

The bells...the bells...

The first in a new series of articles by Avenues resident, Chris Coulson, about Avenues houses and history. In our next issue: "Maids and Companions"



Front door bell pull and bell from 96 Marlborough Avenue (not to scale)

Built in 1886, 96 Marlborough Avenue is one of the earliest houses built in the Avenues, or Westbourne Estate as it was known then. Originally called Ayton Villas it was renamed 'The Poplars' when six Poplar trees were planted in the garden. These eventually became too big and had to be cut down.

Some houses which had live-in maids had a second smaller staircase and a small maid's room near the top of it. It is likely that live-in staff were maids though there possibly could have been 'man servants' but these may have been restricted to dwellings that had coach houses. I have the feeling that

although some did have coach houses and a small stable it would not have been long before the horse was superseded by the motorcar—and the start of our parking problems! There is evidence of a horse at 96 Marlborough though we know the previous owners (we are the third owners) had a touring car prior to WW1.

In the older houses bells with bell pulls with wires running under the floor were used to call staff. The wires ran round pulleys to bells on coiled flat metal springs and although many of the wires remain under the floors at 96 Marlborough the bells

are gone. However, 'bells to summon staff' were not the preserve of the larger houses as many other houses had bell systems. Many of these were electric and had bell pushes on the wall; in the downstairs rooms these were placed next to the fireplaces. This bell system was working at 186 Marlborough Avenue into the late 1950s and one still does at 57 Westbourne. Many were removed as wall papering round them proved difficult.

The wooden 'bell boxes' (about 18 x 8 x 2 - 4 inches) were set on the wall in what was the kitchen when the houses had sculleries but sometimes called, in a middle class way, the 'breakfast room' when modernization took place. Some bell systems had an external transformer to run them while others may have had a battery inside the box. These latter ones seemed to have deeper boxes to accommodate this. The wooden box, which had a hinged front, had solenoids that wobbled numbered cardboard squares behind small glass windows when the bell push was used. The glass windows, about 1.5 inches square, had the name of the room above them: Bedroom 1, Bedroom 2, Drawing Room, Dining Room, Front door etc. A bell external to the box alerted the maid. Originally, I think, these bells had wooden boxes but as time went by they were replaced by Bakelite ones.

Chris would welcome the opportunity to photograph other domestic bell systems still in existence, for Avenues historical records

Chris Coulson
96 Marlborough Avenue
Photographs: Chris Coulson



A well-preserved bell box

The larger, older houses in the area probably employed live-in staff. At 96 Marlborough the maid(s) lived in the attic rooms on the third floor and used the main stairs, the existing second set of stairs being put in for an altogether different

PLANNING MATTERS

Are you altering or replacing your windows?

Are you doing house repairs or improvements?

Always ask before you build or do alterations. Hull City Council will give you advice. Write to:

**Planning Services
Kingston House
Bond Street
Hull HU1 3ER**

with your proposals. They will let you know in writing if you need planning permission or not.

Informal advice can be given by telephone: **612345.**

Planning permission is required for windows and crossovers

In the Avenues and Pearson Park Conservation Area **specific planning permission (under Article 4 Directions of 1995)** is required for:

- the construction of a *driveway* across a pavement or verge;
- the removal or alteration of a *window or bay* facing the highway. **This applies equally to an already altered or replacement window as it does to an original one.**

There is no fee for an application resulting from an Article 4 Direction.

Detailed information is available from the Council in leaflet and other forms; and on the website:

www.hullcc.gov.uk/planning

More detailed guidance on planning controls can be found in the Avenues Conservation Area booklet.

The Planning Department has asked APPRA to pass this message on:

Give them a ring on 612345 if you are thinking of altering or replacing your windows. They are very happy to help and advise you with your proposals. It is best to do this before you commission the work.

Why is this helpful? Discussion will help you get the plans for windows right and will save you time and money later on.

It is better to get the information about what is acceptable from the planners than rely on the company or person who will be doing the work: the "leave it to us, we can sort it all out" approach. This approach by some builders and joiners has sometimes created problems for the resident—incorrect plans, where the window did not match the original, have had to be reworked and resubmitted.



APPRA news

APPRA exists to help retain the unique character of the Avenues and Pearson Park conservation area and to support the neighbourhood's strong community spirit

Chair's Report Autumn 2010

We are frequently met, as we stand on Avenues doorsteps collecting subscriptions, with the greeting, "Is it really that time of year again?" which is pretty much what we feel as we get ready to turn out on Monday evenings in the summer until the job is done (a job made quicker, easier and more fun by the residents who join us to help—many thanks to them all). However, when we get going, we always enjoy seeing residents: chatting, fielding compliments and complaints. Two criticisms we have taken to heart this year are, first, the tone of the newsletter, which apparently is felt to be too negative by some: and secondly, the committee ourselves, which one resident described as 'a self-appointed group.'

I am particularly concerned about the latter charge. If we appear 'self-appointed,' is that not the responsibility of the community who do not appear to vote at the AGM or come forward to join the Committee? We constantly appeal for interested residents to join us and solicit new members on their doorsteps. It seems to us—from the absence of response—that there is a general sentiment of goodwill towards our work, despite the current of disagreement on the UPVC issue. We are aware of our average age and the possibility of being unable

to continue in the foreseeable future: one among us has this year managed seamlessly to produce the newsletter despite a fall necessitating a new hip. But we cannot go on forever, and need to recruit younger residents who will be prepared and able to take over when the time comes. As a Committee, with some strong and valuable support from individual retired residents with City expertise, we feel we have achieved a presence and a voice which is hard-won and could easily be lost. **If you enjoy living in the Avenues, and wish to conserve and preserve them for future generations to enjoy in the same way—come to our monthly meetings, see how we work and if you have ideas to develop and improve the Association.**

We are now at the stage—in the matter of posting poems in our local bus shelters—of choosing the poems; one of them has to be, we now think, Larkin's 'Toads,' miserable though it is. It's my view that the poem should have accompanied each street toad, as the general public seems unaware of the poem and therefore bemused by the choice of toads to celebrate Larkin. When I embarked on the poem project, I had no idea how arduous it would prove; it seemed so simple. In the event, De Caux in Manchester were helpful with advice and information which opened up the way locally.

Satellite dishes on house fronts must have planning permission

The character and appearance of the area can be affected by many types of inappropriate development and over the years the number of satellite dishes appearing on the front elevation of houses has continued to increase. If this is not controlled the number will be likely to continue to increase.

There has been recent publicity within the local press about this and following a report to Hull City Council's Planning Committee it was agreed that more needed to be done to raise residents' awareness of the need to seek planning permission. Within a conservation area planning permission is needed before installing a satellite dish on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto and is visible from, a highway. Permission is not required for dishes on the rear or side if they do not face a road.

None of the dishes on the front within the conservation area have planning permission and it is necessary that these are addressed to be able to assess their effect both now and in the future. The Council have agreed to investigate dishes installed without planning permission, and will be reviewing those which either have not been moved or where a planning application has not been submitted in 3 months' time.

In the mean time residents are being asked to consider siting their dishes to a location where planning permission is not required, or to submit a planning application to seek to retain it in its current location. The former would be the preferred option and there is plenty of guidance available on the siting of dishes.

A useful document is the Communities and Local Government publication "A Householder's Planning Guide to for the Installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes" which can either be viewed on their website or downloaded for free.

Graham Varley
Planning Enforcement Manager, Hull City Council

The poets I have approached have responded so generously; I hope there is something in it for them: ideally, sales...or at least a boost in their PLR income.

We had to do some hasty emailing around in mid-August, when news came from the Area Office that the fountains were due to be painted and did we approve the colours proposed? (which are the same as the Boulevard

APPRA Committee		Tel	Fax	Email	Post
Chair	Stephanie Wilson	493037		chair@avenuesonline.org.uk	48 Marlborough Avenue HU5 3JS
Secretary	Adrian Crummay	445272	445272	secretary@avenuesonline.org.uk	66 Westbourne Avenue HU5 3HS
Verges	Sally Walker	447558		sallywalker214@googlemail.com	214 Westbourne Avenue HU5 3JB
Website	www.avenuesonline.org.uk				laurence.crummay@gmail.com
Committee Members	Chrys Bavey, Ian Colquhoun, Mal Dawes, Haris Livas-Dawes, Lesley Longworth, Christine Minnikin, John O'Mullane, Kate Stockdale (Treasurer), Stefan Weigert, Alan Worsley				

Newsletter design: hullsangel | www.hullsangel.org | Printed by: Scribes Print & Copy Centres 54 Newland Avenue Hull Tel (01482) 341927

Joseph Boxhall: Hull's RMS Titanic connection

Joseph Groves Boxhall was born in Hull on the 23 March 1884 to Joseph and Miriam Boxhall. The Boxhall family had a history in the seafaring industry as his grandfather had been a mariner and his uncle was a Trinity House buoy master. His father was a respected master with the Wilson Line of Hull.

His first ship which he joined on 2 June 1899 was a steel-hulled barque based in Liverpool, which was owned by the William Thomas Line. In 1903, he obtained his Second Mate's certificate and joined the Wilson Line of Hull. By 1907, he had gained his First Mate's certificate; he also had

gained his Masters and Extra Masters certificates which he had taken in Hull.

In 1907, at the age of 23, he left the Wilson Line to join the White Star Line and was assigned to the liner Oceanic as its sixth officer. During his five years serving with the White Star Line, his navigation skills had earned him a good reputation *even though he was only 28 years old at the start*. His skills got him the attention of the Commodore of the White Star Line and in January 1912 he joined the Titanic.

At the time of the disaster, Boxhall was off duty. As soon as he heard the lookout bell he

rushed to the bridge. He was ordered to go below deck to check for damage. He reported back that everything was fine. However, he did not go far enough, as the carpenter went down and found out that it was flooded up to the mail room. It was Boxhall who calculated the position of the Titanic, so that the radio operators could send out a distress signal.

In March 1919, Boxhall married Marjory Beddells, at St Andrew's Church in Sheffield and two months later in May 1919 he returned to the White Star Line. Boxhall was assigned to a number of ships such as the Aquitania

and the Ausonia, where he served initially as a First Officer and later as Chief Officer. He never got the captaincy of his own ship. In 1940 he retired from the service.

However, by the sixties, the state of his health had deteriorated and he spent the last years of his life in hospital. He died on 25 April 1967. He was cremated and his ashes were scattered at sea at the position that he had calculated was the final resting place of the Titanic.

Kevin Watson

Louise Patten, grand-daughter of Titanic's Second Officer, Charles Lightoller, reveals "family secret" in her new novel "Good as Gold", apparently shedding new light on events leading up to Titanic's tragic sinking.....Ed



This year's Open Gardens has been really successful. The weather was just ideal both weekends and Dove House promoted the event, which helped its success. In total we had 52 different gardens opening, with St Cuthbert's

Church doing teas, art and music, various gardens hosting music, children's activities, teas, cakes, art, and plant sales etc.

The event raised just over £10,300 with a further £2,000 raised by Mires Beck, Carnegie Library and Action for Children. So this year we are donating £10,000 to charities, and holding back the balance of £300+ to help fund Open Gardens 2011. The charities that benefited from Open Gardens are:

Dove House	£5000
St John Ambulance	£500
Oxfam	£500
MIND	£500
RSPCA	£500
Alzheimer's Society	£500
WISH – Women in Safer Health, Freetown, Sierra Leone	£500
RNLI – Royal National Lifeboat Institution	£500
Wateraid	£300
Hopeline UK	£300
East Hull Community Farm	£300
Hull Churches Home from Hospital.....	£300
Ghana Outlook.....	£300
TOTAL	£10,000

This year we asked residents to bake cakes/buns for gardens providing refreshments and this worked well. As refreshments are one of the major fund raisers we would like to run this again next year. Thanks to those that donated cakes, if you would like to help by baking for next year's Open Gardens please get in touch.

For the children's activities this year, Open Gardens bought a large gazebo that we can use year after year. If anyone wants to borrow the gazebo, it is £5-10 donation towards Open Gardens fund.

We also have a website: www.avenuesopengardens.com which is currently work-in-progress, and a Facebook Group: search for 'Avenues Open Gardens' and click the 'join' button to be part of the group, anyone can join. There is a facility to discuss topics, share ideas and contribute photographs; there are already some items on there from this year's event.

If you would like to open your garden for next year or help at all please do get in touch. Thank you for continuing to support

the event, and big thanks to all the Open Gardeners for opening up their gardens. The replies of appreciation received back from the charities we've supported this year have shown how much of a difference the money donated by Open Gardens makes to them.

The dates for next year are Sunday 3rd and Sunday 10th July.

Best wishes and Happy Gardening!

Pippa King	230 Marlborough Avenue	492230
Christine Colquhoun	73 Park Avenue	446125
Geoff and Sue Baker	152 Marlborough Avenue	493194

Email us at: opengardens@avenuesonline.org.uk

Join our 9th APPRA Advent Calendar!

We need **24** households to create an Advent Window each. You choose your starting date, from 1 December to 24 December. Create a festive picture, incorporating the date, to be illuminated brightly in one of your front windows. Illuminate the window from your starting date until at least Christmas Day. *Many opt to illuminate their windows to Twelfth Night and beyond!* To volunteer, just complete the form below and send it to Lesley!

Advent Calendar 2010 - Application form

Closing date: 8 November 2010

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Preferred date 1: _____

Preferred date 2: _____

To: **Lesley Longworth, 57 Westbourne Avenue**
Tel 342516 Email: longworth@lathkill.karoo.co.uk
or apply online at: www.avenuesonline.org.uk

Do you remember Joseph and Mara Konrad and Frank Clifton—for many years residents of Park Avenue?

It is not just the houses and the environment that makes the Avenues such a special place to live but the people, so many of whom have lived here for generations. Mara Clifton was one such person and her recent death at the age of 93 is a sad loss.



She was born in Hungary and came to Britain in 1938 with her first husband, Joseph Konrad, to escape from the Nazis. From 1942 to 1963 Joseph taught in the Hull School of Architecture. They moved into 112 Park Avenue in 1949. Joseph qualified as an architect in 1922 and his architectural work before coming to Britain was outstanding. He fully embraced the modernist architectural movement of the time as seen in the photo of one



of his buildings completed in 1931. There is one building locally which he designed – the Quaker Meeting House in Beverley.

He and Mara are both fondly remembered by students of the day at the School of Architecture. His building construction lectures were all the more interesting for his East European English accent. 40 years ago Mara was well known for her nursery in Chanterlands Avenue and, in her own way, keeping the children in-line whilst walking them out in the street. The photo of them was taken at a dinner but the date is not known.

After Joseph's death Mara married Frank Clifton. They were a lovely couple. Christine and I well remember the first occasion we met them when they knocked on our door on Avenues Christmas carol singing night to ask if they could come for the refreshments but would we mind if they didn't go singing because it was too cold. They thoroughly enjoyed the chat that evening and came again in following years.

The Avenues is a much richer place for those of us who knew Joseph, Mara or Frank. They were wonderfully interesting people. There must be similar stories to tell about other past Avenues residents?

Ian Colquhoun

Photographs taken from "A life so far ... Recollections of Hull School of Architecture" by courtesy of Jill Dickens (editor)

Chair's report: continued from page 1

fountain) and could we let them know by Friday? (four days later). The Area Office had themselves been given no notice, and had negotiated this short consultation time by delaying the start of the job for a week. Since it hasn't been done at the time of writing, weeks later, we have had time to discuss the colours at a Committee meeting; we have opted for repetition of the current colours, since extensive previous research proved that they were the original colours. I am taken aback by yet another instance of the city's inability to remember to consult; I had thought, after the instant reaction of Westbourne Avenue residents to the removal of paving stones without notice or consultation, that the obligation to consult would be an essential condition for any Avenues project. Apparently they've already forgotten.

At the risk of prolonging the negative tone of this report, I will quickly refer to our kerb renewal programme. We still, thanks to the energy and determination of the Committee member in charge, intend to renew the Salisbury Street kerbs outside the Gilbert Scott houses and are always on the lookout for York stone to replace the kerbs saved from Westbourne Avenue which were stolen from a city depot. We know, from our experience in Westbourne Avenue, that it is possible to salvage 50% of the old kerbs raised; this seems to us worth doing, in conservation terms, and as an obvious economy. When we asked for the kerbs along Queen's Road, the answer came that it was too labour-intensive to raise the kerbs with a view to reuse; no-one has ever said this before, and it seems to me an affront to the enduring recycling habits of human beings—witness all the monastery stones which

somehow built or rebuilt so many local houses in the time after the Dissolution. My feeling is, if they can't be bothered to treat the city's historic materials with respect (and the story does go around that our original York stone flags were raised carefully enough, to sell outside the Conservation Area), then they can buy us new stone kerbs.

The latest news, about the rules concerning satellite dishes, has an article of its own (on page 1). While the Committee welcomes the City's move to enforce national and local guidelines and believes that the majority of residents concur with the rules, we hope that this will not become a contentious issue once the implications are clear; I hadn't myself realised that applications for planning permission to install dishes would incur the usual costs, which will add to the basic expense of purchase and fixing. I asked if there were any possibility of waiving charges, particularly to begin with, when retrospective permission has to be sought. The answer was, 'no.'

Two notable Avenues residents have died over the summer. Mara Clifton lived her energetic life in Park Avenue for decades: her vitality and involvement influenced the many children—and appreciative parents!—who attended her kindergarten: she leaves a story of survival, of warm relationships and unflagging interest in the community around her to add to our Avenues legends. We also remember Alan Plater, who lived in Westbourne Avenue in the 70s (we are trying to establish exact dates, with a view to a plaque) with admiration and affection; he was kind enough to unveil the plaque to Anthony Minghella in 2008 ("It would be churlish to refuse," were his memorable words) despite his own failing strength. It was an honour and a pleasure to welcome him: a dual celebration of two famous playwrights who chose to live in the Avenues.

Stephanie Wilson MBE