
CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY
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Would you like to get involved with any of the Societies' activities? In particular:

- Planning, (especially admin back-up)
- Parks and open spaces
- Publications and Website
- Events
- Traffic and Transport
- The Library consultation

If so, please contact Nick Holt

(contact details on inside back cover)

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY : MEMBERSHIP AND 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 – please contact the Secretary for dates. Members are welcome to attend as observers with prior notice to the Secretary, Paola Totaro (see inside back cover for contact details).

Sub-Committees on planning, traffic and transport, publications and local history form an important part of the Society's work and all members are welcome to involve themselves in areas which interest them.

GAZETTE OF LOCAL SOCIETIES, VENUES AND EVENTS

We recommend checking details

Brunswick Park Neighbourhood Tenants and Residents

Association Jason Mitchell 07985 548 544.

tandra.brunswickpark@yahoo.co.uk

Burgess Park, Friends of For meetings, events and updates on

Burgess Park improvements, www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk

Email: mail@friendsofburgesspark.org.uk

Butterfly Tennis Club www.butterflytennis.com

Camberwell Gardens Guild Membership enquiries to:

Pat Farrugia, 17 Kirkwood Road, SE15 3XT

Carnegie Library, Friends of See the Friends' tray in the

Library or email: foclchair@googlegmail.com

Cuming Museum, Old Walworth Town Hall, 151 Walworth Road, SE17 1RY. 020 7525 2332

www.southwark.gov.uk/DiscoverSouthwark/Museums

Dulwich Picture Gallery, College Road, SE21 7AD

020 8693 5254. www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Friends of the Earth Southwark Tim Atkinson

020 7358 9905. Email: southwarkfoe@btopenworld.com

Herne Hill Society Jeffrey Doorn 020 7274 7008.

Membership: Herne Hill Society, PO Box 27845, SE24 9XA

www.hernehillsociety.org.uk

Jazzlive Live jazz music every Friday night at St Giles' Church

Crypt, Camberwell Church Street, SE5. Admission £6, concessions £3. Cheap food and bar. Contact Les Alden 020 8693 5207. See www.jazzlive.co.uk for latest listings

Lambethans' Society See Brixton Society website

www.brixtonsociety.org.uk

Minet Conservation Association 020 7737 8210

www.minet.fsnet.co.uk

Nunhead Cemetery, Linden Grove, SE15. Friends of Nunhead

Cemetery (FONC) 020 8693 6191. www.fonc.org.uk

Peckham Society Peter Frost 020 8693 4001. Sunday 14 August,

2pm, *Peckham Walk* (Peter Frost), Meet at Peckham Rye Railway Station

www.peckhamsociety.org.uk

Ruskin Park, Friends of Doug Gillies 020 7703 5018

South London Gallery, 65 Peckham Road SE5. Open: Tuesday

to Sunday – 12pm-6pm, Monday – closed

www.southlondongallery.org

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).

The Society's new Chairman is welcomed . . .



Nick Holt

Nick Holt was elected unanimously as the new Chair of the Society at the AGM in May.

He paid a generous tribute to Jean Sackur, a former Chair, on her retirement from the Executive Committee and thanked her for all her years of work for the Society. He also thanked Sara Hargreaves, another retiring Committee member, for her service to the Society as well as all the continuing and newly elected members, upon whom the Society depends, for volunteering.

Nick was born in Hong Kong and educated at The Manchester Grammar School and Cambridge University, where he studied Law.

He qualified as a solicitor in 1982 and practised as a lawyer in the City and in Hong Kong, with leading UK and US firms.

For the last seven years Nick has been a specialist legal headhunter in the City. Married with three children, Nick has lived in south London for nearly 30 years, moving from Dulwich to Camberwell in 2004.

Nick has been the Co-Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee and a member of the Society's Executive Committee for the last six years.

In his spare time Nick likes gardening and he is a keen supporter of Manchester United.

Alex Blacknell is Vice-Chair.

. . . and the outgoing Chairwoman bids farewell

In Campaspe Lloyd-Jacobs's last AGM address as Chair, she mentioned some of the Society's achievements that had helped make Camberwell a better place, such as the reopening of the Baths, the Mary Datchelor development and passageway by the Grove Tavern which has now been given a name and declared a footpath and public right of way, thanks to the efforts of the sub-committee with Sergei Subotsky, Jeremy Bennett, Julia

Roskill and Nigel Haigh.

She also mentioned Burgess Park, which will be more or less shut from the end May to next spring as earthworks commence, and the URC plans which had been rejected on appeal thanks to the hard work of Julia Roskill, Liz Borowiecka and the committee.

On transport, Campaspe said the Society was still campaigning on trains, and although we will lose our direct link to London Bridge, we

will now have better connections to the north via Blackfriars. TfL has given £200,000 towards an analysis of how to improve the junction at Camberwell Green.

As for the Library, the Council is consulting on plans and Campaspe has asked that we be represented on any working party.

Campaspe said that anyone wishing to be involved with the Society should contact Nick Holt. *(See panel opposite.)*



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An inspiring and colourful Chair with a good line in hats

It's my role – a very pleasant one too, to say thank you on behalf of us all to Campaspe who, after five years, is retiring as our Chair. She's been an inspiring and I would say colourful Chair of the Society. Certainly she has the best line in hats of any chair that I can remember.

We all – members of the Society and Camberwell in general – have benefited greatly from her energy and enthusiasm.

She would be the first to say that working for the Society is a team effort, in which all members of the Committee pitch in to help the Chair fulfil his or her duties. However, certain events and issues stand out from Campaspe's five years as Chair.

The annual Open Gardens Day, in her front garden, has been one of the Society's events to which we all look forward. Campaspe has been the hostess and done much of the organisation, persuading members to open up their gardens so we can get a look at some of the hidden treasures of Camberwell, and organising the tea and cakes that end the afternoon. I'm very glad that she has agreed to continue on the Committee and I think she will be persuaded to continue her involvement with Open Gardens Day.

The pages of *CQ* during the last five years, thanks to the able editorship of first Sergei Subotsky and now Margaret Powley-Baker,



The best line in hats . . .

have recorded all the key events and issues in which the Society has been involved and in which Campaspe has played an important role, often behind the scenes.

Here are some of them:

The campaign to save and refurbish the Camberwell Baths, in support of Chris and Helen Owen and all those who played their part in the campaign. There is still more to be done, as we will hear, but what a success story so far.

Tree planting and keeping Camberwell green. Campaspe has been responsible for persuading the Council to plant more trees round Camberwell streets. She has had an open line to the Council's tree section and can be proud of her green legacy.

She has campaigned for the refurbishment of Windsor Walk – at

last beginning to happen, and when the refurbishment is complete, what a difference it will make to the approaches to Denmark Hill station.

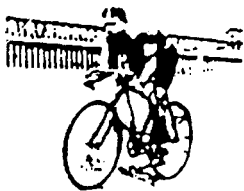
With Alex Blacknell, Campaspe has kept up pressure for better transport for Camberwell – rail and buses, not forgetting the very outside chance of an underground link.

And not forgetting Burgess Park – always a big and contentious issue where, as I know from personal experience, you get as many brickbats as bouquets. Here Campaspe has not been afraid to stick her head above the parapet.

Then there is the annual Christmas Party, which takes a lot of planning and organisation – last Christmas organised with spectacular success in the South London Gallery by Adam Woodward, Val Balleny and their team, with the Chair responsible for much of the behind-the-scenes coordination. I think we all look forward to the party, from the proceeds of which, in Campaspe's time as Chair, we have supported local charities; the Kid's Company and St Giles Trust to mention just two.

One personal thank you. Campaspe offered to be our pro-bono barrister appearing at the public inquiry in April 2006 into the new Mary Datchelor development. She appeared on behalf of the Working Party which had been set up by the Society, in collaboration

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In the Abbey for That Wedding!

with the Grove Lane residents and the Butterfly Tennis Club. She is not a planning barrister and for the days before the inquiry immersed herself in planning law. One morning during the inquiry I knocked on her door, carrying some of the documents which we needed for that day. A rather bleary-eyed Campaspe answered the door and in the car on the way to the inquiry she confessed to having had a very short night's rest. She had fallen asleep at 3am on her sitting room floor over her laptop swotting up on planning law.

At the inquiry there were three barristers, one of them a QC, appearing before the inspector but Campaspe was the one who caught the eye and the ear of the inspector. An awful development plan bit the dust when the inspector produced his report, much of the result due I think to the points made on behalf of local residents by Campaspe. The result you can see today may not be to everyone's liking but I can assure you it is a great deal more fitting for the area than the massive development originally proposed.

So thank you Campaspe for what you have done for the Society and for its members as its Chair over the past five years and for the years before that as a Committee member. We are pleased you are staying on the Committee. We wish you luck in your new career as a novelist.

Campaspe appeared at the beginning of June at the Hay-on-Wye literary festival talking about her first novel *Ophelia in Pieces* – an insight into the turbulent life of a 39-year-old female barrister – Campaspe swears this is not autobiographical. We hope it becomes a best seller. (See page 13.)

Her successor as Chair is Nick Holt. He has been on the committee for several years and was Vice-Chair for the last three.

Jeremy Bennett

Campaspe will be reading *Ophelia in Pieces* on 14 July, 70.30-9pm at Dulwich Bookshop, 6 Croxted Road, SE21. Tickets from www.dulwichbooks.co.uk

The message arrived while I was on the bus, a particularly crowded Number 12 from Westminster back home to Camberwell, to be exact.

It was April 11 and London was already in the grip of Kate and Wills fever, monuments scrubbed clean, spring planting in full bloom, a sea of Union Jacks ready and fluttering in the breeze. As European Correspondent for Australia's two major capital city dailies, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, Melbourne, I've had some pretty extraordinary experiences, among them flying from Rome to Sydney on Vatican I with the Pope, a mid-sea rescue of refugees off the coast of Libya, travelling Congo and Rwanda with the son of Warren Buffett, one of the world's richest men.

However this email eclipsed them all: "Do you want to be in the Abbey for the wedding? We should discuss! . . ." My response – "OMG w call asap am on the bus!" – is now in my email archive, marked "never to be deleted".

Back home, I immediately rang the email's author, Christopher Wyld, the Director of the Foreign

Press Association in London. A former BBC foreign editor, he explained that he had been asked by Clarence House to personally nominate three journalists – one from each of the three Commonwealth realms, Australia, Canada and New Zealand – for approval by the Royal Household. Prince William had visited all three nations and the young couple had decided at the last minute that a representative from each country should be invited to join the 25 UK reporters covering the nuptials in the Abbey.

And so it was that less than a fortnight later, your lucky correspondent (thanks again Christoph!) found herself in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey at the Wedding of the Century. Wearing vertiginous heels and a fabulous hat (which, just quietly, I found in a charity shop in the Cotswolds for five quid), I spent the morning in a fever of clock – and Royal – watching. Australia is nine hours ahead of GMT and the presses in both cities had been kept open and waiting for me – a scary and costly decision which is more often taken for war or mass disaster.

I will never forget seeing Prince Harry whisper, "Wait till you see her," as Kate walked up the aisle, nor the affectionately shared joke between William and his soon-to-be father-in-law. I still giggle at the man behind me who observed that Elton John looked like he was wearing a "hairy fascinator" and the sniffy lady in front who ascribed the Princesses Eugenie and Beatrice's choice of hat to "that mother".

It was an amazing, amazing day.

Best of all, our first editions – out before the young couple had kissed on the balcony of Buckingham Palace – were the first off the presses the world over. Indeed, by the time my English colleagues were back at their desks filing their stories, my day was done – and I was enjoying a champagne with my Camberwell neighbours in the mews behind Grove Lane.



Paola is pictured outside the Abbey

Paola Totaro

Transport update

Despite the efforts of the Society and others, the south London train service will be withdrawn in 2012.

As previously reported, there will be a welcome expansion of possible travel destinations from Denmark Hill.

However, the Society has on many occasions expressed its concern about the reduction in direct services to Victoria. It has welcomed Network Rail's objective to have four direct services an hour to Victoria, but in the absence of a firm commitment or timescale it has written to the Minister for Transport and the Mayor of London to ask them to deal with the matter urgently so that the current level of services to Victoria will be maintained despite withdrawal of the South London Line.

Without prompt action it appears that the direct services from Denmark Hill to Victoria will be reduced to two an hour, with possibly none during evenings and weekends.

The Society has copied its letters to our local MP, Harriet Harman, and Assembly Member Val Shawcross to ask for their support.

Alex Blacknell

Works start on Denmark Hill station



Representatives of the Society attended a stakeholders' update meeting at Denmark Hill station on 1 June and as you can see from the picture above, works have finally started. The first noticeable impact on passengers will be the presence

of a temporary footbridge while the original Victorian footbridge is restored. This will mean that between July and October the entrance to the station platforms will be from Windsor Walk via the temporary footbridge.

Bogus roofers about – be warned!

It has been reported that there are bogus roofers around, trying to get onto roofs, either to strip lead, or get into a home from the attic or roof entrance. A common ploy is to say that they have been on your neighbour's roof and have seen that you have missing tiles or slates or a dangerous chimney pot. One one elderly couple said they had been asked for £1,500 in advance.



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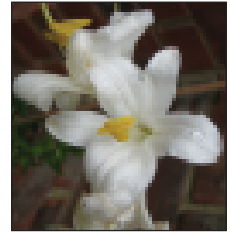
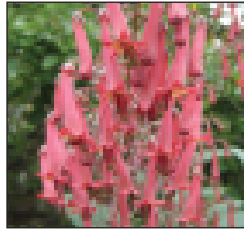
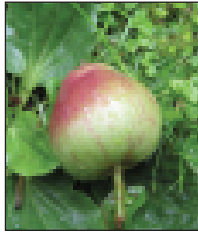


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On an English summer's afternoon . . .

In spite of a wet and chilly afternoon, a surprisingly large number of members took refuge under umbrellas and visited the gardens on show this year. After a fairly slow start, when some exhibitors assumed it was too wet for visitors and temporarily “shut up shop”, the showers eased off for a time and the afternoon managed to raise £350 for St Giles Trust, our Charity of the Year.

There were fewer gardens on show this year, mainly because owners felt their best blooms were over, thanks to the warm and sunny spring. But as you can see from the pictures on this page, there were still some spectacular sights to view.

The Society would like to thank all those who so kindly opened their gardens and hung around in the cold and damp to welcome those who braved the rain. Thanks are also due to the stalwarts on gate duty and all those who helped with the teas, plants and raffle tickets.



Number forty nine – an architectural experience

“... and can boast of many respectable houses, inhabited by citizens of property, who retire thither for air and recreation. Camberwell Grove is a pleasant outstanding walk continued along an ascent of about half a mile.”

London and its Environs – the General Ambulator 12th edition, 1820

Our beloved and notable Grove is indeed always a pleasant experience, up or down, and we enjoy by virtue of the embowerment a sense of harmonious urbanity. We are beguiled by the arboreal and think that behind it there lies a consistent Georgian architecture. Upwards from McNeill Road, ignoring the perverse single lane bridge intervention, things change radically – past the reasonable post-war flats we move into a stucco era, on both sides, somewhat more grandiose than the lower reaches. Downwards from the bridge, the buildings that line the Grove, imagined as unified, are really quite diverse, from singles to groups. For example numbers 92-72 form a single monumental composition, not street architecture at all but demanding an axial approach, whereas numbers 60-38 is as a sequence of pavilions. On the opposite side numbers up to 91 might be regarded as typical Georgian street architecture, sort of

anonymous. There are separate villas as well.

Despite the diversity there is a unity of materials; brick and sash windows and good proportions, a fairly consistent scale between three and four storeys, parapets rather than eaves.

No doubt there have been many internal changes over the years as new owners with or without architects have pummelled their spaces into new formats, for better or for worse, though now our vigilance and that of conservation officers ensures respect, hopefully tinged with imagination.

Once there were more two-storey houses, now few are left, but number 49 is a survivor close to the archly named Ribbon Dance Mews (one wonders – did the ribbon makers celebrate with a ritual dance at the annual Camberwell Fair?)

Externally, number 49 stands down rather than out but internally it is outstanding.

The narrow front has a pair of first-floor sash windows, symmetrically placed, and below there is the front door with one adjacent larger sash window, (glazing bars of course). This façade is a remodelling of an earlier remodelling, proper ordinary stuff!

Was there a tiny Georgian interior within to be cherished – no way! Built around 1787 as a small family house it had been knocked around over the years, converted to a

cobblers and other shop uses with an extension to the back of pavement!

Knocked off it went back to a house but internally nothing to respect.

In 2008 the new owner (now single) decided to gut and rebuild to suit his retirement. With no “planners” objecting and a clear idea of his future lifestyle, and embracing his architect, John Eger, he committed himself to the modern in all respects, aesthetically and technically.

It is a radical living plan with flowing spatial relationships (an essential of the modern) extending to the garden. Modelled space and form, varied natural lighting and surprising prospects – all convenient but withal poetic. And with a discreet but formidable services back up – green as the envy one feels for such a liveable entity which, though specifically designed for one, its unusual format could well suit an unprejudiced couple.

The Grove presents an axial experience and the house echoes this, for on entering and proceeding there is a discernible axial experience through the house and to the end of the garden, some 42 metres. There are no rooms only what I would call zones through which the architectural experience extends including through the subdivided garden.

Zone 1 is the entrance space which can be formed into a small room by virtue of a precision, soundproofed sliding folding screen. Then Zone 2 where to the right a curved fine oak stair wraps round a cylindrical glass structure which (surprise! surprise!) is a one-person pneumatic lift, a real smoothie to the first floor.

Through on the left to Zone 3, the kitchen/dining space. The linear kitchen on the left, comprising all that is needful with high quality Ikea components. Space expands on the right for the dining area. Here there is a lot of natural light from above as well as windows which include glazing into a small fulsomely planted small courtyard. A most charming feature which also forms



High-quality components provide everything needed in the kitchen/dining area



A fine oak staircase wraps around a cylindrical glass structure which is a one-person lift

one side of the link space to the last zone and off which opens the bathroom, also with a breather into the green courtyard.

Zone 4 is a sitting room by day with glazed doors to the garden but at night it can be transformed for sleeping by a generous bed which magically comes down and out.

Here tidiness is at a premium and I suspect Mr Cooper follows the rule: put it back, do it now!

Into the garden there follows a sequence of zones, each with specificity. First outside eating, next horticulture followed by a walk-through shed, a deep and a shallow cupboard with passage between, another space and one faces a screen with central opening beyond where, set back, a polished stainless steel monolith delightfully ripples with falling water, then follows a simulated grass area (overhanging trees inhibit the real thing) then the coda where, with table and seating, summer evenings' last sunlight can be enjoyed.

From front door to rear wall 42 metres offer a magical experience. Among other things architecture is about movement through space and

should you choose to go above you can experience tight enclosure in the lift and then expansion into open space, or take the fine curving oak stair, an alternative spatial experience (without handrail, mistakenly in my experience as, apart from security, well designed handrails can offer a sense of the tactility of the building).

The first floor is of necessity smaller, following the front and rear lines of the original building. From arrival the rear space is a high-ceilinged comfortable sitting "room" which offers garden views and beyond to the churchyard, and to the left the masonry intricacies of the St Giles steeple, particularly when esconced on a long settee which is backed by a display wall cunningly made of sliding panels that open up to reveal well-filled book shelves.

Well lit by the garden-side windows there is also opposite, in the ceiling, a cunningly contrived roof light which doubles up on a periscope principle and diurnally displays the westering sun. Needless to say there are discreet state-of-the-art home entertainment facilities for sight and sound.

From the space on the Grove

side the view extends over to the saved tennis courts and beyond; the ceiling here is lower and, by another quality sliding screen, the room can be separated to provide, in today's parlance, a work centre with all that is needful for contemporary life at the cutting edge as is, unmentioned so far, the very discreet in-built servicing of the house.

Naturally there is mains water and "soil" drainage, electricity and, of course, the high level of insulation now demanded by Regulations. But the underfloor heating is served, not by inefficient boilers but by an air source heat pump (reverse refrigeration). This steals heat from the air, uses little electricity which a smallish array of solar voltaic panels provides as well as feeding back into the grid. Storage for rainwater is provided and this is used for flushing and for clothes washing (some green pundits aver that owing to the many hard surfaces we now build it would be better to have soakaways to return rainwater to our depleted aquifers). These state of the art systems are under sophisticated control and

Continued on next page

Number forty nine – an architectural experience

Continued from previous page

monitoring instruments.

The interiors speak quality, decoration is inherent in the materials and embellishment, furniture, fitments, pictures and artefacts are in harmony – a consistent order, life enhancing – can one say more?

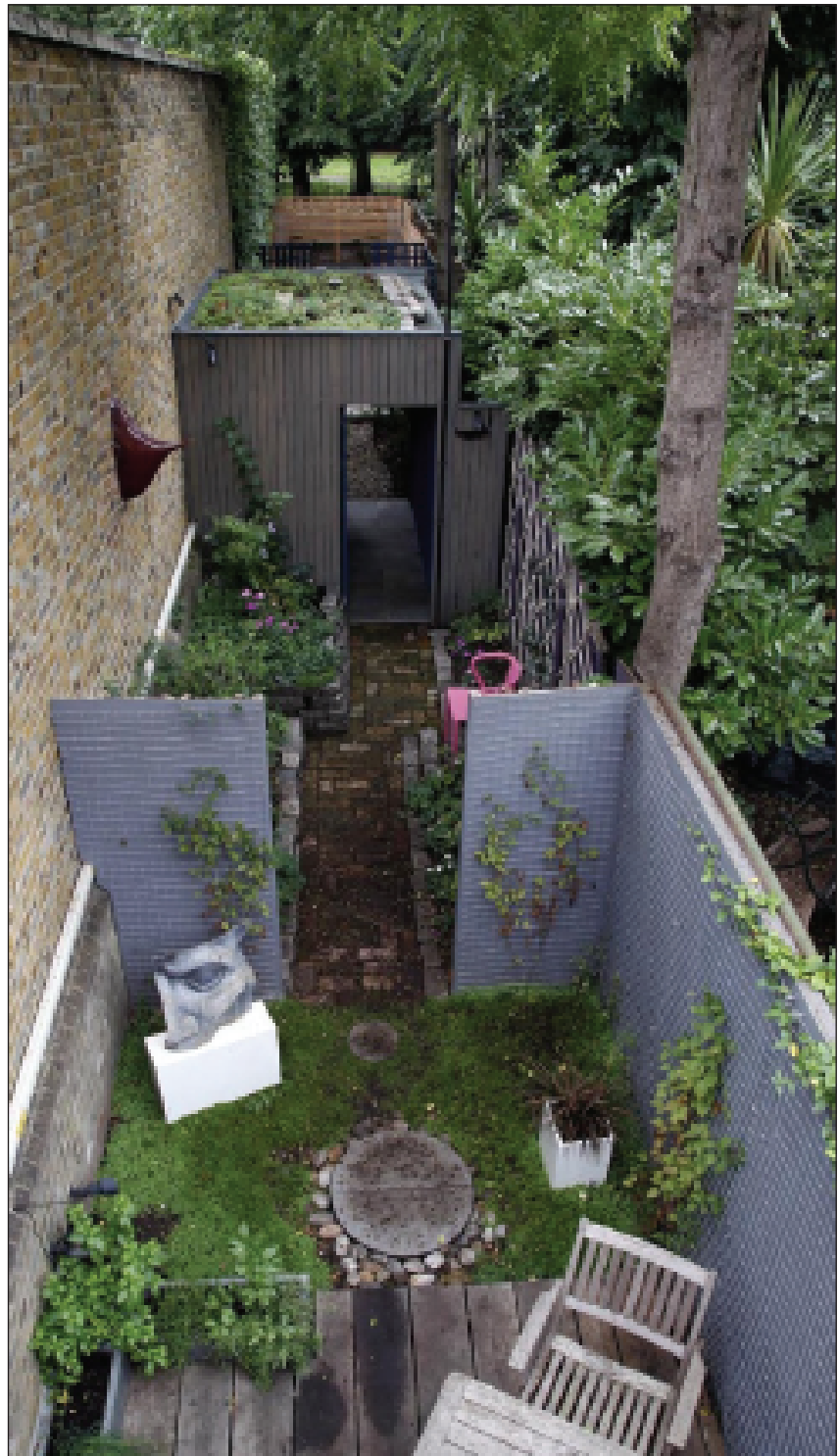
Encountering the house I felt I had to speak out for the often criticised profession, for here is living example of the richness that architects can achieve, offering technique and comfort hand in hand and at a more sublime level the poetics of space, form and light.

My own view is that behind every distinguished building, as well as a good architect there is a good client who cares and supports the creative process: such a situation is exemplified at number 49. The level of thought, knowledge, study and skill is impressive. I have only one cavil: while in some buildings I quite enjoy fronts that belie contents my old architectural philosophy craves here for consonance between interior (thoroughly modern) and exterior (placidly conformist). More thought perhaps but more agro “heritage wise”. Perhaps that was the thought that neutralised the elevations.

Enough said: wait for the autumn and Open House and see for yourself.

TD

The garden follows a sequence of zones: eating, horticulture, storage, a water feature and finally a sitting-out area



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An ancient craft to restore or create stained glass features

Near Loughborough Junction, in a building painted with snazzy graffiti, are found 20 or so spaces for artists in different media. Whirled Art is a complex of studios, some closed, others open-planned.

Here Angi Driver creates stained glass windows and also unusual and attractive looking-glasses. She derives a great deal of satisfaction from being a notable renovator of old, worn out, cracked or broken stained glass in front door panels and other windows.

She came to her craft when, as a housing officer casting around for a hobby, she joined, in the East End, a short course in the method. She then spent several years learning the craft under the tutelage of her teacher, Sheena McKinley. She tells me about her skills as we sit in the private cinema of the complex. Overhead, passing trains punctuate the quietly creative atmosphere.

Her projects, which are usually for people's homes, are influenced more by the work of secular artists such as William Morris and Marc Chagall than by the ecclesiastical tradition established during the Gothic epoch. However, she explains that, while the glass used has changed in modern times, the creative process has altered very little since the mediaeval period.

The lead, for instance, which when cut and shaped, holds the pieces of glass together in the

windows, comes from long pieces called "cames", a corruption of the Latin for reed. The craftsmen of old would fill a trough with sand, lay a reed along it to form the "heart" of the lead and pour in the molten lead. Even the expressions for the tools evoke Middle English: a "fid" (used for many things including to "dress" the lead). She has to "groze" the edges of the glass pieces with special grozing pliers; an oyster knife helps slot glass pieces into place.

A clear, attractive explanation of the method of making a window may be seen in detail on Angi's website: www.angidriver.co.uk It is well worth a visit. The assembling of the different components reminded me of doing very difficult jig-saw puzzles.

The expression "stained glass" originally referred to a type of glass painting, but now the term is used for glass that is coloured in its manufacture. Many traditional glass colouring techniques have changed, often because they were considered too carcinogenic, and some old textures of glass are no longer available. Angi is able, however, to source any colour required from her coloured glass suppliers in west London.

Angi's commissions are site-specific. In other words, no two designs are the same (unless duplicated within a work as exemplified by the image of her

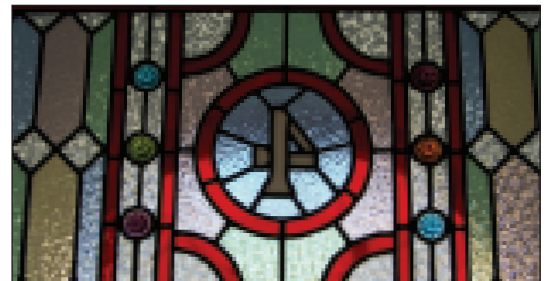
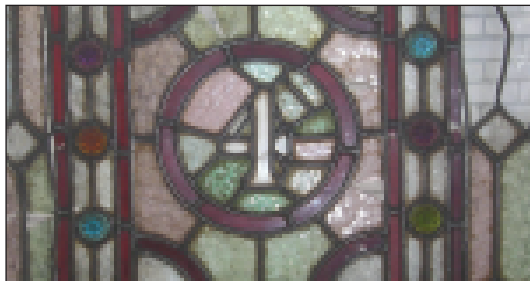
lovely tulip window). Many Victorian and Edwardian houses have original stained glass features and today the fashion is to restore vernacular detailing and create a sense of a past aesthetic or, sometimes a modern design including a motif special to the home owner. Her approach, evidently appreciated by her clients, is to fully involve them in every decision, creating designs or showing them pattern books to help draw up an initial sketch, showing glass samples of what colours are available (most popular are the deep reds and blues) and if they wish, to "colour" the drawing themselves, she will reproduce as precisely as possible what they desire in colour tone and in design, whether figurative or abstract.

She has a tip for improving the look of old stained glass windows. Take ordinary grate blacking polish and with a soft shoe brush, spread a small amount over the entire surface of both the glass and the lead framework. Rub gently until the glass is clean and the lead burnished. The blackening of the lead will give an added dimension and enhance the colour and the glass.

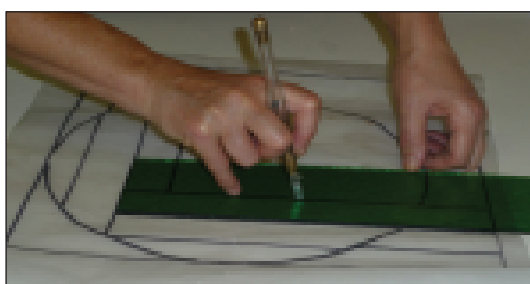
Cathy Brooks-Baker

Angi offers short weekend courses. Cost: one-day, £80; whole weekend, £175. (Materials and lunch are included.)

Top row:
pictures show a
panel before
and after
treatment



Bottom row:
(left) Cutting
the glass;
(right)
Finishing off



Robert Browning's schooldays

Poet Robert Browning, who was born at Rainbow Cottage, Camberwell, "attended a species of dame-school" in "very early boyhood" according to G K Chesterton. Afterwards he attended a weekly boarding school in the High Street, Peckham.

In *Robert Browning and His World: The Private Face* Maisie Ward wrote: "Browning became, at eight or nine, a weekly boarder in a school of which the junior part was taught by the Misses Ready and the senior by their brother the Reverend Thomas Ready.

"Alfred Domett, later one of Browning's closest friends, had two older brothers who were his schoolfellows, and one of them remembered young Browning in a pinafore of brown Holland such as small boys used to wear in those days. Six years older than Browning, he recalled how they 'used to pit him against much older and bigger boys

in a chaffing match to amuse themselves with the little bright-eyed fellow's readiness and acuteness of repartee'."

Maisie Ward continued: "But to Browning the weekly boarding spelt undiluted misery . . . Time softened the pain of the endless weekly exile, but not the intense dislike of the school." Browning spent "five or six years in the school." . . . "At thirteen Browning was still at the Ready school."

In *Companion from London to Brighthelmston* James Edwards wrote about the High Street, Peckham, and South Street (later renamed Rye Lane). He stated: "On the left* is a neat house, in possession of Mr. Ready, who keeps an academy here. At the back of which is a Anabaptist meeting house." [**ie the north side of the High Street*]

In *Life and Letters of Robert Browning* Mrs Sutherland Orr stated:

"As an older child he was placed with two Misses Ready, who prepared boys for entering their brother's (the Rev Thomas Ready's) school; and in due time he passed into the latter, where he remained up to the age of fourteen . . . His attendance at Miss Ready's school only kept him from home from Monday till Saturday every week." . . . "Mr Ready's establishment was chosen for him as the best in the neighbourhood; and under that gentleman's sisters, the young Robert was well and kindly cared for."

Edward Dowden wrote: "After the elementary lessons in reading had been achieved, he was prepared for the neighbouring school of the Rev Thomas Ready by Mr Ready's sisters. Having entered this school as a day-boarder, he remained under Mr Ready's care until the year 1826."

John D Beasley

Father Brown's creator

G K Chesterton is nowadays read a great deal less than he used to be, but he still has a devoted following of admirers, some of whom study his work in great depth. Perhaps the most widely read of his writings today are the Father Brown stories.

Father Brown himself is portrayed so vaguely as to be almost colourless, despite the astonishing insights into human nature that he brings to bear on the solution of crimes. In the story *The Eye of Apollo* we learn (for the only time) that his initial is "J" and that he is at

the time "attached" to the church of St Francis Xavier in Camberwell. So much for that; he turns up in all sorts of locations in the context of the stories.

However, there is another interesting connection which I noticed when first I came to Camberwell. In the story *The Strange crime of John Boulnois*, which is set in the Oxfordshire countryside, the victim is Sir Claude Champion. Many readers will realise that, although the setting of the tale is totally removed from London, Chesterton must have taken the

name from Sir Claude Champion de Crespigny, who gave his name to both De Crespigny Park and Champion Hill.

It may be that this is well known to Chesterton scholars, who can shed more light on his attraction to the area.

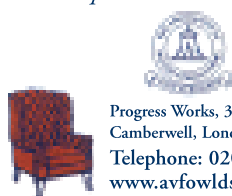
Suffice to say that, to my knowledge, he was the author of a book on Browning, who was, of course, born in Camberwell, and also that he was prone to referring to Camberwell in his journalism and essays more frequently than one would expect – he uses the district very often when making a generalisation about Londoners or "ordinary people" in the same way that one might have said, "the man on the Clapham omnibus".

This is not perhaps very much to go on, but I think that G K Chesterton must have had an interest or fascination in Camberwell that I, at least, was unaware of.

M A K Duggan

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Recent books by Camberwell Society members

Ophelia In Pieces

By Clare Jacob

Short Books

£12.99

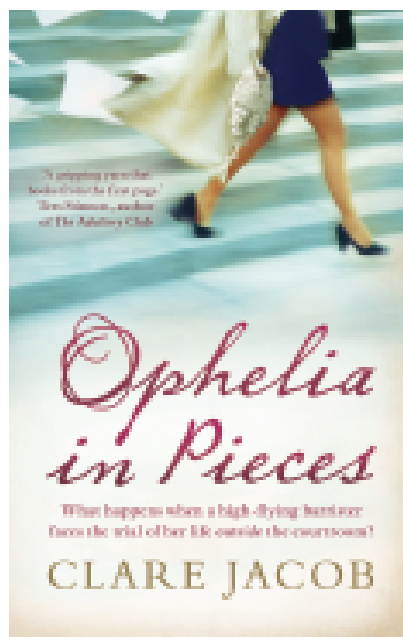
This book will strike a particular note with every woman who has ever tried to juggle home life and career.

It is the story of Ophelia Dormandy, an overworked barrister who, as the story begins, resolves to try living a more normal existence. She decides to go home early and cook a special dinner for her husband Patrick.

Ophelia lives in Camberwell and as she shops on Church Street for some of the ingredients for the skate and caper dinner she hopes to create that evening for Patrick, she dreams of the perfect evening ahead.

She plans to wear the red dress that Patrick used to say he liked so much. They will eat in the garden and enjoy the warm late June sunshine.

Their ten-year-old son Alex will be tired after his rugby and will go to bed happily, allowing his parents some time to themselves. It was



going to be a lovely evening.

Only it didn't turn out that way. Ophelia learns that Patrick has been having an affair with his secretary and from that moment on her life starts to fall apart. Patrick moves out and Ophelia struggles to cope alone and has trouble making ends meet. She drinks too much and suffers with feelings of guilt as work forces

her to miss Alex's school concerts and rugby matches. And then Alex drifts into bad company . . .

But this is not a tragic book. The dialogue is sparkling, the characterisation wholly believable and in places it is very funny.

It offers an insight into the workings of Chambers, the role and power of the clerks, the stress of representing an innocent client (it matters a lot if you lose) and how it feels to strive for a "not guilty" verdict for someone who is decidedly guilty. Ophelia fields her share of dodgy clients – and then one of them threatens her family and her life is plunged into fear.

What happens? You will have to read the book.

The author of this book is a well-known CS member and if you are familiar with Camberwell you will have fun spotting some familiar local haunts.

Ophelia in Pieces is just the thing for a good summer holiday read. I look forward immensely to Clare Jacob's next book.

Edie Wilson

The Magnificent Seven

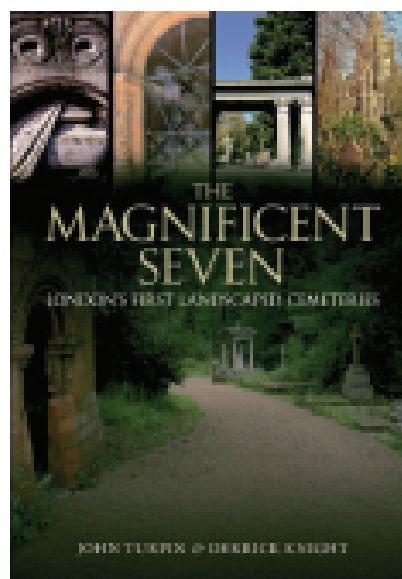
By John Turpin and Derrick Knight

Amberley Publishing

£14.99

This is a fascinating book full of interesting facts and amazing photographs. It tells the stories of seven cemeteries built originally on the outskirts of London but which now, due to the growth of the city, are well and truly within the boundaries. Kensal Green was the first to be built in 1833 by The General Cemetery Company. This was followed by Norwood, Highgate, Abney Park, Nunhead and Tower Hamlets.

The book is well laid out, making it an easy and enjoyable read, as well as extremely informative. It begins with an introduction to the creation of the cemeteries and ends with chapters on conservation, facts about some of



the famous people laid to rest there and a section on why these cemeteries need "friends".

The chapters in between give detailed information on each cemetery, together with black and

white photographs of the most amazing monuments and mausoleums. The carvings and sculptures are magnificent and I am sure would be well worth a visit to view, in the flesh, so to speak.

Each chapter has a brief historical connection, a Hall of Fame and a Don't Miss section. I found these fascinating and was pleased to discover that Bovril was invented by John St John Long who died in 1900 and is buried at Norwood along with Sir Henry Tate, of Tate and Lyle, who was known as Mr Cube. Also the fact that there are 39 people with some connection to Charles Dickens buried in Norwood Cemetery. All in all, a book well worth reading and a useful and informative guide book to accompany visits to all seven cemeteries. I can heartily recommend this book.

Su Thomas

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010**

	2010 £	2009 £
Income		
Membership subscriptions	4,413.00	4,118.50
Donations	224.00	260.00
Sale of cards, Quarterly etc	150.04	200.01
Sale of advertisements	1,365.00	1,322.00
Takings at meetings	204.50	47.40
Gardens day	626.75	675.96
Christmas party	995.00	900.00
Gift Aid	0.00	0.00
Bank interest	4.48	21.26
	<u>7,982.77</u>	<u>7,545.13</u>
Expenses		
Printing quarterly	3,700.00	3,700.00
Quarterly expenses	1,162.92	1,622.62
Photocopying & printing	379.73	59.75
Charitable donations	1,959.70	0.00
Subscriptions	0.00	127.65
Meeting expenses	166.05	0.00
Christmas party expenses	146.65	607.50
Insurance	144.52	190.00
Garden day expenses	26.35	0.00
General and administration	145.00	25.00
Rent	1,303.56	1,303.56
Subscription refund	0.00	0.00
	<u>9,134.48</u>	<u>7,636.08</u>
(Deficit)/surplus of payments over receipts for year	-1,151.71	-90.95
Surplus brought forward	11,571.33	11,662.28
Surplus carried forward	<u>10,419.62</u>	<u>11,571.33</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2009

Current assets		
Cash at bank	1,452.53	2,608.72
Deposit account	8,967.09	8,962.61
	<u>10,419.62</u>	<u>11,571.33</u>
Represented by		
Surplus of receipts over payments	<u>10,419.62</u>	<u>11,571.33</u>

Approved by the executive committee on

C M Blackwell FCA - Hon Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

I have examined the Income and Expenditure accounts above. This charity derives a substantial proportion of its income from voluntary subscriptions which cannot be fully controlled until they are entered in the books and therefore cannot be wholly verified. Subject to this I confirm that the income and expenditure statement above has been drawn up correctly from the books and records

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Chartered Accountant

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Dulwich Pot & Plant Garden p15 7733 3697

Interiors and Furniture Restoration

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South London Guide. Website on all aspects of South London, including shops, services and property. www.southlondonguide.co.uk

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Butterfly Tennis Club p6

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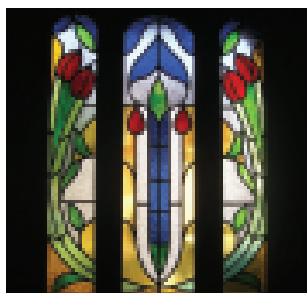
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Membership form available online:
www.camberwellsociety.org.uk

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