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.

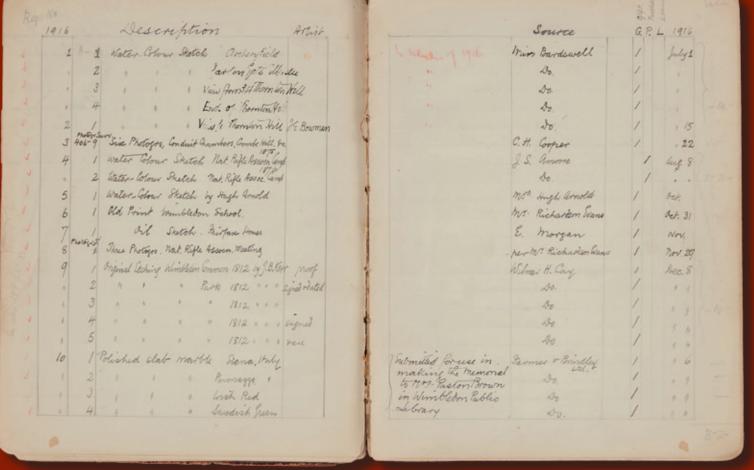
Margaret managed the museum for 30 years. A keen local historian, Margaret was passionate about the museum. Colleagues remembered her being on duty here every Saturday. Margaret kept high standards, staying up to date with the latest methods. Volunteers like Margaret have been running the museum ever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



Photography by Ian Skelton