

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER NO 40

WITH INDEX TO NOS 1-40

January 1978

see the back page for notice of meetings on February 16th, March 16th, etc

YOUR NEWSLETTER

For seven and a half years I have put together your newsletter. The first issue was a single duplicated sheet, coinciding with the formation of the Society in 1970 as an amenity society overtaking the smaller residents' association formed in 1966. This, the fortieth number, is the last for which I shall be responsible. It has been very exciting and satisfying (and no small chore as well) to write much of it, plan and type it, and paste it up, and put into your hands each issue's accumulation when it had, miraculously, taken on a finished and coherent look.

It was by a happy accident that we came to change from duplicating to the much more presentable and flexible litho printing. The duplicator we were using at Cambridge House had broken down and I had, in some roundabout way, just heard that Ann Ward had a typesetter and printing machine which she made available to help community and other groups which could not afford commercial printing costs. I approached her and, showing me how to work the typesetter, she herself set nearly all of our newsletter no 12. Since then I have deliberately established a reticent layout, stuck to one typeface, avoided the blatant, brash and coarse, because I felt that the news must speak for itself and indeed must compel some concentration to convey its message. For the excellent printing we have to thank the small band of dedicated printers at Rye Express who operate at Ann Ward's house, although she no longer takes any part in the printing.

I have sometimes been disappointed that there was so little direct response to the newsletter, but there have been many indirect indications of appreciation which have been ample reward for my effort, and it is said that the newsletter has been taken seriously because it is reasoned, not rabid (though also hitting hard when occasion demanded), on the controversial issues. I am delighted that I was trusted to edit this permanent record of the Society's views and activities; I had unfettered discretion and yet by withholding the editor's name (though pressed from time to time to display it) the newsletter could only be interpreted (as I intended) as the true voice of the Society.

There is no doubt of the importance of a newsletter for many reasons and therefore there will be a sub-committee to see to its editing and production. My resignation as editor is no move behind the scenes but a consequence of my moving, some time this year, from Camberwell, and I will help the new sub-committee while I am still here. Its members, so far, are Jim Tanner and Michael Ivan, and I am sure they would welcome comments and contributions for the essential task of carrying on the newsletter and practical assistance of all sorts from time to time.

Arthur Percival, one of the Civic Trust's most experienced and influential members, campaigner, instigator and adviser of societies up and down the country, has contributed a piece to put our newsletter in context.

Stephen Marks

ONE OF THE 200

Arthur Percival, of the Civic Trust, reviews the Society's newsletter.

A whole bay of the Civic Trust's library is given over to local amenity society newsletters, neatly stored in lever-arch files. It is a remarkable collection, unique of its kind, and testimony at least in terms of volume to the enthusiasm generated by the movement. Here, for us at the Trust, is a cumulative treasury of inspiration; here, for some future PhD student, a wealth of evidence for the way in which community initiative still blossomed in the bleak institutionalised climate of the late 20th century.

However, appearances can be deceptive. There are now over 1200 societies on the Trust's register, but about half the space on the shelves is taken up by only 200 or so. In other words, a majority of societies issue newsletters infrequently or even not at all. How in the circumstances they contrive to communicate with their members remains a mystery. Some make adroit use of the free publicity to be obtained in generous measure (if you are ingenious) in local papers; a few may operate in communities so tiny that word-of-mouth is sufficient, but many of the rest, one suspects, just do not communicate at all.

The Camberwell Society, you may have realised, is one of the 200 which do take the trouble, and always has done. What is more, it forms part of an even smaller elite of perhaps 50 societies — those whose editors remember unfailingly to send the Trust a copy of each issue. Just another thing to do, but *not* a small point — we at the Trust have no more effective means of keeping in touch with society activities and aspirations.

Those of The Camberwell Society have always been well aired in its Newsletter. Members — and prospective members — can never have been in doubt about its aims and how it planned to fulfil them. This is important because it has helped to give the Society its image as a lively, knowledgeable organisation prepared to deploy its enthusiasm and skill in campaigning for what it believes to be right. Never has there been any pussyfooting, never any plaintive signs that the Society is not doing its job — 'sadly the last of the old Georgian houses in the Grove has been demolished'.

So if a newsletter's first job is to keep members *informed*, this one comes through with flying colours. The other jobs? To *record* society work, to *provoke* interest in it, to look at it in its *broader context*, to inspire members with a feeling of *solidarity*, and (last but not least) to *entertain*. Quite a complex formula, and finding a balance isn't always easy. Sometimes there arises an issue of such key importance (Selborne, for instance) that a special issue has to be devoted to it. But that is one of the advantages of a regular newsletter — flexibility. If the balance

has to be upset in one issue, it can be redressed in the next one. So a scrutiny of issues 1 to 34 reveals that all the necessary ingredients are there. Big but baffling concepts like the GLDP have not been overlooked; special reports and supplements have been carried to spotlight areas of special concern; space has been found for precious nuggets of information about Camberwell's past; and on one occasion there was even a free 'giveaway' in the form of a facsimile of an old map of the district. The members have undoubtedly been well served.

At what cost and by whom? The first question is easier to answer. In a rare moment of indiscretion the Editor once revealed (March 1974) that an issue took 27 hours to devise. This means that since the Newsletter began life in 1970 nearly 1000 man-hours must have gone into producing it. Add to that the time spent by other members in distributing it, and there could be no clearer indication of the loyalty the Society commands. To an outsider it is a much more difficult matter to establish the identity of the Editor. He (or she) must be a well-known figure for in November 1976 when members were invited to write to him (her) with their views on the Society's activities no address or telephone number was given. The problem of identification might reach Shakespearean proportions but for the fact that in March 1974 the Editor did divulge a telephone number and this can be associated with that of a member of the Committee, Stephen Marks. It is not like Stephen to settle for anything less than 100% bibliographically, and this might be cause for hesitation but for the fact that he is also a modest soul. Once made, the identification can be forcefully confirmed by such internal evidence as an advertisement in the June 1975 issue.

The Society, and Stephen, can be proud of a medium that has never failed to do its job well. It is a model of its kind, unassuming but quietly persuasive (like its Editor). One's only regret, apart from the fact that it does not include a colophon, is that each issue no longer includes a 'boxed puff' for the Society itself. Yes, of course, the Newsletter speaks for itself, but there is never any harm in *saying* that new members are welcome, what they can expect from the Society and give to it, and how they can join.

PECKHAM HIGH STREET REALIGNMENT

The proposal to 'realign' Peckham High Street is dear to the hearts of some planners and politicians at Southwark. The realignment will in fact be a new dual two-lane road inserted between Clayton Road, east of the Rye Lane intersection, and Southampton Way to the west, passing to the north of the present road. It will thus straighten out the kink in the road at the junction with Rye Lane.

The council's intention is to encourage the development of Rye Lane as a shopping centre by by-passing it. This should, they say, improve pedestrian facilities and enable both private and public transport to move more quickly.

The Peckham Society* is very strongly opposed to the new road. It is afraid that, far from improving facilities, it will damage the townscape, cause nuisance to housing estates and four schools adjacent to it, and create a barrier of fast moving traffic.

* For details of the proposal as it affects Peckham see the Peckham Society's Newsletter no 12 for Winter 1977/78.

All these fears are familiar to us but, as the area at one end of the new road, have we cause for worries of our own? I think we have.

As a straighter road, traffic will undoubtedly wish to travel along it more quickly. It will be aided by the changes of the present one-way route for east-west traffic at the Rye Lane junction. Although there appears to be no direct intention to increase capacity here, it will be widened as it goes past Peckham School and connect with Peckham Road at Goldsmiths School. Fewer intersections than there are at present may mean less traffic will enter the road along its length; on the other hand, they may ensure that more traffic is tempted to travel its length, causing a jam at each end.

This combination will almost certainly mean more vehicles trying to get around Camberwell Green. The road proposal here (Option 7) allows for no increase in capacity. This in turn will mean more pressure on rat-runs along Vestry Road, McNeil Road, Camberwell Grove, Grove Lane on the south, and St Giles and Benhill Roads on the

north. Further, knowing the forces abroad for more road-building, would it then be possible to avoid, at the least, road-widening along the remainder of Peckham Road and Camberwell New Road? And what then would be suffered in terms of increased noise, dirt and vibration by those living and shopping here?

Some people believe that this section of road will be used as a 'creeping' excuse for a substitute Ringway 1. Is this too far fetched? Perhaps this ripple effect is really what the transport planners secretly hope to exploit.

Is this what we want?

Sara Neill

NEW TREES FOR OLD

Southwark Council has prepared a scheme for the planting of trees in Camberwell Grove, involving both replacements for trees that have died or had to be felled through becoming dangerous, and trees that are either unsuitable or which are likely to have to be removed within a few years, as well as some new planting that should provide, for generations to come, some pleasing new vistas.

As this newsletter goes to press the plan is before the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee. Your executive committee has already considered and welcomed it, making suggestions for further planting and for the retention of some existing trees which are of unsuitable type (small flowering trees, for example) until they need to be removed to avoid overcrowding or through coming to the end of their lives. Your committee has also asked what further plans the council might have for planting in other streets.

Members may remember that it was largely the intervention of the Society several years ago that stayed the woodman's axe in the Grove when many of the trees were wrongly declared to be dangerous. Nevertheless, one does have to face facts — trees do have a finite lifespan. The solution to the eventual total loss of trees through old age is to inter-plant when there are signs that a proportion of the older trees area coming to the ends of their lives. New trees can then become established before old ones have to be removed, so one is not left with a naked street. Sadly, there have been many losses in the Grove already, not the least serious being the great London plane on the corner of Lett-som Street which succumbed at the time of the building of the estate. Your committee offered to give Southwark a tree to replace this one, provided it was planted as near as possible to the spot from which the dead tree was removed. Unfortunately, agreement hasn't been reached on this yet, because it seems that current Department of Transport thinking on local road junctions and corners has not yet reached Southwark Council — the view was expressed that replanting there could 'obstruct the corner'. This is the very point: if corners are tight and views restricted drivers are forced to go slowly and carefully. The McNeil Road/Camberwell Grove junction is a classic example of the old bad technique, where what would seem to be a safe, wide corner is in fact dangerous and has already resulted in several accidents, because motorists are misled into taking the corner too fast. However, there is still hope that reason will prevail and trees will go where trees have come out — including one as a gift from the Society on the corner of Lett-som Street.

If approved by other relevant committees of the council, replanting may take place this winter.

Dick Oliver

GROVE PARK

Camberwell Grove Development Area

George Smith, resident in Grove Park and an active member of the newly-formed group of local residents in Grove Park, Pelham Close, Grove Hill Road and the top of Camberwell Grove, has contributed the following comments about Southwark Council's scheme to develop land between Grove Park and the houses it owns in Camberwell Grove (nos 199-211). An account of a Planning and Development Committee discussion and previous events was printed in Newsletter 38 page 4.

A planner does his job by looking at maps and site plans. A resident can only assess the results by looking out of the window. They are two totally different ways of looking at the same thing, and the difference in the two scales of perception is all around us, often tragically so. The council's current plans for the lands between Grove Park, Pelham Close, Camberwell Grove and Grove Hill Road are a good case in point. To a council with genuine responsibilities for increasing its housing stock the current plans for 50-odd houses will probably look neat, intelligent and a classic use of an infill site. To anyone living in the affected roads, and, in particular, those hundreds of residents who will find themselves gazing at brick walls and bedroom windows, it is a horrifying prospect.

So we are fighting the proposal. A residents' group has been formed that promises to be both vigorous and intelligent in its opposition to the council's current plans. A petition was formulated, circulated, and signed by 340-odd local people — the 5% who didn't sign weren't exactly crazy about the plans either, but felt that it was either futile or impolitic to be seen to disagree with Southwark or any of its works.

It promises to be an unusual campaign. For a start it is certainly not the usual bunch of owner-occupiers defending their rateable values against any encroachment by the outside world. In fact most of the local residents do want to see the land developed by the council and developed for the community. But they object to the density of the proposed development (94 to the acre!), to the effect it will inevitably have on the local community, and finally, perhaps, to the waste of a site for which a better, more imaginative use could easily be found.

The area in question is a classic piece of backlands which Southwark has assembled over the years. It consists of derelict garages, a small area of natural woodland and, criminally in our view, 70% of the gardens of the family-intensive council-owned large houses at the top of Camberwell Grove. Into this tight, sloping, complex and totally overlooked site, Southwark proposes to put some 50-odd houses. The only access to the site would be via the little slip road on Grove Park, a situation which would with unerring accuracy bring all the estate's traffic straight onto the already-terrifying 90° bend in the road.

If you looked at the plans you would see an adroit solution to an impossible problem. The elevations are not unpleasant and indeed the houses are packed in with an ingenuity which will probably qualify someone for a Civic Trust award. All that proves is that there's no point in giving yourself an impossible problem in the first place. For our objections are none the worse for being lay objections. It is our windows that will in some cases be within ten feet of someone else's, our kids who are going to be at risk from 50 extra cars, our gardens which will be in

shadow, our environment which will be permanently and unnecessarily spoiled. And we are determined not to get sucked into the obvious political wrangles about this scheme. For Southwark currently see this development as being built for sale, an equity-sharing estate to attract potential owner-occupiers who might otherwise flee to the leafy suburbs. A laudable aim, but a ludicrously half-baked solution, especially when there is ample property available on the private market. And, for what it's worth, we don't believe a word of it. It's our belief that as the costs of the development roll through, the 'building-for-sale' concept — highly controversial at the best of times — will be promptly dropped in favour of an orthodox piece of council letting. To say that is not to suggest chicanery or deception on the council's part, rather a worldly and hard-headed estimate of political and financial reality on ours. And, frankly, we don't much care about the method of tenure of the development: we simply submit that the site is totally unsuitable for housing development on anything like the proposed scale.

Most people in the area would like to see it used as some sort of open space, and we believe that to designate it as such would be a real and positive opportunity for both the council and the community. With a little imagination it could offer some recreational activity, some badly-needed play-space for kids (the whole area is knee deep in children and by no means all of them have any access to a garden), a sitting-out area for old people, and perhaps even an allot-

ment or two. And it could offer all that at a fraction of the cost of the proposed housing development. If the council could think about the site in these terms, then they would find themselves with a real resource in terms of the community spirit which undoubtedly exists in the area, rather than turn that resource into a militant anti-council pressure group which will oppose the scheme at every stage and oppose it, in the opinion of some independent and informed observers, with a reasonable chance of success.

So far Southwark are honouring their commitment to participation. The Chairman of Planning has undertaken to revise the plans in the light of our objections and on January 31st we formally present the petition to the Planning and Development and Housing Joint Sub-Committee. After that, we want the council to convene a public meeting in the area so that they can hear first hand the views of an unusually positive community.

But we have no illusions. We'll only make a breakthrough when we make the case for Southwark *not* needing another 50 houses, however owned. And anyone concerned about that being socially irresponsible has only to look at the amount of development currently going on in the borough. Look at the state of play on Selborne or at any council-owned property lying vacant year on year for rehabilitation or redevelopment. What's behind our houses can and should be used for the whole community. But not with more bricks and mortar. Whatever it says on the flow charts.

NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCILS

Many people attended the January meeting to discuss the pros and cons of 'neighbourhood councils' (NCs), showing the interest felt in the possibility of an increased share in decision-making. The discussion was lively, ranging widely. The consensus that emerged was that there were fears of another layer of bureaucracy were NCs to be set up, and that their structure appeared too formal. Another danger was that they could be manipulated by the borough council. In spite of this, the meeting agreed that the possibilities are worth further thought, and the Society is to continue to examine neighbourhood councils.

Four people accepted the invitation to speak. They had all been involved in NCs in different ways and were able to give several views. Councillors Mike Geater, Bert Wright and Toby Eckersley were in the audience, as were the secretaries of the Elmington and Lettsom Tenants' Associations.

Before handing over to the speakers Sally Stockley read out a letter in support of NCs from Reg Freeson, Minister for Housing and Construction.

The first speaker was Bob Dixey of the Association for Neighbourhood Councils. He explained the legislative background to them, saying that although the Local Government Act of 1972 allowed parish councils in rural areas there was no urban equivalent. Just before Christmas a Private Member's Bill, the Urban Parishes Bill, was introduced. This would enable statutory urban parish councils, with a precept on the rates, to be set up if initiated by 100 electors. In the meantime the ANC continues to help the formation of voluntary councils.

Stephen Humble of the Institute of Local Government Studies in Birmingham described the research they had done after the not very successful consultation paper. They found there were not many NCs, but what there were were in most kinds of areas, cities, suburbs, country or small industrial towns. They found they were up against problems in organising themselves, devising elections that were real-

istic, getting candidates. In spite of this some did well. Their impact was good in a number of areas of social, communication, and social service activities. Money problems, especially for those not funded by local authorities, would be great. Some NCs were inextricably linked with their local authorities, although relationships between the two might be good or bad.

Tony Wilson is a Public Relations Officer for the London Borough of Lambeth, where there are several NCs. While the borough does not run or impose them, their existence is a result of a political act by the majority party. There are thirteen, mainly in the deprived areas in the north of the borough, adjacent to Southwark. He has five staff supporting several NCs each. The council provides a sum of £90,000 each year (including some 'urban aid' grants from central government) towards the running of them. Each has an advice centre in premises provided by the authority, and these are an important shop window for them. At first each tended to be issue-orientated but they have improved, although they are not an unqualified success. The council remains in favour of them but is not in favour of statutory status.

Graham Towers, former Administrative Officer of Golborne Neighbourhood Council, felt he was a prophet of doom, but started off with some positive aspects of his experience there. Golborne, in Notting Hill, North Kensington, is a clearly de-

financed community with a lot of local authority housing, multiple occupation and immigrants. It is working class. In 1971 it was felt it had a sufficient identity to experiment with a neighbourhood council. There were six wards comprising 2000 people. The elections, based on the standard democratic model, produced a high turnout. The council worked in two ways: through direct action, such as a community centre, a summer holiday scheme for children, Christmas parcels for pensioners, etc; and as a pressure group to improve conditions in the area. It was particularly successful in participation with the GLC in a local redevelopment project. However, it did not succeed with the borough council, which listened to them but ignored what they had to say.

From the start it was racked with personality wrangling, through a local political activist. Ultimately there was a vote of no confidence at an annual meeting. There were other difficulties. The Establishment concept, with elections, monthly meetings, standing orders and committees, made it difficult to operate and it became remote.

The organisation of a neighbourhood council must have connections with the people built into it, small wards, street by street, proper by-elections and the power of recall if street representatives do not fulfil their function. There should be newsletter communication with the local community. Golborne became the creature of Kensington and Chelsea Council which manipulated it.

A lot of people spoke in the discussion, both asking questions and making points. Most questions were about the structure and function of NCs, leading to some repetition of what had already been said. Stephen Humble thought Golborne sounded typical of those he had studied. Most NCs have non-party-political status written into their constitution. However, he felt party political views could bring in competition and give identity. Bob Dixey emphasised that there is always a danger that local authorities will not listen, but that can always be overcome. Councils are only as good as the people elected onto them, and they do provide a means of support for other voluntary bodies. Tony Wilson thought the Lambeth NCs had increased public participation through its work with tenants' associations and community groups. He thinks structure is not as important as getting them off the ground.

Dolphi Burton is a community worker in Hammersmith, having left Southwark after six years of work with tenants' associations (TAs) in Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. Although she has seen some very unrepresentative TAs in Southwark she believes NCs are worse. In Hammersmith the neighbourhood council is dominated by the middle class who have aggravated the local housing situation. They bring in their friends, so street representation is important. Councils slam NCs and TAs as unrepresentative, then want to use them to mop up the mess; they are used to legitimise the whole participation process. Party politicians use them as a springboard to become borough councillors. She thought NCs should only be considered if a tenants' association is not possible.

Eileen Conn, of the Peckham Society, thought community groups in Southwark already did much of the work being discussed as a function of neighbourhood councils. Their fund-raising needs were an important aspect, drawing people together. Stephen Humble said that the essential difference is that NCs are elected, one man, one vote, and in a secret ballot. The borough council could not then dismiss them as unrepresentative.

Southwark has made great strides without them, Cllr Bert Wright claimed. For years the GLC had funded the Association of London Housing Estates and Southwark helps the TAs. Because of consultation Southwark no longer builds high or slab blocks; Selborne would not be as it will be if the council had not listened. The speaker was loudly interrupted at this reference.

Jill Phillips, of Grove Park, and Mr Morris, of Love Walk, described their own successful groups. The Grove Park group is a happy one, not long-faced as this discussion was. It grew out of a Jubilee Street Party, and now they have 'knockers up' to keep people informed of what is going on. Because there are no elections they have volunteers who can contribute expertise in many subjects. Love Walk's group has whist drives, organised a New Year's Eve party, and helped one another during the firemen's strike. Stephen Humble saw no incompatibility between community groups and NCs: the latter can also organise carnivals.

Father Bomford spoke of the disintegration of the inner city. We need to have care — or love — in our minds as well as planning decisions. The possibility of yet another hurdle for people terrifies him. He was afraid NCs would attract the wrong sort of people or draw away the workers from existing groups.

Councillor Toby Eckersley is also Vice-Chairman of the London Association for Saving Homes which is affiliated to the ANC. If NCs had existed some of the excessive redevelopment would not have occurred. If the size were right there need be no worried about self-election. Street community groups are quite separate. If the Urban Parishes Bill goes through, as he hopes, there will be an opportunity for experiments.

Mr Brackner, of Ruskin Park House, was confused, he said, but he saw three emerging themes: first, protection is needed against steamrolling by local authorities. Secondly, life in London is anonymous: there is a need for people to get together more frequently, not only once every 50 years at a Jubilee. Thirdly, at Kidbrooke House in Greenwich there is a good example of how amenities can be provided. The meeting applauded.

Cllr Michael Geater agreed with Dolphi Burton. He is confused about NCs and came to hear Bob Dixey because he is the expert. He still doesn't think NCs will work. If TAs can raise the money they are independent. He does not like corporate management and there are already enough elections. If there are more TAs, community groups and Camberwell Societies we could achieve something.

Lettsom TA's Secretary, Janice Wilson, described their activities. It fulfils most of the things that had been spoken about. Everyone on the estate is visited once a month, so problems are dealt with before they become too aggressive. At first self-elected volunteers with political acumen did the work, but officers are now elected at annual meetings.

Bob Dixey summed up. He said that where voluntary neighbourhood councils have been established there is usually a good relationship between other groups and local authorities. When TAs and voluntary groups don't exist they can set them up. They are not another tier of democracy. He recommended two books which give useful information, one called *The Urban Ghetto*, the other, *A Voice for Your Neighbourhood* (HMSO 50p).

The question 'Shall we explore the idea of neighbourhood councils further?' was put to the meeting and it was agreed by a majority of 22 that we should.

Sara Neill

BURGESS PARK

In our last newsletter we reported that the GLC were about to reassess Burgess Park. The Society and other bodies have been very unhappy about the mindless and dilatory implementation of a bad scheme for the creation of a 135-acre metropolitan park. Southwark Council, likewise, has been in recent years increasingly critical and has prepared sketches and suggestions for a more positive phasing and has asked for discussions with the GLC about a major development which lies at the heart of the borough.

We were all heartened, therefore, by the news of a new look at the plans when the new administration took over at County Hall last year. At last, a policy report was presented to the GLC's Recreation and Community Services Policy Committee on December 5th. The summary of the report states:

Problems with existing buildings within the designated park boundaries make it unlikely that a full 135 acre park can be created within the next 20 years. Therefore this report recommends that development over the next 7-10 years should concentrate on providing major metropolitan park facilities (a lake, sports centre, village green and flora/fauna display area) on land which is mostly already available (90-100 acres), at a capital cost of £2,370,000 for Phase I (1980/85) and thereby giving additional life to existing housing and industry.

As we point out later, we think it is wrong to regard the buildings in Burgess Park as 'problems', but first let us look at the substance of the document.

According to the report, 64 acres are now available to the public, mainly in the form of grassed sites awaiting final layout, but this is fragmented by properties and roads still remaining. Various small and medium size leisure facilities have been provided and in the next two years (1978/80) a large fitted playground is to be constructed and a number of small sites laid out. The development of the remaining 71 acres during the next 20 years is only a remote possibility because of problems associated with existing buildings; these include 365 fit houses, 145 of them owned by the GLC and 80 being listed buildings, and the premises of 43 firms providing employment to some 650 people.

A further 35-40 acres (23 of which have already been cleared) should soon be available making a total of 90 to 100 acres within which it is proposed to begin developing four major facilities appropriate to a metropolitan park as Phase I in the years 1980/85, allowing two years for planning and design. These are a lake (8½ acres in Phase I, eventually 10 acres) between Albany Road, Calmington Road, Loncroft Road and Cobourg Road, a sports complex in the central area of the park (10, then 16 acres), village green comprising a gently undulating open space for cricket, fairs, rallies and festivals in the south-east corner of the park and eventually linked to Southwark's open space on the Peckham Arm of the former canal (9, 17 acres), and a flora/fauna area at the western end (3½, 6½ acres).

The provision of these facilities would, the report says, be a very significant step towards the creation of the park and in the meantime make a useful contribution to improving life and providing opportunities, which are lacking, in this part of inner London. 60 out of the 100 acres then available to the public would have been laid out in their final

form. The existing housing and industry could then be given an extended life, 10-15 years for housing which might be taken over by housing associations and a minimum of 20 years for listed buildings to make their retention viable; many in the north-east corner could be retained for up to 30 years without major problems arising. All such buildings now owned by the Open Space and Recreation Committee should be offered to the Housing Management Committee. Some buildings in other parts of the park might be used to house recreational facilities, while local employers could be given assurances that they would not be required to move from their industrial premises during the next 7 to 10 years.

The 80 listed buildings are stated to be generally in reasonable condition. However, two terraces in Trafalgar Avenue (nos 2-14, local list, and nos 16-64, Grade II) are noted as in very poor condition, while of the nine houses in Albany Road (nos 349-361 and 365-369) for which listed building consent to demolish was refused in 1975, nos 365-369 are considered to be beyond repair.

Finally the report says that the existing Burgess Park Forum (on which the Society has been represented) is probably, because of its particular terms of reference, reaching the end of its useful life and that a new type of consultation machinery now needs to be set up to consult with the Borough Councils of Southwark, Lewisham and Lambeth, local groups and other interested parties about the future development of the park and its facilities.

The recommendations of the report were approved subject to consultation. Among these are: that development over the next seven to ten years be concentrated on Phase I of each of the park facilities on land which is already or shortly will be in the council's ownership (about 100 acres); that the council continues to purchase additional sites which become available; that listed houses be retained for at least twenty years and offered to the Housing Management Committee; that local employers be informed that during the next seven to ten years no steps will be taken to acquire their premises compulsorily unless it is clear that there will be no loss of employment; that a paper should be prepared for the Open Spaces and Recreation Committee early in 1978 dealing with implications of the recommendations in detail.

There are many good points about this decision, especially the early provision of major facilities and the retention of houses and employment, and we welcome the substantial change of heart which it has involved. However, we feel it has not gone far enough: we believe, as we have said in the past, that many of the existing buildings (both listed and unlisted) are not 'problems' to be overcome but have a positive role to play in the design and formation of the park. The report refers to the listed buildings as a 'particular problem as the Secretary of State for the Environment is unlikely *at present* to agree their demolition' (our italics) and there is no suggestion that the design of the park might actually incorporate any of the buildings east of Wells Way which were, before this report, threatened. An offer of an assured 30-year life is an improvement on no assurance but, in our opinion, a more positive and imaginative approach is required to keep permanently more of the architecturally interesting buildings as integral elements of the park. Perhaps as the details are worked out, in the new consultation which will include the Society, we can ensure that the reassessment is more

far-reaching.

Southwark has many misgivings which seem to be well founded and feels that it is quite wrong that the report was presented to the GLC's Policy Committee without member-level consultation. The local council's concern was well expressed at the Planning and Development Committee on December 20th: the new plan now follows opportunity purchases by the GLC's valuation division and compulsory acquisition, so that the overall planning view seems to have disappeared between the valuation and parks departments; Southwark is anxious that the new proposals will fit into a proper final plan, but the GLC has not yet given detailed attention comparable to that which Southwark itself has. The burden of Southwark's misgiving is that the new approach is much too general and that many details need resolving: we must hope that the new consultation will really enable Southwark and the GLC to agree a new plan. Certainly the consultation must be set up and working before any more decisions are made.

DAVE SADLER

We are very pleased to record that Dave Sadler, the manager of Burgess Park, has been awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours.

INNER CITY DECAY AND FAILURE IN PLANNING

Mr David Hall, Director of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), addressed The Camberwell Society on November 17th 1977. Before expounding his approach to 'Inner City Decay and Failure in Planning with Suggested Solutions' he explained the *raison d'être* of his organisation. It was founded by Ebenezer Howard in 1899 as the 'Garden Cities Association' with the purpose of propagandising for decongestion of urban slums, by providing crowded town dwellers with the chance of a more spacious and rural setting in the Garden Cities. Welwyn was its first success.

The TCPA is still concerned with improving the urban/rural lot, extolling the need to balance population and employment opportunities in town and country, giving evidence at public inquiries, and educating the public in planning matters generally. Additionally, it runs the Planning Aid Service which advises citizens on planning problems affecting them, occasionally taking up the cudgels itself. The Association publishes the monthly *Journal*, the weekly *Planning Bulletin*, and books such as the entertaining *New Citizen's Guide to Town and Country Planning*.

The problems

Inner city decay is still central to the original concerns of the Association. The inner urban crisis is not new: the publicity now given to it is in part political, since policy towards inner cities influences voting patterns. The decline of the inner city need not have taken planners by surprise, for it represents, by a large, the achievement of the goals of the Abercrombie Plan for London (1944): 1¼ million people have left London in the last 25 years. The only surprises are that this shift in population took 25 years rather than ten, and the costs borne by some receiving towns were largely unexpected, such as a vast expansion of the economic base, 'Tescos in Moot Halls'. Abercrombie failed to predict further population increase

in the south-east, he failed to predict a higher rate of household fission (ie members of large households, single sons and daughters, leaving to set up their own homes before marriage). The drift from manufacturing to service jobs was not foreseen and the demands for office space came as a surprise.

Unfortunately the growth of car ownership/personal transport has led to suburbanization of the city, the loss of life-blood of the inner city such as rateable values; local government structures have been unable to adapt to the shift in the base rate. There is population loss from all major urban centres in the western world, by reason of the greater demands for space made by people and firms. Examples of population loss from the inner cities are dramatic: London with 8 million population (1961) will probably have dwindled to 6½ million by 1981. Manchester has lost 20%, Liverpool 40% of their inner city residents.

Employment loss is severe, with a current national average of 6% unemployed; Poplar has 15%, inner Liverpool 20%. Inner area employment may be partly explained by the national economic situation, but is not alone in suffering: suburban Kirkby has 30% unemployment and there are rural pockets of unemployment equally severe. Some details make chilling reading: inner Liverpool has 80,000 unemployed youths.

Relieving the crisis by use of the current welfare agencies is difficult; as the Shanklin Cox report on Lambeth pointed out, the boundaries for the delivery of welfare are not contiguous. For example, social service areas are nowhere coincident with school catchment area or employment office boundaries. Thus, there cannot be a co-ordinated approach by these agencies to particular problems which might benefit from corporate treatment.

Much land lies idle in the inner city; local authorities paid dearly for it but there is often little demand for commercial or housing use now (Liverpool has a 30% vacancy rate in its inner flats). Land purchased dearly is paid for dearly in high interest rates, therefore local authorities don't put that land to low intensity use such as parkland or houses and gardens: they cannot afford realism in land use.

Some solutions

People may suffer deprivation personally or collectively. Personal deprivation includes low income, infirmity, illiteracy, and so on. The extremes of poverty may be helped by income maintenance schemes. The poverty trap which renders people within certain income brackets both socially and geographically immobile is an anomaly which can be tackled better by fiscal tuning and by revising scales along which benefits are assessed. Multi-service centres would help eliminate the problem of overlapping welfare agency areas and deliver aid more effectively where it is needed.

Collective deprivation subsists in the immediate physical environment. Most people want a house and garden, local shops, pubs, open space, leafiness. Yet one third of local authority dwellings are flats, expensive and oversupplied. Policies to improve the environment in the inner city must include more choice and better access to houses and jobs. Housing waiting lists based on restricted local authority areas should be revised to allow greater geographical mobility, which could be supplemented by schemes to help the disadvantaged move to new towns:

retraining schemes would help them adapt to new employment opportunities. Housing choice can be improved by rehabilitation of old housing stock, by local authority purchase to increase the variety of dwellings it can offer its tenants. Choice can be yet further widened by local authority provision of sites and services for self-build schemes.

Private investment could be attracted into inner areas by such measures as 'tax holidays' to establishing businesses, loans to enterprises, and positive promotion of the area to the world outside as practised at present by the New Town Corporations: Greenwich has succeeded in attracting many jobs through the efforts of its promotion schemes. The land itself can be used as a resource to attract investment, and many partnership schemes between local authorities and private enterprises could be established. Neighbourhood councils could help focus these initiatives at local level.

Resources available

Saving inner cities is all very well, but where will the resources come from? North Sea oil? not necessarily. Current spending could be much more effectively used: for example, the housing cost subsidy on high rise dwellings favours higher density building even without the housing cost yardstick. The government is spending huge sums in regional assistance; for example the subsidy to British Nuclear Fuels has been £64million, creating thereby a mere 1,000 jobs! The London weighting allowance currently costs £400million a year and has only succeeded in maintaining obsolete work patterns.

The provisions of the Community Land Act allow local authorities to keep only 30% of revenue from this source — funds that sink without trace into the Treasury, whereas the 'community' as a local concept should be allowed to deploy the full yield for its own use.

These solutions thus depend on institutional adjustments by local authorities and Whitehall, rather than on a massive funding programme.

After his talk, one interlocutor suggested that Mr Hall was simply 're-arranging the deckchairs on the Titanic'. Others felt he had steered right home.

Paul Watkinson

MEETINGS IN 1977

Meetings held in January 1977 (Stephen Marks on the de Crespigny family) and February (LATA) and the AGM in May have already been reported in the newsletter (nos 35/38, 36 and 37 respectively), and David Hall's November talk is separately reported in more detail. These notes are to complete the record of last year's meetings.

In March we held a meeting on **The work of some other societies**. The main point made by Bob Smyth, Chairman of the Peckham Society, was that the amenity societies ought to act as umbrella bodies or centre groups for smaller organisations such as tenants' and residents' associations which are often active only in spasms as they rise to threats. The amenity societies cover the whole of Southwark except Walworth, and their role should be to co-ordinate the smaller groups, to organise their thinking to meet Southwark's planners since the council is now preparing its local plan. He felt that The Camberwell Society was too concerned with little items and was too small:

perhaps it should take in the whole of SE5 and sacrifice detail, just as the Peckham Society covered all SE15 with some 50,000 inhabitants. Eileen Conn said that her association, the South West Rye Lane Residents Association, embraced about 1000 houses, 3000-4000 people, and has existed for about one and a half years. It had plenty of support but very few people with the necessary skills and no resources for meetings like the present one. There was a need to build up the identity of the area in order to strengthen the group; local groups *must* be small enough to know the issues the council cannot know and are the hope of democracy: ward councillors do *not* function and are no help. She wanted improved communication and support between groups.

According to Peter Lawson, Vice-Chairman of the Dulwich Society, an interest in history provides facts and facts strength: a society must have strength without which there is no point in talking. The Dulwich Society has gradually been built up with a variety of expertise to its present organisation of executive committee, social sub-committee and seven other sub-committees (legal, town planning, traffic roads and transport, trees, local history, wild life, membership & publicity), each with a chairman on the executive committee and seven to ten members. This promoted continued renewal and growth. He thought his society had 70 active members, 10-15 of them really active. Meetings are held once a month except in August, seven of them organised by the seven sub-committees; history, wild life and social meetings are the most popular, and town planning the least. A magazine of good quality is issued four times a year and goes to about a thousand houses, and a broad sheet is distributed once a year to every household. He could not see a unified amenity group operating in Southwark: such groups are essentially local and must build up local residents groups for specific issues.

Our April meeting was held jointly with the Peckham Society: **Baroness Birk**, the Government's chief spokesman on the environment in the House of Lords, spoke on **The future of conservation**, and was accompanied by Lloyd Warburton, head of the Urban Conservation and Historic Buildings Division of the Department of the Environment. We were pleased to see representatives from several other south London societies.

Lady Birk opened by saying that she was still sensitive about words. She gave more than a passing mention to Mentmore and said that we must have a clear idea of our priorities; many doubted whether such a collection was a part of our heritage. In the protection of this heritage very real strides have been made: a quarter of a million buildings are now listed and the entire country has been surveyed at least once. A national survey to revise the lists is in progress and will take another 15 years, adding some 15,000 buildings a year; the present priority is in urban areas to keep ahead of redevelopment, but much of the aggro of listing arises from this progress, especially from spot-listing.

Listing and statutory protection of listed buildings are not enough, however; there are also some 4000 conservation areas. Over a hundred authorities have conservation area advisory committees (CAAC), but this is too few; CAACs should be encouraged: they are a great advantage to an area and excellent value to the local authority who can be educated through them. [Later discussion of the functioning of the CAAC in Southwark was of great interest to

the speaker.] The criteria for listing have been revised: the references to 'too many marginal buildings' being listed was not a sinister anti-Victorian stance but a recognition that some do not stand up to meticulous criteria and that there is a tendency for inexperienced investigators to overlist if in doubt.

Since 1963 central government has given grants for outstanding buildings. In 1976 these amounted to £2½million and another £1½million for outstanding conservation areas. This year [1977] £3million and £1.6million respectively have been allocated, an increase of 10½% over last year and less affected by inflation than many areas of expenditure. Agreement has been reached with the church authorities to give aid (£1million at 1973 prices) for churches in use, although no date for starting has been fixed; churches will have to come into line on listed building control.

Conservation is a joint enterprise between government, commerce and the public, and much of conservation must come from voluntary effort: neighbourhoods and areas are just as important as palaces and the like. Conservation will boost the tourist trade. People need a real choice between flats and houses, between old and modern, and rehabilitation should be encouraged as it is cheaper and more desirable; new uses should be found for old buildings - it is rare to find an empty and unusable hulk. It is important to show that one will end up with something more useful and valuable than if one started building afresh, and important to get commerce and industry on the side of conservation.

Our visit on June 23rd to **Nunhead Cemetery** was attended by nearly twenty people of whom about half were guests. We were given a short account of Southwark taking over the cemetery some eighteen months earlier. The council's first task was to make it safe with new railings and repairs to boundary walls, in spite of which there is still a lot of vandalism, grave robbery, and black magic. Most of the area between the Anglican Chapel and Linden Grove is being left in its wild and overgrown state as a nature reserve with restricted access; an area on the west, starting from the western corner up to the highest point is being partly cleared and tidied to make a public park, while nearly half is being retained as public cemetery. Within this overall division the council has very flexible plans which enable it to be sensitive to the effect of each bit of work which is done and to respond quickly to new ideas. In about two hours we were shown a large part of the cemetery and work already in progress. *

In July the history and planning problems of **Burgess Park** were explained in detail by Stephen Marks to a very small audience. There was little positive change to report since our special issue of the newsletter (no 28) although the GLC has recently made a policy decision of great importance (see report elsewhere in this newsletter)

In October **Judi Bratt** gave a fascinating account and splen-

* *recently published* The *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* NS 22 (1977) contains on pages 28-89 an excellent and profusely illustrated study by James Stevens Curl entitled 'Nunhead Cemetery, London. A history of the planning, architecture, landscaping and fortunes of a great nineteenth-century cemetery.' Offprints are available (£1 including postage) from Ancient Monuments Society, St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, St Andrew's Hill, Queen Victoria Street, London EC4.

did display of her visit to **Nepal**. She spent three weeks in a party of 22 accompanied by eight sherpas and their leader and 45 porters. As well as spending time in Kathmandu, the cultural, governmental and religious centre of Nepal, and other cities, they walked 150 miles to a height of 16,000 feet, walking seven hours a day, sometimes climbing and dropping several thousand feet, and were 35 to 40 miles away from the Himalayas. Her slides showed the excitement of the towns with their numerous temples and religious statues and the spectacular landscape through which they walked.

PROGRESS AT CAMBERWELL GREEN

The drama of the demolition of houses in the Selborne area is past and an uneasy quiet has now settled on this no-man's-land imprisoned by the inevitable hoardings.

The sense of eternity prevailing over this scene of recent urban death sharply re-directs our attention to the positively unhealthy state of the neighbouring Camberwell Green itself. This area, just across Daneville Road from Selborne, the subject of a praiseworthy report by a working party set up by Southwark Council some years ago (including representatives of the Society), has also received the attentions of the demolition men. A long strip of its Daneville Road frontage stares vacantly at the corresponding devastation across the road.

Despite the working party report, despite the public consultation, despite Southwark's astonishing about-face in eventually deciding to preserve the Jephson Street and Wren Road houses, there are still no visible signs that anything constructive is about to happen.

The public is entitled to know what is going on : as far as we know the position is as follows.

The western part of the central site, which is intended to be the subject of a redevelopment scheme by the developer who owns much of it, containing a supermarket, off-street parking for shoppers and an arcade of shops accessible to the pedestrian from Denmark Hill, includes four sites not owned by either the developer or the council. For the scheme to go ahead it is essential that these sites are taken over.

Unfortunately, one of the less helpful aspects of the Community Land Act 1975 (which is one of the many hurdles for large developments) is that it imposes a tight schedule for the council to make a decision on whether to acquire land or not, and in this case it would be necessary to be able to use the powers of acquisition on the four sites. Once a planning application is submitted the council must within eight weeks serve notice of intention to acquire under the Community Land Act if it is not forfeit these powers for five years. This is in practice a very short time to make a decision on a major application such as this one, and it was therefore impracticable for the developer to make a planning application until there was some agreed basis on which such a development could go ahead if planning permission was granted. In our present straitened circumstances failure to reach agreement now could lead to the end of all prospects of the revival of Camberwell Green as a shopping centre.

Officers of the Borough Development Department and representatives of the developer have been engaged in detailed discussion and negotiation for some time now. If the basis

PROGRESS AT CAMBERWELL GREEN

(continued from previous page)

of a workable financial arrangement can be agreed in the next few weeks, involving technically the purchase of the whole of the central site by Southwark and its leasing back to the developer for building and running the new shopping centre scheme, then a planning application can be made and the machinery of the Community Land Act set going with a good chance that it will grind its way through all stages.

There will, however, still be a long way to go before a new Camberwell Green emerges from the rubble. But the next few months are likely to be more crucial to the future of the Green than almost any time in the past, if only because real progress is within grasp. It is asking a lot of the public who use the Green and of the long-suffering shopkeepers to continue to be patient, but patience is needed to allow time for these negotiations to be satisfactorily completed. It is to be hoped that while the hard bargaining proceeds, Southwark and the developer will not lose sight of the fact that the goodwill and patience of the local shopkeepers and their still loyal customers have already been tested almost beyond breaking point.

Many will ask why all this has not been sorted out long ago, and we must confess that, even though we are in touch with the council, we too are perplexed by the length of time it has all taken and still takes.

Jim Tanner

MEETINGS

are held on the third Thursday of each month. They are open to the public, for anyone in Camberwell to attend. Many of the subjects are important to everyone who lives here: we hope you will tell your friends and neighbours about them.

February 16th 8 pm *DR LETTSOM IN CAMBERWELL*

United Reformed Church

John Coakley Lettsom was born in 1744 in the West Indies and was sent to England in 1750 for his education. After apprenticeships, travel and studies he qualified as a doctor at the University of Leyden in 1769 and set up in London. He built a remarkable practice and acquired a phenomenal reputation

and numerous honours. Having bought land in Camberwell he erected Grove Hill in 1779, his 'rural villa about 4 miles from town', his 'Tusculum', where he established world-famous gardens as well and received many celebrated visitors. He lived in Camberwell for some thirty years before being obliged to leave because of his generosity to others. He died in 1815, and his house was pulled down at the end of the nineteenth century. STEPHEN MARKS will give some account of Dr Lettsom and his estate in Camberwell, with numerous slides.

March 16th 8 pm

FIGHT BLIGHT

United Reformed Church

CHARLES MCKEAN, resident in Camberwell and author of the book *Fight Blight* (published last year) and of the supplement with this newsletter, will talk about the decay in our towns and cities. He will suggest how we may fight planning blight and wasted resources (such as land left empty for years

between demolition and rebuilding, or houses standing empty) through the ideas, initiative and energy of ordinary people in Camberwell rather than by relying on the borough council to do everything – which it clearly cannot do anyway.

April 20th

Meeting on different types of tenure which exist or could exist in local authority housing.

May 18th

Annual General Meeting

MUSIC AT ST GILES PARISH CHURCH

Monthly recitals Saturdays at 8 pm

February 18th

CLAVIAN SINGERS A choral miscellany

March 18th

STEPHEN RIDGLEY-WHITEHOUSE organ
Greater London Arts Association 'Young Musician' of 1977

April 15th

RALPH DOWNES organ

May 20th

ANDREW PEARMAIN organ

With the financial assistance of the Greater London Arts Association

The organ was designed in 1844 by Dr S S Wesley who had been organist at the old St Giles Church from 1829 to 1832 and was built by J G Bishop. It was restored in 1961 under the direction of Dr Ralph Downes retaining the original design.

OPEN COMMITTEE

Any member of the Society is welcome to come to meetings of the committee and take part in discussions. The Executive Committee normally meets at 8 pm on the first Thursday of each month. *Please ring 703 4564.*

Newsletter no 40 January 1978
edited for The Camberwell Society by
Stephen Marks 50 Grove Lane, SE5

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

President Miss Nadine Beddington
Chairman Jim Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove SE5 (703 8624)
Vice-Chairman Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4564)
Hon Treasurer Nicholas Roskill 56 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4736)
Hon Secretary [Acting Secretary Michael Ivan]

NEWSLETTER NO 41 & NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 1978

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Thursday 18th 1978

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held at 8 o'clock on May 18th 1978 at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk.

Agenda on back page

THE SOCIETY'S COMMITTEE

All the Society's officers and committee have to retire each year. There will be vacancies on the committee as some members of the present committee will not be available or will not be seeking re-election. So the way is open and we are hopeful that others will come forward and seek election.

If you want to know what is involved please ring one of the officers (see top of this page) or members of the present committee and look through the Annual Report (printed below) and previous newsletters.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1977/78

In recent years major issues such as the proposed redevelopment of the Selborne area and the proposals for the Camberwell Green central site have dominated the Society's activities and done much to keep the Society in the public eye. While, regrettably, neither of these issues has yet been resolved to our satisfaction and there is still much to be done, this last year has been taken up by activities of a less spectacular nature though of no less relative importance.

Early last autumn Southwark Borough Council held a series of public meetings to initiate public consultation on their draft Local Plan. Individual members of the Society's executive committee attended these various meetings and contributed to the discussion and debate. The first stage of the preparation of the Local Plan was based on a 20-page pamphlet entitled *Problems and Opportunities*. This document set out the council's views on the problems facing the area and the opportunities for helping solve them. The Camberwell Society, together with other organisations, was invited to comment on the document and its views, as submitted, were published in Newsletter No 39 (p2).

The GLC's scheme for the development of a major new park in the area, the proposed 135-acre Burgess Park, has in the past been the subject of sharp criticism by the Society. Changes of political control at County Hall last year resulted in a major shift in emphasis on policy for the Park scheme and this was reported in our last newsletter. The Society welcomes this change of heart by the GLC as it will result in early provision of major facilities and the retention of houses and employment, but it feels that the changes do not go far enough. We are in accord with Southwark Borough Council on this subject, the council believing that the GLC's new approach is much too general and that many details need resolving.

As members will know the Society mounted a successful campaign to influence Southwark's Housing Committee to reverse its previous decision and rehabilitate rather than destroy the houses in Jephson Street. These houses are an essential element of the Camberwell Green central site and their retention is of importance. As reported in Newsletter No 38 (p3) the Wandle Housing Association is to take over these properties and rehabilitate them.

Throughout the year since our last AGM the Society has organised a number of highly successful members' and public meetings. The first of these was the public meeting held last June to probe the delay in implementing the proposals of Southwark's Working Party (which includes representatives of the Society) for Camberwell Green. The main hall of the United Reformed Church was well filled for this meeting and the lively discussion was fully reported in Newsletter No 38.

On a similar theme David Hall, Director of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA),

addressed a meeting in November on inner city decay and failure in planning. We returned to this theme at our last meeting when Charles McKean, author of the book *Fight Blight* and a resident of Camberwell, gave a stimulating talk which will be reported in the next newsletter.

Other meetings included a discussion by a panel of speakers on neighbourhood councils (Newsletter No 40 p4) and a talk by Stephen Marks on Dr Lettsom in Camberwell. Stephen's talks are always thoroughly well prepared and stimulating. They represent an essential aspect of the work of an amenity society such as ours, illuminating our links with the past, and they are invariably amongst the best attended of our meetings. It is to be hoped that after Stephen's departure from the district others will come forward and carry on the work.

The executive committee has met regularly throughout its year of office. It has extended and consolidated the system of sub-committees, each responsible for an aspect of the Society's work. These include a sub-committee to deal with planning matters, one on meetings (choosing subjects and organising the meetings) and another on publications. The sub-committees are composed primarily, though not exclusively, of executive committee members and each sub-committee reports back through its chairman to the full committee. This method of working is fundamental to the Society's aim of deploying its limited resources wisely and involving as many ordinary members as possible in the workings of the Society.

Five newsletters have been published during the year since the last AGM, no 40 being a bumper issue, sadly the last with Stephen Marks as editor. These newsletters have included two longer articles: an account by Stephen Marks of the de Crespigny family in Camberwell (no 38), and *Fighting Blight* by Charles McKean (no 40). Newsletter No 40 also contained an index covering all newsletters published to that date.

The Society once again wishes to thank the United Reformed Church for allowing it to use their rooms for meetings.

The accounts for the year May 1st 1977 to April 30th 1978 will be presented at the Annual General Meeting and printed in the next newsletter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday May 18th 1978

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held at 8 o'clock on May 18th 1978 at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk.

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 1977/78 (see above)
- 4 Treasurer's report
- 5 Election of officers and committee
All the officers of the Society and the members of the Executive Committee retire annually in accordance with the constitution of the Society and are eligible for re-election. Nominations are required for the officers and committee. Any paid-up member may, together with a seconder, nominate candidates for the offices and committee. Nominations must be in writing and may be made at the meeting but would be preferred before the meeting delivered to the Acting Secretary, 24 Grove Lane, SE5.
- 6 Any other business

Michael Ivan Acting Hon Secretary

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 25th May | Visit to Vassall Road rehabilitation scheme by Lambeth Council. Meet at corner of Vassall Road and Cowley Road at 4pm. |
| 15th June | Members' meeting on housing tenure at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk 8pm. |

HOW CAN YOU JOIN THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY?

Fill in the form below, tear it off and send or deliver it to one of the following addresses

Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, London SE5.
Elizabeth Betts, 126 Grove Park, London SE5.
Ian Chown, 149 Chadwick Road, London SE15.
Katie Crawley, 43 Grove Hill Road, London SE5.
Sara Neill Wintersgill, 22 Maude Road, London SE5.
Nicholas Roskill - Hon. Treasurer - 56 Grove Lane, London SE5.
Jill Westwood - Hon. Secretary - 40 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership costs only £1 per year, students and pensioners 50pence.

I wish to join the Camberwell Society.

Name

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone

Published for the Camberwell Society by
Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane, London SE5.

CAMBERWELL NEWS

CAMBERWELL IS A MESS

WE HAVE LOST MANY OF OUR SHOPS, HUNDREDS OF
HOUSES, SCHOOLS, ALL OUR CINEMAS, AND OUR
MUSIC HALL.

WHY?

BECAUSE WE, THE LOCAL RESIDENTS, DID NOT FIGHT
BACK EFFECTIVELY.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT CAMBERWELL

JOIN THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

NOW

What does the Society do?

This leaflet tells you

WHAT DOES THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY DO?

- + It fights for a **BETTER CAMBERWELL**
- + It supports small shopkeepers
- + It encourages better facilities for children and old people
- + It gives evidence at Public Enquiries, on Compulsory Purchase Orders and at Planning Appeals
- + It supports conservation schemes and environmental improvement
- + It comments on plans by the Local Authority and encourages improvements
- + It opposes the demolition of more houses: suggests alternatives for the unpleasant traffic conditions that exist: opposes the Peckham High Street re-alignment which will bring a new major road right through Camberwell Green
- + It publishes a Newsletter five or six times a year
- + It is a voluntary group of local people
- + It is **NON-political**

WHAT HAS THE SOCIETY ACHIEVED?

It is now accepted by Southwark Council as an important local group. It represents the people of Camberwell.

It is co-operating with the Council on the future of Camberwell Green and is pressing for faster action.

It helped the residents of Selborne with advice in their legal action against the Council and encouraged wide reporting in the Press, on radio and TV of the activities of the Council at the time.

It fought successfully to preserve Addington Square, Wren Road and Jephson Street.

It has shown the Council that Camberwell can no longer be forgotten.

IS THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY NEEDED?

More than ever.....

LOOK at the Green with its empty shops.....

LOOK at what is happening to Denmark Hill.....

LOOK at what is happening to Daneville Road and Selborne.....

WHO CAN JOIN THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY?

YOU can

If you **LIVE** or **WORK** in Camberwell

If you are a **TENANT** or **HOUSEHOLDER**

If you have a **SHOP** or **BUSINESS** in Camberwell

If you are a **STUDENT** in Camberwell

If you have an **INTEREST** in Camberwell's **FUTURE**

..... then **PLEASE JOIN THE SOCIETY**

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION TO THE SOCIETY IS £1 (MINIMUM) FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, DUE ON JUNE 1ST EACH YEAR. THERE IS A SPECIAL RATE FOR STUDENTS AND PENSIONERS WHO MAY PAY ONLY 35 PENCE.

Subscriptions should be paid to the Hon. Treasurer,
Nicholas Roskill, 56 Grove Lane, London SE5 8ST.

If you have already paid your subscription for 1978/
79, please disregard this reminder.

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

President Nadine Beddington
Chairman Jim Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove SE5 (703 8624)
Vice-Chairman Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4564)
Hon Treasurer Nicholas Roskill 56 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4736)
Hon Secretary Jill Westwood 40 Camberwell Grove SE5 (701 2325)

NEWSLETTER NO 42

October 1978

THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

The new officers of the society are listed at the head of this Newsletter. The Executive Committee for 1978-79 is listed below. Newcomers to the committee include Charles McKean, whose talk to the Society earlier this year entitled *Fight Blight* attracted a large audience and will be reported in the next Newsletter, Michael Frost, Denys Short (who has served previously on the committee) and Nigel Haigh. Nigel was a founder member of the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Society and his wide experience of community affairs and the functions of an amenity society make him a particularly welcome recruit. Our report of the Annual General Meeting of the Society, held on May 18th, appears on page 42.2.

Brian Allsworth	165 Grove Lane SE5 (274 0367)
Jeremy Bennett	30 Grove Lane SE5 (703 9971)
Elizabeth Betts	126 Grove Park SE5 (274 6532)
Ian Chown	149 Chadwick Road SE15 (639 9587)
Katie Crawley	43 Grove Hill Road SE5 (274 3701)
Michael Frost	187 Camberwell Grove SE5 (274 1174)
Nigel Haigh	50 Grove Lane SE5 (703 2719)
Charles McKean	197 Camberwell Grove SE5 (737 2618)
Dick Oliver	89 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4949)
Denys Short	43 Camberwell Grove SE5 (703 5974)
Sara Neill Wintersgill	22 Maude Road SE5 (701 3140)

NEW MEMBERS — WE NEED MORE

Between October and Christmas the Society is making an all-out effort to recruit new members. Enclosed with this Newsletter you will find the newly-printed leaflet which explains what the Society does, what it has achieved and why we think we are worth joining. At only £1 per year and just 50 pence for pensioners and students, we are a bargain!

Please hand the leaflet on to your friends and persuade them to join. All they have to do is to fill in the form and send or deliver it to the nearest committee member, whose addresses are printed on the leaflet.

Members of the Society will also see a poster campaign in Camberwell in the next few weeks. Posters explaining why the Camberwell Society is still badly needed and what it stands for will, we hope, be prominently displayed throughout various parts of Camberwell.

Our aim is to get 1000 plus members. The Dulwich Society has about the same and as the Camberwell Society is within reach of that number. Our aim is to circulate everyone living in Camberwell and volunteers for distributing leaflets would be welcome.

Will every member try and recruit at least one other member. Leaflets will be available from all Committee members and in some of the Camberwell shops.

There will be a prize of a bottle of sherry, which will be presented just before Christmas, to the member who has introduced the most new members. Enter the competition now. . . !

REPORT OF THE AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Camberwell Society was held at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk, on May 18th. The minutes of the previous AGM were read and agreed. The Annual Report (printed in the last Newsletter) and the Accounts were received. In presenting the Accounts Nicholas Roskill once again drew attention to the problem of subscription arrears. He had sent out over 1000 reminders, he said, during the year. He warned that our satisfactory balance of £256.16 at the bank was due to sales of publications and not prompt payment of subscriptions by every member. The Treasurer concluded by thanking the Honorary Auditor, Lindsay Balleny, for his work.

A substantial part of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the need to increase the membership of the Society in order to make it an even more effective watchdog of our living and working environment in Camberwell. One of the most important functions of an amenity society is to apply pressure on the authorities and others on issues of concern not only to its members but to all who live or work in the area of benefit. Inevitably this brings us into conflict with the authorities from time to time and they and other critics of the Society, when under pressure from us, occasionally seek to denigrate us as a small elitist body concerned only with its own petty interests. Such criticism is of course exposed for the nonsense that it is when viewed against the record of the Society throughout its comparatively short existence. But it will only be completely stifled when every part of the area of benefit of the Society is equally well represented in its membership. Effie Planker and Dolly Potter each urged a campaign to recruit new members and backed these views by volunteering to help deliver handbills and recruiting leaflets. Jeremy Bennett considered that issues of local importance were what kept the Society alive: Camberwell Green and Selborne were cases in point. If we could keep these issues before the public then this would recruit members at least as effectively as knocking on doors.

At the election of officers and Executive Committee for 1978-79 Jim Tanner was re-elected chairman, Michael Ivan vice-chairman and Nicholas Roskill hon treasurer. For the second year running the post of hon secretary was not filled, there being no nominations at the meeting.

THE NEW HONORARY SECRETARY

In the report of the AGM you will see that we failed to elect an Hon Secretary. We are pleased to announce that since then one of our members, Jill Westwood has come forward and offered her services. The role of secretary in a Society such as ours is a vital one and can be onerous if the incumbent does not receive the constant support from the other officers, the committee and indeed the membership itself. We are sure that Jill will get this support. She deserves it for like most people who voluntarily commit themselves to the work involved in community affairs she already has other commitments.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

Members of the Society will be aware of the major issues with which the Society has been involved in recent times.

Some members may not be aware of other less publicised but no less important activities of the Society. For some time now the Executive Committee has felt that many of the continuing interests of the Society are best served by sub-committees acting independently of but regularly reporting to the Executive Committee. Membership of these sub-committees is specifically intended to be largely represented by ordinary members rather than members of the Executive Committee although the convenor in each case is a member of the Executive Committee. Listed below are the current sub-committees of the Society with the name of the convenor in brackets. If you would like to help you will be very welcome. Please contact the Hon Secretary. We are particularly anxious to recruit members who are planners or architects to the Planning Sub-committee to strengthen our present team.

Traffic and Transportation (Dick Oliver and Michael Ivan)
Blight (Charles McKean)
Publications (Jeremy Bennett)
Planning (Jill Westwood)

OPEN COMMITTEE

You are reminded that any member of the Society is welcome to attend a committee meeting and take part in discussions. The Executive Committee normally meets at 8.15 pm on the first Thursday each month. As the venue of the meeting tends to vary please contact the Hon Secretary.

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Last year Southwark held a series of public meetings to begin the public consultation on the draft Local Plan. The Local Plan will be the statutory framework for several years to come for future planning and development in the Borough, both for change and conservation. The Council has a statutory duty to consult the public but nowhere is it laid down exactly what form this consultation should take. We are all in favour of consultation but the Camberwell Society is not satisfied with the way consultation is being carried out by Southwark.

Newsletter No 39 reported that the public meetings had been inadequately advertised. In November last year Michael Ivan wrote to the Borough Planner on behalf of the Society drawing attention to the lack of adequate advertising and reported members' complaints about the manner in which the meetings were held. He complained that in several instances there had been distortion by officers of the Council of some of the points made by participants.

Stage 2 of the public consultation has come in the form of a questionnaire called *Mid-Southwark District Plan Stage 2 Consultation* and more meetings. On reflection we feel that many of the questions in the questionnaire are quite simply loaded and have sent a copy of the questionnaire to the Professional Standards Committee of the Market Research Society for their comment.

Most questions appeared to be statements to which the required answer was simply "yes" or "no". Few options were offered, no alternative views were put. Some examples: "Rye Lane is a major shopping centre, should this role be encouraged by seeking to attract large stores? Answer Yes or No."

What about other major shopping centres such as Camberwell Green, which doesn't even get a mention? What about alternatives to large stores?

"Should more land, currently zoned for other purposes be allocated for uses which would provide more jobs?" Of course we all want more job opportunities but this questionnaire does not give any opportunity of listing priorities.

Meanwhile Dick Oliver attended a preliminary meeting under Stage 2 during September and here is his account of what happened.

Preliminary Meeting

Originally, the Planning Department invited the Society to a meeting to be held in Dulwich. Fortunately no-one from your committee was able to go — we later found out that there was a meeting here in our own area of Camberwell, to which we had *not* been invited! It was this later, Camberwell meeting that I attended on behalf of our Society.

This particular series of meetings is called 'preliminary' Stage Two meetings because they precede the full public Stage Two meetings. The idea was to brief bodies like us and tenants associations on the programme so far. The participants at this Camberwell meeting were officers from the Planning Department, two representatives from tenants' associations — but not from Lettsom or the Glebe estates — Ian Jenkin, principal of the Camberwell School of Art, and myself. The officers seemed unsure as to why the Lettsom and Glebe TAs were missing — they 'thought that invitations had been issued'.

Once the meeting got going, we had a slide show with recorded commentary, aimed at clarifying the options resulting from the Stage One consultation. This show did not represent properly, in my view, what I and other Society members who had visited Stage One meetings in other areas as observers recalled, or what we and others had said at our own Stage One meeting. To avoid remaking points that we had made already at our own local meeting, I took up the example of Walworth Road shopping facilities. I recalled clearly that, at the fairly well-attended Walworth Road meeting, there was a strong grass-roots view that Walworth Road did not need knocking down and redeveloping, just a clean-up and face-lift. The Walworth Road people 'liked it the way it is.' This point had sunk without trace, so I pressed for an answer as to how such an important omission could have happened.

The answer I got was very revealing. The Council has been going round asking groups of what it calls 'ordinary people' what they want, since the Stage One public meetings were held, and using these results to overthrow what the original meetings decided. Were the people who took the trouble to find out about the original meeting, and go to it, not 'ordinary' — and even if their civic interest marks them out from the rest who were not so alert at finding the ill-publicised Stage One meetings,

does this mean their views should be disregarded? More important still, were the questions asked of the groups of 'ordinary people' assembled we know not how, as loaded as those in the questionnaire referred to above.

The discussion after the slide show ranged far and wide, covering the topics that worry us all — blight, jobs, traffic and transport, housing, delay in doing anything, and the terrible state to which the Camberwell Green area has been brought. Ian Jenkin most cogently argued his case for a 'peoples' arts centre' here in Camberwell, offering the sort of facilities and activities that he used to have available for local people in his part-time evening classes, before the increased demands on his full-time courses placed on his existing buildings and staff made closure of those opportunities inevitable. This was even more important now, with high unemployment, than it had been in the past. The idea seemed to come like a bolt from the blue to the council officers present, despite Ian's selfless and enthusiastic promotion of the idea ever since his open evening classes had to end. On housing, I made again the point that your society and some of the more aware Councillors have been making for some time — that the present housing mix in Camberwell offers a choice only between cheap, poor-condition old property and premium-grade expensive restorations in the private sector, and council tenancies. What was needed to stem the efflux of the young, and industry, from the borough was reasonably-priced reasonably-new housing for sale — the sort of thing that a young married couple or shop-floor and middle management in industry would look for.

This was met with 'but we thought you were against knocking down and rebuilding'! The officers seemed unaware that, with the housing list for rented property practically satisfied in Southwark, some of the vacant sites might be considered for houses for sale. Altogether this lack of local knowledge, and lack of understanding of the complex inter-linking of all the issues that concern us, was frightening. It is surely hopeless trying to plan, without taking the broad view to identify the areas where the minimum effort and disturbance can yield the maximum benefit?

I cannot accept that the very pleasant, able officers who conducted the meeting are incompetent — it is simply that they've been

given a bad, wrong brief. It is almost as if an individual or small group has decided what is to be done and is trying to manipulate both officers and consultation.

Our way forward is quite clear. First, every single member of the Camberwell Society, plus as many friends and neighbours as can be rounded up, must regard it as his or her civic duty to attend the Stage Two meetings and take the maximum active part in them. After all, we are the people paying the pipers, and Parliament has given us very specific rights to call the tune. If the original Stage One views, and stage two also, are still replaced by what are beginning to look like diktats from some secret bunker by a self-appointed elitist or caucus, then we shall have a hard and sticky fight ahead, while inevitably Camberwell rots further, to get the Secretary of State at Westminster to reject the whole unsatisfactory process so far, and enforce proper eliciting of the peoples' views and action upon them. It has been done elsewhere already — we can do it, if we have to, here, in *our* Camberwell.

Dick Oliver

TALKING OF CHRISTMAS

The magnificently re-printed edition of "The Parish of Camberwell" by W.H. Blanch makes an excellent Christmas present for anyone interested in the history of Camberwell. First published in 1875 it is still the principal reference work on Camberwell, Peckham and Dulwich and their surroundings up to the late nineteenth century. It was reprinted for the Society by Stephen Marks.

Blanch's Camberwell together with the Society's other greetings cards, views of Camberwell etc., are available from The Passage Bookshop. The proceeds go to the Society.

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Public Meeting that Dick Oliver refers to above, for St Giles and Brunswick Wards, is on Monday 30th October at 7.30pm in the Warwick Hall, Kimpton Rd (opp. bottom of Grove Lane.) Bring friends and neighbours, please.

CAMBERWELL GREEN AND SELBORNE

A meeting of the Camberwell Green Working Part was held on July 13th at the specific request of the Camberwell Society representatives on the Working Party. We learnt at this meeting that the GLC had now completed their land and traffic surveys for the new road proposals (known as Option 7) and are well under way with detailed plans. The scheme is hoped to go to the Department of Transport for approval in June 1979 and is programmed for implementation in 1982-3.

As for the central site at Camberwell Green we were advised that heads of agreement were being considered by solicitors for the developers (EPIC) and by the Council's legal officers. It will then be possible to prepare a revised programme.

We have since been advised by Southwark that the earliest start on the site is 1980.

As for the Selborne development area members will probably be aware of the disturbing hiccup in progress caused by local residents' resistance to the closure of Cuthill Road. The Society is sympathetic to the views of the local residents but feels that there is an over-riding urgency to have the new Selborne scheme started without delay. Every week of continued inactivity on the desolate wasteland known as Selborne is potentially another nail in the coffin of Camberwell Green as a shopping and commercial centre.

We have been told that a start will be made on building work in March next year. Many members doubtless will take the view that they will believe it when they see it.

The Society plans to hold another public meeting soon when it hopes to have more definite and encouraging news.

Jim Tanner

MEETINGS REPORT

FIGHT BLIGHT

On March 16th Charles McKean, who lives in Camberwell and wrote the book *"Fight Blight"* which was published in 1977, spoke to members of the Society and other local residents on that subject, including blight caused by neglect, blight caused by planning delays, and what we might do about it.

Charles drew a distinction between what an individual might do and what the Camberwell Society or other groups might do, but emphasized the point made in his

book that our area is ours, and if we do not look after it properly no-one else will. We cannot expect the Local Authority to do everything and we may well get a better result if we do things ourselves. The Camberwell Society could either remain a spectator, commenting upon and attempting to influence Council policy, or it could become a do-er and in the latter case the Council would be forced to take it seriously. Two empty sites were identified as examples of areas where the Society might try to organise temporary usage: the site in Grove Lane near the Canning Pub which has been derelict for some seven years and might be used for allotment, and the building on the corner of Datchelor Place and Church Street which has been empty for five years and might provide temporary flats or a community centre. A participant at the meeting then said that Solon Housing Association had been trying for some time to buy this property.

On an even more positive note Charles McKean suggested that the Camberwell Society itself become a developer. He mentioned Town Development Trusts in which local associations of various kinds get together to form a trust to take over development on behalf of the local community: in Bury St. Edmunds and Croydon money has been obtained and this is already happening. He said that he knew of a developer who had already worked with community groups and would be happy to do a free survey of the "central site" on Camberwell Green where the extreme slowness must be of major concern to us all.

The main discussion of the meeting centred around the question of whether the planting of flowers and saving of glass jars were "pimples" which had little to do with the question of how to tackle the very real and major "scars" resulting from planning blight in Camberwell. Most people, however, felt that the two approaches were not mutually exclusive. Not only does the appearance of the area have an important effect on morale, giving people the enthusiasm to tackle the major planning problems, but the example of Selborne was quoted where it was felt that had more flowers been planted, and even minor repairs been done, the Council would have had even less of an excuse than the flimsy one it produced for pulling down all the houses and leaving us with empty scars for two years already, with no sign of a start on building.

Sally Stockley

RING-RAIL

The first members' meeting of the new season, held on 21st September at the United Reformed Church in Love Walk was an illustrated lecture by three of the Ring-Rail group, Leigh Crowther, Anthony Pilling and Stephen Joseph. Ring-Rail is a delightfully simple and low-cost plan to improve transport in London by forming an outer circle line, so to speak, largely from existing tracks and stations of the surface rail network, interconnecting with tubes and surface lines running radially from the centre. Here in Camberwell, Ring Rail would use the South London Loop lines, linking us with the whole of the rest of the rail transport system in London. Ring-Rail would provide us with ready transport to, say, the shopping centre of Lewisham, with rail and tube to the centre which "misses" Camberwell, and work in the Docklands and the Eastern part of London, either via the tunnel proposed by the GLC at Silvertown, or a new tunnel a little nearer the centre, starting from Angerstein wharf. This tunnel would be the major capital work for the Ring-Rail system, which elsewhere needs, in the main, only the improvement of existing stations and the provision of new interchange stations where lines cross but do not interconnect.

What emerged very clearly from the lecture, which took us right round the Ring-Rail system with slides was that once again South London was being left behind through not pressing its case firmly enough or in a sufficiently organised way. In North London, a major part of the Richmond to Broad Street line would form part of the Ring-Rail system, and the Broad Street line pressure groups had succeeded in persuading the authorities that the line would benefit commercially through improved interconnections, as well as providing a social benefit. In turn, once the interconnection points were specified, plans drawn up and work started, businesses naturally become interested in developing the sites at the interconnections because the improved communications would mean that they could draw staffs from a much wider area than would be the case if they were to site their works or offices on one of the radial lines alone. In fact, a factory or office at an interconnection point on Ring-Rail could draw staff from a large sector of London, perhaps as much as a third, simply because travellers would be able to use the existing

radial line system to get to Ring-Rail, and then interchange and travel round Ring-Rail quickly and easily, rather than going to a central London terminus and fighting onto a tube or bus, and then another line going out again to the point where the works or office was sited — few people were willing to do this, but one change onto Ring-Rail was acceptable. Already in North London, commercial and industrial development is springing up at interchanges, bringing new prosperity to depressed areas. With Peckham, Denmark Hill and Loughborough Junction as local interchanges Southwark and Lambeth could also benefit in the same way (and this seems a far better chance of revitalization than building a new Town Hall for £30m! Ed).

What also came out of the meeting — a satisfactorily full one — was that people living here are deeply concerned at the ever-decreasing standards of local transport, and transport to the centre of our City. In our Camberwell Society we already have the secretariat, so to speak, to collect together this concern and channel it effectively, through the Society's contacts and affiliations, into pressure of much the same nature as the bodies in North London have exerted to improve and safeguard their local transport. The Camberwell Society will organize, later this year, a transport and traffic forum, to which members and their friends and neighbours will be able to bring their problems and ideas: these could then form the start of something new and worthwhile to improve *our* transport. In the meantime, our Society's Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee will be glad to have suggestions

Dick Oliver

LORRY NOISE - GET RATES CUT

Campaign Against the Lorry Menace (affiliated to Lata, as is our Society) is holding inaugural meeting Thursday Nov 16th at 7.30pm at Caxton Hall, Victoria St SW1. Chairman Lord Beaumont. All troubled by heavy traffic please attend.

Jim Tanner,
107 Camberwell Grove.