
CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

The magazine of the Camberwell Society
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www.camberwellsociety.org.uk



In praise of Wren Road – p8

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LOCAL SOCIETIES, VENUES AND EVENTS

We recommend checking details

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

Membership is open to anyone who lives, works, or is interested in Camberwell.

The Executive Committee is elected annually at the Society's AGM. Meetings of the Executive Committee are usually held on the first Thursday of the month – please contact the Secretary for details. Members are welcome to attend as observers with prior notice to the Secretary, Robert Wainwright (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.

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).

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
friendsofburgesspark@gmail.com

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
foclchair@googlemail.com

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

Cuming Museum
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020 7525 2332
(Currently closed due to fire)

Dulwich Picture Gallery
College Road, SE21 7AD
020 8693 5254.
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

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
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www.minet.fsnet.co.uk

Nunhead Cemetery
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020 8693 6191
www.fonc.org.uk

Peckham Society
Peter Frost 020 8613 6757
Sunday 16 February 3pm *An update on archaeology in Southwark (Christopher Constable)* Goose Green Centre, St John's Church
www.peckhamsociety.org.uk

Ruskin Park, Friends of
Doug Gillies 020 7703 5018

SE5 Forum
SE5Forum.org.uk
comms@SE5forum.org.uk

South London Gallery
65 Peckham Road SE5.
Open: Tuesday to Sunday – 12pm-6pm, closed on Monday
www.southlondongallery.org

Southwark Friends of the Earth
Stephanie & Jim Lodge
020 7701 3331. Emails:
stephanielodge1947@talktalk.net
southwarkfoe@btoopenworld.com

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



Cover: Datchelor Place will be the first pocket space created. This is an artist's impression of it how might look (see page 13)

Getting about in Camberwell

Welcome to the winter edition of the *Camberwell Quarterly*.

Let me wish you all the compliments of the season and a healthy and happy 2014.

I want first to talk about transport – trains, bikes and planes in fact. On the trains front, you will find a photo on page 7 of the opening of Denmark Hill station. While this is good news after all the disruption caused by the works, I can't help thinking, as a rush-hour user, that the designers have somehow missed a trick. To my mind, the redesign was a great opportunity to add extra station access points on Windsor Walk and further down Champion Park. The station seems to have been a victim of its own success with the coming of the London Overground, and the resulting change in many people's travel patterns. We did have the station designers come along to our 2012 AGM and I might well take this up with them. The queues in the mornings, both for tickets and to get in and out of the station seem to have simply moved around the corner. Isn't this what travel planning was meant to be about?

When it comes to bikes, then there is good news and bad news. The



Nick Holt

good news comes in the form of the works for the Cycle Superhighway that passes through Camberwell on its way to the Oval and beyond. There is also a new cycle repair shop and café in Camberwell, to reflect the increasing interest in cycling in London. However (and here let me say that I am not a cyclist), I must confess to finding confusing some of the new road markings along Camberwell New Road. Then there is the bad news – surely complete

segregation of cars and bikes is going to be the only way of preventing the tragic accidents that we have seen in recent weeks, one of which was unfortunately in Camberwell?

Now to aviation: I see that Lambeth has given the planning go-ahead to the new helipad on top of King's which will allow the air ambulances to land there rather than in Ruskin Park. I am sure that the time saved will be critical when you consider the work that they do with major accidents in the south of England. On the related topic of aircraft noise, Society member Nigel Haigh has now established a dialogue with the right people at Southwark Council, and I am sure that our views will be taken into account.

Following the editor's appeal in the last issue for help with the *Quarterly*, I am delighted to welcome Marie Staunton to the team and hope she will find the work fun and rewarding.

I hope too that you enjoy the articles in the *CQ*, and as ever, I am always happy to hear from members and non-members alike about Camberwell matters!

Nick Holt

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Eclectic bunch of stall holders provides a range of goodies

Before dawn breaks over Romney Marsh local farmer Clive Ovenden, 55, is up at 4am selecting meat for Camberwell Farmers' Market. It is Saturday and over the next five hours an Italian baker, two theatre designers, a jazz pianist, a couple of fruit growers and a former nursery teacher will make their way to Camberwell Green. An eclectic bunch of stallholders.

Climate change forced Clive to stop the vegetable farming that had supported his family for six generations. "Now we get hardly any rain in summer. I have been on the land all my life and it is getting dryer and dryer," he says. So four years ago the Ovendens switched to livestock. Hebridean sheep, Sussex cows and other rare breeds graze free range on their 500 acres in Kent which is also home to pigs, goats, chickens, geese and ducks. Everything Clive sells comes from the farm which supports a butcher and his two apprentices, Rebecca and Crystal (the trade is increasingly popular with girls) as well as Clive's wife, daughter Zoe and son Ryan.

From six generations to six months – that is how long Pigeon Hole, the stall opposite Clive, has been running. Grinning behind their jams and chutneys former theatre designers Helen Steidl, 29, and Georgia Ellison, 28, tell how they raised £21k in 30 days through the



Clive Ovenden is the sixth generation of his family to farm in the Romney Marshes. "Climate change forced us to switch to livestock from fruit and veg"

online funding site Kickstarter in June. "People we have never met invested up to £500 in us."

They are now setting up a shop/café to sell food and recycled furniture next to the Green. "We come here every week to sell our home-made jams and chutneys and keep in touch with everyone who has supported us and let them know how the hunt for a shop is going."

Helen and Georgia live in Camberwell as does Barbara Pattinson whose ten-year campaign for a Camberwell market led to a free stall for her SE5 Forum. This ex-nursery teacher has seen business slowly building on the Green. "The

future is bright. The Green is being remodelled – with a great space for the market next to the buses and shops – over the next year or two."

Annette Cauneen from Urban Farmers who runs the market talks of more events like the Christmas market to grow customers but keep the ethos of producers selling direct to customer.

Next to Barbara are Chelsea, 40, and Karen from Thrognall Farm, 250 acres near Sittingbourne in Kent. Chelsea, who has the biggest smile on the market, is always willing to supplement her fruit and veg with special orders. "Customers ask for all sorts of things – dandelions, nettles and even thistles." Chelsea and Karen pick the fruit and veg straight from the fields of Joan Attwood's family farm every Friday. They enjoy the work, except for the cold when thermals are essential. Which is why Chelsea hopes her three children will get nice warm office jobs.

It is the sun of his native Salerno that Marcello Rizzo, 47, misses. "When the weather is good I love the Green but when it is freezing it is hard to come." Trained as an Arabic teacher he returned to the family trade of baking when he came to the UK, setting up his own business a year ago. Paninis and classics like torta di nonna, Grandma's cake, are baked to the family recipe and taken out of the oven on Saturday mornings before Marcello drives up from Kent.



Helen Steidl and Georgia Ellison behind their home-made jams and chutneys



Marcello Rizzo (left) brings Italian recipes from the family bakery in Salerno to Camberwell Green, and Edmund May (right) who plays jazz piano when not selling artisan breads at the Flour Station stall

And the jazz pianist? That is Edmund May, 27, who sells Borough brown and sourdough breads at Flour Station, next to Marcello. After graduating from Durham he found working on farmers' markets "lovely work" which leaves him time for jazz. The downside is a big temptation to eat the produce. "There is nothing like that croissant and coffee at 10am when you have just set up the stall," he says. Flour Station is an offshoot of Jamie Oliver's 15 restaurant, started at Borough Market and is now one of London's "ten best bakeries".

Edmund, who has worked at other farmers' markets, finds Camberwell customers more varied. Marcello agrees: "Not as posh as Tonbridge market where I also have a stall."

Clive says that as Camberwell is quieter than Herne Hill market it is easier to get to know the customers – one of them, a barrister, recently arranged work experience in the Temple for Clive's daughter Sophie.

At 2pm stalls start packing up but it is after dark when Clive arrives home. But the market chat is enjoyable he says. And certainly enjoyable for the Camberwell customers – where else can you practise your Italian and Arabic, get stinging nettles, invest in a new business, catch up on SE5 gossip and discuss jazz composition – oh yes, and buy Sunday dinner.



Barbara Pattinson mans the SE5 Forum stall. A resident since 1966, she says major new investment means that a lot is now happening in Camberwell



Chelsea from Thrognall Farm sells greens – and dandelions, nettles and thistles if you wish

Marie Staunton

Remembering a local character and his family's emporium



Derek Austin

Many long-standing residents of Camberwell will remember Austin's furniture emporium on Peckham Rye and it is with regret that we report the death of its proprietor, Derek Austin, who died in May.

Derek was born in June 1925. During World War II he served as a Lancaster captain in an RAF bomber

squadron and in 1949 he joined the family firm of G Austin & Sons Ltd in Peckham.

The firm started out as a dairy farm in Peckham in the 1860s. Later it carted corn, coal and flour before becoming a removal and storage contractor, as well as selling furniture. At one time G Austin & Sons was the largest furniture and antiques emporium in Europe.

In Tony Wilson's article in the *Camberwell Quarterly* of 1997 (No 114 and from which this article is largely drawn) he said that in Ted Allbeury's novel *Deep Purple* it was noted that "most of the furniture had come from the second floor of Austin's of Peckham Rye, the wonderful emporium where the shrewder members of the upper classes and the Diplomatic Corps furnished their houses." The reference to the second floor was significant as that is where young people could find a bargain. The

ground floor was reserved for the better quality antiques. Tony's 1997 article has a postscript saying that a straw poll of readers of the *Quarterly* revealed that 90% of them had at least one item in their house from Austin's. It does not categorise them by floor.

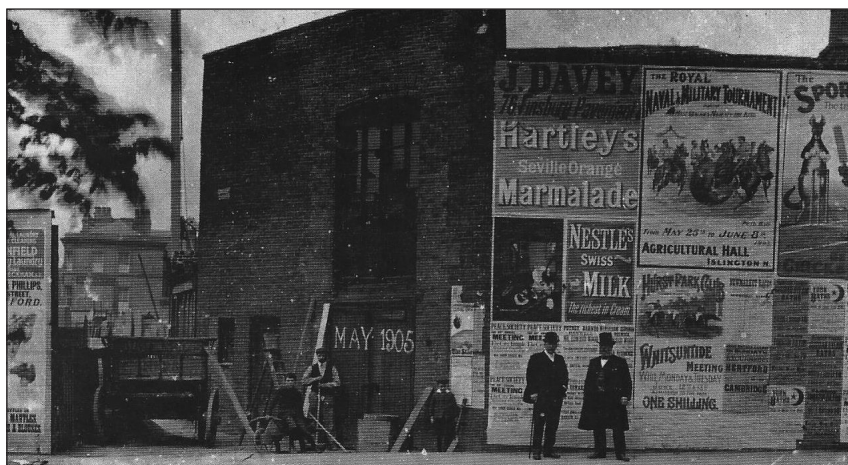
Derek learned his trade from his uncle George and from attending the City Literary Institute and Morley College at evening classes. George would tour the south coast auction sales and every Friday morning the London dealers would arrive to watch the door slide back to reveal what George had to offer.

One of Derek's proudest discoveries was an early piece of Meissen by Böttger, the very first hard white porcelain made in Europe. It was bought for two shillings (ten pence today) and sold for rather more in Christie's. It is now in a Swiss museum.

Derek had a deal in the late 1950s with Henry Sherek, West End impresario. Sherek would buy the furniture needed for a play at the beginning of the run and sell it back at the end at half price. Austin's furnished many West End productions including a "hurly-burly" room for *Gigi*. It is perhaps in this connection that Dame Edith Evans came to Peckham to check that she could get up easily from a chaise-longue on which she was to repose in a West End play.

I remember sitting in on Derek Austin's conversation with Tony Wilson in preparation for the article. Derek said how appalled he was that a neighbour had his furniture delivered by two casually dressed men in trainers. This seemed to concern him more than that the furniture came from the World of Leather. Austin's delivery men were always suitably attired.

Tony's article records that if "one of the men came with his shoes not polished, he would be sent home and lose a day's pay." Austin's staff had also all been trained on how to address a duke, an earl or a princess. The latter would have been useful when Tony Armstrong-Jones, who was a long-standing customer, brought his bride, Princess Margaret,



Above: George Austin's store, and below: Austin's emporium in Peckham Rye from where the upper classes and Diplomatic Corps furnished their homes



Denmark Hill station is finished at last

to Austin's. Cecil Beaton also visited frequently, on one occasion looking for a wedding present for Margot Fonteyn.

Austin's was based on low profit margins and high sales volumes with stock changing 12 times a year. The export market accounted for a quarter of the turnover with buyers from Japan and Italy. However, the supply of cheap bargain and museum quality furniture began to dry up, and in 1994 Derek and his sister Valerie, who had become company secretary, decided to close. The site was cleared and now in its place stands Austin's Court.

Following his retirement Derek gave lectures at the Dulwich Art Gallery on furniture and became master of the Worshipful Company of Upholders [old name for upholsterers] in the City in 1996-7. The long-standing annual Derek Austin Award for Cabinet Making and Furniture Restoration at London Metropolitan University continues.

Peter Cooke

Thanks to Bob Fowlds of A V Fowlds & Sons Ltd, the long-standing family firm of upholsterers in Camberwell, for bringing to our attention the news of Derek Austin's death.



Norman Baker MP, Minister for Transport, cuts the ribbon to mark the formal unveiling of the station's improvements

Members of the Society's Executive committee attended the formal unveiling of the improvements at Denmark Hill station by the Minister for Transport, Norman Baker MP. More than £6million of work has been completed at the station, providing step-free access between pavement and platforms, improvements to information screens, public address systems and signage, a new ticket

office, a new station entrance, better passenger waiting areas and accessible toilets.

The opening ceremony on 10 September was also attended by representatives from Network Rail, Southeastern Trains, the London Assembly, Southwark Council, local hospitals and the SE5 Forum.

Alex Blacknell

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In praise of Wren Road

Pevsner didn't think much of Camberwell Green:

"CAMBERWELL GREEN still has its green, but little else of note except for some houses on the W. side (No.15, c18 with big top window with fan motif, and Nos. 7-13, an early c19 terrace). The most conspicuous building is the NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK of 1899 by A. Williams, in the Edwardian baroque style with a corner tower as if it were a town hall. Nothing much in Camberwell Church Street, ..."

Victorian and Edwardian vernacular architecture, characteristic of most of the Camberwell Green conservation area, was not esteemed. Its neo-classical ornaments tended to be dismissed as attempts by builders or their clients to ape the appearance of the mansions of their social superiors. H J Dyos, for example, wrote, "Architectural taste, like manners, travels downwards, and it must have seemed unthinkable that one's house should not bear some resemblance, however remote, to the façade and the layout of more exclusive properties."

I think this is misleading. We can look at buildings just for what they are. They are attractive or unattractive because of their intrinsic qualities of proportion and balance, without reference to any interpretation of their place in the social struggle. The ancient models which inspired the designers of the great neo-classical buildings do not become less valuable when they inspire speculative builders or a widespread desire for their application in ordinary housing.

So to Wren Road, an uncelebrated and lucky survival; a small collection of pleasing buildings marred only (at least in my view) by the flats at the end of the street. If you shop in Butterfly Walk, then Wren Road is just the quick way from the Green, a bit dirty, too many parked cars, the odd street drinker. But it is worth stopping for moment



Fig 1 The Old House on the Green in the early 19th century with, to the left, the White House. At that time there was a pond at the south-east corner of the Green.

Photo: Southwark Local History Library



Fig 4 The site of the Old House on the Green, and the boundary of its property (red), and similarly for the White House (green), superimposed on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map, which I have updated as necessary.

and looking up.

Wren Road began when an 18th century house known only as the Old House on the Green, whose grounds

extended as far as Daneville Road, was sold in 1850. The house was demolished, Wren Road took its place, and the grounds were split into



Fig 2 (Above) The front view of 13 Wren Road, Wren Cottage. and
Fig 3 (Below) shows the side view

Photos: Donald Mason



plots for development.

The Congregational Church bought a large plot and built a substantial chapel, since replaced by the Colonnades.

The oldest of the buildings that now occupy the street is probably the Lloyds Bank corner building. It appears in directories from 1854. Its first occupant was a bookseller, and for many years part of it was a Post Office.

At some point what is now No 13 was put up on the other side of the street. Originally it was known as Wren Cottage.

At first glance you think, "That's a nice looking façade", but then

perhaps, "No, hang on, isn't the height between the upper windows and the roof a bit too big?"

The explanation for this oddity is seen in the side view (*Fig 3*). The building is unexpectedly narrow, only one room deep. To compensate for this, the builders put two rooms in the roof, each with a window on the gable end. To accommodate these rooms it was necessary to heighten the front wall.

The sites of the Old House on the Green (in red) and the White House (in green) are shown on *Fig 4*, along with the corresponding property boundaries. I assume that the Congregational Church planned from the outset to put up the terrace that became Nos 1-7. Allowing space for that, and for whatever was required for the road, left just a narrow strip on the east side, into which Wren Cottage was tucked.

A building that could possibly be it is shown on the 1861 Dispatch atlas and also in the 1862 Stanford atlas, but these are both clearly very inaccurate. Then there is mention of it by name in 1869. In the last decades of the century the censuses show that it was occupied by the chapel keeper.

Nos 1-7 probably went up in the 1860s. They don't appear in the 1860 directory, but individual buildings are mentioned from 1867. The developers apparently sold the freehold in 1871. I particularly like the windows on the upper storeys.

In 1881, as part of its widening of Church Street, the Metropolitan Board of Works bought the White House and its grounds. This immediately enabled the building of Nos 10-12. The history isn't quite straightforward. The land on which they stand is shown unambiguously in the Congregational Church's deeds as part of the grounds of the Old House on the Green. On the other hand, the 1870 Ordnance Survey map shows it equally unambiguously as part of the grounds of the White House – hence the alternative boundaries in *Fig 4*. I can only suppose that the proprietor of the



Fig 5 1-7
Wren Road

Photo:
Donald Mason

Continued on next page

In praise of Wren Road *Continued from previous page*



(Above) **Fig 6** 10-12 Wren Road; (Above right) **Fig 7** 14 Wren Road; and (Below) **Fig 8** Lloyds Bank building
Photos: Donald Mason

White House took advantage of the sale of the Old House on the Green to make an offer acceptable to the Church, and so enlarge his property.

In any event, Nos 10-12 were up by 1888.

These are my favourite buildings in the street. The windows politely reflect those of the terrace opposite. Then, somehow, the combination of the proportions, the absence of bay windows, the curved corner, the windows in the end wall and the off-centre chimney stack create a building of great charm.

At the same time as it bought the White House, the Metropolitan Board of Works bought the narrow corner property neighbouring Wren Cottage, which enabled the creation of a much wider building plot on the corner of Camberwell Green, where the very tolerable London and South-Western Bank building opened for business in 1885.

This left two oddly shaped plots backing at an angle on to the new houses in Church Street. The current long, thin, and quaint No 14 was in place on one of the plots by 1894. The adjoining plot seems now to house only gateposts, clearly part of the same building event, and definitely an ornament to the street.

The next of the existing



buildings to go up was the Lloyds Bank building.

Lloyds bought the buildings on the plot in around 1925. It retained the 1850s corner building, but demolished whatever was between it and Nos.1-7. It employed Edward Maufe to design a much larger structure, one which very successfully harmonizes with the original 1860s structure.

Finally, the flats at the end, the Colonnades. The side elevation is fairly harmless, what you see from Morrisons but tend not to notice. The end elevation, however, which

naturally dominates the view up the street is, I think, misconceived. The apparent attempt to echo the chapel doesn't really work. What should soar, simply squats.

More practically, a minor tragedy in the long process of replacing the chapel is that one or more of the earlier designs included provision for a library.

Donald Mason

(A fully referenced version of this article can be obtained from the author at masons@cdmason.org.uk)

The Piccadilly Circus of south London

Elephant and Castle – a History

By Stephen Humphrey

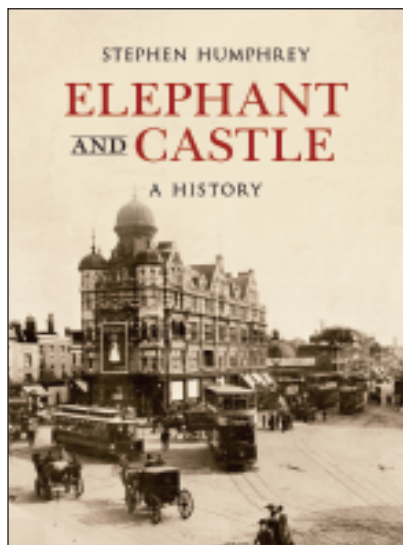
Amberley Publishing

£14.99

I found Stephen's book in our kitchen one Sunday afternoon and could not put it down. He provides a fascinating summary of the history of the Elephant and Castle, its architecture, famous personalities, shops, transport and more with a particular focus after 1850. One central theme throughout the book is that the Elephant and Castle was a vibrant centre of life, commerce and culture south of the river all the way through until the 1930s – a genuine "Piccadilly Circus of south London". Many Camberwell residents, including me, bought their first home somewhere off the Walworth Road and find it hard to imagine such times now. I cycle round the back! However, there is a note of hope as the Elephant enters its next phase with the current regeneration programme.

Here are just a few things I learnt:

- The vast majority of the beautiful buildings around the Elephant were pulled down rather than destroyed in the war. We were still pulling down lovely buildings like John Farrer's Elephant and Castle Pub (or Hotel) in 1959. The book includes some lovely pictures of the Elephant in its prime and the architecture was varied and beautiful. The only survivors now are the Bakerloo line station and the façade of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.
- When Westminster Bridge was opened in 1750, it created a second route over the Thames to Kent via "New" Kent Road. The convergence



of these two routes at the Elephant and Castle created a mini-boom in the area.

- We have only called it the Elephant and Castle in the last 150 years. It was called Newington from the 14th century until then.
- Sir Edwin Lutyens put forward a beautiful plan for the redevelopment of the Elephant in 1942 but unfortunately died before it could gain sufficient support.
- The ugly aluminium box in the middle of the roundabout was created as a memorial to Michael Faraday and houses the original electricity sub-station for the London Underground.
- Charles Spurgeon raised the money and had finished building the Metropolitan Tabernacle by the age of 26. It held 6,000 people. Its predecessor was close to the Globe and held only 1,200. It was burnt down in 1898 and rebuilt by his son and then destroyed again in World War Two. Spurgeon took no salary and was not a teetotaler and added,

"it is not likely I ever shall be".

- The Southwark diocese of the Church of England was only created in 1906.
- Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* includes a chap trying to avoid association with the Elephant and its less fashionable Chatham and Dover Railway Line.

With the benefit of hindsight it's easy to see how the post war development of the Elephant could have been improved. However, it was a different time. Diversity of architecture was not in vogue and money was in short supply. Town planners were captivated by master plans and a desire to improve traffic flow. The ugly nature of the redevelopment which has blighted the area over the last few decades is a warning against what Humphrey describes as "the dead hand of outside intervention" and "concrete brutalism". The area actually thrived and has its origins in localism and local people starting independent businesses and serving the local community.

I will be going on one of Stephen's tours!

Andy Blacknell

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Madcap Violet's view of Camberwell and the (old) Society

I was interested to read Fiona Subotsky's article about George Gissing's *Year of the Jubilee*, (CQ 173). I have always been disappointed in Gissing's quoted assertion that "architectural grace can nowhere be discovered in the houses of Grove Lane" where we live!

Gissing must have known Camberwell quite well to write of it as he did, but another Victorian author, William Black, a close contemporary of Gissing, has set the scene of one of his books partly in Camberwell and its area, where he lived for some years.

Black is hardly known at all today but in his time (1841-1898) he was compared favourably with Anthony Trollope and his novels, about 40 in number, were immensely popular. Some complained that his writings displayed too much interest in his own pastimes of hunting, shooting, fishing and sailing.

Be that as it may, Black is remembered by a lighthouse built in the form of a Gothic tower and according to a plaque over the door, "on a spot that he knew and loved, by his friends and admirers from all over the world". This was erected in 1901 close to Duart Castle on the Isle of

Mull and is apparently still in use. I wonder how many authors are commemorated by a lighthouse in their honour!

Black lived in Airlie House, Camberwell Grove and some of his characters are evidently based on local Camberwell people. (Does anyone have a record of Airlie House?)

Madcap Violet (written in 1876)

"I like Camberwell better than Chamonix"

is the name given to Violet North, "a spirited girl of sixteen or seventeen, tall and strikingly handsome in figure with abundant masses of raven-black hair, dark eyes under darker eyelashes" who is introduced in the novel at Miss Main's school in Camberwell Grove. This fictional school is thought to be based on the Camberwell Collegiate school in a former part of the Lettsom estate and renamed "Pelican House". Violet imitates Miss Main in a scene in front of the class and describes how "you are aware that it is the shocking practice of the little boys and girls in many districts of Africa to go about without clothes: and you are aware of the Camberwell Society for helping the missionaries to take out a few garments to these poor little things". Violet narrowly avoids expulsion for her exploits and goes for a walk in the "higher reaches of Camberwell Grove where the world was filled with the laden blossoms of fruit trees and the blowing of sweet winds and the singing of thrushes

and blackbirds".

Violet North, we are told, "lived in a tall house in Camberwell Grove which had been her home for many a day". Her father was Sir Acton North, a Canadian railway magnate for whom Camberwell was presumably a sufficiently smart address. Development was clearly a source of anxiety even in those days, a few years after the railway line passed through Camberwell.

"Have they built over Grove Park yet?" asks Violet of her companion, young Miller. "Certainly not," was the answer. "And the big cedars are still there and the tall elms and the rooks' nests?" "Not a thing altered." "I like Camberwell better than Chamonix and therefore it is more beautiful." "I'm anxious to discover what it is in the place that makes it the rival of Chamonix."

So closed the discussion which ended in a unanimous decision that Chomonix was a miserable and despicable place compared with a certain chosen spot in Camberwell.

The novel, including much sailing and shooting in Scotland, would hardly appeal to a modern publisher, with no sex within its 402 pages of adventures: but, according to Black's biographer, Wemyss Reid, it was the most finished and consequently most satisfactory of all his novels. The final chapter is entitled "De schmerzenseiche", a word not even in my large German dictionary. I tracked this down to a song in Goethe's *Faust*, probably meaning a rich young lady of sorrows, after the sad loss of Violet's closest friend. Readers in those days were expected to be well educated!

Nicholas Roskill

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Tragic death reinforces cycling concerns

From the one-minute silence to mark the death of a local cyclist to the opening of a new superhighway, cycling concerns dominated last November's meeting of Camberwell Community Council. Over 50 people stood to pay tribute to Richard Mazira, killed on the Walworth Road.

A Zimbabwean refugee, Richard had received a Southwark Civic award and a "local hero" prize for his work with local mental health charity Cooltan Arts.

Residents raised concerns that the newly opened cycling superhighway through the centre of Camberwell from Benhill Road to Medlar Street was not enough to guarantee safety. The Council decided to investigate attaching "Trixie mirrors" to traffic lights to enable drivers to see cyclists more clearly.

Proposals for a new mandatory cycle lane in Denmark Hill went forward but there was strong concern about the speed of traffic and safety on the approach to King's College Hospital. The Council agreed to ask the police to look at speed limit enforcement in this stretch of road.

Overcrowded buses

South London people can talk about buses for hours – and at the Community Council they almost did. The Chair of the London Assembly's Transport Committee, Val Shawcross, reported that all ten of London's most overcrowded routes are in south east London, four of them Camberwell local routes – 185, 176, 484 and 171. The overcrowding that three quarters of bus passengers reported in a recent GLA survey is due to the growth in population (London is predicted to grow from 8m people to 9.4m by 2022) and the lack of growth in bus provision which has flatlined in the last four years.

The Transport Committee is asking TfL to show how it will meet rising demand for buses, report on "bus busyness", work with the NHS on access to hospitals and health centres, roll out more environmentally friendly buses, introduce flexible tickets and give



Above: An artist's impression of how the north end of Grove Lane might look

local councils more say in bus services.

Pocket spaces

One of the proposed "pocket spaces" for Camberwell, Datchelor Place, should go ahead in March 2014. The other five – Grove Lane, (pictured above) Artichoke Place, Wren Road, Coldharbour Place and Selbourne Road – are being implemented together with nearby road schemes so will not start until next year.

The pocket spaces are part of the £11m Camberwell regeneration project. Artists' impressions show seats, planters, pavement cafés in pedestrianised corners of Camberwell.

Local Groups

Wheels for Wellbeing, a charity, promoted its accessible cycling courses – helping people to enjoy cycling regardless of disability, health condition or age.

Southwark Pensioners Centre encouraged the over 50s to attend the Centre in Camberwell Road which offers everything from Tai Chi to knitting to advice.

The meeting applauded the report of *Lyndhurst School's* international show, celebrating the family links children have throughout the world with Capoeira and Samba dancing, puppets, sign language workshops and African theatre.

The Southwark Youth Community Council photographed the meeting as part of their local art projects. Southwark is rewarding youth who have made a positive contribution to the community through its scholarship scheme which

pays their full university fees. And any community group who wants to run an event – from a fun day to a fete – can apply for a grant from £100 to £1000.

Some local groups are clearly feeling the financial pinch. *Camberwell After School* project which serves four local schools (Comber Grove, St Joseph, John Ruskin and St John the Divine) has lost its grant, faces a £20k deficit and may have to cut some of its after school and school holiday clubs.

Camberwell Green

The scheme to improve Camberwell Green is ready to go to a planning application in January. If approval is obtained in March work will begin in September 2014 and finish in Spring 2015.

Greendale

A survey of the wildlife and flora of Greendale is being carried out to see if it can be restored to public use.

Controversial parking

Strong objections from the floor stopped proposals for new visitors parking in Valmer Road, Camberwell Road, John Ruskin Street and Dartford Road going forward. The discussion was deferred to the next Community Council meeting in February.

Police arrests

The Police Safer Neighbourhoods team reported 19 arrests for drug dealing and robbery between August and November.

Marie Staunton

The restoration of St George's Circus



The boarded-up Duke of Clarence pub and the two terraces at St George's Circus have finally had their hoardings and scaffolding removed to reveal "The Clarence Centre for Enterprise and Innovation" which will be used by the South Bank University. The buildings were due to be demolished and their restoration is in part thanks to the Camberwell Society which, in 2000, took the unusual step of commenting on planning issues outside the SE5 area and joining forces with other protesting parties. The Grove Lane Residents Association, under the chairmanship of Julia Roskill, added its support, pointing out, among other things, the historical relevance of the buildings.

The Christmas party

There was an excellent turnout at the Camberwell Society's Christmas Party held on 10 December at the Crooked Well. We would like to thank the many Society members who donated prizes, provided food and prepared the room for the party, as well as Hector and Jen and all the staff at the Crooked Well.


We would also like to thank the following traders and organisations who so generously donated prizes for the raffle.

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A cheque for £1,212.00, a record amount, was handed over to last year's Charity of the Year, the Hollington Youth Centre.

The Society's chosen charity for 2014 is the Camberwell Arts Festival which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone this year's festival will be named The Score.

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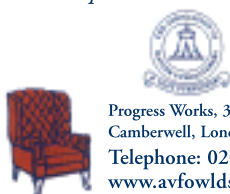
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The Camberwell Society is the recognised amenity society for those living, working or interested in Camberwell.

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