CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

No. 211 Spring 2022

The magazine of the Camberwell Society

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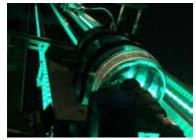
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Cover photo: *Trumpeter Mark Kavuma at Jazz at the Crypt. photo: Daniel Devlin / @susakpress*

From the chair



Enjoy the spring in Camberwell

It was wonderful to meet face to face at the Society Christmas party. Our thanks to the Camberwell businesses who kindly donated prizes and to the lottery ticket buyers. Their contributions raised £810. The money will go towards the restoration of the St Giles' Church clock.

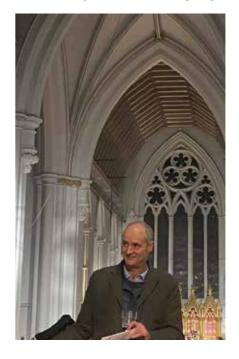
How good too to be able to celebrate the 90th birthday of our illustrious president Nicholas Roskill and to recognise the contribution that he and Julia have made to Camberwell.

I hope you are enjoying Tony's funicular railway at Denmark Hill Station and that the Christmas tree, built by design technology A-level pupils at Dulwich College, brought you some festive cheer. The station was recently awarded third place in the Network Rail Community Rail Awards.

I hope that by the time you read this that covid will have passed (which is pretty much what I wrote a year ago). If it has not, why not take your exercise at the corner of the station next to the Run sculpture / Blue Shop Cottage Gallery and walk the Solar Walk? The sun and planets are represented on the railings

in their correct relative size and astronomical distance.

On a similar note, I hope you will be inspired by the Burgess Park public art walk supplement in this issue. The Trees and Green Spaces Group is planning an active year ahead, including a new series of volunteering activities in the spring.



One such activity will focus on planting in tree pits. Is there a tree pit outside where you live?

These are some of the good things in Camberwell. Less good are the large, illuminated banners – thankfully no longer with advertising - even if we manage to avoid collisions with the scaffolding poles peppering the pavements.

Remember that you will soon be able to comment on changes on the Valmar Estate which now intends to provide facilities for King's outpatients in place of a hotel. You will also want to consider commenting on Seavington House (an article on which is in this issue, as is one on the new KCH building in the old car park).

The Quarterly Team have listened and responded to your wide range of comments about design and layout.

See the inside back cover for interesting things to do in Camberwell over the next few months.

Society Chair Nick Mair. But where in Camberwell was this photo taken? Answer page 23

Local societies

Brunswick Park Neighbourhood brunswickpark@yahoo.co.uk

Brixton Society www.brixtonsociety.org.uk

Burgess Park, Friends of www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk friendsofburgesspark@gmail.com

Butterfly Tennis Club www.butterflytennis.com

Camberwell Arts camberwellartsfestival@gmail.com www.camberwellarts.org.uk

Camberwell Gardens Guild Membership enquiries: Pat Farrugia 17 Kirkwood Road SE15 3XT

Camberwell Life www.camberwell.life

Carnegie Library, Friends of foclchair@gmail.com foclmembers@gmail.com

Concerts in St Giles' Church www.music@stgiles.com

Dulwich Picture Gallery www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Herne Hill Society www.hernehillsociety.org.uk

Maudsley Learning www.maudsleylearning.com

Minet Conservation Association www.minet.fsnet.co.uk

Nunhead Cemetery, Friends of www.fonc.org.uk

Peckham Society www.peckhamsociety.org.uk

Ruskin Park, Friends of info@friendsofruskinpark.org.uk

SE5 Forum www.SE5Forum.org.uk admin@SE5 forum.org.uk

South London Gallery www.southlondongallery.org

Southwark Nature Action Volunteers southwarknature@gmail.com

St Giles', Friends of robertcope@hotmail.com www.stgilescamberwell.org

St Giles' Churchyard, Friends of StGilesChurchyardFriends@gmail.com

Wells Way Triangle Residents Association WWTRACamberwell@gmail.com

Legal eagle on our eastern border

John Hurst on Talfourd Road's eponymous judge and poet

Talfourd Road is named after Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, who was born in 1795. He was a lawyer, Member of Parliament and an author. Talfourd was called to the bar at the Middle Temple in 1821. In 1835 he was elected as the Radical Party MP for the Reading constituency, where he was born. He was re-elected in 1847.

He introduced a Copyright Bill in 1837. It eventually became law in 1842, after many amendments following fierce opposition. Charles Dickens dedicated

The Pickwick Papers to Talfourd and was one of the mourners at his funeral which took place at West Norwood Cemetery. He became a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1849. He wrote for the London Magazine, was a law reporter for The Times and the author of a number of poems and law-related articles.

There are other local streets with legal and political connections which will be explored in future issues of CQ.

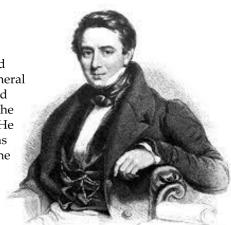


Illustration by Samuel Freeman (National Galleries Scotland)

Art _____ Environment

Fun, fun, funicular

A new wonder on our station plinth driven by water and *Tony Coleman*

Many readers may still believe that the only reason to go to Denmark Hill station is to catch a train or view the artwork at the new entrance. But yet another installation will soon attract its own fans.

Barring disaster and / or mechanical failures, by the time you read this the Funicular Rail will have been installed on the station's garden plinth.

Hopefully, it will also have its two associated rolling ball runs attached and rolling. The device is water driven.

It has been created to be another in the series of mechanical wonders to grace the plinth and bring a smile to the faces of travellers and passers-by alike.

It will sit alongside the Marble Run, the Chaos Wheel, Sit- up Santa, the Cogmas Tree and other wonders that have entertained us, along with static displays such as Una Marson and the endearing Log Train.

People ask why? For the fun of it of course.



The funicular in motion. Photo Tony Coleman

Big Yes to landmark art piece on the Green

Tony Coleman reports on positive public consultation

On two cold, wet and windy December Saturdays it was heartwarming to discover just how many people really like living in Camberwell, and just how much.

Most touching were those who had recently moved in. They were finding out about the joys of Camberwell with a sparkle in their eyes as if they had just discovered the key to life.

So it was not surprising to find deep enthusiasm for the idea of an iconic art piece to be installed on the Green. Something that would provide a landmark for all - a beacon to mark the centre of our community.

We met many local people to hear their views, thanks to SE5 Forum for using its stall. What we found was massive support. Yes, a few caveats and suggestions that have been noted but overall, 97 per cent of the 90 who responded were either in favour or strongly in favour; 3 per cent were neutral and no-one was against.

The next stage is to start identifying and talking to artists able to take on such an important project. Before launching a fundraising campaign, we need to know how much we have to raise.

Our initial estimate is £500,000 including the art piece itself and all the ancillaries such as the physical installation, lighting, finishes and a pot to go towards the first five years' maintenance. We will only be approaching arts funding organisations to bring new money into Camberwell and avoid conflict

with the much-needed social funding sources.

We have already consulted our local Councillors and they are all in favour. We will now also consult Camberwell Arts and other users of the Green such as Camberwell Fair to make sure that any installation does not restrict other activities.

Love the arts?

Camberwell Arts is run by a team of volunteers, and they are on the look out for people to help organise their annual arts festival in June - such as PR, marketing, on-the-day help, social media, leafleting and community outreach. For more info email camberwellartsfestival@gmail.com

The greening of Camberwell

Ben Moxham, Sophy Taylor & Elaine Clarke share the ambitions of the Trees and Green Spaces group

In the winter 2021 issue of the Camberwell Quarterly, we described the launch of the Camberwell Trees and Green Spaces Group. And explained our research into green spaces and local opinion that formed the basis of our priorities. This article gives a brief forward look to 2022.

In early spring 2022, we will be publishing the Ruskin Park Walk. We have been developing this with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (London) and the Friends of Ruskin Park, with input from the Guild of St George – an educational charity founded by John Ruskin.

We have commissioned six short, accessible written contributions from leading Ruskin experts which explain his thinking, experience, and observations of nature. Ruskin lived in a house near the park for almost 30 years. Each contribution will be linked to stops for the walker next to remarkable trees or interesting views within Ruskin Park. Look out for more information about this project, including a planned event, on the Camberwell Society website!

This spring we are planning to step up our volunteering work. There will be a new series of activities to undertake the gardening and litter clearing tasks which have been suggested by friends' groups and resident associations. One such activity will focus on creative planting in tree pits in central Camberwell. We are hoping to soon expand our core team to increase our capacity to organise volunteering initiatives.

Improving communication with Southwark Council's trees and green spaces officers remains a key priority. We will work with them on matters such as tree planting and replacement, parks maintenance schedules and consideration of the Urban Greening Factor within planning cases (this work will be undertaken in conjunction with the Camberwell Society's Planning Subcommittee).

We will be working with the SE5 Forum to help plan the green corridors that could connect some of Camberwell's green spaces, from Burgess Park to Myatt's Fields to Ruskin Park to Camberwell Green and all the smaller green spaces in between. It would be important to provide some coordination of the different proposals that have been made, so that groups can support each other across Lambeth and Southwark. So, we will start with a public meeting.

The trees and open spaces of Ruskin Park. Photo Niki Borowiecki



Annual General Meeting 11 May 2022

 $The \ Annual \ General \ Meeting \ of \ The \ Camberwell \ Society \ will \ be \ held \ at \ 7.00pm \ on \ 11 \ May \ 2022 \ at \ the \ United \ Reformed \ Church, \ Love \ Walk, \ SE5.$

Agenda: 1. Apologies for absence

- 2. Previous minutes and matters arising
- 3. Chair's report for the years 2019, 2020, 2021
- 4. Treasurer's report
- 5. Proposed amendment to the Constitution (see separate notice)
- 6. Election of officers of the Society

All officers of the Society and members of the Executive Committee retire annually in accordance with the constitution of the Society and are eligible for re-election. Nominations are required for the officers and committee. Any paid-up member may, together with a seconder (also a paid-up member), make nominations These must be sent to the Secretary, Robert Wainwright, 55 Grove Lane, SE5 8SP, to arrive at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting.

7. Any other busines

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION The executive committee propose the following amendment to the constitution of the Camberwell Society under paragraph 14 of the constitution, which will be proposed to members at the 2022 Annual General Meeting: In paragraph 6(1) "in" shall be replaced with "by the end of", and "audited" shall be replaced by "independently examined"

Notes: 1. The amendments have the effect on the paragraph as follows: (1) An Annual General Meeting shall be held by the end of the month of May in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter to receive the Executive Committee's report and independently examined accounts and to elect officers and members of the Executive Committee. 2. The first amendment is to enable the AGM to be held earlier in the year (& not so close to Open Gardens). 3. The second amendment is housekeeping, as for governing documents dated before 1 March 1992 (when the audit exemption provisions of the Charities Act 1992 came into force), audit is taken to mean some form of independent scrutiny. Accounts have since then been subject to an independent examination as laid out in Charity Commission guidance CC32.

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Local businesses

Local businesses

Barber's shop octet

Why are there so many barbers in Camberwell? Robert Wainwright meets eight sharp clippers



Camberwell Barbers



Refined Male Grooming



Stars Barbers

It was just before Christmas a few years back. Winter's shroud had descended by late afternoon as my wife, Paola, and I walked along Camberwell Church Street. We paused outside **Gabby's Barbers**, captured by the light which had turned the bright orange window into an iridescent picture frame of a scene within the shop that could have been painted by Norman Rockwell.

A dozen or more men gathered inside, some having their hair cut and others waiting on chairs and benches behind. Everyone was frozen, faces staring upwards at a television screen which was showing a football match. A penalty was being taken by one of the teams. The anxious expectation was riveting. The player scored and the shop was suddenly full of leaping, happy customers. Even the barbers put down their scissors to join the fun before the serious business of cutting hair resumed.

The scene was not unusual, as online reviews show. Gabby's was a regular gathering place for football, Nigerian "Nollywood" movies, even boisterous debates between barbers as they clipped away: "Never a dull moment," said one happy customer. "More than just a barber shop; it's a community," observed another. "They make everyone feels welcome and take their time for every haircut and value for money."

At the centre of the crowd that night was owner and namesake Gabby Matiz who opened his business 13 years ago after training as a barber in a shop down the street. He grins when talking about the football nights but the smile fades when the conversation moves to how times have changed under Covid's pall:

"People would come after work, not just for a haircut but to watch the football for a few hours. Sometimes we would have 20 or more people, so it was a fun place, but nowadays we have to be careful. We can't let people stay just to watch the game. That would be dangerous to have too many people inside at the same time. People are scared because of Covid and stay home, even cutting their own hair."

As evidence of how tough it's been, Gabby shows me how he has been forced to literally cut his salon in half, erecting a stud wall and offering the other half for rent. Where once there were four barbers and two trainees, he now has three or four: "I have lost half my business, but we are struggling through. I'd like things to return to the days of football games on TV."

Gabby's struggles are not unusual at a difficult time for business, the pandemic's challenges compounded by the growth in the number of barber shops operating in central Camberwell. There are now eight, from a two-man bolthole to salons catering for the hipster crowd and African clientele, all fuelled by an evolving community and busier streets.

The owners and barbers are a diverse group, often independent operators rather than employees. They have struggled through the last 18 months but managed to maintain most of their clientele.

Ahmed Hamid runs **Stars Barbers** at No.33 Denmark Hill where he cuts, trims, shaves and buffs customers beneath a photo of his hero, boxer Muhammed Ali in his classic defeat over Sonny Liston: "I'm a big boxing fan. People call me Ali," he grins, pointing to the obvious reference above his head.

Ali, who migrated from Iraq, opened his doors eight years ago in what had been a jewellery shop: "I used to live in Oval and would often come to Camberwell to socialise. I could see there was a need for barbers here, so I took the chance on this place. It wasn't difficult to find clients. I keep my prices low and work hard on customer service."

Ali also found love in Camberwell, meeting his wife Kat who worked in a nearby shop. They have now settled locally and have three children: "Camberwell has been very good for me. I have seen the place change a lot; there are so many more young people around and the streets are so much better."



Gabby's Barbers at night

A few doors up the street, Ersen Eray and his business partner Mevlut Tok spend a fair bit of time each day watching the passing human traffic outside their salon, **Refined Male Grooming** at 77 Denmark Hill.

But don't think for a moment that they are whiling away time or struggling for customers. In fact, the pair are hard at work observing the hair styles in the streets of Camberwell to keep up with rapidly changing trends across the city.

"Once we spot something new, we can replicate it pretty easily," says Ersen who, like his neighbour Ali, opened the business eight years ago when he spotted an opportunity to run his own business. Before then he had been working in a barbers at Nunhead but was always looking for a chance to move into Camberwell.

"I grew up here, at the top of the hill. My parents ran the Seven Stars Drycleaners for years and I know Camberwell like the back of my hand. There were only a couple of barbers then, so we had the chance to establish ourselves before things changed."

Ersen and Melvut offer a breadth of styles and clientele from inside their warm and inviting premises, the walls lined with a mixture of oils and soaps and hairdressing-related art. Even the sunbed out the back is popular: "We do the lot, even afro-style and beards which is the in-thing at the moment. We try to keep the barbers shop experience as authentic as possible. It's nice to see Camberwell change and grow. It has a personality all its own and I hope that continues."

Crown and Glory at 10 Coldharbour Lane opened twenty years ago, catering mainly for the West Indian community. Each of the three barbers inside the striking black and white decorated salon are independent operators rather than employees which made Covid an even more difficult period, according to Steve who has been cutting hair there for the past decade.

"We have been very careful during Covid to only operate when we could, and hopefully we have now seen the worst of it," he said, donning a mask for the interview. "The other challenge has been the growth here in Camberwell because there are a lot more barber shops than ever before."

Trends are also changing, he says. Where once his customers wanted precision cutting and styling, the demand has changed: "All the young people want plaits



Crown and Glory

or skin fades, like the football players they follow, so we have to adapt our skills."

Spare a thought for Ash, Sam, Ras and Adam Babeker who took a lease on premises at 16 Denmark Hill in December 2020, just as the second Covid lockdown struck London. The brothers viewed Camberwell as a natural progression from their long-time successful business, Venus Barbers at Clapham where they learned the trade from their father.

But it would be four months before restrictions were lifted and they could open the new shop, named **Camberwell Barbers**. Manager Rega Farhan is now leading a four-man team, each dressed smartly in monogrammed shirts, hoping to make up for the delays, "keeping it simple" by focusing on traditional services like cutthroat razor shaves, beard trims and sculpting:

"Customer service is a real key for us because you want people to come back again and again," he says. "We've worked hard in a short time to establish a regular clientele base and I just hope we can get through the Covid winter to make that count."

FG Barbers at 36 Camberwell Church Street is another that opened since Covid struck. Owner Mohammed Guarziz, who has run a successful salon in Lewisham for twenty years, knew he was taking a risk when he leased the former café:

"We've had to close three times already and it's been tough," he says. "Business is slower than I'd like but we're managing our way through it. People used to come in once a week for their trim or shave but now they come less and less because they are being careful, or they are changing habits. I hope it changes soon."

Another newcomer is **Off Cut** at No.1 Camberwell Grove, one of three salons opened by the company in the past two years (the others are in Crystal Palace and Streatham) which led to an invitation to exhibit on the "Modern Barber" stage at the Salon International event held at the Excel in October.

Where others trade on being traditional, staff at Off-Cut are considered not only barbers but "trend-setters", offering consultations on style options and advice to serious beard aficionados about shaving regimes in which direction of hair growth and skin sensitivity are taken into account. If that's all a bit much, then you can just pop in for a short back and sides.

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Opinion _____Opinion

The Camberwell caper

The Society has been very much engaged with commenting on the Mapother House development. *Rupert Maas* gives his personal experience as a local objector

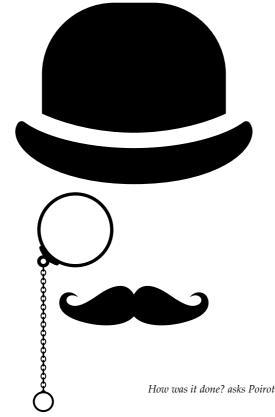
We in Camberwell just got robbed in the dark whilst we were asleep, and an ugly eight storey development of 187 'dwellings' has been dumped on de Crespigny Park in the face of a barrage of objections on the website (100 comments objecting, with three supporting). It means that the population of the street will more than double. The applicant, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLAM), had someone on the inside, the Planning Department of Southwark Council, and for years in a series of meetings we knew nothing about they hatched a plan together to develop Mapother House, a large working hospital building, in order to raise money that they say they could not get elsewhere, which will presumably subsidise the treatment of mental health. This is a perfectly legal part of the planning process but it excluded the people who lived there altogether.

The prize for SLAM is a dense and massive development of apartments that will maximise their revenue. Why do they need to raise money this way? We aren't told. There was no crime, but we may ask, like Poirot, who never seemed to be around to prevent misdeeds before they take place, in the drawing room afterwards: How was it done?

Disguised intentions

The 281 supporting documents with the Mapother House application are mostly opaque and often misleading, especially the comparative illustrations. They are not to be trusted. To take only one, the Landscape Design Statement, which was much praised in the last issue of CQ. The truth is that the original large and flourishing roof garden on the top of the old building was allowed to deteriorate by the neglect of the applicant, before it was destroyed altogether, and the new planting that is proposed has slim chance of flourishing in the depths of the eight storey canyons of the new development. You won't learn about that in the Landscape Design Statement, and in the careful wording there is no guarantee that all of the new landscaping will be accessible to the community, nor even to the new residents, or any patients that remain.

It's true that the Urban Greening Factor is high, perhaps almost half the area of the site will be 'green', but you have to read closely to notice that 20% (over 1,000 square metres) of the 'green' is to be grass grown on shallow beds on the very top of the roofs and is neither accessible, nor even visible. There is no watering system specified for this grass, so it might not survive anyway, way up there. The SLAM gardeners will need crampons. The illustrations in this landscaping document make the proposal look like an urban paradise, so for example the lush imaginings of the de Crespigny Park frontage - or



'improved street scene' as they have it - disguises the fact that the new building will encroach across the existing grass by several feet more than the existing building line, towards the road, and it's much taller. That's only one document, most of the others misrepresent like this. Some, like the Noise Report, have no reliable facts or comparable data in them at all.

The alarm system disabled

By getting Southwark to decree that the proposed development does NOT need an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Any development over 150 'dwellings' ordinarily does trigger an EIA, which then involves a full investigation of the applicant's assertions about heights, massing, density, daylight, noise and green credentials etc. and it's the only way of subjecting a proposal to expert scrutiny. For reasons not entirely clear, it was decided without consultation that this application didn't need one.

Stage meetings

Stage a couple of zoom meetings to pretend to consult the community. Don't invite many people, especially not anyone living nearby, and make sure any zoom invitations you do send don't actually work. In the meetings, spend two thirds of the allotted time having your team promote the scheme, and in the remaining time answer only planted questions and dodge any unwelcome ones which slip through, making sure there are no accurate written records of any difficult moments.

Refuse point blank to hold physical meetings, blaming Covid restrictions even after they are relaxed. Do minimum leafleting and put up as few notices as you can. Fix residents' groups by labelling their objecting comments "supporting" on the Southwark Planning register. If you get caught doing this, you can change it later and claim it was a mistake, as Southwark did with the Camberwell Society's comment.

Hold your nerve

At this point, just as people wake up slowly to what you're up to, do NOT respond or engage with any of the objections from residents - just smile and wave, boys, and don't answer the 'phone. You need Kremlin-grade propaganda, and Covid of course. Your accomplices in planning can reassure virtuous councillors that they are providing much needed housing in the borough. No one important, no one we know, that is, will actually have to live in these tiny dark hutches, after all. You only have to survive until the planning meeting...

The planning meeting

Eight Councillors attend the Mapother House meeting, including the chair, mostly from other wards in the Borough. Objecting and supporting attendees are heard in real time in short speeches, and a vote is taken at end of a short debate whether to grant or deny the application. Make sure you pack this meeting out, so the applicant's team outnumbers dissenters: In the event, SLAM made a rare mistake here, and their three supporting speakers were not allowed to speak because they lived nowhere near the development. It was the equivalent of dropping a crowbar whilst sneaking the silver, but it was too late to matter, because the applicant was almost in the getaway car with the boodle. Each of the councillors then spoke, from which it was clear that these busy and committed people had not had the time to read the 281 supporting documents, few had visited the site and some evidently didn't know where it was. Nonetheless, four voted against it, leaving the vote hung. The chair seemed well briefed and used his deciding vote FOR the proposal and the application was granted. CQ readers might remember the chair, Councillor Martin Seaton, from the Green Dale application for 219 dwellings, which he backed.

Job done

At this point the culprit would shout defiance at Poirot before being taken away in handcuffs by Inspector Hastings to face the rope. Not here, not now. Across England, large scale housing applications are being fast tracked and rubber stamped. Developers are having a field day, and conservation areas are preferred, obviously. There's nothing illegal about it, it's central government policy.

Poirot will need all the help he can get; property developers are permanently plotting ever denser and darker multi-storey deeds, it's what they do, and coming soon to YOUR neighbourhood are The Butterfly Walk Robbery (now involving the Police Station too) and The Seavington House Heist. They've already got away with the Windsor Walk Swindle and the NINE stories high Pears Maudsley Building Job, whilst the Salvation Army Barracks is well on its way and the extra traffic from the Low Traffic Zones adds to the mayhem.

We fought a good fight over the Mapother House proposal, but in the end not everyone felt strongly enough about it, and the Council supported the application before residents even knew about it. There is a sense of futility about the process, as though it doesn't matter what you do or say any more, and that even if we had been able to make clear sense of the densely camouflaged supporting documents, it wouldn't have made any difference. No-one at the Council is taking an overview of the many different proposals being submitted. This area needs regeneration and especially more housing, but does it have to be so piecemeal and so unpleasant, have we learnt nothing? Things have changed since the age when developers of the Mary Datchelor site worked with the community to build good new housing or were made to.

South London and Maudsley NHS trust says

The trio of buildings (Mapother House, Michael Rutter Centre and Professorial Buildings) are no longer fit to provide high-quality modern mental health care.

The residential development will help fund improved mental health services and forms part of the Trust's ambitious plans to invest £186 million in modern services and facilities to improve patient care and experience for local people.

The approved plans will see a development that provides much-needed homes in the heart of Camberwell. The 187 homes have been designed to be in keeping with the area and meet the needs of families, couples and single people.

Fifty per cent of the homes will be affordable and 70 per cent of those available at social rents. The car-free development, will create an attractive public realm and improve pedestrian and cycle networks locally.

More information on the Trust's Modernisation Programme can be found at: www.slam.nhs.uk/modernisation

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Local history _____

Camberwell's dark mistress of sin

Her name suggested an innocence and beauty but Matilda "Tilly" Twiss was no angel, as *Mark Webb* discovers

Camberwell has had its fair share of notorious gangsters, men like Charlie and Eddie Richardson who ran their violent kingdom from Addington Square, but among them was a woman crime boss who ruled Sydney's underworld with an iron fist and a cruel razor.

Matilda Mary Twiss was born in Camberwell in 1900 to bricklayer Edward and his wife Alice. They lived in what is now Comber Grove where "Tilly" grew up to be street

tough, belying her waif-like physique with a temper and a reputation for scrapping tiger-like with nails and boots if cornered. She dropped out of school to work in a book binding factory that produced bibles, but decided instead that she wanted a life of sin.

Aged just 12, Tilly fell into prostitution and plied her trade on the streets of Soho and Covent Garden where she was arrested 84 times for a variety of offences including theft and assault. Hers might have remained a sad life of exploitation if not for the chance meeting with an Australian soldier named Jim Devine who was in London on leave.

They fell for one another and were married in 1917 at the Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Knatchbull Road. A son named Freddie was born two years later but he would be left behind to be raised by his grandparents when, a few months later, Tilly followed her new husband to Australia.

Once in Sydney, Jim Devine's true colours emerged. He had claimed to be a shearer and own a kangaroo farm but instead was a violent standover man who insisted that his bride work in an East Sydney brothel.

Tilly's had no choice, but she wanted more in life. Her formidable reputation would be built on an incident in which she sought out a client who had not paid for her services. She found the man – a gangster - in a barber's shop where she slashed his face with a razor. After a two-year stint in prison and a brief trip back to Camberwell, she set about building a Sydney bordello empire and by the mid 1930s she was "Queen of the Loo", running a number of brothels and dozens of call girls in the harbourside suburb of Woolloomooloo.

In the meantime, Jim had been running protection but was also heavily involved in sly grog and cocaine. The money poured in, enabling Tilly, the former street girl from Camberwell, to buy properties across the city, hold lavish parties, be chauffeured in a blue limousine and live in a beachside villa. She loved to show off her wealth by wearing luscious furs and diamonds on every finger, and offset her infamy by giving generously to the war effort.

But along with the wealth came trouble with the law, arrested more than 200 times over the years and in seemingly constant feuds with rival gangs, including another notorious Sydney female crime boss named Kate Leigh which resulted in pitched street battles between their gangs and even punch-ups between the two women which made newspaper headlines and helped force the NSW Government to bring in consorting laws.



Matilda " Tilly" Twiss

Behind the scenes, her marriage to Jim was as violent as their public lives, with tales of domestic fights involving razors and shotguns. Tilly eventually petitioned for divorce which was granted in 1943 on the grounds of domestic cruelty. Jim did not contest the case.

Tilly would marry a second time, to an ex-sailor named Eric Parsons, although the marriage got off to a bad start when she shot him in the leg after an argument. He forgave her and they were together for 13 years.

The law finally caught up with Tilly, not for her crimes but for non-payment of taxation. A female Al Capone, if you will. It almost bankrupted her and she was forced to sell off her businesses, one by one. But the bravado remained: "I am a lucky, lucky girl, " she boasted to the media. "I have more diamonds than the Queen of England's stowaways, and better ones too."

Tilly sold her last brothel in 1968 and died two years later of cancer. Few attended her funeral. The only public eulogy was given by the then police commissioner Norm Allan who said: "She was a villain, but who am I to judge her?"

Tilly would turn in her grave if she knew that her great grand-daughter, Sharon Twiss, would become a police officer: "It's like history trying to correct itself." quipped Sharon.

A parkful of art

Discover the fascinating variety of public art in Burgess Park in this seventy-minute walk guided by *Richard Barton*

Burgess Park was conceived in 1943 as part of a radical plan by Sir Patrick Abercrombie to rebuild London after the blitz. It was part of an attempt to provide recreational open space for the people living in Southeast London.

The area had considerable bomb damage and the industrial area around the Grand Surrey Canal (now infilled) was very run down. Many houses and industrial buildings were demolished in subsequent decades to create the park. The remnants of some of these streets and buildings can still be seen. And the street plan is reflected in the design of the gates to the park, see stop twelve below.

Major remodelling and landscaping were carried out around 2012, including the creation of new entrances and the formation of the hills covered in wildflowers. For more information about the history of the park visit www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk

The walk

Start at the entrance to the park on Camberwell Road. Do not go into the park but walk south down the road next to the terrace of fine Georgian houses, turn left into Addington Square and continue to the square at the end. On your route, notice on your right, the old sign of Fowlds and Sons upholsters (now a café) and on your left on the last house, a small mosaic advertising ATD Fourth World on the side of 48 Addington Square. (ATD Fourth World is a human rights based anti-poverty organisation). Ahead of you, in the garden at the centre of the square, is a sculpture.

1 Addington Square: Stone sculpture 'Constellation'. Artist: Hamish Horsley 2005

Hamish Horsley had an interest in Zen and often worked directly in the landscape moulding earth, placing boulders etc. to form patterns on the ground. He wrote that his 'objective in the public commissions was to create a visual harmony



– a natural empathy between the sculpture and its environment.'

Horsley was born in Whanganui, New Zealand, moved to London in 1976 and graduated from the Royal College of Art in 1986. He worked as an artist and teacher in London for over 35 years but now lives in New Zealand His work is found throughout UK, northern Europe and Middle East, India, Vietnam and Thailand. You can find another of his sculptures in the Tibetan Peace Garden at the Imperial War Museum.

Addington Square is named after Henry Addington

who was Prime Minister from 1801 – 04. The square has buildings on three sides, the fourth was originally occupied by Camberwell Wharf, built at the end of the Grand Surrey Canal. Later, that area was occupied by an early public baths and swimming pool before being demolished in the 1930s to make a garden. The fine collection of Georgian style houses was built between 1810 and 1844 and as a result form an interesting collection ranging in size from two to five stories. In the 1960s number 33 was the base of the notorious Richardson Gang, who apart from their very unsavoury activities, kept two dancing bears in residence.

Exit the garden, turn away from the park and walk around the garden to exit the square at the south-east corner. Turn right and follow the path. As the park opens out around you, you will see a new children's playground to the left containing a series of interesting

twelve-sided wooden structures of varying size. At the entrances to the playground, you will find the next sculptures.

2 Entrance to children's playground on New Church Road: Two black metal circular sculptures. Artist: Unknown



These sculptures were

originally the top decoration to gateposts which used to form the entrance to the park straight ahead from the former Rust Square They were originally erected by the Greater London Council around 1980 but were moved to their current position in 2017. You can see the letters GLC forming part of the base.

From the entrance to the playground, retrace your steps from the sculptures back to the path from the square but this time turn right on the path past a former pub, now flats, on your left to New Church Road at the end. Stop at the corner. On the other side of this road, you will see the Evelina Mansions with the plaque of the Four Per Cent Industrial Dwellings Company Ltd. The company was founded by Sir Nathaniel Rothschild and Evelina Mansions is named after his sister. Built in 1900, this striking red brick mansion block is an early example of philanthropic housing for the poor in the area built by Jewish philanthropists. The 'four percent' probably referred to the interest rate that an investor might expect to make.

Turn left, staying on the north side of New Church Road, enter Burgess Park as the road bends, and follow the tarmac path. In about 50 metres turn slightly right to join a large straight path.

(continued over on page 12)

<u>Art</u>

Continue for a few hundred metres until there is a junction where you take the path forking off to your right (not the underpass). This will lead to a gate onto the road, Wells Way, where you should cross over to the church on the other side.

This elegant building is the former St Georges Church which was built in the Greek style (similar to the temples of ancient Greece) in 1824 by the architect, Francis Bedford. He also designed three other churches in London known as Commissioner's churches or Waterloo churches, following the defeat of Napoleon. It is difficult to imagine that at that time the church stood alongside the thriving Grand Surrey Canal, where it was constructed to provide for the rapidly expanding population attracted by the industry around the canal. By the 1970s however, the church was almost in ruins. Fortunately, after a public campaign to save the building, it was repaired, and the interior converted to form flats. For more information refer to www. wikipedia/commissionerschurches and www. exploringsouthwark.co.uk

In front of the church is a beautiful sculpture.

3 St Georges Church Wells Way: War memorial bronze statue of Jesus, 'The Omnipresent'. Artist: Arild Rosenkrantz 1919

Baron Arild Rosenkrantz (1870 – 1964) was born in Denmark with a Danish aristocrat father and a Scottish mother. Initially, he studied in the USA and moved to London in 1898. He became involved with Rudolph

Steiner and his extraordinary anthroposophic centre, Goetheanum in Dornach Switzerland where Rosenkrantz carried out some of the decoration. This is one of the artist's few sculptures. In UK he was known mainly as a decorative artist, a painter (several of his paintings are in the entrance to the Royal Academy of Music) and as a stained-glass artist of church windows. As a painter he felt he had a mission to carry out Steiner's ideas of using "spectral colours to reach the invisible spiritual reality which lies behind the material". For more information about the artist visit www.artnet. com/artists/arild-rosenkrantz

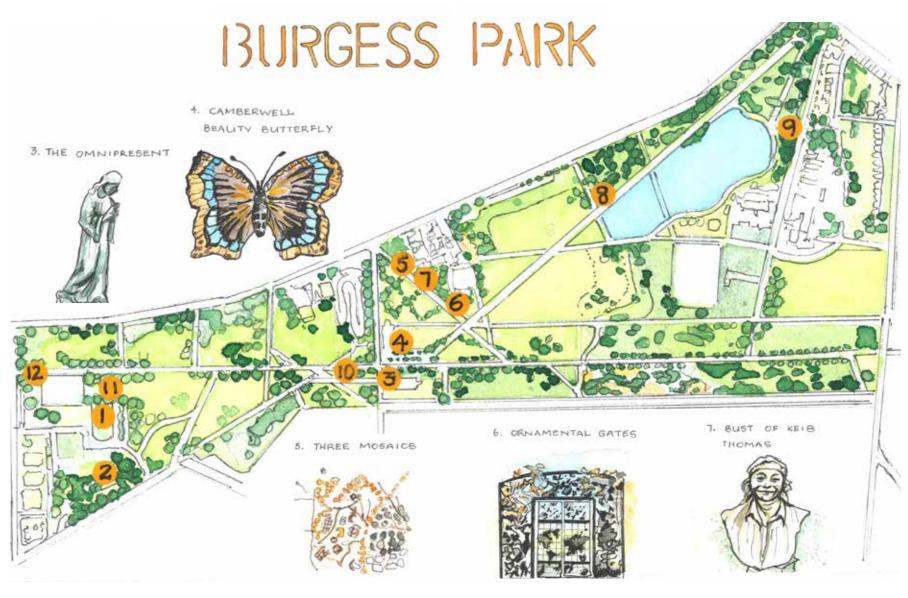
Walk north for about a hundred metres passing the church on your right until you see the next building with its large, tiled mural taking up most of the end wall facing you.

4 Wells Way former library and wash house: Tiled mural depicting the Camberwell beauty, nymphalis antiopa also known as mourning cloak or grand surprise butterfly. Artist: unknown c.1920s

The Camberwell Beauty butterfly was first identified in Camberwell in 1748 when the area was still mainly farms and market gardens. It is now quite rare in the UK.

Samuel Jones opened his paper factory in Southampton Way in 1868 and used the butterfly as his trademark from 1912. His new factory, built in the 1920s, incorporated a large mural of the butterfly made of Doulton tiles. In 1982 the factory was demolished but the mural was carefully taken down and reinstalled on the North Camberwell public library and public wash houses at Wells Way designed by Maurice Adams. This architectural example of Edwardian Free Style is a delightful eclectic mixture containing elements of Baroque, Tudor, Gothic and Queen Anne styles, somehow all blended. The building is now home of the Lynn Boxing Club which is UK's oldest continuing amateur boxing club originally formed in Borough High Street in 1892. In the basement of the former library there are still some murals for children depicting fairy tales which were made by Guy Miller in 1927. These can only be viewed by prior appointment.

Continue walking to the end of the building and turn right into the park. Walk around the circular flowerbed and take the path nearer to the road in a northerly direction. Walk about a hundred metres until the path joins another on the diagonal. To your right you will see an old wall partially covered with creeping plants and with bushes growing in



front. If you are lucky and the bushes have been pruned sufficiently you will see the next artwork.

5 Wall forming the west side to the First Place Nursery: Three mosaics. Artist: Unknown

These three mosaics depict the changing street layout of the area around the park in 1800, 1900 and 2000. No more information seems to be available.

Facing the mosaics, take the diagonal path to your right until you come to a six-way junction. Take the first path on your left and then in a few metres, turn left again at the next junction of paths to bring you to the front of the former Chumleigh Gardens alms-houses. These buildings were built in 1823 and extended in 1847 by the Friendly Female Society for poor single women of good character. The buildings are simple two storey brick houses with delicate neo gothic style windows and doors. Following extensive repair, the buildings now operate as a café and accommodation for Southwark Council. Arranged in a U shape, they form a delightful contrast to the wide-open spaces of the park and create the backdrop to a beautiful formal garden.

Enter the garden and see if you can find the lovely examples of lettering art, plaques about the alms-houses, the zeppelin raid memorial and in memory of Councillor Harvey Hinds. Exit through a gate between the buildings on your left (the south side) and then turn left. At the

far end of this delightful garden (The World Garden), you will find a pair of ornamental gates.

6 World Garden behind Chumleigh Gardens: ornamental gates. Artist: Heather Burrell 2000-3

The gates were designed in consultation with local community groups. They depict a map of the world surrounded by plants from different countries and the Camberwell Beauty butterfly.

Heather Burrell is an artist based in southeast London who specialises in making accessible sculptures for public places. She usually works in steel, combining precision laser cut elements with hand forged blacksmithing techniques. She wrote that her artwork "is intended to inspire an emotional response in all those who see it. Art doesn't belong solely in galleries and private collections – the joy and beauty of art is something to be shared by the whole community." The work was commissioned by PPACTS (Police Partners and Community Together in Southwark), TPI the anti-hate crime targeted policing initiative, and the Metropolitan Police Service.

Retrace your steps through the garden go beyond the previous entrance gate, turn right and look on the left for a metal bust on a plinth.

7 World Garden behind Chumleigh Gardens: bust of Keib Thomas. Artist: unknown (signature on the back looks like Ashim Paul) about 2010

This bust commemorates the life of Keib Thomas who died in 2007. Keib was a community worker and activist, a volunteer and teacher, devoted to ethnic and inter faith harmony, justice and equality. He taught at Morley College whilst working for St Mungo's, the homeless charity, and for Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations where he led on community- police liaison projects. Every year he found time to visit India and work on international development projects. The bust was paid for by public subscription and produced in Kolkata, India.

Walk ahead through the garden, on your right is a beautiful circular grey slate sundial inscribed in white and gold. Exit the World Garden, turn right out of the gates and continue towards the entrance to the café. On your way, notice next to the building, a circular drinking fountain, again in a column of grey slate with spiralling white lettering. Walk past the café to the corner where you will see on your right, the statue of a cute little elephant with a drinking fountain

Art ______ Local history

(continued from previous page)

coming from its trunk. Walk straight ahead keeping the fencing to the children's playground on your left. When you reach a junction of paths, take the path on the left. Walk on to near the start of the lake, you will see the next sculpture to the left of the path on top of the mound.

8 Silent Raid, a series of little cast resin house sculptures in various locations. Artist: Sally Hogarth 2018

These artworks were installed in 2018 to commemorate the people and places impacted by a WW1 Zeppelin

bomb that fell in 1917 on Calmington Road and which is now part of Burgess Park. There are ten houses in total in different locations in the park representing the people killed in the raid. Each house, large, medium or small, represents a man, woman or child. The



houses are in differing shades of red which reflect the varying shades found in traditional red bricks, with the shade darkening with increased proximity of the bomb site. The sculptures were commissioned by Southwark Council

The Sally Hogarth Studio is a multi-disciplinary design studio working on three-dimensional art and interior design. For more information visit www.sallyhogarth.com

Look out for more of the little house sculptures in different places in the park. Follow the path, keeping close to the lake on your right as the path curves around the top. To your left is a circular concrete plinth, on the other side of which is the next sculpture.

9 East end of the lake: circular bronze relief. Artists: Pupils and staff of Cobourg Primary School working with Art in the Park, 1997

Overlooking the lake, this metal relief includes representations of nearly thirty different species of birds found in the park plus a few fish. Art in the Park is based in the centre of Burgess Park. Run by professional artists it aims to involve people of all ages and



9. CIRCULAR BRONZE

abilities in designing and making art works in the studio and outdoors. They work with schools, community groups and professional teams on educational art and heritage projects and with the public to create permanent public artworks. For more information visit www. artinthepark.co.uk

Complete your journey around the lake continuing on the straight path until a junction with the main wide straight path to the left which you should then follow, heading southwest. Away to your left you may just be able to see the 'bridge to nowhere' which used to cross the canal. At the end of this path there is a cobbled area as the path joins with another next to the side of the 'butterfly building' referred to above and descends into an underpass underneath Wells Way. This is the site of the next work.

10 Underpass under Wells Way: The Bridge to Nowhere Project, a series of reliefs in wood and plaster. Artists: Twenty young artists, Pauline Smith, Carol Dalton, Michael Faraday School and Southwark Play Service assisted by Art in the Park 2014.

The series of artworks is located on the side of the underpass, which is on the route of the former Grand Surrey Canal, filled in during the 1970s. The works represent a reinterpretation of the canal barges and the

materials that they once carried, such as lemonade bottles, shells, timber and printed books. The work was commissioned by Friends of Burgess Park and Heritage Lottery Fund.



10. THE BRIDGE TO

Continue to walk on the broad straight path, past the old lime kiln on your right, then past the first tennis court on your left

and on towards the new café beyond. Here you can stop off for a well-deserved refreshment. Just past the café is the next piece.

11 Tennis courts cafe: Tree trunk carved to create a fantastic wooden creature. Artist: Unknown. No information available. Probably created within the last five years.

Children love to climb all over this fantastic creature and sit in one of its carved seats. Continue to walk on the straight path to the exit on Camberwell Road where you will pass the final piece.

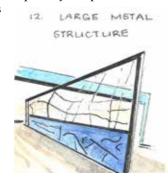


II. FANTASTIC WOODEN

12 Park entrance on Camberwell Road: Entrance marker. Artist: unknown. Part of the 2012 park remodelling.

This large metal sculpture (it can't be called a gate because it doesn't move!) depicts the former street layout of the area now occupied by the park and its

part of the recent park remodelling and there is a similar piece at the entrance to the park on Old Kent Road.

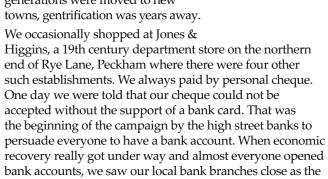


All drawings by Jane Moxham www.spinnakerart.co.uk

How SE5 swung - or was pushed - into the Swinging Sixties

Jim Tanner recalls the effects of social change arriving in Camberwell

When Shirley and I moved into 107 Camberwell Grove in September 1959 Britain was still just recovering from the aftermath of World War Two. Choice of food was limited, and many parts of central London and the docks still bore the scars of bomb damage. We applied for a telephone, but there was a waiting list of months. A shared line would be available much sooner. Camberwell in the early 60's was run down and the once elegant terraces in Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane were slums owned by absentee landlords. Floors were let as flats and rooms as bedsits. There were few bathrooms and generally only outside lavatories. Residents were mainly middle-aged or elderly. Younger generations were moved to new



Supermarkets had yet to be invented and even large shops like Sainsbury's on Rye Lane only provided counter service (and was one of the last of the type to close after it built its huge store on Dog Kennel Hill). You queued at the counter on one side of the store if you wanted, say, tinned produce and then joined the queue on the other side if you wanted dairy products. Butter was not pre-packaged; a shop assistant used a pair of wooden spatulas to slice what you wanted from a large slab, wrapping it in greaseproof paper. It was difficult to get other than white bread. The only cheese available was mild cheddar.

banks merged. HSBC gobbled up Midland for example.

When we moved in we did not have much furniture; an ironing board that doubled up as a table, and a double bed. We had little money to spare. A tenant told us about Austin's of Peckham. Austin's, a family firm, was a second hand furniture business with a large shop at the top of Rye Lane. This sold good quality antique furniture fairly cheaply. Another shop in Brayards Road, in the railway arches, sold bric-a-brac and junk. We bought a couple of Victorian chests of drawers in good condition for £7 each, a circular Victorian table and Victorian sideboards, a secretaire and bookcases; none of which cost more than £10.



Pink Floyd in Ruskin Park, 1967 Photo Colin Prime

Austin's was headed by old Mr Austin, as he was called by members of his staff. His daughter and son worked in the business. When he retired they took over. The site became Austin Court flats when they closed the business.

Our daily newspaper was delivered from a small newsagent on the corner of Camberwell Grove and Churchyard Passage. I did not like the man who ran it, not because he looked shifty, but because he only allowed credit for one week. If I didn't pay promptly he stopped delivery.

In time he got his comeuppance. He was murdered by an irate husband whose wife was having an affair with him.

On the first Monday after we moved in there was a ring at our doorbell at about 5.30am. I got up, bleary-eyed, went downstairs, opened the front door and was confronted by an enormous man with an empty sack draped across his shoulders. Muttering something like "I know where it is mate", he brushed past me and disappeared out of the back door. Moments later he reapppeared bearing our very full dustbin on his back. Again he reappeared, this time with the empty dustbin which he returned to its original position in the back garden. Meanwhile I stood by the front door, half alseep, until he finally left.

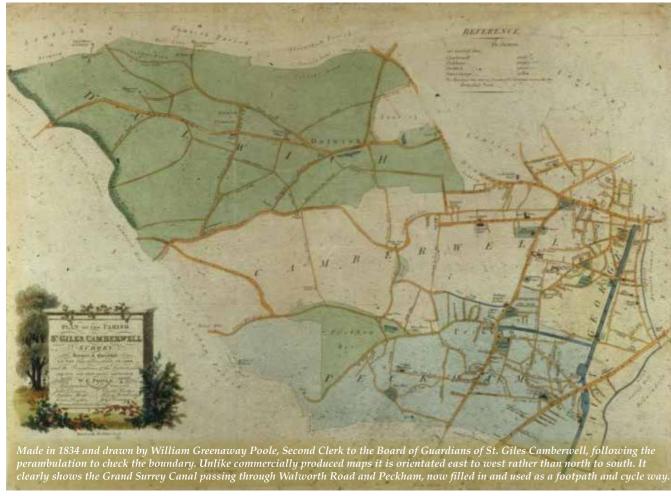
To be continued in next issue

Note: The changing face of Camberwell https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ileRoZ6b6Y8 made in 1963, looks favourably at then new council housing through the clipped, posh tones then fashionable. However, many have already gone and others are ripe for demolition. But it contains great views of many of Camberwell's past schools, churches, pubs and other buildings. See this and other archival films at https://www.londonsscreenarchives.org.uk

Campaigns Campaigns

A perambulation around the parish of Camberwell

Provoked by the proposals of the Boundary Commission, *Shekhar Das* looks back at the borders, local and parliamentary, that defined us



Our feeling of belonging to our community is strengthened if all of us can give the same answer to two questions: "Who is your Member of Parliament?" and, "What is your local authority?" For most of Camberwell's long history, we could.

Camberwell was a village in the County of Surrey. Her MPs, from the inception of the House of Commons till the great reform of 1832, were the two Knights returned by county. But they were remote. The government that mattered was local. This was the Parish of St Giles Camberwell. It included the Liberty of Peckham and the Hamlet of Dulwich. As Blanch writes in his history, the vestry of this parish was its parliament, the beadle, the overseers, the clerks and churchwardens, its officers. What it did, was felt. It was the acts of this vestry that knitted the inhabitants of Camberwell, by including the anonymous and vagrant poor, into a community.

Thus, in 1539 the sovereign ordered parishes to record "everie weddying, christening, and burying...for ever". Camberwell duly did. It was not easy, for many poor people did not have proper names. In 1601 Elizabeth ordered that rates should be paid to support of the poor.

The Overseer was responsible for collecting the tax and distributing it. There was always the need to distinguish between the poor who could work and those who could not. The latter received weekly relief and were known as pensioners. They were required to wear a badge. Most were widows who could not pay their rent.

For the vagrants and beggars who could work, there was a house. The Old Workhouse, circa 1731, stood on the Green. Some years later the vestry decided it was too small. A new building was erected in Havil Street in 1818. Inevitably, it was called by some "the Havil Street Hotel". After the amendment to the Poor Law in 1834, a Board of Guardians was established to look after the poor. It constructed two more workhouses, one in Gordon Road, another in Constance Road, East Dulwich.

Over time the vestry provided all the familiar services of local government such as the removal of household waste; the interment of the dead; policing and the bringing of felons to justice; the maintenance of the roads; the regulation of business; the care of the sick and insane; lighting up the dark - the list goes on.

The territorial imperative

Once every three years the boundary of the parish was perambulated by the churchwardens, the overseers and other officers, with, perhaps, raucous children following. After the perambulation in 1834 a map was drawn that marked the parish boundaries. The second, corrected, edition, drawn in 1837 by William Poole, clerk to the Board of Guardians, is shown on the left with the kind permission of Southwark Archives, with special thanks to Lisa Soverall, Heritage Officer, for discerning the inscriptions that would otherwise be illegible.

The east-west orientation of the map makes it both charming and confusing, but you can turn it a quarter counter-clockwise, and it will look familiar. In the north the parish stretches along the Old Kent Road and Albany Road till Walworth Road; then turns southwards near Grosvenor Street, then bulges out to take in what is now Myatt's Fields and the far end of Coldharbour Lane; then goes south along Denmark Hill and Herne Hill till Red Post Hill, where it turns in, and then goes to the southernmost point, which was called Vicars Oak. This is where is where Camberwell met three other parishes, Lambeth, Battersea and Streatham, and where the perambulators stopped to sing hymns and pray for the welfare of their parishioners. Then the boundary stretches to Honor Oak and Forest Hill and moves north towards Rotherhithe. This boundary, precisely defined after Ordinance Survey, was retained well after the demise of the parish as the border of Camberwell.

Poole's map also shows the division of the parish into the parochial districts of Camberwell, Peckham, Dulwich and St George. The last of these was new: St George's church in Well's Way was erected in 1824. If you ignore this, you can get some idea of the territory attributed to the three villages of the parish: Dulwich in green, Peckham in purple (faded to blue), and Camberwell, which stretched all way from Albany Road in the north to Forest Hill in the south, in pink.

In the 1840s the big problem was the sewers. They were open and they stank. Our vestry was in the vanguard of metropolitan parishes petitioning parliament to deal with this problem. The result was the Metropolitan Board of Works on which Camberwell had one seat. The Great Stink of 1858 was the last of its kind.

The Metropolitan Board of Works was the embryo of London government. In 1889 it was replaced by London County Council, and Camberwell was removed from the County of Surrey to become one of its boroughs. In 1900 the long history of the parish came to an end, when local government passed to the Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell.

The apotheosis of Camberwell

It is a wonder that a settlement valued at £12 at the time of Edward the Confessor (Peckham was 30 shillings), should, a thousand years later, give its name and be the seat of power of a large metropolitan borough in the first

CAMBERWELL C.G. Clon Colonel The Boundary Commission's proposal 1917

city of the Empire. The new councillors moved into the Vestry Hall in Havil Street; dissatisfied, then they pulled it down and built themselves Camberwell Town Hall, which stands today. They acquired a coat of arms on which they inscribed the motto, *All's Well*.

Look at the map of Camberwell produced by the boundary commission of 1917, ignoring the thicker lines within. The outside boundary is of the Parliamentary Borough; it is identical to that of the Metropolitan Borough; it is more or less the same as the boundary of the parish drawn by Poole. Unlike Poole's map, the territory of Camberwell is not distinguished. There are wards such as Ruskin and St Mary's, but no Camberwell. It is all Camberwell.

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Book reviews Obituary

(continued from page 17)

Unsurprisingly, when in 1965 the Borough of Camberwell was abolished and absorbed by the London Borough of Southwark (except West ward, which was placed in Lambeth), Camberwell vanished as a political entity. Henceforth it would be just a place with an antique history and a sentimental legacy.

Would it survive as a parliamentary constituency? In the reform of 1832, the parish of Camberwell, except the hamlet of Dulwich, was included in the constituency of Lambeth. Dulwich was put into the Eastern Division of the County of Surrey. The Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885 created parliamentary boroughs, which in Camberwell's case had much the same boundary as that of the old parish. The parliamentary borough of Camberwell was divided into three single-member constituencies: the Dulwich Division, the Peckham Division and Camberwell North. In the Act of 1918, this was increased to four. The divisions are shown on our second map.

In the 1950 general election, Camberwell had two constituencies: Camberwell Dulwich and Camberwell Peckham. The 1974 general election was fought after boundary changes that reflected the creation of 32 London boroughs. Camberwell had long disappeared. Southwark was given three constituencies: Bermondsey, Dulwich and Peckham. There was no constituency with the name "Camberwell".

It did not appear in the next round either, in 1983, when reference to boroughs also disappeared. Thus, the three constituencies in Southwark were Dulwich, Peckham and Southwark & Bermondsey. But following the changes introduced in 1995, "Camberwell" reappeared in the constituency of Camberwell & Peckham, made up of eight wards of the London Borough of Southwark. It survived the 2007 round with minor changes. This is the current position.

An outrageous proposal

It is not too bad. It contains much of the traditional territory of the parish of Camberwell. But, alas, all is not well. The Boundary Commission for 2023 is proposing to tear it up. It has drawn a line through the heart of Camberwell, placing the Green and everything to its west in a constituency called "Vauxhall and Camberwell", and everything to its east in "Peckham".

This is an outrage. Why link Camberwell to Vauxhall, with which it has no affinity? Why call the constituency that contains St Giles' Church, the fluttering heart of Camberwell, "Peckham"? Ever since the first Henry gave both domains to his bastard Robert, Camberwell and Peckham have been sisters. But Camberwell is the prima of the donnas. The air of Camberwell has always been superior to bog of Peckham.

Camberwell should not be torn apart. By doing so, the Commission violates a sentiment nurtured for a thousand years. To plead precedence is to resort to the age-worn refuge of the scoundrel. But perhaps, ignorance, not vice, is at fault. The Commissioners have no idea of what we are or how we feel. One thinks of the colonial civil servant, gazing through the fog of a malarial fever at a list of population figures, and drawing lines on a map of Africa.

The Commission has received over 800 objections to its proposals. Soon they will be published. There will then be another round. What we want is some recognition of the historic boundaries of Camberwell: perhaps a constituency that stretches along the entire northern border of the old parish and then goes south till the requisite number of electors is reached (between 69,724 and 77,062). And we want this constituency to be called "Camberwell".

Former mayor Bill Skelly

Ian Wingfield remembers the Geordie painter who mingled with filmstars, fought for trade union rights and was always a good samaritan

Former Mayor (1997-98) Bill Skelly who died in November at the age of 89 was a long-term Camberwell resident. He served on Southwark Council first for St Giles ward 1994-98 and then for Peckham ward 1998-2002.

Bill earned a great deal of respect cross-party on the Council. His soft, lyrical Geordie accent, wide grin and the twinkle in his eyes made it impossible not to fall enchanted by his tales. His natural charm and ability to chat to people from all sections of society were second to none. He was always smartly turned out, learning attention to appearance from his national service days in the army. A true gentleman he was, as it is called in modern parlance, a brand ambassador for the Borough.

He led an interesting life. First and always, he was a Geordie proud of his Gateshead roots, always unmistakable in his accent, even after spending most of his life in London.

An accomplished painter, artist and signwriter by trade, Bill was full of stories from his time working on film and TV production sets in 1960s and 1970s. He met the top stars of the day such as Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Sir Roger Moore and Sir Michael Caine.

A committed trade unionist, he nearly brought the construction of the National Theatre to a halt to prevent the Lump contract system of casualised labour prevalent in the industry at that time. He fought to get women and BAME workers recognised for apprenticeships at a time when this was not universally appreciated. Bill was an Executive member of the construction union UCATT and eventually became the Union's President. One of the Union's highest honours was the Skelly plate designed by Bill.

A good samaritan, he was always prepared to help, offer advice and care to others especially those with alcohol addiction. And he worked patiently with Al-Anon to help many recovering addicts.

Bill was often seen listening to the band concerts at Ruskin Park on long summer Sunday afternoons. He will be greatly missed. He is survived by his partner Susie.

Age, nature, kindness, and fun too

Ros Tabor reviews A Robin Called Ruben by Mark and Louise Baxter, £10 from mono_media@hotmail.com.

This delightful book by local authors Mark and Louise Baxter, tells the tale of a robin called Ruben who lives in Camberwell Green. Every day he has his breakfast with the same old lady, Jeannie, who lives nearby. She feeds him every day and then suddenly she is not around.

Ruben is worried and so decides to try and find her. His journey cleverly introduces the different characters who make up the local neighbourhood. He chats to each person and when

they tell him their problems, he wishes them good luck and happy memories in exchange for something to eat.

Eventually he discovers that Jeannie has moved to a care home near London Bridge and he starts to visit her there. We are left with the hope that their special relationship will last a bit longer.

The book is written to be read to young children and explains in a gentle way that old people may have to leave their homes and go into care. Reassuringly, Jeannie is shown as happy in her new home, able to recognise Ruben and enjoy chatting

to him.

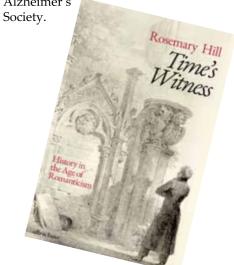
The story is set in Camberwell, and the descriptions are accurate and humorous. But the diverse neighbourhood

is similar to many inner-city areas and the book's themes are universal: age, nature, kindness, caring and hope. It would help a young child whose elderly relatives or carers are becoming more frail. Dementia is not named, but the book is dedicated to sufferers of that condition.

Very young children will enjoy the bright clear illustrations and would be able to pick out the robin on each page. Much fun could also be had tasting the various snacks that the robin enjoys.

Proceeds from sales go to the

Alzheimer's



sensitivity and imagination in order

to interpret the past. Through her

these enthusiasts, Hill uncovers a

fascinating story of the history of

intensively researched study of

study of history across architecture, stone circles, pottery, costume, armour, and manuscripts, Rosemary Hill explores how our concept of heritage took root. Sir Walter Scott was the embodiment of the Romantic antiquary but Hill introduces us to many others, mainly men but a few women including Anna Gurney, who published the first English translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Though hugely different they shared an insistence on the direct inspection of primary sources and an ability to combine

history.

Time's witness

Angela Penrose reviews Times Witness: History in the Age of Romanticism by Rosemary Hill, Allen Lane £25

In the summer of 1789, as revolutionary fervour swept through France, across the channel the eminent architect James Wyatt was commissioned to improve Salisbury cathedral. With neo-Classical Georgian good taste Wyatt removed medieval screens and stained glass, dismantled tombs, demolished a medieval bell tower and the fifteenth century chantry. The thirteenth century ceiling paintings in the choir were painted over to fulfil Wyatt's desire for a uniform interior without the 'wretched daubings'. Alarmed, Richard Gough, a Director of the Society of Antiquarians, dispatched the draughtsman Schnebbelie to see what was going on; unable to prevent the 'improvements' he managed to sketch the ceilings before the 'uncouth, disproportioned figures' disappeared for ever. Gough wrote to The Gentleman's

Magazine, the hub of antiquarian debate, attacking Wyatt's actions in a letter which 'marked the beginning of a revolution in attitudes to the

material past'. In arguing for the preservation of 'monuments of antiquity' Gough was ahead of public opinion; antiquarians were then regarded as eccentric collectors.

These antiquarians, networked across Europe, inspired a transformation in attitudes to the past between the French Revolution and the Great Exhibition of 1851, as illustrated by the rebuilding of St Giles Church in Camberwell. On 7 February 1841 a devastating fire virtually destroyed the medieval church, melting the stained glass, crumbling the stone to powder. The new St Giles became the first major Gothic building by George Gilbert Scott, best known as architect of St Pancras Station and the Albert Memorial, examples of the Gothic Revival which had its roots in 'medievalism' and antiquarian concerns with tangible remains and curiosities.

Through bringing to life an idiosyncratic selection of antiquarians who extended the

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Planning: three significant developments

The Society looks at all planning applications within the SE5 area. The website http://www.camberwellsociety.org.uk/planning has all the advice the Society's planning committee has given to Lambeth or Southwark Councils on whether we object, support or have decided not to comment on an application. It has invaluable quick links to all the relevant applications.

There are some new significant planning schemes on the horizon, and we expect them to be in the public domain within the next quarter.

They are a new proposal on the Valmar trading estate to provide outpatient facilities for King's College Hospital in place of a hotel, a scheme for housing at Seavington House and a scheme to redevelop housing at Redcar Street and Wyndham Road.

Two of these have a planning history and are commented on below together with a building now being erected on the Kings's College Hospital site.

Seavington House site three years on

The Camberwell Society objected to Southwark Council's planning application to develop the Seavington House site in Champion Hill (18/AP/0532) on the grounds of scale, impact on trees and failure to follow the Council's own sunlight, daylight and privacy guidelines with reference to the neighbouring consented application for nine houses at 1A Dog Kennel Hill.

The application was withdrawn in December 2018 with the promise that it was "back to the drawing board" for the development plans

In November 2021 Southwark Council invited local residents to comment on its revised plans for the site which seem remarkably similar to the originals, and arguably slightly

1A Dog Kennel Hill is the building to the left of the proposed new development, which is on the corner of Dog Kennel Hill and Champion

The proximity of the two proposed buildings to the consented scheme at 1A Dog Kennel Hill will result in loss of privacy and daylight for the residents of all three buildings, according to Southwark's guidelines, and to loss of sunlight for the residents of the buildings proposed in this consultation, since 1A Dog Kennel Hill lies on their south side. An alternative strategy would be

to locate most of the proposed new dwellings in a block to the west of the site, set away from 1A Dog Kennel Hill, where there is clear space for them, and build a row of modest one or two-storey houses along the Champion Hill frontage.

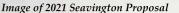
Valmar Road: from trading estate to hotel to clinic

In September 2020 Southwark agreed a planning application to develop the site of the Valmar trading estate, a triangle of land behind the shops of Denmark Hill, backing on to the Samuel Lewis Trust and accessible by car from Valmar Road and by foot through Milkwell Yard.

At the time of going to press NewBe is about to submit its new planning application with a planning decision expected from Southwark in the spring for works to begin in winter 2022. Public response so far has been supportive of the Kings clinic which aims to reduce waiting times and divert outpatients away from the main hospital thus reducing COVID transmission.

Concerns were expressed about the safety of the pedestrian walkway and the need to encourage outpatients to use local shops.

New outpatient building at Kings Work has begun on a new building





Three new buildings were proposed; two six-storey blocks, one to provide a 127-bed hotel and café, a second with employment space on ground and mezzanine and 15 homes on upper floors and a four-storey block of 28 homes.

The developers have now sold the site and new developers NewBe properties held a public meeting to consult on its new plan. They are working with Kings College Hospital NHS Trust to build a six-storev outpatient and diagnostic clinic and 43 homes, including affordable homes, and a new east west green pedestrian route from Denmark Hill to Valmar Road.

for outpatient services at King's College Hospital, next to the existing Normandy Building, facing Bessemer

It will free-up space, help reduce waiting times, and improve service to

The new four-storey building will house 48 consultation rooms and eight procedure rooms. It will offer a range of outpatient services including dermatology, rheumatology, respiratory, neurosciences, pain, and urology, plus some surgery and therapies.

It should be ready for use by patients and staff by May or June.

Local characters What's on

A talent for dealing with disruption

Marie Staunton talks to Trudy Habgood, Denmark Hill Station's manager

Trudy is surprisingly relaxed for a woman responsible for a station busier than Blackfriars in a pandemic. We meet in the operations room. Small, white and windowless, it also serves as staff room, kitchen and storeroom. Four computer screens show trains as moving green squares, signals as flickering red dots and a barrage of emails on train delays, platform alterations and requests from passengers. Christopher, a retired accountant who joined the team eight years ago, juggles the requests while Trudy takes calls from the six other stations on the Catford loop that she manages (Nunhead, Crofton Park, Ravensbourne, Catford, Bellingham and Beckenham Hill).



Drawings by Jane Moxham www.spinnakerart.co.uk

The previous weekend she was duty manager for all of Thameslink south of St Pancras, sorting out one passenger stuck in a lift, another drunkenly falling down an escalator, organising a deep clean of three stations where staff tested positive for Covid and counselling two workers who had been threatened by passengers. Station staff now wear body cameras to record assaults.

Problem solving is Trudy's game. Twenty years as a wedding planner for a Lincolnshire manor house taught her to "put on a front and paddle like anything in the background". Guests at one wedding were surprised and charmed to be dining by candlelight, unaware that this was Trudy's response to an unexpected power failure. In 2016 her husband got a job as a train driver and Trudy moved with him to become a train dispatcher at Bedford station.

A dispatcher watches the signals, keeps an eye on train passengers getting on and off, gets ramps for boarding, watches the area between the train and the yellow line, raises her bat to tell the driver to CD (close doors), blows a whistle and gives a green light for RA (right away) to dispatch the train. Trains terminate at Bedford, so Trudy disembarked those too drugged or drunk to move and the homeless people who sleep on trains. She would wake them gently, aware that she may be the only person who spoke to them kindly all day. Station staff see many homeless people. This year the team made calendars to sell for Noah, the charity for the homeless.

In May 2018, Thameslink was in the news as the infrastructure failed to keep up with new timetable

the mum who needed to be home for her son's first parents' evening, and to be inventive about getting them on their way."

changes, throwing the

network into disarray.

"When the train service is

disrupted you come into

your own," said Trudy.

"Working with limited

information, perhaps a

radio message that there

will be no trains for two

have failed. Passengers

and you are wearing the

not to take it personally.

And to listen carefully to

people who had planes to

catch, were worried about

missing their appointment

for cancer treatment or

hours, or the overhead lines

want to lash out at someone

uniform, so it is you. I learnt

The job became quieter when driver-only operated trains (DOO) which use cameras along the length of the train were introduced, reducing the need for dispatchers. Then Trudy's experience was used to train others across the network. In July 2020, she was appointed station manager for the Catford Loop, just in time for the opening of the new £80 million Denmark Hill station entrance. Luckily, the money had been allocated before COVID hit the railways' income.

Now the railways are being renationalised under Great British Railways. Since Denmark Hill was built by architect Charles Henry Driver in the 1860s, it has been privatised and renationalised twice and almost demolished in the 1980s before the Camberwell Society intervened and persuaded British Rail to preserve it.

What difference will government control make? Decisions will be slower, but as Denmark Hill continues to be busy (passenger numbers doubled between 2014 and 2019) the station will thrive. Trudy hopes that the new free cycle bay on Windsor Walk will be used (just scan the QR code to get your free access card). She is keen to bring back to life neglected areas, "just like Nick and Tony from the Camberwell Society have transformed what was a horrid area with their planting and installations". After eighteen months as our station manager, Trudy says, "I like it here. It is always busy. If you want to see all of life, the worst and the best of people, join the railway!"

What's on

ART South London Fire Station Gallery - Shut the Club Down to 27 February 2022. Dance music and nightlife culture in 1990s Peckham and Camberwell. Main gallery to 20 February New Contemporaries exhibition of emerging and new artists.

The Bower Brunswick Park - Spring exhibition by Rosa-Johan Uddoh inspired by Una Marson. The cafe is open daily. www.thebower.org.uk

Blue Shop Cottage regular shows by

BOOKS Carnegie Library - Winter Book Fair

Saturday 5 February. Author event by Friends of Carnegie Library for LGBT history month with writer Paul Burston. 8 Feb at 7.30pm. Bookable through Eventbrite. Wriggle and Rhyme children's session Wednesdays 10.30 to 11am. Check first at 02079266050 or email Carnegielibrary@lambeth.gov.uk www.lambeth.gov.uk/events

CABARET Longfield Hall - Evening live music, dance, comedy, aerial circus and more. 11th March 7pm, 50 Knatchbull Road.www.longfieldhall.org.uk

camberwell talks - First Monday of the month 7 to 9pm. Anna Doble broadcaster and Jamie Upton record shop manager on music , memory and the value of vinyl 7 February Camberwell Arms. Russell Occomore musician and impresario 7 March, Crypt St Giles Church. Designers Keith and Mark of Mini Moderns 4 April

Camberwell Arms http://www.se5forum. org.uk/events/camberwell-talks-thevibrant-voices-of-se5

CINEMA Whirled Cinema - The White Crow, Rudolf Nureyev's escape to the west, to 2nd Feb, Whirled docs: QT8 the first eight documentaries of Tarentino, 8pm 3rd Feb; Audrey: More than an icon, life story of Audrey Hepburn, 3rd March 8pm. 60 seat cinema under railway arch off Coldharbour Lane in Hardess St. www. whirledcinema.com

EXERCISE Burgess Sports - Tennis, BMX, rugby, cricket, and sports camps. Burgess P|ark Skate welcoming roller-skating group, all levels from beginners. https://www.instagram.com/_bpsgroup, www.burgesssports.org

Butterfly Tennis Club - Community tennis coaching after school and saturdays. 24a Camberwell Grove www. butterflytennis.com

Camberwell Leisure Centre -Swimming, gym, exercise classes, supervised gym sessions for 11 to 15

years. www.everyoneactive.com **Longfield Hall** - Capoeira,choir, dance, drama, yoga, zumba. https:// longfieldhall.org.uk/events

Ruskin Park - Soca by bandstand Tuesdays and Thursdays 12 noon **Zen Yoga** - Yoga, acupuncture and

sound healing zenyoga.org.uk

MUSIC The Crypt - Live jazz

every Friday in the Crypt of St

Giles Church, Camberwell Church Street. Great food, reasonably priced drinks www.jazzlive.co.uk

THEATRE Blue Elephant Theatre

- now streaming Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain www. blueelephanttheatre.co.uk/whatson

Theatre Peckham - The Poetry
Foyer (last Thursday of each month
from 27 January) and Incubate (a
monthly performance event and open
mic event, every third Wednesday
from 16 February). Theatre Peckham
Academy has a range of classes
each week for children aged 3
to 16. 221 Havil St, London, SE5
7SB visit theatrepeckham.co.uk or call
020 7708 5401

WALKS - the Society's website has Camberwell tree walks and the black history walk. Others can be found on www.southwark.gov.uk/transport and Go Jauntly www. gojauntly.com

Thank you! To the following local businesses for kindly donating the prizes for The Society's Christmas raffle 2021

The Crooked Well, The Nunhead Gardener, Nandine's, Off-Cuts Barbers, Support and Sustain Physio, Grove House Tavern, Keely's Fruit and Veg, Lumberjack Coffee, Eleven SE5, The Vineyard, The Pigeon.

Where's Nick? St Giles Church, at The Society Xmas Party December 2021

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

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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Camberwell Quarterly

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