

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 43

March 1979

SOUTHWARK'S NEW WHITE ELEPHANT

Southwark Council are still pressing ahead with their plans to build a new Town Hall in Peckham which will cost at least £50 Million, probably nearer £70 Million. It sounds like a bureaucrat's bad joke. It is just that - but it is worse, because it is one step nearer reality with the announcement made in the middle of February by Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment, that he did not propose the 'calling-in' of the Town Hall Plans for a Public Enquiry because it was not a 'national issue'. Perhaps not surprisingly he ignored the case argued by the Camberwell Society and published in the South London Press, that Southwark's waste is national waste.

First, the background: in November it was decided by the Council at a secret meeting to press ahead with completed plans for the new Town Hall. The idea was to railroad it through the Council without public discussion. This failed because a number of Labour Councillors led by Bob Smyth, former chairman of the Peckham Society, decided that the issues must be publicly debated, and asked for deferment of the plan. He was supported by other Labour Councillors and by the Conservatives, but was overruled. Since then the basis of all opposition to the Town Hall has been that it must not go ahead until there has been proper consultation, professional examination of alternatives and full public discussion of all the issues involved.

Over the weeks of controversy, what has emerged is this: Southwark Council claims that a new Town Hall will give better value for money than renovating existing Council buildings and will provide better accommodation for Council staff, thereby improving the service to the public.

On the other hand it has also emerged that Southwark already has three town halls and that renovation of these and other existing Council buildings could cost only £7 million, that both the town hall unions NUPE and NALGO are against the idea of a new town hall, that the new building would after all only house 1400 of the Council's 8000 staff, that the Southwark Trades Council is against it and so are all the local community groups headed by the Peckham Action Group.

In the event the plan was carried at the full Council meeting by 34 votes to 22 with one abstention - the first time that an issue has ever divided the ruling majority on Southwark Council

Opposition is continuing on two principal grounds. First the waste of public money in the poorest of London boroughs where the average income per family is £1000 less and unemployment higher than anywhere else in London and where money is urgently needed for helping the social services, encouraging employment and new industry and halting blight and depopulation. One wonders if a new Town Hall can really be a priority when resources are scarce and the list of needs so long.

Secondly there are the planning issues. The land upon which the Town Hall will be built was originally designated for commercial and residential purposes, not for monuments to civic glory or folly, whichever way you think of it. This change of use was not thought of sufficient importance for Mr Shore to call in the plans for a Public Inquiry. What will happen now, unless the plan is stopped, is that the bulldozers will move in, there will be years of blight in Peckham just as there has been in Camberwell.

What has the Camberwell Society done about this? We have consistently supported the Peckham Action Group. We took part in the Borough-wide demonstration in January. Jim Tanner spoke at a public meeting and Jeremy Bennett and Dick Oliver have had letters published in the press, all expressing opposition. The Camberwell Society wrote formally to Mr Shore asking for his intervention and the Chairman wrote to the nine Councillors in our area asking them to oppose the scheme.

What can still be done? Write to your Councillors urging them to reconsider. They must all be aware that they could be vulnerable in the next local elections, when the Town Hall will still be an important local issue. Write to Peter Shore at the Department of the Environment urging that the Inspector who conducts the inevitable public inquiry into the compulsory purchase orders, which will be made by the Council to acquire the rest of the Town Hall site, be given the widest possible brief to examine all the issues involved. Support the Southwark Campaign Against the Town Hall, 60 Nutbrook Street, Peckham SE15 with donations or offers of help.

The Southwark campaign is continuing to oppose by all possible means what the Guardian called 'the expensive municipal symbol that few people want and for which the ratepayers of Southwark will be paying for a rather long time.'

Jeremy Bennett

THE CRITICAL COUNCIL MEETING

Camberwell Society executive committee member, Dick Oliver, a resident of Southwark, attended the meeting of the full council on January 17th at which the vote was taken on the proposal to build a new Town Hall. Here is his account of the events of that evening.

With other business early on the agenda the Town Hall issue was not reached till 9.30 in the evening. One might have expected the public gallery and the TV rooms relaying the proceedings on closed circuit television to have been packed since the doors of the Peckham Road Town Hall were opened. But neither the gallery nor the viewing rooms were full. In fact the doors had been locked with only some admitted many were turned away. Under the 1974 Local Government Act the public is entitled to be admitted to full council meetings.

When I arrived at the Town Hall at about 9.15 people were still standing on the steps unable to gain entry as the doors were still locked. After discussion with the police on duty I was allowed to ring the doorbell. It was necessary to quote the 1974 Act before the official who answered the door could be persuaded to admit us. Even then, having gained entry into the building, it was only after some considerable time and effort in arguing with the police that I finally entered the public gallery at about 11.15.

The debate was proceeding in the council chamber with consideration being given to amendments to the main motion to build a new Town Hall. In the main speakers opposing the motion were crisp, clear and logical, whereas the supporters of the motion were not. Some speakers supporting the new Town Hall proposal wandered so far from the point that they had to be called to order.

Eventually at about 2.30 in the morning the vote was taken on the main motion, the mayor having ruled out discussion. The vote was 34 in favour, 22 against with one abstention. At this banners were unfurled, insults hurled and leaflets thrown, and to the sound of a foghorn we all filed out, tired, downhearted at the way our elected representatives had treated our opposition with contempt, but determined now that the fight was really on.

Dick Oliver

How they voted

Here are the details of how councillors in wards broadly within the Society's area of benefit voted:

Brunswick Ward

Jeremy Gordon	against
John Lauder	for
Ronald Watts	for

Burgess Ward

Trevor Ely	against
Ronald Slater	—

Faraday Ward

Frederick Coombes	for
James Greening	—
William Slater	for

Liddle Ward

John Fowler	against
Michael Geater	against
Anne McNaught	against

Lyndhurst Ward

Evelyn Ackroyd	for
Ernest Davies	for
William Payne	for

St Giles Ward

Leslie Alden	for
David Mitchels	against
Cliff Potter	for

Others voting against the Town Hall proposal were: Enid Boxall (Rye Ward), Catherine Clough (Alley), Catherine Clunn (Newington), Pamela Cooper (Ruskin), Tobias Eckersley (Ruskin), Charles Halford (Newington), Bryan Hoskins (College), Margaret Jackson (College), John Meakin (Ruskin), George Nicholson (Cathedral), Anthony Ritchie (Barset), Robert Smyth (Consort), Ralph Spielberg (Rye), Carol Turner (Waverley), James Wheeler (Waverley) and Margaret White (Riverside).

PROTESTERS ON THE MARCH

An offshoot of the Peckham Action Group, The 13th January Co-ordinating Committee, organised a massive demonstration march against the proposed new Town Hall. The Camberwell Society's Sara Neill Wintersgill was there

Hundreds of people from all over Southwark converged on the dismal area of the Elephant and Castle, just after lunchtime. We assembled behind a great white elephant on the back of a lorry, and we marched off in the direction of Camberwell. As we marched, we sang words taught us by colourful long-legged clowns:-

Sweet Johnny O'Grady, Southwark's little red rose

The Camberwell Society was massed behind its elegant new banner, made by executive committee member Ian Chown's wife. Members carried placards proclaiming 'Southwark loves bulldozers' and 'The Great Rate Robbery'.

Accompanied by cheery policemen, reporters and TV crews, the procession entered the brighter reaches of the Walworth Road. Here shoppers stopped and laughed at the music, the clowns, the punning posters. Many joined the march, eager to show their indignation at the pretensions of councillors who force grandiose plans on unwilling citizens.

So we shuffled along, following the elephant, a punk band and seventy black coffins, each carrying the name of a business that the new Town Hall would endanger. The Pearly King of Peckham walked behind a bulldozer, followed by the Mayoress's new boudoir - a red upholstered water closet. Dogs yapped at the wheels of a future Mayor's pushchair, children waved, motorists seethed.

This march of protest was an extraordinary alliance of Southwark Tories and Socialist Workers' Party, Labour Party and Evening Standard, Trades Council and amenity societies and just ordinary people.

As the procession passed St. Giles, the Vicar smiled his sympathy and a few left to rest their blistered feet. At the Town Hall in the Peckham Road, a halt while the coffins piled up in front of the main doors, forming a black wall of names of businesses that serve citizens of Southwark, yet will be destroyed for the monstrous new building: a hairdresser, the eel-and-pie shop, Whitten's Homecraft, the Post Office, banks, a printers, butcher and many others who bring life and variety to our Peckham High Street.

We moved on to circle the blighted site. Shopkeepers came to their doors and shouted support. Yet more people joined us.

Tired now, we reached the Camden Estate, which forms a natural theatre for such a demonstration. At one moment, there was the grass, and the steam from hot-dog and chestnut stalls wafting up to ruffle the bunting that garlanded Camden and brightened the grey chilly day. The next moment it was full of people, waiting, munching, looking up at the balconies and walkways above. Out above our heads came the Pearly King, the clergy, Trades Unions representatives, rebel councillors, all to denounce the ways of the Council.

By now it was clear that very few people or groups in the Borough of Southwark want the new Town Hall yet only days later, the Council forced it through against the peoples' wishes.

Sara Neill Wintersgill

CAMBERWELL DOMESDAY SURVEY

Life for the ordinary person in Southwark varies from the passable down to the degrading in terms of the way that the neighbourhood is maintained or not. Somethings can make life an absolute misery, such as a derelict house next door, an empty site, neglected gardens, dangerous traffic junctions, road noise, unpleasant neighbours (for example a noisy or smelly factory). Sometimes this misery is made worse by those who would like to have a garden being prevented from having one. Imagine what a gardener would feel like on the fourth floor of one of our local council estates (eg Dog Kennel Hill) looking down on all that empty litter-strewn grass which is used by nobody.

The Camberwell Society has begun a foot by foot Domesday Survey of the Society's territory. We are looking for detailed information about the following subjects:

*derelict or empty land;
neglected land (such as gardens);
empty or partly empty or derelict buildings;
land with no good use - wasted land such as ground level on some council estates;
occupied buildings which are neglected and crumbling;
environmental blight;
hazards such as a difficult road junction to cross on foot;
a bad neighbour, eg traffic noise or a noisy factory;
opportunity for improvement*

So far seven people are undertaking the survey aided by large scale maps of Southwark: Ian Chown, Katie Crawley, Michael Frost, Charles McKean, Denys Short, Ian Sime and Paul Watkinson. Others who would like to help will be most welcome. It will mean a lot of foot-slogging but that be-

comes progressively more pleasant as Spring arrives.

The scale of the problem - Selbourne apart - is enormous. Preliminary surveys of perhaps the best off parts of Camberwell, that is to say, the centre of the Grove, Grove Lane, Lettsom and Vestry Road, reveal a surprisingly high number of empty houses, derelict gardens, wasted space and traffic hazards. In this small section of the Society's area there are four *major* and several smaller derelict sites and five empty shops.

If successful, this study will have substantial public and political implications. The current plan is to have the preliminary surveys finished by early April and the total survey ready for analysis by summer, with possibly a presentation to the Society's members late in autumn.

Will those interested to help please contact Ian Chown (639 9587), Charles McKean (737 2618), Ian Sime (703 5254) or Denys Short (703 5974).

Charles McKean

MARY DACHELOR SCHOOL - NEW PROPOSALS

There have recently been various moves to preserve Mary Datchelor, if not as a school, then at least for some other educational purpose. There are suggestions now that the buildings between Grove Lane and Camberwell Grove could eventually be used as a Sixth Form Centre. This is not the same as a Sixth Form College and it is clear that the Inner London Education Authority has ruled out its use as a Sixth Form College integrated into the existing pattern of schools in south east London.

What then is a Sixth Form Centre? Nobody seems to know exactly which pupils would use it or which staff would teach at it. It is thought there would be emphasis on 'European and sixth form' studies but, as the Mary Datchelor Petitioners' Association points out, the pupils attending the courses will be on the rolls of other schools and the teachers also will be on the staff of other schools. So, at the moment, it is difficult to disagree with the Petitioners' Association that it seems as if the plan for a Sixth Form Centre is merely a *use* for the buildings and not in any sense the continuation of the school.

The Petitioners' Association (which, as Newsletter readers may remember, wanted Mary Datchelor to continue as a *school* within the ILEA) had a meeting recently with local MP's and the ILEA. They pressed the School Governors to start negotiations with the ILEA for a four-form entry comprehensive school, believing that the Governors might find this more acceptable than a three-form entry. (It had been felt originally that a three-form entry school would be too small). The Governors were not prepared to consider this new proposal. The Petitioners' Association has since been told by the ILEA that had the Governors proposed the four-form entry solution two years ago it would probably have been accepted and Mary Datchelor could have continued as a school and as a very important element in our community. It seems to be a case of 'where there *wasn't* a will there was obviously not going to be a way....'

Now Camberwell may have a Mary Datchelor Sixth Form Centre. Many living in Camberwell will deeply regret the end of Mary Datchelor as a school and the lost opportunity of making it work as a small comprehensive serving local needs, for which there is now so much public support. However if it is not to continue as a school I am sure many will feel that it is better that it should continue as a Sixth Form Centre rather than that it should remain empty, be pulled down or used for some non-educational purposes.

Any local residents who want to know more about what exactly becoming a Sixth Form Centre entails are encouraged to write to Peter Newsam, ILEA, County Hall SE1 and to John Savage, Chairman of the Governors of Mary Datchelor School, Clothworkers' Hall, Dunster Court, Mincing Lane, London EC3. It is important to show that we still care what is going to happen to the School.

Jeremy Bennett

Ms S. James.
107, Camberwell Grove

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to all new members of the Society. There was a most encouraging response to our recruitment drive last autumn, and in the next issue of the Newsletter we hope to publish some details together with an account of the experience of two of our younger members who chalked up the highest number of new members signed up.

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Members' meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk starting at 8.00.

It is hoped to invite speakers from the Southwark and Lambeth Archeological Society to address the Society at its April meeting.

The June meeting will be addressed by Nicholas Falk, founder of the Historic Buildings Trust and adviser to the DOE Property Advisory Board. His subject will be 'Helping the small firm in the inner city'.

Stephen Marks has promised to revisit Camberwell and address the Society. Details will be published in a later issue.

Suggestions for topics for members' meetings will be welcomed. Contact the Hon. Secretary.

The Annual General Meeting, as usual, will be held on the third Thursday in May.

OVERDUE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our Hon. Treasurer reminds us that a large number of our present members are in arrears with subscriptions. If all arrears were fully paid the Society would be about £300 better off. Subscriptions run from May 1st to April 30th. Members of the Executive Committee will be knocking on the doors of those in arrears over the next couple of months.

You are reminded that the subscription for one person for a year is £1 and for OAP's and students 50p.

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

President: Nadine Beddington, 17 Champion Grove S.E.5.
Chairman: Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane, S.E.5. (703 9971)
Hon. Treasurer: Nicholas Roskill, 56 Grove Lane, S.E.5. (703 4736)
Hon. Secretary: Jill Westwood, 40 Camberwell Grove, S.E.5. (701 2325)

NEWSLETTER NO 44

June 1979

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

The new officers of the Society, elected at the Annual General Meeting held on May 17, 1979, are listed at the head of this Newsletter. Jim Tanner stepped down as Chairman after a two-year stint to retire, as he put it, "to the back benches". We all owe a great debt to him. He has been a very patient, painstaking and approachable chairman. His two years have seen the number of members of the Society grow and he has encouraged the Society to develop into new areas. We are very lucky that his idea of retiring to the back benches is going to involve him—at his own wish—in continuing to be our principal representative on the Camberwell Green Working Party and to remain a member of the Publications Sub-Committee responsible for the Newsletter.

Nadine Beddington was re-elected as our very valued President. Stephen Marks and Michael Ivan have been elected Honorary Vice-Presidents. The Committee felt that this was one way in which we could show our appreciation for the many years of work they have given to the Society.

Stephen Marks now lives in Somerset but still maintains his long connection with Camberwell. Michael Ivan has stepped down from the Committee this year. We will miss him after his years of hard work for the Society, both as Secretary and as Vice-Chairman.

Jeremy Bennett was elected Chairman, Jill Westwood and Nicholas Roskill were re-elected Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer respectively and for the present the post of Vice-Chairman remains vacant.

The new committee is as follows:

Elizabeth Betts, 126 Grove Park, S.E.5. (274 6532)
Ian Chown, 149 Chadwick Road, S.E.15. (639 9587)
Albert Densumbe, 36 Grove Lane, S.E.5. (703 4824)
Michael Frost, 187 Camberwell Grove, S.E.5. (274 1174)
Nigel Haigh, 50 Grove Lane, S.E.5. (703 2719)
Charles McKean, 197 Camberwell Grove, S.E.5. (737 2618)
Dick Oliver, 89 Grove Lane, S.E.5. (703 4949)
Denys Short, 43 Camberwell Grove, S.E.5. (703 5974)
Alison Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove, S.E.5. (703 5254)
Ian Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove, S.E.5. (703 5254)
Janice Wilson, 6 McNeil Road, S.E.5. (701 3480)

Ian and Alison Sime are both new Committee members. Ian is a final year architecture student and is writing a thesis on Camberwell as part of his course and Alison is a teacher. Janice Wilson also joins the Committee for the first time. She is a former secretary of the Lettsom Tenants' Association and a

Committee member of the Southwark Campaign Against the Town Hall. Albert Densumbe has agreed to be a co-opted member. He was born in Camberwell and has lived here all his life. We will value his local knowledge and experience. We welcome them all to the Committee.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

Most of the work of the Society is done by sub-committees which act independently but report regularly to the Executive Committee. It was felt that this was the best way to encourage members to follow up any personal interests which might coincide with the main concerns of the Society. Membership of these sub-committees is 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 Committee. If you would like to help on any of the sub-committees you would be very welcome. Please make contact with the following:

Blight and the Domesday Survey of Camberwell—
Charles McKean (737 2618)

Publications—Jeremy Bennett (703 9971)

Planning—Ian Chown (639 9587) and Jill Westwood
(701 2325)

Traffic and Transport—Dick Oliver (703 4949)

Trees and the Environment—Denys Short (703 5974)

In addition the Society is represented by various members on other organisations. Dick Oliver represents the Society on the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee.

CAMBERWELL GREEN WORKING PARTY

The Society's representatives on the Camberwell Green Working Party, which meets as a committee with Southwark Council and the property developers EPIC, to discuss plans for the Camberwell Green central site, are: Jim Tanner, Jeremy Bennett, Jill Westwood and Nigel Haigh.

OPEN COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee meets regularly at 8.15pm on the first Thursday of every month. Any member is welcome to come to this meeting, and several members have attended in the past year either as observers or when they wished to discuss something in particular. As the venue of the meeting tends to vary, please contact the Honorary Secretary.

STOP THAT WHITE ELEPHANT

The campaign against Southwark's plans for a new Town Hall on Peckham High Street shows no sign of abating. It is now stronger than ever with the opposition—a wide variety of groups and individuals from all over the borough—united in the *Southwark Campaign*. This was formed from the 13th January Coordinating Committee, which organised the successful march and rally. *Crisis*, the band which led the march, have made a record "No Town Hall (Southwark)" which is available from record shops, and is selling fast.

The Compulsory Purchase Order for the new Town Hall site has now been issued. There have been massive objections—not surprising since the Council own less than one-sixth of the site outright. Almost half is still privately owned, and the rest is still leased and in business. This indicates the magnitude of the planned destruction. We now await the announcement of the date for the public inquiry. Objections can still be setn to the Environment Secretary, 2 Marsham Street, S.W.1, and should urge that the inquiry should examine all the issues raised by the development including the need for the new Town Hall.

Electors are now being asked for their views in polls carried out by the *Southwark Campaign* in Dockyard Ward (Cllr O'Grady's), and by the Labour Party in Liddle Ward containing the site for the new Town Hall (Cllrs Fowler, Geater and McNaught are all anti-Town Hall). First results show overwhelming opposition to the plans. Reports on this and other activities of the Campaign are published in the *Southwark Campaign* newspaper, available from the Secretary, 27 Huddersfield House, Sumner Estate, S.E.15.

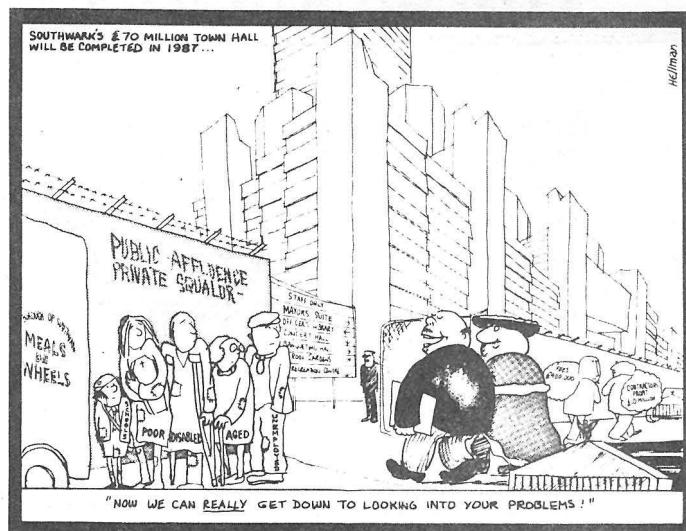
Meanwhile the Peckham Action Group which spearheaded the campaign against the new Town Hall, and therefore strongly supports the *Southwark Campaign*, has been actively showing its confidence in the future of Peckham without major redevelopment. In April members of PAG occupied three houses in Sumner Avenue to prevent further demolition by the GLC. The houses are threatened by the planned new road to go alongside the new Town Hall. The GLC stopped demolition and have resumed their discussions on the short term community use of the houses.

PAG has also applied for planning permission to erect shops and flats on the vacant site next to the Co-op. This sensible in-fill development, to match the existing buildings, has been rejected by the Council on the grounds that it conflicts with their plans for comprehensive redevelopment. The Group will be appealing against this decision and this will mean an inquiry into the whole question.

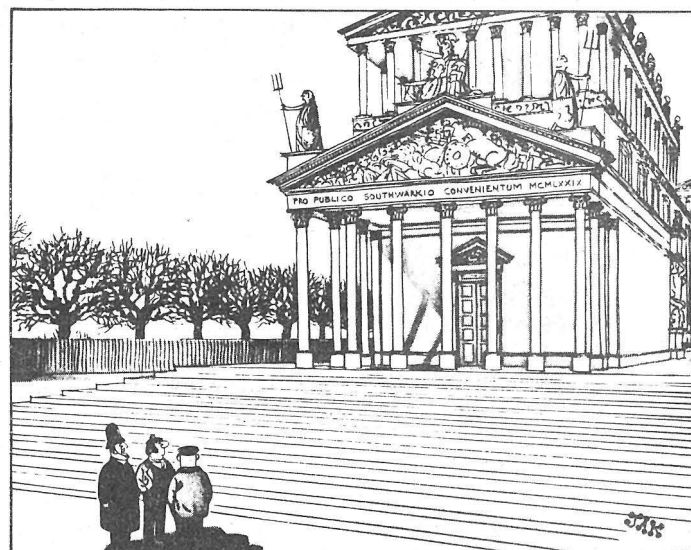
As this newsletter goes to press, PAG is vigorously campaigning along with groups all over London against the GLC's plans to spend £1,100 million on new roads while it cuts back on public transport. In any event the new road through Peckham is not a foregone conclusion. The GLC have to submit their planning application, traffic orders, and road closure orders to the Secretary of State and any objections will lead to a public inquiry. The GLC also needs a CPO which will also lead to an inquiry. The time for objections is likely to be the autumn. Everyone who cares should object.

More details of the PAG campaign are available at the PAG Shop, 8 Peckham High Street. Expenses for the campaign are heavy. More money will be needed for the public inquiries. Donations and offers of any help will be welcomed and should be sent to 60 Nutbrook Street, S.E.15.

Eileen Conn



By courtesy of Hellman and the Editor of the *Architects' Journal*.



By courtesy of Jak and the Editor of the *Evening Standard*.

YOUR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Your next newsletter will include an account of Nicholas Falk's talk to members on 21st June entitled *Putting empty buildings to good use: helping the small business to prosper*.

We also plan to report on recent planning applications in the area of benefit and to make this a regular feature of the newsletter.

CAMBERWELL GREEN AND SELBORNE—WHAT NOW ?

Members of the Society turned up in force to the Annual General Meeting on 17th May and packed the hall at the United Reformed Church to find out what is happening at Camberwell Green and at Selborne.

The outgoing Executive Committee had earlier invited Ron Watts, a former Honorary Secretary of the Society and now Chairman of the Planning Committee of Southwark Borough Council, and representatives of Estates Property Investment Company (EPIC) to attend and address the meeting.

In introducing the speakers, Nadine Beddington, the Society's President, said that it was two years since anything has happened at the Selborne redevelopment site and made the point that the whole Society was in effect a Blight Sub-Committee because the Green and the adjacent Selborne site—the heart of Camberwell—was one enormous area of planning blight.

Dennis Poole of EPIC speaking first, said that no progress on the ground had indeed been made on the central site of Camberwell Green in the last two years but that, once EPIC had to go-ahead from Southwark Borough Council, a start on site could be made in six to nine months. He referred to discussions with Southwark and with the Society to break the deadlock created by the last minute and unexpected action of the GLC in seeking to retain Daneville Road as a major traffic route.

Only three private owners, Mr Poole continued, remained on the central site: London Transport (to be dealt with by Southwark), the Midland Bank and Watney's Golden Lion Public House. The bank was, in principle, agreeable to selling EPIC its property and moving to a new location on the site, but so far agreement had not been reached on the value of their present property for purposes of the sale.

The crucial question

Mr Poole felt that the crucial question was: when will the GLC make a decision on Daneville Road? Members of the audience echoed this question. Ron Watts commented that officers of the GLC hoped to report to Committee for a decision before the summer recess. New Chairman of the Society, Jeremy Bennett, asked him if Southwark could exert pressure to speed this up.

Bob Tucker, a partner of Michael Lyell Associates, EPIC's architects, described the scheme for the central site. The main developments in the last two years were the omission of offices and the retention of the former United Reformed Church. There would be a modest supermarket of 25,000 square feet (16,000 square feet of sales area).

Jerry Wright of Edward Erdman and Partners, EPIC's agents, said that proposals for the central site were becoming known amongst retailers and EPIC is being approached by retail firms with household names. He stressed the importance of the customers' car park, the management policy for which will ensure a fairly rapid turn round of space with possibly a 2-hour parking limit.

On the subject of leases, Mr Wright said that the local authority was limiting leases to 99 years, but that he was hopeful that the position may be improved following a reference in the Queen's Speech at the recent opening of Parliament.

Councillor Ron Watts, speaking last, recalled that it is six years since he became Chairman of Southwark's Planning Committee and that one of his first actions was to set up the Camberwell

Green Working Party, with representatives of Southwark, the GLC, EPIC and the Camberwell Society. He explained the fundamental role of the GLC in implementing Road Option 7 (the road scheme originally put forward by the Society as an alternative to the six options already under consideration). The GLC had adopted Option 7 after cost studies had indicated that it was substantially the most cost-effective of all the schemes, but now wanted to vary it radically by retaining Daneville Road. Southwark Borough Council, the Camberwell Society and EPIC had joined forces to resist this because they feel strongly that the central site and the Selborne area must physically be integrated.

On Selborne, he said that a good firm of architects had been appointed and a pleasing scheme drawn up incorporating modest gardens with many houses. The scheme had been influenced in its design by Nadine Beddington and the Society.

Members' questions

Chairman Jeremy Bennett then invited questions from the audience. Katie Crawley asked what traffic access EPIC would like to the central site and was told that van access was desirable from three points: at the rear (both sides) of the shopping arcade and at the rear of the supermarket.

Leslie Penney and his wife, who run two shops, one on either side of Daneville Road at the junction with Denmark Hill, expressed concern at the disastrous effects on trading caused by the planning blight, but the loss of population occasioned by demolition on the Selborne site and, more recently the re-routing of bus services which has taken buses from Daneville Road. Mr Penney asked Ron Watts what the Council proposed doing to help traders during this difficult and worrying period. It was made clear to them that traders cannot look to others for help without ensuring that they also have done everything to help themselves. The most effective action the Council can take, said Mr Watts, is to press for early implementation of the road scheme and see that the proposals for the central site get under way as soon as possible.

Ian Sime said he was worried about the atmosphere of the new scheme after closing time. Could not the shopping arcade remain open for window shoppers? Why not housing on the site? Mr Poole replied that there was no financial support for housing and a high rate of vandalism. The arcade would have to be locked at closing time.

Dick Oliver wanted to know why there would be no offices within the scheme. Local office workers would surely use the shops during their lunch hour. He was told that there is no demand for office space in the inner London area: large firms are only interested in locations in the City or West End and small firms are unwilling to pay the rents for new accommodation.

Nadine Beddington asked if there was a possibility of phasing the completion of building contracts on Selborne and at the Green to enable life to return to these areas as soon as possible. Ron Watts agreed that this is a good idea and will look into it.

Resolution passed

The meeting passed a resolution put forward by Jeremy Bennett, overwhelmingly supporting the Council in pressing the GLC to drop its plan to retain Daneville Road as a through road and to proceed with all possible speed with the implementation of Road Option 7.

Jim Tanner

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Though our Society is, by its constitution, apolitical, nonetheless our environment is affected by the policies and attitudes of the political parties in power. We have had a Conservative GLC for some time. They have issued plans for £1,000 million-worth of roadbuilding in London over the next 15 years, representing a considerable increase over the plans of the previous Labour administration at County Hall. We now have a Conservative government at Westminster, and whilst they have not yet made public any plans for roads or transport it is clear that, despite the much-heralded public spending cuts, the road lobby is licking its lips in anticipation.

Why is it that spending on new roads is destructive of the environment? The usual justification for an urban road scheme is that it will improve the environment, not diminish its qualities. But this is a false justification—and the pro-road lobby either cannot see or will not admit the true case, which is simply this: our urban roads are full—that is nearly all of them are carrying traffic levels beyond their design capacity. Thus, when one route is improved, to cope with the traffic that's actually on it, it immediately attracts traffic from the adjacent full roads, which in their turn become more attractive, as they're not so solidly jammed as they were. So overall more people decide that it's tolerable to use cars and lorries instead of other facilities—and any increase in traffic must degrade our environment. Road-building and what's usually implied by 'improvement' of existing roads can only offer amelioration of traffic damage to our environment if it's coupled with the most severely repressive measures to prevent further traffic growth.

Why not 'improve' all our roads to cope with the predicted future levels of traffic flow? That would not only incur expense beyond our ability to bear, it would also be pointless expense. We are now paying £1 a gallon for petrol, due to an upset in Iran. Oil supplies are much less dependable than we like to recognise—and, of course, they're running out. In 25 years, oil will be too scarce and expensive for all but essential tasks and those, of course, won't include the private car. People will have to use public transport, and that as little as possible. Goods will have to be carried by rail and water. The GLC roads programme is for 15 years ahead and will probably slip by a few years—let's say five. It's clear that we shall have only five years' use out of the last items in the plan, before road transport becomes too expensive. And do we really want to turn our cities and countryside into a British version of Los Angeles? Wouldn't it be better to start on the changeover, back to public transport and rail and water carriage of goods, now, painlessly, while we're still masters of the situation? And wouldn't the GLC £1,000 million for roads make a very good pump-priming sum to get started?

Local problems

The projected Peckham High Street re-alignment, which incidentally gives Southwark the site for its new Town Hall, continues to threaten us here in Camberwell. The problem will be that the new widened road will tip out its traffic into the old unwidened Camberwell Church Street, which is already full. The first reaction of drivers will be to get off into the side streets, thus worsening rat-running problems. Careful as the Camberwell Society was in working out the Option 7 scheme at Camberwell Green to avoid increasing capacity, Option 7 should reduce jams actually at the Green and thus will make the Green rather more attractive to drivers as well as us. We may succeed in killing off the Town Hall, or the public spend-

ing cuts may do it for us. But we shall still be at risk from this ill-advised road scheme in Camberwell.

But there is still worse to come. The GLC and Lambeth have announced a scheme to widen Lothian Road from two to four lanes. Lothian Road is about half-way to the Oval on the south side of Camberwell New Road. This scheme involves demolishing two Georgian houses, and perhaps worse still, cutting back into the front gardens of newly-restored houses and the footpaths either side of the junction. This will wreck the appearance of the Camberwell New Road which we've preserved from demolition in the past through fighting for the listing of the houses. They are now being splendidly restored as members will have seen. Another complication is the traffic. Camberwell New Road is already full—so full that in the rush-hour, it can take half an hour or more to get from the Green to the Oval.

The prospect of unloading traffic from a four-lane road into an already full sub-standard four-lane road is terrifying. The GLC counters this by saying that the enlarged Lothian Road is designed only to collect up the present traffic that rat-runs through the Myatts' Fields area—and this is a wholly laudable idea that Southwark would do well to copy. But the GLC forgets, or chooses not to admit, that by providing a road designed to carry all this traffic they will inevitably attract more, so worsening the jams in the Camberwell New Road. Inevitably there will be calls for the widening of the New Road. What will happen then? Will the newly restored houses be knocked down in, say, five years' time?

Bus route changes

Whilst the removal of the back-double for bus routes 12 and 171 round Daneville Road crept up on us by stealth, another change hasn't. This is the proposal to provide a right turn for buses only at the Denmark Hill-Coldharbour Lane junction. This will eliminate the back-double through Orpheus Street and Daneville Road.

Whilst we are in favour of improvement to public transport, we had to object to this scheme. The junction concerned is already dangerous enough for pedestrians without adding another hazard in the form of buses doing something different from the rest of the traffic. The Society was first told that provision for pedestrians at this point was impossible—it would impede the traffic too much. There was eight seconds available between the two green traffic light phases and that was considered enough for people to get across the road! The GLC obviously believes that we can all do four-minute miles here in Camberwell. However, further representations from the Society, and sterling work by member Effie Planker, who took the GLC by the ear to the junction and challenged them to get across in eight seconds, particularly as most drivers regard the amber lights as 'go faster' signals and thus block the junction between the green phases, resulted in some concessions to pedestrians. These included a modification of the timing of the traffic lights, though exactly what this will be the GLC has still failed to tell us. Eight seconds to nine perhaps? Get out your running shoes Camberwellians. Perhaps we shall have to take our lives in our hands and have a mass crossing one morning during the rush hour to make our point.

Dick Oliver

NEW MEMBERS WE STILL NEED MORE

Last year over 100 people joined the Camberwell Society and many of them were prompted by our recruiting campaign with leaflets and posters in the autumn.

But we would still like more members because more members will inevitably make us more representative of the residents of Camberwell and, we hope, spread our membership more evenly throughout our area. For example, we have many more members from south Camberwell than from the northern part.

At only £1 per year and just 50 pence for pensioners and students, we are a real bargain. Members receive a newsletter at regular intervals and there are members' meetings on various topics of interest held during most months of the year.

Our Annual General Meeting (reported elsewhere in this newsletter) drew over 100 people and there was a great deal of lively discussion about Camberwell Green and Selborne.

We provide a forum for discussion of important local issues and as a Committee are pressing for action, not only on the Green and Selborne, but on general environmental issues from tree-planting to the removal of blighted areas. All local planning applications are seen by the Society and the Council seeks and generally welcomes our views on these applications. We also publish cards, maps and books about Camberwell, and we are affiliated to the Civic Trust.

We think we are worth joining! Enclosed with this newsletter is a membership application form. Please don't throw it away but pass it on to a friend and urge him or her to join the Society. All they need do is contact one of the names on the membership application form or one of the Committee members listed at the head of this newsletter.

And recruiting new members can be fun as the following account by Katie Jackson (14) and Josephine Austin (15) shows.

AN AFTERNOON'S RECRUITING

We arrived outside three tall blocks of flats opposite Ruskin Park. "Now which one," we considered. So we made a simple compromise and chose the middle one. With only two membership forms left, we intended to recruit two people, Jack Jones (the former trade union leader) whom we knew lived in one of the blocks, and an innocent citizen who would perhaps know where he lived. We thought the first flat would serve the purpose well, especially as we were tired of recruiting and grew weary. A kind, unpretentious lady answered the door. With a cheery greeting we succeeded in recruiting her almost immediately.

"Oh, and just as a matter of interest, where does Jack Jones live?" we asked.

"Why?" she answered in an inquisitive tone.

"Well we know he would want to become a member," we said, sounding totally sure about our stance.

"Well step inside then, he's just eating his lunch."

"We honestly didn't realise he lived here, honestly," we said. We stepped inside to the living room, a warm, cozily furnished room. Mr Jones was listening to a party political broadcast. He jumped up at once and said "hello". He asked us to tell him about the Camberwell Society. We explained they were the people who looked after Camberwell. He seemed very pleased, and said he was glad somebody really cared about the

whole of Camberwell, not just the nicer parts. Of course we recruited him. And we are sure that he will be a very welcome and caring member of the Camberwell Society.

Katie Jackson and Josephine Austin

HOMESTEADING— A GLC SCHEME THAT COULD REDUCE BLIGHT

The GLC's Homesteading Scheme helps young and industrious home-seekers of limited means to become owner-occupiers. The scheme is open to first-time buyers who have lived or worked in Greater London for 12 of the last 18 months and who want a freehold house for owner occupation. 'Homesteaders' are invited to find a delapidated house which has been empty at least two months and locate the owner. The GLC will then negotiate purchase of the house for not more than £15,000 and simultaneously sell it on a 25-year mortgage to the 'homesteader', who undertakes to carry out an agreed schedule of essential repairs and improvements over the next one to three years, according to the cost of the work required. During this period interest is waived and capital payment deferred.

The homesteading scheme is aimed primarily at young people willing to do for themselves much of the work required to restore a rundown property to a comfortable home but using contractors for skilled jobs as necessary.

This scheme appears to offer a constructive approach to the problem of getting empty houses restored and occupied, and thus helps to reduce the general atmosphere of 'blight'. Members of the Society may care to bring the scheme to the attention of friends and relatives looking for a home. Further information is available in the GLC leaflet "Homesteading: conditions, details and guidance notes for GLC homesteaders", available from County Hall.

Elizabeth Betts

SOUTHWARK'S AMENITY SOCIETIES

Largely due to the efforts of Eileen Conn six amenity societies within the London Borough of Southwark have come together to form the Confederation of Amenity Societies in Southwark (CASS).

A constitution has been adopted which sets out the purpose of the confederation as being to further the aims of amenity societies in the borough in particular by co-ordinating their activities.

Present members of CASS are the amenity societies of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, Camberwell, Dulwich, East Dulwich, Peckham and Trinity Square. Membership is open to all amenity societies in Southwark which are registered with the Civic Trust. Inquirers please contact Eileen Conn at 60 Nutbrook Street, Peckham SE15.

HOUSEWIVES' REGISTER

National Housewives Register is an organisation with branches all over the country. We have one here in Camberwell. Our aims are varied: we try to bring together women of all ages who wish to participate in lively discussion, leaving the children and the kitchen sink behind for a few hours. We hope to create an outlet for women, particularly those with domestic ties who feel the need for some mental stimulus that would otherwise be absent. As one of those involved with our local branch here in Camberwell, I know that members greatly enjoy their evenings, even if it has been a long hard day before.

Our talks are held in members' homes, usually twice a month. They are informal and friendly. The topics are chosen by any member who feels that she has an interesting idea. Subjects are wide-ranging. For instance, we have had a talk about life in China by a foreign correspondent and one about art. We will soon be having another on furniture design and a Malayan evening with a talk and slides by one of our members.

We also arrange theatre visits regularly and have had a successful book evening which I hope that we shall soon repeat.

If you feel mentally stagnant, or just plain bored, and would like to meet some new people, please get in touch with me, Jenny Honeysett, 2 Stone Villas, 76 Camberwell Grove, or 'phone me on 703 7854.

Jenny Honeysett

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONORARY SECRETARY

Jill Westwood gave birth to a son, Andrew, last month. We offer her and her husband Mick congratulations from members of the Society. Jill however plans to fit in being Secretary of the Camberwell Society with her domestic commitments or should it be the other way round?

TREES

This year new trees were planted by the Council in Nutbrook Street, Howden Street, Vicarage Grove, Wingfield Street and Camberwell Grove. In the Grove 20 saplings (limes and planes) were planted and eight trees were cut down, or will be when replacements have established themselves. Those on the removal list are either diseased, near the end of their lives, or inappropriate, e.g. a flowering cherry in a line of planes.

During their first years new plantings are especially vulnerable, and we can help them to survive by reporting immediately any damage—a broken strap, a cracked post, or actual vandalism. If you see anything like this telephone Mr Burr, the arboricultural officer (237 6593) or Mr Bradbury, Parks Superintendent (699 6962).

Of course if something happens outside office hours we will have to provide first aid ourselves; so we are asking for volunteers—members willing and able to make repairs or to protect the trees.

The Council has plans for further street planting over the next few seasons. It has powers to protect all trees in the borough, and has acted with great speed to save trees under direct threat when informed. It should be thanked for its attempts to retain and improve the tree stock in the borough.

However, should you find your street is being planted, it is worth seeing that:

- 1 the saplings are not too close to the kerb;
- 2 the posts are between the trees and the road;
- 3 ageing trees are not removed before their time, for the sake of administrative neatness.

Would any one interested in forming a group of tree-watchers, especially to protect them at weekends and at night (and generally oversee their well-being), please contact Denys Short (703 8141).

Denys Short

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No 45

November 1979

SHOP FOR THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

The Camberwell Society has now got its own premises at number 21, Camberwell Church Street. The shop stands between the Church Street branch of the Southwark Public Library and the Frenchee Boutique, almost opposite the Camberwell Police Station. We have acquired the premises on a temporary basis for a peppercorn rent with the help of Andrews and Robertson, estate agents at the Green, to whom we wish to express our thanks.

The shop will be officially opened this month and all members will receive a notice inviting them to the opening.

We intend to use the shop to sell our publications—we have four new cards on sale for this Christmas—and to mount exhibitions on local issues. We intend to announce the results of our Blight Survey shortly and a display and analysis will be mounted in the shop.

We would also like to invite members to make use of the shop if they wish to display and sell, for example, paintings, drawings or craftwork. The shop will be free for any reasonable use by members at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Of course any member using the premises will be expected to "mind the shop" for the Society, sell our publications and recruit new members.

We invite all our members to drop in and have a look round. Would anyone interested in helping to look after the shop please contact:

*Alison Sime,
24A Vicarage Grove, SE5
Tel: 703 5254*

Alison has undertaken not only to organise the redecoration of the shop but also to work out a rota of members who are willing to help keep the shop open.

We would like to open it for part of every day and all day on Saturday and are thinking of offering coffee and biscuits on Saturday morning to any of our members who would like to call in. There are plans to create a simple creche, in part of the shop so that

mothers with young children can relax for a few minutes over their coffee and we hope this will encourage anyone who feels a bit housebound with young children to volunteer to do a stint in the shop. Any further ideas or thought about the use we can make of the shop from members will be greatly welcomed by Alison Sime or any of the members of the Committee.

Now we have a shop please come and visit us!

Jeremy Bennett

The Newsletter is the principal means whereby members are informed of what is going on in the area and what its Executive Committee and sub-committees are doing. We do not expect members always to agree with the action we are taking or the views we express on specific issues. The Newsletter is your forum. If you disagree with your elected officers or have views or information the Editors would like to hear from you. We hope to make readers' letters a regular feature of the Newsletter. Write to Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane; Dick Oliver, 89 Grove Lane; or Jim Tanner, 107 Camberwell Grove.

enclosed by
Bridge Street

NEW CAMBERWELL SOCIETY CARDS

The Publications Sub-Committee of the Society has published four new Greetings cards, which will be on sale in our shop and in local bookshops this month. They are very suitable as Christmas cards, birthday cards and for anniversaries as all four cards carry the one word *Greetings* inside. Of the four new cards, two are in colour and two in black and white.

See centre pages for details

THE SOCIETY'S PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

This sub-committee meets fortnightly on Mondays to review all planning applications submitted to Southwark Planning Department, and examine those which we feel are likely to affect, one way or the other, the environment of the Camberwell area. The sub-committee has six regular members, not all from the Executive Committee of the Society.

We appreciate anyone drawing to our attention matters of importance in the area, and welcome to our meetings any member who feels strongly about a current planning application. If you are interested, please contact Jill Westwood (address on cover).

Over the past year, we have made the sub-committee's views known in about 40 cases, generally with a high success rate (in terms of the Council's planning committee agreeing with us).

One of the notorious cases has been the dastardly attempt by wicked British Rail to allow a large parcel of their land alongside their tracks just to the north of Grove Park to become an open dump for what seemed like half the demolition contractors in South London. Dumping on several parts of the land had been going on since the beginning of the year, causing several members of the Society to complain both to the Council and to British Rail, who had let the land commercially. It was not until May that BR applied for planning permission to validate this entirely unauthorised use of their land, by which time more than one petition has been addressed to the Council complaining about noise, dust and actual physical damage to neighbouring streets.

The Society objected strongly, and also urged the Council to take enforcement action to stop the dumping. Fortunately the Council agreed with our views, and permission to use the land this way was refused, and the dumping stopped. Mostly—that is. We still hear of occasional lorries laden with rubble entering the site. If you see this happening, please contact us.

We had notice of two other applications for different uses for this land also involving heavy commercial vehicles. We again objected strongly, and permission was refused in both cases.

We feel that the only proper use for the land alongside the BR tracks is as permanent landscaping, either left to grow wild, or as allotments or a small park. The land off Grove Park could easily be seen from the Warwick Gardens, off Lyndhurst Grove, by a new footbridge to create a single park twice the size of the existing Gardens. We have written to the Planning Department as well as all the local councillors suggesting this, so far with no response.

A planning application outstanding at the moment is to modernise and enlarge the eight tiny cottages called Chamberlain Cottages in the yard opening off Camberwell Grove at the Northern end, near the Kebab shop.

The application includes a plan to add two cottages. The sub-committee thinks that the proposal to restore the cottages would be an improvement to the area, but it has told the planners of its misgivings about increasing the density by converting the cottages into family houses. Everyone knows of the desperate parking problems in the Grove.

The Salvation Army recently applied to demolish Ripon Lodge, a Victorian pile in Grove Park, in order to build a maisonette block of unspecified design. We successfully opposed the demolition not least because the Army had published no plans for the proposed replacement.

We have been able to actively support many of the planning applications coming before the Council. Among these has been the use by a small electronics business of a run-down warehouse behind 176 Camberwell Grove, and facing Stories Mews. We felt that such unobtrusive industry was preferable to the previous disuse of the building.

We also supported an application to convert three buildings in Canning Mews, behind Grove Lane and close to the Passage Bookshop, into two houses. This was a constructive use for structurally sound buildings, and constituted less of an increase in density of the area than a previous plan to develop new houses there.

Ian Chown

CAMBERWELL FESTIVAL

The Society is taking a keen interest in the ideas being put forward for a Festival in Camberwell next June. You hadn't heard? Well, apparently, following the success of a Display Day and Torchlight Procession this summer and with fond memories of the Jubilee Day festivities, a dedicated band of volunteers in Camberwell is working on several suggestions which have come forward.

That's great. Good luck to them. I hope they 'get it together'. When is it? 6th-15th June. I look forward to that.

Just a second. . . . who's *they*? Shouldn't it be *us*? Yes, maybe I could do something.

I've heard they're forming a group to organise a Carnival Procession; another is building on what was learnt from this year's Display Day; and then again I could make available my acting talents for the Son et Lumiere. . . . mmm. . . . I'm going to the pub to see what the lads think about getting a tug of war team together.

Apparently there's going to be a big dance on New Year's Eve to raise funds. Money is always a big problem. Yes, I'll put it down in the diary, it should be a good night out.

Ian Sime

BLIGHT SURVEY REVEALED

At a meeting on 20th September so packed that some people stood throughout—and a few gave up and went away—Charles McKean unveiled the Society's newly completed Blight Survey. It was a fitting curtain-raiser to this season's members' meetings, yet ironically a sad one for the Society, for it was Charles McKean's swan-song with us. A few days after the meeting Charles left Camberwell and us, to go back to his native Scotland.

What Charles and his happy band had done for Camberwell—they were Ian Chown, Katie Crawley, Michael Frost, Nicola Ramsden, Denis Short and last but not least Ian and Alison Sime—was to divide Camberwell into areas and tramp the streets, peering over walls, and corrugated iron, into windows and through chinks in fences, spying on us all, noting and photographing anything that looked wrong, neglected, unused or unnecessarily messy. This was then transferred in colour code to a large-scale map, so that simply by glancing at the map, one could see concentrations of blight across the land. Although the team obviously concentrated on clear examples of blight in its worst sense, that is derelict land and buildings behind corrugated iron, they also included empty sound buildings, buildings in need of repair, dead trees, even land that wasn't being effectively used by edict, like the expanses of unkempt litter-strewn grass between blocks of flats, that could actually be gardens and playplaces, and the wasted acre of paving in front of the Magistrates' Court. No quarter was given—even our then chairman, Jim Tanner, found that his front garden has received the raspberry of a coloured mark on the map: it could do with tidying up and planting, as he had to agree.

The presentation was in three main parts: slides of examples of blight from other places, to show what blight is in the widest sense, without the emotional involvement of our own area; blight in Camberwell, where members of the team who were present explained and justified their choices and gradings; and finally Charles back out front again, talking about how blight could be overcome, the main point of his message being that though local authorities created a lot of blight, one could not expect them to clear up all of it. We could and should do a lot ourselves—perhaps by surreptitiously nipping under the wire or behind the corrugated and doing a bit of painting and laying out. Sadly, this section was illustrated almost entirely from outside Camberwell, with shots of murals on otherwise blank and over-bearing walls, gardens created out of wasteland at very little expense but with a great deal of devotion and hard work, such as in Covent Garden.

Then, at the end, what did we think—what ideas had we got? One that seemed to raise most enthusiasm was a free-for-all firework-night and barbecue on the Selborne site. After all, we couldn't make a worse mess of it than is there already, and even just

November 5th would bring back a bit of life and warmth. And what about market stalls on the Magistrates' Court wasteland?

Of course, some complained that the survey blighted them—they had actually done up such a house or garden now—but this showed how accurate and valuable the survey was, as a snapshot, so to speak, of what was there at the time. And it showed too, how important it is to go on with the work.

Go on it will—for Charles' groundwork, the team will continue to build. If anyone else would like to join in, please contact Ian Chown who has taken over as convenor of the Blight Sub-Committee. If you missed the meeting—well, the Society's Blight Survey will be one of the chief exhibits in a new Society venture, the shop at 21 Camberwell Church Street. Thank you Charles and your team, you've set something really worthwhile going here and thank you too, to our new members meetings organiser, Eleanor Lines, for setting up such a cracker for the first of the season.

Dick Oliver

FLY-TIPPING IN CAMBERWELL

Fly-tippers seem attracted to Camberwell like wasps to a jam-jar. Particularly bad at the moment is the Selbourne Development Area and worst of all is Kerfield Place, which has become a general dumping ground.

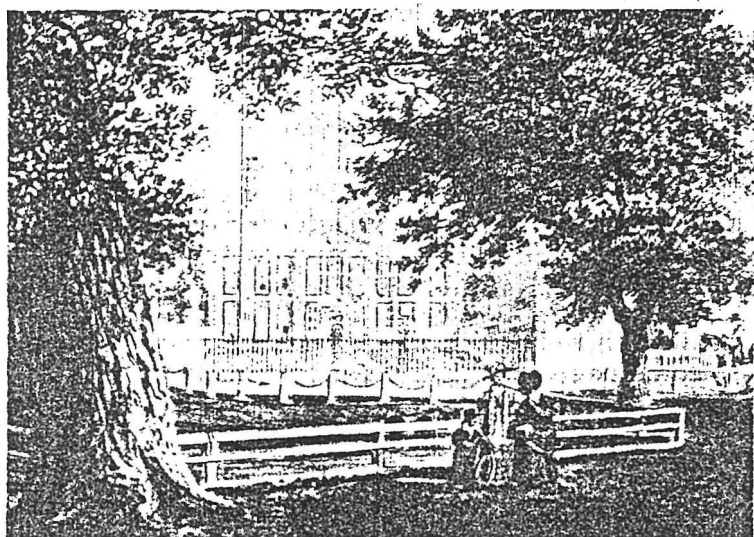
The Council is doing all it can to keep the area clear—in fact it has been very prompt to clear Kerfield Place in response to requests from the Society.

The Council and the Police are very anxious to prosecute if they can catch the offenders. If you see anyone dumping or fly-tipping in Camberwell ring the Camberwell Police Station (tel: 703 0844) and give them the registration number of the vehicle from which the load is being dumped.

Then ring Mr S Parker, Borough Engineer and Surveyor (tel: 703 5464 ext 116)—his assistants are Mrs Reeves or Miss Steinhart—and give the same information and ask that they take the matter up with the Police.

The same goes for dumped vehicles. We have received complaints from members living on the Denmark Hill side of Love Walk that dismantled vehicles are being left in the street. If you feel that dumping of rubbish or other waste material constitutes a health hazard contact Dr M. R. Bahl, Community Health Offices, Castle House, 2 Walworth Road, Elephant and Castle, SE1 (tel: 703 6363 ext 631) and make your complaint to him. He has been most helpful to the Society recently and will, if he feels it necessary, take up complaints with the Borough Engineers Department.

Do take action if you see anyone dumping their rubbish on us.



House at Camberwell Green c. 1820.



Trams at Camberwell Green c. 1950

CAMBERWELL SOCIETY NEW CARDS

NEW CARDS

The Society's four new cards comprise two in colour and two in black and white.

The two colour cards are:

1. *House at Camberwell Green c 1820*, an original watercolour by J. B. Cuming.
2. *Trams at Camberwell Green c 1950*, another watercolour by L. G. Davie.

Both are beautifully printed—we are very pleased with the reproduction—and each will cost 35 pence with envelope, or to members only £3.25 per packet of ten.

The two black and white cards are:

1. *View of Coldharbour Lane Triangle at the Corner of Denmark Hill*, drawing from a print 1833
2. *The Old Camberwell "Dispatch" Carrier 1800*, an engraving.

These two will cost 20 pence each with envelope or to members only £1.80 per packet of ten. All the cards measure 8¼ x 6 inches.

No printing is cheap these days and the cost of printing cards has more than doubled over the past few years. So inevitably the cards are more expensive this year.

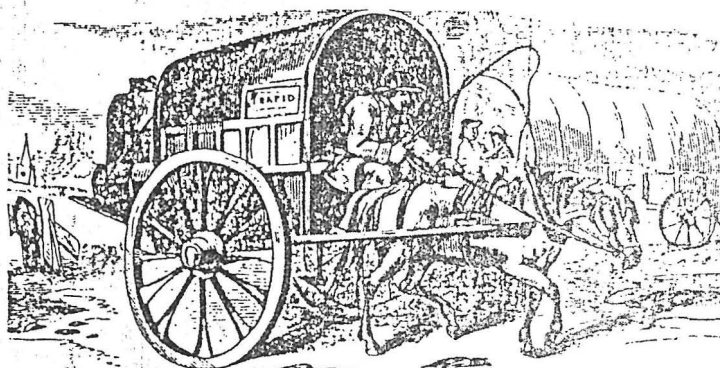
The Committee has invested a considerable amount of the Society's funds in the printing of these cards because many of our members have asked us to publish a new set with views of local interest.

So will members please remember the Society's publications when buying cards, particularly at Christmas. The Society's financial health depends very much on their successful sale and we very much hope that the cards will continue selling throughout the year.

DEWELL Y'S ARDS



View of the Coldharbour Lane Triangle
at the corner of Denmark Hill 1833



The Old Camberwell "Dispatch" Carrier 1800

Full List of Society Publications, November 1979

Cards

In colour *House at Camberwell Green*, c 1820
35p each
members only £3.25 per pkt of 10

In colour *Trams at Camberwell Green*, c 1950
35p each
members only £3.25 per pkt of 10

In b & w *View of the Coldharbour Lane Triangle
at the Corner of Denmark Hill*, 1833
20p each
members only £1.80 per pkt of 10

In b & w *The Old Camberwell "Dispatch"
Carrier*, 1800
20p each
members only £1.80 per pkt of 10

Maps

Large Map of Camberwell by Dewhirst, 1824
(at present being reprinted, price to be announced)

Small Map of Camberwell Green and Peckham
50p each

Views

A collection of 14 views of Camberwell in Sepia, including views of Camberwell Grove, Camberwell Green, the Church and Grove Lane. Excellent value and very good as a Christmas present, as the views can be coloured by hand
£3 per set

Old Photographs

As postcards. Various views. Stocks are running out and we intend to publish a new set and possibly a book of old photographs of Camberwell next year
6p per card

Blanch

The best local history, *The Parish of Camberwell*, by W. H. Blanch—The Society's Reprint of the 1875 edition
£9 to members
£12 to non-members

All proceeds from the sale of publications go to the Camberwell Society. The more we sell the healthier our finances will be and the more adventurous we can become with both our projects and publications.

Jeremy Bennett

TOO MUCH TRAFFIC IN CAMBERWELL GROVE

Plans for Road Option 7, part of the scheme for relieving traffic congestion at Camberwell Green, are well advanced. Members will recall that it was the Society that was responsible for devising the route of Option 7 as an alternative to proposals put forward by the GLC. The proposed traffic arrangements resulting from the scheme will also dramatically reduce traffic in Grove Lane. The adoption of Road Option 7 and the associated traffic proposals can therefore be regarded as mission accomplished so far as Grove Lane is concerned.

There remains the problem of Camberwell Grove. Residents are becoming increasingly disturbed by the growing volume of commuter traffic up and down the Grove. Ironically this could get worse rather than better with the implementation of the new proposals unless effective action is taken now.

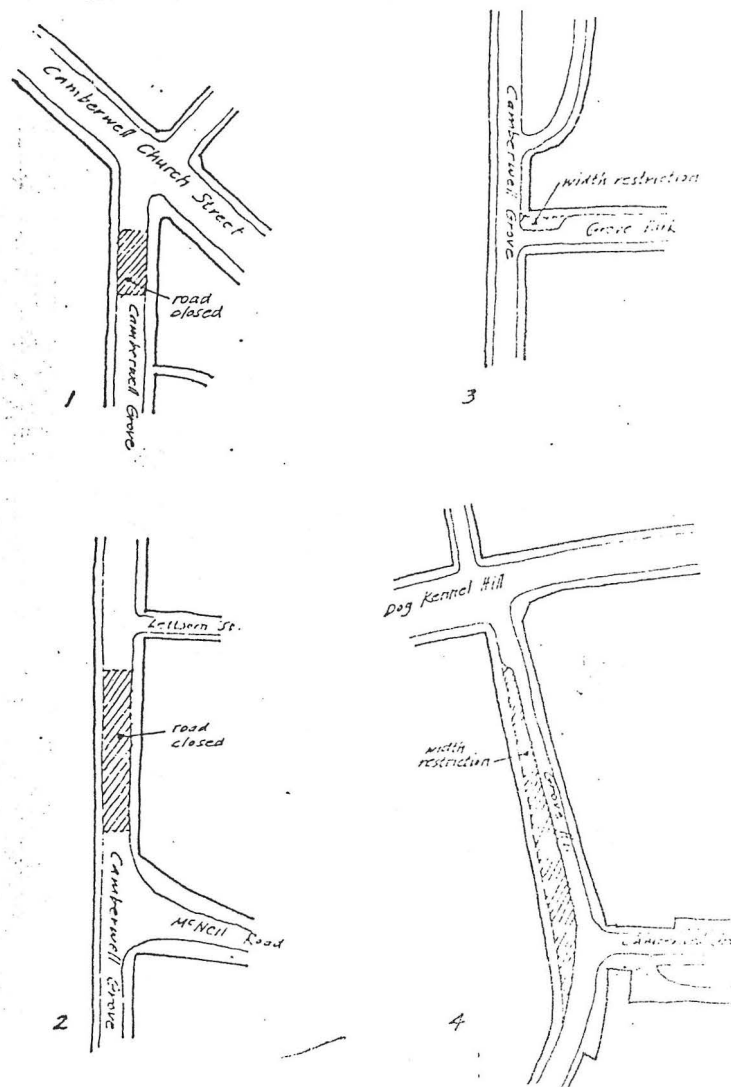
Southwark Borough Council has asked the GLC to provide for restricting through traffic. The GLC has replied that it is a borough problem. Officers of Southwark Borough Council are preparing a report and the Society's views will formally be sought. Your Executive Committee has already discussed the matter and appointed a sub-committee to prepare proposals.

The sub-committee has drafted some preliminary ideas and submitted them as a basis for discussion with Southwark. These include preventing entry into Camberwell Grove from Camberwell Church Street such as by closing off the Grove at its junction with Camberwell Church Street; closing the Grove at a suitable point between Lettsom Street and McNeil Road; or making the north end of the Grove from McNeil Road to Camberwell Church Street one-way going north (i.e. a 'no-entry' sign at the Camberwell Church Street junction) and the south end from McNeil Road to Grove Hill one-way going south.

These ideas are put forward as alternatives. Associated with them are suggestions for a road width restriction in McNeil Road; a road width restriction in Grove Hill at its junction with Camberwell Grove; and a road width restriction in Grove Hill between the Grove and Dog Kennel Hill.

Residents will appreciate that any proposals for restricting traffic through the Grove are likely also to restrict freedom of movement by residents. Such inconvenience will be a small price to pay for eliminating the nightmare conditions now occurring in morning and evening peak hours. Needless to say traffic restriction proposals will have to take due account of the access requirements of the ambulance, fire and police services and the Society's representatives will welcome constructive discussion of their proposals with these authorities in due course.

Convenor of the Society's sub-committee is Jim Tanner, former chairman of the Society, and the other members are Jill Westwood, the Society's



TRAFFIC RESTRICTION PROPOSALS ~ CAMBERWELL GROVE

secretary, Philip Berry, Elizabeth Betts, Dick Oliver and Denys Short. We welcome members' views and observations. Please send these to Jill Westwood at 40 Camberwell Grove or Jim Tanner at 107.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Two new Committee Members have been coopted since the Annual General Meeting in May. They are: Eleanor Lines, Basement Flat, 97 Camberwell Grove, SE5 (tel: 701 2097); Barbara Rose, 103 Cobourg Road, SE5 (tel: 703 8419). We welcome them to the Committee.

SUBSCRIPTIONS REMINDER

1979 Subscriptions—

Please remember—if you have not done so—to pay your 1979 subscription which became due in May. There are a great many still unpaid.

It is still only £1—a great bargain! Pensioners and students pay just 50 pence. Subscriptions may be sent to the Hon Treasurer, Nicholas Roskill, 56 Grove Lane, SE5 (tel: 703 4736) or paid to any committee member.

BIKES IN LONDON

October's members' meeting brought a small but enthusiastic audience to hear Pete Thompson of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) share with us his enthusiasm for the advantages of travelling by bicycle, describe the facilities which we can campaign for to make cycling safer and more enjoyable, and show us the results of the work of sympathetic local authorities in Stevenage, Portsmouth, Peterborough and Milton Keynes in producing cycle lanes through built-up areas and parks and pavement parking facilities.

Travelling from A to B by bike is cheap, energy efficient and healthy. Over the last few years these three factors have ensured that cycling has steadily increased in popularity. A controlled survey of cyclists travelling over Lambeth Bridge revealed that 81 people made the journey in one hour on a June day in 1974. In a similar survey at a comparable time this year 320 people were making that journey in one hour. Last year the LCC's London to Brighton bicycle ride attracted 320 people. This year over 2,000 took part.

The attitude of the Greater London Council to the increasing preference for the bicycle as a means of transport remains uncommitted. A request by the LCC to the GLC to allocate 1% of its annual road construction budget towards facilities such as cycle lanes has been turned down. Instead the GLC has asked for suggestions for road safety improvements from cyclists which do not involve taking any road space. This official attitude makes the proposed 6-lane highway forming the Peckham Road 'realignment' a frightening prospect for all cyclists.

Jenny Chan of Southwark Cyclists, our local cycling group, also spoke and made available copies of a local cycling map outlining the possible routes which bypass the Elephant and Castle roundabouts—a nightmare for all cyclists. Following discussions with Southwark Borough Council, the council has agreed in principle to consider road closures and bicycle routes through new housing estates.

Lively questions and discussion followed about the role of police, tuition for would-be cyclists, cyclists who break road safety rules and many other topics.

Why not join your local group and help campaign for better facilities for bikes like parking facilities on the pavements, bicycle safety classes and the prompt filling in of pot holes? Contact Peter Eyres of Southwark Cyclists at 55 Ansdell Road SE15 (telephone: 639 1740). For more information about the London Cycling Campaign write to them at 48 William IV Street WC2 or telephone Tony Ambrose at 836 6536.

Eleanor Lines

BURGESS PARK—A REVIVAL

It was way back in January 1976 that Burgess Park formed the bulk of this Newsletter. Since then a variety of events has taken place.

Firstly, the park itself has slowly begun to take more shape—streets and houses have gone, roads have been closed and all around the designated area patches of green turf have sprung up. The children's play park situated on the corner of Albany Road and Wells Way has been completed and was packed to capacity during the summer.

Unfortunately, the Burgess Park Forum has been discontinued with assistance from the GLC who felt 'that now a more definite stage had been reached in the development of the park, more progress was likely to be achieved through discussions between elected members. . . . to represent local opinion'.

The Society feels this a sad end to what has been quite a useful body and is seeking to introduce local representatives to the Burgess Park Steering Group. To date, the GLC is adamant that no local voice may be co-opted on to that committee. Our local councillors, especially Bob Smyth and Ron Watts, seem much more sympathetic to local people being kept informed of the Park's development.

This has been somewhat held up due to the tragic death of three of the landscape architects in a helicopter accident while taking aerial photographs of the Park.

We look forward to seeing further development in the park together with, hopefully, more input and comment from those around to whom the park is appearing. It must be remembered that their comments might even be positive?

Barbara Rose

MORE HISTORIC SOUTHWARK UNDER THE HAMMER?

St Mary Overy Dock is a tiny ancient slip of water leading off the Thames just about in the middle of the river frontage of Southwark's only Conservation Area of 'outstanding' status. This Conservation Area can be described roughly as the parcel of land enclosed by the railway as it loops from London Bridge Station round to the bridge that carries it to Cannon Street Station. Of its most famous buildings, all of us surely know the Cathedral, and the remains of Winchester Palace, with its rose window. But perhaps not so widely appreciated is that this is also one of the few niches of Dickensian London that still stand—the cavernous warehouse buildings, examples of beautiful late Georgian and early Victorian architecture in the industrial field.

But it is threatened, about to be destroyed by what, at least, could be called excessive zeal. Going West from London Bridge, Hibernia Chambers has been finely restored. Next to it, a new building, undistinguished, has been erected. Then an open space where, once, more majestic warehouses stood—demolished deliberately to open up a view of the Cathedral from the other side of the river. So perhaps this loss is balanced by a gain. And then more open space, where sadly, another splendid warehouse stood till recently. It mysteriously caught fire and had to be demolished. This space is about to be filled with a modern office block.

And then there's St Mary Overy Dock itself, with, on its West side, perhaps the finest wharf building in the area—not much to see from the river, but with a splendid decorated brick front to the Dock itself, early Victorian, as fine in some people's view as the carved brick fronts on some Georgian buildings. Next to that the staid Pickford A and B warehouses, backing onto Clink Street.

A firm of developers plans to refit Pickford A and B as offices, clearing other buildings behind and replacing them with modern offices and a little housing. The original plans even destroyed the old street pattern

But worst of all is what is proposed for the ancient Dock and the brick-fronted wharf building. The plan is that the fine wharf building should go, to enlarge the Dock so that it can take Captain Scott's Discovery, which needs a new home where it can be dry-docked for maintenance without expensive dismantling and towing down river, and where it can be spared the scouring of sand and debris in the restless tidal Thames. Instead of the wharf building, which could lend plausibility to the ship, as if it were being victualised for a voyage, the developers propose putting windows into what was the party wall between Pickford and the wharf building. Behind the fenestrated Pickford would be some glass and steel and at the end of the dock itself.

The argument for enlarging the dock to take the Discovery is one that's well worth debating in public. Undoubtedly it would bring more visitors to the area—but what would be left of the original area? What is not debatable is the question of losing the fine St Mary Overy wharf building, in the writer's view. This must be saved, despite the fact that the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, by a very small majority, approved the plans. Consequently your Society has applied to the Secretary of State for the Environment for spot-listing of this fine building, in common with other societies in Southwark.

Dick Oliver

MEMBERS MEETINGS

Thanks primarily to Eleanor Lines, a recently co-opted member of the Executive Committee, arrangements are in hand for a full programme of members' meetings during the winter and next spring. Eleanor has taken on the job of co-ordinating the programme and welcomes suggestions from members for topics for meetings. Write to her at 97 Camberwell Grove (basement flat) or telephone 701 2079.

Unless otherwise stated members' meetings are held at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk on the third Thursday of each month commencing at 8pm.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 15th November

Peckham High Street realignment—its effect on Camberwell. The GLC and the London Borough of Southwark are being invited to send representatives to explain and put the case for the proposals. Representatives of the Peckham Action Group, which was formed in order to oppose the proposals, will also be invited to provide speakers. A lively, well-attended meeting is anticipated at which you should learn the true facts behind the proposals.

Thursday 20th December

Our chairman is presenting a bumper Christmas slide quiz. This will be followed by a wine and cheese party for members at a venue to be announced at the November Members' Meeting.

Thursday 17th January

Neil Rhind of the Blackheath Preservation Trust will talk to us about the aims of the Trust and how a group of people can buy and restore buildings in their locality. It is hoped that Gordon Michel of the Civic Trust will also be on the platform.

Thursday 21st February

Trees in urban areas. Speakers to be announced.

Thursday 15th May

The Annual General Meeting of the Society. It is hoped to provide more time at next year's AGM for reports from the Society's several active sub-committees together with questions and discussion.

Other subjects being planned include a talk about the South London Art Gallery and on an art centre for the community at Camberwell Green.