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# CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

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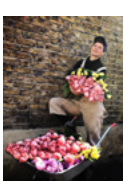
The magazine of The Camberwell Society  
No 209 Autumn 2021 £1.50 (free to members)

**How does your garden grow?**  
**Artists need a space to dream**  
**Heart of Camberwell transformed**  
**Opening of new station entrance**





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[WWTRACamberwell@gmail.com](mailto:WWTRACamberwell@gmail.com)

# Virtual gardens, real cake and adinkras to come

In a colourless year, how rewarding it was to see Camberwell Gardens celebrated in June. The virtual gardens will never fade as they are online; but equally impressive were the spectrum of plants and cakes.

Our copious thanks to the dynamic Liz Cook, our esteemed president Nicholas Roskill for his ribbon-cutting, and of course the ever-helpful Father Nick.

Thanks also to those who uploaded photos, baked cakes and grew plants – without you all this would simply not have happened. You can rekindle the event by looking at the open gardens page of the Society's website.

You will know by now that Butterfly Walk will metamorphose into Camberwell Lanes – and our sincere hope is that the development will contribute significantly to the green spaces of Camberwell.

This is an opportunity for the developers to seize. The new Camberwell banners in the car park are preferred to the older designs and admired.

Thinking of green spaces, and in particular the green space of Camberwell Green, how impressive it was to see the litter pickers (the young, the less young – and lots of scouts), out on multiple occasions reducing the number of bottles, wrappers and (considerably) worse that can be found there.

At the time of writing there is little to report on the various planning applications, but I urge you to check our Planning sub-committee submissions on the website. And please remember to let us know of any developments that might escape the eagle eyes of our sub-committee.

With the opening of the new Windsor Walk station entrance the word adinkra is worth a Google; you can read more in Tony Coleman's article on page 5. I am particularly interested in ways in which that the positivity of the adinkras will impact the mental health of local pupils through the resource packs offered to local schools.

What next? Changes in traffic,

working from home and online shopping steer us towards the 15-minute city where all is but a 15-minute walk or bicycle ride from your front door.

Why not follow Camberwell Identity's exhortation to Love Local. Our wide range of Camberwell businesses will offer a warm welcome and serve you well.

*Nick Mair, the Society's Chair relaxes in a Camberwell branded deckchair. But where in Camberwell was this photo taken?*

*Answer page 19.*



## Stories of Camberwell streets

*John Hurst* shares his research on the history of Mary Boast Walk SE5

This short street runs between Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane and is named after Mary Joyce Boast (1921-2010) who documented the history of the Borough of Southwark and wrote histories of some of the local neighbourhoods such as Camberwell, Peckham, Rotherhithe and Bermondsey.

She was born in Hove and studied history at Royal Holloway College, Egham during WWII. Mary trained as a teacher and worked in various schools before becoming a librarian. In 1954, after working in Cheltenham and Brighton, she was appointed as the branch librarian for Camberwell and became interested in the history of the local area.

When Camberwell was amalgamated with Bermondsey and Southwark in 1965 to become the London

Borough of Southwark, she was based in Dulwich Library and began researching and writing booklets for the council including 'Southwark - a London Borough' and 'The Mayflower and Pilgrim Story'.

In 1972 she was appointed Southwark's first full time Local Studies Librarian based in Newington Library.

Her teaching background and enthusiasm for local history led her to write a series of neighbourhood histories particularly aimed at a younger audience which were so well received that they were revised and printed for years after her retirement in 1981.

Even after retiring she continued writing local histories and giving talks about this area of London that she loved so much.

In 1994 Mary was given the Freedom of the Borough of Southwark in recognition of her many years of work and contributions to the neighbourhood.

For more histories of London streets go to [londonstreetguide.com](http://londonstreetguide.com)





## How does your garden grow?

Open gardens was again online this year, but members met in real life at a pop-up plant stall at St Giles' and picked up gardening tips.



*Liz and Louise from the St Giles' congregation enjoying the Camberwell Chair*



*Plants and ice creams with the vicar in front of St Giles'*



*Society president Nicholas Roskill tries out the Camberwell deckchair created by Nick Mair*



*Peter Milne co-founder of the Nunhead Gardener, gave expert advice on plants and gardening. And Nunhead Gardener donated 15% of any plant sales to Society members in its Camberwell store, to the St Giles' organ fund.*

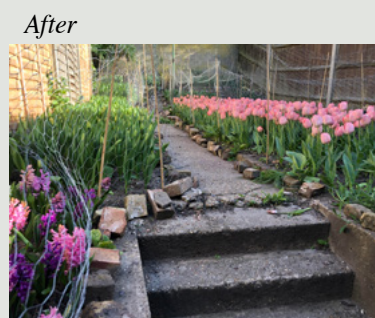
## From waste-land to garden

Local florist *Roka* planted 4,000 tulip bulbs in unused gardens and spaces in Camberwell to sell on her stall on the Green.

**Instagram@roka brings flowers**



*Before*



*After*

## Ban belching buses

*Will Reeves* vice chair of SE5 Forum for Camberwell asks readers to help stop bus drivers leaving engines idling when changing drivers at Camberwell Green.

**A**s schools start this September children and parents are walking through traffic fumes from buses idling, leaving engines running while parked. SE5 Forum is asking the two bus garages to remind drivers to switch off their engines.

By leaving engines idling, drivers are breaching the Highway Code Rule 123, contributing towards poor air quality and creating needless noise next to the Green.

SE5 Forum will be sharing videos of buses with their engines idling on social media channels. We are engaging with the bus companies on what action they are going to take to

eliminate this behaviour.

Readers can help by taking a short **(10-second)** video on their mobile phone when spotting a bus engine idling alongside Camberwell Green. Try to include the bus operator's name which is above the front entry door. Send the video clip to **admin@se5forum.org.uk** and we will tweet it out.

Or post it yourself on Twitter, noting the **bus route number**, and the amount of time the bus engine was idling for. To help us make sure the bus companies see it, include an @ mention of the relevant bus company. Operators that serve Camberwell include **@AbellioLondon** and



**@Go\_Ahead\_London**. Don't forget to also tag SE5 Forum **@SE5Forum** so that we can re-tweet. Include the hashtags **#CleanAirCamberwell** so more people will see your post, and we can get the topic trending! And of course, remember to be respectful and avoid inflammatory language in your post.



# Which way next as chaos rolls in

It struggles to a stop, then speeds off in a different direction, reports *Tony Coleman* – but it's not a train.

**T**he chaos wheel at the station has been getting a lot of smiles. Based on a penny farthing wheel manufactured in... yes... Taiwan, it is designed to promote chaotic motion. Water is pumped into the top bucket but is continually draining out into the trough.

This makes the wheel spin as the buckets are always top-heavy. Many people pause to watch it struggle to a stop and then speed up again – maybe in the other direction – or maybe not.

Edward Lorenz, a US mathematician working on atmospheric modelling, saw how small changes brought about completely different responses. He coined the phrase “Chaos Theory” to describe the effect. Many natural systems exhibit chaotic behaviour: water flowing in a stream, a flag flying in the wind or, indeed, a chaos wheel.

Following a suggestion by Nick Mair, it took me three months to build in the basement. It then had to be taken apart to get it out – fortunately with no bits left over.

It is part of a series of installations

that are planned for the garden plinth at the station. The latest is a wind mobile made by Felix Fried working at Ferrous Wheel Metalworks near Burgess Park.

Other displays are planned to keep up interest. There might even be a re-appearance of the marvellous marble run!

## Entrance opens for Windsor walkers

By the time this edition of the Quarterly hits the news-stands, or thuds through your letter box, the new station entrance from Windsor Walk should be in use. That is the plan, anyway.

The official opening will be on 2 September with Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris coming to cut the ribbon. While the entrance will be in use before then, the art pieces on the plinth inside will be covered for the ta-da moment.

Work on fitting out the interior is carrying on at pace. By early July the flooring is down, the wall tiles are mostly finished, and it will be the turn of the electricians to install their lights, and the equipment everyone recognises. Contractor Bam Nuttall has moved out of its site next to



*Chaos wheel at Denmark Hill Station built by Tony Coleman*

the Salvation Army to a smaller compound at King's College Hospital.

The colourful interior tiling that was inspired by the Camberwell Identity brick logo will be seen by thousands every day. We hope enough tiles will left over so we can make them into souvenirs. Form an orderly queue please.

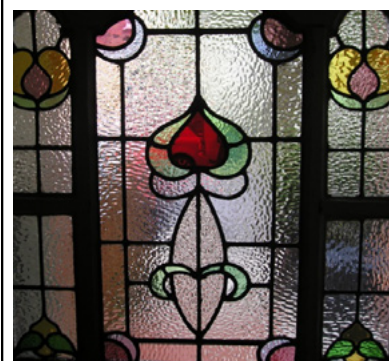
## Sculptured support

Hard work in early July by the artist Godfried Donkor and his team allowed supports for the sculptures to be put in place waiting for the sculptures themselves, which will be unveiled on 2 September.

*Craftsman from Sussex Ironcraft installing one of the adinkra sculptures at Denmark Hill station*



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# Bernard Mandeville is buried here

*Fiona Subotsky* has discovered that the famous author of *The Fable of the Bees* was interred at St Giles' Church, Camberwell. We need a plaque.

I found the name of Bernard Mandeville in a list of people buried in St Giles' Churchyard. Could this be the author of the satirical verses of *The Grumbling Hive*, published in 1705, later re-published as *The Fable of the Bees*? The Church's own information reveals nothing of this and the Wikipedia entry on Mandeville does not mention his burial. However, I found a Dutch website which reported that not only Mandeville, but also his wife and several of his children, were buried in Camberwell.

Bernard Mandeville was born in Rotterdam in the Netherlands on 15 November 1670. His father was a physician and he himself studied both philosophy and medicine. He came to London in about 1693, probably because he and his father were in political trouble, and he set out to practise medicine, his speciality being 'hypochondriasis' and gastric disorders. His views on these are presented in *A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions* (1711). However, his areas of interest were much broader than medicine.

In *The Fable*, the Bees have a society resembling the London of the early eighteenth century, prosperous and busy, thriving from international trade – a consumer society. The author notes the faults and foibles of all classes and trades, but considers that it is these very activities which keep the money flowing:

*Vast Numbers thronged the fruitful Hive;*

*Yet those vast Numbers made 'em thrive;*

*Millions endeavouring to supply Each other's Lust and Vanity*

All the bees grumbled about the behaviour of everyone else. The supreme deity, Jove, became irritated and declared that all would suddenly become 'honest'. As everyone abandoned greed, luxury and corruption, the economy collapsed,

other nations took over, and the shrunken population had to flee the hive for a hollow tree. Mandeville's idea that private vices lead to social prosperity, and conversely, private virtue (thrift) to economic misery, influenced great economists from Adam Smith to Keynes, but moralists condemned him as the Man-Devil who promoted vice.



Portrait thought to be of Mandeville painted between 1702 and 1705 by John Closterman. National Portrait Gallery. See: [www.bernard-mandeville.nl/portrait-of-bernard-mandeville](http://www.bernard-mandeville.nl/portrait-of-bernard-mandeville)

I confirmed the burial information by looking at the church records via Ancestry.co.uk. There is little room for doubt, as Mandeville made sure that even if his surname was erratically spelled his medical status was recorded. There is a rather sad series of child deaths, not uncommon at the period.

The first burial was of the Mandevilles' second son John, who was christened at St Giles' Church in Cripplegate in May 1700, when his parents were resident in that parish. He died in 1702, and was buried on 13 August at St Giles', Camberwell. The next to be buried was a daughter, Petronella Clementia Mandeville, born on 26 July 1701, who was also christened at St Giles' Cripplegate, and was buried on 6 May 1703 at St Giles' Camberwell.

Then there was Clementia, born about 1705, who was buried at St Giles' Camberwell on 25 February

1709. A further daughter also died that year and was buried on 15 April; this was Elizabeth, named after her mother, who had been born on 3 December 1708, and baptised at St Mary Magdalen, Southwark, when the family was living at Long Walk, Bermondsey.

Mandeville's wife Elizabeth was born in 1674, in the parish of St Giles' Cripplegate, to John and Ann Lawrence, and was buried at St Giles' Camberwell on 29 March 1732. Dr Bernard Mandeville himself died in Hackney on 21 January 1733 and was buried at St Giles' Camberwell on 25 January. His estate was largely left to his son Michael (1699-1769) whom he wished "to bury me as nearby and in as private a manner as will be consistent with the cheapest decency". Mandeville's other surviving child was Penelope Mandeville (1706-1748), who was baptised at St Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey. At 19 she married John Bradnox, a weaver, and their home was in Kennington Lane – so there were other south-of-the-river links.

Why St Giles' Camberwell, when the Mandevilles were not residents of the parish? Probably because space was available and the cost lower than in churches closer to central London – the Great Plague had happened not all that long before. The burials would have been either near the old St Giles' Church or in its crypt, not in the current 'Churchyard', which is now a park. The family's earlier links with another St Giles' church are probably coincidental.

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# Commission wants to change our local seats

*Jonathan Hunt* reviews boundary proposals for how we choose our MPs.

**N**ew proposals for parliamentary boundaries seek to divide Camberwell between two new constituencies. Camberwell Green ward would move into a new Vauxhall & Camberwell constituency, while St Giles' and Champion Hill wards would remain in a changed Peckham seat.

All three would continue to be in Southwark borough, and elect its councillors, but residents in Camberwell Green would have a different MP than their neighbouring wards. The Lambeth portion of Camberwell is moving from Dulwich and West Norwood to a new Brixton and Clapham constituency. These proposals are from the independent Boundaries Commission for England, published in mid-June, which periodically examines existing boundaries to maintain a reasonable balance of voters with equal numbers in each.

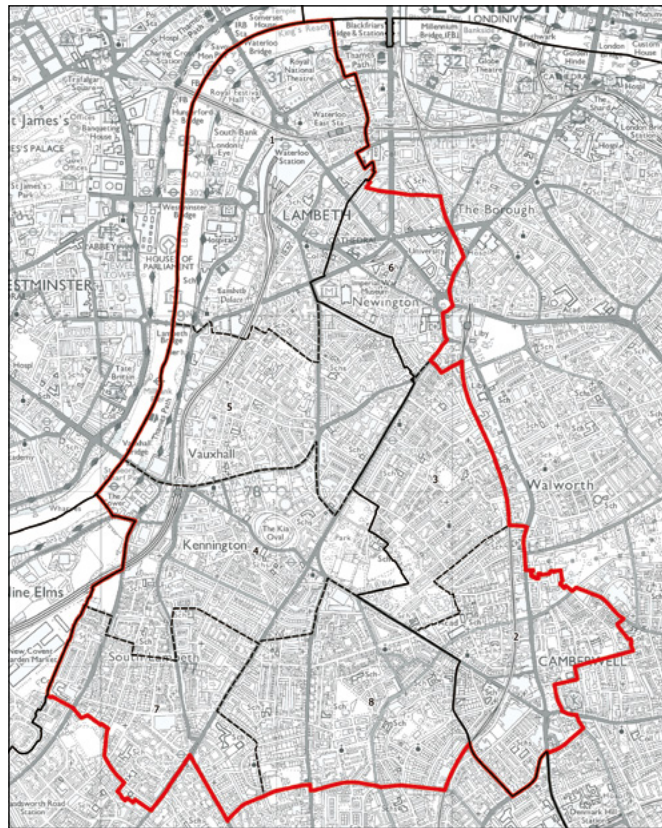
## Community impact

They are also supposed to ensure that natural communities stay together where possible. Many local residents are already complaining that this is not the case for Camberwell, and that all wards should be in one seat.

The favourite choice appears to be for all to stay in Southwark, keeping the name Camberwell & Peckham, represented for many years by Harriet Harman.

## Despair and déjà vu

St Giles ward Labour councillor Ian Wingfield's initial reactions were "ones of despair and a sense of déjà vu. Camberwell is sliced up again to meet electoral quotas. Our postcode is already split between two boroughs. We are now



*Proposed new Vauxhall and Camberwell constituency 2021*

faced with separate parliamentary constituencies, leading to greater fragmentation of local services and an undermining of Camberwell's identity. It should be opposed."

Southwark Liberal Democrats, who currently have no councillors in Camberwell, believe "community interests should be paramount."

## Call to resist proposals

And there are strong views in the community. "The SE5 Forum has worked hard to establish a sense of cohesion and identity for Camberwell," says Sophy Taylor, its chair. "Much of that could be lost if a large part of the area is split into two constituencies. We must all resist these proposals."

Nick Mair, Camberwell Society chair, says the executive committee briefly discussed the issue in June, and will publish its considered opinions in due course. He believes it is "an emotive issue, but the majority view is to keep Camberwell together. Some of our members have

seen boundary changes come and go over the years, with little real effect."

## Camberwell identity

Camberwell Identity group also discussed the issue and proposed removing land from north and east of Burgess Park from the Camberwell and Vauxhall constituency and extending that constituency southwards, along to the end of Camberwell Church Street. The group cites its widespread public consultation as evidence of local understanding of a specific Camberwell identity—diverse, vibrant with green spaces and centered around world class health and art institutions.

"This breakup of the Camberwell community is unacceptable. The 40,000 people who call Camberwell home need a sense of place, as individuals, and as members of a community," says Kelly Blaney, chair of the Camberwell Identity group. "Our council wards must not be split across two boundaries as the more our local bureaucracy is eroded, the less likely we will be seen as a single entity."

Residents are also concerned they had less than eight weeks to make representations, the deadline was 2 August. But the Commission anticipates having to make changes, as its final report is not due until July 2023. Two further rounds of consultation will be held next year with opportunities to make comments on anything from where the proposed new boundary lines are to the names of the constituencies. Those who want to view the proposals in more detail and comment should visit: [www.bcereviews.org.uk](http://www.bcereviews.org.uk)



# Heart of Camberwell will be transformed

*Elizabeth Borowiecka reports on the plan to develop the shopping area.*



*View of the public square*



*Denmark Hill from  
Camberwell New Road*



*Daneville Road*

The application to develop Butterfly Walk Shopping Centre and land at the rear of Denmark Hill, Orpheus Street, Daneville Road and Wren Road was approved by the Southwark Planning Committee on 28 June.

The development was modified after consultation with the planning department and local residents. The final version includes:

- Retail spaces, including Morrison's Supermarket
- A 102-bedroom hotel
- A two-screen cinema with capacity of 160 seats
- A community space for the use of local groups in Wren Road
- 145 dwellings
- 32 car parking spaces for disabled and visitor use
- A linear landscaped shopping street in place of the covered mall, including a public square surrounded by shops and cafes, a children's play-space, and pedestrian and cycle routes which run through the site and link up with adjacent streets.

As a result of the consultations, the height of the buildings was reduced in the revised proposal. The tallest building on the site, at the corner of Wren Road and Daneville Road, will

be 8 storeys high.

There will be 24-hour security on site to guard against noise and anti-social behaviour. The gate which gives access to the public square from Wren Road will be shut at 10pm. Morrisons supermarket, Superdrug, Poundland and McDonalds will be retained and continue to trade throughout the development period. All the businesses on site at present will be able to return when the development is complete.

The provision of 32 car parking spaces has not changed. The Council's policy is that there should be fewer private car journeys, an objective which has been balanced with the requirements of a successful shopping centre. The new flats will be car-free, except for wheelchair users.

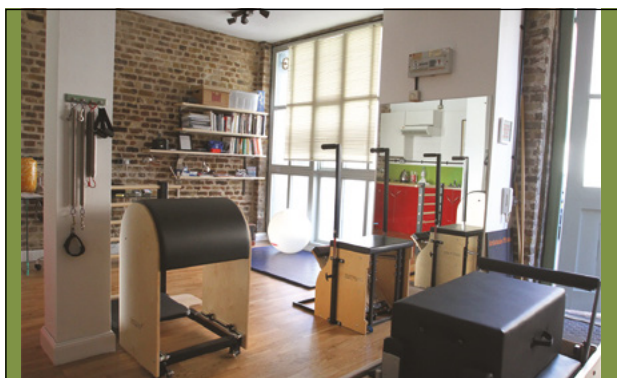
Some mature trees will be lost as a result of the development, but more native species will be planted. The capacity of the two-screen cinema has been increased from 120 to 160 seats. Of the total of 145 flats proposed, 51 will be affordable, of which 35 will be for social rent and 16 for first-time buyers.

Children's play space is available for the use of residents. There is no space available for children over 12, so the developer has agreed to pay for

the cost of providing this elsewhere. Service vehicles will only have access to the yard from the north of Wren Road. There will be bollards to manage vehicle movements along Wren Road.

It was suggested that the colours of the brickwork might better reflect the masonry of the local area. Although no change has been made to the planning application, the developer will seek approval for bricks of a warmer tone than at present proposed when the application for final approval of samples is made to the planning authority. The Camberwell Identity will be reflected in landscaping and public art, including banners and signage, the design of which will be undertaken in conjunction with the Council, local residents and the Camberwell Identity Group.

The decision notice will be issued once the legal agreement between the applicant and Southwark Council has been finalised. Six months are allowed for this. The Agenda and Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 28 June are available on the Southwark website. The application number is 19/AP/7057. The architects for the scheme are John McAlsan and Partners.



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# Thor's garden comes to life

Horticulture in the Thorlands estate is thriving despite lockdown, heat, and slug attacks. *Marie Staunton* reports.



*Irene and her son planting*

**T**horlands, the hammer-shaped 1950s low-rise estate off Denmark Road, is named after the Norse god of war and agriculture, Thor. It is fitting, therefore, that the tenants' management organisation (TMO) has started an ambitious project to transform an overgrown wasteland into a garden. It is a place where people can learn about growing food and herbs. The produce will be sold through an affordable market stall. It will also create work for residents.

## A revival of old Camberwell

Project leader Simon J Taylor explained that market gardening is an important part of local history. "The whole area was previously farmland, mainly market gardens, orchards, pasture and meadow for sheep. Some of these activities continued well into the 1950s. One interesting fact cited in the archives was that the English herb yarrow was collected in the fields of Camberwell and sold in London. Apparently, yarrow was used for cleaning the typhoid-ridden water by brewing with barley into a weak flowers' ale!"

The project was launched in February, 2020. Then COVID hit. Thorlands Garden Club had to cope with the unpredictability of lockdown restrictions on top of the usual headache of the gardener, the weather.

When gardening was allowed, a core group of a dozen volunteers cleared two adjoining spaces of about half an acre that lie along the handle of the hammer part of the estate, marking the border of Lambeth

and Southwark. The first was a neglected piece of tarmac known as the Kickabout. A grant of £1,000 from the TMO paid for a contractor to remove the worst of the spiny brambles, twiggy bushes and nettles. Friends donated pallets with which the club built raised beds. Discarded oak from a former local laundry became a shed and pergola.

Eighteen months and three lockdowns later, the Kickabout is known as the Walled Garden. Raised beds on legs are growing salads and herbs.

The second area, a former playground with a rusted swing frame, was also overgrown. It was cleared by Goodgym Southwark, a group of runners who get extra exercise by helping community projects. They left the buddleia and some trees such as the Indian bean. The plan is to create a forest garden that fosters biodiversity. The trees which have been planted include sorbus, rowan and wild cherry, which was donated by the Society as part of the mayor's plant-a-tree scheme. The garden club is looking for donations of fruit trees, cherries and plums and aims to grow mushrooms and strawberries. The former rent office at the end of the space is now a clubhouse and there are plans for a kitchen garden and green events space.

## Learning with fun

About 50 volunteers have attended Tuesday morning and Saturday afternoon sessions to learn about potting, seed growing, plant care and watering techniques. They range in age from Leila, who started at the club aged three and is already competent at potting, and Bridget the "compost queen" in her 80s, who has led the creation of four tons of compost. The sessions are led by Simon J Taylor, a former market gardener. He trained in horticulture in Norfolk before coming to London to become a musician.

Simon said there are three lessons the club has learnt from the venture. "First, in raised beds, water from the



*Bridget and Leila work together*

bottom. The club uses a system of plastic bottles which are filled from the top and direct water to the bottom of the beds. Secondly, use shading, hoops, even old bed-sheets, to avoid crops bolting. Lettuces, chicory, and radicchio are less likely to bolt when they are out of direct sunlight. Thirdly, and most importantly, let budding gardeners choose what they like to do and buddy up to learn from an existing volunteer."

If you have green fingers and would like some outdoor exercise, or have fruit trees to donate or digital skills to help promote the garden, email: [thorlandsgardens@gmail.com](mailto:thorlandsgardens@gmail.com)

Instagram – [thorlandsgardens](https://www.instagram.com/thorlandsgardens) for imagery and video clips.

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# Artists need a space to dream

*Robert Wainwright* traces the history of artists studios in Camberwell from Charlie Chaplin to today's Open Studios



It was a misty morning in early July 1907 when a crowd of onlookers waved farewell to half a dozen buses, cars and trucks loaded with performers from **Fred Karno's Fun Factory** in Southwell Road, Camberwell.

The famed vaudeville impresario was off on a tour with several shows including his most famous comedy, *Mumming Birds*. Among the performers on the top level of the first bus you can just spot a tiny, moustachioed figure named Charlie Chaplin. Behind him, grinning, is Arthur Stanley Jefferson who would make his name as Stan Laurel, one half of the comedy duo Laurel and Hardy.

It would be Chaplin and Jefferson's last tour with Karno before embarking on their famed Hollywood careers but their presence would always mark Camberwell as important to their success - the place where the first custard pie was said to have been thrown during rehearsals inside the Fun Factory.

Fast forward more than a century and the same property is not only a landmark but, more importantly, has an ongoing role in Camberwell's arts scene. **Clockwork Studios**, as it has been known since the mid 1980s when it was started by Noel and Margy Perkins, is home to a couple of dozen diverse artists, the smell of paint and plaster wafting through the delightfully cluttered corridors

echoing the creative spirit of this iconic building.

It's mid-afternoon in late June and the place has a solid work hum about it. Bridget Bailey, a textile artist, is working on an intricate flower stem made of coloured wire and fine silk thread and painter Mark McLaughlin is finishing an inviting landscape of Brockwell Park bathed in spring sunshine. On the wall is a poster for textile designer Victoria Richard's colourful ties worn by Channel 4 presenter John Snow.

Ros Badger is busy doing a clearout ready for a post-Covid burst of activity. She creates jewellery using "found" objects like Roman coins and Georgian miniatures as well as designing homewares, spurred by a background in textiles and a love of literature.

Ros is a relative "newbie" having been here for six years, and says the studio's strength is the informality of its layout, the artist spaces evolved over the years and connected by curtains rather than doors: "It reminds me of art school because of the collaborative nature of an open community," she says as we pass through John and Cecilia Hunt's stained glass workshop to reach the studio of painter Daisy Perkins, daughter of the owner who combines a love of travelling with art to explore cultures through landscapes.



Daisy has run documentary evenings, life drawing and yoga classes before Covid struck; “We’re hoping it will start opening again,” she says. “Art needs connection and that’s what we’ve been starved of for the past 15 months.”

Clockwork just touches the tip of the artistic jewel in Camberwell, as there are at least half a dozen studio complexes, mostly created as a result of the influence



Daisy, Bridget and Ros at Clockwork Studios

of the Camberwell College of Arts. The fact that many studios across London have been closing in recent years, forced out by commercial rents, shows the importance of protecting this heritage.

Some, like **Vanguard Court Studios**, emerged as a reuse of industrial buildings. Tucked away off Peckham Road and alongside Lucas Gardens, the cobblestone mews carries the name of the cardboard attaché cases that used to be produced in their thousands for British soldiers during World War II. Before that, the city’s first omnibuses were built here and it’s also been home to the iconic drink, R.White’s Lemonade.

Since its conversion to art studios three decades ago, Vanguard has continued to contribute to Camberwell’s artistic tapestry, with Turner Prize short-listed artists among the tenants as well as set designers, builders and sculptors.

In particular, it has become a home to a group of well-known ceramicists. Award-winning potter Chris Keenan began working from Vanguard in 1995, first as an apprentice to Edmund de Waal and then in his own right, producing refined homewares and art compositions from what he calls the yard. “I don’t know why I call it that, perhaps because a mews is more about houses and this is a place of work and creation,” he laughs as we chat in his sun-filled studio 7C. “I can’t believe I’ve been here for 25 years. It’s a place people settle and stay, partly because there is a realistic attitude, a tolerance if you will, by the owners to artists

Chris Keenan at Vanguard



and what they can afford. Covid has been a period of reflection for many of us but things are picking up now.”

Above us there is the faint sound of activity, footsteps and chairs scraping in the upstairs studios, now more frequently used by graphic and computer game designers and small tech companies who need less space: “It’s the way of the world, ever changing but equally creative to what I do,” says Chris.

**Coldharbour London** is one of the newest studios, the former print factory opening its doors ten years ago a few yards along Stockwell Road from Clockwork Studios and with a mantra that *Artists need a space to dream*. Not only is the architecture and art deco entrance different to its famous neighbour but so too is the layout of self-contained, loft-style studios and exhibition space housing 80 artists, not only traditional areas like ceramics, painting and sculpture but a growing diversity including photographers and film production, hat-makers, fashion designers and installation artists.

Lifestyle photographer Tom Leighton, known locally for his collection *36 reasons to love Camberwell*, moved into the studios eight years ago: “There is a real range of artists here producing amazing work. It was modelled on Clockwork’s success but we have perhaps a younger crowd of new work and artists. The setup might be different but we’ve been able to maintain that sense of community. Everyone knows each other.

“Covid had an impact because most of us shut down but a few studios opened up recently during arts week and it was really well supported. People want to reconnect with arts after such a long time locked up, and there were lots of new faces, new blood at the Camberwell arts market.”

**Denmark Place Studios** at 47 Coldharbour Lane was opened in the 1940s and is probably the oldest studio in Camberwell. One of its studios was once occupied by caricaturists and puppeteers Peter Fluck and Roger Law when they helped produce the unforgettable Spitting Image television show in the mid 1980s and early 1990s.

Nowadays it is home to a dozen artists and academics, from painters and print-makers to portraitists, sculptors and architects. Landscape painter Stephen Read moved in here two decades ago. He has exhibited at several major awards including the Threadneedle Prize and is currently working on a series of images that explores the human impact on the environment.

Stephen found Covid lockdowns to be a quiet blessing: “All of us have taken a hit financially because there haven’t been any shows, but on the plus side we have

been able to get a lot of work done. The pressure to work to a deadline was removed so it’s been a time for reflection and production.”

**The Remakery**, at 51 Lilford Road, was created in 2012 from a disused car park. Its philosophy is about making art from used material, encouraging its artists to “rethink, recover, reuse and redistribute” surplus materials.

Michelle Osbourne-Matthiasson describes herself as a sewist and textile technologist, a dressmaker in the old parlance, who was



a contestant on The Great British Sewing Bee and makes everything from bridesmaids dresses and clothes modifications to upholstery and puppets.

She is one of 14 resident artists who create and build from reused materials including a range of carpentry objects, turning old tins into sculptures, making chairs and tables from old scaffolding and even producing a bio-glue.

“Covid has cast a shadow over the activities but we still have a really good core of makers here on a daily basis,” Michelle says. “We share best practices, are very proactive on waste management and help one another by exchanging ideas and services. We engage with the community through workshops which are now beginning to return. I think Covid has highlighted the need for this connection because life can be isolating.”

**Empress Mews** was built two decades ago from a remodelled printing works, its 15 units clustered around a courtyard in Kenbury Street where, unusually, artists live upstairs and work downstairs.

Gabriela Szulman is a mixed media artist working in collage to create greeting cards, jewellery and decorative objects inspired by nostalgia. Her colleagues are also her neighbours and include print-maker Pauline Amphlett, sculptor Emanuele Gori and architectural artist Paul Draper as well as design companies producing homewares and niche wallpaper.

“It’s different here because most of us live and work in the mews. I felt quite privileged during Covid because getting to work was easy and I had contact with the others, even if it was only outside space.”

**Warrior Studios**, at 241 Coldharbour

Lane, was founded in the 1990s for a dozen or so artists committed who work together as a loose and diverse collective. It established its own press operation to promote their work in 2013.

Phil Dobson studied architecture before moving to art, initially as an abstract painter but now experimenting with mixed media including light and sound projection installations. He has been at Warriors since the mid-1990s, used now to the “troglodyte” spaces of studios created beneath railway arches at Loughborough Junction, as have his colleagues which include sculptors, painters, digital artists, performance artists and even making objects from cardboard packaging: “We not only work on our own projects but are keen to be a part of the local community, involved in a Loughborough Junction garden project and now discussing another project with the Brixton library,” he says. “We’ve been secure here for years but things are changing with the commercial use of railway arches. I hope we’re around for a while yet.”

Warrior is not alone in facing commercial pressure.

Despite its history, talent, diversity and innovation, the artist studio industry remains under threat as city property prices rise, as Debbie Allen, the community projects co-ordinator for the Camberwell Arts Festival, warns: “Open Studios have been the backbone of the annual Camberwell Arts Festival over the years. As our community expands we must take every opportunity to connect residents with Camberwell’s creative heart, and push back against the pressures of losing artist studio space in the area.”

Find out about more about local artists and this winter’s Open Studios at <https://www.camberwellarts.org.uk/>

## READERS

Clockwork Studios is opening its doors to Camberwell Quarterly readers in a special event on Saturday October 16th between 6 and 8pm. Come along and meet some of our local artists in their own environment on Stockwell Road. Mingle, chat, enjoy a glass of wine and learn about the days of Fred Karno, Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel when Camberwell was the hub of London’s vaudeville industry.

Spaces are limited so RSVP is required. You can do so by emailing [ClockworkQuarterly@yahoo.com](mailto:ClockworkQuarterly@yahoo.com)

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# Our historic buildings deserve better

*Elizabeth Borowiecka* looks at three worrying examples.

**S**outhwark Council has applied for permission to convert five historic buildings in Camberwell from Houses in Multiple Occupation to self-contained flats in a way that shows scant regard for their historic and architectural value and compounds the adverse effects of their original ill-judged conversions to HMOs.

The Camberwell Society urged Southwark Council to reconsider their approach to these buildings and take the opportunity to carry out conversions which properly respect their historic value and the principles of good quality domestic design.

The properties are:

- **93 Grove Lane SE5:**  
**Application 21/AP/1648**

- **76-78 Camberwell Road SE5:**  
**Applications 21/AP/1646/7**

- **75-77 Southampton Way SE5:**  
**Applications 21/AP/1651/2**

The original conversions to houses in multiple occupation involved the destruction of much of their historic character, internal and external: an inappropriate extension, unsuitable replacement windows, rainwater and soil pipes fixed to the front of the building, and loss of internal features including plaster mouldings, doors, skirtings, architraves and other joinery.

The current applications fail to rectify these shortcomings and add new items to the list: poorly designed flat layouts, rooms which fall below the space guidelines set by the Southwark Residential Design Standards. They include lobbies



76-78 Camberwell Road

which take corners out of otherwise rectangular rooms unnecessarily, a fire escape which has been retained but access to it blocked, two flats with only single bedrooms, a flat with a dining room recess that has no windows, a maisonette with no staircase linking the two floors, kitchen layouts and fittings grouped in such a way as to make them unusable and no landscaping proposals or arrangements for bicycle and rubbish storage

These buildings are important to Camberwell – and should be treated with respect.

## Updates on existing planning applications

*The Society looks at all planning applications for SE5 and significant developments for adjacent post codes. Full list at: [www.camberwellsociety.org.uk/planning](http://www.camberwellsociety.org.uk/planning)*

### **Dulwich Hamlet FC and neighbouring artificial pitch at Green Dale (bordering SE5)**

27 July 2020 Committee voted to approve. Southwark extension of time to 30 November 2021 to agree legal matters. 19/AP/1867

### **Camberwell Lanes/Butterfly Walk**

Approved at committee. 19/AP/7057

### **249 Camberwell New Road**

Approved. 19/AP/6950+20/AP/0136

### **21-23 Parkhouse Street**

Approved at committee. 19/AP/0469

### **25-33 Parkhouse Street**

HTA architects for Joseph Homes (JH Parkhouse Ltd). Under consideration 203 comments, 173 objections, 30 support. 20/AP/0858

### **1A Dog Kennel Hill SE22**

Under consideration 4 objections, 4 neutral. 20/AP/0359

### **6 Canning Cross**

Under consideration 16 objections, 4 support. 20/AP/1931

### **163 Camberwell Grove**

Withdrawn

### **Mapother House, Maudsley Hospital, De Crespigny Park**

Under consideration 100 objections, 3 support. 20/AP/2768

### **Brook Hall, 17 Flodden Road**

Under consideration 18 objections, 0 support. 20/AP/0887

### **The Lighthouse (former Regal Cinema)**

254-268 Camberwell Road  
Amendments and variation of conditions to previous approvals. Under consideration 3 objections together with 20/AP/3483 to the Medlar Street rear of the site, an overlapping 9 storey development. Under consideration 54 objections, 8 support. 20/AP/3489

### **1-13 Southampton Way**

Under consideration 614 comments, 472 objections, 141 support. 21/AP/0451

### **134 Camberwell Road**

Approved Granted. 21/AP/0593

### **Lettsom Tenants Hall redevelopment, Vestry Road**

Under consideration 3 objections, 1 neutral. 21/AP/1358

### **5-7 Cottage Green + 69 Southampton Way**

Under consideration 39 comments, 37 objections, 0 support, 1 neutral. 21/AP/1254+1255

### **Updates on Lambeth SE5 applications**

#### **Hardess Street SE24 0HN (bordering SE5)**

Proposals for a 20 and 29 storey tower. Rejected by Lambeth and that decision upheld by the Mayor of London. 19/04280/FUL

#### **Geoffrey Close Estate, Flaxman Road redevelopment**

Under consideration 31 objections, 13 support. 20/03257/FUL

#### **Youth Club Kenbury Street**

Under consideration 9 objections, 0 support. 20/03551/VOC

#### **84 Southwell Road**

Approved. 21/00347/FUL

#### **Rear of 114 Denmark Hill**

Under consideration 0 public comments. 21/01022/FUL

# Joey the monkey and the rooftops of Camberwell

Theresa Giffard describes the 1920s antics of a pet monkey intent on escape.

In 1924, a monkey called Joey escaped from the garden of 25 Sansom Street in Camberwell where his owner, James Gibbons kept him in a cage in the garden. Joey went on the rampage for some time, despite numerous attempts to catch him.

In those days a monkey on the loose was big news and he became a major celebrity, his every move followed by hundreds of excited onlookers as he roamed the streets, leaping from rooftop to rooftop, terrorising housewives by jumping onto their windowsills and stealing scraps of food as they shrieked and shooed him away.

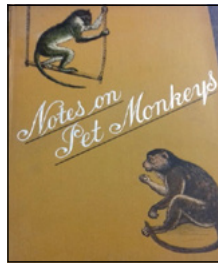
It's not clear why James Gibbons came to have a pet monkey and there are no clues to be found in the census of 1911 where his occupation is listed simply as 'Hammerman'.

## Exotic pets

In the 1900s there was a craze for keeping exotic pets, a craze that often backfired when the owners discovered that monkeys in particular, do not make good house pets. In *Notes on Pet Monkeys and How to Manage Them* (1888), Arthur Patterson warns that; 'Those who expected monkeys to behave like domesticated pets or mischievous little children were often unpleasantly surprised to learn that monkeys exhibited the exact same traits as their relatives still living in the wild. They were prone to aggression and tended to be destructive and dangerous.'

The book also advises that monkeys were often brought to Britain by sailors or dealers alongside traditional cargo from South India and Asia and were then sold on. As Camberwell is close to the docks at Deptford Creek and Greenwich it is highly possible that Joey may have arrived in this country by boat and could easily have been bought by James Gibbons at a market like East Street where it was easy (though not strictly legal) to find monkeys for sale.

There was a tendency to treat these poor creatures as if they were little human beings and they would often



Arthur Patterson's *Notes on Pet Monkeys and How to Look After Them* (L.U Gill, 1888, London)

be dressed in clothes and made to perform. There was a lot of ignorance on what diet they should be fed, particularly in the case of Joey who it was rumoured lived on sausages and beer, not exactly ideal monkey fodder.

Though there is no evidence that he was made to wear clothes, the fact that he eventually died of alcohol poisoning is a grim indictment of the reality of life as a captive animal.

## On the run

And so, to the escape. It seems that Joey was on the run through Camberwell for thirteen days despite numerous attempts by the local police, a chemist, three firemen and a retired soldier to catch him by means of ladders, traps and lassoes. He became a local hero and people went out of their way to help him to evade recapture. The landlord of the local pub refused to allow anyone up on his roof to catch him and people threw up bananas and bread for him to eat and left saucers of milk



25 Sansom Street, Camberwell shown in 2020 ([www.onthemovemarket.com](http://www.onthemovemarket.com))

and beer out on their windowsills. Time and time again he managed to outsmart his would-be captors. People came out into the streets to follow him and schoolchildren played truant in order to spend their afternoons looking for him. In exasperation the police issued a warrant for his arrest.

## National fame

Newspaper articles from as far afield as Belfast, Bristol and Birmingham reporting on Joey's exploits indicate how the story captured the imagination of the public. *The People* reported:

*Joey poses for the camera. Escaped monkey spoils police strategy. A warrant has been issued for the arrest of an escaped monkey Joey who for ten days has lived a life of glorious*

*Rat Catcher with caged Joey, Poor Old Joey (British Pathé, 1924)*







Stills from *Epic of Joey* (British Pathé film 1924)

*freedom among the chimney pots of Camberwell.*

Rumours of a secret potion to be used to tempt him spread as far Birmingham with the catchy headline, 'Pet monkey caught by five men and magic of Eastern aroma'.

### Rat catcher to the rescue

It seems that despite everyone's best efforts, Joey had no intention of being caught..until John Jarvis was brought in on the case.

John Jarvis of Cork Street Camberwell was a famous rat catcher with a reputation for excellence. His secret weapon was a concoction rumoured to be irresistible to animals, a potion that eventually put an end to Joey's freedom. Mr Jarvis, when visited post-capture by a representative of the *Westminster Gazette*, produced a small bottle containing a dark yellowish liquid with a pungent smell, which he claimed lured Joey into the trap. He said the recipe, given to him by a black sailor from the East, "will attract any wild animal including lions and tigers. Do not spill any on your clothes or you will have all the cats and dogs in the neighbourhood after you."

On the morning of 28 October 1924, a group of men armed with nets and lassoes climbed out on the rooftops of a row of houses in Benhill Road, watched by an excited crowd of onlookers who had gathered on the other side of the fence in the adjoining park. Joey could clearly be seen looking down at them from above and John Jarvis stood waiting in one of the gardens below. As the men stumbled towards him, he leapt off and scampered away. The crowd cheered and for a moment it looked as if once again he was going to get away but at the last moment he jumped down on to a flat greenhouse roof and ran straight into John Jarvis's concoction laden trap. It was over. In

the words of the *Westminster Gazette*:

*Joey's last evening was sitting in his improvised cage munching bananas and wearing a look of the utmost innocence, but previously he had been greatly disturbed by the presence of large crowds of children and adults, who, when the news of the capture became known, queued up in front of Mr. Jarvis's door and were allowed to file through the house to inspect the pretty, frightened, brown-coated creature, which cowered in a corner in the back of the large wooden trap. In some ways Joey must be hardly sorry to be no longer at large. London roofs cannot compare for warmth or comfort with jungle tree-tops, or even with the ease of captivity, and while he has been well fed (even clambering on neighbours' windowsills to take food from them), he has had a harassing time evading the sticks and stones which have been hurled at him by intending captors.*

After his recapture James Gibbons sold Joey on to a man who lived near Tower Bridge. It was a short-lived arrangement as in April he escaped again. He was then bought by George Palmer proprietor of the Palmers pet



Still from *Poor Old Joey* (British Pathé, 1924)

shop in Camden (now a café, though the shopfront still exists) famous for trading in exotic pets. One afternoon Joey escaped again and ran down Camden High Street before being chased back inside. He jumped up, swung on top of a large birdcage where a bowl of whiskey was hoisted up to him in a pot. He drank the whiskey, threw the pot on to the head of George Palmer standing below and promptly fell asleep.

Inevitably there is no happy ending to this story.

On 24 August 1926, aged eight, Joey died. The cause of death was seemingly pneumonia combined with alcohol poisoning. George Palmer had received many tempting offers for Joey the celebrity over time including from a Japanese prince, but declined to part with him for any amount of money. Unsubstantiated rumours state he had Joey stuffed and exhibited in the pet shop.

Perhaps Joey deserves his own statue on one of the Camberwell rooftops he scampered over? Watch this space...

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*Palmers Pet Shop shopfront, Parkway, Camden shown in 2020*



## Squatting in Camberwell – a circular walk

*Jonathan Hunt* looks at the whys, wheres and whens of squatting in Camberwell based on *Rare Doings in Camberwell* by Melissa Bliss and Alex Hodson.

The modern squatters' movement started in 1969, caused by the contrast of rising rents and widespread homelessness, while thousands of houses stood empty. Much blame was attached to many slum clearances and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs). Local councils had left homes to rot for up to seven years in some cases.

The 1970s saw a huge increase in squatting, both for personal housing needs and increasingly as part of alternative lifestyles that questioned, opposed, or rejected traditional conformist ways of life, including work. They challenged the sanctity of private property, including leaving houses empty, and conventional social, sexual, and economic values.

Southwark Family Squatters Association was founded in October 1970. At this time councils had, under pressure from squatters and lengthening waiting lists, started to licence squats in property they were planning to use.

*From the Green walk up Grove Lane right (r) to Kerfield Crescent*

Squatting in Camberwell began in January 1971 in Cuthill Road, Allendale Road and Kerfield Crescent in houses left empty, while the Daneville Road/Selborne Road area was waiting for redevelopment, scheduled for 1974.

Southwark Family Squatters Association moved four homeless families into Numbers 13 and 25 Cuthill Road, 44 Allendale, and 22 Kerfield Crescent. Before the squatters moved in these houses were empty with doors and windows boarded up – usually a sign that nothing is going to happen for a long time.

*Left (l) on Kerfield Place, r through Selborne Village, l to Love Walk*

The Camberwell Society was involved in what was called the "Selborne business". It was, as we have previously reported (CQ206), an area of seven acres of small

Victorian houses. Southwark Council had decided to clear it all for redevelopment, issuing CPOs against the wishes of its occupants.

The Council claimed they were going to repair the houses and use them, but squatters, occupants, and the Society, had their doubts. The squatting families had all been made homeless due to evictions by private landlords or were living in properties that were too small or unhealthy. They felt let down by the council which refused to rehouse them or was dragging its feet.

The council and the squatting associations were in conflict and frustrating each other's activities despite sharing aims that were basically the same – to improve the housing situation in Southwark.

Southwark then had about 1,600 empty houses, 1,200 due for demolition that year, and the other 400 due for repairs. The squatters offered to vacate any properties that the Council said were awaiting repairs. But the Council refused to give any information.

Southwark refused to do the deals with squatters that other councils had struck, for example the squatters offered to only house people on the Council's waiting list. Instead, they evicted the Camberwell squatters and trashed the houses to stop them being occupied, claiming that squatters were "queue jumping".

In response the squatters launched a campaign for council recognition. Tactics included marches, demos and deputations plus an invasion of the council chamber when the squatter's "mayor" refused to let Council leader John O'Grady speak. They occupied Southwark homeless families department in Grove Lane, and Transport House, the Labour Party HQ, waving a banner reading: 'Labour Southwark fights the Homeless'.

The Council still refused to deal with the squatters, and pressed on in



*July 2021 the former Camberwell police station is squatted in protest at the proposed Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill*

court, but good legal defences meant that many cases were adjourned. Eventually new Labour councillors made deals with squatters many of whom got licences and created Southwark Self Help Housing which bought houses from the Council.

*L along Love Walk, into alley opposite, r up Camberwell Grove, l into Grove Park*

Later, there were also squats in more up-the-hill and up-market streets. Large homes largely at the top of Camberwell Grove had been taken over by an ever-acquisitive council and left empty. In 1983 more squatting took place, firstly in numbers 201 to 218, where a community built-up, working communally at organic vegetable gardens and sharing power supplies -- in somewhat unorthodox ways.

In 1991 a former children's home at 2 Grove Park was invaded by 20-odd squatters opening an 'Art-Co-op' and claiming to be tee-total, non-smoking veggies (not fully accurate).

No 113 had been part of police flats and a nursing home and was used as a "communications centre" known to residents as "the listening post" – where cop cars suddenly screamingly arrived during any kind of crisis in the city. Number 123 Grove Park was occupied in about 2017 as part of



# Shirley Tanner: architect

*Dr Stephanie Tanner* remembers her mother a longtime Camberwell resident.

Shirley Tanner, architect and resident of Camberwell since 1959, was a founder member of The Camberwell Society.

Serving on the Society's first planning sub-committee chaired by Stephen Marks, Shirley worked closely with Stephen on various campaigns. One of the earliest was an attempt to prevent the demolition of the Victorian terrace houses designated for replacement with the new Selbourne Estate. Shirley and Stephen undertook a thorough architectural survey of the terraces and interviewed residents. They concluded that the houses were in sound condition and urged the Council to reconsider.

Shirley, a proud Australian, was born in Maroubra, a seaside suburb of Sydney on 9 November 1928. A highly intelligent youngster, she attended the prestigious North Sydney Girls High School, going on to study architecture at the University of Sydney.

In 1952, Shirley married Jim Tanner, an architecture student at the University of New South Wales. Following graduation Shirley completed a three-year postgraduate course in town planning. In 1957 the University awarded her the Hezlet



Bequest to study landscape design at Durham University.

After a year in the north east of England, Shirley and Jim headed for London. They settled in Camberwell Grove in September 1959 having persuaded (with some difficulty) their bank manager to loan them the money to buy a tenanted late Georgian mid-terrace house. Children followed in the 1960s as Shirley built up her architecture practice. During this time she volunteered at the St Giles' Centre,

and then for the Windsor Walk Housing Association joining the management committee as consultant architect, developing sheltered housing for patients of the Maudsley Hospital.

In 1970, Shirley stood for election to the Greater London Council as a member of the party 'Homes Before Roads' dedicated to resisting GLC plans for an inner London motorway. This campaign was highlighted in an episode of the BBC Two television series *A Secret History of Our Streets* in which Shirley featured.

From the mid-1970s, Shirley's interest in health and social care led her to specialize in the development of GP surgeries, and design for primary care remained her work's focus until retirement in 1993.

Shirley now had time for her other passions – painting, drawing and gardening. But she never lost her enthusiasm for design and was thrilled to see her son, and then her grandson, follow her lead into architecture.

Shirley died, aged 92, on 27 May 2021. She leaves behind her beloved Jim, daughter Stephanie, son Ben and grandsons Kaspar and Luke.

*continued from page 16*

a campaign to save its grounds and mature woodland. The squatters were evicted in January 2020.

*Back to C'well Grove turn r, l into alley next to 144, ahead to main road, down Champion Park to the r, r down Denmark Hill to Nando's*

Other more short-lived sets of squatters brought music gigs and raves to Camberwell's empty properties. Nando's and the flats behind it was the site of the Empire music hall, then the Odeon which became Dickie Dirt's clothing warehouse until the late 1970s when it closed. In August 1984 it was squatted as a crash pad and gig venue holding benefits for the

Stop the City movement of 1000s of young anarchists who attacked, demonstrated against, and besieged City institutions. The last three squatters were evicted in October 1984. But it was resquatted several times and in June 1986 hosted music gigs and the Camberwell band House of Love played there. In the 1990s squatters in the old Muesli factory across the road behind the Joiners Arms held rave parties. In 2003 the former Kwik Fit at 123 Denmark Hill was squatted for two or more punk shows

*Down Coldharbour Lane, r on Crawford St, r along Warner Rd, r to return to the Green*

The social centre in Crawford Road was squatted by the Black Star Collective in 2003. They held gigs, a lost film festival and before being evicted handed out flyers inviting locals to come and get involved because they asserted, they were "charming and reasonable people... not into drugs or anything alike". LS Diezel crew held a squat party at 299 Camberwell Road. Squatters briefly opened an art centre at 64 Camberwell Church Street.

*For the full walk see Rare Doings at Camberwell:*  
[www.past-tense.org.uk](http://www.past-tense.org.uk)

# Bringing the wisdom of adinkras to Camberwell

Marie Staunton talks to Godfried Donkor about his life and art.

Godfried Donkor's mother was his inspiration. She collected cloth stamped with adinkras from her native Ghana. She was a seamstress. Adinkras are symbols that represent ideas and aphorisms. The Sankofa, for example, is a bird walking forward and looking back. It illustrates the saying, "It is not wrong to go back for what you have forgotten". Donkor used adinkras in his artwork that is installed on a plinth inside the new Windsor Walk entrance to Denmark Hill station. The installation reflects the African diaspora in Camberwell and our links to the continent.

Godfried is based in Brixton. His work has been shown at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art, the Venice Biennale and Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester. He has had one-man shows in Accra, Johannesburg and London. He was born in Kumasi, Ghana's second city. It was the capital of the Ashanti empire in the 17th century. At the age of eight he came to London to join his parents. His father, an accountant, worked for social services. The family lived in one of the blocks in the Surrey Lane estate in Battersea.

When he was 13, Godfried was challenged by the local newsagent for reading comics without ever buying one. Godfried explained that he was using the images for his drawing. On seeing the boy's sketches, the newsagent suggested that he go to art school. So Godfried asked his teacher, Roger Elsgood, "Which is the best art school?" "Central St Martin's," he said. "That is where I want to go" "You can if you work hard." By the age of 16, Godfried had been accepted by St Martin's, but first he had to get academic qualifications.

"St Martin's at that time was the centre of punk," Godfried said.



*Godfried Donkor by Jane Moxham*  
[www.spinnakerart.co.uk](http://www.spinnakerart.co.uk)

"Every night we were needed in a club. They couldn't do without us." He started as a fashion student with a side-line selling his designs on the King's Road. A tutor encouraged him to paint. He tried it out one Easter holiday and was admitted to the painting course. After graduating with a BA in Fine Art, he went to Barcelona for his post-graduation, working for two years as an artist's assistant. He learnt the craft of running a studio. He became a curator at 118 Gallery in Brixton when he returned to London.

In 1995 he completed an MA in African Art History at the School of Oriental and African Studies. "It was important for me to learn about contemporary African art history." He took up a residency in Accra, Ghana. He explored Ashanti history in large, arresting multimedia works based on research into the interlinked histories of Africa and Europe.

In 2011, he was commissioned to design the Ghana national football team shirt. He covered it in painterly stars. It was launched at the Design

Museum and made his mum "very proud." When his parents fell ill, Donkor gave up his peripatetic lifestyle of working in Johannesburg, Accra and London. After their death, he returned to making art. Last year he was approached to make masks to auction for a children's health charity. His mask used Aya, the fern adinkra, a symbol of endurance and resourcefulness. "It struck a chord and was really popular."

When Donkor heard about the Camberwell award for an artwork on the theme of health and wellbeing, he submitted a concept based on adinkras. He was shortlisted and interviewed twice by a panel including the head of sculpture at UAL Camberwell, a curator, the Chair of Camberwell Arts, Tony Coleman from the Society and Network Rail. He

was awarded the commission in the autumn of 2020. He was required to consult the community. A tall authoritative figure with a ready smile often seen in a comfy jumper, he quickly established a rapport through zoom with local residents and in person with young people from the adventure playground and Sacred Heart School.

He found the adinkras that most resonated with people were the fern and the crocodile, a creature that lives in the water and breathes the air, the symbol of adaptability. Pupils at the school responded to the spider-web adinkra, which stands for wisdom and creativity. It also suggests the connectedness of the people of Camberwell with places their parents came from. "These symbols are important to me," he says. "Now they can be important to people here. They are vehicles to tell stories that appeal to people in Accra and in London". The artwork is manufactured in aluminium. He has dedicated it to his mum.



# Hike for health

Kings launch Great Hospital Hike in September.

**K**ings College Hospital charity are holding an inaugural sponsored walk on 18 September. It will follow the Green Chain walk for 17 miles from King's College Hospital in Denmark Hill to the Princess Royal University Hospital in Bromley. Those with shorter legs can join for the home stretch – the Little Hospital Hike is only three miles long, ideal for children.

The Camberwell Charity which raises funds to support

care for patients says:

*"After the most challenging of years, the Great Hospital Hike is a fun and safe way to come together and fundraise for hospital projects that transform clinical services, advance research and improve the hospital environment for everyone".*

To sign up go to:

<https://supportkings.org.uk/GHH/register-your-interest>



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Website on where to go, what to do shops and services in Camberwell.



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## THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

Membership is open to anyone who lives, works or is interested in Camberwell. The Executive Committee is elected annually at the Society's AGM. Meetings of the Executive Committee are usually held on the first Thursday of the month. Members are welcome to attend as observers with prior notice to the Secretary.

Planning, the environment, traffic and transport, publications and local history form an important part of the Society's work. Members are welcome to involve themselves in areas of interest.

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

The views expressed in the Camberwell Quarterly are not necessarily those of the Society unless clearly stated as such. The Camberwell Society is a registered charity (No 264751).



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Page 3...Where's Nick?  
In front of St Giles' Church

## MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership costs:

- £20 (household)
- £15 (individual)
- £10 (concessionary)

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