

Davina Thackara and Fran Lloyd, *Public Sculpture of Outer South and West London, Public Sculpture of Britain, 13* (University of Liverpool Press, 2011), 277.

Terrace Gardens

Top of Terrace Gardens, immediately below Richmond Hill

Aphrodite

Sculptor: Alan Howes

Date: installed 1952

Materials: Portland stone

Dimensions: figure, approx. 180cm high × 75cm wide; base, approx. 90cm high × 90cm wide

Status: not listed

Owner: London Borough of Richmond on Thames

Condition: good

The stylised and slightly abstracted figure of the goddess is seated on a stone base, cut to suggest waves, with her hands lifting her hair and a dolphin between her feet. Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of love. The figure was for many years known as 'Bulbous Betty' by local residents.

The work was made independently by a Hammersmith-based artist whose wife had been born in Richmond, and was donated to the borough in 1952. It had previously been exhibited at the Royal Academy. It was accepted by the council after some debate, and was installed on its present site.¹ The pond originally contained a fountain and formed part of the grounds of the former Lansdowne House (demolished in 1865), later to be converted into Terrace Gardens and opened by the Duchess of Teck in 1887. The work was initially extremely



Alan Howes, *Aphrodite*

unpopular with local residents, who considered it obscene and mounted a vigorous campaign in the local press to have it removed.² A poster was also produced and circulated by a local group describing itself as 'The Richmond Connoisseurs', printed with a text which read as follows:

"Bulbous Betty" The horrible statue of Richmond Hill. This travesty of art is an insult to human intelligence, an affront to womanhood and sacrilege to Aphrodite. Write to the Mayor of Richmond and demand immediate removal.

The campaign proved unsuccessful and the work remained. The sculptor has since been described as producing 'monuments of rare distinction'.³

Notes

- [1] *Richmond Herald*, 31 May 1952. [2] *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, 12/20/23/26 July 1952. [3] Burgess, *English Churchyards Memorials*, p. 148.

Lower part of Terrace Gardens near Petersham Road entrance

River God

Sculptor: John Bacon the Elder

Manufacturer: Coade & Sealy

Date: c.1780s; resited 1992

Materials: Coade stone

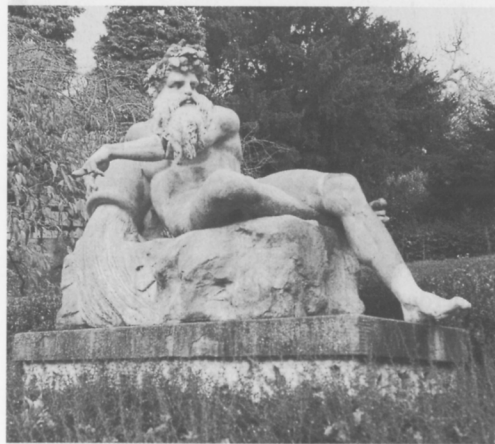
Dimensions: figure, 157cm high × 236cm wide; base, 87cm high × 212cm wide × 89cm deep

Status: Grade II

Owner: London Borough of Richmond on Thames

Condition: good

The god is depicted with a wreath of fruits and leaves around his head and a long flowing beard, reclining on a stone base. His right arm rests on an upturned jug which gushes water, while his raised left hand points into the distance. The figure and base are mounted on a pedestal with rusticated sides, bearing a crest of an arrow and purse on one side.



John Bacon the Elder, *River God*