

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

*Chairman* Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5  
*Vice-Chairman* David Whiting 92 Ruskin Park House, Champion Hill, S E 5  
*Hon Treasurer* Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)  
*Joint Hon Secretaries* Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
Mrs Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 4758)

NEWSLETTER NO 23

January 1975

*Because your editor has unusually heavy demands on his time at the moment, this Newsletter must be brief and he apologises accordingly. Here are some reminders and notices; future newsletters will include reports on Holly Grove Conservation Area (which the Council has finally approved for designation), on our public meeting on November 21st about the Camberwell Green area and our survey, and on the confirmation of the Daneville Road and Selborne Road compulsory purchase orders.*

## DON'T FORGET

Monday January 27th at 8 at the United Reformed Church

Sally Stockley's

*LIFE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA*

*Some themes for discussion, with slides from a recent visit*

## CIVIC TRUST FILM

*A Future for the Past: action now in conservation areas*

On Thursday January 23rd at 7 30 the Rye Lane West Community Association will be showing this most interesting film prepared by the Civic Trust at an open meeting at All Saints' Hall, Blenheim Grove, Peckham. This is the first step following the decision of the Council to designate the Holly Grove Conservation Area. After the 37 minute film there will be time for discussion and Cliff Potter, Vice-Chairman of the Council's Planning and Development Committee, will be there to answer questions.

Members of The Camberwell Society who would like to go will be welcome.

## ALBANY ROAD

The Greater London Council want to demolish ten early-nineteenth-century houses in Albany Road (nos 349-361 and 365-369) for the extension of Burgess Park. These houses are on the Statutory List of historic buildings so the GLC has had to apply to the Secretary of State for the Environment for consent to demolish them.

We have long been appealing for a more sensitive approach on the part of the park-builders to those existing buildings which are of interest in themselves (e.g. Addington Square, saved by our campaign, and Glengall Terrace) but have seen little evidence of any 'flexibility' which the GLC have claimed in designing the park. Without in any way wishing to prevent or delay the formation of a much-needed open space with its facilities we felt that the Albany Road houses presented an opportunity to test the need to clear everything in sight; we have, therefore, objected to the demolition of these houses, and we asked for a public inquiry to be held.

It is very satisfactory that there is to be a public local inquiry to assess the rival claims of park and preservation: we shall contend that the latter, involving a narrow strip of land on the very edge, will have little effect on the park and will not affect its usefulness at all.

## BURGESS PARK FORUM

The GLC has now set up the Burgess Park Forum of local organisations to advise its Arts and Recreation Committee on problems arising from the planning and development of Burgess Park (formerly

the North Camberwell Open Space) and the interim uses of selected sites awaiting permanent layout. In its early moves on public participation the Council limited its consultations to those living or working in the northern part of Southwark, north-eastern Lambeth and north-western Lewisham. In being invited to be represented on the Forum The Camberwell Society, whose nominated representative is Shirley Tanner, welcomes the extension of consultation to the area south of the new park and hopes that the rather limited terms of reference may be extended to cover fundamental issues such as design.

### PECKHAM METHODIST CHURCH

We have received a notice of a booklet entitled *Labouring for Posterity, the Story of Peckham Methodist Church*. This new booklet, written by John D Beasley, tells the story behind the building of the New Methodist Church in Peckham. It traces the history of the buildings used by the Wesleyans and Methodists since boat builders came to the village of Peckham in about 1805.

15 pages, duplicated, with cover illustration, price 12 pence, plus 6 pence postage, from Mrs Marian Beasley, South Riding, 6 Everthorpe Road, Peckham SE15 4DA

### CLIFTON CRESCENT

As a result of local pressure and research, the Department of the Environment has just spot-listed this splendid, shallow, crescent of some 34 houses on the north side of Clifton Crescent which lies east of Asylum Road.

They appear as 'The Crescent' on Wyld's New Plan of London 1849, but not on earlier maps. They are brick house on three storeys and basement at the ends and centre of the terrace and two storeys and basement between, arranged 3-11-6-11-3, and are two windows wide. The ground floor of each house has three narrow grouped windows with brick mullions between, decorated canopy on cast iron brackets, and floral guards to the cills. The entrance doors are recessed with simple stucco surrounds to the openings. First floor windows in the centre block have palmette and anthemion pattern guards to cills. Cornice hoods to top floor windows form part of the continuous stucco cornice. The end houses have an additional set-back entrance bay.

These houses lie right in the middle of one of Southwark's major redevelopment areas, so the Council will have to think again: it is a pity that they didn't listen before to suggestions that this terrace should be kept. Regrettably the Department of the Environment did not accept our recommendation in 1971 that it should be listed, but it has now changed its mind.

Unfortunately many of the houses have been sadly neglected, suffering from the blight of threatened redevelopment; a lot of the the decorative features are now missing and one house is badly mutilated, but overall the group is most unusual and potentially very attractive. Its retention will introduce a very necessary element of variety and historical continuity to the area.

### CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION - EXHIBITION

To mark the opening of European Architectural Heritage Year the Greater London Council has put on an exhibition of the work of the Council's Historic Buildings Board. The exhibition illustrates three main aspects of the Council's work, recording (The Survey of London), works in caring for its own 400 historic buildings and monuments, and statutory control (i.e. dealing with listed buildings).

This exhibition is well worth seeing and visitors from our part of the world should be pleased to see that Clifton Crescent which has just been listed is featured with a photograph and actual samples of the beautiful ironwork before and after cleaning.

At the Royal Festival Hall, Main Ballroom, till February 2nd, 6 pm to 9 30 pm, free.

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NEWSLETTER NO 24 & NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

April 1975

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Thursday May 22nd 1975

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held on May 22nd 1975 in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church, Love Walk, at 8 o'clock.

### A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Previous minutes and matters arising
- 3 Annual report of the Executive Committee for the year 1974-75 (printed overleaf)
- 4 Treasurer's report
- 5 Election of officers and committee

Nominations will be required for Chairman, Hon Treasurer, and Hon Secretary, and for the committee. Any paid-up member may together with a seconder nominate candidates for the officers and committee. Nominations must be in writing and may be made at the meeting but would be preferred before the meeting delivered to the Joint Hon Secretary, 24 Grove Lane, SE5.

The retiring committee comprises Judi Bratt, Beryl Johnson, David Main, Stephen Marks, Trevor Pattinson, Paul Sandilands, Sally Stockley, Shirley Tanner, Jim Tanner, Roger Thompson.

- 6 Any other business

Michael Ivan  
Valerie Kent Joint Hon Secretaries

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## THE SOCIETY'S COMMITTEE - WHY NOT TRY YOUR HAND?

As the notice above says, a new committee is to be elected in May. The Society needs new people with new ideas to help with the Society's work. If you are in doubt about what we do, please ring one of the Society's officers or members of the present committee, and look through the Annual Report on the next page.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

A meeting has been arranged for April 17th at 8 o'clock at which Chief Inspector A F Durston, of Carter Street Police Station, will talk about and answer questions on

### *THE WORK OF THE POLICE IN CAMBERWELL*

in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church (at the corner of Love Walk and Grove Lane, enter from Grove Lane, down the ramp).

A party is being arranged for some time in June, possibly a conducted tour of Burgess Park to see how things are going, and an illustrated talk in the autumn on the new buildings of Camberwell - not all of them are bad!

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription to the Society is 50 pence a year, due on June 1st. Subscriptions for the current year (June 1974 to May 1975) or for the coming year may be paid at the Annual General Meeting. Only paid-up members may vote on any matter at the meeting.

## REPORTS OF MEMBERS' MEETINGS

### *Life in the People's Republic of China*

On January 27th Sally Stockley talked to members about life today in China. She had spent some time in China recently, doing research work on missionary history, and lost no opportunity to inquire about the way of life. We were told that everything in China is politics, everything the result of the political system: a great deal of time is spent in discussion. She gave us the historical background to the revolution of 1949 which was welcomed by many besides communists; the Chinese are well aware that, in spite of their enormous achievements and hard work, there is still much to do on their way to communism. The talk was illustrated with a large collection of fascinating slides of unexpected and unfamiliar scenes, taken by Sally on her recent visit.

### *Some Camberwell Landmarks and Lesser Lights*

Nearer home, and on what ought to be more familiar ground, Stephen Marks spoke to the Society on October 28th about the buildings around us, with nearly a hundred slides to bring out the variety, detail, and potential attractiveness of buildings which people take for granted and hardly look at as they pass them or use them. To some this talk was an eye-opener and to all an encouragement to look above street level and to look at the fabric of our surroundings, in the main, perhaps, not of architectural significance, but the essence of identity which distinguishes Camberwell from all other places.

## TREES — NEW PROTECTION

Six months ago in Newsletter no 21 the extension of control over demolition was mentioned; now, to protect trees in conservation areas, another provision of the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974, section 8, has recently been brought into force (March 12th).

Anyone who has it in mind to cut down, top, lop, uproot, damage, or destroy a tree in a conservation area must give the Council six weeks notice of his intention. This is to give the Council time to make a tree preservation order if it wishes to prevent or control the work. This new provision does not affect trees already protected by tree preservation orders; there are also limited exemptions from the new control.

So, if you see someone cutting down a tree or damaging it you can ring up the Council and ask for action: the Council can stop the work if it is not authorized or exempt, make a tree preservation order if appropriate, and require the planting of a replacement. The person to ring is Phil Collins in Southwark's Borough Development Department, 703 6311 ext 50.

### *Tree surgeons*

If you yourself have a tree which needs attention, do remember that this is a specialist job and that it is easy to hurt a tree and not even achieve what you wanted in the long run. We have a list of recommended tree surgeons which you can get from Stephen Marks (703 2719).

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1974-75

Camberwell Green and the area around it have once again absorbed a large part of the Society's energy since the last report of the Committee. A detailed report of the survey which was carried out during the winter of 1973/74 was prepared by Valerie Kent and published and put on sale in the autumn (see Newsletter no 22). A public meeting, reported elsewhere in this Newsletter, was held in November to discuss the results and to consider what further action the Society should take, especially on the Selborne Road and Daneville Road compulsory purchase orders. The Selborne Residents Association was formed in the later part of last year with the purpose of protecting the interests of all kinds of occupiers whatever the outcome of the compulsory purchase orders.

To our extreme disappointment and dismay the two compulsory purchase orders, which we and many residents had opposed with great effort, were confirmed without any exclusions although some houses were reclassified as not being unfit. These decisions of the Secretary of State for the Environment were particularly unfortunate, indeed quite inconsistent with the official encouragement in speech and in circulars to local authorities to consider rehabilitation on a much wider scale instead of wholesale demolition and clearance.

On a more positive note, the Society's activity and interest have led to the setting up of a working party on the Camberwell Green area, with specific reference to the central site (bounded by Church Street, Grove Lane, Denmark Hill, and Daneville Road) south of the Green. The working party comprises officers of Southwark Council and the GLC, members of the Society, and representatives of EPIC as the owner of a significant land-holding, and it has had several meetings, since it began in October last year, to prepare a brief for the future of the area.

The scrutiny of planning applications has continued and comments, usually with constructive suggestions, have been submitted to Southwark, and also on occasion to the GLC and Lambeth, on some forty or fifty cases where it was felt that a development was unsatisfactory in some detail or simply not acceptable. The Society prepared submissions to support the Council's refusals of permission for mews development at 151 Grove Lane and 182 Camberwell Grove where the owners have appealed against the decisions; it will be remembered that these decisions followed the Society's reasoned plea, reported in Newsletter no 13, to restrict building in the mews. The Society will also give evidence at a public inquiry late in April into the GLC's proposal to demolish houses in Albany Road for the extension of Burgess Park.

In addition to work on planning applications and the like, the Society has had representatives on three official bodies dealing with planning matters, the working party, already mentioned, on Camberwell

Green area (Sally Stockley, Stephen Marks, Valerie Kent, Jim Tanner), Burgess Park Forum (Shirley Tanner), and the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (Stephen Marks). There has also been liaison with various voluntary organisations, including SOLTAC (South London Traffic Area Committee), LASH (London Association for Saving Homes), and FARRAS (Federation of Associations in Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas in Southwark).

The year has seen the enlargement of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area to include Grove Park, Champion Grove, and the upper part of Grove Lane, at the suggestion of the Society, and the extension of the Sceaux Gardens Conservation Area (see Newsletter no 22), while, after long-sustained pressure through the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, the Holly Grove Conservation Area, described elsewhere in this Newsletter, has at last been approved for designation. A long range of houses in Camberwell New Road, many in poor condition or even derelict and proposed for demolition by the GLC, have been spotlisted at the request of the Society, and almost all will now be preserved and repaired. We have been in touch with numerous bodies trying to find a use for St George's Church; the latest position, we understand, is that the GLC is negotiating to purchase it and that the church is likely to be retained, roofless, as a feature of the landscape.

The Society's publications this year have been the *Report of the Survey of the Camberwell Green Area 1973/74* and five Newsletters. We did not produce a greetings card, but the sale of cards from the previous three years made a handsome contribution to our funds without further outlay; once again, our thanks are due to the proprietor of the Passage Bookshop for selling the cards without charge and to those who touted them around to members.

There have been three meetings of the Society in addition to the Annual General Meeting, and the full Executive Committee has met at least once a month, besides numerous ad hoc meetings of small groups and with people outside the Society. A public meeting, already mentioned, was held in November, and there were two meetings for members: in October Stephen Marks talked to the Society about the buildings around us, and in January Sally Stockley spoke about China today illustrated with slides from her own recent visit. Reports of the three meetings are given elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Once again we wish to thank the United Reformed Church for allowing us to hold our meetings in the Wren Hall and the Vaughan Room.

The accounts will be presented at the Annual General Meeting and printed in a later Newsletter.

## PUBLIC MEETING ON NOVEMBER 21st 1974 - REPORT

As a result of the public meeting just over a year earlier, the Society carried out its survey of what people thought and wanted in the Camberwell Green area; the findings had been analysed and published, and this meeting was being called to report on these findings. The Society's job, Miss Beddington said, was only half done with the completion of the survey; she reported that the Society's Committee had had discussions with the GLC and Southwark, that a technical working party had just come into being with members from Southwark, GLC, the Society, and Epic, and that a residents' group, who were welcomed to the meeting, had recently been formed; the distressing news had just been received that one of the compulsory purchase orders had been confirmed.

Miss Beddington welcomed to the meeting Mrs Lilies Gillies, Vice-Chairman of the South Area Board of the GLC and a member of its Transport Committee, and Ron Watts, Chairman of Southwark's Planning and Development Committee.

Before Mrs Gillies spoke Valerie Kent, the author of the report and co-ordinator of the survey, outlined the work involved and the most important findings [see Newsletter no 22]; David Whiting emphasised that while the survey was originated and organised by The Camberwell Society its findings were *not* the views of The Camberwell Society, but represented as fairly as possible, given the limitations of the Society's resources, the views of the area, taken broadly and collectively.

Mrs Gillies congratulated the Society on its very interesting survey which she felt was a thoroughly representative view, and especially valuable to people like herself, politicians who want to know what people want. She dealt with roads, crossings, shopping, and public transport. First, on roads, she referred to the halting of the motorways, easy to do but not so easy to produce acceptable alternative

policies; it is now GLC policy *not* to build roads to take increased traffic and they would only build if public opinion wants relief on environmental grounds, only to take the same traffic in a better place. She thought a road 'around the back' of the Green, i.e. to north and east, possibly to the west as well, was the line to pursue, because the opportunity was already presented by current redevelopment; it would not be possible, though, to remove traffic from all sides of the Green. The GLC's planning board are well aware of the preference for street-level crossing; they would in any case prefer it to other forms on cost. On shopping, her own preference was for the existing pattern of development which could be kept if the roads were not widened. She recognised the deterioration of the bus services, and referred to staff shortages, traffic congestion, and shortage of parts as factors; the recent pay award should help but would take up to a year to have effect. We should not rely on the extension of the tube, but she referred to the London Rail Study of British Rail, London Transport, and the GLC, who were about to report. She felt that housing redevelopment should be staged to

reduce the impact.

Ron Watts found that the report of the survey confirmed much of what he had felt, especially that proposals formerly current were wrong in principle. The Society now had before it six options for roads at the Green, prepared by the GLC. He could not agree with the value judgments of the inspector which had led to the confirmation of the Daneville Road compulsory purchase order. He felt that the decision did not necessarily mean that the clearance had to be implemented in all parts; the decision was not necessarily the last word if the working party concluded that some could be kept. He hoped that the decision on Daneville Road was not an indication of the decision not yet announced on the Selborne Road c.p.o. The working party on the Camberwell Green area included representatives of the developer who owned a substantial part: there must be adequate financial return, but this did not rule out desirable facilities, such as a new library which was indeed wanted by the Council's library services.

After the main speakers there was plenty of lively discussion. Many people were emphatic about present conditions and the poor state of cleanliness which should be remedied now: parking on kerbs (Mrs Gillies said that the GLC now had a Bill approved making parking on pavements illegal), litter, rats, street-cleaning: why neglect the present when considering the future? There was a feeling that the Society had, with its survey, done the Council's work, so now the Council should get on; some expressed impatience that the answers weren't ready at once, but in fact it was only a year since the Society had started to try to get the Council involved in the search and only a month since the survey report was published. There were comparisons with what

Camberwell was like in years past: one speaker said she had watched the change for the worse continuously for ten years, another, resident for 67 years, used to be proud to live in Camberwell, used to be glad to go to Camberwell Green, but couldn't get there now across the roads. The vicar, Canon Rhymes, complimented the Society on being the main prodding force for the Council.

Summing up, David Whiting said the Society was extremely pleased to have Southwark and GLC Chairmen who had both expressed views close to those of the Society. There were many complaints expressed in discussion, small individually, but taken together they were not trivial; it was up to us all to get something done, and special efforts by any group were only effective if they were backed up by individuals. He particularly opposed the feeling of defeatism which he sometimes sensed, and urged us to go on fighting, remembering that since last year the Society had produced its survey under the guidance of a qualified social psychologist (to whom all thanks), it had procured the GLC member of the appropriate committee for this meeting, and its actions had led to the working party being set up. The working party was bound to achieve something, since both Southwark and the GLC are represented on it and it should produce a planning brief acceptable to both; wider terms of reference would have been preferable but would have risked the dilution of its effectiveness; part of its function is to make proposals for public participation.

David Whiting repeated earlier requests for assurances on participation: Ron Watts had the last word in saying that he would do all he could to see that the work of the working party was followed up by the appropriate public consultation and participation.

## HOLLY GROVE CONSERVATION AREA

The recently-approved Holly Grove Conservation Area is not in our area of benefit, but as a neighbour we have felt the need to do something when for long there seemed to be no-one else able to take up the matter. It has been a long struggle, and, though now ended, it is worth recounting as an example of what can be achieved by perseverance.

The new conservation area contains five streets (Holly Grove, Elm Grove, Highshore Road, Bellenden Road, Lyndhurst Way) and Lyndhurst Square, lying just west of Rye Lane and north of the railway which came in the 1860's. They were developed in the 1820's to 1840's, beginning as a small suburb of the old village of Peckham, and consisting mainly of semi-detached and detached villas. The Square and Holly Grove are almost wholly listed and there are buildings on the statutory or local list in three of the other four streets. The original houses, including many of those that are not listed are excellent examples of the pleasing variety and ingenuity of the early nineteenth-century builders' skill. The disposition and relationship is generous and extremely attractive, and the area contains two small open spaces of considerable importance and character; one of these, the Shrubbery, in Holly Grove, is a miniature linear park, laid out at the same time as the houses were built as a private garden, now maintained by the Council.

The whole area was seriously blighted by the threat of Ringway I which would have obliterated much if not all of the core of the area; no attempt was made at that time by the local authority, Southwark, to protect it. Moreover, the low density of a large part of it inevitably made it a potential target for housing gain redevelopment.

Over a period of more than two years the Society's repre-

sentative, Stephen Marks, pressed the case for its designation at five meetings of the Council's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, starting in June 1971 with a slide show of sixty-six views, maps and plans. In November after members had had an opportunity to look for themselves the CAAC recommended that the area warranted study as a possible conservation area. In July 1972 the Borough Planner argued against designation, belittling the architectural interest and proffering social objections; the Committee asked him to reconsider. In April 1973 the Borough Planner recommended to the CAAC an area about two-fifths of the original suggestion and was asked to do his studies again. Finally in September 1973 he reported that an area of about three-quarters of the first proposal was to be recommended to the Planning and Development Committee. This was accepted by the CAAC but it was then held up because the Housing Committee claimed that it would be harmful to the interests of tenants!

Ironically, there was about this time a planning application to redevelop nos 32-34 Highshore Road, two houses vital to the character of the area and involving the removal of controlled tenants who did not wish to move: designation would have given the Council power to prevent demolition and have added some measure of protection for the occupants — so much for protecting tenants against conserva-

tion. Interestingly enough, Lambeth Borough Council have actually studied this very problem and their report gives the lie to the unsubstantiated fears about conservation. In the event the application was refused but the buildings were still quite unprotected.

Fortunately, at this stage, a local society, the Rye Lane West Community Association, took up the fight. The Association, which was formed a few years ago primarily to tackle social problems, has more recently become concerned with the visual side of their environment, and, having earlier been very worried about the Highshore Road houses, prepared, with very little notice, a brochure which went to all the members of the Planning and Development Committee and a deputation from the Association went to the Committee meeting on October 22nd last year. Designation was approved by the Committee by 12 votes to 6 and by the full Council in November.

Thus, designation has been achieved: designation is, of course, only the first step in conservation, but it is a very big one, giving protection to the buildings and an assurance of the future retention of the area.

### SOME RECENT CASES

#### *27 De Crespigny Park*

The Council has given permission for this house to be used as a Day Nursery for children of Maudsley Hospital staff, with a matron's flat. In conceding this use, which is contrary to the zoning as residential, the Council felt there was a special case: this the Society deplores, because special cases can be made for almost any proposal and the Society is very worried about hospital encroachment (even in the worthy guise of day nurseries) beyond the very extensive area allocated for hospital use.

#### *97 Camberwell Grove*

This house is divided into flats. The occupier of the basement applied for permission to extend his flat; the new extension would not only have filled the space between the existing back extension and the boundary wall but would have stretched considerably beyond the existing extension. The Society's view was that it would in itself be an excessive intrusion into the rear garden space and would also set an unfortunate precedent for creeping erosion of the gardens which are of benefit collectively to the houses in the terrace as well as to the individual houses. The Council has refused the application.

#### *1 Graces Mews*

The so-called Coach House at 1 Graces Mews has been empty for some time, although permission has been given for the development of the land to the east with a short row of town houses. A recent planning application for permission to use the ground floor as a showroom for antique furniture with restoration workshop attached was turned down by the Council. The Society had written to say that it felt that the workshop use might be a nuisance to houses which are very close nearby, that there would be some increase in commercial traffic in a residential area, and that if only the upper floor were residential, as proposed, it would have no parking space or garage which can at present be provided for it on the ground floor.

#### *45 Camberwell Grove*

Work on this house began without appropriate consents but has now stopped. An application is now with the Council to put an extra storey on the entrance bay and the side wing of the house: the drawings first submitted were

so grossly misdrawn that it was difficult to judge whether the proposals were likely to be acceptable. New drawings have been prepared by a firm of air-conditioning engineers who obviously have no idea about architectural detail: this house with a charming but sadly dilapidated portico and many other signs of insensitive treatment needs the attention of an architect with experience of work on historic buildings.

#### *125-137 Grove Lane*

Last September we commented on an application for a new development of very poor quality on this site. The present position is that Southwark's planners are expecting to discuss revised plans with the applicant, Ogilby Housing Society.

#### *48 Camberwell Grove*

A red burglar alarm appeared last year on the facade of no 48 Camberwell Grove in the most prominent position that could be found: it is now impossible to look at the extremely attractive group of houses it stands in without being infuriatingly distracted by the horrid red box. Last October we wrote to the Borough Development Officer and to the GLC Historic Buildings Division about it but have had no response. It certainly affects the appearance of the building and would seem to need listed building consent. We commented in Newsletter 22 ('Don't Spoil Your Face') on this kind of thing.

### South Lambeth

*The Dispossessed* by Barbara Kerr (John Baker 1974) is a study through the lives of two related families, the Thornhills and Beaufoyes, of the ways in which in Victorian times life was irrevocably changed by the effects of the industrial revolution for previously prosperous classes of society.

Two chapters are devoted to the area of South Lambeth between Vauxhall and Stockwell during the nineteenth century. The earlier chapter describes the transformation from tamed countryside to industrial city particularly referring to a purchase of land in 1810 and the subsequent building of Caron House and Beaufoy's Vinegar Works; the other chapter recounts the parochial work of the later part of the nineteenth century centred around St Anne's Church, in which the Thornhill family, come to live at Caron House, took a large part.

Many aspects of this story could apply to Camberwell and other parts of South London and it is well worth reading.

### Wilson's Grammar School

To escape the clutches of the ILEA Wilson's Grammar School moved south last December away from Camberwell.

Edward Wilson, vicar of Camberwell, founded the Camberwell Free Grammar School in 1615; it continued till the buildings were demolished in 1845 and the school itself suffered total eclipse until new buildings were erected in 1882 and the school was refounded as Wilson's Grammar School. The buildings, which are those we see today, were designed by E R Robson, the architect of many of the schools of the London School Board in the 1870's and 1880's; Wilson's is on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, Grade II.

The buildings are now empty, but the GLC has now submitted proposals to use them as a School of Arts and Crafts and a Teachers' Science Centre.

## ST GILES MAY FAIR - FESTIVAL WEEKEND MAY 2nd - 4th

During the weekend of May 2nd to 4th many local organisations and charities including The Camberwell Society will be taking part in the May Fair centred around St Giles Church.

A flower festival and exhibition of paintings by local artists and students will be arranged in the church itself and will open with a reception (with wine) on the evening of Friday May 2nd. The programme for Saturday the 3rd includes a special peal of bells, country dancing in the church forecourt, a band concert, a Fair in the Parish Hall in the afternoon (including stalls run by The Friends of St Giles Hospital, The Friends of Love Walk, and The Camberwell Society), a special showing of the Cup Final on colour TV, and in the evening a barn dance and cabaret.

The Dean of St Paul's is to preach at a festival service on Sunday morning while the afternoon is to be occupied by a parish walk and the evening by a concert in the church given by Goldsmiths' Orchestra. Full details of all events will be published on the church noticeboards and elsewhere.

The Society's contribution will be the parish walk, led by Stephen Marks, on Sunday afternoon and a stall of publications which will give us an opportunity also to publicise the Society.

### IN PRAISE

These pages are so often full of complaint (not without good reason) that it is very pleasing to notice some good things that have happened as well. Lots of improvements pass almost unnoticed, but cumulatively they make a considerable impact.

#### *White Lodge, 67 Grove Lane*

Extensive repair work is coming to a close at White Lodge. The restoration of the Roman Doric portico with the help of an historic buildings grant is the most prominent improvement for the passer-by and has involved the removal of the fluted wooden columns to E G Rose & Son's workshops for thorough repair while the portico roof is supported on props; the work is being supervised by one of our members, James Elliott.

#### *Westminster Bank, Camberwell Green*

A splendid job has been done on this very prominent corner building which stands in the view down Denmark Hill (built 1899, archt. A Williams). The cleaning of the brick and stone makes it sparkle and the redecoration has been meticulous. The bank's sign, too, is restrained and tasteful, a contrast with Barclays, on the corner of Wren Road, with its garish, ill-mannered, blue flash obliterating much of the architectural detail.

#### *118 Grove Lane*

Although some details leave much to be desired, the rebuilding of the destroyed half of a semi-detached pair of

early Victorian villas has vastly improved the corner of Grove Lane and Champion Hill.

#### *49-55 Grove Lane*

These four houses, opposite Love Walk, have stood in their livery of wood-grain paint for so long that their appearance in gleaming white is a much more startling improvement than the usual periodical repainting. We heard, once, that long ago the owner had hopes of redevelopment, but now their future is assured as they are on the statutory list.

#### *167 Camberwell Grove*

Another excellent piece of restoration work has been completed at 167 Camberwell Grove, at the bottom of the Crescent, also supervised by James Elliott and carried out by E G Rose & Son. Besides thorough stripping of all old paintwork to reveal the jointing lines on the facade the work has required new stone balustrades for the portico which is now brought back to its original appearance; historic buildings grants were given by Southwark and the GLC for this work.

#### *18 Camberwell Church Street*

At last someone has enough confidence to do basic work on the south side of Camberwell Church Street on the 'Epic' site: complete repointing of the facade (even if the pointing is a bit harsh and bright) is an encouraging sign, and we hope it will be the forerunner of more upgrading of these long-neglected buildings.

### POSTCARDS OF OLD CAMBERWELL

To add to the publications of Camberwell, Stephen Marks is publishing reprints of six postcards of Camberwell in about 1900; the views are of Camberwell Green, Camberwell Grove, Ruskin Park, Upper Grove Lane, The Triangle on Denmark Hill, and Dog Kennel Hill. These have been received and will be on sale at the St Giles May Fair and the Passage Bookshop as well as from him at 50 Grove Lane. They cost 6 pence each or 30 pence for the set of six.

St Giles May Fair  
50 Grove Lane  
Camberwell

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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*Chairman* Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5  
*Vice-Chairman* David Whiting 92 Ruskin Park House, Champion Hill, S E 5  
*Hon Treasurer* David Main St Giles' Centre, Camberwell Church Street, S E 5 (703 5841/2)  
*Hon Secretary* Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
*Assistant Secretary* Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 2658)

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NEWSLETTER NO 25

June 1975

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## THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

At the Annual General Meeting on May 22nd the officers, as shown above, and the following members of the Executive Committee were elected:

Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane (274 0367)  
Mrs Beryl Johnson 70 Daneville Road  
Mrs Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove (701 4758)  
Stephen Marks 50 Grove Lane (703 2719)  
Dick Oliver 89 Grove Lane (703 4949)  
Paul Sandilands 21 De Crespigny Park (703 4536)  
Mrs Shirley Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove (703 8624)  
Jim Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove (703 8624)  
Rev Barry Thorley Fiat A, St Giles' Centre, Camberwell Church Street (703 3316)  
Bill Wells 21 Cuthill Road

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## BURGESS PARK - A CONDUCTED TOUR Saturday June 28th

We are very pleased to have been able to arrange a tour of Burgess Park, formerly North Camberwell Open Space. The tour will be conducted by DAVE SADLER, the able and enthusiastic Park Manager, on Saturday June 28th; it will start at 2.30 from Addington Square and take about two hours.

Please let Michael Ivan (703 4564) know before June 22nd if you think you are coming, because, if there is likely to be a large number, Mr Sadler will be joined by Mr Evans, the Area Manager of the Parks Department of the Greater London Council.

You may remember that at a public inquiry in April the Society contested the need to demolish ten late-Georgian houses in Albany Road for the park. Their preservation, we felt, would have little impact on the park, but we shall eventually be faced with more important buildings whose retention would have a much greater effect, so we must, as a Society, decide what attitude to take, for example, on Chumleigh Gardens, Trafalgar Avenue, St Mark's Church.

In the autumn a Newsletter will be devoted to the subject of Burgess Park, the development of the idea, its actual growth, its impact, design and purpose; the Newsletter will include reports on this visit, the public inquiry, and current problems. This will enable the Society to have a well-informed meeting and to decide how far it should press for preservation and new design.

*Don't miss this chance to hear at first hand about the vision and the hope as well as what is actually happening now*

*Saturday June 28th, 2.30, Addington Square*

## REPORT OF THE SURVEY OF THE CAMBERWELL GREEN AREA 1973/74

Members may like to know that our *Report* has been purchased by the following local authorities in London, in most cases for their libraries: the Greater London Council, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Westminster, Sutton, and Southwark. Other institutions to take it include Guildhall Library, Open University Library, London School of Economics, Polytechnic of the Southbank, Bishopsgate Institute, and the Department of Health and Social Security.

Up to the end of April, 46 copies had been sold, bringing in nearly two-thirds of our expenditure of £47 on the printing.

The Camberwell, Peckham and Dulwich Chamber of Commerce have just bought six copies, but we have been quite unable to persuade Southwark Planning Department, who, we hope, would make most practical use of it, to purchase any copies at all, even as a way of thanking the Society for carrying out a very extensive piece of work which the Council should have done!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAY 22nd 1975

Some forty members attended the Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society, held on May 22nd 1975 in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church. The main discussion arising out of the minutes of the previous year's meeting was about the extension of the Society's area: two specific extensions were suggested as desirable, one the area of Grove Hill Road, Ivanhoe Road, Bromar Road ('Denmark Park Estate'), the other a group of houses north east of Wells Way and Southampton Way, both small areas which could conveniently be included. It was also suggested that we should extend our area to meet that of neighbouring societies, but this might seriously over-extend our resources, even though it might bring in extra members and extra revenue. The Executive Committee were asked to make recommendations at the next annual meeting.

The annual report (printed in Newsletter no 24) was accepted and the accounts (circulated at the meeting and printed in this Newsletter), presented by Brian Allsworth, were approved. Brian, who had been Hon Treasurer for nine years, ever since the foundation of the original residents' group, was proposing to retire from that office and was warmly thanked for his work for the Society. The subscription had been kept at 50 pence (10/-) since the beginning, but it was now inevitable that it would have to be increased to meet steeply rising costs: more efficient recruitment at public meetings was suggested as well.

Miss Nadine Beddington and David Whiting were re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman; David Main was elected as the new Hon Treasurer to succeed Brian Allsworth, and as Valerie Kent also wished to retire, Michael Ivan was elected as Hon Secretary, with Sally Stockley as Assistant Secretary. The new committee (printed on page 1 of this Newsletter) included three new members (Dick Oliver, Barry Thorley, Bill Wells)

A long discussion followed about Burgess Park: there was

strong feeling that more attempts should be made to keep interesting old buildings as positive features of the park, that imported earth mounds were no substitute for old structures. The Burgess Park Forum, set up by the Greater London Council and with a representative of the Society, was performing a valuable task in dealing with current problems but was prevented by its terms of reference from considering the design of the park. Stephen Marks urged the Society to think very carefully how far it should press for the preservation of various buildings whose retention would radically alter the park plan; the plan had assumed a clean sweep of everything and was based purely on convenience without reference to any other consideration; a conducted tour at the end of June would be very helpful, and it was agreed that when we had published a Newsletter all about Burgess Park we would then have a meeting so that we could come to a fully-informed decision.

Mrs Cole spoke on behalf of several members from the Selborne Road area who were present and thanked The Camberwell Society for all it had done so far in the struggle to retain and rehabilitate their homes; she said there was still a long way to go and urged the Society to continue to help.

Jim Tanner gave a brief account of the working party on the Camberwell Green area; the report, hoped for early in the year, was not likely to be ready before the summer. He mentioned that the studies included an assessment of buildings to be retained, a comparison of six road options put forward by the Greater London Council and a seventh by the Society, shopping requirements, and the provision of offices.

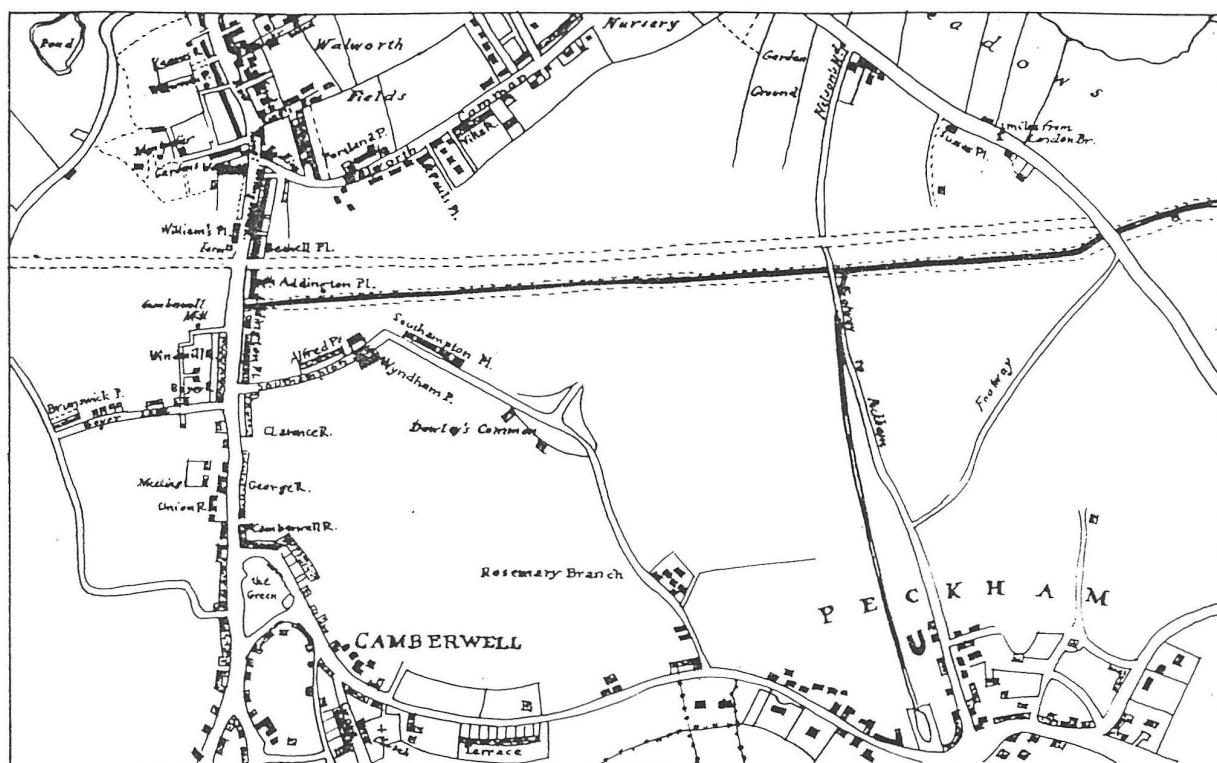
Other matters discussed included the condition of a number of houses, especially those at the top of Camberwell Grove, owned by the Council, the prevalence of litter in the streets, and parking on pavements. David Whiting informed us that he was now a member of Southwark's Planning and Development Committee.

### Accounts for the period June 1st 1974 to April 30th 1975

<i>Expenditure</i>		<i>Income</i>	
hire of halls	26.50	membership	
newsletters		subscriptions	142.97
printing and postage	61.67	sales of greetings cards	77.50
Report of Survey	47.00	sales of Report of	
other printing	33.85	Survey	28.50
sundry expenses	75.57	other sales	2.60
	<u>244.62</u>		
excess of income over expenditure	6.95		
	<u>251.57</u>		<u>251.57</u>

### Balance sheet at April 30th 1975

		<i>Assets</i>	
balance at 1 6 74	85.75	bank balance, 30 4 75	220.74
		cash etc in hand	5.25
			<u>225.99</u>
excess of income over expenditure	6.95	less creditors	133.29
	<u>92.70</u>		<u>92.70</u>



Extract from LAURIE & WHITTLE's Plan of London with its Environs

1809/10

#### ALBANY ROAD - An historical note

Albany Road was formed in about 1810, quite independent of the rather congested development of Walworth to the north, linking Camberwell Road and Old Kent Road in a very slight curve. Laurie and Whittle's map dated 1809/10 (see extract above) shows what the area was like just before the street was laid out. The canal is shown running straight across just above the centre of the map and immediately to the north and parallel with it a projected road which would have come from the Oval and from the proposed Vauxhall Bridge (opened in 1816); in the event the new road struck south-east from the Oval to Camberwell Green, as Camberwell New Road (see Newsletter no 19 page 6). Curiously enough, a road linking the Oval and Old Kent Road, in the same position north of the canal, was proposed in Abercrombie's County of London Plan in 1943.

The first mention of Albany Road appears in the ratebooks for 1811 as 'Albany Street'. On Cary's map of 1820 (see Newsletter no 17 page 3) it is called 'Albany New Road' and there is a liberal distribution of separate rows of houses on either side of the road itself but no developments leading off it north or south.

The ratebooks show that once building began, houses were erected fairly quickly. The group with which the recent public inquiry was concerned, nos 345-369, was among the later terraces in Albany Road: a few of the houses in this group existed in October 1819, possibly a little earlier, most of them in April 1823, and the whole

row was complete by 1826. For a time this terrace was called 'Read's Place', for example in the ratebook of 1829 and on Dewhurst's map of 1842.

A full account of the public inquiry which was held late in April will appear in an autumn Newsletter, when the whole question of the creation and design of Burgess Park will be examined.

#### THE WORK OF THE POLICE IN CAMBERWELL

On April 17th Chief Inspector A F Durston, of Carter Street Police Station, spoke to the Society about the work of the police in Camberwell. His area stretches from the Elephant and Castle to the top of Champion Hill and Grove Lane, and he has been in Camberwell for the last two of his twenty-one years in the police force.

He thought there had been little or no change from a police point of view, in two years, probably not even in twelve years. The area was noted for its characters and was a rough area with as many officers injured as in Soho: there were always two or three off sick with their injuries. The main crime in Camberwell was theft, especially easy 'walk-in thefts'; there was now a skilled team of housebreakers. Camberwell had the highest incidence of vehicle taking in the metropolitan police area, almost all by under-16s.

Mr Durston referred to cross-cultural problems for the police in enforcing laws which conflicted with the customs

of other nations or races. He said that the police were not very concerned with punishment or remedial measures. The problem of preventing damage to pavements, by parking was really the problem of catching the breaker, a problem of not having enough men whom Mr Durston had to allocate to a variety of jobs.

Two officers are responsible for the 'home beats' in the Grove Lane area, Ian Gray at the top and Brian Palmer at the bottom. The beat system gave them information by observing; they could recognise patterns of behaviour of people who did not belong to the particular area; and it was a deterrent. There were not, however, enough men to keep a general foot patrol, so they used panda patrols and faster cars, all with modern means of communication.

It was Mr Durston's opinion that Camberwell had lost by the closure of the Police Station in Church Street, but he was not able to comment on the economics of the matter.

The meeting closed shortly before ten o'clock with a vote of thanks from nearly forty members attending.

## 24 CAMBERWELL CHURCH STREET

*Mr Robert Ford, a member of the Society, writes:*

The slides shown by Stephen Marks at the members evening last Autumn, under the title of 'Camberwell Landmarks and Lesser Lights' were of great interest generally to all who saw them and one shot, in particular, of especial interest to me. That was the picture of the two-storey shop building which is sandwiched in between the Police Station and the Edwardian block adjoining the corner of Grove Lane, known as 24 Camberwell Church Street. Its particular interest for me is that it happens to be my birth-place (farther back in time than I now care to admit!). I well remember the old house. Behind the shop on the ground floor was a large stockroom and a shop parlour and at the east end the staircase to the first floor. Behind the staircase was a back addition housing the kitchen and scullery. On the first floor were four rooms and an additional room over the kitchen. There was a small garden behind the house enclosed at the end by two outhouses which, quite evidently, had been cow-sheds or stables originally. In the garden was a fig tree which bore small figs in due season and in the garden next door was a mulberry tree which also fruited annually. Adjoining the house at the east end was a ramshackle shop which sold shell fish and next to that the old Hermit's Cave at the corner of Grove Lane. These latter two buildings were demolished in the early 1900's and replaced by the present buildings. I recall that the entrance door to the shop at No 24 was of very heavy design, two inches to three inches in thickness with egg and dart mouldings around the panels. The shopfront occupied about two-thirds of the frontage and at the west end there was a small cottage window set in the brickwork. If and when the redevelopment of the Camberwell Green area is finally effected no doubt No 24 will be swept away so I am glad to know that Stephen Marks has secured so good a record of this old relic.

## LONDON TOPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

(founded in 1880)

- publishes facsimiles of old maps, plans, and views of London (both City and Metropolis), research on London history and topography, and *London Topographical Record*
- distributes a publication each year to its members
- has a large number of past publications for sale, including the following

Horwood's Plan of London 1792-99, 36 sheets

Hollar's Long View of London 1647, 7 sheets

*The London Panoramas of Robert Barker and Thomas Girtin, c. 1800*, by H. J. Pragnell

Norden's View of London 1600  
Survey of St. Marylebone by B. R. Davies, 1834

*Leybourn's City of London Market Plans 1677* by Betty A. Masters (just issued to members)

Mills and Oliver's *Survey of the Building Sites in the City of London after the Great Fire of 1666*, 5 volumes

1st ed OS (1876) of the City of London, with pre-Fire parishes superimposed in colour

Hollar's Exact Surveigh 1667

Tallis's *London Street Views*

Inigo Jones' Banqueting House

Langley and Belch's New map of London 1812

*Berkeley Square to Bond Street*, by B. H. Johnson

Drawings of Old and New London Bridge by E. W. Cooke. c. 1830

Grand Architectural Panorama of London, Regent Street to Westminster Abbey, 1849

*The Map of Mid-Sixteenth-century London*, by Stephen Marks

Map of Chelsea by F. P. Thompson, 1836  
*London Topographical Record*, 13 volumes out of 23 published

Map of the Railways proposed in 1863

- members are entitled to 25% discount on publications
- annual subscription £2.50

**information and full price list from  
Stephen Marks (Hon Secretary)  
50 Grove Lane, London SE5 8ST**

Mrs Gillian Whaites  
50 Love Walk  
SE5

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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*Vice-Chairman* David Whiting  
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*Hon Secretary* Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
*Assistant Secretary* Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 2658)

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NEWSLETTER NO 26

October 1975.

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## MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Meetings have been arranged during the next three months, all in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church (at the corner of Love Walk and Grove Lane, enter from Grove Lane and go down the ramp).

Tuesday November 11th at 8

### *SOME ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK IN CAMBERWELL*

An evening of information and discussion arranged by David Main of St Giles' Centre, with short talks by Rosy Taylor of Community Drug Project, a speaker from the Grove Park Day Training Centre (Inner London Probation and After-Care Service), and David Main himself.

Tuesday December 9th at 8, when Stephen Marks will show slides and talk about

### *NEW CAMBERWELL — POST-WAR BUILDING*

A critical appraisal of good and bad in modern architecture near home.

Tuesday January 13th 1976 at 8, a discussion about

### *BURGESS PARK — DESTRUCTION AND CREATION*

Should the GLC demolish everything within the 130 acres designated for the park? Can the design be improved? Can the blight of another twenty-five years to completion be avoided? A Newsletter will soon be devoted to the subject of Burgess Park in preparation for this meeting.

*Please note these in your diaries now - there may not be reminders for all of them.*

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year we have again produced a greetings card - this time, not a view, but a vivid portrait, in colour, of one of the characters of Camberwell in the 30s, Bessie who stood at the kerb in Camberwell Church Street selling steaming beetroot, drawn by a former resident of Camberwell. With on

Street selling steaming beetroot, drawn by Miss Molly Capes, a former resident of Camberwell. With only the word GREETINGS inside, it can be used for any occasion as well as for Christmas. Its price with envelope is 10 pence each or 90 pence for a packet of 10, obtainable after the middle of the month from

The Passage Bookshop, Canning Cross  
Valerie Kent, 38 Camberwell Grove (701 4758)  
Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane (274 0367)  
Mrs Betts, 126 Grove Park (274 6532)  
Michael Ivan, 24 Grove Lane (703 4564)

*PLEASE TURN TO THE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS OF  
POSTCARDS, MAPS AND VIEWS OF OLD CAMBERWELL*

## THE BOROUGH PLANNER

In July the new Borough Planner, responsible to Ceri Griffiths, Southwark's Director of Development, arrived in Southwark to take the place of Ian Lacey who was appointed last year as Chief Planning Officer at Westminster. The new man is Michael West, MCD, BArch (L'pool), FRTPI, RIBA.

For nearly three years he has been in charge of the work of the Central London Planning Conference, a non-statutory advisory body responsible for bringing together the varied policies and ideas of seven central boroughs (Southwark, Lambeth, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, City of London, and Islington) and for providing a collective response to overall planning proposals for London. He has, among other things, spent a short time in Bermuda as Deputy Director of Government Planning and has worked in Westminster's Planning Department.

At 36, he has taken over an extremely difficult and sensitive job. We wish him all success and look forward to regular contact and a continuation of the happy relationship we have built up with the Planning Department and the Planning and Development Committee.

## FARRAS Federation of Associations in Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas in Southwark

### *The Secretary of FARRAS writes*

Shortly after the London government reorganisation of 1965, the newly formed London Borough of Southwark declared some 700 acres of "development" (i.e. demolition) areas. All were instantly blighted, and about half are either still blighted and inhabited or totally derelict. The problems of living in such areas became so acute that in 1973 tenants' and residents' associations got together to see what could be done to persuade the council to improve matters.

In February 1974, just before the national and local elections, senior officers and councillors encouraged the grouping to constitute itself properly. This was done at a public meeting attended by over 300 people in September 1974 when the Federation of Associations in Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas in Southwark (FARRAS) was formally inaugurated and instructed to pursue with the council ways of alleviating the problems of living in development areas. Eventually FARRAS was offered informal meetings every six months. In reply, FARRAS suggested that the meetings should be quarterly and on a formal basis; that would encourage action as well as talk. Besides, the Southwark branch of the Association of London Housing Estates enjoys successful and formal consultation with the council in the shape of the Tenants Consultative Committee, and FARRAS felt that people in redevelopment areas should be treated similarly. But the council's response was to refuse to meet FARRAS at all.

FARRAS has all the time been trying to help its members with the problems of redevelopment, but little can be done without the co-operation of the council, and it is hoped that the council will think again and adopt a more humane and helpful attitude. At a tenants' conference in January 1975, the Chairman of the Housing Committee, Alderman Sawyer, said he recognised the serious problems of redeve-

lopment areas and would do something about FARRAS' request. FARRAS is disappointed that he later voted against any meetings at all.

FARRAS is now trying to persuade the three Southwark MPs to urge the council to act more reasonably, but some of the more cynical FARRAS members fear that only another election will do the trick. What is certain is that the blight and anxiety about "redevelopment" will afflict the borough for many years yet.

## CLIFTON CRESCENT, Nos 3-67

Nos 3-67 Clifton Crescent, lying in the centre of the northern part of Southwark's Brimington (formerly Clifton) development area, were spot-listed by the Department of the Environment at the beginning of the year, so that they could not be demolished without the Secretary of State's consent. The council's immediate reaction was to get in an application for listed building consent to demolish them and it appeared to treat contemptuously all efforts to get a change of heart, but recently, we are glad to report, the council has decided to retain and repair these houses, in the main for larger families so that they can be used without undue division.

No 1 was pulled down shortly before the listing but it seems that Southwark are considering the possibility of rebuilding it to restore the symmetry of the group (see the description in Newsletter 23.2). Plans for the area, which included a new road on the site of the houses, will of course have to be recast; we understand that an open space will now be formed in front of the crescent which will be set off to advantage.

## NEW CROSS ROAD, Nos 6-12

An interesting conflict between a compulsory purchase order for clearance as unfit and the architectural interest of four houses, known as Carlton Cottages, in New Cross Road, was fully aired at a public inquiry in January 1973 (see Newsletter 13.4). Two and a half years later (!) the decision to preserve them has been issued by the Department of the Environment.

The inspector concluded in his report that "their retention would be likely to have little or no detrimental effect on the council's scheme for the Clifton/Pomeroy development area as a whole in terms of the amount of accommodation to be provided" and that "Carlton Cottages properly restored and rehabilitated to modern standards would provide a foil for the new development in the rest of the area, and would remain as an attractive reminder of past achievements and living standards". It is very gratifying to see the official approval of points which were made in the Society's evidence at the inquiry.

The decision letter also makes the interesting point, not previously resolved, that because the Secretary of State has refused listed building consent to demolish these houses it is not now open to the council to take steps to secure their demolition in spite of the duty to do so by virtue of the confirmed compulsory purchase order: in other words, the duty to demolish seems removed by the mere legal impediment to carrying out that duty!

The London Amenity and Transport Association came into being in 1968 with the object of encouraging a sensible policy for London as a whole, seeing that the requirements of amenity and transport often conflict. Almost immediately LATA became involved with the London Motorway Action Group, an umbrella organisation for many groups opposed to motorways in Inner London (i.e. Ringways 1 and 2), and helped to prepare a case for the public inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan which lasted from 1970 to 1972.

The decision to go ahead with motorway plans was reached by the government in February 1973 and not until the new Labour GLC came into power in April 1973 were those plans abandoned. After this the emphasis in LATA's activities shifted back towards its original objectives and former members of the London Motorway Action Group, such as The Camberwell Society, were invited to join. We did this in the summer of 1974 and during the last year we have attended meetings on various subjects, the most recent being a discussion of the GLC's proposed lorry routes.

These proposals vitally affect Camberwell, Camberwell New Road, Camberwell Church Street, and Denmark Hill all being designated routes in the scheme.\* The original consultation paper which went out to the boroughs stated that such routes would have to have some priority for 'improvement to adequate standards to facilitate the easy movement of lorries. . .'. Bearing in mind this hint that the routes could be an excuse for road widening which encourages more traffic, that the policy would be unfair to people living alongside the routes, that over two hundred conservation areas would be adversely affected and many open spaces would be even more difficult to get to than they are already, LATA resolved (by an overwhelming majority at their meeting reported below) to support the stand against lorry routes and the alternative policy of a ban on heavy lorries in London. Heavy lorries in this case are those of six wheels (three axles) or more.

The GLC's decision will be made public in the autumn. It is clear that heavy lorries bring a quite unacceptable level of distress to people's daily lives and The Camberwell Society sent its own letter of protest against lorry routes to the GLC in July, putting in yet another plea for a reduction in traffic in general and heavy lorries in particular, improved and extended Underground services, as well as possible renewed use of the River Thames as a freight carrier.

Alternatives to road transport and action for improved public transport are now two of LATA's main concerns, and their recent document, *Ringways in Outer London*, looks at the Department of the Environment's reasons for planning Ringways 3 and 4, now roughly-speaking merged into one "Outer Orbital Route". The document finds that the Department has not considered alternatives to the building of roads of motorway standard, that the route would provide only a small lessening of through traffic in London for a limited time before it built up again (unless accompanied by measures to prevent this), and that such roads would encourage people to use cars rather than public transport, with all the ensuing degeneration of public transport that we have seen in recent years.

LATA represents amenity societies as well as individuals, acts as a channel for the exchange of information and experience, and hopes to deal mainly with issues brought to it by its members. If you have ideas which you think should be discussed please tell us and, if possible, join LATA as well. The Hon Secretary is Tim Martin, 26 Elm Park Mansions, Park Walk, London SW10.

Sally Stockley

\* These were shown on a leaflet, *Lorry Routes and Bans*, issued by the GLC in April 1975 requesting comment by July 31st.

### LORRIES OR PEOPLE?

*Report of LATA meeting, July 2nd 1975*

Dick Oliver attended on behalf of the Society and reports: Ringways are dead, long live the Ringways! Judging by the GLC's lorry routes plan, about which the GLC has managed to keep remarkably quiet, this is what the road planners have in store for us. The answer is to tell the GLC and the government in no uncertain terms that it's people that matter, and the communities that they comprise, and that we will not have our houses torn down to make way for yet more traffic, and we will not have our sleeping - and waking - hours made impossible by the passage of ever heavier through traffic.

This is the conclusion of the London Amenity and Transport Association meeting called on July 2nd to discuss the GLC's lorry routes plan. This is a proposed network of 425 miles of existing roads designated as "lorry routes". Here in Camberwell, Church Street and the New Road are to form one lorry route, and Denmark Hill another. We are lucky in having comparatively little in our area - but the problems of the constantly mounting juggernaut traffic pounding along Church Street and the New Road, in particular, make the mind boggle - what are the planners thinking of? The answer eventually will be the inevitable 'improvement' of these pleasant streets that are so much a part of our lives. And we all know what 'improvement' will mean - the sweeping away of what is familiar and human in scale, and its replacement with something much like the ringway scheme that we thought we had seen the last of. And if the GLC wants to protest - as does the roads lobby as a whole - that we must have lorries because that represents trade and prosperity, then we might ask why they haven't been more open about their plans - there are about 150,000 households along their designated routes, and the GLC printed only 17,000 copies of their broadsheet on the subject. Nothing like hiding a light - whether it be of trade and prosperity, or disruption - under a bushel, especially as the last date for protest was at the end of July.

First speaker at the LATA meeting was Terence Bendixson, who seemed to think that compromise was possible. He outlined the example of Groningen in Holland, where, as a commercial operation backed by the local authority, the

road hauliers in the town had clubbed together to build a bulk breakdown depot on the outskirts. Deliveries and pickups within the town were conducted from this depot in lorries about the size of large post office vans, running routes carefully planned to minimize fuel use and nuisance. In its fifth year now the system was just beginning to pay, despite competition from people who preferred still to deliver their own goods, and the Dutch national carrier.

Bendixson was followed by Mayer Hillman, who took a much stronger line. To plan for the lorry was to accept it and not to consider the alternatives that should be used, or even not used. What sense is there in bringing bricks from Scotland to London and bricks from London to Scotland, he wanted to know. A great deal of the traffic on the roads was either running empty or carrying building materials, to rebuild areas devastated by road improvement schemes, he wondered. How much unnecessary traffic could be saved if we rejected the idea of the throw-away society thrust on us by marketing 'experts'?

Then a lively discussion session followed, during which a GLC document outlining the boroughs' reactions to the lorry routes scheme was brought out. Despite the GLC claiming that most were in favour, detailed study and report told a different story - it was rather like the difference between half-full and half-empty - the GLC had ignored all reservations when compiling their summary. Interestingly, Southwark did not appear in the document at all. A representative from Kensington & Chelsea made the point that we were still fighting the ringways, and another from Islington, where St Paul's Road is not unlike our Church Street and New Road, shamed our lack of militancy here in Camberwell by reporting that residents there had sent at least a thousand postcards to County Hall protesting

against the proposals.

In the end, the ideas of Hillman won the day, and the meeting decided to support in principle a move put forward by CALM - Campaign Against the Lorry Menace - for the banning of all lorries over 16 tons total loaded weight. This is the point at which lorries move from four to six wheels, to give a rough idea of size. Also the meeting decided to tell the GLC that to plan for increasing lorry traffic, that is, the lorry routes plan, was completely unacceptable. Only one person present voted against and he pointed out that he had been mandated so to vote by the body that sent him. Interestingly the area he came from had a great deal of the only road in London really suitable for heavy traffic, the North Circular, and obviously keeping lorries on this, rather than wandering at will through residential streets, could well minimize their problems. But that, of course, still begged the fundamental question so clearly seen by LATA - why juggernauts at all?

#### *CALM Campaign Against the Lorry Menace*

The Campaign Against the Lorry Menace was founded by Chiswick Motorways Liaison Committee, Intersoc, and the Clapham Society, with the support of the Civic Trust, Transport 2000, and the Conservation Society. The campaign was launched in May 1975, its main object being to ban lorries over 16 tons gross vehicle weight in the GLC area and meanwhile to deter heavy lorries by a lorry permit system. It is against designated lorry routes. If anyone would like to join (no charge) or find out more about it, write to Ken Hawkes, CALM, 20 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W4. The committee of The Camberwell Society has not yet discussed whether it should join this organisation so please give us your views.

## POSTCARDS, MAPS, & VIEWS OF CAMBERWELL

*Don't forget that the following are available from The Passage Bookshop and from Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane (703 2719)*

A set of fourteen Views of Old Camberwell, printed in collotype, with leaflet (also available separately at 10 and 20 pence each)	£2
A Plan of Grove Hill, Camberwell, Surrey, belonging to J C Lettsom MD engraved from a survey taken in 1792	30 pence
A Map of the Parish of St Giles, Camberwell 1842 (36" x 24")	£1.50
A Map of Peckham and Camberwell in about 1861 (10½" x 14¾")	20 pence
Postcards of Old Camberwell, c 1900, set of six	30 pence

Miss Gillian Whaité  
30 Love Walk  
S E 5

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5

Vice-Chairman David Whiting

Hon Treasurer David Main St Giles' Centre, Camberwell Church Street, S E 5 (703 5841/2)

Hon Secretary Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)

Assistant Secretary Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 2658)

NEWSLETTER NO 27

November 1975

## **DON'T FORGET — MEMBERS' MEETINGS —** *At the United Reformed Church, Love Walk*

Tuesday December 9th at 8 o'clock

Tuesday January 13th 1976 at 8 o'clock

## **NEW CAMBERWELL — POST-WAR BUILDINGS**

Stephen Marks will show a large selection of slides taken in and around Camberwell. Please come with an open mind and put away any preconceptions about 'nasty new buildings'.

## **BURGESS PARK — DESTRUCTION**

### **AND CREATION**

A discussion about the future of 130 acres designated by the GLC as a Metropolitan Park to serve south London. Read the next Newsletter.

## **DON'T FORGET — GREETINGS CARDS**

Bessie stood in Camberwell Church Street selling beetroot in the 1930s; now in full colour she can carry your greetings for Christmas and other occasions and bring a smile to the recipient, so please buy now (and help the Society into the bargain) from:

The Passage Bookshop 5 Canning Cross

Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane

Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane

Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove

Elizabeth Betts 126 Grove Park

Price (with envelope) 10 or more: 9 pence each  
singly: 10 pence each

*On other pages*

Camberwell Green working

party *page 7*

Greater London Development

Plan *page 4*

Local development plan *page 5*

Lettsom area - visit *page 3*

GLC Speedbus *page 6*

# CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday December 12th  
at St Giles Crypt

Come to our Christmas Party on Friday December 12th, 8 o'clock till midnight, in the crypt of St Giles Church. There will be a WEST INDIAN STEEL BAND, a GUITARIST, and other delights, and if you don't want to dance you can TALK and EAT. We shall provide a variety of food but please bring your own drink. Besides having some fun we hope that the party will give people in Camberwell an opportunity to meet each other, and members of the Society's Committee will be there to introduce you if necessary.

If you are a member you should already have received an invitation through your letter-box, but anyone interested in Camberwell is welcome so long as they contact us in advance.

PLEASE will everyone let us know by December 5th if you are coming and whether you will be bringing any friends, otherwise the party will be impossible to organise.

RING, WRITE or CALL: 24 Grove Lane 703 4564 or 701 2658

## **SELBORNE**

The scheme of proposed new housing for the 6.8 acre site of the Selborne development area prepared for Southwark by Sir Frederick Gibberd and Partners has been referred back to the architects as a result of detailed criticisms of their proposals.

The Selborne site, located within an area roughly defined by Daneville Road to the north, Denmark Hill to the west, Love Walk to the south and Grove Lane to the east, is to provide housing in a mixture of 2-person, 4-person, and 5-person dwellings at a density of 100 persons per acre, with special 1- and 2-person units for the elderly and 2- and 4-person units for the disabled.

The scheme prepared by Sir Frederick Gibberd and Partners has been well thought out with such laudable objectives as the provision of a front door at ground level for every dwelling, thereby avoiding common stairs and access balconies. But this basically well-considered scheme fails because the full demands

of the brief are virtually incapable of achievement. Criticism by councillors of aspects of the planning of the dwellings may seem, at first sight, to be concerned with detail which the designers can easily rectify, but the roots of their criticism, whether they are aware of it or not, are far more fundamental. For example, the overlapping of 2-person dwellings, which are on two floors, by 4- and 5-person dwellings which are on three floors, is considered to be unacceptable. But this planning device has been resorted to so as to provide ground floor entrances as well as 'adequate internal planning standards', at a density of 100 persons to the acre and, one suspects, sufficient site not occupied by buildings so as to provide for private gardens and for communal landscaped courts and play spaces.

At a recent meeting of the Housing Committee, Alderman Sawyer, commenting on proposals for the Brimington South Estate, made a stinging attack on the Borough Architect's department for 'their lack of imagination'. He took his officers to task not only for building 'rabbit hutches' but also for deliberately creating a council house identity. The 'rabbit hutches' charge is manifestly unfair - the cost yardstick virtually dictates minimum space standards in new developments. But his censure of the estate approach to housing planning can be laid squarely at the door of his own council. It is time that the concept of the housing estate as it has developed in the post-war years was exposed to full critical scrutiny. Southwark should begin by questioning the very starting-point of the Gibberd scheme at Selborne, an inward-looking development which, despite reference by the designers to having regard for the 'special architectural qualities of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area', arrogantly turns its back on the surrounding streets and houses of Camberwell. If the brief really means what it says, here is a heaven-sent opportunity to avoid the visual discord of yet another housing estate.

Southwark Borough Council recently received the report of its Working Party on the future of Camberwell Green. (This working party was unique in that it included members of the public in the form of representatives of the Camberwell Society.) Members of the working party felt strongly that there should be a link between the Green and the Selborne development area. There is a real chance that the latest road proposals for the Green will see the end of Daneville Road as a major traffic through route. Yet the designers of the Selborne scheme have chosen deliberately to turn their backs on Daneville Road because of the time-lapse before it ceases to be a major traffic route. In consequence they have thrown away the last chance of linking the Green, not only with Selborne, but also with a substantial area of housing, including the new De Crespigny Park development lying to the south.

If Southwark is serious in its desire to see a housing development which is in scale with its surroundings, why replace the existing housing? By definition the existing housing is already in scale with its surroundings. If Southwark wants houses which are not 'rabbit hutches', why do away with the existing houses? Whatever else their shortcomings, minimum space standards is not one of them. If the perpetuation of the council estate mentality in borough housing is deplored, why create yet another estate?

The Camberwell Society has consistently challenged the assumption that the only way to deal with Selborne is by wholesale redevelopment. Recently it submitted to the council a written statement strongly urging, even at this late stage, the consideration of at least partial rehabilitation as opposed to redevelopment. The Borough Surveyor's department challenges our figures but even their prediction of £2million for rehabilitation (with which we would take issue) is well below the cost of redevelopment.

It is not too late for Southwark to go back on its decision to clear the Selborne area and redevelop it. To do so at this stage would demonstrate the sincerity of concern with housing standards as recently expressed by Alderman Sawyer - a concern which is obviously shared by many of his fellow councillors.

*Jim Tanner*

#### **REHABILITATION OR REDEVELOPMENT ?**

*The Society recently sent the following statement to all members of the Joint Housing and Planning Sub-committee in time for the meeting on November 4th and to the Directors of Development and of Housing.*

The Society still believes that rehabilitation of most, if not all, of the area is the most appropriate course of action and, in this belief, has now carried out further studies into the comparative costs of rehabilitation and redevelopment.

The Society's comparison is on a very broad basis, as it is not possible for the Society either to prepare a detailed scheme of rehabilitation or to assess precisely the costs of redevelopment. However, on the basis of an inspection of several of the houses, including some which appeared to be in the worst condition as well as some which have been well looked after by their owners, the Society considers that it is valid to work on the calculation of an overall average costing for the rehabilitation.

The area which has been studied for the calculations is the area of approximately seven acres (2.8 hectares) on which there stand at present 173 houses in Daneville Road, Cuthill Road, Selborne Road, Allendale Road, Kerfield Place, and Kerfield Crescent.

Costing of redevelopment is based on a scheme with a dwelling mix as given in the published brief (Housing and Planning and Development Joint Sub-committee, October 23rd 1974) which results in a development of some 250 dwellings with an average of 2.8 persons per dwelling. The cost of normal housing over the whole site, based on the Housing Cost Yardstick (DOE Circular 61/75) would exceed £3,000,000. This figure includes small dwelling allowance, 50% hardstandings, regional variation, ad hoc for redevelopment site, and the September quarterly adjustment, together with site development costs at, say, £1000 per dwelling; it is assumed that part if not all of the 10% tolerance would be taken up, but other ad hocs, e.g. for special foundations, have not been included.

Calculation of rehabilitation costs, as shown in the figures below, range between 1¼ and 1¾ million pounds.

The brief for redevelopment provides for some special housing (sheltered and for disabled) and for additional facilities (tenants' room, etc). These, however, are extra costs on top of calculations for both redevelopment and rehabilitation and are not worked out here. It is considered that they would not significantly affect the comparison.

Depending on the method of achieving improvements over the whole area, it should be possible to reduce the council's expenditure further by not assuming responsibility for some of the houses which are in relatively good condition, and in these cases the council's maximum liability would be for housing improvement grants, if necessary.

The Society does not necessarily expect that all these houses could or should be rehabilitated and accordingly there may be some reduction in the difference in cost between redevelopment and rehabilitation.

A dwelling mix somewhat different from the redevelopment brief occurs in the rehabilitation scheme. The degree of difference is, however, not as large as appears to be the case, as the units in the brief for 4P-2B do not seem to us to be realistic; these will almost certainly be underoccupied for a large part of their time as 3P-2B. In our opinion four persons should be provided with three bedrooms. The main difference, therefore, is in the provision of a small number of larger dwellings (6P-4B) in some of the three-storey houses in the scheme of rehabilitation. The Society's aim has been to provide approximately the same number of units, but it would be possible to subdivide more of these and to reduce the density.

Bearing in mind the comment about 4P-2B units, rehabilitation of all the houses would provide a higher density which therefore gives some leeway for demolition for achieving extra amenities, such as the open space, within the rehabilitation costs suggested.

No account has been taken in the costings of further savings which would accrue to the council from rehabilitation which would avoid a long interruption in the occupation of the site.

#### *Appendix: rehabilitation of the Selborne area*

<i>dwelling conversion</i>				<i>dwellings/persons</i>	
73 2-storey houses undivided	(4 rooms)	4P 3B	73	292	
20 3-storey houses undivided	(6 rooms)	6P 4B	20	120	
80 3-storey houses converted	(2 rooms	2P 1B	140	280	
to 2 units each	per unit)	1P 1B	20	20	
<i>calculation of costs</i>				253	712

METHOD 1: overall cost per sq ft

2-storey houses approx 400 sq ft per floor,	2x400x73 =	58400
3-storey houses do	3x400x100 =	120000
		178400

from experience of private architect working for another inner London borough, based on tenders just received, cost @ £10/sq ft = £1,784,000

(This figure is confirmed by a figure of £11/sq ft on work being carried out to a higher standard on a single house for a private client)

METHOD 2: conversion costs per dwelling, based on housing association work in west London, builder's own tender figures of £4500 to £5000, increase for inner London costs (i.e. 40% regional variation instead of 25%) cost = £5040 - £5600 x 253 = £1,275,120 - £1,416,800

#### **GIBBERD'S SCHEME ASSESSED**

The Council has criticised some aspects of this development. The Society also has very serious reservations about it.

As with almost all council estates the development quite fails to integrate with its surroundings; it is inward looking and treats the perimeter as a dumping ground for car parks, ball-game areas, refuse collection depots and boiler house. This occurs particularly in Kerfield Place where a ball-games area for older children adjoins the largest of the car parks with more than thirty car spaces; it will inevitably become a centre of rowdy activity and constant movement on what should be the quiet side of houses in Grove Lane.

The building of a new club house in the corner of Grove Lane and Daneville Road will exacerbate this effect, and in any case it is not required because there is every expectation that accommodation will be made available on the Wren Road church site which would be convenient for many more people and nearer the heart of the Green.

It is quite obviously a mistaken principle to group almost all the disabled and old people's dwellings so that they face Love Walk where there is already a heavy concentration, with Nye Bevan Lodge and Love Walk Hostel.

We are appalled by the extremely narrow frontages and by the width of only 10' 8" internally: these are indeed Alderman Sawyer's 'rabbit hutches'.

The scheme has been sent back for revision, so no useful purpose will be served in making more detailed comment at the moment.

#### **THE PEOPLE OF SELBORNE**

At the Council meeting on November 4th it was stated that there were still some 160-170 families living in the Selborne area. Cllr Mrs Ann McNaughton wanted an assurance that rehousing would continue whatever happened. How we agree with her on this point! People who should have been rehoused long ago are still stuck there, while many who wanted to stay are now gone; all this is most regrettable and is the direct result of the Council's inability to tackle the human problem.

#### **LETTSON DEVELOPMENT AREA**

A small party of members of the Society were given the opportunity to see in detail the Lettsom estate on November 1st, accompanied by Mr F H Vaughan, senior partner of Riches & Blythin, architects of the scheme, and by the architect-in-charge, Mr Keith Compton who is himself a Camberwell resident.

The development covers about 11 acres between Vestry Road and Camberwell Grove, north of the railway, and will accommodate 1500 people in 433 dwellings at a density, which is now regarded as high, of 130 persons per acre. In 1970 a thirty-storey block was the first thought, but rejected for several reasons in favour of three- and four-storey buildings; such buildings, however, create their own problems at high densities. Lifts, expensive and vulnerable, have been avoided by ensuring that no flat has its front door above second-floor level. There are fourteen different kinds of dwelling, ranging from one-person to 8-person, including sheltered accommodation for old people, and this has involved a system of interlocking units. The ranges of building are disposed about a number of individual courts linked or close to a main pedestrian spine route; breaks are left in the enclosure of each court so that there are recognisable outward views enabling new residents to feel they are part of Camberwell, an important aspect as the architects themselves pointed out.

The slope of the ground has been turned to advantage both in the landscaping and in the placing of parking space be-

neath some of the buildings. With the careful separation of traffic and parking the courtyards are a haven of quiet, but curiously enough in the first part to be occupied the greatest demand has been for the flats on the perimeter facing the existing streets, which clearly indicates the reluctance of people to find themselves in the middle of an 'estate'.

The elevation of the buildings facing Camberwell Grove has been slightly modified to improve its relation to the conservation area, but otherwise, and deliberately, they are basically the same as the rest of the scheme.

Much thought has gone into attractive paving, often simple but effective in the use of bricks and other materials including perforated blocks which provide a route for a fire appliance but also allow grass to grow through. The landscaping is very comprehensive and imaginative, with, for example, contouring and mounding in some of the courts where trees are about to be planted; new trees will also be placed along the McNeil Road frontage which should help to soften the rather bleak appearance of this new and excessively wide street.

It is not very difficult to find fault with individual details and with materials, especially the rather dreary bricks (a disguised fletton), but it should not be forgotten that housing by councils or by publicly-assisted bodies is subject to crippling financial restraints in the form of the housing cost yardstick.

Phase 1, at the Vestry Road end, includes a small row of shops, not yet let, which complement the existing group of local shops on the east side of Vestry Road; the pub has been retained and the new community hall built as part of this grouping. Except for the community hall this phase is now occupied. Another section, including old people's flats, is nearly ready for occupation, leaving the Camberwell Grove end still some way from completion.

### THE PECKHAM SOCIETY

A new amenity society has been formed: the Peckham Society. It had its inaugural meeting on October 7th at St John's, Meeting House Lane, and Stephen Marks spoke about 'The Aims and Methods of an Amenity Society'. The Society's area is the SE15 postal district, which brings it up to our eastern boundary with a little overlap in Lyndhurst Grove and at St George's Church. Its constitution, like our own, is based on the Civic Trust model, and it will seek registration with the Civic Trust. A newsletter is already being produced, printed, as ours is, by Rye Express.

The chairman of the Peckham Society is

Bob Smyth, 54 King's Grove, SE15 (732 6984)  
and the Hon Secretary is

Fiona Ross, 70 Asylum Road, SE15 (639 5031).

### GLDP - Greater London Development Plan

The GLC submitted the Greater London Development Plan to the Government in 1969 for approval. What was of most concern to the Society was the system of motorways which figured prominently in the Plan and we took an active part in opposing them, especially Ringway 1 (see Newsletters 11 page 5 and 13 page 3) and in supporting the London Motorway Action Group (LMAG) who put

the strategic case against motorways.

A public inquiry, at which Stephen Marks gave evidence, was set up and lasted from July 1970 to May 1972, the largest and longest investigation of its kind, with more than 28,000 objections to be considered - never to be repeated we hope. Apart from some preliminary views in February 1973, confirming parts of the motorway which was then abandoned by the newly-elected Labour GLC later in the year, there had been no indication of the outcome of the inquiry until last month the Secretary of State for the Environment issued a ten-page statement setting out his main conclusions, to be followed sometime by an amended draft Written Statement. ('Written Statement' is the formal term for the text of the Plan). The amended draft Written Statement, based on revisions of the inquiry panel and containing all the modifications which the Government would now like to see has been prepared by the Department of the Environment; the modifications, including appropriate draft maps and diagrams, have been notified to the GLC who have been asked to publish them for public comment. It is understood that three months will be allowed for these comments which will then be considered by the Government and a decision made on how much of the Plan to approve formally.

Stress is laid on the importance of a co-ordinated transport policy, with less reliance on new road construction; the Government approves of traffic management and other measures to assist buses, protect shopping and residential areas, and moderate the volume of private traffic, but with a regard for the legitimate needs of goods vehicles.

Ringway 1 is to be deleted because it would cause 'unacceptable heavy loss of housing and environmental damage; and the cost would be excessive in relation to the resources which . . . might be available . . .' (this confirms the arguments put up by the objectors from the very beginning). Ringway 2, across south London, is also rejected. However, the statement refers to 'improvements and traffic management to cater for orbital movement of road traffic' somewhere near where Ringway 1 would have been; improvements 'will make the best use of existing roads, but some new road construction may be needed'.

These and other references to providing links between radials and with the primary network still represent a threat, though much reduced; the London Motorway Action Group, which met on November 11th, is determined to object to any road-building in inner London which approaches motorway standards or scale of destruction, and the Group considers the need to improve orbital movement as extremely doubtful. Reg Goodwin's comment was that he expected 'no major roads in the foreseeable future'.

Other salient points of the statement are: an acceptance that the population is likely to become smaller than was envisaged at the time the Plan was submitted and that there should be some decentralization of employment; the endorsement of the GLC's designation of 28 strategic centres (which include Rye Lane and Brixton); the need for an effective strategic housing authority, a role which ought to be discharged by the GLC; housing densities normally to fall within the lower part of the range 70 to 100 habitable rooms per acre; retention of, and reversion to, residential use.

The Secretary of State's short statement gives a broad picture of the kind of policies which are to be approved, but we will have to await the publication of the amended draft Written Statement for details and see whether we should make any further comments.

## THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

On October 2nd Drew Stevenson, Senior Assistant Chief Planning Officer of Westminster City Council, responsible for the preparation of Westminster's local development plan, spoke to members of the Society about the procedure and the obligations upon a local planning authority in preparing its local development plan.

He opened his talk by asking "What is a plan?" and seeking to dispel the general impression one often gets in the press that "plans are something we can do without". A development plan is a framework within which planning decisions are made and there is already such a plan in operation (the Initial Development plan of 1950, with revisions, covering the old LCC area). The situation is now more complicated because of the split of responsibility, since 1965, between the Greater London Council and the London boroughs. The GLC has been responsible for the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP) as a structure plan dealing with major issues, but this has become something of a fiasco: its preparation began ten years ago, a draft was published in 1969, a public inquiry was held lasting for 237 days spread over 1970-72 and costing over a million pounds, and much of its substance was rejected by the panel of inquiry chaired by Frank Layfield. Two and a half years later the Secretary of State for the Environment is still sitting on the panel's report \* and there is still no agreed development plan for Greater London.

The GLDP ought to give in general terms and at a strategic level growth targets, the major road network, employment opportunities and the like. It is the framework for the plans of the local authorities who must accept the provision, when approved, of the GLDP.

The local plans have three main aspects, to set down policies within overall targets, proposals (with a map) for specific services and amenities, and standards such as densities, plot ratios or design criteria for conservation areas. To some extent these things have always been in a plan and the new plans are not all that different, but they must now go further than previous plans: first, they must take account of the social problems, secondly they must assess economic problems and possibilities and look realistically at the resources of cash, manpower and materials available, and thirdly they must provide 'reasoned argument' behind the policies. The last element is extremely important and it is the first time that it has been required in a plan.

Before the local plan is accepted by the Secretary of State it must go through a consultative process and also be put 'on deposit' for a formal consultation period of at least six weeks during which objections can be made which the council is bound to consider; an opportunity for pursuing objections follows at an 'examination in public' of the local plan held by an inspector.

The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act provided the framework for the new plans and the 1971 Act incorporated the main recommendations for a large measure of public participation advocated by Sir Arthur Skeffington in *People and Planning*. There are several different degrees of participation, ranging from coercion to full citizen control. The basic variations are consultation on a plan with alternative or participation before any ideas are fixed and leading to a joint exercise in formulating the plan. One of the Government circulars (DOE 52/72) says that publicity and participation are essential and that a plan must have general acceptance and be fully understood; local circumstances will determine how the public will be

involved; the legal obligations are limited but local authorities should do more to achieve 'compliance in-depth' with the requirements on participation.

Westminster is a highly visible place and has suffered a number of controversial consultation exercises such as on Piccadilly Circus and Covent Garden; difficulties arose which the Council wants to avoid in its participation programme. There is, however, a dilemma: if involvement is too early, ideas are too indefinite and the implications not understood, but if it comes too late there is even more trouble, for example two options presented preclude the possibility of other choices.

Active participation has meant going to the public right at the beginning, not even in parallel with the preparation of the plan. Three stages have been fixed for the process in Westminster, the first to discover the problems which remained in spite of the old plans, the second to assess what sort of policies would be effective, and the third, and much the most difficult, to bring all policies into a coherent plan. The first stage took a year from October 1973 with a series of twenty public meetings in different areas, to promote discussion and to discover the background. There was an enormous response and a lot of homework on the facts, producing thick topic papers (for example on Hotels and Tourism) and summaries, conservation area documents and research papers. The final publication of this first stage was a report, *Problems Issues and Priorities*, which summarised the comments and the various studies so far done, and came to be known as 'the black book'.

The second stage was to decide what to do about the problems discussed. Thirteen area working parties were set up, meeting every two or three weeks for seven or eight months. 100,000 provocative leaflets, entitled for example "More development in South Westminster?", brought hundreds of people to the meetings, and the black book was given to anyone involved and to many others, including associations. Over 170 meetings were held between the end of October 1974 and late July 1975, entirely open, with members encouraged to report back to their organisations. There was no formal framework for the meetings, except that they concentrated on specific topics and problems. The proposals, of which there were over 2000, were recorded and analysed in schedules and presented to the working parties who were asked to comment on priorities. Next January reports will be sent to the working parties setting out what further action can be taken or referring to other bodies or to the next document.

In the final stage choices will be set out within the constraints of the GLDP, Council policy, etc, and the Council will consider in September or October 1976 the draft document which will then go to formal consultation; by then it is hoped that, with most of the arguments already well aired, the formal objections will be serious and to the point.

Stimulated by Drew Stevenson's extremely interesting exposition there was almost an hour of discussion. Some points arose directly out of the talk: much background work can be done before the GLDP is approved, but a draft plan cannot be prepared without it; the GLDP, when approved, is likely to be a much watered-down document

\* but see the article above on the GLDP - Ed.

not giving detailed policy guidance to individual boroughs. Members of working parties comprised 40-60 people, plus officers and councillors, but sometimes attendance was as low as 15; the chairman was never a councillor or officer. All known associations in Westminster were approached, and it was noticeable that tenants' associations on council estates did not come to meetings. The effect of 170 meetings on Drew as a planner, apart from making him very tired, was to change his views on what a plan should be: the problems of today became the most important and the plan should attempt to give specific solutions to problems instead of depending on planning theory.

Ron Watts, Chairman of Southwark's Planning and Development Committee, was ill and not able to be present, so Cliff Potter, the Vice-Chairman, came in for quite a lot of questioning on Southwark's progress on the local development plan. Southwark, he said, had held many public meetings, but he felt that more valuable were the continuing panels, such as the Camberwell Green working party, the Surrey Docks Forum, and others on Bankside and on Consort/Barset development area. He claimed that consultation was already under way for an overall borough plan; they were starting with piecemeal plans already being put forward, but he accepted as valid criticism that the piecing together of smaller plans would contain a lot of left-over bits which he hoped they could deal with. He could not, however, allay the strong feeling which so many of us have that Southwark is making little progress on the preparation of a plan as such and that, as a matter of policy, genuine public participation is being kept to a minimum: we look forward to more positive evidence to the contrary.

Drew Stevenson was warmly thanked for coming to talk to us about the local development plan, for showing us how another borough was getting down to its preparation, and for giving us plenty to think about.

## **GLC SPEEDBUS ROUTE**

### **Peckham Rye to Parliament Hill Fields**

On November 12th the GLC held an evening meeting with local residents' and amenity groups to explain and discuss Speedbus proposals. There is to be a series of these meetings.

The GLC intend to make new kinds of express bus routes through London. They have chosen for their first service, at the suggestion of London Transport, a route from Peckham and Camberwell through central London to Parliament Hill Fields. They claim that this, on the southern half, while it will not replace the need for the Bakerloo Line extension, will go a long way and relatively quickly towards improving the present situation.

What it proposes is to get more movement on the traditional routes by spreading traffic widely onto alternative streets. In effect it widens the full road width available to traffic particularly during rush hour peaks.

Groups from north London expressed concern about particular streets etc. The GLC seemed almost ultra-sensitive to the disturbance that can be caused by displacing ordinary traffic onto alternative routes. After this depressing start the discussion turned to south-east London. At this point the meeting came to life and the ordinary people who use buses in Southwark came into the picture for the first time.

The Speedbus scheme was one of road management rather than one of dogmatic assertions and vast accompanying

road works and constructions. It was empirical, experimental, and elastic. It should be given a chance. The North Peckham Residents Association, the Rye Lane West Association, the East Dulwich Society and others strongly supported this view. People in Camberwell and Peckham were still waiting for the Tube extension that never comes. It was a commonplace to wait half an hour or more for a bus.

There was considerable enthusiasm for the Speedbus proposals. If it succeeds we shall be better off: we shall be brought nearer to central London. If it fails nothing irreparable will have been done. This was indeed a welcome change from Ringways and one that should be watched sympathetically.

The most surprising recommendation of the GLC in our area is that the Walworth Road should become a 'Bus Only' street (except for access vehicles) between the Elephant and Castle and Albany Road - a distance of nearly a mile. The GLC's given reason is 'to provide bus priority, improved pedestrian safety and a better shopping environment'.

The commuter motorist will undoubtedly object and local shopkeepers can be expected to behave to pattern. They will object violently until they actually discover the advantages of the proposals to themselves, as happened, for instance, in Norwich. Actually the two kinds of objection run counter to each other; shopkeepers do not want non-stop commuter traffic and commuter drivers do not like busy shopping streets and open markets. And it is this hidden conflict of interests that must account largely for the rag-bag state of the present-day Walworth Road.

There will be a shorter section (about half a mile) for 'Bus Only' in Rye Lane which is to solve the present Hanover Park complications and, the GLC claims, reduce delays to northbound buses. There is also to be a considerably greater use of Pelican crossings, often in place of Zebra crossings. A Pelican crossing is one in which there are flashing amber lights especially for pedestrians.

Albany Road would have a large increase in traffic. Vestry Road, Lyndhurst Way and Highshore Road would have a disbenefit. There would be a reduction in traffic in Wells Way. The journey from Peckham to Oxford Circus would take 13 minutes less during peak hours. Tidal flow bus services in Peckham Road will get more detailed study as will Walworth Road. This proposal was only a beginning and problems arising from the scheme would be considered in more depth when the scheme was being designed in detail.

It will be about three years before the Speedbus itself could be introduced. In the meantime existing bus routes, and there are 51 of them, will benefit from the proposals as and when they are introduced.

The GLC pointed out that half the families in London did not have access to a car. The GLC are committed to a very radical solution of the transport problem. It was the considered opinion of London Transport planners that a radical approach to the solution of public transport was needed. The top priority was that bus schedules should be guaranteed; reliability was the central point.

During question time it emerged that the scheme was not subject to a veto by the local authorities.

The GLC were represented by Mr Jim Daly, Chairman of the Transport Committee and Mr J E Beatson, head of the Speedbus Task Force of the Planning and Transportation Department. London Transport were represented by Mr R D Smith, Chief of Operations, and Mr J Massey.

*Michael Ivan*

## CAMBERWELL GREEN WORKING PARTY

A working party was set up in October 1974, largely in response to the Society's questionnaire and survey report which was published in September. The members of the working party were officers of Southwark and the GLC and representatives of The Camberwell Society and of Estates and Property Investment Company, the owners of about a third of the site studied, and their architects. Those who have taken part on behalf of the Society are Valerie Kent, Stephen Marks, Sally Stockley, and Jim Tanner; each has managed to attend almost all the meetings which were held under the chairmanship of David Hayes, Southwark's Assistant Borough Planner.

Southwark's officers included representatives of the Housing and Borough Engineer's Departments as well as of the various sections of the Planning Department. Numerous papers were produced by the officers between meetings which, like the drafts of the report, were subject to critical scrutiny by all the working party members. We have nothing but praise for the patience and helpfulness of David Hayes and his colleagues and of Mr Cottey and Mr Hutchinson from the GLC.

The working party's task was to prepare a planning brief or framework for the future of the area and especially for the 'central site' or 'EPIC site' which is bounded by Camberwell Church Street, Grove Lane, Daneville Road, Orpheus Street and Denmark Hill. The terms of reference were to study the Society's *Report of the Survey of the Camberwell Green Area*, to indicate other necessary public consultation, to consider the future of the Camberwell Green area in the context of the various road options now under consideration, and to establish a framework for preparing proposals for the development of the EPIC site in the context of the need to relate it to the redevelopment of the adjoining Selborne development area.

The recommendations cover movement, shops, employment, housing, community and recreation, and townscape and environment in some detail; the most significant are:

- to adopt a road pattern which includes a west-east route to the north of Camberwell Green, along Medlar Street and emerging into Camberwell Church Street at Kimpton Road, and which allows Daneville Road and the north and east sides of Camberwell Green to be closed to through traffic, and to cancel all previous proposals for road widening and realignment not related to this road pattern;
- to keep the existing amount of shopping space, with

- the redevelopment of an area between Wren Road and Denmark Hill, to include a supermarket;
- to use the former church premises in Wren Road as a community centre, if possible;
- to improve for short-term use the houses in Wren Road and to keep the houses in Jephson Street;
- to retain the shops and buildings facing Camberwell Church Street and Camberwell Green as far as Tiger Yard.

The report was submitted to Southwark's Planning and Development Committee on November 11th. The Committee congratulated the working party and accepted the recommendations in principle, and has referred the report to other committees, namely Highways and Works, Libraries and Amenities, and Housing. The report will also have to be considered by the appropriate GLC committees (the most important matter concerning the GLC is the road pattern), by the board of EPIC, and by the Executive Committee of The Camberwell Society. It will then form the basis for all those who use and have an interest in the area.

It is now vitally important that the formal agreement of the other committees and the GLC is obtained as soon as possible, at least to the road proposals so that the uncertainty which has hung over so much of the area can be removed.

We regard the establishment of a regular working party, with members of an amenity society working closely beside council officers as a very considerable achievement and a happy, if rare, example of public involvement at a meaningful stage in plan-making. We are even more pleased that the group has been asked to continue so that the recommendations can be pursued and we can ensure that the report is not shelved or conveniently forgotten.

## SOUTHWARK'S PROBLEMS!

As we have already reported, Clifton Crescent (off Asylum Road) is to be preserved within the Brimington Road development area, as a result of determined pressure from local residents backed by well-informed research. There are also gypsies at Brimington Road and Southwark is now embroiled in a row about providing an alternative site for them.

Councillor John Fowler, housing vice-chairman, is reported in the South London Press as saying "I don't give a monkey's where you put the gypsies but I'm not having the Brimington Road development sabotaged by a second group of people who don't pay rates in the borough. First we had the conservationists and now the gypsies".

## SOME RECENT CASES

### 125-137 Grove Lane

The Ogilby Housing Society, who had a scheme to provide accommodation for teachers on the site of nos 125-137 Grove Lane, have had to abandon their plans because they cannot raise the necessary finance (their scheme was the

subject of comment in Newsletter 21 page 2). Another housing association to whom the site was offered is also unable to proceed because of financial problems, so the Council intends itself to use the site for housing. It will, however, be quite a long time before building can begin, so the Council is hoping to let an advertising contractor put up a secure fence with hoardings on the Grove Lane frontage. We have suggested that advertisement panels should be kept small, well-spaced-out and within the height of a normal fence, not only for reasons of appearance but also for safety reasons, because the typical very large road-side hoardings must be a distraction to motorists and, after all, virtually no-one walks down the west side of Grove Lane there, far enough away to see large panels.

### 83-97 Denmark Hill - development between De Crespigny Park and Love Walk

King's College Hospital have sponsored a planning application for a substantial residential development in the back gardens of nos 83-97 Denmark Hill; the hospital own most of them. The application, by Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker & Bor, the hospital's architects, has actu-

ally been submitted on behalf of a housing association so that they can take advantage of grants from the Housing Corporation, but the accommodation is intended for doctors and other hospital staff.

At the moment there are houses fronting onto Denmark Hill, built in the middle of the nineteenth century. Three are handsome houses, nos 93, 95 and 97, and are listed buildings; nos 83, 85, 87 and 89 have suffered from the loss of a number of their important architectural features, indeed no 89 is only half of a pair as no 91 was destroyed long ago. The houses are well set back from Denmark Hill with sweep drives and they have very long back gardens, with a great many trees, running back to the boundary with no 1 De Crespigny Park and no 26 Love Walk. The whole site lies within the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area.

The proposal is to retain the existing houses, restoring the missing features and rebuilding no 91 to match its pair, and to build on the back gardens a series of 2-, 3- and 4-storey flats and maisonettes. The new buildings are in three ranges, two along the frontages and one as a wing stretching onto the site near the eastern boundary; they are broken down into small units arranged in an informal pattern. On De Crespigny Park they are four storeys high matching the scale of the existing houses, while on Love Walk they step down from four to three to two storeys to meet the smaller scale of Love Walk. The rear wing likewise drops to two storeys. The density over the whole site as proposed comes to 122 persons per acre (the architects' figure) in an area zoned at 136 ppa.

The development would encroach substantially on the collective open space enclosed by the houses on Denmark Hill, Love Walk and De Crespigny Park and would very much affect the outlook from the existing houses adjoining the site. The Society has in the past resisted backland and mews developments, sometimes successfully, and would very much prefer a development here which involved building only on the two frontages, notwithstanding that this would fall a long way short of the zone density. One must, however, weigh up the good points of the scheme; these are, especially, the restoration of the existing houses with the rebuilding of no 91, the care which has been taken to achieve a relationship with the different scales of Love Walk and the other two frontages, and the promise shown by the sketch elevations which would still have to be worked out in detail; it would also provide housing related to a local need.

Your committee, therefore, came to the conclusion that the benefits in this case outweighed the encroachment on the centre of the site, although we expressed our preference for a scheme omitting the buildings projecting into the centre. Accordingly, detailed comments were sent to the Council who are now considering the application.

#### *151 Grove Lane & 182 Camberwell Grove mews development - appeal decisions*

The Society has opposed several developments in the mews between Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane because we were concerned to preserve as far as possible the space between the two rows of buildings; while we did not doubt that very attractive buildings could be designed we felt that the existing openness was a very important element in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area and that its character would be unacceptably altered by the developments; other practical problems would arise as well. Our views on mews development are set out at length in Newsletter no 13 page 6.

The Council refused these two applications, although it approved another at no 192 Camberwell Grove, and the applicants appealed against the decisions. We are relieved to hear that the Council's refusals have been supported by the inspectors whose reasons follow very closely the arguments put forward by the Society. A more recent decision, reported below, establishes even more firmly the policy of restricting development in the mews.

#### *101 Grove Lane*

This house has been standing empty now for a long time and has suffered the inevitable attacks of vandalism - smashed windows, battered-in doors, and internal destruction. In May 1974 we commented on a planning application to convert it into four self-contained flats which we thought was beyond the capacity of the house and we suggested division into fewer units; however, in June the Council gave consent because they felt the proposed flats were up to the appropriate standard and could not, therefore, be refused.

Nothing was done about this permission that year, but a new application was submitted early this year for a three-storey block at the rear containing either three flats or two mews-type town houses; this was refused in July by the Council on the grounds that it would be an 'excessive obtrusion into the open space existing at the rear of the properties in Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane', that it would be 'detrimental to the character of the conservation area' (both points which we have made strongly previously), and that it would cause a loss of amenity to occupants in adjoining premises because of the problem of overlooking.

However, work began on the house itself during the summer, with a blotchy coat of off-white paint (still not complete) covering the very attractive mellowed stock brickwork. As soon as the painting started on one of the side walls complaints were made to the Council, but they refused to take any action to prevent further permanent and irreversible damage. More recently, new casement windows, quite inappropriate to this Georgian house, have appeared in place of the sash windows: we gather that the Council will take action to get the sashes put back.

This house is being sadly maltreated and we are apprehensive that each day might see some new evidence of insensitivity and poor workmanship.

#### **VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN SOUTHWARK EXHIBITION**

The Livesey Museum, 682 Old Kent Road (between Commercial Way and Peckham Park Road) has a fascinating exhibition on till December 13th, open Monday to Saturday, 10 till 5.

The main exhibits are old photographs, some the originals, others well enlarged, and divided into several sections, on ground and first floors. There are also cabinets of period furniture, clothes, books and the multifarious paraphernalia of Victorian and Edwardian life. This is well worth a visit, but it closes after December 13th, so go quickly.

Miss Gillian Whalley  
30 Love Walk  
S E 5