



Blue Plaques Scheme

Policy

Putney Society has produced 7 blue plaques 2007-2011 to commemorate the lives of those who have made a significant contribution to Putney.

The policy for selecting and mounting blue plaques is:

- Buildings marked with plaques must be visible from the public highway
- Although most plaques will be erected on the former residences of famous people, the erection of plaques on subsequent buildings on the site such as blocks of flats is not excluded
- The person must have been dead for 5 years

Nominated figures must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be considered eminent by a majority of members of their own profession or calling
- Have made an important positive contribution to human welfare or happiness
- Have resided in Putney for a significant period, (3/5 years) within their life or work

Unless a case is deemed exceptional (i.e. nominee contributed something exceptional during their stay in Putney, compared with the rest of their life) each figure may only be commemorated with one plaque in London (i.e. not duplicating names already commemorated by Wandsworth Council, English Heritage)

Nominations are considered and selected by the Putney Society Executive

Plaque nominations should be sent to Sue Rolfe: rolfe.sue3@gmail.com

The Society usually mounts one new plaque per year. This document is updated annually and is available via The Putney Society website www.putneysociety.org.uk



1. Captain Lawrence Oates

Unveiled 17 March 2007

at 307 Upper Richmond Road

(1880-1912) **Antarctic explorer** - the site of the childhood home of Lawrence Oates, a key member of the team which reached the South Pole in 1912 under Captain Scott.

Lawrence Oates lived in Putney from 1885-91, from the ages of 5 to 11 in Upper Richmond Road. He was one of the first pupils to attend the Wellington Prep School nearby in Colinette Road. The school moved in 1990 to Wimbledon. Oates paid for himself to go on the Scott expedition and was accepted as a cavalry officer from the 6th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. He was the expert who would look after the ponies taken on the trip. Although they had been purchased by another member of the party, who was inexperienced with horses. Captain Scott mistakenly thought they would be the key to a successful expedition to the South Pole. Lawrence Oates is most remembered for his sacrifice in leaving the security of the tent for certain death with the immortal lines "*I am just going outside and may be some time*". He knew that his acute frostbite was limiting the party's chance of survival.

"*It was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman*" were the words written by Scott.

Within two weeks Scott and the rest of the

party would also be dead within 11 miles of the "One ton depot" which contained the supplies they desperately needed. The day of Oates' death March 17, 1912 was also the day of his thirty second birthday. The sacrifice and examples of Scott, Oates and the rest of the expedition were a tragic inspiration to the generation who went to the trenches two years later in 1914. When Oates lived in Putney it was still semi-rural with working farms, but commons, heaths river and churches where he worshipped as a boy mean that there is much he would still recognise.



2. Gavin Ewart FRSL

Unveiled 10 January 2009

at Kenilworth Court, SW15 1EN

(1916-1995) **Notable poet**

Lived at Kenilworth Court from 1963 until his death in 1995. He was born in 1916. His poems first appeared in national magazines (*the Listener* and Geoffrey Grigson's *New Verse* in 1933 when he was 17.) His first book *Poems and Songs*, was published in 1939. A Fellow of the Royal Society for Literature, Ewart produced many more collections of poems and anthologies for children. With *Pleasure of the Flesh* (1966) and *The Deceptive Grin of the Gravel Porters* (1968), Ewart's characteristic approach was set; he intermingled poems of serious autobiography, social satire and sexual humour. A

1971 by the American Academy and Institute of Arts & Letters. He often composed poems about life in Putney where he lived with his wife Margo and daughter Jane and son Julian Ewart.



3. Lord Hugh Jenkins

Unveiled 10 January 2009
at Kenilworth Court, SW15 1EN
(1908 – 2004) **Politician**

Won the seat for Putney in the dramatic 1964 General Election. Twelve years and three elections later he was appointed by Harold Wilson as Minister for the Arts and at once established himself as a controversial figure. He was determined to bring the arts closer to the people and to wrest control of arts patronage from the Establishment. He lifted the charges for museums and fought for the Public Lending Right, a democratically elected Arts Council and a new site for the British Library. He was also a leading official of Actors' Equity and Chairman of the Theatres Advisory Trust. His connection with the world of theatre meant that he had many actor friends who often supported him in dramatic fashion during his Putney election campaigns. He served as MP for Putney until 1979 – campaigning against aircraft noise and the threat of the proposed London motorway box. He was knighted as Baron Jenkins of Putney in 1981. He was married to Marie Crosbie who died in 1989 and to Helena Pavlidis who died in 1994.

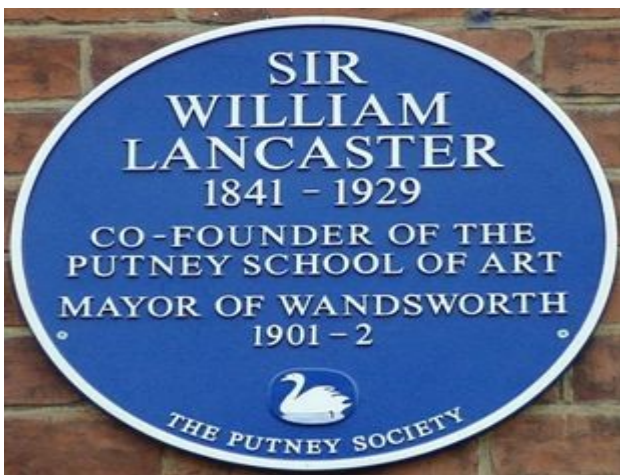
4. Norman Parkinson CBE

Unveiled 20 June 2009
at 32 Landford Rd, SW15
(1919-1936) **Photographer**

Norman Parkinson was born in Roehampton and evacuated to the country during the First World War. He spent the rest of his childhood living at 32 Landford Road, 'a cosy semi-detached in the purlieu of Putney half-drowning in my mother's roses' and between 1927 and 1931 was educated at Westminster School. He describes his journey in top hat and tails to Putney Bridge underground Station with his brother picking 'our way through the (then) slum areas of the Lower Richmond Road, which our mother had warned us was inhabited by "guttersnipes". Running the early morning gauntlet of abuse and over-ripe vegetables was certainly character forming, necessitating frequent defensive thrusts with well rolled umbrellas (obligatory regulation) and quick evasive rearguard actions.' *From Portraits in Fashion* (by Robin Muir). With thanks to Colin Webb (Publisher) Gallery, London.



In a career that spanned seven decades, Norman Parkinson dazzled the world with his sparkling inventiveness as a fashion photographer. Standing at 6 feet 5 inches tall, Parkinson was unable to remain unobtrusive behind the lens and instead created 'Parks', the moustachioed, ostentatiously elegant fashion photographer – as much a personality as those who sat for him, and frequently more flamboyant. By the end of his life (he died on location in 1990) he had become a household name, the recipient of a CBE, a photographer to the royal family, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, and the subject of a large scale retrospective at the National Portrait Gallery.



5. Sir William Lancaster

Unveiled 4 November 2009
at Putney School of Art, Oxford Road,
SW15

(1841-1929) Philanthropist

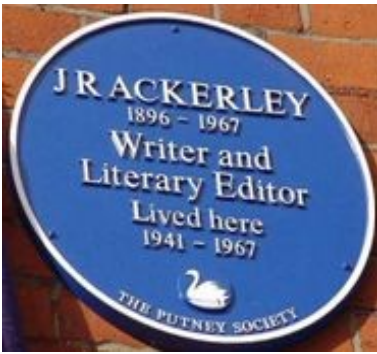
Lancaster was not born a rich man. His wealth, much of which he devoted to the public good, was gained as a result of his ability and capacity for the Victorian virtue of hard work. He was born in Norfolk to a poor grocer's family and King Lynn's Grammar school. Joining the Prudential Assurance Company at the age of seventeen as a junior clerk, he was rapidly promoted and became Deputy Chairman and retired in 1920. In 1868 he married Sarah Harriot who died in 1889 leaving 7 children.

Lancaster was elected to the new Wandsworth borough council in 1900 and missed

becoming the first mayor of Wandsworth by just a few votes. He was elected as the second Mayor 1901-2 serving during the year of the Coronation of King Edward. It was at the Coronation that Lancaster began his philanthropy contributing 100 guineas to the celebrations and mementoes to the head boys and girls of every school in the borough. Other gifts included a mace for the borough. This is known as the Putney mace because the shaft is made from one of the piers of old Putney Bridge dismantled in 1886. Lancaster also donated the land for Tooting library which opened in 1902 and land for other public enjoyment in the borough as well as a ward in Putney Hospital. His generosity in providing a new Grammar School for King's Lynn in 1906 earned him his knighthood.

In 1883 he joined with Baron Pollock and Sir Arthur Jeff to form a committee with the purpose of founding an art school. The beginnings of the school were in temporary rooms over the parish offices in Putney High Street lent by the Vestry of Putney. The LCC refused to recognise the school until larger premises could be found so in 1885 Sir William bought the freehold site and erected the art school at his own expense which opened in 1895.

Sir William was for thirty years churchwarden of Putney 1878-1908. He endowed the Church Hall in Putney Bridge road in memory of his wife Sarah. In 1931 the inner oak doors of south west entrance to St Mary's were donated by the Lancaster family and erected to his memory and the doors to the west porch were also erected to his memory by public subscription. Lancaster lived at South Lynn, a large mansion on Putney Hill, now occupied by a block of flats called 'West Point'. He died there 28 February 1929. He was described by his grandson Sir Osbert Lancaster as: "a kind authoritative, philanthropic, good-humoured and exemplary grandparent".



6. J R Ackerley

Unveiled 8 June 2010, Star and Garter Mansions, Lower Richmond Rd SW151JN (1896-1967)

Writer

Joe Randolph

Ackerley was resident at 17 Star & Garter Mansions from 1941 until his death in 1967. References to Putney and the building feature heavily within his published work. Ackerley and Star & Garter mansions are mentioned in Time Out London Walks guide. Ackerley was a writer and literary/arts editor (BBC's The Listener) who fostered the careers of a number of major writers such as Philip Larkin, W H Auden, Stephen Spender, Christopher Isherwood and Francis King. A long-time friend and literary associate of E M Forster, he was connected to 'everyone who was anyone' in English letters of the time, an intimate of Auden, and venerated by the post-Bloomsbury circle of gay writers. As a writer himself his output was small - but his three autobiographical works, one novel and several poems are considered 'minor masterpieces' noted for the candour of their content and bold themes. The novel *My Dog Tulip* is a comic memoir called by Christopher Isherwood 'one of the greatest masterpieces of animal literature'. It gives a moving account of living with his difficult dog Queenie in the flat, and details encounters with Putney residents on his regular trips to bathe in his beloved Queensmere on Wimbledon Common.

The book has been made into a feature length film starring Christopher as Ackerley.

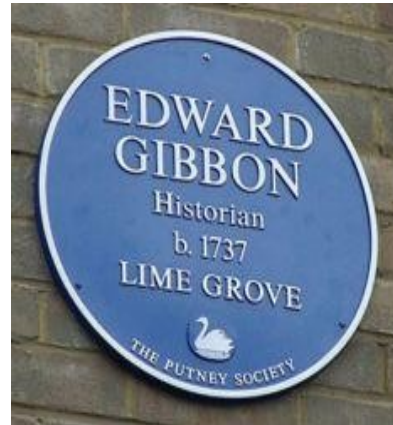


book has been made into a feature length film starring Christopher Plummer

7. Edward Gibbon

unveiled 1 June 2010, 139 Upper Richmond Road, SW15 2TX (1737-1752) **Historian**

Author of *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* which was published in six volumes between 1776-1758. Gibbon was born at Lime Grove 1737 and spent part of his childhood there. Lime Grove was a large estate comprising a house with lake and gardens, on the land bordered by East Putney Station running along the Upper Richmond Road



and up Putney Hill as far as Putney High School. The 1862 Stanford map shows an exit onto the Upper Richmond Road from the estate which may be where the stables were situated.

