
CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY
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www.camberwellsociety.org.uk



History of the Mary Datchelor School – p13

A Neighbourhood Exercise – p6

Transport Update – p5

Report from the Chair	3
Planning	4
Transport update	5
A neighbourhood exercise: the URC development ...	6
Local news	9
Profile: Rupert Maas	10
Public Realm: improving the centre of Camberwell .	11
Book Review	12
History: Mary Datchelor School	13
Directory	15

Camberwell Society subscriptions
are now due.
Membership cards will be sent out
with the April edition of the
Camberwell Quarterly

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, Paula Totaro (see inside back cover for contact details).

Sub-Committees on planning, the public realm, 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.

Forthcoming Events

Thursday, 17 May, 7pm-9pm
Sunday, 27 May, 2pm-6pm

Annual General Meeting
Open Gardens Day

Venue to be advised
Tickets from 34 Grove Lane on the day

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@googlemail.com

Concerts in St Giles' Church, Camberwell Church Street
www.music@stgiles.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 Stephanie & Jim Lodge
020 7701 3331. Email: stephanielodge1947@talktalk.net

Herne Hill Society Jeffrey Doorn 020 7274 7008.
Membership: Herne Hill Society, PO Box 27845, SE24 9XA
www.hernehillsociety.org.uk

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 19 February 3pm, *Discovering Southwark's archaeological past* (Dr Christopher Constable), Goose Green Centre, St John's Church, Goose Green
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, closed on Monday
www.southlondongallery.org

Wells Way Triangle Residents Association Andrew Osborne
WWTRACamberwell@gmail.com

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).

Cover: A postcard circa 1900 showing one of the houses converted into the Mary Datchelor School (See page 13)

Regenerating Camberwell's town centre

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year in what is the first Chair's letter for 2012.

This year promises to be an exciting year for Camberwell – we will hopefully see the first results of the “Revitalise Camberwell” campaign for the regeneration of our town centre. I do hope that as many of you as possible will participate in this campaign and make Southwark Council aware of your views and concerns. There is money available to improve all aspects of the town centre around the Green and we should make sure that it is properly spent! It was also great to hear in the weeks before Christmas that the Olympic Capital Legacy Fund had approved the bid from the Camberwell Baths Campaign for the refurbishment of the Olympic Hall. A planning application should have been submitted before the end of the year, with work starting shortly in 2012.

On the planning front, this issue of the *Quarterly* includes an article about the proposed redevelopment of the United Reform Church on Grove Lane. The Society was very happy to join forces with a number of other local associations and local residents in a working party that I think has produced real improvements to the proposed design. All members of the



Nick Holt

working party are busy people who give their time freely, and I would personally like to thank them all for their efforts – from the Society's Planning Sub-Committee, local architects Anthony Kyrke-Smith and Liz Borowiecka, from the Grove Lane Residents' Association, Nigel Haigh and Nick Powell, the chair of the SE5 Forum Barbara Pattinson (though she was not representing the Forum itself), and local residents Justin Webb, Shamus Olivier, Christopher Le Brun and Ann Warby. I must not forget Julia Roskill, the chair, who brought everything together to a successful conclusion. You can read about it on page 6.

I want to end this letter with a

thought – this is The Camberwell Society, and as such we want to be relevant to the whole of Camberwell. I was at the Community Council meeting in October and some attendees wondered how relevant the Society was to them. My answer is that I want the Society to be relevant to all areas of Camberwell, and to that end I would invite you all to contribute to the Society in whatever way you can. I would love to hear from you on this topic.

Nick Holt

nick.holt.camberwell.soc@gmail.com

Death announcement

We deeply regret to report the death of **Christopher Logue**, prizewinning poet and writer who died on 2 December, aged 85. Our deepest sympathy to his widow, Rosemary Hill.

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The Society's comments on recent planning applications

The Society looks at all planning applications within the SE5 area and occasionally at other applications which are significant to our area of interest. We advise the relevant planning authority (either Lambeth or Southwark) that we object, support or have no objection to an application where we have decided to comment.

Owing to the limited space available in the *Quarterly*, we are only able to print a selection of the applications on which the Society has commented.

39 Crofton Road SE5

Conversion of residential house into three flats, one two-bedroom and two studios.

Classic "quart into pint pot" application, which had been preceded by a "gallon into a pint pot" application to convert the house into one two-bedroom bed, one one-bedroom and one studio flat, which was refused permission earlier this year, and a subsequent application to convert the house into two two-bedroom flats, which was granted. The Society's view is that two flats is the maximum that this building can accommodate, and this application should therefore be turned down on the grounds of over-development. (GRANTED)

93 Dylways, SE5

Replacement of windows and doors with uPVC double glazed windows and doors.

The Society objects to replacement with uPVC windows by this housing association. These are



183 Southampton Way

non-sustainable and will result in crude fenestration. We would recommend timber or powder-coated aluminium as recently proposed by the Council in its own development at 1-72 Mistral, Sceaux Gardens, SE5.

(GRANTED)

183 Southampton Way, SE5

Change of use of ground floor from retail (A1) to habitable accommodation (Class C3) to be used in connection with existing upper floor maisonette and change double door to single door (side elevation).

This corner property (*above*) looks as though the conversion of the ground floor to residential is all but in place and logical within this block of converted shops, so we do not object in principle. However, the drawings are very poorly drawn by

the applicant/owner and how the application was validated on the basis of these is questionable. The drawings portray nothing of the conversion detail, scale or orientation and the Society objects based on these drawings as there is insufficient detail to determine the application.

(GRANTED)

Public property – public waste: good news at last!

There is, as expected, good news on the redevelopment of 4A, 6 and 6A Grove Lane. Planning permission, with some minor agreed adjustments, has been received from Southwark Council and the tender process for contractors is likely to begin next March. There is, not surprisingly, a very large amount of work involved.

Meanwhile, drilling for soil samples is to take place. Thanks to all those who wrote in with support for the scheme, for which we have been waiting 34 years!

Nicholas Roskill

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Tube in the pipeline – but don't hold your breath...

The Society sent a representative to the recent Southwark Public Transport Consultative Forum, attended by the various rail and bus operators in the borough. The following updates relevant to Camberwell were given:

- Network Rail is to open the new South Bank entrance at Blackfriars Station in December 2011 providing a new option of travel to the South Bank from Denmark Hill.
- All bendy buses should have disappeared from our streets by the end of last November.

Southwark Council had been asked by Transport for London (TfL) to comment on two proposed routes for a possible extension of the Bakerloo line from Elephant & Castle. The Council has expressed a preference for a route to Lewisham via Camberwell and Peckham. While this is clearly wonderful news nothing is settled and the potential time frame being discussed for implementation is for the late 2020s and early 2030s... so best not to hold our breath!

The Society has been in touch with various local residents' groups to offer support in connection with:

- the Wells Way Triangle Residents Association's efforts to have buses diverted to provide much needed transport links
- the Loughborough Junction Action Group's concerns about the proposed decrease in train services from Loughborough Junction to Blackfriars.

Members of the Society will have followed the coverage over the last few years about the withdrawal of the South London Line service from December 2012, following the



It's goodbye to bendy buses, also known as the "free buses"

introduction of the London Overground orbital service at Denmark Hill. The position following the withdrawal of the line will be:

- no direct link from Denmark Hill to London Bridge (although with the new London Overground Line it will be possible to take one of the more frequent trains to Peckham Rye and change)
- no services from Denmark Hill to Battersea Park or South Bermondsey
- a decrease in services from Denmark Hill to Victoria.

The Society has been pressing the Mayor and the Department for Transport to provide further services to mitigate these losses. The Mayor provided an update in November and TfL has asked the Department for Transport to approve a new off-peak Victoria to Bromley service, stopping at Denmark Hill, to be specified in the next south

eastern franchise (probably in April 2014) and to approve a proposal that additional stops in existing services to Victoria are incorporated into the south eastern timetable from December 2012.

The Society will continue to lobby the Department for Transport to approve these proposals.

Alex Blacknell



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A neighbourhood exercise in planning approval

The United Reformed Church (URC) finally gained approval for its development plans in July 2011, two earlier applications having been refused by the Council and, on appeal, by the Inspectorate. This third and successful application means that there is to be a new church and community hall in Love Walk, the project financed by the sale of eight flats in Grove Lane and an end house. It differs substantially from those which have gone before: the monolithic appearance of the housing on Grove Lane has been replaced by Façade E which has the appearance of Georgian houses. A south “pavilion” has been created to match the “pavilion” at the north end of the terrace so that the terrace has been completed in the spirit of its original design. Roof terraces, walkways and “Juliet” balconies have been omitted and the original maisonettes replaced by flats with four bedrooms reduced to three. Meanwhile, the earlier church building has been reduced in size to harmonise with its surrounding buildings. The “Grampian condition” attached means that the future residents cannot apply for parking permits with the exception of the disabled.

The Site

The development affects the important corner site of Grove Lane

and Love Walk in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area (CA). It adjoins the late 18th century Grade II listed terrace Nos 18-62 Grove Lane (formerly Queen’s Row). The present church, now “no longer fit for purpose”, was built in 1964 when three Georgian houses, Nos 64-68 Grove Lane at the south end of the terrace were expressly demolished. At the time the terrace was Grade III listed. As a result of a widespread outcry it was made Grade II, acknowledging its historical importance. Shortly afterwards it became part of the newly formed Conservation Area (CA).

The site presented a threefold challenge to the URC architect, Alex MacLaren of Wyatt MacLaren: it was in a CA, adjoined a Grade 2 terrace and was on rising ground. In addition, the URC wished to increase the footprint. The new development was to cover the area of the three demolished houses and extend the terrace up to Love Walk while developing the land on Love Walk itself. Alex has worked hard and with the local community to resolve these issues as successfully as possible.

History of the Earlier Applications

The story goes back to 2008 when the first application was refused. When a second application was to be submitted a *Working Party (WP)

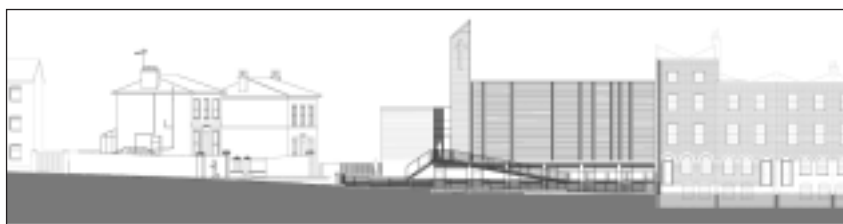
was created to represent the local community on the lines of that created in response to the Mary Datchelor development.

Response to the Second Application

The design submitted for this and the subsequent appeal was substantially the same as that for the first application. There was a strong preference among some local residents for town houses rather than flats. However, the WP was supportive of the URC need to redevelop. It considered the plans before it, and bearing in mind the importance of the corner site in the CA and the adjoining terrace, considered the repetitive character of the bulky residential accommodation, together with the “Juliet” balconies, modern designed windows and stretch-bond brickwork incongruous attached to the 18th century terrace. The “back areas” of the housing seemed cramped. There was particular concern about potential noise from the proposed roof terraces and walkways, the latter also posing possible light pollution for nearby residents, and concern too to keep the “open, leafy feel” of the CA.

Meanwhile, the church building and community hall on Love Walk seemed out of proportion to its space and like “an elephant in the garden” as it backed onto the gardens of the adjoining terrace. There was concern too about the height (10.7m.) causing possible loss of daylight for adjacent buildings and the distance of only 1.5m from the boundary of No 62. Furthermore, the treatment of the end house, which turns the corner, was not thought satisfactory and there was a worry that provision of external seating could attract street drinkers, while concern about traffic and parking was raised. It was a great relief when the second application was turned down in December 2009.

At the Appeal, in addition to its previously expressed views, the WP was able to provide a **drawing by Stephen Marks made in 1964 at the



Existing Grove Lane elevation

By courtesy: Wyatt MacLaren



First proposed Grove Lane elevation in 2008

By courtesy: Wyatt MacLaren



This Love Walk elevation was approved in 2011

By courtesy: Wyatt MacLaren

time of the demolition of the original houses. Stephen, an architect and former resident of Grove Lane, was the first editor of the *CQ* (then the *Newsletter*) and later became a planning inspector. The WP was also able to provide Stephen's analysis of the design of the terrace as a whole. In Stephen's view the original symmetry was the key to any redevelopment and he wrote to the Inspectorate to that effect. His knowledge was an immense help to the WP.

The subsequent report made by Paul Jackson RIBA, from the Bristol Inspectorate following his site visit, dismissed the appeal, observing "the proposal would not enhance or better reveal the setting of the listed buildings and would not sufficiently recognise or respect the character and appearance of the conservation area... the harmful impact of the scheme on the historic significance of the Listed terrace... the detrimental effect on living conditions in terms of noise and disturbance are compelling."

The Third and Final Application

beginning in October 2010 marked a change of approach. At the URC architects' invitation the WP became

in closer touch with the church and its architects, while pursuing a policy of making comments, not suggestions, as these can be easily misinterpreted. It was agreed that to avoid any misunderstanding such comments would be passed to the Council in due course. Pastor Roy Powell had instructed the architects to omit roof terraces and walkways before the first joint meeting and the URC architects produced an encouraging choice of façades which showed the influence of the original design.

Furthermore, at a joint meeting with the WP architects, chaired by Councilor Ian Wingfield, the URC saw its way to reducing the "elephant in the garden". WP enquiries about basements produced subsequent plans with basements echoing those of the terrace. These changes were greatly welcomed except for a complicated proposed series of upward and downward ramps which detracted seriously from the new façade: the architects were puzzled by the conundrum of managing the slope.

The Pre-Planning Meeting between the URC and Southwark Planners in March 2011, to which the WP

contributed its earlier comments, marked a decisive step forward. Plans now revealed a Georgian façade with Nos 64 and 66 set slightly forward and with landscaped gardens on Grove Lane, all ramps being abandoned bar one ascending and one descending. They continued, however to be "work in progress" until well into the consultation period. Open evenings offered a model of the development which was used as the basis for comments to the Council from the WP and local residents.

The WP Response to the application, while reiterating its reservations about what could be considered overdevelopment of the site, supported the application as a considerable improvement on previous plans. However, it asked the Council for some minor but important amendments which it considered would enhance the appearance of the new development within the CA. These included pergolas to counteract potential noise from the outside spaces on the top floor and the need for an improved design to make the church

Continued on next page

***Working Party**

Membership was as widely drawn as possible from the three amenity societies, the GLRA, CS, the SE5 Forum and local residents. Ann Warby and Julia Roskill, both former GLRA chairs, were joint chairs for the second application: Ann, due to pressure of work, subsequently became vice-chair.

****Design of the Terrace (Queen's Row)**

Stephen Marks' drawing of the terrace showed a carefully modulated symmetrical plan unmatched, in his view, in any long row in this area of London at that time. The architect and theatre designer Michael Novosielski (1747-1795) is mentioned in the earliest deeds of the terrace and may have been involved in the layout. It is the work of no ordinary builder. Historically, the terrace marks the beginning of Camberwell's Georgian development from a village to early suburbia within easy reach of Westminster and the City.



Final approved Grove Lane Elevation "E" in 2011, showing the south "pavilion"

By courtesy: Wyatt MacLaren

Continued from previous page

"lantern" more of a landmark. The WP especially asked for an Elevation "E" which added a "cill" course (line of stucco) under the first floor longer windows of Nos 64 and 66, (rather than on the adjoining narrower houses). This would create a south "pavilion" and harmoniously complete the terrace in the spirit of the original. It also suggested the removal of the descending ramp since a lift was proposed. News reached the WP on 9 July 2011 that the Council officers had recommended approval subject to the WP amendments being heard by the Community Council (CC) on 21 July.

The Community Council Hearing



Queen's Row: demolished in 1964
Photo: Stephen Marks

was a huge "gear change". How to prepare the WP case in a short time with so many people on holiday? First, I contacted the URC architects to say that the WP did not wish to be objectors and wondered if the URC would see its way to agreeing to its amendments beforehand, in particular to the WP's revision of the façade, skilfully marked up by architect member Anthony Kyre-Smith, creating an Elevation "E".

The URC architects were keen not to delay planning permission until September and agreed to all the WP details except the omission of the descending ramp. Vikki Lewis, acting team leader in the Southwark Planning Department, agreed to this common approach.

In view of my imminent absence abroad I much appreciated being able to brief Andy Blacknell, vice-chair of the Grove Lane Residents Association (GLRA), who in turn briefed Ann on her return, while I kept in touch by mobile, at one point from the bottom of a lock on the River Douro! Ann, vice-chair, returning from holiday, valiantly made the three-minute presentation. Councillor Wingfield

spoke in support of the WP and this was greatly appreciated. Elevation "E" was approved and planning permission granted with conditions.

With regard to the descending ramp, a condition was made that the URC and WP should work together on its details: an unusual request but it seems the councillors had been impressed by the goodwill which had been established between the WP and the URC: a neighbourhood exercise.

At the time of writing the URC architects are awaiting sign-off from the URC Synod. We hope they will be successful in finding a suitable developer in the new year.

In conclusion, I am personally most appreciative of Ann's support and the contribution of all the WP members, particularly that of our architects. The WP greatly appreciates Councillor Wingfield's support, the advice of Southwark Planning department and the courtesy of the URC architects: thank you.

*Julia Roskill
Chair, United Reform Church
Working Party*

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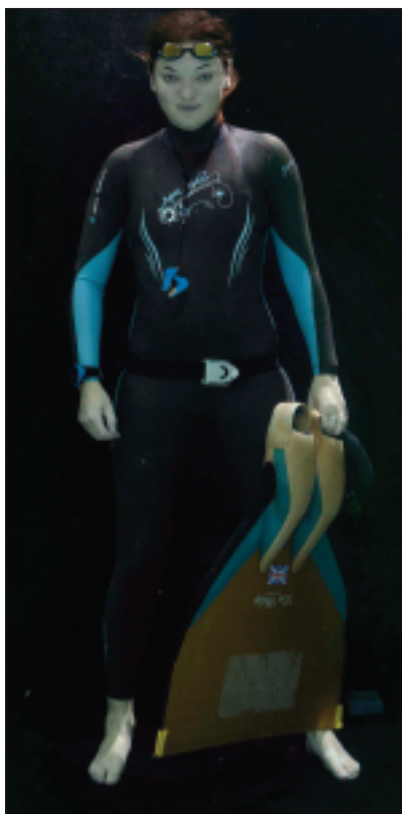


Record broken at Camberwell baths

Last November, Camberwell Leisure played host to a freediving national record attempt by UK freediving champion Liv Philip from Camberwell. She was the highest ranking freediver in the world in 2010.

Liv's attempt was made in the freediving discipline of dynamic no fins. Her aim was to swim on one breath for more than 111m (over four lengths of the pool) to break her existing national record. She swam for 116m on one breath, which earned her a new national record.

Liv has broken her record in Camberwell on two other occasions.



Liv holds her breath for record time
Photo: Emma Critchley

Neighbourhood participation



In a break from its normal horticultural pursuits, D'Eynesford Estate Secret Garden held a Halloween party last October. Pictured here are two young helpers from the estate who took part in the event

Remains of old church honoured

A Blue Plaque has been awarded to a small, ancient looking stone building (*right*) in Benhill Road that looks extremely odd among its neighbours. Known as the summerhouse, it is actually the porch and doorway of the old St Giles church, all that remains after a fire in 1841 that destroyed the original church. Sadly, this historic building now houses a wheelie bin and other rubbish.

It stands in the grounds of the Caribb Club, whose building is familiar to most of us as the polling station. For the rest of the time it is a youth centre run by Elaine Joseph, an inspirational woman who is passionate about helping young people fulfil their potential.

She is particularly proud of her



entrepreneurial courses and has trained nine young people as youth workers. "Being able to say they have had work experience helps them to find work," she said. "Paid work has also given them self-confidence and dignity."

The courses aim to teach young people how to behave and react socially and how to conduct themselves at interviews.

Camberwell Society Christmas Party: our thanks to all

The Camberwell Society would like to thank the following local traders and individuals who generously donated prizes for the Christmas Party raffle.

Edwardes Cycles: cycle accessories

Pesh Flowers: a flower arrangement

The Cambria: voucher for dinner for two

Caravaggio: voucher for dinner for two

Claire Hart Jewellery Designs: a voucher

Bill Taylor of Stage Entertainment: Tickets for *Strictly Come Dancing*

We would also like to thank the many Society members who donated prizes, provided and served the food and decorated the room. Thanks too to the Crooked Well for allowing us the use of their upstairs room.

Proceeds went to the Camberwell Choir School.

Art expert and harasser of the Council

While running off the effects of jet lag in a Beijing park, Rupert Maas found a large crowd of Chinese in pursuit; to them, all six foot six inches of him was a speedy giant. For three years Rupert flew to China as a representative for Ballantine's whisky. He particularly admires the Chinese their recycling tradition, every component stripped and re-sold, and nothing from either machines or animals wasted.

As regards Japan he refers to the movie *Lost in Translation* as portraying very well "the alienation" he felt when stranded in a Hilton far away from his home. He went to the Far East for his art dealership, and regularly, to New York. Recently he has travelled much less thanks to the internet.

For Rupert's tall figure, the stylish and graceful family home is well proportioned; a spacious and beautiful conversion complete with an atrium reaching to a high elevation extending this Victorian mansion into the garden.

He's coined the word "Healthopolis" for his district of Camberwell: in the immediate vicinity of his house, there are three major health institutions employing 5,000 people and owning the larger buildings.

No one is more aware of the vital aspects of local developments than he. Listed as one of his hobbies is "harassing the local council" and he has had some interesting, sometimes frustrating experiences.

He is "lost in admiration" for the Society's Planning Sub-Committee. "What they do for the area is incalculably important." From his experience thereon, he detected a



Rupert Maas

basic lack of "joined up thinking" within Council planning procedure. Luckily for the area, our chairman and his committee, "intelligent, thinking, professionals," know how things work and apply to every application good, progressive, sensible judgement based on a sound knowledge both of the Southwark Urban Development Plan and the wishes of the residents.

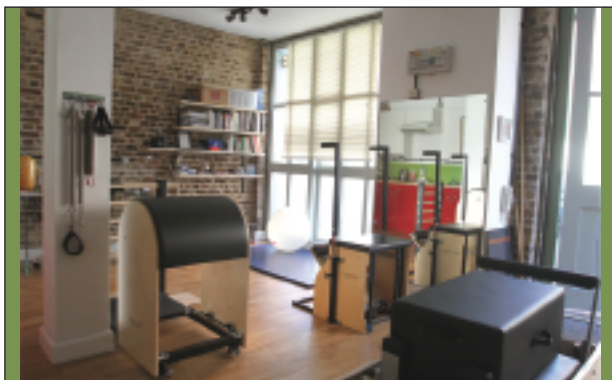
After he represented a petition for speed bumps in De Crespigny Park, Rupert was rung quite casually one day by a nameless Council person who asked him if that's what was wanted – "there was a little money left over..." Soon, German ramps were installed, a good example of "localism" or merely the "shambolic nature" of local planning where he perceives a lack of liaison among departments. The question of the leak at the Peckham Pulse that took a year to resolve made him cross – "wastage and stupidity!"

Rupert recalls the sale of Jenny Lee House by the Council to King's

College Hospital as a murky display of opaque dealings in which the Council inflated the price in a series of skilful manoeuvres around a dutch auction. There appears to be very little cooperation between the various organisations inhabiting the locality. He asks why there cannot be more cooperation, coordination even, over such essential services as waste disposal, parking and catering, to combat the ever present noise problem from twenty-four-on-seven deliveries. He fears it comes down to Little Britain, people with their fiefdoms who cannot afford to relinquish in these hard-pressed times. The principle of local consultation is not always effective: one architect did not know the height of the new-build he was designing for the Institute of Psychiatry: what about the overshadowing, or light, or green space aspects? Maybe of indifference to the hospital but important to people in the Brunswick Ward. He also prevented a CCTV installation adjacent to his house.

In 1980, Rupert's art dealer father, Jeremy Maas, suggested he work in his gallery to fund the cost of a tractor that Rupert needed for "Bloggs Logs" his successful lumber business in Kent. The tractor never materialised. Then, during a stint of crewing on a yacht (Rupert currently sails at Whitstable) to Boston, Mass. he decided to follow his father, eventually taking over the gallery (maasgallery.com). Later the gallery was backed by Harlech television.

Rupert is probably best known for his regular contribution to the *Antiques Roadshow*. He says it has become a victim of its own success since he and his colleagues now see



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It's time to improve the public realm in Camberwell

thousands of items, most worth little today, nor, he reckons, valuable in times to come. "Things are put in attics for reasons... not all old things are very good." A notable success was finding *The Spy* by the Irish painter William Orpen (of his mistress, Yvonne Aubicque) which was a copy of the original in the Imperial War Museum yet copied by the artist himself; Rupert noticed the signature: NEPRO; a handy £250,000 to a *Roadshow* hopeful.

Maas Gallery had been a "revivalist" gallery, specialising in the formerly unfashionable field of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Now it regularly exhibits and sells Victorian and Modern British pictures. He shares, with his late father, a love and appreciation of "the wonderful and beautiful" Victorian art, and guessing from the works in his house, also of the later periods. One famous work he discovered, bought by a collector in Burma, is the incomparable portrait of the Burmese Princess Sao Ohn Nyunt. The artist, Sir Gerard Kelly, was the son of the Curate of St Giles, Camberwell. A friend of Somerset Maugham, who lent him his fare to Burma, Kelly was an inspiration for the character in Maugham's novel *The Moon and Sixpence*.

Listing reading as a hobby I asked him what he was currently reading: *Dance to the Music of Time* by Anthony Powell, and most enjoyably, *The New Painting of the 1860s* by the American professor, Allen Staley, that describes a fascinating, transitory period between "the Pre-Raphaelite and the Aesthetic Movements," a time when British artists looked to Europe.

He says he misses the haven of the Butterfly Walk bookshop of which he wrote an "obituary" in the *CQ* several years ago. Rupert saw its closure as "a classic case of greed." The Camberwell Library, no doubt neglected, has no disabled access but he joins the chorus of praise for the achievements of the community in the refurbishment of the Artichoke Baths.

Cathy Brooks-Baker

What do we actually mean by the expression *the public realm*? It is usually defined to include all publicly owned streets, pathways, rights of way, parks, and publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic buildings and facilities. On that basis, you only have to take a quick look around the centre of Camberwell to appreciate that the quality of our public realm is something that needs urgent attention.

For some years the Camberwell Society has operated a Parks and Open Spaces Committee, most recently under the watchful eye of Jean Sackur. With the regeneration of Burgess Park underway (but the reopening is delayed to next summer, I understand) then now is the right time for the reach of that committee to extend to the broader public realm of Camberwell.

Complaints

This is a topic that is close to the hearts of all our members. I frequently see emails and letters complaining about the state of the pavements in and around Camberwell Green – uneven paving stones, rubbish strewn streets, overbearing street furniture – too many signs, wrongly positioned bins. It was also raised at the Camberwell Community Council meeting I recently attended (see the Chair's letter). But the problem is not confined just to the Green. Other streets, well away from the centre, also require attention.

Good news

There is some good news to report: Southwark Council is aware of these concerns and has said that it will be doing something about it. By the time you read this we should have seen a decluttering of our streets with the removal of unnecessary street signs – please send me any photographs and we can publish them in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

The Council is also planning a

major project to transform and revitalise Camberwell Town Centre, and this time there is money available to turn our wishes into reality. Over the last few years, the Society, with other interested bodies including SE5 Forum and Living Streets, a national charity that looks to promote safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, has supported the Community Council in its efforts to improve our town centre. This has resulted in a bid earlier in the year to Transport for London under their "Major Schemes" programme which was successful in gaining funding for a project in Camberwell Town Centre.

Dead spaces

With a strong focus on how public transport operates in the centre of Camberwell, the project will look at the streetscape, how "dead spaces" can be revitalised, as well as improving pedestrian facilities. You can find more information on the Southwark website at

www.southwark.gov.uk/camberwell

This is too good an opportunity for us to miss. The plan is to come up with a number of preferred options for further discussion by the summer of 2012. The Society will play its part in the consultation and in the project through our renamed Public Realm Committee. If you have any interest in helping us with this then please get in touch with either me or Alex Blacknell.

Nick Holt

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A young man's moving journal of the bombing of London

Boy in the Blitz

By Colin Perry

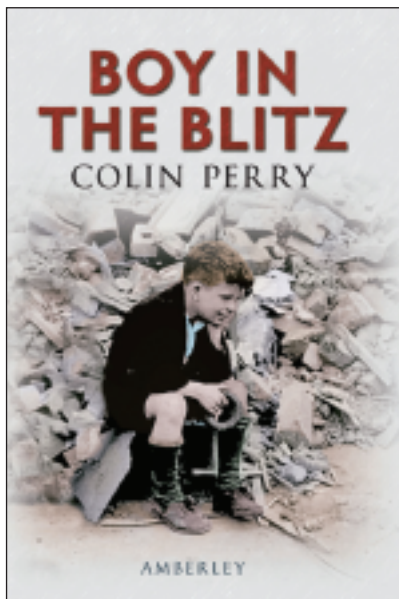
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This title and the accompanying dust jacket photo of boy in shorts on a pile of rubble might attract the attentions of the Trade Descriptions Act, for the writer of this compelling diary covering the three months of the 1940 Blitz on London, though boyish was 18, a junior clerk in a City office (no teenagers then!) who commuted daily from his family home near Tooting Bec underground station, then known as Trinity Road.

He worked for the California Standard Oil Company for 30 shillings a week, was well regarded and was more or less becoming acting cashier. This was a boy who left school at 14 with such little qualification that he was rejected by the RAF when he applied for flying duties: he desperately wanted to fly Spitfires. But for our enrichment he was literate; his reading included T E Lawrence, *Seven Pillars* and the letters, H G Wells, Vera Brittan, Maugham and others, and had a fluent pen, or rather typewriter at home and at work.

Colin Perry was born in Brixton, part of the proper London Borough of Camberwell, very gritty in parts, not the manicured enclave we enjoy. Sometime before the Second World War the family moved to a newly built block of flats, Holmbury Court, Tooting. It's still there, a characteristic 1930s development, Crittall windows, three storeys with a fourth mansard-like floor with a not apparent flat roof which the diarist visited frequently and carelessly to watch the raids. Two wings of the building embraced a courtyard beneath which there was an integral air raid shelter for residents.



Although his younger brother and his mother did use the shelter at times, despite a foetid atmosphere and some disruptive elements, he and his father endured the nights in the flat with frequent alarms and intensive noise from nearby AA batteries. The diary graphically covers all this: rarely was the night raid free, then commuting to the City determined to be at work on time despite disruption and horrors. His father, who worked at the *Daily Herald*, was equally committed, going by car, occasionally shared, but mostly it was the underground or hitching when this was disrupted.

Colin bought a second-hand bike and went on country rides. He also inspected bomb incidents, local and beyond, such as Croydon aerodrome, unhindered by officials or nerves, and recorded it all with considerable flair.

Night and day attacks were continuous over the period, as I can testify, but in comparison my own experience, after initial days, was lighter, although I travelled daily to architecture school close to the BBC in Portland Place.

Perry's account of his

experiences makes vivid reading and at times transcends that. He seems quite fearless and is more interested in experiencing and recording than personal safety.

Through all the rapportage runs a skein of developing consciousness, youthful examination of his aspirations and development, a zest for life, his chaste attraction to girls seen from afar (like the girl in the ABC where he takes his frugal lunch). He is assiduous with his diary, writing of "the long strived-for transition when the diary becomes an obsession" and at the same time writing regularly to his pen friend Binnie in Australia, believing he will marry her and have children.

Forgetting his RAF aspirations, his romantic nature led him to the Merchant Navy. After an interview at the P & O head offices he was appointed "ships writer" on the *Strathallan* and served on several voyages. He made Sydney where he and Binnie didn't "hit it off." He survived the loss of the *Strathallan* to serve on other ships, eventually becoming ship's purser. Alas there are no pages for these years, for he destroyed them on his marriage in 1944.

The diary was given to the Imperial War Museum which published it in a small edition in 1972. This solid edition from a small publishing house is well produced, made more marketable with typical bomb damage scenes, but more endearing are his own and his family portraits.

Seventy years ago now, the subject continues to fascinate and be mined by the media. This, to quote: "outpouring of a proud and totally insignificant Londoner" is the moving and touching experience of a perceptive and engaging spirit, a testament to youth and to loyalty.

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From school, to offices to tasteful apartments

Now that people have moved into the Ruskin House building, formerly the Mary Datchelor School, I felt it timely to tell the story of the site's history. In this three-part series I will attempt to cover what sort of school the Mary Datchelor was, what stood there before it was built, when and why was it built, who designed it, why that architect was chosen, his reputation and his inspiration to others. I will also attempt to explain why the building was converted rather than demolished and the Camberwell Society's part in this.

Peter Cooke

In 1726 Matthuis Datchelor died and in his will left provision for poor apprentices and inhabitants of the Parish of St Andrew's Undershaft in the City of London. By the 1870s the value of his estate in Threadneedle Street had increased so enormously that it was no longer possible to dispense the revenue exclusively for the purpose it was intended. The Charity Commission gave approval that the major part of the fund, £20,000, could be used to establish a girls' school, with the remaining £10,000 to be used for the poor of the Parish of St Andrew's Undershaft.

A new trust was formed, administered by the rector and churchwardens of St Andrew's Undershaft, and land between Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane was bought for £4,000. Housing existed on the site at the time of purchase. The school was named after Matthuis' eldest daughter, Mary, who was not married. The school was set up as a girls' middle-class day school in purpose-built buildings about the same time that Wilson's Grammar School for Boys was built, now part of the Camberwell College of Arts.

In 1832 the trustees exchanged some land in the parish of St Andrew's Undershaft for the Sugar Loaf Tavern at the corner of Great St Helens and St Mary Axe. In 1880 they granted an 80-year lease on the tavern that produced for the trust an

income of £500 per annum.

In 1891 only one of the original trustees remained, and after attempts to get the Corporation of London and the Alleyn endowment in Dulwich to run the school it was suggested that one of the City of London livery companies, noted for their munificence in education, might take over the school.

The Clothworkers

The Clothworkers' Company took over the school, continuing to administer the Datchelor funds which also included money held in stocks. Shortly after the Clothworkers took over they built an extension which, although it appears similar to original building in Camberwell Grove, had a lantern roof light which could easily be seen from Camberwell Grove. According to their archive the Clothworkers added £14,000 of their own funds between 1895 and 1909. From about the time of the First World War there was also an annual grant of about £1,750 a year from the London County Council, but most of the school's running costs were covered by tuition fees. The Clothworkers' Company continued to support the school until it closed in the 1970s.

The Clothworkers appointed its architect Horatio Porter to design a single storey art room and gymnasium which were built along the Grove Lane frontage.



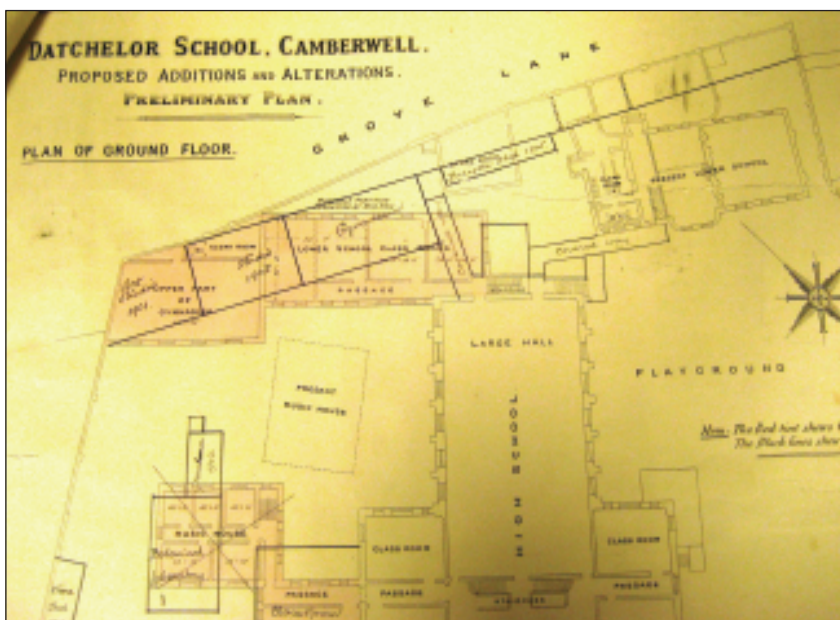
Ruskin House building

Beside these were converted houses which housed the lower school. A couple of years ago I came across a postcard (pictured on the cover) showing these houses circa 1900.

Prior to that there was no record of the appearance of the lower school in the archive held by the Clothworkers' Company, but the layout of the buildings is shown on the 1870s plan which shows a curved walled front enclosure. This wall was lost when Grove Lane was widened and railings were constructed as can be seen in the postcard pictured on the cover.

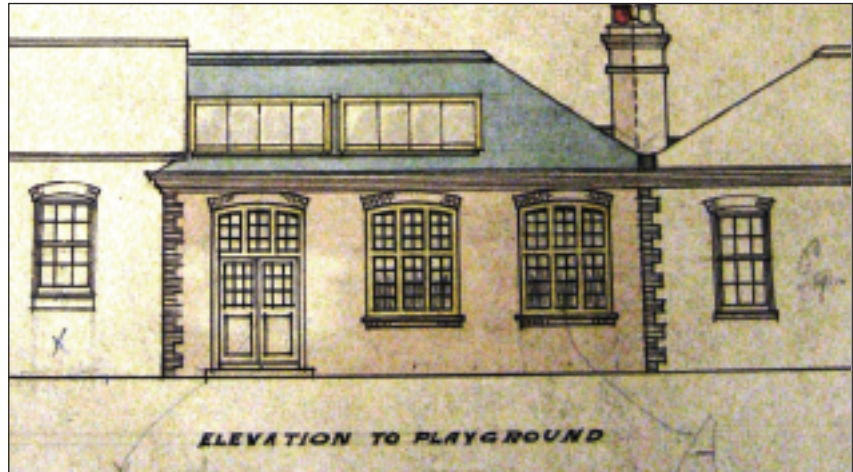
In 1912 the Board of Education inspected and while they had favourable comments on the running of the school, they had concerns about some of facilities, noting that there were insufficient lavatories and cloakrooms, that an art room and

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

chemistry laboratory were needed and that the accommodation for music teaching and the lower school were both unsuitable. At this time the Board of Education also wanted to take over control of the school, but they still expected either the original trust or Clothworkers to pay half the £15,000 cost of the new extension. At the time the Datchelor funds which could be most readily accessed (held in Consoles), were producing lower returns than a decade before. An impasse was reached between the parties which was not resolved until after the First World War when building costs had increased. In 1921 the Datchelor Estate sold the remaining 40 years of their lease of the Sugar Loaf Tavern to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam



Navigation Company (better known today as the P & O line). This allowed the extension to be built. At the sub-committee minutes of March 1925 held in the Clothworkers' archive William Curtis Green is noted as the architect who explained

the scheme.

The next article will explain why he was awarded the commission and the design influences behind the building.

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NatWest award for Camberwell Choir School

The Society's Charity of the Year for 2012, the Camberwell Choir School (CCS), has won the NatWest Community Force Award top prize of £6,250.

For more on the CCS see its website

http://www.camberwellchoirschool.org.uk/index_files/Friends.png

We hope to tell you more about the CCS in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

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