

# A Museum for Wimbledon

The Wimbledon Village Club's founders always dreamed of opening a museum. In 1863, one of them even set out his ideas in a book. Joseph Toynbee wrote that the museum should focus on natural history and ancient objects found within five miles of St Mary's parish church.

It wasn't until 1912 that this ambition became reality thanks to the John Evelyn Society (now the Wimbledon Society). Francis Bather was appointed the first chairman of the Museum Committee. Francis worked at the Natural History Museum and was a president of the Geological Society and the Museums' Association. His secretary, Margaret Grant, became the museum's first curator.

Margaret managed the museum for 30 years. A keen local historian, Margaret was passionate about the museum. Colleagues remembered her being on duty here every Saturday. Margaret kept high standards, staying up to date with the latest methods. Volunteers like Margaret have been running the museum ever since.

'Portrait of Joseph Toynbee by Maull & Fox'  
Undated, mid-19th century



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The first page of the museum's Accession Register in 1916, showing the first items formally accessioned into the museum's collections

1916		Description	Artist	Source	G. P. L. 1916
1	1	Water Colour Sketch	Arbury Hill	Mr. Bardswell	July 2
1	2	"	Parsonage House	do	/
1	3	"	New Forest, Bournemouth	do	/
1	4	"	East of Bournemouth	do	/
2	1	"	View of Garrison Hotel, St. Leonards	do	15
3	1	Water Colour, Gilded Borders, Gilded with Gold		C. H. Cooper	22
4	1	Water Colour Sketch	Redcliffe House, Bath	J. S. Brown	Aug 5
5	2	Water Colour Sketch	Redcliffe House, Bath	do	/
5	1	Water Colour Sketch	by Hugh Arnold	Mr. Hugh Arnold	see
6	1	Red Print	Wimbledon School	Mr. Richardson Jones	Oct 31
7	1	Oil Sketch	St. Leonards	E. Morgan	Nov
8	1	Water Colour, Red Gilt Borders, Gilded		per Mr. Richardson Jones	Nov 22
9	1	Original sketch	Wimbledon Common 1812 of J. B. G. Jones	Richard H. Gray	Nov 5
10	1	"	"	do	/
1	2	"	"	do	/
1	3	"	"	do	/
1	4	"	"	do	/
1	5	"	"	do	/
10	1	Polished slab marble	Barnes, Woking	Barnes & Brixley	16
1	2	"	"	do	/
1	3	"	"	do	/
1	4	"	"	do	/
1	5	"	"	do	/
1	6	"	"	do	/
1	7	"	"	do	/
1	8	"	"	do	/
1	9	"	"	do	/
1	10	"	"	do	/
1	11	"	"	do	/
1	12	"	"	do	/
1	13	"	"	do	/
1	14	"	"	do	/
1	15	"	"	do	/
1	16	"	"	do	/
1	17	"	"	do	/
1	18	"	"	do	/
1	19	"	"	do	/
1	20	"	"	do	/
1	21	"	"	do	/
1	22	"	"	do	/
1	23	"	"	do	/
1	24	"	"	do	/
1	25	"	"	do	/
1	26	"	"	do	/
1	27	"	"	do	/
1	28	"	"	do	/
1	29	"	"	do	/
1	30	"	"	do	/

Photography by Ian Skelton