



# THE ST MARYLEBONE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023 Number 367

[www.stmarylebonesociety.org](http://www.stmarylebonesociety.org)

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## THE BAKER STREET QUARTER IS COMING!



Baker Street Quarter public consultation in Dorset Square.

Following its successful ballot of businesses in the area in November 2022, Baker Street Quarter Partnership is pleased to be extending its provision of services further north beyond Marylebone Road to encompass the area around Marylebone station (see map on page 2).

The extension means that, from April, amongst other initiatives, Baker Street Quarter's Street Team will begin patrolling and monitoring the local area, seven days a week, from 7.00 until 23.00 on weekdays and 11.00 – 23.00 at weekends, deterring crime and anti-social behaviour. The team also monitors and reports on cleanliness and maintenance to bring a positive experience for those living and working locally and providing visitors with a warm welcome. In the coming months BakerStreetQ will be adding an enhanced cleaning service that can be called upon by the Street Team to tackle litter, spills, fly tips, fly posting and graffiti.

The Street Team will continue to work closely with the police, TfL and the

council, sharing information and gathering evidence that is used to support them taking action. The team is already building relationships with Chiltern Railways and the team at Marylebone Station to ensure this work expands to this new area of operation. Additional outreach services, funded by BakerStreetQ, will also be extended, providing targeted support and resolution for rough-sleepers.

The Baker Street Quarter Partnership was established in 2013 as a Business Improvement District – a not-for-profit company funded and directed by local businesses for the benefit of the broader community of the Baker Street and Marylebone area. Their mandate was renewed recently with 80% turnout and 99% approval of businesses. Their focus is on enhancing and managing the area for the benefit of everyone working here, living in the area and visiting, and with a vision for an area that is progressive, compelling and connected. Since its launch, BakerStreetQ has undertaken a range of projects to improve cleanliness and security in the area and initiatives to support

improvements to air quality, including introducing an area-wide recycling scheme for businesses that has led to a reduction in the number of waste collection trips, and consequently traffic emissions, in the area by 58%. A recently developed Sustainability Action Plan drives forward this area of work with plans for more projects to support carbon reduction and additional greening to encourage biodiversity.

The extension further north enables the Partnership to bring its services to this key district of Marylebone, including the station as a key gateway to the area, as well as moving closer to BakerStreetQ's charitable giving initiatives that forge partnerships between businesses and the communities in Church Street/Lisson Grove.

For more information on Baker Street Quarter Partnership, visit the website at [www.bakerstreetq.co.uk](http://www.bakerstreetq.co.uk). There, you can also sign up to the fortnightly newsletter to stay up to date on the latest projects and news from across the area.

See page 2 for more on the Baker Street Quarter.

# PLANNING MATTERS: PLACE-MAKING CONSULTATION

There have been several opportunities recently for residents to feed into a wide-ranging consultation about the area being carried out by Soundings, a community engagement and consultation company, and Publica, urban designers, appointed by the Baker Street Quarter Partnership working with The Portman Estate. In November last year the SMS planning committee took part in a walkabout with Publica which gave us an opportunity to convey local problems and discuss solutions and ideas. In December, Soundings held a street-side public consultation exercise,

as highlighted at our AGM, based at the corner of Dorset Square, the heart of our conservation area and a place we all wish to see protected in terms of townscape, traffic and pollution.

This complemented other events as well as an online survey. Comments made are on the online interactive map at [www.bakerstreetandmarylebonearea.co.uk](http://www.bakerstreetandmarylebonearea.co.uk)

Opinions were gathered about how people experience the area currently, what makes it special, and what needs to be addressed to improve things for

everyone. This included local services, car parking, public spaces and greenery, community and cultural offer, the night-time economy, how safe the area feels, and the routes and modes people use to move around the area and where they avoid.

We look forward to hearing the findings of the consultation in the coming month and discussing with the Partnership ideas for desired improvements in line with the views heard.

*Gaby Higgs*



Map of the Baker Street Quarter area: The existing area in yellow and the expansion area in orange.



Our walkabout with BSQ and consultants.



A member of the BSQ Street Team, which patrols and monitors the local area.

## CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Able Homecare  
 Alan Higgs Architect  
 Altiplano Finance Ltd  
 Baker Street Quarter Partnership  
 Blandford Estate Residents' Association  
 CAMBARD RTM Ltd.  
 Chiltern Court (Baker Street)  
 Residents Ltd  
 Clarence Gate Gardens  
 Residents' Association

Crown Estate Paving Commission  
 CWC Enterprises  
 Fellowship of the School of  
 Economic Science  
 Howard de Walden Estate  
 Ian Wylie Architects  
 Kubie Gold  
 Lisson Gallery  
 Mac Services  
 Marylebone Theatre

Old Philologists  
 Portman Estate  
 Royal Parks  
 St Marylebone Parish Church  
 The Chiltern Firehouse  
 The Fruit Garden (TFG)  
 The Seashell Restaurant  
 Ward & Burke  
 York Estates

# ST MARYLEBONE SOCIETY'S 74TH AGM NOVEMBER 2022

The meeting was held at St Cyprian's Church, with 46 attendees. Joint-Chair Mike Wood chaired the meeting.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mike Wood welcomed those attending. A legacy of the Covid pandemic has been to transform our use of communication technology and Robert McAulay is to be congratulated for stepping up to become our "Zoom Czar".

As the Society enters its 75th year, it is instructive to review how the Society meets the needs of its members. The SMS has broadly 3 areas of activity: 1) as a historical society – researching and publishing on the history of the area; 2) a role in relation to planning and the environment and 3) organising events and social activities.

It has been a productive year on the local history front. After a lull during the Covid lockdown, sales of the Society's "Discovering St Marylebone" have bounced back. The Newsletter maintains its high standards of scholarship and design. Our thanks go to Cynthia Poole for contributing many fascinating articles and to Robert McAulay for his creative layouts and design. In 1952 we published a booklet about the Memorial Garden which the Society played a part in creating. Over the past year, I have been putting the finishing touches to a book which updates and greatly expands that publication. We hope that it will be published next year.

Gaby Higgs will report on planning later, but I want to note here the changes since I first joined the Planning Committee approximately 30 years ago. At that time, we were well-supported as a planning consultee to Westminster Council:

- the Council paid the Society an annual grant for consulting on planning matters,
- the Society had free use of meeting rooms in the Old Council House – and, as many of you will remember, we held our AGMs in the Board Room there.
- WCC provided us with large-format paper plans to help us review planning applications.

None of this support is provided today. It is to the great credit of the Planning Committee that they somehow find ways to adapt to these challenges.

Finally, I want to address the social side of the Society and Events. When the SMS was founded in 1948, it was the only Amenity Society, covering the whole London Borough of Marylebone. Since then, a complex ecology of local organisations has evolved. New amenity societies have been formed, including the St John's Wood Society in



Photo: Johan Van Der Merwe.

Gaby Higgs delivering her talk.

the 1960s and the Marylebone Association in the 1980s. Following the Localism Act of 2011, Neighbourhood Forums have been set up for: St John's Wood, Church Street, Marylebone and East Marylebone (now called Fitzrovia West). Plus, there is the very active "Friends of Regent's Park" which organises an extensive programme of events. All these organisations have overlapping memberships and compete for a relatively small number of active volunteers. And I have not yet mentioned the Baker Street Quarter, which not only works to improve the amenity of a large part of Marylebone but also organises events and walks etc.

It is in this context that I report that, having organised two successful concerts, our Events Co-ordinator, Irene Martin-Smith, has decided to step down. We thank her warmly for her contribution to the Society. We therefore renew our call for a volunteer (or volunteers) to organise Events for the SMS, whilst recognising that ultimately what the Society does in this sphere will depend on what, if anything, our members volunteer to organise.

Talking of being over-committed, Cynthia Poole and myself, having served in various capacities over decades, agreed at the beginning of 2022, jointly to chair the Society for one year. In the absence of other volunteers, we are prepared to continue for an additional year, but we will be looking to someone else to take on the responsibility of chairing the Society after that – although we would propose to continue contributing to the Society in our various other capacities.

## ELECTIONS

The following Officers of the Society were all re-elected *nem. con.*: Mo Parkes (Hon. Gen. Sec.), Robert McAulay (Membership Sec.), Liz Queenan (Hon. Treasurer)

The following Council members were re-elected *nem. con.*: Gaby Higgs, Mike Wood, Cynthia Poole, Patricia Kleinman, Ian Wylie. Anthony Alford was re-appointed as External Auditor:

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Liz Queenan reported that the main source of income from subscriptions to the Society were slightly down on last year. Other income of £6,709, included £370 from the sale of publication and £2,561 from ticket sales for two recitals. Expenditure covered the costs of the recitals, newsletters, website, zoom fees, insurance, subscriptions, AGM costs and the External Auditor's fee. The SMS also sponsored a chair in the Marylebone Parish Church. These costs resulted in an overspend of £211. The bank account balance was £2,476. There is a NS&I bond of £19,817, plus an unavailable amount of interest, estimated at £150. The Society has a total of £22,293 assets with no debtors.

## PLANNING MATTERS PRESENTATION

Gaby Higgs gave a round-up of planning matters over the year with slides.

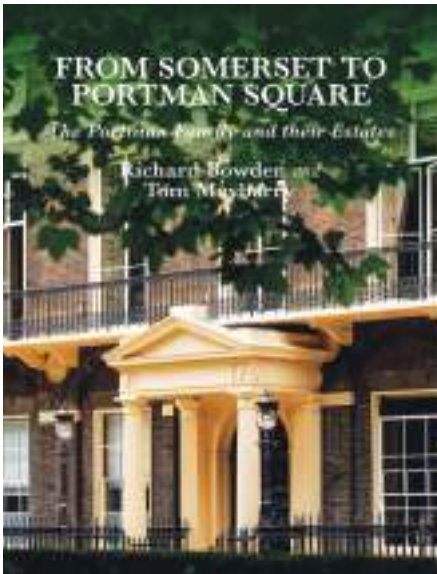
After Gaby took over as Chair in February 2022, the Committee held regular Zoom meetings. Limited by resources, it is trialing an approach whereby each member of the planning committee pursues areas of specific interest to them. These include: Dorset Square Conservation Area; Marylebone Station; the quality of new developments; conservation of 20th century properties; air quality with relation to pollution and idling; cycle and pedestrian routes; and further connections with Marylebone Forum, Baker Street Quarter and Regent's Park.

There have been 50 planning apps this year. Including work on a new University of Westminster extension at 29 Marylebone Road and redesign and refurbishment of the old Marylebone BHS HQ. We saw the problematic emergence of "dark supermarkets" (one proposed for Boston Place was refused) and a large number of BT hubs springing up. Other developments included the redevelopment of Seymour Leisure Centre to house the new Marylebone Library; a new Marylebone Theatre and the demolition and new build at 26-44 Lisson Grove.

In June a 2-hour Planning Walk was organised with the WCC Planning Dept, during which we talked about specific building projects. A second walk, with the newly elected local councillors, focused on street problems in the area.

Finally, Gaby Higgs gave a very well received and illuminating talk titled "The St Marylebone Society - Saving the Nash Terraces".

# THE PORTMAN FAMILY – A DEFINITIVE HISTORY



The book is available from Daunt Books, Marylebone High Street.

***From Somerset to Portman Square: The Portman Family and their Estates*** by Richard Bowden and Tom Mayberry, The Portman Estate £25 pp192.

Full disclosure – Richard Bowden, co-author of the above book, is a long-standing SMS member known to many of us. Indeed, members received a foretaste of this book in a presentation he gave to the Society's AGM in 2015 entitled "*Fortune's Wheel; the Portman Family's London Estate*". Richard who at one time worked for Westminster City Archives and, until he retired, was Archivist at the Portman Estate, was chiefly responsible for the London chapters while his co-author, Tom Mayberry, Chief Executive of the South West Heritage Trust, was chiefly responsible for the West Country chapters. Notwithstanding its impeccable scholarship, the book is an easy read, with notes and references placed unobtrusively at the end together with a helpful family tree which spans over 700 years across 6 pages. The family's story, which in large measure is also the story of a significant part of Marylebone, is brought vividly to life with 122 illustrations, many culled from Portman Estate and City of Westminster Archives.

The family first enter the written record in 1301-2, starting as they were to continue, with a Thomas Portman conducting a property transaction in Taunton, Somerset. By 1334-5 the family held at least 12 dwellings in the town. The Marylebone connection came about in 1532 when William Portman (c1498-1557), later Lord Chief Justice,

bought the remaining 30-year term of a lease on 11 fields in the manor of Lilestone – a manor that made up what we now think of as the west side of Marylebone. Two of the fields, in the south-west corner, were called "Great Gibbet Field" and "Little Gibbet Field". The gibbet referred to was of course Tyburn gallows, which, since the end of the twelfth century, had stood at what is now the junction of Oxford Street and Edgware Road. These 11 fields had an area of about 300 acres and the lease on them had originally been granted by the Prior of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenwell.

However, shortly after William Portman purchased his leasehold interest, the Dissolution of the Monasteries resulted in the manors of Tyburn and Lilestone reverting to the Crown. Henry VIII wanted to create a new hunting ground, Marylebone Park (which later became Regent's Park), and the roughly circular park he created took in about 42 acres from the north-east corner of the 11 fields leased by Sir William Portman (as he had by then become). It is a testament to Sir William's negotiating skills that he managed to retain the remaining land outside the new park. In 1554 he successfully upgraded his leasehold interest by securing Letters Patent granting him the freehold of the remaining approximately 258 acres outside the park.

And there the story of the London estate languished for the next 200 years. The land was let for farming, yielding an annual rental income of over £500 (as indexed by accounts in c1660). All the while, the Portmans grew their land holdings in the West Country and allied themselves by marriage to other leading local families. And in 1611, Sir William Portman's grandson, Sir John Portman (1562-1612), enhanced the family's status by buying a baronetcy for £1,095. This hereditary honour descended in his family for the next 80 years before being extinguished for want of offspring.

This is where the inheritance of the Estate gets complicated, as the thrice-married 6th Baron, Sir William Portman (1644-90) sought to preserve the Portman name. His chosen heir, his first cousin Henry Seymour (c1640-1728), was to inherit on condition he took the surname Portman, which he duly did. A year after he inherited, Henry Seymour consolidated

his new wealth by marrying an heiress, Penelope Haslewood. Penelope died childless and in 1714 Henry amazed society by marrying Meliora Fitch, a girl reputedly only 14 years old and thus 60 years his junior. That marriage was also childless and the Estate passed to William Berkeley (-1737), who also changed his name to Portman. Although originally a "Berkeley", William's marriage to Anne Seymour (-1752) in fact reunited two strands of the Portman family which flowed via two sisters of the 5th Baron, Sir William Portman (1608-45). These convolutions of inheritance are best appreciated by tracing them though the family tree provided at the back of the book.

Meanwhile, back in Marylebone, the Portman family were about to turbocharge the wealth generating capacity of what remained of their 11 fields by developing them according to the Leasehold System. In this they were following the lead of the Earls of Bedford on their Covent Garden estate in the 1630s, and more recently the owners of the adjacent Harley (or Portland) estate. Essentially the landowner granted leases to developers, for say 99 years, at a low or peppercorn rent for the time it took to build on the land. Developers built at their own expense and their properties had to conform with an outline development plan. The developer would then recoup his building costs and make a profit by selling on the unexpired term of the leases to third parties, who were bound by various Estate Covenants and had to pay the freeholder "ground rent", subject to built-in increases. These ground rents from the developed land were vastly greater than the agricultural rents that they replaced. A bonus for a landowner prepared to take the long view was, having had his estate developed at the expense of third parties, the properties reverted back to his descendants when the relevant leases expired.

In the mid-18th century, the Portman's London Estate was made up of two farms, one at Lisson Green, farmed by a Mr William Baker, and one halfway along Oxford Street – on a site where 150 years later Harry Gordon Selfridge would build a department store. In 1755 Henry William Portman I (1709-61) granted William Baker a lease on the entire estate which, for the first time,

permitted development – subject to individual building leases being granted by the Estate. Orchard Street and Portman Street were the first two streets built and named after the original family home in Somerset (Orchard Portman). Indeed, all the streets shown on Rocque’s map of 1761 were named after the Portman family or their West Country homes, with one notable exception – Quebec Street. The building leases for that were granted in 1759, the year of General Wolfe’s



Richard Bowden.

victory at the Battle of Quebec. The book contains much rich detail on the unfolding development of the Estate, which was essentially completed by the time Portman Market was built on (New) Church Street in 1832. Potter’s map of 1832 shows only one square remained to be completed, Harewood Square, immediately to the south of Blandford Square. By the end of the century, both these squares were destined to be included in the 14 acres compulsorily purchased for £260,000 to construct Marylebone Station. Further sales of freeholds took place in 1899, 1900 and 1910 to accommodate the enlargement of Baker Street Station and the opening of the Central Line’s Marble Arch station. But the biggest contraction of the Estate came about not through compulsory purchase but as a consequence of Estate Duty, which was introduced in 1894.

Edward Berkeley Portman II (1799-1888) had been only 23 when he inherited the family estates. He was created Baron Portman in 1837 and Viscount Portman of Bryanston in 1873 after a long and distinguished career in public service, including briefly being MP for the newly created Parliamentary seat of Marylebone in 1832-3. His son, William Henry Berkeley Portman, the

2nd Viscount, died in 1919 and his son, Henry, the 3rd Viscount, died in 1923. These two deaths in rapid succession led to heavy death duties. For complex reasons, which you will have to read the book to discover, the West Country estates bore the brunt of sales, with only about 7 acres near Church Street sold from the London estate. It was different story following the death of the 7th Viscount, Gerald Portman in 1948, when death duties amounted to £7.6 million. In March 1951 42 acres north of the Marylebone Road were sold, including all the properties in and around Church Street and Dorset Square. Then in November 1952 41 acres running south from Marylebone Road down to Dorset Street were sold. The London estate was reduced to 110 acres, less than half the 258 acres that Sir William Portman had been granted the freehold of in 1554. One of the first actions of the 8th Viscount on inheriting the estates, was to introduce a new corporate structure designed, among other things, to reduce the estate’s future liability to death duties<sup>1</sup>. The book goes on to describe how these years took their toll.

Lord Portman, the 8th Viscount (1903-1967), presided over the opening of the Old Church Garden in the High Street in 1952<sup>2</sup>, a project carried out by the newly formed St Marylebone Society, *“But he twice declined invitations to speak to the society about the history of the estate owing to the pressure of death duties and the two estate sales, which were heavy blows to him”* (p148). With some delay, this book richly makes up for those declined invitations.

*Mike Wood*

<sup>1</sup> In 1955 the corporate structure was changed again to create a business trust, called Portman Family Settled Estates, under which Lord Portman did not participate in trust matters and the trustees alone decided how the income was to be distributed.

<sup>2</sup> Fittingly, following in the footsteps of his great-uncle, Lord Christopher Portman, the 10th Viscount, presided over the reopening on 18th November 2012 of the restored Memorial Garden (a.k.a. The Old Church Garden) after its renovation by the SMS and others. Lord Portman also generously contributed towards the cost of the Society’s forthcoming publication *The Memorial Garden revisited: Its churches and the people of Marylebone*.

## LETTERS

*A member of the Balcombe Street diaspora reminisces:*

Dear Mike Wood,

Struck by an urge to find out “whatever happened to...” the other evening I searched the internet for Michael Joseph and found your remembrance of him in the St Marylebone Society newsletter (Spring 2017).

I too shared the house with Michael. That was from 1968 to 1975 (five months before the IRA siege) when I left to live first in the Philippines and then in Hong Kong where I still am.

On the morning of my departure Michael appeared concealing in his fist a small box which he pressed into my palm saying *“This went with me to the East and now it is going with you”*. It was one of his army rank buttons and has lived ever since in the same box wrapped in cotton wool. I think the time has come to make it into a brooch.

I emailed a link to your article to the only other Balcombe Street resident in those days whose whereabouts I know (and who made a small fortune reporting on the siege).

Days of recalling wonderful warm-hearted stuff followed – including my recollection of opening the front door with Michael one Saturday morning to see the Beatles’ “psychedelic” Rolls Royce\* parked immediately outside. For some reason our reaction was not curiosity but gales of laughter. We then laughed because we were laughing...

*Best wishes, Jo McBride  
Hong Kong*



Michael Joseph

\*John Lennon bought the Rolls Royce Phantom V in 1965, custom-painted black. In 1967 he had it re-painted bright yellow, with brightly coloured “psychedelic”/Romany-style designs. He took the car with him to New York, but subsequently sold it to settle a tax bill. It was bought at auction by a Vancouver billionaire for US\$2,299,000 who, after displaying it in various contexts, donated it to a Canadian museum. Today it is a well-loved exhibit at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, where it still raises the spirits of all those who see it – just as it did in Balcombe Street, all those years ago.

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# JULIA WEDGWOOD (1833-1913): THE THOUGHTFUL WOMAN PAR EXCELLENCE

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Frances Julia Wedgwood as a young woman.

Frances Julia Wedgwood spent much of her life in or near Marylebone. Despite receiving a sporadic education, she became the cleverest of her generation of the Wedgwood-Darwin-Mackintosh clan, learning much by private study and interaction with the family's extensive social network. She was a leading Victorian intellectual who made substantial contributions to literature, philosophy, science and theology. She is now the subject of a major biography by Dr Sue Brown.

### Family and social circle

Julia Wedgwood was born in February 1833, the eldest of the six surviving children of Hensleigh and Fanny Wedgwood. Hensleigh was the grandson of Josiah Wedgwood, the innovative potter, and brother of Emma, who married Charles Darwin. He trained as a barrister but made a living as Registrar of London Cabs and company directorships. This allowed him time to pursue his passion for philology and compile a 3-volume dictionary of English etymology.

Julia's mother, Fanny, was the favourite child of Sir James Mackintosh MP, the Scottish philosopher, historian and jurist. Her salons were attended by figures like Macaulay, Thackeray, Ruskin and Carlyle. Her friends included

leading women writers like Elizabeth Gaskell and Maria Edgeworth, Harriet Martineau, often regarded as the first sociologist, and Mary Somerville, a polymath and scientist. So Julia grew up in an intellectual environment interacting with many talented, high-achieving women as well as men.

Hensleigh and Fanny Wedgwood began their married life in Langham Place but moved to Clapham on the death of her father, returning to a house on Gower Street, Bloomsbury in 1839. Shortly after, Charles and Emma Darwin moved in four doors down to start their married life. For most of the '40s, '50s and '60s the Hensleigh Wedgwoods lived at various addresses around Regent's Park,

including Cumberland Place and 1 Cumberland Terrace.

The family moved to Surrey in 1872 but soon missed having a Marylebone base. In 1875 they leased 31 Queen Anne Street, a few doors away from Erasmus Darwin, Charles' elder brother and a close friend of them both. Julia moved in with them. As their eldest daughter and only unmarried child, she would have been expected to stay at home and look after her elderly parents. She did for a while until her quarrelsome brother and his wife regularly interrupted the household and her ability to work. Despite her mother's ill health, Julia moved to a nearby "lodging house" at 56 George Street early in 1880 and stayed there until after her mother's death in May 1889. After that she took a house at 94 Gower Street to provide a home for her father until his death in 1891. She moved to a large house with leafy views at 16 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park in 1896 until her death in 1913.

### Relationship with Marian Hughes

Julia's choice of companion when she left her parents' home caused a ruckus in the fastidious, socially conscious Wedgwood family. She took Marian Hughes, a lowly young parlour maid, to her unconventional independent household as manager and companion. The relationship had its ups and downs

but lasted till Julia died. It gave her practical support and the stability she needed for her work as well as a point of contact with the real world. Marian ran the house, looked after Julia's nephews when their parents abandoned them, joined her at dinner with guests and passed on the family and servants gossip she would otherwise have missed. When Hensleigh lived with Julia at 94 Gower Street, he quickly came to appreciate Marian. Julia provided well for Marian in her will but, despite having ample means, Marian could not maintain her social status in London without Julia. She emigrated to Texas and died five years later.

### Education

The Hensleigh Wedgwoods were involved in the foundation of two of the first colleges of higher education for women – Queen's College, in Marylebone, and Bedford College. However, like most women at that time, Julia received relatively little formal education and had to teach herself Latin, Greek, French and German. She had some drawing lessons from Ruskin. She spent a year at a school in Liverpool aged 13 being taught by the great Unitarian leader, James Martineau, and briefly attended Queen's College, where F D Maurice, the founder of Christian Socialism, was one of her teachers. She entered Bedford College, alongside George Eliot and Barbara Bodichon, when it opened in 1849 but dropped out in 1851, when she was 18, after a severe bout of meningitis. This illness aggravated her incipient deafness but she nonetheless became renowned for her brilliant conversation and passion for scientific and theological debate.

### Early accomplishments

In her mid-20s, Julia wrote two novels, *Framleigh Hall* in 1857 and *An Old Debt* (as Florence Dawson) in 1858. Both dealt with intellectual conflict, confused gender roles and sexual passion and were well received. But she turned away from fiction after her father criticized them and begged her to "*write something more cheerful*". She turned to non-fiction writing instead and contributed to heavyweight periodicals like *Macmillan's Magazine*, *Westminster Review* and the *Spectator* tackling diverse serious topics such as Charles Darwin's books on evolution and Lyell's work on geology, as well as the debates on the origins of human speech (a topic of keen interest to her father) and the boundaries between scientific knowledge and religious belief.



Watercolour by Julia Wedgwood: A view of St Marylebone Parish Church from Regent's Park.

### Reviews of Darwin's books

Julia reviewed Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* as a two-part dialogue in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1860 and 1861. She welcomed his discoveries and sought to understand their theological significance. Darwin wrote to his niece: "I must tell you how much I admire your Article; though ... I could not clearly follow you in some parts ... due to my not being at all accustomed to metaphysical trains of thought. I think that you understand my book perfectly, and that I find a very rare event with my critics".

Her review of *The Descent of Man* in the *Spectator* in 1871 was one of two that caught his eye (the other was by Alfred Wallace), although he was unaware of its authorship. In it, Julia largely avoided the debate on Darwin's explanation of the natural development of morality and her conclusion reclaimed Darwin as a Theist. When Fanny Wedgwood disclosed the review's authorship to him, he described it as "very clever" and asked his wife Emma to congratulate Julia as "the sole person, except pure naturalists, who have noticed this part [on the significance of sexual selection] with approbation."

### Friendship with Robert Browning

Julia had an intense friendship with Robert Browning between 1863 and 1870 after his wife Elizabeth's death in Italy and his return to England. She admired Elizabeth Barrett greatly and looked to Browning to assuage her grief over the premature death of her favourite brother. Browning clearly saw similarities between Julia and Elizabeth and appreciated her intellect. He never talked down to her, was willing to explain his poems and enjoyed discussing the Classical world with her for her fresh and sometimes original insights.

Their relationship went through two distinct phases. In the first from July 1863 to March 1865, he called regularly at the family home at 1 Cumberland Terrace and they met and wrote frequently. Whereas Julia had hoped the

fact that he was a man and she a woman was incidental to their friendship, others in the family/social circle envisaged marriage. And so, Julia, out of a sense of honour, suddenly broke off the friendship much to Browning's surprise and hurt.

In the second phase from October 1868 to July 1870 they did not meet but

corresponded. Browning got in touch, offering to show her the long poem he was finishing and she responded eagerly. He asked for her "honest" criticism of *The Ring and the Book*, which he considered his major work, and got it. She was highly critical of his sympathetic portrayal of wickedness and immorality in the poem. He patiently tried to explain himself but, when she told him his work was unworthy of a poet who had been married to Elizabeth, he became irked and eventually closed their correspondence with: "Come let us go back to that quiet place where we do not forget each other."

### Later interests

Encouraged by Richard Hutton, the editor of the *Spectator*, Julia extended her range, writing with insight on the Classical world, English mysticism, history, literature, theology and politics. She served as an unofficial tutor in Greek and Latin to the first intake of what would become Girton College, Cambridge. This was the first higher education institution at which women were expected to follow the same courses and sit the same exams as men, even though they could not graduate.

Julia argued a deliberately moderate case for female suffrage in a key contribution to a collection of articles on women's issues edited by Mrs Josephine Butler in 1869. She talked about equity, not equality and asked for some, more suitable professions to be open to women, not all. Time would show what was possible. She supported Elizabeth Garrett Anderson's successful campaign in Marylebone for election to the first London School Board in 1870 and continued to campaign for female suffrage until Gladstone rejected the case in his 1884 Reform Act. Then, like her friend, Frances Power Cobbe, she turned to the rights of animals and became a passionate anti-vivisectionist. She left a large part of her substantial fortune to animal welfare causes.

Julia's book *The Moral Ideal* (1888 and

1907), the outcome of twenty years of research, reflection and writing, traced the evolution of man's aspiration towards the divine through the great world civilisations from earliest antiquity to mid-19th century. It was, in part, her answer to Darwinism. It was critically acclaimed and marked the apogee of her literary success. In *Nineteenth Century Teachers* (1909) she republished several of her profiles of leading Victorians she had known such as Thomas Carlyle, George Eliot, Dean Stanley, John Ruskin, Richard Hutton and her spiritual mentor, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. Her biography of John Wesley in 1870 had been much-praised and she was writing a life history of her great-grandfather, Josiah Wedgwood, when she died aged 80.

At the height of her reputation, Julia Wedgwood was seen as one of the great female intellects of Victorian England, second only to George Eliot in her ability to handle difficult 'masculine' subjects and 'modern' themes. She deserves to be better known today.

Sheila D'Souza



The paperback edition of Dr Sue Brown's biography of Julia Wedgwood.

With grateful thanks to Dr Sue Brown for generously sharing the text of her lecture on Julia Wedgwood given to the Browning Society on 19 November 2022. The paperback edition of her book is now available.

### Sources

Sue Brown, *Julia Wedgwood, the unexpected Victorian: the life and writing of a remarkable female intellectual* (Anthem Press, Nineteenth Century Series, 2022)

Wedgwood, (Frances) Julia (1833-1913)  
[www.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52808](http://www.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52808)  
[www.darwinproject.ac.uk/julia-wedgwood](http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/julia-wedgwood)

# EVENTS IN MARYLEBONE

## ST MARYLEBONE PARISH CHURCH, 17 Marylebone Road, NW1 5LT [www.stmarylebone.org](http://www.stmarylebone.org)

A free in-person and online series of lectures entitled “*A progressive Society – Nineteenth Century St Marylebone*”. From 6.30-8pm. The next 3 lectures are:

1st March: “*Mary Seacole*” by Jane Robinson

3rd May: “*J.M.W. Turner*” by Catherine Parry-Wingfield

7th June: “*Elizabeth Garrett Anderson*” by Prof. Lawrence Goldman

For more details and to book/register email: [events@stmarylebone.org](mailto:events@stmarylebone.org)

## MARYLEBONE THEATRE

[www.marylebonetheatre.com](http://www.marylebonetheatre.com)

Our new local theatre. Visit their newly refurbished café serving excellent coffee and light meals with a licensed bar. For more information see their website or pop in for their leaflet.

Future performances include:

14-26 March: “*Grenfell: System Failure*”

Nick of Time Productions and the Playground Theatre. Following last year's critically acclaimed production “*Grenfell: Value Engineering*”, this production explores further vital questions raised at the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in the last eighteen months. Edited by Richard Norton-Taylor & Nicolas Kent and directed by Nicolas Kent. Tickets: £17.50 - £35

31 March-6 May: “*The Dry House*”

By Eugene O'Hare. A world premiere: In the Irish border town of Newry, Chrissy promises her sister Claire that after one final drink she will go to *The Dry House* to get sober. Does she mean it this time?

Tickets: £25 -£40.

7-24 June: “*Dedication*”

A singular tale from the Holocaust that is at once extraordinary and relatable. Written, produced and performed by Roger Peltzman. Directed by Jessi D. Hill. Tickets: £20-£35.

The Theatre offers members a 20% discount on tickets for “*The Dry House*” (preview shows excluded as they are already discounted) and “*Dedication*”. The discount code is **OFFER20**.

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

The RAM has an extensive programme of classical, modern and jazz concerts and master classes during term time. All are open to the public. Some concerts are free entry but for all concerts tickets must be booked in **advance**

The programme includes:

Tues 7th March, 1pm in the Angela Burgess Recital Hall; the Academy Saxophone and Clarinet Ensemble perform a programme curated by Simon

Haram, including an arrangement of Beethoven's Octet in E flat, Op 103. Free Entry.

Tues 21st– Fri 24th March, 6pm in the Susie Sainsbury Theatre, “*Le Nozze di Figaro*” by the Royal Academy Opera conducted by Alice Farnham. Tickets £20-£30 (conc. £15-£25).

Mon 24th March, 1pm in the Dukes Hall, Trevor Pinnock conducts the Academy Soloists Ensemble. Brand new versions of JS Bach's keyboard partitas, reimagined for chamber orchestra by Thomas Oehler in a joint performance with the students from the Toronto Glenn Gould School. Free Entry.

## REGENT'S PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE [www.openairtheatre.com](http://www.openairtheatre.com)

Public booking is already open for the first play of the 2023 season.

10th May-10th June: “*Once on this island*” – a musical story of love, grief, faith, and hope which tells of a union that prejudice forbids.

## THE LONDON ZOO [www.zsl.org](http://www.zsl.org)

On New Year's Day a baby two-toed sloth called Nova was born in the Zoo. Visitors can see Nova and her mother Marilyn, together with 14,000 other animals in the Zoo.

Also, expected to open on 31 March – “*The Secret Life of Reptiles and Amphibians*” is currently under construction in Barclay Court in the centre of the Zoo. This new purpose-built space will include the world's largest amphibian and largest aquatic frog. Find out about the exciting conservation work happening around the world to save reptiles and amphibians on the brink of extinction.

## LISSON GALLERY

67 Lisson Street and 27 Bell Street [www.Lissongallery.com](http://www.Lissongallery.com)

24 February - 8 April 2023 at 67 Lisson Street – Tues-Sat 11 – 6

**Haroon Mirza** presents a solo exhibition of new works, entitled |||, forming a constellation of installations around the so-called ‘Holy’ or ‘Divine’ frequency of 111 Hz, which provides a sonic bathing experience that permeates the gallery spaces. Individual works incorporate light, moving image, sound and sculpture, while a living ecosystem deriving from one of Mirza's solar-panel works ‘powers’ an ant colony and a fungus farm.

3 March – 8 April 2023: **Julian Opie** introduces an ambitious new series of works across Lisson Gallery's Bell Street spaces this March. The exhibition begins with the UK premiere of a ground-breaking new virtual reality experience: the first time Lisson Gallery has presented a VR work in its

50+ year history. Using portable headsets, visitors are invited to journey through a new dimension, encompassing multiple realms spanning from intimate interactions to multi-layered experiences. The presentation also includes a new fast-paced dance sequence, life-size and large-scale portraits, as well as landscapes and architectural works, both indoors and out.

## LONDON PARKS & GARDENS [www.londongardenstrust.org](http://www.londongardenstrust.org)

Their Winter Lecture Series continues (see website for details and to book):

14 March online lecture: “*London's Ancient Trees*” by Russell Miller. 6 pm tickets £5 each.

“*London Open Gardens*” is on the 10th and 11th June 2023. You can get early bird tickets now online.

## HELLENIC CENTRE in Paddington Street [www.helleniccentre.org](http://www.helleniccentre.org)

2nd March, the Waldstein Piano Trio in collaboration with clarinettist Benjamin Mason: *Quartet for the End of Time* by Olivier Messiaen. Booking via Eventbrite or 020 7487 5060

## THE COCKPIT THEATRE in Gateforth Street [www.thecockpit.org.uk](http://www.thecockpit.org.uk)

There are a number of events showing over the next months. 30th March – 1st April: “*Trolls OnLine*” is a new show. Wild rock and beautiful ballads intersperse audacious scenes which speak directly of our complex multi-layered, hazard-strewn modern lives. Directed by Marcus Fernando.

## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY 2022

**Patron:** Lord Montagu

**President:** Lord Adonis

**Co-Chairs:** Cynthia Poole and Mike Wood

**Hon. Secretary:** Mo Parkes

**Hon. Treasurer:** Liz Queenan

### Council Members:

Gaby Higgs (Planning Co-ordinator)  
Cynthia Poole (Local History, Planning)

Robert McAulay  
(Newsletter and Membership)

Mike Wood (Local History)

Ian Wylie (Planning)

Patricia Kleinman (Planning)

## The Society needs an EVENTS ORGANISER

Will need to be able to communicate via email.

Any volunteers please contact

[mail@stmarylebonesociety.org](mailto:mail@stmarylebonesociety.org)