



Newsletter – March 2016



Green plaque

Wandsworth Council unveiled a green plaque on 9 March at the former entrance on Church Lane commemorating Tooting Military Hospital, now an exit from Hawthorn Crescent. This is the local equivalent of the national scheme to mark places of historical interest.

The St Benedicts site in turn housed St Joseph's Roman Catholic College, Tooting Home for the Aged and Infirm, Tooting Military Hospital and, until it was demolished to make way for our development, St Benedicts Hospital. This history is available at www.stbentooting.co.uk/history. The parts on Tooting Military Hospital and St Benedicts Hospital are reproduced overleaf.



Tree work

This summer, we will seek Council permission to remove a few low overhanging branches from the oak trees on Rectory Lane and remove dead wood from the lime trees in Limetree Walk apparent after they were cut back in 2014 (they will not be cut back further).

The fallen tree on the bank between Abbey Drive and St Benedicts Close will be removed.

Any small trees not subject to protection order that are overgrown or causing an obstruction will also be cut back. **Please advise any small trees needing pruning by 30 April**, either by using the website fault report form or by contacting the Managing Agent, Rendall and Rittner. If you miss this deadline, the next opportunity for tree work will be in 2017.

→ Key loss

Keys have been lost for a sub-let flat for the second time, so the security lock and keys for the block concerned are being replaced at that flat owner's expense, around £350 + VAT. Make sure you, letting agents and tenants look after keys or you may have to pay too! You are also recommended to have insurance covering the costs of key loss and lock replacement.



Maintenance

The Directors found a local contractor to carry out routine maintenance work, Rafal Wiatek. We hope this will allow work to be carried out more quickly and economically than it has been by large contractors used by Rendall and Rittner.

Initial work in February was very successful, including repairing a damaged flat block landing, replacing several flat block door closers that no longer worked properly, changing a ceiling lamp, easing a couple of tight doors and repairing a leaking gutter.

We hope to find an electrician locally too, as large contractors have failed to carry out or taken months to repair and replace some lights.

Following a helpful suggestion from a flat owner, Unbloc inspected all the flat sewer interceptor traps and repaired a couple of faults that might have allowed rodent entry. Also at that owner's suggestion, metal grilles will be fitted over air bricks on one block with a mouse problem as a pilot to see if that helps prevent entry. If it proves successful, they will be fitted to other blocks over the next couple of years.

After months of Wandle Housing Association failing to reply and not even being able to give us a date when it would be considered, we got their broken fencing repaired in 2 days via Twitter! See https://twitter.com/stben_tooting/.

→ Items in communal areas

Residents of flats may not store items in communal areas because of the fire risk and the obstruction of emergency exits. Any items found will be removed without notice and a note left. Those not claimed are disposed of after a while.



Newsletter – March 2016



St Benedict's history

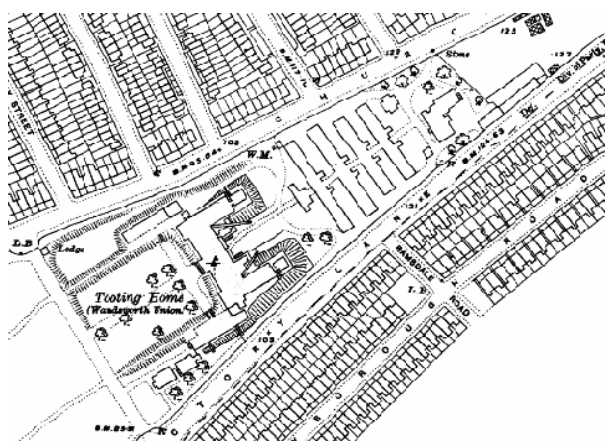
Tooting Military Hospital



The War Office took over Tooting Home for the Aged and Infirm during World War I and it became the Tooting Military Hospital. After the war the Ministry of Pensions used it as a neurological hospital for shell-shocked and neurasthenic ex-servicemen until 1923. The buildings then became empty and derelict.

As a timing comparison, the London Underground Northern line extension from Clapham Common through Tooting to Morden opened in 1926.

The map shows the area then.



St Benedict's Hospital



The London County Council bought the site in 1930. It spent up to £30,000 to renovate and re-equip it as a hospital for long-stay patients. The hospital reopened in 1931 as St Benedict's Hospital. It admitted three classes of patients: convalescents or those needing rehabilitation; the aged chronic sick; and young adults who were permanently incapable. The rehabilitation patients were transferred to Margate in 1938 and much of the activity of the Hospital was reduced, catering for the two remaining classes of patients.

The hospital joined the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948, when it had 200 patients, coming under the control of the Wandsworth Hospital Management Committee, part of the South West Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board. The X-ray Department was improved and a new chapel was built between 1948 and 1950. The hospital had 246 beds in 1950. A further 50 beds were opened for fracture cases from St James' Hospital, Balham (which was undergoing major rebuilding works) – now also closed – and for male patients undergoing rehabilitation in 1951.

As timing comparisons, the Northern line opened in Tooting in 1926 and electric trams introduced in 1902 were replaced by electric trolleybuses around 1937 to 1950, in turn replaced by diesel-powered buses during the 1960s.

Following reorganisation of the NHS in 1974, the Hospital came under the control of the Wandsworth and East Merton (Teaching) District Health Authority, part of the South West Thames Regional Health Authority. It was latterly used for geriatric care and closed in 1981.