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WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

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PUBLICATIONS RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION  
AND IMPROVEMENT

OF

WANDSWORTH COMMON,

1886—1891.

# Wandsworth Common Protection Association

For the immediate purpose of (i.) representing to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund the justice and equity either of restoring the land, recently leased for profit, to the original use of the School, or allowing its annexation to the Common; (ii.) directing public attention to the grievous damage now being done by vehicular traffic crossing a portion of the Common, by public meetings, memorials, petitions, or other lawful means; and (iii.), if necessary, bringing the circumstances under the notice of Parliament.

## TO THE INHABITANTS OF BATTERSEA AND WANDSWORTH.

The Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, about 1856, acquired, at a nominal cost, the large portion of 55 acres of your Common for the purpose of a school site to be "a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity." The boys' school and 11 acres of the land were sold in 1882, and 19½ acres of the remaining land have been recently leased for a "cabbage garden," its ultimate use being unknown. The map shows the school site and the land leased.

ASSOCIATION.

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## Committee :

ALGERNON BLACK.  
JOHN BLACKBEARD.  
GEORGE BUCKINGHAM.  
J. H. COWHAM.  
WILLIAM K. EDWARDS.  
GEORGE ENNIS.

EDWARD W. FITHIAN.  
ORMOND INNOUS.  
EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*  
HENRY J. JONE.  
W. SHELLARD LATHAM.  
JAMES H. MACE.

JAMES P. MOORE.  
W. W. SAUNDERS.  
GEORGE T. SMITH.  
EDWARD STEELE, *Hon. Treas.*  
RICHARD N. STEVENS.

*With power to add.*

December 11th, 1886.

## To the Inhabitants of the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth, and others interested in maintaining open spaces for purposes of public recreation.

ABOUT THIRTY YEARS AGO, for a nominal consideration, the Lord of the Manor and Commoners generously allowed some fifty-five acres of the Common to be transferred to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund for the purpose of a site for two schools for the maintenance and education of the orphan children of our soldiers and sailors who sacrifice their lives in the defence of their country. Aided by a handsome subscription list, and by the unceasing exertions of the parliamentary representative of the division—Sir Henry W. Peek, Bart.,—the inhabitants of the district procured the passing of the Wandsworth Common Act in 1871, to secure the remnant of the Common "for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation." The purpose of this circular is to explain, to those in search of information, the unwarrantable injury which has been, and is still being, done by the action of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, by leasing, for profit, a portion of the land which originally formed part of the Common, whose tenant now conducts an extensive vehicular traffic over a portion of the existing open Common. It can, therefore, create no surprise that measures should have been taken, first to ascertain the views and opinions of the inhabitants, and next to make representations and take such action as the circumstances render desirable.

A Public Meeting was held at the Wandsworth Town Hall, on Monday evening, November 15th, 1886. The room was crowded, and the attendance greatly exceeded the expectations of the Committee. Mr. JOHN BELL kindly presided, and the letters received are indicative of wide-spread sympathy; our reference must necessarily be confined to a few very brief extracts, viz :—

SIR HENRY W. PEEK, BART.—"Wimbledon House, 9th Nov., 1886. You may put me down for ten pounds in aid of the fund. In connection with my parliamentary career, I look back to few things with more satisfaction than the part I took in securing for the public enjoyment the remains of your Common."

SIR J. J. TREVOR LAWRENCE, BART., M.P.—"Barford Lodge, Dorking, 9th Nov., 1886. I fully sympathise with the object of the meeting, and should be glad to help if I could. But I have an engagement here of long standing which makes it impossible. With hearty good wishes, I am, &c."

THE LORD BRABAZON.—"83, Lancaster Gate, W., 9th Nov., 1886. Lord Brabazon, whilst thanking you for your note of this date, regrets that absence from town will prevent his being with you on the 15th instant."

J. FLETCHER MOULTON, Esq., Q.C.—"74, Onslow Gardens, S.W., Nov. 9th, 1886. I greatly regret that I am already engaged for the evening of the 15th, or I should be delighted to be at your meeting. . . . I sincerely hope that the steps now being taken will lead, not only to the concession of the very moderate demands that are now being made, but will ultimately bring about the restitution of the ground itself."

O. V. MORGAN, Esq., M.P.—"13, The Boltons, South Kensington, S.W., 9th Nov., 1886. I am engaged for Monday next, otherwise it would give me great pleasure to be present at your meeting on that evening."

C. A. V. CONYBEARE, Esq., M.P.—"Queen Anne's Mansions, S.W., 10-11-86. My own view as to all these questions of interference by individuals with the public rights over Commons and wastes by the roadsides, &c., is, that any person interested in the locality ought to have the right to lodge a complaint against such individual with the local authorities; and that the latter should be compelled, upon such application, to take the matter up, and, if need be, fight it out."

E. COOPER WILLIS, Esq., Q.C.—“32, Lincoln's Inn Fields, November 10, 1886. Had it not been for the prior engagement I should have made a point of accepting your invitation. Trusting that you will not only have a satisfactory meeting, but also that the steps proposed to be taken will produce a satisfactory result.”

JAMES T. SAUNDERS, Esq.—“Carvalla Lodge, Upper Tooting, S.W., 12th Nov., 1886. I am quite in sympathy with the resolutions and memorial, and trust the Association will not relax their exertions, but carry them to a successful conclusion.”

REV. RUSSELL WING, M.A.—“5, Dorlcote Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W., 12th Nov., 1886. It will doubtless be sufficient for me to assure you of my hearty interest and sympathy in the business which you have in hand, and I can only hope that the efforts that are being made . . . not only to safeguard the interests of the immediate neighbourhood, but also to confer a benefit upon the metropolis in general, may issue in a great success.”

JOHN S. GILLIAT, Esq., M.P.—“Charleywood Cedars, Watford, Nov. 12th, 1886. I entirely sympathise with every effort to preserve our open spaces and the beauty of the Suburban Commons, and I am specially interested to know that there is an active public spirit aroused for the protection of Wandsworth Common. . . . It is worth while to struggle earnestly for the preservation of all that remains.”

JOHN BLACKBEARD, Esq.—“Whernside, Wandsworth Common, S.W., 13th Nov., 1886. I thoroughly agree with the resolutions and memorial, and the object you have in view. I am very busy, but if I can spare the time I will attend the meeting.”

J. C. BUCKMASTER, Esq.—“14th Nov., 1886. The land taken by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund was greatly in excess of their requirements for a girls' school, and ought to have been resisted at the time. I always feared that the ultimate object would be something like that which has now come about, but this is not the end of it—to cover the land with buildings will be the final result.”

LETTERS, and TELEGRAMS, were received from many others, expressing regret at their inability to be present, including one from Mr. Kimber, jun., in acknowledgment of an invitation to Mr. HENRY KIMBER, M.P., who was abroad at the time, on whose cordial sympathy and support, it was stated the meeting might rely.

**Resolutions and Memorial.**—The following resolutions and memorial were cordially adopted by the Meeting, viz. :—

- i. “**That**, inasmuch as the Wandsworth Common Act of 1871 [34 and 35 Vict., ch. clxxxvi] provides that it shall be the duty of the Conservators ‘to keep the Common for ever open and unenclosed and unbuilt on [cl. 33] for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation’ [cl. 37], this Meeting desires to record its deepest regret that the Patriotic School Authorities and their Tenant should have established an extensive ‘vehicular traffic’ [cl. 58] across a portion of the Common whereby most serious damage has been done to the turf, gorse, and footpath [cl. 35] contrary to the spirit and intention of the Act.”
- ii. “**That**, as the Schools and Grounds as first established were intended to afford a ‘visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity,’ this Meeting desires to record its emphatic protest against the action of the Royal Commissioners in leasing more than a third of the land to a market gardener, and respectfully urges that steps should be taken to extinguish the lease granted with a view to restoring the land to the use of the school or its annexation to the Common.”
- iii. “**That**, the Chairman, on behalf of this Meeting, be requested to sign the Memorial to be presented to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, and that a copy be forwarded to each individual member of the Commission.”

### To the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.

The Memorial of the Inhabitants of the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth in Public Meeting assembled.

#### Sheweth,

**That** the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund acquired, at a nominal cost, for the benefit of this National Charity from the Lord of the Manor and Commoners of the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth, in or about the year 1855, fifty-five acres of the land known as Wandsworth Common as a site whereon to erect two schools for the education and training of the orphan children, boys and girls, of the soldiers and sailors who had laid down their lives in the defence of their country.

**That**, in consequence of the Commissioners having sold the Boys' School and a site of about eleven acres, and having recently leased for profit nearly twenty acres of the site in connection with the Girls' School to a market gardener there is much apprehension in the district that it is the ultimate intention of the Commissioners to dispose of it for building purposes.

**That**, although a lodge has been erected and an approach to the grounds in the rear of the Girls' School maintained this approach has been seldom used for many years past, while by the enclosure of the site the Commissioners appear to have stopped footpaths which ancient maps show to have existed.

visible and permanent memorial. The boys' school and 11 acres of the land were sold in 1882, and 19½ acres of the remaining land have been recently leased for a "cabbage garden," its ultimate use being unknown. The map shows the school site and the land leased.

ASSOCIATION.

## Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

*For the immediate purpose of (i.) representing to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund the justice and equity either of restoring the land, recently leased for profit, to the original use of the School or allowing its annexation to the Common; (ii.) directing public attention to the grievous damage now being done by vehicular traffic crossing a portion of the Common, by public meetings, memorials, petitions, or other lawful means; and (iii.), if necessary, to bring the circumstances under the notice of Parliament.*

To EDWARD STEELE, Esq., Honorary Treasurer,  
Turret Lodge, Routh Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Sir,—I herewith enclose a contribution of £ : : , in aid of the Association.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

BANKERS: The London and South Western Bank, Limited (Clapham Junction Branch), 3, Garfield Terrace, Clapham Junction, S.W.

## Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

EDWARD STEELE, Esq., Hon. Treasurer, Turret Lodge, Routh Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Received, with thanks, from \_\_\_\_\_

the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ pounds \_\_\_\_\_ shillings

and \_\_\_\_\_ pence \_\_\_\_\_ 188 \_\_\_\_\_

£ : : .

N.B.—A statement of Receipts and Expenditure will be prepared by the Committee and forwarded to all Contributors.

FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF CONTRIBUTORS THIS SHEET MAY BE FILLED UP AND LODGED ENTIRE EITHER AT ANY BRANCH OF THE ASSOCIATION'S BANKERS OR SENT ON TO THE TREASURER, WHO WILL BE PLEASED TO SEND ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY POST.

**The Patriotic Fund.**—THE FOLLOWING FACTS, TAKEN FROM THE OFFICIAL REPORTS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSIONERS OF THE PATRIOTIC FUND, CANNOT FAIL TO BE OF PUBLIC INTEREST, AND MAY RENDER MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE PATRIOTIC FUND, VIZ. :—

**How raised.**—The contributions are thus officially summarised : ENGLAND and WALES, £884,991 ; IRELAND, £60,047 ; SCOTLAND, £149,747 ; Army, Navy, Dockyards, Hospitals, Civil Service, Police, &c., £12,099 ; British Possessions, £315,390 ; British Residents and others in Foreign Countries, £30,772 ; and it must be added the Contribution of the Lord of the Manor and Commoners of the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth was fifty-five acres of their Common, the present market value of the land being probably £100,000. The following extract is significant :—“Contributions of large amount have been received from agricultural districts and rural parishes, swelled by the spontaneous bounty of the peasantry ; artisans, domestic servants, workpeople, labourers, individually and in associations, have felt a patriotic pride and a generous satisfaction in answering their Sovereign's appeal. In one striking instance, the inmates of the Reformatory Asylum, Smith Street, Westminster, having literally nothing of their own to give, denied themselves a meal, that its value might be offered as their gift. We deem it a fact deserving your Majesty's notice, that even the children of the poorer classes have very generally contributed their 'mite' to enlarge the amount of the Nation's bounty.”—*First Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, 1858, page 11, clause 3. (Parliamentary Paper 163, Session 1858. Price 1s.)*

#### A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE FUND IN 1858 and 1886.

**The Patriotic Fund in 1858.**—“In our first report to your Majesty in May, 1855, we stated that the Patriotic Fund loyally and generously contributed up to that time by your Majesty's subjects in all parts of your dominions, exceeded £1,000,000. It now (Feb. 9th, 1858) amounts to £1,453,045.”—*Second Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, page 43, clause 2 (Parliamentary Paper 163, Session 1858, price 1s.)*

**The Patriotic Fund in 1886.**—“The assets of the Fund are valued at the 31st December, 1885, as worth £428,759, in comparison with £438,173, at the 31st December, 1884. The change is to be ascribed to the expiration of a terminable Annuity on the 5th April, 1885, of which the final instalment amounted to £8,450 4s. 2d., and to a reduction that has taken place in the cash balance.”—*Twenty-fourth Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to her Majesty the Queen, page 22 (Parl. Paper C—4869, Session 1886, price 6½d.)*

**The original intention of the Royal Commissioners (1856).**—“Your Committee feel that they cannot exclude from their consideration the desire which they believe to be entertained by the Royal Commissioners, that the School to be established should afford a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which has provided the means for its foundation.”—*Second Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, 1856, Appendix 6, page 57 (Parliamentary Papers 163, Session 1858, price 1s.)*

**The Land not required for the Asylum (1885).**—“A fence has been erected to separate the land which is not at present required for the use of the Asylum from that which it is necessary to retain : and after public advertisement the Committee have arranged for letting the farm buildings, a cottage, and the land not required for the Asylum (about 19½ acres), to a desirable tenant, who will make certain improvements and pay a rental of £150 per annum for a period of twenty-one years, foregoing any claim for compensation at the expiration of that period for any further improvements he may have made during his tenancy beyond those now agreed upon.”

“At the expiration of the twenty-one years (should the land be required for Patriotic Fund purposes) the tenant is to vacate ; but if not so required, the tenant is to have the occupation for a further period of twenty-one years, upon an increased rental of £50 per annum.”—*Twenty-fourth Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to Her Majesty the Queen, 1886, page 8, clause 10. (Parl. Paper C 4869, Session 1886, Price 6½d.)*

**Other interesting particulars** will be found in the “Correspondence between the War Office and the Royal Commissioners for the Patriotic Fund relative to the condition of the Fund.”—(*Parliamentary Paper, C—2,956, price 2d., Session 1881.*) Also the “Report of a Sub-Committee.”—(*Parliamentary Paper, C—3,001, price 2½d., Session 1881.*)

The Royal Commissioners are undoubtedly in the position of Trustees of a National Charity, but the Committee of this Association do not admit that the Trustees are entitled to exercise the functions of their office to the injury of the Common or danger to the inhabitants, even, if in the first instance, the land had been purchased at a fair market price ; but when it is borne in mind that the land—formerly Common Land—was virtually given for a specific purpose—the use of the Schools—the inhabitants are justified in believing that they have reasonable and proper grounds for the course they are adopting.

Contributors may obtain copies and other information on application, by letter, to the Honorary Secretary, 3, Dorlcote Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

# Wandsworth Common Protection Association

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## TO THE INHABITANTS OF BATTERSEA AND WANDSWORTH.

The Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, about 1856, acquired, at a nominal cost, the large portion of 55 acres of your Common for the purpose of a school site to be "a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity." The boys' school and 11 acres of the land were sold in 1882, and 19½ acres of the remaining land have been recently leased for a "cabbage garden," its ultimate use being unknown. The map shows the school site and the land leased.



## ASSOCIATION.

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 the Common "for the purposes  
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 Council, of the "Manorial  
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 restoration to the Common.

- i.—Are you opposed to the alienation of this land?  
 Then support the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.
- ii.—Are you opposed to the land being leased to a tenant instead of being properly cultivated for the benefit of the children?  
 Then support the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.
- iii.—Are you opposed to the continuance of heavy wheeled traffic across the open Common?  
 Then support the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.
- iv.—Are you in favour of the continuance of this land as an open space?  
 Then support the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.
- v.—Are you in favour of the annexation to the Common of any "land not required" for the purpose of the School?  
 Then support the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.
- vi.—Are you desirous that Parliament should prevent further damage to the Common?  
 Then support the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

[SEE OVER—OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.]

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November, 1886,

## Report of the Committee

ON THE

### GRIEVOUS DAMAGE

TO

## WANDSWORTH COMMON.

MARCH, 1887.

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## WANDSWORTH COMMON.—Opinions of the Press.

“The attempt which is being made to prevent the perversion of a public trust deserves the sympathy of the whole of London. Wandsworth and Battersea are doing a public service in thus persistently directing attention to the subject. . . . Wandsworth Common is one of the most useful breathing grounds in Southern London. . . . It is quite possible that they [the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund] might prove to be within their legal rights if they sold it [the land] for building purposes, though, if that should prove to be the case, it would be the duty of Parliament to reconsider the terms of the gift. . . . There can be no doubt for what purpose the land was put into their hands, and they can have no moral right to use it for any other purpose. It was given for Schools for the Orphans; and if it is not needed for that purpose it should be handed back to the public. . . . The fear is naturally and justly entertained at Wandsworth that the letting these acres for market gardens is the first step. It is an act of alienation. It is setting up a kind of private ownership. . . . If for market gardens, why not for houses and streets? is the question people ask; and there is no answer.”—*Daily News*, Nov. 18th, 1886.

“The inhabitants of Battersea and Wandsworth have a very clear grievance against the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund; and they are taking vigorous action, by public meeting and otherwise, to get that grievance removed. . . . The schools and grounds as first established were intended to afford a ‘visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity,’ but since that time the Commissioners have sold the boys’ school, and with it a site of eleven acres; and they have leased for profit nearly twenty acres of the site in connection with the girls’ school to a market gardener, who, forsooth, is also a lime and cement merchant, a tar pavior, and a contractor for public works, whose horses and carts have for months past been working over a portion of the common, doing damage to the turf and the footpaths, notwithstanding the fact that in 1871 the inhabitants secured at great cost the passing of an Act to preserve the remainder of their common. They claim now that the Commissioners should not allow any portion of the grounds, whether leased or unleased at the present time, to be diverted for building purposes; and that they shall give some assurance that the school and the whole of the grounds as originally established shall either continue to be ‘a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which provided the means for its foundation,’ or if not now required for its original purpose be restored to the common. That is a perfectly fair and reasonable request, and it will be strongly urged at the meeting to be held to-night at Balham. At any rate, the inhabitants will not cease their exertions, for they know full well that if they do the end of it will be the covering of the land with buildings. Our map [on the first page] explains the agitation.”—*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 17th, 1886.

"If we were asked to point out to a stranger the suburban common which is the most striking example of modern encroachments, we should take him to Wandsworth. . . . The Patriotic Fund Commissioners obtained a large slice of the common thirty years ago as a site for an orphan school. . . . It was made for a specific purpose, and the people of Battersea and Wandsworth naturally object to the manner in which the Commissioners are using the land. A portion has been let to a tenant who coolly drives carts and waggons over the furze and turf, and a third of the land granted to the Patriotic Fund Commissioners is let out as a cabbage garden."—*The Echo, November 18th, 1886.*

"The Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund must be assumed to be patriots. . . . The property they are vested with is the outcome of a noble self-sacrifice exerted in a noble cause, the care of the helpless victims of a cruel, though chivalrous war, in which English blood was poured out without stint in vindication of the national honour. . . . We hear sometimes of filial ingratitude, the misuse of parental gifts made at the sacrifice of health and life. A profligate son will sell a memento of his departed mother for a drink of beer. He is a low fellow, and an abandoned wretch. But he is not without excuse. The Royal Patriotic Commissioners, occupying a high position in the State, have leased a part of the Battersea and Wandsworth gift for profit to a market gardener! It is even feared that they will eventually contract the breathing space, and diminish the lives of the givers by surrendering the enclosure to building purposes. The Commissioners are honourable men, and their patriotism is unquestionable. Do they not administer a Patriotic Fund? They force us to an apparent contradiction. They are unpatriotic patriots."—*Wandsworth and Putney Observer, November 20th, 1886.*

"The proceedings at the enthusiastic meetings held at the Town Hall, Wandsworth, on Monday, and at the Bolingbroke Hall, on Thursday, serve to shew that the ratepayers of Battersea and Wandsworth are awakening to their rights in respect of the land, formerly part of Wandsworth Common, now being so seriously misused by the Patriotic Fund Commissioners. . . . The agitation now set on foot must be continued. When Parliament meets, Mr. Gilliat and Mr. Cosmo Bonser must follow up, by motion or question, their speeches at the meeting of Thursday last, when they are sure to be ably seconded by Mr. Kimber and others. The members for Wandsworth Borough and for the Clapham Division of Battersea are equally interested in this question, the boundary between the two parishes traversing the land in dispute, and the county is also concerned."—*Putney and Wandsworth Borough News, November 20th, 1886.*

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## ASSOCIATION.

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# Report of the Committee

ON THE

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"The question of the condition of Wandsworth Common is arousing a large amount of interest, not only in the parishes immediately affected, but amongst Londoners generally. . . . The legal question now at issue is not so much whether the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund are within their rights in letting twenty acres of the land for agricultural purposes—that has yet to be tested—as whether the lessee has the right to take his carts across, and cut up, what is really and truly the common."—*Mid Surrey Gazette, November 20th, 1886.*

COPY.]

**PHOTOGRAPHS.**—Photographs, showing the state of the Common as described below, may be purchased from the Hon. Sec., price 1s. each, viz. :—

**A**

**WANDSWORTH COMMON**—Rear of the Girls' Patriotic School. The portion in which the cattle are seen shows the land fenced off and recently leased to a market gardener. *November 30th, 1886.*

**B**

**WANDSWORTH COMMON**—Rear of the Girls' Patriotic School. The "quagmire" created by the vehicular traffic of the tenant over the open common; the white patches show the pools of water, some of which are nearly knee-deep. *November 30th, 1886.*

**C**

**WANDSWORTH COMMON**—Rear of the Girls' Patriotic School. "Just past the willows a rough muddy road branches off into two unploughed quagmire cart roads, worse than many a colonial bush track."—*Daily News, October 23rd, 1886.* The house for the tenant is also shown near the entrance to the grounds. *November 30th, 1886.*

WANDSWORTH

**FUNDS ARE REQUIRED.**—Contributions of 1s. and upwards constitute Membership; they should be addressed to Edward Steele, Esq., Honorary Treasurer, Turret Lodge, Routh Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Copies and other information may be obtained on application, by letter, to the Honorary Secretary, 3, Dorlcote Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Wandsworth

"The fear is natural these acres for market alienation. It is settled dens, why not for home answer."—*Daily News*

"Every new proposal utmost jealousy."—*Arthur Fawcett, M.P.; Sixth*

Patriotic Fund  
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# Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

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"Every new proposal for destroying a Common should be watched with the utmost jealousy."—*Manual of Political Economy by the (late) Right Hon. Henry Fawcett, M.P.; Sixth Edition, p. 237.*

"The whole area of London is insufficient to supply its population with fresh air, and the free space that is wanted for wholesome recreation."—*Contemporary Review, February, 1884, by Alfred Marshall, Esq., Professor of Political Economy, Cambridge.*

## Report of the Committee

ON THE

### GRIEVOUS DAMAGE

TO

## WANDSWORTH COMMON.

MARCH, 1887.

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**An Easy Remedy.**—It was, and still is in the power of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, if they so desire, to withdraw the vehicular traffic of their tenant from the open Common which is devoted, under the authority of an Act of Parliament to “purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation,” and to give “some assurance” that the grounds connected with the school shall continue to be maintained as an open space.

The administration of the Patriotic Fund is, in the largest sense of the term, a matter of public concern; the money was contributed by a generous public for a purpose of wide national interest, and it ought to be possible to manage its affairs without the slightest infringement of, or injury to any portion of the open Common.

The Royal Commissioners are undoubtedly in the position of Trustees of a National Charity, but the Committee of this Association cannot admit that the Trustees are entitled to exercise the functions of their office to the injury of the Common or danger to the inhabitants. The land was recently Common Land, it was purchased at a very low agricultural value, and the money was raised by public subscriptions for a specific purpose, viz: the use of the Schools. Under these circumstances, the Committee feel that the inhabitants are justified in believing that they have reasonable and proper grounds for using every legitimate effort in their power “to maintain “the Common unimpaired and the land attached to the school as “an open space.”

Every true friend of public rights and of the maintenance of open spaces must regret the circumstances which have rendered necessary the formation of this Committee, but the inhabitants have a right to expect that Parliament will—in that spirit of equitable fairness by which its action has ever been characterised—take such measures as may be necessary to effectually protect the Common for the enjoyment of the people.

**Memorials to the Commissioners.**—The views held by the inhabitants of the district have been clearly stated in no less than four Memorials, containing respectful representations to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, from Public Meetings and from Public Representative Bodies in the district.

**The First Public Meeting** was held at the Wandsworth Town Hall, under the auspices of the Association, on November 15th, 1886. There was a crowded attendance; Mr. John Bell presided, and many letters, indicating wide-spread sympathy with its purpose, were received. The following resolutions and memorial were adopted, viz:—

- i. “That, inasmuch as the Wandsworth Common Act of 1871 [34 and 35 Vict. ch. clxxxii.] provides that it shall be the duty of the Conservators ‘to keep the Common for ever open and unenclosed and unbuilt on [cl. 33] for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation’ [cl. 37], this Meeting desires to record its deepest regret that the Patriotic School

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Resolutions : Memorial : Correspondence with the Commissioners. 5

Authorities and their Tenant should have established an extensive 'vehicular traffic' [cl. 58] across a portion of the Common whereby most serious damage has been done to the turf, gorse, and footpath [cl. 35] contrary to the spirit and intention of the Act."

- ii. "That, as the Schools and Grounds as first established were intended to afford a 'visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity,' this Meeting desires to record its emphatic protest against the action of the Royal Commissioners in leasing more than a third of the land to a market gardener, and respectfully urges that steps should be taken to extinguish the lease granted with a view to restoring the land to the use of the school or its annexation to the Common."
- iii. "That, the Chairman, on behalf of this Meeting, be requested to sign the Memorial to be presented to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, and that a copy be forwarded to each individual member of the Commission."

To the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.

The Memorial of the Inhabitants of the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth in Public Meeting assembled.

Sheweth,

That the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund acquired, at a nominal cost,\* for the benefit of this National Charity from the Lord of the Manor and Commoners of the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth, in or about the year 1855, fifty-five acres of the land known as Wandsworth Common as a site whereon to erect two schools for the education and training of the orphan children, boys and girls, of the soldiers and sailors who had laid down their lives in the defence of their country.

That, in consequence of the Commissioners having sold the Boys' School and a site of about eleven acres, and having recently leased for profit nearly twenty acres of the site in connection with the Girls' School to a market gardener there is much apprehension in the district that it is the ultimate intention of the Commissioners § to dispose of it for building purposes.

That, although a lodge † has been erected and an approach to the grounds in the rear of the Girls' School maintained this approach has been seldom used for many years past, while by the enclosure of the site the Commissioners appear to have stopped footpaths which ancient maps show to have existed.

That, during the past nine months, the tenant of the grounds in connection with the Girls' School has conducted an extensive vehicular traffic over a portion of the Common, thereby doing grievous damage to the turf, gorse, and footpath, contrary to the spirit and intention of the "Wandsworth Common Act of 1871," wherein provision is made that the Common shall be for ever open and unbuilt upon "for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation."

Your Memorialists, therefore, respectfully urge that the Commissioners will not allow any portion of the grounds in connection with the Girls' School, at present leased or unleased, to be diverted for building purposes, but will give some assurance that the School and the whole of the grounds as originally established shall either continue to be "a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which provided the means for its foundation," or if not now required for its original purpose, be restored to the Common. And your Memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray.

(Signed) JOHN BELL,

Chairman of the Meeting, held in the Wandsworth Town Hall, Nov. 15th, 1886.

\* £3,700, this is £68 per acre for land now worth £1,000 per acre. See Question in Parliament, p 9.

§ Which they have not denied.

† This is termed a "Cottage" in the Commissioners' advertisement in the "Times" Newspaper of June 19th, 1885. It has now been converted into a large house for the tenant.

## Correspondence with the Commissioners.

[COPY.]

(i.) "WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION,

"November 17th, 1886.

"DEAR SIR.—A well-attended Public Meeting of the inhabitants of the district was held at the Wandsworth Town Hall on Monday evening, November 15th, 1886, for the purpose of recording a respectful protest against the grievous damage now, and for some time past, being done to the Common; and to memorialise the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund relative thereto.

"I am desired by the Committee of this Association, under whose auspices the meeting was summoned, to forward to you the accompanying memorial, which was unanimously adopted and ordered to be signed by the chairman of the meeting on behalf of those present; and I am to express the hope that the Commissioners and their officers will give the subject their earnest consideration.

"As an indication of the strong feeling exhibited by the meeting, perhaps I should mention that the following resolution, which had been prepared by the sub-committee and placed second on the list, was rejected by at least three or four to one, viz. :—

"That, without offering any opinion on the legal aspect of the action now pending between the Conservators of Wandsworth Common and the Official Trustees of the Patriotic Fund and their tenant, this meeting desires to record its opinion that if the Patriotic School Authorities had provided, at a comparatively trifling cost, a suitable entrance from the Trinity Road for their tenant, the action in question would have been quite unnecessary.

"Notwithstanding the rejection of this resolution there does exist a wide-spread opinion that it would be an unfortunate and humiliating spectacle should the funds of a national charity on the one hand and rates on the other be squandered in an action at law, which becoming moderation on both sides ought to render unnecessary.

"On the annexed leaf [see page 4] I append the resolutions adopted by the meeting.

"I have, &c., (Signed) "EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*

"The Secretary of the  
"Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund."

[COPY.]

(ii.) "ROYAL COMMISSION OF THE PATRIOTIC FUND.

"53, Charing Cross, London, S.W., 29th November, 1886.

"SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant (as Honorary Secretary of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association) enclosing a Memorial from the Inhabitants of the Parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth in Public Meeting assembled, and I am instructed by the President of this Commission to inform you that it will be duly considered by the Royal Commissioners. In the meantime I am to remind you that at the present moment legal proceedings on certain points are pending between the Conservators—who are entrusted by Act of Parliament with the Protection of Wandsworth Common—and the Royal Commissioners, who are the defendants.

"I am further instructed to state that the Royal Commissioners will carefully avoid the infringement of any public interests or the rights of the Commoners.

"I have, &c., (Signed) "WM. H. MUGFORD, *Secretary.*

"ED. JOHNSON, Esq., *Hon. Sec.,*

"Wandsworth Common Protection Association,"

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Correspondence with the Commissioners.

[COPY.] (iii.) "WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.  
"December 3rd, 1886.

"Dear Sir,—I am desired by the Committee of this Association to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 29th ultimo, written by desire of the President, and conveying an intimation that the Memorial to which it refers will be duly considered by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.

"The Committee observe that 'the Royal Commissioners will carefully avoid the infringement of any public interests or the rights of the Commoners;' and 'the Committee assume, in making this declaration, the Royal Commissioners do not draw any distinction between themselves and their tenant.

"With reference to the pending 'legal proceedings on certain points,' I am to state that the Committee of this Association have no authentic knowledge whatever on the 'points' about to be raised; and they do not, at present, desire to express any opinion on the merits of the case other than to record their extreme regret that 'legal proceedings' should be deemed necessary.

"I am instructed to mention that though the Conservators are, as your letter states, the legal representatives for the administration of the provisions of the Act, having duties to perform as well as rights to exercise, Parliament never intended that these circumstances should be held to prohibit the right of the inhabitants to take such action as they may think desirable to prevent unfair and unnecessary damage.

"While firmly adhering to the views set forth in the Memorial, the Committee desire me to briefly supplement my previous communication. In the Twenty-fourth Report of the Royal Commissioners, dated 1886, page 8, clause 10, there appears a passage on which they would be glad to receive any observations you may desire to offer for their information. The words are these:—'After public advertisement, the Committee have arranged for letting the farm buildings, a cottage, and the land not required for the Asylum (about 19½ acres) to a desirable tenant.' Could you kindly furnish the dates and names of the London daily or local weekly newspapers in which the advertisement appeared? The tenant is known to combine with the occupation of farmer or market gardener, the businesses of Lime and Cement Merchant, Tar Pavior, Contractor for Public Works of various kinds, and the like; he is the owner of a large number of horses, carts, and other plant necessary to the carrying on these trades; and I am to state that the Committee are unaware of the grounds on which a tenant with so many occupations can be regarded, under all the circumstances, as a 'desirable tenant.

"I have, &c., (Signed) "EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*

"To the Secretary of the Royal Commissioners  
"of the Patriotic Fund."

[COPY.] (iv.) WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

January 15th, 1887.

"DEAR SIR,—I am desired by the Committee of this Association to inquire when the reply of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to the Memorial addressed to you on the 17th of November last, and to my further letter of December 3rd, 1886, may be expected to be received?

"The Committee think it inconceivable that the Royal Commissioners can be aware of the nature and extent of the damage done to the Common, and with the view of bringing the actual facts under their notice, I am directed to enclose for their inspection three Photographs, marked A, B, and C respectively, taken on the 30th of November, 1886, showing the deplorable condition of this portion of the Common, occasioned by the vehicular traffic of their tenant.

"I am also to state that notwithstanding the assurance contained in your letter of the 29th of November, 'that the Royal Commissioners will carefully avoid the infringement of any public interests or the rights of the Commoners,' the damage still continues. It appears that a portion of the traffic has

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Correspondence with the Commissioners.

"recently been taken through the front entrance (why not the whole?) but this is probably only a precautionary measure for the safety of tenant's horses. On several occasions the teams have been unable to get through, and the carts have had to be unloaded, but during the frost it was absolutely dangerous to attempt the passage, of what the Daily News aptly describes as 'cart roads worse than many a Colonial bush track.'

"At a PUBLIC MEETING held in the St. Andrew's Hall, Balham, on the 17th of November last, Mr. John Blackbeard in the Chair, the following resolution was carried unanimously, viz. :—

"That this meeting of Inhabitants, in the vicinity of Wandsworth Common having heard of the steps taken by the Wandsworth Common Protection Association to induce the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund either to restore the land recently leased for profit to its original school use, or to consent, on equitable terms, to its annexation to the Common, desires to record its approval of the action of the Association, to which it tenders its hearty support, and it requests the Committee to persevere in their efforts to maintain the Common unimpaired, and the land attached to the School as an open space.

"I have, &c., (Signed) EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*

"The Secretary of the Royal Commission of the Patriotic Fund."

The Royal Commissioners' reply to the Memorial.

[COPY.] (v.) "ROYAL COMMISSION OF THE PATRIOTIC FUND, 53, CHARING CROSS, LONDON, S.W., 12th February, 1887.

"SIR,—I am directed by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to acknowledge the Memorial addressed to them by the [public] meeting held November 15th, 1886, of which you were chairman, and to point out to you that one of the paragraphs of that Memorial deals with a matter in regard to which the Conservators of Wandsworth Common have commenced an action against the Commissioners, which is still pending.

"The Commissioners regret that, under the circumstances, it is impossible for them to enter into any further communication upon the subject of your Memorial, and they feel convinced that, now that this action thus commenced against them has been brought to your notice, you will feel the justice of the course they are compelled to pursue.

"I have, &c., (Signed) "J. S. YOUNG, *for Secretary.*

"JOHN BELL, Esq." [Chairman of the Public Meeting.]

[COPY.] (vi) "INCHCOLM, PUTNEY, S.W. February 18th, 1887. The Secretary, Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.

"SIR,—I have to acquaint you that your letter of the 12th instant has been received acknowledging the receipt of the Memorial to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, relative to the damage to Wandsworth Common, adopted by a Public Meeting which requested me, in my capacity of chairman, to sign on their behalf. I will refer the communication, with a copy of this letter, to the Committee of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

"The clause referred to in your letter is doubtless that which directs attention to the vehicular traffic across the open Common. Although this clause was deemed necessary to a full statement of the complaints of the inhabitants, care was taken (the matter being *sub judice*) not to include the question of the right of way in the Prayer of the Memorial which respectfully urges that, the Commissioners will not allow any portion of the grounds in connection with the Girls' School, at present leased or unleased, to be diverted for building purposes, but will give some assurance that the school and the whole of the grounds as

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"originally established shall either continue to be a visible and permanent memorial, &c., or, if not now required for its original purpose, be restored to the Common," [This means, of course, under equitable conditions.]

"I feel sure those who attended the Public Meeting, at which I had the honour to preside, will expect a more explicit reply to their very limited request; and I hope the Commissioners will be graciously pleased to grant such a reply.

"I have, &c.,  
(Signed) "JOHN BELL, *Chairman of the Public Meeting held at the Wandsworth Town Hall, November 15th, 1886.*"

NOTE.—The Commissioners have promised to take this letter into their consideration.

**Questions in Parliament.**—Unless your Committee are under a misapprehension, it is the duty of Ministers and the purpose of Parliament to furnish information which cannot be obtained in any other way. It is to Parliament that the inhabitants—not merely of the two parishes, though far more populous than many county towns or corporate boroughs, but of the immense population as a whole which is embraced in what is known as the Metropolitan area—will finally have to turn for relief. The state of the Common and the circumstances under which the land was recently leased have already formed the subject of several questions in Parliament. The answer of the Secretary for War to Mr. Kimber's question of February 3rd, is unsatisfactory; it lacks force when submitted to analysis. It is, of course, the answer of the Royal Commissioners, which they might and ought to have given in writing, without occupying the valuable time of Parliament.

**Mr. KIMBER**—Asked the Secretary of State for War [Feb. 3rd, 1887] whether land (about 55 acres), part of Wandsworth Common, was given to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund for the purposes of the asylum, since erected thereon, to afford a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which provided the means for its foundation; and was enclosed from the Common without any equivalent or compensation to those enjoying rights over the Common

Whether the Royal Commissioners have recently admitted that a portion (about 20 acres) of the land is not required for the purposes of the asylum, and have leased the same, as a market garden, to a contractor for public works, who, by an extensive vehicular traffic, has for some months past done grievous damage to the existing portion of the open Common reserved for purposes of exercise and recreation under the provisions of "The Wandsworth Common Act, 1871":

Whether any offer of such land was made to the Wandsworth Common Conservators:

And, in what manner the advertisement of their intended letting of the ground, referred to on page 8 of the last Report of the Commissioners, was published; and why no notice thereof was given to the Conservators?

**Mr. STANHOPE**—The land on Wandsworth Common was not given to the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, but was purchased from the Lord of the Manor at a substantial price [A]. The Commissioners have recently

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leased about 20 acres of their estate to a market gardener, but this is not, in reality, any variation from the original object [B] for which the Commissioners held the ground. That object was to produce vegetables for consumption by the boys and girls of the schools and to instruct the boys in the art of gardening; but when the boys' school was given up it was found that **the ground was cultivated at a loss [C].** By the present arrangements the **vegetables are obtained from the tenant,** and there has been so great a gain that the Commissioners have been enabled to **maintain seven more beds [D].** As regards the increase of traffic across the Common, an action at law is now pending, and my honorable friend will understand therefore that I cannot express any opinion upon it. The letting of the land was after public advertisement in *The Times* of the 19th June, 1885, and also the *Gardeners' Chronicle* and *Agricultural Gazette*.

Mr. KIMBER—Asked the Secretary of State for War [Feb. 17th, 1887] whether he would state the amount paid by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund for the fifty-five acres of land, formerly a portion of Wandsworth Common, as a site for the Victoria Patriotic Asylum for Girls; out of what fund was the payment made; and, by whom was the money received?

Mr. BRODRICK—Who answered for the Secretary for War,—£3,700 was the consideration, which was paid in 1857 to Lord Spencer.

- (A) The first assertion is that a “substantial price” was paid for the land. The reader will perceive that it required a second question to get at the whole truth. On the 17th of February Mr. Brodrick, Financial Secretary, stated that “£3,700 was the consideration,” for about fifty-five acres, showing that so far from a substantial price having been paid, the land was obtained for the low agricultural value of £68 per acre. As an indication of the value of land in the immediate neighbourhood it may be mentioned that an estate on the opposite side of the road, was recently sold at about £1,000 per acre.
- (B) The statement that “the original object was . . . to instruct the boys in the art of gardening” is weak, when the fact is borne in mind that the Boys' School was not completed until 1873, and was sold in 1882. The official records of the Commissioners must be accepted as authoritative, and they show that a boys' school at Wandsworth was not even contemplated until 1870, many years after the land was purchased.

**Origin of the Boys' School:**—“The Executive Committee, who in July, 1870, reported to us that they had carefully considered the whole question; and looking to the cost of adaptation to the purposes of a school of any house built as an ordinary residence, and to the want of completeness which would always be felt in a building so altered when compared with premises constructed for that specific purpose; and looking also to the public and permanent character of the Institution proposed—they recommended the purchase, within a reasonable distance of the metropolis, of a piece of freehold land not exceeding 20 acres, or not exceeding a cost of £10,000, and the erection of a building thereon for the maintenance and education of 200 orphans

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Questions in Parliament: Sale of the Boys' School. 11

“ [boys] of soldiers, sailors, and marines of Your Majesty's Forces.”—*Tenth Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund*, p. 6. [*Parl. Paper C. 455 (Session 1871), price 3d.*]

“After mature deliberation,” it was subsequently decided to utilise “about 12 acres” of the land belonging to the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum for Girls at Wandsworth—

“Five Architects were selected to send in Plans and Designs. . . .  
“A tender to include the main building, infirmary, boundary wall, &c., for a sum of £20,326 was accepted” . . . The builders undertaking to complete the work in eighteen months from the date of signing the contract (12th April, 1871). Chapel accommodation £800, . . . and the Land Tax of the whole of the ground . . . at Wandsworth was redeemed ‘at a cost of £714 11s. 6d.’—*Ibid.*

**Sale of the Boys' School.**—By the Patriotic Fund Act, 1881, [44 and 45 Vict., c. 46], passed in less than eight years after the completion of this building, which was to be of a “public and permanent character,” it was enacted that “the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund may agree to sell the boys' school, known as the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum for Boys, and the land appropriated thereto,” &c.

Your Committee can but express their profound regret that such a statement should have been made in Parliament.

- (a) The next point to be noticed is the voluntary but humiliating confession that the ground was cultivated at a loss. If the tenant can grow vegetables and sell them to the school authorities at remunerative rates it ought to be practicable to the Commissioners by good management to secure every advantage, arising from the cultivation of the land, for the benefit of the school, without the intervention of any tenant.
- (b) The argument that by better cultivation of the land the Commissioners have been able to maintain seven more beds amounts to a painful admission. Moreover, it is a pity that result could not be accomplished without injuring the Common. If the Commissioners are justified by the conditions of their trust in procuring this insignificant result by leasing the land for farm purposes, there remains to them a strong temptation, presently, to convert the whole acreage into a crowded building estate in the very centre of the Common.

Mr. OCTAVIUS MORGAN—Asked the Secretary of State for War [Feb. 24th, 1887] whether, in view of the public dissatisfaction at the disposition made by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund of a portion of the land in the centre of Wandsworth Common, originally devoted as an appanage of the girls' school, the land being held by the Royal Commissioners in charitable trust, Her Majesty's Government will take any steps to secure the restoration of the land to the use of the school?

[The answer to this question has neither been reported in the press nor communicated, but it was understood to be a repetition of the answer of February 3rd, and therefore unsatisfactory.]

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**D** The "quagmire" created by the vehicular traffic of the tenant over the open common; the white patches show the pools of water, some of which are nearly knee-deep.  
November 30th, 1886.

Law Intelligence: Letters of Sympathy.

"The Court (without calling on Mr. M'Clymont, who appeared on the other side) were clearly of opinion that the action had better be tried, and so they dismissed the appeal."—*March 3rd, 1887.*

WANDSWORTH COMMON CONSERVATORS V. OFFICIAL TRUSTEES OF THE PATRIOTIC FUND AND ANOTHER.

**Daily News.**—"This was an appeal on behalf of the defendants from a refusal of Mr. Justice Day to order that the points of law which had been raised by them might be set down for hearing previous to the trial of the issues of fact involved in the action. The action was brought for alleged trespass, the defendant's servants having, it was stated, used the common as a means of access to the Patriotic Fund Asylum, which was on one side of it, and having taken carts across the common. The defendants denied the trespass, as they had not infringed any bye-laws, and also raised the points of law the subject of motion.—Mr. Clode, with whom was the Attorney-General, said the questions of law which the defendants wished tried first were two in number. First of all they said the Conservators had no right under their Act to sue for trespass, but that they could only sue as commoners, and then they would have to show that damage had been committed by the defendants, which was, defendants alleged, not the case. The second point was that the official trustees could not be sued. If these points were decided in defendants' favour, the learned counsel argued that the case would be at an end, and there would be no need to go into the question of fact.—Their lordships, without calling on Mr. McColl, who appeared for the plaintiffs, dismissed the appeal."—*March 3rd, 1888.*

The above reports appear to show that the attempt to quash the action of the Conservators on points of law has failed, and it is assumed that the action will proceed to hearing in the ordinary course.

**Letters of Sympathy.** A considerable number of letters of sympathy have been received, from which a few extracts are appended, viz:—

**Sir Henry W. Peek, Bart.**—[To whose handsome munificence and unceasing exertions in his capacity of Parliamentary representative of the division, the passing of the Wandsworth Common Act of 1871 was mainly due, wrote]:—"You may put me down for ten pounds in aid of the fund. In connection with my Parliamentary career, I look back to few things with more satisfaction than the part I took in securing for the public enjoyment the remains of your [Wandsworth] and the whole of this [Wimbledon] Common."

**Lord Brabazon.**—"I have received your letter of the 11th instant relative to the action of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund in leasing, for profit, a portion of the land which originally formed part of Wandsworth Common, and although without further information I am unable to speak with certainty on the subject, it would appear to me that there is *prima facie* evidence that the Royal Commissioners have no right to alienate any portion of the Common not required for the Asylum, and by their own admission it would appear that they have leased 19½ acres to a tenant of land not required for the Asylum. If this be the case I am of opinion that your action deserves the support of all those who believe that in the interests of the health of the people the greatest vigilance should be exercised to see that every acre of open space which can be legitimately retained near London should be preserved for the use and permanent enjoyment of the people, and as Chairman of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association I have great pleasure in observing the action which your Association has taken in the matter."

Letters of Sympathy

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**Mr. John S. Gilliatt, M.P.**—"I entirely sympathise with every effort to preserve our open spaces and the beauty of the Suburban Commons, and I am specially interested to know that there is an active public spirit aroused for the protection of Wandsworth Common. . . . It is worth while to struggle earnestly for the preservation of all that remains."

**Sir J. J. Trevor Lawrence, Bart., M.P.**—"I fully sympathise with the object of the meeting, and should be glad to help if I could."

**Mr. H. Cosmo Bonsor, M.P.**—"The importance of the preservation of every open space near London is evident to everyone, and I hope your society may be successful in retaining what is left of Wandsworth Common. I can assure them I will do what little I can both in and out of Parliament to forward their views."

**Mr. George Howell, M.P.**—"I heartily sympathise with your objects and hope that you will be in every way successful. Every district must jealously guard every bit of vacant land and open space in its vicinity, and the metropolis, as a whole, should see to it that any available piece of land suitable for an open space be secured ere it be too late."

**Mr. Henry Kimber, M.P.**—"I shall be happy to do anything I can for you. Don't think I consider it a trouble."

**Mr. J. Fletcher Moulton, Q.C.**—"I sincerely hope that the steps now being taken will lead, not only to the concession of the moderate demands that are now being made, but will ultimately bring about the restitution of the ground itself."

**Mr. J. C. Buckmaster**, whose exertions for the preservation of the Common are now of local historical interest, writes:—"I had hoped after we had obtained an Act of Parliament and had appointed Conservators that we should have no more trouble or anxiety about the common. It always seemed to me, and I referred publicly to it at the time, but without much response that the land taken by the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund was greatly in excess of their requirements for a girls' school, and ought to have been resisted at the time. I always feared that the ultimate object would be something like that which has now come about, but this is not the end of it, to cover the land with buildings will be the final result."

**Mr. W. R. Williams**, whose endeavours to secure the preservation of Highgate Woods have been attended with a large measure of success, wrote:—"I heartily wish you success in your efforts to preserve what remains as an open space for the use and recreation of the public."

Several metropolitan Members have also corresponded with the Committee, including Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, M.P., Lieut.-General C. CRAWFORD FRAZER, M.P., Mr. O. V. MORGAN, M.P., Captain PENTON, M.P., &c., &c.

**Commons Preservation Society.**—The Committee have been in communication with the Commons Preservation Society, whose powerful influence has been frequently and successfully exerted in Parliament. The 21st anniversary of the Society was recently held, and already it has quite an imposing record of noble victories. The Right Honble. J. G. Shaw Lefevre, M.P., is the Chairman of the Committee. The experience, advice, and assistance of such a Society may be very valuable.

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## APPENDIX.

**Letters to the Press.**—The following letters or extracts, which have appeared in the Public Press, in some measure give expression to the prevailing widespread dissatisfaction with the leasing of the land by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund and the misuse of the Common by their tenant. The limited space at their disposal does not enable the Committee to do more than quote a few examples, nor do they hold themselves responsible for the individual opinions of the writers. The dates in brackets are those on which the letters were published.

(i.) MR. GEORGE ENNIS, who at an early stage directed public attention to the action of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund by his letter in the *Times* [13/11/85], wrote as follows:—

“ Sir,—Permit me the use of *The Times* to draw attention to what looks like the impending perpetration of a small Highland enclosure at our very doors—  
“ i.e., in the very centre of Wandsworth-common.

“ The facts, as far as I have been able to gather them, are these:—At the close of the Crimean war the Patriotic Fund was established by national subscription for the maintenance and assistance of orphan children of soldiers and sailors, and with this fund were built the twin institutions known respectively as the Patriotic Asylums for Boys and Girls, upon extensive sites appropriated out of Wandsworth-common, with the assent of the commoners for that especial object.

“ The building for boys was lately sold to the Governors of Emanuel Hospital, for lack of legitimate occupants. That for girls, together with its land, which is of considerable extent, is still applied to its original uses, the land supplying farm, dairy, and garden produce for the use of the institution.

“ So long as it is limited to these uses no complaint could arise, but when they fail I take it there is reversion to the former use of the commoners.

“ On passing the farm this morning, however, I noticed indications of survey, with the apparent object of cutting off about one-half, and, upon inquiry of a common keeper, was informed that it had been taken by Mr. Neal for the purpose of conversion into nursery ground. A lease of this kind, if made, I believe to be altogether *ultra vires*, and, if allowed to stand effective, no doubt the next step upon its expiration or extinction would be fresh grants to speculative builders. It behoves the local authorities, common conservators, and others interested, to be upon the alert. The common has already suffered severely by appropriations to various railway companies, by gravel digging, by enclosures of manorial lords, and by the land taken for the use of various buildings, and chiefly for the Patriotic Institutions.

“ The public and commoners are quite content at present to be excluded from admission to the latter, more especially as its present open fence leaves it practically belonging to and parcel of the great open space of the common, but after this warning I cannot suppose that they will tamely submit to its threatened appropriation for the use indicated.”

(ii.) “ C,” in his letter to the *Daily News* [16/10/86], directed attention to the “trampling into a quagmire of a considerable portion of the open common;” and this gave rise to an animated correspondence resulting in united action on the part of the inhabitants:—

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“to a farmer for occupation and private gain. The commoners who so generously, and without hesitation, consented to the appropriation of this large portion of the “common,” are not considered when these changes are made. They do now, however, very fairly ask whether the nation is so poor as to be reduced to the necessity of leasing for the ends of private gain the land entrusted to them for charitable and national purposes. Is the land, given to the soldier orphan, and held as a national trust, now that the surrounding property is almost covered with building, to be leased first to the farmer and then to the builder? If the Patriotic Commissioners no longer require the common entrusted to them, will they not give the commoners the opportunity of buying back that which was generously [almost] given? Where are the conservators? They may be active, or possibly asleep. In the absence of evidence of activity we may assume they are in a dormant condition. Surely if they cannot dissuade the patriotic trust from leasing a portion of the “common” for farming purposes, they can prevent the farmer from trampling into a quagmire a considerable portion of the remaining ‘open common.’ If the farmer must be maintained on land which was common and open to the people up to 1854, surely he should be given an entrance direct from the highway, and not be permitted to make what was at one time the prettiest nook on the common a perfect slough of mud and filth.”

(iii.) “O,” whose letter appeared in the *Daily News* [17/10/86], wrote:—

“Sir,—I read a letter in the *Daily News* to-day very properly headed ‘Spoliation of Wandsworth-common.’ The whole of ‘C.’s’ remarks all who live near here will cordially endorse. He has explained how common land for a great public charity has been fenced off and leased to a contractor in the neighbourhood by the Commissioners of the Patriotic Schools. I have always understood that the amount subscribed for this institution was nearly two millions. Surely, after paying for buildings, the income would be sufficient for the support of the schools, without resorting to the mean and paltry method of raising the wind by letting on lease a large proportion of the land. . . . This contractor has enlarged what was originally a lodge into a private residence for himself, and farms the rest of the ‘20 acres.’ To have made an entrance from the highway would doubtless have drawn too much public attention to the matter. So about 250 yards of the ‘prettiest nook on the common’ have been, as ‘C.’ observes, ‘turned into a perfect slough of mud and filth,’ his carts having cut three or four different roads over the furze bushes, and across the public path. All this is the thin edge of the wedge, and if the Patriotic Commissioners find everything goes on quietly and public attention is not drawn to the matter they will allow further building operations to take place.”

(iv.) MR. EDWIN R. RANSOME, the Chairman of the Board of Conservators, also wrote to the *Daily News* [21/10/86], as follows:—

“Sir,—The attention of the Board of Conservators of Wandsworth Common has been drawn to a letter signed ‘C’ in your columns, in which it is pointed out that parts of Wandsworth Common granted by the lord of the manor and the commoners to the ‘Patriotic Fund Institution’ for charitable purposes are being turned to other uses, and that the common is being grievously damaged by the tenant who is renting the land thus diverted from its original purpose. Your correspondent suggests that the Conservators are ‘dormant.’ I am requested by my colleagues to acquaint, through your columns, all those interested in this question (and who is not interested where the preservation of an open space is at issue?) that on the first rumour that this land was to be no longer used for school purposes the Conservators wrote, urging that it should be restored to the common; and that, failing success for that prayer, they offered to buy the land back rather than that there should be a possibility of its being given up hereafter to building purposes. All their efforts, however, in this

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## Appendix—Letters to the Press.

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“ five pounds. Notwithstanding this improved position, however, the Commissioners have thought fit, from the forty-four acres still left to them surrounding the girls' school, to sever and let on lease to a market gardener nearly twenty acres. The inhabitants of the vicinity feel that this is only the “ thin end of the wedge,” which presently may be driven home by extinction of the lease or otherwise, and the land finally appropriated for building purposes.

“ Lord Colchester, Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Commissioners to consider and report on a proposed school, states (20th June, 1856), “ that the school to be established should afford a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which has provided the means for its foundation,” and the inhabitants of the district feel that the Commissioners, by the step taken, have entirely ignored and set aside the moral and equitable obligations implied therein and in the circumstances of the trust, to preserve this stately building and its picturesque domain to its original uses in perpetuity.

“ Following the principles of equity, charitable trusts should be administered in accordance with the intentions of the donors, but I venture to think that such a disposition of this land as that just made could never have been contemplated by the donors, and I trust it will never have their acquiescence. Is it such a disposition as can be approved or suffered to continue in view of our ever increasing necessity for breathing room? The land, as at present enclosed, had no objectionable feature when limited to its original use, as it formed in effect part and parcel of the great open space of the Common; but the destructive effects involved in its present tenure are only too apparent, and are exciting general indignation. The Chairman of the Common Conservators states that upon the first rumour that the land was to be no longer used for school purposes, the Conservators offered (without avail) to buy it back. Was it too much to ask that that offer should have been preferentially accepted? The rent of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, payable by the tenant, can only be of trifling importance in the administration of so large a fund, and I hope that, public attention being drawn to the matter, the Commissioners will see the wisdom and expedience of procuring a cancellation of the lease granted and the restoration of the land to the service to which it had been so generously devoted.

(viii.)—MR. J. C. BUCKMASTER, whose exertions in all that relates to the preservation and welfare of the Common during the last forty years, are widely known and highly appreciated, in a letter to the *Daily News*, 30/11/86, writes:—

“ SIR,—Between 1854 and 1857 the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund obtained possession of about sixty acres of Wandsworth Common. The terms upon which they obtained the land from the Lord of the Manor were never, so far as I know, made public; but there is reason to believe that if any consideration were given, it was merely nominal. A girls' school was erected in 1857 and a boys' school in 1870. Neither of these schools have been very satisfactory.”

“ The boys' school, together with eleven acres of land, have been sold to the Governors of Emmanuel Hospital for a sum of £30,000. A fence has been erected to separate the land, about twenty acres, not now required for the girls' school, and after public advertisement, which no one in a large public meeting had seen, the Commissioners have let this land for the erection of farm-buildings and a cottage to a desirable tenant, who is to make certain improvements, and pay a rental of £150 per annum for a period of 21 years. If at the expiration of 21 years the land be required for Patriotic Fund purposes, the tenant is to vacate; but if not so required, the tenant is to occupy for a further period of 21 years at an increased rental of fifty pounds per annum.”

“ A rather long and intimate acquaintance with enclosures on Wandsworth Common has convinced me that the final result of this lease is forty-foot roads and houses called villas, with two or three families in each. The Commissioners, like other appropriators of commons, begin by what they describe as certain improvements, which are perfected by the architecture of the speculating builders. Our contention is this: Considering the object for which the Patriotic Fund was raised, and the persons who contributed, it was never supposed that

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"any of this land would be diverted from the special uses for which it was obtained, and if the Commissioners had no further use for the land, why was it not offered to the Conservators, or restored to the common?"

"As soon as the Conservators knew of the proposal to lease the land they at once opened up a correspondence with the Commissioners, with a view of securing it, but the lease had been signed. The Commissioners cannot plead financial difficulties, because they have now an unused balance of nearly £94,000. It is nonsense to vapour about the legal rights of the Commissioners. We all know what that means; but as a body of gentlemen we believe and hope that they will be influenced by moral rather than legal considerations, and that some plan will be devised to at once cancel the lease. The Conservators have commenced proceedings to prevent the Patriotic tenant from destroying the turf and cutting up the common by heavily-laden carts. A stuccoed building has already made its appearance, and, if one, probably in a few years as many as can be crowded upon the area."

"After the death of the Mayor of Garrett, which took place about 1780, there was no organization to prevent enclosures of common. A sort of tradition lingers that the most resolute persons against these enclosures, after unsuccessful efforts to prevent others appropriating, at last quieted their own lives and consciences by appropriating pieces of common for their own benefit. From 1794 to 1866 there have been 53 enclosures of areas varying from a quarter to 96 acres. Many of these were made without any payment, authority, or consent. The total area of common land enclosed during the past century in the parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth alone is not less than 500 acres, and the 160 acres which has been preserved at the cost of upwards of £3,000 raised by voluntary subscriptions has to be narrowly watched against persons anxious to make improvements. Whether this can be best done by those living on or near the common, or the Board of Works, I am unable to say; but this I can truly say, that if the preservation of Wandsworth Common had been left to the Board of Works it never would have been preserved. After all efforts and entreaties with the Board failed, a local Bill for the preservation of the common was promoted. The Board of Works spent the ratepayers' money in opposing by counsel the Bill before the Parliamentary Committee, which compelled us to spend four of five hundred pounds more than we otherwise should have done out of a fund which had been partly raised by contributions of pennies, sixpences, and shillings. We owe no thanks to the Board of Works. What has been secured through many years of agitation and lawsuits, and varying terms of imprisonment, we are anxious to keep for the health, comfort, and recreation of the public."

**Opinions of the Press.**—The Committee tender their grateful thanks to the Press for the assistance which has been rendered by the publication of reports of Public Meetings, the insertion of letters of correspondents directing attention to the circumstances and for the editorial notices of which we can only give a few brief extracts. The Committee believe they will not appeal in vain for the material help which it is in the power of the Press to give in supporting and sustaining a cause, the just claims of which have already been freely admitted, but which it is necessary to keep before the public mind. Here are a few examples of editorial comment:—

**Daily News.**—"The attempt which is being made to prevent the perversion of a public trust deserves the sympathy of the whole of London. Wandsworth and Battersea are doing a public service in thus persistently directing attention to the subject. . . . Wandsworth Common is one of the most useful breathing grounds in Southern London. . . . It is quite possible that they [the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund] might prove to be within their legal rights if they sold it [the land] for building purposes, though, if that should prove to be the case, it would be the duty of Parliament to reconsider the terms of the gift. There can be no doubt for what purpose the land was put into their hands, and they can have no moral right to use it for any other purpose. It was given for

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Schools for the Orphans; and if it is not needed for that purpose it should be handed back to the public. . . . The fear is naturally and justly entertained at Wandsworth that the letting these acres for market gardens is the first step. It is an act of alienation. It is setting up a kind of private ownership. . . . If for market gardens, why not for houses and streets? is the question people ask; and there is no answer." *November 18th, 1886.*

**In a Second Article.**—"This is another instance of the folly of committing public duties, public money, or public land to irresponsible bodies. . . . The public has no *locus standi*; and in this case we fear the Conservators of the Common have no power. Their question, however must be put in Parliament, if answer can be got to it in no other way. On what conditions, subject to what trusts, and under what limitations, if any, do the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund hold this great slip of Wandsworth Common? Have they a right to turn into building land the land they have now let for Market-gardens? If not, they must be made to restore it to the public; if they have these powers, it will be the duty of Parliament to take them away." *November 30th, 1886.*

**Pall Mall Gazette.**—"The inhabitants of Battersea and Wandsworth have a very clear grievance against the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund; and they are taking vigorous action, by public meeting and otherwise, to get that grievance removed. . . . The schools and grounds as first established were intended to afford a 'visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity,' but since that time the Commissioners have sold the boys' school, and with it a site of eleven acres; and they have leased for profit nearly twenty acres of the site in connection with the girls' school to a market gardener, who, forsooth, is also a lime and cement merchant, a tar pavior, and a contractor [for public works, whose horses and carts have for months past been working over a portion of the common, doing damage to the turf and the footpaths, notwithstanding the fact that in 1871 the inhabitants secured at great cost the passing of an Act to preserve the remainder of their common. They claim now that the Commissioners should not allow any portion of the grounds, whether leased or unleased at the present time, to be diverted for building purposes; and that they shall give some assurance that the school and the whole of the grounds as originally established shall either continue to be 'a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which provided the means for its foundation,' or if not now required for its original purpose be restored to the common. That is a perfectly fair and reasonable request, and it will be strongly urged at the meeting to be held to-night at Balham. At any rate, the inhabitants will not cease their exertions, for they know full well that if they do the end of it will be the covering of the land with buildings. Our map [on the third page] explains the agitation." *December 17th, 1886.*

**Echo.**—"If we were asked to point out to a stranger the suburban common which is the most striking example of modern encroachments, we should take him to Wandsworth. . . . The Patriotic Fund Commissioners obtained a large slice of the common thirty years ago as a site for an orphan school. . . . It was made for a specific purpose, and the people of Battersea and Wandsworth naturally object to the manner in which the Commissioners are using the land. A portion has been let to a tenant who coolly drives carts and waggons over the furze and turf, and a third of the land granted to the Patriotic Fund Commissioners is let out as a cabbage garden." *November 18th, 1886.*

**Wandsworth and Putney Observer.**—"The Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund must be assumed to be patriots. . . . The property they are vested with is the outcome of a noble self-sacrifice exerted in a noble cause, the care of the helpless victims of a cruel, though chivalrous war, in which English blood was poured out without stint in vindication of the national honour. . . . We hear sometimes of filial ingratitude, the misuse of parental gifts made at the sacrifice of health and life. A profligate son will sell a memento of his departed mother for a drink of beer. He is a low fellow and an abandoned wretch. But he is not without excuse. The Royal Patriotic Commissioners, occupying a high position in the State, have leased a part of the Battersea and Wandsworth gift for profit to a market gardener! It is even feared they will eventually contract the breathing space, and diminish the lives of the givers by surrendering the enclosure to building purposes. The Commissioners are honorable men, and their patriotism is unquestionable. Do

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22 Appendix—Opinions of the Press: Facts about the Patriotic Fund.

they not administer a Patriotic Fund? They force us to an apparent contradiction. They are unpatriotic patriots." *November 20th, 1886.*

**Putney and Wandsworth Borough News.**—"The proceedings at the enthusiastic meetings held at the Town Hall, Wandsworth, on Monday, and at the Bolingbroke Hall, on Thursday, serve to shew that the ratepayers of Battersea and Wandsworth are awakening to their rights in respect of the land, formerly part of Wandsworth Common, now being so seriously misused by the Patriotic Fund Commissioners. . . . The agitation now set on foot must be continued. When Parliament meets, Mr. Gilliat and Mr. Cosmo Bonser must follow up, by motion or question, their speeches at the meeting of Thursday last, when they are sure to be ably seconded by Mr. Kimber and others. The members for Wandsworth Borough and for the Clapham Division of Battersea are equally interested in this question, the boundary between the two parishes traversing the land in dispute, and the county is also concerned." *November 20th, 1886.*

**Mid Surrey Gazette.**—"The question of the condition of Wandsworth Common is arousing a large amount of interest, not only in the parishes immediately affected, but amongst Londoners generally. . . . The legal question now at issue is not so much whether the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund are within their rights in letting twenty acres of the land for agricultural purposes—that has yet to be tested—as whether the lessee has the right to take his carts across, and cut up, what is really and truly the common." *November 20th, 1886.*

**Facts about the Patriotic Fund.**—The following information, taken from the official Reports, is of public interest and may be of assistance to those who desire to understand the origin and purpose of the Fund, viz. :—

**How raised.**—The contributions are thus officially summarised: ENGLAND and WALES, £884,991; IRELAND, £60,047; SCOTLAND, £149,747; Army, Navy, Dockyards, Hospitals, Civil Service, Police, &c., £12,099; British Possessions, £315,390; British Residents and others in Foreign Countries, £30,772. The following extract is significant:—"Contributions of large amount have been received from agricultural districts and rural parishes, swelled by the spontaneous bounty of the peasantry; artisans, domestic servants, workpeople, labourers, individually and in associations, have felt a patriotic pride and a generous satisfaction in answering their Sovereign's appeal. In one striking instance, the inmates of the Reformatory Asylum, Smith Street, Westminster, having literally nothing of their own to give, denied themselves a meal, that its value might be offered as their gift. We deem it a fact deserving your Majesty's notice, that even the children of the poorer classes have very generally contributed their 'mite' to enlarge the amount of the Nation's bounty."—*First Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, 1858, page 11, clause 3. (Parliamentary Paper 163, Session 1858. Price 1s.)*

**A Comparative View of the Fund in 1858 and 1886.**

**The Patriotic Fund in 1858.**—"In our first report to your Majesty in May, 1855, we stated that the Patriotic Fund loyally and generously contributed up to that time by your Majesty's subjects in all parts of your dominions, exceeded £1,000,000. It now (Feb. 9th, 1858) amounts to £1,453,045."—*Second Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, page 43, clause 2 (Parliamentary Paper 163, Session 1858, price 1s.)*

**The Patriotic Fund in 1886.**—"The assets of the Fund are valued at the 31st December, 1885, as worth £428,759, in comparison with £438,173, at the 31st December, 1884. The change is to be ascribed to the expiration of a terminable Annuity on the 5th April, 1885, of which the final instalment amounted to £8,450 4s. 2d., and to a reduction that has taken place in the cash balance."—*Twenty-fourth Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to her Majesty the Queen, page 22 (Parl. Paper C—4869, Session 1886, price 6d.)*

Appendix—Fact

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Appendix--Facts about the Patriotic Fund: Contributions. 23

The original intention of the Royal Commissioners (1856).-- "Your Committee feel that they cannot exclude from their consideration the desire which they believe to be entertained by the Royal Commissioners, that the School to be established should afford a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which has provided the means for its foundation." Second Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, 1856, Appendix 6, page 57 (Parliamentary Papers 163, Session 1858, price 1s.)

"The Land not required for the Asylum (1885).--" A fence has been erected to separate the land which is not at present required for the use of the Asylum from that which it is necessary to retain: and after public advertisement the Committee have arranged for letting the farm buildings, a cottage, and the land not required for the Asylum (about 19½ acres), to a desirable tenant, who will make certain improvements and pay a rental of £150 per annum for a period of twenty-one years, foregoing any claim for compensation at the expiration of that period for any further improvements he may have made during his tenancy beyond those now agreed upon."

"At the expiration of the twenty-one years (should the land be required for Patriotic Fund purposes) the tenant is to vacate; but if not so required, the tenant is to have the occupation for a further period of twenty-one years, upon an increased rental of £50 per annum."--Twenty-fourth Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to Her Majesty the Queen, 1886, page 8, clause 10. (Parl. Paper C 4869, Session 1886, Price 6½d.)

Other interesting particulars will be found in the "Correspondence between the War Office and the Royal Commissioners for the Patriotic Fund relative to the condition of the Fund."--(Parliamentary Paper, C-2,956, price 2d., Session 1881.) Also the "Report of a Sub-Committee."--(Parliamentary Paper, C-3,001, price 2½d., Session 1881.)

Wandsworth Common Ratepayers' Protection Association.--A few years ago the Wandsworth Common Ratepayers' Protection Association was formed to resist the attempt made by the London School Board to appropriate part of the field opposite the Surrey Tavern as a site for a Board School. This field, formerly a part of the Common, was granted by the Homage of the Manor subject to its use for arable, pasture, or garden ground.

The resistance was successful, the School Board giving way in the matter. The Committee endeavoured by discussions at the Annual Meetings of the Conservators to rouse public feeling with the view, mainly, to obtain the restoration of certain pieces of ground formerly part of the Common.

In 1886 the proceedings of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund caused the formation of another Committee. It was thought that an amalgamation of the two Committees would be for the public benefit, and they accordingly united their forces under the title of Wandsworth Common Protection Association, the balance of the original fund £3 10s. 8d. was subsequently handed over to the Committee by the Treasurer, Mr. W. Touzeau Saunders, and inserted in list of subscriptions.--See page 24.

Contributions.--The Treasurer desires on behalf of the Committee to tender their grateful thanks to all who have given contributions in support of the work. Two public meetings have been held under the auspices of the Association, and a considerable number of posters, handbills, and circulars have been printed and circulated for the information of the inhabitants. There still remains much to be done, and the Committee earnestly hope that those who sympathise with the objects of the Association will kindly forward contributions in accordance with the instructions on the annexed form, page 25. Appended is a list of subscriptions and a statement of expenditure to date, viz:--

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Metropolitan Board of Works

Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

For the immediate purpose of (i.) representing to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund the justice and equity either of restoring the land, recently leased for profit, to the original use of the School or allowing its annexation to the Common; (ii.) directing public attention to the grievous damage now being done by vehicular traffic crossing a portion of the Common, by public meetings, memorials, petitions, or other lawful means; and (iii.), if necessary, to bring the circumstances under the notice of Parliament.

To EDWARD STEELE, Esq., Honorary Treasurer, Turret Lodge, Routh Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Sir,—I herewith enclose a contribution of £ : : , in aid of the Association.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address \_\_\_\_\_

BANKERS: The London and South Western Bank, Limited (Clapham Junction Branch), 3, Garfield Terrace, Clapham Junction, S.W.

Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

EDWARD STEELE, Esq., Hon. Treasurer, Turret Lodge, Routh Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.

Received, with thanks, from \_\_\_\_\_

the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ pounds \_\_\_\_\_ shillings

and \_\_\_\_\_ pence \_\_\_\_\_ 188 \_\_\_\_\_

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N.B.—A statement of Receipts and Expenditure will be prepared by the Committee and forwarded to all Contributors.

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FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF CONTRIBUTORS THIS SHEET MAY BE FILLED UP AND LODGED ENTIRE EITHER AT ANY BRANCH OF THE ASSOCIATION'S BANKERS OR SENT ON TO THE TREASURER, WHO WILL BE PLEASED TO SEND ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY POST.

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# Metropolitan Board of Works.

July 13th, 1887.

MY LORD,

## Re WANDSWORTH COMMON.

I am requested by the Committee of this Association to draw the attention of the Metropolitan Board of Works to the following question, and to the answer of the Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons relative to Wandsworth Common, viz :—

Mr. Kimber asked (16th February, 1888) the Secretary of State for War—"Whether the action-at-law referred to "in the answer to a question put on February 3rd, 1887, "relative to the extensive damage to Wandsworth "Common by the vehicular traffic of the tenant of the "Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, is still "pending?"

Mr. Stanhope answered (*Times*, 17th February, 1888)—  
"The powers of the Conservators of Wandsworth  
"Common were transferred last year by an Act of Par-  
"liament to the Metropolitan Board of Works. I think  
"my hon. friend would best obtain the information on  
"the subject referred to from that body. I may add  
"that the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund  
"do not admit the alleged damage."

In the opinion of this Committee the reply of the Secretary of State for War may be parliamentary, but it is decidedly unsatisfactory. If "the Commissioners do not admit the alleged damage," Mr. Stanhope might have told the House of Commons and the country why they did not go into Court and at least

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## WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

TO THE

# Metropolitan Board of Works.

July 13th, 1887.

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*To the Metropolitan Board of Works.*

THE MEMORIAL of the Wandsworth Common  
Protection Association.

SHEWETH:

**Management.** **That**, under the provisions of the Metropolitan Board of Works (various powers) Act, 1887, the management of Wandsworth Common is vested in the Metropolitan Board of Works, with power to exercise all the functions—with the exception of levying a separate local rate—formerly discharged by the Conservators under the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871, which provides that it shall be the duty of the administrative authority of the Act “to keep the Common for ever open “and unenclosed and unbuilt on (cl. 33), for purposes of “health and unrestricted exercise and recreation (cl. 37),” and to “protect the turf, gorse, heather, timber, and other trees, shrubs, and brushwood thereon (cl. 35).”

**Improvements.** **That** in the opinion of your memorialists the Common may be materially improved by a judicious and comparatively moderate expenditure, and thus afford increased facilities for recreation and enjoyment to a large section of the inhabitants of this crowded metropolis.

**Footpaths.** **That** one of the most urgent needs is a series of good and suitable footpaths—not of mud, loose shingle, brick-ends, or other material which nobody will walk upon, but of—something calculated to afford comfort and convenience to the public: such paths would be gratefully appreciated and would materially conduce to the preservation of the turf, as required by the terms of clauses 35 and 37 of the original Act.

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**That** Cricket or other games permitted on the Common should be played under proper regulations clearly drawn and firmly enforced: it ought to be possible to afford adequate protection to pedestrians and to prevent needless accidents without placing undue restrictions upon games.

**That** it is desirable to afford facilities under reasonable regulations, for playing on the Common the games of Bowls and Tennis, or such other games as may be found advisable, and by charging a penny or two-pence a game a source of revenue would be created sufficient to secure the services of an attendant to maintain order and to protect the property of the public; examples of the working of such a plan would doubtless be furnished by the Corporation of Manchester, where the practice is followed in the public parks which have been purchased and are maintained by means of public rates.

**That** the surface of Wandsworth Common readily lends itself to the formation of ornamental waters or a series of ponds, which if laid out with judgment, studded with small islands planted with suitable trees, the water not to exceed thirty inches in depth, with a gravel or concrete bottom, broad footpaths along the banks, and adequate protection against the dog nuisance, would be in striking contrast to mud-pools, rotting vegetation, and other unmentionable filth: such a series of ornamental waters as is here suggested could hardly fail to exercise a beneficial influence on the surroundings, and could be fairly supplied by the surplus surface water from the higher portions of the Common; this method of utilising the resources of nature—in a district in which, in a dry season, the rain, after a heavy fall, disappears in a few hours—appears to be preferable to “under drainage,” with its usually disastrous effect upon turf, gorse, and trees.

**That** although the Common possessed many fine trees, prior to 1871, and others have been since planted, yet there remains ample room for considerable additions; the Kew authorities would, if necessary, readily advise the Board as to the most suitable kinds, and if a thousand or more were purchased in a lot the cost per tree should not be large; for the protection of very young

trees many of the existing especially those from which they are at present employed enough to take care of

**That** Carpet-beating is an ancient institution, but the ancient gear, to be at Baskerville Road, a Carpet Beating beyond the m draw their ve conducive to protection of the trees: the Common is to be objections ought to be a

**That** Horse Riding, a terror and a danger to children, who numbers; this continue, as the of its being cut up by rails for such purposes.

**That**, with the exception which fringe or intersect upon the most frequented have the only alternative Lighting. or risking the ceptional opposition and there is a structure known as the “Cat’s Back” communication between the East and West of the Common about three feet wide, and as really dangerous at night as at all seasons of the

**That** the assumed revenue of the Common for agricultural purposes a notable instance may be in consideration of your Board Royal Commissioners of Wandsworth 55 acres of Wandsworth per acre, for the purpose

## The Patriotic Fund

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ow raised.—The contribution  
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## A COMPANION

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trees many of the existing tree-guards might be utilised—especially those from the north side of the Common, where they are at present employed in the protection of trees old enough to take care of themselves.

**That** Carpet-beating on the Common appears to be an ancient institution, but the practice of allowing poles, ropes, and other gear, to be attached to the trees near the north-end of Baskerville Road, and of allowing persons who reside beyond the metropolitan area to use the site and draw their vehicles upon the Common is neither conducive to the preservation of the turf nor the protection of the trees: if the practice of carpet-beating on the Common is to be continued, stations free from these objections ought to be appointed.

**That** Horse Riding, as now practised on the Common, is a terror and a danger to the public, and especially to the children, who resort to the Common in increasing numbers; this practice should not be permitted to continue, as the size of the Common, and the fact of its being cut up by railways and paths, render it unsuited for such purposes.

**That**, with the exception of the lamps upon the highways which fringe or intersect the Common, there is not even one upon the most frequented path. In this darkness the inhabitants have the only alternatives either of going a long way round or risking the passage of a region affording exceptional opportunities for evil disposed persons; and there is a structure which, owing to its peculiar shape, is known as the "Cat's Back Bridge," forming a means of communication between the portions of the Common which lie East and West of the Brighton Railway; this bridge is only about three feet wide, and by many inhabitants is regarded as really dangerous at night, and this too is left in total darkness at all seasons of the year.

**That** the assumed rights of way across portions of the Common for agricultural or other purposes should be stopped; a notable instance may be cited, deserving the careful consideration of your Board:—In or about the year 1855, the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund acquired some 55 acres of Wandsworth Common for £3,700, or about £68 per acre, for the purpose of establishing a School for Girls,

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MY LORD,

## Re WANDSWORTH COMMON.

I am requested by the Committee of this Association to draw the attention of the Metropolitan Board of Works to the following  
the Secretary of State for War in

which should "afford a visible and permanent memorial of the national generosity which provided the means for its foundation." Such was the patriotic fervour of the time that subscriptions were eagerly made by all classes, the rich and poor alike, throughout the United Kingdom and the Colonies, and even from foreign countries, and the fund speedily reached the enormous total of nearly one million five hundred thousand pounds. It is recorded in the reports of the Royal Commissioners that "in one striking instance the inmates of the Reformatory Asylum, Smith Street, Westminster, having literally nothing of their own to give, denied themselves a meal that its value might be offered as their gift." In 1882 eleven acres of this land, and the Boys' School, built in 1872-3, were sold; and in 1886, the Royal Commissioners reported that a further portion of the land not required for the Asylum (about 19½ acres) had been let to a tenant who will pay a rental of £150 per annum for a period of twenty-one years, and if, at the expiration of that period, the land is not required, the tenant is to have the occupation for a further period of twenty-one years upon an increased rental of £50 per annum. During the past twelve months the Patriotic School authorities and their tenant, who is also a contractor for public works and the owner of a large number of horses and carts, have established an extensive heavy-wheeled traffic across a portion of the Common, whereby most serious damage has been done to the turf, gorse, and footpath, contrary to the spirit and intention of the original Act. The condition of this road has been aptly described in a special article in the *Daily News* (October 23rd, 1886), viz.:—"Just past the Willows a rough muddy road branches off into two up-ploughed quagmire cart roads, worse than many a colonial bush track." A not dissimilar abuse, but at present on a smaller scale, exists at the south-west corner of the Common, adjacent to Burntwood Lane. Such uses of land devoted to purposes of public recreation, under the provisions of an Act of Parliament, are improper and incompatible with the intention of the legislature.

That there are pieces of adjacent land which, undoubtedly, originally formed part of Wandsworth Common, and which have been granted or sold subject to use for arable, pasture, or garden ground. The attempt made by the School Board

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**Adjacent Land and Manorial Rights.** for London to appropriate a portion of the field opposite the surrey Tavern, as a site for a school, which this Association successfully resisted, is a case in point; the land between Trinity Road, and Her Majesty's Prison, now used as a nursery-ground is understood to be similarly placed; and with regard to the land attached to the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum for Girls, it was not contemplated, at the time of the transfer, that the land should ever be occupied other than by school buildings. By causing the Court Rolls to be examined your Board may learn the exact conditions under which these and other pieces of land are held, and probably for a small consideration might be able to purchase the manorial rights, and thus secure, in perpetuity, their maintenance as open spaces.

**That** it is desirable the Bye-Laws should be exhibited in a permanent form upon the Common in order that the individuals named in clause 58 of the original Act may be deprived of the plea of ignorance as to the nature of the law; the titles of the Acts, Bye-Laws, or other public documents concerning the Common should also be described, the price stated, and where copies may be obtained.

**Your Memorialists** desire particularly to draw the attention of your Board to the objects for which the land attached to the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum has been severed from the Common; your Memorialists are of opinion that its diversion to the uses of an individual trader in the manner shown, is entirely *ultra vires*, and contrary to the intentions of the donors, since, as regards the Common Rights, the land was a gift, and being held in charitable trust, should be administered in accordance with those intentions: the piece recently severed comprises some twenty acres, and in view of the necessity for the maintenance of open spaces in and near the metropolis, your Memorialists trust that this serious alienation may have the prompt attention of your Board, as the only power in existence possessing the right and means of resisting so great an encroachment; And

Your Memorialists respectfully submit that it is practicable and desirable to afford increased facilities for recreation and games, under proper regulations; to provide good and suitable footpaths, and to cause them to be lighted; to improve and maintain ornamental waters; to plant suitable trees; and to obtain, as far as practicable, the manorial rights over certain pieces of land adjacent to the Common; and, in the words of the original Act, to do all those things best calculated to promote the "health, exercise, and recreation" of the people: And

Your Memorialists further respectfully submit that, in addition to paying the general rate of the Metropolitan Board of Works, the inhabitants of the district have, by means of a separate local rate, contributed about £13,000 for the preservation and maintenance of the Common since the passing of the Act of 1871; they, therefore, feel justified in urging that they have strong exceptional claims upon your Board for favourable consideration.

And your Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

EDWARD STEELE (*Hon. Treas.*)  
*Chairman of the Meeting.*

ALGERNON BLACK,  
JOHN BLACKBEARD,  
J. H. COWHAM,  
W. H. DICKINSON,  
W. KERSHAW EDWARDS,  
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JAMES H. MACE,  
JAMES P. MOORE,  
JOHN RICHARDSON,  
W. W. SAUNDERS,  
GEORGE T. SMITH,  
RICHARD N. STEVENS,  
JOSEPH BARRS TATAM.

EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*

July 13th, 1887.

*Members of the  
Committee of the  
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Members of the  
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COPY of a letter to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works. All who are interested in the preservation of open spaces—and who are not interested in such a vital question?—are most earnestly requested to keep this most important question in view at all forthcoming Elections in the Metropolis.

## Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

“The fear is naturally and justly entertained at Wandsworth that the letting these acres for market gardens is the first step [to building]. It is an act of alienation. It is setting up a kind of private ownership. . . . If for market gardens, why not for houses and streets? is the question people ask, and there is no answer.”—*Daily News*, November 18th, 1886.

“Every new proposal for destroying a Common should be watched with the utmost jealousy.”—*Manual of Political Economy* by the (late) Right Hon. Henry Fawcett, M.P.: Sixth Edition, p. 237.

“The whole area of London is insufficient to supply its population with fresh air, and the free space that is wanted for wholesome recreation.”—*Contemporary Review*, February, 1884.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD MAGHERAMORNE, K.C.B.,  
*Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works.*

MY LORD,

### Re WANDSWORTH COMMON.

I am requested by the Committee of this Association to draw the attention of the Metropolitan Board of Works to the following question, and to the answer of the Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons relative to Wandsworth Common, viz:—

Mr. Kimber asked (16th February, 1888) the Secretary of State for War—“Whether the action-at-law referred to in the answer to a question put on February 3rd, 1887, relative to the extensive damage to Wandsworth Common by the vehicular traffic of the tenant of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, is still pending?”

Mr. Stanhope answered (*Times*, 17th February, 1888)—“The powers of the Conservators of Wandsworth Common were transferred last year by an Act of Parliament to the Metropolitan Board of Works. I think my hon. friend would best obtain the information on the subject referred to from that body. I may add that the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund do not admit the alleged damage.”

In the opinion of this Committee the reply of the Secretary of State for War may be parliamentary, but it is decidedly unsatisfactory. If “the Commissioners do not admit the alleged damage,” Mr. Stanhope might have told the House of Commons and the country why they did not go into Court and at least

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endeavour to justify their action. Until a complete answer to this question has been received, those who have given the matter their careful consideration are not likely to change their views. The damage most certainly exists; it has been photographed, and copies sent to the Commissioners; and it has been accurately described in the public press as "up-ploughed, quagmire cart-roads, worse than many a colonial bush track."

Since application to your Board is suggested, for information on the subject, I am instructed to inquire what steps, if any, have been taken by the Metropolitan Board of Works to secure, unimpaired, the public interests involved?

It is rumoured that the terms which were understood to have been practically agreed upon between the respective legal advisers of the late Board of Conservators of Wandsworth Common and the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund—in July of last year—have been withdrawn by the latter, apparently in the hope of inducing your Board tacitly to acquiesce in the perpetuation of a grievous wrong. If this rumour be accurate there ought now to be no hesitation, in a matter of public concern, to openly state the facts. The public interests are not likely to be damaged by a frank admission.

I am desired to commend a suggestion to the attentive consideration of your Board:—A simple method of settlement, which has not yet been publicly discussed, would be for your Board to re-purchase the 19½ acres of the land, which, the Commissioners have reported to Parliament, is "not at present required for the use of the Asylum," and the present rental of which is £150 per annum. Of the original site (55 acres), purchased for £3,700, or less than £68 per acre, the Commissioners have already sold about 12 acres; hence, if the freehold of these 19½ acres which were purchased by the Commissioners for, say £1,326, and now "not required" were re-purchased by your Board for, say £3,000, and restored to the Common, the Commissioners would still retain an ample site of 23½ acres, the cost of which, by the arrangement suggested, would be reduced to a purely nominal sum.

If the contention should be set up that Parliament sanctioned the purchase, at a nominal price, of a large slice of Wandsworth Common in the belief that the land was necessary, but which mature experience has led the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to officially report is "not at present required for the use of the Asylum," we must decline to believe that Parliament would be unwilling to rectify the mistake or provide a remedy for this injustice. It could never have been the intention

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(A) AS TO IMPROPER AND UNLAWFUL USER OF THE COMMON.

Your Memorialists desire to bring urgently to your notice that the tenant of the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund continues to this day, for the purposes of his trade, an abnormal and excessive user of the easement which formerly attached to

WANDSWORTH COMMON.

of the legislature to sanction the injury of which we complain to the remaining portion of the unenclosed Common which by statutory enactment it is the duty of your Board to maintain and improve "for the purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation" of the people.—See Wandsworth Common Act (34 and 35 Vict., ch. clxxxi.)

It should be borne in mind that the inhabitants of the district generously raised a large sum to procure the Act of 1871, and from that date, to the passing of the Act of 1887, the ratepayers of the two parishes of Battersea and Wandsworth have, by means of a separate local rate, maintained the Common. Moreover, during all those years, the inhabitants of the two parishes have been rated for the maintenance of your Board without receiving from it any assistance in aid of the Common; they have, therefore, very just claims upon the consideration of the Board. Some nine months have elapsed since a Memorial was presented to your Board directing attention to these circumstances, and to the state of the Common; and, in the public interests, suggesting improvements, such as the public exhibition of the Bye-laws, the lighting of the footpaths, &c.; but to this time no satisfactory action has been taken. To that memorial I have again to call the attention of your Board, and to suggest that the promised deputation of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee of your Board, referred to in Mr. Wakefield's letters of December 22nd, 1887, and January 14th, 1888, should meet our Committee by appointment to inspect the Common, and especially to view the grievous damage complained of.

A brief list of the duties which the Metropolitan Board of Works last year sought and obtained parliamentary sanction to undertake and discharge may be thus summarised:—

Under the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, it is the duty of the Board to "protect the turf" (cl. 35), to "abate all encroachments and attempted encroachments on the Common . . . and preserve it as an open space" (clause 33), to "plant trees and shrubs, for shelter and ornament" and to "make and maintain such roads and ways . . . as may be necessary and proper" (cl. 37), and to make Bye-laws "for the prevention or restraint of any act or thing tending to the injury or disfigurement of the Common, or to interference with the use thereof by the public for purposes of exercise and recreation" (cl. 58).

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The provisions of the Act and the bounden duty of the Board are, therefore, equally clear and unmistakable. In the public mind, it is felt to be within the power as well as the plainest public duty of the Board to improve the Common and to protect it from injury. If this cannot be done, then the Act of Parliament for the protection of Wandsworth Common is merely waste paper and its administration a farce. Moreover, this question is becoming of increasing importance in view of the very large sums of public money now being applied to secure additional open spaces for the recreation of the people within the metropolitan area. Unless local authorities clearly shew their inclination and exercise their powers in the protection of existing open spaces, public confidence will be destroyed and a great and useful work impeded.

In conclusion, the Committee desire to express a hope that no arrangement may be entered into or entertained by your Board with the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund which does not fully and entirely prohibit a continuance of the damage to the Common by either the Commissioners or their tenant, and adequately provide for the reparation of existing damage.

It is intended to give general circulation to this letter.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*

DORLCOTE ROAD,

WANDSWORTH COMMON, S.W.

11th April, 1888.

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YOUR COMMITTEE  
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*To the Metropolitan Board of Works.*

THE MEMORIAL of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association,

*Presented pursuant to the letter of the Board of October 17th, 1888.*

SHEWETH:

**That** the inhabitants of the populous districts of Battersea and Wandsworth especially, and of the whole metropolis generally, continue to suffer serious grievance and injury with respect

- 1st—To improper and unlawful user of Wandsworth Common.
- 2nd—To the present use of land formerly part of the Common but diverted to other purposes.
- 3rd—To the administration and maintenance of the Common as now vested in the Metropolitan Board of Works.

(A) AS TO IMPROPER AND UNLAWFUL USER OF THE COMMON.

**Your Memorialists** desire to bring urgently to your notice that the tenant of the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund continues to this day, for the purposes of his trade, an abnormal and excessive user of the easement which formerly attached to the Patriotic School (*quâ* school) of a grass-grown light cart track across the Common, from the Trinity Road to the farm entrance of the school land.

**That** this user imposes upon the Common, the servient tenement, a burden which is altogether novel, excessive and injurious. That it has caused serious damage to the gorse and turf, and, at the expense of the Common, greatly widened the track, from which clouds of dust arise in the summer, and which in the winter is an up-ploughed "quagmire."

**That** the Tenant of the Commissioners has projected from an original "gate cottage" a considerable house as a residence for himself and family. That the windows of this new projection are the commencement of "Ancient Lights" and "Rights of Prospect" and that there is some evidence of an intention to extend the newly developed frontage thus begun by the formation of a path along the whole frontage of the Common to the Trinity Road, and the erection of an additional doorway, by trespass opening on to the Common.

**That** the user of the Tenant of the Royal Commissioners tends greatly to pollute the air, the land occupied being from time to time heavily manured, and extensive piggeries being maintained thereon.

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YOUR COMMITTEE, in presenting to the subscribers a summary of their audited statement of account, embrace the opportunity of submitting a brief summary of their

believe that, under the circumstances of its acquisition and appropriation, the diversion of a great portion by the Commissioners in the manner shown is altogether unlawful and contrary to public right and policy. AND YOUR MEMORIALISTS therefore recommend that the Charity Commissioners be consulted as to the validity of the lease granted by the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, and that if necessary an Act should be obtained for its cancellation, and the restoration of the land so alienated to the direct use of the school, with a declaration that it shall for ever remain open and devoted to that use alone.

Your Memorialists [Section C.] desire to remind your honourable Board that these grievances have already been brought under its notice in the fullest detail by your Memorialists' report dated March, 1887, by their Memorial to your honourable Board, dated 13th July, 1887, and by their letter to Lord Magheramorne, dated 11th April, 1888. Copies of these documents have been furnished to every member of your Board, and further copies thereof are hereto appended:—AND YOUR MEMORIALISTS in conclusion desire very respectfully to remind your honourable Board, as the central authority having charge of the interests of the public with respect to Commons and Open Spaces in the Metropolitan district, of the pressing and vital necessity of putting an end at once to all attempts at encroachment of the kind herein alluded to, and of the desirability of immediate and energetic action for the restraint of alienation of quasi Common lands such as those now held in trust by the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.

And your Memorialists as in duty bound, will ever pray.

RICHARD N. STEVENS.

*Chairman of the Meeting.*

- ALGERNON BLACK,
- JOHN BLACKBEARD,
- J. H. COWHAM,
- FREDERICK DELANO,
- W. H. DICKINSON,
- W. KERSHAW EDWARDS,
- GEORGE ENNIS,
- EDWARD W. FITHIAN,
- ORMOND INNOUS,
- HENRY J. JONES,
- W. SHELLARD LATHAM,
- JAMES H. MACE,
- JAMES P. MOORE,
- JOHN RICHARDSON,
- EDWARD STEELE, *Hon. Treas.*
- GEORGE T. SMITH,
- JOSEPH BARRS TATAM,
- EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*

*Members of the Committee of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.*

October 23rd, 1888.

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PART I.

That the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871 (34 and 35 Vict., ch. clxxxi.) defines the duties of the Conservators of the Common

Common "for the purposes in accordance with the provisions

Council, of the "Manorial Common, with the view to the restoration to the Common

# Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

For the purpose of—

- i.—Directing public attention to the grievous damage to the Common by the vehicular traffic of the tenant of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.
- ii.—Representing to the County Council the justice and equity of protecting the Common "for the purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation" of the people, in accordance with the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871.
- iii.—Promoting the transfer, from the Lord of the Manor to the County Council, of the "Manorial Rights" over certain lands adjacent to and formerly part of the Common, with the view to the recovery of such lands, their maintenance as Open Spaces, and their ultimate restoration to the Common.

## COMMITTEE.

ALGERNON BLACK  
 JOHN BLACKBEARD  
 J. H. COWHAM  
 FREDERICK G. DELANO,  
*Hon. Treas.*  
 W. H. DICKINSON  
 W. KERSHAW EDWARDS

GEORGE ENNIS  
 EDWARD W. FITHIAN  
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 W. SHELLARD LATHAM  
 JAMES H. MACE

JAMES P. MOORE  
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 GEORGE T. SMITH  
 EDWARD STEELE  
 RICHARD N. STEVENS  
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With power to add.

## REPORT.

YOUR COMMITTEE, in presenting to the subscribers and supporters of the Association an audited statement of account, embrace the opportunity of submitting a brief summary of their proceedings.

On the 1st of November, 1886, a meeting of a few residents was held for the purpose of directing public attention to the "grievous damage to the Common by the traffic of the tenant of the Patriotic School Grounds." It was then in contemplation to form a Wandsworth Common Preservation Committee to make representations to those in authority, with the view of preventing a most unfair use of the land, which, under the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act of 1871, was henceforth to be maintained "for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation" of the people. The promoters of the meeting found in existence the Wandsworth Common Ratepayers' Protection Association, which had already done useful work, and the two were at once united under the wider title of the WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

**Public Meetings** were held in the Wandsworth Town Hall on the 15th November, 1886, under the presidency of Mr. John Bell; and at St. Andrew's Hall, Balham, on the 17th of December, 1886, under the presidency of Mr. John Blackbeard. At these meetings a series of resolutions were passed in support of the work of the Association.

The Wandsworth meeting adopted a memorial to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund which was ordered to be signed by the Chairman for presentation. The memorial was duly signed and presented; it has already been published and circulated.

**Photographs.**—Messrs. Clarke & Clarke generously offered to take photographs of the damage, at a nominal cost, and on the 30th of November, 1886, they succeeded in obtaining some interesting pictures of—in the language of the *Daily News*—"the up-ploughed quagmire cart roads worse than many a colonial bush track." These photographs were forwarded to the Patriotic Fund Commissioners and others, and copies have been presented to and may be seen at the Wandsworth Public Free Library.

**Legal Proceedings.**—In 1886 an action-at-law was commenced against the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund and their tenant; and behind this action the Commissioners have for a long time sheltered themselves by pretending they could not discuss the

been furnished to every member of your Board, and further copies thereof are hereto appended:—AND YOUR MEMORIALISTS in conclusion desire very respectfully to remind your honourable Board, as the central authority having charge of the interests of the public

matter. Questions in Parliament have been evaded in like manner. In consequence of the transfer of the managing authority, hereafter referred to, the action-at-law has been dropped. In a letter from the Metropolitan Board of Works, dated the 28th of November, 1888, in answer to the "second memorial" presented by deputation to that body, it is stated that:—"The Board made an application to the High Court of Justice on the 21st instant, for leave to prosecute the suit commenced by the Conservators of Wandsworth Common with a view to restricting the use of a track across the Common to premises in the occupation of Mr. Neal; the application was, however, unsuccessful; and the Board has accordingly referred to a Committee for consideration, the question of instituting such other proceedings as may be necessary to assert the Board's rights as against the Patriotic Fund Commissioners and other parties."

Before leaving this subject it may be noted that the legal charges which must have been incurred by the Patriotic Fund Commissioners in the preparation for the defence of an action, which has been pending *two years*, must have been considerable. Doubtless, this waste of "charitable funds" for the purpose of sustaining a public wrong would have amply sufficed to make a separate entrance from the Trinity Road which abuts upon the Patriotic School grounds. Your Committee can only record their regret that such a policy should have been pursued.

**Two Deputations** have waited upon the Metropolitan Board of Works and presented Memorials relative to the state of the Common and suggesting improvements. The *first* was presented on the 5th of August, 1887, and the *second* on the 26th October, 1888, when, on behalf of the Committee, Mr. Henry Kimber, M.P., addressed the Board at some length. The thanks of the subscribers are due to the honourable member and other gentlemen who attended to support the memorials.

**Inspection of the Damage.**—The Parks and Open Spaces Committee of the Metropolitan Board of Works inspected the damage to the Common on the 6th October, 1888. Mr. Kimber, M.P. also met the Committee on that occasion. The Chairman and several members of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee freely admitted the abuses of which the Association complains, but your Committee were surprised to find that they had not the support of the representative of the Wandsworth district on the Metropolitan Board of Works. To prevent any misapprehension the Committee feel it to be a public duty incumbent upon them to place the fact on record.

On the 9th of February, 1889, four of the six members—(the fifth being abroad, and the sixth who was unable to be present, having since made a personal inspection)—of the County Council for the divisions of Battersea, Clapham, and Wandsworth, met your Committee and viewed the damage. A course of action was then agreed upon. The thanks of the Committee and subscribers are due to these gentlemen for the cordial interest they have already manifested in the question.

**Publications.**—The Committee have found it desirable to keep the public informed, of the steps they have taken, by means of publications. They have, therefore, prepared and issued to the inhabitants, local authorities, members of public bodies and others interested in the protection of open spaces:—

- i.—A circular to the inhabitants in December, 1886.
- ii.—A circular of "Opinions of the Press," lists of photographs, &c. in January, 1887.
- iii.—Report of the Committee (pamphlet 24 pp.), March, 1887, containing (a) Map (by permission of the proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*), of the land leased. (b) Copy of the memorial to and correspondence with the Royal Commissioners. (c) Questions in Parliament and answers. (d) Correspondence with the Charity Commissioners. (e) Letters to and Opinions of the Press. (f) Subscriptions received and statement of account.
- iv.—Memorial (I) to the Metropolitan Board of Works (13th July, 1887) relative to (a) management, (b) improvements, (c) footpaths, (d) cricket and other games, (e) ornamental waters, (f) trees, (g) carpet beating, (h) horse riding, (i) lighting, (j) patriotic trust and damage to the Common, (k) adjacent land and memorial rights, (l) bye-laws.
- v.—Letters to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, April, 1888.
- vi.—Memorial (II) to the Metropolitan Board of Works (23rd October, 1888) on (1st) improper and unlawful user of the Common, (2nd) the present use of land formerly part of the Common, but diverted to other purposes, (3rd) the administration and maintenance of the common.

FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF CONTRIBUTORS THIS SHEET MAY BE FILLED UP AND LODGED ENTIRE AT ANY BRANCH OF THE ASSOCIATION'S BANKERS OR MAY BE SENT TO THE TREASURER, WHO WILL RETURN ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY POST.

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# The Memorial of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association

Sheweth,

PART I.

That the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871 (34 and 35 Vict., ch. clxxxi.) defines the duties of the Conservators of the Common

vehicular traffic of the tenant  
Common "for the purposes  
accordance with the provisions  
Council, of the "Manorial  
Common, with the view to the  
restoration to the Common.

## Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

To *FREDERICK G. DELANO, Esq., Hon. Treasurer,*  
*16, Baskerville Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.*

*Sir,—I herewith enclose a contribution of*  
£ : : , *in aid of the Association.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address \_\_\_\_\_

BANKERS: The London and South Western Bank, Limited (Clapham Junction Branch), 3, Garfield Terrace, Clapham Junction, S.W.

## Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

F. G. DELANO, Hon. Treas., 16, Baskerville Rd., Wandsworth Common.

Received, with thanks, from \_\_\_\_\_

the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ pounds \_\_\_\_\_ shillings

and \_\_\_\_\_ pence \_\_\_\_\_ 188 \_\_\_\_\_

£ : : .

N.B.—A statement of Receipts and Expenditure will be prepared by the Committee and forwarded to all Contributors.

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Common "for the purposes of the Act in accordance with the provisions

Council, of the "Manorial Common, with the view to the restoration to the Common.

**Correspondence.**—Necessarily a rather extensive correspondence has taken place between your Committee and those in authority and others who take an interest in the preservation of Open Spaces. In this manner many interesting particulars have been collected. In the local and metropolitan press public attention has been frequently drawn to the subject.

**Improvements.**—The watching of the Common is much improved, some of the foot-paths have been repaired, ugly ditches have been filled in, some portions have been levelled (but those whose duty it is to administer the Act should not forget that the natural features are to be preserved), the "cat's-back-bridge" over the London and Brighton railway has been re-constructed, a number of trees have been planted on the south side of the Common, notice boards containing the new bye-laws have been erected, and to the great relief of parents and delight of the children, carpet beating and riding across the Common have been prohibited.

There however, still remains much to be done. The foot-paths are not nearly as good as they ought to be, and not one of them is yet lighted. More trees, which, doubtless, in due time will be planted, would add to the beauty of the Common. The great abuse arising from the unwarrantable traffic across the Common by the tenant of the Patriotic Schoolgrounds still remains to be abated, and in respect of this your Committee hope and believe the newly elected County Council will have something definite to say.

**Changes of Local Authority.**—Among the difficulties with which your Committee have had to contend must be mentioned the remarkable successive changes in the constitution of the local authority. It will be remembered that the Conservators of the Common appointed under the original Act of 1871, were relieved of their functions, and the management of the Common transferred to the Metropolitan Board of Works on the passing of the Act promoted by the latter in 1887. And under the provisions of the Local Government Act of 1888, the Metropolitan Board of Works also has been superseded. From April, 1889, the management of the Common will be vested in the County Council of London, whose members, being elected by, are fully entitled to give expression to the wishes of the inhabitants of the Metropolitan, to whom the question of the preservation and extension of open spaces is of vital importance.

**Contributions.**—The appended audited accounts made up to the 28th of February, 1889, show that £62 11s. 2d. had been received, and £54 18s. 4d. expended, leaving a balance of £7 12s. 10d. in the bank and in hand. The Honorary Treasurer desires, on behalf of the Committee, to tender thanks to all who have assisted in raising the necessary funds for the promotion of a work so essential to the health and well-being of the inhabitants. When it is borne in mind the large sums contributed and the valuable services rendered by Sir Henry Peek, Bart., Mr. Ransome, Mr. Buckmaster, and many others, for the purpose of procuring the Act of Parliament for the preservation of the Common, and the exertions which have been made from time to time to prevent encroachments, the Committee hope and believe they will not now appeal in vain for sufficient funds with which to protect from most unwarrantable damage the portion of the Common dedicated to public uses, under the provisions of that excellent Act. The protection of the Common is now vested in the County Council whose local members there is good reason to believe are in cordial sympathy with our moderate and just representations; but it must not be overlooked that many other claims will be made upon the time and attention of those gentlemen; it will, therefore, be necessary to continue to press our case upon their attention. In conclusion the Committee earnestly appeal to the inhabitants of the district to afford them more energetic and efficient support in the efforts now being made for the protection and preservation of what remains of this once magnificent Common. Further neglect and apathy may throw the balance of power into the hands of the powerful bodies whose energies appear to be devoted to obtaining possession of Common land and devoting it to any and every use but that for which it was intended, viz.:—"for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation."

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YOUR MEMORIALISTS in conclusion desire very respectfully to remind your honourable Board, as the central authority having charge of the interests of the public

CONTRIBUTIONS received from November 1st, 1886, to February 28th, 1889:—

			£	s.	d.				£	s.	d.
Sir Henry W. Peek, Bart.	10	0	0	Goodman, C. H.	0	10	6	Saunders, W. Touzeau,			
Ackhurst, W. F.	0	5	0	"H. C."	0	5	0	balance of the Wandsworth Common Ratepayers' Protection Association Fund	3	10	8
Anderson, E. G. L.	1	1	0	Innous, O.	0	10	6	Schultz, G.	0	10	0
Baker, H.	0	5	0	Jervis, G. W.	0	5	0	Smith, Guildford	0	2	6
Barter, W. A.	0	5	0	Johnson, E.	1	1	0	Stark, J. H.	0	5	0
Bell, John	2	0	0	Kynoch, C.	2	0	0	Steele, E.	1	1	0
Bendall, R. S.	1	0	0	Kynoch, J.	0	10	0	Steele, E. (2nd contribution)	1	1	0
Black, A.	1	1	0	Lansell, G.	1	1	0	Stevens, R. N.	2	2	0
Blackbeard, J.	2	2	0	Lawrence, E. G.	0	6	0	Swears, H.	1	1	0
Bolingbroke, Tradesmen & Ratepayers' Club—per E. H. Parkes, Sec.	0	10	6	Longstaff, Dr. G. D.	2	0	0	Tatam, J. B.	2	0	0
Borley, G. W.	0	1	0	Lyons, Mrs.	0	5	0	Thomas, Dr.	1	1	0
Brown, J. G.	0	10	6	Macirone, Miss	0	10	0	Thomson, Major	0	10	6
Cowham, J. H.	1	1	0	Moir, C.	0	2	6	Todd, J. Courthope	0	10	0
Delano, F. G.	1	1	0	Moir, Robert	0	2	6	Valpy, H.	1	1	0
Dickinson, W. H.	1	0	0	Moore, W. P.	0	10	0	Wallis, W.	0	10	0
Edwards, W. Kershaw	1	1	0	Mountain, J. C. (the late) per Mrs. Mountain	1	1	0	Walsh, Nugent C.	1	1	0
Ennis, Geo.	1	1	0	Pierce, E.	0	10	0	Winder, R.	1	1	0
Evans, W.	0	5	0	Privett, H.	0	10	6	Wing, Rev. Russell	1	1	0
Fase, Rev. H.	0	5	0	Proctor, P. F.	0	5	0	Wood, T. Vickers	0	10	0
Featherstonhaugh, W.	1	1	0	Photographs—Tradesmen's Club	0	3	0				
Gaston, Mrs.	0	3	0	Richardson, J.	3	3	0				
Gingell, W. H.	2	2	0					Total	£62	11	2

FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO CARRY ON THE NECESSARY WORK ARE EARNESTLY INVITED.

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure from November, 1886, to February 28th, 1889.

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.				
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Subscriptions, &c. (see list above)	62	11	2	Printing Circulars, Pamphlets, Handbills, Posters, &c.	33	8	6
				Hire of Town Hall, Committee Rooms, &c.	1	11	0
				Advertising in Local and London Papers	8	13	0
				Postages and incidental expenses	8	19	10
				Photographs of damage done to Common	1	5	0
				Subscription to the Commons Preservation Society (Earl of Meath, Chairman)	1	1	0
				Balance at the London and South-Western Bank (Clapham Junction), and in hand	7	12	10
	£62	11	2		£62	11	2

We have Examined these Accounts, and find them correct,

28th February, 1889.

ALG. BLACK, }  
ORMOND INNOUS, } Auditors.

Contributions may be paid to the London & South Western Bank (Clapham Branch), 3, Garfield Terrace, Clapham Junction, S.W., or to the Honorary Treasurer, Frederick G. Delano, Esq., 16, Baskerville Road, Wandsworth Common, London, S.W. Cheques and Money Orders should be crossed.

March, 1889.

COPY.

# WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

For the purpose of—

- i.—Directing public attention to the grievous damage to the Common by the vehicular traffic of the tenant of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.
- ii.—Representing to the County Council the justice and equity of protecting the Common “for the purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation” of the people, in accordance with the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871.
- iii.—Promoting the transfer from the Lord of the Manor to the County Council of the “Manorial Rights” over certain lands adjacent to and formerly part of the Common, with the view to the recovery of such lands, their maintenance as Open Spaces, and their ultimate restoration to the Common.

## TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR LONDON.

### The Memorial of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association

Sheweth,

#### PART I.

That the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871 (34 and 35 Vict., ch. clxxxi.) defines the duties of the Conservators of the Common (now the County Council for London) to be “to keep the “Common for ever open and unenclosed and unbuilt on” (cl. 33), “for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and

“recreation” (cl. 37), to “protect the turf” (cl. 35), Purpose to “abate all encroachments and attempted en- of the Act. “croachments on the Common” (cl. 33), to “plant

“trees and shrubs for shelter and ornament, and to “make and maintain such roads as may be necessary and proper” (cl. 37), and to make Bye-Laws “for the prevention or restraint “of any act or thing tending to the injury or disfigurement of the “Common, or to interference with the use thereof by the public “for purposes of exercise and recreation.” (cl. 58). The passing of that admirable Act ought to have been sufficient to secure uninjured what remains of the Common, thereby dedicated to public uses.

That in the year 1856 the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund acquired from the Lord of the Manor (Earl Spencer) about 55 acres of Wandsworth Common for £3,700 (about £68 per acre) for a site and school devoted to the education of orphan girls of our soldiers, sailors and marines, and, in the words of a Report of the Royal Commissioners, intended to afford “a visible and per- “manent memorial of the national generosity which contributed to its foundation”; in 1871 a portion of the said land, “about 12 acres,” was set apart for a school for boys, of a “public

and

February 28th, 1889:—

£ s. d.

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s, R. N. ... ..	2	2	0
, H. ... ..	1	1	0
J. B. ... ..	1	1	0
s, Dr. ... ..	0	10	6
on, Major ... ..	0	10	0
J. Courthope ... ..	1	1	0
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Rev. Russell ... ..	0	10	0
T. Vickers ... ..	0	10	0
total ... ..	£62	11	2

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February 28th, 1889.

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ASSOCIATION

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- WARD STEELE
- HARD N. STEVEN
- 3. TATAM
- GENT C. WALSH

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“the Patriotic Fund, while some twenty acres at the Tooting  
“London parish for the purposes of an industrial school. Not  
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“[interests of the] public. This process is indeed spoken of as  
“interest of the public alone, but curiously enough it is always  
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and permanent character," erected at a cost of upwards of £20,000, but which together with the 12 acres of the said land were within 8 years of the completion of the building, sold by the Commissioners for about £33,000, and thus diverted from their original purpose.— See map 1a. b. & c.

That in 1886 the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund leased about 19½ acres of the remaining land for a term of 21 years, at a yearly rental of £150 per annum (with a provision for continuing the tenancy for a further period of 21 years at an

**Land leased.** increased rental of £50 per annum) to a tenant carrying on the business of "a lime, cement, and "brick merchant, wharfinger, ballast, tarpaving, and "general contractor and carman," and whose business has been recently converted into a limited liability company, of which the tenant is the chairman.—See map 1c.

That the tenant of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund has, since 1886, for the purpose of his business, which necessitates the use of an extensive cartage plant, arrogated to himself a greatly enlarged use of the easement (which, if it ever existed, formerly attached to the Patriotic School, for school purposes

**Damage to Common by tenant.** alone), over a portion of the Common where—as the 25 inch scale Ordnance Map (1874-5) clearly shows—not even a footpath or track of any kind existed.

This injurious and wrongful use thereof, utterly regardless of the public rights and interests, has caused most serious damage to the turf and gorse, and, at the expense of the Common, dedicated to public uses under the provisions of the before-mentioned Wandsworth Common Act, 1871, established a wide track, which in the winter is an "up-ploughed quagmire." The damaged parts were successfully photographed by Messrs. Clarke and Clarke, on the 30th November, 1886. A not very dissimilar encroachment is going on at the south-west of the Common.—See map.

That already a most unwarrantable trespass has been committed by the opening of a new private entrance leading directly from the school grounds on to the Common for the private use

**Trespass, &c.** of the tenant, and by the erection of a considerable house for his occupation, which, by lapse of time will establish lights and rights of prospect over the Common; if such liberties are allowed to pass unchallenged they will be held to establish precedents for similar encroachments.

PART II.

That the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871, provides (cl. 41) that "Earl Spencer, his heirs, and assigns, shall on every reasonable

**Conservators right of access to Court Rolls.** "request in writing by the Conservators, and at "their expense, produce to them or their agents, or "in any court or elsewhere, as occasion requires, the "Court Rolls of the Manor of Battersea and Wands- "worth, or any portion thereof, and make and fur- "nish to them true copies, attested or unattested,

"thereof

CONTRIBUTI

- Sir Henry W. Peek, Bar
- Ackhurst, W. F. ...
- Anderson, E. G. L. ...
- Baker, H. ...
- Barter, W. A. ...
- Bell, John ...
- Bendall, R. S. ...
- Black, A. ...
- Blackbeard, J. ...
- Bolingbroke, Tradesmen
- Ratepayers' Club—p
- E. H. Parkes, Sec.
- Borley, G. W. ...
- Brown, J. G. ...
- Cowham, J. H. ...
- Delano, F. G. ...
- Dickinson, W. H. ...
- Edwards, W. Kershaw
- Ennis, Geo. ...
- Evans, W. ...
- Fase, Rev. H. ...
- Featherstonhaugh, W.
- Gaston, Mrs. ...
- Gingell, W. H. ...

FURTHER CONTRIB

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“thereof, or any portion or portions thereof as they require,  
“and shall in the meantime keep the same Court  
“Rolls safe and undefaced”; and Clause 39 pro-  
vides that “the Conservators may from time to time  
“purchase by agreement, or accept a grant of and  
“hold any land, having been, or reputed to have  
“been, formerly part of or adjoining to the Common,  
“and any such land when vested in the Conservators shall, for the  
“purpose of this Act, be deemed part of the Common.”

**Power to  
purchase  
land  
adjoining  
Common.**

**That** inasmuch as the field bounded by Trinity Road and Burntwood Lane, situate at the South-west corner of the Common, formerly Common Land, was sold by the Lord of the Manor, subject to the condition that it should never be built upon without his consent, it is most desirable that the County Council should secure the **manorial rights**, and thus preserve it as an open space in perpetuity.—*See map 2.*

**Land which  
may not be  
built upon.**

**That** since the land situate between H. M. Prison and Trinity Road, now used as a nursery ground, in the occupation of Mr. Robert Neal, was in 1861 secured by the “Justices of Surrey” for the purpose of preventing its being built upon, the present would appear to be a favourable opportunity for the Council to acquire control over it.—*See map 3.*

**Land vested  
in the  
Justices  
of Surrey.**

**That** the land situate at the South-east corner of the Common, known as the “Railway Enclosure,” and adjoining Wandsworth Common Station, was acquired by the Brighton Railway Company in 1854, but subsequently sold as surplus land. This land, after a protracted lawsuit, was purchased by the adjoining landowners to prevent its being built upon; it is still unbuilt upon; and it is hoped that it might be re-purchased and restored to the Common on equitable terms under the provisions of Clause 39 of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871.—*See map 4.*

**Land  
purchased  
by Railway  
Company in  
excess of re-  
quirements.**

**That**, in view of the fact that large sums of public money and public subscriptions are being applied to the purchase of land for purposes of public recreation in various districts in the metropolis, and large provincial towns, no opportunity should be lost of securing and protecting as open spaces all such land as legitimately belongs to or was formerly part of the Common, especially as it is asserted on good authority that within about the last sixty years at least *two hundred acres* of this once magnificent Common has passed into the hands of railway companies, so-called charitable institutions, and builders.

**Open spaces  
should be  
protected.**

Your

people's expense. A huge block, cut out of the very heart of  
“the Patriotic Fund, while some twenty acres at the Tooting e  
“London parish for the purposes of an industrial school. Not

**ASSOC**

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**Your Memorialists** respectfully submit that the terms of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871, require, in the interests of the public, that the damage to the Common occasioned by the traffic of the tenant of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund should cease and be entirely discontinued, and that steps should be taken without further delay, to assert the public rights, and to defeat the encroachments thereon now proceeding.

**And your Memorialists** further respectfully urge, in view of the extensive and ever increasing building-operations on land formerly part of the Common, the exercise of the powers conferred upon the Council under the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871, viz. : to secure, as far as practicable, the manorial rights of the Lord of the Manor, to use every effort, ere it is too late, to acquire and exercise such rights over the open spaces referred to as may be deemed to be in the public interest, and to preserve unimpaired all portions of the Common which the Legislature in its wisdom has declared to be "for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation" of the people.

- EDWARD STEELE, *Chairman of the*
- ALGERNON BLACK [*Meeting*]
- JOHN BLACKBEARD
- J. H. COWHAM
- FREDERICK G. DELANO, *Hon. Treas.*
- W. H. DICKINSON
- W. KERSHAW EDWARDS
- GEORGE ENNIS
- EDWARD W. FITHIAN
- ORMOND INNOUS
- EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*
- HENRY J. JONES
- W. SHELLARD LATHAM
- JAMES H. MACE
- JAMES P. MOORE
- JOHN RICHARDSON
- GEORGE T. SMITH
- RICHARD N. STEVENS
- J. B. TATAM
- NUGENT C. WALSH

*Members of the Committee of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association.*

*April 26th, 1889.*

N.B.—The Photographs and Map will materially assist the Council.

**TRIBUTI**

- W. Peek, Bar
- W. F. ...
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**R CONTRIB**

COPY

# WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

For the purpose of—

- i.—Directing public attention to the grievous damage to the Common by the vehicular traffic of the tenant of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.
- ii.—Representing to the County Council the justice and equity of protecting the Common “for the purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation” of the people, in accordance with the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871.
- iii.—Promoting the transfer, from the Lord of the Manor to the County Council, of the “Manorial Rights” over certain lands adjacent to and formerly part of the Common, with the view to the recovery of such lands, their maintenance as Open Spaces, and their ultimate restoration to the Common.

## COMMITTEE.

ALGERNON BLACK  
 JOHN BLACKBEARD  
 J. H. COWHAM  
 FREDERICK G. DELANO,  
*Hon. Treas.,*  
 16, Baskerville Road,  
 Wandsworth Common, S.W.  
 W. H. DICKINSON

W. KERSHAW EDWARDS  
 GEORGE ENNIS  
 EDWARD W. FITHIAN  
 ORMOND INNOUS  
 EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.,*  
 3, Dorlcote Road,  
 Wandsworth Common, S.W.  
 HENRY J. JONES  
 W. SHELLARD LATHAM

JAMES H. MACE  
 JAMES P. MOORE  
 JOHN RICHARDSON  
 GEORGE T. SMITH  
 EDWARD STEELE  
 RICHARD N. STEVENS  
 J. B. TATAM  
 NUGENT C. WALSH

With power to add.

# M A P

OF

## WANDSWORTH COMMON AS IT WAS AND IS.

Presented with a Memorial to the County Council for London.

APRIL, 1889.

**PRICE (to Non-Subscribers), 1s.**

“Wandsworth Common was once the principal tract of waste land in the large Manor of Battersea and Wandsworth, which extended from Wimbledon to Clapham; but is now but a fragment of its former self, for no Common round London has been worse treated. It has been cut into ribands by the London and Brighton and South Western Railway Companies, and the Lord of the Manor appears to have regarded it as a means of being generous at other people’s expense. A huge block, cut out of the very heart of the Common, is in the hands of the Patriotic Fund, while some twenty acres at the Tooting end have been made over to a London parish for the purposes of an industrial school. Not satisfied with such destructive generosity, Lord Spencer granted two large plots to building speculators, besides assenting to that process of rectifying boundaries and taking off ugly corners which is so fatal to the [interests of the] public. This process is indeed spoken of as though it were conceived in the interest of the public alone, but curiously enough it is always found necessary to straighten a fence by taking it outwards on to the open land, and increasing the area in private ownership.”—[Extracts from an interesting article on London Commons, by Robert Hunter, in *The English Illustrated Magazine*, October, 1885, p. 14.]

“Every new proposal for destroying a Common should be watched with the utmost jealousy.”—[*Manual of Political Economy*, by the Rt. Hon. Henry Fawcett, 6th Edition, p. 237.]

Contributions may be paid to the London & South Western Bank (Clapham Branch), 3, Garfield Terrace, Clapham Junction, S.W., or to the Honorary Treasurer, Frederick G. Delano, Esq., 16, Baskerville Road, Wandsworth Common, London, S.W. Cheques and Money Orders should be crossed.

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Members of the Com-  
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# WANDSWORTH COMMON AS IT WAS AND IS.



Photographed from the (6-inch) Ordnance Survey taken in 1868-70, and corrected down to date.

## EXPLANATIONS:

One square inch represents an Area of 17½ acres.

The Scale of this Map is six inches to the mile, hence one square inch represents an area of nearly eighteen acres.

The portions coloured **GREEN** show the extent of the Common as defined by the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871. The duties of the County Council are "to keep the Common for ever open and unenclosed and unbuilt on" (cl. 33), "for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation" (cl. 37), to "protect the turf" (cl. 35), to "abate all encroachments and attempted encroachments on the Common" (cl. 33), to "plant trees and shrubs for shelter and ornament, and to make and maintain such roads as may be necessary or proper" (cl. 37), and to make Bye-Laws "for the prevention of or restraint of any act or thing tending to the injury or disfigurement of the Common, or to interference with the use thereof by the public for purposes of exercise and recreation" (cl. 58). The portions over which heavy vehicular traffic is conducted are marked.

The portions coloured **YELLOW** are those over which it is desirable the County Council should secure the Manorial Rights, with the view to their maintenance as "Open Spaces," and their ultimate restoration to the Common.

The portions coloured **RED** indicate the several pieces of land formerly part of the Common which have, within a comparatively recent period, been sold and largely devoted to building purposes, viz:—

1a, 1b, 1c.—These portions of the Common, 55 acres, were sold by EARL SPENCER for £3,700, or less than £68 per acre, in 1856, as a site for the Patriotic School, the purchase-money being provided by public subscriptions.

1a.—Is still retained for the above purpose by the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund.

1b.—The Boys' School and "about 12 acres" of the land were in 1880 sold by the Royal Commissioners to the Governors of the Emmanuel School.

1c.—19½ acres leased, in 1886, by the Royal Commissioners, to the tenant whose use of an alleged right of way has caused so much damage to the Common. In the official report it is stated to be "land which is not at present required for the use of the Asylum."—*Twenty-fourth Report of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund to Her Majesty the Queen, 1886, p. 8, Clause 10, Parl. Paper c. 4869, Session 1886. Price 6½d.*

2.—This portion of the Common was granted by the Lord of the Manor, subject to the condition that it should never be built upon without his consent.

3.—This portion of the Common, 10 acres, was acquired, in 1861, by the Justices of Surrey, to prevent its being built upon.

4.—This portion of the Common, about 15 acres, was acquired, in 1854, by the West London and Crystal Palace Railway Company (now London, Brighton & South Coast Railway), and subsequently bought by the adjoining land owners to prevent its being built upon.

5.—This portion of the Common, about 20 acres, was probably enclosed about 1821, let as Market Gardens, and subsequently leased for building purposes.

6.—This portion of the Common, 20 acres, was acquired in 1846, for the purpose of the St. James's, Westminster, Industrial Schools; a large part of this land has been built upon.

7.—This portion of the Common, 20½ acres, was disposed of, about 1848-53, and has since been built upon.

8.—This portion of the Common, 9 acres, was acquired by the Brighton Railway Company, and subsequently sold as surplus land not required; a large part has been built upon, and the remainder is now used as a contractor's yard.

9.—This portion of the Common was enclosed by degrees, the operation being finally completed about 1869, and subsequently built upon.

10.—This portion of the Common, 11 or 12 acres, was partly enclosed many years ago, and in 1871 the work was completed. It covers the site of what was once one of the most picturesque and ornamental waters near London, known as the "Black Sea," which has been filled up and built upon.

**NOTE.**—It is more than probable that the other portions, numbered 11, 11a, and 11b, were formerly parts of the Common which have been enclosed and nearly all built upon, but the exact dates have not in every case been ascertained. The piece numbered 11a formed part of the 14 acres acquired by the South Western Railway Co. in 1836, and subsequently sold as waste land; while 11b was a roadside pond down to about 1863, when it was enclosed and planted with lime trees, now the site of the new Board of Works Offices. It is not always possible to secure the correct date or area, but the particulars have been carefully collected and the Committee believe they will prove trustworthy. Maps of various dates have been referred to, and by the kindness of Mr. Edwin R. Ransome, for many years the Chairman of the Conservators of the Common, a copy of the Map, with notes, used in 1871 by those interested in securing the passing of the Wandsworth Common Act, has been placed at the disposal of the Committee. That Map proved extremely useful. There can be no doubt that in times past the extent of the Common has been curtailed in a most serious and unjustifiable manner without the slightest compensation of any kind. The inhabitants have therefore a perfect right to expect that the portions reserved for public uses, under the provisions of the Act, will, in future, be effectually protected.

## THE PROTECTION OF WANDSWORTH COMMON.

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# Wandsworth Common Protection Association.

"MEN DIE, BUT GREAT PRINCIPLES LIVE."

"Wandsworth Common was once the principal tract of waste land in the large Manor of Battersea and Wandsworth; it extended from Wimbledon to Clapham, but is now but a fragment of its former self, for no Common round London has been worse treated."—*English Illustrated Magazine*, October, 1885, p. 14.

"The whole area of London is insufficient to supply its population with fresh air, and the free space that is wanted for wholesome recreation."—*Contemporary Review*, February, 1884, by the Cambridge Professor of Political Economy.

"Every new proposal for destroying a Common should be watched with the utmost jealousy."—*Manual of Political Economy* by the (late) Right Hon. Henry Fawcett, M.P.; Sixth Edition, p. 237.

## WANDSWORTH COMMON

1891.

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Horse Riding... .. 5	

Committee :

ALGERNON BLACK.  
J. H. COWHAM.  
FREDERICK G. DELANO, *Hon. Treas.*,  
16, Baskerville Road,  
Wandsworth Common, S.W.  
W. H. DICKINSON.  
W. KERSHAW EDWARDS.  
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EDWARD W. FITHIAN.  
ORMOND INNOUS.  
EDWARD JOHNSON, *Hon. Sec.*,  
3, Dorlcote Road,  
Wandsworth Common, S.W.

HENRY J. JONES.  
W. SHELLARD LATHAM.  
JAMES H. MACE.  
JAMES P. MOORE.  
Dr. RICHARD R. W. ORAM.  
JOHN RICHARDSON.  
GEORGE T. SMITH.  
EDWARD STEELE.  
RICHARD N. STEVENS.  
JOSEPH BARRS TATAM.  
NUGENT C. WALSH.

## THE PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF WANDSWORTH COMMON.

THE COMMITTEE feel that the time is opportune for submitting to the subscribers and friends of the Association an account of their stewardship. The vehicular traffic over a portion of the Common is, by an Order of the High Court of Justice, about to cease ; a Committee of the Vestry has been appointed to watch over the interests of the Common, and many of the points urged upon the authorities have received attention. Since November, 1886, when public attention was directed to serious grievances, many unexpected circumstances have intervened, but the Committee are able to report substantial progress. During that period there have been two changes in the administrative authority—the Board of Conservators having been superseded by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the latter in turn by the now popularly elected body, the London County Council.

### Serious Encroachments.

The story of encroachments on Wandsworth Common is as long and as discreditable as anything of the kind that can be found in the whole history of public open spaces. It is unnecessary at this stage to scrutinise the details too closely, but it is stated\* that, as far back as 1760, there existed an organisation for the protection of Wandsworth Common. Between 1785 and 1818 it is also stated that 36 enclosures were made of a total of 172 acres, and subsequently there were further extensive appropriations for railways, schools, prison, and by private individuals, making a grand total of 365 acres.

### The Wandsworth Common Act, 1871.

The Committee desire to record their grateful recognition of the exertions made in 1870 and 1871 by Sir Henry W. Peek, Bart., then the parliamentary representative of the division, nobly aided by many residents, prominent among whom may be mentioned Mr. Edwin R. Ransome, for many years chairman of the Board of Conservators, and Mr. J. C. Buckmaster. A committee was formed who were successful in raising a considerable sum of money and in ultimately obtaining the passing of an Act for the protection of the Common, entitled the Wandsworth Common Act of 1871 (53 & 54 Vict. ch. clxxxix). Its clauses are admirably drawn, and it is clearly the duty of the inhabitants to take care that its provisions shall on all occasions be respected.

August 12th, 1891.

\*"How the Battle of Wandsworth Common was fought and won." Reprinted from the *Mid-Surrey Gazette*, January, 1887.

### Area of the existing Common.

Notwithstanding the serious encroachments which have from time to time taken place, the remaining fragments form the very respectable area of about 130 acres. If this land had to be purchased at the present time it would cost, at least, £130,000, and as the district is rapidly being built up, the value of this open space is daily increasing. There ought, therefore, to be no complaint heard about the necessary expenditure on the making and maintenance of desirable footpaths, or of otherwise resolutely protecting the Common for purposes of health and unrestricted exercise and recreation of the people, in accordance with the provisions of the Wandsworth Common Act, 1871.

### Representations made to Administrative Authorities.

In July, 1887, the Committee deemed it expedient to prepare and submit a statement of their case, which, in the form of a Memorial, was presented to the Metropolitan Board of Works in August of that year. That document received a respectful but not enthusiastic reception. Subsequent events have shown the value of stating an unanswerable case for the thoughtful consideration of those whose business it is to find remedies for undoubted causes of complaint. The document was thought to be a trifle long, and it may well be doubted whether it was, at the time, read by one-third of the gentlemen to whom it was presented, but nobody attempted to deny the facts as stated. The points raised, were footpaths, cricket and other games, ornamental waters, trees, carpet beating, horse-riding, lighting, the patriotic trust, damage to the common, adjacent land and manorial rights and bye-laws. The gentleman who was supposed to represent the district and protect the interests of the common, was found to be entirely opposed to such a programme; and it was even stated that the officers of the Patriotic Trustees laughed at the proposals. Such was the prospect in 1887. The committee however entertained a firm conviction that sooner or later so just a cause ought to receive adequate recognition and attention. Time has justified them in that conviction, and they are now enabled to note with satisfaction the progress that has been made in connection with most of the points that were then raised. The work of course was not done without a persistent effort, but when it was recognised that there could be no escape from a proper discharge of a public duty, the rest became easy. Taking the subjects in the order stated, in the 1887 Memorial, the results may be thus briefly described:—

#### Footpaths.

Some excellent footpaths have already been made, and it is understood that others are in contemplation. These paths will be gratefully appreciated, since they serve the double purpose of affording reasonable comfort and of materially preserving the turf as required by the Act.

### Cricket.

Some suitable pitches have been prepared, and it is understood that cricket will in future be played under reasonable regulations, rendering it possible to cross the common without liability to injury.

### Other Games.

There are several places where lawn tennis might be played, without in any way injuring the common. The old gravel pit, near the wind-mill, having recently been much improved and re-turfed, would make a very fair bowling green. The Committee see no reason why the practice adopted in the Manchester Parks of charging a penny a game, to pay the expenses of an attendant, should not prevail in the Metropolis.

### Ornamental Waters.

In this respect a very great improvement has indeed been made. The area has been much enlarged, the banks have been entirely altered and improved, and the old spring, which for some time had been diverted into the sewer, has been utilised as a means of affording a constant supply of fresh water. These waters—for there are now two large ponds, spanned at their connecting point by a rustic bridge—will be a source of pleasure to thousands. In the winter, during frosty weather, they will afford safe and excellent recreation to skaters.

### Trees.

A cheaper method has been discovered of providing and protecting the young trees, which have been planted in considerable numbers during the last few years. Some of the older trees have been needlessly mutilated, by cutting large branches from them, but public attention having been called to the circumstances, it seems improbable that such ruthless treatment will be repeated.

### Carpet Beating.

This nuisance has entirely disappeared, and the trees, to which the gentlemen who engaged in this particular calling used to attach their "poles, ropes, and other gear," are looking all the better for the change.

### Horse Riding.

Happily the "terror and danger," at one time not infrequently caused by not very competent riders, is rapidly becoming ancient history; or, at any rate, it can no longer be practised without incurring the risk of having to make the acquaintance of a Police Magistrate, under disagreeable conditions.

**Lighting.**

To get lamps erected along the principal footpaths proved, to the surprise and regret of the Committee, a very thorny subject. For a time they were confronted with the humiliating spectacle of the Local Authorities refusing to expend the comparatively small sum necessary to provide the much needed lamps. The result was a state of lawlessness of a truly lamentable character, which the reports of Police Court proceedings have already made known to the inhabitants, clearly showing that what is intended as a source of pleasure and innocent recreation was, in the absence of suitably lighted paths, a public danger of a serious nature.

After much correspondence and needless delay, a deputation waited upon the Wandsworth District Board of Works in January, 1890, when Mr. Algernon Black, on behalf of the Committee, addressed the Board with the result that the principal paths on the portion of the Common within their jurisdiction have been lighted. With the Battersea Vestry the Committee have been less successful, but it is now reported that they intend to light some of the principal paths of that portion of the Common which lies with the Battersea parish. It is, however, only just to state that some of the vestrymen have done their very best for this cause, and the Committee desire to thank them for their advocacy.

**The Patriotic Trust—Damage to the Common.**

The settlement of this question, fully explained below, has been most unduly prolonged and skilfully delayed. So long ago as November the 17th, 1886, it was stated in the letter of the Hon. Secretary of the Association to the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, that "if the Patriotic School Authorities had provided, at a comparatively trifling cost, a suitable entrance from the Trinity Road for their tenant, the action in question would have been quite unnecessary."\* That it should have required four years in which to use every endeavour to avoid such a reasonable and rational solution, and to be compelled to ultimately adopt it, demonstrates, at least, that the Committee may take credit for having made the only practical proposal possible under the circumstances. The public will naturally desire to be made acquainted with the terms of the settlement which has now been arrived at. On the 29th of July, 1890, the Parks and Open Spaces Committee reported to the London County Council as follows:—

"We have to report that, after considerable negotiation, we have arrived at a provisional agreement for the settlement of the dispute between the Council and the Trustees of the Patriotic Fund, with reference to an alleged right of way across a portion of Wandsworth Common. The cause of action arose in the year 1885, when a tenant of land belonging to the defendants, and forming part of the premises of the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum, commenced to use an old track across the Common for the purposes of his trade as nurseryman, and caused great damage to the turf and annoyance to the neighbourhood

by the constant passing of heavy carts and wagons to and from his land. At that time the Common was under the control of a Board of Conservators, and that Board commenced an action in order to resist the claim made by the defendants to an absolute right of way over the Common. Before this action reached the hearing, Parliament transferred the control of Wandsworth Common to the Metropolitan Board of Works. That Board, after considerable delay and some legal difficulties, revived the action, and it was still pending when the Council came into office. Since the matter has been in our hands the defendants have made overtures, with a view to settlement, and negotiations have taken place with this intent. The case is one of difficulty. The decision depends on the amount and kind of user to which it could be shown the track has been subject, and the evidence after so long a period is conflicting upon this point. There are also some legal points of much nicety. It is therefore by no means certain what the result of the action will be. If the action were fought out, great expenditure would be incurred, a considerable portion of which would, even under favourable circumstances, fall upon the Council. We are of opinion that some settlement should be arrived at, and we think that the terms of agreement appended to our report are fair, both to the trustees, and to the public. Under these terms the defendants give up all their claim to a right of way for horses and vehicles over the Common, and agree so to close their gateway that it can only be used by foot-passengers. On the other hand the Council agrees to permit the defendants and their tenants to pass over the Common on foot, and further, to contribute a sum of £200 towards the cost of making a road over the defendants' land to their tenant's premises over their own land from an adjoining highway. The Council further agrees that if ever a public carriage-way is constructed upon the portion of Common adjoining the trustees' land, a right of access to that road shall be granted to them. It is not probable that such a road will ever be made, but in the event of its being so constructed, the character of that portion of the Common would be so changed as to render it only reasonable that the defendants should have access to it. We therefore recommend:—

That the Council do agree to the following Order being made in the action of the London County Council and the Official Trustees of the Patriotic Fund:—

—, 1889. M. No. 253.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE.\*

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION.

Between The London County Council      *Plaintiffs*,  
and

The Official Trustees of the Patriotic  
Fund and George Neal      *Defendants*.

Upon hearing the Solicitors for the above-named parties, and by consent, I ——— do order and adjudge as follows:—

1. The Defendants withdraw and give up their claim to a right of way for horses and vehicles over the part of the Common coloured blue upon the plan annexed hereto, marked Z and filed with this judgment.
2. The Plaintiffs and the Defendants respectively shall bear and pay their costs of this action.
3. The above-named Plaintiffs shall pay to the Defendants the sum of £200 (two hundred pounds), to enable them to construct and

\* The Terms as amended by the insertion of the words in italics received the assent of the Council on the 9th December, 1890, and was made an Order of Court in January, 1891.

\* Report of the Committee on the Grievous Damage to Wandsworth Common, issued 1887, p. 4.

make over the lands vested in and possessed by the above-named Defendants, a road or carriage-way with an entrance to Trinity Road, at some point between the points X and Y on the plan which shall be constructed and made within a reasonable time.

4. From and after the date of this Order it shall be lawful for the Defendants and the tenants or occupiers of the land of the Defendants, or of their tenants or such occupiers, to pass to and fro on foot along the track between the points B and C, and marked with a dotted red line on the plan delivered with the defence, at all times of the year for all ordinary and usual purposes.
5. The gateway now existing at the point C, as shown on the said plan [delivered with the statement of defence] shall be partially stopped up by the defendants so as to effectually prevent the passing to and fro through the said gateway of any horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, carts, barrows, or other animals or vehicular traffic.†
6. In the event of any public carriage-way being hereafter made or constructed over any of the lands vested in the Plaintiffs, and coloured blue on the said plan annexed hereto, the Plaintiffs shall grant to the Defendants by deed a right to a way to and fro on foot and with horses, carts, and wagons over the lands possessed by or vested in the Plaintiffs, to, from, and over the said carriage-way and through the said gateway to the lands possessed by or vested in the Defendants. And I further order and adjudge that such deeds shall be prepared and executed at the expense of the Official Trustees of the Patriotic Fund, and shall be settled in case of difference by one of the conveyancing Counsel of the High Court of Justice."

The above terms were formally accepted by the Council on the 9th of December, 1890, and made an Order of Court on the 12th of January, 1891. The Committee wish it to be most distinctly understood that they do not approve the concession, as stated in clause 6; on the contrary, they do not believe the Council can legally grant a right of access to that which does not belong to them. But the real obstacle to giving effect to this feeble principle lies in the fact that it will be necessary, before any such road can be made across the Common, to secure parliamentary sanction, and if that be refused the Royal Commissioners are very much in the position of having secured, in the language of a Scotch witticism, "A fine new naething, with a whistle at the end." It may now be accepted as an indisputable fact that any further damage to, or encroachment upon, the remaining fragments of Wandsworth Common will be solely due to the negligence or indifference of the inhabitants of the district.

† This new road is now (August, 1891) nearly completed.

\* The Terms of this section have not been happily chosen: the "gateway" through which a person may pass and yet "effectually prevent the passing of sheep, pigs, carts, barrows, or other animals," must possess some remarkable peculiarities.

### Manorial Rights.

With the view of maintaining, as open spaces, certain lands formerly part of the Common, it was suggested by the Committee that, if the manorial rights of the Lord of the Manor could be transferred to the Public Body having charge of the Common, it might prove an effective means of preserving them as open spaces. The Committee desire to tender their grateful acknowledgment to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association for the very valuable assistance they have rendered in this matter. The following letter of the London County Council (7813), dated November 5th, 1890, addressed to the Hon. Secretary, states:—

"With reference to your letter of the 22nd of September last, inquiring what steps have been taken by the Council with regard to securing the manorial rights over certain portions of land formerly part of Wandsworth Common, I have to inform you that the Council is only waiting for Lord Spencer's solicitors to obtain from his lordship the execution of the deed, transferring to the Council his rights over the land held by Mr. McKellar, near the Surrey Tavern, and also the land in front of Wandsworth Prison. In a previous letter I stated that the Parks' Committee had attempted to open negotiations with Mr. Rose for the acquisition of the land held by him near Wandsworth Common railway station, but had not succeeded in coming to any arrangement. The Committee have communicated with the Home Office with a view to the Council obtaining possession of the land in front of the prison, but have been unable to get any more satisfactory reply than that the Home Office do not intend to build upon the land; but they will give no guarantee to that effect."

The Deed referred to was completed on the 13th December, 1890. It conveys all Lord Spencer's rights over the land held by Mr. McKellar near the Surrey Tavern, and the land in front of the Prison. It also contains covenants that no violation of the terms of the grants will be permitted, and further that if the County Council acquire the ownership of the lands in question, they shall be thrown into the Common.

It is improbable that the Home Office contemplate building upon the land referred to, but the case will require watching; and the most strenuous opposition should be offered if ever an attempt is made to obtain parliamentary sanction for such a purpose.

### Bye Laws.

The Committee thought it reasonable that the Bye Laws and other public documents concerning the Common should be described or exhibited in a permanent form on the Common, and they are glad to be able to record that this has been done by the erection of a number of notice boards.

## POINTS REMAINING TO BE NOTICED.

It may be admitted that the process has been a slow one; but the Committee feel grateful for the assistance they have received, and they wish, in the name of the inhabitants, to heartily thank all who have aided them in carrying into effect proposals made and pressed upon public attention solely in the interests of the community.

## The Future of the Patriotic School Site.

The assessment of the Patriotic School premises and site would, under ordinary circumstances, be outside the terms of this Report; but, inasmuch as the Secretary of the Royal Commission of the Patriotic Fund boldly stated to the Assessment Committee that "My Commissioners could build upon it (the site) to-morrow and let it out as 'building plots,'" \* it does not appear that such a statement could rightly be passed without a word of comment. There are two conditions under which this land, or any portion of it, can be built upon. The Trustees are bound, either—(i) to procure the assent of the Charity Commission, or (ii) to secure the passing of an Act of Parliament, as in the case of the sale of the Boys' School and the land attached. No such Act having been passed, inquiries were addressed to the Charity Commission, who have replied that "the Commissioners do not find that any application has been made for building on, or for letting on building leases, any part of the Charity land."† It would therefore appear that the Secretary of the Royal Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund has been drawing, rather largely, upon his imagination. Colonel Young is also reported to have stated that the land ought not to be rated, and it appears that the net assessment was reduced some £350, which, of course, means that the burden to that extent will be thrown upon the other rateable property of the parish. It is idle to pretend that the property is now less valuable. On the contrary, the land is increasing in value every year. The Right Honourable Edward Stanhope stated, in the House of Commons, in reply to a question put to him by Mr. Kimber, that, in letting the land they were themselves unable to manage, "there had been so great a gain that the Commissioners had been enabled to maintain seven more beds."‡

## A Map of the Common.

In April, 1889, the Committee arranged, printed, and circulated a map of Wandsworth Common, as it was, and is, prepared on the basis of the Ordnance Survey, but with additional details, bringing it down to date, and showing the more serious encroachments of the last forty or fifty years. These encroachments were coloured and numbered, and such explanations appended as were deemed trustworthy. The Committee desire to acknowledge their obligations to Mr. Ransome, who kindly rendered most valuable assistance.

\* *Patriotic and Wandsworth Borough News*, August 23rd, 1890.  
 † Charity Commissioners' Letter B—54428, March 7th, 1891.  
 ‡ *Times*, February 4th, 1887.

A large scale copy of the Map was also prepared and suitably mounted. This map was, for a time, left at the County Council offices, for reference. It has since been presented by the Committee to the Commissioners of the Wandsworth Public Free Library, where it may be seen by those who may desire to make a closer acquaintance with the subject. The map is now the property of the public.

## The Land known as the "Railway Enclosure" piece.

The enclosed land situate at the south-east corner of the Common, adjoining the railway station, numbered 4 on the map, and said to be about fifteen acres in extent, is now in danger of being built upon, unless purchased by the County Council and restored to the Common.

This land was acquired by the West London and Crystal Palace Railway Company, (now London, Brighton and South Coast Railway), in 1854. Subsequently it was discovered that the land was not required for railway purposes, and was accordingly sold as "surplus land." The assumed right to sell the land for building purposes, was challenged by the late Mr. Rose, who, after a protracted lawsuit, purchased it with the intention of maintaining it as an open space. Mr. Rose during his life-time, kept faith with the public in preventing the land being built upon. Since his death it is understood that the land is coming into the market, and having regard to the most serious encroachments which have from time to time been made, the Committee desire to give expression to a most earnest hope that the County Council may be induced to purchase and restore the land to the Common. Section 39 of the Wandsworth Common Act provides that "The Conservators may from time to time purchase by agreement, or accept a grant of, and hold any land having been, or reputed to have been formerly part of or adjoining to the Common, and any such land when vested in the Conservators shall for the purposes of this Act be deemed part of the Common."

## Serious Gorse Fires.

Portions of the Common have recently been much disfigured by numerous serious gorse fires, in some instances several acres of gorse have been destroyed. The Committee believe these fires are easily preventable. There would be nothing that could take fire if the staff were regularly, say once a year, to rake out and burn the accumulated dead branches and grasses which—in dry weather, especially when there is a strong wind—constitute an irresistible temptation to a little mischievous, or wilful mind. The effect of the course suggested promotes the growth of the young gorse, which shoots up thickly, beautifully green and pleasant to look upon, presenting a striking contrast to several acres of charred sticks. Such a simple and effectual remedy deserves a trial.

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### A New Vestry Committee.

To have induced the Wandsworth Vestry to appoint a Committee to watch over Commons and Open Spaces within its jurisdiction is an event of more than ordinary significance. It is even more surprising that the Vestry, during several generations of neglect and of acquiescence in much that tends to cover the locality with lasting disgrace, should not have taken this step many years ago. The Committee of the Association wish this new effort, on the part of the Vestry, every success. Rightly guided, the new Committee may do yeoman service in a cause which has been sadly neglected in the past. The gentlemen who have been appointed to serve on the Vestry Committee are Messrs. G. Ennis (who moved for the Committee), Chairman, R. M. Hensley, J. C. Mortimer, T. Pincham, and R. Wilson. Communications for the consideration of the Committee should be addressed to the Vestry Clerk, Town Hall, Wandsworth.

### Publications.

The following references to the more important publications, issued by the Association, may be useful to those who desire to trace our proceedings at some future time. Copies of all, or nearly all, have been presented to the free libraries, public bodies, and political organizations, irrespective of party.

#### 1886.

1. Circular containing the opinions of public men, resolutions passed at a public meeting, a memorial to the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund, etc. *December.*

#### 1887.

2. Circular containing map, opinions of the press, particulars of photographs of damage, etc. *January.*
3. Report of the Committee on the grievous damage to Wandsworth Common, questions in Parliament, list of subscribers, statement of receipts and expenditure, etc., etc. *March.*
4. Memorial to the Metropolitan Board of Works, presented *Aug. 5th.*

#### 1888.

5. Copy of a letter to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works. *April.*
6. Memorial (No. 2) to the Metropolitan Board of Works, presented by deputation, October 26th, 1888, Mr. Kimber addressing the Board at some length. *October 23rd.*

#### 1889.

7. Report of the Committee to subscribers, list of contributors from November 1st, 1886, to February 28th, 1889, statement of receipts and expenditure, &c., &c. *March.*

8. Memorial (No. 3) to the County Council for London, presented June, 1889, by deputation.
9. Map of Wandsworth Common as it was and is, presented with the memorial to the County Council for London, containing explanations and notes. Two large 6-in. scale mounted maps were also prepared, and one of these has been presented to the Wandsworth Public Free Library. *April.*
10. Circular to the Members of the London County Council, containing a series of resolutions passed at a meeting of subscribers to the Association held at the Hope Hotel on the 18th instant. *December.*

### Finance.

Statements of accounts were published in 1887 and 1889 respectively, and the Treasurer has much pleasure in submitting further audited accounts to date. From November, 1886, to the end of February, 1890, our friends had contributed £90 9s. 2d., which had been expended on meetings, advertising, printing, stationery, postages and incidentals. The whole of the services have been performed voluntarily, most of the committee meetings have been held at the residences of members, and it is hoped that the services rendered have been, at least, commensurate with the modest expenditure. An additional sum will be required to clear off the liabilities, and when this has been raised it is hoped that it may not be necessary to make any further claim upon our friends for some time to come. The Treasurer and the Committee tender their thanks to all who have aided their cause with contributions.

### Contributions received from March 1st, 1889, to February 28th, 1890.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Baker, C. H. ...	0	5	0	Brought forward ...	15	19	6
Black, A. (2nd contribution) ...	1	1	0	Moir R. (2nd do.) ...	0	2	6
Blackbeard, J., The late (2nd contribution) ...	1	1	0	Munt — ...	0	5	0
Boss, C. de ...	2	2	0	Oram, R. R. W. ...	1	1	0
Brown, John G. ...	0	10	6	Peck, Sir H. W., Bart. (2nd contribution) ...	5	0	0
Dalton, F. G. (2nd contrib.) ...	1	1	0	Pierce, E. (2nd contribution) ...	0	10	6
Dickinson, W. H. (2nd do.) ...	0	10	0	Rouch, S. W. ...	1	1	0
Edwards, Miss E. A. ...	1	1	0	Saunders, J. Touzeau (2nd contribution) ...	0	10	6
Ennis, Geo. (2nd contrib.) ...	1	1	0	Steele, E. (3rd contribution) ...	1	1	0
Garrett, W. H. (2nd do.) ...	2	2	0	Stevens, R. N. (3rd do.) ...	1	1	0
Harris, W. ...	0	10	6	Ward, Captain C. Y. ...	0	5	0
Harrison, R. B. ...	0	10	0	Wing, Rev. Russell, M.A. (2nd contribution) ...	1	1	0
James, O. (2nd contribution) ...	1	1	0				
Johnson, E. (2nd do.) ...	1	1	0				
Langstaff, Dr. G. B. (2nd do.) ...	2	0	0				
Longstaff, Dr. G. B. (2nd do.) ...	0	2	6				
Moir, C. (2nd contribution) ...	0	2	6				
Carried forward ..	£15	19	6		£27	18	0



## Statement of Receipts and Expenditure,

From March 1st, 1889, to February 28th, 1890.

Dr. RECEIPTS.		Cr. EXPENDITURE	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To balance from last Account	7 12 10	By Printing ... ..	10 0 6
„ Subscriptions during the year	27 18 0	„ Maps ... ..	14 5 0
		„ Hire of Room ... ..	0 10 0
		„ Postages and Incidental Expenses ... ..	7 14 6
		„ Balance at Bank 2 10 4	
		„ „, in Treasurer's hands... ..	0 10 6
			3 0 10
	£35 10 10		£35 10 10

We have examined these Accounts and find them correct,

ALGERNON BLACK, }  
ORMOND INNOUS, } Auditors.

19th March, 1890.

At a Meeting of the Committee, by the kind permission of Mr. E. Steele, held at "Rosslyn" on the 27th of April, 1891, the following resolutions were adopted, viz. :—

## I.

THAT the draft report and statements of account be presented to a public meeting of subscribers and friends, and that copies, not exceeding fifty, of the principal publications of the Association be collected, bound, and presented, for future reference, to such public libraries or other institutions as may be deemed advisable.\*

## II.

THAT a Sub-Committee be appointed, consisting of Messrs. A. Black, J. H. Cowham, W. K. Edwards, G. Ennis, and E. Steele, to arrange a Public Meeting to be held on the Battersea side of the Common, about the end of May.

\* Including the following: *Literary*—Bodleian, Guildhall, London, Inns of Court, Battersea, Clapham, and Wandsworth; *Museums*—British, Fitzwilliam, South Kensington; *Public Bodies*—Commons Preservation Society, Kyrie Society, London County Council, Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, Public Record Office, Vestries, &c., &c.

## III.

THAT the Committee pledge themselves to raise a sum of money sufficient to meet all liabilities of the Association; that a list of the additional contributions, together with an audited statement of account to date, be inserted in the report; and that the balance, if any, be lodged in the Clapham Junction Branch of the London and South Western Bank, Limited, to meet any future expenditure.

## A PUBLIC MEETING.

A Public Meeting of subscribers and friends was held on Wednesday evening, 3rd June, 1891, at the St. Michael's School, Darley Road, Bolingbroke Grove. Col. A. ROTTON, L.C.C., presided, and among those present were Mr. A. BLACK, Mr. J. BURGESS, Mr. J. H. COWHAM, Mr. F. G. DELANO (Hon. Treasurer), Mr. J. L. DIPLOCK, Mr. W. K. EDWARDS, Mr. O. INNOUS, Mr. E. JOHNSON (Hon. Sec.), Mr. J. H. MACE, Mr. MAXWELL, Mr. J. P. MOORE, Mr. E. STEELE, the Rev. RUSSELL WING, and others.

The CHAIRMAN made a brief and suitable reference to the progress and improvement which had been made since the Common came under the control of the London County Council. He said it was a great pity that action for the preservation of the Common had not been taken earlier. It was most humiliating to think that in past years 365 acres—an acre a day for a whole year—had been filched from what ought to have been an open space for the public. The efforts of the Association had been very successful in preventing further robbery—it deserved that title—of what ought to have been sacredly preserved as an open space for the enjoyment of the people.

Mr. E. STEELE, in a humorous speech, in which he reviewed the history of Wandsworth Common, moved—

"That the draft report and an audited Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the Committee be approved and circulated.

The Rev. RUSSELL WING seconded the resolution, expressing warm approval of the improvements recently carried out on the Common.

Mr. F. G. DELANO (hon. treas.) read a list of new contributions which, it was estimated, would be sufficient to meet the current expenses, and to admit of copies of the various pamphlets and maps connected with the agitation being bound into volumes and presented to the various Public Libraries.

Mr. J. L. DIPLOCK moved, and Mr. J. BURGESS seconded, the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:—

"That this meeting desires to record its conviction that owing to the action of the Committee of the Association a perpetual serious damage has been averted, and numerous improvements have been made to the Common; and that the cordial thanks of this meeting be tendered to the Committee for their exertions."

Mr. E. JOHNSON (hon. sec.) addressed the meeting, and returned thanks on behalf of the Committee, whom, he stated, it had been a pleasure to serve.

The meeting then passed votes of thanks to Sir Henry W. Peek, Bart., for the great exertions he had made on behalf of the Common; to Lord Spencer for his great kindness in transferring his manorial rights to the London County Council; and to the Parks and Open Spaces Committee of the London County Council for the improvements recently made to the Common.

Mr. ALGERNON BLACK then rose and said he wished to move a resolution which was not on the Chairman's agenda, viz. :—

"That this meeting desires to place on record, and to convey to Mr. Edward Johnson its sense of the value and importance of, and thanks for, the services he has rendered to the public; and its appreciation of the ability and energy he has shown as Honorary Secretary of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association."

Mr. BLACK explained, in sympathetic terms, that a Sub-Committee had been formed, and under their direction, without Mr. Johnson's knowledge, an appropriately worded and beautifully illuminated address had been prepared and framed, which would, when signed, be presented to him as a mark of appreciation of his services.

Mr. W. KERSHAW EDWARDS seconded the resolution, which was supported by Mr. J. H. COWHAM and Mr. F. G. DELANO, and carried unanimously.

Mr. JOHNSON briefly replied, and tendered sincere thanks to his friends who had spoken so kindly of his services.

The illuminated address was on view. The inscription is as follows :—

"WANDSWORTH COMMON PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

"Address, accompanied by a Testimonial,

"Presented at a Public Meeting held at the School-rooms of St. Michael's Church, Bolingbroke Grove, "on the 3rd June, 1891.

"(COLONEL ROTTON, L.C.C., IN THE CHAIR).

"To Edward Johnson, Esq.

"We, the undersigned, Members of the Wandsworth Common Protection Association, and inhabitants of the vicinity of Wandsworth Common, desire to convey to Mr. Edward Johnson our appreciation of the eminent services he has rendered to the public by his labours during the past five years as honorary secretary of the above Association.

"He has been indefatigable, able, sagacious, and courteous, and by the measures he has mainly devised and carried into effect, has stopped and remedied a serious encroachment on the Common, has greatly improved its condition and attractiveness, has stimulated and enlightened public bodies—directly or indirectly connected with the Common—in regard to their rights and duties, and has won universal respect and esteem.

"In the contemplation of the results of the work he voluntarily undertook and has so successfully carried through, we trust he may have the satisfaction attendant on aims achieved and self-imposed duty accomplished, and of knowing that he carries with him the regard and good wishes of all who are acquainted with his good work, and especially of those who have been associated with him in his arduous labours in connection with the protection and improvement of Wandsworth Common.

"R. S. Bendall.  
E. G. Bell.  
Algernon Black.  
E. Steele.  
G. Ennis.  
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R. N. Stevens.  
F. G. Delano.  
J. B. Tatam.  
Mrs. Blackbeard.  
Major Thomson.  
Rev. R. Wing.  
W. K. Edwards.  
F. Truefitt.  
E. Lawrence.

"Dr. Oram.  
A. Henderson.  
Rev. H. Fase.  
Dr. C. Robertson.  
H. Baker.  
W. Muhlemkamp.  
C. H. Goodman.  
S. W. Rouch.  
S. Woolgar.  
G. Roberts.  
J. T. Saunders.  
J. Richards.  
J. G. Poynter.  
G. T. Smith.  
W. Akhurst.  
A. Knight.

"J. P. Moore.  
Rev. C. Todd.  
F. Rose.  
J. T. Cooper.  
W. Hutcheon.  
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Dr. A. Thomas.  
Miss Edwards.  
J. H. Stark.  
P. Proctor.  
A. Ellett.  
J. L. Diplock.  
J. H. Mace.  
F. L. Storey.  
Thomas Dale.  
V. Wood."

The meeting passed a cordial vote of thanks to the Chairman.

### Presentation of the Signed Address, and Testimonial.

The Members of the Testimonial Committee and a few friends, including Mr. A. Black, Mr. J. H. Cowham, Mr. W. Kershaw Edwards, Mr. G. Ennis, Mr. O. Innous, Mr. J. H. Mace, Mr. J. P. Moore, and the Rev. Russell Wing, called upon Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, at their residence, on Thursday evening, the 25th of June. Mr. G. Ennis, at the request and on behalf of the Committee and subscribers, requested Mr. Johnson's acceptance of the illuminated address and a cheque for the balance of the Testimonial Fund; and in very graceful terms begged Mrs. Johnson's acceptance of a most beautiful bouquet.

Mr. Johnson tendered, on behalf of Mrs. Johnson and himself, their grateful thanks to the Testimonial Committee and subscribers, present and absent, for the marked kindness of which they were, that evening, made the recipients.

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P. Proctor.  
A. Ellett.  
J. L. Diplock.  
J. H. Mace.  
F. L. Storey.  
Thomas Dale.  
V. Wood."

The meeting passed a cordial vote of thanks to the Chairman.

### Presentation of the Signed Address, and Testimonial.

The Members of the Testimonial Committee and a few friends, including Mr. A. Black, Mr. J. H. Cowham, Mr. W. Kershaw Edwards, Mr. G. Ennis, Mr. O. Innous, Mr. J. H. Mace, Mr. J. P. Moore, and the Rev. Russell Wing, called upon Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, at their residence, on Thursday evening, the 25th of June. Mr. G. Ennis, at the request and on behalf of the Committee and subscribers, requested Mr. Johnson's acceptance of the illuminated address and a cheque for the balance of the Testimonial Fund; and in very graceful terms begged Mrs. Johnson's acceptance of a most beautiful bouquet.

Mr. Johnson tendered, on behalf of Mrs. Johnson and himself, their grateful thanks to the Testimonial Committee and subscribers, present and absent, for the marked kindness of which they were, that evening, made the recipients.

