

# MILTON SOCIETY

## MAY NEWSLETTER



### Letter from the chairman



Our latest newsletter comes just after the wonderful 'In Harmony' event in Hamlet Court Road which I hope you were able to get to. A great and growing celebration of local community with hundreds of people in the road, taking in the brilliant live music, visiting the community interest stalls and generally meeting and chatting. Particular thanks to those of you who visited our stall and chatted with us. Myself and fellow committee members Andrew and Mel certainly had a great day!

I must also mention the Hamlet Court Calling stall who were opposite us and promoting the economic regeneration of the road. They are busy planning the pre-Christmas 'Festive Friday' event, which is another opportunity for local shops and businesses to promote themselves and for the community to come together to give support.

The latest position with the cliff gardens national Listing application is that we have received the draft written Listing reports and we excitedly await formal adoption by Historic England and the Secretary of State. Given all the work carried out on these Listings, we cannot see that Listing will not follow.

This will give both recognition and some protection to the gardens. It will also open up funding opportunities. If you want to give your support please join our campaign and sign-up [here](#) or you can scan the QR code below.



Another big story is the absence of a House in Multiple Occupation planning policy, as outlined in the Evening Echo recently. Although not reported, Milton Society have been a major participant in this issue, raising a complaint with the council, which is now being looked at by the Local Government Ombudsman. It is a huge indictment of our council that, as a seaside resort (where HMO problems are particularly bad) and in 2025 we don't actually have an HMO planning policy. We won't let this go and expect to see wider publicity in due course.

Elsewhere, our routine work continues and this includes:

- 18-24 Hamlet Court Road. Approved but alleged unauthorised development which we are pursuing
- 155 Hamlet Court Road – fire damaged building. Direction from Secretary of State declined but council have said they will step in if required (we think this is required!)
- 242 London Road. 9 bed HMO development. We have objected.

Please do continue to support our work to help to protect our historic area and influence good design and townscape for all the community to enjoy.

*For more information please email [chair@hamletcourt.org](mailto:chair@hamletcourt.org)*

**Andy Atkinson, Chairman**





# Garden makeover

Mel and her husband Ryan have a helping hand to get their garden looking best in show.



At the time of writing this, it is the week of the 2025 Chelsea Flower Show and whilst I love a beautiful garden, the skills needed to create one are certainly not ones in my wheelhouse!

When we moved into our home, it being December 2020, we were locked down over Christmas with little else to do apart from jobs around the house and garden. We did a great job clearing the garden, which was a mass of overgrown plants and weeds (we found countless pots hidden in the overgrowth, as modeled by Ryan below!) but as I'm not naturally green fingered, it wasn't long before the garden looked a bit of a state again. However, as I sit here typing, I am admiring my rose trees and peonies, following the

transformation of our front garden.

Just over a year ago, Richard and his team from the Garden Landscaping Company helped bring our garden from shabby and sad to chic. We removed the large area of grass (and grass is being polite as I think it was more weeds!) replacing it with ravena sandstone paving - it has a red tinge to it so it picks out the red detailing in our original terrazzo path; we replaced the sad old wooden fence with metal railings and a matching entrance gate; the front wall was rebuilt so the style was more in keeping with the house - according to our neighbour, the original wall was knocked down when a car ran into it; and lastly, the flowerbed welcomed some new plants to sit alongside our rose tree and peonies.



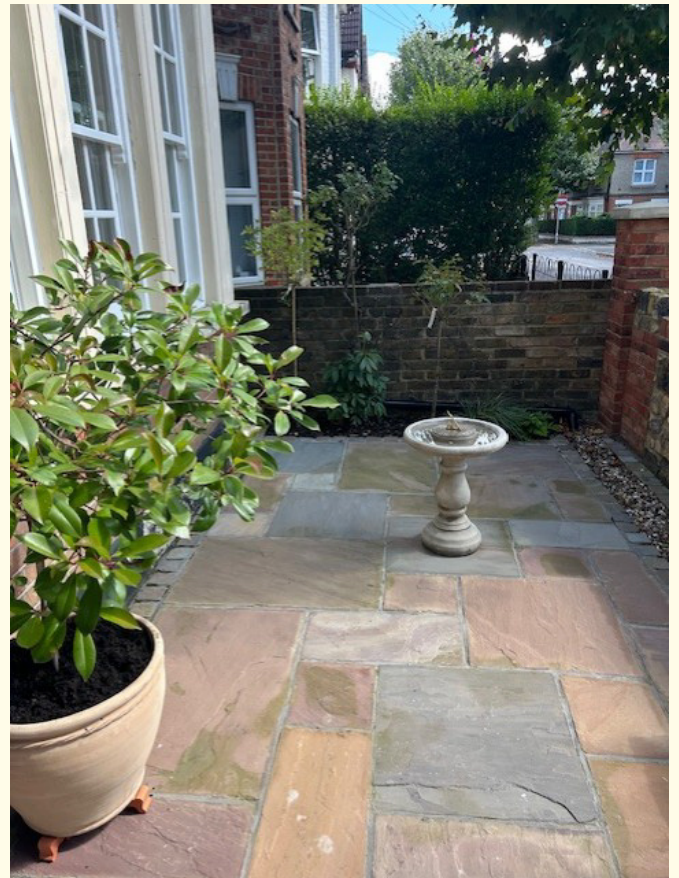




And whilst our garden was done a little while ago now, as it's had time to age and we've added new plants and a bird bath (two additional rose trees and the bird bath, all from Morley Nursery in Woking), this year I really do feel like I have my own slice of Chelsea on my doorstep.

Sadly, the same cannot be said for the back garden - for the moment, the back garden is very much a case of it is what it is. I've kept up my fight with the weeds, added some nice pots and put up some festoon lights (honestly,

pretty lights are the answer when it comes to polishing a turd of a garden!) and that is as good as my skills will allow. A dream back garden is incoming, but not until we have a few more pennies in the bank. At least now we have a bit of curb appeal and the front of the house looks presentable...even if we are living that bare plaster wall life behind closed doors!



**Melanie Philips, Secretary**

**Insta: @Meloniec\_90**

# Pioneers and progressives

Inventors, mountaineers, palaeontologists and social reformers are among those who have made the area their home. By Sandra White



Photography and film pioneer **Birt Acres** (1854-1918) lived at 19 Park Crescent in Westcliff (pictured left).

A recent Milton Society nomination for a Historic England blue plaque, acknowledging Acres' contribution, was not successful, but then only 7 of the 450 applications were.

Acres was co-creator of the first working 35mm camera in Britain and also directed a number of early silent films. He was a key player in the development of cinematography, from the construction of cameras, projectors, film viewers, coating and slitting machines and the manufacture of 35mm raw film stock, to mobile newsreel reporting and public projections of moving pictures.

**Edward Whymper FRSE** (1840–1911), mountaineer, explorer, illustrator and author, best known for the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865, lodged at the top floor of 4 Cliff Town Parade, Southend.

Whymper sought out the fresh sea air of Southend after his travels. Whymper's landlady Louisa Wright and her family lived in the basement of the property. Particularly keen on peace and quiet, he insisted that the floors in between be kept vacant. He led a simple life; he had barely any furniture and used a mattress on the floor (kept rolled up when not in use) as his bed.

Whymper also found a wife in Southend after his landlady's niece Edith Lewin visited from London. They married two days before his 66th birthday. His daughter, Ethel, also became a mountaineer.



He made important first ascents on the Mont Blanc massif and in the Pennine Alps, Chimborazo in South America, and the Canadian Rockies. His exploration of Greenland was a significant contribution to Arctic exploration. Whymper wrote several books on mountaineering, including “Scrambles Amongst the Alps”.

**Dorothea Minola Alice Bate FGS**, also known as **Dorothy Bate**, was a palaeontologist and pioneer of archaeozoology, who was born in 1878 and died in Westcliff in 1951. Her work focussed on finding fossils of recently extinct mammals to help understand how and why giant and dwarf forms evolved.

The **Reverend Benjamin Waugh** (1839–1908), who founded the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, lived at 4 Runwell Terrace in Westcliff (pictured right).

Waugh began his work to better the lives of children while serving as a congregational minister in the slums Greenwich. He had grown to love Southend after becoming a frequent visitor during his time in London, and had often come to the borough to speak at rallies and meetings to establish local child-protection groups.

He is buried in Southend’s Sutton Road Cemetery.

