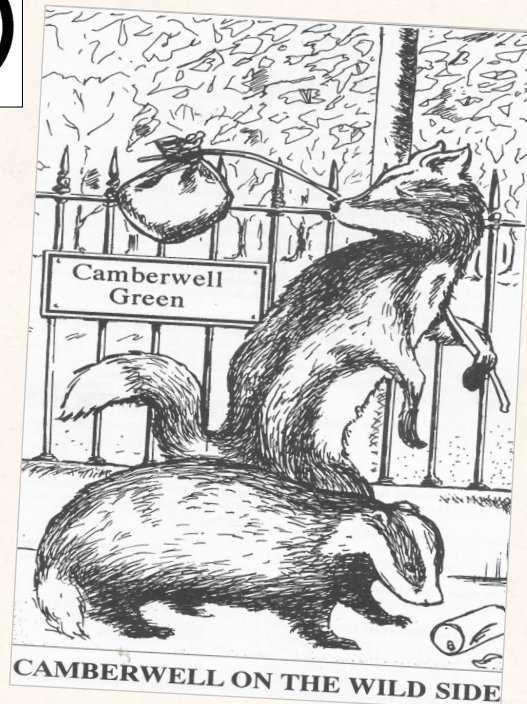
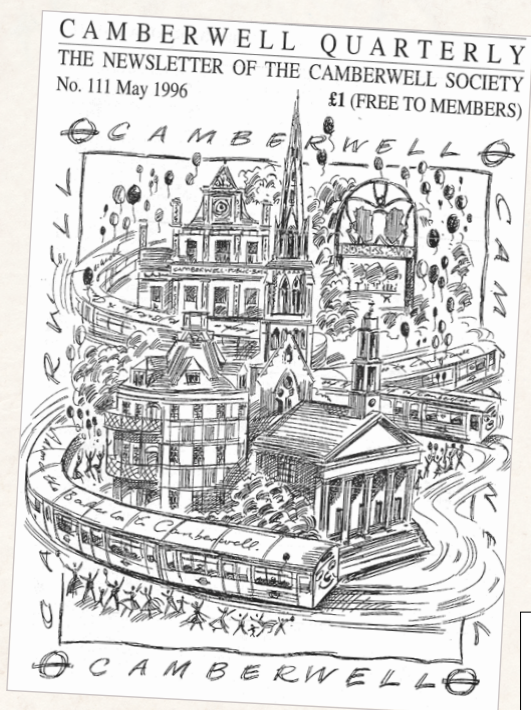


# CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

The magazine of The Camberwell Society – fiftieth anniversary edition

No 206 Winter 2020 £1.50 (free to members)

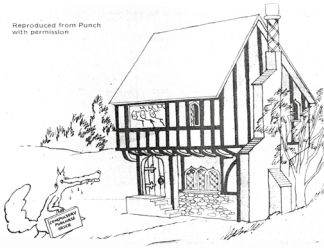





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**Battles that shaped Camberwell over half a century**  
**Cannabis in Camberwell | Jenny Eclair, older and wider**  
**Protests over Greendale | Peter John – profile**



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## Local societies, venues and events – please check details

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[tandra.brunswickpark@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tandra.brunswickpark@yahoo.co.uk)

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# Black history, tree hunts and our Christmas party

Stephen Bourne's excellent Black History walk was celebrated in October to recognise the contribution of eight significant black figures – some of 'Camberwell's finest'. You will have almost certainly seen some of the six large vinyls around Camberwell. The map is easy to download from [www.camberwellsociety.org.uk](http://www.camberwellsociety.org.uk), to print out or follow on a mobile. For those who enjoy geocaching treasure hunts you can download the (free) Munzee app. The walk explores black history in Camberwell from John Primero (d 1615) to John Boyega in the current day via a WWI soldier, fireman and British Empire Medallist, a Windrush arrival who became mayor of Southwark, a black feminist broadcaster on the BBC in the 1940s and the 'Martin Luther King of Britain'.

Myriad orange figures are building the new Windsor Walk entrance at Denmark Hill station. The likely completion date is April 2021. Black lives will be making a significant contribution here too – Una Marson will be represented (Camberwell

resident, feminist activist and the first black woman broadcaster at the BBC) and Godfried Donker's adinkra – inspired artwork will decorate the entrance. Adinkras, as I hope you will have read on the posters and online or even seen in the British Museum, are symbols from west Africa which represent positive human qualities. Godfried has engaged widely with the local community, holding workshops and open zoom consultations. The installation, his work and the positivity of the adinkra system will form an educational resource for primary and secondary schools

Camberwell's network of tree enthusiasts has developed the existing Tree Walk (a 40-minute walk round Camberwell taking in eight significant trees). On the environment page of the Society website you will find species by species tree maps for Lucas gardens, Brunswick Park, St Giles' churchyard and Camberwell Green. In Lucas Gardens the names alone are worth the visit – common limes are common there, as is the



Nick Mair

Japanese pagoda tree, the Swedish whitebeam – or further afield, the Tree of Heaven.

The flap of the butterflies' wings on the Metropolitan Open Land of Greendale was not an illustration of chaos theory but the release of two Camberwell Beauties, the butterfly that is of course the symbol of Camberwell and the Society. James Frankcom bred the Beauties, which was no easy task as the Camberwell Beauty is not an english native. We hope to continue the butterfly release by offering a small number

of simple breeding kits to local primary schools. Please let us know if you would like to be involved in a natively titled 'Camberwell Beauties – Pollinators for Primaries' project.

Whilst I hope we may be able to celebrate Christmas at the Crooked Well, this is so unlikely that we are investigating a virtual party. Is there any enthusiasm for this or are we unable, unwilling or simply fed up of another Zoom meeting? Bah humbug? Please let us know.

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## The show must go on.line

How does Camberwell Arts support local artists and communities in an era of social distancing? *Shauna Blanchefield* has the answers.

On 23rd March this year, the government announced that Britain was going into lockdown. On 28th March, the Camberwell Arts Committee rolled up its sleeves, figured out how to use Zoom, and decided the show had to go on. The 26th Camberwell Arts Festival beamed live from our living rooms and makeshift control rooms to a multifarious audience slowly emerging from isolation.

So, what next? We say the show must go on (again). Through constant consultation with Camberwell's creative community we will bring on a blended winter programme. The Camberwell Arts Directory will be expanded for Open Studios, encompassing studio walk-throughs, Q&As, workshops and interviews with local artists, while still offering the opportunity to arrange in-person viewing appointments – because art is always best seen in the flesh. We will be expanding our digital marketplace for the festive season, so that you can still buy unique, Made in Camberwell,



presents for your nearest and dearest at a time when it is more important than ever to support local.

Community feedback on the Summer festival has been crucial to our committee of volunteers, and whilst we can't wait to see you again, we were extremely pleased to hear that our online events were found accessible in a way live events can't be. Accessibility is key, now more than ever, so we're delighted to announce a new initiative: *Camberwell Monthly*, a series of

live-streamed digital performances to watch at home from the comfort of your sofa – stay tuned for more information coming soon! We're always on the look-out for new ideas, so if you would like to join our committee or have an idea for Camberwell Monthly contact us at: [camberwellartsfestival@gmail.com](mailto:camberwellartsfestival@gmail.com) And if you just can't wait for our next festival, why not re-visit our Camberwell Arts Directory and Digital Arts Market at: [www.camberwellarts.org](http://www.camberwellarts.org)



*Trevor Dannatt celebrated his hundredth birthday on 15 January 2020. Copies of his book Poems & Some Verse (Lotus Press, 2019) are available from the Review bookshop in Bellenden Road*

## Trevor Dannatt: architect of poetry

Centenarian Trevor Dannatt is best known for his achievements in the field of architecture. He is also an accomplished draughtsman, and recently published his first book of poetry. *Alison Kirby* summarises the life of a polymath.

Trevor grew up in Greenwich and studied architecture at Regent Street Polytechnic. He began his career as a member of the team of architects responsible for the Royal Festival Hall, and subsequently set up his own private practice. His designs have attracted considerable acclaim, including the British Embassy in Riyadh and the Quaker meeting house in Blackheath, one of several of his buildings that now have listed building status.

He combined running a busy practice with his appointment as Professor of Architecture at Manchester University. He was also Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy for a period. He edited ten volumes of the Architects Yearbook and has been president of the Twentieth Century Society. In 2017 Trevor received an OBE for services to architecture and architectural education.

Trevor regularly exhibits and sells work at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition. He has lived in Camberwell since 1989, when he married his wife, Dr Ann Crawshaw, a past Secretary of the Camberwell Society.



# £7.5m now arriving at Denmark Hill

Network Rail has started work on its £7.5m investment in Denmark Hill station  
*Tony Coleman reports.*

The project is designed to improve safety and reduce over crowding at the gates and on the platforms by encouraging people to use the eastern ends of the platforms which are currently sparsely occupied. Construction started in September and is due to be completed in April 2021. Canopies will be extended over platforms 2, 3, and 4, and platform 4 will be widened at its eastern end. New seating and realigned platform furniture will allow easier movement along the platforms. The new entrance on Windsor Walk, with its six new entrance gates will relieve congestion.

The station will be doing its bit for the climate emergency. Solar film on the canopies will make the development net carbon beneficial. A new 85 stand secure cycle storage area will improve options for sustainable travel to and from the station on the so-called “last mile”.

## The Test

The last issue of the Quarterly described the tiling design for the entrance hall. We can also now say that the poem selected for etching on the glass of the picture windows in the entrance is the Test by Una Marson (1905 – 1965). Una was the first black woman programme maker at the BBC. She lived in Camberwell next

### THE TEST

*The test of true culture*

*Is the ability*

*To move among men,*

*East or West,*

*North or South,*

*With ease and confidence,*

*Radiating the pure light*

*Of a kindly humanity.*

Una Marson, published in 1937

to Brunswick Park for several years during the early 1940s. She was a feminist writer and activist for equal rights. As a colleague of Dr Harold Moody, she earlier had been writing for the League of Coloured Peoples.

## The Art Piece at the New Entrance

The call for tenders for the art piece to be sited on the plinth at the new entrance attracted 51 submissions. They were whittled down to a short list of four who were interviewed by the selection panel which included representatives from Network Rail, GTR, UAL, Culture &, Camberwell Arts and the Camberwell Society. The panel selected Godfried Donkor and his piece based on Adinkra symbols. Godfried is a south Londoner of Ghanaian heritage who has exhibited at the ICA and the Smithsonian and was selected to design the strip for the Ghanaian football team.

The first adinkra symbols were created in the eighteenth century in Ghana and there are now over 100. They convey different aspects of life and traditional wisdom and are often linked with proverbs.

Godfried has been consulting with Sacred Heart school, Dog Kennel Hill adventure playground, a local care home, adolescents attending the Maudsley and communities in Camberwell to select the adinkras that speak to the theme Health and Wellbeing. He will also develop an adinkra that represents Camberwell and its values. *For further reading see Wikipedia: Adinkra Symbols and follow the references.*

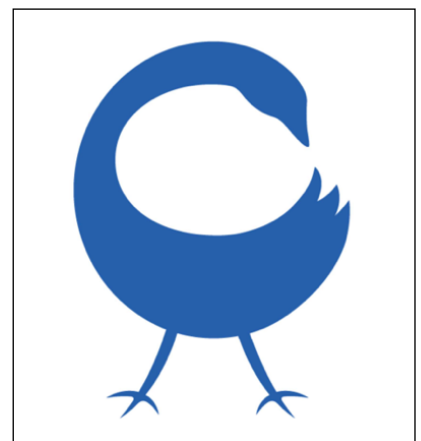


*Sacred Heart art students working with Godfried on a health and wellbeing adinkra. They said, “Coping with COVID is about us being different but strong and united as a community. We care for each other.”*



**Aya – The Fern**

*Representing resilience and endurance – outlasting some difficulty*



**Sankofa – The Bird**

*Representing learning from the past to inform the future*

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# The trouble with the grass we smoke

Walking about Camberwell, you will have noticed both the whiff of cannabis in the air and the unusually large number of people who are mentally ill. This is not a coincidence. *Shekhar Das* reports.

On the 2 May, Connor saw through the window of his tiny council flat a tall man approaching. You could not mistake him. One of his eyes had been gouged out, the other was flaming red. The man was holding Sasha, Connor's mental health worker, by the elbow and guiding her to his door. A few days earlier Connor had 'distinctly heard' the man say to Sasha, "You tell anyone and I'll kill you." The man with the red eye had every reason to resent Connor. Connor's best friend had gouged out his eye and Connor himself had 'snitched' on him to the police. The man was using Sasha to enter Connor's flat and kill him.

Two hours later Connor was arrested for possession of a knife and a pepper spray and taken to Brixton Police Station. The officer in charge realised that something was not right and called the social services. Connor was sectioned and spent several days at the Maudsley. All this happened during lockdown of which Connor was scarcely aware. Twice he had presented himself to A&E, twice he was pronounced perfectly sane.

Now he is back 'in the community', attended by Sasha and her colleagues from STEP, an early intervention service to help people in Southwark who are suffering from psychosis. Connor knows that some of his beliefs are delusions, but he doesn't know which; he remains certain, however, that the man with the red eye is out to kill him. Talking

to him, I am struck by how rational he is: if I had his visual and auditory experiences, I think I would also have his beliefs.

'Connor' is not his real name, but he is not made up. He grew up in Camberwell, went to the local schools, started smoking skunk in his teenage years, first occasionally, then regularly. Now, in his mid-20s, he suffers from paranoid delusions and psychotic episodes that make it difficult for him to hold down a job or form relationships. He is afraid to go out. His isolation makes his psychosis worse.

Connor is typical of people who attend the Psychosis Cannabis clinic in Kennington. Most are in their twenties, according to Dr Diego Quattrone, one of the clinicians who works there, just the age when one typically starts a career and forms long-term relationships. The clinic is led by Dr Marta Di Forti, consultant psychiatrist at King's and the Maudsley, who is pre-eminent in research into the effect of cannabis on mental health. It is funded by the Maudsley Charity. Its main purpose is to offer a service to those young people who are suffering their first episode of psychosis and who want to reduce or stop their cannabis use. These young people often fall between mental health services for psychosis and addiction. 'If you keep using the drug you have a higher risk of a relapse,' said Dr Quattrone. The people who come to the clinic share their experiences with each other and

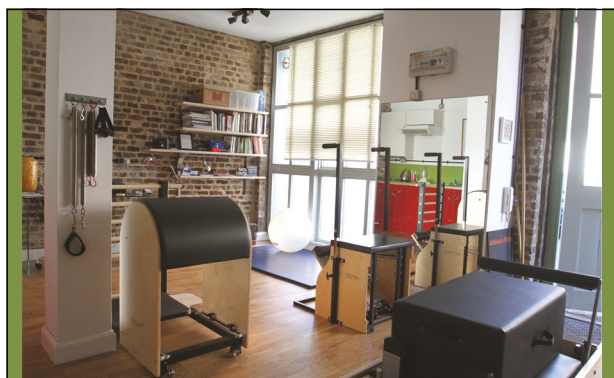
motivate each other to recover.

Last year Dr Di Forti and her colleagues published a paper on the effect of cannabis on psychosis based on a massive piece of research stretching over 11 sites in Europe and one in Brazil. Its conclusions have implications for what we need to do to tackle the problem in areas such as Camberwell, where the incidence of cannabis-induced psychosis is particularly high.

First and foremost, the effect depends on the potency of drug sold in the street as measured by its THC ( $\Delta^9$ -tetrahydrocannabinol) content. 'A couple of years ago,' said Dr Quattrone, 'we did a study with the help of the police and analysed the cannabis sold in this area and found THC averaged 16 per cent.' Anything equal or over 10 per cent has been linked to an increased risk to develop psychosis.

This is not how it used to be. In that delightful film *Withnail and I*, released in 1987 but set in the dying months of the 1960s, the 'grass' in the Camberwell Carrot smoked by Withnail (played by Robert E. Grant) probably had a THC content of three or four per cent. The cannabis made Withnail giggle and behave in a silly way. It did not make him mad.

The method used to produce street cannabis these days increases its THC content. The plants are left non-pollinated, so all the energy goes into producing the flowers which contain the THC. This is done deliberately,



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*Passing the 'Camberwell Carrot' from the film Withnail and I (Courtesy of Handmade Films)*

because THC is what gives the user the 'high' he craves. In Amsterdam, where cannabis use is legal, the THC content is even higher than in South London.

Rastafarians, who have long been smoking the stuff, don't like this high-potency cannabis, according to Dr Quattrone. They prefer the old-fashioned weed with its low THC content. Nor is street cannabis particularly good for medicinal purposes. It is altogether bad.

What might be a good constituent of cannabis is cannabidiol. Used on its own, it is becoming fashionable, especially in New York, where Martha Stewart, the famous socialite, puts it into her *pâte de fruit*. Cannabidiol doesn't make you high; it makes you – let us say – intensely relaxed.

Apart from its potency, two other factors increase the risk of getting psychosis from smoking cannabis: how frequently you smoke it and the age at which you start. "If you use high-potency cannabis on a daily basis, your risk of developing psychosis is five times higher than it would be if you didn't use it at all," said Dr Quattrone. Unfortunately, many young people in Camberwell do precisely that. Connor, for example, smoked it every night, at a daily cost of £10. If for some reason,

he could not get hold of it, he would become restless and violent.

Imagine what it must have been like during lockdown for a single mother living with an addict like that. In fact, as far as one can tell, the trade continued during lockdown, though availability fell, and prices rose. Dealers supplied their clients with cannabis, it seems, under the cloak of delivering food.

If you start using street cannabis in your late teens, when the brain is still developing, according to Dr Quattrone, your risk of developing psychosis is much higher than if you start in your 50s or 60s.

Cannabis is a Class B drug. The police do not seek out people who use it, but they often find it in their possession when, for instance, they stop and search someone. In the first instance, the people caught are given a 'community resolution' warning, provided police are satisfied that the cannabis is for personal use. In the second instance, they are given a fine, which is £90 at present. This approach is probably the right one: a tougher approach is not going to solve the problem.

Dr Quattrone, who is a resident, does not know why we have very high rates of psychosis in Camberwell, higher than other

districts of London, but the widespread use of cannabis is a major factor. To be sure, there are others, such as genetic predisposition and social isolation. But the statistical link between cannabis use and psychosis is robust. The figures suggest that, assuming causation, if all the people in Camberwell who use high potency cannabis were to stop doing so, the incidence of psychosis would fall by nearly 30 per cent.

The clinic in Kennington Lane caters to people who have had their first episode of psychosis and are motivated to give up cannabis use. It meets with some success: contrary to common belief, it is possible to recover from this mental illness. But the greater task is prevention. If young people in Camberwell could be persuaded to reduce or stop the weed, or at least smoke it less frequently, or smoke a less potent variety (almost impossible, because you don't know what you are buying when you buy it in the street), a great deal of mental illness could be prevented. Propaganda against the smoking of tobacco helped reduce the incidence of lung cancer in the population. A similar effort, local not national, is needed to break the pitiless link between smoking street cannabis and psychosis.



# Revealed: Camberwell's secret nuclear bunker

You may have never noticed the plot at the intersection of Vestry Road and Peckham Road. But beneath this unloved lot lies a gem of our history: the Southwark Control Cold War Bunker. *Joanna Large* of the Camberwell Bunker Collective tells the story.



*Communication and chart centre*

During the Cold War, London was partitioned into four (later five) areas. Each was to report to the centre of control situated in Kelvedon Hatch, near Brentwood, Essex, 38 metres below ground. There is a rumour that an underground railway was planned to connect it to London. In the bunker in Camberwell, Southwark Council staff from the Town Hall opposite would have lived and worked, following instructions from Kelvedon, trying to gather intelligence about what remained above after a nuclear attack on London.

It is sealed up and impossible to enter now. But photos taken by intrepid folk a few years back show maps still on walls and acoustic booths where operators would have sat to record events above ground. The words Time, Location, Action and Resources could be seen on the incident board. The separate lavatories for men and women still could be flushed and the hand driers were in working order.

There is a generator room, a control room, a switchboard, a teleprinters centre and a communications centre. There are desks, monitors, Avtex Telex managers, keypads and printers. All abandoned, thankfully never needed. There are various BT junction boxes on the wall where we can imagine operators anxiously awaiting orders.

Then there are the living quarters. There is a canteen and kitchen with a work surface and various wooden cupboards. One wonders who would have cooked and what packets and pouches the staff would have had to survive on. Other small rooms may have contained bunks for the dormitories; now they are populated with filing cabinets still full of papers and documents. At the far end of one of these rooms is a curtain concealing an emergency escape shaft similar to those used for the Royal Observer Corps. Behind glass is a large tree diagram describing the hierarchy of command for 'Organisation – London Borough Wartime Headquarters'. At the head of the tree is the Borough Controller (Staff Officer Young) and under him the Deputy Controller (J. Parker) and the Assistant Controller Support Services (Cammies).

The Camberwell Bunker Collective was born from fascination with this site and a desire to see it restored and put to use. We are now over 50-members strong and committed to restoring and regenerating the bunker for Camberwell. We hope to attract people from afar to experience history in a unique and memorable form.

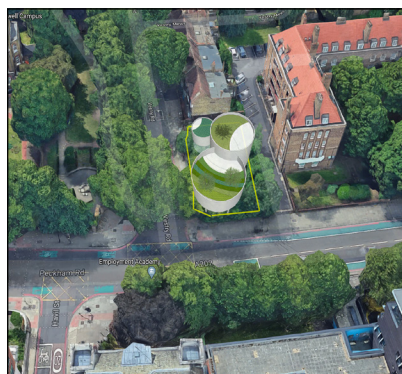
The Cold War in the popular imagination has been condensed to an image of a red button, Kennedy and Khrushchev locked in a frightening face off, children practising how to hide under tables when an atom bomb is dropped. Thatcher famously

stated that Reagan won this war without firing a shot. The truth is more complex. Many died in proxy wars and its cultural ramifications were profound and worldwide.

If you or your family have a story to tell about the Cold War, we would love to hear from you. We have a *Cold War Stories* project. We want young people of Southwark to have the opportunity of understanding themselves in the context of recent history – how all our histories relate to each other and what we share. We are hoping to build a Museum of Cold War History on this abandoned plot.

We have already had much interest and help. Scouts and Explorers groups have offered to clean up the site and work on the garden. Local architect firm Tsuruta Architects has kindly made an initial design. It shows how a roof garden could be utilised – hired out for wedding receptions (the Registry office is next door), as a community space for youth groups and residents' associations, and so on. We know that the Council is looking to proceed with a compulsory purchase order for the site. After that happens, we would love to prepare the site for outdoor history lectures and concerts to raise money and awareness of what an asset this could be for Camberwell, situated as it is in the Corridor of Art.

We really want to see all the people of Camberwell benefitting from the creation of the museum: our wonderful art institutes which could use the space for exhibitions; our young architects who could work on the design, people needing employment. We want everyone to notice this corner and say, "That's our bunker!" If you would like to get involved or just follow our progress please contact us via our website [www.camberwellbunker.com](http://www.camberwellbunker.com) or via Instagram: @camberwellbunker or follow us on twitter: @camberwellbunk1.



*Proposed new museum by Taro Design*



# Launching Love Local

Nick Harvey explains the campaign for independent businesses.

The past six months have been exceptionally challenging for business, not only in Camberwell but across the UK. Independents have had to quickly adapt to survive in what is fast becoming the new normal during the Covid 19 pandemic. It is encouraging to see so many independent businesses open again. In some cases they are thriving, but the new government guidelines mean that they have had to change the way they operate to ensure both staff and customers alike are kept safe. This often comes at a cost to their bottom line.

With so much uncertainty facing independent businesses, it is imperative, now more than ever, to support and champion local businesses so that our high streets remain thriving and exciting places to eat, drink, shop and socialise. So, the Camberwell Identity Group supported by the Camberwell Society, SE5 Forum and Camberwell Arts charities have collaborated to help launch the Camberwell "Love Local" campaign.

As a group we are bringing people together to create a brighter high street, more business for local traders and a Camberwell for everyone to be proud of. The campaign itself asks independent businesses to become Camberwell Champions and the good news is it's totally free! The one small request we have is for businesses to display our Love Local campaign sticker in their customer facing window to show their support.

The campaign goes further than a mere window sticker. These Camberwell Champions will also benefit from a free listing on the new [www.camberwell.life](http://www.camberwell.life) website which highlights the thriving community we have here in Camberwell and aims to help visitors navigate the area and all the wonderful things to see and do. Businesses will be featured on the



*Resident and volunteer Nick Harvey*

website allowing them to tell their unique story, promote their goods and services, and communicate what being a Camberwell Champion means to them.

The Love Local campaign is promoted via CQ and a robust social media push across a number of channels including Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. We are supplying Camberwell Champions with promotional drinking coasters, encouraging patrons to leave reviews of their experience using the hashtag #CamberwellLife. The hope is to build a picture of life in Camberwell encouraging others to come and explore the area and find out for themselves why Camberwell is such an amazing place to eat, drink, shop and socialise.

The campaign aims to create a network of like-minded independent businesses to champion all that Camberwell has to offer. With a range of businesses already signed up, we want to encourage more independents to join the campaign and help us to ensure our local economy continues to survive and thrive for years to come.

To sign up to this exciting new project, please contact Nick Harvey, resident & volunteer for the Camberwell ID Group [nicholasharvey@gmail.com](mailto:nicholasharvey@gmail.com)



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## An evangelist for local government

Peter John was one of the most successful leaders of Southwark Council in modern times. He spoke to *Shekhar Das* a week after he stepped down.



*Peter John*  
*Drawing Jane Moxham*

When Peter John became leader of the Council in 2010, he discovered he had far more power than he expected to have. “To have an idea, to turn it into policy, a policy that has a positive impact on people’s lives, to ensure that it is delivered: that is a rare position in politics.” He fell in love with the job and excelled at it. Yet, after ten years, he resigned. Why? It is a mystery. He is content with that: “Better why,” he said, “than when.”

Perhaps his past will give us a clue. Peter was born in 1966 in Weston-Super-Mare. His father was a teacher at the local comprehensive, his mother a housewife, both originally from South Wales. From them he and his two siblings acquired the drive to take advantage of the education on offer and make the most of their lives. “We were middle class, I suppose, but there wasn’t a lot of money sloshing about.” Peter went to the primary school a few hundred yards from home, then middle school, then the comprehensive where his father had taught before he retired.

Weston was a Tory town, but Peter was staunchly Labour during his school-days. The family influence that inclined him in this direction came from his mother’s side. Her grandfather was a trade union official in the T&G, Ernest Bevin’s union,

and her aunt was the Labour Party agent in Swansea. She was the one who discussed politics with Peter and told him the stories that make up a child’s family inheritance. Curiously, the first party meeting he went to was addressed by Peter Tatchell, who had just lost Bermondsey for Labour in the famous by-election of 1983, beginning the long domination of the Liberals in that constituency. Bermondsey was where Peter was to buy his first flat (for £78,000) and is where he lives now.

After school, Peter went to Queen Mary College in London to read Law, and then to the Inns of Court School of Law. A scholarship from Avon County Council, as it then was, made this possible. The county council paid his tuition fees and provided a maintenance grant. Even then for a local authority to do such a thing was rare; now it is unheard of. It left a lasting impression. When Peter became Leader of Southwark it was this experience that led him to introduce the Southwark Scholarship Scheme. It pays the tuition fees of ten youngsters a year who come from low-income families, who are academically good and have contributed something to the wider community. About 110-120 have gone through the system.

Then after his pupillage, Peter

began his career as a barrister, eventually carving out a niche in contentious probate and trusts. He has kept his practice going, albeit at the lowest level in the past ten years, but aims to revive it now that he has stepped down as Leader.

In his early years in politics he did, of course, have an ambition to become an MP. In fact, he tried to get selected as a candidate before he was elected as Councillor in Champion Hill ward, Camberwell, in 2002. But when he became Leader ten years ago, these ambitions fizzled out. He felt he could do much more locally than as a back-bench MP. “Local government has been a much under-appreciated part of our fabric of government. I hope the pandemic has woken up people into seeing what a force for good it can be.”

Of course, being Leader has been hectic and stressful. It took 18 months to shift the bureaucracy to the new administration’s way of thinking. That took a lot of work. Then there is the painstaking task of making sure you deliver on your manifesto commitments. There is the normal Council business, with lots of budget challenges between summer and February. And party management, and hundreds of invitations to events where a consistent story must be told – it takes a lot of time. Periodically, big events take over. Now it is Covid. Over the past ten years, there were the riots in 2011 and the terrorist attack in London Bridge.

Peter intended to resign as Leader on 25 March and also stand down as Councillor in Champion Hill. The pandemic delayed his departure and, because a by-election is not possible at present, he will be staying on as ward councillor. Although he is relinquishing his political positions, he is not giving up politics in the broad sense. He will always be involved in public service.



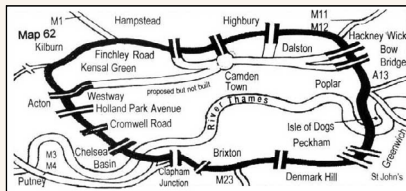
# The battles that shaped Camberwell over half a century

The Camberwell Society was born in 1970, when the Camberwell Green District Residents Association enlarged its geographical scope, changed its name and started publishing a duplicated newsletter which evolved into the *Camberwell Quarterly*.

*Liz Allen, Elizabeth Borowiecka, Elaine Clarke, Tony Coleman, Tim Gaymer and Marie Staunton*, with contributions from *Jonathan Hunt*, combed through 50 years of the CQ to find the battles the Society won – and lost.

## Saving our streets in the super 70s

The new Society, under founder chair Nadine Beddington, quickly found itself involved in a major issue that threatened the physical existence of the town itself. It faced plans for a motorway which would have sliced through Camberwell.



*The motorway Ringway 1*

The first AGM of the Camberwell Society resolved to hold a jumble sale to fund its opposition to the scheme at the public enquiry. From its beginning, the Society's battles mixed activism, fundraising, local surveys and highly technical analysis and expertise with passionate opposition. In this case it was to a "massive and insensitive redevelopment" and highway schemes leading to local communities being "wantonly destroyed".

Proceeds of the jumble sale went to the London Motorway Action Group, which represented the Society and presented the case against 'Ringway 1', a proposed urban motorway encircling 60 square miles from the East End to the City to Westminster and Camberwell (above).

The plan envisaged the inner-London highway coming up Blenheim Grove and splitting into two carriageways at Camberwell Grove – leaving Denmark Hill Station isolated in the middle – with a spur down to Camberwell Green. It required the demolition of many listed buildings and would cause "huge noise disturbance and visual

intrusion", according to the Society.

The most astonishing and destructive thing never to happen to London, the scheme sparked the creation of over 100 local opposition groups throughout the capital, popularly labelled Homes Before Roads and led to the defeat of the GLC Conservative Council and was withdrawn in 1973. The Society had tasted its first major victory, albeit shared with many others.

But it was "the Selborne business," that was the 'most demanding and the most difficult issue for the Society in the 1970s' according to Stephen Marks in an article in a later CQ. Marks was a founder member and among the most distinguished planning and historian writers to live and work in Camberwell. Sadly, he died a few months ago (see obituaries, page 15).

Selborne was an area of seven acres of "small but decorous Victorian houses". Southwark Council had a long history of ruthless and dedicated slum clearance elsewhere in the borough.



It decided in 1969 to clear the area for redevelopment. In 1973 it issued compulsory purchase orders starting with Jephson Street, Wren Road and Daneville Road. At the same time the council was considering a new road scheme around Camberwell Green. The newsletter tells of a stormy public meeting called by the Society in September 1973. Chair

Nadine Beddington said it was called because "no one had asked local people what they wanted around Camberwell Green... we were tired of asking for information about road and other plans but still had received nothing and were little wiser about the future of the area".

Mr O'Brien, responsible for the Councils rehousing programme, "was greeted with feeling when he announced himself: he complained we were being emotional and ignoring the facts". The meeting resolved to carry out a survey of residents. It was published as a 28-page booklet. Some 80 per cent of Selborne residents wanted to stay if the houses were rehabilitated with private bathrooms, toilets and no damp.

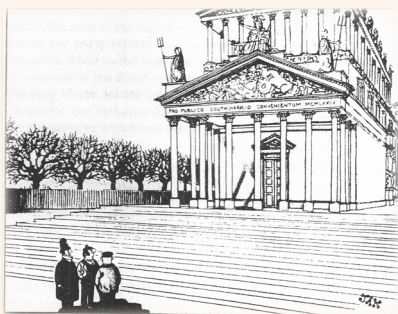
The report failed to sway the planning inquiry in 1974 which upheld the compulsory purchase order. Empty houses were squatted, by Young Liberals among others. The society supported residents in asking Southwark to use new legal powers to rehabilitate rather than demolish their homes. But the request was rejected. Bulldozers moved in at the crack of dawn one Saturday morning and by 7pm residents, supported by the Society, had obtained an interim injunction to prevent demolition. The full hearing ruled that Southwark was entitled to proceed with the demolition. The verdict from Stephen Marks was that the Selborne campaign 'was on the face of it, its least successful, but the Society did achieve a major advance. Our survey resulted in the council setting up a working party to...' suggest solutions for the Camberwell Green area' which were implemented in the next decade.

Selborne and the Camberwell Green road scheme were far from the only issues that aroused ire



in Camberwell. “White elephant” campaigners who opposed building a new Town Hall in Peckham were locked out of council meetings. At one, a vote was to be taken until Society members quoted the 1974 Local Government Act under which the public is entitled to be admitted to full council meetings. “Eventually at about 2.30am the vote was taken 34 in favour 22 against. At this result, banners were unfurled, insults hurled, and leaflets thrown, and to the sound of a foghorn we all filed out, tired and downhearted at the way our elected representatives had treated our opposition with contempt. But we were determined “that the fight was really on”. And won. The white elephant was never built – although three decades later, under different control, the civic offices moved from Camberwell to London Bridge.

This drama was balanced by detailed technical work. The Society, noticing that the council list was out of date, compiled a list of 400 historic buildings in Camberwell and got down to detailed scrutiny of planning applications. When Addington Square was scheduled for demolition as part of the expansion of Burgess Park, the Society argued to preserve these listed buildings. Its campaign persuaded Southwark



*“I’m not sure, but I think it’s the new gents for Southwark Town Hall”*

*By courtesy of Jak and the Editor of the Evening Standard*



*Campaigning for the Bakerloo line to come to Camberwell started in the 70s*

to designate the square as a conservation area and the GLC to exclude it from the park.

A campaign to extend the Bakerloo line to Camberwell started and continued until it was rejected in 2017. The winning scheme to take the tube down the Old Kent Road was delayed indefinitely by TfL in September 2020.

At this time the Newsletter concentrated mainly on planning. But the Society also worked to develop a Camberwell festival. And established a shop selling local crafts at 21 Church Street. At one of its frequent public meetings a speaker from the local police, Chief Inspector Durston of Carter Street, opined that Camberwell was noted for its characters, but had as many officers injured as in Soho with two or three officers off sick at any one time with their injuries. The main crime was theft carried out by local teams of housebreakers and we had the highest incidence of vehicle-taking

in London “almost all by under 16s”.

### **Easing the impact of the awful 80s**

The Eighties saw the Camberwell Society enter its second decade with 600 members. It also witnessed EPIC (Estates Property Investment Co) finally obtain planning permission for the scheme which is the genesis of the Butterfly Walk we have today – but for how much longer?

EPIC began to assemble the central site in 1969. It did not finish until 1981, and then only after Southwark Council compulsorily purchased the Golden Lion Pub from Watney’s with its statuesque Lion statue... (more later).

The Society had by then saved Jephson Street and Wren Road from demolition, with the site recognised in Southwark’s emerging Local Plan. A working party was established which met regularly and fed its

comments into the scheme. In 1984, the Society was represented at the turf-cutting ceremony.

It suggested the name ‘Butterfly Walk’ and encouraged landscaping by the car park. It was a notable supporter of MacDonald’s when Southwark sought to deny planning permission to occupy a unit.

Alongside this development, in 1981, Southwark Council decided to sell the Selborne Estate it had compulsorily purchased over the previous 14 years for redevelopment. Instead of a Frederick Gibberd-



*Butterfly Walk site with the Golden Lion pub on the corner*





*Jill Westwood and Billie Densumbe represent the Camberwell Society at the turf cutting ceremony initiating the Camberwell Green shopping centre on 9th July 1984*

designed social housing scheme, the site was sold to Wates Built Homes. It proposed low-rise private housing which was built later in the decade.

Because of housing subsidy cuts to Southwark from Margaret Thatcher's central government, the 'Selborne Sell Out' as it became known, was considered the right decision by The Society which was keen to end the blight caused by the presence of a demolition site in central Camberwell.

In July 1983, Society chair Jeremy Bennett officially opened the development at Selborne. He unveiled the Golden Lion statue transplanted from its old perch on top of the former pub to a new plinth. He expressed collective sorrow that there were no council dwellings on the site to enable former residents to return.

Other notable achievements included promoting a motion for the Mary Datchelor buildings to be included in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area – accepted in March 1980, before the girls' school



*Two well-known Camberwell landmarks: Jeremy Bennett, Chairman of the Society, unveiling the Golden Lion, former sentinel of the now demolished pub of the same name, transmogrified into the guardian of the new Selborne Village*

closed in July 1981.

This was timely, as it saved the building from demolition. And allowed The Society soon after to welcome Save the Children Fund to make the old building its headquarters.

The 1980s saw the Society open a shop – or rather shops for short-term periods before redevelopment. This was not common in the early 1980s and in a number of premises, the Society widened its membership and improved its financial position – partly by selling its recently-produced Blight Survey.

The 1984 Public Property – Public Waste revisited the subject. A survey of empty properties in Camberwell demonstrated how much the council was losing in lost rents and council tax – not to mention its ever-increasing housing waiting list. In 1985 one memorable CQ contained articles from the three Southwark MPs – one from each party – on Southwark's Housing Problem. It helped to show importantly the publication and the Society were viewed from Westminster.

Camberwell Green was a roundabout in the 1980s, with a one-way system extending to Grove Lane and Daneville Road. Option 7 was originally suggested by the Society and the planning application for it was lodged by the GLC at the end of 1981.

It sought to direct traffic via a new road behind the Baths and enable the current minor cul de sac to exist in front of the Peabody housing estate. A new blight survey – this time on traffic – was tabled in the CQ, and a public inquiry took place in 1985. Yet the scheme in its totality as supported by the Society was abandoned, and only the closure of Danville Road and a reverse flow to Grove Lane was implemented. Further lobbying secured crossings and before long, the flow of traffic from north to south went as now via the west side of the Green. Through traffic was stopped on the east side past the Peabody estate.

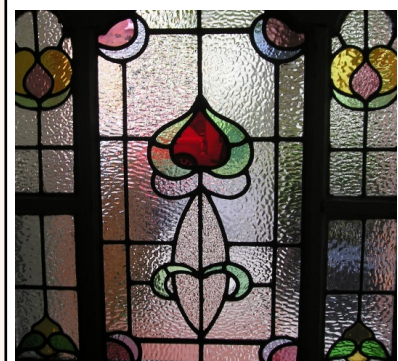
Following a fire in the Victorian Denmark Hill station, The Society struck up a partnership with British Rail to avoid demolition. Chair Jeremy Bennett found Firkin pub



entrepreneur David Bruce who opened the Phoenix & Firkin in the rebuilt structure.

Widely viewed as a unique public/private partnership, it won a civic trust award commemorated by a plaque unveiled by the Duke of Gloucester (an architect) in 1986. Meanwhile, below the pub, the tracks were carrying fewer trains that stopped in SE5. CamSoc (as it was becoming known) keenly lobbied for better services and was rewarded when the initial Thameslink services started in 1988.

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Support for further transport provision strengthened, with another rail station on the Walworth Road bus garage site proposed together with a bus interchange (*plus-ca-change*), and a campaign for a Bakerloo Tube extension to the Green.

However, all this was overshadowed by plans during the closing years of the decade to construct the Channel Tunnel rail link to Waterloo and Kings Cross via suburban rail lines and additional tracks in cuttings and tunnels under Camberwell.

The Society formed a working party to ensure members' views were represented with the Rethink the Link campaign, working closely with other affected local amenity societies.

At the end of the decade, King's College Hospital unveiled three options for the year 2000. Each would effectively double its size. Considerable concern about a worsening environment was spearheaded by The Society, as local authority cuts meant parks and street care was reduced, while the age of the car had increased traffic levels significantly across SE5.

The last CQ of the decade – still published in black and white – carried illustrations and photographs which had been progressively introduced during the CQ's of the decade – and was the first to have significant advertising from local businesses.

### Little let-up in the Never-ending 90s

A vigorous campaign to stop the channel tunnel rail link passing through Camberwell and Peckham grew in strength, led by PEARL, (Peckham Against the Rail Link), and the Camberwell Society. Victory, as always, came more through cuts in public spending than governments seeing the error of their ways.

Sadly, the cuts also cut short the ongoing campaign to bring the tube to Camberwell, which accompanied the fight to stop high-speed trains rushing through Warwick Gardens, and shaking up Peckham.

Back on bus-driven land, the battleground moved to Wells Way in the middle of the nearing-completion

at the home of a prominent member at breakfast time to urgently urge Southwark to develop a policy on development of mews back-streets.

The haste was caused by increasing numbers of applications to build on small plots, often in the back gardens of departing residents. There had to be some measures to prevent ad hoc inappropriate development. Committee chair Mick Westwood helped to draft a policy.

From small homes to huge commercial development followed in the next year. King's College wanted to sell its large and attractive sports ground on the lower slopes of Champion and Dog Kennel hills to supermarketiers.

Sainsbury's sought to build a huge

superstore on the site, which attracted much opposition – although a lot of vocal support came from Dulwich Hamlet FC fans. As part of its section 106 planning gain offer, it promised to build the club a new stadium to replace its neglected and crumbling ground. The Society was firmly against.

Almost 1,000 people packed the Albrighton Centre, most against, but the Council's planning committee gave it permission to build. The supermarket was built, as recorded in CQ. In 1993, campaigners were back on the track of seeking a railway station in Camberwell. Sadly, to no avail. Or no to a rail.

It was more successful in opposing toxic waste storage sites on Wells Way and Parkhouse St. And again in 1995 in fighting plans to close the pool at the leisure centre, repeated in 1996. Members also supported the allocation of funds to landscape Burgess Park.

Another victory came with a campaign to save houses in Windsor Walk threatened by a Maudsley development. But too many became outposts of the healthcare industry and most homes went. Right at the end of the decade, the first Camberwell Arts Week was held.

*Next issue Battles that shaped Camberwell, 2000 to 2020.*



Drawing by Linda Clark

### ARISE ST. GEORGE'S

Burgess Park. Officers and members sought to save St George's Church from demolition. The cover of CQ 104 carried a dramatic graphic of St George slaying the Dragon of Developers to save the church

In Winter of 1991, members of the planning sub-committee gathered



# Planner with a passion for Georgian Camberwell

*Jim Tanner* remembers Stephen Marks a modest man of great influence and achievements.

**S**tephen Marks, one of the foremost founder members of The Camberwell Society, died on 8 June at the age of 88. He was a towering figure in The Society's early and uncertain years. Yet he was a modest man, who never sought the spotlight.

His roles included chairing the first planning sub-committee while, at the same time, starting the Newsletter (forerunner of the Quarterly) as founding editor.

Both Shirley, my wife, and I worked closely with him; she on the planning sub-committee while I succeeded Stephen as editor of the Newsletter. We remember Stephen for his almost boyish enthusiasm for whatever it was he was doing, his quiet demeanour and the twinkle in his eye. It betrayed a singular sense of humour. He and Tordis, his wife, lived at 50 Grove Lane with their two children until 1978 when they moved to Somerset.

The Camberwell Society was founded in 1970 following the Civic Amenities Act 1967, which provided for the setting up of local amenity societies. All citizens within an area of interest were entitled to join and should have a voice in local council decisions. Councillors should listen to and respect the views of the amenity society.

The reality in Southwark was that the council did neither. It was overwhelmingly composed of old guard labour, whose members were convinced that the Society was full of professionals, only concerned with protecting the value of their newly acquired houses.

It was against this hostile background that Stephen, working with Shirley Tanner, strove to save a vulnerable network of streets of Victorian small terrace houses. That battle was lost. The council

was determined to demolish the entire area and replace it with a new council-built housing estate. But the irony was that it ran out of money and was forced to sell the site to developers Wates, which built the Selborne estate.

Stephen was passionate about the late Georgian houses of Camberwell, best demonstrated by the story that when the council gave permission for the wholesale demolition of the end of the Grove Lane terrace, ignoring the views of The Society, he and James Elliott broke into the demolition site at night to salvage



*Stephen and Tordis Marks*

architraves and beadings – only to be apprehended by the police.

Born in London on 24 April 1932 to Herbert Marks and Isobel Powys, Stephen's maternal grandfather was Albert Powys, secretary to the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), and the architect who oversaw the restoration and repairs to the National Trust Elizabethan mansion, Montecute House in Somerset. Stephen's mother, Isobel, was a pioneering architect who worked for a time for Clough Williams-Ellis at Portmeirion.

After school at Clifton College, Bristol, and a Classics degree at Queen's College, Oxford, Stephen enrolled at the Bartlett School of Architecture, headed by the classicist, Professor Hector Corfiato, whose teaching was based on the

Beaux Arts model.

As a result of his heritage and teaching, Stephen instinctively knew the right thing to do in any given situation. He believed that the best of the past was worth preserving. Thus his strong belief in the conservation and repair of old buildings, while maintaining a firm grip on the present.

Stephen was appointed deputy chief conservation officer for Westminster in 1968, beating more qualified applicants, probably because of his historical enthusiasms. With the new powers granted in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act, his team oversaw the formation of many large conservation areas and increased the number of listed buildings in the borough, with Stephen writing most of the reports.

As a planning inspector, Stephen presided over the Planning Appeal Inquiry into plans for an office block at Mansion House Square

in the City, designed by Mies van Der Rohe. Stephen recommended rejection of the appeal, which was agreed by the minister.

After the family's move in 1978 to Kilmersdon in Somerset, Stephen was instrumental in the creation of the North Somerset Coalfield Heritage Museum.

Nearer to home his influence has lived on. Julia Roskill made use of Stephen's original research as chair of the local United Reformed Church (URC) working party. This influenced the restoration of the end of the Grove Lane terrace, so shamefully demolished to make way for the original church.

*I owe thanks to many people, especially Kate Mackintosh for her obituary in The Guardian and Julia Roskill for her articles in CQ.*



## Beauty flutters by again

Camberwell Beauties returned to Camberwell after many years' absence this summer. The famous butterflies were once a regular sight in flight around parts of SE5 for two centuries. They virtually disappeared when paper mills, once an important local industry, closed more than half a century ago. *Jonathan Hunt reports.*

The new beauties were bred in London by James Frankcom, a teacher and amateur butterfly breeder from Spitalfields. "I thought Camberwell was the right place to release these two beauties," he says. "And I was advised that Green Dale Fields was the ideal place. It is the right habitat with good vegetation."

Some 35 to 40 mainly local people turned out to welcome them on Sunday 30 August. The first Beauty to be released from the laboratory jar flew into a nearby cluster of trees; but the second stayed around to be sociable, settling on human hands while photos were taken. However, butterfly lives are short and they may not survive for long unless they find a suitable place to hibernate. Hollow trees are favoured or roofs of buildings like factories that are warm.

In their heyday, when local papermakers imported huge logs, butterfly eggs were usually laid on arrival. They often have three batches. Many live in big green houses at temperature of 30deg. Soon after, the chrysalis hatches, turning into beautiful butterflies within a few weeks. But they do not mate until their hibernation ends. Soon after their eggs hatch, they die, and the process starts again.

Chrysalises have huge appetites compared to their delicate size.



*young Frances Scott meets a Camberwell Beauty*

Preferred food is flowers and nettles. They also love elm trees – but not whole ones.

Frankcom claims it is relatively easy to hatch butterflies, once the lava is obtained from specialist breeders. This has led to hopes by some locals that they could grow families of Beauties and restore a near-constant presence. Green Dale is already home to many rare species, and the butterflies are welcome to join them.

However, many species are unlikely to survive the building of 220 dwellings and a new football stadium on Green Dale, despite its protected MOL status.

"We are very grateful to James Frankcom for deciding to bring

his beautiful butterflies home to Camberwell", said Nick Mair, Chair of The Camberwell Society

The butterflies enjoy a long history. The first recorded sighting was in 1748 when two individuals were caught in Cold Arbour Lane (as it was then spelt). A few years later, in 1766, a publication called the Aurelian gave them the name Camberwell Beauty.

The butterflies became relatively commonplace in Camberwell when it was a centre of paper making. A number of paper mills were built close to the Grand Surrey Canal, on which large logs shipped from northern Europe and Scandinavia were transported. The canal extended to Camberwell in 1826 to serve the mills.

In some years, the creatures are blown from Europe (where they are called Mourning Cloak) by high winds. Sightings have been made on English east and south coasts including several this summer.

But apart from another breeding trial in the 1990s, Beauties have not made it to south London since the paper mills gradually closed after WW2. The famous Samuel Jones mill opened in the mid-19th century and grew into the biggest when Edward Jones acquired patents for making flat gummed paper in 1872.

### **Elizabeth Bukspan remembers Conrad & Marilyn Dehn** (Full obituary Autumn 2020 CQ 205 page 14)

Conrad introduced my sister Dominique and myself to the Camberwell Society and its members, all of them highly interesting and friendly people. We remember the delightful moments that we spent with Conrad and Marilyn when they invited us to many "Open Garden Days". It was a real discovery: as Parisians, we did not know that such events even existed! We spent a wonderful time visiting neighbours' gardens with them, then having tea, eating home-made cakes, chatting with their friends in their garden and buying and selling plants.

Conrad encouraged us to participate as much as we could in the activities of the Society, such as the Christmas Party. We had never done anything like it before and it was a heart-warming experience. Through the Society meetings we learnt a lot about Camberwell. It gave us a sense of belonging.

When we were settling in London, Conrad and Marilyn recommended that we buy a house not too far from theirs. They even helped us to choose it! Thanks to them, we still live in this house and we feel at home

Dominique and I always admired Conrad's wisdom. Particularly when, still in excellent mental and physical shape, he planned and did step down from the CS's chairmanship aged 80.



# Community garden is part of wildlife corridor

Today's Benhill nature garden is the result of careful planning, hard work, care and imagination. *Alison Kirby* explains its current ethos and fascinating history.

Following the arrival of cheap and reliable transport links in the mid-Victorian period, Camberwell was rapidly transformed from a rural village in Surrey, with an economy based on market gardening, into a densely populated suburb of London. Benhill Road was laid out across what had previously been open fields. The small terraced houses at its northern end suffered WW2 bomb damage and were cleared by the council as part of its 1956 redevelopment programme to build the Elmington estate followed by a 1961 extension to Brunswick Park School. A contemporary photograph and map show prefabricated houses on the site of what is now the Nature Garden. This was established in 1982 with the assistance of Friends of the Earth and the London Wildlife Trust following the demolition of the prefabs by Southwark Council.

The garden fell into disrepair until 2014 when the council, partnering with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and the London Wildlife Trust, restored it with input from the Elmington Residents Steering Group and Brunswick Park School. It is now a designated Local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation cared for by a group of local Friends, supported by TCV. The TCV group, which includes corporate volunteers, does five or six sessions a year and helps with heavier work such as path-making and pond maintenance.

The local Friends are a constituted group under the umbrella of the Brunswick Park Tenants and Residents Association and hold regular volunteering sessions on the third Sunday of the month. Currently on hold due to Covid-19, it is hoped they will start again soon. The group was founded by Benhill Road residents Anne Roache, who holds a qualification in ecology, and

John Turpin, a very knowledgeable plantsman and gardener along with Tony Atkins, who is also a member of TCV. No insecticides are used in the garden and compost is made on site. Asked about the benefits of volunteering, John highlights the social contact and getting close to urban nature. Anne mentions the positive feedback they get, such as the following Facebook post:

"I want you to know how wonderful I think this nature garden is. My toddler and I go every evening in the summer to connect with nature

area, which has a living willow teepee as its centrepiece. Groups of schoolchildren use it for nature study. Others come for some peace and quiet or to read a book and recently it has been a popular location for friends to meet up safely outdoors. Some visitors are curious about nature, and the information boards help them identify the various species of plants and animals that have made a home there.

Anne says the garden is an important part of a corridor for urban wildlife, linking up with private gardens and the nearby Brunswick and Burgess Parks. She is a member of the Southwark Nature Action Group, which support and promote corridors and green routes throughout the borough.

The garden was carefully designed to provide spaces for a range of habitats, with an emphasis on native species. The pond is home to frogs, toads, dragonflies damselflies, water boatmen and many other aquatic insects. There is a stag

beetle loggery, a dead hedge for invertebrates, a wildflower area (under which foxes have excavated an extensive earth), bat boxes and a range of native trees, including hazel, willow, apple and cherry. Some of these have survived from the gardens of the houses which were previously on the site, as traces of history. There is also an old telegraph pole which served the houses, and poignantly, a Strawberry Tree planted in memory of the victims of the 2009 fire in nearby Lakanal House. One of the children who died had been a pupil at Brunswick Park School.

*To join the volunteers for future work sessions, follow the group on Facebook: [benhillroadnaturegarden](#) or Twitter: [@BenhillRoadGdn](#), or look for updates on the information board in the garden.*



*Friends founders Anne Roache and John Turpin in the garden by the Soukop mural*

and it's so special! He picks apples, examines snails and balances on the wooden logs. We don't have a garden, so it has been amazing."

On the wall of Brunswick Park school hall facing the garden is a large mural created in 1989 by sculptor Willi Soukop RA for the newly built Elmington Estate. When parts of the estate were demolished it was moved to its current location. Soukop took his inspiration from the poem *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* by Robert Browning, who was born nearby in 1812 in Rainbow Cottage, Cottage Green.

The garden is much valued and well used by the local community. Exercise regulars include weightlifters and yoga enthusiasts, and children enjoy the natural play



# Cream of the Eclair

Jonathan Hunt reviews *Older and Wider a Survivor's Guide to the Menopause* Quercus Publishing £16.99 by Jenny Eclair.

Having known Jenny Eclair for a few years, I feel I can rightly describe her as that Funny Woman. As we are in the world of the Rising Pun, you may choose your own choice of meanings.

I have just read, even more than most reviewers normally do, her new book. And feel honour bound to say it is one of the funniest I have read for a long time. On a rough count, I burst out laughing on at least every third page.

She describes *Older and Wider* as a woman's guide to the menopause. Without knowing quite why it was called Men – O Pause (pause from what, one asks), it is just as useful informing the male of the ageing species about what happens to the women in their lives, at just about the same point as our hairline is receding, belts have to be let out by a notch or three, jowls are less jolly, and the ability is gone to score six times a night – on or off the footie field.

For Jenny happily comments about men under the letter O, Other Halves, in this alphabetical volume of 26 sections. So, A starts it all off by asking: A: Are you're sure you are menopausal? Each section begins with a witticism by JE, some of which are listed in the panel above.

She also lists ten top tips for we males to help the Mrs through it all. Although there are many (mainly justified) moans about men, she accepts that most men "in their forties and fifties are quite well sussed these

days. They've got the Internet. It's not like the 1950s when a chap didn't really understand what went on in his wife's pretty little head – never mind under her frilly nightie."

Speaking of which, V unsurprisingly stands for Vaginas. We are told these are an incredible and weirdly flexible part of the anatomy. As she continues with great medical detail about "the love tunnel" and the exact whereabouts of the wee-wee hole, I feel I should quickly turn to W for wardrobes.

But intrepid reporter that I am, having once mastered a range of technical topics to enable readers to know something about them, I read on, absorbing physical facts I would prefer not to have known. But I feel a bit more at home with her story about doing a telly ad for a respected brand of vaginal moisturising cream.

"What I hadn't accounted for was how often the ad was shown at peak viewing times," she says. Also, the angry Twitter. "Sometimes I got fed up and threatened to demonstrate the product with my knickers off."

Having been drawn to the chapter about sex, X-rated, which acts as a must-read magnet to most of us, I find that another advertisement to which Jenny objects is one for Viagra: "the last thing I'd want is the old man 'making love like a teenager again' -- all that fumbling about, missing the target area and worrying that mum may burst in. No thanks."

Advice on re-igniting your sex life



Photo  
Ray Burmiston

*'Who needs sex when you've got Twitter and knitting'*

*'My doctor told me to take up something twice a week to get my heart racing and my blood pumping – so I took up shoplifting'*

*'It's not until your children leave home that you realise quite how long a packet of cereal can last'*

*'I don't even know where to buy my clothes anymore – if I go into Top Shop everyone thinks I'm the store detective'*

*'Remember sex is cheap and it keeps you warm (mind you so does making your own soup)'*

rejects the candlelit bedroom "It's hard to relax when all you can think about is the curtains going up in flames and having to run out in the street with no clothes on."

For those for whom sex is no longer an active hobby, the K chapter deals with Knitting and other hobbies. As Jenny expounds, there is no point in fighting the craft hormone. Knitting ranks high, as the world divides into those who can crochet and me". Knitting is a "nice sitting-down hobby for ladies who want to do something with their hands apart from opening a biscuit tin fifty times a day".

Most readers will believe Jenny Eclair has found the ideal role for her hands. And that's to remain on the keyboard turning out humorous books of this quality.



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# Private space problems on major scheme

*Peter Cooke suggests alternatives for Butterfly Walk plans*

**R**eports about the planning application for the redevelopment of Butterfly Walk and its car park first appeared in issue 203 of CQ. I read with interest comments by local residents and the ward councillors. In the main, their concerns seemed to concentrate on the effect of the Blocks A and B which are to the south of the site and face Daneville Road.

I was also attracted by the history of the Tiger, Cock, Lion and Butterfly and the area described as Camberwell Lanes.

However, I noted that there was one objection about the flats in Block C which faced Denmark Hill, and the comment was that these flats did not have a 'private amenity space' as required in planning policies set out in the London Plan by the GLA and in the Southwark Plan by the Council.

The applicant's plans described these spaces as being 'private outdoor space', but looking at the proposal submitted as part of the planning application, (below) they are not 'private'. Neighbours could also use the space. As a resident you would need to cross the access used by your neighbours to be able to sit outside. Looking at the plan, it shows that your neighbours pass in front of your bedroom window, with only half-a-metre of roughened surface

to discourage them from getting any closer.

This proposal was made before the virus, but if it would be used now, how could you maintain social distancing? Residents would have to get up from sitting outside and go inside their flats every time a neighbour went by. I resolved to solve this puzzle.

My solution was that the 'private outdoor space' should open directly from the living room and kitchen, with access to the other flats gained by a central corridor with staircases in the flats themselves.

But would my plan comply with other requirements? I believe they would, as they are dual aspect and are above the minimum space standards for their internal size and for their balconies. The flat's living rooms and balconies overlook the roof above the shops; the council proposal was they should be a communal amenity space where children could play.

To the rear, near the existing flats, the Colonnades, other flats could be 'accessible' with private front gardens. I then considered whether this typical flat could be assembled into a development which local residents might consider appropriate for this setting?

The development would be 'L' shaped with 39 flats along Denmark

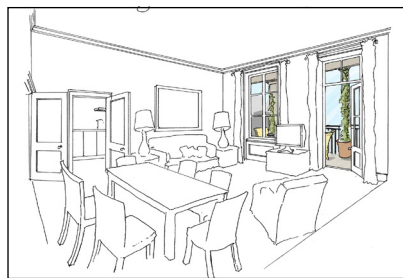
Hill, turning into Orpheus Street, allowing seven flats on each branch of the access from the lifts and staircase. Fifty flats in all. The sketch view below shows how this might appear.

From the Green this long elevation is broken up into parts, with the end nearest the Tiger pub having an entrance to the flats set back from the pavement. The corner at Orpheus Street would also be an entrance to the flats, and is shown resembling the entrance to the Palace of Varieties (Camberwell Palace Theatre) which used to stand on this site up until 1956. The flats behind rise to a similar height as the former Palace's fly-tower.

This may be considered too overt a historical reference; might more of a hint at what stood on the site be considered more appropriate? Equally the elevations may be considered too traditional; although what is shown follows that of recent developments in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. Other options for the elevations would be facing in sheet materials, or to be like the early Victorian Tiger pub next door. These should, I think, be prepared for residents for comment, as this is a significant site in the town centre of Camberwell.



*Applicant's visual of deck access walkway and balcony*



*Private amenity space accessed directly from the flat and access to the flats*  
(© 2020 ADAM Architecture)





# Council decision on Green Dale subject to inquiry

Protesters await report from leading lawyer over conduct of planning meeting.

**S**outhwark Council is taking seriously complaints from residents and Society members about a controversial planning decision -- and its conduct by planning chair Cllr Martin Seaton. It has appointed a top planning lawyer from leading international law firm Dentons to conduct an inquiry into the way Seaton conducted a meeting of the planning committee on 27 July.

It involved a joint application by Meadow Partners and Dulwich Hamlet FC to move the football stadium to Green Dale Fields. It was passed after a stormy meeting lasting five hours. Meadow, through a subsidiary, is seeking to build 219 new dwellings on the site of the current stadium by moving it on to Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). According to some estimates, it could profit by £100 million-plus from development.

The decision was followed by reports of improper behaviour by some members, and allegations about Seaton breaking a number of the council's code of conduct rules for members, and laws relating to the quasi-legal status of planning decisions.

These have come from a number of individuals as well as more formal submissions from recognised local bodies.

The Camberwell Society has written to London Mayor Sadiq Khan, to whom the application must be referred, asking him to reassess all the material considerations relevant to the planning decision, to ensure that sufficient scrutiny is given to the s106 obligation imposed on the original planning permission granted in 1990 to develop over King's College London's playing fields.

Although this legal covenant explicitly prohibits building over the existing football pitch for any purpose other than leisure, recreation or education, and the drafters of the 1990 obligation reasonably



*Committee Chair Martin Seaton*

considered the development of the Sainsbury's as exceptional, barely a moment was spent by the Planning Committee to consider whether further encroachment on open land was acceptable.

Planning committee members must also approach applications without prejudice and make their decisions based on the evidence presented at the meeting, both written and spoken. Cllr Seaton was reported for making a number of remarks such as "who could possibly object to this plan" which he obviously backed strongly.

The main objection was voiced by Phil Addison of Friends of Green Dale within the permitted three minutes, and by answering just two questions. But representatives of both applicants were allowed, quite legally, to speak for longer.

The controversial issue of building on MOL, the highest form of protection, the urban equivalent to the Green Belt, failed to cover several important factors. Although the stand and clubhouse bar would be on Other Open Land, a plan to build seven-step terracing all-round the MOL was ignored. These would need to contain 10ft walls, say protestors, to prevent people falling off the back.

Planning officer Wing Lau advised

that could be dealt with after the plan for the pitch received final approval. At the time of going to press, the approval had not been sent to the Mayor as the council was drawing up a covenant to protect the new stadium. Now it is likely to be delayed until the Dentons inquiry reports

Part of the meeting was dominated by Seaton interrupting ward councillors Peter John and Sarah King who were speaking on behalf of their residents against the scheme.

### **The Society's letter to the Mayor recites both case law and planning guidance which states:**

*"at the point of making a decision, members must carefully consider all the evidence put before them and be prepared to modify or change their initial view in the light of the arguments and evidence presented. Then they must make their final decision at the meeting with an open mind based on all the evidence."*

### **The Society says:**

*"there is no question that members .... did not base their decision considering all the evidence ....and ignored one of the most important issues.... worthy of long and careful debate."*

### **It concludes that:**

*"the resolution taken by the committee .... appears invalid in law." It asks the Mayor "to recover the application for his own determination.... applying the judicious balancing exercise required by law".*

However, a band of Hamlet supporters took a different view, demanding that the club name a new structure the Seaton Stand after his efforts on their behalf.



# Planning: a hotel, more hospital, even more flats

The Society looks at all planning applications for SE5 and significant developments for adjacent post codes. Owing to limited space only a few of the applications on which the Society has commented are printed here.

For the full list see: [www.camberwellsociety.org.uk/planning](http://www.camberwellsociety.org.uk/planning)

## Maudsley



The historic Maudsley hospital is seeking to re-develop some of its older low-level buildings and replace with three taller blocks ranging from five to eight stories at the de Crespigny Park end of its site. These would replace the Mapother House, Rutland Centre and the more anonymous Professional house, ageing structures.

But no development would be complete without a lucrative number of flats; 189 in this case. A benefit to the community would be a new footpath from de Crespigny to Denmark Hill station.

## Valmar



An exciting new mixed development in the centre of Camberwell received

the go-ahead in early October, despite some local objections. It is claimed it will bring artists and photographers studios, meeting rooms, an event space and an art-inspired hotel with 134 bedrooms.

Few residents know the Valmar Trading Estate, a somewhat run-down small industrial area between the shops on the west side of Denmark Hill and Camberwell New Road.

Versatile and creative uses will be provided on site, with commercial and employment floor space provided in the form of artists' studios, meeting rooms, photography studios,

The hotel is expected to provide artistic and creative influences, while place and home would be created through 47 residential dwellings, described as being of a high standard.

## Magistrates Court



An Isle of Man company that seeks to redevelop Camberwell Magistrates Court appears to need a lesson in geography. Criterion Capital's lavish brochure describes it as being "close to Elephant & Castle" and "lies at the heart of the area and community" (is that Elephant or Camberwell?).

It is supposed to be "ideal for young couples who want to live as well as work in Central London". Those who have ever appeared in the court – as accused or witness – will be surprised to discover the ground floor will have a generous amount of leisure space.

This level will also "be transformed into a contemporary co-working space equipped with everything for the modern-day freelance / work-from-home employee". The dock and witnesses' boxes space will be "transformed" (again) this time into "161 modern 1,2, and 3-bedroom flats". Planning permission has not yet been applied for.

Local concern has been voiced over the preservation of the Camberwell coat of arms displayed on the building. The large relief in the entrance, created by polish war time artist Tadeusz Adam Zielinski has been donated to the Polish Cultural Foundation. Young south London accused persons now must travel to Bromley to be tried, while older ones, with their lawyers, must go to Croydon.

## New applications

Among planning applications coming up for deliberation are:

- Changing bookmakers' shops to gaming places in two places: 14 Denmark Hill (20/AP/2706) and at 48-50 Camberwell Church Street (20/AP/2418)
- Telecom masts in two sites: John Ruskin St, with cabinets (20/AP/2372) and at McNeil Road (20/AP/2520)
- Redesign of approved extension: 85 Camberwell Road (20/AP/1813)
- Building new house in garden: 163 Camberwell Grove (20/AP/2634)



## Brothers in faith working together

In a corner of Camberwell, an imam and a vicar are fostering understanding and jointly tackling problems of the community. *Marie Staunton* reports.

It is a Tuesday afternoon before lockdown. The sun streams through the sanctuary cross cut into the wall of St Michael and All Angels Church on Wyndham Road. In the bright light, twelve women sit in a circle while their toddlers play in the middle. They belong to Mum's Space, a joint health project of the church and the mosque. Imam Abdulhakim Omotoso rushes in and grasps Vicar Jonathan Roberts by the arm. Both men beam and retreat to the back of the church to plan their latest interfaith project.

Their origins couldn't be more different. Omotoso is one of thirteen children from a farming family in Lagos State, Nigeria. Roberts is the son of a solicitor from Sutton. But both have an academic background. Omotoso holds an MA in Arabic Language and Literature. After teaching, he became an imam for Jama-at-ul Islamiyya in Nigeria. The mosque in Camberwell is affiliated to this organization, and when the congregation could not find a UK-based imam, Omotoso was called here.

Roberts set up the MA degree in Youth and Community Work at Teesside University. He was the National Youth officer for the Church of England. After placements in parliament and parishes in the North East, he joined the newly rebuilt St Michael's church as vicar and chaplain in 2014, also the adjoining Ark All Saints Academy. (See Alan Johnson's series on St Michael and All Angels School: [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0002snq](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0002snq)).

The new St Michael's is a striking modernist church based on a Japanese design. It won RIBA and Civic Trust awards when it was built in 2013. It has plenty of space for its diverse congregation of 500 that includes many worshippers of West Indian origin. By contrast, Camberwell mosque, founded by Nigerian students in the 1990s, has been operating out of a former pub since 2010. Now it has become too small for its diverse congregation of British, West African, West

Indian, Asian and North African origin. Planning permission has been granted for a new mosque on the site. Architect Shaheed Saleem, known for his reimagining of the British mosque, has done away with traditional minarets and domes in favour of a stunning geometric, almost cubist façade. "Just the fundraising for the building to do now," says Roberts, clapping Omotoso on the back.

The brothers in faith support each other. Roberts backed Omotoso's application to remain in the UK, pointing out to the Home Office the need for competent imams in the area. (He is a strong critic of the impact of the Home Office's hostile environment policy on his parishioners.) They focus on building mutual understanding between their congregations and the common challenges their members face: poor health, lack of decent housing, little support for young people. Some 28 per cent of the local population is under 25.

They worry that some of the 600 pupils at Ark All Saints are at risk from predatory drug dealers and gangs. Roberts praises the tenacity of the school's safeguarding team, its Tavistock-trained counsellors and the police officer attached to the school. One third of pupils are Muslim. Omotoso helps not only with spiritual matters, but also with Arabic GCSE studies. Roberts has recruited members of the mosque to the management committee of the Hollington Youth Club, which he chairs. They are working together to get it reopened. Omotoso's speech on parents' responsibility to teach youth



*Imam Omotoso and Vicar Roberts with models of St Michael's Church and the proposed mosque.*

*Illustration Jane Moxham*

morality, to understand the true spirit of Islam, to resist extremism and promote peaceful coexistence was well received by the 50,000 people who attended the Burgess Park Eid Festival in 2018. The mosque has weekly youth sessions on Sundays to which it invites a range of speakers – magistrates, academics from SOAS, the police – covering topics such as knife crime, terrorism and the law.

Mum's Space's weekly sessions were supported by volunteers from both the church and the mosque with King's hospital's Parents and Communities Together providing information for pregnant mothers and their infants. The group closed during lockdown. Now it plans to begin again in November.

Lockdown has been tough. Members of both congregations were anxious. Only a third of them had decent internet. St Michael's communicated through WhatsApp and email. Worship sheets had to be hand-delivered. The church and the mosque have been gradually reopening since September. At the Academy, the Vicar took on traffic warden duties to help 250 students enter the school safely. There is good news too, Roberts said: "Some parishioners who work in the care sector have miraculously got their Leave to Remain."



# It's a plane... It's a bird... It's the St Giles' falcon

Nick Elam says overflying aircraft are quieter than Camberwell's baby falcons.



A young Peregrine falcon on St Giles' Church  
photo Dr Michael Leary-Owhin

I was puzzled by the whole page letter in your last edition from *Plane Hell Action* suggesting that aircraft noise is a serious problem in Camberwell (their website says it is "fast becoming a nightmare"). I live in Camberwell Church Street, right on the eastern flight path to

Heathrow. Over the decades we have been here, aircraft noise has actually reduced – still more since Covid 19. Even the babies of the Peregrine falcons nesting in the tower of St Giles' make more noise. Before Covid, the noise from the planes was nothing like the levels suffered in West London. The sirens of emergency vehicles has been a more serious bother to us throughout our time here, as has other road traffic noise – not least the powerful cacophony of motorbikes ridden for effect.

The aircraft noise diagram that appeared with Ms Bell's letter was almost impossible to read, but it seemed to suggest that Camberwell was as badly off as Kew. That is wildly far from being the case. Nor do flights in and out of City Airport much affect us here. (And

flights out of Heathrow seem not to affect us at all.)

I am not sure what the agenda of *Plane Hell Action* really is; but it does not seem to have much relevance to Camberwell – certainly not enough to occupy the whole of your *Letters* page.

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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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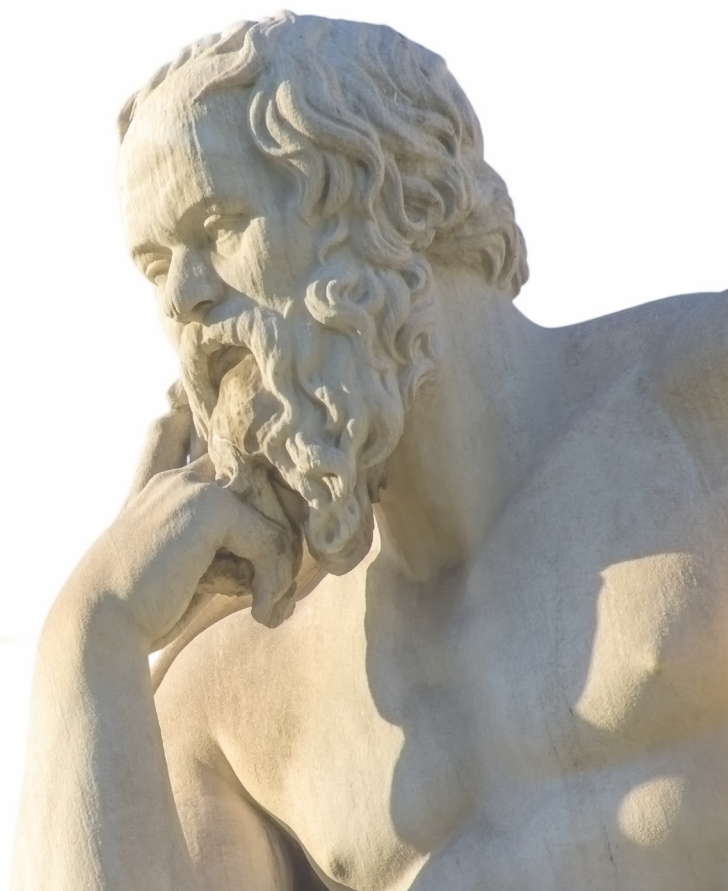
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