



# 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

May 2013 Issue 46

## HELP...

# OPEN GARDENS 2013 AND BEYOND

**THIS YEAR'S OPEN GARDENS IS DUE AS ALWAYS ON THE FIRST TWO SUNDAYS OF JULY, 7<sup>TH</sup> AND 14<sup>TH</sup>.**

Unfortunately, Christine and I are moving out of the Avenues and we are unable to continue running Open Gardens.

In order for the event to happen this year we need at least two people to come forward.

Organising Open Gardens is huge fun and very rewarding as it brings the whole community together.

Open Gardens is one of the largest, longest-running open garden events in the UK and, as far as we can tell, the only urban open garden event—unique to Hull. Over the past 4 years we have had on average 2,000 visitors come over the two weekends each year, and raised just over £35,000 for charity.

There are existing residents who help, a good support network, clear guidelines and instructions in place for new organisers.

Please get in touch **IMMEDIATELY** if you can help with this year's Open Gardens.

Pippa King and Christine Colquhoun

### CONTACT

Stephanie: 493037 or Pippa: 492230

## Chair's Spring report

We are so grateful to Pippa and Christine for the lively efficiency with which they have run the Open Gardens, building on the successful years of work by Bob and Rose Sandham; and we hope that successors will manifest happily and quickly, as they did.

Permission has recently been given for railings along the Princes Avenue side of Pearson Park, from the children's playground to the West Lodge entrance. We could not see the point of new railings on this stretch, particularly as they will not be quality facsimiles of the old decorative railings left, along Princes Avenue beside the Wildlife garden; it seems to us an expensive project whose purpose we do not understand.

We know there is a housing shortage nationally; we know that local authorities are urged by Government to encourage new building; we wonder about the effect on Conservation Areas like ours, where historic design and neighbourhood amenity are eroded by 'pop-up' dwellings in odd plots of land. Two new houses are going up on a plot behind Regina Crescent/Victoria Avenue; they will themselves be hemmed in, and alter the aspect of the older surrounding houses forever. If different priorities prevailed in Conservation Areas, this land could have been put to better use.

We were disappointed by the Planning Inspector's decision to allow the development of 99-101 Park Avenue and have written to point out (for the sake of the future; we've lost this one) that the Inspector's observations were inaccurate, as well as unsympathetic. We await an answer.

A second application to turn the railway cottages (10-12 Princes Avenue) into a cafe/restaurant has arrived. These cottages, the first houses on Princes Avenue, linked to the Botanic Station, remain as a unique presence in the Conservation Area, already over-supplied with food outlets. Please join us in objecting. **See you at the AGM!**

Stephanie Wilson MBE

**The APPRA AGM  
is on Wednesday 8 May  
at 7.00 PM in St Cuthbert's  
Hall, Marlborough Avenue**



To find us on Twitter, search for @APPRAHull

Tweet us to tell us you are an Avenues resident and we will follow you back.



Like APPRA on Facebook

To find us on Facebook, login to Facebook and search for "APPRA", then "like" our page.



Scan the code to reach APPRA's website—see Advent Windows, our craftsmen list and other resources

[www.avenuesonline.org.uk](http://www.avenuesonline.org.uk)

# J M Dossor — Architect and Lord Mayor (1872-1940)

On Wednesday 8 November 1932, Alderman John Malcolm Dossor J P and his wife Edith Kate Dossor (née Brittain) of 135 Westbourne Avenue attended The Guildhall for what was to be the culmination of his career in civic life: his installation as Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull for 1932 and hers as Lady Mayoress. They had been living at 135 Westbourne Avenue for twenty-seven years. Also on the avenue were some houses that were reminders of another career of the new Lord Mayor; as a professional architect and surveyor he had designed those houses and others in The Avenues. Although he had not designed the house in which he was living, it had 'many internal features of his design.' (1)

Dossor was born in Hull in 1872. He attended Hull and East Riding College, Park Street, which was a private secondary school, and remained in Hull for his professional training. From 1888 to 1894 he was first an articulated pupil and then an assistant at the firm of architects, Messrs Smith and Brodrick. For the following three years he undertook further training out of Hull, during which, in 1896, he qualified as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He returned to Hull, was an assistant in 1898 to Sir William Alfred Gelder, and set up an independent practice in that year.

His architectural legacy in The Avenues area is important:

- St Augustine's Parish Hall (1900) at the junction of Princes and Queen's Road: Dossor is listed in the magazine St Augustine's Church Monthly, July 1900, as subscribing £2 2s 0d to the church's campaign to raise funds for building the parish hall.
- 73-75 Park Avenue (1901).
- 34-40 Westbourne Avenue (1904): The houses '...are half-timbered in the overhanging upper storeys with Dossor's favourite leaded light windows ...' (2)
- 12-18 Victoria Avenue (1905): '...on the north side is a small block... of large red brick houses with mock Tudor upper storeys projecting a little.' (3)
- Ebor Lodge, 92 Westbourne Avenue (1905): 'It shows the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement in the deliberate asymmetry and carefully shaped gutter supports and tall tapering chimney. Interest is continued by variations in bay window design and stained glass panels. Well worth a second look.' (4) Unfortunately, some of these external features have been removed since this recommendation was written almost twenty-five years ago.

In 1907 Dossor became a partner in the firm Wellsted, Dossor & Wellsted. Colonel W H Wellsted was an architect, engineer and surveyor and his son C G Wellsted was an engineer. The firm designed:

- 60-64 Marlborough Avenue (1908).
- 54-56 Marlborough Avenue (1910).

- 22-28 Richmond Street (1920): The houses of this terrace '...with leaded windows, pebbledash, overhanging eaves and cast-iron ventilators, are particularly notable in a 'garden village' style.' (5)



73-75 Park Avenue PHOTO: John Geekie

'The Avenues houses designed by Dossor all show influences of the English Arts and Crafts Movement, which was at its peak during the years 1900-1910. Another architect and designer, born in Hessle, was Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941), who, to this day, has received national acclaim.' (6) Voysey did not design any buildings in this area, but Dossor and other local architects would have been aware of Voysey's works through architectural publications and were inspired by his ideas. 'Many Arts and Crafts architects, notably Voysey, favoured an architectural style linked to the English cottage tradition, which stood for honest design, workmanship and

expression of materials rather than originality of style at any price. Principal features were its rough-cast walls with mullioned windows, timber-framed walls, tile-hung gables, strip first floor windows, wide doors with strap hinges, stained glass windows, cast iron downpipes and guttering etc. The design qualities of these features can be seen in Dossor's houses in The Avenues.' (7)

Dossor also designed houses in Newland Park. Most notable is Number 132, West Garth (1910), by Wellsted, Dossor and Wellsted. This is 'almost certainly the work of John M Dossor. He utilised the fashionable 'butterfly plan'—the revolutionary layout pioneered by E S Prior... in 1896, with wings set at an angle of 45 degrees, leading off a central hall.' (8)

By the 1910s Dossor had established himself as a very accomplished architect. A design historian wrote of Voysey, 'A spell in an important office is always a good way in which to begin a career.' (9) If so, Dossor's spell in Mayor Gelder's office must have been a source of many ideas and contacts. In Dossor, Hull had produced an architect who was very alert to current ideas in architecture, locally and nationally, and applied them in a personal style, sensitive to the site and remit of each of his buildings.

## Cecile Oxaal

### NOTES

- 1 An Illustrated History of The Avenues and Pearson Park, Hull, edited by Christopher Ketchell, 1989
- 2 Ketchell, *ibid*
- 3 Ketchell, *ibid*
- 4 Ketchell, *ibid*

5 Ketchell, *ibid*

6 Ian Colquhoun, note to present writer, 2013

7 Colquhoun, *ibid*

8 David & Susan Neave, Hull, Pevsner Architectural Guides, 2010

9 Stuart Durrant, The Decorative Designs of C F A Voysey, The Lutterworth Press, 1990

This is a brief version of the article. For the complete, fully illustrated version, visit the [avenuesonline](http://avenuesonline.org.uk) website.

# Your verges need you!

The particularly wet winter has made the overriding by vehicles even more damaging than usual, as wheels have churned up the verge edge in many places, leaving large ruts.

With shrinking local authority finances, it will become more and more necessary for us as residents to assist the council and shoulder some of the actual work if we wish to maintain our Avenues streetscape in good order.

**I am hoping to form a team of volunteers** to mend the deep ruts alongside

crossovers and at verge edges. Less deep damage will turn into ruts very quickly if we do not deal with it now; and this can be done by tamping the turf back into place and re-seeding.



or phone me.

Sally Walker

**Sally's contact details are on page 4**

I shall need to put in a bid to the Community Initiative Budget for 'materials' and liaise further with the council about what we are allowed to do and how best to tackle the problem, but none of it will be possible without willing workers.

Having discussed with friends and neighbours, I think we could do quite a lot in a day if we work as a large team. If you can commit to between the hours of **10 am and 4 pm on a Sunday** to be specified, say in late Spring, then please email

## Reporting verge damage

Do please let us know about companies (some builders, especially those working for developers, seem to be the regular culprits these days) who damage the verges with their vehicles, machinery or materials.

Tell Sally Walker (contact details on page 4) and she will contact Highways. They are only too happy to deal with the offenders as the cost for repair is the responsibility of the perpetrator but only within a certain time frame. Highways can do nothing unless we tell them.

Evidence is needed:

1. a photo, *plus a note of*
2. time
3. date
4. and exact location.

# John Clappison 1937-2013

With regret, I have to report that John Clappison, a world renowned ceramic and glass designer with many close connections to Hull and the Avenues died on 21 February 2013 aged 75 years.

John was born on 27 June 1937 in a room above the family butcher's shop on Anlaby Road, (the shop was demolished when the Great Thornton Estate was built). He was an only child and he remembers playing with other children in the area during the Blitz.

At 13 he attended Hull High School for Arts and Crafts (now the Avenues Adult Education Centre). This was built in 1888 and designed by John Bilson, a prominent local architect, in the Flemish Renaissance style. John started school there on 26 April 1950. His family had moved to Hornsea when he was twelve so attending school involved a long journey. He travelled along the old Hull to Hornsea railway line to the Botanic Gardens station.

There were some rules at the Art School. "When I decided to adopt a rather Bohemian style of dress and went to school in shorts, yellow socks and brothel-creepers, the headmaster noticed. After looking me up and down he said, 'Don't come to school in these again Clappison.' I may have gone a little too far that time."

At the end of his three years at the Art School, John was one of three students who were recommended for places at the Hull Regional College of Art and Design in Anlaby Road, Hull (not far from his father's old shop). John's Pottery tutor there was George Shepherd. George lived in Park Avenue and John remembered visiting him there; "George was a very talented potter and a wonderful friend, his help was invaluable to me in later years."

Whilst he was a student at the College, John designed pieces for Hornsea Pottery including Studio Slipware, Bon-bon dishes and the Honeymoon and Elegance ranges. Elegance was very popular and is still admired by today's collectors as an outstanding illustration of 1950s styling (see image above).

Hornsea Pottery sponsored John's year at the Royal College of Art in London, specialising in Industrial Design and Ceramics. After gaining the Faculty of Design Certificate in Ceramics, John was appointed as Hornsea Pottery's Chief Designer in 1958. A studio was specially built on the Pottery site and when this was fully instituted, John refined and originated a whole range of designs for tableware, novelties and gift wares that would take



the company to the vanguard of British Design

Although John worked for the Pottery until 1987, he did have a break from ceramics during the 1970s when he worked as a designer for Ravenhead glass. Whilst there he produced many popular glass designs such as the Barmasters ranges of glasses and Whitefire, Olympiad and Topaz.

Many of the pieces John designed for Hornsea Pottery have won expert acclaim, especially his Home Décor range, which has been likened to some of the most advanced work in Studio Ceramics. Several innovative items of tableware and decorative pieces were produced, reflecting contemporary designs. The 1950s hand-decorated Slipware, 1960s Studio vases, and the 1970s Muramics and are still enthusiastically collected.

When John finally left Hornsea he took up a post as Chief Shape

Designer for Royal Doulton. Whilst there he designed many tableware ranges, nine of which went into full production. After retirement, John started to plan and produce his own ceramics which have an enthusiastic following amongst enlightened collectors.

Many experts in design and ceramics such as Andrew Casey and Wayne Hemingway have praised the work John produced during his time at Hornsea Pottery and his designs are often cited as the epitome of post-war industrial ceramic design.

Pauline Coyle

Pauline lives in the Avenues. She produced Hornsea Pottery's newsletter for many years, and has written John's official biography "Gone to Pot, the Life and Work of John Clappison", published in 2007.

<http://www.hornsea-pottery.co.uk>



THIS COLUMN REPRESENTS THE PERSONAL VIEWS OF ITS WRITERS

## Verges of disaster

The condition of the verges in our area continues to be a major cause for concern for local residents. Not only do damaged verges look unsightly and give our area an appearance of neglect, they can be a real hazard to the disabled and anyone unsteady on their legs.

There are three main causes of verge damage:

1 **Crossovers.** Careless use of crossovers is a real problem. The evidence is clear that drivers regularly cut across

the verge at the corners where the crossovers meet the road, causing deep erosion and mud. Casual visitors to our area also use them to back into when they want to turn around. The result is ugly rutting and progressive damage to the verge.

2 **Low or damaged kerbs.** Where the kerb is level with or only a few centimeters above the gully the verge will flood if it rains heavily, obscuring the border between the kerb and the road. This results in drivers inadvertently parking with one or two wheels on the verge, causing the verge to churn up and become a quagmire.

3 **Blocked drains.** These also cause flooding with the result that the kerb and verge cannot be seen and people park with wheels on the verge.

This winter has been wet and cold. The road surfaces are pot-

holed and the kerbs and verges are in worse condition than ever. The City Council has sole responsibility for road repairs but is there anything we local residents can do to improve the condition of the kerbs and verges?

Since 2005 APPRA has made three successful bids for funding from the Wyke Area Committee for the repair and protection of our grass verges, including raising kerbs in two areas. But this is expensive—we need to try to come up with some viable practical solutions of our own (see opposite page). Meanwhile, remember:

**Lobby** our three local councillors. Tell them how concerned you are about the fabric of our roads and verges. Remind them that in their current condition the verges can be a risk to health and safety and ask them to secure funding for repairs.

**Take care parking** and using crossovers. Avoid parking with wheels on the verge and cutting across the corners of your crossover. Keep your own crossover in good condition.

If you see a vehicle parked on the verge—**speak up!** Builders and delivery vehicles sometimes park on the verge. Remind the driver this is **illegal** and ask them to park on the road.

Protecting the character of our area is one aspiration the vast majority of local residents share. We don't want to persecute car owners—we nearly all have access to a car—but we do need to be careful how we drive and park.

The extensive grass verges help make this area one of the most unique and attractive in Britain—let's work hard to keep it that way.

John Wright, Avenues resident

# Memories of an eccentric Professor (1901-1976)

From its inception, or at least from when people started to take up residence, the Avenues attracted a range of 'professional' people. Accountants to Authors, Bankers to Builders, Timber Merchants to Teachers, Solicitors to Scripture Readers to name a few. One or two residents stayed for their whole working life, while others moved elsewhere. Time erodes the memory of many of them. Their achievements as well as quirks fade into the misty and sometimes faulty memory of a few neighbours.

Marshall McDonald Gillies was one such person who perhaps is still remembered by a declining number but probably by none under 40. His father was a Presbyterian minister in Lesmahagow, Scotland, his brother was killed in WW1, his sisters emigrated from the UK to Australia and he lived as a bachelor in the Avenues for decades. Educated at Eton, where he was a Kings Scholar and Captain of School in 1919, the Universities of Cambridge (MA), Edinburgh (PhD), Oxford and Vienna he came to Hull in 1928 where he remained until death took him away in March 1976.

Gillies or properly 'Prof Gillies' lived at 131 Westbourne Avenue (a neighbour for a while of playwright Alan Plater at number 133) with his housekeeper, Miss Sharp and two Siamese cats called Yanto and Bobby. When a cat died another took its name although the number of cats slowly grew so presumably there were other names! He was Pro-Vice Chancellor of Hull University (1962-1968) and a well-regarded specialist in Ancient Greek, though once when he met a Greek Orthodox priest their only common language was Latin! One of his academic robes, possibly from Vienna University, was covered with fur and with its tall hat made him look like a character from a medieval Flemish painting. He settled in Hull in 1928 as the first Head of Classics at the then University College and never again moved. Subsequently I have learned what an important member of the University he became—apparently helping to hold it together during some turbulent times and helping to steer it into calmer waters. As a Head of Dept he seems to have been regarded as a gentle and fair boss supporting his staff and getting them promoted when possible.

An unmarried, rather eccentric Scots academic, who sometimes made up limericks about his neighbours, he always wore an

old brown suit with matching waistcoat and frequently padded about in the Avenues in plaid slippers. Indeed he occasionally went shopping on Chanterlands in his pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers much to the concern of some of his neighbours. He could be a bit alarming sometimes and once told my sister that there was nothing wrong in 'speaking ill of the dead' if you didn't like them when they were alive! The large room behind the metal balcony of 131 was his study which was a timeless place, lined with books with a carpet square on polished floorboards. On his death most of his books formed the Gillies Collection at the Brynmore Jones library at the University, then helmed by Philip Larkin. Two of his bookcases are still in another house in Westbourne with more of his books still waiting to go to the University Library.

Visiting his house you were always given ice cream by Miss Sharp and once he and Miss Sharp took my sister and me for a picnic to what seemed to be a firing range on the North York Moors—no Health and Safety issues then! I remember I collected a big bag full of spent 303 cartridges and he, having forgotten the tin opener, smashed the tin open with a rock which did little for its contents! Tins of food seemed to be his 'thing' as just before the war, and in case of invasion, he collected many of them and they remained in his cupboards for decades after the peace, some being removed after his death. He also collected bags of conkers—throwing them over our back gate leaving us to wonder how they had got there.

The lawn in front of his house was always tidy as he cut it with his tortoise-shaped green electric rotary lawn mower. I always thought this mower an exciting piece of technology as at the time most grass was cut with the old push/pull cylinder mower with its characteristic whirring noise going forward and clicking noise when it was pulled back—noises which many of us still associate with summer weekends. Gentler times?

Prof Gillies bought a new Renault Dauphine which was delivered late one afternoon to his house in Westbourne Avenue. Delighted with his purchase he took his new car for a spin around the Avenues, still wearing his slippers, as he always did! Suddenly, becoming bored with this circuit, he turned right onto



M M Gillies: School Captain, 1919 (left), with J F Grace, Master in College

Chants Avenue and went north (I was told "to Scotland")—still, of course, in his slippers! Unfortunately, Miss Sharp had got his tea ready and he hadn't mentioned his impromptu adventure to her. While he apparently cruised towards his homeland Miss Sharp could be seen bobbing in and out of the house in the hope of discharging her housekeeper's obligations of providing food for the good, not to say eccentric, Professor!

A delicious story concerns an evening when the Classics and Theology Depts happened to be having dinner in the same dining room in the Newland Park Hotel. Theology had a visiting speaker, a Professor Canon Lampe from Cambridge, and on seeing Prof Hanson of the Theology Dept (once an Avenues Resident) proffering more wine to the good Canon, Prof Gillies lent towards him and said, 'Ah Hanson, I'm glad that, like a wise Virgin, you are intent upon producing your Lampe well oiled'.

He told a member of his Department that his ashes should be made into a timer and used in the University Senate Meetings to stop them blathering on so much.

Perhaps you remember him.

Chris Coulson

## HELP@HAND

### CRAFTS LIST ONLINE

AvenuesOnline has APPRA's updated list of recommended local firms with the skills and willingness to carry out conservation-minded repairs and renovation

### HERITAGE REPAIRS ADVICE

If you wish for advice on repair and renovation using traditional materials and styling, email **Ed Uilyart** and he will help, or find a "man who can".  
ed@allstar.karoo.co.uk

### PLANNING MATTERS

Phone the Planning Dept on 612345 if you are thinking of renovating or making changes to **the front of your house**. They will give you advice about what is acceptable and help to make the process easier for you. .

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