

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER NO 46

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WHO KILLED MARY DACHELOR?

The article printed below was written by a group of parents opposed to the closing of Mary Datchelor School, some of whom are members of the Society. Mary Datchelor is a vital and vibrant part of Camberwell and we shall all be the poorer for its demise. The Editors would be interested to receive other contributions on the subject and are hopeful that the Headmistress will take advantage of our offer of space for her to write. The Society has been informed officially by the Clothworkers' Company that it is at the moment taking advice about future of the buildings from property surveyors.

The smokescreen of false hopes that surrounded the approaching death of Mary Datchelor is at last dispelled, and there can be no stay of execution. The Governors of Mary Datchelor School have finally informed parents that it will definitely close in July 1981.

The death sentence was passed in 1976, when, having failed to secure a place in Sutton, the Clothworkers' Company declined to submit proposals to convert the school into a three-form non-selective entry. As all schools in the Inner London Education Authority area were required to end selection from September 1977, the ILEA was compelled to apply to the Secretary of State for a 'cease to maintain' order.

The reasons for the Clothworkers' decision—made without any prior consultation with parents—were given by the Headmistress in an address to parents in February 1976. After detailed research into the educational background and with the aid of documentary evidence from the ILEA, parents believe that the Clothworkers' arguments were based on factual errors, mistaken assumptions and wishful thinking. In September 1976, after abortive attempts at making these misunderstandings public, parents and old girls formed the Mary Datchelor Petitioners' Association.

Ever since then the Petitioners have been struggling to save the school. They collected 2,000 signatures to a petition to the Secretary of State, Shirley Williams, organised a public meeting (which the Headmistress and the Clothworkers' Company declined to attend) and had several meetings with the ILEA, the Department of Education and Science and local members of Parliament, all of whom were anxious to keep the school open. But, unfortunately, according

to the law only the governors of a voluntary-aided school may submit proposals to change its character. Although efforts were made at the highest level to persuade the Clothworkers' Company to change its decision, it seemed impervious to these reasoned arguments

The Diocesan Board of the Church of England then produced a viable plan to run the school as a non-selective Church school, co-operating at sixth form level with neighbouring schools. The School Governors, the majority of whom are nominated by the Clothworkers' Company rejected the offer as being based on intangibles. Now, two years later, the future for Datchelor is seen to be only too tangible.

The Trustees then suggested turning the school into a sixth form centre after July 1981. The ILEA was interested in leasing the school premises for this purpose but stressed that it would not be a legal entity, but a place to which other schools in the area would contribute pupils for courses not available in their own schools. The Clothworkers have not disclosed their reasons for rejecting the ILEA's terms.

After a last attempt to persuade the Clothworkers to propose a four-form entry non-selective school, the Petitioners sought legal advice. An approach was made to the Charity Commissioners but they maintained that the Trustees were not unwilling to carry on the object of the Trust, they were merely prevented from doing so by the 'cease to maintain' order. Whatever the complicated strands that have gone into weaving the Datchelor shroud, the fact remains that the death of the school is now certain. So who is to blame?

Had we an Hercule Poirot to sift the evidence for a

trial for the murder of Mary Datchelor, perhaps the list of accused would be as follows:

1. *The Clothworkers' Company* for (a) failing to accept the ILEA's offer of part of the Wilson's building which would have enabled Mary Datchelor to be a viable four-form entry non-selective school; (b) failing to submit proposals to end selection, resulting in the present impending closure; (c) not taking enough care to ascertain the true facts (as for example when quoting out of date banding figures); (d) ignoring the opinions of a number of distinguished staff, ex-staff and old girls; (e) failing to preserve the school by going independent; and (f) refusing to substantiate the validity of their educational reasons in public in an open discussion with the ILEA, staff and parents.
2. *The ILEA* for (a) failing to allocate the Clothworkers a site for a large comprehensive school in South London (what has happened to the proposed site for Thomas Calton?); and (b) failing to provide the Clothworkers with an attractive enough deal to keep their support, such as a more gradual intake of lower ability pupils and a more flexible pupil/teacher ratio.
3. *The London Borough of Southwark* for failing to offer a site for extending the school (a chunk of Daneville Road would have made sense).
4. *The Charity Commissioners* for inaction.
5. *All of us* for letting it happen.

The verdict of future generations will be incredulity that all these good and worthy people, all with the best of intentions, could have committed such a monstrous folly—the murder of a fine school that has served the area devotedly for over one hundred years. Or is it murder? Should the verdict be suicide while of unsound mind?

What of the future? After July 1981 the object of the Trust—a day school for girls—can no longer be carried out. Under the 'Cy Press' rule, the Clothworkers can apply to the Charity Commissioners to have the object changed to something as near as possible to the original object. It seems obvious that the nearest thing to a three-form entry selective school in Camberwell would be a three-form entry non-selective school in Camberwell. But the Clothworkers think otherwise. They plan to change the object to a Trust merely for providing bursaries for able pupils to go to fee-paying schools.

Some people think that, rather than change the Trust, it would be better to change the Trustees. The Charity Commissioners have a responsibility to see that the Trust is faithfully administered and should therefore transfer the Trust to a new body not only showing willingness to administer the Trust but also willingness to comply with the ILEA's non-selective require-

ments.

It is clear that the Clothworkers intend to sell the site with the result that the buildings are likely to be razed to the ground. But in order to do this they would have to apply to the Charity Commissioners to have the educational use of the buildings changed, if no other educational or charitable uses can be found for them.

According to the scheme of 1909, the *beneficial area* is the 'catchment area of the school'. It is up to the people of Camberwell who live in the beneficial area to find another use for it. Would Camberwell not benefit from a community centre in the interesting old buildings, where there are facilities for music, drama, arts and crafts, gymnasium and swimming, for adult education, day classes for old age pensioners and young mothers nerve-wracked by high-rise flats, with a creche and a playground?

Sadly, in a time of acute financial cut-backs, it may seem rather fanciful to suggest such things. But approaches could be made to local businessmen to see if they could buy the building for the benefit of the community. Perhaps Southwark Council could be induced to help, using some of the money it will save by not building the Taj Mahal in Peckham High Street.

Who knows? In some dim, distant, happy future when falling rolls rise and when the children of the happy residents of the new Selborne Housing Estate reach 11-plus, it might even revert to being a school again.

Or is it to be another 24-storey office block? It's up to us!

FATE OF MARY DATCHELOR BUILDINGS

The decision by the Clothworkers' Company to seek the advice of property surveyors means that the retention of the Mary Datchelor buildings cannot necessarily be guaranteed. It is a worrying thought. The existing buildings may well have potential uses for the community, which would otherwise have to spend larger sums on new buildings—even assuming that at these stringent times money would be available for new building. One possible use for part of the school might be a tenants' hall for the Selborne Estate—which incidentally is threatened by 'cuts' and general re-organisation of local authority housing legislation. Any economy possible here might well help save the Gibberd plans for Selborne's rebuilding. And there is the question of conservation of good buildings. The school entrance fronting Camberwell Grove is an important part of the street-scene. Many people consider the school's Victorian assembly hall a fine example of its style and type, and well worth preserving. There may be many other possible uses for the buildings in their present form.

Sadly, anyone may demolish any unlisted building outside a Conservation Area, without permission. So there is a real danger that the first we would know about these buildings' demise is seeing their remains being driven off in lorries. True the Council would be bound to consult fully over any change of use for the site or any new building on it, as the site is bounded on three sides by the Conservation Area—but that could not bring back what had been destroyed.

Consequently the Camberwell Society through its representative put a motion before the last Conservation Areas Advisory Committee meeting on 30th January requesting that, to protect Mary Datchelor against demolition without consultation, the Council should consider taking the school and grounds into the Conservation Area. The Committee passed this—so at least now we are on the way to proper consultation and agreement before destruction.

STOP PRESS

Council accepts motion. At its meeting on 6th February the Council's Planning and Development Committee accepted the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee's recommendation to include Mary Datchelor buildings and grounds in the Camberwell Grove-Grove Lane Conservation Area. Various legal hurdles now have to be passed but the outlook is much more hopeful.

THE END OF THE TOWN HALL BUT NOT THE END OF THE ROAD

The new Town Hall is dead—well, not quite dead, but in what appears to be a terminal coma. The illness really began to show about a year ago, when we were parading with cardboard coffins and banners, bulldozer and model Mayor's parlour, in that splendid march organised by the Peckham Action Group. The march firmly reminded the pro-Town Hall Councillors that they occupied their positions at the will of the people, for the people, and that their mandate did not include the erection of unwanted civic monuments to the power and majesty of the Council at the expense of jobs and the environment, let alone citizens' pockets.

The death-knell is booming out for Southwark Council is now deciding to withdraw its compulsory purchase orders for the shops and other premises that would have to be destroyed to erect the metal and glass dinosaur. However, should some Councillors' memories be failing, and, given a change in economic and political climate, some latter-day Frankenstein attempt to revive the corpse on another site, let him remember that it might well become his last political act—for it's clear that the people who put him there won't stand for it. However, this danger is being averted by the sort of thing that's going on at present in old Camberwell Town Hall—extensive refurbishing

of wiring, heating and phones, with a minimum life for the new installations of about 20 years. This seems a sensible and proper way to provide the working conditions that the council staff need

The end of the road still needs to be fought for, though. The battle against Peckham High Street re-alignment, like that against the Town Hall, needs money and troops. And this battle is one for us here in Camberwell, if anything even more than the Town Hall was. This ill-advised scheme to enlarge the Peckham High Street to carry properly the traffic that jams it at present, means only one thing—it will attract even more traffic. And that traffic will pile up here in Camberwell, at the Green and in the Camberwell New Road. At first sight it might seem sensible to provide a better road—but this is thinking just as blinkered as that leading to the New Town Hall nonsense. The root cause of the problem is not that the road is too small, but that it is carrying through traffic that's nothing to do with us here in Southwark. The only answer to today's traffic problems is to plan transport resources properly, to carry what needs to be moved in the most economic and least-damaging way. And that must mean keeping through traffic out of Central London, not the attracting of it into the centre.

Ironically, Southwark has the answer in its own hands. Southwark and Tower Hamlets have jointly engaged transport and traffic consultants Scott Wilson and Kirkpatrick to prepare a document setting out the reasons why another 'through traffic route', the Docklands Southern Relief Road, should not be built further north in the Borough. Copies of this excellent treatise are available from the (old) Town Hall. And one can play a splendid game with a copy. Just go through it, substituting our Peckham High Street re-alignment and place names for 'Docklands Southern Relief Road' and Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. It then provides an excellent case against Peckham High Street re-alignment! What's sauce for the Bermondsey goose is surely good for the Peckham and Camberwell gander?

Of course, simply cancelling the re-alignment doesn't answer the problems of Rye Lane—but as the Peckham Action Group has shown, and Southwark Council admits, having initially prepared such plans, if Peckham wants a pedestrianised Rye Lane, then it can have it better and cheaper provided in simpler and less-damaging ways.

The crunch for Peckham High Street is now. As this Newsletter is being printed, the South Area Planning Committee will be deciding whether to re-align or not. If it chooses re-alignment, then the battle is on, the troops will have to mobilise again. Peckham Action Group will ensure that there are objections sufficient to result in a Public Enquiry. But even this won't be so easy as it might have been—for the House of Lords has recently overturned yet another

of Lord Denning's High Court judgments. And sadly, Denning was right on this one. He had ruled that it was in order to question government forecasts of traffic at local public enquiries, whereas previously this had not been allowed—government forecasts simply had to be accepted as gospel. Now we're back in the gospel situation.

So the Peckham Action Group needs all the support we can give it. And that also goes for its offshoot, South London Action on Transport, SLAT. Camberwell Society members are particularly welcomed as members of either or both organisations—contact both at 60 Nutbrook Street, SE15.

Dick Oliver

CAMBERWELL SOCIETY SHOP OPENS

Saturday 1 December saw great activity at 21 Camberwell Church Street. The official opening was billed for 12 noon but by about ten o'clock the shop was full of volunteers putting the final touches to the display board and folding up the raffle tickets which had been sold to members during November. Judging by the number of people who dropped in during our somewhat frantic last minute preparations, our presence in Camberwell had not passed unnoticed, even though the shop was not yet officially opened.

At midday our guest of honour, actress Diana Quick, arrived in Church Street to carry out the official opening ceremony. She is a member of the Society, lived for ten years in Camberwell Grove and had travelled all the way from Yorkshire, where she was filming for the television series "Brideshead Revisited", specially to open the shop. Her visit had been previewed the week before in both the *South London Press* and in the *Mercury*, which reported "Stage Set for QUICK Act". Chairman of the Society Jeremy Bennett thanked Diana Quick for returning to Camberwell for the opening ceremony, for an occasion which was an important milestone in the history of the Society. The Society was coming up for its tenth birthday and at last we had found ourselves a base right in the heart of Camberwell. He hoped that the shop would be used as a meeting place for people living in or interested in Camberwell and that the Society would be able to arrange displays and exhibitions on subjects of local interest, which would itself encourage people to use the shop.

The Society, he said, would be selling its publications and members would also, at the discretion of the committee, have the opportunity of exhibiting arts and craftwork. The main purpose, he emphasised, was to provide a focal point in Camberwell for the Society. We hoped there would be many new members as a result.

He thanked Alison Sime and her helpers on behalf of the Society for their energy and hard work in almost

totally refitting and redecorating the shop in the previous six weeks, and then asked Diana Quick to perform the opening ceremony.

Diana then snipped the red tape which was strung across the shop, and declared us open. After applause from the seventy or so members who had packed the floor, she then drew the winning tickets for the Grand Opening Raffle from a top hat. The prizes—a transistor radio, two framed maps of Camberwell, a bottle of Champagne and a copy of W. H. Blanch's *The Parish of Camberwell*—were quickly claimed and it was discovered rather to our surprise that we had not made the expected loss on the sale of raffle tickets but a small profit!

Diana Quick was presented with a bouquet of flowers and an inscribed copy of Blanch by Miranda Westwood and Alexander Bennett. The crowd seemed to increase, people milled around and chatted—and it was open house for the Camberwell Society on its own premises for the first time.

AND MORE ABOUT THE SHOP

The shop has now been open for two months and is doing well. We've had our problems but we're still there.

As those of you who have visited the shop will know from our opening display, the purpose of the shop is to provide a community focus. Even if you don't wish to buy anything, do visit the shop just to browse and chat with the minder. We are also there, of course, to promote the Camberwell Society and the work it does. As a matter of interest we have enrolled over sixty members since the doors opened, bringing our total to over six hundred.

The initial exhibition showed the three areas of change which Camberwell can expect and we have recently expanded one of these subjects with a model and display of the new housing scheme at Selborne, kindly lent by the architects, Frederick Gibberd and Partners.

Also on display are local crafts. Camberwell School of Art and Crafts used some wall space to exhibit sketches of sculpture in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Any member is welcome to display and sell his or her wares. We do need more in the shop so, if you have a hidden talent, please let us know. We would love to display and sell your products. On that point we also need more volunteers to man the shop. We have been able to open at least a few hours each day—unfortunately not always the same few hours each day. If you do have any time during the week or on Saturdays, please let me know. Every little helps.

Before Christmas business was booming. Our cards sold extremely well as did our other publications. If you want a Blanch you had better hurry: there are

only a few left. Inevitably trade has dropped off since Christmas, but we are still making ends meet.

In the future we hope to have more exhibitions of local interest. If you have any other ideas for making the best use of the shop for the community, please let any member of the Society's Executive Committee know. Some ideas include displaying the plans for the central site at Camberwell Green and the future of the shopping centre, and detailed plans of Road Option 7, and views of Camberwell Green as it used to be.

With enthusiasm and a little help from everybody the shop will continue to succeed. In conclusion I would like to thank everybody who has put so much work into the shop already.

At present the shop is open (as far as possible) at the following times:

Monday	9.30 to 11.30
Tuesday	11.00 to 3.00
Wednesday	9.30 to 3.00
Thursday	11.00 to 3.00
Friday	9.30 to 12.00
Saturday	10.00 to 6.00

If you intend visiting the shop from afar, I suggest you telephone me the evening before to confirm it will be open. Once again if you can offer other help or ideas please contact: Alison Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove, SE5 (01-703 5254).

STREET LIGHTING FOR CAMBERWELL GROVE

Our Secretary, Jill Westwood, reports below on the proposals of the Borough Engineer's Department to replace the street lights in Camberwell Grove and presents the views of the Society and of residents of the Grove. Although the Society welcomes the Council's intention of replacing the lights, we are profoundly disturbed at the manner in which public consultation has been handled by the Borough Engineer's Department. Incompetent would be the most charitable verdict. It is our view that aspects of the design of the proposed lighting scheme are unsatisfactory. This view has been clearly put to the Borough Engineer's Department several times but it has been blandly ignored. The Society now hopes that the Highways and Works Committee will agree to our request to receive a deputation.

The Borough Planner wrote to the Society on 8th October 1979 setting out the Borough Engineer's proposals, enclosing a plan and trade literature showing the proposed lamp standards, and asking for the views of the Society. The proposals are to replace the existing 400-watt mercury vapour lighting on eight metre columns installed in the 1930s, with 250-watt high pressure sodium lamps on new ten metre steel columns, the number of lights to be

increased from 18 to 32.

We responded with our comments to the Director of Development on 1st November, expressing our disquiet that lamp standards designed for motorways and trunk roads were to be installed in a residential street in a conservation area, and our fear that the lights would be ineffective as they would be up in the tree canopy. (We also feared that if the scheme went ahead as designed and this proved to be the case, there would be a real risk then of having trees removed to 'solve' the problem.)

A meeting was then arranged for 6th November when Mr Clark of the planning department and Mr Carvin of the Borough Engineer's Department met members of the Society's planning committee to explain the scheme further. We repeated our reservations at this meeting and Mr Carvin took away with him a copy of our letter to the Director of Development. On 9th November, the Borough Engineer wrote saying he was awaiting with interest our comments arising from the meeting and that Mr Carvin would be available 'to address another meeting to explain the proposals to a larger proportion of the residents' of Camberwell Grove if required. On 29th November we replied to the Borough Engineer repeating our previously stated objections and accepting his offer for Mr Carvin to address a further meeting.

On 30th November we were alarmed to see an advertisement in the *South London Press* inviting tenders for the scheme. We promptly contacted Mr Carvin who said that the scheme (which he had designed) had been passed by all the relevant committees within the Council and could therefore go out to tender. Nevertheless he would be willing to address a meeting of residents. This meeting, organised by the Society as a public meeting (note: *not* organised by the Council), took place on 18th December in the Grove Chapel, every house in Camberwell Grove having received a leaflet in advance. It was made clear at this meeting that the proposals generally were felt to be quite inappropriate. Mr Carvin asked that any letters about the scheme should reach the Borough Engineer's Department by 7th January 1980 as the tenders were to be opened on 14th and mail took several days to reach him within the department. We forwarded two letters from residents to Mr Carvin and understand that some half dozen other people also wrote to him independently to protest.

It was decided to assess the strength of local feeling about the scheme by taking a petition from house to house. This was done on 6th January. About 100 residents were contacted, of whom all but three were opposed to the scheme. This as yet incomplete petition was taken to the Borough Engineer's office on 8th January. Having established that Mr Carvin was in his office, the doorman was asked to deliver it directly to him to avoid delay.

We learned by chance on Saturday 12th January that

the tender documents had been opened on Wednesday 9th January. We understand that no mention was made at this time of any public opposition to the scheme but that fortuitously there were errors in some tender documents which prevented their immediate acceptance. A councillor drew the attention of the Town Clerk's Department to the existence of the petition and all local ward Councillors were circulated with copies, but unfortunately, with no explanatory covering letter.

The Town Clerk's Department asked Councillor Payne at very short notice to present the petition at a full Council meeting on Wednesday 23rd January and proposed to put the matter before the Highways and Works Committee on Wednesday 30th January. Councillor Payne had been contacted too late and could not be adequately briefed in time. The matter was therefore not brought up in Council.

It has been agreed on the telephone with the Committee Clerk of the Highways and Works Committee that the Camberwell Society and the residents of Camberwell Grove should be allowed to send a deputation to the Highways and Works Committee meeting on 17th March and that further discussions of the lighting scheme will be deferred until then. On 27th January the Society wrote to Councillor Rowe, Chairman of the Highways and Works Committee, setting out the current position and repeating our request to send a deputation to the meeting on 17th March.

Jill Westwood

CAMBERWELL FESTIVAL

"One Camberwell 1980"

Is Camberwell a community in decline or is it about to take on a new lease of life?

We think it is about to take on a new lease of life. Let us look at the positive side—Camberwell must have also a unique diversity of people and of life for a neighbourhood of its size and type. There is an enormous wealth of talent—every sort of culture, of interests and skills and concerns—in fact an enormous wealth of human energy and life in what is still the village atmosphere that Camberwell once had.

Local Festivals are one way of reviving our neighbourhood. The sense that we belong to one another, is revived, as we share in one another's interests, pleasures and achievements. Perhaps a Festival in Camberwell could open doors of understanding, could rebuild responsibility for the neighbourhood and its people, could give a new sense of unity and of community. Those of us who are working to get this festival off the ground in 1980 share this conviction.

Camberwell is not dead but divided. Many of the places where people used to meet are gone or in decline, music hall and cinemas closed, many shops

closing, and the Green. . . ! But in a festival new ways of meeting are opened up, and old ways revived. We would like every side of Camberwell life to join in the Camberwell Festival. Perhaps you are involved in some organisation that would like to put on a new event at this time, or to include something you already do in our programme. So far we have only an outline, and we are waiting for the people of Camberwell to fill it with events of every kind. Here is the programme so far: where possible also there are details of how to join in these particular events that have already been arranged.

Saturday, June 7th:

CARNIVAL PARADE This will pass right through the centre of Camberwell on this Saturday afternoon. You can take part by entering a float: a decorated lorry (if you can get one), or simply a group walking together perhaps in costume, to advertise your activity or interest. Write to Chris Watson, 20 Ballow Close, Elmington Road, SE5 or telephone 703 6938.

FANCY DRESS CARNIVAL BALL at 7.30pm on the same day. Tickets from Jean Watson, as above.

Sunday, June 8th:

The Public Houses of Camberwell hope to join in some sort of festival competition: information from Bill Burden, 12 Colbert, Sceaux Gardens, 703 3837.

STREET PARTIES will be held in the afternoon for children, organised by local tenants' associations etc. Why not arrange one for your street, or estate, if nothing is now being done?

Monday, June 9th:

OPEN DAY for local Brownies and Guides—details later.

Wednesday, June 11th:

OPEN DAY at Love Walk Hostel.

Thursday, June 12th:

SCHOOL CONCERT with contributions from several Camberwell schools. Details from the Headmaster, Lyndhurst Grove School, Camberwell, SE5.

Friday, June 13th:

FILM SHOW with Camberwell Credit Union—details later.

Saturday, June 14th:

DISPLAY DAY possibly on Camberwell Green. This takes the form of a Charity Fair, with stalls from many charities, to raise money, or to display work.

Sunday, June 15th:

FESTIVAL MASS, BARBECUE and TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION starting in St Giles Church at 8pm.

The Camberwell Society is taking responsibility for organising the Display Day, and members who are interested in helping with this should get in touch with Ian Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove (telephone 703 5354). The Festival is an opportunity to revive the life of

Camberwell in many varied ways. We see it, not as something laid on by a central group, but as an invitation to everyone in Camberwell to celebrate what they are doing, or would like to do. We hope that members of the Camberwell Society especially, will be able to take a leading part in this!

June 7th to 15th - remember the dates!

Rodney Bomford

PECKHAM HIGH STREET RE-ALIGNMENT

Four organisations, the GLC, the London Borough of Southwark, the Peckham Action Group and the London Amenities and Transport Association, were invited to send speakers to our members' meeting on 15th November 1979, to explain and discuss the proposed six-lane highway, more commonly referred to as the Peckham High Street re-alignment.

A well attended and lively meeting was expertly conducted by Dick Oliver, standing in for the Society's Chairman who was unavoidably absent. Informing us that the GLC, at the last moment, had advised that it could not send a representative, Dick invited us to reflect on the possible motive for the curious behaviour of the GLC.

Peter Ruddy from the Borough Engineers' Department was thus left on his own to defend the construction of this highway from both the local and London-wide points of view. Peter Bibby, representing the Peckham Action Group (PAG) put the case against the road and Tony Howell of the London Amenities and Transport Association (LATA) set it in the London context.

The proposals, said Peter Ruddy, would provide an important traffic artery, linking one side of London to another, as well as helping to revitalise Peckham with the aid of pedestrianisation. Tony Howell pointed out how the A202—of which Peckham Road is a part—provides a through route from the Channel ports to the M4 and that there exist other plans for major routes taking traffic round London (M25 and South Circular).

With the aid of slides, Peter Bibby showed some of the buildings which would be demolished along the route of the re-alignment, and reminded us of the likelihood of adverse effects on Peckham traders with higher rates to pay. The true cost of the road was in part concealed, he continued, because money spent on such items as sound-proofing the windows on the new housing estate would be on the bill of the housing programme and not that of the road.

Peter Bibby was in dispute with Peter Ruddy over the capacity of the new road. The wider road would have a greater capacity than the existing one, argued Bibby. The effect of this would be to discharge even more

traffic onto the already overloaded Camberwell Church Street and Camberwell Green. Southwark's answer, according to Ruddy, was that the road was designed to improve the traffic flow for existing road users. It seemed inevitable to most of those present, that any road-widening scheme is bound to attract more traffic.

A question was asked about the possibility of the widened road being extended in the future right through Camberwell and on to Vauxhall Bridge, resulting in more traffic through the centre. No such plans for extending the road were admitted.

Eleanor Lines

COMPETITION FOR LOCAL ARTISTS

The Committee has written to the Principal of the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts to ask for his support for a competition which the Society would sponsor.

We are proposing to invite artists to submit a painting or drawing with some local connection. We have decided to make the subject, simply, "Camberwell" in the hope that this will be considered the widest possible brief. It would include for example, local views, insights into local life, portraits and even abstracts. There would only have to be *some* local connection. Maximum size of pictures is to be 24 ins by 18 ins.

The Society would offer three cash prizes—£30, £20 and £10—would display as many of the entries in the shop as we could and would offer them for sale if the owners wished. If there were suitable drawings or paintings we would also hope to reproduce them as cards or as part of a calendar.

The competition is primarily intended for art students or serious amateur artists. The closing date is 30 June and the judges will be appointed by the Committee.

For further information please contact Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane, SE5 (tel: 703 9971).

MORE MONEY FOR CONSERVATION

Southwark Council is investigating the possibility of helping to make available another source of funds for conservation, under the 'Town Scheme' arrangements. These offer part of the cost of approved structural repairs and consequent external redecoration for listed buildings in Conservation Areas only. Dick Oliver (Camberwell Society's representative on the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee) would be pleased to have suggestions in writing for Conservation Areas to be included in the scheme, and to hear from anyone who thinks that the scheme might be of help to him.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Murder of Brother Lazarus at Camberwell Greek Orthodox Church, Camberwell New Road

All members of the Society were deeply shocked at the brutal and senseless murder of Brother Lazarus at the end of last year. At the request of the Committee, the Chairman wrote a letter of sympathy from the Society to Bishop Christophoros, asking him to pass on our sympathy to Brother Lazarus' mother and to the Greek community in Camberwell. During January the Society received a letter of thanks from the Bishop.

New Shopping Centre at Camberwell Green

This still seems some way off but the Society has written to the Estates Property Investment Company (EPIC) inviting them to display their plans for the central site in the shop as soon as they are ready. There is great interest in Camberwell in what they are planning and we very much hope they will take us up on our offer.

Selborne at Risk?

There are growing worries that public spending cuts may affect the Selborne development scheme. It will all depend on the housing cost yardstick—the amount of money Councils are allowed by the government to spend on each council house. At the time of going to press this has not been announced. We await the announcement with interest. The Society remains committed to the proposed scheme designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd and Partners. It is on display in the shop at present. Come and see it for yourself!

* * * * *

Immigration to Camberwell continues! A superb cock pheasant crossed Camberwell Grove at 2.20pm on 29th January 1980: seen by two local residents, one the Grove Park postman.

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Ceri Griffiths, Southwark's Director of Development, announced his retirement just before Christmas. He has always listened sympathetically to our views and often (though not always) been in accord with us. We wish him well.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A number of 1979 subscriptions are still outstanding. It's only £1 (or 50p for pensioners and students). If you haven't paid up please contact a member of the Committee. If you can't remember whether you have paid or not, each committee member has an up-to-date list and should be able to tell you.

To keep energetic and active, we do need our members' subscriptions.

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

The list of members' meetings published in Newsletter No 45 gave the subject of the February meeting as trees in urban areas. This was cancelled in order to allow for a meeting on Burgess Park in response to members' requests to be brought up to date on the plans for the new park.

On Thursday 17th April Stephen Marks makes a welcome return to Camberwell to address a members' meeting on the subject *London from afar*. Stephen will show a set of slides of Camberwell and other parts of London taken between 1968 and 1978 and hopes to interest you with some recent thoughts on the metropolis.

The AGM will be held on Thursday 15th May.

Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk, starting at 8pm.

BEETHOVEN COMES TO SOUTHWARK

Works by Beethoven and Liszt will form the programme for a piano recital by John Sipprell at the North Peckham Assembly Hall, 608 Old Kent Road, SE15, at 8pm on Tuesday 11th March. Admission is by programme at £1.50 available at the door or from 112 Thurlow Park Road, SE21, or 107 Camberwell Grove, SE5. Please send S.A.E.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING April 30th 1979

The following accounts were presented at the AGM on 17th May 1979. Due to pressure of space in the Newsletter it is regretted that it has not been possible to publish them until now.

Expenditure	£	Income	£
hire of hall	10.00	subscriptions	266.20
printing newsletter	256.53	donations	30.30
other printing	98.12	sale of publications	347.26
subscriptions paid	10.00		
general expenses	29.68		£ 643.76
special items	52.87		
	£ 457.20		
excess of income			
over expenditure	£ 186.45		
	£ 643.76		

Balance Sheet at April 30th 1979

	£		£
balance at 1.5.78.	258.16	bank balances at	6.4.79
excess of income over		current account	283.06
expenditure for period		deposit account	—
ended 6.4.79	186.56	representing reserve	
		for publications	161.66
	£ 444.72		£ 444.72

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

<i>President</i>	Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove SE5
<i>Chairman</i>	Jeremy Bennett 30 Grove Lane SE5 (703 9971)
<i>Hon Treasurer</i>	Nicholas Roskill 56 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4736)
<i>Hon Secretary</i>	Jill Westwood 40 Camberwell Grove SE5 (701 2325)

NEWSLETTER NO 47

May 1980

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 15th May 1980

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held at eight o'clock on May 15th 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 1979/80
(see below)
- 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 Hon Secretary, 40 Camberwell Grove SE5.)
- 6 Any other business

Jill Westwood, Hon Secretary

THE STORY OF CAMBERWELL

A Son et Lumiere is to be presented at St Giles Church on the 4th, 5th and 6th June next in celebration of thirteen hundred years since the first church was founded in the parish of St Giles in 680AD. This will launch the Camberwell Festival.

The story of Camberwell is a fascinating one, covering 2,000 years of history. Although for years an outer suburb of London it was closely linked with the very mixed fortunes of the big city itself. The three Surrey villages of Camberwell, Peckham and Dulwich grew and developed through the ages and as this broad sweep of history unfolds, it becomes clear that they were all caught up in the great events of London's past, and drawn into the inner net of the great city.

Son et Lumiere can best be described as radio drama with plenty of drama, music and sound effects to ensure that in imagination one is transported into

situations from years gone by. It has the bonus of light: ever-changing lighting effects to beguile the eye and conjure up the fantasy of real events. As you listen and watch, you can believe that you are really there!

Professional actors narrate passages which leap over the centuries and conduct the listeners in their journey through time. A truly memorable experience not to be missed.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society now has over six hundred members. We would like still more. If you know anyone who would like to join, please collect a leaflet from the shop and encourage them to join. Or even better, suggest they come and look round themselves.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1979/80

1980 is the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Camberwell Society and our birthday year has seen many important developments in the activities of the Society.

First and foremost, we opened the Society Shop at the beginning of December, the first time in our history that we have had any premises in Camberwell. We have provided displays of local interest—on Selborne and Camberwell Green—we have shown the work of local art students and several of our members have sold their own products and helped man the shop. We still need volunteers to hlep with manning. I'm glad to say we were **not** short of volunteers when we held the Christmas Party this year on our own premises for the first time.

The Society has been most active in pursuing the planning and environmental issues which take up most of the energies of both the Executive Committee and the various Sub-Committees which deal with individual areas of interest. We continue to urge rapid development of the central site at Camberwell Green through our representatives on the Camberwell Green Working Party and we have had some success in the general acceptance of our ideas for easing the traffic conditions in Camberwell. We are told these are to be implemented within the next three years. We have pressed consistently for an early start to building on the Selborne site and remain committed to the Gibberd plan at present on show in the Shop. We have made a deputation to the Council about the inadequacy of their plans for replacement of street lighting in Camberwell Grove and are shortly to make our representations before a full Council Meeting. We await with interest to find out whether the Council's interpretation of the word "consultation" is the same as ours.

Our planning sub-committee has dealt with well over fifty local planning issues referred to us by the Council and in many cases our recommendations have been accepted. A particular issue was the dumping of rubbish on British Rail ground at Grove Park, opposed strongly by the Society and prohibited officially by the Council.

The fate of the buildings of the Mary Datchelor School, once the school closes in July 1981, concern us. The Society moved swiftly and, through our representative on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, we have proposed that the buildings be included in the Conservation Area. This has been accepted by the Committee and by the Council and the school will now be protected against demolition. The Society is canvassing for ideas for possible uses for the buildings.

This year has also seen the success of the campaign against the building of the new Town Hall. The Society consistently supported the Peckham Action Group and was represented on the Southwark Campaign. The success of the campaign in uniting and articulating the widespread protest against the Council's plans provided proof that campaigns **can** succeed. It also provides great encouragement to all voluntary groups that issues can be fought and won, even when the odds seem stacked very heavily on the other side.

We have recruited approximately 195 members since May last year and our membership is now 615. The subscriptions have remained the same for ten years. Unfortunately they will have to be increased from May this year. Financially, as the Treasurer will report, we are at the moment healthy thanks to the sales of our publications. The new Christmas cards have proved very popular and your publications Sub-Committee have plans for further publications this year. We will also be publishing the results of the Society's Blight Survey—the subject of last September's members' meeting and various interim reports in the newsletter. This survey is a considerable achievement, having taken many hours of work. We are the first London Amenity Society to have surveyed our area, professionally and in detail, drawn it up in map form, pinpointing the degrees and quantity of dereliction and to have tried to draw some general conclusions from the research work.

Last but certainly not least, we have held many good members' meetings this past year. Subjects have varied from Bicycling in London, the Problems of Burgess Park, Traffic and the proposed Peckham High Street Realignment, to Trees in Towns, Preservation Trusts and How to Help Small Firms in the Inner City. All are issues which affect our lives in Camberwell in some way or other.

Your committee wishes to thank all members for their support, to emphasise that we are always open to ideas for meetings or suggestions of issues we should take up and that we hold an Executive Committee meeting every month on the first Thursday. Details of where the meetings are held can be obtained from the Hon Secretary and any other member is most welcome to come along.

The Accounts for the Year to April 30, 1980, will be presented at the Annual General Meeting and will be printed in the next newsletter.

Jeremy Bennett, Chairman

WHO KILLED MARY DATCHELOR?

We print below two letters in response to the article by a group of Mary Datchelor parents published in our last Newsletter. Annette Leask was a member of the staff of the school from 1929-66. Dorothy Crawshaw was Head Girl in 1932-33.

Sir,

In the March edition of your Newsletter you invite comments on the article you published from a group of parents opposed to the closing of the Mary Datchelor School.

There is a very large number of parents, staff, ex-staff and old girls who are entirely loyal to the Clothworkers and agree with their stand because they believe that the Company is upholding the educational values and standards which have made the school famous.

It is noteworthy that the Petitioners, who appear interested in the idea of changing the Trustees, do not express a single word of gratitude to the Clothworkers for their outstanding generosity to Mary Datchelor from 1894 onwards, generosity from which some of the Petitioners' daughters are deriving benefit at present. And would the school enjoy the fine reputation it still has today if it had not been for the constant interest, help and encouragement of the Worshipful Company?

The spirit of Mary Datchelor has not been 'killed'. The school may close and the buildings may be lost, but her true spirit will be kept alive for many years to come by those who have been brought up in her traditions.

*Annette I Leask
Whitstable, Kent*

Sir,

A Camberwell friend sent me your Newsletter No 46 and I have read it with interest.

As a former Head Girl of Mary Datchelor (1932-33) and one of those who have received the outstandingly good education that that school has provided over the last 100 years I should like to make one or two comments on your article, *Who Killed Mary Datchelor?*

The article leaves out of account the vast historical changes that have taken place in London education during those 100 years.

In 1871 the Charity Commissioners directed that funds from the Datchelor Trust—set up in 1726 by the Datchelor sisters 'to pay yearly two poor children of the Parish (St Andrew Undershaft) Apprentices'—should be used to found a girls' school. At that time enlightened people were beginning to recognise that girls should be educated along the same lines as their

brothers and the need was for girls' schools but not in the parish of St Andrew's in the City—there only one girl could have benefitted from the Datchelor Trust School.

So in 1876 the school was started in Camberwell where there were girls to be educated.

Now when the child population of London has dropped so considerably and there are no longer secondary pupils to fill the existing schools in Camberwell there is no reason at all why the Charity Commissioners should not allow the Trust to revert to its original purpose—'to provide apprenticeships' (or in the modern context 'bursaries for able pupils').

The Parish of St Andrew's Undershaft might well have protested in 1876 at the removal of Datchelor Trust monies to Camberwell, especially since the monies had increased enormously since 1726. It ill behoves the people of Camberwell to question in 1980 the good faith of the Datchelor Trustees (now the Clothworkers' Company) who have for so long administered that Trust for the benefit of Camberwell and who moreover have injected large sums of their own money into the school.

As Trustees the Clothworkers were represented on the governing body of the school along with the LCC (later ILEA) and the Camberwell (later Southwark) authority and, I think, London University. And after the 1944 Education Act the school opted for voluntary-aided status which gave it the right to continue to have its own governors, independent of the local authority (ILEA).

Some other London secondary schools, without independent governors ('maintained schools') were simply closed by the ILEA in their re-organisation of secondary education on non-selective lines. This the ILEA deemed necessary in order to full their large purpose-built comprehensive schools. But the parents liked their small schools and resisted. In the early 1970s Strand School, Brixton was threatened with closure and the Parents' Association petitioned the ILEA to keep it open as a *3-form non-selective-entry school*. The answer from the ILEA was that such a school 'was not educationally viable'. A year or two later the ILEA was offering a *3-form non-selective-entry school* as an alternative to the closure of Mary Datchelor!

It seems to me that the governors did us a great service in rejecting 'an educationally non-viable' school! We don't want to keep the name without the reality.

And if the ILEA said a 3-form non-selective-entry they didn't mean a four-form. It is they who know about the declining numbers of school children. The governors would only be wasting everybody's time if they proposed a four-form entry school of which the ILEA has no need.

What I think the authors of your article are not clear about is the effect of changing educational policy on individual schools. The ILEA is bent on non-selective conformity throughout inner London and a pioneering, outstanding Mary Datchelor cannot exist in such a climate. The school must change out of all recognition or die. It is tragic for Camberwell and for Camberwell parents and for those of us who belong to the school and have felt the strength of its influence all through our lives.

But those of us who believe in the need for diversity and variety in education would not like to see Mary Datchelor a 3-form entry non-selective school just 'containing' its pupils, unable with a limited number of staff to teach the glorious variety of subjects that it has done in the past and would have been able to do in Sutton had not the economic stringencies of 1976 clamped down on the building work.

And this 'educationally non-viable school' could have lasted for 'a limited period of time only'. This was made clear to the governors and reported by the Head Mistress to parents in her address of February 1976. With a declining school population the ILEA have no need of Mary Datchelor.

*Dorothy W M Crawshaw
Winchcombe, Glos*

MARY DACHELOR BUILDINGS

Ideas for a possible use for the Mary Datchelor buildings are flowing thick and fast following the article in the last Newsletter. A centre for foreign students, an English base for an American university, a centre for evening classes, a community centre, even municipal offices to replace the now defunct new Town Hall. Please let the Society know if you have any ideas.

SELBORNE IN DANGER

Selborne is in danger. The present plans are threatened by cuts. We are told however that if enough councillors support the **principle** of going ahead on the present plans a way can be found and building could start this year.

Please approach your local councillors and urge that Selborne should be considered a priority.

If Selborne is further delayed, the Green will continue to decay and your shops will get worse. Will new businesses want to open at the Green, will anyone want to take on building a new supermarket, let alone run it, when there is a gaping hole in the middle of Camberwell of seven acres where 700 people—and potential shoppers—should be living?

If Selborne gets passed over this year, it will be a scandal and it will affect all of us in Camberwell. **So please lobby your councillors.**

THE STREET LIGHTING WE DESERVE

Despite reasoned arguments by the Society, despite letters of objection from residents, despite a public meeting which voiced its objection and a petition signed by 100 residents, Southwark's Highways and Works Committee, at its meeting on 17th March, reaffirmed its approval of the Borough Engineer's scheme for replacing the existing eight-metre high mercury vapour street lights in Camberwell Grove with high pressure sodium lights on 10-metre high precast concrete standards.

The Society agrees with the Highways and Works Committee that the street lighting in Camberwell Grove needs improvement. How best to achieve this is where our views diverge.

A deputation of local residents from the Society, comprising Elizabeth Betts, Michael Frost, Peter Honeysett, Dick Oliver, Jim Tanner and Jill Westwood, was received by the Committee and allowed to put its case. Afterwards the issue was debated by committee members.

Councillor Alden, a local ward councillor, agreed that the street lighting needed improvement. Unlike some of his colleagues, his judgment was not clouded by the argument that to increase illumination levels *per se* improves lighting standards. Almost alone among committee members, he seemed to appreciate the effect of the tree canopy on any lighting scheme.

Councillors Clough, Eckersley, Greening and Rolph each pointed out the desirability of consulting local residents at an early stage. Councillor Clough drew attention to the fact that the details of the Council's new scheme were sent to the Society for comment on 8th October 1979—14 days after the Committee had approved the scheme to go ahead!

A motion by Councillor Greening that the matter be deferred to allow proper consultation with local residents and the scheme to be reviewed if necessary was predictably defeated. One councillor, who arrived late and did not hear the case put by the deputation or the subsequent debate, duly voted against the motion.

Jim Tanner

MONCRIEFF STREET PUBLIC ENQUIRY

The Moncrieff Street, Peckham, car-park plans will go to Public Enquiry, thanks to Peckham Action Group. Southwark's original plan was to site the new Town Hall there, but then they decided instead that Messrs Sainsbury had to have an extra large car-park, that Sainsbury didn't want. Sadly, the Public Enquiry won't bring back the homes that were demolished, nor repair the lives of those who lived there.

PRESERVING AND RESTORING BUILDINGS

Representatives from the Civic Trust and the Blackheath Preservation Trust gave us an information-packed expose of their work at the members' meeting on 15th January when they talked about encouraging the protection and improvement of the environment by rescuing buildings from dereliction and decay and restoring them to their former glory.

Gordon Michell consultant architect for the Civic Trust, showed slides of examples from all over England to illustrate the variety of buildings which have benefited from their rescue operations. Projects ranged in size from a small, isolated toll house to the restoration and revitalisation of a whole village, once thriving on its nearby lead-mining industry.

The Civic Trust, formed in 1957, is an independent charity, supported by contributions from industry and commerce. Mr Michell spoke of the grants made available by the Trust as well as the projects which the Trust itself is involved in. The Civic Trust administers the architectural fund from which loans are made at low rates of interest.

Neil Rhind spoke on behalf of the Blackheath Preservation Trust, one of the earliest to be established. Its first property was acquired with a loan plus capital in 1939 and from there the Trust went on to purchase other early nineteenth century housing surrounding the Heath with the aid of loans and capital available from the sale of earlier acquisitions.

Many Building Preservation Trusts now operate on the revolving fund principle, whereby a derelict building is bought, restored, sold and the money ploughed back into buying another building for restoration.

Set up as a limited liability company, the Blackheath Preservation Trust receives loans from the bank as well as grants from the GLC. If the Trust had charitable status it would be eligible for loans from the Architectural Heritage Fund and other Civic Trust monies. Local borough councils and the Arts Council have also offered loans depending on the types of building concerned.

Recently Blackheath Preservation Trust has been successful in securing a row of small nineteenth century shops in the village by out-bidding Woolworths; it bought Vanbrugh Castle in the seventies and converted it into flats; and most recently the old concert hall of Blackheath. The focus is now much more on these large white elephants rather than private dwellings which are now easily sold to private purchasers willing to spend time and effort as well as money restoring and maintaining them. The Trust retains an element of control over its buildings by selling leases rather than the freehold. This enables the Trust to ensure that regular maintenance is carried out on the newly restored properties.

This was altogether a fascinating evening and one which brought up the possibility of forming a Camberwell Preservation Trust. There are certainly many properties which need to be saved! If the public is unable to do this, perhaps a trust could be formed to work towards rescuing architecturally worthwhile properties which otherwise might be left to decay and eventual demolition. Contact Jeremy Bennett (telephone 703 9971) if you are interested in such a project.

Eleanor Lines

PUBLICATIONS REPORT

Our new cards, printed shortly before Christmas, have sold well but we need to increase our sales so that we can continue our publications. Please remember that the cards are *Greetings* cards and can therefore be used at all times of the year, as Birthday cards, Get Well cards, etc, and are not exclusively Christmas cards.

We have republished the 1842 Dewhurst map and there are now plenty of copies available at £4 each in the shop.

Plans for the Future

Your publications Sub-Committee is discussing at the moment the next year's publishing programme. We hope to be able to publish a paperback book of old photographs of Camberwell, possibly matching old views with present views so that we can show where and how Camberwell has changed and where it has remained much as it was in the last century.

Would anyone who has any old photographs of Camberwell, however tatty they may be, please contact Jeremy Bennett (703 9971) or any member of the Committee. Also, if funds permit, we hope to publish more photographs as postcards and a collection of local views or subjects of local interest as cards or as a calendar for 1981.

Anyone want to sell a Blanch? The Society will pay up to £7 for copies of its facsimile edition of Blanch, with reduced prices for acceptable but not 'mint condition' copies. If you have a Blanch you no longer want, contact a committee member.

Jeremy Bennett

MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS QUIZ

The Question Master was ruthless: whose is the statue outside King's College Hospital? Dr Lettsom? John Ruskin? No. Where would you find a Victorian post box cast into a prominent wall in Camberwell? Ah yes, opposite St Giles Church.

It was fascinating—images flashed before us of half familiar scenes which we pass almost every day. Now where have I seen that half obscured sign telling us of the shop with the verandah? And it was revealing. How can we see and not take in what we see? We are forever discussing the nature of our environment and yet often oblivious of its detail.

There were those present, however, who disproved this hypothesis. The winner, picking up the bottle of whisky, attained an amazing 38 out of a possible 44 marks and the two other prize winners were not far behind. The first half of the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Jeremy Bennett for his keen eye and his technical skills with the camera.

The serious part of the evening over, all present plus a few more adjourned for some light refreshment. There was a good mixture of new members and old, and the Christmas spirit flowed in the form of some excellent wine. Food was laid on, and very good it was too. The evening was a success which we hope to repeat in the future.

Alison Sime

PAINTING GRANTS FOR GLENGALL ROAD AND TERRACE

Southwark Council is proposing to make external redecoration grants of up to £300 for approved repainting of some of these houses, believed to have been built by Henry Amon Wilds in about 1843. The Glengall houses have Ionic pilasters and porch-columns, but Wilds, who came from Brighton, is famous for having replaced the formal Ionic details on some of his houses with representations of the fossil snail or ammonites. These are normally seen only round Sussex coast, but members speak of there having been some in Peckham or Deptford areas. Are there any still standing? Please contact Dick Oliver if you know of any.

NEWS IN BRIEF

In case any of you missed it in the press, Camberwell has the distinction of playing host to a spy centre! According to the *New Statesman*, no 113, Grove Park, Camberwell, is a joint electronic and bugging centre for the intelligence service and the police. Concealed by a suburban terrace, overlooking the railway, the only entrance is via an electrically operated steel doorway, says the *New Statesman*.

The Prime Minister says that bugging facilities are not 'normally' used in pursuit of VAT or Income Tax enquiries!

* * * * *

Things are happening with our bus services. You have probably noticed the graphics on the side of buses denoting sub-divisions of the London service. On ringing our local manager we learned that Selkent has taken over from the former South East area. The buses from the Coldharbour Lane end, however, are Wandle buses and many of those that are City-bound come under the Tower area.

It is good to see that the big new buses have been taken off the 36 and 36A routes and transferred to the Plumstead Garage. The reliable, convenient, speedy old RMs have taken their place.

The 42s are new single deckers. Any complaints or constructive comments concerning this or any other local bus service should be given to our local manager, Mr S. Dixon, Warner Road, SE5 (telephone: 274 2251). He would like to hear from you.

STOP PRESS

We are inviting the Camberwell Festival Committee to attend the AGM and to talk to us—and possibly show us some of their plans and ideas for the **CAMBERWELL FESTIVAL** which starts with the **CARNIVAL PARADE** on June 7 and ends with a **BARBECUE** and **TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION** on June 15.

This is the most ambitious programme yet for the Camberwell Festival and it is important for all of us that it is a success. So please try and come and hear what will happen in Camberwell for that week in June—and put forward your ideas.

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

<i>President:</i>	Nadine Beddington, 17 Champion Grove, SE5
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 9971)
<i>Vice-Chairmen:</i>	Nigel Haigh, 50 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 2719) Dick Oliver, 89 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 4949)
<i>Hon. Treasurer:</i>	Nicholas Roskill, 56 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 4736)
<i>Hon. Secretary:</i>	Jill Westwood, 40 Camberwell Grove, SE5 (701 2325)
<i>Assistant Secretary:</i>	Alison Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove, SE5 (703 5254)

NEWSLETTER NO 48

August 1980

THE SOCIETY'S NEW OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The new officers of the Society, elected at the Annual General Meeting held on May 15, 1980, are listed at the head of this Newsletter. The new committee is listed below. Newcomers, whom we welcome, are Ian Barbie and Michael Griffith-Jones. Ian and his wife are the new owners of Michael Ivan's house.

Ian Barbie, 24 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4564)
Elizabeth Betts, 126 Grove Park SE5 (274 6532)
Ian Chown, 149 Chadwick Road SE15 (639 9587)
Albert Densumbe, 36 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4824)
Michael Frost, 187 Camberwell Grove SE5 (274 1174)
Michael Griffith-Jones, 156 Camberwell Grove SE5 (733 4364)
Eleanor Lines, 97 Camberwell Grove SE5 (701 2079)
Barbara Rose, 103 Cobourg Road SE5 (703 8419)
Denys Short, 43 Camberwell Grove SE5 (703 5974)
Ian Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove SE5 (703 5254)

THE AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Camberwell Society was held in the United Reformed Church Wren Hall in Love Walk on Thursday May 15 1980 at 8.15 pm. About 70 members attended the meeting.

The chairman, Jeremy Bennett, welcomed members to the 10th Anniversary AGM of the Camberwell Society in its present form.

The meeting was arranged in three parts. The AGM business was followed by the introduction of the Society's Blight Survey, and finally by talks by some of those involved, about plans for the 1980 Camberwell Festival.

Apologies for absence were made and the minutes of the 1979 AGM were read and signed.

The Chairman reported on the Society's activities during the past year. (This report appears in full in the Camberwell Society Newsletter No. 47).

Copies of the Treasurer's report were circulated at the meeting. This year's figures will be audited and published in a Newsletter as soon as our auditor has finished moving house.

Subscriptions to the society are to be increased to £2 for an individual member, £3 for joint membership, and will remain at 50p for OAPs and students. The subscription year runs from 1st June to 31st May.

The treasurer said that the past year had been good financially which had enabled the society to do a great deal. The accounts were agreed.

The chairman then invited members to raise points of interest.

Jim Tanner reminded us that the Society's Newsletter is available to members as a forum to air their views and said that he would welcome contributions of all kinds (c.f. the recent discussion of Mary Datchelor). Old photos which might make suitable cards or calendars for the society would also be welcomed.

Helen Chown said how much she had enjoyed being behind the counter in the society's shop. She encouraged others to join in if we were fortunate enough to find new premises.

Judy Fairclough raised the problem of the appalling unevenness of Camberwell's pavements and the discomfort suffered, particularly by those in wheelchairs, as a result.

The AGM business concluded, Ian Chown and Ian Sime introduced the Society's Blight Survey to the meeting. Initiated by former committee member Charles McKean, the 'Blight Survey' was carried out by seven volunteers, each of whom studied a ¼ kilometre square section of the area covered by the Camberwell Society, noting examples of neglect and decay both of buildings and land, and marking each on a map using various colours to denote different circumstances. Altogether about 1100 instances of blight were noted in the Society's area. The results of the Survey have been printed in the form of a booklet which is available, price 50p from Ian Chown or Ian Sime.

The chairman then introduced Mrs. Fairclough who told the meeting how she had conceived the idea for a Son et Lumiere performance in St. Giles Church, covering the history of Camberwell, and how she had brought her idea to fruition.

Father Bomford talked about the intention behind the setting up of a Camberwell Festival and outlined some of the events which were scheduled to take place during the Festival's fortnight. Chris Watson told us about plans for the Carnival, and Liz Mitchelmore Hawkins explained how much it meant to those in residential homes in the locality to be able to become involved in community affairs and to contribute to and take part in local activities such as the Festival.

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Following a year of members' meetings on topics as far ranging as bikes, trees, Building Preservation Trusts and main roads, I am now in process of locating likely speakers to inform us on some more aspects of life as it affects our local area.

At this time not all dates have been finally fixed—last minute switches sometimes have to be made to accommodate the plans of our speakers. But we have several meetings lined up.

Kenneth Sharp, Curator of the South London Art Gallery, and Ian Tregarthen Jenkin, Principal of the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts are preparing an evening on local art and artists. They will bring news of the conversion of houses in Jephson Street and Wren Road near Camberwell Green, which were saved from the bulldozers through the campaigning efforts of the Society and are now being rehabilitated to house local art students.

The changing face of Camberwell—events which have determined its present appearance as well as the likely changes in the future—is another subject we will be hearing about. Our local awareness will be roused by Eric Blackwell, who spent the first 30 years of his life in Camberwell in the early part of the century, and by our local planners who have a major say in its future. Don't miss this opportunity to voice your opinion about the development of our community. Come and meet the planners and pose your questions. We hope also to be hearing about police work in Camberwell—the types of crime committed here and what the police do to detect and prevent it.

The Burgess Park Residents' Association celebrates its first nine months work in January. This was the first association to be formed as a result of a Camberwell Society members' meeting in which we heard about what is happening to Burgess Park and why it is still only a very small proportion of the size of park first planned as far back as 1948. We will hear about the progress of the Association at the January meeting.

At Christmas we shall be learning how to make a

documentary film and watching the end product which features the art of calligraphy. Everyone is welcome to join in the festivities which will follow.

I am keen to hear from any of our members who have requests for particular subjects for meetings. Telephone me on 701 2079 with any ideas. The next Newsletter will print the confirmed dates of the above meetings. For now we can say that the September meeting will be on *Art in the Community*. We hope that Eric Blackwell will be with us in October to tell us about old Camberwell.

Members' meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month in the United Reformed Church on the corner of Love Walk and Grove Lane starting at 8pm. I look forward to seeing you there. (Please note: there will be no meetings in July and August).

Eleanor Lines.

DENMARK HILL STATION—FLAME AND SHAME

As we all know, Denmark Hill station booking hall was burned out a short while ago—and as members who pass that way will have seen, British Rail has now demolished the central building to first-floor window-cill level.

Concerned about the future of the station after the fire, and thankful that only the roof itself and the internal plaster and joinery had suffered serious damage, your Society approached British Rail about its future. We were told that it was intended to restore the station when time and funds permitted. There seemed no reason to doubt this assurance, because Denmark Hill features large in the definitive book on Southern Region's buildings, by the present SR Chief Architect, Nigel Wikelly.

Another call was made when members approached your Executive at the beginning of June with a rumour that BR was to demolish—again we were reassured. Southwark Council had also heard the rumour, but they too had been given assurances by BR that only dangerous parts were to be removed. Even the erection of scaffolding with protective 'fans' over the roofs of the two wings, the front canopy and the rear verandah gave no cause for fear, because obviously in any work aimed at preserving what was left of the structure by the fire, there must be no risk of materials or tools falling onto the public or the fragile roofs of the wings.

Then came the shock and horror. One morning a member of your Executive Committee found that workmen had destroyed several metres run of the carved stone cornice-cum-coping of the central building. The stone was obviously firm—hefty wallops with pickaxes had resulted not in the stones coming adrift with little damage as they might if loose—rather it had had to be smashed to break it free.

A frantic telephone call to British Rail discovered that BR claimed not to know that demolition was

taking place. Was it all a ghastly error? Could it be stopped before it went too far? Already the cost of replacing the stonework would run into thousands.

Everyone had thought that the station was a listed building—but checking now that its destruction had started showed that it was not—and further research led to the suggestion of an agreement between British Rail and the Department of the Environment that normally only the most outstanding example of each type of architecture in BR's charge would be listed. It could be said that British Rail, charged with the efficient running of the country's railway system, should not be forced into costly preservation of old buildings. On the other hand private owners, industrial or domestic, have to maintain historic buildings that they own—so why should BR be any different? And in the case of Denmark Hill station, because it is such an important building to the community, in the visual sense as well as from the point of view of the very existence of Camberwell in its form of old village with Georgian additions, surrounded by Victorian suburb which the railway itself caused to be created, the responsibility for preservation cannot be lightly shrugged off. Does it really matter which public coffers the money for maintenance and repair comes from—should not such a building anyway be preserved largely at public expense?

Then back came a call from BR. 'The engineers' BR said, 'had decided that minimal demolition had to be carried out to avoid danger.' But did it have to be demolition? Most of our houses would yield to the pickaxe and fall apart as complete bricks and lintels—not have to be smashed to smithereens to get them down—and the District Surveyor doesn't consider our houses dangerous.

And why was the stone being destroyed—irreplaceable stone? There was no satisfactory answer, except that 'the engineers had decided.' 'Could the stone be removed carefully and stored?' 'Unfortunately we don't have the funds to do that.' 'But,' we said, 'you're pre-empting the decision to restore by smashing the stonework—no one could afford to replace that.' Back came the reply 'Yes it is a pity, do you know each of those corbels is different?' We offered our support in obtaining restoration grants—even, rashly, hocking the Camberwell Preservation Trust whose setting-up we're considering—all to no avail.

Naturally, the Society is not going to leave the matter there. One of your committee members has already been in contact with Sir Peter Parker and another has approached Gavin Simpson, Managing Director of BR's property board. We believe that BR has a duty to restore Denmark Hill station, as it led us to understand was planned. It is unfortunate that it has wilfully destroyed, probably without good reason, stonework and railings worth tens of thousands of pounds—BR will simply have to explain to the Secretary of State, in due course, why replacement of these items helps to swell its deficit.

THE BLIGHT SURVEY OF CAMBERWELL

Those of you who attended the Society's Annual General Meeting on May 15th will have heard described the Blight Survey undertaken by a group of members in 1979. Following a members' meeting held in the spring of 1979, when Charles McKean, author of *Fight Blight* and then architectural correspondent for *The Times*, described the many aspects of environmental blight and some of the measures which could be taken against it, a sub-committee was formed of members to look at blight in Camberwell.

During the summer, the sub-committee members surveyed every piece of land and every building in an area of two square kilometres of Camberwell, on foot and armed with a large scale map and a set of 19 varying categories of neglect. A second members' meeting in September 1979 presented some of the Blight Survey's findings (see Newsletter No 45, November 1979) and during the Society's stay at the shop at 21 Church Street, the Blight Survey Master Map was on display there.

Now we have published the Blight Survey properly, in the form of a 12-page report. It costs 50p, and is obtainable from Ian Chown, 149 Chadwick Road, SE15 (tel: 639 9587). The conclusions in the report include the facts that we discovered over 1,000 cases of blight in Camberwell; that Southwark Council owns easily the largest amount of derelict land in the area (more than 59%—including the seven-acre Selborne site in the very centre); that neglect of both Council and privately owned buildings is widespread; that blight breeds further blight. We think that this is the first time an amenity group has produced a comprehensive survey of its own area; and we hope we have demonstrated that the exercise is well within the scope of local groups with limited time available, and that other groups will see the value of conducting surveys of their own areas.

In order to spread the message further, we have sent complimentary copies of the report to Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment; to Sam Silkin and Harry Lamborn, the MPs for the area covered; to the GLC Councillors and Horace Cutler, leader of the GLC; to 16 Southwark Councillors including the leaders of both parties, and to Chief Executive, Chief Planner, and Chief Valuer of LB Southwark. We have sent further copies to the Civic Trust, and to other environmental bodies. If you know of other organisations who would, or should, be interested in the report, please let us know, and we will arrange to send them copies.

We have had a variety of responses. Horace Cutler complimented us on our assiduousness, and promised to feed the report into the GLC machinery—by which we hope he doesn't mean the shredding machine! Gerald Bowden and Herbert Sandford, both GLC Councillors, said they found the report's findings most interesting and helpful. Harry Lamborn, MP for Mid Southwark, said he would approach the Council, in

conjunction with his colleague Sam Silkin, to seek proposals to deal with some of the problems highlighted. From Southwark, Councillors Potter, Gordon and Watts have given us their comments, pointing out what improvements the Council has been attempting recently. An obvious one has been the good take-up of the Council's 50% grant offer for external improvements to the shops along Church Street. Southwark Borough Planner Michael West, and Valuer Philip Berry have both replied to us at some length, and have suggested further discussion with the Blight team on the types of remedy which are possible to counter the blight we have found. We shall be taking up their offers of meetings shortly.

We have not yet had any reply from Michael Heseltine. A busy man, no doubt.

Ian Chown

TAKING A DIM VIEW

Every now and again we stumble over examples of British democracy operating at community level. In our last Newsletter we reported on the efforts of a deputation from the Society and residents of Camberwell Grove to the Council's Highways and Works Committee to persuade our elected representatives to think again about the Borough Engineer's scheme for replacing the street lighting in Camberwell Grove.

Those efforts were unsuccessful. We thought the matter was closed. Not so. As a failed deputation we had the right, it seemed, to try again by presenting ourselves to the next appropriate meeting of the full Council.

On 23rd April our deputation, comprising Elizabeth Betts, Jeremy Bennett, Michael Frost, Dr. John Hewitson, Peter Honeysett and Jim Tanner, duly presented itself to the full Council.

The occasion was impressive. Jim Tanner, the deputation's spokesman, had the use of a microphone, the ear of the Councillors, the principal officers and the public gallery and the seat of Alderman Sawyer, who had kindly vacated it for the occasion and temporarily taken refuge in the ranks of the Opposition.

The deputation was given a good hearing. There were earnest questions from Councillors, some of whom seemed concerned to establish that they and the deputation were talking about the same street. Then the deputation was asked to remove itself from the Council Chamber (it was entitled to adjourn to the Public Gallery) and our Councillors duly debated the matter. It came as a surprise to the deputation and members of the public in the gallery to discover that street lighting in Camberwell Grove is apparently a party political issue with the Conservative opposition seeing the light and the Labour Councillors on the whole taking a dim view. Just to confuse the uninitiated one Labour Councillor spoke in support of the deputation and thereby unwittingly aligned himself with the Opposition. But he subsequently displayed a true British spirit of fair play by voting against the deputation.

So the new street lighting planned by the Borough Engineer will go ahead. This is a shame because it will cost precious money and there are serious shortcomings in the scheme. All that the Society and the many residents of the Grove who signed the petition were asking for was that the scheme should be deferred long enough to allow it to be reviewed in the light of criticisms put forward and the views of residents properly taken into account.

We can no longer afford to spend public money without taking these simple precautions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Three Cheers for the Council!

Have you noticed the scaffolding and the amount of decoration and renovation going on in the Camberwell Church Street area, in particular?

More and more of the shops and the pubs are getting a facelift. It's like an epidemic and what a welcome one it is. It's all due to Southwark Council encouraging shopowners and pub owners to redecorate and meeting part of the cost from the Environment Fund. It is an imaginative 'effective way of using the fund.

Rehabilitation Works

The Camberwell Society was largely responsible for saving the two small terraces of early nineteenth century houses in Jephson Street (leading off the bottom end of Grove Lane) and the terraces in Wren Road.

The Wandle Housing Association and their builders have been hard at work in the past few months on Jephson Street and the houses are approaching completion. When finished, we understand they will be used mainly as lodgings for students from the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts.

Wren Road is also making progress and so are the council-owned houses on the Denmark Hill end of Love Walk.

We hope that people will soon be living in these houses. Camberwell needs more people living in the area. It could be about to happen.

New Hotel for Camberwell

Camberwell's newest (perhaps only?) hotel is approaching its opening. It is the Dome Hotel in Camberwell Church Street and it replaces the derelict shop site which was once the Tigress Restaurant

Brunel's Engine House on the Thames

Largely through the efforts of Nicholas Falk (who came to address the Society last year on making use of derelict buildings in the inner city) Brunel's engine house, used for constructing the Thames Tunnel from Rotherhithe to Wapping, has been restored and the area round it landscaped. It was opened on June 14 by Bob Mellish MP, Deputy

Chairman designate of the Docklands Urban Development Corporation, with both Nicholas Falk and Ron Watts, former Hon. Secretary of the Camberwell Society, present. Ron Watts, now Chairman of the Council's Planning and Development Committee, was largely responsible for securing financial support for the project from Southwark Council.

The Thames Tunnel was the first successful underwater tunnel in the world and pioneered the technology that makes modern tunnelling possible. It was designed by Sir Marc Brunel and built under his direction with his son Isambard Kingdom Brunel as site manager.

The engine house, used in building the tunnel, is close to the underground station at Rotherhithe. It is open at weekends and by arrangement during the week with Ron Vere Field, Community Workshop, Hope (Sufferance) Wharf Street, Marychurch Street, SE16. Telephone: 237 5299.

Film Made in Camberwell on Show at Victoria and Albert Museum

Last year two members of the Camberwell Society, Donald Jackson and Jeremy Bennett, formed a film production company to make a series of films on calligraphy. The series—*Alphabet: The Story of Writing*—consists of four half-hour films in which calligrapher Donald Jackson demonstrates the art of calligraphy—literally 'beautiful writing'—and illumination. The films were made in his studio in Grove Lane. The series covers the history of writing from man's earliest attempts to make marks right up to the present time. The narration is by actress Susannah York.

For anyone interested, the films can be seen weekly at an exhibition called *The Universal Penman—A Survey of Western Calligraphy from Roman Times to 1980* which began at the Victoria and Albert Museum on July 2 and runs until September 28. On display also is a work of modern calligraphy by Donald Jackson specially commissioned by the Victoria and Albert Museum for the exhibition.

Congratulations

To committee member Barbara Rose and husband Jim on the birth of their third daughter, Elizabeth, on 7 May.

Treeplanting Time

Autumn is not far off and autumn means treeplanting time. The Council's Mr Endicott operated a scheme last year which proved highly successful. Trees were offered free by the Council to people living in selected areas of the borough for planting in their gardens. Demand was heavy and outstripped supply.

Encouraged by this, Mr Endicott wants to try the scheme again this year. He emphasises not *everyone* can be offered a free tree and the Council has to

reserve the right to decide which areas will be planted.

If you have any ideas where you would like to see more trees planted, contact Mr Endicott either by writing to him at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, SE15 or phone him on 703 6311 extension 230.

Your Views on the Council?

Recently Southwark Council took certain steps to improve its image. They commissioned a public opinion poll to find out what ratepayers thought of them. Sixty-nine percent of those questioned reckoned the Council "wasted a lot of money".

The report on the poll says: "The Council has a discouragingly poor image among residents. Relatively few felt it cared about people like them or gave them the information they wished for."

The Council's Deputy-Leader Ann Ward is quoted (by the *Evening News*) as saying: "Frankly, the results are better than I expected." The opinion poll is expected to cost the ratepayer £15,000.

No Nest for Southwark's Sparrow

Image building seems to be in the air. The Council has commissioned a design team to come up with ideas to improve "borough identity". They proposed that Southwark's new emblem should be the Sparrow and that it could be used on Town Hall stationery, council vehicles, advertisements and on T-shirts. The team also proposed that all council vehicles should be repainted beige and chocolate, instead of the familiar green.

We reprint the following item with acknowledgements to the *Guardian Diary*:

A COMMON TOWN BIRD

Southwark Borough Council, which has just published a map showing a non-existent Tube station and missing out several churches, is wondering whether to liken itself unto a sparrow. A meeting tonight will decide whether to approve the idea for the council's emblem as a sort of consolation prize for the abandoning of an enormous new town hall.

A special slide show was held at the end of April (one of those occasions the Diary would dearly love to have attended) where councillors were introduced to this well-known bird. The script of the public relations consultants, who will be paid £30,000 to design the new livery if the sparrow is approved, is an entertaining read in itself.

After yards of sociological screed about "the need to express Southwark as an entity in minimal form", the slide lecturer announced, with a tremor of pride, "We have found something which all of you see every day, which seems to live up to these expectations." There then followed five separate photographs of *Passer domesticus* going about its municipal business.

Further erudition, which has already earned the consultants a slice of their fee, follows with the comment that some people may only come into contact with the council via its public lavatories. "This small experience," trilled the slide

lecturer, "can be transformed by our three components—language, colour and (pause for yet another ornithological slide) the sparrow."

The council (Labour, but an enthusiastic cutter) may well decide to adopt the bird, but anyway here are two rival and free, suggestions. Why not the Camberwell Beauty butterfly, which was first netted in the borough, or the red geranium, whose associations include London, socialism, Dickens and the famous former MP for Bermondsey, Dr Alfred Slater?

It was announced at the end of June that the Council had rejected the idea of spending the sum of £127,000 on the new "borough identity scheme", of which the sparrow emblem was a part.

However the design team's bill has got to be paid and that will cost anything between £7,000 (the Council's estimate) and £15,000 (the design team's estimate).

Who was it that suggested the Council "wasted a lot of money"? The cost of fees on the opinion poll and the design team could have built one new council house.

Who Are They?

Since the opinion poll commissioned by the Council revealed also that only one in five of the Southwark residents questioned could remember the name of any councillor, the Camberwell Society prints below the names of those *you* should approach if you live in the Camberwell area and find you have problems. The Camberwell Society area is covered by four wards and below are the names of the councillors for each ward with the days and times of their 'surgeries'.

Brunswick

Cllrs Gordon, Lauder and Watts, Tenants' Hall, Sceaux Gardens, SE5. First and third Saturdays of the month, 11am to 1pm.

Lyndhurst

Cllrs Mrs Ackroyd, Davies, Payne, Dog Kennel Hill Primary School, SE5. First, second and third Fridays, 7.30 to 8.30pm.

St Giles

Cllrs Alden, Mitchels, Potter, Town Hall, Room 71, Peckham Road, SE5. First, second and fourth Fridays, 7 to 8pm.

The Lane

Cllrs Brean, Rolfe, St James Church Hall, Elm Grove, Rye Lane, SE15. Alternate Fridays from 22nd February 1980, 6.15 to 7.45pm.

Camberwell Society Art Competition

Details of the competition were published in Newsletter No 46 in March. As a result of requests that the closing date for entries should be further extended, it has been decided that entries will be accepted up to 30th September.

Local views, sketches giving some insight into local life, portraits and abstracts would all be acceptable for entry. The subject is simply 'Camberwell'.

Several paintings and drawings have been received but the Society would welcome more.

Prizes are £30, £20, and £10 and the decision of the judges, who will be appointed by the Committee, will be final. When making their decision, the judges will not know the names of the artists who have entered the competition. Entries please to Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane, SE5 (tel: 703 9971).

Selborne and Camberwell Green

Meetings and discussions are being held regularly in both the Council and in the Camberwell Green Working Party (on which the Society is officially represented), as we go to press.

We very much hope to be able to report progress on the building of the new Shopping Centre at the Green and on whether the Selborne Development is to go ahead and if so, what is to be built on it and by whom, in our next newsletter.

Watch this space in the autumn for the latest reports on two sites vital to the health and livelihood of the whole of Camberwell.

Mary Datchelor School

No decision has yet been reached on the future of the school, which is now, thanks to the Society, included in the Camberwell Grove Conservation area. We understand that there are two important bidders interested in buying the buildings, as they stand. By September we expect to be able to tell our readers who will be the new occupants.

Campaign to Hold Next Year's Festival on Camberwell Green

See inside for our account of this year's successful Camberwell Festival. What is not generally known is how close the organisers of the Festival came to obtaining the agreement of the police and the Council to hold some of the events on the Green itself, instead of in the very pleasant but rather too secluded area behind St Giles Church.

We are beginning a campaign now to persuade the authorities to agree that in 1981 the Camberwell Festival will be held on the Green where it should be—in the centre of Camberwell where everybody can see what is going on and can take part.

The Old Camberwell Fair was always held on the Green. Our readers may be interested to know that the last one was held there in 1855. It was stopped after that because of the presence of "too many lewd women". We feel confident that that is not the problem now.

THE CAMBERWELL FESTIVAL

The Carnival is over, so too is the *First Camberwell Festival*, and the reaction from the many who took part in one or more of the events has been that the efforts were worthwhile. For ten days in June Camberwell gave itself the chance to be entertained, meet new and familiar friends, and show that last year's motto of 'One Camberwell' is not the lost cause of idealists.

But the Steering Committee, responsible for the co-ordination of the Festival is certainly not immersed in self adulation. I think it realises that the success was indeed modest and that the greatest benefit gained from the First Festival is the experience which can be fed towards the Second. Mistakes were made, events were missing from the programme, the promotion and organisation were not as slick as some would have liked, but the difficult first step has been taken towards a regular summer festival, and with fresh ideas and inspiration we won't stumble at the second.

Over 1,000 locals crowded into St Giles in the four evenings prior to the opening Carnival Procession to hear, in a presentation of sound and light, a social history of this Victorian suburb. If some parts of the Festival could be criticised as being unprofessional, this is certainly not one. It is still being talked about as a well managed piece of cultural entertainment which will be remembered for years.

The procession, short but varied and colourful, was enjoyed by many bemused spectators who appeared, surprised and delighted, at their doorsteps; indeed shoppers put down their groceries, and even motorists seemed to need little persuasion from the police to switch off their ignition for a few minutes. The Festival was officially underway.

In the week that followed the Camberwell dweller had a choice of an evening at the concert, a combined production by local schools, a live discotheque, a street party, a film show, an exhibition, and various social evenings, each with its own flavour of entertainment and conversation. Every event seemed to be enjoyed as much by the hosts, who had put so much into it, as by the visitors. The Festival was concluded by a well attended Mass at St Giles, a barbeque and a Torchlight procession round the streets of Camberwell, which balanced well with the opening the previous Saturday.

Perhaps the most disappointing event in the whole programme was the Display Day/Fair on the final Saturday. It is true that the gusty wind and threatening rain kept many at home, but until the lights, bunting, brightly decorated stalls, steel band, and displays are seen by the passer-by it will never be a total success. The argument put up for the event being held on Camberwell Green is, however, much stronger than the undoubted commercial benefit to potential stall holders. Many would say that Camberwell has little to recommend it above any other inner city area of London. But I would suggest that it is one of the few that has a visible focus. It has a centre

which can be pinpointed—can you say that of our neighbours? Unfortunately, due almost entirely to the increase in traffic in recent years, the Green has become an island refuge underused by those it was created for. So it seemed an ideal opportunity to utilise this underused asset of ours for a communal activity. Unfortunately the police, who had been so helpful in other events in the Festival (and consequently the Council) felt otherwise, not offering a single suggestion to appease the obvious danger from traffic except to stage it somewhere else. Surely something can be done for next year to dismiss the idea that the residents cannot have priority over through-traffic for one afternoon in the year. The situation will only change if you do something about it. Please write a short sharp letter or postcard to us expressing your support (or opposition) to the idea so that we can present your opinions to the police. They can do something if the public feeling is strong enough.

Despite this setback the week was a success. It was enjoyed by a fair proportion of the residents. If, however, this proportion is to be increased next year there is a need for more publicity and therefore more money—the smallest donation to the Treasurer, Bob Cookman (Good Neighbour House, D' Eynesford Estate, SE5) from each reader would cover costs. But more than that, fresh ideas are needed to produce a bigger and better *Second Festival*. Thanks go to so many for the chance to stage it.

Ian Sime

CAMBERWELL BUTTERFLY: IT MUST NOT FLUTTER BY

The Camberwell Beauty butterfly adopted as a trademark by the Samuel Jones firm many years ago is in danger. Not the real live Camberwell Beauty, you understand, but Samuel Jones' ceramic copies—the huge one on the factory in Southampton Way, and the smaller, brighter one on the other factory at the back of Camberwell Green.

The problem in Southampton Way is that a firm further north in Southwark needs bigger premises yet wants to stay in the borough. So they've made a bid for the derelict Southampton Way factory, which is owned by the Council. Also they've put in a planning application to refurbish part of the premises as offices, and build a new single-storey warehouse on the rest of the site.

No one who knows the state of the old Jones buildings would object—but what is to become of the butterfly which has been a local landmark for so long? The plans show no future for it, the Council's Planning Department had apparently forgotten what had been almost a religious vow to retain the famous butterfly, despite suggestions at one stage that it might help decorate the £70 million new town hall that is now not to be built. The only hope now really seems to be that the preservation of the butterfly in one

way or another should be part of the contract of sale of the Southampton Way premises. At least it must be carefully removed and safely stored.

Meanwhile the Society's leaving no tile unturned, so to speak—and already has a possible temporary or perhaps even permanent home in view. The butterfly must be saved.

The second butterfly at Camberwell Green is not quite so much of a problem. There's a little more time before EPIC starts their redevelopment scheme. In any case, being much smaller than the Southampton Way plaque, a new home should be easier to find. Meanwhile members' ideas on new places for either or both will be welcome—we might even find a prize for the successful ideas.

Note on the Camberwell Beauty

The Camberwell Beauty was often seen around Camberwell at the end of the eighteenth century. Now it is a very rare butterfly indeed.

At that time Camberwell was a Surrey village surrounded by fields full of the trees and foliage in which the butterfly thrives. The Beauty is a Scandinavian species and reached South East England from August onwards and was commonly seen around birch trees, in particular, during the early autumn.

Some of the butterflies used to reach Britain as stowaways in timber ships. They had a gliding or fluttering flight pattern and used to be seen soaring over the tree tops and had a lifespan of between nine and ten months.

Let's hope our two remaining Beauties can be given a longer lifespan in a permanent setting.

OUR SHOP

Those of you who have walked or driven down Camberwell Church Street recently will have noticed that we no longer have our shop. It has been taken over by a firm dealing in electrical goods, who have spent time and effort on the refurbishment of the shop. We wish them success.

When we took on the lease of the shop we agreed on a peppercorn rent, with Andrews and Robertson, the estate agents, for six months and after then on a fortnightly basis. We would be asked to leave should any retailer wish to buy the lease and that is what happened.

Our time in the shop was successful, our membership increased by almost a hundred and our publications sold well. Latterly the shop was becoming a social focus. We hope to repeat the venture in the future, time, money and commitment willing.

The loss of the shop deprived us of our major outlet for our "summer promotion". If you saw the carnival or went to the Camberwell Festival Display Day you will have seen the T-shirts—green with a design incorporating Camberwell and a balloon in real festival

spirit. All credit must go to Helen Chown for the excellent design.

Anybody still wishing to buy a T-shirt should contact us—we have just a few left and if the demand is great we will have some more printed.

Alison Sime

THE ABBEYFIELD SOCIETY IN CAMBERWELL

The Abbeyfield Society owns houses in many places all over the country. Each house has from six to eight elderly residents cared for by a Housekeeper. The residents furnish their own room with their own furniture and their own personal possessions. Each room has running hot and cold water, a fridge and cooking facilities provided by the Society. Each resident can cook their own breakfast and snacks and hot drinks, and must be responsible for cleaning their own room—although home helps from the district may be asked to come in. The housekeeper cooks lunch and high tea, and is always present to give general help and friendship. In the surroundings of an Abbeyfield House can be found security and stability, also independence—and a room which has all the familiarity of home.

The Betty Lambert House, which is the new name for No 119 Camberwell Grove, will open in the autumn. It has been given to the Abbeyfield Society by someone who has lived in Camberwell for many years, in memory of her mother. It will house six old people. They must be in good health but feel that they would now rather live in a community than on their own. Rent is paid according to the position and size of the room occupied.

The Committee would be interested to hear from anyone who would like to be considered as one of the first six residents, or who would like to recommend a member of their family. Some people have already been interviewed for the valuable position of Housekeeper. This is a salaried post and there is a self-contained flat. Anyone interested in this post could still apply. The Housekeeper is responsible for the smooth running of the house, the happiness of the inmates, and the cooking, but no nursing.

Once the house is opened there will be scope for helpers of all ages. All Abbeyfield houses have a rota of visitors from neighbours and friends. Some people can find time to drop in occasionally for a chat, others perhaps can offer more regular help such as shopping, and most kind of all, but more time consuming, is the offer to cook meals on the Housekeeper's necessary day off.

The Committee would be very happy to receive gifts of furniture, china, small items of kitchen ware to furnish the public rooms and kitchen. Glass, cutlery, and table linen would also be welcome. These need to be in good conditions to contribute to the comfortable and home-like atmosphere they hope to create at the Betty Lambert House.

The names of the Committee are below and they will answer enquiries and consider all kind offers of help. Once the House is ready there will be an Open Day when visitors will be welcome.

Philip Almeida, 62 Grove Park (733 8785)
Margaret Devlin, 4 Champion Grove (274 9560)
Mary Rose Seldon, 26 Grove Lane (703 4427)
Marjorie Storey, 61 Grove Park (274 5233)

Mary Rose Seldon

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following letter was received from a former pupil of Mary Datchelor School

This is primarily a letter of thanks—the thanks of hundreds of Mary Datchelor wellwishers, old girls, parents and friends who now rejoice in the news that the Mary Datchelor School buildings and grounds are to be included in the Camberwell Grove-Grove Lane Conservation Area.

We know that it is largely due to the efforts of the officers and members of the Camberwell Society that this has come about and we are extremely grateful for the interest shown and delighted at the outcome. Those who have taken opposing views in the heated controversy of the last few years must now join together in our thanks to you and in our great pleasure that a tangible memorial to the School will exist through the preservation of its buildings.

I do not write as an ex-Head Girl or an authority on educational policy and practice, merely as an ordinary past pupil whose love of the School and its traditions has coloured the whole of my life. Together with many others who supported the Petitioners' Association in their struggle to preserve Mary Datchelor alive I remain completely loyal to the School and the Clothworkers' Company, contrary to the suggestions made by one of your previous correspondents.

Let us hope that in future years the traditions which the School has maintained will continue to flourish in whatever activities are located in the buildings which bear its name.

Joan Rich (Miss)

And this letter makes further points about the school.

As a member of the Mary Datchelor Petitioners' Association, a parent, as well as an old girl, may I put on record the deep debt of gratitude I and my daughter owe to the Clothworkers' Company. Members of the Petitioners' Association include a large number of old girls and ex-staff whose love for and loyalty to the school is beyond question. Of course they are fully conscious of the benefits they have derived from the Clothworkers' generosity, and

from the excellence of the teaching at Datchelor. But they feel that gives them all the more reason for deprecating the Clothworkers' decision not to cooperate with the ILEA in keeping the school open!

I should like to comment on two points in the letter you printed from an old girl living in Gloucestershire. Had she lived in London, she would have been aware that in 1975 the ILEA hit upon a successful solution to the problem of 3-form entry non-selective schools. Liaison between neighbouring schools at 6th form level is operating all over Inner London, and ensures that minority A-level subjects can be available to any student who wants them.

Secondly, a myth appears to have grown up that a non-selective Datchelor would have remained open for a 'limited period' only. May I quote from Dr Briault's statement to the ILEA Education Sub-Committee, dated May 3rd 1976? Dr Briault (then Chief Education Officer of the ILEA) expressing disappointment at the Governors' decision, referred to a 'degree of misunderstanding that had found its way into the discussions at school with staff and parents'—and, I quote:

"... these misunderstandings seem to have been to the following effect:

"(a) That if Mary Datchelor were to end selection and continue in being this would only be for a very limited period with an ultimate date for closure, perhaps as soon as 1981, already set by the Authority. As the Sub-Committee will know, there is no question of there being any such predetermined limit or any reason why the school should not continue indefinitely, as a non-selective school, to attract the support of parents."

It is now possible to monitor those ex-grammar schools, such as Charles Edward Brooke, Haberdasher Askes' and Archbishop Tenisons', who chose to remain open as non-selective 3-form entry schools, and some encouraging reports are coming from them. There is an increase in their choice of subjects at A-level—rather than a decrease—with new subjects available to girls, that were hitherto available only to boys. Some children, thought to be of average ability, are improving their capabilities, and will be encouraged to stay on for A-level courses. One example of improved opportunities deserves mention: a child, unable to read, and labelled as of lower than average ability on entry to the school, after a year of remedial classes, not only was able to read, but eventually went on to do very well, gaining 85% for mathematics. This is what education is all about!

And, by closing their eyes to the educational needs of the many, in favour of the select few, the Clothworkers' Company have done a disservice not only to the Camberwell community, but to their own 'image' as benefactors.

Dera Pearson, London SE4

SUBSCRIPTIONS SUBSCRIPTIONS

May we remind all our members that 1980 subscriptions are now due. As regretfully announced at the AGM, they have had to go up this year, the first rise in many years.

Individual membership is now £2 per person. Family or Household membership (for as many people who reside at a single address) is now £3. Students and OAPS subscriptions remain at the old rate of 50p.

Please pay your subscription promptly as the Society's activities depend on both the financial support and the efforts of our members.

Subscriptions may be sent by post to the Hon Treasurer, Nicholas Roskill, 56 Grove Lane, SE5, or paid to any officer or committee member listed in this Newsletter.

PAVEMENTS

At our annual meeting urgent and moving pleas were made by residents of the Love Walk Hostel for something to be done about the unevenness of the footpaths—and for the paths to be cleared of obstructions—so that they could get about in their wheelchairs. The same pleas might equally well have come from people who have to push children in prams, and those whose sight is poor.

Whilst it's the Borough Engineer's job—a task the law lays on him—to mend footpaths, the simple answer is that the footpaths are wilfully obstructed and smashed by vandals. And those vandals are not 'teenage louts', but rather respectable citizens, who think that they have a right to park their cars, vans, coaches and lorries on the footpaths.

Such citizens are mistaken. Parking on the footpath costs all of us money, apart from endangering the lives of pram-pushers, wheelchair users, the blind and so on. Pavement parking costs us money because it not only smashes the paving stones, but also the water, drain and gas pipes, and electricity and telephone cables beneath the surface. Footpaths are not designed to support even the weight of a mini. So path-parking puts up rates, water rates, gas, electricity and phone bills. It also puts up income tax and health-service charges too, to cope with those who're injured or killed through being forced off the paths into the roads, and the blind injured by contacting vehicles on the path—many blind are injured in this way.

But that's not the end of the matter—pavement parkers might like to know three other things too that affect them directly. First, footpath parking is against the law—as several people have found already. Second, some insurances are invalidated when the vehicle is removed from any place that it should properly occupy—leading to a second offence and no pay-out should there be damage to the vehicle. Third, mounting the kerb causes internal damage to the tyre-walls—which can result in a catastrophic 'blow-out'

when travelling at high speed. The vehicle's suspension can also be damaged.

Naturally, your Society is asking the local police to end this abuse of footpath parking, as well as seeing that the Borough Engineer discharges his legal obligations over repairs. But each of us can also make his or her own contribution. Each time you see someone about to park on the path, ask him not to, using the reasoned case above. Otherwise, note the numbers of footpath-parked vehicles and telephone Carter Street Police Station (703 0844), to complain of obstruction to the footpath. If you feel like becoming a real campaigner, get some of the excellent windscreen stickers published by the National Federation of the Blind* and apply these to pavement-parked vehicles.

A final point: as most of us are disturbed by through traffic and rat-running in our residential streets, let's just remember that this is actually encouraged by **clear passage**. In fact the more that's **parked in the road** rather than on the paths the better for our environment—it'll help discourage the through traffic that we don't want, that shouldn't be there, and that Southwark Council does little or nothing to restrict—unlike Lambeth and Lewisham, who are both doing so much to exclude it. Oh, by the way—do please remember that shrubbery should not extend beyond your boundary with the public way, unless it's at least seven feet above ground. Please clip those hedges, and help the blind and disabled that way too.

* Sample: **GIVE US BACK OUR PAVEMENTS**

**PLEASE DO NOT PARK
ON THE PAVEMENT, AS IT IS A
HAZARD FOR BLIND PEDESTRIANS.**

National Federation of the Blind

*contact: Barbara Reynolds, 10 Lisbon Avenue,
Twickenham TW2 5HP.*

CAMBERWELL'S FIRST SON ET LUMIERE.

Over a thousand people attended the three nights of the Son et Lumiere held in St. Giles Church on 4, 5 and 6 June at the start of the Camberwell Festival (see full report of the Festival in this Newsletter).

The Son et Lumiere was the idea of Judy Fairclough of Love Walk who did all the research, wrote the script and produced it. Taking part were Timothy West, Prunella Scales and Andrew Cruickshank.

Camberwell was recorded in the Domesday Book in which the Normans charted and assessed the value of the lands they conquered in England.

Narrator: Saxon England was to sustain yet another invasion—this time the last. In 1066 Harold was crowned King in Westminster Abbey. Almost at once he was faced with

a double invasion, one from the north-west where the threat came yet again from the Vikings, but this he was able to repel, but the second meant death and defeat for him. When the fleet of William of Normandy landed at Pevensey, Harold was still in York, from whence he marched day and night for seven days to London. Here he gathered all the forces he could. Among these were some of the strong farmers of Camberwell, mostly foot soldiers, armed with axe, javelin or club. The outcome of the battle of Hastings meant that the English once again had to accept conquest.

The villagers of Camberwell were granted one dubious privilege denied to most of their countrymen, when they saw Duke William and his victorious army as it marched on London. William was crowned King in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066.

The Doomsday Book was the ultimate achievement of a King of unrivalled authority and a government of ruthless efficiency. This great inquest carried out in 1086, the year before William I died, showed the underlying structure of England and its peasant life. It is also the first full record we have of Camberwell.

Then follows a snatch of conversation between a Norman inquisitor and a local.

Inquisitor: "Now, may I finish? Total value is £14

Voice 4: £14 for Camberwell?

Inquisitor: £14

Voice 4: Camberwell was obviously a sizeable village— Peckham was only valued at 30 shillings and Dulwich wasn't even worth mentioning."

Narrator: So Camberwell got its name but not quite in the way we know it today.

It was called Cabrewell; then the b was dropped and from the 11th to 15th it was written as Camwell, Cammerwell or Camerwell. In the 17th century the 'B' reappeared and by the end of the 18th century it had arrived at the spelling we have today. Two possible derivations of the name can be suggested; one stems from the fact that the old English word 'cam' meant crooked or crippled—this and the fact that St. Giles is the patron saint of cripples, suggests that the name means 'Well of the Cripples' or as we prefer to say nowadays 'Well of the Disabled', which may well have had curative properties. The other possibility is that it comes from 'cambered' meaning

'protected', cambered over for protection—again suggesting that the well had special properties, or perhaps mineral waters.

Ruskin Park takes its name from Camberwell's most distinguished writer.

The writer we must always associate with Dulwich is John Ruskin and some of his most important work was in defence of the painter Turner and the English school of landscape painters and the then Modern Painters. An artist himself, he also studied architecture and wrote on it. Ruskin Park serves to remind us that this eminent Victorian once lived among us. He was only 4 when his parents moved to No. 26 Herne Hill, later he moved to Denmark Hill. The east window of this church was designed by him.

When Ruskin was an old man living in retirement in Italy, an eager young disciple visiting his retreat, said: "Really, Mr. Ruskin, it's only in Italy that one can find true romance."

The old man thought for a moment and then replied:

"Yes....but perhaps also in Camberwell."

One of the great annual events in Camberwell was the annual fair, held on the Green. There was a song about it.

"This is an invitation song
For the London lads and lasses;
Camberwell Fair, I now declare,
All others now surpasses;
Both young and old, the spruce and gay
The clown and beau's invited;
With rural scenes upon the green,
You are sure to be delighted.

CHORUS: There's mam and dad are raving mad,
To please their sons and daughters,
For sport, ding-dong, they crowd along,
A pleasing scene of laughter.

There's pretty toys for girls and boys,
And gingerbread and gay things,
Organs, drums, confused noise;
New wonders every year brings
Their ups-and-downs, about they go,
For threepence they are vaulted,
One minute high, another low.
Next up they go exalted.

Then to the noted puppet shows,
The people they go prancing,
And when the're in they see a row,
Of rangs and dolls a-dancing,
There's learned hogs, and learned dogs,
Can mighty things unriddle
And learned cats will dance in clogs,
While monkeys play the fiddle.

All round about the fair you go,
 You there may taste and smell too,
 For Browsy Nan in her dripping pan,
 Has sausages to sell too,
 But as each link she knew must stink,
 She's garnished them with mustard,
 And some who ate thought them as sweet
 As tho' they had eat a custard.
 John and Joan came to the town,
 To see this famous fair, Sir,
 And heartily they both did laugh,
 The fight it was so rarem Sir.
 But when the crowd began to scroud,
 Joan said they were all sad men,
 And John he swore he'd come no more
 Among so many mad men."

Many of the local inhabitants agreed with John and complained loud and bitterly against the fair.

However, it survived until August 1855—

"in which month the Green was encumbered for the last time with its nomadic thieves; its coarse and lewd women; and this concentrated essence of vice, folly and buffoonery was no longer allowed to contaminate the youth of the district and annoy the more staid and respectable residents

At the end of the nineteenth century Camberwell acquired its first Music Hall.

Camberwell was also ahead of the rest of South London to build a Music Hall. It was a great evening in 1896 when the Palace of Varieties opened its doors for the first time. It was on Denmark Hill at the corner of Orpheus Street where the Golden Lion pub is today. A bow-fronted building, with a flag flying in triumph on the top. The Manager was Fred Reeves and a Mr. Makin was the House Manager in charge, among other things, of the bars—and these were almost as important as the entertainment—for drinking went on during the entire performance and smoking of course...cigars in as much evidence as cigarettes. So Ladies and Gentlemen—prepare to spend a merry evening as we peep inside perhaps a box? The man of the night is the great Dan Leno who is officially opening it... and here he comes the greatest Widow Twankey of all time, a little figure, his evening suit ever looking crumpled and as if to fall off his shoulders—long, tousled hair and that knowing face with its deeply etched lines of fun and compassion

Another little man was to walk the same boards—Charlie Chaplin. Charlie would have been then a member of the Fred

Karno Company, a famous music-hall troupe. One of the music-hall skits called "Mumming Birds" with Charlie in the cast played there. There was everything; acrobatics, juggling, tumbling, miming, broad slapstick, song, dance and burlesque. He would have played anything from a drunk, a body-snatcher, a pool-room shark, a punch-drunk boxer even a magician. He was then in his early twenties before he went to America in 1913 aged 24 years.

Camberwell was to see yet another Gala opening 2 years later on Monday October 29th 1898, this was the Metropole—on the triangle at the corner of Denmark Hill and Coldharbour Lane. This was perhaps even more ornate and was a veritable Oriental Palace inside. Straight plays did not succeed here—so it became the Camberwell Empire Music Hall and all the big stars appeared here. It was finally demolished in 1937 and became the Odeon Cinema.

The above is an edited extract of the full script of the Son et Lumiere performance. The script (price £3.50) and tapes on cassettes (price £2.50) are available from Judy Fairclough, 10 Love Walk, SE5 (tel: 703 3001).

STOP PRESS:

Local newspapers gave good good coverage of the publication of our Blight Survey. Both the *Mercury* (22nd May) and the *South London Press* (28th May and 13th June) devoted space to the findings of the Blight Survey and to a letter from Chairman of the Society, Jeremy Bennett, appealing for action (particularly from the Council) to be taken to implement some of the recommendations contained in the Survey.

As a result of the publication of the Survey, the Society was invited to participate in a conference on *Urban Wasteland* held at the Royal Society of Arts on 18th June. Copies of the Blight Survey were distributed to several people who expressed interest by Jeremy Bennett, who attended the conference on behalf of the Society.

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

<i>President:</i>	Nadine Beddington, 17 Champion Grove, SE5
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jeremy Bennett, 30 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 9971)
<i>Vice Chairman:</i>	Nigel Haigh, 50 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 2719) Dick Oliver, 89 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 4949)
<i>Hon Treasurer:</i>	Nicholas Roskill, 56 Grove Lane, SE5 (703 4736)
<i>Hon Secretary:</i>	Jill Westwood, 40 Camberwell Grove, SE5 (701 2325)
<i>Assistant Secretary:</i>	Alison Sime, 24A Vicarage Grove, SE5 (703 5254)

NEWSLETTER NO 49

November 1980

SAVE OUR STATION



On October 24 the Camberwell Society launched the **SAVE DENMARK HILL STATION FUND** and, with the approval of the Executive Committee, made the first donation of £100. The Committee felt that an attempt to save Denmark Hill station from possible demolition by British Rail was a top priority and constituted a special case. The Society could not always be expected to contribute towards the restoration of threatened buildings but in this case we would, especially after the challenge issued to us by British Rail (see below).

Readers of Newsletter Number 48 will remember that the Society's views on the restoration of Denmark Hill station, damaged by fire in March, were made very

clear. We stated then that the demolition men, who moved into the station after the fire to "make it safe", knocked down far more than was necessary. Much of the carved stonework and brickwork of the central building was demolished and smashed up and since then parts of the building have been left unprotected. It is not enough for British Rail to say, as they now do, that the decision to knock down more of the building than was necessary was made by British Rail's engineers and their decision is final. There are still many questions left unanswered about the demolition team. Were they properly supervised? Who exactly made the decision to demolish the top part of the central building and on precisely what grounds? Was there any evidence to show that the

walls themselves were unsafe? Why was it all done so quickly?

The result has been to make full restoration of this fine example of a Victorian station that much more difficult and expensive. On October 17 a report appeared in the South London Press in which British Rail said that there were three options for the station:

1. demolition of what remains and the building of a pre-fabricated replacement;
2. rebuilding the station 'in modern style'; or
3. restoration of the existing structure.

This was the first the Society heard of the three options although we have been in correspondence with British Rail for some months and have invited them to meetings, to which they have declined to come.

In the same report they challenged the Camberwell Society to put their money where their mouth is—to provide funds which would pay the difference between rebuilding a cheap modern alternative or restoration of the original. We ourselves cannot produce several thousand pounds but the public appeal, launched by us under the name **SAVE DENMARK HILL STATION FUND** in October, may produce enough money to persuade British Rail that they have no option but to restore. At the time of going to press we have written to a number of well-known local and national figures to ask for their support and the names of those people and institutions who support us will be published in the press shortly and in our next Newsletter.

WE BELIEVE WE CAN RAISE ENOUGH TO SAVE OUR STATION. Would any of our members who wish to make a donation please send it to: *Save Denmark Hill Station Fund*, c/o Barclay's Bank, Camberwell Green Branch, SE5—enclosing a self-addressed envelope.

For background information we reprint the following two articles with acknowledgements to the South London Press:

RAIL STATION'S FUTURE IN DOUBT (17 October, 1980)

A Conservation Group is being asked to put up cash to help British Rail restore Denmark Hill railway station—burned down in March.

BR say it cannot afford to meet demands by the Camberwell Society that the station be fully restored to its original Victorian structure. British Rail are presently installing a temporary ticket office, ticket hall and barrier.

The fire gutted the booking hall and the Society has had a battle with workmen to persuade them not to destroy the fine stonework. Despite their efforts

several metres of the carved stone ledges were ruined.

This caused Society members to fire off letters to BR chairman, Sir Peter Parker, and Gavin Simpson, managing director of British Rail's property board.

Heritage

A meeting has been organised for December when Camberwell Society chairman Jeremy Bennett is to make the case for restoration. Mr Bennett said: "We have written to a number of people at British Rail and they say they won't do any more work at the moment. The station is a superb example of Victorian architecture. British Rail is responsible for a great deal of our architectural heritage and they should make financial provisions for these disasters."

He is also taking the matter up with the Department of the Environment, Civic Trust and various MPs. British Rail says there are three long-term options for the station, with work possibly running into five figures.

- * Demolition of the existing structure and erection of a pre-fabricated building.
- * Rebuilding in modern style.
- * Renovation of the existing structure.

Renovation would be the most expensive alternative and rail officials say they will not consider this without financial help. A spokesman said: Liverpool last year a local society made the difference and helped restore a station.

No Funds

The Camberwell Society will consider the request when approached by BR but Secretary Jill Westwood gave the idea a cool reception. She said: "The Society doesn't have that sort of money. We are not a preservation society. We don't have the funds to do anything."

CONSERVATIONISTS LAUNCH "SAVE OUR STATION" FUND (24 October, 1980)

British Rail's reaction to local concern about the fire-damaged Denmark Hill station, reported to you on October 17, sounds like a joke in rather bad taste. To suggest that the Camberwell Society, whose finances amount to not much more than the annual subscriptions of its 600 members at £2 per head and the sale of its publications, should pay what could amount to several thousand pounds to restore the Victorian station evades the central issue. That is that British Rail is responsible and should accept its responsibility.

Denmark Hill station is a fine example of Victorian railway architecture. Built in the 1860s, by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, it was known for its French-style convex roofs and its

carved stone decoration. It was, and still is, a distinctive landmark of Camberwell and is featured in at least two of the major reference books on railway architecture.

When it was burnt down in March demolition men moved in and destroyed much more than was necessary to secure the safety of the building. Whether by design or accident they knocked down much of the carved stone coping of the central building and left part of the damaged roof unprotected. A cynic would say that when the demolition men moved out, so much had already been damaged that it would make complete restoration both difficult and extremely expensive. We are not surprised to hear British Rail say now "renovation will be the most expensive alternative."

After the fire the Camberwell Society made representations to the chairman of British Rail, Sir Peter Parker, to the managing director of the British Rail Property Board and to BR's engineers and architects. We learned that Sir Peter had asked his officials to meet us. We invited them to a meeting in July and August. They couldn't come. They invited us to a meeting in September to which we were ready to go but they cancelled it saying they could not talk to us until December.

Everyone we spoke to said somebody else was responsible and we got the definite impression that BR was avoiding us.

British Rail owns some of the finest Victorian buildings in the country. They are guardians of the heritage of Britain's railway architecture. Yet it appears that they insure few if any of their buildings because the premiums would be too high. Understandable, particularly in difficult times, but what financial provision does BR make for the repair and restoration of damaged buildings?

We cannot believe that they do not allocate funds for this purpose and we feel that a suburban Victorian station, which is recognised as a fine example of its type, should benefit from such funds as well as, say, a main line station about which there would be a national outcry were BR to put forward the same options as they have on Denmark Hill.

The responsibility is British Rail's to rebuild the station as it was, not to replace it with a plywood portakabin, a modern functional building or a cheap patching up of the original. We wish to help BR raise the money and that is why we are now appealing through the South London Press to raise enough money to make it impossible for British Rail to ignore local feelings.

On the principle that we should put our (limited) money where our mouths are, we are now pledging £100 to start the **Save Denmark Hill Station Fund**. For us, this is a special case and we cannot offer help every time a public building is threatened but we believe others will join us.

Cllr Ron Watts has told us Southwark Council will view "sympathetically" any request that part of the Council's Environment Fund should be used to support the renovation of the station. The Department of the Environment, local MPs, the Civic Trust, the Victorian Society, the Chamber of Commerce, King's College Hospital, the banks in Camberwell and other local groups are all being approached.

Would anyone wanting to contribute please send their donation to *Save Denmark Hill Station Fund*, c/o Barclay's Bank, Camberwell Green Branch, London SE5. We plan to give British Rail the support they need. If our offer is rejected donations will be returned, so please include an addressed envelope.

Jeremy Bennett
Chairman, Camberwell Society

CAMBERWELL'S NEW SHOPPING CENTRE

While the desolation of the Selborne development area may seem to have become a feature of the Camberwell scene, there are much more hopeful signs of progress across Daneville Road on the Camberwell Green central site.

Michael Lyell Associates, architects for EPIC (Estates Property Investment Company), the developers for the major part of the site, have now obtained planning consent for their shopping centre scheme, subject to certain reserved matters, such as detailed design of shop fronts and other matters of design, and are currently working on construction drawings. The developers, advised by Edward ERdman and Partners, are in discussion with potential operators of the supermarket which will form the centre piece of the scheme.

It is expected that a start will be made on site next year subject to the satisfactory conclusion of certain negotiations

We expect to be publishing details of the EPIC scheme in our next issue.

NEW DEVELOPMENT ON CAMBERWELL GREEN

Members will have noticed the demolition of shops on the west side of Camberwell Green. This is to make way for a new supermarket catering for the co-it-yourself enthusiast for home decoration and refurbishment. What could have been a visual disaster like the IMF Warehouse further along the Walworth Road is likely to be a fitting piece of urban infill, thanks to the efforts of the architects, Lawrence Barrett Lloyd Davis in consultation with the officers of the Borough's Development Control Department.

The new building will be built on the line of the existing shops and will comprise a showroom at ground level with two floors of offices above, maintaining the scale of this part of the Green. The office accommodation, amounting to 4,000 sq ft, will be suitable for the smaller business or professional office. The retail area will provide 22,000 sq ft. Customer car parking (26 spaces) will be provided on the north side of the site and service access will be from Camberwell New Road.

The development which should be ready in about a year is estimated to provide 54 new jobs initially.

HOUSING IN CAMBERWELL

The fabric of an urban community should reflect the merging of the past with the present. Comprehensive demolition and redevelopment clearly fails to do this, whereas the rehabilitation of sound, old buildings and new infill buildings amongst the old are two means of regeneration which patently do join our past with the present.

We describe below two recent housing schemes in Camberwell. The house at 25 Grove Park is one half of a pair of handsome Victorian semis which has been carefully reconstructed following neglect and a disastrous fire and converted into flats. The Flodden Road scheme is an admirable example of urban infill.

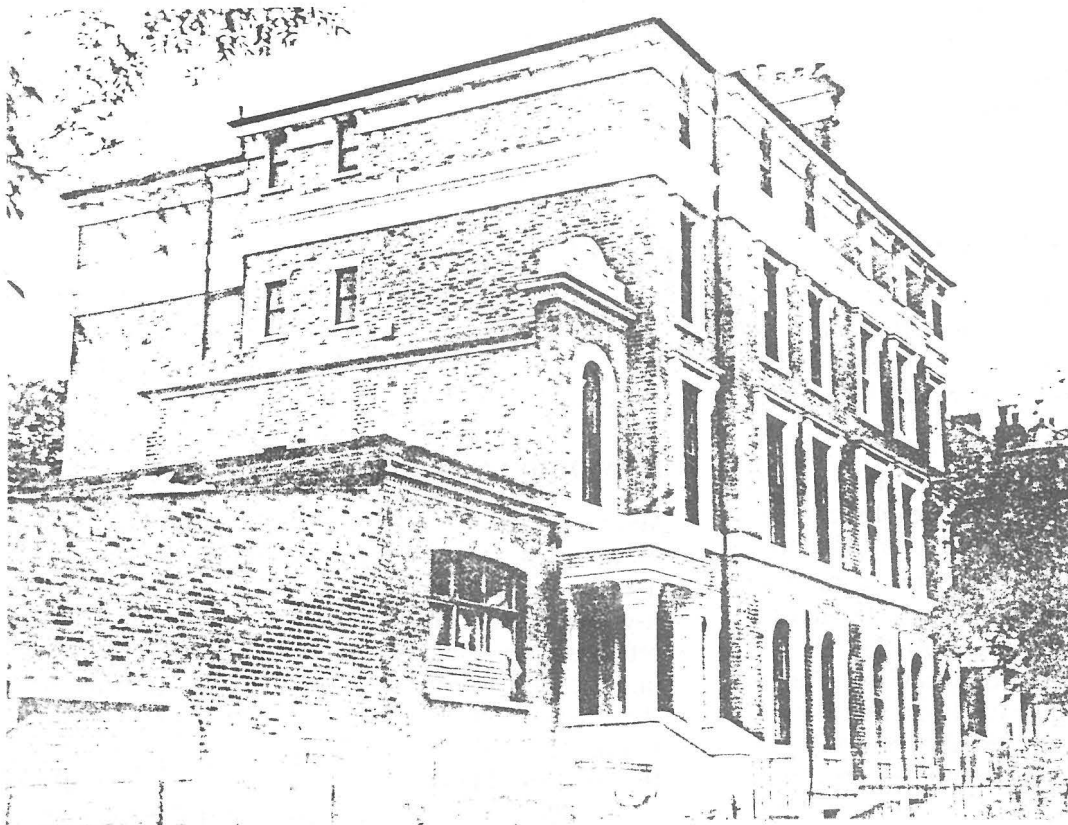
25 Grove Park

25 Grove Park was bought by Solon Housing Association in 1974. There were sitting tenants who could not be rehoused until 1976-7, and the house was

subsequently vacant until the original conversion scheme was ready to go on site.

The house is half of a five storey 'twin' pair of semis, and the front and rear of the site form the boundary of the Camberwell conservation area.

In February 1977, a fire totally gutted the building, burning out all floors, partitions, windows etc. A dangerous structures notice was issued, and the remains of the building were propped up temporarily with scaffolding. The fire added further structural faults to those already caused by the location of the building at the edge of a railway cutting. This meant it was necessary to decapitate the top two and a half storeys completely, and to empty out the whole of the inside of the building so that although the perimeter of the building was still defined, the work to be done was effectively a 'new build' rather than a rehabilitation scheme. Obviously the house had to look just as it had before from the outside, while incorporating massive continuous tie beams binding it to its other half. The site was deeply underpinned, and a full-height 9in brick spine wall was built from the foundations. Structural elements were hidden under the renewed exterior decoration of friezes and cornices executed by Szerelmey (UK) Ltd. In order to avoid taking space from the building for common access to the flats, the planning department allowed the addition of a staircase tower behind the building, provided that all the surface detail from the main building was continued there as well. The only other extra features are new railings and gate, turf in the front garden, and stained glass in the main entrance. The original glass was plain, but it is part of the Solon thumbprint to put in stained glass where the budget



permits.

The accommodation, which was opened on Friday October 10th, consists of four two-bedroom flats and one three-bedroom flat, all with gas central heating.

Architect: Solon South-East Housing Association, Architects Group.

Contractor: Fennel & King Ltd, who also carried out a new scheme of five houses in Flodden Road.

Quantity Surveyor: MDA

Structural Engineer: John Vincent

Flodden Road

In a quiet backwater off Camberwell New Road can be found London and Quadrant Housing Trust's recently completed scheme, making good use of various left-over plots of land behind the existing terraces of houses.

The Housing Trust, who provide government sponsored new and rehabilitated property to let at fair rents, originally bought this whole block as part of the Minet Estate. Conversion work had been proceeding gradually over a number of years and the Trust then asked architects Hunt Thompson Associates to look at the possibility of developing the derelict workshop and garage area off Flodden Road, together with the car repair yard behind County Grove, for new housing purposes. Despite long delays awaiting Listed Building Consent for the

alteration to the garden walls on two sides of the site, planning permission was eventually granted for the erection of fifteen houses of varying size in three separate terraces of similar design.

The simple and straightforward nature of the houses with their variegated pantiled roofs and porches and dark stained timber windows set in red/brown multi-stock brick walls belies the care and attention that has been given to their detailing. The intimate nature of the spaces around and between the dwellings and the organisation of the semi-private zones in front of the houses create an immediate sense of place and identity that is so often to be found lacking in large scale comprehensive developments. Given that Housing Associations work to the same space and cost standards as local authorities do (without enjoying the benefit of unlimited top-up from the rates if anything goes wrong), this scheme shows how urban renewal can successfully be achieved on a small scale and that local housing associations may well be the best people to be doing it.

Architect: Hunt Thompson Associates

Contractor: Eve Construction

Costs: Contract sum—£395,000

Cost per home—£26,300

Cost per person—£4,300

CAMBERWELL AND ITS EARLY DEVELOPMENT

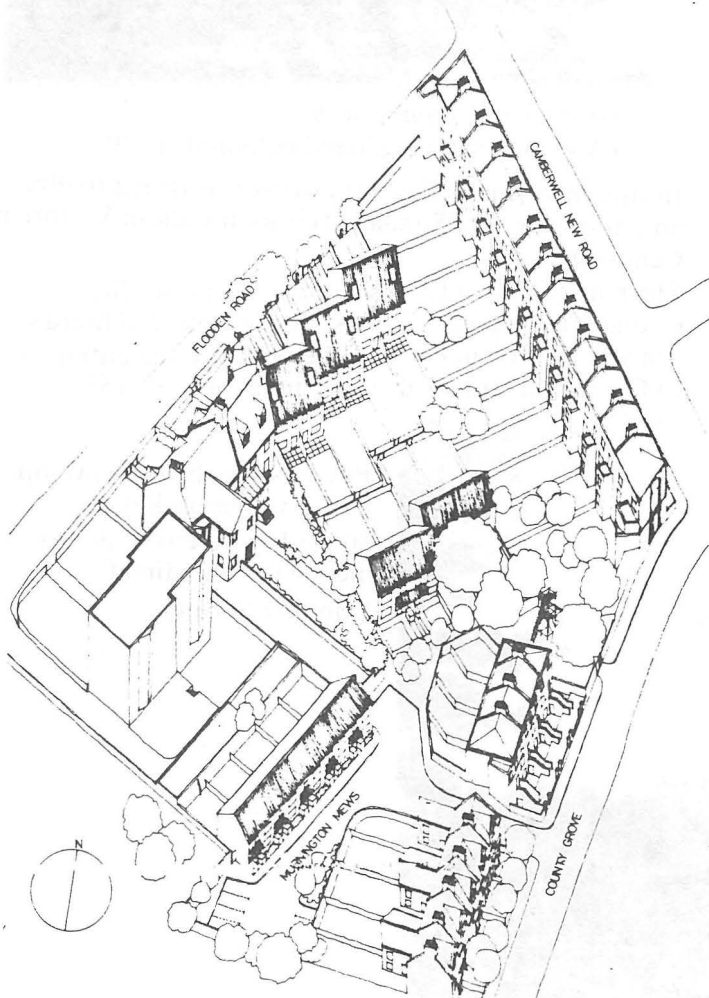
Eric Blackwell, lecturer for Lloyds and Freeman of the City of London, entertained a jovial audience at the last members' meeting on October 16th. He has been a student of the history of Camberwell since he was at school and not only recalls vividly the 30 years he spent here in the early part of the century but also has a strong fascination for its early history from Roman times onwards.

His talk took us from the origins of the word Camberwell and its mention in the Domesday Book to descriptions of the village just before the 19th century when the population was only 2,000 and the area was famous for its strawberries. We travelled through time, stopping to catch a glimpse of the distinguished characters who made Camberwell their home—Robert Browning, John Ruskin, Michael Faraday and more; and of those who made frequent visits such as Dickens and Mendelssohn (whose *Spring Song* was originally called *Camberwell Green*).

Victorian Camberwell was the home of the music hall and of the street traders, such as the lavender girls, the muffin man and the knife and scissor grinder. Lockhart's performing elephants were kept behind Grove Lane and were the source of much amusement.

The evening was nostalgic for some and a glimpse of something hitherto unrevealed for others. All were equally well entertained. We hope to be able to entice Mr Blackwell back to share more of his memories and his historical research in the future.

Eleanor Lines



NEW PUBLICATIONS

We have published four new cards which we hope members will send as Christmas cards this year.

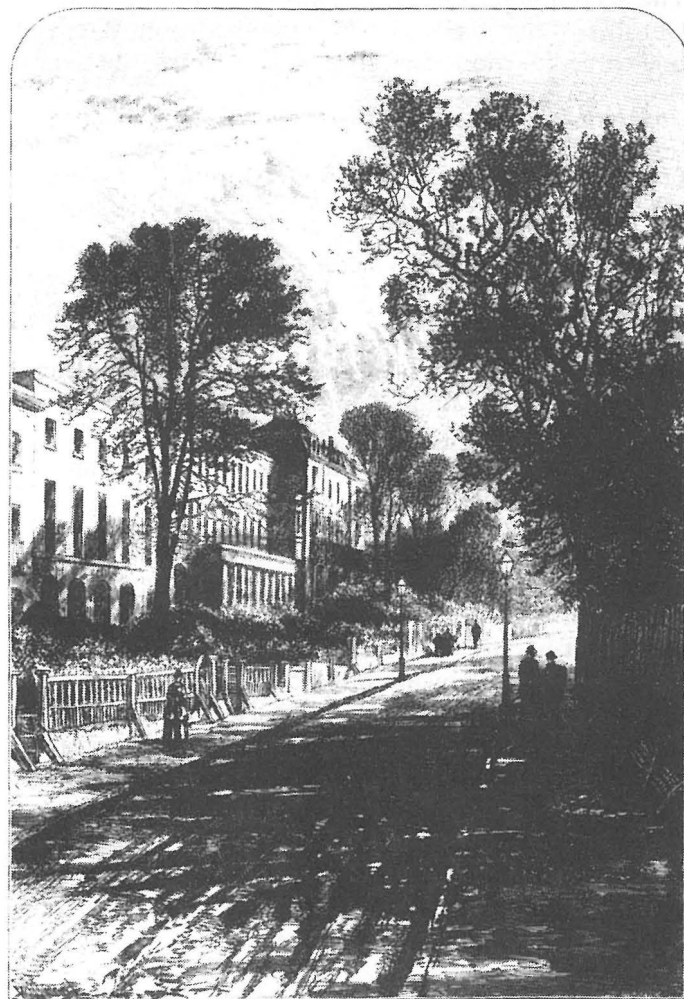
These cards, together with the whole range of the Society's publications, will be on sale direct from the Society either at our temporary shop next to Rhinoceros Sports at 12 Camberwell Church Street, or from Executive Committee Member, Albert Densumbe, 36 Grove Lane, SE5 (tel: 703 4824). Cards are also sold at the Passage Bookshop, Canning Cross, SE5 (thanks to a very generous arrangement made with the Society by Mrs Hugh-Jones) and at the Bookplace in Peckham. This year's new cards are all fine old prints or early photographs of Camberwell.

The new cards (all have one word, *Greetings*, inside) are as follows:

1. *View of London from Camberwell*
(Hand coloured engraving 1797)

This is the view, with St Paul's and the City clearly visible, which a resident of Grove Park, Camberwell would have enjoyed before the age of high rise buildings. The artist drew this view from the paddock of Dr Lettsom's house in Grove Park and the fine three-storey Georgian houses, which can be seen in the centre of the picture, are still there today. They are now the offices of the Southwark Borough Development Department at 30-32 Peckham Road and the rear of these houses can be seen, more or less as they are in the print, from Lucas Gardens.

The publication of this card has been made possible by a generous donation from Mr Dowdall. Price 40p each with envelope, or £3.50 per packet of 10 cards with envelopes to members only, direct from the Society.



2. *Grove Lane, Camberwell*
(A wood engraving, hand coloured, 1870)

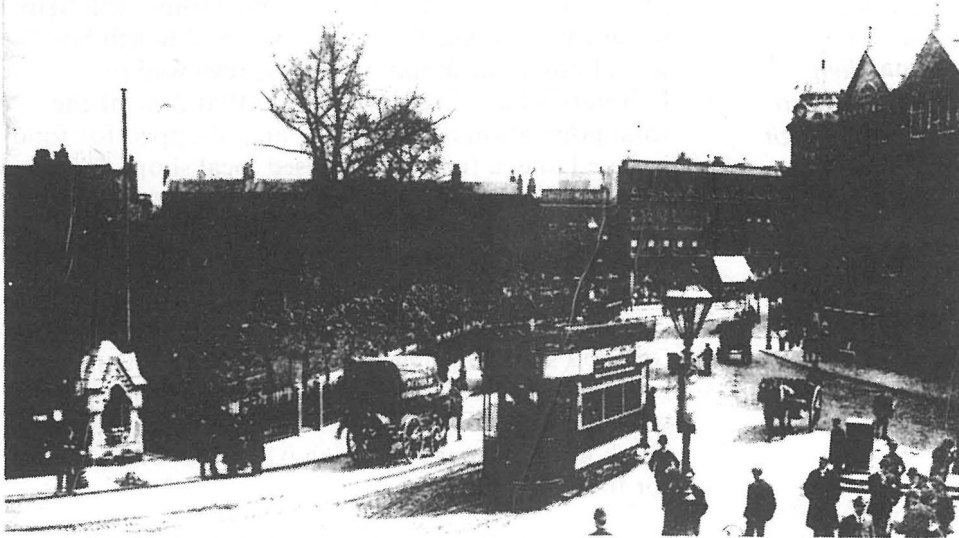
In this engraving perhaps the artist was trying to give an impression of a Sunday afternoon walk in Victorian Camberwell.

The part of Grove Lane shown is just above the George Canning pub and the elegant terraced houses can still be seen in Grove Lane opposite the entrance to Champion Grove. They are numbers 139-155



Price 40p each with envelope, or £3.50 per packet of 10 cards with envelopes to members only, direct from the Society.

CAMBERWELL GREEN.



3. *Camberwell Green* (From a photograph taken in 1907)

This photograph was taken from the corner of Denmark Hill and Camberwell New Road. The buildings on the opposite side of the Green at the junction with Camberwell Church Street remain much the same today. Even in 1907 Camberwell Green was busy with local traffic—trams, horses and carts—a cluttered and clattering centre of Camberwell, which is preferable perhaps to the juggernauts of today which plough their way past the Green.

Price 20p each with envelope, or £1.80 per packet of 10 cards with envelopes to members only, direct from the Society.

4. *Denmark Hill and the Palace of Varieties* (From a photograph taken in 1905)

The Palace of Varieties was Camberwell's Music Hall, the first in south London. Opened in 1896 its full name was the Oriental Palace of Varieties although the locals called it "the Camberwell Palace". It stood on the corner of Denmark Hill and Orpheus Street and it was demolished in 1956. Today the site is used by a car dealer. This view shows Denmark Hill looking north to the Green and what is now the National Westminster Bank. Orpheus Street and the Music Hall are to the right and next to them is the Golden Lion pub, still standing but shortly to be pulled down to make way for Camberwell's new shopping centre.

Price 20p each with envelope, or £1.80 per packet of 10 cards with envelopes to members only, direct from the Society.

Denmark Hill and Palace of Varieties



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 THE CARDS WILL CONTINUE SELLING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

DANGER TO CAMBERWELL

Too often Societies like ours are not alert enough to what is going on outside our immediate area of concern, although decisions taken outside our borders may profoundly affect what goes on inside them. Take the plan to realign and widen Peckham High Street for example. The GLC and Southwark plan to upgrade the A202 (which is the road running through Peckham High Street down to Camberwell Church Street to the Green) into a major route carrying traffic travelling from Kent and the Channel Ports to London and beyond. That's where most of the juggernauts we see at the Green come from. If the plans to widen the road in Peckham succeed, then there is an obvious threat to buildings in Camberwell Church Street, otherwise there would be an immense bottle neck. It is a danger to Camberwell about which we must be alert.

We reprint below, with acknowledgements to Southwark's Planning Newsheet and the Peckham Action Group, a letter on the future of Peckham by Peter Bibby, in which he presents the arguments against major redevelopment in Peckham.

Southwark Council are trying to convert Peckham into a place at best like Lewisham or Croydon, at the worst like Elephant and Castle. The major elements of this plan are two roads and a multi-storey car park which would hopefully encourage big name stores.

The road building plan suits the GLC who wish to upgrade the A202 (Peckham High Street) into a major route for traffic travelling from Kent and the channel ports through London to the North and the West. It is estimated that 66% of the road space on the proposed new highway in Peckham would be occupied by heavy goods vehicles. If the route is improved there is likely to be an increase in the number of the largest juggernauts, particularly transcontinentals.

As well as the £10 million High Street 'realignment' proposal, Southwark are considering a £3 million 'Eastern Bypass' 44 foot wide carriageway to run from the Peckham Rye/East Dulwich Road traffic lights, via Heaton Arms and Copeland Road, under the railway and through some of the remaining houses in Moncrieff Street to join the proposed High Street realignment.

The destruction of what Southwark purchased as 'a valuable addition to the Council's housing stock', namely 44 houses in Moncrieff Street, to make way for a 720 space multi-storey car park is another part of the strategy.

To back up this kind of thinking, Southwark Council have recently altered the priorities for assessment of highway schemes in the Community Plan (the Community Plan is the Council's statement of policy). The alterations, which put environmental effects bottom of the list of considerations for road schemes, were approved by the Highways and Works Com-

mittee without one word of discussion.

Southwark Council believe that Rye Lane is losing potential customers to other shopping areas outside the borough and that this road programme will help to recapture them. The recent Mid and South Southwark household shopping survey, reviewed in February's Planning News, found that 29% of the total population of the survey area shopped for food in Rye Lane, a further 28% used local shops, less than 2% used Lewisham and about ½% went to Croydon. Six percent went to Forest Hill, but these were mainly residents of Dulwich. The West End and Brixton accounted for a further 2%. Sixty-five percent of the residents of Peckham itself use Rye Lane for food shopping and it is clear from the figures given above that very few of the remainder shop outside the borough. So there does not seem to be much potential for increasing patronage of Rye Lane for food shopping.

However for clothes and other goods larger percentages do go to Lewisham 7%, Croydon 5%, and the West End 15%. But it is not likely that Peckham could compete with the West End or even Croydon in terms of size, variety and number of shops. So the potential recapture is only a few percent from Lewisham. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to improve Peckham to suit the people that do shop there rather than for those that don't.

Most of the Council's programme for Rye Lane is geared towards cars, yet only about a third of the households in Peckham have a car and only half that third use the car for shopping. In fact 60% of shoppers in Peckham arrive on foot, 30% by bus and only 10% by car. The increasing costs of car ownership and use make it unlikely that this figure will rise much before the real petrol crisis comes. A genuine commitment to maintain and improve public transport should also help to keep traffic levels constant or reduce them.

It is not necessary to build the proposed High Street Realignment and Eastern Bypass in order to achieve pedestrianisation or at least severe traffic reduction in Rye Lane. Either could be carried out at the north end of Rye Lane by returning Peckham High Street to two way working. It might be thought that the traffic was deliberately routed into Hanover Park and Rye Lane so that it could be argued that the High Street realignment was necessary to get it out again.

Instead of whole scale demolition and road building, development could be restricted to present empty sites and encouragement given to refurbishing existing buildings. Assistance, instead of being given to the big stores, could be given to small shops which are far more likely to bring variety. Instead of encouraging car and heavy lorry use, with all the attendant environmental hazard, noise, pollution and danger, they could be restricted and public transport receive the benefit of the enormous expenditure.

There are at present more than 2,000 new homes being built in Peckham. This will provide a major boost to the shops in Rye Lane. Why not let these people settle into Peckham—not a building site, not more traffic, not more blight, not more corrugated iron. A Factlift Not A Heart Transplant—would bring greater advantages to Peckham than the Council's plans and at far less cost.

Peter Bibby
(Peckham Action Group,
62 Oakhurst Grove, London SE22,
phone: 693 8752)

AN EXILE RETURNS

We spotted the following article in TIME OUT at the beginning of August. It's nice to think that those who have left Camberwell can feel rather touched at returning. We reprint "Going Back" with acknowledgements to both TIME OUT and the writer, Michele Roberts.

Peckham and Camberwell are neighbouring districts within Southwark in south-east London. It's important to stress the location for north Londoners, who fancy themselves as a sort of territorial ruling class, tend to be snooty about south London. They are scared of crossing the river, and prone, in their ignorance, to mythologise the south as horrid, boring and unfashionable.

South Londoners sigh with relief that their homeland can retain a little longer its charm and mystery, without hordes of explorers and missionaries tramping all over it and insisting on setting up historic shopping experiences and similar abominations.

I was one of the people of Peckham and Camberwell once. Now I'm a displaced person, an exile. I lived for four years in a collective house on the borderline of SE5 and SE15, and I've not been back since the landlord repossessed the house some years ago. So I'm sitting on the number 12 bus just about to rumble over Westminster Bridge, and my guts are churning with excitement at the prospect of revisiting places once as unselfconsciously familiar as breathing.

For me, south-east London, I discover as we hurtle past the glorious rotting fruit smell of East Street market on the Walworth Road, is paradise, the land flowing with milk and honey.

Yet when I get off the bus at Camberwell Green I'm recognised as a voyeur, the nosy tourist snooping about, eyes clicking like cameras; some people giggle, others hail me derisively. A derelict like the Ancient Mariner grabs me to tell me his tale. "Did you know that they used the Green as a mass cemetery in the last war? Dig down just two feet under the rich turf and you come to heaps of human bones. . . ."

The marvellous jumble of Victorian Gothic, Romanesque, Byzantine and Egyptian architecture remains, and the joyous eclecticism of town hall, art gallery, cinema, houses and shops.

The Black Cat Caterer on the Walworth Road still has its 1950s window display of net drapes, china cat, wedding cake. Kennedy's on the Green still has its sunburst window and art deco logo, its homemade sausages and pies and cooked meats. Sainsbury's has laid lino over its formerly glorious mosaic floor, but has retained its splendour of mahogany and marble and tiles. Rossi's in Rye Lane is still going strong selling sweets and ground coffee and icecream, and the Italian shop ladies have not been soured by time. The Peckham Polish deli still crouches under the railway arches (exit here for the hopfields of Kent) next to the shop pumping out reggae and soul. In the covered market there's the same riotous mixture as before: Asian and Caribbean vegetables and food-stuffs, iridescent statues of the Sacred Heart, sexy black lingerie, ironmongery, pets.

Shopping used easily to take up most of Saturday, because you met friends and neighbours bound on similar errands and went off with them for cups of tea in one of the cafes. Manzes had its steamy miles of marble and green and black art nouveau tiles. Como's smart gold and pink formica, Bill King's Dining Rooms was close, clean and curtained, with the lorries thundering through to the Old Kent Road.

The neighbourhood still felt small and stable enough to have the practical morality based on knowledge of one another's lives. People in our street accepted us, telling us stories of how things used to be, giving us lectures on how things ought to be.

We were an odd household: poor, single people, mostly women. Rude girls who stuck pro-abortion posters in the windows, went to Troops Out meetings, drank pints. Youth would spreadeagle themselves against our bedroom windows, teetering on dangerous ledges better to, er, understand us.

Mostly people were kind. The landlady of the pub, where I was a regular, gave me her daughter's smart and spotless cast-offs. When I forgot my doorkey, our white, racist neighbour would give me a leg-up over her garden wall so I could climb in. Our Chilean neighbours across the street (exiled after torture, working for a pittance as office cleaners) popped in frequently and brought us gifts of food.

In return, we shared the garden: the Chileans had their own vegetable patch; our black neighbour picked our roses for his sick relatives. He got up at six every day for his job with London Transport. He'd come for a drink at night, never his wife. Some nights, coming home late, I'd find his daughter locked out, and I'd help her climb in over the yawning drop to the basement. Looking back, it seems that an awful lot of climbing around other people's houses went on. The boys from next door were always

climbing into our garden to rescue their ball or their dog.

I used to hang over the wall at the far end, chatting to our neighbour who had a long white beard and a fantastic touch with plants. He taught me local history, told me how Camberwell Green once had a dairy to which Londoners drove out in their carriages for fresh milk, how our street stood on what was once farm land, with the old walnut tree in our garden to prove it. He opened my eyes, made me see history poking through everywhere, drove me off to the library to find out more.

Like all lovers with their memories of perfect affairs safely intact in the past, I'm reluctant to admit that those days weren't solely halcyon, and glad that the loved one hasn't changed too much.

After a day wandering the streets, sitting in cafes and pubs, talking to people and revisiting old friends, I was physically and emotionally exhausted. It started to rain and all the streets and colours glistened. I felt weepy in paradise lost, climbed back on to the bus and returned to North London.

Michele Roberts

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

David Hayes, Southwark's Deputy Borough Planner, answered questions on the work of planners and our local environment following two films which introduced us to the subject of 'The Built Environment' at the members' meeting on September 18th.

'Buildings for People' was a film showing the planned development of Milton Keynes. The second film, 'Nobody Told George' (that a motorway was being built next door to his house), was an encouragement to us all to attend the open Council Planning meetings, and to read our planning newsheet which lists current planning applications and is available from Borough libraries.

Eleanor Lines

THE OPEN ASPECT OF THE EASTERN END OF GROVE PARK

Many residents in Grove Park, in the south eastern part of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area, are concerned that the open eastern aspect of the road may be threatened. Following the recent sale of 85 Grove Park, the new owners negotiated a deal with British Rail, owners of an extensive site between Grove Park and two railway lines, that resulted in the exchange of two small parcels of land. The garden on the north side of number 85 was extended back to provide a site suitable for building and north of this British Rail acquired a 20 foot strip of land allowing potential access to Grove Park. The new owners of

85 Grove Park applied for planning permission to build three town houses set back from the street and received outline planning consent for this. The Society's planning sub-committee saw no reason to oppose outline planning permission, especially as the owners of number 85 were proposing to use the money received to renovate number 85, a late Victorian house of unusual design and a feature of the road. The Society did however express reservations about the detailed design presented. The site has subsequently been sold at auction.

The major concern is now about possible developments on British Rail land that might either obscure the view of trees and open sky at the end of Grove Park or bring further heavy traffic into the road.

Local residents have formed a committee to monitor developments on the British Rail land. The officers of this committee are:

Sally Lynes (Chairwoman):	92 Grove Park
Jonathan Hunt:	67 Grove Park
Rodney Lard:	91 Grove Park
R R Reeves:	33 Grove Park

They would greatly welcome your support.

Dick Oliver, the Society's representative on the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, has written to Southwark's Director of Planning and Development, pointing out the Society's concern about possible developments on the British Rail site that might materially alter the view and atmosphere of the eastern end of Grove Park and our fears that land might be used for tipping or industry that would lead to environmental nuisances such as increased traffic through the Conservation Area and the streets leading to it.

The Borough Planner has replied that the Council is aware that British Rail had retained a strip of land to serve as possible access to their land, but the Council has not agreed to this land being used as access and would view such a proposal unfavourably in the light of the unsatisfactory traffic situation that would result. The Borough Planner has assured the Society that any proposals for the redevelopment of the site will be the subject of widespread consultations.

Dick Oliver also wrote to the Council indicating the Society's support for the residents' applications for Tree Preservation Orders on the mature trees on land to the east of Grove Park.

Elizabeth Betts

NEWS IN BRIEF

Camberwell Society Shop

We are currently negotiating with the GLC for a short licence to use the premises at 12 Camberwell Church Street (next to the sports shop Rhinocerus)

as the Camberwell Society Shop during November and December. This will not be a permanent home but a temporary shop from which we will sell the Society's publications, including the new set of Christmas Cards, in the period before Christmas.

Will any member willing to help in the shop on a rota basis or anyone wanting to sell their own home-made goods from the shop and in return are prepared to man it, please get in touch with Alison Sime (tel: 703 5254), as soon as possible?

The Society is still looking for a permanent home and we are currently in touch with the Camberwell School of Art and Southwark Council with an idea of sharing premises with the School at a property in Grove Lane.

Our first experimental six months in running a shop was such a success that we want to repeat it.

Art Competition

We are pleased to announce the winners of the Society's Art Competition. The Executive Committee of the Society under the chairmanship of Denys Short, artist and lecturer, met at the beginning of October to judge the entries.

The first prize of £30 went to Helen Chown, 149 Chadwick Road, SE15 for a cartoon of a well known Camberwell character walking his dogs past the then Camberwell Society shop in Church Street. We are hoping to publish this and other drawings by Helen next year.

The second prize of £20 went to Michael Solomons, Good Neighbours House, 38 Mary Datchelor Close, SE5 for a very striking patterned drawing on the theme of Camberwell.

The third prize of £10 went to Henrietta Marley for her painting of Camberwell Town Hall decorated to celebrate the end of the Great War in 1918.

The Committee received very grateful letters from all the winners. Two out of the three were especially thrilled to win prizes as they are disabled.

The Camberwell Beauty

We appealed in our last Newsletter for ideas on how to save the two famous replicas of the Camberwell Beauty butterfly, which are threatened with demolition—one in Southampton Way and the other in Orpheus Street. We have more news to report on ideas that we have received but so far no decision.

EPIC, the property company who are developing the Camberwell Green site and who will be responsible for the demolition of Orpheus Street, have written to say they are sympathetic to the idea of saving the Beauty and have asked their architects, Michael Lyell Associates, to come up with ideas of how the Beauty might be incorporated into the design of the new shopping centre. Dennis Poole, director of EPIC, in

his letter to the Society says that it may be difficult and expensive to remove the existing Beauty intact and that they are considering reproducing a replica for the shopping centre. So the Orpheus Street butterfly may still be without a home.

The Society has received two more ideas from members for either or both of the butterflies.

The first is that the Beauty should be built into the bottom of a swimming pool because "It would look very nice viewed through water". Is there a possibility of the Camberwell Baths?

The second is that it should be incorporated into the extension of the north western end of Camberwell Green, when the Green is enlarged as part of the traffic improvements due to begin in 1984. The idea is that it should be built into a landscaped garden on the Green, perhaps raised at an angle of say 30° so that it would be seen by people approaching the Green from the Camberwell Road and Walworth as the principal identifying feature of Camberwell.

We feel we must keep the Camberwell Beauty as a feature of Camberwell. We offer these ideas to the Council.

Any members with additional ideas please write direct to the Director of Development, Southwark Borough Development Department, 30-32 Peckham Road, London SE5 8QP (tel: 703 6311).

What Do We Call It?

Demolition of the central site at Camberwell Green is scheduled to begin early next year. When the bulldozers move in to demolish what is left of the old Samuel Jones factory off Orpheus Street, they will be clearing a path for Camberwell's new shopping centre.

EPIC, the property company who own the site, are looking for the right name for the new shopping centre, and have asked the Society's help. The company would like the name to end with the word "Walk", as the plans show a shopping precinct with a main promenade and local names tend to end in "Walk" (Love Walk, Ruskin Walk, etc).

So far the Society has suggested the following:

Camberwell Palace Walk
Palace Walk
Old Palace Walk
[all relating to the old music hall "The Camberwell Palace" which once stood on part of the site]

Camberwell Walk
Butterfly Walk
Beauty Walk
Beauty Parade
[all relating to the Camberwell Beauty]

Lion Walk

Golden Lion Walk

[both relating to the pub which will be demolished to make way for the shopping centre]

Would any member with further ideas please contact Jeremy Bennett (tel: 703 9971) who will pass them on to EPIC.

Facelift for Camberwell

We often criticise Southwark Council. We also enjoy congratulating them and saying thank you. Full marks then to Southwark for the enterprising use they have made of the Environmental Fund by offering financial assistance to shops and businesses in Camberwell to decorate the exteriors of their properties. Most have taken up the offer and the results have been startling. There are however still a few eye-sores.

The Society were recently asked by the Council to use its good offices to persuade four or five shops and offices at the Green and in Camberwell Church Street to accept the Council's offer of help before it is too late (the offer will be withdrawn at the end of March). We are glad to say that at least one—the Chelsea Building Society—has agreed and will be redecorating—and Kingsway Wallpapers, and the Falconwood Employment Agency are considering the offer. Customers of shops that look near-derelict from the outside could always make remarks to the shop owners suggesting that it might be to everyone's benefit if the Council's generous offer was taken up!

Hope for Mary Datchelor Site

The Mary Datchelor School will be closing finally at the end of the summer term 1981 but there is renewed hope that the buildings will be taken over by another school.

The school interested in buying the buildings from the Clothworkers' Company is the combined foundation of St James Independent School for Boys and St Vedast Independent School for Girls, at present at 91 Queens Gate, SW7. The Headmaster, Nicholas Debenham, told the Society that the two schools were looking for larger premises in the central London area as they were bursting at the seams in Queens Gate and wanted to expand. They have approximately 500 children from age five to 18 and fees are approximately £200 per term. He said he would personally be "most disappointed if St James' and St Vedast's were not eventually able to move to Camberwell."

He and the governors of the schools are in direct contact with the Clothworkers' Company and are, as far as the Society knows, discussing a possible sale.

The Society's view is that it would like to see the return of more school-children to Camberwell, particularly to the Mary Datchelor site. Our view,

frequently expressed, is that it should continue as a school and that if St James' and St Vedast's move to Camberwell they will be warmly welcomed.

We Want Our Park Attendants

Cuts always hurt but in its search to save money is Southwark Council turning its beady eye on the wrong target?

News has just reached the Editors of the Newsletter that our much respected park keepers in Camberwell could be reduced in number as the Council wants to cut the number of people they employ in looking after the parks and open spaces.

Under threat in particular, we understand, is the park attendant in St Giles Churchyard, now looked after by the Council. There has been a proposal that there should be *no* attendant there in future to save money. This is being strongly resisted by the Vicar and residents. We support this. Without an attendant the very lovely Churchyard garden will soon become a training ground for vandals, a resting place for drinkers and a garbage dump for all—not the sort of place children can go and play in without fear or the elderly will want to use in fine weather to sit out in the sunshine. There may be other parks in our area involved. Will all members please write to their local councillor protesting at any cuts in the parks department?

If the Council wants to save money we suggest they turn their beady eye on the excessive number of people who work in the Housing Department.