



The Dulwich Society

TO FOSTER AND SAFEGUARD THE AMENITIES OF DULWICH

Newsletter 29

July 1975

THE DULWICH SOCIETY: NEWSLETTER 29: JULY 1975

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| Chairman: Roger V. Low, 41 College Road, SE21 | 693 2953 |
| Vice Chairman: Peter F.J. Lawson, 41 Village Way, SE21 | 733 2646 |
| Secretary: Edgar Brady, 79 Burbage Road, SE24 | 274 7941 |
| Treasurer: R.C. Low, 88 Alleyn Road, SE21 8AH | 670 1609 |

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

We would like to draw your particular attention to the following points which in some respects alter information already given in earlier newsletters:

1. Saturday 26 July is the occasion of Bill de Baerdemaecker's mystery historical walk. This will start at 2 pm at the Dulwich Wood House (public house in Sydenham Hill at the top of Low Cross Wood Lane). Tea will be available there after the walk for a small charge. It will be helpful to the organisers if those wanting to take tea could inform Mrs Evans (tel 693 3522) in advance.
2. Thursday 2 October. The meeting on 'Railways of Dulwich' will now be in the Great Hall of Dulwich College, by kind permission of the Master, and NOT in St. Barnabas Hall. The time is 8 pm and the speaker will be Mr R.L.E. Lawrence, a member of the British Railway Board. There will also be interesting maps, photographs etc. to be seen.
3. Please note that our Treasurer, Dick Low, has moved to 88 Alleyn Road, SE21, as shown above. His telephone number has not changed. If by chance you have not sent him your 1975 subscription (£1) please do so now to the new address.

PLANNING MATTERS

87-89 College Road. The new development plan for this site (which was described in our last newsletter) was further discussed at a recent meeting between the Governors, representatives of the Society, and residents in the area

immediately adjacent to this site. We agreed that the new plan, which had been prepared following objections to an earlier scheme embodying a number of blocks of flats, was a great improvement and that it met most of the points we had made. At the meeting we suggested a number of further changes, mostly relatively minor, and we were assured that these would be taken into account in the development of the scheme. However, bearing in mind present economic circumstances it seems unlikely that development of this site can be regarded as imminent.

Buildings of Local Interest. We are glad to be able to report that the London Borough of Southwark have now accepted our recommendation to include in their list of 'Buildings of Local Interest' the following:

- 12 Alleyn Road
- 'Lyncombe' 1 Crescent Wood Road
- 'Redbanks' and 'Feyenoord', 2 & 4 Crescent Wood Road
- 3 Crescent Wood Road
- 'Six Pillars' Crescent Wood Road
- 22, 24, 26 & 28 Dulwich Wood Avenue
- Dulwich Wood House, Sydenham Hill
- 41 Sydenham Hill
- 'Stoney Hill' Rockhill (off Sydenham Hill)

The Council have not felt able to accept our recommendation to include two further buildings or groups of buildings in the list, namely:

- 'Beechcroft' Sydenham Hill
- 1-15 Alleyn Road

Although the list of buildings of local interest carries no statutory protection, it does ensure that any application for permission to develop the site of a listed building will be given especially careful consideration. The Council's constructive and helpful response to our proposals is therefore most welcome.

Farquhar Road Woods. The four and a half acre steeply sloping woods to the east of Farquhar Road are not to be destroyed for houses after all, but are to be preserved intact and properly enclosed as an amenity for the enjoyment of the public. Excluding numerous shrubs, rhododendrons and saplings, the woods contain 387 fine trees of many species, including a magnificent oak well over 120 inches in girth, and a variety of wild life. Nearly half of these trees would have had to be felled to make way for the houses but many more over and above this total would have been lost through disturbance of the water tables, root-feeders and other factors beyond human control. Just over two years ago local residents near Farquhar Road were startled to learn that the GLC planned to build eight blocks of flats within their woods to house a population of 260 people. Local inhabitants could not understand why so many fine trees had to be destroyed to provide homes when a much larger, flat site lay beyond the woods ready and waiting for permanent housing at far less cost to develop than the wooded site. This was the seven acre site formerly occupied by the Crystal Palace High Level Station and at present covered by some seventy-nine temporary single storey dwellings.

The Farquhar Road Area Residents' Association was formed on the advice and with the support of the Dulwich Society. The Association has made a survey of the trees, written numerous reports and made delegated representations to the GLC and Southwark Planning Committees, always pressing strongly for permanent houses to be built on the High Level site so as to spare the woods as an amenity both for existing residents and those who would occupy the new houses.

That this view has at long last prevailed was announced at a crowded meeting of the Crystal Palace Forum on 17 March 1975. The saving of our Farquhar Road woodland, besides preserving a wonderful amenity in Dulwich and a landmark visible for many

miles, must be considered a great victory for local opinion powerfully aided by our MP and Dulwich representatives on the Greater London and Southwark Councils.

The High Level Station Site. The future of the High Level Station site at Crystal Palace has been bedevilled for many years by the close proximity of the Exhibition site itself, the future of which has also been in doubt. Some local societies take the view that the two sites are so closely related that no decision about the Station site should be taken at all until long-term plans for the Exhibition site and park are finally resolved. We on the other hand support the development of the Station site for housing (see also the note on the Farquhar Road woods above) without further delay, provided that local interests are fully consulted about the scope, shape and amenity aspects of such a development. We now understand that architects have been commissioned by the GLC to undertake feasibility studies for such a development, and the Society among others will of course be consulted.

Crystal Palace Park. As forecast in our last newsletter, the GLC have now presented to the Crystal Palace Forum (on which the Society is represented) a series of options for the future of the Crystal Palace Park. These include a 'minimum' scheme embodying restoration of the terraces as a kind of introduction to the park and some enlargement of the caravan site, but with emphasis primarily on the retention and consolidation of the park itself. At the other end of the spectrum are a series of progressively more ambitious schemes to include the construction of a Youth Conference Centre, enlargement and elaboration of the Sports Centre and its ancillary facilities and so on. It is perhaps fair to say that in present economic circumstances the more elaborate propositions will be ruled out for the foreseeable future on grounds of expense. But the Society's general approach

in the discussions that are to take place in the near future will be to press for:

- a. the retention and restoration of the terraces and their incorporation into the park;
- b. the retention, with some extension and improvement of amenities and screening, of the caravan site;
- c. resistance to any further encroachment into the park by the construction of new buildings not directly associated with the Sports Centre or otherwise 'foreign' to a park.

We shall of course report developments.

Hambleden House. This is the large white building (formerly used as a nursing home, earlier the Toksowa hotel, and unoccupied for some time now) near the corner of College Road and Dulwich Common. Members who have shown an interest in the future of the building in recent times may like to know that consultant architects have been appointed to prepare a scheme for the use of the whole site (amounting to about five acres), possibly including the existing building, as a university students' hotel. We simply do not know at this stage to what extent it will prove possible to retain all or part of the building, but we have been assured that the Society will be consulted before any firm decisions are taken.

EAST DULWICH SOCIETY

We welcome the formation of a sister society which started last November. We understand that the East Dulwich Society considers that its boundary to the west runs approximately along Lordship Lane, East Dulwich Road, Peckham Rye and Forest Hill Road including the new Park Estate. In fact we believe that their boundaries follow closely the old Friern Manor limits. Should you wish to contact the Society their Secretary is Mrs Mitchell, 112 Friern Road, SE22.

TRAFFIC

The lay-by opposite the Village Infants' School comes under frequent criticism as a possible source of accidents before and after the parking of cars by local residents. It is obviously a dangerous manoeuvre to park except when approaching from the north of the Village. For those coming from any other direction the only safe approach avoiding a U turn would be via Calton Avenue and Gilkes Place.

Pram ramps have recently been installed, at the suggestion of the Dulwich Society, on either side of the pavement at the south end of Dulwich Village near the shops, to facilitate the crossing of invalid and baby carriages at the point of the road where there is already a pedestrian refuge. Members of the Society are asked to help in discouraging the parking of cars at this point, in the narrowest part of the road, so that a passage may be left clear for pedestrians and carriages.

When the Westow Hill experimental traffic ban comes into operation, it seems likely that the effect of motorists trying to avoid the Crystal Palace Triangle may be felt within the Dulwich area. Comments on the scheme would be welcomed by the Traffic Sub-Committee and should be sent to its Secretary, Miss G.D. Johnson at 75 Stradella Road, Herne Hill, SE24.

WILD LIFE

At the members' meeting on 1 May the enthusiasm for beekeeping of Mr P.H. Springall of the Kent Beekeepers' Association drew an interested response from the audience. The life of the highly organized honey-bee community was made vivid, not only by means of slides and descriptions, but also by the actual handling of frames from a hive carrying wax comb but laden with honey on foundations provided by the beekeeper and of some of the tongue-shaped pieces of comb formed by a swarm in a temporary home. We also saw the

different kinds of brood cells in which queens and drones were reared. It was made clear that bees are creatures of fixed and complicated habits and that beekeeping is entirely a matter of co-operating with the insects. We hope that some new converts were made to the fascinating and absorbing art. This is the best possible time to grow your own honey as sugar gets more and more expensive.

We are very pleased to report that a newcomer to the woods in the form of a wood warbler spotted by Mr B. Banson has been regularly seen and heard this Spring. We hope that with the coming of the fine weather many cameras have been clicking to provide photographs for the competition announced in the last issue of the newsletter. The entry form is repeated on the back page: the closing date is 15 September, so there is still time to enter.

LOCAL HISTORY

Those who missed Bill de Baerdemaeker's evening last Winter may be interested to know that he will be giving his interesting talk on 'Dulwich past and present' in the Horniman Museum on Saturday 25 October at 3.30 pm. All will be welcome.

THE TREES WALK 1975

Thursday 5 June was a very dull and dismal day until the sun eventually broke through in the early evening. Whether in fact it was a case of the sun 'shining on the righteous' is open to debate: nevertheless it is true that the weather really put on its best suit for the Society's 'Trees Walk'. Mr Storey, Chief Horticultural Adviser to the GLC Parks Department and his colleague Mr Paul Canneaux, a trees specialist, had both had previous experience of taking parties of interested folk to see trees in various localities, but they confessed afterwards that their nerve nearly cracked when they saw the enormous crowd of members and friends, estimated at about 180, who awaited them at

the Old College entrance to Dulwich Park at 7.30 pm that evening. Even dividing this great crowd into two groups still meant that our two guides had to strain their voices to be heard as they identified and gave a mint of information on the various trees seen. Geography, history, chemistry and divinity were but some of the subjects touched upon and which contributed to a fascinatingly interesting tour of Dulwich Park.

We are grateful to Mr Woods, the new Park Superintendent, for his helpful advice in the arrangements made for the evening, and there is no doubt that everyone who took part came away with a very healthy respect for the work carried out by the staff of the park.

To Mr Storey and Mr Canneaux the Society owes a big debt of gratitude for the friendly and interesting way in which they conducted the evening's proceedings: perhaps one point they particularly appreciated was the large number of members who could be seen taking copious notes. It was pure coincidence that the walk took place on Referendum Day, but the Society at least can undoubtedly claim a hundred per cent 'YES' to a truly memorable evening.

CHILDREN'S PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Closing date 15 September 1975.

Has your child a camera? If so, please encourage him or her to take photographs of Dulwich wild life (either creatures or plants), and to submit these for the Wild-Life Committee's competition this summer. There will be a First Prize of £5 for the under twelves and one of £10 for those aged from 12 to under 16 years. There will be free films too for those entries which are highly commended. The prizes will be awarded only if, in the opinion of the judges, entries have reached a sufficiently high standard; and in all respects their decision will be final. Photographic and artistic excellence as well as interest and difficulty of the subject will be taken into account.

RULES

THREE PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE FORM OF EITHER PRINTS OR TRANSPARENCIES, not larger than 130mm x 90mm may be submitted by each entrant, whose parent should be a member of the Dulwich Society. They must have been taken during 1975 and must be attested as having been taken by the entrant. A completed entry form must accompany the entries of each applicant. Additional forms are available from the address given below.

Entries should be addressed to: Miss G. M. Pye-Smith, 9 Breakspeare, 94 College Road, London SE21 7NB and must arrive not later than 15 September 1975.

Photographs will be returned to their owners if they are clearly labelled and an addressed envelope is enclosed with the entry.

----- TEAR OFF -----

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION - ENTRY FORM

Name.....Age last birthday

Please state the following for each photograph entered:

| <u>Print or Transparency</u> | <u>Subject</u> | <u>Where Taken</u> | <u>Date Taken</u> |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

TO BE FILLED IN AND SIGNED BY AN ADULT MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY
This/these photograph(s) was/were taken by.....
during 1975.

Signature.....

Address.....