maintain a tradition of horse riding. At Hampton Court the walls and one of the viewing towers of King Henry VIII's Tiltyard – built for jousting tournaments – survive, as does its Royal ("Real") Tennis Court. King Henry's Mound in Richmond Park and "Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge" in Epping Forest remain as one-time lookouts for watching the chase. Two of the classic races of the horse racing calendar, the Oaks and the Derby, were originally run at Oaks Park, Carshalton, while Pall Mall recalls the obsolete game of *paille-maille* once played nearby. *Doggett's Coat and Badge* public house by Blackfriars Bridge (now sadly renamed merely *Doggett's*) and the many riverside pubs between Putney Bridge and Mortlake celebrate boat races on London's river, and for

centuries London's heaths and commons have provided much-loved space for organised and informal sport.

The importance of providing parks to improve the moral and physical welfare of the rapidly increasing – and potentially revolutionary – population of the capital was recognised by the 1833 *Select Committee on Public Walks*. London's population grew from 958,000 in 1801 to 1,948,000 in 1841, and while residents of the West End benefited both from the large number of private garden squares and from the Royal Parks, the East End and South London were grimly deficient in both public and private open space. Walks, promenades and carriage drives were prominent features of Victoria Park (opened in 1845) and Battersea Park (1854), but formal provision for sport on a large scale for the populace was only

gradually accommodated in the existing Royal Parks and in the new public parks that started to be created from the 1840s.

Battersea Park provided boating on the lake and ice skating in winter, and by the end of the 19th century it was recorded (*Municipal Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces of London* – Lieut. Col. JJ Sexby (1898)) that "the cream of society still come to Battersea for their morning (bicycle) ride". "There are large cricket and football grounds... lawn tennis... a gymnasium... a quoit ground... and also a bowling green...". At Victoria Park "the area of the park is so large that it is possible to provide for nearly every form of out-door amusement and recreation. Foremost among these must be placed swimming and bathing... As many as 25,000 bathers have been counted on a summer morning...".

The introduction of sports pitches into historic landscapes can be problematic, especially if they include all-weather surfaces and flood-lighting. Even natural pitches are visually dull and generally ecologically poor; nevertheless, new features such as "The Hub", a sports pavilion by David Morley Architects in the Regent's Park (pictured), which gives wide-ranging views from its artificial mound, can be successful and dramatic. Golf courses are not necessarily incompatible with historic landscapes – the course in the Home Park at Hampton Court sits easily enough among the formal avenues and the deer – and some historic parks, such as Wimbledon Park, owe their survival to conversion to sports uses at a time when they might otherwise have been sold for building development.



Cyclists in Hyde Park circa 1890's



www.royalparks.gov.uk/parks/regents_park/hub/thehub.cfm

www.royalparks.gov.uk/special_interest/

www.lpgsf.org.uk

www.davidmorleyarchitects.co.uk

RICHARD DUMVILLE CELEBRATES THE VAST NUMBER OF CLUBHOUSES AND SPORTS PAVILIONS THAT ARE HOME TO LONDON'S SPORTS COMMUNITIES, AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL – A MUCH LOVED, BUT INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE PIECE OF LOCAL HERITAGE

CLUBBING TOGETHER

Take a closer look at your local map and you will see the term "Pavilion" or "Pav" cropping up with surprising regularity amongst the patchwork of parks and sports fields. Indeed, you could be forgiven for taking them for granted; only becoming aware of their existence when a local newspaper reports the closure of a sports club or another act of vandalism. Despite being numbered in their hundreds at their peak, a mere handful in London are listed. Probably the most famous is the grade II* listed pavilion at Lord's Cricket Ground, built in 1889-90, but this is very much out on its own – the vast majority are far more humble, often built of timber and with architectural elements such as balconies or verandas that reflected the popular "Tudorbethan" style of London's expanding suburbs in the early 20th century.

Although of undeniable character, and often capable of adapting to new uses, their future well-being can rarely be assured. Sports clubs merge or close, the open land

around them being seen as tempting "prime development opportunity". Their value however extends beyond simple visual appeal. Take the Cheam Fields Club near Sutton for example. Founded in 1914 as a bowls club, then expanding as lawn tennis became more popular, it still thrives today with a healthy membership of around 600. However, its "value" to the local community is so much more than a sports facility, as Club Chairman James Mackenzie (pictured here with fellow member Anne Jameson) explains: "A major feature of a club like ours is that it enables local people of all ages and backgrounds to meet each other and form long and lasting friendships that extend beyond the confines of the bowling green and tennis courts. I am sure that if our club did not exist, then with modern life being what it is, I doubt if I for one would know many local people beyond my immediate neighbours". The club is run entirely on a volunteer basis and with no shareholders; the members are in

'I am sure that if our club did not exist, then with modern life being what it is, I doubt if I for one would know many local people beyond my immediate neighbours'.



effect the owners. Beyond tennis, bowls (and a popular bridge section) their pavilion is home to its own "fixture list" of sell out social events – in just seven brief years it will be 100 years young.



www.cheamfieldsclub.org.uk



New Beckenham near Bromley has, for many years, been home to a large number of sports clubs – HSBC and the Kent County Cricket Club are just two "big players" in the area. Unfortunately there have also been casualties. This burned out shell is all that remains of the once proud home of Cyphers Cricket Club. Formed over 100 years ago, it witnessed the cricketing skills of such luminaries

as W G Grace and the actor Trevor Howard, as well as accommodating tennis and bowls. Slow decline saw the once impressive club house (dating from 1936 and funded mostly from donations) close in 2004. Then one night in February 2005 it was engulfed in flames. The future of the building and its grounds remains uncertain.

ALL ACROSS LONDON, THERE ARE BUILDINGS WITH SPORTING LINKS, SOME STILL IN USE, OTHERS WHOSE SPORTS HERITAGE IS JUST A MEMORY. RICHARD DUMVILLE OFFERS SOME SNAPSHOTS....

PLAY THE GAME!

Pictures from top left to bottom right

Craven Cottage

STEVENAGE ROAD
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

The home of Fulham Football Club since 1896. Both the east stand and the famous corner "cottage" offices (1905) are by noted football ground designer, Archibald Leach and listed grade II.

– www.playedinbritain.co.uk/books/archie.html

The "German Gymnasium"

PANCRAS ROAD, CAMDEN

Tucked in between St Pancras and Kings Cross railway stations, this grade II listed building of 1864-65 was built for the German Gymnastic Society to enable German businessmen living in London to exercise (non-Germans were later admitted). Its interior includes cast-iron piers with foliate capitals and laminated wood roof trusses. It is currently in use as a café and exhibition space.

Lord's Cricket Ground

ST JOHN'S WOOD ROAD
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

The world famous Members' Pavilion (grade II*) dates from 1889-90 and was fully refurbished and extended in 2005 by the architects Ettwein Bridges. This included a new roof terrace and restored viewing turrets. Pictured here is the Long Room.

East Stand at Highbury Stadium

AVENELL ROAD, ISLINGTON

Art deco grade II listed stand by William Binnie (1936) replete with the famous Arsenal gun (which harks back to the club's Woolwich roots). Closed in 2006, both the East and West Stands are being converted for residential use as The Stadium, Highbury Square.

– www.thestadium-highbury.com

Wembley Arena (formerly Empire Pool)

EMPIRE WAY, BRENT

Designed by Sir Owen Williams and built in 1934 for that year's Empire Games, it housed a 200 x 60 foot pool (covered by the then largest concrete span roof in the world) but it fell out of use after the 1948 Summer Olympics. Listed grade II, it continued to house a variety of sports and music concerts and has recently been renovated as part of the major redevelopment of Wembley Stadium.

– www.hilsonmoran.com/?section=projects&pid=107

Bowling Alley

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE

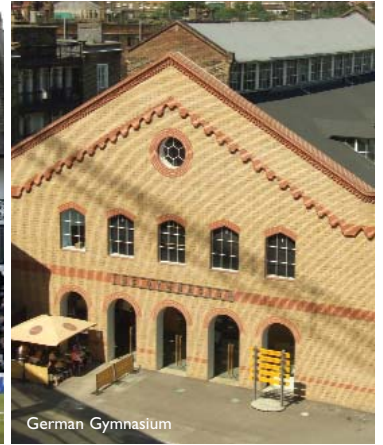
KING WILLIAM WALK, GREENWICH

1860s bowling alley in the restored Chalk Walk beneath the Queen Mary Quarter (listed grade I) of the former Greenwich (Seamen's) Hospital. The alley is now managed by the Foundation for the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

– www.greenwichfoundation.org.uk/



Craven Cottage



German Gymnasium



Lord's Cricket Ground



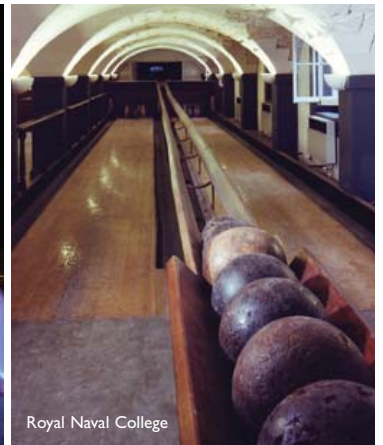
Highbury Stadium



Highbury Residential conversion



Wembley Arena



Royal Naval College



London Fields Lido



Kentish Town Baths



Kentish Town Baths



Streatham Ice Rink



Streatham Ice Rink



York Hall



Herne Hill Cycle Track

Pictures from top left to bottom right

LONDON FIELDS LIDO
LONDON FIELDS WEST, HACKNEY
 Opened in 1932 for the LCC, this unlisted Lido served local people right through to its closure in 1986. Following local pressure, Hackney Council funded renovations which saw it re-open for a brief period in late 2006. Closed again for further works, it re-opens this Spring with plans for a seasonal roof to be fitted later in 2007.

– www.hackney.gov.uk/c-londonfields-lido

KENTISH TOWN BATHS
PRINCE OF WALES ROAD, CAMDEN
 After fears of possible closure, which sparked a local campaign, this very impressive building (1901 grade II) has now been allocated major funding by the Council that will see it refurbished and improved for future generations.

– www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure/

STREATHAM ICE RINK
STREATHAM HIGH ROAD, LAMBETH
 Opened in 1931 and designed in the popular Moderne style of the time by specialist cinema architect, Robert Cromie, it had an ice rink of 21,000 sq ft that could accommodate 1,000 skaters. Many original features were lost to 1960s alterations and it is not listed. It is due to be redeveloped for retail uses, but a local group is campaigning for a new rink to be incorporated.

– www.sisag.org.uk

YORK HALL
OLD FORD ROAD, BETHNAL GREEN
 Opened in 1929 by the then Duke and Duchess of York, York Hall (unlisted) has become synonymous with boxing, although it also houses a swimming pool and Turkish and Russian baths. Threatened with closure, funding was found for much needed improvements and repairs

– www.londonpoolscampaign.com/pools/yorkhall

HERNE HILL VELODROME
BURBAGE ROAD, LAMBETH
 Considered the home of track cycling in the U.K. the Velodrome opened in 1892 and was used in the 1948 Summer Olympics. Its original (unlisted) grandstand just about survives in altered form, although replacement seems a certainty.

– www.vcl.org.uk/hemehill/

LONDONERS HAVE BEEN ENJOYING A DIP FOR OVER 150 YEARS. THE ORIGINAL IMPETUS WAS HYGIENE BUT THE PURSUIT OF FITNESS AND FUN SOON LED TO A BURGEONING OF POOLS AND LIDOS. BUT FOR MANY THERE IS AN EVER-PRESENT DANGER THAT THE PLUG MAY BE PULLED, AS **HOWARD SPENCER** REPORTS.

POOLS AND LIDOS: SWIMMING WITH OR AGAINST THE TIDE?

The first series of the BBC's 'Restoration' was won by the Victoria Baths in Manchester; an outcome made all the more remarkable for the fact that indoor swimming pools have, in general, been so underrated among public buildings. Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war pools feature rarely in Pevsner's famous guides, but all too regularly on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register (eight feature on the 2006 London register).

In London, as elsewhere, the provision of public baths as a municipal enterprise began with the *Baths and Wash-houses Acts* of 1846 and 1847. The first metropolitan parish to take advantage of the enabling legislation was St Martin in the Fields, which built a baths at Orange Street, off Leicester Square in 1849 (demolished 1910). Designed by Price Prichard Baly, who was responsible for several similar projects, they contained 200 private 'slipper baths'; the preoccupation at the time being public hygiene rather than physical fitness.

Swimming facilities in early pools featured separate baths for men and women, mixed bathing being frowned upon in general until the early 20th century. There were often first, second and even third class pools, too, in order to keep the burgeoning middle class at a safe distance from 'the great unwashed'!

Laundries were a common feature – in modern automated form, such a facility is still in existence at the inter-

war Ironmonger Row Baths in Islington. No facilities survive from the initial phase of pool construction in London; the oldest functioning municipal pool was (until March 2006) at Forest Hill. Opened in 1885 (and unlisted) it was closed on safety grounds by Lewisham Council, following discovery of major roof problems. The early years of the 20th century saw a wave of pool building that has been linked to the authorities' concerns about the health and fitness of the nation in the light of the poor physical condition of Boer War army recruits. Here there are survivals, though they are becoming rarer by the decade. Acton Baths, opened in 1904, is one unsung (again unlisted) example. Its changing rooms are located around the outside of the pool, a feature harking back to the earliest municipal pool designs. Restored in 1989-1990, there are nonetheless rumblings about replacement with a modern facility.

The reasons why local authorities (particularly in the wealthier west London boroughs) have favoured replacement over refurbishment are several. There are health and safety considerations, plus the perception that the public demand is for modern facilities – along with the usual development pressures and the temptation to cash in on prime sites. Given recent public disquiet over levels of obesity, it is worth noting that many of the older facilities are actually better at promoting physical fitness than their leisure centre rivals,



'Traditional pools are all too easily written off as worn out, expensive to maintain, without any proper comparative study of old and new buildings'
(SAVE Report, 1980)

as they almost invariably feature larger pools.

Arguably one of the most contentious cases in the capital recently has been the Clissold Leisure Centre in Stoke Newington, a state-of-the-art facility which not only ran over budget, but then closed owing to serious construction defects: major remedial works need to be finished before it can re-open. Not only was an interwar pool demolished on this site to make way for the new building, but the same local authority also closed the grade II listed Haggerston Baths in 2000

(pictured here) – four years short of its centenary. This was designed by Alfred Cross, whose *Public Baths and Wash Houses* (1906) became a standard reference on good pool design. A campaign is under way to save the baths, and with Hackney Council consulting on options for multiple uses, including swimming, there may yet be an aquatic future for the building.

Strong local opposition was not enough to save – among others –

Latchmere Baths in Battersea (1889), Silchester Road Baths in Kensington (1886-8) and the North End Road Baths in Fulham (1900-1902), all demolished in the early 1980s. The latter was occupied and run by campaigners for a time, but the only result of their endeavours was the preservation of the grade II listed façade, which, divorced from its original function, has all the life of a fly in amber. Not all is doom and gloom however. The grade II listed

1930s Marshall Street Baths in Soho, closed since 1997 and remarkable for its barrel-vaulted roof and Sicilian marble lined 'first class' pool, is hopefully to be restored and provided with new facilities which may see it re-open in 2009. Camden Council have also recently agreed to fund a £22.7m programme of major refurbishment work to the very popular Kentish Town Baths (grade II listed) where hitherto there has been much local concern and

campaigning over its future. Brenda Humphreys, life-long swimmer and member of the Save Kentish Town Baths campaign, was jubilant: "We are overjoyed that Kentish Town baths will now continue to serve present and future generations, in particular our school children, who will be able to enjoy the benefits of learning to swim in such a fantastic environment – and who knows we may even see an Olympic champion in 2012 thanks to this decision."

A DIP OUTDOORS

DESPITE THE VAGARIES OF THE WEATHER, THE LIDO WAS THE PLACE TO GET FIT, TOP UP YOUR TAN, MEET NEW PEOPLE, OR JUST RELAX WITH FRIENDS. MANY HAVE SINCE CLOSED, BUT NOT ALL IS LOST. **RICHARD DUMVILLE** TAKES A LOOK AT THE HEALTH OF THE LONDON LIDO.

Whilst open air pools have their origins in the 19th century, to many people the term "lido" is more redolent of the 1930s and the rise of Art Deco. The inter-war period was the boom period for lido construction, with Greater London numbers peaking with nearly 70 open air pools by 1950. However, with changing leisure pursuits, reducing resources for maintenance and repair (and the rising effects of vandalism) this number had dropped to just 10 by 2005. Nevertheless there is good cause for optimism. The grade II listed Brockwell Lido (1937) at Herne Hill in south London is an extremely popular amenity (known locally as

"Brixton Beach"). Closed in 1990, local pressure saw it re-open in 1995, and with a recent lottery grant of £400,000 work has now begun on a major programme of improvements that will secure its future. See more at www.brockwelllido.com. Across the capital in Hackney, the London Fields Lido (1932, unlisted) closed in 1986 but, in response to local demand, re-opened in October 2006 following Council funding £2.5m of repairs and improvements. It has a 50 metre heated pool (see page 6). One of the few listed lidos in London is at Uxbridge (grade II, 1935). Built in a nautical Moderne style, it is unique in having a



12-sided "star" shaped pool. Closed since 1998 and now liberally covered in graffiti (see image), it will hopefully be repaired and re-opened as part of a major leisure complex centre proposed for adjacent land. The Heritage Lottery Fund has made a grant of almost £1m toward the repair of the historic fabric. See the plans at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/education/amr/lido.php

For a fully illustrated history of lidos see *Liquid Assets: The Lidos and Open Air Swimming Pools of Britain*, by Janet Smith, published by English Heritage in 2005 (ISBN 0954744500).



For information about lidos past and present, visit www.lidos.org.uk

For an overview of London pools at risk and the moves to save them see www.londonpoolscampaign.com

See www.playedinbritain.co.uk for news on *Great Lengths – the indoor swimming pools of Britain* to be published in July 2007

Visit www.victoriansociety.org.uk to read the report of their 'Making a Splash' conference of June 2006.

FUNCTION, NOT STYLE, DICTATED THE FORM OF POST-WAR SPORTS BUILDINGS – BUT THEY HAVE NOT WORN WELL, COMMENTS ARCHITECT **GRAHAM MORRISON**.

POST-WAR SPORTS BUILDINGS

'Maintaining these buildings puts additional pressure on the limited land and financial resources available to cope with the very problems that they were designed to help resolve.'



CRYSTAL PALACE NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE

Designed by LCC architects and built in 1960-64, this ground-breaking reinforced concrete frame building housed the first Olympic-sized pool in southern Britain and was one of the first indoor multi-functional halls in the U.K. Although listed grade II* elements of its design have caused problems and demolition was a recent threat. However, English Heritage persuaded the London Development Agency to explore all options for retaining the building and very much welcomes the recent announcement that it will be overhauled to keep the pool in use until 2012. It will then be converted to "dry" use to complement a new sports centre nearby. For now it remains on English Heritage's Register of Buildings at Risk.

Our post-war buildings were necessarily concerned with content not style. Despite a shortage of labour and materials, in the two decades that followed World War II there was a massive expansion in construction to meet the demands of a new series of specialist social tasks. These years witnessed an architectural era defined by buildings whose architectural language was specifically geared to utility.

The best have since been listed (including some built specifically for sport) but increasingly they are giving us considerable cause for concern. They are different from other types of listed buildings in having an almost scientific accuracy in their design and engineering in order to support specific functions, and it is these factors (combined with their listed status) that significantly increase the degrees of difficulty when considering proposals to effect changes. Often

built in areas of social deprivation, many of which are still awaiting regeneration, maintaining these buildings puts additional pressure on the limited land and financial resources available to cope with the very problems that they were designed to help resolve.

Much importance was given to their "economy". They were intended to have a "popular" rather than a "civic" importance and it was deemed inappropriate to manifest profligacy in their construction. But were they truly "economical"? Rather they were optimal than economic – like a racehorse or athlete, made only from what was absolutely essential. This engineering philosophy must surely have proved a false economy in the long term. The taut nature of both structure and surface and the minimal use of materials have been difficult to maintain. Just as racehorses and athletes have

dramatic but relatively short active lives, so do many of these post-war buildings. They are often survived by their architectural predecessors, which in their more easy-going, long-life and loose-fit manner have become the 'tortoise' to the later high-performance 'hares'. This analogy is not misplaced, as the specificity of the "hares" accommodation was often so carefully honed that it allowed little room for future adjustment or alteration. Such buildings, exactly fitting a clearly defined brief may, in their time, have made a significant contribution to the community, but as soon as they fail, either in their construction or their ability to adapt, they can come to represent the very decline in a community that they were supposed to alleviate.

The criteria for listing 20th century buildings, and particularly those built after 1945, are much tougher than

for earlier periods and the case for listing has to be very strong. But if a building, listed for the care, consideration, and clarity of its original design, now measurably fails to perform, those responsible for deciding planning and listed buildings applications start to ask uncomfortable questions. Such specialist building types are different and will need to be looked at differently. With more and more listed post-war buildings being considered for alteration or demolition, a resolution of this issue is becoming ever more urgent.



To see the LDA's plans for Crystal Palace visit www.crystalpalacepark.org.uk.

The views of the Twentieth Century Society can be seen at www.c20society.org.uk/docs/press/060412_crystal.htm

LONDON UPDATES



BEDFORD SQUARE: PUTTING BACK THE STYLE

Bedford Square is the only Georgian square surviving intact in London, but until recently its public areas were sadly neglected. As a result of English Heritage's London Squares Campaign, it has now been transformed to provide a splendid setting for the surviving terraces of grade I listed buildings. Working in partnership with the Bedford Estate, the Crown Estate and Camden Council, English Heritage contributed £237,000 towards the overall cost of £740,000. The pavements have been relaid to the original pattern in York stone, the street lighting restored, and large areas of bound gravel have replaced broken pavement build-outs installed in the 1970s. Nearby, major improvements to Woburn Square and Gordon Square will bring to fruition English Heritage's vision for this historic part of the capital.

RAF KENLEY

Being close to Croydon in south London, this airfield (first established in 1917) was in the front-line during the Battle of Britain and subsequent "Blitz". Fighters flew from here to meet enemy raids heading for London, and it was often attacked in an attempt to knock it out of the conflict. Flying ceased in the late 1970s and much of the open space was transferred to the City of London for public access. Kenley is

unique in that whilst many of the main buildings (hangars etc) were lost, in many other respects it is seen as the most complete fighter airfield associated with the Battle to have survived the usual post-war improvements. Although some elements (fighter pens and the Officers' Mess) are individually protected, there was concern that development encroaching on the airfield's fringes would damage its



"KITTY" GODFREE BLUE PLAQUE

Kathleen 'Kitty' Godfree (1896-1992), Olympic and Wimbledon lawn tennis champion, has been commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque at 55 York Avenue, East Sheen, where she lived for 56 years. An outstanding tennis player, she is particularly renowned for winning five medals over two Olympic Games (1920 and 1924), the most Olympic tennis medals won by any player. At Wimbledon she scooped both the singles and mixed doubles titles. 'Kitty' was part of a golden age of British tennis and is remembered not only for her sporting triumphs, but also for the modesty and good-nature with which she achieved them.

810 TOTTENHAM HIGH ROAD

This rare and beautiful 18th century Merchant's House is to be saved with help from an English Heritage Grant of £325,000. One of the longest-running and most intractable Buildings at Risk cases in London, this grade II* listed building of 1715 had been left stranded and derelict since the 1980s. Now in the care of the Haringey Buildings Preservation Trust, the grant will finally allow repair work to start after 20 years of failed attempts. Initial work sees the removal of the ugly later period extensions at the front and back, timber and structural repairs and the reinstatement of windows on the front. Once the exterior is repaired the Trust will decide on a future use which will both generate revenue to keep it maintained and allow some public access.

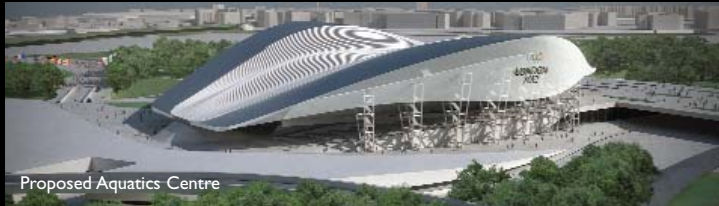


historic character. Joint action was therefore taken by Croydon and Tandridge Councils, supported by English Heritage and the Friends of Kenley Airfield, to designate the airfield as a Conservation Area. This will much improve the ability of planning authorities to protect the special character of the airfield when considering development proposals.



2012 AND BEYOND

FORMER CULTURE SECRETARY CHRIS SMITH IS KEEN TO ENSURE THAT WE SEIZE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD A LASTING LEGACY



Proposed Aquatics Centre

With the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games just five short years away, the spotlight is increasingly focusing on the preparations for this major sporting event. However, it is equally important that we look beyond 2012 and the opportunities for providing a lasting legacy for London. How we approach the design of individual buildings and structures within the Olympic Park, is of paramount importance if we are to create something that is truly world class and that will be central to a continuing cultural enrichment.

It is vital that artistic and cultural design elements, be they for the Park or individual buildings, form part of the main design process from the very beginning rather than something "tacked on" as an afterthought. The best results will be achieved through partnership working via a combination of creative competition and public engagement. Using the construction phase as a tool to involve the general public in architectural and artistic design, harnessing their mounting excitement as 2012 approaches, is a wonderful opportunity that should be grasped. Indeed, simply raising public debate on such issues could in itself be a cultural legacy, establishing a new benchmark for future construction projects for public engagement and access.

2012 is the classic "once in a lifetime" chance that London's cultural community will relish. Getting the cultural content right can only strengthen London's position as a world class creative city - a centre for design, media, arts and heritage and all under the gaze of a global audience. The Olympic Development Authority (ODA) is the champion for delivering cultural content through infrastructure development in the years preceding 2012, and with the clock ticking it is critical that the ODA and LOCOG (the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games) start this process now at the earliest planning and construction phases. Let us seize this golden opportunity to produce something that truly brings the worlds of sport and the arts together giving present and future generations a sustainable and worthy legacy that we can all be proud of.

"Getting the cultural content right can only strengthen London's position as a world class creative city – a centre for design, media, arts and heritage and all under the gaze of a global audience."

NEXT ISSUE LONDON'S SUBURBS

London is a patchwork of planned urban quarters and historic villages, each with its own sense of identity, but an identity increasingly threatened. We take a look at some of the issues they face.



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